



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

**September 5-11  
The Julian calendar**

**Content**

<b><u>Stages of meditation</u></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><u>September 5</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>September 6</u></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>September 7</u></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>September 8</u></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>September 9</u></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><u>September 10</u></b>	<b>19</b>
<b><u>September 11</u></b>	<b>23</b>
<b><u>What is Skynia Magazine?</u></b>	<b>26</b>

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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

**September 5**

- [Reading](#)

**Sunday 11**

- [Meditation](#)

**1 Corinthians 9: 2-12**

- [Prayer](#)

- [Contemplation](#)

**Matthew 18: 23-35**

### 1 Corinthians 9: 2-12

Brethren, if I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?

Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope

and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

### **Matthew 18: 23-35**

And the Lord said: "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you

not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

### **Meditation**

The Lord's forgiveness always has a condition. It is never deprived of deep meaning. God forgives us under certain conditions. The first one is always the faith in Jesus Christ, belief in his Word, mission, redemption and salvation, his universal mediation, his Person.

Perfect faith in Jesus Christ presupposes believing his apostles appointed by him to be managers of his forgiveness, grace and truth which are the mediators for the Holy Spirit to come. And this condition should also be met. The Father forgives through the mediation of his apostles. They can forgive those who repent, convert, believe in Christ, and allow to be baptized. A very important condition is the Sacrament of Penance. And there is also the third condition just as irrevocable. That is the forgiveness which we already have we should offer to those who sinned against us in any way. If we do not forgive our neighbor then God will not forgive us. If we do not forgive something small God will not forgive us the whole burden of our debt which in fact we can never pay off even during the whole eternity. The wicked slave refused to forgive a small debt of a hundred denarii which in fact was a small amount of money, so, God refused to forgive him a bigger debt of 10 thousand talents not just a hundred denarii.

Unfortunately we rarely think about the greatness of what has been forgiven us. We do not forgive our brother his small sins against us

so God may not forgive us our deadly sins. God's law does not presuppose the forgiveness of sin for sin, heavy sin for heavy sin or everyday sin for everyday sin. If we do not forgive something small he will not forgive something big. So, there is always our small against his big; our nothing against his everything. Forgiveness always relates to a particular person. If we forgive our brother then God forgives us. One person in exchange for another one. May the Lord give us grace to understand the importance of forgiveness and teach us to forgive our neighbors from all our heart.

## September 6

### Monday

#### 2 Corinthians 5: 10-15

#### Mark 1: 9-15

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

### 2 Corinthians 5: 10-15

Brethren, for all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

## **Mark 1: 9-15**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

## **Meditation**

Jesus was baptized not to wash away his sins but to exert the will of the Father. The mystery of the Holy Trinity fascinates and astonishes. Jesus has his own will, he is God, his will is perfect and yet he chooses the will of the Father. In the way incomprehensible for us Jesus has separated himself from the Father and uses his earthly life to submit to the Father, obey him, express his respect and love towards the Father.

Often Jesus moves away and goes somewhere to pray for the whole night. He could spend more time preaching or healing people, teaching his disciples or just having rest but he prefers to communicate with the Father.



Prayer is never a heavy duty, burdensome activity or waisting of time. Prayer is a source of life, it is distancing ourselves from this world and having rest in the Kingdom of God. Prayer helps to find peace and refresh our strength. It would be good to remember this and practice more often. If Jesus needed prayer then how can I manage without it?

The Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness what is not the most comfortable place to pray. But there nothing distracts from the most significant. Because of the fast pace of modern life and oversaturation with information I need a desert. I need to turn off my cell phone and stay alone for some while. And it is easier to do that than to turn off our thinking about everyday problems, people and plans for the future. And it is even harder to turn off our fears and stop focusing on our own needs. Heart full of peace can hear the voice of God, rejoice in his presence and discern his will.

The Spirit drives Jesus into the place full of temptations. It is impossible to avoid temptations. But if you come with the Holy Spirit then you have chances to overcome them. Temptation is not yet a sin. Temptation loses its power if exposed in time.

## September 7

Tuesday

**2 Corinthians 5: 15-21**

**Mark 1: 16-22**

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

### **2 Corinthians 5: 15-21**

Brethren, and he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## **Mark 1: 16-22**

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

## **Meditation**

This passage is better known as the vocation of first four disciples. And here comes an important point. The mission of Jesus cannot be fully accomplished and will not make any sense without the cooperation with other people and contribution of each of us. That is why He while walking his way calls those whom He meets and who are also walking their way of life.

