



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

July 25 - 31
The Gregorian calendar

Content

Stages of meditation	2
July 25	3
July 26	6
July 27	9
July 28	12
July 29	16
July 30	19
July 31	22
What is Skynia Magazine?	25

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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 25

Sunday 9

The Dormition of Saint Anna,
Mother of the Most Holy
God-bearer (Theotokos)

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

1 Corinthians 3: 9-17

Matthew 14: 22-34

1 Corinthians 3: 9-17

Brethren, for we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the

builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Matthew 14: 22-34

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

Meditation

In today's passage we read about a famous event when Jesus walks on the water. Walking on the water is definitely impossible for a person. It, therefore, seems logical that the Gospels mention this event to confirm the divine nature of Christ.

The boat in which the disciples await the return of Jesus is an often-repeated metaphor for the community of believers, the Church. It has to cope with navigation in difficult conditions to get to the opposite shore. Jesus returns late at night, just before the dawn. Usually in the sacred texts it is at these hours that the divine revelations take place. The boat is far from shore, so Jesus comes walking on the water. This act is so unexpected that the disciples are initially convinced that they see a hallucination, even a ghost, and are frightened. This human reaction to an incomprehensible revelation presupposes the same reaction to an event that is even more difficult to understand, that is, to the central event of the Gospel, - the resurrection. But Jesus allows them to recognise Him and reassures the frightened disciples. Then Peter asks for a strength to follow Him. Jesus invites the disciple to walk on the water like Him. Peter takes a few steps of faith on the water. But when the wind changes the surface of the lake, Peter's confidence also becomes shaky. This behavior of Peter can be a metaphor for our shaky faith, our insecurity in the face of many decisions. Sometimes, impressed by some words from the Gospel, we manage to take a few steps in their direction, but very rarely do we manage to follow those words to the end. This touching and demanding

message, simple and difficult at the same time, will shake our confidence. And then we will definitely start drowning in the swamp of our habits and indulgent foundations of this world. Most of us, though inspired by good intentions, are not consistent, what is necessary to invariably follow the words of the Gospel. But if we, like Peter, are ready to ask Him for help, which only He can give, then He will take us by our hand and lead to the boat. With proper help and a strong sense of faith, we will be able to do what we previously thought was impossible, - as impossible as walking on the water.

July 26

Monday

1 Corinthians 15: 12-19

Matthew 21: 18-22

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

1 Corinthians 15: 12-19

Brethren, now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Matthew 21: 18-22

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. When the

disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

Meditation

Doesn't today's reading of the Gospel seem cruel and unjust to you? It seems to me. After all, why does Jesus dry an innocent fig tree? Moreover, according to Mark, at that time it was not yet time to gather the fruit from it (cf. Mark 11:13).

After listening to clever people, I have learned that the fig tree fundamentally differs from all other trees: the figs appear on it earlier than leaves. While other trees grow leaves and it is not yet known whether they will bear fruit, a fig tree full of leaves can be seen immediately – it will bear fruit during the harvest of figs.

Today's Gospel event takes place on the eve of Christ's passions, death and resurrection in Jerusalem. At that time the Son of God came, *so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil* (Hebrews 2:14). A few months earlier, Christ had announced the gift of salvation to all who heard His sermon. Then He told the parable of the fig tree that grows in the vineyard, takes its place, requires attention and labor, and does not bear fruit. The owner is not satisfied and plans to cut down a fig tree. So, the gardener asks the owner to give him more time until he digs around it and puts manure on it (Luke 13:8).

What is it about? It is about a short period of time during which Christ proclaims the Good News everywhere and sends His disciples, the Church, to preach the Gospel. This is the time when the gardener cultivates the fig tree to make it bear fruit. And what shall He do if it does not bear fruit?

Probably today the Lord shows us, the listeners, a certain perspective of our superficial life in the style of *everything is for me*. Everyone should please me the way I want. My wife has to be the way I want her to be. Children should be the way I dream of, and in general there should be no more than one or two of them. After all, the Lord must also work miracles the way I see them: heal my diseases, give me money, and reward me with success.

What does Paul the apostle answer to this situation today? If we trust in Christ only in this life, then we are the unhappiest of all people. In other words, we are fig trees that abound in leaves, that is, all kinds of God's gifts, but we do not bear fruit, we live only for our own pleasure and comfort. And then what should Christ do with such withered Christians?

