

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, September 28, 2025

"Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

This Gospel riding brings us face to face with one of the most transformative moments in the lives of the apostles: the encounter with Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. It is a story that begins in the ordinary and ends in the extraordinary.

Peter and his companions were not idly waiting for a miracle; they were weary fishermen, worn down by a long, fruitless night. Their empty nets spoke not only of professional failure but also of the fragility of human effort. How often in our lives do we, too, labor with all our strength, yet find ourselves with nothing to show? We know the weight of disappointment, the sting of futility, and the silence of prayers that seem unanswered.

Into this very moment of emptiness, Jesus enters. He steps into Simon's boat, the space of his daily struggle, his livelihood, his vulnerability. He does not call Peter from a mountaintop or a sanctuary but from the very heart of his exhaustion. This is the first miracle: the Lord does not wait for us to be successful, holy, or prepared. He comes precisely when our nets are empty and our hearts are tired. Then comes the invitation: *"Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch."* This word of Jesus is both a challenge and a promise. It asks Peter to risk again, to go beyond the safe shallows into the depths where fear and uncertainty dwell. To obey means to surrender control, to move from self-reliance to trust. How hard this is for us, who cling to our own ways, who find safety in routines, who dread risking failure one more time. Yet it is in this obedience "at your word, I will let down the nets" that Peter discovers abundance.

The overflowing catch is not just about fish; it is about the revelation of who Jesus is. Confronted with divine power, Peter falls to his knees and says, *"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."* Here we see the paradox of every authentic encounter with God: the more we taste His holiness, the more unworthy we feel. Yet Jesus does not depart. He does not shame or reject Peter. Instead, He lifts him up with the words: *"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."*

This is the heart of discipleship: the Lord takes our weakness, our failures, even our sin, and transforms them into a vocation, into a mission of life. The boat that once carried empty nets now becomes the vessel of salvation for others.

And so they leave everything and follow Him. This radical letting go is not about despising their past, but about stepping into a future anchored not in themselves, but in Christ.

For us, this gospel is an invitation to hear Jesus speak into our own places of emptiness. Where in our lives are the nets empty? Where do we feel tired, discouraged, or unworthy? The Lord comes to those very places, asking us to trust Him enough to launch into the deep again. To risk faith, to risk love, to risk obedience. And if we dare, we too will find our lives overflowing, not with fish, but with grace, meaning, and a mission greater than ourselves.

The miracle is not only that the nets were filled, but that hearts were changed. That is the true abundance: when an encounter with Christ moves us from fear to trust, from failure to mission, from clinging to the shore to following Him into the unknown depths of God's plan.

The Courage to live courageously as Catholic

For us, the members of the Dormition of the Mother of God parish, courage in faith is not something distant or abstract. It is the daily call the Lord places before us, to let His light shine through our lives in a world that often prefers shadows. Each of us, in our own vocation, is asked to be a witness: in our families, at work, in our friendships, and in the way we live together as a parish community.

Courageous witness does not always look like bold speeches or dramatic gestures. Sometimes it is as simple as choosing patience in a moment of frustration, offering forgiveness when we have every reason to hold on to resentment, or speaking the truth when silence would be easier. In these quiet decisions, made every day by the members of this parish, Christ becomes visible. He is made present when we care for the sick, when we welcome the stranger, when we extend kindness to those who are hurting.

But courage also means being ready to speak of our hope when the opportunity arises. The Dormition of the Mother of God is not only the name of our parish; it is a living mystery that teaches us how to live and die in Christ. Like the Mother of God, who bore witness to her Son by her faith, her “yes,” and her presence at the Cross, we too are called to bear witness, not by force, but by love, not by arrogance, but with gentleness and reverence. People around us are longing for hope. How powerful it is when members of this parish share the reason for their hope: the living Christ who abides with us, who gives meaning to our struggles, and who promises life beyond death.

We must remember: this courage does not come from ourselves. We are not witnesses because we are strong, but because God has chosen to work through our weakness. It is His Spirit that strengthens the tired parent, the overworked employee, the elderly member who continues to pray faithfully, the young person searching for meaning. Each act of fidelity, each word spoken in love, each quiet prayer offered in trust, these are the living testimonies that make our parish a light in this community.

To be a member of the Dormition of the Mother of God parish is to carry the same mission the apostles received: not to keep Christ hidden within us, but to let Him be seen in us. Our courage is not about never being afraid, it is about being faithful even when we are afraid. It is about trusting that Jesus, who has conquered death, is alive among us and will use our lives, however ordinary, to draw others to Himself.

May our parish, then, be known not only for its beautiful liturgies but for the living witness of its members, men and women, young and old, who show by their words and their actions that Christ is truly alive. This is our vocation: to be a community of courage, a community of love, a community of hope. And if we live this way, quietly but faithfully, the Lord will make our little parish a great net, drawing many into the joy of His Kingdom.

