

### Reflections for this Weekend

As Jesus enters a village, ten lepers cry out for mercy, seeking healing from a disease that isolates them and threatens their very lives. Their cry is a cry of desperation, a reaching out toward the One who alone can restore them. Christ hears them and responds with compassion, instructing them to show themselves to the priests. On the way, their bodies are made whole. The healing comes as they journey, not solely as a result of ritual or human effort, but through obedience and trust in the Word of Christ. In Eastern spirituality, this reminds us that God’s grace often works in the movement of our lives, in our acts of faith, and in our willingness to follow Him, even when the path is uncertain. Healing unfolds in the journey itself, not only in the moment of relief.

Yet only one returns, glorifying God with a loud voice, falling at the feet of Jesus to give thanks. Christ notes the absence of the others, highlighting the deep lesson of gratitude. Healing is a gift freely given, but recognition and thanksgiving open the soul to the fullness of God’s presence. The leper who returns embodies the heart of prayerful attentiveness, the soul awake to the gift that has been received. In Eastern spirituality, thanksgiving is not a mere courtesy; it is a spiritual posture that transforms every blessing into a participation in God’s life. It makes visible the invisible reality of grace dwelling in the heart.

Jesus’ response to the one who returned is profound: not only is his body restored, but his soul is made whole, his faith confirmed. The physical healing is extended into spiritual wholeness because gratitude awakens the heart to God’s intimate presence. The others received relief, yet their failure to return illustrates how easily human hearts can receive gifts without recognizing the Source. In the Christian life, health, strength, and success are transient if they do not lead the soul to deeper communion with God. True restoration always includes a spiritual awakening, a turning toward the Lord in reverent acknowledgment.

This passage challenges the believer to cultivate attentiveness and gratitude in daily life. How often do we pass through moments of grace, spiritual insight, or mercy without pausing to give thanks? How often do we focus on our relief, our comfort, or our achievements, and forget the hand of God that sustains all things? Eastern spirituality calls us to a continuous offering of the heart, to recognize God’s presence in every encounter, every moment of blessing, and every hidden act of grace.

May we, like the one leper, return to Christ with hearts overflowing with thanksgiving. May we cultivate awareness of His gifts in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. May our souls be healed not only in body or circumstance, but in faith, love, and gratitude, so that every blessing draws us deeper into the abiding presence of God.



Celebrating Ukrainian Heritage

January 10<sup>th</sup> 2026



**PLEASE  
JOIN US!**

Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church  
INVITES YOU to the FIRST UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL.  
Enjoy Ukrainian Performances, Arts & Crafts, Vendors,  
Music, and more!

Location: 3720 W Maryland Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85019

**[www.arizonaukrainianfest.com](http://www.arizonaukrainianfest.com)**

## The courage to thank God each day.

Every morning, when we open our eyes to the newness of the day, we are met with a profound invitation. It is not merely the sun's light that beckons us, nor the world's endless rhythm that calls us to action. It is the quiet, yet insistent whisper of grace the invitation to remember, to recognize, and to give thanks. This is where true courage begins: the courage to thank God each day.

To give thanks requires a kind of spiritual bravery. It asks us to let go of the illusion that we control our lives, that we hold the reins of our destiny. To give thanks is to stand humbly before the mystery of existence, acknowledging that we are part of a grand, unseen design. It is a willingness to surrender to the flow of grace, even when that flow feels turbulent or unclear. In moments of peace, we thank God for His presence; in moments of trial, we thank Him for His sustaining strength. Gratitude is not bound by the conditions of our circumstances but anchored in the understanding that every moment, every breath, is a gift whether it feels like one or not.

In the Christian tradition, this daily act of thanksgiving is not simply a religious duty; it is the recognition that our lives are continually held in the mercy of God. The very breath we take is not our own, but a gift from the Creator. To say "thank you" is to acknowledge that we are never truly alone, never abandoned, even when the world around us seems distant or harsh. There is a deep, unshakable comfort in knowing that we are carried in the hands of a loving God, regardless of what we face.

But from the Eastern contemplative perspective, gratitude is not just a mental or emotional act. It is a profound state of being an awareness that everything, from the smallest to the largest, is suffused with the sacred. The Eastern traditions speak of mindfulness, of living fully present in each moment. In gratitude, we are trained to return to the present moment, to see the Divine in the simple and the ordinary. The very air we breathe, the water we drink, the earth beneath our feet they are not just "things" but expressions of the Divine in tangible form. To live in gratitude is to awaken to the sacredness of life itself, to embrace each moment as an offering of the Divine to us.

To thank God daily is, therefore, a practice of awakening. It is an invitation to live consciously, to open our eyes to the blessings that are always around us, even when our hearts are heavy. In a world that often feels dark or uncertain, gratitude becomes a counterpoint to the noise of fear, desire, and distraction. It invites us to see with spiritual clarity, to recognize that even in suffering, there is grace at work. To thank God is to align ourselves with this grace, to trust that all things, in the end, will work together for good.

There is a deep wisdom in the Eastern understanding that courage is not about conquering the

(continue on page 4)

(continue from page 3)

world, but about surrendering to its flow with full awareness and open-heartedness. True courage is found in the willingness to be vulnerable, to face life's uncertainties, to hold our own suffering with compassion, and to meet joy with humility. Gratitude, in this sense, is an act of courage because it requires us to face life as it is not as we wish it to be but to embrace it fully, with all its beauty and brokenness. It takes courage to thank God in moments of pain, to find the blessings in the most unexpected places, to trust that every experience, however difficult, is part of a larger, more loving plan.

