

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, October 26, 2025

"20th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

The story of the rich man and Lazarus reveals, through the lens of the Desert Fathers, a truth that reaches into the depths of the human soul. The rich man, living in luxury and surrounded by comfort, represents not simply wealth, but the heart that has grown insensible to God through attachment to earthly things. Lazarus, lying at the gate in suffering, is the silent image of humility, endurance, and inner poverty, the soul that waits upon the Lord. The parable is not a judgment upon possessions themselves, but upon the failure to love, the failure to see the living God in the one who suffers beside us.

The Desert Fathers would say that the rich man's tragedy began long before death. His heart, filled with pleasure, had no space left for compassion. Abba Dorotheus taught that the soul becomes darkened when it ceases to care for others; self-love is the root of all separation. "As smoke drives away bees," he said, "so self-love drives away compassion." The chasm that later appears between the rich man and Lazarus is the outward manifestation of this inner condition a heart so hardened that it cannot be reached, even by love itself. The Fathers remind us that judgment is not imposed from without; it is the unveiling of what we have chosen within.

In Lazarus, the ascetics saw the image of the true monk, the one stripped of everything, yet filled with God. St. Isaac the Syrian said, "The man who knows his own weakness is greater than the one who raises the dead." Lazarus, though covered in sores, had already found the peace that the rich man never knew. His suffering became his prayer, his emptiness became the dwelling place of divine presence. The dogs that licked his wounds were, for the Fathers, symbols of the humility that heals; they did for him what no man did, tended him with simple, wordless compassion.

For the Desert Fathers, the story calls not for moral judgment but for interior watchfulness. They would tell us: look not at the rich man as someone else, but as the temptation within yourself, to live without remembrance of God, to feast while another starves, to pray without love. Abba Poemen said, "If you see your brother in need, you have seen your own salvation." Each Lazarus we ignore is Christ Himself whom we reject. Our salvation is not found in mystical visions or great achievements but in mercy made concrete, in small acts of love that bridge the gulf between souls.

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The Courage not demanding proof but recognizing God's presence already among us

To believe without demanding proof is to stand before the mystery of God with a heart stripped of pride and filled with wonder. It is to live with the courage of one who chooses trust over control, love over certainty, and worship over comprehension.

This courage is not the absence of questions, nor the denial of doubt, it is the sacred strength to remain faithful even when God hides His face. For faith that requires no risk, no darkness, no silence, is not faith but sight.

In every generation, humanity repeats the cry, "Show us a sign!" It is the same cry that echoed in the wilderness and at Calvary, the yearning to see before believing. Yet God's response is always the same: He reveals Himself not in spectacle, but in stillness; not in the earthquake or the fire, but in the whisper that can only be heard by a listening heart.

The Incarnation itself is the supreme answer to our demand for proof. The Infinite took flesh not in glory but in poverty, not on a throne but in a manger. In Christ, God's presence became tangible, but hidden beneath simplicity. He walked among us quietly, healing, teaching, forgiving, offering Himself as the sign of divine nearness. Yet even then, many did not recognize Him.

To recognize God's presence already among us is the beginning of true conversion. It requires the purification of sight, a deep transformation of the heart.

The world teaches us to look for power, evidence, and control; God invites us to see through humility, silence, and love. The daily Catholic vocation is to live in the awareness that grace is already here, in this moment, in this breath, in this very encounter. When we rise in the morning, go to work, bear with the burdens of others, pray in the quiet of the night, or receive the Eucharist in faith, we are already living within the mystery of Emmanuel, "God with us."

The Fathers of the Desert understood this with luminous simplicity. They fled into solitude not to escape the world, but to learn how to see God in all things. "If you cannot find God in the silence of your heart," said Abba Anthony, "you will not find Him in the desert."

For them, proof of God's presence was not needed; His reality was experienced in the struggle to remain faithful, in the patience of prayer, and in the compassion they showed to others.

Their desert became fertile with divine grace because their hearts were emptied of self and opened to wonder.

In the same way, our modern deserts, the places of loneliness, uncertainty, and sorrow, can become sacred ground if we dare to recognize God dwelling within them. The courage to believe without proof is the courage to see Christ crucified in the midst of our suffering, to see

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Practically, this parable teaches us to live with hearts awake. It asks that we notice those who suffer near us, the poor, the lonely, the unnoticed, the immigrants, ward refugees and to recognize them as the presence of God’s grace offered to our repentance.

The Desert Fathers believed that one cannot draw near to God without drawing near to one’s brother. To share food, to listen, to comfort, to forgive, these are not simple deeds of kindness but sacred acts that shape eternity. The heart that gives becomes like the heart of Christ, and the one who humbles himself to serve the poor finds the Kingdom already dwelling within.

