

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, October 19, 2025

"19th Sunday after Pentecost"

Reflections for this Weekend

In Luke 8:5-15, Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower, using the image of a farmer scattering seed to explain how people receive the word of God. The sower, who represents God, spreads the seed generously, but the seed falls on different types of soil, each reflecting a different response to God's message.

The first seed falls on the path, where it is trampled on and quickly eaten by birds. This represents those who hear God's word but whose hearts are hardened maybe due to cynicism, pride, or distraction, preventing the message from taking root. The enemy, or the forces that oppose God, snatches it away before it can make any impact.

The second seed falls on rocky soil, where it begins to grow quickly but withers when the sun comes out because it has no root. This represents those who receive God's word with joy but lack depth in their faith. When challenges, difficulties, or persecution arise, their faith fades because it hasn't been nurtured and deepened enough to withstand hardship.

The third seed falls among thorns, and although it begins to grow, it is eventually choked by the thorns. This is the person whose life is crowded with worries, wealth, the pursuit of pleasure, the distractions of daily life, our jobs, desires, anxieties, can choke the life out of the word of God in us.. The distractions and concerns of life prevent the word from bearing fruit, as it gets choked by competing priorities and desires.

Finally, the fourth seed falls on good soil, where it grows, takes root, and bears fruit.

This represents the person who receives God's word with an open, humble heart, allowing it to grow and transform their life. The word bears fruit in their actions, relationships, and character, bringing about lasting change.

The beauty of this parable lies in the sower's generosity. Despite knowing that some seed will fall on rocky or thorny ground, the sower continues to scatter the seed freely, reflecting God's relentless love and grace. He doesn't withhold the word from anyone, even when some may not be ready to receive it. God continues to offer His message of hope and transformation, always inviting us to open our hearts to Him.

The parable challenges us to examine the condition of our hearts. Are we receptive to God's word, or are we distracted, hardened, or shallow in our faith? It's a call to cultivate the soil of our hearts, making space for God's word to take root, grow, and bear fruit. Even if our hearts are rocky or thorny at times, there's always room for transformation. God's grace invites us to try again, to clear the thorns and soften the soil, so His word can flourish within us.

The parable ultimately speaks to the hope of transformation, that no matter where we are, God's word can bring new life if we are willing to receive it.

The Courage that catholic have to integrate belief into the “normal” routines of work, family, and community life

The courage of the Catholic faithful lies not in the grandiose moments of heroism or the boldness of doctrinal proclamation, but in the quiet, often unseen act of integrating their deep, abiding faith into the everyday rhythms of life.

In the midst of a world that prizes speed, productivity, and material success, Catholics are called to weave the fabric of their beliefs into the ordinary, the mundane, and the routine. This is a courage born not of spectacle, but of silent, steadfast commitment to live out a profound truth in the most intimate and familiar spaces, work, family, and community. The heart of Catholic life, in its most profound sense, is not confined to church walls or sacred rituals. It is lived in the hours spent in the workplace, where mundane tasks can become acts of profound grace. A Catholic, laboring at their desk, in the fields, or in the home, brings to their work the very presence of Christ, whether through the compassion shown to a colleague, the patience offered to a child, or the integrity maintained in the face of pressure. In this, they find that the routine of work is not separate from worship; it is, in fact, a form of worship, a Eucharist of the everyday. Each task becomes an offering of self, a silent prayer that transforms the “normal” into the holy.

The courage to live out one’s faith in family life is similarly deep and sacrificial. In a world that often elevates individualism and personal achievement, Catholics are called to love in ways that reflect God’s sacrificial love. To be a parent, a spouse, a sibling, each of these roles requires a daily surrender of the self. The routine of family life can often be chaotic, with moments of tension, frustration, and exhaustion, yet it is within these very moments that the Catholic finds opportunities for grace. It is the courage to forgive when it seems most difficult, to serve when one feels depleted, to love even when it is not reciprocated. This is the courage of living the Beatitudes not in the realm of the ideal, but in the gritty, sometimes messy reality of human relationships.

