



**This week meditations on liturgical texts
from **Skynia Magazine****

July 11-17
The Gregorian calendar

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Stages of meditation

Please find below some schematic prompts for each stage of the meditation on the Word of God. [Read more.](#)

1. Reading

- Read the text
- What does it tell by itself?
- Clear up the context
- Look up the comments
- Find the key-phrase

2. Meditation

- What is my here and now?
- What does the Word tell me?
- Use your imagination
- "Digest" the text
- The Word and my life

3. Prayer

- What will I say in response?
- Recognition and request
- Gratitude and glorifying
- Prayer in the Word
- My participation in the Divine Liturgy

4. Contemplation

- A call to conversion
- Now I am silent
- Staying in the presence of God
- Now He is guiding me

Biblical readings and meditations

July 11

Sunday 7

Romans 15: 1-7

Matthew 9: 27-35

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

Romans 15: 1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Matthew 9: 27-35

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

Meditation

Two poor blind men sincerely – and in full voice! – ask Jesus to have mercy on them, that is, to heal them. Physical blindness is the inability to see things and their beauty. Spiritual blindness is the inability to see the heavenly and transcendent beauty, that is, the true value of things. Jesus, the good and powerful Savior, listens to the persistent request of these men and restores their sight so that they can be active participants of their family and community life.

Restoring the vision reveals the joy and wonder of a new and harmonious view of the world. It allows to share and participate in life, to be filled with joy and love. We are called to look attentively at Jesus and recognize in Him our only Savior and friend, the companion of our journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. Pope Francis says: *Jesus pours out His mercy upon all those He meets. He calls them, makes them come to Him, gathers them, heals and enlightens them, creating a new people that celebrates the wonders of His merciful love* (sermon on June 15, 2016).

In addition, Jesus returns the ability to speak to the mute. When we take the path of conversion and approach the Word that reveals to us the truth about ourselves, we begin to understand God's plan for humanity as if we are learning a new alphabet. The Word awakens new and unexpected words inside of us. We become able to evangelize, comfort, counsel ... The words we used before as weapons suddenly become an instrument of deep and ingrained unity. Formerly unable to utter other than empty and unnecessary words, we become amazed to discover in our hearts and souls new conversations inspired by the Holy Spirit. We were mute, and now we can speak and tell everyone about the great things of God. Lord, let me also have this joy – to look at You with pure and gentle eyes so that I may implement Your mercy for others in my life.

July 12

Monday

1 Corinthians 9: 13-18

Matthew 16: 1-6

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1 Corinthians 9: 13-18

Brethren, do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

Matthew 16: 1-6

The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Then he left them and went away.

When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, “Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Meditation

The 16th chapter of the Gospel by Matthew tells us that the Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven, because they did not have enough evidence of what they saw in His actions. I wonder, would I just as much close my eyes to the miracles Jesus was performing?

The Pharisees and Sadducees are representatives of different philosophical and religious schools in Judea. It was especially important for them to strictly follow the external aspects of the law and traditions of the Jewish religious teachers. These people were supposed to be believers, because they spent so much time *obeying the Lord*. That is, people who knew a lot about the law, about faith and about God, having met Jesus, did not recognize Him and tested Him. They can be understood, because it was about their teaching

and faith which were passed down over many years, and Jesus brought the New Testament with Him. I must also admit that I may not fulfill even the smallest part of what the Church and the community ask of me. However, the Pharisees and Sadducees had such a clear idea of God that even His living presence could not convince them otherwise.

I also have my own vision of my prayer to God... And when I meet Him in a different way, for example, when He reproaches me or quarrels with me, I do not acknowledge Him. This Word of God once again shows me that I must be always open to God, to His active presence, and not wait for a specific confirmation from heaven which should convince me of His presence.

Moreover, as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so the Son of Man is the greatest sign for me by means of His cross (cf. Luke 19:20). What other confirmation do I need?! In the Book of Revelation there are warnings about the signs that will be shown on earth and that should not be believed (cf. Revelation 19:20). Let us always look at the sign of the cross, which is a true manifestation of God's love and mercy.

July 13

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 10: 5-12

Matthew 16: 6-12

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- [Meditation](#)
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1 Corinthians 10: 5-12

Brethren, nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall.