July 27

Tuesday

**The Holy Great-Martyr and
Healer Panteleimon**

1 Corinthians 15: 29-38

Matthew 21: 23-27

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

1 Corinthians 15: 29-38

Brethren, otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body

that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

Matthew 21: 23-27

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Meditation

By what authority are you doing these things? We often feel discouraged to dedicate our life to the good of our family when it breaks up. To the good of my son who has taken the wrong road. To the respect for others when there is no one to stand up for or support me. To the healthy lifestyle and nurturing my inner youth when diagnosed with *cancer*. To planning a life together with someone who will go away or die today or tomorrow. To be discouraged, to be demoralized, to fall to the ground, to want to die or even take away one's own life – to feel this, you don't have to try

hard, many people don't try. But it is worth looking ahead. How to do it? To look to the future, you need to know well your past and stand firmly on your feet *today*. The past of our lives never and for no one consists only of pain and sorrow. Even in the middle of the ocean of sorrow there is a spark of joy. It ignites our spirit, enlightens our heart, makes us think about the ways to repeat this moment. It is possible, it has happened so many times in our lives. And this spark has come out to remind us of this. To stand firmly on our feet today means that we have to live today, not tomorrow, not yesterday. We must live, cook, dress, go out, meet others, work, rejoice and cry. In every situation – live. And then the future will not seem so distant, so vast, so difficult to plan. The Lord gives us a promise, saying: if you were unhappy yesterday, if you weep today, then you will rejoice tomorrow. He shows us the path of our journey, the path paved with love: of other people to us and vice versa. But I have loved so much – now I'd like someone to love me! How often did we say that, how often did we feel lonely and abandoned by everyone? But the only right way is to continue to love, even those who don't wish us any good, who neglect us. Sooner or later, peace will return to our hearts. Sooner or later we will find someone who will love and respect us. Let's ask the Lord of the grace to live fully every moment of our lives, to trust in His love which remains forever faithful.

July 28

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 16: 4-12

Matthew 21: 28-32

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

1 Corinthians 16: 4-12

Brethren, if it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

I will visit you after passing through Macedonia—for I intend to pass through Macedonia—and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity.

Matthew 21: 28-32

And the Lord said: “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

Meditation

From today’s reading of the Gospel by Matthew, we hear about two sons and a man asking for help in the vineyard. The topic of the vineyard is not new to readers – Christ often speaks of it. As in other passages, He speaks, contrasting one person to another. For me personally, this passage raises two issues – that of obedience and conscience.

Let’s compare this passage with the parable of the Merciful Father (or of the prodigal son, cf. Luke 15:11-32). The eldest son represents the inheritance, because according to the tradition of that time he had the right to receive all the father’s property. Of course, the youngest son could also get a small part. And so these older sons do the will of their father – keep to the word and *do* His will. In this passage, the word of the son is just a word, nothing more. He

doesn't comply with his father's request. Instead, in a parallel passage, the son, doing everything flawlessly, does so insincerely. In this way, Christ speaks veiledly of Israel, which keeps its promises only in words, but in fact doesn't fulfill them.

And here we come to the younger sons. In both passages, they look unruly. In this reading, the son openly says that he doesn't want to do what he is asked about, in the other one – without any reason raises the question of what doesn't belong to him. But the younger ones have what the older ones don't – conscience. After a while, they return and fulfill their promises. These younger sons are all those who at first reject the Word of the Father by deeds, but in time come and convert.

Christ speaks of sinners to whom He came to heal and convert. To some extent, we can see ourselves in this passage: how do I respond to God's request and what do I do to keep my word and fulfill it? What son am I to my Father, what daughter am I?

This teaching of Christ urges us not to be closed to the word and action, to accept and give, to be honest and consistent, and at least sometimes listen to our conscience, because it might be the voice of God in our life.

July 29

Thursday

2 Corinthians 1: 1-7

Matthew 21: 43-46

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

2 Corinthians 1: 1-7

Brethren, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

Matthew 21: 43-46

And the Lord said: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Meditation

In today’s Gospel excerpt we read a story of Jesus about the consequences of human behaviour in their treatment of the cornerstone which is God Himself. Christ warns us about careless treatment of this stone. Thus, who is the one who will fall on this stone and be broken to pieces? And who can generally fall?

A person sitting or lying cannot fall. That is the image of an obedient person. Only the one who rises high above can fall – and that is the image of a self-conceited, disobedient person. Who is the person on whom the stone will fall and crush him/her? That is the person in whose life God either takes some secondary place, or generally is an obstacle. Then a person tries to remove that stone from its place, to remove for it not to stay on his/her way. We have a lot of examples from history when people tried to remove that cornerstone from its place at their own discretion.