Every time we give thanks, we soften the ego. We let go of our need for control, and we open ourselves to the deeper reality that we are part of something much greater than ourselves.

Gratitude teaches us that we do not live in isolation; we are held, sustained, and surrounded by a love that transcends our understanding. It is this love that enables us to face life's challenges with resilience, to rise above adversity with a spirit of grace. It is this love that transforms us, day by day, into beings of compassion, kindness, and understanding.

So, when we rise each morning and offer our simple prayer "Thank You, God" we are not simply acknowledging the good things in our lives. We are acknowledging that *all* things are held in divine hands, and that everything, even suffering, is an invitation to grow in love.

We thank God not because life is perfect or easy, but because life is sacred. We thank Him not because we understand everything, but because we trust that His wisdom and love are far deeper than we can fathom.

In a world that often feels divided, where our hearts are pulled in many directions, gratitude becomes the bridge that connects us to the Divine, to one another, and to the very pulse of life itself. It teaches us to be present, to recognize the sacred in the mundane, to understand that God is in everything *in every moment, in every breath, in every encounter*. Gratitude, then, is not just a practice; it is a way of being. It is a path of awakening, of seeing with new eyes, of living fully in the present moment, with reverence and deep love for the life we have been given.

In this daily act of thanksgiving, we discover that we are never separate from God. We are not isolated beings struggling to make sense of the world. We are children of the Divine, woven into the fabric of existence, held in the eternal love of the Creator. And as we give thanks, we are reminded again and again that we are part of a much larger story a story that is unfolding with infinite grace, one moment at a time.



### **A Note of Gratitude**

**With heartfelt appreciation, I extend a sincere thank you to all who continue to offer financial support to our church.**

**May the Lord, who sees the goodness of every giving heart, grant you abundant blessings.**

DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
UKRAINIAN FUNDRAISER

# SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

## Agenda:

Registration will begin at 8:00am

Safety Briefing 8:30am

Shoot Begins 9am

Lunch & Prizes immediately following

## WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- ✓ Lunch
- ✓ Ammunition & Shotgun
- ✓ Safety Review
- ✓ Raffle prizes!

**DEC. 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**

[www.ukrainianchurch.org/sportingclayshoot](http://www.ukrainianchurch.org/sportingclayshoot)

## REGISTRATION:

- ✓ Individual Shooter \$200
- ✓ 4 Person Team \$800

## SPONSORSHIP:

- ✓ Exclusive Title Sponsor \$2000 (squad included, exclusive signage)
- ✓ Station Sponsor \$300
- ✓ Awards Sponsor \$400
- ✓ Door Prize Sponsor \$500
- ✓ Shell Sponsor \$600
- ✓ Lunch Sponsor \$700

**SQUADS OF 4 COMPETING FOR TOP INDIVIDUAL AND  
TEAM PRIZES**

## LOCATION

Rio Salado Sportsman's Club  
3960 N Usery Pass Rd., Mesa, AZ 85207



# *Ukrainian Christmas Pysanky Workshop*

Join us for our beginner-friendly Ukrainian Pysanky (Egg Decorating) workshop where you will learn about the basic techniques, materials, colors, and designs of this ancient Eastern European art of egg decorating! After creating your beautiful Pysanky, we will turn it into a Christmas ornament! All supplies will be provided.

#### DATE & TIME

**20 DEC 2025**  
FROM 10 AM - 1 PM

#### LOCATION

DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD  
CHURCH  
3720 W MARYLAND AVE.  
PHOENIX, AZ 85019

#### ENTRY FEE

**\$35**  
PER PERSON

FOR REGISTRATION & INFORMATION



[HTTPS://UKRAINIANCHRISTMASPYSANKY.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://ukrainianchristmaspysanky.eventbrite.com)

**Ukrainian Catholic Parish****Pastor****Very Rev. Hugo Soutus****Address:****3720 West Maryland Ave.****Phoenix, AZ. 85019****Rectory: (602) 973-3667****Parish: (602) 347-9267****Emergency:****602-329-3281****E-mail:****DMofGod@cox.net****Website:****[www.Ukrainianchurch.org](http://www.Ukrainianchurch.org)****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, December 7****“26<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost”****“Our Holy Father Ambrose”****Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19    Gospel: Luke 17:12-19****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****Gods blessings & good health for **Anna Dworskij** from the parish****Monday, December 8****“Our Venerable Father Patapius”****Epistle: 1 Timothy 5:1-10    Gospel: Luke 6:17-23****6:00 p.m. God's blessings & good health for **John & Marlene Oram** from the parish****Tuesday, December 9****“The Conception of Saint Anna”****Epistle: Galatians 4:22-31.    Gospel: Luke 8:16-21.****6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom****Wednesday, December 10****“The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes and Eusebius”****Epistle: 1 Timothy 5:22-6:11    Gospel: Luke 21:5-7; 10-11; 20-24****Thursday, December 11****“Our Venerable Father Daniel the Styliste”****Epistle: 1 Timothy 6:17-21    Gospel: Luke 21:28-33****6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom****Friday, December 12****“Our Venerable Father Spiridon the Wonderworker”****Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 8-18    Gospel: Luke 21:37-22:8****Saturday, December 13****“The Holy Martyrs Eustratios and others with him”****Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17.    Gospel: Luke 21:12-19****6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom****Sunday, December 14****“Sunday of the Forefathers”****“The Holy Martyrs Thyrus, Leucius****Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11.    Gospel: Luke 14:16-24.****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****In loving memory of **+Bill Nagle** from Dr. Laurel Retay-Nagle**