Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory for ever!

Reflections for this Week!!!!

There are moments when life becomes so painful that words seem powerless. We stand beside a grave, receive devastating news, watch someone we love suffer, or experience a loss that changes everything. In such moments, even the strongest faith may tremble beneath the weight of sorrow. The Gospel of Luke 7:11–16 brings us to one of these moments, where human grief encounters the immeasurable compassion of God.

Jesus approaches the city of Nain, accompanied by His disciples and a great crowd. At the city gate, He encounters another crowd following a widow who is burying her only son.

Two processions meet: one follows the Author of Life, while the other accompanies death. One carries the promise of God's Kingdom, while the other carries the unbearable weight of human suffering. Neither crowd could have imagined what would happen when these two processions met.

Luke tells us something extraordinary: "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her."

The widow does not ask Jesus for help. She does not confess her faith, make a petition, or even speak to Him. Jesus sees her, and that is enough. Before she can express her pain, He recognizes it. Before she can ask for mercy, Mercy Himself approaches her.

This reveals something essential about the heart of God. Our Lord is not waiting for us to find perfect words before He draws near. He sees the tears we conceal, the wounds we cannot explain, and the loneliness we carry behind our smiles. Sometimes grief leaves us incapable of prayer. Sometimes suffering exhausts our ability to hope. Yet our inability to speak does not make us invisible to God. His compassion reaches us even when our own words fail.

In our Byzantine spiritual understanding, divine compassion is not merely an emotion. God's love enters human suffering to restore what sin and death have wounded. In Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God assumes our humanity, enters our mortality, and confronts death from within our own human experience. He does not remain distant from our tears. He comes to meet us where our hearts are breaking.

Jesus tells the widow, "Do not weep." These words are not a rejection of her sorrow. Christ does not condemn tears or demand that she pretend everything is well. He speaks because He is about to reveal a reality greater than the death before them. Christian hope does not deny suffering; it discovers that suffering does not possess the final word.

Then Jesus touches the bier. Those carrying it stop. With a simple command, He declares, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

The dead man sits up and begins to speak, and Jesus gives him back to his mother.

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Here we witness more than an extraordinary miracle. We encounter the One who possesses authority over death itself. The young man rises because the voice of the Creator calls him back to life. The same divine Word through whom all things came into existence now speaks into the silence of a tomb. Death must yield before the Lord of Life.

Yet notice the tenderness of the miracle. Jesus does not restore the young man merely to demonstrate His power. He restores a son to his mother. He sees the personal consequences of death, the broken relationship, and the devastated heart. Divine majesty and intimate tenderness are united in Christ. The One who governs creation is also the One who notices a widow's tears.

This miracle also points beyond itself toward the Resurrection of Christ. The young man of Nain would eventually die again, but Jesus would rise from the dead never to die again. His Resurrection is not simply the restoration of earthly life; it is the destruction of death's ultimate dominion and the beginning of humanity's transfiguration. Every miracle of resurrection in the Gospel directs our eyes toward Pascha, where the Crucified and Risen Lord opens the way to eternal life.

What does this mean for us today? First, we must allow Christ to approach our own places of sorrow. We do not have to hide our grief from Him. We can bring Him our disappointments, our broken relationships, our fears for our children, and our anxieties about the future. Faith is not the absence of tears. It is the courage to weep in the presence of the One who conquers death.

Second, we are called to become witnesses of Christ's compassion. There are widows, grieving parents, lonely elderly people, wounded families, and forgotten individuals in our communities. Sometimes we cannot reverse their circumstances, but we can refuse to let them suffer alone. A visit, a listening ear, a sincere prayer, or a faithful presence can become the means through which another person encounters the tenderness of Christ.

Finally, the Gospel reminds us that no human situation is beyond God's power to redeem. We may not receive the miracle we desire in the manner or time we expect, but we trust the Lord whose Resurrection promises that death itself will not have the final word.

When Jesus enters Nain, sorrow meets hope, death encounters Life, and a grieving mother discovers that she has not been forgotten.

