Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory for ever!

Reflections for this Week!!!

The Gospel of Luke 8:41–56 reveals one of the most beautiful and profound mysteries of our faith: Christ enters the places where human strength ends, where fear overwhelms hope, where suffering seems endless, and where death itself appears to have spoken the final word. Yet, in the presence of Christ, no suffering is forgotten, no wounded heart is abandoned, and no grave has the authority to pronounce the last sentence.

The Gospel brings before us two people whose lives are marked by suffering. Jairus, a respected leader of the synagogue, falls at the feet of Jesus and begs Him to come to his dying daughter. At the same time, a woman who has suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years approaches Jesus quietly from behind, hoping only to touch the fringe of His garment.
One man comes publicly, desperate for his child. One woman comes secretly, carrying years of pain, disappointment, and isolation. Their circumstances are different, but their hearts share one thing: they have reached the end of their own strength and have turned toward Christ.

There is something deeply moving about the woman who touches the garment of Jesus. For twelve years, she has suffered physically, emotionally, and socially. She has spent her resources seeking healing, yet her condition has only worsened. Perhaps the greatest wound was not simply the illness itself, but the loneliness of living with a suffering that others could not understand. Yet she refuses to surrender her hope. She believes that even touching the garment of Christ can change her life.

And it does.

Jesus stops and asks, "Who touched me?" He knows perfectly well who has touched Him, but He wants the woman to come forward, not because He needs to discover her identity, but because He desires to restore her completely. He does not want her to receive healing and remain hidden in shame. He wants her to stand before Him as a beloved daughter. He tells her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Notice how tenderly Christ addresses her: Daughter. After twelve years of suffering, she receives more than physical healing. She receives her dignity, her belonging, and her identity as a child of God. This is the healing Christ desires for every human soul. He does not merely repair what is broken in our bodies; He restores what suffering, sin, fear, and rejection have wounded within us.

Meanwhile, Jairus receives the devastating news that his daughter has died. Human hope seems to collapse. Yet Jesus turns to him and speaks words that every Christian heart must learn to carry: "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

(continue to page 3)

(continue from page 2)

These words are not a promise that we will never experience sorrow, illness, disappointment, or loss. They are an invitation to trust that Christ remains present even when our circumstances appear hopeless. Faith does not mean that we understand everything God permits. Faith means that we continue walking with Him even when we cannot see the road ahead.

When Jesus enters the house, He takes the little girl's hand and says, "Child, arise!" What a powerful revelation of divine tenderness! The hands that created the universe now gently take the hand of a child. The Lord of life approaches death without fear, because death cannot overcome the One who is Life itself.

In our Byzantine tradition, we proclaim that Christ is the conqueror of death, not merely because He restores this little girl to earthly life, but because His own Resurrection will destroy the dominion of death forever. Every healing miracle points toward the greater mystery of Pascha, when the tomb becomes the doorway to eternal life.

Perhaps today we recognize ourselves in one of these two figures. Sometimes we are like the woman, quietly carrying wounds that nobody sees, exhausted by struggles that seem to have no end. Sometimes we are like Jairus, watching someone we love suffer, desperately praying for an answer that seems delayed. And sometimes we stand in that house, surrounded by circumstances that appear beyond repair.

The Gospel reminds us that Christ is never indifferent to our tears. His apparent delay is not abandonment, and His silence is not the absence of His love. He knows the pain we cannot explain, the prayers we cannot formulate, and the burdens we have carried for years.

Let us therefore approach Him with the faith of the woman and the perseverance of Jairus. Let us touch Him through prayer, the Holy Eucharist, confession, and a life surrendered to His mercy. Let us never allow despair to become stronger than our trust in Him.

For the deepest message of this Gospel is not simply that Jesus can heal the sick and raise the dead. It is that He comes personally into our suffering, takes our wounded humanity into His hands, and calls us into life. When everything seems finished, Christ is still able to speak. And when He speaks, even the places within us that have fallen silent can hear His voice: "Arise."

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!

The Courage to Climb the Thirtieth Step:

The Bond of Faith, Hope, and Love

The thirtieth step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, written by Saint John Climacus, brings us to the summit of the spiritual journey: faith, hope, and love. After leading the soul through the struggles of repentance, humility, obedience, prayer, discernment, and purification, Saint John reveals that the ultimate purpose of the entire ascent is not simply to become morally better, but to become united with God through love. This final step is not merely the conclusion of a spiritual book; it is an invitation to discover what it truly means to live in Christ.

