

Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава навіки!



Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Glory for ever!

УСПЕННЯ ПРЕСВЯТОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ

Dormition of the Mother of God

Sunday, May 31, 2026

“1st Sunday after Pentecost Sunday of All Saints”

Reflections for this Weekend

The words of Christ in Matthew 10:32 to 33, 37 to 38, and 19:27 to 30 lead us into one of the deepest mysteries of the spiritual life, the mystery of loving God above all things and discovering that nothing surrendered to Him is ever truly lost. These passages are not merely invitations to religious commitment, they are a call to transformation of the heart, a journey from earthly attachment into divine communion.

When Christ says that whoever acknowledges Him before others will be acknowledged before the Father, He speaks not only about public confession with words, but about a life that reveals His presence. In the Eastern Christian tradition, faith is not simply agreement with doctrines, it is participation in the life of God. Every act of mercy, every moment of forgiveness, every hidden sacrifice becomes a confession of Christ before the world.

The saints teach that the greatest witness is not found in loud proclamations but in a heart that has become transparent to the light of God.

The Lord then speaks difficult words about loving Him more than father, mother, son, or daughter. At first these words may seem harsh, but they reveal a profound spiritual truth. Christ is not asking us to love our families less, He is inviting us to love Him first so that we may love everyone else more purely. Every human love reaches its fullness only when rooted in God. When Christ occupies the center of the heart, all relationships become sanctified and healed. Without Him, even our most sincere loves can become possessive, fearful, or self seeking.

The command to take up the cross is equally profound. In the Eastern understanding, the cross is not merely suffering, it is the path of self emptying love. The cross is carried whenever we choose humility over pride, forgiveness over resentment, obedience over self will, and love over comfort. To carry the cross means to allow the old self to die so that the life of Christ may gradually shine through us. Every struggle accepted with faith becomes a meeting place with God.

Peter's question about what the disciples will receive for leaving everything behind reveals a concern that often exists in every human heart. We wonder whether our sacrifices matter, whether God truly sees what we have surrendered. Christ answers with extraordinary

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tenderness. He promises that no sacrifice made for His sake is forgotten. Yet the greatest reward is not material blessing or heavenly honor. The true reward is Christ Himself.

The saints understood this mystery deeply. They left homes, possessions, comforts, and ambitions, only to discover an inexhaustible treasure. The more they emptied themselves, the more they were filled with divine life. What appeared to the world as loss became eternal gain.

The final words, that many who are first will be last and the last first, remind us that God's Kingdom operates according to a different measure. In heaven, greatness is measured by humility, power by love, and success by holiness. The soul that quietly follows Christ, carrying its cross with trust and offering everything to Him, may appear unnoticed on earth, yet shines brightly before the throne of God. There the faithful discover that every sacrifice became grace, every cross became glory, and every surrender became eternal joy.



As we journey together in faith, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each member of our parish family. Our church is much more than a building, it is a community of believers united in prayer, worship, love, and service. Every smile, every prayer, every act of kindness, every sacrifice, and every helping hand contributes to the life and vitality of our parish.

In a world that often brings uncertainty and challenges, let us remember that we do not walk alone. Christ walks with us, strengthens us, and calls us to support one another as brothers and sisters in faith. The Church becomes strongest when we pray together, worship together, and care for one another with genuine Christian love.

I encourage each of you to remain steadfast in prayer and faithful in your relationship with the Lord. Never underestimate the power of your presence at the Divine Liturgy, your prayers for one another, or your simple acts of charity. These are the moments through which God transforms hearts and builds His Kingdom among us.

If you are carrying burdens, worries, or struggles, know that you are remembered in prayer. If you are experiencing blessings and joys, give thanks to God and share that joy with others. Together we form the Body of Christ, and each person is precious and important in the eyes of the Lord.

May the Most Holy Mother of God continue to protect and guide our parish family. May our Lord fill your homes with peace, your hearts with hope, and your lives with His abundant blessings. Let us continue to grow in faith, encourage one another, and joyfully proclaim the love of Christ through our words and actions.

Thank you for being a vital part of our parish family. Your faithfulness is a blessing, and your presence enriches our community more than you may ever realize.

With gratitude, prayers, and blessings,

The Spiritual Courage to the struggle against resentment !!!

The ninth step of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* is devoted to remembrance of wrongs, or more precisely, to the struggle against resentment and the hidden wounds that linger within the human heart. John Climacus understands that few spiritual battles require more courage than the battle to forgive. While external struggles can be seen by others, the struggle against bitterness often takes place in silence, deep within the soul, where only God can fully see. It is here that true spiritual courage is revealed.

Every person experiences moments of hurt, disappointment, betrayal, or rejection. Words spoken carelessly, actions done unjustly, or wounds inflicted by those closest to us can leave lasting marks upon the heart. Human nature naturally wants to remember these injuries. The mind revisits them, the emotions relive them, and the ego uses them as evidence to justify anger. Saint John Climacus teaches that remembrance of wrongs is a poison that slowly darkens the soul. Even when outward peace appears to exist, hidden resentment continues to separate the heart from the fullness of God's grace.