Thus, the unique experience of following Christ begins with an encounter with Him; unexpectedly He suggests his presence in our life giving it meaning. That is why the disciples of Jesus leave everything and follow Him; the feeling of greatness of what they will witness is so powerful that nothing from their everyday life can hold them anymore.

What is the deep mystery of this gaze that gives it such a power and makes ordinary people, like we are, satisfied with their life change their life and follow Christ? This mystery is love. The eyes of Jesus meet the eyes of a man; His gaze pierces the existence of the man and his soul to the depth; his gaze reaches there where no one else can reach. This is the way He chooses and loves each of us.

He does not look at us to condemn and does not point sternly at us with his finger, but his eyes are full of mercy; they are full of liberating power; his eyes invite us to leave the quagmire of sin which traps us every day and maybe leaves without any hope of salvation.

So, to accept this gaze consciously and voluntarily means to take a step into eternity, into the dimension of new life which has no fear of weakness, defeat and death. The only thing that really matters is to catch the One Who alone can pull us out of this death forever.

**September 8**

**Wednesday**

**2 Corinthians 6: 11-16**

**Mark 1: 23-28**

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

**2 Corinthians 6: 11-16**

Brethren, we have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**Mark 1: 23-28**

Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of

him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

### **Meditation**

The man with an unclean spirit was in the synagogue. He went there and was praying with other people. Most probably other people had no idea about this. The presence and action of the evil spirit in this man could not strifle his desire for God, desire to pray and look for God. Maybe this unclean spirit has not manifested himself earlier, probably in the synagogue he has felt safe. He may even have despised that community gathering for a prayer for their little faith and insensitivity to the evil. But they were in the right place and at the right time. On Saturday they were in the synagogue praying.

God always comes to synagogue and church, He comes there where people are gathered in His name. For Him there are no people unworthy of His attention, there are no feeble prayers or little faith. Our Lord comes to His people. His might cures and liberates but not the prayers of people.

Jesus had come and changed everything. The unclean spirit could not stand it and started to shout. He showed himself, attracted attention to himself and then he had to become silent and leave. Jesus forbade him to testify because He did not need evil spirits to acknowledge that He was the Son of God. The kingdom of God

about which Jesus preaches and which He brings wherever He comes is incompatible with the evil. The evil cannot be resistant. The best way to get free from the evil is to come closer to Jesus, look for Him and stay there where He is. His presence liberates, purifies and blesses. Jesus is near and actually there is no need to look for Him. He is present in every church, at the holy mass, in His Word; He comes to a person who prays, He listens to every prayer and appreciates the time dedicated to Him.

What did the man with the unclean spirit do to deserve the liberation? - Nothing! He did not ask for himself and no-one asked Jesus for him. The Lord is merciful to those who suffer. He wishes good for all His children. Most gifts which we receive from God are given to us not because of our faith but despite our disbelief, not because we are good but because He is good.

**September 9**

**Thursday**

**2 Corinthians 7: 1-10**

**Mark 1: 29-35**

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

**2 Corinthians 7: 1-10**

Brethren, since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.

Make room in your hearts for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I often boast about you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction.

For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—disputes without and fears within. But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter,



though only briefly). Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

### **Mark 1: 29-35**

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

### **Meditation**

This passage describes the end of one day; the day which Mark starts describing in verse 16 ends with the deeds of power and preaching. Everything described is one whole. Other topics typical of Mark appear as well: home and misunderstanding of the disciples. This passage is divided into three parts: healing of Simon's

mother-in-law (verses 29-31); summary of all the healings (32-34); Jesus prays and leaves Capernaum.

The whole passage consists of short phrases connected among themselves with the help of Greek *kai* (meaning *and*). The evangelist shows us a connection with the previous episode writing that Jesus and those who were with him left the synagogue. And now they are entering the house of Simon. This mentioning of the house echoes the notion of Church: in the Gospel of Mark the house is the place where Jesus is talking with his disciples. The early Church viewed the house as the place for liturgical assembly and teachings. In the passage describing Simon's mother-in-law Jesus is not taking but acting. He comes, takes her by the hand and lifts her up (here the word *egheiro* which describes the resurrection is used). The immediate recovery is stressed with the words that at once she began to serve them. This is the only passage from the Gospel which speaks about the healing of the family member that is a kind of a personal situation. Maybe Peter himself wanted this healing to be mentioned.