The courage to climb this final step requires something deeper than human determination. It requires the willingness to surrender our hearts completely to God. We may overcome certain habits, resist temptations, practice fasting, and become more disciplined in prayer, but if our hearts remain closed to love, we have not yet reached the summit. The mountain of holiness is not conquered by pride, knowledge, or spiritual achievement. It is reached through love.

Saint John Climacus presents love as the very likeness of God within the human soul. Love is not simply an emotion, a pleasant feeling, or an expression of kindness when circumstances are favorable. It is a transformation of our entire being. It means learning to see another person not according to what they can offer us, but according to the dignity God has placed within them. It means forgiving when forgiveness is difficult, remaining patient when others disappoint us, and choosing mercy when resentment seems easier. True love does not ask what it can receive; it asks how it can give.

Yet we cannot reach this love through our own strength alone. This is why faith and hope are inseparable from love. Faith teaches us to entrust ourselves to God even when His ways remain mysterious. Hope allows us to continue walking when the road becomes painful, when prayers seem unanswered, and when our weaknesses remind us how far we still have to travel. Love gives meaning to both. Without faith, we lose our foundation; without hope, we lose our courage; without love, we lose the very purpose of our journey.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of this final step is that it asks us to love not only those who love us, but also those who have wounded us. It is relatively easy to be generous toward people who appreciate us, patient with those who agree with us, and kind toward those who make our lives comfortable. But the Gospel calls us to something greater. Christ commands us to love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven. This is the love revealed upon the Cross. Christ did not wait for humanity to become worthy of His love. He loved us while we were still sinners.

Here lies the deepest courage of the thirtieth step: allowing the love of Christ to enter those

(continue to page 5)

(continue from page 4)

places within us that we have carefully protected from Him. Sometimes we carry old wounds, hidden resentments, disappointments, jealousy, and judgments. We may speak beautifully about God while quietly refusing to forgive someone. We may participate in the services of the Church while allowing bitterness to occupy our hearts. We may know the language of faith without allowing faith to transform our relationships. The final ascent demands honesty.
It asks us not merely to speak about love, but to become people through whom God's love can be encountered.

In our Byzantine spiritual understanding, the entire journey of the soul is directed toward theosis, participation in the divine life. We do not become God by nature, but through grace we are invited to share in His life. And because God is love, the more deeply we participate in His life, the more genuinely we learn to love. Holiness, therefore, is not measured by how impressive our spiritual accomplishments appear, but by how much of Christ becomes visible in our hearts.

This final step also reminds us that the summit is not a place where we stop loving, praying, or growing. It is where we begin to understand that love must become our permanent way of life. Every morning gives us another opportunity to climb. Every encounter becomes an invitation to practice mercy. Every difficult relationship becomes a place where Christ asks us to reveal His presence.

Let us not be afraid of this final ascent. We may feel unworthy, weak, or far from the holiness to which God calls us. But the summit is not reached by those who believe themselves perfect. It is reached by those who never stop surrendering themselves to divine mercy.

Ultimately, the thirtieth step teaches us that the greatest achievement of the spiritual life is not to become admired, recognized, or praised, but to become capable of loving as Christ loves. When our hearts become places of forgiveness, compassion, humility, and self-giving, the ladder has brought us toward its true destination.

And perhaps, when we finally stand before God, the most important question will not be how high we climbed, how much we accomplished, or how much we knew, but how much we loved.

For the summit of the Ladder is not a position above others. It is a heart transformed by Christ, in which faith becomes trust, hope becomes perseverance, and love becomes the very breath of eternal life.

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.

Philip's Fast: Preparing Our Hearts for the Coming of Christ

The Christmas Fast, known in our tradition as Philip's Fast or Pylypivka, begins on November 15, following the feast of the Holy Apostle Philip, and leads us toward the glorious celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a sacred invitation to prepare not simply our homes, tables, and celebrations for Christmas, but something far more important: our hearts and souls to receive the living God. In a world that begins celebrating Christmas weeks before its spiritual meaning is remembered, the Church calls us to pause, become spiritually attentive, and rediscover the extraordinary mystery of God's love revealed in the birth of His Son.

Why does the Church ask us to fast? Is it simply to abstain from certain foods, follow dietary restrictions, or fulfill an ancient religious obligation? Certainly not. Fasting is never an end in itself. It is a spiritual discipline that teaches us to place God above our appetites, desires, comforts, and distractions. When we voluntarily surrender something that gives us pleasure, we learn that we are not slaves to our desires. We discover that the human heart possesses a hunger that food, possessions, entertainment, and worldly success can never satisfy. That deepest hunger is a hunger for God.

