

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, November 30, 2025

"25th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

Christ's healing of the woman bent over for eighteen years is a profound revelation of divine tenderness and the liberating power of mercy. In this sacred moment, we witness a God who sees beyond the surface, who does not wait for a plea, a cry, or an act of faith.

This woman does not ask for healing; she does not seek attention, nor does she strive to come near to Christ on her own. She is simply present in the synagogue, quietly bearing her suffering. And yet, Jesus sees her before she speaks, before she knows what to ask, before any of her actions. With compassionate authority, He calls her forward and sets her free from the chains of affliction.

This act of healing speaks volumes about the nature of God's mercy: it is not given according to our worthiness, eloquence, or strength. It is a mercy that flows directly from the heart of God, who, seeing us in our deepest condition, desires not only to heal but to restore.

In this, we learn that divine compassion is not a response to our deserving, but to our need, and it flows freely from God's love for His creation.

In Eastern Christian spirituality, this woman stands as a powerful symbol of the human soul under the weight of sin and sorrow. When the passions and struggles of life weigh heavily upon us, we, too, become bent over, unable to lift our gaze toward the Divine.

The burdens we carry silently, the wounds we grow accustomed to, the weariness that feels like our natural state these all contribute to a soul bent inward, closed off from the light of God. Yet, even in this condition, Christ does not abandon us. He approaches, He calls, He touches, and He straightens what has been twisted by years of brokenness.

His healing is not merely physical; it is a restoration to the divine purpose for every soul: to stand upright before God in dignity, freedom, and communion.

The reaction of the synagogue leader to Christ's act of mercy reveals a deeper, more insidious form of spiritual illness: the rigidity of legalism. While the woman's bent body prevents her from looking up, the synagogue leader's hardened heart prevents him from seeing the mercy of God at work. Both are imprisoned, but only one is open to the possibility of healing.

This contrast teaches us a crucial spiritual lesson: that spiritual blindness can masquerade as correctness. The obsession with rules and the external observance of laws can suffocate the deeper call to compassion. In the Eastern Christian tradition, true obedience is never separated from mercy; the Sabbath is fulfilled not by restriction, but by restoration, by the healing of the human person.

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Celebrating Ukrainian Heritage

January 10th 2026



**PLEASE
JOIN US!**

Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church
INVITES YOU to the FIRST UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL.
Enjoy Ukrainian Performances, Arts & Crafts, Vendors,
Music, and more!

Location: 3720 W Maryland Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85019

www.arizonaukrainianfest.com

A Note To Think About It.....

I am delighted to share a joyful initiative that has emerged from the heart of our community. A group of dedicated parishioners has brought forward a beautiful idea: to host a one-day Ukrainian Festival on our church grounds on January 10, 2026.

This celebration will not only highlight the richness of Ukrainian culture but also strengthen our unity as a parish family and open our doors to the wider community.

As your pastor, I wholeheartedly commend this idea and the generous effort already being invested to make this event meaningful and successful.

A festival like this is more than a celebration it is a witness to our heritage, our faith, and the warmth of our parish life.

Today, I extend a heartfelt invitation to every one of you: ***“Do not be afraid to volunteer”***

Your gifts, your time, and your presence are deeply needed.

Whether you can help with planning, organization, hospitality, setup, cleanup, or simply offer a willing hand on the day of the festival, your contribution will make a real difference.

Our parish is at its strongest when we work together. This festival is an opportunity for us to build something beautiful as one community rooted in faith, enriched by culture, and united in love.

To all who have already offered to volunteer: **thank you.** Your enthusiasm and generosity are a blessing to our church, and your example encourages others to join in.

As we look forward to this special day, let us carry the spirit of joy, cooperation, and hospitality in our hearts. May God guide our preparations and bless our efforts, so that this Ukrainian Festival becomes a moment of grace for all who take part.

With gratitude and pastoral blessing,.

Fr. Hugo



Feast of St. Nicholas

This year we will celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas on the Eve of the Feast, Friday, December 5 at 6:00 PM. We warmly invite you to come and pray with us as we honor this beloved saint, a shining example of generosity, compassion, and steadfast faith.

May his holy intercession inspire us as we continue our journey toward the Nativity.

All are welcome!

“Do not condemn, and you will be free.”

Abba Moses the Black

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Christ's response to the synagogue leader reveals the gentleness of divine authority. He refuses to allow the woman's dignity to be overshadowed by cold judgment or rigid interpretation of the law. By calling her "a daughter of Abraham," He affirms her inherent worth and identity. In that simple phrase, Christ restores not only her physical health but her place among God's people. To be healed by Christ is never simply to be fixed or made whole; it is to be re-established in relationship with God and with His people, to be seen and loved as one of His own.