And in the community, whether the local parish, the neighborhood, or the broader world, the Catholic finds that their faith must be lived out in service, solidarity, and humility. To be in community is to be called to both serve and to be served, to offer one’s own gifts and to receive the gifts of others in mutual love. It is the courage to speak truth to power, to seek justice for the oppressed, and to care for the poor and marginalized, not because it is easy, but because it is the very heart of the Gospel. It is in this courage that one’s faith is not merely an abstract belief, but a living, breathing force that transforms society from the inside out.

What makes this courage so profound is that it often requires a silent, unseen, and deeply

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personal struggle. We are not merely asked to follow a set of rules, but to be transformed at the core of their being. The call to integrate faith into daily life is a call to witness to something greater than oneself in the midst of a world that often values self-sufficiency over self-sacrifice. And yet, in the midst of these struggles, the Catholic finds a deep joy, because it is in the small, seemingly insignificant acts of faithfulness that the divine presence is revealed. It is in the courage to continue, to persist, to love, and to hope, even when the world seems indifferent, that the Kingdom of God is made manifest. This courage is not a fleeting burst of bravery, but a steady, unwavering commitment to live as if heaven were already present in the midst of earth’s brokenness. It is the courage of saints, not only in their acts of martyrdom, but in their daily perseverance to be faithful to the quiet call of Christ that echoes in the ordinary lives of work, family, and community. Through such acts of courage, the Catholic faithful participate in the ongoing creation of a new heaven and a new earth, one small, faithful act at a time.



We are most appreciative for the generous donations to the church, and pray that the Lord grant you many, many blessings, prosperity and good health!

Thank You!!

On behalf of our entire church community, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to each of you who played a part in the success of our rummage sale. Whether you volunteered your time to organize and prepare, donated items for sale, or helped in any other way, your generous efforts have made a significant impact.

Thanks to your hard work and dedication, we are thrilled to announce that the funds raised will go towards covering the expenses of our first **Arizona Ukrainian Fest**, which will be held on **January 10th, 2026**, right here on our church grounds. This event will be a special celebration of our culture, faith, and community, and it would not have been possible without your support.

Every item donated, every hour spent preparing, and every word of encouragement has made a difference. You are all an essential part of making this event a reality, and for that, we are truly thankful.

Let us continue to work together, united in faith, to make this festival a beautiful celebration of our shared heritage and a blessing for our parish and beyond.

With heartfelt thanks and blessings,

Good to known!!!!

The incense offering at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, particularly when the royal doors are closed and there is no light, is a profound symbol of mystery and spiritual preparation. The ritual is rich in theological significance, drawing from ancient traditions and invoking the presence of God in a way that transcends the visible world.

The Setting: The Royal Doors Closed and No Light

At the outset of the Divine Liturgy, when the royal doors are closed and the church is initially without light, the atmosphere is one of mystery and anticipation. The royal doors, the central doors of the iconostasis (the screen that separates the altar from the nave), symbolize the boundary between the sacred and the profane, between heaven and earth. The fact that they are closed at the beginning of the service serves as a powerful metaphor for the hiddenness of God's presence and the need for purification before entering into the fullness of the Divine.

The absence of light in the church in these early moments heightens the sense of mystery. Light, in Orthodox theology, symbolizes the presence of God, and its absence points to the reality that God is often veiled or hidden in the world. Just as Christ's full revelation to the world was hidden in His incarnation, so too the full glory of God is hidden at the beginning of the Liturgy, awaiting the moment of revelation when the royal doors will open and the light will be brought forth.

The Incense Offering: A Symbol of Prayer and Purification

The use of incense at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy is rich in symbolism. Incense has long been understood as a symbol of prayer ascending to God, particularly drawn from Psalm 141:2:

"Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

As the priest or deacon offers incense at the altar, this act of "censing" is meant to symbolize the prayers of the faithful rising up to God, just as the smoke of the incense ascends to the heavens. The offering of incense is also an act of purification, as incense is an ancient purifier in both religious and spiritual contexts. In the Eastern Catholic Church,

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it represents the purification of the faithful, preparing them to stand in the presence of God. At the start of the Liturgy, when the royal doors are closed and the church remains in darkness, the incense offering signifies that the faithful are entering into the mystery of God's presence, but are still in a state of preparation. The darkness and the closed doors suggest that they are not yet ready to approach the divine mystery in its fullness. The offering of incense, then, acts as a kind of intermediary step, an offering to God that acknowledges His transcendence while preparing the faithful to approach Him more closely.