Philip's Fast is an opportunity to examine honestly what occupies the center of our lives. Perhaps we are too busy to pray, too distracted to listen, too impatient to forgive, or too consumed by our responsibilities to recognize the presence of God. We may spend hours shopping for gifts, decorating our homes, preparing meals, and organizing celebrations, yet neglect the most important preparation of all: preparing a dwelling place for Christ within our souls. We can have the most beautifully decorated home and still possess a heart filled with resentment, anger, jealousy, and spiritual emptiness. Christmas invites us to discover that the true beauty of this feast begins within.

The mystery of the Nativity reveals one of the greatest paradoxes of our Christian faith. The Creator of heaven and earth enters His creation not in a palace, surrounded by earthly power and wealth, but in the poverty, silence, and humility of a manger. The Eternal Word becomes a little child. The One whom the heavens cannot contain allows Himself to be held in the arms of the Holy Theotokos. God does not remain distant from our humanity. He enters our vulnerability, suffering, loneliness, and brokenness to restore us and bring us back into communion with Himself.

This is the mystery we are preparing to receive during the Christmas Fast. If God humbled Himself so profoundly to come close to us, can we not humble ourselves to come closer to Him? If Christ emptied Himself and accepted poverty for our salvation, can we not surrender

(continue to page 7)

(continue from page 6)

some of our comforts for the sake of spiritual growth?

Our fasting, therefore, must extend far beyond our plates. We must fast from anger, judgment, gossip, resentment, selfishness, pride, and indifference toward those who suffer.
We must learn to forgive those who have wounded us, reconcile where relationships have been broken, and offer compassion where someone feels forgotten. A person who abstains from food but refuses to forgive has missed the deeper meaning of fasting. A person who observes dietary restrictions but remains indifferent to the suffering of another has not yet understood the spirit of the Nativity Fast. Our physical discipline must become an expression of an interior transformation.

The Church also reminds us that fasting must be accompanied by prayer and acts of mercy. When we eat less, let us become more generous. When we spend less on ourselves, let us remember those who struggle to provide for their families. When we find time for entertainment, let us also find time for Scripture, silence, and prayer. When we prepare gifts for those we love, let us remember those who have nobody to visit them. Perhaps a sincere apology, a visit to someone who is lonely, or a generous act toward someone in need can become a beautiful offering to the newborn Savior.

Most importantly, let us remember that Philip's Fast is not a competition in religious discipline or an opportunity to judge how others observe the fast. It is a personal journey of conversion, undertaken with humility and guided by the mercy of God. Each person must approach this journey according to his or her circumstances and the guidance of the Church. What matters is not outward appearance, but the sincerity of a heart seeking transformation.

As we begin these holy days, let us ask ourselves a simple but profound question: What must I change within myself so that Christ may find a place in my heart? Perhaps it is a habit we need to abandon, a relationship we need to heal, a prayer life we need to restore, or a person we need to forgive.

May Philip's Fast become a journey from distraction to prayer, from selfishness to generosity, from resentment to forgiveness, and from darkness to light. Let us prepare not merely to celebrate the birth of Christ, but to encounter Him anew.

The greatest preparation for Christmas is not what we place beneath the tree, how beautifully we decorate our homes, or how abundantly we fill our tables. It is how much room we make for Christ in our hearts. For the most beautiful manger we can offer the newborn Savior is a heart purified by repentance, strengthened by prayer, and made radiant through love.

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

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 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

Monday, November 9

"The Holy Martyrs Onisiphorus and Porphyry"

"Our Venerable Mother Matrona"

Epistle: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10. **Gospel:** Luke 12:13-15, 22-31.

Tuesday, November 10

"The Holy Apostles Erastus, Olympus, Rodion and Those with them"

Epistle: 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2 **Gospel:** Luke 12:42-48.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, November 11

"The Holy Martyrs Menas, Victor and Vincent"

"Our Venerable Father and Confessor Theodore the Studite"

Epistle: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. **Gospel:** Luke 12:48-59.

Thursday, November 12

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Josaphat, Archbishop of Polotsk"

"Our Holy Father John the Compassionate, Patriarch of Alexandria"

"Our Venerable Father Nilus"

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:10. **Gospel:** John 10:9-16.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, November 13

"Our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople"

Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-8:2 **Gospel:** John 10:9-16

Saturday, November 14

"The Holy and All-Praiseworthy Apostle Philip"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 **Gospel:** John 1:43-51

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, November 15

"25th Sunday after Pentecost

"The Holy Martyrs and Confessors Gurias, Samonas and Abibus"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6 **Gospel:** Luke 10:25-37

9:00 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends