

The Truths We Hold

(compiled and edited by a monk of St. Tikhon's Monastery)

Church History

A History of the Orthodox Church

The history of the Orthodox Church actually begins in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, with the Descent of the Holy Spirit: When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). As the text further tells us, on that same day, after St. Peter had preached to the gathered people, those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41), thus constituting the first Christian community at Jerusalem.

This first community of Christians, headed by St. James, the Brother of the Lord the first Bishop of the city was later scattered by the persecutions which followed the stoning of the first martyr of the Christian Church, St. Stephen: And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles (Acts 8:1).

At the same time, faithful to the Lord's command to go...and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), the Apostles went out and preached wherever they went, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, so that in a surprisingly short time, Christian communities had sprung up in all the main centers of the Roman world and beyond. Their exploits are recorded in the Acts, as well in the inner tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The Holy Apostles.

St. Andrew the First-Called.

St. Andrew was a Galilean fisherman of Bethsaida and was the first called of the Apostles of Christ (John 1:37-40), to whom he brought his brother Simon, called Peter. According to Church tradition, he suffered martyrdom at Patras in Achaia on an X-shaped Cross (St. Andrew's Cross). Another tradition says that he visited Russia as far as the city of Kiev (while yet another Novgorod). His Feast Day is November 30.

St. Bartholemew.

In Holy Scripture, St. Bartholemew is to be identified with the Nathanael of John 1:45-51, of whom the Lord Himself witnessed, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile (John 1:47). According to Church tradition, he preached the Gospel in Lycaonia, India and Armenia, where he was martyred by being flayed alive. His Feast Day is June 11.

St. James the Elder.

St. James the Elder (so-called to distinguish him from the other Apostle, St. James the Younger) and his brother, John (the Evangelist), were fishermen the sons of Zebedee. This James, along with his brother and St. Peter, were especially beloved of the Lord. According to the Acts, he was beheaded by King Agrippa in Jerusalem (Acts 12:2), after first having preached in Spain. His Feast Day is April 30.

St. James the Younger.

St. James the Younger (so-called to distinguish him from the other Apostle of the same name; sometimes called the Son of Alphaeus), was the brother of St. Matthew. In St. Mark's Gospel he is said to be the son of Mary, one of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women (Mark 16:1). According to Church tradition, he labored in Judea and then accompanied St. Andrew to Edessa, preaching the Gospel. Later he traveled to Gaza (on the southern seacoast of Palestine), and from there to Egypt, where he was martyred by crucifixion. His Feast Day is October 9.

St. John.

St. John the Evangelist (also the Theologian or the Divine), was a son of Zebedee and brother of St. James the Elder. In Holy Scripture he is referred to as the disciple, whom Jesus loved (John 13:23), and who leaned on his Master's breast at the Last Supper. To him was entrusted the Most-Holy Theotokos by Our Lord as He was dying on the Cross (John 19:26), and it was at St. John's house that her Holy Dormition occurred. St. John occupied an important place in the Apostolic ministry and, according to St. Paul, he, together with Peter and James were seen to be pillars of the Church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). According to Church tradition, he was the last of the Apostles to die, ca. 100 A.D., and while exiled on the Isle of Patmos, he wrote the Apocalypse (or Revelation). To him is also attributed the Gospel and the three Epistles that bear his name. His Feast Days are May 8 and September 26.

St. Jude.

This Apostle, the brother of James the Just (both being half-brothers or perhaps, cousins, of the Lord), is also called Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus (John 14:22; Matt. 10:3). To him is attributed the Epistle of St. Jude. According to Church tradition, he preached in Syria and Edessa, eventually being martyred in Persia with his fellow Apostle, Simeon Zealotes. His Feast Day is June 19.

St. Lebbaeus.

[See St. Jude].

St. Matthew.

St. Matthew (also called Levi the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14)) was a brother of St. James the Younger and was a tax collector. The First Gospel is attributed to him, and, according to many scholars, was first written for the Hebrews. According to Church tradition, St. Matthew preached to the Jews first, and then traveled to Ethiopia, Macedonia, Syria and Persia, dying a natural death, according to one tradition, or by martyrdom, according to another. His Feast Day is November 16.

St. Matthias.

According to the Acts, St. Matthias was chosen by lot to fill the place among the Twelve Apostles left vacant by the Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26). According to Church Tradition he is said to have preached in Ethiopia and Armenia, eventually suffering death by crucifixion. His Feast Day is August 9.

St. Nathanael.

[See St. Bartholomew].

St. Peter.

St. Peter was a brother of St. Andrew, and, together with him, was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. Called by the Lord to become a fisher of men (Matt. 4:19), he was originally named Simon,

but later his name was changed to Peter (in Aramaic Cephas, meaning rock) by the Lord. This was in response to Peter's declaration: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16), for the Lord then said to him, You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). Holy Scripture amply witnesses to the fact that Peter occupied a primary place among the Apostles, although not to the extreme claimed by the Roman Catholic Church. His activities after the Resurrection are witnessed to in the Acts and, according to Church tradition, he was later martyred in Rome, being crucified upside down at his own request, since he felt himself not worthy to die in the same manner as the Lord Himself. The two Epistles of St. Peter are ascribed to him and he is celebrated, together with the other chief Apostle, St. Paul, on June 29.

St. Philip.

St. Philip, like Peter and Andrew, came from Bethsaida in Galilee (Matt. 10:3) and was called early in the Lord's earthly ministry, bringing Nathanael with him (John 1:43ff.). According to Church tradition, he was a missionary in Phrygia and died there (by martyrdom, according to some) at Hierapolis. His Feast Day is November 14, the next day being the beginning of the Nativity Fast (for which reason it is often called St. Philip's Fast).

St. Simeon Zealotes.

St. Simeon Zealotes (or the Zealot; sometimes the Canaanite), according to Church tradition, traveled through Egypt and Africa, then through Mauretania and Libya, preaching the Gospel of Christ. Later he is said to have traveled to Britain, where he was martyred by the Romans on a Cross. Another tradition says that he was martyred with St. Jude in Persia. His Feast Day is May 10.

St. Thaddaeus.

[See St. Jude].

St. Thomas.

St. Thomas, called Didymus (or the Twin, John 11:16), appears several times in St. John's Gospel, which gives a good impression of the sort of man he was: ready to die with the Master (John 11:16); skeptical about the Resurrection, yet, when the Risen Christ manifested Himself to him, is whole-hearted in his belief (John 20:24-28). According to Church tradition, St. Thomas preached in Parthia (Persia), Edessa and India, where he is held in great veneration as a founder of the Church there, eventually suffering martyrdom. According to Church tradition, his remains were buried in Edessa. His Feast Day is October 6 and also the Sunday following Holy Pascha (St. Thomas Sunday).

Judas Iscariot.

This disciple, forever a symbol of treachery, the son of Simon, was from the town of Kerioth (from Kerioth Iscariot). According to the Gospel, he stole from the common treasury of which he had charge (John 12:5-6) and ultimately betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-15). After the Crucifixion of Jesus, in deep remorse, Judas cast the pieces of silver into the Temple before the Chief Priests and Elders, later going out and hanging himself. With the money, now considered blood money, a potter's field was bought to bury strangers in (Matt. 27:3-10).

St. Paul.

St. Paul was a strict Pharisee, having studied under the respected Rabbi Gamaliel at Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). At a young age he had learned the trade of a tent-maker (Acts 18:1-3) and had inherited Roman citizenship from his father (Acts 22:28). The young Saul (as he was known before his conversion to Christianity) was zealous for Judaism and consented to the stoning of St. Stephen,

later actively joining in the persecution of the Christians (Acts 8:3). While on the way to Damascus, to persecute the Christians there, he had a sudden vision of the Lord, Who rebuked him for his persecution, and later he converted to the Christian Faith (Acts 9:1-22). After this conversion experience, St. Paul went on to become one of the greatest of the Apostles, zealously bringing the Light of Christ to the Gentiles, eventually going to Rome where he received martyrdom by beheading. During his missionary journeys, amply attested to in the Acts, he wrote letters of encouragement to various congregations and individuals along the way, and thirteen of them (fourteen, if the Epistle to the Hebrews is accepted as of Pauline origin) have been accepted as part of the New Testament. Together with St. Peter, he is commemorated on June 29.

Other Apostles.

St. Barnabas.

St. Barnabas, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith (Acts 11:24), was a Jew from Cyprus, closely associated with the work of St. Paul. It was Barnabas who was sent to the Christians at Antioch, fetching Paul from Tarsus to help him. Later, he and Paul were sent on the first missionary journey, which began on the island of Cyprus, of which Church St. Barnabas is said to have founded. According to Church tradition, he was martyred on Cyprus at Salamis. He commemorated together with St. Bartholomew on June 11.

St. James the Brother of the Lord.

St. James was a half-brother (or perhaps a cousin) of the Lord, and was the first Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem, being called by St. Paul a pillar of that Church, together with Peter and John (Gal. 2:9). At the first general Church council, the Council of Jerusalem, James is depicted as having a leading role (Acts 15:12-21). Having ruled the Church in Jerusalem wisely (for which reason he is often called the Just), St. James was martyred there. Being taken to the top of the Temple wall, he was commanded to convince the people to turn away from Christ, which he refused to do, speaking to them in quite the opposite manner. Thereupon he was thrown down from that high point to the ground, where he was stoned and beaten to death. The Epistle of St. James is attributed to him and his Feast Day is celebrated on October 23.

St. Luke.

St. Luke, the Beloved Physician (Col. 4:14), is the author of the Gospel bearing his name, as well as the Acts of the Apostles. He was a Gentile convert, probably a Greek, and was a companion of St. Paul in his later missionary journeys, concerning which he related in the Acts. According to Church tradition, St. Luke was an iconographer and wrote the first Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos. St. Luke died, unmarried, in Greece, at the age of eighty-four, and is commemorated on October 18.

St. Mark.

The Second Gospel is attributed to this Apostle, who some say was the young man who fled away naked at the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:51-52). In the Acts, he is called John Mark (Acts 12:12; 15:37), the son of Mary, at whose house in Jerusalem the early Christians stayed (Acts 12:12), and he was a cousin of the Apostle Barnabas (Col. 4:10). He figures several times in the Acts, at one point being the source of a temporary rift between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40), but later he was with Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. 4:10). In his 1st Epistle, St. Peter mentions Mark as being with him, styling him my son (1 Pet. 5:13). According to Church tradition, St. Mark wrote his Gospel at the request of the brethren in Rome, who asked him to relate what he had learned from St. Peter. He is said to have preached the Gospel at Alexandria, Egypt, and was its first Bishop, being martyred there during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. His Feast Day is April 25.

The Persecutions.

After these humble beginnings, Christianity spread far and wide throughout the known world, but the Good News of Christ aroused intense opposition, and the first three centuries of the Church were characterized by sporadic, but bloody, persecutions. Church tradition is full of the lives of these early martyrs for the faith, and one cannot but admire the courage and perseverance of these heroes who willingly gave up their lives rather than denounce Christ. Among these were Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, burned at the stake when over eighty years old, Justin the Martyr, and Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, as well as many other men and women martyrs, who are commemorated in the Church Calendar.

These persecutions were often local in character and of limited duration, and although there were long periods of de-facto toleration, the threat of persecution was always there. Christians knew that at any time the threat of persecution could become a very present reality and the idea of martyrdom held a central place in the spiritual outlook of these warriors for Christ. Later, when persecution and martyrdom ceased to be a major concern of the Christians, the idea, nonetheless, did not disappear, but took other forms. Chief among these was the monastic life, regarded by many as a form of martyrdom equal to bodily death.

In 312, however, a momentous event occurred, for in that year, seeing, in a vision, a Cross in the sky with the inscription, In this sign conquer, and placing the Cross on the shields of his army, the Emperor Constantine defeated a rival army and ultimately became the first Roman Emperor to embrace Christianity. In 313, Constantine and his fellow Emperor Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, which proclaimed the official toleration of the Christian faith. Fifty years later, the Emperor Theodosius carried this policy even further when he legislated Christianity as the only accepted religion of the Empire, while outlawing paganism.

In 324, Constantine moved his imperial capital from Rome to Byzantium, on the shores of the Bosphorus, where he built a new capital, Constantinople (dedicated in 330). From here, in 325, he summoned to Nicea what was to be the first of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

The Seven Councils.

The conciliar principle of deciding matters of doctrinal and disciplinary importance began with the Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15, where the Apostles met to decide whether Gentile converts should be subject to the Mosaic Law. (They were not!). With this Council in mind, and the various local councils which met at diverse parts of the Empire in the period prior to Nicea, the Church established an important principle: In council, the members of the Church, so to speak, can together claim an authority which individually none of them possess. The Seven Ecumenical Councils which met in the period from 325 to 787 performed two basic tasks: 1) They formulated the visible, ecclesiastical organization of the Church, setting the ranking of the Five Patriarchates; and 2) they defined, once and for all, the teachings of the Church on faith, formulating the basic dogmas concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Nicea I (325).

This Council condemned the heresy of Arianism, which had contended that the Son was inferior to the Father and was, in fact, created. The Fathers here declared that the Son is one in essence (homoousios) with the Father, and formulated the first part of what eventually became the Creed the Symbol of Faith. In addition, three great Sees were singled out Rome, Alexandria and Antioch (Canon 6), and the See of Jerusalem, although still subject to the Metropolitan of Caesarea, was given the next place in honor after Antioch (Canon 7).

Constantinople I (381).

This Council expanded the Nicene Creed, developing the teachings concerning the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father; Who, with the Father and Son, is worshipped and glorified..., against the heresy of the Pneumatomachi (Spiritsmashers) and the Macedonians (followers of Macedonius), who could not accept the Third Person of the Trinity as equal to the other Two. It was in this period that we see the activities of the great Cappadocian Fathers, St. Gregory Nazianzus (the Theologian), St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nyssa, as well as the great Alexandrian Father, St. Athanasius the Great. The First Council of Constantinople also decreed that Constantinople, the new capital, should hold the next place of honor after Rome, since it was now the New Rome (Canon 111).

Ephesus (431).

This Council met to discuss the heresy of the Nestorians, who could not accept that God and Man had been united in one Person, Christ, refusing to call the Virgin Mary, Theotokos (or Birthgiver of God). Supported primarily by St. Cyril of Alexandria, this Council affirmed that Mary was truly Theotokos, since, as the Evangelist had proclaimed, the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), and the Virgin had borne a single and undivided Person Who is, at the same time, God and Man.

Chalcedon (451).

This Council met to discuss the heresy of the Monophysites who held that in Christ the human nature had been merged into the divine, so that there was, after the divine union, only one nature. The Bishops of this Council accepted the so-called Tome of Pope St. Leo the Great of Rome, which affirmed the belief that the one and the same son, perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, [is] truly God and truly man...acknowledged in two natures unconfused, unchanged, undivided and inseparable. In addition, the place of Constantinople after that of Rome was confirmed, as was that of Jerusalem in the fifth place of honor.

A tragic result of this Council (and that of Ephesus prior) was the splitting apart from the main body of a large group of Christians adhering to either the Nestorian or Monophysite view. The Nestorians were found basically in Persia and Mesopotamia, and were especially decimated by the Islamic and Turkish onslaughts, whereas the Monophysites were strong in Africa (Egypt and Ethiopia the present Coptic Church), Armenia, and India (the Jacobite Church).

Constantinople II (553).

This Council met to further reinterpret the decrees of Chalcedon, seeking to explain how the two natures of Christ unite to form a single person. It affirmed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one of the Holy Trinity, one and the same divine Person (hypostasis), Who has united personally (hypostatically) in Himself the two natures of God and Man, without fusing them together and without allowing their separation. Certain teachings of Origen, including his teaching concerning the pre-existence of the soul, among other things, were also expressly condemned.

Constantinople III (681).

This Council met to condemn the Monothelite heresy which held that in the union of the two natures in Christ, the human will was merged into the divine as one will, since the two natures were united into one person. The Council, however, held that if Christ has two natures, he also has two wills human and divine.

Nicea II (787).

This Council met to affirm the belief of the Orthodox that veneration of the Holy Icons was proper and necessary for a correct understanding of the Incarnation of Christ, against those who held that Icon-veneration was idolatry and that all Icons should be destroyed (Iconoclasts). This Seventh

Council was also the last of the Ecumenical Councils accepted as such by the Orthodox Church, although the possibility does exist that, in principle, more could be convened. The Iconoclast controversy did not end until after another rising of the heretics beginning in 815, which was finally suppressed by the Empress Theodora in 843. This final victory of the Holy Icons in 843 is known as the Triumph of Orthodoxy, and is commemorated on the First Sunday of Great Lent. Thus, with the resolution of the Iconoclast controversy, the Age of the Seven Councils came to an end.

During this same period, there were two other major currents that were to have a profound effect on the Byzantine Empire and Orthodoxy. The first of these was the rise of monasticism. It began as a definite institution in Egypt in the 4th Century and rapidly spread across the Christian world. It literally began at a time when the persecutions had ended, and the Monks, with their austere life, were, in a real sense, martyrs when martyrdom of blood had virtually ceased. At a time when people were in danger of forgetting that life in the world the earthly kingdom was not the Kingdom of God, the Monks and their withdrawal from society, reminded Christians that God's Kingdom, in fact, is not of this world.

The second major current in this period was the rise and rapid spread of Islam, the most striking characteristic of which was the speed of its expansion. Within fifteen years after the death of Mohammed in 632, his followers had captured Syria, Palestine and Egypt, and in fifty years, they were already at the gates of Constantinople. Within 100 years, they had swept across North Africa and through Spain. The Byzantine Empire lost the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, and until the actual fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Empire was never free from attack.

The Great Schism.

In 1054 occurred one of the greatest tragedies of the Christian world the Great Schism between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. Officially proclaimed at Constantinople in that year by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Humbert, it was, in a sense, the culmination of a process that had been taking place for several centuries, ultimately centering on two major controversies: Papal authority and the Filioque.

Originally the two branches of Christendom had begun to drift apart because of cultural and language differences. Then, in 800, we see a political split with the proclamation of Charlemagne as the Holy Roman Emperor there were now two! The hegemony of the Arabs over the Mediterranean and their expansion into the Balkans made direct contact difficult, if not impossible, between East and West. And even in theology the two branches of Christendom began to differ in their basic approaches, with the Latins being more practical, the Greeks more speculative; the Latins more influenced by legal ideas nurtured by the basic concepts of Roman law, while the Greeks were influenced by worship and the Holy Liturgy; the Latins were more concerned with redemption, the Greeks with deification. These different approaches, practiced in greater isolation from each other, eventually led to the two main theological problems outlined earlier.

The first problem was that of Papal authority. The Greeks were willing to ascribe to the Pope of Rome a primacy of honor, considering him to be the first among equals, whereas the Pope believed his power of jurisdiction to extend to the East as well as the West, the Greeks jealously guarding the autonomy of the other Patriarchates. The Pope saw infallibility as his sole prerogative, whereas the Greeks insisted that in matters of faith, the ultimate decisions belonged to an Ecumenical Council consisting of all the Bishops of the Universal Church.

The second great problem was the Filioque (Latin and the Son), first inserted into the Creed at the Council of Toledo in Spain in 589 and later adopted by the whole Western Church. Whereas the original wording of the Creed ran, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father..., the Latin insertion changed it to read, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son__ The Orthodox objected to this insertion on

two grounds: 1) the Ecumenical Councils had expressly forbidden any changes to be introduced into the Creed, and 2) this insertion disturbed the balance between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, leading to a false understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world.

Prior to the Schism of 1054, there had been another breach, the so-called Photian Schism, in the 9th Century, but it had been officially terminated in the latter years of the reign of Patriarch Photius. The breach of 1054, however, although not universally applied at first, was never healed, even after several attempts to do so, most noticeably at the Council of Lyons in 1274 and the Council of Florence in 1438-9, when the Turks were already threatening Constantinople, but these reunion attempts were doomed to failure. Probably the deciding factor in the permanence of the Schism had been the capture and sack of Constantinople by the Latin Crusaders in 1204, which forever after remained indelibly imprinted on the consciousness of the Orthodox.

In 1453, a crucial event occurred in world Orthodoxy, with the Fall of Constantinople to the Turkish Sultan, Mohammed II. The Greek-speaking Churches fell under the heavy yoke of Islam, and for nearly 500 years labored in servitude, only emerging again with the Balkan Revolutions of the 19th Century and World War I. In the meantime, the focus of Orthodoxy shifted to the North, to the domains of the Most Pious Tsars of Russia.

Notable Fathers of the Early Period.

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (258).

St. Cyprian, commemorated on August 31, was Bishop of Carthage during the persecutions of the Emperor Decius (250). He died as a martyr in 258, and among his many writings concerning Church life, the most important is *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, which sets forth the role of the Bishop in the ecclesiastical structure.

St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (107).

St. Ignatius was the second Bishop of Antioch and is commemorated on December 20 and January 29. Martyred in the Arena at Rome, while on his way to martyrdom, he wrote seven letters to Christian communities, as well as to St. Polycarp, which contain valuable information on the dogmas, organization and liturgy of the early Church.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (202).

St. Irenaeus, who is commemorated on August 23, was a disciple of St. Polycarp, and, as a Westerner, he succeeded St. Photinus as Bishop of Lyons. His major doctrinal work is *Against Heresies*, which defends Orthodoxy against the Gnostics, borrowing heavily on both human reason and Holy Scripture and Tradition, serving as an important witness to Church traditions of his time.

St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (167).

St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John the Theologian and is commemorated as a martyr on February 23. The account of his martyrdom, the earliest detailed account of a martyr, gives an excellent picture of his character and the steadfastness of his Christian faith.

Notable Fathers of the Early Byzantine Period.

St. Anthony the Great (356).

St. Anthony, commemorated January 17, is considered to be the Father of monasticism, and *The Life of St. Anthony*, by St. Athanasius, presents him as a truly inspiring example of monastic ascetical perfection. During the Arian controversies, he risked his life defending the Orthodox teachings of St. Athanasius in Alexandria.

St. Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria (373).

St. Athanasius, commemorated January 18 and May 2, was a great defender of the Orthodox faith during the Arian controversies and was exiled five times for his labors. Among his major writings are *The Incarnation of Christ* and *The Life of St. Anthony*, which serve as major inspirations for Orthodox theology and monastic spirituality.

St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (379).

St. Basil, commemorated January 1 and January 30, was a notable theologian and spiritual writer of the 4th Century and is noted for his many writings on numerous theological and spiritual subjects, as well as commentaries on Holy Scripture. During the Sundays of Great Lent, as well as on his Feast Day (Jan. 1), the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is served, although probably only the prayers are actually of this Saint.

St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria (444).

St. Cyril, commemorated on January 18 and June 9, was the leader in the defense of Orthodoxy against the Nestorians, and was a firm defender of the veneration of the Virgin Mary as Theotokos. He was especially prominent in the deliberations of the Third Ecumenical Council.

St. Ephraim the Syrian (373-9).

St. Ephraim, commemorated January 28, was a major spiritual writer and hymnographer of the 4th Century, and is especially noted in Orthodox liturgical life for, among other things, his inspiring work, *The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian*, which is said at all of the weekday services of Great Lent.

St. Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople (389).

St. Gregory, commemorated January 25 and 30, was a fellow student and friend of St. Basil the Great and was a leading opponent of the Arians. He has been honored by the Church with the title Theologian, being one of only three, so honored (the others being St. John the Evangelist, and St. Simeon the New Theologian), primarily because of his *Five Theological Orations*.

St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (4th Cent.).

St. Gregory was the younger brother of St. Basil the Great and is commemorated on January 10. He is especially known for his spiritual writings, as well as various dogmatic works, including his *Great Catechism*.

St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (407).

St. John Chrysostom (the Golden-mouth), commemorated January 27 and 30 and November 13, was one of the greatest preachers of his time (late 4th Century) and was known for his zeal for Orthodoxy and his passionate defense of the poor, boldly exposing the vices of his age, for which reason he was eventually deposed and exiled. The bulk of his works are sermons on Holy Scripture, especially the Epistles of St. Paul, as well as other ascetical and pastoral works, including his *On the Priesthood*. To St. John is attributed the usual Divine Liturgy, although, as in the case of that of St. Basil the Great, probably only certain prayers are properly his.

Notable Fathers of the Later Byzantine Period.

St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome (604).

St. Gregory the Dialogist, commemorated March 12, was Pope of Rome in the 7th Century and was noted for his many literary works, including his Dialogues on the monastic Saints of Italy. To him is ascribed the writing-down of the beautiful Gregorian Chants as well as the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, during which he is specially commemorated.

St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (ca. 1360).

St. Gregory, commemorated on November 14 and the Second Sunday of Great Lent, was a pious Monk of Mt. Athos, and later was elected to the See of Thessalonica as its Bishop. He is noted for his defense of the contemplative life of hesychasm (inner silence), teaching concerning the uncreated Light of Tabor and the Divine Energies of God, through which man can have true communion with God.

St. John of Damascus (Damascene (776)).

St. John, commemorated December 4, was noted for his Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, a major dogmatic work, as well as his zealous defense of the Holy Icons, for which he suffered the severing of his hand (miraculously restored by the prayers of the Mother of God). He is also noted for his many sermons on Feast Days, as well as numerous hymns, extensively used in Orthodox liturgical services.

St. Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus (15th Cent.).

St. Mark, commemorated January 19, accompanied the Byzantine Emperor to the Council of Florence, and single-handedly defended the Orthodox faith against the Latins. His brilliant defense of Orthodoxy and his letters after the Council were largely responsible for the Orthodox rejection of this false Council.

St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople (891).

St. Photius, commemorated February 6, was a zealous defender of Orthodoxy against the Latin error of the Filioque, for which he suffered much. He wrote on the Procession of the Holy Spirit and was responsible for the commissioning of Sts. Cyril and Methodius for the conversion of the Slavs.

St. Simeon the New Theologian (1021).

St. Simeon, commemorated March 12 and October 12, was noted as a brilliant spiritual writer, whose works hold a place of honor in the Phllokalia, a major monastic spiritual work. For this reason he endured persecution and also received the veneration of the Orthodox Church which honors him as the New Theologian.

The Conversion of the Slavs.

Of major importance in the history and development of Orthodoxy was the conversion of the Slavs and the shifting of the focus of the Church to the northern regions of Bulgaria, Serbia, Moravia, Romania, and then Russia. In the middle of the 9th Century, Patriarch Photius initiated large scale missionary labors in these regions by sending out the two brothers Constantine (in monasticism Cyril 869) and Methodius (885 both are commemorated May 11), first to the Khazar State north of the Caucasus (this was largely unsuccessful) and then to Moravia (Czechoslovakia) in 863.

The Prince of Moravia, Rostislav, desired that his people hear the Word of God in their own language and the two brothers were apt missionaries in this respect as they had developed an

alphabet, adapted from the Greek, which later was called Cyrillic (after St. Cyril). Using a local Macedonian dialect which they had heard near their birthplace of Thessalonica, the brothers began translating the liturgical books, Holy Scripture, etc., into this dialect, using the new alphabet which they had developed. This new liturgical language Church Slavonic became of crucial importance in the extension of the Orthodox faith into the Balkans and ultimately to Russia. This was so, since, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, which continued to insist on the use of Latin, the use of Church Slavonic allowed the new converts to hear the Gospel and the services in a language they could understand.

The Mission to Moravia was ultimately doomed to failure because of the jealousy and persecution of German missionaries working in the same area. The brothers traveled to Rome (where St. Cyril died) and placed themselves under the protection of the Pope, but this was not honored by the Germans in Moravia and after the death of St. Methodius in 885, his followers were expelled from the country.

The missionary labors of Cyril and Methodius were not in vain, however, for their disciples were successful in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. Led by St. Clement of Ochrid (commemorated November 25), the missionaries were successful and in 869, Tsar Boris of Bulgaria himself was baptized. The Bulgarian Church grew rapidly and about 926, under Tsar Simeon, an independent Patriarchate was established there, recognized by Constantinople in 927 (although later suppressed), and the Bulgarian Church became the first national Slavic Church.

The missionaries were likewise successful in Serbia and with the baptism of Prince Mutimir (891), Serbia became officially Christian. After a period of vacillation between East and West, Serbia came under the sway of Constantinople. Under St. Sava (1237 commemorated January 12), the Serbian Church became partially independent with his consecration in 1219 as Archbishop of Serbia, and in 1346 a Serbian Patriarchate was established with the consecration of Bishop Ioannikios, recognized by Constantinople in 1375.

Missionaries from Bulgaria traveled to the Romanian lands and by the end of the 9th Century portions of the Romanian people had been Christianized, adopting the Slavonic Liturgy, but it was not really until the rise of the Wallachian Moldavian principalities in the 14th Century that the Church actually began to thrive. In 1359 a Wallachian Metropolitan was appointed by Constantinople to the new See of Argesin the foothills of the Transylvanian Alps and in 1401, the Romanian Metropolitan of Suceava in Moldavia was recognized by Constantinople.

The missionaries had also penetrated into Croatia, Dalmatia, Illyria, Bosnia and Montenegro, but these areas were, for the most part, under the influence and control of the Latin West during this period.

The Conversion of Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church.

Missionaries penetrated into Russia during this period and the Russian Princess Olga was converted to Christianity in 955, although the effective Christianization of Russia actually received its greatest impetus with the conversion of Olga's grandson, Vladimir, in 988. According to Russian tradition, Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev decided that an official religion was necessary for his country and he was unsure which to choose: the Islam of the Volga Bulgars, the Judaism of the Khazars (on the lower Volga), the Latin Christianity of the Germans, or the Orthodox faith of the Greeks. Accordingly he sent envoys to the various regions to enquire of their faiths and to make a report to him.

The envoys fulfilled their appointed mission and then reported to Vladimir:

When we journeyed among the Bulgarians [of the Volga region], we beheld how they worship in their temple, called a mosque, while they stand ungirt. The Bulgarian bows, sits down, looks hither

and thither like one possessed, and there is no happiness among them, but instead only sorrow and a dreadful stench. Their religion is not good. Then we went among the Germans, and saw them performing many ceremonies in their temples; but we beheld no glory there. Then we went on to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations.... [From the Russian Primary Chronicle].

After receiving the report of the envoys, Vladimir went to war with the Byzantine Empire and laid siege to the Greek city of Kherson. He promised to accept Christianity if he was successful in this campaign and after the capture of the city, he did, in fact, embrace Orthodoxy and was given in marriage Anna, the sister of the Byzantine Emperors Basil and Constantine. Returning to his capital of Kiev, Vladimir ordered that all pagan idols be destroyed. The people were exhorted to renounce paganism whereupon they embraced the Orthodox faith and received Baptism in 988. From this date Russia became officially Christian.

With the conversion of Vladimir (later canonized by the Russian Church commemorated July 15), Orthodoxy spread rapidly and already, within fifty years, the Russian Church had her first canonized Saints, the martyred brothers Boris and Gleb (1015 commemorated together on July 24). In 1051 the first Russian Monastery (The Monastery of the Caves) was founded in Kiev by St. Anthony (1073 commemorated July 10), later reorganized by St. Theodosius (1074 commemorated May 3 and August 14; he and St. Anthony are commemorated together on September 2). In 1037, Theopemptos was consecrated Metropolitan of Kiev and all but two of the Metropolitans of this period were Greeks, appointed by Constantinople. (The first Russian Metropolitan was Hilarion in 1051, and the other Clement in 1147). To this day, the Russian Church still sings in Greek the greeting to a Bishop, *Eis polla eti, Despota*, in recognition of the debt owed by the Russian Church to Greek Byzantium.

Disaster befell the Kievan State in 1237 with the onslaught of the Mongols, who ruled until 1480, and during this period only the Church kept alive national consciousness, much as was later done by the Greek Church under the Turkish yoke. The primary See of the Russian Church was moved from Kiev to Moscow by St. Peter, Metropolitan of Kiev (1326 commemorated December 21), and henceforth ceased to be the city of the chief Hierarch.

Three important Saints shone in this period: St. Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod (1263 commemorated August 30 and November 23), who preserved the political structure of his Principality (alone unharmed by the Mongols in their invasion) against the Swedes, Germans and Lithuanians; St. Sergius of Radonezh (1392 commemorated September 25 and July 5), founder of the famous Trinity St. Sergius Monastery at Sergiev Posad (Zagorsk) near Moscow, (from which Monks spread out through all of Northern Russia), probably one of Russia's greatest national figures (as was St. Sava in Serbia); and St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm (1396 commemorated April 26) who, in a sense, was the first of the long line of missionaries who were eventually to come to Russian America.

After the Council of Florence in 1440, Constantinople had accepted union with the Roman Catholic Church and Russia could not accept a Metropolitan from there. Finally, in 1448, a council of Russian Bishops elected their own Metropolitan and from this date the Russian Church has reckoned her independence. In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Turks and from this date the Russian Church remained the sole free branch of Orthodoxy. Men began to see Moscow as the Third Rome, and the Grand Duke of Moscow assumed the titles of the Byzantine Emperors Autocrat and Tsar the earthly protector of Orthodoxy. Accordingly, with the rising power of Russia, in 1589, the head of the Russian Church was raised to the rank of Patriarch (the first being Patriarch Job), ranking fifth after Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

The Russian Church was not without its own turmoils however. In 1503 came the beginnings of a split in the monastic ranks between the Non-Possessors (followers of St. Nilus of Sora (1508 commemorated May 7)), who argued for monastic poverty, and the Possessors (followers of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, 1515, commemorated September 9), who defended monastic landholding. The Non-Possessors were more lenient and gentle concerning the treatment of heretics, considering it to be solely a Church matter, while the Possessors, great supporters of the idea of the Third Rome, believed in a close association between Church and State in such matters (and many others as well). In this struggle the Possessors were victorious, but recognizing the sanctity of both leaders, the Church has enrolled both Joseph and Nilus in the Calendar of Saints.

In the mid-17th Century there occurred in the Russian Church a major split due to the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (1605-1681) who attempted to correct certain corruptions in the liturgical books and liturgical practice. The result was the splitting off of the Old Believers, who resisted the changes (many of which were ill-founded), as well as their persecution, and this schism has endured to the present day. The leaders of the Old Believers, including the Archpriest Avakkum, were burned at the stake and Nikon himself suffered persecution, since the Council of

Moscow, which met in 1666-7, endorsed his reforms, but deposed him from his Patriarchal Office because of his intemperance and arrogance.

A third major event which was to have a profound effect on the Russian Church, was the abolition of the Patriarchate by Tsar Peter I (the Great) in 1721. The Patriarch had died in 1700 and Peter, wishing no more Nikons, refused to allow the appointment of a successor. Accordingly, in 1721 he issued his celebrated Spiritual Regulations, and the Russian Church was placed under an uncanonical Synodal System, whereby a Synod of twelve members, drawn from the Bishops, Abbots and secular Clergy appointed by the Government ruled the Church. However, all meetings were attended by a government functionary, the Chief Procurator, representing the Tsar, and all decisions had to be approved by the Sovereign. At the same time monasticism was severely restricted and later in the Century more than half the monasteries were closed by Empress Catherine II (the Great 1762-96) and their lands confiscated.

This Synodal Period, which lasted until 1917, was a period of spiritual low for the Church, although there were a few bright spots. Missionary activity, always a strong feature of the Russian Church, expanded throughout Siberia and Central Asia, eventually reaching Alaska. Certain monasteries were revitalized, including the famous center of Valaam, and the spiritual traditions of Mt. Athos, especially popularized by Paisius Velichkovsky and his Philokalia, reached Russia, through the efforts of Metropolitan Gabriel of Moscow and his disciple, Nazarius, Abbot of Valaam. A special system of spiritual direction, eldership (or starchestvo) developed, especially popularized at the Optino Hermitage under the Elders Leonid, Macarius, Amvrosy and Joseph, and a few Saints shone during this time, especially St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (1783 commemorated August 13), a revitalizer of pastoral life, and St. Seraphim of Sarov (1833 commemorated January 2 and July 19).

Finally, in 1917, with the Fall of the Monarchy, the Patriarchate was re-established and Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, was elected Patriarch by the All-Russian Council of that year. Sadly, however, the Church was soon engulfed in the fires of the Bolshevik Revolution of that year and the unprecedented persecutions which followed. The Russian Orthodox Church since 1917 has endured sufferings without parallel, contributing a new rank of Martyrs to the Church Triumphant, yet despite the severe decimation of her faithful, clergy, and institutions, she still remains a powerful spiritual and moral force in the Orthodox world, confirming that the Church of Christ is built upon a rock, for in the words of the Savior, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Orthodoxy in America

Orthodoxy in America.

In the 18th Century, the great Orthodox Christian missionary work which began with Pentecost in Jerusalem, so many centuries before, finally crossed from the continent of Euro-Asia into North America. The first missionaries traveled with the explorers Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov, who formally claimed Alaska and the Aleutian Islands in 1741. For the next fifty years, together with the exploration and economic development of this new outpost of the Russian Empire, the first attempts were made to bring the Orthodox Faith to the natives of that region (the Aleuts, the Athabascan Indians, the Tlingits, and the Eskimos).

The first formal Orthodox Christian Mission to America arrived on September 24, 1794, in Kodiak. This Mission consisted of eight Monks and two Novices, together with ten Alaskan natives who had been taken to Russia by Gregory Shelikov in 1786. This Mission discovered on Kodiak Island hundreds of natives who had been taught the rudiments of the Orthodox Faith, and had been baptized by laymen. Gregory Shelikov, one of the founders of what was to become later the Russian-American Company, had himself baptized about two hundred Aleuts on Kodiak Island.

The American Mission, headed by Archimandrite Joasaph, immediately began the work of establishing the Church in Kodiak and the Islands and later on the mainland of Alaska. Despite great difficulties, this Mission was very successful, for virtually all the remaining natives of Kodiak Island were baptized in just three years. During this period, one of the missionaries, Hieromonk Juvenaly, was martyred at Lake Iliamna by natives.

The Martyrdom of Hieromonk Juvenaly.

In 1795 Hieromonk Juvenaly left Kodiak for Nuchek, where he baptized more than seven hundred Chugach, and then crossed to Kenai Bay and baptized there all the local inhabitants. In the following year (1796), he crossed to Alaska in the direction of Lake Iliamna, where his apostolic duties came to an end, together with his life. He was killed by the natives, and the reason for his death, was partly because the first thing he did after baptizing the natives was to order them to give up polygamy. He had also persuaded the chiefs and other leading men in the tribes there to give him their children so that the latter might be educated on Kodiak. When he set out with the children, the men regretted what they had done, gave chase, caught up with him, and fell upon him.

When Father Juvenaly was attacked by the savages he did not try to defend himself, or run away, which he could easily have done, especially since he had a firearm with him. He let himself be taken without offering any resistance, asking only that those with him should be spared, which was done.

Much later those who had been spared related that when Father Juvenaly was already dead he had risen up and followed his murderers, saying something to them. The savages, supposing him to be still alive, attacked him again and beat him. But as soon as they left him he again stood up and followed them, and this happened several times. Finally, in order to be rid of him, the savages hacked his body to pieces. Only then did this fervent preacher fall silent, a Martyr for the word of God. On the spot where the missionary's remains lay, there at once appeared a column of flame, reaching up to the sky.

The Martyrdom of the Aleut Peter.

In a letter to Abbot Damascene of Valaam, dated November 22, 1865, Simeon I. Yanovsky, Chief Manager of the Russian Colonies from 1818 to 1820, wrote:

Once I related to [Fr. (later St.) Herman] how the Spaniards in California had taken fourteen of our Aleuts prisoner, and how the Jesuits had tortured one of them, to try and force them all to take the Catholic faith. But the Aleuts would not submit, saying: We are Christians, we have been baptized, and they showed them the crosses they wore. But the Jesuits objected, saying No, you are heretics and schismatics; if you do not agree to take the Catholic faith we will torture you. And they left them shut up two to a cell until the evening to think it over.

In the evening they came back with a lantern and lighted candles, and began again to try and persuade them to become Catholics. But the Aleuts were filled with God's grace, and firmly and decisively answered, We are Christians and we would not betray our faith. Then the fanatics set about torturing them. First they tortured one singly while the other one was made to watch. First they cut off one of the toe joints from one foot, and then from the other, but the Aleut bore it all and continued to say: I am a Christian and I will not betray my faith. Then they cut a joint off each finger first from one hand, then the other; then they hacked off one foot at the instep, then one hand at the wrist. The blood poured out, but the martyr bore it all to the end, maintaining his stand, and with this faith he died, from loss of blood!

On the following day it was planned to torture the others, but that same night an order was received from Monterey that all the captured Russian Aleuts were to be sent under guard to Monterey. And so in the morning those remaining alive were sent away. This was related to me by an Aleut who was an eyewitness a colleague of the man put to death and who later escaped from the Spaniards....

When I had finished telling him this, Father [Herman] asked me, What was the name of this tortured Aleut? Peter, I replied, but I cannot remember the other name.

Then the elder stood before the Icon, devoutly crossed himself and said, Holy newly-martyred [Peter], pray to God for us!

[The above accounts were taken from *The Russian Orthodox Religious Mission in America, 1794-1837, with Materials Concerning the Life and Works of the Monk German, and Ethnographic Notes by the Hieromonk Gedeon, St. Petersburg, 1894.*]

In 1798, Archimandrite Joasaph returned to Irkutsk in Siberia and was consecrated on April 10, 1899, Bishop of Kodiak, the first Bishop for America, but he and his entourage, including Hieromonk Makary and Hierodeacon Stephen of the original Mission, drowned somewhere between Unalaska and Kodiak Island. Though the American Mission was now reduced to half of its original number, it continued its work. Notable was the great spiritual and missionary work of the Monks Herman and Joasaph. Not only did they instruct the natives in spiritual and religious matters, but they also taught them practical, secular subjects, such as mathematics, carpentry, agriculture, as well as animal husbandry.

In 1824, with the arrival of the Missionary Priest John Veniaminov in Unalaska, a new impetus was added to the missionary work already done. The original missionaries had been replaced by others, so that by the time of the arrival of Father John, only the Monk Herman, now retired to Spruce Island, was left of the original American Mission. He died on December 13, 1837, and on August 9, 1970, he was canonized as the first Saint of the Orthodox Church in America.

Our Venerable Father Herman of Alaska.

Little is known of the early life of the Monk Herman. He was born in Serpukhov in the Moscow Diocese about 1756 and at the age of 16, he began his monastic life at the Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage near St. Petersburg. While at the Hermitage, Herman developed a severe infection on the right side of his throat which brought him to the point of death. After fervent prayer before an Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos he fell into a deep sleep, and during this sleep, Herman dreamed that he was healed by the Virgin. Upon waking, he found that he had completely recovered. Remaining

at the Trinity-Sergius Hermitage for five more years, he then moved to the Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga.

During his stay at the Valaam Monastery, Father Herman developed a strong spiritual attachment to the Elder Nazarius, Abbot and Renewer of the spiritual life of Valaam. He found in Nazarius a gentle, yet effective spiritual guide, whom he would remember for the rest of his life. During his stay in Valaam, the monastery was visited by Gregory Shelikov, head of the Golikov-Shelikov Trading Company, who requested Monks to work in the new mission field in Alaska. Thus, in 1793, Father Herman, with several other Monks was sent by the Holy Synod of Russia to the Alaskan missionary field.

After a journey of nearly a year, the little band of eight Monks arrived on Kodiak Island on September 24, 1794. From Kodiak, the Monks began their effort to convert and educate the natives. Several thousand Alaskans were converted to Orthodoxy, but the Mission did not have the success that had been expected. Archimandrite Joasaph, the head of the Mission, was consecrated a Bishop, but died with two others when the ship on which he was returning to Alaska sank, and Fr. Herman, who, from the beginning had distinguished himself with his humility, compassion for the natives and his administrative skills, became the acting head of the Mission. Eventually only he remained from the original Mission.

After difficult relations with and persecution by the Russian-American Trading Company, which controlled the Alaska Colony, between 1808 and 1818 Fr. Herman left Kodiak and went to Spruce Island, which he called New Valaam. He spent the rest of his life on this island, where he cared for orphans, ran a school and continued his missionary work. He built a small chapel, school and guest house, while food for himself and the orphans was produced from his own experimental garden.

Caring little for himself, Fr. Herman wore the oldest and simplest clothes under his cassock and ate very little. His free time was devoted to prayer and singing the services he could do as a simple Monk, since, in humility, he had refused to be ordained. Thus, his life on the island was that of an ascetic and was in many ways similar to the lives of the early Monks of the Egyptian desert. When asked if he was ever lonesome, Fr. Herman answered, No, I am not alone there! God is there, as God is everywhere. The Most-Holy Angels are there. With whom is it better to talk, with people or with Angels? Most certainly with Angels.

Father Herman continued to grow in his love for the natives while he lived on Spruce Island, for he saw them as newly-born children in the faith, who had to be guided and taught. He had a special love for the children and they were very fond of him. One of his greatest pleasures was being with children, teaching them and giving them the delicacies he made. During this time a ship from the United States brought an epidemic to the Alaskans and hundreds of them died. But they were not alone, for Herman remained with them constantly, going from person to person, Comforting the dying, and praying with and for them. After the epidemic ended, Fr. Herman brought the orphans back to New Valaam with him and cared for them. On Sundays and Holy Days, Fr. Herman would gather the people for prayer and singing, and he would give sermons that captivated the hearts of all those present. As a clairvoyant Elder, he could see into the hearts of his spiritual children and help them.

The natives recognized the holiness of the Venerable One and turned to him for help, seeing in him an intercessor before God. Once there was a great tidal wave threatening the island and the people came to Fr. Herman for help. He took an Icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the beach and said, Have no fear. The water will not go any higher than the place where this holy icon stands; and it did not. On another occasion there was a fire on the island and the people again turned to the righteous Elder, who interceded successfully on their behalf.

Prior to his death, Fr. Herman revealed what would happen to him. He told the people that when he died there would be no Priest in the area and the people would have to bury him by themselves. He

also said that he would be forgotten for thirty years and then would be remembered. Father Herman died on December 13, 1837, in the manner in which he had described to his flock. They continued to revere his memory, but the outside world seemed to forget him until the first investigation of his life in 1867, by Bishop Peter of Alaska. Finally, on August 9, 1970, the Holy Monk was glorified by the Orthodox Church in America, in impressive ceremonies at Kodiak, Alaska, and the Blessed Father Herman of Alaska entered the ranks of Saints who are interceding on behalf of American Orthodoxy.

The Church, however, worked hard to further the work of the Mission, even in these difficult times, so that, despite the harsh climate, the difficulty of supplying the Mission because of the great distances involved, Father John found a solid foundation upon which to do his work. He had the help of Father Jacob Netsvetov (a Creole, one of mixed race), who had been sent to Irkutsk, Siberia, for Seminary training, and had been ordained in 1828. (The first American-born Priest, Prokopy Lavrov, was ordained in 1810, but he returned to Russia after a brief period of less than a year, since he found the life in Kodiak too harsh.)

Together, Fathers John and Jacob were a remarkable missionary pair. They succeeded in revitalizing the Mission to such a degree that at the end of the 1830's, there were five active Priests and five religious centers, with more than 10,000 Orthodox Christians. There were four schools for boys (about 100 students) and four orphanages for girls (about 60). All these schools, as well as the churches, gave religious instruction to the natives in their native tongues. This missionary work was financially supported primarily by the Russian-American Company, with substantial assistance also provided by the Holy Synod and the Church of Russia.

On December 15, 1840, the American Mission was blessed with the consecration of the now-widowed Priest, Fr. John Veniaminov, as Innocent, Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kuriles, and the Aleutian Islands. With the consecration of Bishop Innocent, the history of the American Mission entered an even more glorious phase. Bishop Innocent's sixteen years of experience in the Alaskan missionary field, coupled with his in depth knowledge of the natives now entrusted to his pastoral care, as well as his judicious choice of fellow missionaries, accounted for the unparalleled success of the Mission.

As soon as he arrived in Sitka (the capital of Russian America), he began the work of enlarging the missionary work of the Diocese. The Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel was beautified and enlarged, and plans were laid for the construction of a Seminary, which opened in 1845. At the same time, he continued his extensive missionary journeys throughout his far-flung Diocese which covered parts of two continents.

When his responsibility was again increased with the enlargement of his Diocese into an Archdiocese, with increased territories, Bishop Innocent transferred his center of activity to Siberia, leaving an Auxiliary Bishop to supervise the American part of his enlarged domain. In 1869, Archbishop Innocent was elevated to the See of Moscow as its Metropolitan, but he still kept a careful watch over his beloved American Church. Important here was the organization, at his urging, of the Russian Missionary Society, which was organized to further the missionary work of the Russian Church, especially in Siberia, Alaska and Japan, which guaranteed that the work begun in America would not be abandoned or forgotten with the sale of Alaska to America which had occurred in 1867. With true prophetic insight, the aged Metropolitan called for the missionary work to be directed to the whole of America and foresaw the need for American-born clergy totally conversant with the American cultural ethos, as well as the English language.

Our Father among the Saints Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the Americas.

John Popov (later St. Innocent) was born on August 27, 1797, in Aginsk, a small village near Irkutsk, Siberia. He came from a pious family and at age six, young John was already reading at his

parish. At age nine he entered the Irkutsk Theological Seminary, where he remained for eleven years, proving to be its most brilliant pupil during this time. Besides his Seminary classes, he read all of the books in the library dealing with history and the sciences, and while still a student he began to construct different types of clocks, acquiring the skills of carpentry, furniture making, blacksmithing, and the construction of musical instruments.

At the age of seventeen, in recognition of his outstanding achievements at the Seminary, his last name was changed to Veniaminov, in honor of the late Bishop Benjamin (or Veniamin) of Irkutsk. Not long after graduation from the Seminary, John married the daughter of a Priest and was ordained to the Diaconate. In 1821, he was ordained to the Priesthood.

While a young man, Fr. John had heard stories about the native settlements at Unalaska in the Aleutian Island chain, part of the Russian colony in America, and how they labored in the darkness of paganism. Thus, in 1823, having heard that the Bishop of Irkutsk had been requested to send a Priest to Alaska and that everyone else had refused, against the wishes of his family and friends, he volunteered to go. After fourteen months of difficult travel across the wilds of Siberia and the Bering Sea, he arrived in Unalaska with his family.

Upon arriving at Unalaska, Fr. John found that there was no house or chapel there, but he welcomed this as an opportunity to teach the natives. He first built a home for his family, using the opportunity to teach the natives carpentry. Constructing furniture for the new home, he taught the natives this skill as well, so that, with these newly-acquired skills, they were able to assist Fr. John in the construction of the Cathedral of the Ascension, which was completed in 1826.

At the same time, Fr. John's primary work was converting the natives to Orthodoxy and educating them. He learned the Aleut language, as well as the life style of the people. He and his wife organized a school for them (as well as for their own six children), and one of the required subjects was the Aleut language, for which Fr. John had devised an alphabet based on the Cyrillic. He translated services, as well as the Gospel of St. Matthew, and even wrote a small book, *A Guide to the Way to the Heavenly Kingdom in the Aleut language*.

Fr. John traveled throughout the Aleutian chain to teach and baptize the people, and while preaching he was always able to communicate effectively with his flock. One of these wrote, many years later: When he preached the Word of God, all the people listened, and they listened without moving until he stopped. Nobody thought of fishing or hunting while he spoke; nobody felt hungry or thirsty as long as he was speaking, not even little children.

In 1834, Fr. John and his family were transferred to Sitka, where the local Tlingit population was intensely antagonistic to their Russian overlords. He learned their language and culture, but they showed now real interest in his message until a smallpox epidemic hit the area. Father John convinced many of the Tlingits to be vaccinated, saving many of them from death. This served to be the means whereby he was to reach these natives and gradually he gained their love and respect.

In 1836, Fr. John decided to return to Russia to report to the Holy Synod on the needs of the Alaskan Mission. Leaving his family in Irkutsk, he went on to Moscow, where he met with the Synod, which approved his request for more Priests and funds for the Mission, as well as desiring to publish his translations. While in Moscow, he learned of the death of his wife. Hearing of this, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow encouraged Fr. John to become a Monk, which he accepted, being tonsured with the name Innocent. Soon after, the Alaskan Mission was constituted part of a Diocese and Fr. Innocent was consecrated Bishop of Kamchatka and Alaska on December 15, 1840.

Returning to his new Diocese, Bishop Innocent traveled to the far reaches of his new domain, teaching the population and organizing churches. Everywhere he preached and served in the native languages. In Sitka, he organized a Seminary to train native Priests and built a new cathedral there dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. Although preoccupied with the affairs of his large Diocese,

the Bishop did find time to construct, with his own hands, the large clock on the front of the Cathedral.

In 1850, Bishop Innocent was elevated to the dignity of Archbishop and his new Archdiocese was enlarged to include more territory in Asiatic Russia, with its center at Yakutsk. Once more Innocent and his Priests set out to learn languages and cultures, teaching the new flock with gentleness and by personal example. In 1860, Archbishop Innocent met the future Bishop Nicholas of Japan (canonized in 1970), who was just beginning his lifetime missionary labors, and he gave Nicholas advice on missionary work.

Despite declining health and his request to retire, in 1868, Innocent was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. He was especially loved by his new flock for his many works of charity, and he remembered his former missions by organizing the Imperial Mission Society, which he served as its first President. Almost blind and in constant pain, Metropolitan Innocent died on Holy Saturday, 1879, at the age of eighty-two, having served Christ and His Church throughout his entire life, distinguishing himself as a true missionary and apostle. In recognition of his great apostolic and missionary labors, the Russian Orthodox Church, on October 6, 1977, solemnly glorified this Man of God and entered him into the Church Calendar, styling him St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the America's.

In 1867, Bishop Peter (Lyaskov) of Sitka was succeeded by Bishop Paul (Popov) and in this year the first study of the life of the Elder Herman of Spruce Island was initiated. In 1870, Bishop John (Metropolsky) was appointed and he transferred the center of the American Church from Sitka to San Francisco, California, in 1872. In 1879, the American Church came under the supervision of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, and the long tie with the Diocese of Eastern Siberia was ended, with Bishop Nestor (Zakkis) being appointed Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska in that year. In 1882, however, he drowned at sea and was buried on the Island of Unalaska.

After six years without a resident Hierarch, Bishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky) was appointed in 1881, and on March 25, 1891, he accepted the Holy Virgin Protection Uniate Church in Minneapolis, as well as its Pastor, Fr. Alexis Toth, into the Orthodox Church. With this event, the American Mission entered into a new phase of its life. A Church almost exclusively concerned with missionary work among the natives of America, mostly in Alaska, now was to change its focus of attention to the return of the Uniates to Orthodoxy. This work, until now centered in the Western provinces of Russia, was directed to those Uniates who had emigrated to America, together with those from the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Galicians and Carpatho-Russians). The first attempts at a development of an English liturgical text to be used in the Church also began at this time.

In 1891, Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) arrived in America and became deeply involved in the many-sided work of the American Mission to the native Alaskans, to the newly-returned Uniates, as well as to the Orthodox immigrants from virtually all of the traditional Orthodox nations in Europe and Asia. It was in this period (from the time of the American Civil War) that Serbians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Greeks, Russians, Syrians and Albanians began to come to America in increasingly greater numbers. The Mission was now extended to Canada, where great numbers of Orthodox and Uniate immigrants had been arriving, a Missionary School was established in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and a bilingual (English-Russian) publication for the Diocese was initiated.

In 1898, Bishop Tikhon (Bellavin) arrived to rule over the Church in America, and in his nine years of service in America, the Mission was brought to a new stage of maturity. For the first time the American Mission became a full Diocese, with its presiding Bishop wholly responsible for a Church within the continental limits of North America. In 1905, the center of the Church was transferred to New York (St. Nicholas Cathedral, the new Episcopal Cathedral, had been dedicated in 1902), and the newly-elevated Archbishop Tikhon was now given two Auxiliary Bishops to administer a greatly-expanded Church in America. Bishop Raphael (Hawaweeny) of Brooklyn (the first Orthodox Bishop consecrated in America March 12, 1904) was primarily responsible for the

Syro-Arab communities and the other Auxiliary, Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) was appointed Bishop of Alaska.

Orthodoxy in the World

Constantinople.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople again, at least nominally, became independent after World War I and the rise of modern, secular Turkey, although greatly reduced in size. At present the Patriarch's jurisdiction includes Turkey, the island of Crete and other islands in the Aegean, the Greeks and certain other national groups in the Dispersion (the Diaspora) in Europe, America, Australia, etc. as well as the monastic republic of Mt. Athos and the autonomous Church of Finland. The present position of the Patriarchate in Turkey is precarious, persecution still exists there, and only a few thousand Greek Orthodox still remain in Turkey.

(a) Mt. Athos.

Located on a small peninsula jutting out into the Aegean Sea from the Greek mainland near Thessalonica, Mt. Athos is a monastic republic consisting of twenty ruling monasteries, the oldest (Great Lavra) dating to the beginning of the 11th Century, as well as numerous other settlements sketes, kellia, hermitages, etc. Of the twenty ruling monasteries, seventeen are Greek, one Russian, one Serbian, and one Bulgarian. (One, Iveron, was originally founded as a Georgian monastery, but now is Greek.) Perhaps 1,500 Monks are presently on the Mountain, a dramatic decline from the turn of the Century when, in 1903, for example, there were over 7,000 Monks there. This is due, in great part, to the halt of vocations from the Communist countries, as well as to a general decline in monastic vocations worldwide. However, there appears to be a revival of monastic life there, particularly at the monasteries of Simonopetra, Dionysiou, Grigoriou, Stavronikita, and Philotheou, and two Monks have shone as spiritual lights there in this Century - the Elder Silouan (1938) of St. Panteleimon's Russian Monastery and the Elder Joseph (1959) of the New Skete.

(b) Finland.

The Orthodox Church of Finland, an autonomous Church (self-governing, except that the primate is confirmed by the Patriarch of the Mother Church, in this case Constantinople) was originally the fruit of the Monks of Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga, who spread Orthodoxy among the Finnish Karelian tribes in the 14th Century. Until 1917, the Finnish Church was part of the Russian Orthodox Church, but with the independence of Finland in 1917 and the unsettled situation in Russia after the Revolution, since 1923 it has been under the spiritual care of Constantinople. There are, today, approximately 66,000 Orthodox faithful in the Finnish Orthodox Church.

Alexandria.

One of the original ancient Patriarchates, since the Monophysite Schism after the Council of Chalcedon (451), the numbers of the faithful of the Patriarchate of Alexandria have remained small approximately 300,000 faithful in Africa, most of whom are non-Greek Christians in Central Africa (primarily Kenya and Uganda). The rapid expansion of Orthodoxy in Central Africa in this Century has been most remarkable since it sprang up without benefit of Orthodox missionaries, and the Orthodox Church of this region promises to become an important force in the life of the Alexandrian Patriarchate.

Antioch.

Like Alexandria, the ancient Patriarchate of Antioch was severely decimated by the Monophysite Schism and Turkish depredations, and now numbers some 500,000 faithful in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, as well as an emigrant population in America. Its Patriarch, who lives in Damascus, is an

Arab, as are most of the clergy, and the bulk of its faithful are Arabic and Arabic-speaking, its liturgical services being celebrated in that language.

