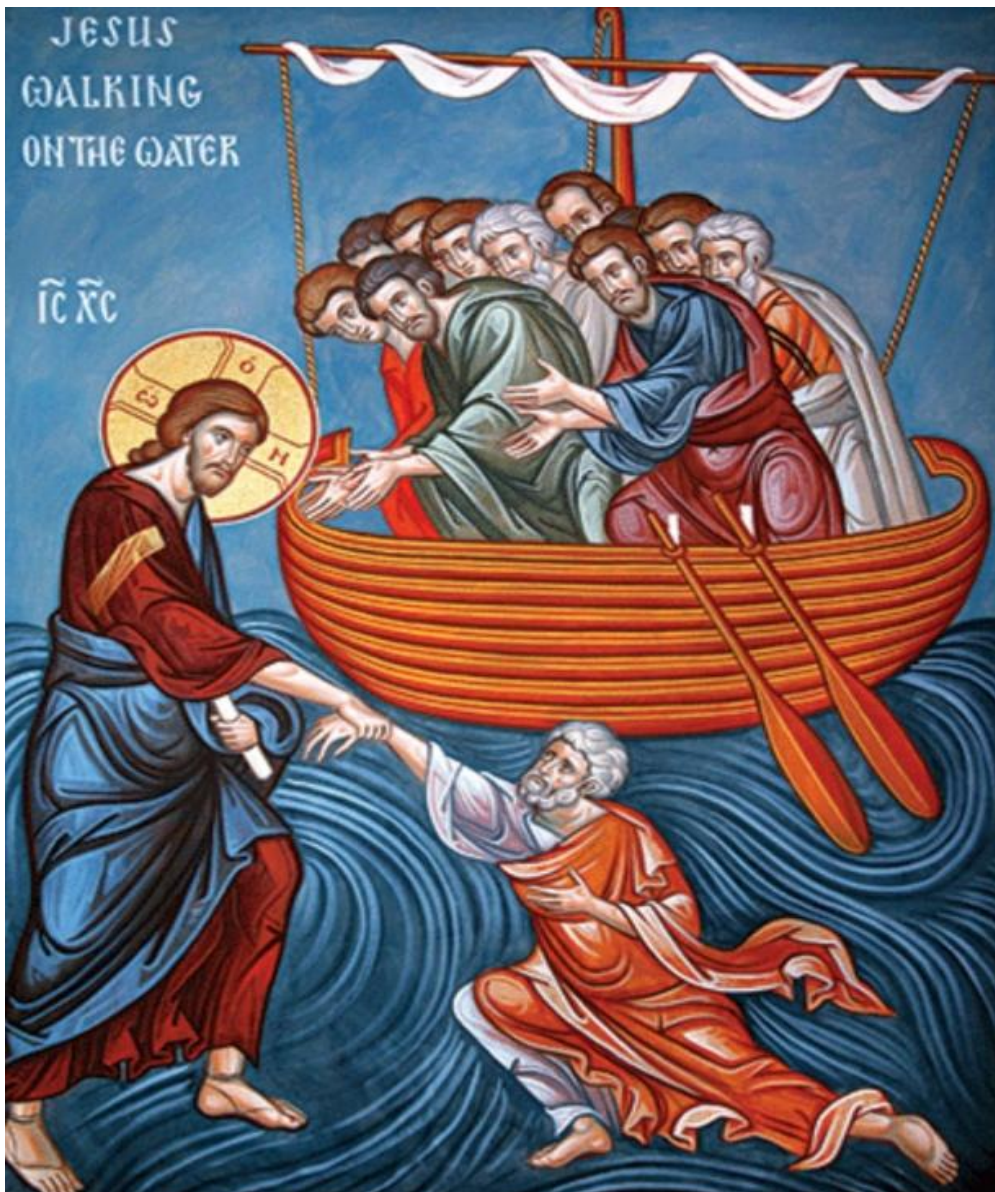


Слава Ісусу Христу!

Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, July 26, 2026

"9th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

Matthew 14:22 through 34 invites us into one of the most profound lessons of the spiritual life. The Gospel is not simply about Jesus walking on water. It is about Christ entering the storms that every disciple must face. We know that faith is not an escape from suffering but a journey through it. The Lord never promised a calm sea. He promised His presence.