This Gospel passage invites each of us to examine the areas of our hearts where we remain bent over, burdened, or hidden. What weights, whether of sin, sorrow, or fear, keep us from standing upright before God with freedom and joy? What unspoken wounds have we grown so accustomed to that they shape the very posture of our lives? And equally important, where do we, like the synagogue leader, cling to a sense of correctness or control, preventing us from recognizing the surprising ways God is at work in our lives?

Christ calls each of us to come forward, to let Him touch the places in our hearts and lives that we cannot straighten by our own effort. He comes to free us not only from the weight of our wounds but from the suffocating confines of judgment, fear, and spiritual isolation.

When He speaks the word of liberation, the soul rises, breathes again, and begins to glorify God, standing in the fullness of its dignity.

May we, like the woman in the synagogue, allow Christ to see us as we are, to call us forward with gentle compassion, and to place His healing hands upon our lives. And may we, standing upright in the presence of God, glorify Him with hearts made whole, free, and full of joy.



A Note of Gratitude

With heartfelt appreciation, I extend a sincere thank you to all who continue to offer financial support to our church. Your generosity strengthens our parish family, sustains our ministries, and allows us to continue the good work entrusted to us by Christ.

May the Lord, who sees the goodness of every giving heart, grant you abundant blessings. May He bless you with good health, happiness, peace, and prosperity, and reward your kindness a hundredfold for all you so lovingly share.

Thank you once again for your faithful support and your commitment to the life of our parish.

May God bless you and your families always.

The courage to recognize that the hardening of our heart prevents us from seeing others with mercy and compassion.

In the Eastern tradition, courage is not merely the boldness to act, but the quiet bravery to let God soften what we have allowed to become hardened within us. A hardened heart is rarely something we choose all at once; it grows slowly, layer by layer, each time we protect ourselves instead of opening ourselves to the life of Christ. And yet the Gospel repeatedly shows us that God's grace does its most transformative work precisely in the places where we are least willing to let Him in.

The courage to recognize the hardness of our hearts is itself a work of the Holy Spirit. It takes courage to admit that we have grown accustomed to seeing others through the lens of judgment, disappointment, or fear. It takes courage to confess that people's wounds irritate us more than they evoke compassion. But in the Eastern spiritual vision, this admission is the beginning of healing because God never enters a heart pretending to be whole. He enters a heart that finally dares to say, "Lord, I cannot soften myself. You must do it."

We know our hearts have hardened when the suffering of others begins to feel like an inconvenience. Perhaps a neighbor asks for help when we feel too busy. Perhaps someone in our family struggles again with the same weakness, and instead of patience, irritation rises. Perhaps a person we disagree with shares their sorrow, and we feel nothing. These are not moments of failure; they are revelations gentle epiphanies from God showing us where mercy has grown thin. The Fathers teach that God allows these encounters not to accuse us but to awaken us, so we can see clearly the condition of our soul.

The person who annoys us, interrupts us, or burdens us becomes, in the light of the Gospel, a holy visitation. Christ does not come only in the Eucharist, or in prayer, or in the stillness of our heart; He also comes to us disguised in the weaknesses and needs of others. When we cannot perceive Him there, it reveals not His absence but the dullness of our spiritual sight. The courage we are called to have is the courage to look again to say, "Lord, open the eyes of my heart so that I may see You in this person before me."

Hardness of heart often grows from wounds we have not allowed God to touch. Perhaps someone betrayed us long ago, and we still guard our heart with suspicion. Perhaps life has exhausted us, and we protect ourselves by not feeling too deeply. Perhaps we have been disappointed by the very people we tried to help. Yet Christ invites us to a different way. He does not tell us to be naïve or to let ourselves be trampled; He invites us to allow His mercy to be stronger than our fear. The essence of courage is not in pretending we are unhurt it is in bringing that hurt into the light of Christ, so it does not distort our vision of others.

In the Eastern understanding, mercy flows from a heart that knows its own poverty. The saints became compassionate not because they were naturally gentle, but because they saw clearly how much they themselves needed God's forgiveness. Someone who has tasted the tenderness

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**DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
UKRAINIAN FUNDRAISER**

SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

Agenda:

Registration will begin at 8:00am

Safety Briefing 8:30am

Shoot Begins 9am

Lunch & Prizes immediately following

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- ✓ Lunch
- ✓ Ammunition & Shotgun
- ✓ Safety Review
- ✓ Raffle prizes!