The Priest's Movements: A Symbol of Christ as the High Priest

In the Divine Liturgy, the priest's movements as he censes are also symbolic. The priest will cense the altar, the holy objects, the iconostasis, and the faithful, moving in a pattern that reflects the sanctification of all things through Christ. The act of censuring, especially when the royal doors are closed, can be seen as a priestly action that mirrors Christ's own priesthood. Just as Christ, as the High Priest, offered Himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of the world, so the priest offers the incense as a form of spiritual preparation, setting the stage for the eventual revelation of Christ to His people.

The incense, as the offering of the priest, also recalls the biblical imagery of Christ's offering of Himself on the altar of the Cross. In the book of Revelation (5:8), the saints are seen offering incense before the throne of God, which represents the prayers of the faithful. In the Liturgy, this act of censuring is seen as an anticipation of the offering of Christ Himself, who will be made present in the Eucharist at the proper moment of the Liturgy.

The Theological Significance: The Hidden God Revealed

The closing of the royal doors and the absence of light at the beginning of the Liturgy point to the mystery of God's hiddenness. Just as the full revelation of Christ was hidden in His incarnation, so too the full glory of God is veiled at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The incense, however, signifies that even in God's apparent hiddenness, He is still near. It is through the prayers of the faithful (symbolized by the incense) that God's presence will be made manifest.

As the censuring continues, the royal doors are eventually opened, the light of the candles is

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brought forward, and the full revelation of the divine mystery unfolds. The journey from darkness to light in the Divine Liturgy mirrors the spiritual journey of the Christian life: from ignorance and separation from God to the revelation of His presence and glory. The incense thus serves as both a preparationY and an anticipation of this revelation. It symbolizes the prayers of the Church rising toward God, a visible sign of the invisible grace that will soon be fully manifested in the Eucharist.

Conclusion

The incense offering at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, with the royal doors closed and the church in darkness, is a powerful ritual that speaks to the hiddenness of God and the need for purification before entering into His presence. It is a moment of preparation, of waiting in hope, as the faithful offer their prayers symbolically through the rising smoke of the incense. The closed doors, the absence of light, and the scent of the incense all point to the mysterious nature of God, who is both hidden and revealed. This ritual reflects the journey of the Christian soul: from darkness and separation to the light and unity found in the Eucharist. It is a profound reminder that, though God may be hidden for a time, He is always present and always drawing His people closer to Himself.



As we continue to deepen our faith and grow together as a community, it's important to remember the power and beauty of prayer, not only during the Divine Liturgy, but also throughout the week. Prayer is a way to strengthen our bond with God and with one another, and even in the busyness of our daily lives, it can be a source of comfort and grace.

For the past three years, a dedicated group of parishioners has been gathering virtually every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 6:30pm via Zoom, committing to pray together in the comfort of their own homes. It's been a truly special time of community and reflection, and we would love for you to join us.

If you're interested in participating, all you need to do is reach out by sending an email to DMofDod@cox.net. In your email, just request the prayers, readings, and the Zoom meeting number and password to log in.

We look forward to having you with us in prayer as we continue to walk this spiritual journey together.

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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 19

"19th Sunday after Pentecost"

"The Holy Prophet Joel"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9. Gospel: Luke 8:5-15

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

Monday, October 20

"The Holy Great-Martyr Artemius"

Epistle: Philippians 2:12-16. Gospel: Luke 9:18-22

Tuesday, October 21

"Our Venerable Father Hilarion the Great"

Epistle: Philippians 2:16-23. Gospel: Luke 9:23-27

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, October 22

"The Holy Wonderworker and Equal-to-the Apostles Abercius"

Epistle: Philippians 2:24-30. Gospel: Luke 9:44-50

Thursday, October 23

"The Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord in the Flesh James"

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19. Gospel: Matthew 13:54-58.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, October 24

"The Holy Martyrs Aretas and Those with Him"

Epistle: Philippians 3:8-19. Gospel: Luke 10:1-15

Saturday, October 25

"The Holy Martyrs and Notaries Marcian and Martyrius"

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. Gospel: Luke 7:1-10

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

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