

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, September 20, 2026

“Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross “

“17th Sunday after Pentecost”

Reflections for this Week!!!!

There are moments when the Gospel stops us in our tracks because Jesus speaks words we would rather avoid. “Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.” These words from Mark 8:34 are not a call to seek suffering, nor are they a command to despise ourselves. They are an invitation to discover what it truly means to belong to Christ.

In our tradition, the Cross is never separated from the Resurrection. We do not carry the cross because suffering is the goal. We carry it because love is the goal. The Cross becomes the path through which our hearts are purified, our pride is humbled, and our lives are gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Jesus begins with “deny yourself.” This does not mean rejecting your dignity or believing that you have no value. It means denying the false self that wants to control everything, to be admired, to be right, to be comfortable, and to remain at the center of every decision.

The spiritual life begins when we move from “What do I want?” to “Lord, what do You desire from me?”

Then Jesus says, “Take up your cross.” Every person has a cross. Sometimes it is a difficult relationship, an illness, loneliness, responsibility, disappointment, financial pressure, grief, or a burden that nobody else sees. But our question is not simply, “How can I escape this?” The deeper question is, “How can I carry this with Christ?”

A cross carried without Christ can become bitterness. A cross carried with Christ can become an offering.

This is why the Church places the Cross before our eyes again and again. We venerate it, we bow before it, and we make its sign upon ourselves. We are reminded that our wounds, sacrifices, and struggles do not have to be meaningless. When united to Christ, even our hidden suffering can become prayer.

Jesus continues with a startling truth: “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the Gospel will save it.” The world teaches us to protect ourselves at all costs. Christ teaches us to give ourselves in love. The world says, “Keep what you have.” Christ says, “Give.” The world says, “Protect your reputation.” Christ says, “Be faithful.” The world says, “Live for yourself.” Christ says, “Live for God and for others.”

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There is a profound paradox here. We discover our true life precisely when we stop making ourselves the center of our life.

This Gospel therefore asks every parishioner a very personal question: What cross am I carrying today, and how am I carrying it? Am I carrying it with resentment, fear, and complaint, or am I placing it into the hands of Christ? Am I using my suffering as a reason to close my heart, or can I allow Christ to make my heart more compassionate?

Jesus does not promise that following Him will always be easy. He promises something greater. He promises that our faithfulness will not be empty. “The Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father.” Our choices today have eternal meaning.

The final invitation is therefore simple but demanding: follow Him. Not occasionally, not only when life is comfortable, not only when prayer is easy, but every day. Follow Him when forgiveness is difficult. Follow Him when nobody notices your sacrifice. Follow Him when you are tired. Follow Him when the road is uncertain.

The Cross is not the end of our journey. It is the doorway to Resurrection. When we place our lives into Christ’s hands, our crosses can become places of grace, our wounds can become places of healing, and our surrender can become the beginning of true freedom.

The courage to follow Christ is not the absence of fear. It is the decision to love Christ more than we love our own comfort. That is the courage of the Cross. And whoever dares to walk that road with Christ will discover that the Cross he carries is also being carried by Christ.



Congratulations to Kyle and Ivy!

With great joy, we congratulate Kyle and Ivy on the blessing of their son, **Simeon Anthony**, who today receives the Holy Mystery of Chrismation.

What a beautiful blessing from God for their family and for all of us as a parish family. We rejoice with them and pray that the Holy Spirit will always guide, protect, and strengthen little Simeon Anthony throughout his life.

May he grow in **good health, happiness, wisdom, faith, and love**, surrounded by the love of his parents, family, and parish community. May Christ bless him abundantly and lead him always closer to Himself.

Many years, Simeon Anthony! May God grant you many blessed and joyful years!

The Courage to become meek!!

The twenty fourth step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent calls us into one of the most beautiful and difficult virtues of the spiritual life, meekness. Saint John Climacus presents meekness not as weakness, passivity, or surrender to injustice, but as the strength of a heart that no longer needs to defend itself before everyone. Meekness is the quiet power of a soul that has learned to rest in God.

There is tremendous courage required to become meek. It is easy to react, to become angry, to answer immediately, to defend our reputation, to prove that we are right, or to make sure that others understand our side. The meek person does not live from this constant need for self protection. The meek heart has discovered something deeper. It knows that its identity does not depend upon winning every argument or receiving the approval of others.