DEC. 13TH, 2025

www.ukrainianchurch.org/sportingclayshoot

REGISTRATION:

- ✓ Individual Shooter \$200
- ✓ 4 Person Team \$800

SPONSORSHIP:

- ✓ Exclusive Title Sponsor \$2000 (Squad included, exclusive signage)
- ✓ Station Sponsor \$300
- ✓ Awards Sponsor \$400
- ✓ Door Prize Sponsor \$500
- ✓ Shell Sponsor \$600
- ✓ Lunch Sponsor \$700

**SQUADS OF 4 COMPETING FOR TOP INDIVIDUAL AND
TEAM PRIZES**

LOCATION

Rio Salado Sportsman's Club
3960 N Usery Pass Rd., Mesa, AZ 85207

of God cannot help but extend tenderness to others. When we remember how patiently Christ deals with our repeated failures, how gently He waits for our repentance, how generously He pours grace upon us even when we resist it becomes possible to see others not as irritations but as fellow travelers who are just as needy as we are.

Practical courage appears in small, hidden moments. It looks like pausing before reacting in anger and saying a silent “Lord, have mercy.” It looks like choosing to listen to someone’s story even when time feels tight. It looks like praying for the person who frustrates us instead of replaying their offense in our mind. It looks like offering kindness to someone who may never thank us. These small acts soften the soil of our heart and allow the Spirit to breathe life into what has grown dry.

Ultimately, the courage to acknowledge our hardened heart is the courage to believe that God can restore us. It is the courage to let go of our defenses, our pride, and our self-protective instincts and to trust that Christ’s love is strong enough to remake us from within.

When we dare to say “Yes” to this work, our heart becomes a place where mercy naturally flows a place where compassion is not forced but becomes our very way of seeing.

And then, with hearts made tender by grace, we begin to recognize Christ everywhere in the poor, in the broken, in the difficult, in the overlooked, and even in those who have wounded us. For the softened heart becomes a living icon of God’s mercy, revealing His presence in every human face.



Please Note!!!!

You are warmly invited to join the faithful members of the Dormition of the Mother of God Parish who gather in prayer every **Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 6:30 PM** all from the comfort of their homes through our Zoom prayer meetings.

By God’s grace, this coming January we will begin our **fourth year of uninterrupted prayer together**, a beautiful testament to the strength and unity of our parish family.

These evenings of prayer have become a source of peace, encouragement, and spiritual closeness for many, and we would be blessed to have you with us.

If you have any special intentions or prayer requests, please send them to DMofGod@cox.net, and we will gladly lift them up before the Lord.

May this simple gathering of hearts continue to draw us closer to Christ and to one another. All are welcome!

**“Prayer softens the heart, unites the faithful, and opens the soul
to the gentle workings of God.”**



Ukrainian Christmas Pysanky Workshop

Join us for our beginner-friendly Ukrainian Pysanky (Egg Decorating) workshop where you will learn about the basic techniques, materials, colors, and designs of this ancient Eastern European art of egg decorating! After creating your beautiful Pysanky, we will turn it into a Christmas ornament! All supplies will be provided.

DATE & TIME	LOCATION	ENTRY FEE
20 DEC 2025 FROM 10 AM - 1 PM	DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD CHURCH 3720 W MARYLAND AVE. PHOENIX, AZ 85019	\$35 PER PERSON

FOR REGISTRATION & INFORMATION



[HTTPS://UKRAINIANCHRISTMASPYSANKY.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://ukrainianchristmaspysanky.eventbrite.com)

Ukrainian Catholic Parish
Pastor
Very Rev. Hugo Soutus
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Phoenix, AZ. 85019
Rectory: (602) 973-3667
Parish: (602) 347-9267
Emergency:
602-329-3281

E-mail:
DMofGod@cox.net

Website:
www.Ukrainianchurch.org

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, November 30

"25th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy and All-Praiseworthy Apostle Andrew the First-Called"

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6 Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

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 & good health for Lawrence, Christine (Lesya) Bell and their family
from the parish

Monday, December 1

"The Holy Prophet Nahum"

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:1-7 Gospel: Luke 19:37-44

Tuesday, December 2

"The Holy Prophet Habakkuk"

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:8-14 Gospel: Luke 19:45-48

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, December 3

"The Holy Prophet Zephaniah"

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:18-20 & 2:8-15 Gospel: Luke 20:1-8

Thursday, December 4

"The Great-Martyr Barbara"

Epistle: 1 Timothy 3:1-13 Gospel: Luke 20:9-18

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, December 5

"Our Venerable and God-bearing Father Sabbas the Sanctified"

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-6:2. Gospel: Mathews 11:27-30.

6:00 p.m. Gods blessings & good health for Anna Dworskij from Soutus family

Saturday, December 6

"Our Holy Father Nicholas"

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21. Gospel: Luke 6:17-23.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, December 7

"26th Sunday After Pentecost"

"Our Holy Father Ambrose"

Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19 Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

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 & good health for Anna Dworskij from the parish