**Dormition of the Mother of God
Ukrainian Catholic Church**

Rummage Sale

Saturday Oct 18, 2025

8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Sunday Oct 19, 2025

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

**& Bake
Sale!**



**Clothes,
Kid & Baby,
Home Decor, Dishes,
Books, Art Supplies,
& More!**



**3720 West Maryland Ave.
Phoenix, Arizona. 85019**

Dear Parishioners and friends

We are happy to share some exciting news with you!
Our **new parish website** is now live, and it’s more **functional, welcoming, and user-friendly** than ever before! We are deeply grateful to **Martha**, who designed and guided this transformation with so much care and dedication. Her talent and generosity have created a digital space where our parish can grow closer in faith and stay connected every day.
As part of this update, you can now:

Read the daily bulletin and Gospel reflections online

Receive the bulletin directly by email

Scan a QR code in the vestibule to view the bulletin before entering the church

Access the Sunday Propers digitally, before the Service.

This change also helps us care for creation and reduce costs: by going digital, we are saving both money and many trees. We will no longer print the Sunday bulletin every week, but everything you need is just a click or a scan away.
We also welcome your input! Please don’t hesitate to share any feedback or suggestions, your voice matters in helping us continue to grow as a vibrant, faithful, and connected parish community.
With gratitude,
Fr Hugo

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“Heavenly King, Comforter..”: History and Spiritual Meaning of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

1. Historical Background

The prayer “*Heavenly King, Comforter...*” is one of the most beloved and widely used prayers in our Byzantine tradition.

Early origins: This prayer likely took shape in the 4th century, during the golden age of the Church Fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. John Chrysostom). The Church at that time was defending the full divinity of the Holy Spirit against heresies that tried to reduce Him to a mere force or influence. This prayer boldly proclaims Him as King, Lord, and Giver of Life.

Liturgical use: While the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom does not begin with this prayer for the congregation, the priest and deacon recite it privately in the **preparatory prayers** before the public part of the Liturgy begins. Over the centuries, the prayer also entered into Vespers, Matins, and the Hours, until it became the standard way Byzantine Christians begin almost every liturgical service.

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Pentecostal character: The prayer is omitted from Pascha until Pentecost, when it returns in a solemn way during the kneeling prayers of Pentecost Vespers. This reminds us that the Spirit is the gift of the risen Christ, poured out upon the Church at Pentecost. Every time we pray *“Heavenly King”* we are entering into our own personal Pentecost.

2. Theological and Spiritual Meaning

Each phrase of this short prayer is packed with meaning:

“Heavenly King” The Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son in majesty and glory. When we call Him “King,” we confess His divinity and authority in our lives.

“Comforter, Spirit of Truth” The Greek word *Parakletos* means Advocate, Helper, Consoler. Jesus promised this Spirit in John 14:16–17. He comforts us in trials and guides us into all truth.

“Who are everywhere present and fill all things” The Spirit is not limited by space or time. He permeates all of creation, sustaining it, and dwells within the Church and within our hearts.

“Treasury of blessings and Giver of life” Every good gift comes from Him. He gives both physical life (our breath) and spiritual life (grace, faith, holiness).

“Come and dwell within us” This is the heart of the prayer: we invite the Spirit to make our souls His temple, to remain with us as He once filled the apostles in the Upper Room.

“Cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One” The Spirit is the sanctifier. We cannot purify ourselves; He cleanses our hearts, heals our wounds, and saves us.

This prayer is more than words, it is the summary of our Christian life. To begin any service with it means that nothing in the Church, nothing in our lives, can bear fruit unless it is animated by the Holy Spirit.

3. What This Means for Us at Dormition Parish

For us, the members of the **Dormition of the Mother of God parish**, this prayer is both a guide and a challenge:

In our parish life: Before our Divine Liturgy, before every meeting, before serving others, we must first call upon the Spirit. It is not our cleverness or planning that makes the Church alive, it is the Spirit who “fills all things” and unites us in love.

In our families: The Spirit must be invited into our homes. Every time we begin a meal, a family prayer, or even a difficult conversation, we can whisper *“Heavenly King, Comforter...”* and trust that He will guide us.

In our personal struggles: When we feel weak, confused, or stained by sin, this prayer becomes our lifeline. It reminds us that we do not need to rely on ourselves, the Spirit Himself comes to dwell within us, to cleanse and renew us.

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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, September 28

"Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost"

"Our Venerable Father and Confessor Chariton"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 **Gospel:** Luke 5:1-11

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 **Dr Laurel Retay-Nagle** from Soutus family

Monday, September 29

"Our Venerable Father Cyriacus the Anchorite"

Epistle: Ephesians 1:22-2:3. **Gospel:** Luke 4:38-44

Tuesday, September 30

"The Priest-Martyr Gregory, Bishop of Great Armenia"

Epistle: Ephesians 2:19-3:7. **Gospel:** Luke 5:12-16

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, October 1

"The Protection of the Holy Theotokos"

Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7. **Gospel:** Luke 10:38-42; 11:21-28.

Thursday, October 2

"The Holy-Priest Martyr Cyprian; and the Holy Martyr Justina"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:14-19. **Gospel:** Luke 6:12-19

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, October 3

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Dionysius the Areopagite"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:17-25. **Gospel:** Luke 6:17-23

Saturday, October 4

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens"

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 14:20-25. **Gospel:** Luke 5:17-26

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, October 5

"17th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Martyr Charitina"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1. **Gospel:** Luke 6:31-36

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 **Dr Laurel Retay-Nagle** from parishioners