Matthew 16: 6-12

Jesus said to them, “Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They said to one another, “It is because

we have brought no bread.” And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, “You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How could you fail to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!” Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Meditation

Today’s Gospel passage speaks of bread. The bread the apostles ask about seems to be Christ Himself. He is the only bread that can feed everyone. Unexpectedly, Jesus intervenes in their concern with a request that at first glance has nothing to do with the topic of their conversation: *Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. They think about a different meaning of this request: *It is because we have brought no bread*. Then Jesus speaks again, rebuking their little faith. He encourages them to recall what happened recently, that is, the double miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. Not only the number of fed people, but also the number of the gathered baskets is extraordinary. It seems that Christ wants to say that this double miracle, which He performed, must warn them against the *yeast* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It must fully assure them that He is a reliable guarantor of all good in any difficult situation.

And here again He repeats His warning against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. We may recall that in the previous

passage Jesus was asked to show a sign. This is actually the yeast He is talking about, that is, what the Pharisees and Sadducees add, demand, and impose as a duty on themselves and others, as a guarantee and additional provision in their relationship with the Word of God. To the *unleavened bread* from the Book of Exodus, *the bread* of the Passover night of the liberation from Egypt, always present during the Jewish Passover meal, fully illuminated by the Person of Jesus Christ and His Pesach, the Pharisees and Sadducees – and not only them! – add their *yeast*. And this is what Jesus tells to be avoided. Jesus is the only one Who can feed a great community. Only He is able to gather into one community and unite so many different paths. And this community is not a homogeneous mass of people, but a meeting of diversity within Him. Only complete fidelity to Him will help to be fully open and attentive, able to accept another person. Let's not add anything to what Jesus said and did. The Christian is called to follow Him along the way of absolute love for one's own brothers and sisters.

July 14

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 10: 12-22

Matthew 16: 20-24

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- [Meditation](#)
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- [Contemplation](#)

1 Corinthians 10: 12-22

Brethren, so if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table

of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Matthew 16: 20-24

Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Meditation

Today's Gospel excerpt immediately follows Peter's recognition when he told Jesus: *You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God* (Matthew 16:16), hence, we would expect Jesus to answer: *And now go and tell everyone that I am the Messiah*. But He orders His disciples to tell nothing. Why? Since to say *Messiah* would mean the messiah the people were waiting for, who would glorify Jerusalem with his weapons, win over the Romans and establish the kingdom of Israel. Jesus is not that sort of messiah! That is why He orders not

to tell anything.

Peter who recognized the Son of the living God in Jesus was called *rock* that can be used as a foundation block for community development, but when it is rooted into the messiah-winner's traditions it transforms into a stumbling block right away. Thus, the evangelist shows us a certain caricature of a disciple who represents all of us: each of us could be a rock, stone, block for community establishment; if we get this life from God and transfer it to others we are those ideal stones to be used for the construction of God's community. But if we cherish the desire for power, success, ambitions, we become the stumbling block other people will trip over, and we will belong to the devil.

Jesus reminds Peter and each of us: *If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves*, – that does not mean getting disappointed about one's own existence, but just denying those ambitious ideals, *taking up one's cross and following Him*. Cross is not imposed on us, we take the cross to follow Christ. What is this cross like? The cross does not stand for sufferings or diseases that life will definitely bring, but, in the biblical language, the cross is the death penalty for those rejected by the society – it means absolute loss of reputation. Thus, Jesus says: *If someone follows the desire of success, ambitions, (s)he is not thinking of following Me, since following Me means absolute loss of one's own reputation, which is exaggerated love for oneself*.

July 15

Thursday

The Holy Grand Prince

Volodymyr

Galatians 1: 11-19

John 10: 1-9

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Galatians 1: 11-19

Brethren, for I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.

John 10: 1-9

And the Lord said: "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."

Meditation

Today's Gospel excerpt shows us the figure of Jesus a Good Shepherd who *calls his own sheep by name and leads them out*. The first thing attention should be paid to is that He considers every sheep to be *His*, He is their owner and knows them personally. John wisely uses this pronoun pointing to its exclusive belonging. The shepherd personally knows each of His sheep since they belong to Him. He acquired them, one by one, paying the highest price with

