Thout

- 2026-09-20: 2nd Sunday of Thout - Revelation of God
- 2026-10-03: 4th Sunday of Thoout - She Loved Much

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Introduction

Today's Gospel from Luke 10 starts right after the disciples returned from their mission. The Lord sent the 70 to go into every city ahead of him, to heal the sick and preach the Kingdom of God. The disciples return very excited and very happy and say "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." So the Lord tells them not to rejoice over this, but to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. And then, He rejoiced!

This is where our gospel reading today begins - The Lord Jesus, Himself, rejoiced in the Spirit! And this word that is used in the Greek for rejoice - it means to rejoice exceedingly, to jump for joy! And then He prays to the Father. And of course, this is a lesson for us that in our rejoicing, we praise and glorify and thank God. He says:

> "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." (Luke 10:21-22)

And here, we see this word "reveal" twice. That the Father has hidden some things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes. And then that no one knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

What does this mean? Is it possible that something could be understood by a baby or by a child, but not by a wise and prudent man?

God's Revelation

Consider these points:

1. God is Trinity: Three in One and One in Three
   - If you tell this to a child, and you explain to him with an analogy, he understands, he believes, he trusts
   - But if you try to tell it to an adult, who is "wise and prudent" and learned to trust in himself and in his mind, he will say "this is foolishness!"

2. Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God, the Logos of God, the Second Person of the Trinity
    - Tell this to a child... he understands, he believes, he trusts.
    - Tell it to a learned man - what do you mean God became man? What do you mean the eternal became temporal? What do you mean the One who fills all, was restricted to a body?

3. The Lord Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin

4. The Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, and was crucified and killed of His own will

5. He rose on the third day.

6. Our sins are forgiven because of His Sacrifice

7. He gives us His Body and Blood on the altar every Sunday - we take bread and wine, and we pray on it and it becomes Body and Blood. And we eat.
    - What do you mean it becomes Body and Blood? How? When?

How Does God Reveal Himself?

How does God reveal Himself to us?

1. Holy Scripture
    - The Holy Scripture is the word of God, the breath of God
    - “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20–21)
    - "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
    - God reveals Himself to us through the Scripture
        - How do we know God created the world? Genesis 1
        - How do we know that the Son is begotten of the Father? John 3:16
        - How do we know that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father? John 15
        - How do we know that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ? John 6
    - The difficulty with the Holy Scripture, is that some things are hard to understand
        - "Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures." (2 Peter 3:15-16)

2. Holy Tradition
    - So the Church gives us the Holy Tradition. This is why if you remove the Holy Tradition, you will fall into error like St Peter says.
        - Holy Tradition includes the Traditional Interpretation of the Scripture

    - Holy Tradition came even before the Scripture
    - "Orthodoxy is what Christ taught, the disciples preached, and the Fathers kept" - St Athanasius
- “Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3)
- “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15)
- Actually, most of the time, the apostles PREFERRED to go and preach with their voice, rather than to write in a letter. St John in both epistles 2 and 3, he says this - he says "I do not wish to write to you with paper and ink." St Paul says in 1 Corinthians "The rest I will set in order when I come."
- God reveals Himself to us through the Holy Tradition
    - Where do we get the word "Trinity" from? Holy Tradition
    - Where do we learn to sign the cross on ourselves? Holy Tradition
    - How do we understand the difficult verses in the Scriptures without falling into error like St Peter says? Holy Tradition!

Reason

- You might say, "what about reason?" God gave us a mind, God gave us logic and reason...
- Yes! Reason is very important, because our faith is not unreasonable.
    - But let me understand it for what it is - that the bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood is not a scientific question. It is not a question that can be reasoned about from scratch.
    - The existence of God is not something that can be empirically tested and proved or disproved in a lab.
- Revelation starts from a different point than science!
    - In the scientific method, you ask a question, then you gather information, you propose a hypothesis - an educated guess or assumption, and try to prove or disprove the hypothesis, and make a conclusion.
    - In Revelation, the conclusion is given to you, and then you can use your reason to build on what you know by revelation, explore the implications, etc.
- "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)
    - The Natural Creation attests to God
    - Beauty
    - Order
    - Seemingly Infinitely small
    - Seemingly Infinitely large
- The Revelation is that God created the world, and so using my reason I can see that this must mean that God is a God of order. That God is infinite. That God is all-powerful. That God is beautiful and the source of all beauty!