Jerusalem.

This ancient Church, whose jurisdiction includes Palestine and Jordan, never was large in numbers, but always held a special place in Orthodoxy due to her custody of the Holy Places of Palestine. The Patriarch of Jerusalem is a Greek, but the majority of the clergy and faithful are Arabic, numbering about 60,000 souls.

Russia.

Since the Russian Revolution, the Church of Russia has been severely persecuted by the atheist state and the numbers of her faithful, clergy and institutions have been drastically reduced. In 1914, there were officially 54,457 churches, 57,105 Priests, 1,498 monasteries and convents, 4 theological academies, 57 theological seminaries, and 40,150 religious schools, with perhaps 100,000,000 faithful. By 1947, the figures read: 22-25,000 churches, 33,000 Priests, 80 monasteries and convents, 2 theological academies, 8 theological seminaries, and no other religious schools. (This was after a certain liberalization following World War II!) At the present time there are perhaps 30,000,000 active Orthodox Christians. By 1966, after renewed persecution, only 3 seminaries were still functioning and by the 1970's, only 12 monasteries and convents were open, as well as about 7,000 churches. Nonetheless, Orthodoxy is still alive in Russia, and, despite reduced membership figures, this Church remains the largest in the Orthodox world.

Georgia.

Founded in the 4th Century by St. Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles (355 commemorated January 14), this Church had become autocephalous (self headed) in the 8th Century, but was incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church, with the subjugation of the Caucasus, in 1811, receiving her independence again in 1917. The ranks of her faithful and clergy have been severely diminished since the Communist takeover, and now there are about forty functioning churches (2,455 in 1917), served by less than 100 Priests, out of a population of over 2,000,000. The head of this Church is styled the Catholicos Patriarch of All Georgia.

Serbia.

With the gradual crumbling of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century, the Serbian Church received her independence again in 1879. This Church has fared better than some in the Communist bloc, but many of the problems common to the Churches there (diminished ranks of clergy, closing of churches, etc.) are found here also. There are large numbers of Orthodox Serbians in the Dispersion, many of whom are to be found in America, Australia and Canada. The primate of the Serbian Church is the Patriarch, who lives in Belgrade.

Romania.

As in the other Balkan countries, with the independence movement of the 19th Century, the Church of Romania received her independence. The nation became a Principality in 1856, and its Church was organized in 1864. Romania became an independent Kingdom in 1881, and the autocephaly of her Church was finally recognized in 1885 by Patriarch Joachim IV of Constantinople. In 1925, the Church of Romania became a Patriarchate, whose Patriarch lives in Bucharest. In numbers of Orthodox faithful, this Church is the second largest in world Orthodoxy, and the persecution by the atheists has not been as severe as in other Communist countries.

Bulgaria.

With the conquest of the Balkans by the Turks, the ancient Bulgarian Patriarchal See of Trnovo was suppressed and the Bulgarian Church was placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. On April 3, 1860, however, Bishop Hilarion openly declared independence from Constantinople by omitting the Patriarch's name at the Divine Liturgy, and on March 11, 1870, the Turkish Government recognized a Bulgarian Exarchate in Constantinople. In 1872, the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated the Bulgarian Church, but the de-facto autocephaly of this Church was finally recognized in 1945. As in Romania, the persecution of the Church has not been as severe as, for example, in Russia, but monasticism is in decline and there are few young Monks. Generally, Church life is more active, however, than in Yugoslavia with its more liberal policies.

Cyprus.

This ancient Church has been independent since the Council of Ephesus (431) and, although suffering under the Turkish yoke, is still strong with over 700 Priests and over 400,000 faithful. For a time, the Turkish system, whereby the primate of the Church was also the political leader of the Greek population, was continued after the liberation of the country in 1878, which explains the role played by the late Archbishop Makarios, who ruled Cyprus as President, as well as being the primate of her Church.

Greece.

The first national Church to emerge from the independence struggles of the 19th Century was the Church of Greece. On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1821, Germanos, the Archbishop of Patras, raised the banner of revolt against the Turks (which cost the Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory, his life). This war of independence was successful and, as the Hierarchs of the Greek Church did not wish to remain subject to a captive Patriarch in Constantinople, in 1833 a synod of Greek Bishops declared their Church autocephalous, although this was not officially recognized by Constantinople until 1850. In 1864, the Diocese of the Ionian Islands was added to the Church of Greece, and in 1881 the Dioceses of Thessaly and a part of Epirus were likewise joined to her. This Church is the third largest in the Orthodox world and is ruled by a Holy Synod, presided over by the Archbishop of Athens.

Albania.

Christianized by both Greek and Latin missionaries, Albania, part of ancient Illyricum, had both Latin and Greek rite Christians, with close ties both to Rome and Constantinople, until the Turkish conquest of 1478-9, when half the population became Moslem and a small minority remained Christian Latin in the North and Orthodox in the South. On November 28, 1912, Albania declared its independence from Turkey, and on October 26, 1922, a Church Council at Berat declared the Church of Albania independent of Constantinople, which was finally recognized by that Hierarch on April 12, 1937. After World War II, with the seizure of power by the Communists, the Church has suffered terribly, her clergy forbidden to conduct services, as the regime has officially declared religion to be dead in Albania. Since the death of the last Primate, Damian, the primal See of Tirane remains vacant.

Poland.

The Church of Poland has been autocephalous since 1924, although this independence has not been recognized by Constantinople. Consisting primarily of Orthodox Christians from Western Byelorussia, which was added to Poland's territory after World War II, this Church is headed by a Metropolitan who lives in Warsaw.

Czechoslovakia.

The Church of Czechoslovakia has been autocephalous since 1951, although, as in the case of Poland, this has not been recognized by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Czechoslovak Church is composed, primarily, of former Uniates, who were forcibly joined to the Orthodox Church by the Communists in 1950 (many returned to Roman Catholicism in 1968). The Church is headed by a Metropolitan who lives in Prague.

Sinai.

The ancient Church of Sinai, which is actually an autonomous Church consisting of a single monastery, St. Catherine's, at the foot of Mt. Sinai the Mountain of Moses. The Abbot of this Monastery is always an Archbishop, elected by the Monks of the Monastery, although he is consecrated by the Patriarch of Alexandria and lives in Cairo. The Monastery, at the present, consists of only a few Monks, most of whom are very old.

Japan.

The Church of Japan was founded by St. Nicholas (Kassatkin), later Archbishop of Japan (1912 commemorated on February 16), a Russian missionary, who knew St. Innocent of Alaska. At the present there are about 40 parishes and about 36,000 faithful. The autonomy of this Church was proclaimed by the Patriarch of Moscow in 1970, and it is headed by a Metropolitan, who lives in Tokyo, and one other Bishop, who, although chosen by the Church of Japan, must be confirmed by the Church of Russia.

Feasts of the Church

The Feast of Feasts - Pascha

On Saturday, the day after the crucifixion of the Lord, His disciples and followers were filled with gloom, for they had seen their Lord and Master die, crucified on a cross. As Holy Scripture tells us, there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus (Luke 23:50-52). Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away His body. [He and] Nicodemus also, who had at first come to Him by night...took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen clothes...as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there (John 19:38-42). The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how His body was laid; then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment (Luke 23:55-56).

Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while He was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore order the sepulcher to be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples go and steal Him away, and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead, and the last fraud will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can. So they went and made the sepulcher secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard (Matt. 27:62-66).

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared (Luke 24:1). And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the

Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead (Matt. 28:2-7).

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him. Peter then came out with the other disciples, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciples outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.... Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him. Saying this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek? Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, Rabboni! (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, Do not hold Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God. Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and she told them that He had said these things to her (John 20:1-8, 10-18).

Later the Risen Christ revealed Himself to the apostles in the Divine Glory of the Resurrection. And when they witnessed that glory, a new awareness of life was born within them along with the power of faith which moved them to new deeds in their apostolic service. It led them into a hostile world in which they were to endure suffering and which met their preaching of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ with enmity and scorn. But we know that Christ's apostles carried His holy message throughout the Greek and Roman world and into other lands, preaching Christ, how He had come into the world to save men and how, though Himself God, He had taken human flesh and lived as a man among men, and how, as a man, He had achieved incomprehensible perfection.

So too, all true believers rejoice on this day of redemption by the great revelation of God's truth and life eternal in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. His glorious Resurrection is the foundation of our Christian Faith and Hope. It is the indestructible foundation on which the miraculous structure of Christ's Church is built.

The Resurrection of Christ the Redeemer is the completion of the Great Work for the redemption of mankind from enslavement to Satan and corruption; the power of sin is destroyed and Death itself is abolished. The Resurrection of Christ grants every one the right to call himself a child of God; it is the return of Paradise lost, the threshold of the Holy of Holies of immortal life and communion with God. St. Paul tells us that if there had been no Resurrection then our Christian faith would have been deprived of any foundation or value: If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain,... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins (1 Cor. 15:14, 17).

But Christ is risen; He rose the First among the sons of earth, and thus manifested His Might and His Divine Power. Through our forefather's disobedience to God, sin took possession of human

nature, and brought decay and death in its wake. But Christ abolished original sin and cleansed the fallen Adam (Eph. 1:7). With His divine blood He raises man into a new creation (1 Cor. 15:13-26).

The Holy Orthodox Church triumphs, exults and rejoices, magnifying and extolling Christ's glorious Resurrection, the great and wonderful manifestation of Divine Love and Forgiveness and the beginning of everlasting life. On this Feast of Feasts, this Triumph of Triumphs, the Holy Church exults in her love for her beloved Bridegroom, Who rose from the tomb for our salvation, and summons us, Her faithful children, to this eternal Feast of angels and men. This greatest feast, illuminated by the light from on high, is a divine prefiguration of the general resurrection of all those who have died from the beginning of time. And this is so because, as the Paschal Hymn so triumphantly proclaims: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Troparion of the Feast (Special Melody).

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 8).

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal, Thou didst destroy the power of death. In victory didst Thou arise, O Christ God, proclaiming Rejoice to the myrrh bearing women, granting peace to Thy apostles, and bestowing resurrection on the fallen.

Hymn of the Resurrection.

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection; for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name.

Come, all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy Resurrection, For behold, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Let us ever bless the Lord, praising His Resurrection. for by enduring the Cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.

The Twelve Great Feasts

Great Feasts of the Fixed Cycle.

The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Sept. 8)

The first Great Feast to fall in the Church Year is the Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos. It is entirely fitting that at the beginning of the new religious year all Orthodox Christians should come before the highest example of human holiness that the Orthodox Church holds precious and venerates that of Mary, the Theotokos and Mother of God. This day is seen as one of universal joy; for on this day the boundary of the Old and New Covenants was born the Most-Blessed Virgin, pre-arranged from the ages by Divine Providence to serve the mystical Incarnation of God the Word.

The first Old Testament Reading of Vespers (Gen. 28:10-17) speaks of the dream of Jacob, one of the Old Testament Patriarchs, when he fled the wrath of his brother Esau. He saw a ladder extending from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending. When he awoke, Jacob blessed with oil the stone on which he had slept and called it Bethel, meaning house of God. The Most-Pure Mother of God is seen here as that ladder between heaven and earth, uniting earth with heaven in her womb. She who carried God in her womb is truly Bethel, none other than the house of God...and the gate of heaven (Gen. 28:17).

The birth of the Most-Holy Theotokos took place in the following manner: Her father, the Righteous Joachim, was a descendant of King David, to whom God had promised that from the seed of his descendants would be born the Savior of the world. Her mother, the Righteous Anna, was the daughter of Matthan, and through her father was of the tribe of Aaron and through her mother was of the tribe of Judah. The spouses lived in Nazareth of Galilee.

Joachim and Anna had no children, and all their life they grieved about this, especially since they were now in old age. Scorn and mockery was their lot, for at that time childlessness was reckoned as a shame. But they never murmured and only the more fervently beseeched God, humbly trusting in His Will.

Once, during the time of a great Feast, the offering which Joachim took to Jerusalem to offer to God in the Temple, was not received by the priest, who reckoned that a childless man was not worthy to bring a sacrifice to God. This greatly grieved the old man and he, counting himself only a sinner among men, decided not to return home, but to flee to a place of solitude in a deserted place.

Anna, having heard how her husband had been humiliated by the priest, began to fast, and in prayer sadly beseeched God to grant her a child. In the wilderness, secluded and fasting, Joachim also prayed to God about this.

The prayers of the Holy Spouses were heard. The angel Gabriel came to them and announced that a daughter would be born to them, whom the whole human race would call blessed. At the command of the Heavenly Messenger, Joachim and Anna returned to Jerusalem where, according to the promise of God, a daughter was born to them, whom they named Mary.

This child, the Most-Holy Virgin Mary, pure and virtuous, surpassed not only all men, but even the angels, being manifested as the Living Temple, the Heavenly Gate, ushering in Christ to the Universe as the Salvation of our souls. The Nativity of the Mother of God pre-announced the approaching time when the great and comforting promise of God concerning the salvation of the human race from the slavery of the devil was to be accomplished. The Mother of the First-Born of all Creation was revealed to all of us as a merciful Intercessor to whom we perpetually run for help in all things.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Your Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos! By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing. By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4)

By your Nativity, O Most-Pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life.

The Universal Exaltation of the Life-Creating Cross (Sept. 14)

Not long after the Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos, the Church celebrates the Exaltation of the Most-Precious Cross of the Lord. The Savior Himself had spoken of His death on the Cross, saying: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:14-16). This was accomplished on Holy Friday when the Lord was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried, as the Creed proclaims. And just before He died He proclaimed It is finished (John 19:30)!

Truly, the Nativity of the Theotokos was seen as the beginning of our salvation, and the Cross is seen as the culmination of our salvation. By Christ's death on It, our salvation was accomplished. Mary is also closely associated with the Cross, for she was the mystical paradise in whom the Tree of Life sprouted; this Tree of Life, Christ our Savior, then planted on earth the life-creating Tree of the Cross (from the Feast). And as He suffered and died on the Life-giving Tree of the Cross, so too we are called upon to take up our own crosses on our shoulders and to die daily for the sake of Him Who died for us.

The Feast itself came about because of certain historical events. After the voluntary suffering and death on the Cross of the Lord, the sacred place of His suffering was scorned by the pagans. When the Roman Emperor Titus, in 70 A.D. conquered Jerusalem, he destroyed the city and leveled the Temple on Mt. Moriah, not leaving even a stone upon a stone, as had been foretold by the Savior in a dialogue with His disciples (Mark 13:1-2).

The Emperor Hadrian (117-138), a backward, zealous pagan, constructed in place of the Jerusalem destroyed by Titus a new city, which he named Helio-Hadrianopolis. Further, it was forbidden for this city to be called by its previous name of Jerusalem. He commanded that the Holy Grave of the Lord be covered with earth and stones, raising on it an idol. On Golgotha, where the Savior was crucified, in 119 he erected a temple dedicated to the goddess Venus. Sacrifices were offered before the statue and pagan rites were celebrated, accompanied by prostitution. In Bethlehem, in the place where the Savior had been born of the Most-Pure Virgin, the impious monarch erected an idol to Adonis. All of this he did intending that the people completely forget about Christ the Savior and nevermore recollect the place where He lived, taught, suffered and arose with glory.

When Constantine the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles (306-337) ascended the throne (being the first of the Roman Emperors to recognize Christianity) , he, together with his pious mother, Queen Helena, decided to restore the city of Jerusalem, and in the place of the suffering and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to erect a new church, to cleanse all of the places connected with the memory of Jesus from the pagan cult, and again to consecrate all of them. The Orthodox Queen Helena left for Jerusalem with a great quantity of gold, and the Emperor sent a letter to Patriarch Macarius I (313-323) in which he asked every kind of aid in the holy task of restoring the Christian holy places.

Having arrived in Jerusalem, the pious Queen destroyed all the idols and cleansed the city of pagan cult objects, consecrating the defiled places. She burned with the desire to raise up the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and so she commanded that digging proceed at the place where the Temple of Venus had stood. There the covered Grave of the Lord was discovered, as well as the place of execution, not far from which were found three crosses and four nails, as well as the sign board which had been nailed over His head.

In order to determine which of the three crosses belonged to the Savior, Patriarch Macarius ordered that the crosses, in turn, be placed on a dead person who was being brought to a place of burial. When the Cross of Christ touched the dead one, he immediately came to life. With great joy, the Orthodox Queen and the Patriarch together lifted up the Life-Creating Cross and showed it to all the people standing by. Later the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was constructed on the site, enclosing within its walls the place of the crucifixion of the Savior, as well as His tomb, and a Feast was instituted for September 14, commemorating the glorious Exaltation of the Cross.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1).

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4).

As Thou wast voluntarily crucified for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple (Nov. 21).

Soon after the beginning of the Nativity Fast (Advent), the Holy Church celebrates the Feast of the Entrance of the Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Here we encounter the holiness of Mary a small child separated from the world, brought to live in the Temple a life set apart, consecrated, and in a state of intimacy with God something that all of us are called to be. We also see in this Feast a comparison between the Temple of stone and Mary, the Living Temple the Temple of the Savior for she will bear God the Word the God-Man in her womb, thus showing herself to be a holier Temple than that at Jerusalem. It is the Living Temple the instrument of the Incarnation which sanctifies the Temple built of stone.

According to the Inner Tradition of the Church, the Entrance into the Temple took place in the following manner: The parents of the Virgin, Joachim and Anna, when praying for the resolution of their barrenness, gave a vow that if a child was born, it would be dedicated to the service of God. Thus, when the Most-Holy Virgin was three years old, her holy parents resolved to fulfill their vow.

Having gathered relatives and acquaintances, clothing the Most-Pure Mary in bright garments, singing sacred hymns and carrying lit candles in their hands, they led her to the Jerusalem Temple. There the young Maiden was met by the High Priest with a multitude of priests. Leading up into the Temple were fifteen high steps, and the child Mary, it seems, was not able on her own to ascend these steps. But, as soon as she was put on the first step, being strengthened by the power of God, she quickly climbed the remaining steps to the top. Later, at an inspiration from Above, the High Priest led the Most-Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies into which the High Priest entered only once a year on behalf of the people, after first making sacrifices for them and for himself. All who were present were astonished at this extraordinary event.

The righteous Joachim and Anna, having delivered the child voluntarily to the Heavenly Father, returned home; the Most-Blessed Mary remained in the rooms for virgins which were found at the Temple. Around the Temple, according to the witness of Holy Scripture (e.g., Luke 2:37), as well as that of the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many rooms in which remained those dedicated to the service of God.

A deep mystery covers the earthly life of the Most-Holy Theotokos from her childhood to her repose. Her life in the Jerusalem Temple was concealed. If you were to ask me, said the Blessed Jerome, how the Most-Holy Virgin passed the time of her youth, I would answer that this is known only to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel detailed to protect her.

In Church Tradition, however, is preserved information that during her sojourn in the Jerusalem Temple, the Most-Pure Virgin was educated in the community of pious virgins, diligently reading Holy Scriptures, occupied with handiworks, perpetually in prayer and growing up with love towards God.

In remembrance of the Entry into the Temple of the Most-Holy Theotokos, the Church, from ancient times, instituted a solemn Feast. Information concerning the celebration of the Feast in the first centuries of Christianity is found in the tradition of Palestinian Christians, which says that when the Holy Queen Helena came to Palestine, she erected a church in honor of the Entrance into the Temple of the Most-Holy Theotokos. Thus the Feast of the Entrance into the Temple of the Most-Holy Theotokos, pre-announcing the Incarnation of God on earth, proclaims salvation to all Christians.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. The Virgin appears in the Temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her: Rejoice, O divine Fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4).

The most pure Temple of the Savior; the precious Chamber and Virgin; the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, is presented today to the house of the Lord. She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, which the angels of God do praise. Truly this woman is the Abode of Heaven!

The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Dec. 25).

In the earliest days of Christianity, the Feast of the Nativity of Christ was not generally celebrated in the Church. First mention of the Feast is made by Clement of Alexandria, who mentions that certain Egyptians commemorated the birth of Christ on May 20. The Apostolic Constitutions of the first half of the 4th Century set forth that January 6 should be celebrated as both the Feast of the Nativity and Epiphany. St. Gregory of Nyssa in 380 wrote that the faithful of Cappadocia celebrated the Nativity on Dec. 25. The Feast was not celebrated in Jerusalem until the 6th Century, while St. John Chrysostom introduced it at Antioch in 386 and at Constantinople between 398-402. In Rome the Feast of the Nativity of Christ had been celebrated on Dec. 25 since 354.

December 25 was ultimately chosen by the Church as the date of the Nativity in order to Christianize the pagan Feast of Natalis Invicti or Invincible Sun, which was celebrated on that day. St. Cyprian of Carthage noted that this anniversary of the invincible was made actual only in the birth of Jesus the only invincible One.

As the hymns of Christmas proclaim, Our Savior, the Dayspring from the East, has visited us from on high: And we who were in darkness and shadow have found the Truth. For the Lord is born of the Virgin (Exapostilarion). And as the Prophet Isaiah foretold many centuries before, and as the Church proclaims at the Great Compline during the All-Night Vigil for the Nativity of Christ, Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!

The Christmas story is well-known from the witness of Holy Scripture:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born Son and wrapped Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn [Luke 2:1-7].

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel/ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the Child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him. When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till

it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way [Matt. 2:1-12].

And in that region there were shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men [Luke 2:8-14].

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us. And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this Child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them [Luke 2:15-20],

Now when [the wise men and shepherds] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy Him. And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called My son. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more [Matt. 2:13-18].

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, Glory to Thee!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 3).

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey with the star! Since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!

The Holy Supper.

Christmas customs among the Orthodox people are simple, yet beautiful and rich with meaning. Among these customs is the Holy Supper which is served on Christmas Eve. We must emphasize, however, that the traditions which follow are not necessarily followed in every detail by every family that serves the Holy Supper, for Orthodoxy is rich in its diversity.

Traditionally, the meal is served on Christmas Eve at the time of the appearance of the first evening star. This, of course, serves to remind us of the Star of Bethlehem which shone in the East to the Magi coming to worship the Savior. The table itself is covered with straw and linen, which reminds us of the manger in which Christ lay and the linen cloths with which He was wrapped. A lit candle is placed on the table, symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem and the Light of Christ shining out in the darkness and despair of the world.

In some farming households, a meal was prepared for all of the animals and they were fed first. At the start of the Holy Supper the question would be asked, Have the animals been fed? and with an affirmative reply, the meal began. This served as a reminder that animals were also present at the Birth of Christ.

Traditionally, twelve courses are served separately at the meal, starting with bitter foods and ending with sweet. All are Lenten foods, since the Nativity Fast does not end until the Liturgy of Christmas Day. The first food is bitter garlic or onion greens, which each person must taste before touching any other food. This serves to remind us that until the coming of Christ the Savior, man's life was one of despair and bitterness, for he had fallen away from God by disobeying His commandments.

Each of the twelve dishes has a special meaning, then. Honey, for example, represents the sweet and pleasant moments in life; garlic the bitter days; grain dishes are reminders of the simple and ordinary moments, as well as our Daily Bread and the Bread from Heaven the Lord Jesus Christ.

The number of courses twelve represents the Twelve Tribes of Israel who lived in the promise of the Messiah and it also symbolizes the Twelve Disciples who followed Christ. The whole sequence of the meal from bitter to sweet courses reminds us that in following Christ we must be ready to bear the bitter moments with the same patience and understanding with which we accept life's ordinary and happy experiences.

The evening meal is completed by a Prayer of Thanksgiving and the singing of Christmas Hymns (Carols). These Hymns are sung to announce to the world the Birth of the Christ Child even as the angels announced it to the shepherds in the fields, singing Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men. The day ends with the attendance of the whole family in Church at the Nativity Vigil and the Divine Liturgy on the following day.

The Theophany of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Jan. 6)

The Feast of the Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is celebrated on January 6. After Pascha and Pentecost, this is the greatest Feast of the Orthodox Church, predating even the Nativity of Christ in importance. Here Our Lord Jesus Christ is baptized by John in the waters of the Jordan, this being the first public manifestation of God the Word Incarnate to the world.

As Holy Scripture tells us: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.... [And John said,] I baptize you with water for repentance, but He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire [Matt. 3:1-6, 11).

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of Whom I said, 'After me comes a man Who ranks before me, for He was before me' [John 1:28-30]. Then Jesus came...to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me? But

Jesus answered him, Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He was the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased [Matt. 3:13-17].

And John bore witness, I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him; but He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God [John 1:32-34].

In commemoration of this event, the Church, on January 5, the Eve of Theophany, performs the Blessing of Waters in the church itself, and on January 6, the day of the Feast itself, the Blessing of Waters is performed at a site prepared outside the church (preferably a river or lake).

The Feast of the Epiphany reminds us of our own Baptism in the hymn sung just before the reading of the Epistle at the Divine Liturgy: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia! For in the waters of Baptism, we put off the Old Man and put on the New, that is Jesus Christ, and strive to acquire the humility shown by the Lord Himself when He, the Creator, bowed His head under the hand of John, the creature, in the waters of the Jordan River.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1).

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son! And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light Unapproachable!

The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple (Feb. 2).

The Creator of the Law, in fulfillment of the Law, was brought to the Temple and presented to the Lord, for the external aspect of this great event in the Gospel narrative was in conformity with the rules laid down in the Old Testament. The Lord said to Moses, Consecrate to Me all the first born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast is Mine.... And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem' (Ex. 13:1-2, 14-15).

And so Mary and Joseph came after forty days of purification to the Temple to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons (Luke 2:24). The original Old Testament prescription that the firstborn must be consecrated to the service of the Lord was now done by substitution: ...the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts you shall redeem. And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary... (Num. 18:15-16). These five shekels evidently symbolized the coming redemption of us by the Savior His five wounds on the Cross.

The harsh way of the Cross, portent with profound significance, brought Son and Mother, the God-Man and she who is more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious, beyond compare, than the Seraphim, meekly to the Temple at Jerusalem, and the Liberator and Redeemer of the world was Himself redeemed for so trifling a sum.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word (Luke 2:25-29).

This was the crossroads between the Old Testament and the New. St. Simeon symbolizes the departing Old Testament, exemplified by men of righteousness and prophets who in spite of all their doubts and searchings entertained the firmest faith in what had been foretold of the promised salvation. The righteous Simeon took Him up in his arms, and the Old and New Testaments stood together: the Old, departing, held in its arms and blessed the New. This was unity and continuity, a direct link and a development; the Law and the promised manifestation of the Grace of God as His Only-Begotten Son, the Redeemer.

To Simeon the God-Receiver was granted more than had been granted to any other man before him: he held the Almighty in his arms, and to him were revealed both the Glory and the Way of the Cross of his God: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of Thy people Israel. And His father and His mother marveled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:30-35). Thus, for the first time, the Most-Holy Mary was forewarned that there would be no end to the thorns and trials of her life, that her Son, while bringing light and spiritual renewal to all peoples, would Himself be so persecuted that a sword will pierce through your own soul also.

The Lord wished for moral harmony in spreading abroad this holy news, and so He wished a woman, too, to repeat what had been said by Simeon: And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the Temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of Him to all who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38).

Just as in Palestine in ancient times, we bring our children on the fortieth day to be presented to the Lord; but in contrast to the Israelites, we bring children of either sex. In the Presentation, Christ, the Firstborn of all the human race, Creator of the New Church and of the New Testament, filled the old rites with a new content. By bringing our children to church like the Most-Pure Virgin Mary, we bind them over to God. Baptized and sanctified by grace, our children, by being made members of the Church, take their first steps upon the way of grace and the way of the Cross that lies before those who would follow Christ.

So we must go out to meet Christ and receive Him, taking Him into the arms of our souls, begging leave for sin to depart from us that we may live our lives in peace and tranquility, free of the agitations of evil. St. Simeon gave us an example of how firmly to follow the path of a righteous life, filled with the expectation of a meeting with the Lord.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1)

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace! From you shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who sat in darkness! Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder; you accepted in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection.

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 1)

By Thy Nativity, Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb and didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos (Mar. 25).

The role that the Most-Holy Theotokos plays in the redemption of the human race cannot be emphasized strongly enough. As the Feast of her Nativity shows, she was the ladder bridging earth and heaven. The Troparion of the Feast of the Annunciation proclaims in part, Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. This was effected through the perfect obedience of the Theotokos whose humble yes to the will of God overthrew the disobedience of the First Mother, Eve, in the Garden of Eden.

As Holy Scripture tells us: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women! But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I have no husband? [Luke 1:26-34].

Mary's question, How shall this be...? is not an expression of doubt. In this differs quite radically from the attitude of Zechariah, the father of St. John the Baptist, when the angel announced to him news of the birth of his own son. She simply poses a respectful question. And the angel said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born of you will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth [the mother of St. John the Baptist] in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible [Luke 1:35-37].

With perfect obedience and humility, Mary gives her reply to the angel and with it overturns the curse of the First Parents: And Mary said, Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her [Luke 1:38]. Thus, with the Archangel Gabriel we can all cry out to her from the depths of our hearts:

Rejoice, you through whom joy will shine forth: Rejoice, you through whom the curse will cease! Rejoice, restoration of fallen Adam: Rejoice, redemption of the tears of Eve! Rejoice, Height hard to climb for the thoughts of man: Rejoice, Depth hard to perceive even for the eyes of angels! Rejoice, you who are the throne of the King: Rejoice, you who hold Him Who holdeth all! Rejoice, Star who makes the Sun appear: Rejoice, Womb of the Divine Incarnation! Rejoice, you through whom the Creation is made new: Rejoice, you through whom the Creator becomes a newborn child! Rejoice, Unwedded Bride! [From the Ikos of the Matins of the Feast].

