

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, October 4, 2026

"19th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Week!!!!

There are words in the Gospel that sound beautiful when we hear them in church, but become difficult when we try to live them. "As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." Then Christ goes even further: "Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return." These are not simply admirable ideals. They are the radical invitation of Christ to enter into the very life of God.

The world teaches us to love those who love us, to be generous toward those who appreciate us, and to forgive those who deserve another chance. Jesus asks something much greater. He calls us to love even when love is not returned, to forgive when there is no apology, to do good when nobody notices, and to show mercy when another person has shown us little mercy.

Why does Christ ask this of us? Because He wants to make us like the Father.

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." This is the heart of the Gospel. Christian life is not merely about following rules. It is about becoming transformed into the likeness of God. The Fathers of the Church understood salvation as a healing and transformation of the human person. Through grace, our hearts gradually become capable of loving with a love that does not come naturally from our wounded human nature.

Our natural instinct often says, "If they hurt me, I will hurt them." Christ interrupts that cycle. He teaches us another way. Mercy becomes the answer to hatred. Forgiveness becomes stronger than resentment. Kindness becomes stronger than revenge.

This does not mean that Christians should permit abuse, injustice, or evil. Forgiveness does not mean pretending that something harmful never happened. Mercy does not eliminate truth or justice. Rather, Christian mercy refuses to allow another person's sin to determine the condition of our own heart.

Someone may have wounded us, but we do not have to become wounded people who wound others. Someone may have spoken against us, but we do not have to answer with another word of destruction. Someone may have disappointed us, but we can still pray for that person. This is where the Gospel becomes real.

Every day gives us opportunities to practice this teaching. Perhaps someone in our family has hurt us. Perhaps a friend has disappointed us. Perhaps a coworker has treated us unfairly. Perhaps there is someone we would rather avoid completely. Christ places that person before us and says, "Love."

Sometimes love begins with something very small. Refuse to speak badly about the person.

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Pray for them. Stop rehearsing the offense in your mind. Ask God to heal what happened. Choose not to retaliate. These small acts may seem insignificant, but they are movements of the heart toward God.

The Divine Liturgy reminds us that we cannot approach the Holy Mysteries while deliberately holding hatred in our hearts. Before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, we are called to reconciliation and peace. Why? Because we cannot receive the One who gives Himself completely for us while refusing to give even a little mercy to another.

Christ Himself is the perfect revelation of this Gospel. On the Cross, He does not answer hatred with hatred. He offers Himself. He does not destroy His enemies. He prays for them. The Cross reveals that divine love is not weak. It is stronger than sin, stronger than violence, and stronger even than death.

Therefore, when Christ says, “Love your enemies,” He is not asking us to manufacture feelings we do not have. He is asking us to allow His love to live within us. We may not immediately feel affection for someone who has hurt us. But we can choose mercy. We can choose prayer. We can choose forgiveness. We can choose not to return evil for evil.

This is how the heart is purified.

The measure of Christian maturity is not how kindly we treat those who are kind to us. It is how we respond when we are treated unjustly. The person who can love without receiving anything in return begins to reveal something of the heart of God.

Today, let us ask Christ to heal our hearts of resentment, pride, anger, and the desire for revenge. Let us place before Him the names of those who are difficult for us to forgive. We may not be able to change them, but by God's grace, we can allow Him to change us. “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”



A JOYFUL PASTORAL VISIT FROM OUR BISHOP

With great joy, we welcome Bishop Benedict to our parish from October 11 through October 13. His pastoral visit is a special blessing for our entire parish family and an opportunity to strengthen our unity in Christ and our communion as members of the St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy.

We warmly invite everyone to come and welcome our Bishop, to pray together, and to share in the grace of his presence among us. On Sunday, October 12, we will celebrate a special Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Benedict as the principal celebrant.

Let us come together as one parish family to welcome our Bishop with joyful hearts and prayer, asking the Lord, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos, to bless our parish, our eparchy, our families, and all those entrusted to our care.

We look forward to this beautiful opportunity to pray together and to experience the joy of our unity in Christ.

Please join us and warmly welcome Bishop Benedict to our parish!

The Courage to Guard the Heart!!!

The spiritual journey becomes increasingly demanding as we climb the Ladder of Divine Ascent. Each step reveals something deeper about the human heart and something greater about the grace of God. The twenty sixth step of the Ladder brings us into the profound territory of discernment, thoughts, and spiritual watchfulness. It teaches us that not every thought that enters our mind deserves to be believed, welcomed, or followed. To take this step requires courage because it asks us to become honest about what is happening within us.

Our greatest spiritual battles often begin quietly. A thought appears, then another follows. A small resentment becomes an accusation. An insecurity becomes fear. A temptation becomes an imagination. A disappointment becomes judgment. Before we realize what has happened, something that began as a passing thought has taken residence in our heart.

Saint John Climacus teaches us that we must learn to recognize what is taking place within us. The spiritual life requires vigilance because the heart is a battlefield where many voices compete for our attention. Some thoughts lead us toward God, truth, peace, repentance, and love. Others lead us toward pride, despair, anger, impurity, suspicion, vanity, or discouragement.

