

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, September 13, 2026

“Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross”

“16th Sunday after Pentecost”

Reflections for this Week!!!!

There are moments in life when we feel that heaven is far away. We look at our wounds, our failures, our fears, and the suffering around us, and we wonder where God is. Yet in the Gospel of John, Jesus reveals something astonishing. Heaven is not distant from our suffering. God Himself has entered into our human condition and has come down to where we are. Jesus says, “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” These words reveal the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ does not save us from a distance. He comes down. He enters our darkness, touches our brokenness, carries our humanity, and takes upon Himself everything that separates us from God. The Son of God becomes the Son of Man so that the sons and daughters of humanity might become children of God.

Then Jesus recalls the mysterious serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness. Those who looked upon it were healed. This image points toward the Cross. Christ will be lifted up, not because God delights in suffering, but because divine love is willing to enter even the deepest place of human suffering and transform it from within.

The Cross is therefore not simply an instrument of death. It becomes the throne of divine love. On the Cross, Christ stretches out His arms toward a wounded humanity. Nothing is held back. He does not love us because we are worthy. He loves us in order to make us worthy. He does not wait until we become holy before approaching us. He approaches us so that we may become holy.

And then comes one of the most beautiful revelations in all of Scripture: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.”

The heart of Christianity is not fear. It is love. We do not begin our journey by asking, “How can I become good enough for God?” We begin by discovering that God has already loved us beyond measure.

This love is not sentimental. It is sacrificial. God gives. The Father gives the Son. The Son gives Himself. The Holy Spirit gives life to the human heart. Divine love is always self giving. “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” How deeply we need to remember this. Many people carry an image of God as a judge waiting to condemn them.

(continue to page 3)

(continue from page 2)

But Christ reveals the Father as the physician who comes to heal. The Church is not a courtroom for perfect people. She is a hospital for sinners, a place where wounded hearts can encounter mercy and begin again.

For us as parishioners of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Cross always points toward Pascha. Death is not the final word. The Cross leads to Resurrection. The descent of Christ leads to our ascent. His humility opens the way to our glorification.

Perhaps today the Lord is asking us simply to look toward Him. Look toward Christ when you are afraid. Look toward Him when you have failed. Look toward Him when someone has hurt you. Look toward Him when your prayer feels empty. Look toward Him when the world seems broken.

The One who was lifted up on the Cross is still looking upon you with mercy.

Do not run from Him because of your wounds. Bring your wounds to Him. Do not hide your weakness. Place it before Him. Do not believe that your past is stronger than His mercy.

The Cross declares that love is stronger than sin, mercy is stronger than failure, and life is stronger than death. God did not simply send us a message of love.

He sent us His Son.

And when we finally understand this, the Christian life becomes less about trying to earn God's love and more about learning, day by day, to receive it, trust it, and become an instrument of that same love for others.



The Universal Exaltation of the Cross.

The Cross stands at the heart of our Christian faith, revealing the immeasurable love of God. What appeared to the world as an instrument of suffering became, through Christ, the throne of victory and the path to resurrection. On the Cross, Jesus enters fully into our suffering, takes upon Himself our sin, and transforms death into the doorway of eternal life.

The Universal Exaltation of the Cross reminds us that we are never alone in our struggles. Whatever burdens we carry, Christ has already entered into the deepest places of human suffering. When we look toward the Cross, we are invited not to despair, but to trust, because divine love is stronger than suffering and life is stronger than death.

We warmly invite everyone to join us for the Divine Liturgy tomorrow, Monday at 9:30 a.m. Come and stand beneath the Cross with the Church, giving thanks for the love through which Christ has redeemed and continues to heal the world.

The Courage to release what we have been carrying for too long!!

There is a hidden battlefield within every human heart. It is not always visible to others, and sometimes we ourselves do not recognize how deeply the battle has entered our soul. We can smile, pray, worship, and continue our daily responsibilities while carrying within us anger, resentment, wounded pride, and memories of those who have hurt us. Saint John Climacus brings us to this difficult place in the twenty third step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent. Here he speaks about anger, remembrance of wrongs, and the poison that resentment can become within the heart.

This step requires extraordinary courage because anger can disguise itself as strength. We may believe that holding onto resentment protects us. We may think that remembering the offense keeps us from being hurt again. Sometimes we even convince ourselves that refusing to forgive is a form of justice. Yet Saint John invites us to see something deeper. Anger that is continually nourished does not remain directed toward another person. Eventually it becomes a prison within ourselves.

The person who wounded us may have moved on, but we continue to carry the wound. We replay the conversation. We remember the injustice. We imagine what we should have said. We rehearse the offense again and again. The event may have lasted only a few minutes, but we allow it to occupy years of our heart.