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 8).

O victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants, delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

The Transfiguration of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Aug. 6).

At one point in His earthly ministry, Our Lord asked His disciples, Who do men say that the Son of man is (Matt. 16:13)? The disciples gave various answers: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. Then He said to them, But who do you say that I am (Matt. 16:15)? Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). Shortly after this confession of faith, Jesus went up a high mountain (according to Church Tradition, Mt. Tabor) to pray, taking with Him Peter, James and John. And as He was praying, the appearance of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with Him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. And as the men were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, My Beloved; listen to Him! And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen (Luke 9:29-36).

In the Old Testament, the presence of light and cloud often signified the Divine Presence: Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel (Ex. 24:15-17). Likewise, on Mt. Tabor the cloud signified the Divine Presence the God-Man Jesus Christ and the Theophany here was accompanied by a bright radiance.

Both Moses and Elijah had beheld the presence of God, as the Readings at the Vespers of the Feast point out, and thus were appropriate witnesses on Mt. Tabor to Christ's divinity. In addition, as Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, how appropriate it was for those who par excellence represented the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) to be present.

The Lord took His three closest disciples (Peter, James and John) with Him on the mountain for, although God sometimes reveals Himself to sinners in quite unexpected ways, it is usually those who have followed Him long and faithfully who are privileged to enter into the joy of the Transfiguration of the Master.

The bright radiance and shining of the face is also a characteristic of those closest to God. Such was the case of Moses, who spoke to God face to face: When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. And when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to

him, and Moses talked with them.... And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him (Ex. 34:29-35). In more recent times this phenomenon was especially noted in the case of St. Seraphim of Sarov whose face shone like the brightest sun according to contemporary reports [Conversation with Motovilov].

In like manner, we all have the opportunity to be transfigured in our lives and to acquire a close relationship with God. So, too, we all have the opportunity to manifest the visible signs of those closest to God. In any case, as St. Paul tells us, when we die our bodies will be transformed (transfigured, as it were) and we will take on spiritual, radiant bodies. This aspect is clearly seen in the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Troparion (Tone 7).

Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light shine upon us sinner! Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!

Kontakion (Tone 7).

On the mountain wast Thou transfigured, O Christ God, and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they could see it; so that when they would behold Thee crucified, they would understand that Thy suffering was voluntary, and would proclaim to the world that Thou art truly the Radiance of the Father!

The Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Aug. 15).

Liturgically, the most important Feast of the Theotokos is that of her Dormition or Falling-Asleep. Prior to this Feast there is a strict two-week fast, beginning on August 1, which is broken only by the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6. This Feast possesses two distinct aspects inseparably linked in the mind of the believer. On the one hand, there is death and burial and, on the other, resurrection and the assumption of the Mother of God. As part of the Inner Tradition of the Church, this event was mystery that was not designed for the ears of the outside world, but which was revealed to the faithful within the Church.

True believers know that insofar as the son of God assumed human nature in the womb of the Virgin, She who was the means of His Incarnation was resurrected and taken up into Heaven in the Divine Glory of Her Son. Arise, O Lord, and go to Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy might (Ps. 132:8). The Son transported His Mother to the eternity of the life to come, for being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life by the One Who dwelt in her virginal womb (from the Kontakion of the Feast).

Thus, if every year we commemorate the anniversaries of the deaths of the Saints the Martyrs, Apostles, Venerable Mothers and Fathers, Sainted Hierarchs, etc. so much the more we commemorate the death of the Most-Holy Theotokos who did not see the corruption of the grave common to all humanity. And not only did her soul ascend to heaven, but her body also. As she was a perfect example of that obedience which all Christians are called upon to exercise, and as she alone was the Mother of God, her body did not see the natural corruption which follows death, but was raised from the dead and carried to the glory of the King of All in the heavenly mansions.

According to the Inner Tradition of the Church, the Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos took place in the following manner: Having reached an advanced age, the Most-Pure One wished to

leave the body and go to God as soon as possible, since the one unceasing desire of her soul had always been to see the sweet face of her son sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. Many tears she shed as she prayed to the Lord to take her from this present vale of sorrows.

The All-Chaste One lived in the house of St. John the Divine on Zion and often she went to the Mount of Olives, which was nearby, offering there in solitude her fervent prayer to her Son. Once, as she was praying alone on the Mount, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and announced that soon (after three days) she would depart and be with Christ. The Archangel told her that she should not be troubled, but should receive his words with joy as she was being called to immortal life and to the eternal King of Glory.

As a sign of the triumph of the Mother of God over death that bodily death would not have power over her, just as spiritual death had not had dominion over her, and that she would merely fall asleep for a short time and then, as if waking from sleep, she would rise and shake off death like sleep from the eyes and would see in the light of the Lord's face the immortal life and glory to which she would go with shouts of joy and spiritual happiness the Archangel handed the Most-Holy Virgin a branch from Paradise. The Most-Blessed Mother of God was filled with unspeakable joy and, falling down on her knees, she fervently thanked her Creator.

Before her departure from this life, the Most-Pure Lady wanted to see the Holy Apostles who were already scattered all over the world for the preaching of the Gospel. On her knees she prayed that this might be possible and that at the hour of her death she might not see the Prince of Darkness and his terrible servants, but that her son and God Himself would fulfill His promise and come and receive her soul into His holy hands. As she knelt, the olive trees growing on the Mountain bent, as if they were animate, and when the Pure Theotokos rose, they straightened themselves out again, honoring her as the Mother of God.

Returning home, the Most-Blessed Lady showed the branch from Paradise to St. John and told him to carry it before her bed. Then she began to make preparations for her burial. St. John sent word to St. James, first Bishop of Jerusalem and the brother of the Lord, and also to all other relatives and neighbors, informing them of the imminent decease of the Mother of God. In turn St. James informed all the Christians living in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns. With weeping they came to the home of the Pure Virgin to await her death.

As the multitude was gathered at the home of the Theotokos, suddenly there was heard a loud noise, like thunder, and a cloud encircled the house of St. John the Divine. At the command of God, angels seized the Apostles who were scattered to the ends of the earth and, bringing them on clouds to Jerusalem, placed them on Zion before the door of the house. St. John greeted them and told them of the speedy departure of the Most-Holy Mother of God. Later the Apostle Paul, accompanied by his close disciples, Dionysius the Areopagite, Hierotheus and Timothy, as well as the Seventy Apostles arrived at the home.

On the fifteenth day of the month of August, as all were awaiting the final hour, there suddenly shone in the room an ineffable light of Divine Glory which dimmed the lamps that had been lit in the house. The inhabitants saw the roof of the room opened and the glory of the Lord descending from Heaven Christ the King of Glory Himself with the hosts of angels and archangels, with all the heavenly powers, with the holy Fathers and Prophets who of old had prophesied about the Holy Virgin, and all the righteous souls, approached His Immaculate Mother.

After greeting Her Son, the Virgin surrendered her pure soul into His hands. She felt no pain whatever, for the end was as if she had fallen into a sweet sleep. At once there began angelic singing and with triumphant songs the heavenly hosts accompanied the soul of the Mother of God as she went in the arms of the Lord to the dwellings on High.

After her demise, the Holy Apostles bore the Most-Pure Body of the Mother of God to the Garden of Gethsemane, where she was placed in a tomb. The Holy Apostles stayed by the tomb of the Most-Pure One without leaving the Garden for three full days, singing psalms day and night. In addition, for all this time there was heard in the air the wonderful singing of the heavenly hosts praising God and blessing His Immaculate Mother.

By God's special arrangement, one of the Apostles, St. Thomas, was not present at the glorious burial of the body of the Immaculate Mother and he only arrived at Gethsemane on the third day. Grieving that he had not been granted the last greeting and blessing of the Most-Pure One, Thomas wept bitterly. Taking pity on him, the Apostles decided to open the tomb so that he might at least see the dead body of the Blessed Mother. But when the tomb was opened, the body of the Mother of God was not there, but only the burial clothes, giving off a wonderful fragrance!

With weeping and reverence the Holy Apostles kissed the burial clothes, praying that the Lord would reveal to them where the body of the All-Pure One had disappeared to. Later, after having eaten a meal in the Garden, the Apostles suddenly heard angelic singing. Looking up, they saw standing in the air the Immaculate Mother of God surrounded by a multitude of angels. She was enveloped in an ineffable light and she said to them: Rejoice, for I am with you always! Filled with joy, instead of the usual Lord Jesus Christ, help us! the Apostles cried: Most Holy Mother of God, help us! From that time they taught the Holy Church to believe that the Immaculate Mother of God on the third day after her burial was raised by her Son and taken with her body to Heaven.

Thus, the Lord, by His special Providence, delayed the arrival of St. Thomas until the day of the Falling-asleep of the Mother of God so that the tomb might be opened for him, so that the Church, in this way, might believe in the resurrection of the Mother of God, just as previously through the same Apostle's unbelief the Church had come to believe in the resurrection of Christ. Thus were accomplished the Falling-asleep of our Most-Blessed Lady the Mother of God, the burial of her undefiled body, her glorious resurrection and the triumphant assurance regarding her ascension to heaven in the flesh.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1).

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity! In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos! You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 2).

Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. For being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb!

Great Feasts of the Paschal Cycle.

The Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem (Sunday Before Pascha).

On the Sunday before Pascha, the Holy Church celebrates the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead (John 12:1). While tarrying there, in the house of Lazarus, many of those who had accompanied Him on the way from Jericho managed to reach Jerusalem and spread the tidings that Christ the Savior was coming there for the Feast of the Passover, and had stopped for a while in Bethany. Hearing this news, Christ's enemies, the scribes and Pharisees came to Bethany, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, Whom He had raised from the dead (John 12:9).

The number of people believing in Christ the Savior was growing from day to day, and even some of the Jews who had up until then been hostile towards Him, seeing the miracle He had wrought, believed in Him. This made the scribes and Pharisees even more angry, and they resolved to kill not only Our Lord Jesus Christ, but the righteous Lazarus as well.

Jesus Christ did not want to increase the spite of His foes, the scribes and Pharisees, and for this reason He often avoided direct and open confrontation with them. But the time had come to take all the wrath and spite of these people upon Himself. So that His enemies would have no justification for their unbelief and would not be able to say afterwards that He had hidden His glory and His predestined Messianic mission from them, Our Lord made a ceremonial entry into Jerusalem, fulfilling all that the Prophets had foretold of Him. After spending a day in Bethany, Jesus Christ set out for the Holy City.

Calling to Himself two of His disciples in all likelihood Peter and John Our Lord asked them to bring from a nearby village a she-ass and her colt. The disciples went and fulfilled everything: finding at the gates of the town a she-ass and her colt, they brought them to the Savior. The young colt had not been ridden or borne a yoke before (1 Sam. 6:7). The disciples then spread their clothes upon it.

Thus Jesus entered Jerusalem, not in a royal chariot drawn by horses, but on a young ass, covered, not with rich cloths, but with the well-worn robes of the disciples. In this way, as the Evangelists John and Matthew tell us, the sayings of the Prophets were fulfilled: Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:5).

The meek and humble entry of Our Lord Jesus Christ in to Jerusalem was a symbol of peace and humility, for it represented a complete contrast to the triumphal processions of kings at that time. The way in which Christ entered Jerusalem showed that His Kingdom was not of this world, but that He was sent by His Father in Heaven. Jesus was accompanied by throngs of people who had followed Him from Bethany or had met Him on the way.

Having ascended the Mount of Olives, He stopped. From this hill a beautiful view opened out over Jerusalem. The tumultuous joy of the people following the Great Miracle-Worker who had raised Lazarus from the dead, grew even greater at the sight of this beautiful and sacred city.

Not only the disciples, but all who believed in Him rejoiced with a great joy, for they believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, Who, according to the erroneous beliefs and expectations of the Jews, would sit on the throne of David, the king of glory, and be their ruler and rescue them from the Roman yoke.

At the gates of Jerusalem Jesus was met by a great multitude of people, rejoicing and waving palm branches, who, as St. Matthew tells us, bestrewed the way with them and their garments (Matt. 21:7-8). All this was an expression of particular reverence for the Messiah Whom they had come out to welcome. [We note here that in the Russian Orthodox Church, branches from the pussy willow are used instead of palm branches, obviously on account of the harsh climate.]

During the Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the whole people, who had come in their multitudes to celebrate the Passover and those who had witnessed Lazarus' resurrection and had been astounded by this great miracle, cried in joyous rapture: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest! (Matt. 21:9). The humble and meek procession of the Savior through the streets of Jerusalem surpassed and eclipsed all the triumphant processions that humanity had ever known.

Seeing the joy of the multitudes around Him, however, the Savior grew sad, and since He loved His people and His city, His heart was filled with sorrow. He knew that the same people, who rejoiced

now and cried Hosanna! and saw in Him their salvation, would in a few days cry out in rage: Crucify Him! Crucify Him! (John 19:6). The Savior also knew that the fair and holy city of Jerusalem which He was entering, would soon be desolated and not a stone be left one upon another. As He drew night to the city, Jesus wept over it, saying, Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes (Luke 19:41-42).

But it was not for Himself that our Lord wept. He wept and grieved because He knew that God's chosen Jewish people were perishing in ignorance and error. The Lord grieved not only for Jerusalem and the Chosen People, but for the whole universe; His gaze reached across the centuries, and saw the sins of future generations, and it was for them that He grieved in His soul; for them He wept and prayed.

Thus, the triumphant entrance of the Savior into Jerusalem which we celebrate on Palm Sunday was accomplished. In the Lord's Entrance, we see His way to voluntary suffering and death for our salvation. And we also see the image of Christ's spiritual Kingdom the Kingdom of Truth, Peace and Humility.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1).

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Another Troparion (Tone 4).

When we were buried with Thee in Baptism, O Christ God, we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection! Now we praise Thee and sing: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 6).

Sitting on Thy throne in heaven, carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God! Accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: Blessed is He that comes to recall Adam!

The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ (40th Day after Pascha).

On the 39th day after Pascha we celebrate the Leave-taking of the Feast of Feasts, commemorating the last day of the Risen Christ's earthly sojourn. The day following is celebrated as His Leave-taking His Glorious Ascension into Heaven. As Holy Scripture tells us, after Jesus had spoken with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away (Acts 1:9-12).

The Lord ascended to Heaven not to sadden us with His departure, but in order to do what was best for us. It is to your advantage that I go away, He had told His disciples. For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you (John 16:7). I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth... The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things (John 14:16, 26). The Savior saw that His mission on earth was accomplished. The goal of His Incarnation was to proclaim the Divine Truth to the world, to direct men onto the path of repentance and salvation, and deliver us from Eternal Death. The Lord accomplished our salvation and man acquires it through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord knew the trials and tribulations that would be endured by His disciples mockings, scourgings, imprisonment and even death. And thus the Lord ascended to His Heavenly Father that the Spirit might descend from the Father as the Comforter, and fortify His Friends.

The Lord ascended to Heaven in order to prepare for us, too, the path to the Heavenly Mansions, to open the Gates of Paradise, and Himself to be our Guide. Heaven that had been closed to men before the Resurrection now at the Ascension was opened by Christ the Savior.

None of the righteous men of the Old Testament the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and men pleasing to God could enter Heaven. No one has ascended into heaven but He Who descended from heaven, the Son of man (John 3:13), the Lord had said. Our first parent, Adam, closed the Gates of Paradise, and an angel with a flaming sword was placed at the gates. But the New Adam, Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Ascension, opened the way to Life and Heaven itself. He was followed by the souls of the holy Forefathers, Prophets and hosts of righteous people of the New Testament. All worthy Christians who follow in the footsteps of their Savior, enter Heaven in this way today and so they will in the future.

The Lord ascended to intercede for us with His Heavenly Father. Towards the end of His earthly mission He had said: I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go and prepare a place for you., I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also (John 14:2-3). This same thought was also expressed by the great Preacher of Christ's teaching, St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb. 9:24). These words fill us with hope, for we now have in Heaven a great Mediator and Advocate for the world with God Christ Our Lord.

Our Lord ascended in a cloud on high, symbolizing the rising smoke of an acceptable sacrifice. Thus the sacrifice was accepted by God and Christ the Lamb that was slain is ushered into the preserve of God where He will be eternally offered in the Holy Eucharist. Therefore we must be worthy of the great mercies of God, capable and ready to receive them. All the power, all the fruit of His divine Ascension, therefore, belong to us, for when He ascended on High, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men (Eph. 4:8). This is why the Church repeatedly proclaims: Clap your hands, all you nations, for Christ is ascended up to the place where He was before [from the Vespers of the Feast].

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4).

O Christ God, Thou hast ascended in Glory, granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that Thou art the son of God, the Redeemer of the world!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 6).

When Thou didst fulfill the dispensation for our sake, and unite earth to heaven: Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: I am with you and no one will be against you!

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (50th day after Pascha).

On the 50th Day after Pascha, the Holy Church celebrates the Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Holy Pentecost). When the Day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

In His farewell discourses to His disciples, the Lord told them, I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; you know Him, for He dwells with You, and will be in you.... The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things... (John 14:16-17, 26). These words of the Lord were accomplished on the 50th Day after the Passover (Pascha), for the Seal of the Holy Spirit was seen on the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues, just as, in Holy Chrismation, we receive the Seal of the Holy Spirit in the form of the Holy Chrism.

The people who were present were greatly amazed at the sight, and especially that each one of them, no matter what nationality, heard the Apostles speaking to them in their own language. But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine (Acts 2:13).

Then Peter got up and spoke to them: Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on My menservants and My maidservants in those days I will pour out My Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:14-21).

Peter went on to speak of the Risen Christ and His redemptive acts, reminding them that this Jesus God raised up, and of that... all [of the Apostles were] witnesses (Acts 2:32). He continued: Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy spirit, He has poured out this which you see and hear (Acts 2:33).

Many of those hearing were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...' So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:37-38, 41).

A special characteristic of this day is the singing of the Troparion to the Holy Spirit: O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One! In addition, seven Kneeling Prayers are read by the Priest during the Vespers which immediately follows the Divine Liturgy of that day, while everyone are on bended knees, this being the first time kneeling is permitted since Holy Pascha.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 8).

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them thou didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of Man, Glory to Thee!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 8).

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-Holy Spirit!

Various Other Feasts

In addition to the Holy Pascha of the Lord, and the Twelve Great Feasts, there are several other Feasts ranking in importance just after them. These are: The Circumcision of the Lord, The Nativity of St. John the Baptist, The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, The Beheading of St. John the Baptist, The Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Russian Church only), and The Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers.

The Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Oct. 1).

This Feast commemorates an event that happened at Constantinople in the 10th Century. In the year 911, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, a large army of Saracens was preparing to attack the city and conquer it. The pious people of Constantinople reacted to the threat by turning to prayer. They thronged to the Church of Blachernae (where was preserved the Robe and Veil of the Mother of God) and there raised their voices to Christ the Lord, and to His Mother, the All-Holy Theotokos, pleading for mercy and help against the foe.

As the soldiers raised their arms in battle, the church was filled with hymns and prayers. Among the believers was St. Andrew, a Fool-for-Christ, and his disciple, St. Epiphanius. Suddenly they saw a vision of the Virgin Mary surrounded by a choir of angels, prophets and apostles. Do you see, brother, the Queen of all praying for the peace of the world asked Andrew? Indeed I see, father, answered the disciple. I see and I fear.

The inhabitants of the city heard of this vision of the two men, and were filled with joy and hope that this was a sign of deliverance. They thanked God and sang hymns to the One who interceded for them. All night they prayed in the church, while outside, the Christian army fought against the invaders. The tide of battle turned against the enemy and the defenders of Constantinople emerged with a decisive victory. Saints Andrew and Epiphanius told everyone of their vision in the church, seeing the Holy Virgin with outstretched arms, holding a veil over the city as a sign of protection, and imploring God's mercy upon the people.

Since that time the Feast of the Protection has come to be celebrated by the Church. In the Feast of the Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos, we entreat of the Queen of Heaven to protect and help: Remember us in your prayers, O Lady, Virgin Theotokos, that we not perish for the increase of our sins; protect us from all evil and cruel misfortune. For we put our hope on you, and honoring the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you!

Synaxis of the Holy Angels (Nov. 8).

The Feast of the Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and the Other Bodiless Hosts was established at the beginning of the 4th Century at the Local Council of Laodicea, a few years before the First Ecumenical Council. This Council, among other things, condemned and rejected the heretical worship of angels as creators and rulers of the world and confirmed the Orthodox in their particular veneration.

The Feast is celebrated in November the 9th Month (counting March, which, in antiquity, \was the beginning of the year) conforming to the traditional Nine Ranks of Angels Seraphim and Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. [All of these titles are mentioned in Holy Scripture, and a detailed exposition of them, their characteristics and function may be found in The Celestial Hierarchies by Pseudo-Dionysius, who wrote in the 6th Century.] The fact that the Feast is celebrated on the 8th Day of the month indicated the future assembly of the Heavenly Powers on the day of the awesome judgment of God which the Holy Fathers called the 8th Day, since after this present age, characterized by 7-day weeks, will come the 8th Day, when the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him (Matt. 25:31).

In the theology of the Church, the angels are seen as pure spirits, but nonetheless created spirits, destined to worship and reflect the infinite divine beauty as well as being sent forth to do the divine bidding. As St. Paul tells us, Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation (Heb. 1:14)? Angels appear at times in the Old Testament to the Patriarchs and Prophets and often were seen to be the bearers of God's image and power by the ancient Jews. Especially noted is the manifestation of the Holy Trinity to Abraham (Gen. 18) in the form of three angels (the subject of Andrei Rublev's famous icon of the Holy Trinity).

In the New Testament the Archangel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus; angels ministered to Him in the wilderness and also during His agony in Gethsemane before His crucifixion; and the Resurrection is announced to the Myrrhbearers by angels. They are closely involved in the life of the apostles and also in the beginnings of the Church.

In addition, the Church teaches that everyone is given a Guardian Angel at birth to act as a guide and protector to every individual. The Lord Himself bears witness to this, when speaking of little children, He cautioned His disciples: See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of My Father Who is in heaven (Matt. 18:10).

The leader of the Heavenly hosts is Michael the Archangel, whose name means Like unto God. He is mentioned by name in the Old Testament book of Daniel, as well as in the New Testament Epistle of St. Jude, and especially figures in the Revelation of St. John. In ancient Jewish tradition, he was seen as the heavenly protector of Israel.

According to the Revelation of St. John, seven angels serve before the throne of God (Rev. 8-10) and take part in the final woes of the world. In the tradition of the Church, the names of these angels, commemorated by name in the Church Calendar on November 8 are: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selaphiel, Jegudiel and Barachiel.

The Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Jan. 1).

January 1 is dedicated to the memory of the Circumcision of Christ. According to the covenant which God made with Abraham, God said to Abraham, As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.... Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised (Gen. 17:9-12).

In submitting to the Law of Circumcision, Our Lord signifies that He is the fullness and the completion of the Old Covenant: And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb (Luke 2:21). At the same time He showed the way to humility by submitting to humiliation of the flesh, prefiguring the bloody consecration His All-Pure Body was to receive on the Cross.

So, too, in the spiritual sense, every Christian must submit his body and desires to the will of God. As St. Paul says, in the Epistle Lesson read on the Feast: For in [Jesus] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him, Who is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ (Col. 2:9-11).

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24).

The birth of St. John the Baptist, the last and greatest of the Old Testament Prophets, was the result of a miracle. As Holy Scripture tells us: In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her

name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years

(Luke 1:5-7).

Childlessness was a terrible thing to an Old Testament Jew; not having a firm belief in life after death, barrenness meant that one's name would not be carried on in life. In addition, Zechariah and Elizabeth were both getting on in years, and the likelihood of bearing children diminished with each passing day.

But then the miraculous hand of God intervened. One day, while Zechariah was serving in the Temple, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that his barren wife Elizabeth would bear a son, whose name would be John. Zechariah was incredulous. He doubted the angel since both he and his wife were old. As a result, by divine command, he was struck dumb until the time when the child would be born (Luke 1:8-23). After this, Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men (Luke 1:24-25).

We find parallels to this account in the Old Testament stories of the births of the Prophet Samuel and of Samson, both of whom were born of barren mothers at the intervention of God. But we find an even greater parallel in the birth of the Most-Holy Theotokos, who was born of barren parents, Joachim and Anna, also by means of Divine Intervention.

Finally the time came for the consummation of the miracle. For the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, Not so; he shall be called John (Luke 1:57-60). This was confirmed by Zechariah in writing; and when he wrote the name John, his mouth was opened, and he spoke openly.

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins (Luke 1:67, 76-77). We know that John later became a great Prophet and was privileged to baptize the Lord Himself in the waters of the Jordan. As the Evangelist tells us, he acknowledged Christ's divinity when, after he had baptized Him and witnessed the events of that glorious day, he said, / have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1:34).

The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29).

From the 4th Century on, the Church of Rome has celebrated the Feast of the Holy Apostles on June 29. This became the usage of the Universal Church. Spiritually the Feast is linked with Holy Pentecost, as the witness of the Apostles is the immediate fruit of the descent of the Holy Spirit which came upon them. The Feast is preceded by the Fast of the Holy Apostles which begins on the Monday following All-Saints' Sunday (1st after Pentecost). The two most important Apostles of the early Church were Peter and Paul and, according to Church Tradition, they were both martyred in Rome, Paul by beheading and Peter by crucifixion. Thus this Feast became especially prominent in Rome.

Although St. Peter had a special zeal concerning Christ and is considered the chief of the Apostles, he did not have any special authority over the other Apostles, but was only first in honor. When there were important questions in the Church, it was a Church council that decided them, and St. Peter himself was sent by a council to preach the Word of God.

According to St. John Chrysostom, St. Paul sought dishonor more than we seek honor, death more than we seek life, poverty more than we seek wealth, sorrows more than we seek joy, and that he prayed for his enemies more than others pray against their enemies. For him there was only one thing to be feared: that he might offend God! He desired nothing more in life than to please God and the whole meaning of his life was his love for Christ.

The Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Aug. 29).

During His earthly ministry, the Lord bore witness to the stature of His Baptizer. Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he (Matt. 11:7-11).

John was the greatest of the prophets; however, as the Resurrection had not yet occurred, no man had ascended to the glory of the Kingdom of God. Even so great a prophet as John had not been redeemed. Like all men, John had to die a bodily death and it is entirely appropriate that this occurred as the result of his high moral integrity and courageous words such as would come from a great prophet.

The Holy Evangelist Mark tells the story: Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to 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 kept him safe. When he heard him he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly.

But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias' daughter 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 grant it. And he vowed to her, Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said to her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the baptizer. And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb (Mark 6:17-29). Thus the Baptizer of Christ met a tragic end. In commemoration of this event, on the Day of his Beheading, the Holy Church has decreed a day of strict fasting.

In addition to the above Feasts, other days are dedicated to the Saints and Holy Events. Among these are:

St. Anthony the Great, Father of Monasticism (Jan. 17)

The Three Holy Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom (Jan. 30)

The Repose of St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the Americas (Mar. 31)

The Holy Greatmartyr and Victorybearer George (Apr. 23).

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian (May 8)

The Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril and Methodius, Evangelizers of the Slavs (May 11)

The Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and his mother, St. Helena (May 21)

Our Venerable Father Sergius, Wonderworker of Radonezh (July 5).

The Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir (July 15).

Our Venerable Father Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov (July 19).

The Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah (July 20)

The Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord (Aug. 1)

The Glorification of Our Venerable Father Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska and All America (Aug. 9)

The Repose of St. Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh, Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia (Aug. 13)

The Holy New-Martyrs of Alaska: Peter the Aleut and Priest-monk Juvenaly (Sept. 24)

The Glorification of St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the Americas (Oct. 6)

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (Dec. 6)

The Repose of Our Venerable Father Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska and All America (Dec. 13).

Orthodox Dogma and Doctrine

Holy Tradition

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Holy Orthodox Church is its changelessness, its loyalty to the past, its sense of living continuity with the ancient Church. This idea of living continuity may be summed up in one word: Tradition. As St. John of Damascus says, We do not change the everlasting boundaries which our fathers have set, but we keep the Tradition, just as we received it [On the Holy Icons, II, 12]. To an Orthodox Christian, Tradition means the Holy Bible; it means the Creed; it means the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and the writings of the Fathers; it means the Canons, the Service Books, the Holy Icons, etc. In essence, it means the whole system of doctrine, ecclesiastical government, worship and art which Orthodoxy has articulated over the ages [Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p.204].

We take special note that for the Orthodox, the Holy Bible forms apart of Holy Tradition, but does not lie outside of it. One would be in error to suppose that Scripture and Tradition are two separate and distinct sources of Christian Faith, as some do, since there is, in reality, only one source; and the Holy Bible exists and found its formulation within Tradition.

As Orthodox, however, while giving it due respect, we realize that not everything received from the past is of equal value. The Holy Scriptures, the Creed and the dogmatic and doctrinal definitions of the Ecumenical Councils hold the primary place in Holy Tradition and cannot be discarded or revised. The other parts of Holy Tradition are not placed on an equal level, nor do they possess the same authority as the above. The decrees of the Councils since the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787) obviously do not stand on the same level as the Nicene Creed, nor do the writings of, for example, the Byzantine theologians, hold equal rank with St. John's Gospel.

Here we must also distinguish between Tradition and traditions. At the Council of Carthage in 257, one of the Bishops remarked, The Lord said, I am Truth. He did not say, I am custom [The Opinions of the Bishops on the Baptizing of Heretics, 30]. Many traditions that have been handed down are merely cultural variations, theological or pious opinions, or simply plain mistakes. [One need only recall the whole problem of the reform of the Russian liturgical books under Patriarch Nikon and the ensuing Old Believer schism to see the truth of this.]