The apostles obeyed Christ and entered the boat because He commanded them to do so. Yet obedience did not spare them from fierce winds and rough waves. This is often the first surprise in the spiritual life. Many people believe that if they are faithful, pray every day, attend the Divine Liturgy, receive the Holy Mysteries, and strive to live according to the Gospel, then life should become easier. The Gospel reveals something different. The disciples were in the middle of the storm precisely because they obeyed Jesus. Faithfulness does not remove every trial. Instead, it allows every trial to become an encounter with God.

The darkness of the night also has meaning. Throughout Scripture, darkness often represents uncertainty, fear, loneliness, and waiting. There are moments when God seems silent. We pray, yet the answer does not immediately come. We struggle with illness, family conflicts, financial burdens, grief, or spiritual dryness. We begin to wonder whether Christ has forgotten us. Yet the Gospel reminds us that while the disciples could not see Him, Jesus had never lost sight of them.

Then, during the fourth watch of the night, just before dawn, Jesus came walking upon the sea. He came at the moment when human strength had nearly reached its limit. God often works this way. His timing forms our hearts. If He always acted immediately, we would trust only His gifts and not His presence. Waiting teaches us that faith is built upon who Christ is rather than upon how quickly He solves our problems.

The words of Jesus should echo in our heart. Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid. In the original meaning, Christ reveals Himself with divine authority. He is reminding His disciples that the One standing before them is the eternal Lord. Fear loses its power when we recognize who walks toward us.

Peter's response is both courageous and deeply human. He steps out of the boat because he desires to be with Christ more than he fears the water. As long as his eyes remain fixed upon the Lord, the impossible becomes possible. Yet the moment he begins to measure the strength

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of the wind, he begins to sink.

How often this becomes our own experience. We begin our day with prayer and peace. Then we become overwhelmed by news, disappointments, criticism, anxiety, or temptation. Our attention shifts from Christ to the storm. We start calculating every problem and imagining every possible disaster. Our hearts sink long before our circumstances change.

Peter teaches us another priceless lesson. As he sinks, he does not compose a long prayer. He simply cries, Lord, save me. This short prayer has sustained countless saints. In the Byzantine tradition, the Jesus Prayer carries this same simplicity. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. When fear overwhelms us, complicated words are unnecessary. A humble cry from the heart reaches heaven immediately.

Jesus immediately stretches out His hand. Notice that Christ does not first lecture Peter. He first saves him. Correction comes only after mercy. This reveals the heart of God. His first movement toward every sinner is compassion.

When they enter the boat, the wind ceases. Peace comes not because the disciples become stronger sailors but because Christ is present among them. The deepest peace is never the absence of problems. It is the presence of Jesus.

We are invited to live this Gospel every day. Begin each morning by placing your entire day into Christ's hands. Repeat the Jesus Prayer whenever anxiety appears. Come faithfully to the Divine Liturgy, where Christ again steps into the boat of His Church. Receive the Holy Eucharist with confidence that the same Lord who walked upon the sea now enters your heart. Encourage someone who is struggling instead of judging them. Remember that every person around you is fighting a storm that may remain unseen.

When our eyes remain fixed on Christ, the waves no longer define our lives. The storms may continue, the winds may still blow, but our hearts become anchored in the One who still says to every fearful disciple, Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.



A Thought for the Week

Every day God gives us opportunities to make a difference in someone's life. A smile, a kind word, a listening ear, a sincere apology, or a quiet prayer may seem small, but in God's hands they become acts of love that can change a heart.

This week, ask yourself, "Whom can I encourage today?" You may never know the burdens another person is carrying, but your kindness may become the answer to a prayer they have been silently praying.

As you leave the Divine Liturgy, do not leave Christ behind. Carry His peace in you.

The Spiritual Courage To Learn About Not What Is In Our Wallet, It Is About What Occupies Our Heart!!!!

The sixteenth step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent confronts one of the most subtle idols of the human heart, the love of money, or avarice. Saint John Climacus does not condemn money itself, because money is simply a tool. It can feed the hungry, build churches, educate children, care for the sick, and support countless works of mercy. The danger begins when money ceases to be our servant and quietly becomes our master. The real battle is never about what is in our wallet, it is about what occupies our heart.