Let us therefore walk with Christ, trusting His compassion even when the road passes through suffering. The Lord who stopped for the widow still sees us today. His voice still calls us from spiritual death into communion with Him. And His Resurrection assures us that, for those who belong to Him, the darkest grave is not the end of the story

The Courage to stop running from ourselves.!!!

The courage to climb the twenty seventh step of the Ladder of Divine Ascent is the courage to enter the sacred stillness of the heart and discover that true prayer begins when the soul learns to remain before God. Saint John Climacus speaks of holy stillness, the hesychia of the soul and body, a state of inner attentiveness in which the heart becomes receptive to the presence of God. This is not an escape from life, but a deeper entrance into its mystery through communion with the living Lord.

The twenty seventh step confronts us with a difficult truth: we may spend our entire lives speaking about God while rarely becoming still enough to listen to Him. Our minds are crowded with responsibilities, anxieties, ambitions, resentments, and endless distractions. Even our religious activities can become noisy when they are disconnected from interior conversion. We pray with our lips while our hearts wander elsewhere. We enter the church carrying our concerns, yet sometimes leave without allowing the presence of Christ to touch the depths of our being.

The courage of stillness is the courage to stop running from ourselves.

When we become quiet, uncomfortable realities begin to emerge. We encounter fears we have concealed, wounds we have neglected, sins we have justified, and desires that compete with God's will. This is why genuine stillness requires spiritual courage. Silence removes the distractions behind which we hide. Before God, we can no longer maintain the image we have constructed for others. We stand as we truly are, wounded yet loved, sinful yet invited to repentance, weak yet sustained by divine grace.

For Saint John Climacus, stillness is not simply the absence of sound. It is the disciplined attentiveness of a soul that desires God above everything else. A person may live in a monastery surrounded by silence and remain inwardly restless. Another may serve a family, work among people, or care for the suffering while carrying a profound stillness within the heart. The essential question is not whether the world around us is quiet, but whether our hearts are becoming attentive to the presence of Christ.

Our Byzantine spiritual tradition teaches us that prayer is not merely the recitation of words or the fulfillment of a religious obligation. Prayer is communion, the gradual opening of our whole existence to the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit. Through repentance, vigilance, humility, and perseverance, the heart becomes a dwelling place where the presence of God is welcomed. This is not something we achieve through personal strength alone. We cooperate with grace, and God patiently purifies and heals us.

The courage to climb this step means learning to remain with God even when prayer feels dry, when consolation disappears, and when the mind seems unwilling to settle.

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Many people abandon prayer because they expect immediate peace or emotional satisfaction. Yet authentic prayer is not measured by how deeply we feel something, but by how faithfully we turn toward the Lord. Sometimes the holiest prayer is simply remaining before Him, repeating the Jesus Prayer with humility: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Such prayer gradually reveals that stillness is not indifference toward the suffering of others. On the contrary, a heart that rests in God becomes more capable of loving without demanding recognition, serving without resentment, and forgiving without keeping accounts. When our interior life is governed by constant agitation, we often react from wounded pride and impatience. When we learn to become still before Christ, we create space for discernment. We begin to respond with mercy rather than anger, with patience rather than judgment, and with compassion rather than self justification.

This lesson is especially important for Christians living in a world that celebrates constant activity. We can become so occupied with doing good things that we neglect the One who gives those things their eternal meaning. Our service can become mechanical, our words harsh, and our relationships superficial. The soul that never pauses before God risks confusing busyness with holiness. Stillness restores the proper order of love: first receiving God's presence, then allowing that presence to shape everything we do.

The twenty seventh step invites us to practice this courage daily. Set aside a little time for prayer without distractions. Stand before an icon, open the Gospel, breathe quietly, and turn your attention toward Christ. When thoughts arise, do not become discouraged or condemn yourself. Gently return to prayer. When anger disturbs you, seek reconciliation. When pride speaks, remember your dependence on mercy. When suffering overwhelms you, remain faithful even without understanding.

Ultimately, the purpose of holy stillness is not to admire our own spiritual progress, but to become more completely united with Christ through grace. The quiet heart is not empty; it is a heart learning to make room for God.