This stone must stay in its place and be duly respected. What is my attitude in life to this stone, that rock which is our God? Have I not flown above it? Am I not trying to move Him from his due place? Probably, there is some area of my life where this stone constitutes an obstacle for me?

God, help me to always have You in the right place in my life.

July 30

Friday

2 Corinthians 1: 12-20

Matthew 22: 23-33

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

2 Corinthians 1: 12-20

Brethren, indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God—and all the more toward you. For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end—as you have already understood us in part—that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast.

Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor; I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been “Yes and No.” For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not “Yes and No”; but in him it is always “Yes.”

For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God.

Matthew 22: 23-33

The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman herself died. In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her."

Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

Meditation

Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They could not imagine what it would be like. They could not find the answers to many questions with their human mind, that is why they decided to deny the truth of the resurrection. A subjective and limited

approached to the truth: if I don't understand something and cannot explain it, this means it does not exist.

If God volunteered to disclose the whole truth about the resurrection and eternal life, He could have done this, since there is nothing impossible for God. But He decided to open up this secret to us only a bit, for us to trust Him, to accept through our faith what we cannot perceive with our mind.

Probably, if we knew how fine we will feel in the kingdom of God, we would not be afraid of getting aged and dying. And probably, we would like to get there as soon as possible, would stop appreciating the earthly life, would become indifferent to it, and would perceive it just as temporary inconveniences, a boring expectation at the airport for our flight to the Heaven.

Jesus tells Sadducees that they are mistaken since they don't know either the Scriptures, or the God's power. These are the two sources of truth cognition – the Holy Scriptures and experiencing of the effect of God's actions in one's life. They are interrelated. The word of God, heard and accepted by the human heart always brings some fruits, gives birth to God's actions in human life. God's power – unexpected God's help, prayer heard, a small or a great miracle affects human hearts and urges to look for God and His Words.

No one gets married in the resurrection – people are staying in God's presence as angels. There is no suffering and sadness in the kingdom of God, no ordeals and temptations, no diseases and old

age. Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection. He could remain invisible, could be not like Himself, since they did not recognize Him, he could go through closed doors. He had the flesh and the bones, ate fish and honey in the presence of the apostles. He allowed Thomas to put his hands into His wounds. Jesus was the first among those resurrected who opened up for us the way to the resurrection and eternal life.

July 31

Saturday

Romans 15: 30-33

Matthew 17:24 - 18:4

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

Romans 15: 30-33

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

Matthew 17:24 - 18:4

When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?" He said, "Yes, he does." And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" When Peter said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free. However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me."

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Meditation

Today’s Gospel excerpt is of great importance for the understanding of what the attitude of the believer to the *temporal affairs* should be. Therefore, one may consider this temple tax not as a “religious” duty of the believers, but as the “civic” duty for all men who are the sons of Israel and who are 20 years of age and older, as it is written in Exodus 30:13 and on. Here is what Jesus speaks about with Peter today. The personality and deeds of Peter often constitute our reflection. That is why Christ’s teaching for Peter acquires importance for us today as well. Thus, Peter gives a clear answer when he is asked whether the Teacher will pay the tax. Jesus does not deny this, but extends the limits, creating an opportunity for reminding about the incredible novelty He has brought to the world. Even in His answer Jesus quickly connects all of us, though the question seemingly refers only to Him. We are also the sons in Him! The earthly kings charge taxes from the children of others, non-sons, while their children enjoy the privilege of being of royal blood. They are really free! *Free* is the word that one may very rarely come across in the Gospels. John uses it only in one excerpt. Among other Evangelists, only Matthew suggests this term and only here! But our free status is the key! It should even be mentioned

that it is because we are free that we should pay all the taxes. Be careful not to transform your faith into a privilege! But, on the other hand, let us not forget that it is our freedom that makes our liberty so precious. Even more! By paying a tax – any, even an intangible one, like as disease, fear, or infirmity – we also make a hint to our brothers who still don't know how they can be the free sons of the King, which is their most deep essence! It is very much consoling that Jesus asks us not to consider even a tax paper a burden, but rather one more confirmation of our perfect status of the children of God. Hence, the mouth of the first fish caught by Peter confirms that we may trust all our misfortunes in peace since all our life is protected, it is supported by our Father with His love.

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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