

Христос Воскрес! Воістину Воскрес!



Christ is Risen ! Indeed, He is Risen!

УСПЕННЯ ПРЕСВЯТОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, April 26, 2026

“Fourth Sunday of Pascha of the Paralytic”

Reflections for this Weekend

In the Gospel of Gospel of John 5, 1 to 15, we encounter a man who has been ill for thirty eight years, lying beside the pool of Bethesda. His life has been marked by waiting, disappointment, and a quiet resignation. Surrounded by others who also long for healing, he remains there, day after day, holding on to a fragile hope that perhaps one day the waters will be stirred for him.

Jesus approaches him not with a dramatic gesture, but with a simple and piercing question, “Do you want to be made well.” At first, this question may seem unnecessary. Of course the man desires healing. Yet Jesus is reaching deeper, beyond the surface of suffering, into the hidden places of the heart. Sometimes we become so accustomed to our burdens that they shape our identity. We learn to live within them, and even unconsciously cling to them, because they have become familiar.

The question of Christ invites honesty, it calls the soul to awaken, to desire something more than what it has settled for.

The man responds not with a direct answer, but with an explanation of his limitations. “I have no one to put me into the pool.” His words reveal a deeper loneliness, not only physical suffering but the pain of abandonment. He believes that his healing depends on others, on circumstances, on being in the right place at the right time. Yet standing before him is the One who is greater than the waters, greater than any human help.

Jesus speaks again, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk.” In this moment, everything changes. The command of Christ carries within it the power to fulfill what it asks.

The man is not only healed physically, he is called into a new way of living. The mat that once held him becomes something he now carries. What once defined his weakness becomes a sign of his restoration.

(continue to page 3)

(continue from page 2)

There is a deep spiritual meaning here. Each of us has a place of paralysis, an area in our lives where we feel stuck, unable to move forward, bound by fear, past wounds, or habits that seem unbreakable. Like the man by the pool, we may wait for the perfect condition, the right moment, or someone to help us. Yet Christ comes to us where we are and speaks a word of life. He does not always remove our struggle instantly, but He always offers the grace to rise.

Later, Jesus finds the man in the temple and speaks to him again, "See, you are well, sin no more." This reveals that healing is not only physical, it is spiritual. It is a call to transformation, to a new way of living aligned with God. True healing reaches the heart. It restores not only the body, but the relationship with God, with others, and with oneself.

This Gospel invites us to reflect gently and honestly. Where am I still lying beside the pool, waiting and feeling unable to move. What excuses have I repeated to myself that keep me from stepping into new life. Do I truly desire the healing that Christ offers, even if it means change, responsibility, and trust.

The kindness of Christ is evident in every moment of this encounter. He sees the man, He approaches him, He listens, and He speaks life into him. There is no judgment, only invitation. The same Christ stands before us today, asking quietly, do you want to be made well.

May we have the courage to answer not only with words, but with trust. And when He speaks, may we rise, take up what once burdened us, and walk forward into the freedom of His grace.

Christ is Risen ! Indeed, He is Risen!



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.

Please remember, in your prayers, all our parish members who are in convalescent homes or are homebound because of illness.

The Courage to Blessed Obedience...

Embracing the Fourth Step of the Ladder

In the fourth step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, John Climacus calls the soul into the demanding and luminous path of obedience. This step is not simply about compliance, it is about courage, a deep, interior courage that dares to surrender the will and entrust life entirely to God.

Obedience requires a strength that is often hidden and misunderstood. It is not the courage of force or control, but the courage of trust. To obey is to step into the unknown without full clarity, to release the need to direct every outcome, to accept that God's wisdom surpasses our own. This is not easy, because the human heart naturally seeks security in control. We want to know, to plan, to decide, to protect ourselves from uncertainty. Obedience gently challenges all of this and invites us to a higher way of living.

There is a quiet battle that takes place within every soul, a struggle between self will and surrender. This is where courage becomes essential. It takes courage to admit that our way is not always the right way. It takes courage to listen, to receive guidance, to accept correction without resistance. It takes courage to say, Lord, not my will, but Yours be done, especially when His will leads us through discomfort, misunderstanding, or sacrifice.

True obedience is not blind, it is relational. It is rooted in love. We obey not because we are forced, but because we trust the One who leads us. The deeper the trust, the greater the freedom. Yet this trust does not come automatically, it is formed through many small acts of courage. Each time we choose to let go of our own insistence, each time we surrender a preference, each time we accept what we did not choose, we are strengthening the soul in the virtue of obedience.