Experience

- I can talk about God by referring to the Scripture, the Tradition, Reason, but eventually reach the point where I cannot say more. Because I didn't experience God.
- This is what happened to Job, after God reveals to him His power over all creation, Job reflects on the last forty chapters and says "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."
- But then he says this: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You." (Job 42:5)
- When I see the work of God in my life, then I can witness to Him.
- When I see the work of God in the lives of those around me, then I can witness to Him.
- That's why when they went to choose someone to replace Judas in Acts 1, they were looking for someone who had witnessed everything from the beginning of the baptism of John until the day of the ascension. And they chose St. Matthias. Because how could he preach the gospel message - how could he DIE for the gospel message, unless he had personally experienced it.
- The Fathers of the Church have such rich interpretations of the Scripture, not because they were skilled in rhetoric or philosophy, but because they had a strong personal relation with God. So their theology was supported by a personal experience. That's why they could stand firmly against any false teaching.
- "Theology" means "study of God" - "Theo" + "ology." But it's not like Biology or Archaeology, where you can open a book and read it, and learn. Theology is a little bit different - because to know God, is more than just intellect.
- God is personal - Three Persons. So to know a person, I can't just read about them. Like if I gave you a book about my wife, and you read the book and you memorized it, will you know her like I know her? Of course not! Because she is a person. And persons are known through relationship.
- Evagrius Ponticus, one of the disciples of St Basil from the 4th Century says:

> “The theologian is the one who prays, and the one who prays is a theologian.

What Should I Do?

1. Be simple, like the babes
   - Watching debates, learning words and arguments, etc. - if it's not your calling (given to you by your FoC), don't get sucked into them. You will drown.
   - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;" (1 Peter 3:15)
     - Many times we are trying to prepare for the "be ready to give a defense" but we skip "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" and we skip "the hope that is in you" and we skip "meekness and fear."
     - This is the danger of YouTube debates and videos and discussions and all of that
   - The more I lean on my own understanding, the more I lean on my own wisdom, the more will be hidden from me.

- That's why the Lord said "Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." and "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

2. Develop my Relationship with God
   - God is personal - if I want to know Him, I need to know Him personally - in the prayer corner. In the room by myself. And He will reveal Himself to me.
     - I was just telling some of the catechumens this week that the most important part of catechism is not the classes or the theology or the arguments or the knowledge... those things are very important. But the most important is the spiritual canon. This is where I will succeed as a Christian.
   - God is also known and seen and met in His Church. I cannot know God without being in the Church. As St Cyprian of Carthage says, "No one can have God as his Father without having the Church as his Mother." And we had wonderful topics this past week during the Revival for St. Rebekah's Feast, about the role of the Church in my life.
     - The Church is my Mother
     - The Church is my Salvation
     - The Church is my Home and my Joy

3. Treasure and Value what has been entrusted to me
   - The Gospel ended today with the Lord turning to the disciples and saying, privately: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it." (Luke 10:23-24)
   - We repeat these words in every liturgy before the reading of the Holy Gospel and we take them as words for ourselves.
   - Blessed are your eyes, which have seen the salvation accomplished by God. Blessed are your ears that hear the word of God and His Gospel. Blessed are your feet that enter into His House, His dwelling place, His altar. Blessed is your mouth that partakes of His Body and His Blood.
   - Many prophets and kings - Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel: They all dreamed of seeing what we see. They all prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. They prophesied about salvation. About the Cross. About the Resurrection. About the Eucharist. But none of them got to see what we see or to hear what we hear or to eat from the Tree of Life that we eat from.
   - Blessed are you!
   - Do I take for granted these great gifts? Or do I treasure them?