The Resurrection of Christ gives ultimate meaning to this teaching. The One who rose from the dead is the same who identified Himself with the hungry, the sick, and the poor. The Fathers would say that to encounter Lazarus is to encounter the risen Christ, hidden in human weakness. If we learn to bow before that mystery now, the chasm of eternity will not frighten us, for love will have already bridged it.

In the end, this parable calls us to a conversion that begins in the heart, a turning from self toward love. As Abba Anthony said, “Our life and our death are with our neighbor. If we gain our brother, we gain God.” The rich man’s downfall was not that he had much, but that he loved little. And Lazarus’ glory was not that he suffered much, but that he bore it with a heart open to heaven. To follow their example is to walk the narrow path of mercy that leads, even now, to the joy of the eternal feast.



Request for Your Prayers

I would like to ask, with a humble heart, for your kind prayers as I prepare for my upcoming surgery on Wednesday, October 29. Following my doctor’s recommendation, I will need to limit my activities and take a period of rest for about three months while I recover.

It will be difficult for me to be away from my chaplaincy work at the hospital, a ministry that I hold very close to my heart, but I trust that this time of healing will also be a time of grace, reflection, and renewal. I am deeply grateful for your understanding, your support, and above all, your prayers.

Please remember me in your intentions during this time, that God may guide the hands of those who care for me, bless the surgery with success, and grant me a full and peaceful recovery. Know that I continue to keep you all in my prayers as well, united in the love and mercy of Christ.

With gratitude and every blessing,

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resurrection hidden in every small act of love, to see the Holy Spirit breathing even through our weakness. Faith does not remove the veil of mystery; it allows us to live beneath it in peace.

This recognition of God’s presence is the heart of Eucharistic faith. In the humble form of bread and wine, the Church dares to proclaim, “Behold the Lamb of God.” No vision confirms it, no sound announces it, yet the soul that believes knows it to be true. To kneel before the hidden Christ in the Eucharist is to confess that we do not need more signs, He has already given us everything. The same Christ who once walked the roads of Galilee now walks through the corridors of our hearts, through the laughter of children, through the tears of the suffering, through the stillness of prayer.

The courage to believe without demanding proof is the courage of Mary at the Annunciation, who trusted a word that had no precedent; the courage of Joseph, who obeyed in silence; the courage of the apostles, who left all to follow a man who called Himself the Way. It is the courage of every believer who continues to pray when heaven seems silent, to forgive when wronged, to love when love is not returned, to hope when hope seems unreasonable.

Such courage does not come from human strength, but from grace. It is born of the awareness that God is closer to us than our own breath. When this truth dawns within the soul, the need for proof dissolves, replaced by adoration. The eyes of faith begin to see differently, to recognize that every moment is charged with divine presence. The beauty of creation, the ache of longing, the face of the poor, the silence of prayer all become sacraments of God’s nearness. To live this way is to dwell in the Resurrection even now. The Risen Christ is not absent; He is among us, hidden yet radiant. The courage to recognize Him without proof transforms ordinary life into holy ground. Every gesture of kindness, every act of mercy, every silent prayer becomes an encounter with the living God. Faith then is no longer merely belief in doctrines, but communion with Presence, a Presence that sustains, heals, and transforms. And so, the daily Catholic life is an invitation to walk with open eyes and a trusting heart, to embrace mystery as a friend, and to let faith be not the search for evidence, but the continual discovery of God already here. For those who have learned to see in this way, every day becomes sacred, every encounter becomes revelation, and every breath becomes a prayer that whispers, “My Lord and my God, you were here all along.”



With heartfelt gratitude, I thank you for your generous financial support to our church.
Your kindness and love for God’s house are a true blessing to our parish family.
May the Lord, in His abundant mercy, reward you a hundredfold with His grace, granting you good health, happiness, and many blessings for you and your loved ones.

With prayerful thanks,

Good to Know!!!!!!

The **Proskomedie** (also spelled Prothesis or Proskomide) is the beautiful and deeply symbolic preparation of the bread and wine that will later be consecrated during the **Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom**. It takes place quietly at the side altar, known as the Table of Preparation (Prothesis), before the public part of the Divine Liturgy begins. This rite, often hidden from the congregation, reveals the entire mystery of salvation in miniature, it is a liturgy before the Liturgy, a sacred offering that unites heaven and earth even before the first chant is sung.

Historical Background

The roots of the Proskomedie go back to the earliest Christian communities, when believers would bring bread and wine from their own homes as offerings for the Eucharist. The deacons would select the best portions to be used for the Holy Gifts, and the rest would be distributed to the clergy and the poor. Over time, this preparation became more formalized and filled with prayers and ritual actions that reflected the Church's growing understanding of the Eucharist as both a sacrifice and a mystery of communion.