The third part of the passage shows that Jesus is praying. This is a very important aspect which we still have not discussed. Twice the evangelist specifies the time and place of the prayer. It seems that Mark wants to stress that the prayer of Jesus is closely connected with his preaching. Let us ask the grace from God to be able to preach the Gospel with our everyday life and to have a prayer, talk with God the source of our preaching.

## September 10

Friday

**2 Corinthians 7: 10-16**

**Mark 2: 18-22**

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

### **2 Corinthians 7: 10-16**

Brethren, for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who was wronged, but in order that your zeal for us might be made known to you before God. In this we find comfort.

In addition to our own consolation, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all of you. For if I have been somewhat boastful about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved true as well. And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

## **Mark 2: 18-22**

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

"No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

## **Meditation**

Fasting is a good and useful practice for the soul. The disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting. It must have been a fasting period of the year. Perhaps they observed not only the mandatory but also an additional fast. However, the disciples of Jesus weren't fasting. This was noticed by people who were watching who, how much and how was fasting. It is unknown whether they were among those who were fasting. Maybe yes. They demanded Jesus to report on this issue. Perhaps, they wanted to reproach Him, point out His mistake. They considered themselves to be righteous and others -

sinful. Or maybe they were fasting and envied those who weren't fasting. They wanted justice.

Jesus doesn't answer their question directly. Can the wedding guests fast? Wedding is the time to share the joy of the groom and bride, to eat, drink, dance and sing. Jesus compares His staying with the disciples to the wedding. However, the time of a carefree and safe following of their Master, listening to His teaching and contemplation of His miracles will end. The time of hard work and service will begin; then they will fast.

A piece of unshrunk cloth doesn't fit an old cloak. It won't help, but will only make things worse. The teaching of Jesus cannot be sewn as a cloth to the Old Testament Law and the rules formulated on the basis of the Pentateuch the way Jews understood it. The law is good, but people were unable to fulfill it. It didn't help to save people, but pointed out their sins.

New wine will break the old wineskins. The commandments of Jesus are the new wine. They cannot fit in the mind and heart of a person who relies on his/her own ideas about God, commandments, morals and rules of conduct. It is impossible to cognize God, it is impossible to explain Him. He cannot be framed.

Jesus came to transform the mind and heart of the man. He is the light for the mind. His mercy and love soften the heart, take away the hardened, stony heart, and give a sensitive heart that knows how to love. Jesus makes us new wineskins that can hold His commandments, the Holy Spirit and Himself, Whom we are greatly

honoured to receive in the Holy Communion under the species of bread and wine.

## September 11

### Saturday

The Beheading of the Honourable and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

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

**Acts 13: 25-33**

**Mark 6: 14-30**

### Acts 13: 25-33

And as John was finishing his work, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet.’

“My brothers, you descendants of Abraham’s family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him

from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'

### **Mark 6: 14-30**

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to



her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught.

### **Meditation**

Today the Church commemorates Beheading of the John the Baptist. He is indeed a great saint! Every time we honour him we become inspired for spiritual conversion and motivated to think about the stage of the path to holiness we are at right now. Herod's fear of John the Baptist was not the fear itself but rather an amazement at the one who exceeded him. In the life of Herod only two things were of great importance: power and luxury. Whereas the life of John the Baptist shone with righteousness and holiness. Today Christians so badly need these two qualities. Righteousness means the right attitude towards oneself, God and our neighbour. Holiness presupposes the way of life full of respect and love for God who has given us life and with the help of Jesus Christ snatched it away from the power of evil and sin.

A righteous and saint person is humble and aware of his/her limitations. But at the same time such a person is brave and does not accept the limitations in what is good and beautiful. Moreover, the fidelity to everything good and beautiful in life and eternity makes such a person an example to others what multiplies the glory of God and wins respect in people. Even people of questionable moral qualities who like Herod hold prestigious positions in society feel unconscious respect for the righteous and saint people.

Chrysostomos Konstantinidis, a metropolitan bishop of Ephesus, reminds us: *Holiness is not the result of human choice. It cannot be measured by human standards nor comprehend by human methods... Holiness belongs to God. Saints are no one other but God's people.*

Oh Lord, I ask you to make me your follower. Give me a clear conscience that does not sleep a lethargic sleep, enlighten my conscience with faith. Let me be righteous and saint in the might of your Word, for your glory and good of all.

## 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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