



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

August 22-28
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

August 22

Sunday 13

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Matthew 21:33-42

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

1 Corinthians 16: 13-24

Brethren, keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

Now, brothers and Sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.

The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. All the brothers and Sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 21:33-42

And the Lord said: "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?'"

Meditation

The parable of the tenants tells us of those high priests and scribes who were called to work in God's vineyard, but didn't bear the proper fruit. For they taught the people not the commandments of God, but the traditions of men. They were weaving heavy burden for people, but didn't even touch it with their fingers. They didn't enter the kingdom of God and blocked the way to it for others. God the Father sent them His servants, - the prophets, but they didn't listen to them, didn't honor them, and didn't repent. When the time came, God sent His Son Jesus. But they didn't recognize in Him the Messiah they had been waiting for. Jesus found His people weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. What fruit could such a vineyard bear?

The parable also tells the story of each person. The vineyard is everything that God gives us: health, beauty, abilities, time, opportunities. The Lord plants this vineyard, fences it, builds a tower and a press, and leaves. God gives the man everything he needs for his life and happiness, everything to prosper and bear fruit. The almighty Lord steps aside and allows the man to choose what to do. He doesn't control, doesn't point out, doesn't demand and doesn't insist. He patiently steps aside and trusts.

There are those tenants among us who work diligently, take care of the vineyard, and manage it wisely. They will receive great fruit and give it to God at the harvest time, because they understand that they are not the owners of the vineyard – only its tenants.

And the wretches will be put to a miserable death. He who doesn't build his life on a solid foundation, on a cornerstone, on Jesus Christ, will be defeated. He who wastes talents received from God, or uses them to do evil, cannot bear good fruit. He who doesn't understand that all that he has and has achieved is a gift of God, appropriates to himself the glory of God. He deceives himself. There is nothing good a person can do on his own. We have nothing to be proud of before God. His ways are strange in our eyes.

August 23

Monday

2 Corinthians 12:10-19

Mark 4:10-23

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

2 Corinthians 12:10-19

Brethren, therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works. How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I

urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.

Mark 4:10-23

When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil:

they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

He said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

Meditation

Why did Jesus speak to people in parables? One of the meanings of the word *parable* is to liken something, to become like something. So, the Lord, in telling parables, likened unearthly, spiritual, invisible things to visible and earthly things.

Why make everything so complicated? - we may ask. If the Lord had made the Scriptures as simple and clear as a multiplication table, it wouldn't have prompted us to look for Him again and again on the pages of the Bible. That would be uninteresting. God wants us to look for Him and step by step find the spiritual pearls He has hidden there.

What kind of Sower is the one who sows anywhere? It is the Lord. The seed is the Word of God. Soil is human hearts. The seed falls on the path, on rocky ground, among thorns and on the good soil.

God sows everywhere, for Him there are no lost and hopeless people. Don't we group people into 1st, 2nd or 3rd category? Are there people whom we consider hopeless? *The path* stands for the hearts of people whose lives pass by Jesus and not with Him. Jesus

said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. However, their path doesn't intersect with Jesus.

Rocky ground is the ground where there is little good soil, it stands for a petrified heart, where the seed (the Word of God) cannot take root. You can admire the Word of God, but not dive into its depths. *Among thorns* denotes the cares of this world that drown out the Word. Many things can be confusing and bounding, and we don't have enough time for God's Word, there are more important things in our life: study, work, relationships, household chores, television, the Internet.

What kind of soil can be called the good one, where will the Word increase? Such soil is plowed and fertilized. However, spiritual plowing is a painful process. When the plow of the Lord is guided through the soil, it plunges into its depths and with force uproots everything that is superfluous and hidden. To become good soil, one must allow the Lord to plow the heart and free it from stones and other filth that has accumulated there. When we are going through difficult times or are in pain, this is the most fruitful time for God's Word.

Lord, my heart is ready to be plowed, make me good soil so that I may bring You good fruit.

August 24

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 12:20 - 13:2

Mark 4: 24-34

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

2 Corinthians 12:20 - 13:2

Brethren, for I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

This is the third time I am coming to you. "Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses." I warned those who sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not be lenient.

Mark 4: 24-34

And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Meditation

Today’s Gospel contains a story of sowing, growing, maturation, and harvesting, that may not be separated in the context of the Kingdom of God. Jesus wants to awaken our trust in God the Father and His deeds of salvation. God’s power acts inside us and encourages silent growing of the seeds of love and brotherhood. Growing depends on God’s might. The Kingdom of God is already present and acts, even before maturation, and even before sowing or harvesting.

The mustard seed that becomes a tree reminds us of the growth of the Kingdom within the categories of quality, maturity, and perfection. Many birds settle on the branches of the God's tree. Openness to the world that has become pagan and acceptance of those who have become distant will become an opportunity for them to consume the fruits of eternal life. Salvation is open for everyone.

Jesus has sown the Word. He Himself is the seed of God, thrown into the field of history. He just needs the soil prepared for His acceptance, in trustful patience that knows how to wait.

Jesus proclaimed: *The Kingdom of God has come near!* Though, at the first glance, nothing has changed in the world: people keep living, suffering, and dying. Only the Person preaching in a minor place of the empire is new, while His listeners are sick, uneducated, poor, — that is the ones who are of not importance. Is this the Kingdom of God? Right, it is! Like a mustard seed. Since God is great, He is not afraid of becoming small. Since His Kingdom is mighty, it can deal without any large external structure, does need to make anyone accept its power.

The world opposes its awful temptations, money, satisfaction, and its power, that makes us full of the terror of persecution, problems, violent death, to the Kingdom of God...

Jesus is the grandeur of God, that became small for our sake up till the death on the cross. In that way the tree where everyone may find a place for him or her became big. A disciple must mirror those

smallness and service in his or her spirit. They win over the evil of this world, that is the striving for grandeur and power.

August 25

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 13: 3-13

Mark 4:35-41

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

2 Corinthians 13:3-13

Brethren, since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you. For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed. But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect. So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Mark 4: 35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Meditation

Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. A windstorm was raging around and the waves filled the boat. The disciples thought they were dying.

Jesus teaches His disciples to trust in God. Everything that is happening around, from the outside – even a windstorm – is in

God's hands. Jesus is there both in good weather and in a storm. In difficult situations God is especially close. He sees everything and knows everything. Moreover, He wishes good and happiness to His children, He knows how to be the best. The disciples were frightened and panicked. Once prophet Jonah found himself in a similar situation. He didn't want to do God's will and go to Nineveh, so he sailed in a boat in the opposite direction. When a strong storm arose and didn't calm down and everyone prayed as hard as they could, Jonah was sleeping inside of the ship. He knew for sure that every storm was in God's hands, as was every man's life. Jonah was a prophet and knew God. The disciples of Jesus didn't know God as well as Jonah, fearing and wondering that the wind and the sea obeyed the Son of God.

Jesus teaches His disciples to be patient. He is in no hurry to help them in seconds. As a human being, He is asleep, weary from His daytime ministry and night prayer. As God, He uses this opportunity to test their faith. Jesus rebukes the disciples who still don't have faith, - after all the miracles they have seen, they continue to be afraid. He rebukes, but doesn't leave, He helps and works another miracle to increase their faith.

God is faithful. He is not indifferent to His children. Every time He is called He comes to rescue. He helps, but not always in the way we have expected, and not always at the time we would like it to happen. He is patient, acts at the right time. His wisdom is beyond human imagination. God isn't indifferent when a person is lost. The greatest pain of His heart is that His children reject salvation and lose their own souls.

August 26

Thursday

Galatians 1:1-10.20-2:5

Mark 5:1-20

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

Galatians 1:1-10.20-2:5

Brethren, Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the members of God’s family who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As

we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!

Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me.

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us—we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you.

Mark 5:1-20

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately

a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Meditation

Jesus meets the man with an unclean spirit. People of that area couldn't cope with him. He was handcuffed and chained, but could easily tear everything apart. No one could calm him down. No one could help him return to normal life. The demoniac was constantly causing problems. At the same time, he was a convincing testimony to the existence of evil – not just as natural imperfection, but as a spiritual world, as supernatural evil, the evil that is a person. The evil, with which human power cannot cope. The existence of such spiritual evil proves the existence of good, of God, Who is stronger than this evil. For if there were no God Who restrains and limits evil, it would destroy the world.

Jesus casts out demons and frees the demoniac. For this Jesus

doesn't need chains or shackles. Words and orders are enough. Even the greatest evil cannot resist Jesus. There is a lot of evil in the world besides demons. To those who are afraid of evil, unable to cope with it on their own, Jesus gives hope. It is enough to invite Him and He will come. Where He comes, evil subsides. And when He commands, evil recedes. Fear is replaced by joy.

But the people of the Gerasene area don't rejoice. Even greater fear comes to them. They are used to their demoniac. And they don't know Jesus, Who can deliver from evil spirits. And they don't want to meet Him. They don't want to change, to renounce not so noticeable everyday evil that they are doing. They don't want to repent. And there is such a loss – a whole herd of swine disappeared. The salvation of the demoniac is less important than the loss of pigs. So they ask Jesus to leave.

Jesus doesn't tell them anything. He doesn't rebuke or persuade. Jesus never imposes Himself and always respects man's will and choice. Jesus isn't disappointed in those people and doesn't despair of their conversion. He leaves them to the testimony of the former demoniac. He sends him to his home and to his family to testify to them about God. He whom they have seen for years being mad is clothed and in right mind, preaching to them about Jesus and salvation from God.

August 27

Friday

Galatians 2: 6-10

Mark 5: 22-24,35 - 6:1

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Galatians 2: 6-10

Brethren, and from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

Mark 5: 22-24,35 - 6:1

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My

little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” So he went with him.

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Meditation

Have I lived through any grief in my life? Any disappointment? Any awful tragedy? Maybe, a close relative has died, maybe, somebody has abandoned me, maybe, the closest people have betrayed me? Maybe, I am dissatisfied with my life, feeling lost, and I don’t know what to do? Everyone has something that is a pain for him/her since it is impossible to live this life and not to be hurt, affected with the results of the first sin. Each of us feels its detrimental effect on us.

After we give the answer to this question, it is important to ask another question: what am I doing with this? How do I cope with the pain that has already become so dear for me that I cannot even imagine how I would live without it? I have already forgotten what it means to be happy, if this pain was healed ... This pain can be suppressed, and that is our natural reaction as people. We suppress pain, or pretend it's not there, or nurture it in ourselves, cherish it. Tell others about it or close in ourselves. But the Lord shows us today that He wants us to come to Him with all this, and not to look for consolation in other things or people, but with our dying daughter. Pain, infirmity, weakness, sin, crises can be represented by this daughter. He wants us to come to Him with all this to pray, and to give everything to Him in this prayer and trust Him, patiently waiting for God's reaction. Giving our daughter, let us patiently wait for God's reaction, He knows the time and the place where and when He needs to come and what to heal. Let us not be gods: let us not point to God what He needs to do, but let us humbly trust Him. Then we will see a miracle, when we let God to catch us by surprise, let us allow Him to act by His logic of things, and not by ours. He is *God – not of the dead, but of the living!* (Matthew 22:32). The Lord will heal even the things that may already seem dead in me, that I myself already have no hope for and have already buried.

Trust Jesus, don't be afraid of approaching Him: He will not betray, not abandon, but He will enter the home of your life and heart. Be, at the same time, ready that, when God comes, you need to listen to Him and to act the way He tells you, and not the way you want

Him to act.

August 28

Saturday

1 Corinthians 4: 1-5

Matthew 23: 1-12

- [Reading](#)
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1 Corinthians 4: 1-5

Brethren, my point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

Matthew 23: 1-12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best

seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Meditation

Jesus teaches people to be prudent. He says that people should do whatever the scribes and the Pharisees teach them and follow it but do not do as they do for they do not practice what they teach. Jesus stresses that we should not blindly and without thinking follow a leader. We should discern what is good and what is not.

There is no perfect human being. Each person has his/her strengths and weaknesses. Despite the fact that the Pharisees had many weaknesses and failed to recognise Messiah in Jesus He encourages people to follow their teaching. The Word of God was their strength, they were learning it during their whole life and knew it better than ordinary people did.

We should not reject people for their deeds. If a person did something bad it does not mean that all his/her words, thoughts or actions are bad. God is the only one Who knows the heart of a person, He knows all the intentions and motives, sorrow and repentance for the sins. Only He can judge people. The goal of Jesus

is not to judge but to save, convert and liberate. There is no-one totally good or bad. Realising our sinfulness we give birth to patience and compassion for others.

Jesus pays attention to the fact that the scribes and the Pharisees do all their deeds to be seen by others. They are looking for recognition and glory from people. They love to have the place of honour and to be greeted with respect. Such a behaviour can bring neither inner peace nor happiness or awareness of one's value, because always there will be someone richer, cleverer, more beautiful or greater. Comparing oneself with others leads to frustration and envy. God has given everyone specific talents, aspirations and vocation. So, the fruit will be different.

Glory from people can quickly pass. Today the crowd greets you with Hosanna and in a week it will shout Crucify! It is useless to please people. Much better is to please God. He is the only one Who loves kindly and absolutely. He values and respects us. He blesses and exalts the humble. Everything a person does for God brings true peace and happiness.

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.

We offer digital subscriptions:

- in English and Ukrainian
- according to Gregorian, Julian and New Julian calendars

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- You can **print** or upload to your **website** a **PDF** document with the meditations from Skynia Magazine so that parishioners or members of your community could easily download it.
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