The courage required in this step is not the courage to fight another person, but the courage to fight one's own wounded pride. Often we believe that holding onto resentment protects us from further pain. In reality, it imprisons us. The person who cannot forgive remains spiritually tied to the offense and to the offender. The wound continues to govern thoughts, emotions, and relationships. Forgiveness, however, breaks those chains and restores freedom to the soul.

From the perspective of Eastern Christian spirituality, forgiveness is not merely a moral obligation. It is participation in the very life of Christ. On the Cross, our Lord prayed for those who crucified Him. He responded to hatred with mercy, to violence with compassion, and to rejection with love. Every act of forgiveness becomes an imitation of Christ and a sharing in His divine life. Yet this imitation requires courage because it asks us to surrender our demand for revenge, our desire to be vindicated, and our attachment to being right.

Saint John Climacus understands that forgiveness does not always happen instantly. Sometimes the wound is deep and the healing process is gradual. Courage is needed to return repeatedly to prayer, placing the injury before God again and again. There are moments when forgiveness feels impossible, yet grace accomplishes what human strength alone cannot achieve. The courageous soul continues to pray even when emotions resist. It chooses mercy even when pain remains. It trusts God to heal what seems beyond healing.

One of the deepest insights of this step is that resentment harms the person who carries it more than the person who caused it. Bitterness becomes a heavy burden. It steals peace, weakens prayer, and clouds spiritual vision. The heart becomes divided, wanting God while

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simultaneously clinging to anger. Saint John teaches that the soul cannot ascend freely toward God while carrying the weight of remembered offenses. Forgiveness is therefore not simply a gift offered to another person, it is a gift offered to oneself.

The courage of the ninth step also involves humility. Pride constantly whispers that we have every right to remain offended. Humility, however, remembers our own need for God's mercy. When we recognize how often we have been forgiven by the Lord, our hearts become more capable of extending forgiveness to others. We begin to see fellow human beings not as enemies but as wounded people struggling with their own weaknesses and failures.

This step invites believers into a profound freedom. The person who forgives is no longer controlled by past injuries. The memory may remain, but its power to wound is diminished by grace. The heart gradually becomes peaceful, gentle, and compassionate. Prayer deepens because nothing stands between the soul and God.

Ultimately, the ninth step of the Ladder teaches that forgiveness is an act of spiritual courage rooted in love. It is the courage to release pain into God's hands, the courage to abandon resentment, and the courage to trust divine justice rather than personal revenge. Such courage transforms the heart into a dwelling place of peace, where the mercy of Christ reigns and where the soul becomes increasingly capable of reflecting the boundless love of God.



Vacation and Our Relationship with God

Summer is a wonderful time for rest, travel, and spending time with family and friends. Vacations help renew our bodies and minds, but they should never become a vacation from God. Wherever our travels may take us, God continues to walk with us, bless us, and invite us into a deeper relationship with Him.

For this reason, the Church encourages all faithful to participate in the Sunday Divine Liturgy, even while away from home. Sunday is the Lord's Day, a sacred time when we gather to worship God, hear His Word, and receive the gift of the Holy Eucharist. The Divine Liturgy nourishes our souls, strengthens our faith, and reminds us that Christ remains at the center of our lives.

As you enjoy your summer travels and activities, remember to make time for prayer and seek out a church where you can join in the Sunday Divine Liturgy. A vacation enriched by God's presence becomes not only a time of physical rest, but also a time of spiritual renewal.

May God bless you with safe travels, joyful moments with loved ones, and a summer filled with His peace and grace.

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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, May 31

"1st Sunday after Pentecost Sunday of All Saints"

Epistle: Hebrews 11:32-12:2. Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; & 19:27-30
8:50 a.m. The Third Hour and Moleben to the Holy Theotokos
9:30 a.m. Gods blessings and good health for all our parishioners and friends

Monday, June 1

"Holy Martyr Justin, Philosopher and those with Him"

Epistle: Romans 2:28-3:18. Gospel: Matthew 6:31-34. 7:9-11.

Tuesday, June 2

"Our Venerable Father Nicephoros"

Epistle: Romans 4:4-12. Gospel: Matthew 7:15-21.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Wednesday, June 3

"The Holy Martyr Lucilian and His Companions"

Epistle: Romans 4: 13-25. Gospel: Matthew 7:21-23.

Thursday, June 4

"Our Venerable Father Metrophane"

Epistle: Romans 5:10-16. Gospel: Matthew 8:23-27.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Friday, June 5

"The Holy Priest-Martyr Dorotheus"

Epistle: Romans 5:17-6:2. Gospel: Matthew 9:14-17.

Saturday, June 6

"Bessarion and Hilary"

Epistle: Romans 3:19-26. Gospel: Matthew 7:1-8.

6:30 p.m. Evening prayers via Zoom

Sunday, June 7

"Second Sunday after Pentecost"

Epistle: Romans 2:10-16. Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23.

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
In loving memory of +Maria Fagarash and +Elizabeth Martindale from family

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.