By the fourth century, the rite was already taking shape, and under the influence of the great liturgical fathers, especially **St. Basil the Great** and **St. John Chrysostom**, the prayers and actions became more explicitly Christ-centered and theological. The Proskomedie as we know it today, with its profound symbolism and commemorations, developed fully by the ninth century.

Theological Meaning

The Proskomedie expresses the entire **economy of salvation**, the mystery of God's love from the Incarnation to the Resurrection, through the simple act of preparing bread and wine.

The Lamb (Christ):

The priest takes a square portion from the prosphora (the leavened bread offered by the faithful) and cuts it out carefully with a liturgical knife called the lance, symbolizing the spear that pierced Christ's side. This piece, called the Lamb, represents Christ Himself, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." It will become the Body of Christ during the consecration. The cutting of the Lamb recalls both the Nativity (Christ taken from among humanity) and the Passion (Christ offered for our salvation).

The Wine and Water:

Wine mixed with a little water is poured into the chalice, recalling the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side on the Cross. This mingling also symbolizes Christ's divine and human natures united in one Person.

Commemorations:

The priest cuts out smaller particles from additional prosphora to represent the **Theotokos**, the **nine ranks of saints**, the **living**, and the **departed**.

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These are placed around the Lamb on the diskos (paten). In this sacred arrangement, the entire Church, triumphant and militant, is mystically gathered around Christ. The living and the dead are present together, united in one communion of love.

The Coverings:

The diskos and chalice are covered with veils and then with a larger veil called the aër. These coverings signify the swaddling clothes of the Christ Child, the shroud in the tomb, and finally the glory of the Resurrection. The priest censes the Gifts, symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the Church rising before God.

Theologically, the Proskomedia is a **liturgical icon of the Incarnation and Redemption**. It is the hidden manifestation of Christ’s self-offering, the mystery of His coming among us and giving Himself for us. When the priest prepares the Lamb, he does so not as a mere ritual, but as a profound act of faith in the living presence of Christ, who takes on our humanity and transforms it into divine life.

Practical and Spiritual Application

For the faithful, even though the Proskomedia takes place quietly and out of sight, it is a vital part of our spiritual participation in the Liturgy. Through it, we are invited to **bring our lives, our joys, and our sorrows** to the altar. Traditionally, names of the living and the departed are given to the priest to be commemorated during the Proskomedia. This signifies that each of us is mystically placed on the diskos, gathered around Christ. Our lives, too, are offered with the bread and wine, to be transformed by divine grace.

In the hidden silence of the Proskomedia, the Church teaches us that **God works most profoundly in what is unseen**. Before the majestic hymns and prayers of the Liturgy begin, there is this quiet preparation, a reminder that holiness is born in humility and in hidden service. Just as the bread and wine are made ready in silence, so must our hearts be prepared before we can enter the mystery of divine communion.

The Proskomedia is, therefore, not only a ritual act but also a mirror of the spiritual life: we bring what is ordinary and human, our bread, our wine, our very selves, and through God’s grace, it is sanctified, transformed, and offered back as divine life.

In its fullness, the Proskomedia is the Church’s silent heartbeat before the great symphony of the Divine Liturgy begins. It reminds us that salvation is not distant or abstract, it begins quietly, humbly, in the offering of love. As the priest prays before the hidden altar, heaven and earth are already meeting, and the mystery of Christ’s self-giving love is once again being prepared for the life of the world.



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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, October 26

"20th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy and Glorious Great-Martyr Demetrius"

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19. Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

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 and good health for Fr Hugo

Monday, October 27

"The Holy Martyr Nestor"

Epistle: Philippians 4:10-23 Gospel: Luke 10:22-24

Tuesday, October 28

"The Holy Martyrs Terentius and Neonila"

Epistle: Colossians 1:1-2; 7-11 Gospel: Luke 11:1-10

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, October 29

"The Holy Venerable-Martyr Anastasia"

Epistle: Colossians 1:18-23 Gospel: Luke 11:9-13

Thursday, October 30

"The Holy Martyrs Zenobius and Zenobia His Sister"

Epistle: Colossians 1:24-29 Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, October 31

"The Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplias and Others with Them"

Epistle: Colossians 2:1-7 Gospel: Luke 11:23-26

Saturday, November 1

"The Holy Wonderworkers Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8. Gospel: Matthew 10:1-8.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, November 2

"21st Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Martyrs Acindynus, Pegasus and Others with Them"

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20 Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

8:50 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. Gods blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends