

УСПЕННЯ ПРЕСВЯТОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, March 29, 2026

“Palm Sunday”

Reflections for this Weekend

In the Gospel of John 12:1–18, we are invited into a series of moments that reveal the heart of discipleship moments filled with love, tension, misunderstanding, and ultimately, glory. It begins in the quiet intimacy of a home in Bethany, where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with costly perfume and wipes them with her hair. This gesture is extravagant, deeply personal, and profoundly humble. It is an act that goes beyond duty; it is love poured out without calculation.

Mary teaches us something essential about our relationship with Christ: true love does not measure the cost. In a world that often urges us to be practical, efficient, and restrained, her example challenges us to give freely our time, our attention, our devotion. How often do we hold back from God, offering only what is convenient? Mary reminds us that holiness begins when we stop counting and start loving.

Judas, however, responds differently. He questions the waste, cloaking his criticism in concern for the poor. Yet the Gospel reveals that his words do not arise from compassion but from a divided heart. This contrast between Mary and Judas is not merely about generosity versus greed; it is about authenticity versus pretense. One gives out of love; the other speaks out of self-interest. This gospel invites us to examine our own motives. Do we serve God with sincerity, or do we sometimes hide behind good words while our hearts remain distant?

Jesus defends Mary, affirming the beauty of her act and connecting it to His coming burial. In doing so, He reveals that love always prepares the way for sacrifice. Mary’s anointing becomes a quiet proclamation of the cross. She may not fully understand what is to come, but her love places her in harmony with God’s unfolding plan. There is a deep lesson here: when we love Christ sincerely, even our small acts can participate in something far greater than we see.

The scene then shifts dramatically as Jesus enters Jerusalem. The crowds gather, waving palm branches and shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” It is a moment of joy and recognition. Yet, even here, there is a subtle tension. The people welcome Jesus as a king, but many do not yet understand the kind of kingship He brings. He comes not with power as the world defines it, but in humility, riding on a donkey.

This image speaks powerfully to our own expectations. We often look for God in strength,

(continue to page 2)

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success, and visible triumph. But Christ reveals that true victory is found in humility, obedience, and self-giving love. His kingdom is not built by force but by sacrifice. To follow Him means to embrace this same path to choose humility when pride is easier, to serve when we would rather be served, to love when it costs us something.

The crowds rejoice, yet their understanding is incomplete. Later, many of these same voices will fall silent or turn away. This reminds us how easily faith can become superficial, driven by emotion or circumstance rather than rooted in a deep and abiding relationship with Christ. The Gospel calls us beyond fleeting enthusiasm into steadfast commitment.

At its heart, this passage invites us to become like Mary attentive, loving, and unafraid to give ourselves fully. It calls us to welcome Christ not only with words of praise but with lives transformed by His presence. It challenges us to recognize Him as He truly is: a King who reigns through love, a Savior who conquers through the cross.

If we allow this Gospel to take root in us, it will change the way we live. We will begin to see every act of kindness, every sacrifice, every moment of prayer as an offering poured out before the Lord. And like the fragrance that filled the house in Bethany, our lives too will bear witness, quietly but powerfully, to the beauty of a heart given completely to Christ.



From the Pastor's desk!!

As we approach the sacred days of Holy Week, our hearts are gently invited to draw closer to the mystery of God's love, a love so deep that it held nothing back, a love revealed in the sacrifice of Jesus for each one of us.

In the midst of our busy lives, it can be easy to let these holy days pass quietly. But Holy Week is not just another time on the calendar; it is the very center of our faith. It is the story of love poured out, of mercy extended, of hope rising even in the face of suffering. When we pause to truly reflect on what Jesus endured for us, His humility, His pain, His unwavering love, we begin to realize that no effort we make to be present with Him could ever be too great.

We warmly invite you, with open hearts, to make a special effort this year to join us for our Holy Week celebrations. Come as you are, with your joys, your burdens, your questions, and your hopes. There is a place for you here. Together, as one community of faith, we will walk the journey of Jesus, from His triumphant entry, through His passion, to the glory of His resurrection.

There is something profoundly beautiful about gathering in prayer as a family of believers. In those moments, we are reminded that we are not alone. Our voices rise together, our hearts beat as one, and our faith is strengthened in ways that cannot be experienced in isolation. Through our shared prayers, we glorify the Father and open ourselves more fully to His grace.

Let us not forget: while we invite you to come and pray with us, we are already praying for you. Each parishioner, each family, each loved one is held in our prayers with care and love. We lift up your needs, your struggles, and your intentions, trusting that God sees you,

“The courage to follow Jesus”

There comes a quiet moment in every sincere soul’s journey when the noise of the world begins to lose its authority. The slogans, the arguments, the endless pull to take sides, these things once felt urgent, even necessary. But then, like a whisper beneath the chaos, another voice calls. It does not shout. It does not compete. It simply invites: *“Follow Me.”*

To follow Jesus is an act of profound courage, far deeper than choosing a side in any human debate. It requires stepping away from the safety of belonging to a crowd and entering the unknown terrain of surrender. Political parties offer identity. Ideologies offer certainty. Human reasoning offers the comfort of control. But Jesus offers something altogether different: transformation.

And transformation is costly.