The twenty third step asks us to have the courage to stop.

This does not mean pretending that the wound never happened. Christianity does not call us to deny injustice, excuse evil, or permit someone to continue hurting us. Forgiveness is not weakness, and forgiveness does not eliminate the need for truth, boundaries, or justice. Forgiveness means something deeper. It means refusing to allow another person's sin to become our own spiritual destruction.

Christ teaches us the mystery of this freedom from the Cross. He was betrayed, rejected, mocked, beaten, falsely accused, and crucified. Yet from the Cross He revealed the heart of God through mercy. He did not permit the hatred of others to determine the condition of His own heart. He entrusted Himself completely to the Father.

This is the courage Saint John places before us.

Sometimes the most courageous prayer we can make is not, "Lord, punish the person who hurt me," but, "Lord, heal me from the wound that I continue to carry."

That prayer may be difficult. We may not feel ready to forgive. We may still feel anger. But spiritual healing often begins before our emotions have changed. We can choose forgiveness before we feel forgiveness.

(continue to page 5)

(continue from page 4)

We can place the person into God's hands even while our heart is still trembling.

Perhaps someone has hurt you deeply. Perhaps you have been misunderstood, betrayed, rejected, forgotten, or treated unjustly. Perhaps you have even been wounded by someone within the Church. These wounds can be especially painful because we expect the Christian community to be a place of love. Yet even within the Church, we encounter imperfect people because the Church is also a hospital for sinners who are being healed by Christ.

Do not allow another person's weakness to destroy your communion with God.

Do not allow resentment to become more important than your peace.

Do not allow yesterday's wound to steal today's grace.

The Fathers of the Church understood that the heart is the place where the battle for salvation is fought. If anger settles there, prayer becomes difficult. If resentment becomes comfortable there, love begins to disappear. But when mercy enters the heart, something miraculous begins to happen. We become free.

The practical challenge of this twenty third step is simple but demanding. Bring one person before God. Do not justify yourself. Do not rehearse the entire story. Simply say, "Lord, I place this person into Your hands. Heal what happened. Heal this person. Heal me."

Then repeat the prayer whenever the memory returns.

This is not surrender to injustice. It is surrender to God.

Little by little, the wound loses its power. The memory may remain, but the poison begins to disappear. The person may still have done something wrong, but that wrong no longer controls your heart.

This is one of the great miracles of Christian forgiveness. We do not change the past, but through Christ we can change what the past is allowed to do to our soul.

The Ladder of Divine Ascent is climbed one step at a time. The twenty third step teaches us that sometimes the next step upward requires us to release what we have been carrying for too long.

Let Christ take it. Let Christ judge it. Let Christ heal it. And let your heart become free again. For the heart that has learned to forgive becomes a heart capable of receiving God. And when resentment finally gives way to mercy, we discover that forgiveness was never merely a gift we gave to another person.

It was a door through which Christ set us free.



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Sunday Divine Liturgy:

9:00 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Religious Education
September - May

Sacraments Penance:
Sunday before Liturgies
or by appointment

Baptism - Matrimony
In most instances
six-month membership
required

Funerals
Membership of an
immediate family member
required

**Communion to the
Homebound**
If you or your family
members are confined to a
health center or are
homebound, please contact
Fr. Hugo directly so that
arrangements can be made
for his visitation.

Sunday, September 13

"16th Sunday after Pentecost"

"Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross"

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18. Gospel: John 3:13-17.

9:00 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends

Monday, September 14

"The Universal Exaltation of the Cross"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. Gospel: John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35.

9:30 a.m. In loving memory of +Lidia Dydyk from the parish

Tuesday, September 15

"The Holy Great-Martyr Nicetas"

Epistle: Ephesians 2:19-3:7. Gospel: Mark 11:11:23.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, September 16

"The Holy, Great Woman-Martyr Euphemia the All-Praised"

Epistle: Ephesians 3:8-21. Gospel: Mark 11:23-26

Thursday, September 17

"The Holy Martyr Sophia, and Her Three Daughters Faith, Hope & Love"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:14-19. Gospel: Mark 11:27-33.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, September 18

"Our Venerable Father Eumenes, Bishop of Gortyna, Wonderworker"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:17-25. Gospel: Mark 12:1-12.

Saturday, September 19

"Saturday after the Exaltation of the Cross"

"The Holy Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius, and Dorymedontus"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 Gospel: John 8:21-30.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, September 20

"17th Sunday after Pentecost"

"Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross"

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20. Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1.

9:00 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends

We are most appreciative for your generosity in donations to the church, and pray that the Lord bless you all with many blessings and good health.