Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory for ever!

Reflections for this Week!!!

There are moments in the human journey when a person can feel so overwhelmed by darkness that even the possibility of freedom seems distant. We may continue our daily routines, speak with others, fulfill our responsibilities, and appear perfectly ordinary, while deep within us there are wounds, fears, memories, resentments, and spiritual struggles that imprison the heart. The Gospel of Luke 8:26–39 brings us face to face with a man whose suffering has become so profound that he no longer recognizes himself. Yet, into this place of abandonment and darkness, Christ deliberately comes. This encounter reveals something essential about the heart of God: there is no place so broken, no soul so wounded, and no darkness so deep that Christ cannot enter.

The possessed man lives among the tombs, separated from his community, stripped of his dignity, and unable to control his own life. The tombs become the symbol of an existence without hope, a life surrounded by death rather than filled with life. He is physically alive, but his humanity has been imprisoned. His condition reminds us that spiritual bondage does not always appear in dramatic or visible ways. Sometimes we become prisoners of our pride, anger, jealousy, unforgiveness, addictions, fears, and destructive habits. We may live among others while remaining isolated within ourselves. We may speak about love while carrying hatred, profess faith while surrendering to despair, and receive the Holy Mysteries while refusing to allow God's grace to transform our hearts.

But notice something extraordinary: Jesus does not avoid this man. He crosses the sea and enters a territory that others might consider unclean, dangerous, or undesirable. Christ goes where human beings are afraid to go. He approaches the suffering that society has abandoned. This is the movement of divine mercy. God does not wait for us to become worthy before approaching us. He comes precisely because we are wounded. He does not turn away from our brokenness but enters it to restore what has been lost. The Incarnation itself reveals this divine movement: the eternal Son of God enters our human condition to rescue us from sin and death.

When Jesus asks, "What is your name?" the response reveals a multitude. The man has lost his personal identity beneath the forces that dominate him. This question invites us to examine our own hearts. What has become our name? Is it anger? Is it resentment? Is it the pain someone caused us years ago? Is it the failure we cannot forgive ourselves for? Is it the fear that prevents us from trusting God? None of these things defines who we truly are.

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Our deepest identity is not found in our wounds, failures, or sins, but in the fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God and called to become children of His Kingdom. Sin distorts that image, but Christ comes to restore it.

The healing of this man is more than an extraordinary miracle. It is a revelation of the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness. In the spiritual vision of our tradition, Christ is the Physician of our souls and bodies, the One who restores humanity to communion with God. His authority is not merely the power to command evil spirits; it is the divine power to give life where death has taken hold. The man who was once naked, tormented, and isolated is now found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. What a beautiful image of salvation! He has recovered his dignity, his peace, and his capacity to enter into communion.

Yet, surprisingly, the people who witness this miracle ask Jesus to leave. They see the restored man, but they are more concerned about their material losses and the disruption of their familiar world. Their reaction reveals a frightening spiritual possibility: sometimes we prefer the security of our possessions, habits, and comfort to the transforming presence of God. We may want Christ to bless our lives, but not necessarily to change them. We welcome His mercy, but resist His demands. We want healing without conversion, peace without repentance, and resurrection without the Cross.

The final instruction Jesus gives the healed man is equally profound: "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." He is not told to remain among the crowds or escape from ordinary life. He is sent back to the very place where his suffering was known. His restored life becomes his testimony. His mission begins at home.

This is also our calling. We do not encounter Christ merely to receive comfort for ourselves. We encounter Him so that our lives may become witnesses to His mercy. Our families, workplaces, communities, and parish must experience something of the healing presence of Christ through us. A person who has received forgiveness must learn to forgive. A person who has received mercy must become merciful. A person who has encountered divine love must not continue living as though hatred has the final word.

Perhaps the deepest question of this Gospel is not whether Christ has the power to liberate us. He does. The question is whether we are willing to surrender to His healing presence. Let us stop building tombs around our hearts and making peace with the darkness that enslaves us. Let us sit at the feet of Christ, allow His grace to restore our dignity, and discover again who we are in Him.

For Christ does not come into our lives simply to make our burdens easier to carry. He comes to set us free, to restore the image of God within us, and to lead us from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious light of His Resurrection. And once we have experienced that freedom, our lives should become a living proclamation of one beautiful truth: What Christ has healed, darkness cannot claim as its own.

The Courage to Conquering the Fear of Death

There are few fears as deeply rooted in the human heart as the fear of death. It is a fear that reminds us of our fragility, our limitations, and the mystery of our earthly existence. Yet, in the spiritual journey described by Saint John Climacus in the Ladder of Divine Ascent, the twenty-ninth step invites us to contemplate death with spiritual wisdom and to discover the courage to live in the light of eternity. For the Christian, the courage to face death is inseparable from the courage to live faithfully, knowing that our life is ultimately held in the hands of God.

To climb this step requires us to look honestly at our lives. We often behave as though our earthly existence will continue indefinitely. We postpone forgiveness, delay repentance, neglect prayer, and convince ourselves that there will always be another opportunity to become better. We become attached to possessions, recognition, personal achievements, and our own plans, as though these things could provide lasting security. But the wisdom of the spiritual fathers invites us to remember that our time is a gift, not a possession. Every day is an invitation to return to God, reconcile with our neighbor, and prepare our hearts for eternity.