Conclusion

May the Lord grant us to know Him, to get to know Him, and may He reveal Himself to us.

Glory be to our God. Forever. Amen.

2026-10-03: 4th Sunday of Thoout - She Loved Much

Introduction

The Gospel today is the same Gospel we pray every night in the 2nd Watch of the Midnight Hour, about the Sinful Woman. And one of the very interesting things in this parable is that we call her the Sinful Woman. The Gospel says "A woman in the city, who was a sinner" and in most English Bibles the title of this story is "Sinful Woman Forgiven." But that's not the name that the Lord Jesus gave her...

The Lord called her "The woman who loved much"

So what is the relationship between forgiveness and love? The Lord explains it in a parable

The Parable

There's a creditor with two debtors - one owes 500, and the other owes 50. When they couldn't afford to pay, he forgave both of them. Freely. He took away their debt. He just cancelled it.

Then the Lord asks - which of the two debtors will love him more? The one who owed 500? Or the one who owed 50? Who will love him more?

Simon said - the 500! He was forgiven for more, so he will love him more.

And the Lord tells him that he has rightly judged.

Then the Lord says: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

She loved much - she loved the Lord Christ BECAUSE of the forgiveness. Her sins are many, and they were forgiven. So she loved much. She is the debtor who owed 500. And all 500 were forgiven.

But Simon is the debtor who owed 50. So he didn't love as much.

All of the things she did out of love, were things HE was supposed to do for his guest, but he didn't because he didn't love the Lord. And he didn't love the Lord because he was not forgiven much. And he was not forgiven much because he did not see himself as a sinner or needing forgiveness.

When you believe that the Lord forgave you, you will love Him more. The more you realize your own sins and see what the Lord forgives you for, the more you will love the Lord.

Any of us, if we ask will say "I love the Lord" but how do we express our love? And how does this love bring forth repentance?

We can take lessons from what she did. How did she express this love to the Lord?

Steps of Repentance

"Stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil." (Luke 7:38)

From this action, she actually did about 8 different things that we can learn from and take their spiritual message.

1 - She went to him

- “When she knew that Jesus sat to eat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment”
- Here she does something very difficult - she walks into a Pharisee's house. Knowing who she is and what she does, she walks into the house of someone who will judge her. She walks to her shame. Of course, she met Christ who offered her forgiveness instead of judgment.
- Sometimes when we sin, we run away from God. We are ashamed. We stop praying. We avoid confession. We don't want to come to church.
- We even justify - "How can I go before God after what I did?"
- Let me acknowledge my own sin and shortcoming and my need for Him
- “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (John 6:37)

2 - She stood at his feet behind him

- Feeling of unworthiness; humility
- She doesn't walk in making demands or justifying herself or trying to explain, or comparing herself with others
- Many people when they come to confession
  - "I did xyz buy he started it"
  - "I said this word but it was because what she said to me first"
  - "I sinned but everyone does it"
  - "At least I did better than this other person"
- Or Abouna gives guidance
  - This guidance doesn't match what I want
  - This guidance is different from what I expected
- Look at the Tax-Collector in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
  - "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’" (Luke 18:13)

3 - She wept

- "**Godly sorrow** produces repentance leading to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- "A broken and humble heart, God will not despise" (Psalm 51:17 - Psalm 50 in the Agpeya)
- Why is she crying?
  - Tears of Repentance
  - She's not crying out of fear of punishment
  - She's crying because "How could I sin against the One who loves me?"
  - She's crying because "How could I deserve this forgiveness?"
- "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)

4 - She washed His feet

- "Godly sorrow produces **repentance** leading to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- The tears are not shed for no reason, but they produce repentance
- It's not enough to shed tears
  - Judas felt bad about betraying the Lord - he shed tears. He even regretted what he had done... but repentance is a step beyond that.
- St John the Baptist was preaching to the people "Bear fruits worthy of repentance" - repentance involves an action.
- Examples
  - If I steal... it's not enough to weep because I felt bad about stealing, but I must return what I took.
  - If I hurt someone... it's not enough to weep because I felt guilty, but I must apologize and restore the person
- "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." (Luke 19 - Zaccheaus)