Orthodox loyalty to Tradition [the things of the past] is not something mechanical or lifeless, however. Tradition is a personal encounter with Christ in the Holy Spirit, as Bishop Kallistos affirms. Tradition is not only kept by the Church it lives in the Church, it is the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church [The Orthodox Church, p.206]. Thus Tradition must be seen and experienced from within. Tradition is a living experience of the Holy Spirit in the present. While inwardly unchanging (since God does not change), Tradition constantly assumes new forms, supplementing the old, but not superseding it.

Our Lord tells us that when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth (John 16:13) and this promise forms the basis of Orthodox respect for Holy Tradition. Thus, as Fr. Georges Florovsky expresses this idea: Tradition is the witness of the Spirit; the Spirit's unceasing revelation and preaching of good things.... To accept and understand Tradition we must live within the Church, we must be conscious of the grace-giving presence of the Lord in it; we must feel the breath of the Holy [Spirit] in it.... Tradition is not only a protective, conservative principle; it is, primarily, the principle of growth and regeneration.... Tradition is the constant abiding of the Spirit and not only the memory of words [Sobornost: the Catholicity of the Church, in The Church of God, pp. 64-5].

The Beatitudes

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Beatitudes can be viewed as a single system a ladder ascending in virtues. Christ calls us first of all to acquire spiritual poverty, and meekness, and only then to rise step by step to the summit of spiritual perfection. Man becomes aware of his poverty of spirit from the moment when the summoning and illumining grace takes effect within him. The first thing revealed to the spiritual infant is his helplessness the incompatibility of his present spiritual state with that to which he is being summoned. The human spirit is the chief motivating force of our salvation, for we are bound to God, not by the soul, but by the spirit, and it is not through the soul, but through the spirit that God's good will descends upon us.

It is in the spirit of man that the Image of God is most truly reflected. Our spirit trembles before God when it establishes contact with Him in prayer, meditation, reading the Word of God, in the Sacraments, Divine Services, good deeds, and so on. Only when it is humbled will our spirit become aware of the gulf which separates man from God and will know that God is all that within ourselves is nothing worthy of the Lord or pleasing to Him, nothing that is our own except our sins and that the fullness of spiritual life consists in renunciation of self in giving oneself entirely to God and to others.

Only by sacrificing ourselves will we find ourselves in the fullness of life lived for God and for others. And to find ourselves in God and in others, we must lose our own selves. Our spirit, renewed in God, knows that human life belongs to Him and always and in all things is dependent upon Him, and that we must be in steadfast contact with Him, begging His help and living in the hope that the gracious Lord in His mercy will not abandon us in our helplessness.

The righteous men of the Old Testament were aware of their insignificance before God. As Abraham said of himself, I... am but dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27). David, both king and prophet, cried out, I am a worm, and no man (Ps. 22:6); I am poor and needy (Ps. 86:1). Moses said to the Lord, I am slow of speech and of tongue (Ex. 4:10); and the Prophet Isaiah said to himself, I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips (Is. 6:5).

The saints of the New Testament Church, the nearer they drew to God, the stronger they were aware of their smallness and unworthiness before God, and were filled with truly profound humility. Some of them declared as they died that they had not even begun their salvation, while others declared that there was no place for them even in Hell, while yet others declared that even the earth would not accept their sinful bodies.

According to St. John Chrysostom, humility is the foundation of all virtue, for even if one distinguishes himself by fasting, prayer, alms, chastity, of any other virtue, without humility all of these would be destroyed and would perish. Thus there is no salvation without humility. This virtue was regarded highly in the Old Testament, for as the Psalmist says, A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise (Ps. 51:17). Seeing the results which humility brings, he was moved to say, When I was brought low, He saved me (Ps. 116:6).

In the New Testament, the Lord Himself gave us the greatest example of humility (Matt. 11:39; John 13:14-16), for His entire life teaches us humility. The Mother of God says of herself, For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden (Luke 1:48). The Apostle Paul said of himself, I am the foremost among sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). The Publican of the Gospel saw nothing within himself except sinfulness, and simply hoped in God's mercy.

The ways in which one attains humility are different. Sometimes it is through sickness, sorrow and misfortunes. Sometimes it is through being persecuted by others or oppressed by disease. As St. John Chrysostom says, True humility comes when we turn from our sins to God.

In the human soul, humility is countered by pride which struggles ceaselessly with it trying to destroy it. We know that all the evils which bring man to damnation are the results of pride: the Fall of Satan, of Adam, of Cain, and so on. And to this day pride is the chief enemy of humility, and overcoming it with God's help is the first task to be undertaken for our salvation, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

The attainment of humility is linked with overcoming our own self and pride, and with the victory over our passions and the temptations which face us. True humility prevents us from passing judgment, from envying, being angry, arousing anger in others, hurting or rebuking them, and it enables us to help others, to pray for all, and to bear everything that happens to us calmly as coming from God. He who has attained deep humility considers himself the unworthiest among men and attributes all his accomplishments to God.

Christian humility is free and highly fruitful, and there is not the least servitude, ingratiating or flattery in it. The humble Christian cannot be the servant of other men, because then he would not be the servant of Christ, for the servant of Christ is free in Christ as the Highest Truth. Love for Christ and devotion to Him allow the believer to call himself the servant of Christ, and as a result of his regeneration, he is a freeborn son, a child of God and not a slave.

Therefore, the poor in spirit, those who are humble of heart, will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. This kingdom, as the Lord Himself says, is within you (Luke 17:21), in the spirit and in the humble heart.

2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Sorrow and grief enter the soul of one who has attained poverty of spirit and who has become aware of the power of sin over his soul, and they wring an involuntary cry of grief from its very depths. Therefore the Savior is anxious to comfort those who weep with His second Beatitude.

When it lived in Paradise, the human soul knew neither weeping, nor tears, for then man was with God and God was with man. The sin of our first parents separated man from God, giving rise to godly tears and sorrow which lead to contrition and salvation. This godly sorrow, as St. John of the Ladder tells us, liberates the soul from all earthly loves and affections. This sadness, however, should not be confused with worldly grief [which] produces death (2 Cor. 7:10). If we do not overcome it, this earthly sorrow may grow into the mortal sin of depression and despair.

Godly sorrow is permeated with love for God and for others and sorrow for their sins and for our own. Such was the sorrow of Moses when, at the foot of Mount Sinai, the Israelites forgot their God and made themselves a golden calf to worship. Such were the tears shed by the Prophet Jeremiah over the ruins of Jerusalem. And such were the tears of the Savior Himself when He foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem. Peter wept bitterly after his denial of our Lord, but the Lord comforted him when He appeared to him on the first day after His Resurrection, for God's mercy is infinite and He not only comforts those who repent in this earthly life, but will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev. 7:17).

Mourning, as the expression of the spirit's repentance for its sins, is of spiritual value, and must be treasured so as not to be wasted on earthly vanities. The mourning of the spirit, however, is not always accompanied by physical tears, for deep sorrow can be expressed in sighs, constriction of the heart, profound silence, inner concentration and withdrawal. Yet, as St. Ephraim the Syrian notes, these tears are like precious pearls, for by God's gift the soul is enlightened by tears, reflecting the heavenly like a mirror.

Great is the strength of pure and heartfelt tears that rise from the depths of the heart, for these tears wash away all internal and external filth and quench the flame of all irritability and anger. These tears are especially saving when they are constant and, as St. John of the Ladder teaches us, he who is truly concerned for his salvation will count each day when he has not wept for his sins as wasted, in spite of any good deeds that may have been accomplished.

We are constantly sinning, both when we are active and when we give ourselves over to idle dreams, and these sins must be washed away with tears of repentance. These tears are a means of washing and purifying our soul, and a sacrifice offered up to God by our contrite and broken spirit. If our tears arise from fear of God for our sinfulness, they will intercede for us with God, as St. Ephraim tells us.

The blessed receive a special gift from God tenderness and the tears of tenderness, which show that godly tears and sorrow contain both joy and gaiety, just as the comb contains the honey. In addition, there are the tears of the heart, which are better than the tears of the eyes, as Bishop Theophan the Recluse wrote. The tears of the eyes fatten the worm of vanity, while the tears of the heart are to be seen by God alone. Tears during prayer at Church and at home are beneficial, but in Church it is better to hide one's tears, leaving merely the tearful mood in one's heart, that is to say, a contrite spirit and a contrite heart. Night is the best time for prayer, especially at midnight. That is the place for your tears. Therefore, secret tears for our sins cleanse the soul and bring it closer to God, bringing us both comfort in this life and true consolation in the next.

3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Meekness is directly linked with heartfelt repentance and mourning for our sins and he who considers himself worthy of all sorrows and troubles will be filled with the spirit of meekness and humility. He who is meek offends no one, is angered by no one, is modest and virtuous. He is a stranger to idle curiosity and never refuses his help to those who are suffering, doing good quietly and without notice. This virtue is as difficult to attain as it is great, for it demands much effort and struggle within the one who wishes to attain it. First he must overcome his irritability, impatience, touchiness and irascibility, for by overcoming his passions, he attains modesty and meekness. This, however, is only the beginning of his growth in this virtue.

The Psalmist especially praises meekness, placing it on a level with truth and righteousness (Ps. 45:4), and the Prophet Isaiah speaks of God's particularly merciful attitude to man who is meek: This is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word, says the Lord (Is. 66:2). St. Peter sees a meek and quiet spirit as one of the greatest treasures of the human heart, which in God's sight is very precious (1 Pet. 3:4). Therefore he urges the followers of Christ to be ready to answer with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15) those who ask the reason for their hope. St. James asks us to receive with meekness the Word of God (James 1:21), so that it will find the most direct way to the hearts of his listeners.

St. Paul pays special attention to meekness, pointing out that meekness in the preacher is the best way of convincing those who oppose him (2 Tim. 2:24-25) or for correcting the sinner (Gal. 6:1). He begs the Ephesians to treat each other with all lowliness and meekness, because these are the qualities that make a man worthy of the calling to which [he has] been called (Eph. 4:2, 1). To the rebellious Corinthians, he would come not with a rod, but with love, in a spirit of gentleness, (1 Cor. 4:21), for this Apostle to the Gentiles counts meekness among the fruits of the spirit, for against such there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).

In the Old Testament King David (the Psalmist), the Prophet Moses, who is called very meek (Num. 12:3), and also the righteous Job, who blessed the Name of God when subjected to severe trials, were all distinguished by their meekness. In the New Testament the Savior demonstrated the greatest meekness and called us to learn from Him first and foremost this virtue: Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matt. 11:29), for it is out of this virtue that all the other virtues grow, including love itself. Through meekness and humility man overcomes his natural self and pride, and spiritually develops towards self-denial in the Name of God and out of love of Him and one's neighbor.

The saints offer us marvelous examples of meekness. Once during Divine Liturgy, St. John the Almsgiver, when he was Patriarch, reading in the Gospel lesson about making peace with your brother before coming to pray (Matt. 5:23-24), recalled that there was a cleric whom he had punished for some misdeed and who was angry with him. He called him immediately and, falling at his feet, begged him to forgive him and to make peace. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, while in a conversation with a local landowner, was in the course of an argument struck in the face by him, at which the saint fell down on his knees and humbly asked forgiveness of the landowner, saying, For God's sake, forgive me for bringing you to such a state. Only a man of meek spirit could have answered thus.

We can help pave the way to meekness in ourselves by deciding to strive for spiritual health in all things, and for abstention in our designs, in thought, in word and in deed. As St. John Chrysostom says, If we are opposed, we will be humble. If anyone is arrogant with us, we will be helpful. If anyone torments or oppresses us by making fun of us or swearing at us, we will not answer in kind, so as not to destroy ourselves through vengeance.

The Lord promises those who attain meekness that they will inherit the earth. One would have expected the meek, the most defenseless and oppressed of all, to perish in the first centuries of the

Christian era at the hands of the infuriated pagans, but they have indeed inherited the earth that was formerly ruled by those who persecuted them. The meek will receive their spiritual inheritance in the mansions of the righteous, and will receive the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Ps. 27:13), where eternal blessedness awaits them.

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

The more profoundly we become aware of our sinfulness and spiritual imperfection, the less bearable to our reason and our conscience becomes the idea of being spiritually extinguished the threat of losing our salvation and within our soul are born hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. Just as in life the body periodically hungers for food and thirsts for drink, so in the spiritual life come moments when man yearns for spiritual food.

The good news of the gospel is the Truth that the Savior has come to earth, and His teaching the righteousness of our salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This good news of the Truth of Christ enlightens the soul. The Truth of Christ leads to faith in the true righteousness of our salvation. And the stronger the faith in this righteousness, the more fully its depths are revealed to the soul possessing it wholly, acting from faith to faith, urging it to lead a life compatible with this righteousness.-

If the meaning of the Truth of Christ lies in the fact that it brings spiritual enlightenment to those who believe, then the significance of this righteousness lies in the fact that it leads them to faith and justifies them. God's righteousness in all its fullness is centered in God alone and from Him it is poured forth on all who seek it. To live in righteousness means to live according to the will of God, and to live according to the will of God means to live in God's righteousness.

It is not those who thirst for worldly happiness that are blessed, but those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, obeying Christ's commandments, living in God and with God. He who fulfils the will of God will be like the Savior, Who said: My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to accomplish His work (John 4:34).

The will of God is revealed to us in Holy Scripture. However, it is not enough to know the truth of our salvation, for we also need the strength to carry it out, which we receive through the Sacraments and the prayers of the Church. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the food and drink of which Christ said: I am the bread of life.... For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed (John 6:35, 55).

Hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, which find their highest satisfaction in the prayers and Sacraments of the Church (especially in Holy Communion), act together with love and the other virtues in man's heart. However, we will be completely and entirely satisfied with God's righteousness only in the life to come, when the righteous will neither hunger nor thirst and He Who sits upon the throne will shelter them with His presence (Rev. 7:15).

5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Everyone who lives in society needs a kind word, sympathy, and compassion, and the man of warmth and sympathy has the traits of mercy. The merciful, whom the Gospel calls charitable, are first and foremost spiritual people hearers of the spirit. Mercy is a gift or the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The merciful follow Christ's commandments: they give meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, they clothe the naked, they take in the stranger and comfort the sorrowing (Matt. 25:31-46).

The charitable look after orphans, do not forget the aged, return to the path of truth those who have lost their way, strengthen those whose faith is wavering, teach others kindness, give advice, do not answer evil with evil, and forgive offenses. They pray for their fellow men, and especially they pray

for the dead who need nothing from the living except prayers and deeds of kindness in their memory.

The Lord warned Cain: ...if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it (Gen. 4:7). Doing good constantly is the guarantee of a successful struggle with sin. Those who are constantly charitable and merciful will receive mercy in their turn both from God and from good fellow men. But let the hardhearted bear in mind that judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy (James 2:13). The Savior points to His Heavenly Father as the highest example of mercy and calls us to emulate Him (Luke 6:36), for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior also teaches us how to perform deeds of mercy: Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father Who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do.... But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing... (Matt. 6:1-3). To do deeds of kindness with the aim of being praised by others, will be the means of depriving oneself of the rewards of our Heavenly Father, for God Who sees in secret will reward you (Matt. 6:4).

Around us are people who need our sympathy. They are the Lazaruses of our lives (Luke 16:14-31 the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus), who will open or close for us the gates of God's Kingdom, depending upon how we have treated them. And all those who are charitable and merciful on earth in the Name of God will find mercy in the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

It would seem that there is nothing harder to attain than purity of heart and nothing more impossible than to see God. For, is it possible for our heart to be pure and spotless when out of it come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander (Matt. 15:19), or for us to see God Whom no man has ever seen or can see (1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18; 1 John 4:12)? Nevertheless, the Savior speaks of purity of heart and of seeing God with the heart, because the previous Beatitudes teach the Christian humility, mourning, meekness, righteousness and mercy; for only the spirit which has acquired these virtues will give a new fruit grace-endowed purity of heart and radiant holiness that sees God from within.

The pure in heart are not tempted by the seductions of this world. As St. John of the Ladder says, truly blessed is he who has attained complete dispassion for all carnal things, for appearance and beauty; great is he who is dispassionate; he who has triumphed over the body, has triumphed over nature, and there is no doubt that he who has triumphed over nature stands higher than nature, and such a man differs little from the-Angels; purity of heart brings us closer to God and, as far as possible, makes us like unto Him.

St. Ephraim the Syrian teaches that purity of heart hates luxury, laziness, bodily beauty, fine garments, rich food and drunkenness. It overcomes the flesh and penetrates the heavenly with its eye. It is the fountainhead of love and the dwelling place of Angels. It is a gift of God, filled with goodness, edification and knowledge. It is a peaceful and fitting haven which fends off evil and cleaves to goodness. This purity of heart is characterized by cleanliness of body and soul, a peaceful nature, meekness, humility, love and closeness to God, and attainment in all the virtues, including strict abstinence.

The heart attains purity, says St. Ephraim the Syrian, through numerous tribulations, privations, renunciation of all worldly things and mortification. And if it attains purity, it is not defiled by minor offenses, fears neither tribulations in any part of the soul, because the soul is strengthened by God.

The struggle with impure thoughts that defile our heart and conscience helps us to attain purity of heart. Remaining in constant prayerfulness before God creates a living link with God, giving rise to what is called the awareness of God in the soul, the awareness of Christ our Savior, and His cross, and it conquers our bad thoughts, evil designs and desires of the heart. And this awareness of God, on the highest levels of spiritual attainment, becomes the grace-giving vision of God.

The performance of charitable deeds fills with love the heart of the ascetic. Contemplating God, reading the Holy Scriptures, the works of the Holy Fathers and the Lives of the saints, attending Divine Services as often as possible, and partaking of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, are all spiritual and saving fare for the heart.

The ascetic whose heart has been purified and sanctified by the Holy Spirit is filled with love for Christ and enters into such a close spiritual union with the Lord that it is as though he sees Him in himself. Freed from the influence of their passions, the saints also see God in Divine Revelation. Just as a mirror reflects an image when it is clean, so can a pure and holy soul see God and understand the Scriptures, says the Blessed Theophilact. Like the other Beatitudes which begin on earth and are completed in Heaven, seeing God when it begins on earth is but seeing through a glass, darkly what in the next life we shall see face to face (1 Cor. 13:12).

7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

The fall of our first parents, which led to the severing of the grace-endowing link with God and changed their souls radically, could not but affect the relations between them as well. Disorder and conflict within men brought about their mutual alienation. But because our God is Peace and Love, salvation was impossible without reconciliation with God. As St. Paul says, in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:19-20). And Christ fulfilled the will of His Father. He came, accomplished the Sacrifice of Redemption and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near (Eph. 2:17). And to this day He bestows peace upon us, for He said: Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you (John 14:27). And not only does He bestow peace, but He Himself has become our peace (Eph. 2:14).

Christ founded upon earth the Kingdom of God, one of the most essential features of which is its peace. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). Peace in the Kingdom of God is the peace of God, which passes all understanding, [which] will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

St. Paul summons all believers to seek peace in God (Rom. 15:33; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20-21). When, with God's help, inner peace is established in the human heart, the link between this heart and others is also established. It is expressed in unity of word, spirit and thought. / appeal to you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10). Agreement and unanimity make for lasting peace in human relations, for where they are found, the individual is like the whole and the whole is like the individual. Such peace must be sought and striven for (1 Pet. 3:11), and cherished with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

The Savior Himself was particularly insistent upon the need for peace among men. If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; and first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser...lest your accuser hand you over to the judge...and you be put in prison (Matt. 5:23-25). The Savior said further: If any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go

with him two miles (Matt. 5:40-41). The main thing here is that there should be no quarrel on the way and that the inner link not be broken.

The Holy Fathers teach that humility is the foundation of all virtues, and helps us to attain spiritual peace. According to St. Isaac the Syrian, it is when peace reigns in your life and when your soul is obedient to you, and the rest of you along with it, that the peace of God is born in your heart. According to St. Ephraim the Syrian, if your brother disagrees with what you say, do not be angry, but renounce your own will for the sake of love and peace.

The Son of God came down to earth in order to reconcile to Himself all things (Col. 1:20). He Himself, the Only-Begotten Son of God, is the great Peacemaker The Prince of Peace, as the Prophet Isaiah calls Him. Blessed are the peacemakers who keep their conscience at peace with God and with their fellow men, following the example of our Savior the Peacemaker. According to the words of the Lord, they shall be called the sons of God.

8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

In His Sermon on the Mount, the Savior pointed out the two paths through life the wide and broad one, and the strait and narrow one. The wide one leads to perdition, and there are many who choose this path, while the narrow way leads to life, that is, it brings salvation (Matt. 7:13-14).

The narrow way demands an effort a constant spiritual struggle with sin and with all the obstacles which are to be met with on the way. The flesh, our bodily nature, revolts against this way, for it finds our efforts towards purity of body and of heart hard to endure, and the enemy of mankind, who cannot bear man's movements towards salvation, revolts along with ill-intentioned men, who take the good life of the believer as a rebuke to themselves.

History remembers many who have persecuted God's righteous ones. The first was Cain, who killed his brother Abel because of the latter's piety. The wild Esau cast forth his meek brother Jacob, and the sons of Jacob cast out their brother Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt to get him out of their way. The unfortunate King Saul oppressed the meek David. The Jews drove away the prophets who condemned their lawless life, and persecuted and crucified our Lord Jesus Christ. This persecution of the faithful came about, as the Savior shows us, for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10).

The true believer answers enmity and opposition with goodwill. He answers lies and slanders with patience and silence, following the rule that we should turn away from evil and do good (Ps. 34:14; Rom. 12:9). St. Paul teaches us: Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all (Rom. 12:17), including the ill-intentioned, in order to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

The Savior speaks even more concretely and decisively: If any one strikes you on the right cheek., turn to him the other also (Matt. 5:39), by which means you will morally disarm him. It is better to suffer pain and humiliation than to subject him who has hurt you to evil in return, for evil breeds only evil. Only good can breed good. The best defense from persecution, therefore, is patience and prayer for those who persecute you. That is how the Savior Himself prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34) and how St. Stephen the First Martyr and Archdeacon prayed for those who stoned him (Acts 7:60).

We know that all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). The words of the Savior, though, are heartening and comforting: If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you (John 15:20). The destiny of the Christian, then, is to live in sorrow and take the narrow way. However, love of truth, constancy and determination in virtue, courage and patience help us to bear suffering. It is not enough to know righteousness; we must also love it. And it is this love which gives rise to our determination, courage and patience.

All the previous Beatitudes, by producing corresponding virtues in the heart of the Christian, prepare him for active love of Christ's righteousness, and for spiritual life in Christ which gives us strength to bear the sorrows, tribulations and persecutions that come our way. And the reward for longsuffering is the Kingdom of God, which every man who loves God's righteousness starts to bear within himself here on earth, and in full measure in the Kingdom of Heaven.

9. Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.

10. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.

These words are the continuation and conclusion and at the same time the crown of all the Beatitudes that have preceded. In the eighth Beatitude, oppression and persecution were linked with Christ's righteousness, and in the ninth, with Christ Himself as the bearer and expression of this righteousness. The Savior declares in no uncertain terms that men shall persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. In this lies the greatest reward for His followers, who are called to joy and happiness, when the hour of suffering is upon them.

It is hard for the non-Christian to understand how one can rejoice and be happy when oppressed, cursed and persecuted. It seems to him that all suffering leads naturally only to sorrow. But let us recall the path we have trodden, up every step of the ladder of the Beatitudes. As St. John Chrysostom says: Note after how many Beatitudes Christ offers us this last one. In this last He wished to show that he who has not been prepared by all the other Beatitudes cannot undertake the feat of bearing suffering, revilement and persecution for Christ's sake. For this reason, in laying the way from the first Beatitude to the last, Christ was forging a golden chain for us. It starts with the fact that the poor in spirit, the man of humility, will mourn for his sins and in this way will become meek, righteous and merciful. And the merciful is bound to become pure in heart. The pure in heart will be a peacemaker. And he who has attained all this will be ready for danger, and will not be afraid of calumny and countless tribulations. Readiness and fearlessness will be the crowning virtues that bring, according to Jesus Christ, joy and happiness.

It is, of course, natural for man to avoid suffering, for through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Tribulations are unavoidable as an accompaniment to this life. The Savior said: In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33). The Lord overcame the world by treading the path of persecution by His enemies, the path of torture and suffering in Gethsemane, at Pilate's judgment and on Golgotha. Sinless and innocent, He accomplished His feat for our sake and for us, to free man from the stain of sin, to bring him closer to Himself and make his path through life more like the way of the cross which He Himself had followed. He calls him to take up his cross and follow Me (Matt. 16:24), for he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me (Matt. 10:38), and cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:27).

It is important to understand that tribulations are necessary because there is no other way for us to be cleansed of our sins except that pointed out by the Savior and followed by Him. In suffering we become aware of our own weakness and helplessness, and, humbled in prayer and contrition before God, we receive divine help and joy in the Lord.

Tenderness of heart and spiritual joy are characteristic of the spiritual life. If life itself is a thing of goodness and joy, then life in God is doubly good and doubly joyous. The very fact that Christ is preached brings joy (Phil. 1:18). When we behold God's world with a pure eye or pray sincerely, or do good willingly, or perform the current act of obedience in the awareness that we are fulfilling our duty, then a quiet joy in the Lord descends in our heart. As St. James instructs us: Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness (James 1:2-3).

Joy is no less a fruit of the spirit than love, peace, meekness and the other virtues (Gal. 5:22). Joy carries within it hope in God's continuing mercy. This joy and hope helped those who performed spiritual deeds for Christ to bear their sufferings, and gave them confidence that the Lord would not send them more suffering than they could bear, but would grant them consolation in its turn. And the lives of the holy martyrs confirm this.

Amidst a severe test of affliction joy abounds, granted by God's grace (2 Cor. 8:2). It is not surprising that the Apostle calls us to rejoice always (1 Thess. 5:16). The Lord promises that no one will take your joy from you (John 16:22). If even here in our earthly life the Lord gives us joy, how great must be the joy that awaits us in Heaven!

The Christian who accepts the Gospel call to his neighbor is like the wise man who built his house on the rock (Matt. 7:25), and he will fear no misfortunes. For all believers this rock is our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), urging us to follow Him, practice the Christian virtues and fulfill His commandment.

The Christian Ethic

The Sermon delivered by our Savior on the Mount was preceded by two significant meetings, one with His secret disciple, Nicodemus (John 3:1-21), and the other with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-42). In His conversation with Nicodemus, Christ spoke of being born again, born of the Spirit of God, and in Samaria He taught of God as Spirit and of the worship of the Father in spirit and truth.

Nicodemus had not known of spiritual birth before his meeting with the Lord. What interested him was the same question that troubled many other men: was this Teacher and Miracle-Worker an ordinary prophet, or was He the Christ, the promised Messiah? His desire to find the answer to this question is evident in the words with which he addressed Christ: Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him (John 3:2).

Aware of Nicodemus' inner state and aware of his spiritual blindness and fundamental unreadiness to receive the Truth, our Lord spoke to him of the necessity of spiritual birth: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). Nicodemus misunderstood these words and took them to mean a second birth from the womb. Christ, in His mercy, was patient with Nicodemus and explained to him: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit (John 3:5-6).

According to St. John Chrysostom, what is meant here is not birth in fact, but birth in dignity and grace. Birth in dignity is the spiritual rebirth of the man who strives constantly for the spiritual, heavenly and eternal; for man, as the Image of God, is called to live continuously with God and in God. Birth through grace is the part played by the Holy Spirit's grace in man's birth, in his regeneration justification and sanctification.

All of this was difficult for Nicodemus to understand, for in the last words spoken by the Savior, he saw a fresh mystery, and that is why he asked: How can this be (John 3:9)? Jesus explained that He was teaching not of worldly, but of heavenly things, that He was the Christ, the Son of God come down from Heaven, and that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Our salvation contains many hidden mysteries and ineffable spiritual blessings linked with them. The greatest and most fundamental mystery, along with the greatest blessing, lies in the fact that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Man should respond to this saving love of God first and foremost with faith in it and in Christ, as the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, Who came, not to judge,

but to save those who believed in Him, Who came as the Light to illumine those who were in darkness and sought God's Truth, so that they should live and find salvation through it.

St. John the Evangelist, speaking of the Logos the Word of God and of those who did not accept Him, wrote: To all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13). In these words the Evangelist points out two unfathomable mysteries, that of birth from God and that of the power to become the sons of God.

Children inherit from their parents their nature and their attributes. And what do God's spiritual sons inherit from Him? First and foremost they inherit such attributes of God's grace as love, holiness, goodness, light, kindness, peace, truth, righteousness and purity. The gifts of God are received through the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation and they develop and grow throughout the Christian's life.

In our Lord's conversation with the Samaritan Woman by Jacob's Well, He revealed to her the truth of the living water, welling up to eternal life (John 4:14). Then, speaking of the worship of God, He said that the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, [because] God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). Here, when He states that God is Spirit, Jesus is saying, according to St. John Chrysostom, that God is incorporeal and that for this reason those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

And what does worshiping in Truth mean? According to St. John Chrysostom: Earlier rites, like circumcision, burnt offerings, sacrifices and the burning of incense, were merely symbols, whereas new Truth has come. Now it is not flesh that we must circumcise, but evil thoughts; now we must crucify ourselves, and exterminate and mortify our unreasonable desires. It is this that is meant by worshiping in truth. But only one who is born in the spirit can worship in this way.