The twenty seventh step teaches us that courage sometimes means standing firm in battle, but sometimes it means becoming silent enough to hear the voice that calls us to holiness.
Let us climb patiently, with humility and perseverance, until our restless hearts learn to rest in the Lord, and our entire lives become a prayer offered in love to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

"Abba Poemen said, 'Teach your mouth to say what is in your heart.'
True prayer begins when the heart stands honestly before God."



An Invitation to Prayer with Bishop Benedict

There are moments when an icon becomes more than an image before our eyes. It becomes a window into heaven, a silent invitation to encounter the living God, and a reminder that we are never alone on our journey of faith. Through the sacred beauty of the icon, we are invited to look beyond the visible and open our hearts to the eternal presence of Christ, who continues to call His people into communion, healing, and holiness.

An icon does not merely ask us to look. It invites us to stand in the presence of God with humility, gratitude, and a heart willing to be transformed. Before an icon, our words may become fewer, our tears may become prayers, and the burdens we have carried in silence may finally find a place of rest in the mercy of God.

As this sacred icon comes to our parish, let us receive it not simply as a beautiful treasure, but as a spiritual blessing and an opportunity to renew our faith. Let us come together as one Church, bringing our families, our worries, our hopes, our wounded hearts, and our prayers for peace, especially for Ukraine and all those who suffer throughout the world.

We warmly invite everyone to join us in prayer with our beloved Bishop Benedict. His presence among us reminds us that we are united in one faith, one Eucharistic communion, and one spiritual family, gathered around Christ, who is the source of our hope and the healing of our souls.

Come and pray with us. Come not because your faith is perfect, but because your heart needs God. Come not because you have no burdens, but because Christ invites you to bring them to Him. Let us stand together before this sacred icon, lift our hearts in prayer, and allow the grace of God to touch places within us that words alone cannot reach.

May this holy encounter strengthen our communion with Christ, deepen our love for one another, and remind us that the greatest beauty of an icon is not only what we see with our eyes, but the divine love it awakens within our hearts.

May the Holy Theotokos intercede for us, may our Lord Jesus Christ bless our parish, and may the Holy Spirit renew us in faith, hope, and love.

"O Holy Theotokos, you carried within your virginal womb the One whom the heavens cannot contain. You became the living bridge between heaven and earth, the tender Mother who gave us the Savior, and the silent prayer through whom the Light of the world entered our darkness. When our hearts are wounded, teach us to remain close to your Son; when our faith grows weak, teach us to trust as you trusted; and when our journey becomes painful, hold our hands and lead us toward Christ. O Mother of God, you gave Him your flesh, your tears, your love, and your entire life."

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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, October 11
"20th Sunday after Pentecost"
"Sunday of the Seventh Ecumenical Council"
Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19. **Gospel:** Luke 7:11-16.
9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos
9:30 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with **Bishop Benedict**
God's blessings and good health for **Alex, Jackie, Emma, Harper** and **Lucas**

Monday, October 12
"The Holy Martyrs Probus, Tarachus and Andronicus"
Epistle: Philippians 4:10-23. **Gospel:** Luke 7:36-50.
9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos
9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, October 13
"The Holy Martyrs Carpus, Papylas and Agathonicus"
Epistle: Colossians 1:1-2; 7-11. **Gospel:** Luke 8:1-3.
9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos
9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, October 14
"The Holy Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius and Celsus"
Epistle: Colossians 1:18-23. **Gospel:** Luke 8:22-25.

Thursday, October 15
"Our Venerable Father Euthymius the Younger"
Epistle: Colossians 1:24-29. **Gospel:** Luke 9:7-11
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, October 16
"The Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion"
Epistle: Colossians 2:1-7. **Gospel:** Luke 9:12-18.

Saturday, October 17
The Holy Prophet Hosea"
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. **Gospel:** Luke 6:1-10.
6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, October 18
"21st Sunday after Pentecost"
"The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke"
Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20. **Gospel:** Luke 8:5-15.
9:00 a.m. The Third Hour
9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends

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.