5 - She exposed her hair

- Exposing our sins in confession
- In those days and the Jewish culture, it was considered immodest for a woman to uncover her hair, but here she is exposing her hair before the Lord. Exposing her immodesty.
- When I sin, my natural instinct is to hide...
  - Adam and Eve in the garden "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God" (Genesis 3:8)
- Repentance does the opposite - expose it before Christ in confession.
  - The devil will tell me "if this is exposed, you will be shamed and humiliated."
  - Christ says "Bring it to me so I can heal it"
- Imagine if someone went to the hospital and was too embarrassed to tell them his symptoms or how he was feeling... he will not find healing!
- “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)
- “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9)

6 - She dried His feet with her hair

- St Paul says that a woman's hair is her glory... so now, when we see the image of this woman who is drying the Lord's feet with her hair, we see that she is letting go of her glory. Putting it instead at the feet of Christ. Using her glory to serve Him.
  - Maybe my glory is in my career
  - Maybe my glory is in my intelligence or my degrees or my achievements
  - Maybe my glory is in my reputation or in my fame
  - Maybe my glory is in my money
  - Maybe my glory is even in my seeming spirituality - I fast, I know the Bible, I know the hymns
- It's easy to put my sins at the feet of Christ, because I know sin is weakness and it needs healing.
- But how about to put my glory? How about to say that "anything good that I DO HAVE is from You, Lord. But anything bad that is because of my own weakness"
- "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Galatians 6:14)
- It doesn't mean that I ignore my talents or my intelligence or my career - but I use them to serve Him. To glorify Him.

7 - She kissed His feet

- Returning to love and reconciliation with God - communion
- This brings us back to the beginning - why is she doing all this? Because she loved much.
- Sometimes we are very focused on "is it a sin" or "I need to confess this sin" or "What if I forget a sin" - that's good. But there's a better way to see my spiritual life.
- I have a relationship with God. Anything that comes in between that relationship, needs healing. I come to Him for healing and then our relationship is restored. Our communion is restored. I can abide in Him and He in me. I love You, Lord and I don't want anything to separate me from You.

8 - She poured perfume on His feet

- Finally, she poured the fragrant oil that she had walked in with, on His feet
- Many commentators see this oil as one of two things:
  - The perfume that was used to seduce or lure others into sinful life
  - The perfume purchased with the wages of sin
- In both cases, it is the object of her sin... and the last step in repentance is to forsake the object of my sin, that I may not return to it.
- If she had done all of this, but kept the fragrant oil as a reminder, or as a "just in case" - then her repentance would not be complete. But now, she has forsook the life of sin and left it behind. There is no more remnant.
- Sometimes
  - We come to confession with a relationship that we don't want to end
  - We confess about a show that we will continue to watch
  - We confess about anger, but we're holding on to grudges
  - We confess about pride, but not willing to apologize
- It's time to let go of the perfume. Time to leave it at the feet of the Lord.

- "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)
- Christ will transform the object of our sin
  - The mouth that used to curse, will be used to praise Him
  - The time that was wasted, will be offered to God
  - The money that was squandered, will be offered to the needy
  - The hands that sinned, will be used to serve Him and His House

Conclusion

If we look at Simon, we can imagine someone who goes to sit for confession, doesn't really have much to say, even the little bit that he says, he starts by justifying all his actions, blaming and judging others, he comes with the same stories every time, never any change, never any action, full of pride. This is Simon.

But the Woman Who Loved Much gives us a complete picture of repentance. In this one verse and this one action, we learn so much: "She stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil." (Luke 7:38)

That I acknowledge my sin, go to Christ in Humility, shed tears of repentance, expose my sin in Confession, let go of my own glory, be reconciled with God, and put away what belongs to my old life.

May the Lord grant us to examine ourselves and see if we are a little more like Simon, and strive to be like this wonderful woman, so that we may hear the voice of the Lord say to us: "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."