The Savior's conversations with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan Woman revealed His teaching about God as Spirit and about the spiritual worship of God by those who believe. In this way He established the concepts of spirituality, of spiritual feeling, the spiritual man as compared with the non-spiritual, the natural man, the man of this world, and the man of the flesh. Thus our Lord's summons to beatitude (or blessedness) is addressed to the man who has passed through or who is passing through the process of spiritual birth, and who already partakes in the effects of the summoning and illumining grace of God, leading to faith in Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the World. Therefore, in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12), which are sung at the Divine Liturgy, are to be found the basis for Christian Morals.

The Mother of God

The Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

In the theology and piety of the Orthodox Church, a special place of honor is given to the Mother of God the Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who is revered by the Orthodox as being more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious, beyond compare, than the Seraphim. As Orthodox we style her as the most exalted among God's creatures; but we do not regard her as some sort of goddess, the 4th Person of the Trinity, as some accuse us; nor do we render her the worship due God alone. Just as with the Holy Icons, the veneration due Mary is expressed in quite different words in the Greek writings of the Fathers than that due God.

At many of the Divine Services, the Deacon exclaims: Commemorating our Most-Holy, Most-Pure, Most-Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the Saints.... And here we can see three basic truths expressed concerning her.

The Virgin Mary is honored because she is Theotokos the Mother of God not of His divinity, but of His humanity, yet of God in that Jesus Christ was, in the theology of the Church, both God and Man, at one and the same time, in the Incarnation. Therefore, the honor given Mary is due to her relationship to Christ. And this honor, rather than taking away from that due God, makes us more aware of God's majesty; for it is precisely on account of the Son (Himself God) that she is venerated. Of times, when men refuse to honor Mary, it is because they do not believe in the cause of her veneration the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.

We also speak of the Theotokos as being Ever-Virgin, which was officially proclaimed at the 5th Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 553; the dogma concerning Mary as being Theotokos was proclaimed in 431 at the 3rd Ecumenical Council in Ephesus). This notion does not actually contradict Holy Scripture, as some would think. And His mother and His brothers came; and standing outside they sent to Him and called Him (Mark 3:31). Here the use of the word brothers in the original Greek can mean half-brother, cousin, or near relative, in addition to brothers in the strict sense. The Orthodox Church has always seen brothers here as referring to His half-brothers.

If Mary is honored as Theotokos, so too, she is honored because she is Panagia All-Holy. She is the supreme example of the cooperation between God and Man; for God, Who always respects human freedom, did not become incarnate without her free consent which, as Holy Scripture tells us, was freely given: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). Thus Mary is seen by the Church as the New Eve (as Christ is the New Adam) whose perfect obedience contrasted the disobedience of the First Mother, Eve, in Paradise. As St. Irenaeus says, the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by her unbelief, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by her faith [Against the Heresies, III, xxii, 4],

As All-Holy and Most-Pure, Mary was free from actual sin, but, in the opinion of most Orthodox theologians, although not dogmatized by the Church, she did fall under the curse of Original Sin as does all mankind. For this reason by virtue of her solidarity with all humanity the Theotokos died a bodily death. Yet, in her case, the resurrection of the body had been anticipated; and she was assumed body and soul into Heaven; and her tomb was found empty an event celebrated in the Feast of the Falling-Asleep (or Dormition) of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Aug. 15). Thus, as the hymns of that Feast proclaim, she has passed from earth to heaven, beyond death and judgment, living already in the age to come. She enjoys now the same bodily glory all of us hope to share one day.

Whereas the Church has officially proclaimed as dogmas the doctrines concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, the glorification of the Mother of God belongs to the Inner Tradition of the Church. As the noted Orthodox theologian, Vladimir Lossky writes: It is hard to speak and not less hard to think about the mysteries which the Church keeps in the hidden depths of her inner consciousness.... The Mother of God was never a theme of the public preaching of the Apostles; while Christ was preached on the housetops, and proclaimed for all to know in an initiatory teaching addressed to the whole world, the mystery of His Mother was revealed only to those who were within the Church.... It is not so much an object of faith as a foundation of our hope, a fruit of faith, ripened in Tradition. Let us therefore keep silence, and let us not try to dogmatize about the supreme glory of the Mother of God [Panagia, in *The Mother of God*, ed. E.L. Mascall, p.35].

Appellations of the Theotokos.

Ark.

The Theotokos is often called an Ark, for the Glory of God settled on her, just as the Glory of God descended on the Mercy Seat of the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:10-22).

Aaron's Rod.

Just as Aaron's Rod sprouted miraculously in the Old Testament, so too, the Theotokos has budded forth the Flower of Immortality, Christ our God (Num. 17:1-11).

Burning Bush.

On Mt. Sinai, Moses saw the Bush that was burning, but was not consumed. So too, the Theotokos bore the fire of Divinity, but was not consumed (Ex. 3:1-6).

(Golden) Candlestick.

In the Old Testament Tabernacle, there were found in the Sanctuary golden candlesticks. The Theotokos is the Candlestick which held that Light that illumines the world (Ex. 25:31-40).

(Golden) Censer.

Just as the censer holds a burning coal, so too, the Theotokos held the Living Coal. In the Apocalypse, there stands an Angel before the Throne of God, swinging a censer, representing the prayers of the Saints rising up to God. This is also seen as a symbol of the Theotokos, for it is her prayers that find special favor before her Son.

Cloud.

In the Exodus, the Israelites were led out of Egypt by a Cloud of Light, symbolizing the presence of God in their midst. So too, the Theotokos is a Cloud, bearing God within.

Fleece.

In the book of Judges we read the account of the dew which appeared miraculously on Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:36-40). So too, the Dew Christ, appeared miraculously on the Living Fleece the Theotokos.

Holy of Holies.

Into the Holy of Holies only the High Priest could enter. So too, the Theotokos is the Holy of Holies into which only the Eternal High Priest Christ entered (Heb. 9:1-7).

Ladder.

In a dream Jacob saw a ladder ascending to Heaven, with Angels ascending and descending on it. The Theotokos is a Ladder, stretching from earth to Heaven, for on It God descended to man, having become incarnate.

Mountain (from which a Stone was cut not by hand of man).

The Prophet Daniel saw a mountain, from which was cut a stone, not by the hand of man (Dan. 2:34, 45). This is a reference to the miraculous Virgin Birth which was accomplished without the hand of man.

Palace.

The Theotokos was the Palace within which the King Christ our God dwelt.

Pot.

[See Urn]

Stem of Jesse.

In the Nativity Service, the Lord is referred to as the Rod from the Stem of Jesse (Is. 11:1), indicating His lineage from David, which was fulfilled through the Theotokos, who was a scion (or stem) of the line of David, the son of Jesse.

Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle was the place where the Glory of God dwelt. So too, the Glory of God dwelt in the Theotokos the Living Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34).

(Holy) Table.

This refers to the Holy Table (Altar Table) on which, at the Divine Liturgy, the Divine Food is offered. So too, the Theotokos is the Holy Table which bore the Bread of Life.

Temple.

The Prophet Ezekiel speaks of the Temple whose East gate remains sealed, through which only the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered. This clearly prophesies the Virgin Birth of the Theotokos (Ez. 44:1-2).

Throne.

The Theotokos is the Throne upon which Christ, the King of All, rested.

(Golden) Urn.

In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant contained within itself a golden urn filled with the heavenly manna. The Theotokos is the Urn which contained Christ, the Divine Manna (Heb. 9:1-7).

Vine.

The Theotokos is the Vine which bore the Ripe Cluster (of Grapes), Christ our Lord.

The Symbol of Faith

The Creed, sung during the Divine Liturgy, is one of the most ancient prayers of the Orthodox Church. It was composed, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils (Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381), respectively), at a time when various heretical doctrines attempted to overthrow the true faith in the Trinity.

The main reason for the convening of the First Ecumenical Council was the appearance and growing strength of the false teaching of the Alexandrian priest, Arius. The basic theory of the Arians' false teaching was that the Son of God was created that His existence had a beginning.

The Second Ecumenical Council condemned the false teaching of the Pneumatomachi (Adversaries of the Spirit), whose chief representative was Macedonius, Archbishop of Constantinople. The Pneumatomachi called the Holy Spirit the servant and fulfiller of God's wishes as well as other names that were fitting only for the angels, and they did not recognize Him as a Hypostasis (Person) of the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Orthodox Church made a decisive stand to protect the purity of the Orthodox teaching of the faith, setting out the basic saving truths of Christian teaching in the Creed, which is a constant guide for all Orthodox Christians in their spiritual life.

The Creed itself is divided into twelve parts, seven of which were formulated at the First Ecumenical Council, the other five at the Second.

(1) I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

(2) And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; True God of True God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made;

(3) Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man.

(4) And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.

(5) And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;

(6) And ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father;

(7) And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

(8) And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets.

(9) In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

(10) I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

(11) I look for the resurrection of the dead;

(12) And the life of the world to come. Amen.

Concerning God's Essence and the Creation of the World.

The Fathers of the Church included in the Creed the most important truths of the faith taught in the Gospels. Here, in the first and second verses of the Creed, they stated the dogmatic truths about God's Essence and the Creation of the world. Through Divine Revelation, the Holy Church teaches us to believe in the One God (Deut. 6:4; 1 Tim. 1:17) in Three Persons, Who in the Holy Scriptures are called God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). God the Father is ungenerated and does not proceed from another Person. God the Son is pre-eternally generated by the Father. God the Holy Spirit pre-eternally proceeds from the Father. Nonetheless, all Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are equal in Divinity. The Triune God is The One Who IS (Ex. 3:14). He is Pre-eternal (Is. 41:4; Ps. 89:2), Infinite (Luke 1:33; Ps. 102:27), Everywhere-present (Omnipresent) (Jer. 23:24), All-Wise (Rom. 11:33), All-Knowing (Omniscient) (1 John 3:20), All-Good (Ps. 145:9), All-Righteous (Ps. 145:17), All-Holy (1 Sam. 2:2), and Almighty (Ps. 115:3).

By His Omnipotent Word He brought into being from non-being both the invisible and the visible world (Gen. 1:1). In the first place He created the Kingdom of His eternal glory, giving life to the most pure spirits, the angels (Job 38:6,7). At first all the angels were holy. Some of them, firmly established in holiness, love and striving after goodness, glorify God continuously (Ps. 103:20; Is.

6:3), and carry out God's commandments. Each Christian believer is given a Guardian Angel at Baptism. Other angels, who did not stand firm in goodness, sinned before God (Jude 1:6) and, remaining in evil, strive to subjugate men, too, to sin (2 Thess. 2:9), in order to drag them down to the same fate which they themselves suffer (Matt. 25:41). The leader of the fallen angels is called the Devil or Satan (The Adversary; John 8:44).

After He had created the incorporeal beings, the Triune God with His Words Let there be... created the whole visible world out of nothing (ex-nihilo) in six days that is, all the host of heaven, the earth on which we live and all that surrounds the earth and finished His work of creation by creating man (Gen. 1:3-28), from whom proceeded the whole human race (Acts 17:26). The first man, created sinless by God's grace (Eccles. 7:29), was not only like unto the angels of God, but he was also made in the Image and Likeness of God (Gen. 1:26) from the moment of his creation that is to say, he possessed pure wisdom (Gen. 2:20,23), his will was directed towards doing good (Eph. 4:24) and his heart in the righteousness and holiness of truth burned with pure love for the One God, while his conscience was untroubled and at peace. When our first parents were like this, all the creatures which surrounded them were submissive and served them (Gen. 1:26), and the very place of their habitation was called Paradise (Gen. 2:8). The first man kept God's commandment and lived in constant joy and blessedness.

Concerning the Son of God the Savior of the World.

The teaching of faith in the Son of God the Savior of the World is to be found in the third to seventh articles of the Creed.

For the salvation of mankind was accomplished the great mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16), the mystery of His [God's] will (Eph. 1:9). The Only-begotten Son (John 1:18) of God, descended from Heaven, was made incarnate, was born of the Virgin Mary in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4), and was made flesh (John 1:14). He took a human body without its sin, and a human soul, and became true Man without ceasing to be True God (Rom. 9:5).

Two Natures the Divine and the Human are united without confusion, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably in the Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore He is called the God-Man (definition of the Fourth Ecumenical Council), and His Most-pure Mother is called the Theotokos (Mother of God) (Luke 1:43), who is more honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious, beyond compare, than the Seraphim.

Our Lord Jesus Christ manifested His divinity in His Gospel teachings and in His many miracles which no other man did (John 15:24), in which He revealed Himself as the Lord of the visible world (John 2:1-2, Luke 8:24; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 14:15-21); the Lord of human nature (Matt. 9:20-22; 14:35-36; Luke 4:40; Matt. 20:29-34; Matt. 9:32-35; 12:22; Luke 11:14; Matt. 8:1-3); the Lord of the invisible world (Matt. 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-40); and the Lord of Life and Death (Luke 7:11-16; Matt. 9:18-19; Luke 8:49; John 11:1-45). He also manifested His divinity through other signs and miracles that occurred at various moments of His life (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22).

Yet, as Man, the Savior was exposed to various dangers (Matt. 2:13; Luke 4:29), deprivations and tribulations (Luke 9:58), to malice, humiliation, and persecution (Matt. 12:24; John 5:18) during His earthly life.

Having illumined men with the light of the true knowledge of God (John 1:18) and having disclosed the will of the Heavenly Father (John 6:40), Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, accomplishing the Divine Truth which had condemned sin (1 Tim. 2:6; John 1:29), endured mocking, abuse, the Passion of the Cross and death under Pontius Pilate (Matt. 26:47-75; 27:1-66). While His Body was in the Sepulcher, Christ descended into Hell, where He freed the souls of the righteous who had awaited His coming (1 Pet. 3:18-19; Eph. 4:8-9), and on the third day after His entombment was resurrected by the power of His divinity. During the forty days after His Resurrection, the Savior

appeared many times to His disciples and continued to instruct them in the mysteries of His divine Kingdom (Acts 1:3).

Having accomplished our Redemption, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of His disciples, ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:9) and sits at the right hand of God the Father (Mark 16:19) with honor and glory in the same Body in which He had been resurrected from the dead. The Lord ascended into Heaven as the God-Man, for as God He was always in Heaven and in every place of God's dominion (Ps. 103:22). After His Ascension the Savior was given all power in Heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), and through His Divine Providence He preserves His Church, in which He is present through Grace (Matt. 28:20), instructing and giving wisdom to her shepherds, through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), to administer rightly the word of Truth. Therefore Christ's Church cannot sin in Truth, for she is the pillar and bulwark of the Truth (I Tim. 3:15) and the Kingdom of God on earth (Mark 1:15). This grace-bestowing Kingdom shall endure (1 Cor. 15:25) until the Lord Jesus Christ comes in His glory with His angels (Matt. 25:31) to judge the living and the dead (John 5:29), after which the Kingdom of Glory and Blessedness shall come, and of His kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:33).

Concerning the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Orthodox Church confesses the Holy Spirit as the True God, the Third Person (Hypostasis) of the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-Giving and Indivisible Trinity. The Church confirmed her hope and faith in the Holy Spirit as God in the definition of the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 381), which was convened to condemn, among other things, the heresy of Macedonius who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This definition entered into the Creed as the eighth article.

Holy Scripture testifies to the Holy Spirit while speaking of the very beginning of Creation: The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). Further in Holy Scripture the Holy Spirit is mentioned frequently, disclosing His divine attributes. The Holy Spirit is the True God (Acts 5:3-4). He is glorified equally with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19), He is All-Knowing (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:10-11), Everywhere-Present (Rom. 8:9), Eternal (John 14:6), and Omnipotent (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Creative activity is inherent in Him (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 32:6; Job 33:4), He regenerates souls, cleanses men of their sins and sanctifies them (John 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:11), and is the world's Providence (Ps. 104:30). The Creed calls the Holy Spirit the Giver of Life, because through His activity man becomes a partaker in life eternal in God.

The distinctive property of the Third Person of the Trinity the Holy Spirit is that He proceeds from God the Father, Who, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, confers His one nature upon the Son and upon the Holy Spirit alike, in Whom it remains one and undivided, not distributed, while being differently conferred; for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father is not identical with the generation of the Son by the same Father. The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father is eternal and comprises the Spirit's personal property, belonging to Him alone as the Third Person of the Trinity.

The Orthodox Church has always preserved and will continue to preserve unaltered the Undivided Church's teaching on the Holy Spirit's personal property the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father the definition of the Second Ecumenical Council and the teaching of the Church Fathers in the spirit and power of Holy Scripture. She preserves untouched the formulation of the Creed as set out by the first two Ecumenical Councils. The Fathers of the following Ecumenical Councils forbade any alterations in the Creed through addition or deduction of any new words.

As Holy Scripture teaches, the Father creates everything by the Son in the Holy Spirit. According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, it is the Father Who acts, but by the Son in the Spirit; the Son also acts, but

as the power of the Father, inasmuch as He is from Him and in Him according to His own Person. The Spirit also acts, for He is the All-Powerful Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

The Holy Spirit participated with the Father and the Son in the creation of the world, for by the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (Ps. 33:6), and of man (Gen. 1:26-27). The Holy Spirit bore witness of Himself through the Prophets and the chosen men of God, proclaimed the Lord's Truth and Will to God's people, and disclosed the coming Messiah in the prototypes: No prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God (2 Pet. 1:21).

The action of the Holy Spirit never ceased in the world, but it was only with the coming of Christ the Savior into the world that the fullness of God's saving grace was made accessible to men. And from His fullness have we all received, grace upon grace (John 1:16).

The Holy Spirit was revealed to the world in a special way on the day of the founding of Christ's Church Pentecost when He descended upon the Holy Apostles in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 2). From that charismatic moment to the present the Holy Spirit abides in the Church as Christ Himself bears witness: And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth (John 14:16).

Everything in the Church is filled with the Holy Spirit. The action of His grace abides in every sacrament of the Church and extends to all forms of divine service. In the Holy Eucharist, the supreme sanctifying moment in the Church's daily liturgical service, the prayers and rites are linked, above all, with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The Church prays that through Holy Communion we may commune with the Holy Spirit; that we, having partaken of the Holy Gifts, may bear the living Christ in our hearts and be temples of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

The Holy Church was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). The purpose of Christ's Church is the salvation of man. It is only in the Church that full union of man and God takes place, and this union is the basic condition for salvation.

By His suffering on the Cross the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for human sin (John 1:29; Heb. 7:27) and by His Holy Blood He founded the Church (Acts 20:28), so that in her we might live by Him and for Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Therefore there is no guarantee of salvation outside of the Church.

We are brought to the Church by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; for the Lord said that He would found the Church on the confession of faith (Matt. 16:18). Members of the Church are justified by God's grace (Rom. 3:24-30) and saved by God's power (Rom. 1:16) through faith in Christ and His Resurrection (Rom. 10:9) and by works of faith (James 2:17-26).

The Church is One as the Lord Who founded her is One (John 10:18). The Church is Holy, for she lives, acts, and thinks by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 8:15; 9:17). The Church is Catholic, for her flock has one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32) and her catholicity is dominant. The Church is Apostolic, for she keeps the Apostolic Succession by the laying-on of hands upon the hierarchs (Acts 6:6; 14:23; 20:28), and sacredly holds the Apostolic Tradition (2 Thess. 2:15).

St. Paul calls the Church the mystical Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and this definition of the Church as Christ's Body is not a symbol or abstraction, but an expression of the Church's real mystical life, indicating the real union of God and man in Christ.

On one hand, as founded by God, the Church received her being and exists outside the usual order of human life and cannot be compared with it because she is a phenomenon full of profound

mystery. On the other hand, however, the Church is a community of people united by their Orthodox faith, its doctrine, the hierarchy, and the Sacraments. The human side is changeable and imperfect, but the Church is Holy and Divine because she is sanctified by the Blood of Jesus Christ and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Who gives mankind true life in God.

The Church serves to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, for she was preordained by Christ to serve as a means of transfiguring the world in the Light of the Gospel Truth and to become the leaven for the Kingdom of God (Matt. 13:33). The Church is the pillar and bulwark of the truth, for she is the Church of the living God, Who is Truth itself. Therefore everything in her is true the confession of faith, sanctification by the Sacraments, the bestowal of grace, life according to God life upheld by God in her, God's help and His promises. The words the pillar and bulwark express the truth's firmness, immutability, and changelessness.

The Apostles, like Christ Himself, teach only one Church; they teach the unity of all in God: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:4-6).

The unity of the Church is founded on the mutual love of all the members of the Church: If we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12). For it is precisely in that we share the bonds of love that we constitute the Church, the true Body of Christ, and for this reason the Lord commands us to love one another (John 15:17). It is by prayer offered in unity of spirit that the unity of the Church is achieved.

The unity of the Church exists by the power of the Divine Grace in the Holy Spirit. The unity of all the members of the Church with Christ and between one another exists in its highest form in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

The unity of the Church is protected by the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils, the rules of the Holy Fathers of the Church, and Holy Tradition. The existence of Local Orthodox Churches does not contradict the unity of the Church. The fact that they are separate in their visible organization does not prevent them from being spiritually larger members of the one body of the Universal Church, or from sharing the One Head, Christ, and the one spirit of faith and grace. This unity is given visible expression by a single confession of faith and by communion in prayer and the Sacraments. The Local Orthodox Churches continually maintain Eucharistic Communion, honor and respect the traditions of every Church, and always show one another their concern in mutual love.

If the Church is a unity, she is also divine and holy by her nature and essence. She was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by His Passion and His Holy Blood. The Church is sanctified by the power of Christ the Savior's prayers (John 17:11-19). The Church is also holy by virtue of Christ's teaching. Through the glad tidings of the Gospel the Lord reveals His will to men, calls them to salvation and indicates the way to salvation and sanctity (Heb. 4:12).

The Holy Spirit, dwelling permanently in the Church, fills her with His sanctifying grace (1 Cor. 12:13). The Spirit sanctifies man and awakens him to deeds of selflessness and sanctity (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Rom. 8:1-15). Divine service, the Sacraments, sermon, ritual, singing, fasting, prayer, icon, and architecture everything bears the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit and is directed towards the salvation of man.

The great assembly of Saints in the Orthodox Church is a living testimony to the sanctity of the Church. This is a proof of the reality of the life and action of Divine Grace in the souls of men. The

Church is also holy through the lives of those of her children who, striving for Christian perfection, have devoted themselves entirely to the fulfillment of the will of God, of His Holy Commandments.

The extent to which a person preserves his sanctity is the extent to which he remains a member of the Church. Our sinfulness is outside the Church. Some individuals remain members of Christ's Church by virtue of the rudiments of the sanctity that is in them. That is why the process of the grace of salvation consists in our full sanctification, in the complete elimination of sin from the community of believers and from separate individuals.

Faith in the Church is not a substitute for faith in God. To believe in the Church is to believe that she is the mystical Body of Christ (Eph. 1 -22-23), that she is the concentration of grace on earth where man receives sanctification, and the abode of the grace of God throughout all ages, world without end (Matt. 16:18; 28:20; Eph. 3:21).

To have faith in the Church means to venerate in piety the true Church of Christ and to obey her teaching and commandments in the conviction that she is filled with the saving grace which guides and teaches us, and which pours forth from her One, Eternal Head our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because she is the Body of Christ the Church is fully in possession of all that is required for man's sanctification and salvation through grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Founder of the Church, Who taught men to have faith, love and charity, bade men above all to have faith in Him as their Lord. And as no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3), we must commune in the shrine in which the Holy Spirit permanently abides, and which we call the Church.

Faith in Christ leads us to the Church, and life in Christ is life in the Church. Thus, he who does not believe in the Church does not believe in God either. The Christian's life is impossible without faith in the Church, without abiding in the Church. It is impossible to understand Christ's teaching and to commune with Christ without the Church, for our salvation is not just the reward for a righteous life, but also consists in the gradual merging of our life with the life of the Church, that is, the Body of Christ. The Church regenerates and renews all those who enter her and she vitalizes and elevates man, making him fit for a new holy life in Christ.

There is nothing accidental or arbitrary in the Church. Everything in her takes place through God's ordination. All that has been prescribed by the Church is and must be law for each and every one of us. The Christian also believes in the Church because obedience to the Church is obedience to God, and by serving the Church he serves God and earns His approval.

The Lord inspires man with faith in the Church through His grace by drawing him into the life of the Church. The Christian feels the power of Divine Grace acting upon him through the Holy Sacraments, the rites and the whole order of Orthodox Church life; and as he lives this life man attains an unshakeable conviction of the truth of his faith in the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Concerning one Baptism for the Remission of Sins.

Man becomes a child of the Church through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Baptism is the door to Christianity, the beginning of life in God. Baptism restores the image of God in man and bestows the saving power of Christ's redemptive feat on him. Through Baptism the Christian receives access to all the Holy Sacraments and acts of grace of the Church, which lead him to deification.

Baptism is called the second birth because in it a man dies to his sinful life and is reborn into a new, spiritual, holy life, in which he puts on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24). Through Baptism men are reconciled to God, cleansed from the impurities of sinful acts by the Divine Spirit, and become fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19), and children of God (John 1:12).

Just as the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon the Lord Jesus Christ during His Baptism in the River Jordan, so is every Christian endowed with Divine Grace in a mystic way during his Baptism. St. Peter says: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Through the action of God's sanctifying grace in the Sacrament of Baptism all the sins of the person being baptized are forgiven. Man's sinful state is totally eradicated by Baptism, and his sins are washed away as if they had never existed. The newly-baptized leaves the font as a new creature.

Our Savior says: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Baptism, therefore, is necessary for every man who enters the Church. Only through Baptism can infants be cleansed of Original Sin and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. They are baptized according to the Lord's words: Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:14); on the basis of Apostolic Tradition, and according to the faith of their parents and godparents.

All the saving actions of Divine Grace are indivisible in the Sacrament of Baptism. Grace, by regenerating man, cleanses him from all sin, justifies and sanctifies him. And, by justifying and sanctifying him before God, Divine Grace makes him a son of God, a member of the Body of Christ the Church and an heir to Eternal Life.

Water is the substance used in the Sacrament of Baptism. Man has long associated water with the concept of a life-giving, regenerating power that cleanses and revives nature, a power vitally necessary for human life. Therefore water in the Sacrament of Baptism is the best symbol of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which cleanses man of sin and regenerates him.

Baptism is administered by triple immersion of the one being baptized, with the intoning of the Holy Name of the Triune God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Who bestows the power of grace to the Sacrament. The Church always administers Baptism, as Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20), through the invocation of the Threefold Name. The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, one of the oldest Christian writings (1st-2nd Centuries), says in Chapter 7: Baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And, as St. Athanasius the Great says, He who takes anything from the Son, or the Father and the Son, without the Spirit receives nothing...for attainment is only in the Trinity.

The Creed, just as St. Paul (Eph. 4:6), calls us to confess one Baptism. This is because regeneration through grace (is born again John 3:3), that man experiences in Baptism, is unique and unrepeatable, just as his natural birth is unique and unrepeatable, and just as Christ's Death and Resurrection are unique.

A Christian should confess his baptism through a life pleasing to God, for Christ our Savior says: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Therefore a man's visible, external life is a reflection of his inner, spiritual life. The Sacrament of Baptism lays the foundation for a new life of grace, and the perfection of this life with the help of Divine Grace is the task of every member of the Church. For a Christian the path to the confession of the grace-bestowing gifts of Baptism lies through living faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:15-16), a life according to faith (James 2:20), membership in Christ's Church, and a constant sense of prayerful repentance (Heb. 13:15; Acts 17:30).

St. Paul tells us: without faith it is impossible to please [God] (Heb. 11:6). The basis of the Christian's spiritual life is faith in Jesus Christ, in the Triune God, in the Divine Economy of our salvation, and in the Holy Orthodox Church. Living faith in Christ perfects the Christian, makes him wise and firm, and gives him joy and the life eternal (James 1:4-8, 12).

In addition to his heartfelt faith in Christ, the Christian should confess his Baptism through his life in faith. A Christian life is a constant struggle against sinful temptations, a feat assisted by divine

grace. In translating the Savior's Gospel into life, a Christian is serving the commandments of goodness and justice on the basis of the pure teaching of the Gospel.

A Christian can attain perfection in his spiritual life through constant prayer in church and at home. Prayer is a means of constant communion and union with God. It preserves a man from spiritual fall and maintains him on the path of spiritual ascension. Prayerful communion with God rewards the person praying with great spiritual consolations: an ineffable joy, peace and an inexplicable feeling of blessedness, which serves as a guarantee of our future total union with God in His Kingdom.

Prayer must be accomplished by a sense of repentance, which is the basis of a spiritual feat. Repentance is necessary to achieve a living faith in Christ and to maintain this faith. Without true repentance a Christian cannot attain a single virtue. A repentant feeling saves a man from many pitfalls on the path to salvation. Penitence is a second Baptism and renews the grace of our first Baptism; for he who truly repents and promises to turn away from sin is not only forgiven, but his sin is erased by God, as well, and he attains the purity and sanctity given him at Baptism.

The confession of Baptism through a deep, truly Christian spiritual life is only possible if a man is a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. In the Church he is made one with Christ. Christ our Savior not only revealed God to man and drew us closer to Him, but also showed us a perfect model of sanctity, what a man's inner, spiritual essence should be.

Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead.

Man is created by the Lord for life, and human thought cannot reconcile itself to the thought of death. Death was a consequence of the first man's sin, for as St. Paul says: sin came into the world through one man and death through sin (Rom. 5:12). As a consequence of his sinful disobedience to God, man deprived himself of paradise and knew death. The Fall deformed man's inner, spiritual nature, as well as the entire visible world. The accord between human freedom and Divine Grace was destroyed, an accord through which man was directly called to deification. This break was so forceful that man could no longer return to this previous condition by his own power.