This step demands great courage because our society often measures success by possessions, investments, and financial security. We are constantly encouraged to accumulate more, to compare ourselves with others, and to believe that happiness is found in having rather than in being. Without realizing it, we begin to place our trust in bank accounts instead of God's providence. The more we possess, the more we fear losing what we have. Instead of owning our possessions, our possessions begin to own us.

Jesus speaks directly to this struggle when He says, "Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." These words invite every Christian to examine the deepest desires of the soul. Our treasure is not simply what we own. It is whatever occupies our thoughts, consumes our energy, and shapes our decisions. If Christ is our treasure, our hearts gradually become filled with peace. If wealth becomes our treasure, anxiety quietly takes its place.

Saint John Climacus teaches that avarice is rooted in fear. We fear not having enough. We fear tomorrow. We fear becoming vulnerable. We fear depending upon God. The rich fool in the Gospel believed that larger barns would guarantee a secure future, yet that very night his life was demanded of him. His tragedy was not that he was wealthy. His tragedy was that he had prepared for everything except eternity.

The opposite of avarice is not poverty alone. It is trust. A generous heart believes that everything belongs to God. Our health, our talents, our families, our homes, our time, and even our next breath are gifts entrusted to us for a little while. Stewardship replaces ownership. Gratitude replaces entitlement. Freedom replaces fear.

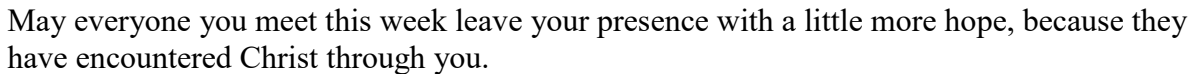
This step speaks powerfully to every vocation. Parents may become so occupied with providing material comforts that they forget their children also hunger for affection, prayer, and time together. Professionals may spend years building successful careers while neglecting their spiritual lives. Retirees may worry endlessly about financial security while overlooking the countless blessings already surrounding them. Even churches can become so concerned with budgets and buildings that they lose sight of the people they exist to serve.

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Saint John reminds us that generosity is one of the greatest signs of spiritual freedom. A generous person gives without calculating every sacrifice. Such generosity is not limited to money. We can be generous with our patience, our forgiveness, our encouragement, our hospitality, our prayers, and our attention. Some people have abundant financial resources but little generosity. Others possess very little, yet enrich countless lives through kindness and compassion. Heaven measures generosity differently than the world.

It is also important to teach the next generation that success is measured not by what we accumulate but by the love we share. Children learn generosity not from sermons but from watching their parents give freely, speak gratefully, and trust God during uncertain times. They remember acts of kindness long after they forget expensive gifts.

When our greatest treasure is found in the Kingdom of God, no economic uncertainty, no earthly loss, and no passing success can steal our peace. The generous heart already possesses the only wealth that will endure forever, the inexhaustible love of God, shared freely with others and stored safely in heaven, where neither rust nor time can ever diminish its value.



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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, July 26

"9th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Hermolaus and Those with Him"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17. Gospel: Matthew 14:22-34.

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

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends
God's blessings and good health for **Michele Tabasso** from the parish

Monday, July 27

"The Holy Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon"

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10. Gospel: John 15:17-16:2.

Tuesday, July 28

"The Holy Apostles and Deacons Prochor, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:29-38. Gospel: Matthew 21:23-27.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, July 29

"The Holy Martyr Callinicus"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:4-12. Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32.

Thursday, July 30

"The Holy Apostles Silas, Silvanus and Those with Them"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:1-6. Gospel: Matthew 21:43-46

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, July 31

"The Holy and Just Eudocimus"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:12-20. Gospel: Matthew 22:23-33.

Saturday, August 1

"The Procession of the Holy Relics of the Cross of the Lord"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. Gospel: John 19:6-11; 13-21; 25-27; 30-35.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, August 2

"10th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Transfer of the Relics of the First-martyr and Archdeacon Stephen"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16. Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23.

8:50 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends
God's blessings & good health for **Mila Eva Tabak**.

Holy Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion of Mila Eva Tabak.