His blood shed on the cross. And now, in His Resurrection, He is taking them one by one out of death. What is more, John adds that the sheep *follow him because they know his voice*. The sheep acknowledge their belonging, agree to it and, therefore, follow Him. The relations between the Shepherd and His sheep constitute the relations of mutual love, affinity, recognition, and not passive obedience. Only thanks to such trustful mutual love can we allow to take ourselves from behind the fence of our own poor and confined world in order to meet others, proclaiming the Resurrected God. Only the one who can fully trust can leave his maintenance systems. A person needs to know well whom to trust. The salvation brought by Christ via the mystery of Resurrection may become human destiny on condition (s)he goes through the gate of the holy human nature of Jesus. *I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved*. We are to enter communion with God via the human nature of the Saviour, Jesus. That means that one should recognize human nature as high calling. From the moment God became man no other way has been left to cognize God, to reach Him, than the path of new humanity shown by Christ. In spite of all those false *gate* which keeps attracting us to making mistakes, God's triumph permeates and wins over every doubt of our soul. Since it is much stronger than the "smart" statements denying it. Nothing can destroy the striving for Christ in an individual.

July 16

Friday

1 Corinthians 11: 8-22

Matthew 17: 10-18

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1 Corinthians 11: 8-22

Brethren, indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it.

Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

Matthew 17: 10-18

And the disciples asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He replied, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly.

Meditation

And the disciples asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

The Old Testament ends up with the expectation of Elijah coming, while the Gospel culminates in the death of Christ, when all those present are still waiting for Elijah to come. This expectation is based on the promise that everything of value is always be preceded by something else, paving the way. But Jesus reminds in a loud voice that the fate of all prophets is not to be recognized during the period of their preaching and prophesying. That is the bitter truth – we realize the importance of something or someone only when it is already too late. And still, it would be enough to be humble, plain, patient and loyal to notice how God fills our life with something of value through most ordinary and least noticeable things which make up our existence.

Again, the Gospel writes about Jesus healing an epileptic possessed by a demon. When we read this page, our eyes get full of the tears of excitement about His deed. In a strict and decisive way, as in many other places, Jesus urges the father of the child just to believe, not to permanently ask for any signs, to make a step, full of trust, into the unknown. That is the same that He demanded from a Canaanite woman who sated her hunger with crumbs in His presence. But this is the deed of the one who can also let a tired and aching look of the father concerned about his son entreat Him. Help us, God, to be like You. Clear and decisive as far as the principles of our faith are concerned and, at the same time, emphatic and pleasant to specific individuals. Let us ask God for this

mercy today. Let Him multiply our faith and allow us recognize the presence of Jesus in ordinary daily situations.

July 17

Saturday

Romans 13: 1-10

Matthew 12: 30-37

- [Reading](#)
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Romans 13: 1-10

Brethren, let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority[a] does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You

shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Matthew 12: 30-37

And the Lord said: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Meditation

Today's Word helps us clear ourselves from lies in order to go ahead in the truth. To accept this story, we need to realize what the context of Jesus' words is. He has just healed a demoniac who was blind and mute, and the Pharisees are accusing Him of being related

to the ruler of demon. Jesus shows the absurdness of such accusation using different arguments, and, finally, at the end of today's Gospel, He exposes their intentions: those who accuse Him deny the truth. They see not the reality but the projection of their deceitful heart. Their words are the fruit of the evil tree, evil treasure.

A heavy sin causes a withered heart, preventing the Spirit from action, it resists the truth, rejects to see it and to go along the path of growth. The sin against the Spirit cannot be forgiven since it makes conversion necessary for accepting the forgiveness impossible. That is like a tumour that needs to be removed. Exposing lies, Jesus wants to help the Pharisees, to heal their blindness. That is why He has come, to save everyone, to offer forgiveness to every heart open to the truth. That's what He did to the penitent thief on the cross.

How relevant is today's Gospel excerpt for us! We need to expose lies in our hearts and in the surrounding reality. We also make sins against the Spirit when we refuse to open our hearts and retreat to total defense, condemn others, or consciously do not recognize our faults. How often do I try to plan my spiritual life, promote my intention arising from well-disguised mean intentions, instead of looking for the truth? Let us pray today for ourselves and for the society, for us to be courageous enough to be open to the truth, to accept the eternal youth of the Spirit who revives everything, to be the children of God, and not the brood of vipers, as Jesus calls the Pharisees.

What is Skynia Magazine?

Skynia Magazine is published with the purpose to help its readers meet the Lord with the help of the Bible.

This is why on most pages of the magazine our readers can find daily meditations on the Word of God: biblical readings according to the liturgical calendar of the UGCC. These meditations are the fruit of the personal prayer of their authors: priests, nuns and laity, who strive to live in the rhythm of the life of the UGCC, trying to tackle present-day issues.

Bible verses are cited according to the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition.

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