By His Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ conquered Death by death, and revealed to man the path leading from death and corruption to eternal life (Acts 2:24, 27-28; 2 Tim. 1:10). Although man remains mortal as before, death has no power over him; for it was defeated by the Risen Christ the First-fruits from the dead and the Author and Finisher of our own resurrection. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... [so that] all be made alive... at His coming (1 Cor. 15:20-23). For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).

By the words of the 11th Article of the Creed, I look for the Resurrection of the dead, the Holy Church confesses that through the action of God's omnipotence all the bodies of the dead shall reunite with their souls, come to life, and be both spiritual and immortal. The universal resurrection of the dead, as the Bible tells us, is linked with Christ's second, glorious coming (1 Thess. 4:16).

Resurrection of the dead was known in Old Testament times, too. The Prophet Job said: For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another (Job 19:25-27). The holy Prophet Ezekiel also prophesied the universal resurrection of the dead (Ez. 37:12,14).

By His Resurrection, Christ the Savior affirmed the truth of the universal resurrection of the dead. All of Christianity is founded on Christ's Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:14). Brought into communion with Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism, man becomes one whole with Him in the body of the Church, which is at once human and divine. As a result of this union of grace, the Christian partakes in both Christ's Resurrection and in eternal life. While man's spiritual link with Christ is

established through Baptism, his physical unity with Him is accomplished through the Holy Eucharist (John 6:54-57). The Eucharist Christ's Body and Blood is a guarantee of resurrection. Christ's Resurrection is the beginning and guarantee not only of our resurrection, but of a universal renewal and transfiguration of all creation (Rom. 8:20-21).

The Orthodox Church's prayers for the dead are based on faith in universal resurrection and on the unity of the Churches Militant and Triumphant. By His Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ showed that death is not annihilation and non-existence, but the gate to life and immortality. The Christian looks on death as the transition to an eternal life.

Concerning the Life of the World to Come.

The Creed ends with this confident hope on the part of the Christian: I look for...the life of the world to come. By the life of the world to come the Holy Church means the life that shall be after the resurrection of the dead and Christ's last judgment.

A man is responsible to God for the life that he has been given. It is here on earth that, of his own free will, a man lays the beginning of that life which shall begin when his body dies. His fate after death depends on how he has lived his life on earth. If he has always been with Christ, joined closely to Him through the Holy Sacraments in His God-Man organism of the Church, then after his death he shall also be with God, ceaselessly experiencing the blessed and eternal joy of living communion with God which we who live on earth call in the words of Holy Scripture Paradise (Luke 23:43), the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3-10,8,11; Luke 13:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:50), the house or the mansions of our Heavenly Father (John 14:2).

This ineffable joy of life in Paradise cannot be expressed in human language (2 Cor. 12:2,4); it derives from the fullness of knowing God and from the nearness of God. That is why Christ our Savior says: And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent (John 17,:3).

This joy is immutable, but it affects the human soul in different ways. The depth of perception of this joy by man's soul also differs. In My Father's house are many mansions (John 14:2), says Christ the Savior. There are many mansions, and all of these mansions, prepared for the souls of those saved and redeemed by the Son of God's death, are illumined by a light coming from God, the Source of Light, Life and Blessedness; and in each of these mansions the presence of our Savior the Lord can be felt, giving life and joy to those who dwell in it.

Only those who consciously and stubbornly disdain the call to repentance, the call to a life worthy of repentance, shall remain outside communion with God at death, deprived of Light and Grace (Luke 16:23; Matt. 5:22,29; 8:12; 22:13; Phil. 2:10).

We should not suppose that the attaining of eternal blessedness and the Kingdom of Heaven are goals in themselves for the Christian, the purpose for which he lives and towards which he strives. The blessed state in the life to come is a result of moral perfection, the deification of man, which he attains here on earth. The Savior says: Seek first [the kingdom of God] and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well (Matt. 6:33).

The Ten Commandments

After the Exodus from Egyptian slavery (Ex. 14), the Children of Israel encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moses went up onto the mountain and there received from God two tablets of stone, upon which were written by God's hand the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20,31). The text of these commandments (The Decalogue) is as follows:

1. I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me (Ex. 20:2-3).
2. You shall not make for yourselves a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them (20:4-5).
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain (20:7).
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work (20:8-10).
5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you (20:12).
6. You shall not kill (20:13).
7. You shall not commit adultery (20:14).
8. You shall not steal (20:15).
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (20:16).
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's (20:17).

[NOTE: Some interpreters (especially among the Protestants) consider the First and Second Commandments above to be one commandment, while they split the Tenth Commandment into two.]

According to Church Tradition, the first four commandments were inscribed on the first tablet and the last six were inscribed on the second tablet. The first contains those commandments pertaining to our obligations towards God, while the second contains those pertaining to our neighbor. This traditional division is testified to by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He was asked by a lawyer, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law (Matt. 22:36)? The Lord replied, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-40; cf. Luke 10:25-28).

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.

In a world dominated by polytheism (many gods), the Israelites received the revelation that there was only one true God (monotheism), the Creator and Lord of all. In this first commandment, the Lord directs all of us to acknowledge Him and honor Him as God, directing that nothing else should be held in greater esteem; for we must not serve anyone or anything else as god. As the Psalmist proclaims, Come, let us worship and bow down and kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand (Ps. 95:6-7). When our Lord Jesus Christ was in the wilderness for forty days after His baptism, Satan came to Him and said, having shown Him all the kingdoms of the world, To You I will give all this authority and their glory.... If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours (Luke 4:6,7). But Jesus, knowing the First Commandment, rebuked him, saying, It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve' (Luke 4:8).

2. You shall not make for yourselves a graven image...; you shall not bow down to them or serve them.

From the earliest times man has been wont to set up and serve gods other than the God of all. As St. Paul says, although [men] knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him.... Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles (Rom. 1:21-23). Even after the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai, the people chased after other gods the Golden Calf, Baal, etc. worshipping objects of wood, stones, or metal, or natural elements such as the sun, moon, stars, etc. Even now we set up idols wealth, money, power, fame, pleasure, etc. and give them the honor and devotion that the Second Commandment tells us is due only to God.

Despite what literalists might say, however, this commandment does not forbid the use of Icons, pictures or representations, whether of wood, stone or whatever. The Jews at Sinai were commanded to construct an Ark with golden cherubim at each end (Ex. 25:18-20). When the Israelites were afflicted by poisonous snakes in the Wilderness, Moses constructed a bronze serpent and placed it upon a pole, so that looking upon it, anyone so bitten might live (Num. 21:8-9). When King Solomon constructed the Temple, it was decorated with carved fruits, flowers, trees, and cherubim (1 Kings 6:18,29,32,34-35). The large bronze sea (or basin) in the courtyard was supported by twelve bronze oxen (1 Kings 7:25) and the King's throne was supported by carved lions and had a carved calf's head at the back (1 Kings 10:19-20).

The key point of this commandment is that these objects are not to be objects of the devotion and worship due solely to God. The devotion that we, as Orthodox, render the icons and other holy objects is a veneration quite apart from that due to God and such was the teaching of the Church Fathers, especially St. John of Damascus.

3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

This commandment strikes at those who would not act with reverence and respect towards God's holy name. We are forbidden to use God's name vainly and to swear false oaths, You shall not swear by My name falsely, and so profane the name of your God (Lev. 19:12). As St. James tells us, My brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation (James 5:12); this reflects the words of the Lord Himself, Who said, Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the Evil One (Matt. 5:37). Rather, the divine name is to be glorified, for, as the Psalmist says, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:1). Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! (Ps. 113:1), for the Lord's name is blessed from this time forth and for evermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised (Ps. 113:2-3).

How often in our ordinary conversations the name of God, of Jesus (Himself God), of His Mother and of the Saints are pronounced casually, unthinkingly or even for shock effect. We moderns have such disrespect for the Holy especially for the name of God and His Son when, as St. Paul tells us, God has...bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth (Phil. 2:9,10).

4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

In addition to the first three commandments, we are also commanded to render special honor to God on His special day the Sabbath for God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it (Gen. 2:3). The early Church the New People of God in the New Dispensation under divine inspiration substituted the first day of the week, Sunday, for the seventh, Saturday, as the new and superior Lord's day (Rev. 1:10). On this day we commemorate the New Creation made possible by the Resurrection of Christ, rather than the first creation of the world, commemorated on the old Sabbath Day. On this day the Lord's Day the Holy Orthodox Church commands us not to perform unnecessary work, but

rather to honor the Lord's Day by attendance at the Divine Liturgy and the Services preceding it Vespers and Matins. Further, we are commanded to honor and keep the other holy Feast Days of the Church, whether or not they fall on Sunday for all holy days can be considered as the Lord's Days.

Whereas the first four commandments reflect the Lord's command to love God with all one's heart, soul and mind, the last six reflect the second command of the Lord to love one's neighbor as oneself. The first of these is the Fifth Commandment:

5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Above all we are commanded to love, honor and respect our parents who brought us into the world, continuing the original act of Creation and expanding the universal family of love. As St. Paul tells us: Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord (Col. 3:20). Further, if we are unable to love and honor our parents, how could we begin to love and honor our neighbor? This commandment also contains a promise, as St. Paul points out, that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth (Eph. 6:3).

Applying this commandment to our earthly lives, we are to render the same respect to anyone put in authority over us (Eph. 6:5-8), whether they be the secular authorities, as St. Paul tells us: Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God.... Pay all of them their dues...respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:1,7), or our religious authorities our Priests and Bishops: Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account (Heb. 13:17). Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of a double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17).

6. You shall not kill.

From earliest times, the taking of a life has been considered to be a very serious matter, indeed. Life is given by God and only God has the absolute right to take it away; for every man bears the Image of God within himself. It is for this reason that even the taking of one's own life (suicide) is so strongly condemned. Yet, one can be killed not only by another man's hand (or his own), but also by one's words by the actions of his tongue the ruining of one's reputation, character or standing; for, as St. James says, the tongue is a fire...a restless evil, full of deadly poison, with it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God (James 3:6,8-9). How many times has a man been killed, so to speak, not only by malicious talk, but also by merely idle talk by gossip? Even the seemingly idle harmless talk can kill and it is this that St. Paul refers to, as follows: Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear (Eph. 4:29).

The fact that not only physical killing kills is witnessed to by our Lord when He says, Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea (Matt. 18:6). Just causing one to sin is a terrible crime! As St. John tells us, even bearing hatred in one's heart towards another is the same as killing: Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15).

7. You shall not commit adultery.

When we speak here of adultery, one should have in mind the following words of St. Paul: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?...Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God (1 Cor. 6:15, 18-20)?

When we speak of adultery, we include here not only that which is committed between a married person and one who is not one's spouse, but also unclean desires and thoughts. But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5:28). We are also commanded to avoid immoral stories, filthy talk, pornographic books, magazines, movies, T.V. programs, etc., as well as evil companions. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, the words of the pure are pleasing to Him (Prov. 15:26). Our Lord blesses those who abstain from these immoral things when He says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8). This is because the impure passions wage warfare against our very spiritual being: Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles [in the world] to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

8. You shall not steal.

We are here forbidden to steal (or take away) anything which belongs to another. We must obviously respect another's possessions; but we must also guard against such things as stealing another's happiness, or robbing him of a friendship. This commandment warns against any dishonesty, cheating, or deception in any form; for, as our Lord tells us, what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life (Matt. 16:26)? As St. Paul says, Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves...will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Rather than taking from another, we should instead be willing to give, just as the Lord gave everything, even His own life, for us. For He tells us to do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High...Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap (Luke 6:35,38). Rather than stealing doing harm to others we should rather practice the Golden Rule As you wish that one would do to you, do so to them (Luke 6:31).

9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Here we are forbidden to tell lies about anyone, anywhere, for lying lips are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 12:22). We should always remember that lies can be told not only in words, but also by our silence, by our actions or in many other ways. As Christians we are commanded to be straightforward in everything to be above reproach, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil...for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt. 12:34-35, 37). Instead of lies, we should only be forthright, as St. Paul says: Therefore, putting away falsehood let everyone speak the truth with his neighbors (Eph. 4:25).

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Here we are commanded to accept whatever state God places us in and not to be envious of others, or to look with hate on the well being and prosperity of another: There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction (1 Tim. 6:8-9). Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, I will never fail you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5).

Rather we should be content with our state and place our trust in God alone: Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him... Every one should remain in the state in which he was called... So, brethren, in whatever state each was called, there let him remain with God (1 Cor. 6:17,20,24). Envy and desire lead to spiritual death, as St. James tells us, for each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire

when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death (James 1:14-15).

In addition to the Ten Commandments in which we are given standards of conduct, our Lord gives us another, new commandment: A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34). This new love requires that we not only love those who love us, but also to love those who hate us: But! say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again (Luke 6:27-30). It is not even necessary that we like someone in order to love him in the Christian manner, for this love means that we must always be ready to help, to forgive, to be just, and to live by the Golden Rule cited earlier. By doing this, as our Lord said, all the requirements of the law and prophets are fulfilled and as He further tells us, do this, and you will live (Luke 10:28).

Orthodox Icons

Holy Icons

One of the first things that strikes a non-Orthodox visitor to an Orthodox church is the prominent place assigned to the Holy Icons. The Iconostasis (Icon-screen) dividing the Altar from the rest of the church is covered with them, while others are placed in prominent places throughout the church building. Sometimes even the walls and ceiling are covered with them in fresco or mosaic form. The Orthodox faithful prostrate themselves before them, kiss them, and burn candles before them. They are censed by the Priest and carried in processions. Considering the obvious importance of the Holy Icons, then, questions may certainly be raised concerning them: What do these gestures and actions mean? What is the significance of these Icons? Are they not idols or the like, prohibited by the Old Testament?

Some of the answers to these questions can be found in the writings of St. John of Damascus (†776), who wrote in the Mid-Eighth Century at the height of the iconoclast (anti-icon) controversies in the Church, controversies which were resolved only by the 7th Ecumenical Council (787), which borrowed heavily from these writings.

As St. John points out, in ancient times God, being incorporeal and unincircumscribed, was never depicted, since it is impossible to represent that which is immaterial, has no shape, is indescribable and is unencompassable. Holy Scripture states categorically: No one has ever seen God (John 1:18) and You cannot see My [God's] face, for man shall not see Me and live (Ex. 33:20). The Lord forbade the Hebrews to fashion any likeness of the Godhead, saying: I7ou shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth (Ex. 20:4). Consequently, the Holy Apostle Paul also asserts: Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man (Acts 17:29).

Nonetheless, we know that Icons have been used for prayer from the first centuries of Christianity. Church Tradition tells us, for example, of the existence of an Icon of the Savior during His lifetime (the Icon-Made-Without-Hands) and of Icons of the Most-Holy Theotokos immediately after Him. Tradition witnesses that the Orthodox Church had a clear understanding of the importance of Icons right from the beginning; and this understanding never changed, for it is derived from the teachings concerning the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The use of Icons is grounded in the very essence of Christianity, since Christianity is the

revelation by the God-Man not only of the Word of God, but also of the Image of God; for, as St. John the Evangelist tells us, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

No one has ever seen God; the only Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known (John 1:18), the Evangelist proclaims. That is, He has revealed the Image or Icon of God. For being the brightness of [God's] glory, and the express image of [God's] person (Heb. 1:3), the Word of God in the Incarnation revealed to the world, in His own Divinity, the Image of the Father. When St. Philip asks Jesus, Lord, show us the Father, He answered him: Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father (John 14:8, 9). Thus as the Son is in the bosom of the Father, likewise after the Incarnation He is consubstantial with the Father, according to His divinity being the Father's Image, equal in honor to Him.

The truth expressed above, which is revealed in Christianity, thus forms the foundations of Christian pictorial art. The Image (or Icon) not only does not contradict the essence of Christianity, but is unfailingly connected with it; and this is the foundation of the tradition that from the very beginning the Good News was brought to the world by the Church both in word and in image. This truth was so self-evident, that Icons found their natural place in the Church, despite the Old Testament prohibition against them and a certain amount of contemporary opposition.

St. John Damascene further tells us that because the Word became flesh (John 1:14), we are no longer in our infancy; we have grown up, we have been given by God the power of discrimination and we know what can be depicted and what is indescribable. Since He Who was incorporeal, without form, quantity and magnitude, Who was incomparable owing to the superiority of His nature, Who existed in the image of God assumed the form of a servant and appeared to us in the flesh, we can portray Him and reproduce for contemplation Him Who has condescended to be seen.

We can portray His ineffable descent, His Nativity from the Blessed Virgin, His Baptism in the Jordan, His Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor, His sufferings, death and miracles. We can depict the Cross of Salvation, the Sepulcher, the Resurrection and the Ascension, both in words and in colors. We can confidently represent God the Invisible not as an invisible being, but as one Who has made Himself visible for our sake by sharing in our flesh and blood.

As the Holy Apostle Paul says: Ever since the creation of the world [God's] invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made (Rom. 1:20). Thus, in all creatures we see images that give us a dim insight into Divine Revelation when, for instance, we say that the Holy Trinity Without Beginning can be represented by the sun, light and the ray, or by the mind, the word and the spirit that is within us, or by the plant, the flower and the scent of the rose.

Thus, what had only been a shadow in the Old Testament is now clearly seen. The Council in Trullo (691-2), in its 82nd Rule, stated:

Certain holy icons have the image of a lamb, at which is pointing the finger of the Forerunner. This lamb is taken as the image of grace, representing the True Lamb, Christ our God, Whom the law foreshadowed. Thus accepting with love the ancient images and shadows as prefigurations and symbols of truth transmitted to the Church, we prefer grace and truth, receiving it as the fulfillment of the law. Thus, in order to make plain this fulfillment for all eyes to see, if only by means of pictures, we ordain that from henceforth icons should represent, instead of the lamb of old, the human image of the Lamb, Who has taken upon Himself the sins of the world, Christ our God, so that through this we may perceive the height of the abasement of God the Word and be led to remember His life in the flesh, His Passion and death for our salvation and the ensuing redemption of the world.

The Orthodox Church, then, created a new art, new in form and content, which uses images and forms drawn from the material world to transmit the revelation of the divine world, making the

divine accessible to human understanding and contemplation. This art developed side by side with the Divine Services and, like the Services, expresses the teaching of the Church in conformity with the word of Holy Scripture. Following the teachings of the 7th Ecumenical Council, the Icon is seen not as simple art, but that there is a complete correspondence of the Icon to Holy Scripture, for if the [Icon] is shown by [Holy Scripture], [Holy Scripture] is made incontestably clear by the [Icon] [Acts of the 7th Ecumenical Council, 6].

As the word of Holy Scripture is an image, so the image is also a word, for, according to St. Basil the Great (†379), what the word transmits through the ear, that painting silently shows through the image [Discourse 19, On the 40 Martyrs]. In other words, the Icon contains and professes the same truth as the Gospels and therefore, like the Gospels, is based on exact data, and is not a human invention, for if it were otherwise, Icons could not explain the Gospels nor correspond to them.

By depicting the divine, we are not making ourselves similar to idolaters; for it is not the material symbol that we are worshipping, but the Creator, Who became corporeal for our sake and assumed our body in order that through it He might save mankind. We also venerate the material objects through which our salvation is effected the blessed wood of the Cross, the Holy Gospel, and, above all, the Most-Pure Body and Precious Blood of Christ, which have grace-bestowing properties and Divine Power.

As St. John Damascene asserts: I do not worship matter but I worship the Creator of matter, Who for my sake became material and deigned to dwell in matter, Who through matter effected my salvation. I will not cease from worshipping the matter through which my salvation has been effected [On Icons, 1,16]. Following his teachings, we, as Orthodox Christians, do not venerate an Icon of Christ because of the nature of the wood or the paint, but rather we venerate the inanimate image of Christ with the intention of worshipping Christ Himself as God Incarnate through it.

We kiss an Icon of the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of the Son of God, just as we kiss the Icons of the Saints as God's friends who fought against sin, imitated Christ by shedding their blood for Him and followed in His footsteps. Saints are venerated as those who were glorified by God and who became, with God's help, terrible to the Enemy, and benefactors to those advancing in the faith but not as gods and benefactors themselves; rather they were the slaves and servants of God who were given boldness of spirit in return for their love of Him. We gaze on the depiction of their exploits and sufferings so as to sanctify ourselves through them and to spur ourselves on to zealous emulation.

The Icons of the Saints act as a meeting point between the living members of the Church [Militant] on earth and the Saints who have passed on to the Church [Triumphant] in Heaven. The Saints depicted on the Icons are not remote, legendary figures from the past, but contemporary, personal friends. As meeting points between Heaven and earth, the Icons of Christ, His Mother, the Angels and Saints constantly remind the faithful of the invisible presence of the whole company of Heaven; they visibly express the idea of Heaven on earth.

In venerating the Icons, then, the Orthodox are championing the basis of Christian faith the Incarnation of God and, consequently, salvation and the very meaning of the Church's existence on earth, since the creation of the Holy Icons goes back to the very origins of Christianity and is an inalienable part of the truth revealed by God, founded as it is on the person of the God-Man Jesus Christ Himself. Holy Images are part of the nature of Christianity and without the Icon Christianity would cease to be Christianity. The Holy Gospel summons us to live in Christ, but it is the Icon that shows us this life.

If God became man in order that man might be like God, the Icon, in full accord with divine worship and theology, bears witness to the fruits of the Incarnation and to the sanctity and deification of man. It shows him in the fullness of his earthly nature, purified of sin and partaking of the life of God, testifies to the sanctification of the human body and displays to the world the image

of man who is similar to God by grace. The Icon outwardly expresses the sanctity of the depicted Saint, and this sanctity is apparent to bodily vision.

Thus, according to St. John Damascene, those who refuse to venerate an Icon also refuse to worship God's Son, Who is the living image and unchanging reflection of God the Invisible. Be it known, he says, that anyone who seeks to destroy the Icons of Christ or His Mother, the Blessed Theotokos, or any of the Saints, is the enemy of Christ, the Holy Mother of God, and the Saints, and is the defender of the Devil and his demons.

Icon Not-Made-By-Hands

One of the earliest Icons witnessed to by Church Tradition, is the Icon of the Savior Not-Made-By-Hands. According to Tradition, during the time of the earthly ministry of the Savior, Abgar ruled in the Syrian city of Edessa. He was afflicted with leprosy over his whole body. At this time report of the great miracles performed by the Lord extended throughout Syria (Matt. 4:24) and as far as Arabia. Although not having seen the Lord, Abgar believed in Him as the Son of God and wrote a letter requesting Him to come and heal him. With this letter he sent to Palestine his court-painter Ananias, entrusting him to paint an image of the Divine Teacher.

Ananias went to Jerusalem and saw the Lord surrounded by people. He was not able to go to Him because of the great throng of people listening to His preaching; so he stood on a huge rock and attempted to produce a painting of the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, unable, however, to succeed. The Savior Himself called him by name and gave for Abgar a beautiful letter in which, having glorified the faith of the ruler, He promised to send His disciple in order to heal him from the leprosy and instruct him in salvation.

After this, the Lord called for water and a towel. He wiped His face, rubbing with the towel, and on it was impressed His Divine Image. The towel and the letter the Savior sent with Ananias to Edessa. With thanksgiving Abgar received the sacred object and received healing, but a small portion, only a trace, remained of the terrible disease on his face until the arrival of the promised Disciple of the Lord.

The Apostle of the 70, Thaddeus, came to them and preached the Gospel, baptizing the believing Abgar and all living in Edessa. Having written on the Image Not-Made-By-Hands the words, Christ-God, everyone trusting in Thee will not be put to shame, Abgar adorned it and placed it in a niche over the city gates.

For many years the inhabitants preserved a pious custom of venerating the Image Not-Made-By-Hands whenever passing through the gates. But a great-grandson of Abgar, ruling Edessa, fell into idolatry and resolved to take the Image away from the city walls. In a vision, the Lord ordered the Bishop of Edessa to conceal His Image. The Bishop, coming at night with his clergy, lit before the Image a lampada and then blocked up the niche with clay tablets and bricks.

Many years passed by and the inhabitants forgot about the Holy Object. But then, when in 545 the Persian King Chroses I besieged Edessa, the position of the city seemed hopeless. But the Most-Holy Sovereign Lady manifested Herself to Bishop Evlavios and commanded him to get from the enclosed niche the Image with which to save the city from the adversaries. Dismantling the niche, the Bishop found the Holy Image; before it burned the lampada and on the clay tablets, with which the niche had been enclosed, was a similar image. After preceding with the Cross and the Image Not-Made-By-Hands around the walls of the city, the Persian army miraculously departed.

In 630, Edessa was seized by the Arabs; but they did not impede veneration of the Image Not-Made-By-Hands, glory of which extended out into all the East. In 944 the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (912-59) requested that the Image be redeemed from the Emir the ruler of the city of Edessa and brought to the Capital of the Orthodox. With great honor the Image of the Savior

Not-Made-By-Hands and the letter which He wrote to Abgar, were brought by the clergy to Constantinople. On Aug. 16 the Image of the Savior was placed in the Pharos Church of the Most-Holy Theotokos.

Concerning the subsequent fate of the Image Not-Made-By-Hands, there exists several traditions. According to one, it was carried away by Crusaders during the time of their dominion over Constantinople (1204-61), but the ship on which the Holy Objects had been taken, sank in the Sea of Marmora. According to another, the Image Not-Made-By-Hands was taken about 1362 to Genoa, where it was presented to and preserved in a monastery dedicated to the Apostle Bartholomew.

In the time of the iconoclastic heresy, the defenders of icon-veneration, shedding their blood for the Holy Icons, sang the Troparion to the Image Not-Made-By-Hands. The Image (the Holy Face) was put up as an emblem of the Russian armies, defending them from the enemy; and in the Russian Orthodox Church there is a pious custom that before entering a church, the faithful read together the prayers and the Troparion to the Image Not-Made-By-Hands. The Feast of this Icon is celebrated on Aug. 16, during the Afterfeast period of the Feast of the Dormition, and is popularly called the Third Feast-of-the-Savior in August.

Icons of the Mother of God

Icons of the Most-Holy Theotokos.

Iveron	Feb. 12
Kazan.....	July 8 & Oct. 22
Of The Sign (Znamenny)....	Nov. 27
Pochaev.....	July 23 & Sept. 8
She Who Is Quick To Hear..	Nov. 9
Smolensk (Hodigitria).....	July 28
Tikhvin.....	June 26
Vladimir.....	May 21, June 23 & Aug. 26

She Who is Quick to Hear.

This ancient wonderworking Icon is located on Mt. Athos at the Monastery of Docharou. The Monastery's tradition dates the time of the writing of this Icon to the 10th Century, when St. Neophytos (co-founder of the Monastery) was Superior.

In 1664, the Steward, Nilos, passing through the dining-hall at night with a flaming torch, heard from the Icon of the Theotokos which was hanging over the door, a voice, appealing to him not to pass by here in the future in order not to blacken the Icon with smoke. The Monk thought that this was a practical joke by one of the brethren, and, disregarding the sign, continued to pass through the dining-hall with the smoking torch. Suddenly he was struck blind!

With bitter repentance, Nilos prayed before the Icon of the Mother of God, beseeching her forgiveness. And again he heard the wondrous voice, announcing forgiveness and returning his sight, while commanding all of the brethren to proclaim: From this time forth, this My Icon will be called She Who Is Quick To Hear, because to all who come to it will be revealed quick mercy and complete forgiveness. The Most-Holy Theotokos fulfilled then and even now fulfils her promise manifesting quick help and consolation to all who hasten to her with faith.

In Russia, copies of the wonderworking Athonite Icon, She Who Is Quick To Hear, were always regarded with great love and honor. Many of these have been glorified with miracles and individual cases of healings from epilepsy and frenzy have been especially mentioned. A copy of this Icon, from Mt. Athos, is to be found in the iconostasis of the monastery church of the Russian Orthodox Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Of the Sign (Znamenny).

This Icon depicts the Most-Holy Theotokos sitting prayerfully, with uplifted arms. On her chest, with a background of a circular shield (or sphere) is the Divine Infant the Savior-Emmanuel giving a blessing. This representation of the Mother of God is considered to be one of the first of Her iconographic Images. In the Catacombs of St. Agnes in Rome, there is a representation of the Mother of God, arms outstretched in prayer, with the Infant sitting on her knees, dating from the 4th Century. In addition to this, there is an important ancient Byzantine Icon of the Mother of God, from the 6th Century, where the Most-Holy Theotokos is represented sitting on a throne and supporting with both arms in front of her an oval shield with the Image of the Savior-Emmanuel. Icons of the Mother of God known under the name Of The Sign, appeared in Russia in the 11th-12th Century, recalling the wondrous sign from the Novgorod Icon of this name which occurred in 1170.

In that year the Princes, headed by the son of the Suzdal Prince, Andrew Bogoliubsky, joined together and gathered before the walls of Great Novgorod, intending to capture the city. The Novgorodians remained, however, trusting in God, and day and night they prayed, beseeching God not to abandon them. On the third night, the Archbishop of Novgorod, Elijah, heard a wondrous voice, commanding him to take from the Church of the Transfiguration on Ilinoi Street the Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos and to carry it about on the walls of the city.

When the Icon was carried out, the invaders shot off at the Cross-Procession a storm of arrows, one of which pierced the iconographic face of the Theotokos. From Her eyes poured out tears and the Icon was turned with the face to the city. After this Divine Sign, the invaders were suddenly seized with indescribable terror and they began to beat each other. At the encouragement of the Lord, the Novgorodians fearlessly rushed upon the enemy and defeated them in battle.

In remembrance of the wondrous help of the Queen of Heaven, Archbishop Elijah then established a feast in honor of the Sign of the Mother of God, which the whole Russian Church observes to this day. For 186 years after the Sign of 1170, the Icon remained in the Church of the Transfiguration on Ilinoi Street; but in 1356, a Church of the Sign of the Most-Holy Theotokos was erected in Novgorod, next to the Cathedral Church of the Monastery of the Sign.