Meekness begins when we stop allowing other people to determine the condition of our heart. Someone may criticize us, misunderstand us, ignore us, or speak unfairly about us. The instinctive response is to fight back. Sometimes we believe that if we remain silent, we are weak. But spiritual courage often means refusing to allow another person's anger to become our anger. It means remaining rooted when someone else is unstable. It means answering with peace when our emotions are demanding retaliation.

This does not mean that we should tolerate evil or remain silent in the face of injustice. Meekness is not cowardice. A meek person can speak truth, establish boundaries, correct wrongdoing, and defend another person, but does so without hatred consuming the heart. The difference is profound. We can defend what is right without destroying the person who opposes us.

The twenty fourth step therefore asks us to examine what happens inside us when we are wounded.

How quickly do we become offended? How long do we carry resentment? How much energy do we spend remembering what someone said about us? How often do we rehearse conversations in our minds, imagining what we should have said? These hidden battles reveal how much freedom we still need.

The meek heart does not mean that nothing hurts. It means that pain does not become the master of the soul.

There is also a beautiful connection between meekness and humility. Humility allows us to admit that we are not always right. Meekness allows us to remain peaceful when someone else does not recognize that truth. Humility brings us down from the throne of self importance. Meekness keeps us there without resentment.

In parish life, family life, friendships, and even within our closest relationships, this virtue becomes extremely practical. Sometimes holiness means choosing not to have the last word. Sometimes it means listening when we would rather speak. Sometimes it means forgiving without receiving an apology. Sometimes it means allowing another person to misunderstand us

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while trusting God with the truth.

This is difficult because our ego wants immediate justice. Our ego wants recognition.

Our ego wants others to know that we were right. But the spiritual person gradually learns to say, “God knows my heart. God knows what happened. God knows the truth. I do not need to destroy my peace trying to control everyone's understanding of me.”

That is freedom.

The courage of the twenty fourth step is therefore the courage to remain gentle in a world that constantly invites us to become harsh. It is the courage to protect the tenderness of the heart without becoming naive. It is the courage to be strong without becoming aggressive, truthful without becoming cruel, and firm without becoming bitter.

Meekness transforms the way we carry ourselves before God and before one another. It teaches us to become less reactive and more prayerful. Before answering, we breathe. Before judging, we listen. Before retaliating, we pray. Before speaking about someone, we ask whether our words will heal or wound.

The journey up the Ladder is not simply about becoming more religious. It is about becoming more like Christ. The higher we climb, the quieter the ego must become and the more peaceful the heart should become.

The twenty fourth step invites us to discover that true strength does not shout. True strength does not need to dominate. True strength can remain peaceful because it has placed its life into the hands of God.

To take this step today may mean choosing peace when anger feels justified. It may mean forgiving someone who wounded us. It may mean surrendering the need to be understood. It may mean becoming silent long enough for God to speak within us.

Meekness is the courage to let God be our defender, our judge, and our peace.

And when the heart finally learns this freedom, we discover that meekness is not the loss of strength. It is strength purified by love.



A Special Thank You

A very special thank you to **Juan** for his faithful service to our parish, coming to water the plants, opening and closing the church, and helping with the preparation for our church services. Your generosity, reliability, and willingness to serve are truly appreciated.

A sincere thank you also to **John**, who patiently guided Juan and helped him learn and grow in his service to our parish.

And thank you to all our dedicated parishioners who quietly and faithfully serve our church in so many different ways. Your time, love, generosity, and willingness to help are what make our parish a welcoming home.

Every person who walks through our church doors should feel that they are welcomed, valued, and loved. Thank you for helping make that possible through your service and kindness.

May God bless each of you abundantly for all that you do for our parish family.

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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 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
Holy Chrismation of Simeon Anthony

Monday, September 21

"The Holy Apostle Condrotus of Magnesia"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:25-32. Gospel: Luke 3:19-22.

Tuesday, September 22

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope"

Epistle: Ephesians 5:20-26. Gospel: Luke 3:23-4:1.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, September 23

"The Conception of John the Baptist"

Epistle: Galatians 4:22-31. Gospel: Luke 1:5-25.

Thursday, September 24

"The Holy First-Martyr and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thekla"

Epistle: Ephesians 5: 33-6:9. Gospel: Luke 4:16-22.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, September 25

"The Venerable Mother Euphrosyne"

Epistle: Ephesians 6:18-24. Gospel: Luke 4:22-30.

Saturday, September 26

"The Passing of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian"

Epistle: 1 John 4:12-19 Gospel: John 19:25-27; 21:24-25.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, September 27

"18th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Martyr Callistratus and His Wife"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Gospel: Luke 5:1-11.

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.