The text for the sermon this morning is written in the fourteenth verse of the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We all have things in which we are tempted to glory in. – We may not use that particular word very often – but I think we know what St. Paul means. We take pride in our accomplishments, our work, our families, our education, our reputation, even our favorite professional sports teams (when they are doing well). We like to know that something we have done has gone well – and, if we are being truthful, we generally do not mind when someone else notices.

The problem in today's Epistle is not simply that some people were proud. St. Paul says that they wanted "to make a fair shew in the flesh." They wanted religion that looked impressive. They wanted something visible that they could point to as evidence of success. And St. Paul tells us there was another reason as well – they wanted to avoid "persecution for the cross of Christ."

In other words, they wanted a Christianity that would bring them respectability – without bringing them the cost of the Cross.

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

– And St. Paul will have none of it. – He says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That is an extraordinary thing to say when we remember what the Cross meant in St. Paul's day. – Today, we see crosses everywhere. There is one above our altar. We wear them around our necks. We place them on churches and prayer books. – The Cross has become so familiar to us that it is easy to forget that in the ancient world it was an instrument of humiliation and death.

And St. John Chrysostom makes exactly that point. He says that the world considered the Cross something shameful – but for the Christian it had become the highest glory. ***Why?*** – Because the Cross showed St. Paul the depth of Christ's love for him. – Christ had willingly endured that shame and suffering for his salvation.

So when St. Paul says that he glories in the Cross – he is not saying that suffering itself is something to celebrate. – He is glorying in what Christ has done there.

The Cross says that we could not save ourselves. – The Cross says that our sins are serious. – But the Cross also says that the love of God is greater than our sins – that Christ loved us enough to give Himself for us. – And once St. Paul understood that, it changed what he thought was worth glorying in.

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

He continues: "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

That can sound rather severe until we understand what he means. St. Paul is not saying that the creation God made is evil. St. John Chrysostom explains that by "the world" Paul means those things which so easily captivate us – the praise of other people, wealth, status, outward glory, and all those things that appear so important by the world's standards. – Paul is saying: those things no longer get to tell me who I am.

And that may be where this Epistle begins to come uncomfortably close to us. – Because the Cross changes not only what we believe about Christ – it begins to change what we believe is worth wanting for ourselves.

Do I need everyone to think well of me? – Do I need always to get my own way? – Does my security depend upon how much I possess? – Does my happiness depend upon everything going according to my plans? – How much of my life is spent trying to make a "fair shew" – making sure that everything looks successful, respectable, and under control?

This passage has particular meaning for me this week because tomorrow I will be traveling to meet with my brethren in

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

the Society of the Holy Cross – Societas Sanctae Crucis. The Cross is not merely in the name of the Society. Part of our Rule of Life reminds us that we are to strive to surrender our wills to God, and that the spiritual life can develop only in a climate of silence which we should seek to make part of a daily pattern of praise and thanksgiving. – That language of surrendering the will sounds wonderful until the will of God and our own will begin pointing in different directions.

It is easy to say, "Thy will be done," when God's will happens to agree with ours. – It becomes something rather different when obedience costs us something – when God asks us to forgive someone we would rather remain angry with – to give up something we desperately want – to accept a road we would never have chosen – or simply to admit that we are not in control. – But that is the way of the Cross.

Our Lord Himself prayed in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine, be done." – And that surrender is connected with silence – because our lives are filled with voices competing for our attention. – The world tells us what ought to impress us. – Advertising tells us what we need. – The news tells us what we ought to fear. – Social media tells us whose approval we ought to seek. – Our own pride tells us how we ought to be treated.

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

And sometimes we need enough silence before God to ask a much more important question – Whose voice am I actually following?

That question leads us directly into today's Gospel. – Jesus says, "No man can serve two masters." – Notice that He does not say that serving two masters is difficult. – He says ***it cannot be done. – Eventually one of them will come first.***

And then He names one of our most common competing masters: mammon. – Mammon certainly includes money, but the problem is larger than money. The problem is anything in this world that begins to claim the loyalty that belongs to God alone.

That is why Jesus eventually says: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness."

There is the question of priority again. – Jesus does not say that food does not matter. – He does not say clothing does not matter. – He does not say tomorrow does not matter. – In fact, He says plainly, "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

The problem begins when the necessary things of life become the first things – when they begin deciding what we will obey – what we will sacrifice – and whom we will serve.

And here the Collect becomes especially important, in it we prayed: "Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall…" The compilers of the Prayer Book knew us and themselves rather well. It does not say that the frailty of man might fall. It says that without God we cannot ***but fall***. And that is important – because a sermon about surrendering our wills could easily become another sermon about trying harder. Just grit your teeth, become more disciplined, silence all the distractions, and surrender yourself to God.

But the Collect tells us that we cannot do this without His mercy. – We need God to keep us. – We need Him to protect us from "all things hurtful." – And we need Him to lead us toward "all things profitable to our salvation."

And sometimes the things profitable to our salvation are not the things that seem most profitable to us at the time. – St. Paul could have avoided a great deal of trouble by making his Christianity more acceptable. – He could have softened the

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

message of the Cross. – He could have cared more about what people thought of him. – That would have made his life easier. – But it would not have made him faithful.

And so he says: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." – Then, almost immediately, St. Paul gives us the result: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

And that is finally what matters. – Not whether we look religious. – Not whether other people are impressed with us. – Not whether our Christianity remains comfortable. – Not even whether we can point to some outward sign and say, "See what I have accomplished."

The question is whether the Cross is actually making us into something new. – Is Christ changing what we value? – Is He changing what we seek? – Is He changing whose approval matters most? – Is He teaching us to surrender rather than always insisting upon our own way? – Is there enough silence in our lives for us even to hear Him?

St. John Chrysostom says that the "new creature" means a life renewed by Christ – a new and heavenly rule of life rather than

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.

simply an outward mark of religion. – That is the challenge before us.

We wear crosses. – We place them upon our altars. – We carry them in procession. – Some of us even belong to a Society that bears the Holy Cross in its name. – But St. Paul asks for something more than admiration of the Cross. – He teaches that the Cross must become the measure of our lives – teaching us what is worth glorying in, what is worth surrendering, and ultimately whose will we intend to follow.

And when the many voices of this world begin competing for first place, we hear again the words of our Lord: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness."

And when we are tempted to boast in ourselves, St. Paul brings us back to the one thing worthy of our boast: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

 Homily © 2026 The Ven. Michael C. Weaver, SSC. All rights reserved.