The courage spoken of here is not a fascination with death or a rejection of life. It is the courage to live without allowing the fear of death to govern our decisions. It is the freedom that comes when we understand that our existence is sustained by a loving God. The person who remembers eternity begins to see earthly life differently. Small arguments lose their importance. Pride becomes less attractive. The desire to prove ourselves right becomes less necessary. We begin to recognize how precious every encounter, every act of kindness, and every opportunity to love truly is.

Our Lord Jesus Christ entered death Himself, not because death had power over Him, but because He came to destroy its dominion over humanity. On the Cross, He entered the deepest darkness of our human condition, and through His Resurrection, He opened the way to eternal life. This is the foundation of Christian courage. We do not face death with confidence in our own strength, but with trust in the One who has conquered it. The empty tomb becomes the answer to our deepest fear and the source of our hope. In our tradition, the Resurrection is not simply a comforting idea; it is the victory of Christ that transforms the destiny of humanity.

The spiritual courage of this step also challenges us to die before we physically die. We must have the courage to die to our pride, selfishness, resentment, and the passions that keep us separated from God. Sometimes the most difficult death is not the surrender of our physical life, but the surrender of our own will. It is difficult to forgive someone who has wounded us deeply. It is difficult to admit that we are wrong. It is difficult to abandon a habit that gives us temporary satisfaction but slowly destroys our spiritual freedom. Yet every sincere act of repentance becomes a small resurrection within us. Every time we choose humility over pride,

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mercy over judgment, and love over hatred, we take another step toward the life of the Kingdom.

Saint John Climacus reminds us through the spiritual wisdom of the Ladder that our journey toward God demands vigilance, humility, and perseverance. We cannot climb toward divine life while clinging desperately to everything that belongs to this passing world. The heart must gradually become free, not by rejecting God's creation, but by learning to love everything in its proper place and placing God above all things. The remembrance of death, properly understood, does not make us despair; it awakens us to the sacred responsibility of living well.

Perhaps the most touching expression of this courage is found in the way we treat one another. When we remember that life is fragile and that every person carries an eternal dignity, we become more patient, compassionate, and generous. We stop wasting precious days holding grudges. We learn to say, "I forgive you," "I am sorry," and "I love you" without waiting for a perfect moment. We understand that holiness is not something we postpone until tomorrow; it is something we practice today.

To climb the twenty-ninth step is to discover that the fear of death can be transformed through faith into hope, and that the uncertainty of tomorrow can lead us into a deeper trust in God today. The Christian does not approach the grave as someone abandoned by hope, but as someone who awaits the fullness of life promised by Christ.

Let us therefore have the courage to live each day with eternity in our hearts. Let us forgive while we still have the opportunity, love while we still have the strength, repent while grace is calling, and remain faithful even when the journey becomes difficult. For the greatest tragedy is not simply that our earthly life will one day end, but that we might pass through it without ever learning how to love God and one another.

The courage of the twenty-ninth step is the courage to live with eternity in our hearts, to die to everything that separates us from God, and to entrust our final breath to the One who has promised us eternal life.

Commemoration of the 93rd Anniversary of the Holodomor

With prayerful remembrance and reverence, we invite everyone to join us on Saturday, November 21, at 9:30 a.m., as we commemorate the 93rd anniversary of the Holodomor, the horrific genocide by starvation inflicted upon the Ukrainian people in 1932–1933 by the Soviet regime.

We will celebrate the Divine Liturgy followed by a Panakhyda (Memorial Service), praying for the eternal repose of the millions of innocent victims who perished during this terrible tragedy.

As we remember those who suffered and lost their lives, let us also pray for Ukraine and its people, who continue to endure suffering and hardship. May their memory remain forever in our hearts, and may the Lord grant eternal rest to all the innocent victims.

Вічная пам'ять! Eternal Memory!

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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, November 1
"23rd Sunday after Pentecost"
Epistle: Ephesian 2:4-10 **Gospel:** Luke 8:26-39
9:00 a.m. The Third Hour
9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends
In loving memory of **+John Christopher Patrick** from Dr. Laurel

Monday, November 2
"The Holy Martyrs Acindynus and Others"
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 2:20-3:8. **Gospel:** Luke 11:29-33.

Tuesday, November 3
"The Holy Martyrs Acepsimas"
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13.**Gospel:** Luke 11:34-41.
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, November 4
"Our Venerable Father Joannicius"
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. **Gospel:**Luke 11:42-46.

Thursday, November 5
"The Holy Martyrs Galaction and Epistemis"
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8. **Gospel:** Luke 11:47-12:1.
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, November 6
"Our Holy Father Paul, Archbishop of Constantinople"
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-13; 24-28. **Gospel:** Luke 12:2-12.

Saturday, November 7
"The 33 Holy Martyrs of Militene"
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:1-6. **Gospel:** Luke 9:1-6.
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, November 8
"24th Sunday after Pentecost"
Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22. **Gospel:** Luke 8:41-56.
9:00 a.m. The Third Hour
9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends
God's blessings and good health for **Rebecca Morrissey** from the parish

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.