Courage in obedience is especially tested when life does not unfold as we expected. When plans change, when doors close, when we face suffering or uncertainty, the temptation is to resist, to question, to withdraw. But this is precisely where obedience becomes transformative. It invites us to remain, to trust, to believe that even in what we do not understand, God is present and working for our good.

There is also a humility that accompanies this courage. To obey is to accept that we are not the center of everything. It is to recognize that our perspective is limited, that we do not see the full picture. This humility is not weakness, it is truth. And in this truth, the soul becomes free.

No longer burdened by the need to control everything, the heart begins to rest in God.

Christ Himself reveals the fullness of this courageous obedience. In the Garden, He faced the deepest human struggle, the desire to avoid suffering, the weight of what was to come. Yet He chose surrender. Not out of resignation, but out of love. His obedience was not passive, it was

(continue to page 5)

(continue from page 4)

active, intentional, and full of courage. He entrusted Himself completely to the Father, even when the path led to the Cross.

In following Him, we are invited into that same courage. Not in dramatic moments alone, but in the ordinary rhythm of daily life. In choosing patience when we want to react, in listening when we want to speak, in accepting when we want to resist. These are the quiet places where obedience is lived and courage is formed.

The fourth step, then, is a call to brave surrender. It asks us to trust beyond what we can see, to let go beyond what feels comfortable, and to love beyond what is easy. It teaches us that true strength is not found in holding tightly, but in releasing ourselves into God’s hands.

So we ask ourselves, where is God inviting me to trust more deeply, where am I holding back out of fear, what would it mean to take one step of obedience today with courage.

In that step, however small, the soul grows stronger, freer, and closer to the heart of God.



May Devotions in Honor of the Holy Theotokos

With love and reverence, we invite you to join us each Sunday in the month of May for special devotions dedicated to the **Holy Theotokos, our loving Mother and Protectress**.

These prayers will take place at approximately 9:12 a.m., between the 8:50 a.m. Third Hour and the 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy.

This sacred time offers a beautiful opportunity to draw closer to the Holy Theotokos, to seek her intercession, and to entrust our hearts, our families, and our needs into her gentle care.

Through these devotions, we honor her who said “yes” to God with perfect faith and who continues to guide us to her Son.

Come and experience the peace, comfort, and grace that flow from spending a few moments in prayer with our Heavenly Mother.

A Gentle Invitation to Pray for Vocations

With humble hearts, we ask you to join in prayer for vocations to the diaconate and the holy priesthood, especially within our own parish family.

The Church is blessed and sustained by those who generously offer their lives in service to God and His people. Every vocation begins quietly, often in the silence of a listening heart, nurtured by prayer, faith, and the loving support of a community.

Let us pray that the Lord may touch the hearts of our young people, calling them with courage and peace to follow Him. May He grant them the strength to say “yes,” and may we, as a parish, encourage and uplift them with kindness, understanding, and example.

We also remember in our prayers those who are already discerning their calling, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit and strengthened in faith.

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Sunday Divine Liturgy:
8:50 a.m. The Third Hour
And
Prayer Service for Peace in
Ukraine.
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, April 26

“Fourth Sunday of Pascha of the Paralytic”

“The Holy Priest-Martyr Basil, Bishop of Amasia

Epistle: Acts 9:32-42. Gospel: John 5:1-15.

8:50 a.m. The Third Hour and Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine

9:30 a.m. Gods blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends

Monday, April 27

“The Holy Priest Martyr Simeon”

Epistle: Acts 10:1-16. Gospel: John 6:56-69.

Tuesday, April 28

“Apostle Jason, and Sospater”

Epistle: Acts 10:21-33. Gospel: John 7:1-13.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, April 29

“Mid-Pentecost”

“The Nine Holy Martyrs of Cyzicus”

Epistle: Acts 14:6-18. Gospel: John 7:14-36.

Thursday, April 30

“Apostle James, Brother of St. John the Theologian”

Epistle: Acts 12:1-11. Gospel: Luke 5:1-11.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, May 1

“The Holy Prophet Jeremiah”

Epistle: Acts 10:44-11:10. Gospel: John 8:21-30.

Saturday, May 2

“Athanasius the Great”

Epistle: Acts 12:1-11. Gospel: John 8:31-42.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, May 3

“Fifth Sunday of Easter”

“Sunday of the Samaritan Woman”

Epistle: Acts 11:19-26, 29-30. Gospel: John 4:5-42.

8:50 a.m. The Third Hour and Moleben to the Holy Theotokos

9:30 a.m. Gods blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends