

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, July 5, 2026

"6th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

Matthew 9:1-8, the healing of the paralytic, offers a profound tapestry of theological insight and practical application, particularly when viewed through the lens of Eastern Catholic theology. This passage is far more than a simple miracle story, it's a revelation of Christ's identity, His authority, and His compassionate approach to human suffering, addressing not only physical ailment but also the deeper dis-ease of sin.

The scene opens with Jesus entering a boat and returning to "His own city," Capernaum, immediately establishing a sense of His authority within a known context. The arrival of the paralytic, borne by four men, is a testament to the community's faith and persistence. From an Eastern perspective, this act of carrying the paralytic is not merely about physical transportation; it reflects the deep communal aspect of salvation. The faith of those who bring the sick man contributes to his healing, underscoring the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ. This is a powerful image for the Church, where intercessory prayer and supportive community play a crucial role in bringing souls closer to spiritual healing. The Church, as the mystical body, carries its members, particularly those unable to carry themselves, to the merciful Physician.

When Jesus sees "their faith," He paradoxically addresses the paralytic directly, saying, "Son, take heart, your sins are forgiven." This non-sequitur, from a purely physical perspective, is precisely where Eastern theology finds its richest insights. For the East, illness, suffering, and death are ultimately consequences of the Fall, a disruption of the original harmony between God, humanity, and creation. Sin is not just a legal transgression but a spiritual disease, an ontological wound that affects the entire person, body and soul. Therefore, Christ's immediate pronouncement of forgiveness of sins signifies His understanding of the root cause of the paralytic's affliction. He is attacking the disease at its source, not merely treating the symptom. This highlights the holistic nature of salvation, not simply a legal declaration of innocence, but a restoration of the entire person, body and soul, to communion with God.

The scribes' internal accusations of blasphemy perfectly set the stage for Christ's self-revelation. Their legalistic understanding of God's authority fails to grasp the Incarnate God standing directly before them. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asks the crucial question, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?" From a human

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perspective, forgiving sins is invisible and thus "easier" to claim without proof, while physical healing is visibly verifiable. Yet, for Christ, both are expressions of His divine authority. To prove His power to forgive sins, a power understood by the scribes to belong to God alone, He performs the visible miracle. "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Rise, pick up your bed and go home." The immediate obedience and healing of the paralytic is the undeniable empirical proof of Christ's unparalleled divine authority over both spiritual and physical realms.

The practical application for the Eastern Catholic Christian is profound. Firstly, it calls for a deep and sincere faith, not only personal but communal. We are encouraged to "carry" one another in prayer, especially those afflicted by sin or suffering, trusting in the power of intercession. This applies to our participation in the Divine Liturgy, where the community offers up prayers for the living and the dead, bringing before Christ those in need of healing and forgiveness.

Secondly, this passage constantly reminds us that spiritual healing, primarily the forgiveness of sins, holds precedence. When facing sickness or distress, while seeking medical attention is important, the faithful are first directed to the Sacraments, particularly Confession and the Anointing of the Sick. We seek reconciliation with God as the foundational step towards holistic healing, recognizing that sin is the ultimate paralysis that binds us. This doesn't diminish the reality of physical suffering or the need for medical care, but firmly places spiritual well-being at the apex of our concerns, understanding that true healing begins in the soul.

Lastly, the passage offers immense hope and reinforces the transformative power of Christ. Just as the paralytic was not only healed but also forgiven, so too are we invited to experience this dual grace. Our weaknesses, our sins, our ailments, when brought to Christ with faith, can be transformed into opportunities for divine mercy and revelation. The joyful, awe-struck response of the crowds, praising God "who had given such authority to human beings," prompts us to marvel at the Incarnation, the condescension of God who became human to restore us, offering authority and grace for our own deification, our journey towards becoming godlike through His uncreated energies.



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.

The Spiritual Courage to the struggle to letting go of seeking human praise and approval

The Thirteenth Step of Saint John Climacus's Ladder, a pivotal juncture in the spiritual ascent, centers on "Vainglory," or the spiritual illness of seeking human praise and approval. To courageously confront and overcome vainglory demands an extraordinary depth of spiritual insight and an unwavering commitment to the purest forms of Eastern Catholic theology, particularly regarding humility and the unceasing pursuit of God alone as the ultimate good. This step, while seemingly psychological at first glance, delves into the very core of our being, challenging the ego's most tenacious and subtle forms of self-affirmation.

The courage required for this step is not the outward bravery of a warrior in battle, but an inward, almost microscopic fortitude. It is the courage to relentlessly examine one's own motives, to dissect every good deed, every spiritual practice, every act of piety, to discern if its ultimate aim is the approbation of others or the glory of God. Vainglory, as Climacus warns, is insidiously pervasive, often masking itself as zeal or natural giftedness, even turning spiritual successes into traps for the soul. The monastic tradition, ever vigilant against this inner foe, recognizes vainglory as a venomous serpent that can coil around even the highest virtues, rendering them sterile or even destructive.

Eastern theology emphasizes the centrality of humility, *tapeinosis*, not as self-deprecation but as truth, a profound recognition of our utter dependence on God and His grace for every good inspiration and action. To embrace the Thirteenth Step courageously means to truly desire this evangelical humility, to be willing to be perceived as foolish, unspiritual, or insignificant by the world, if that is what it takes to free the soul from the shackles of human opinion. This requires a radical self-emptying, a *kenosis* of the ego, mirroring Christ's own self-effacing love. It is the courage to let go of the need for external validation, to find one's entire worth and identity solely in the eyes of God.

Furthermore, overcoming vainglory is crucial for the practice of the Jesus Prayer, or hesychasm. The unceasing invocation of the Name of Jesus, when practiced with vainglory, becomes a mere performance, a ritual devoid of true spiritual power, aimed at impressing others or even oneself. To courageously strip away this hidden layer of self-adulation allows the heart to become truly receptive to divine grace, rendering the prayer pure and effective.

The early Church Fathers understood that true spiritual progress was impossible while the soul still craved human praise. The courage here is to silence the inner voice that incessantly analyzes how one is perceived, to truly center one's gaze not on one's own image, but on the Image of God within.

This battle against vainglory also involves a courageous acceptance of humiliation, of being

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unnoticed or even criticized unjustly. The Desert Fathers, masters of this spiritual warfare, often sought out circumstances where they would be overlooked or dishonored, precisely to stamp out the last embers of pride and vainglory within themselves. This is a profound counter-cultural stance, demanding immense spiritual strength to willingly embrace what the fallen world shuns. It is the courage to find joy in obscurity, peace in being forgotten, freedom in not being admired.

Ultimately, the Thirteenth Step of the Ladder is a profound test of one's genuine love for God. Does one seek God for God's sake alone, or for the spiritual benefits, for the feeling of piety, for the recognition of others? The courage to pass this step means choosing God exclusively, rejecting the seductive whispers of self-aggrandizement. It means cultivating an inner gaze that seeks only the divine approval, valuing the secret witness of the Holy Spirit above all outward accolades. This courageous spiritual purification of motivation is not a one-time event but a continuous process, a daily dying to self, ensuring that every subsequent step on the Ladder is taken not in pride, but in the profound, liberating humility that alone makes true union with God possible. It is the courageous act of offering one's entire being, every deed, every prayer, every thought, as a pure sacrifice of love to the Beloved, utterly unconcerned with the fleeting estimations of humanity.



Every day brings its own burdens. Some struggles are visible, while others are known only to God. In those moments, we are invited not to search first for explanations, but for the quiet presence of Christ. He does not stand far from our suffering; He enters it, transforms it, and walks with us through it.

According to the Eastern Catholic tradition, suffering is not a punishment from God nor something to be desired for its own sake. Rather, when united with Christ in faith and love, it can become a path of communion with Him. The Cross is never separated from the Resurrection. Even in our weakness, God is at work, shaping our hearts with patience, humility, and compassion.

Today, place your worries into the hands of the Lord. Trust that every prayer, every tear, and every small act of faith is seen by Him. Ask not only for relief, but for the grace to remain close to Christ in every circumstance. As we learn to entrust ourselves to His mercy, our trials become places where His light quietly shines, and our hearts are gradually transformed into His likeness.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, grant us steadfast faith in our daily struggles. Teach us to carry our crosses with hope, to recognize Your presence in every trial, and to trust that Your love is stronger than every sorrow. Through Your holy Cross and glorious Resurrection, lead us into the peace and joy of Your Kingdom. Amen.

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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 5

"6th Sunday after Pentecost"

"Our Venerable Father Athanasius of Athos"

Epistle: Romans 12:6-14. Gospel: Matthew 9:1-8.

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 John Skrypoczka from Soutus family

Monday, July 6

"Our Venerable Father Sisoës the Great"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:11. Gospel: Matthew 13:54-58.

Tuesday, July 7

"Our Venerable Father Thomas of Maleum"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:20-7:12. Gospel: Matthew 14:1-13.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, July 8

"The Holy Great Martyr Procopius"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 7:12-24. Gospel: Matthew 14:35-15:11.

Thursday, July 9

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Pancratius"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 7:24-35. Gospel: Matthew 15:12-21.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, July 10

"Our Venerable Father Anthony of the Monastery of the Caves in Kyiv"

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-6:2. Gospel: Luke 6:17-23.

Saturday, July 11

"Repose of Blessed Olha, Princess of Kyiv"

Epistle: Galatians 3:23-29. Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, July 12

"7th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Martyrs Proclus and Hilary"

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7. Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35.

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
In loving memory of +Jozef Rydzaj from family