The courage of the twenty sixth step is the courage to stop believing every thought simply because it appears in our mind.

We often say, “I feel this, therefore it must be true.” But feelings are not always reliable guides. We may feel rejected when we are actually loved. We may feel superior when we are actually insecure. We may feel hopeless when God is quietly working. We may assume someone intended to hurt us when we do not know their intention at all.

Spiritual maturity teaches us to pause.

Before reacting, we ask, “Where is this thought leading me? Does it bring me closer to Christ or farther from Him? Does it produce peace, humility, patience, and charity, or does it produce anger, pride, fear, and judgment?”

This is not merely psychological self examination. It is spiritual watchfulness. Our tradition speaks of the heart as the deepest place of communion with God. The purification of the heart therefore requires attention to what we allow to enter and remain there.

Consider how easily a thought can become a judgment. Someone does not greet us, and immediately we think, “They are ignoring me.” Someone speaks differently than we would, and we conclude, “They do not respect me.” Someone makes a mistake, and we think, “They always do this.” We rarely possess the entire story, yet the mind quickly creates one. The courageous Christian learns to say, “I do not know everything.”

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Those words can become an extraordinary act of humility.

The twenty sixth step also challenges us to examine thoughts that appear spiritual but actually contain pride. We may convince ourselves that we are defending truth when we are really defending our ego. We may believe we are correcting someone for their good when secretly we want to feel superior. We may call our criticism “concern” when it is actually resentment.

Discernment asks us to bring even our religious thoughts before Christ.

The answer is not to become afraid of our thoughts. Thoughts will come. Temptations will come. Memories will come. What matters is what we do with them. A thought becomes dangerous when we welcome it, nourish it, and allow it to shape our actions.

When a destructive thought comes, we can refuse to entertain it. We can pray. We can turn our attention toward Christ. We can invoke His holy name. We can choose silence instead of reaction. We can speak with a trusted spiritual guide when necessary. We can return again and again to the truth of the Gospel.

The world constantly fills our minds with anger, fear, comparison, outrage, and endless distraction. If we allow every voice to enter our heart, eventually we will lose the interior silence necessary to hear God.

The twenty sixth step calls us back to that silence.

Perhaps today we should ask ourselves: What thoughts have I been carrying that Christ never asked me to carry? What resentment have I repeatedly rehearsed? What fear have I allowed to become stronger than my trust in God? What judgment have I accepted without knowing the whole truth? What temptation have I been feeding instead of resisting?

The courage to take this step is the courage to guard the doorway of the heart.

We cannot prevent every thought from arriving, but by grace we can decide which thoughts will remain.

The goal is not simply to have an empty mind. It is to have a heart increasingly occupied by Christ. When our thoughts are purified, our words begin to change. When our words change, our actions change. When our actions change, our relationships change. And gradually, through grace, our entire life begins to reflect the peace of Christ.

The twenty sixth step therefore teaches us a profound truth: spiritual warfare often begins long before anyone sees our actions. It begins with what we permit to live within us.

For the heart that learns to discern becomes a heart that learns to remain free.

And the heart that remains watchful becomes increasingly capable of recognizing the quiet voice of God.





THE JUBILEE ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD COMES TO OUR PARISH

With great joy and thanksgiving to God, we welcome the Jubilee Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos to our parish from October 9 through October 12, as part of the 65th Anniversary celebration of the St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy.

The Jubilee Icon is traveling throughout our eparchy as a visible sign of unity, prayer, and the loving presence of the Holy Theotokos among her children. This visit is a beautiful opportunity for our parish family to come together in prayer, to ask for the protection and

intercession of the Theotokos, and to renew our love for Christ and His Church.

We warmly invite everyone to come and venerate the holy icon, bring your personal intentions and prayers, and entrust your families, our parish, our eparchy, Ukraine, and all those in need to the maternal care of the Most Holy Theotokos.

During the Icon's presence, we will gather for special services and prayers:

Friday, October 9

6:00 p.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

6:30 p.m. Divine Liturgy

Saturday, October 10

9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Sunday, October 11

9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

9:30 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Benedict

Monday, October 12

9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Let us take advantage of this special grace and blessing. Come with faith, bring your families, invite others, and allow the Mother of God to lead us ever more deeply to her Son, Jesus Christ.

Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

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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 4

"19th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Hierotheus"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9. Gospel: Luke 6:31-36.

9:00 a.m. The Third Hour

9:30 a.m. God's blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends
In loving memory of **+Charles Retay** from Dr. Laurel

Monday, October 5

"The Holy Martyr Charitina"

Epistle: Philippians 2:12-16. Gospel: Luke 6:24-30.

Tuesday, October 6

"The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16. Gospel: John 20:19-31.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, October 7

"The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus"

Epistle: Philippians 2:24-30. Gospel: Luke 6:46-7:1.

Thursday, October 8

"Our Venerable Mother Pelagia"

Epistle: Philippians 3:1-8. Gospel: Luke 7:17-30.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, October 9

"The Holy Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16. Gospel: Luke 10:16-21.

6:00 p.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

6:30 p.m. Divine Liturgy

Saturday, October 10

"The Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. Gospel: Luke 5:27-32.

9:00 a.m. Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos

9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

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

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.