It asks us to release the need to always be right. It challenges our deepest attachments, not just to what we believe, but to who we think we are. To follow Him is to admit that no system, no philosophy, no leader crafted by human hands can fully contain truth. It is to trust that truth is not an idea to defend, but a Person to know.

This is where courage is born.

Because following Jesus will often place you at odds with the world around you, not just one side of it, but all sides. You may find that He affirms what is good in places you were taught to reject, and confronts what is broken in places you were taught to defend. He refuses to be claimed by any camp, reduced to any agenda, or wielded as a tool for human power. And so, if you truly follow Him, you will not fit neatly anywhere.

That can feel lonely.

But there is a sacred beauty in that loneliness. It is the space where your faith becomes real, not inherited, not performed, but chosen. It is where you begin to love not because it is easy or rewarded, but because He first loved you. It is where obedience stops being about external approval and becomes an intimate response to a living presence within you.

The courage to follow Jesus is not loud or aggressive. It does not need to prove itself in arguments or win every debate. Instead, it is steady and unshakable. It looks like forgiveness when bitterness would be justified. It looks like humility when pride would be applauded. It looks like compassion when judgment would be easier.

This courage reshapes how you see others. No longer are people simply allies or opponents, right or wrong, worthy or unworthy. They become souls, deeply loved, deeply broken, and deeply in need of grace, just like you. And in that realization, the walls built by ideology begin to crumble.

You start to see that the Kingdom Jesus spoke of does not rise or fall with elections, trends, or cultural movements. It is not threatened by disagreement, nor strengthened by dominance. It

(continue to page 4)

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grows quietly, like a seed in the soil of the human heart, wherever someone chooses love over fear, truth over convenience, and surrender over control.

To follow Him, then, is to live with open hands. It is to let go of the illusion that aligning with the “right” group will save you or define you. It is to root your identity in something eternal, something unchanging, something far greater than the shifting tides of human thought.

And yes, it will cost you. It may cost you approval, comfort, even relationships. But what you gain is beyond measure: a life anchored in truth, a heart aligned with divine love, and a peace that no earthly power can give or take away.

So when the voices around you grow louder, urging you to choose sides, remember the quieter call. The one that does not demand allegiance to a system, but invites you into a relationship.

It is there, in that sacred invitation, that true courage is found.



You are warmly and joyfully invited to celebrate the beauty and hope of Easter
with our parish family!

On April 5, following the Resurrection Divine Liturgy, we will gather together for a **Potluck Easter Community Breakfast**, a time to rejoice in the Risen Christ, to share in fellowship, and to experience the warmth of our community united in faith and love.

We invite you to bring your family, your friends, and a dish to share. Most of all, bring your joyful heart as we celebrate this beautiful feast of the Resurrection together.

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.

Palm Sunday gently opens the door to Holy Week, inviting us to remember Jesus’ humble and triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The crowds welcomed Him with branches in their hands and hope in their hearts, yet His path would soon lead to the cross a powerful reminder of love that gives itself completely.

As you take home the blessed pussy willow, let it be more than a simple decoration. Place it somewhere meaningful, where it can quietly call you to remember Jesus each day. It is a sign of His presence in your life, a reminder of His journey, and an invitation for you to welcome Him into your heart again and again.

May this small branch become a living symbol of faith in your home one that inspires prayer, gratitude, and a deeper awareness of the love that entered Jerusalem, and continues to enter our lives today.

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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, March 29

“Palm Sunday”

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9. **Gospel:** John 12:1-18.

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, March 30

“Holy Monday”

Reading: Exodus 1:1-20; **Reading:** Job 1:1-12 **Gospel:** Matthew 24:3-35

6:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Tuesday, March 31

“Holy Tuesday”

Reading: Exodus 2:5-10; **Reading:** Job 1:13-22 **Gospel:** Matthew 24:36-26:2

6:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Wednesday, April 1

“Holy Wednesday”

Reading: Exodus 2:5-10; **Reading:** Job 1:13-22 **Gospel:** Matthew 26:6-16

6:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Thursday, April 2

“Holy Thursday”

Reading: Isaiah 50:4-11; 1 **Epistle:** Corinthians 11:23-32 **Gospel:** Matthew 26:2-20; John 13:3-17; Matthew 26:31-39 Luke 22:43-45; Matthew 26:40-27:2

6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil with Vespers

Friday, April 3

“Good Friday”

Reading: Isaiah 52:13—54:1; **Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2 **Gospel:** Matthew 27:1-38; Luke 23:39-44;

Matthew 27:39-54 John 19:31-37; Matthew 27:55-61

9:00 a.m. Service of the Twelve Passion Gospels

5:00 p.m. Solemn Vespers & Placing of Holy Shroud (Plashchanytsia)

Saturday, April 4

“Holy Saturday”

Epistle: Romans 6:3-11 **Gospel:** Matthew 28:1-20

5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil with Vespers

Sunday, April 5

“Resurrection of our Lord” “Easter Sunday”

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 **Gospel:** John 1:1-17

7:00 a.m. Prayers in front of the Holy Shroud.

Procession around the church — Resurrection Matins

Note: Today the priest blesses Paschal foods following the Liturgy
And following by the Potluck Easter Community Breakfast