Many copies of the this Icon were made and have received prominence in Russia. Many of them have shone with miracles in local churches and received fame as a place of miracles. Among these are the Icons of the Most-Holy Theotokos Of The Sign of Dionysius-Glushetsk, Kursk, Seraphimo-Ponetaevskaya, and others.

Smolensk (Hodigitria).

This Icon, called Hodigitria, which means Directress or Guider of the Way, according to Church Tradition was written by the Holy Evangelist Luke during the earthly life of the Theotokos. At this time, according to the same Tradition, the Mother of God blessed her portrait, saying, My blessing will remain always with this Icon. According to St. Dimitry of Rostov, this Icon was written at the request of Theophilus, Governor of Antioch, the most excellent Theophilus (Luke 1:1). From Antioch, the Holy Object was transferred to Jerusalem and from there, about the middle of the 5th Century, the Empress Eudoxia, wife of the Emperor Arcadius, transferred it to Constantinople, as a gift to Pulcheria, her sister-in-law, who placed the Icon in the Blachernae Church.

The Greek Emperor Constantine IX (1042-1054), in 1046, giving his daughter, Anna, in marriage to Prince Vsevolod of Chernigov (son of Yaroslav the Wise), blessed her on her way with this Icon. After the death of Prince Vsevolod, the Icon was presented to his son, Vladimir Monomach, who presented it to the Cathedral of Smolensk in 1101. At this time the Icon received the name, the Hodigitria of Smolensk.

In 1238, at a voice from the Icon, the selfless soldier, Mercurius, defeated a mighty Mongol army (led by the great invader Batu). Later receiving the blessed end of martyrdom, he was numbered among the Saints by the Russian Orthodox Church (commemorated Nov. 24).

In the 14th Century, Smolensk fell under the rule of the Lithuanian princes. The daughter of Prince Vitovtus, Sophia, was given in marriage to Grand Prince Dimitry of Moscow (1398-1425) and in 1398 she brought to Moscow the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God. The Holy Image was placed in the Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin at the right corner of the Holy Doors.

In 1456, at the request of the inhabitants of Smolensk, headed by Bishop Mishael, the Icon was festively returned to Smolensk, while two copies were left in Moscow one in the Annunciation Cathedral and the other, in 1524, in the Novodevichy Convent, memorializing the return of Smolensk to Russia. This Monastery was erected on the Devichy Field where, with many tears the Muscovites had bid farewell to the Holy Icon when it had been returned to Smolensk.

In 1602 an exact copy of the wonderworking Icon was written, which was then lodged in the Tower of the Smolensk fortress wall over the Dnieprovsky Gates, under a specially-constructed roof. Later, in 1727, there was erected there a wooden church and in 1802 one of stone.

The new copy received the blessed power of the ancient Image and, on August 5, 1812, when the Russian armies left Smolensk at the advance of Napoleon, they took with them the Icon for safekeeping. The day before the Battle of Borodino, they bore this Icon around the camp so that the troops would be strengthened. The ancient Image of the Smolensk Hodigitria, temporarily placed in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow, on the day of the Battle itself, together with the Iveron and Vladimir Icons of the Mother of God, were carried through the streets of Moscow, as well as to the sick and wounded in the Lefortovsky Court. After the victory over Napoleon, the Smolensk Hodigitria, as well as the glorified copies, were returned to Smolensk.

The Feast in honor of this Icon was established on July 28, 1525, in memory of the return of Smolensk to Russia. This Icon is one of the principle Holy Objects of the Russian Church and the faithful have received and still receive from it abundant graces of help and healing. The Mother of God, through Her Holy Image helps and strengthens us, guiding us to salvation and thus, we cry out to her: O All-gracious Hodigitria, Praise of Smolensk and the whole Russian Land you are the confirmation of the believing people. Rejoice, Hodigitria, Salvation of Christians!

Tikhvin.

According to Church Tradition, this Icon was written by the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke. In the 5th Century it was transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople, where it was placed in the Blachernae Church. In 1383, about 70 years before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the Icon vanished from the church and with luminous rays of light appeared over the waters of Lake Ladoga. Wondrously borne from place to place, it finally settled near the city of Tikhvin.

On the site where the Icon appeared, there was constructed a wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos. Later, with great fervor, Grand Prince Vasily (1505-1533) constructed a stone church in place of the wooden one. In 1560, at the order of Tsar Ivan the Terrible, a men's monastery was erected by the church, enclosed by a stone wall.

In 1613-14, Swedish armies, having captured Novgorod, attempted to destroy the Monastery, but, by the help of the Mother of God, it was saved. In view of the approaching Swedish armies, the Monks had resolved to flee the Monastery, taking the wonderworking Icon with them, but there had been unable to remove it from its place. This miracle overcame their faintheartedness and the Monks remained in the Monastery, placing their hope on the protection of the Mother of God. The small number of defenders successfully turned back the attacks of the invaders, for the attacking Swedes saw a multitude of warriors coming from Moscow like a heavenly army and they fled.

After the miraculous deliverance of the Monastery, royal emissaries came from Moscow and having made a copy of the miracle-working Icon, they returned to the ancient town of Stolbovo, not far from Tikhvin, where peace was concluded with the Swedes. The main guarantee of peace in the Russian lands was the bringing of this copy of the Tikhvin Icon. Subsequently this copy was transferred to Moscow and placed in the Dormition Cathedral. Then, at the request of Novgorod, whose citizens had participated in the war with the Swedes, the Icon was returned to Novgorod and placed in the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom. The All-Russian festival of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God, glorified by countless miracles, was established by the Church in memory of its wondrous appearance and the conquering of the enemies by the protection of the Theotokos. It is celebrated on June 26.

Pochaev.

In 1340, two Monks made their abode on the mountain of Pochaev (Volynia Little Russia) in the place where there is now the Monastery of Pochaev. One day, after having completed his cell rule, one of the Monks ascending to the top of the mount, suddenly saw the Mother of God, standing on a rock and surrounded by flames. Astonished, he called his brother to see the miracle. A third witness to this vision, was the shepherd, John Bosoi, who ran up the mount. Together the three glorified God and on the rock where the Theotokos stood, there remained the imprint of her right foot. In addition, a healing spring also poured forth from the spot where she had stood.

In 1559, the Greek Metropolitan, Neophytos, traveling through Volynia, stopped to visit the noblewoman Anna Goiskaya, on her estate of Orlya, not far from Pochaev. In thanksgiving for her hospitality, the Metropolitan blessed her with an icon of the Theotokos, brought with him from Constantinople. Later it was noticed that a radiance sprang from the Image and when Philip, the brother of Anna had been healed before it, she presented it, in 1597, to the Monks living on the mountain of Pochaev. The Holy Image was placed in the church erected in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God and later a monastery was built, for which Anna Goiskaya provided large sums for its upkeep. Later, in 1602, the Icon was transferred to the newly-completed Church of the Holy Trinity.

The wonderworking Icon began to be known as the Pochaev Icon and among many witnesses concerning the help of the Queen of Heaven, the following is especially well known. A Monk of the Pochaev Monastery was captured by the Tatars, and finding himself held in captivity, he recalled the Pochaev Monastery, its Holy Objects, Divine Services, and singing. In particular, the Monk longed for the approaching Feast of the Dormition and with tears beseeched the Mother of God for deliverance from captivity. Suddenly, at the prayers of the Most-Holy Virgin, the walls of the prison vanished and the Monk found himself within the walls of the Pochaev Monastery.

In 1675, during the wars with the Turks, regiments of Tatars approached the Monastery, surrounding it on three sides. The weak monastery enclosure, together with the weak stone buildings of the Monastery, did not present an adequate defense for the besieged Monks. At this the Abbot, Joseph, convinced the brethren and laity there to turn to the Heavenly Protectors the Most-Holy Theotokos and Venerable Job of Pochaev. The Monks and laity prayed fervently, falling down before the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God and before the shrine of the relics of Venerable Job.

On the morning of July 23, with the rising of the sun, the Tatars held a last council concerning the assault against the Monastery, while the Abbot ordered the faithful to sing an Akathist to the Mother of God. At the first words of the Akathist, the Most-Pure Theotokos Herself suddenly appeared, unfurling her white and shining omophor, surrounded by heavenly angels holding unsheathed swords. Venerable Job was seen near the Mother of God, bowing to her and praying about the defense of the Monastery.

The Tatars took the heavenly army for ghosts and in confusion began to fire arrows at the Most-Holy Virgin and Venerable Job, but the arrows turned backwards and wounded those who had fired them. Terror enveloped the invaders and in panic they took to flight, in the confusion even killing many of their own fellows. The defenders of the Monastery rushed upon the fleeing Tatars in pursuit, taking many captives. Subsequently, many of the captives embraced the Christian faith and remained, forever after, in the Monastery. Thus a festival was instituted by the Russian Church for July 23 in memory of the deliverance of the Monastery. The Icon is also feasted on September 8 and on the Friday of Bright Week.

Vladimir.

The Vladimir Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos was written by the Holy Evangelist Luke on a board taken from a table on which the Savior, together with His Most-Pure Mother and the Righteous Joseph ate. The Mother of God, having seen this Image, pronounced: Henceforth all generations will call Me blessed. Let the grace of Him Who was born of me, as well as Mine, be with this Icon.

In 1131 the Icon was sent to Russia from Constantinople to the Holy Prince Mstislav (1132) and was sent to the Devichy Monastery of Vyshgorod an ancient appanage town of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga. In 1155, Andrew Bogoliubsky, the son of Yuri Dolgoruky, brought the Icon to Vladimir and installed it on Sept. 21, 1164, in the magnificent Dormition Cathedral, where it remained for 230 years. At this time the Icon received the name Vladimir.

In 1395 Russia was threatened by the terrible Conqueror of the East, Tamerlane. Grand Prince Vasily, son of Dimitry Donskoy who had first defeated the Mongols at the River Don, gathered together an army, greatly inferior in numbers and strength to that of Tamerlane, and took his stand on the Oka River beyond Kolomna. The fearful inhabitants of Moscow fasted and prayed fervently through the Dormition Fast, while the miraculous Icon of the Most-Holy Mother of God was transferred in a solemn procession from Vladimir to Moscow.

On August 26, when the tearful inhabitants of Moscow went out to meet the miraculous Icon at Kuchkovo Field, Tamerlane had a vision in which a majestic woman, surrounded by a luminous radiance, commanded him to leave the boundaries of Russia. Inquiring as to the meaning of the dream, he was told that the radiant woman was the Mother of God, the great Protectress of Christians. At this time Tamerlane retreated beyond the boundaries of Russia. In memory of this event and in honor of the Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos of Vladimir, the Monastery of the Presentation of the Lord was built on the spot where the Icon had been met by the inhabitants of Moscow on Aug. 26. So, too, a Feast was instituted for this day.

In 1480, Khan Achmet of the Golden Horde invaded Russia and met the army of Tsar Ivan III on the banks of the Ugra River (called the Sash of the Mother of God), which protected Russia's boundaries. The Tatars and Russians faced each other across the River. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Moscow prayed to the Most-Holy Theotokos for deliverance of the Orthodox capital. As a result, the Khan unexpectedly retreated, leaving the bounds of Russia. In thanksgiving for the deliverance of the country from the Tatars, a Feast in honor of the Mother of God of Vladimir was instituted for June 23.

In 1521, the miraculous help of the Theotokos alone saved Moscow from the forces of Mahmet-Girei, Khan of the Crimean Tatars, who, united with the Nogai and Kazan Tatars, as well as the Lithuanians, threatened Moscow. Tsar Vasily gathered an army to oppose the Tatars, while Metropolitan Barlaam, together with the Moscow inhabitants, fervently prayed for deliverance from destruction.

At this time, a certain pious Nun, who was blind, had a vision. From the Spassky Gate of the Kremlin came the Moscow Hierarchs, abandoning the city, and borne in their company was the

Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, on account of the pending punishment of God on the inhabitants of the city. The Hierarchs were met at the Spassky Gate by the Venerable Monks Sergius of Radonezh and Barlaam of Khutinsk, tearfully beseeching them not to leave Moscow. At this entreaty the Hierarchs returned to the Kremlin and carried back the Vladimir Icon. A similar dream was granted to the Moscow Saint, the Blessed Basil, Fool-For-Christ, to whom was revealed that at the intercession of the Mother of God and the prayers of the Saints, Moscow would be saved.

The Tatar Khan had a vision of the Mother of God, surrounded by a threatening army, rushing at his regiments and in fear he fled, and the Russian capital was spared. For this reason, on May 21, the Russian Church again commemorates the Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos of Vladimir.

Iveron (Iberian).

The Iberian Icon of the Most-Holy Virgin, which is especially honored above all of the Icons of Mt. Athos, first appeared about the middle of the 9th Century. The Holy Orthodox Church at that time was profoundly agitated by fresh waves of iconoclasm under Emperor Theophilus; and to protect the Holy Icons from being burnt and desecrated, pious people tried to hide or set them afloat on swift rivers or seas, entrusting their destiny to the will of God.

Such was the case of the Iberian Icon of the Mother of God. According to Church Tradition, to save the Icon from the iconoclasts, a certain pious widow who lived not far from the town of Nicea, floated the icon on the waters of the sea, committing it to the care of the Theotokos. But as the widow and her son, who helped her to set the Icon afloat, watched, the Holy Image did not disappear into the water, but floated westward in an upright position. This moved the widow's son to dedicate himself to God and secretly he set out for Thessalonica and from there to Mt. Athos, where he settled after taking monastic vows at the Iberian Monastery (Iveron). It was he who told the Monks there about the Icon and thus preserved its sacred memory.

One day in the latter half of the 10th Century, the Monks of Iveron Monastery saw a pillar of fire rising from the sea. It continued for several days and nights. Soon the Monks who gathered on the shore saw an Icon of the Virgin which seemed to be standing upright on the surface of the water, giving off rays of light. The mystery of the miraculous appearance of the Icon was revealed by the Holy Mother of God Herself to Gabriel, a pious hermit of Iveron, whom she willed to walk over the water and receive the Icon in his hands. With great rejoicing and ceremony the Monks greeted the Holy Image on the shore and a chapel was built on the spot soon after.

The Holy Icon, placed by the Monks on the Holy Table of the Monastery Church, was soon found to have changed its place and to stand above the gates of the Monastery. And every time the Monks returned the Icon to the place they had chosen, it miraculously moved back to the gates of the Monastery. Finally it was revealed to the Monks by the Mother of God through the same Gabriel that this was a visual sign that she herself wished to be their Gatekeeper and Guardian not only in their present life, but also in the hereafter. Thus, at this special Sign, the Monks built a special chapel for the Icon by the inner gates of the Monastery, where they worshipped zealously every day. The Icon was called Iberian (or Of Iveron) after the Monastery, and Portaitissa (or Gate-Keeper), after its place by the gates.

One day, a blow dealt by a bandit left a mark on the cheek of the Holy Virgin. The sight of the blood that ran down the cheek terrified the robber. He turned to God and to the life of a holy ascetic. Since then all copies of the Iberian Icon of the Mother of God have depicted Her with a scar and drops of blood on Her cheek.

The fame of the Icon reached Russia through pious pilgrims. It became especially venerated in Russia in the 17th Century when two early copies of it were brought from Mt. Athos one in 1648 and the other in 1656 both being made at the order of Patriarch Nikon. One copy was placed in the Tsar's palace and later in a special chapel built for it by the Resurrection Gates of Moscow. This

chapel was built in 1685, and the Icon placed here was especially venerated locally as a miracle-working Icon. The other copy, which had been commissioned by Patriarch Nikon, was brought in 1656 to the Monastery of Holy Lake.

During the War of 1812, the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God from the Iberian Chapel, together with the Icons of the Virgin of Vladimir and of Smolensk were taken in procession, while prayers were offered to the Mother of God for victory for the Russian armies over the invader, Napoleon. In time, numerous copies were made of the Holy Iberian Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos.

In the Church Calendar, the Iberian Icon is commemorated on three occasions: Oct. 13, the day when the Icon was brought from Mt. Athos to Moscow, in 1648; Feb. 12, when the main Feast of the Holy Icon was established; and on Bright Tuesday, according to the Athonite tradition. The many prayers that are offered up to the Iberian Icon of the Virgin and the services in its honor testify to the great love and veneration in which it is held among all the Icons of the Mother of God which are the spiritual beauty of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Kazan.

In 1579, during the reign of Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible), who had subjugated the city of Kazan with the aid of God (for the city had been the capital of the Tatar Khan), the young maiden Matrona was shown in a dream the Mother of God who commanded her to go into the town and tell the Archbishop and the rulers about her Precious Image which was buried in the ground, and that they should come forth and bring the Holy Object from the depths of the earth; she was also shown the spot where the pearl of great price the Mother of God's miraculous Icon would be found. The young girl saw this vision not once, but repeatedly.

Matrona told her mother of the miraculous vision, but she did not pay any attention to the words of her young daughter. Finally the young maiden caught sight of the Icon in the flames of the kitchen fire, before which she heard a strange voice: If you do not relate My words, I will manifest Myself in another place, and you will be lost. At this time the mother listened to the words of her daughter about this awesome sight and went, together with her, to the Archbishop and the Governor of the city, but they did not want to believe them.

Having returned home, the mother of the young Matrona dug in the ground at the indicated place. Others joined her, but no one was able to find the Icon. The girl then began to dig at a spot where a stove had once stood, and others helped her. When they had dug up more than three feet, the miracle occurred, for the wondrous Icon of our Queen, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, together with the Pre-Eternal Christ Child, appeared. This miraculous Icon was covered with an old sleeve of cherry-red cloth; the Icon shone wondrously, as if it had just been painted, and the dust of the earth had in no way affected this miraculous Work.

With great honor the Icon was brought to the Church of St. Nicholas in Kazan, where a Molieben was sung by Archbishop Jeremiah. A Cross-Procession was assembled and made its way to the Annunciation Cathedral in the Kazan Kremlin. On the way, two blind men, Joseph and Nikita, were healed, making this only the first of the miracles which were to make this Icon famous throughout all Russia.

A copy of the Icon was written and sent to Moscow. Tsar Ivan commanded that at the place of the appearance, a church in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God be constructed, wherein was placed the Holy Icon, and a woman's monastery was also founded there. Matrona and her mother, later received the tonsure at this Monastery. As the Holy Icon had been found on the Feast of St. Procopius the Martyr, July 8, the Church decreed that henceforth the Kazan Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos also be commemorated on that day.

Later, in 1612, during the Time of Troubles, the Kazan Icon was responsible for the deliverance of Moscow from the invading Poles. At the summons of then Patriarch Hermogenes (who was the Priest at the Church of St. Nicholas in Kazan when the Icon had first been found, and who later wrote an account of the Finding), the Russian people began to take measures to aid the homeland. At the Patriarch's request, the Kazan Icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos was sent by Prince Dimitry Pozhharsky from Kazan to Moscow.

Knowing that the invasion was on account of their sins, all the people and the militia took upon themselves a three-day fast, and with prayer entreated the Lord and His Most-Pure Mother for heavenly help. The prayers were heard. From Bishop Arseny (later Bishop of Suzdal) who was in captivity at the hands of the Poles, came news that in a vision there was revealed to him a change in the judgment of God to mercy, at the intercession of the Most-Holy Virgin. Heartened by the news, the Russian army, on October 22, 1612, freed Moscow from the Polish invaders. Thus a Feast in honor of the Kazan Mother of God was instituted for that date. And until our own times, this Icon is especially honored by the Russian Orthodox people.

Orthodox Monasticism

The Monastic Grades

When one desiring the monastic life enters a monastery, he normally passes through three steps or stages: 1) Probationer (Novice including Riasaphor), 2) Monk of the Lesser Schema (Cross-bearer or Stavrophore), and 3) Monk of the Great Schema (Russian Skhimnik). The Probationer who enters a monastery desires to do so in order to acquit himself worthily in the angelic state, so called because Monks renounce all worldly things, do not marry, do not acquire and hold property, and live as do the Angels in Heaven, glorifying God night and day and striving to do His Will in all things.

The first act of anyone who desires to perform any strenuous task is that of preparation. If, for example, one is an athlete, he would train and condition himself physically and mentally, so as to better perform in the chosen event. If one wishes to be a doctor or a lawyer or a businessman or whatever, he first prepares himself with the proper education, apprenticeship training under the skilled guidance of one more experienced, and so on. A soldier first spends time in Boot Camp, being trained physically and mentally to be a good soldier. And so, in like manner, he who wishes to be a Monk must prepare himself for the task at hand, thus entering as a Probationer (or Novice).

For a period of at least three years, the Novice must train himself under the guidance of one skilled in the monastic life and the direction of souls, by immersing himself in the life of the Monastery, struggling to perform the obediences given to him and preparing himself physically (through his labors, fasting, vigils, etc.) and spiritually (through his rule of prayer and obedience to an elder), for the monastic life. This three-year period of preparation has existed from the earliest times, for, in the Life of St. Pachomius, the founder of the Common Life, we learn that he was commanded by an angel: Do not admit anyone to the performance of higher feats until three years have passed.... Let him enter this domain only when he has accomplished some hard work.

Traditionally, a Novice, after spending a short time in lay clothing, is vested in part of the monastic habit, that is, the Inner Riasa and the Skouphos (or monastic cap). The Inner Riasa is simply a narrow-sleeved robe reaching to the ankles (Podriznik in Russian) and the Skouphos is a cup-shaped cap common to all Orthodox clerics and monastics. These garments are always black in color (as are all the monastic garments), signifying penitence and deadness to the ways of the world.

Riasaphor.

After one has been a Novice for a while, he could take the next step, which is that of Riasaphor Monk, who, it must be noted, is still considered to be a Novice, but in a special sense. He does not make solemn vows, as do the Monks of the Lesser and Greater Schemas, but he is still considered to be, although imperfect, a true Monk. He cannot marry, he cannot leave the Monastery without censure, and if he were to leave and marry, he would be subject to excommunication. Nonetheless, he is still a Novice.

The Order of the Riasa is usually performed after one of the canonical Hours. Standing before the Abbot, the candidate is tonsured (hair cut in a cross-wise form) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, signifying that he casts from himself all idle thoughts and acts, and takes upon himself the yoke of the Lord. The Abbot then vests him with the Outer Riasa (a wide-sleeved outer robe) and Kamilavka (a flat-topped hat).

In ancient times the Riasa was worn on days of mourning and it signifies to the Novice that he must grieve for his sins. The Kamilavka (cap protecting from the heat) signifies to the Novice that he must tame the heat of the passions. Henceforth the Novice is called Riasaphor (Wearer of the Robe), but, as noted, no vows have been made. [In our times, the Riasaphor Monk is also allowed the monastic veil with the Kamilavka, as is worn by the Monks of the Lesser and Greater Schemas.]

He who has attained the dignity of Riasaphor is under no obligation to advance further in the monastic grades, and many do not of their own choice, but neither is the Novice obligated to advance to the dignity of Riasaphor prior to making solemn vows and attaining to the next step in monasticism, which is that of the Lesser Schema (habit, dignity, or aspect).

Order of the Lesser Schema.

Originally in monasticism there were only two grades: Probationer and Monk of the Angelic Habit (or Great Schema). Thus we can say that for every Monk the most desired feat of the soul the feat of attaining perfection is the taking of the Great Schema. Since ancient times Monks have spoken of the Great Schema as the culmination of Monkhood, wherein the Monk loves God with a perfect love in accordance with the Gospel command, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt. 22:37). In time the Lesser Schema became a kind a preparatory step to the Great Schema. The Common Life (that of a Monk of the Lesser Schema) came to be known as betrothal, and Seclusion (the life of a Monk of the Great Schema) within a Monastery as actual matrimony.

The Tonsure.

The main feature of the Order of the Lesser Schema is the Tonsure and the making of solemn vows. The Monastic Tonsure (or Profession) can be seen as the mystical marriage of the soul with the Heavenly Bridegroom, but it also can be seen as a second Baptism, inasmuch as the very ceremony parallels the actual Baptism ceremony. The candidate for the Monastic Tonsure comes as a penitent, as though to Baptism. [In the original Greek of the rite, the candidate is referred to as a catechumen, and he fulfils, in a sense, a catechumenate prior to the Monastic Tonsure in his three-year probation.]

The candidate stands unclothed in the Narthex of the church as though about to be baptized by immersion, signifying that the Old Man is being put off and the New Man put on. Vows are made, as at Baptism, similar to the Baptismal vows of renunciation, faith and obedience to the end of life, and these are given in response to specific questions, as at Baptism. A new name is given, as at Baptism, and the hair is shorn in the tonsure, just as at Baptism. The new monastic is given a cross, just as a cross is placed around the neck of the newly-baptized, and he is also given a lighted candle to hold, just as is the newly-baptized.

Thus, it is obvious that the resemblance of the Monastic Tonsure to Baptism is not accidental; indeed, in the instructions given to the monastic Catechumen in the Order of the Great Schema (with parallels in the Order of the Lesser Schema), the following words are said: A second Baptism you are receiving...and you shall be cleansed from your sins.

We can also see in the Monastic Tonsure the mystical re-enactment of the return of the Prodigal Son to his father's house, for, at first, he stands at a distance from his father's house (in the Narthex the entrance to the Sanctuary) as a penitent, having abandoned the world after drinking the cup of its deceitful delights. He is seen from afar (as the Prodigal was by his father), for the Monks come to greet him and escort him to the gates of the Altar where his father (the Abbot) awaits him.

In the Order of the Lesser Schema, as noted above, the Novice stands unclothed and unshod in the Narthex, wearing only a sort of shirt (in ancient times a hair shirt), waiting, as a penitent, to be conducted into his father's house.' As he is conducted to the Abbot, the Novice performs three prostrations on the way, and then stops before the Holy Doors where the Abbot is waiting. Before him stands a lectern upon which are laid a Cross and a Testament.

The Abbot then asks him what he seeks in coming here. The reply is given, I seek a life of mortification. The Abbot then questions him further as to whether he aspires to the angelic estate, whether he gives himself to God of his own will, whether he intends to abide in the Monastery and lead a life of mortification until his last breath, whether he intends to keep himself in virginity, chastity, and piety, whether he will remain obedient to the Superior and to the brethren even unto death, and whether he will endure willingly the restraints and hardships of the monastic life. When he has answered all these questions, Yes, Reverend Father, with the help of God, the Abbot then exhorts him as to the nature of the monastic life and the Novice pledges himself to keep his vows, which were included in the Order of Monastic Profession by St. Basil the Great.

Then, in order to test his willingness, the Abbot hands the scissors, with which the Tonsure is to be effected, three times to the Novice, asking him each time to take these scissors and give them to me. Each time the Novice takes the scissors and hands them back to the Abbot, kissing his hand. Then the Abbot tonsures the Novice's head in the form of a cross, saying, Our brother N. is tonsured by the cutting of the hairs of his head in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in doing so changes the Novice's name for another, in token of complete renunciation of the world and perfect self-consecration to God. Indeed, the first act of obedience of the new Monk is his acceptance of the new name given him.

The Monastic Habit.

At the completion of the Tonsure itself, the new Monk is now vested in the Monastic Habit. He is given to wear a square of cloth, called the Paraman (something added to the mantiya) upon which are represented the Cross of Christ with the lance, reed and sponge, and the inscription, I bear on my body the wounds of the Lord. This is fastened about the shoulders and waist by means of strings or cords sewn to the corners, and serves to remind the new Monk that he has taken on himself the yoke of Christ and must control his passions and desires. At the same time a Cross is hung on his neck (often fastened to the same cords with which the Paraman is bound), signifying that he is to follow Christ.

Then the Monk is given the Inner Riasa, which is the same as that worn by Probationers. A leather belt, made of the skin of a dead animal signifying deadness to the world is fastened about his loins. This girding of the loins also signifies bodily mortification and readiness for the service of Christ and His return (Luke 12:35-37).

Next, the Monk is given the Mantiya (mantle or cloak), a long, sleeveless robe, also called the robe of incorruption and purity, the absence of sleeves signifying the restraining of worldly pursuits. Upon his head the Monk is given the Kamilavka with veil (called, in Russian, klobuk), or the

helmet of salvation. The veil signifies that the Monk must veil his face from temptation and guard his eyes and ears against all vanity. The wings of the veil date from the time of St. Methodius (846), Patriarch of Constantinople, who was wounded in the face during the reign of the iconoclast Emperor Theophilus. In order to conceal his wounds, the Saint wore wings with his veil and fastened them about his lower face. And so, the wings of the veil have been in use since that time in memory of the sufferings of the Saint. Finally the Monk is given sandals for his feet.

After the vesting, the Monk is given a Prayer Rope (chotki in Russian) with many knots, to count prayers and prostrations by. This Prayer Rope is the Monk's spiritual sword, helping him to conquer absent-mindedness while at prayer and to drive away evil thoughts from his soul. Then he is given a hand cross as the shield of faith, with which to put out the flaming darts of the Evil One. Finally, he is given a lighted candle, signifying that he must strive, by purity of life, by good deeds, and good demeanor to be a Light to the World.

At the conclusion of this, the Great Litany is recited by the Deacon with the addition of special petitions on behalf of the new Monk. The hymn, As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, is sung as at the Baptism, and then Epistle and Gospel readings, reminding the new Monk that he must wage war against the enemies of salvation and how love of God must be greater than love of parents, etc. At the conclusion of the Rite, the Kiss of Peace is exchanged by the new Monk and the other brethren of the Monastery.

Order of the Great Schema.

As noted earlier, the ultimate goal of a Monk is the Order of the Great Schema (or Angelic Habit). One who aspired to that dignity usually struggled for many years in the monastic life and often it was not conferred until the end of a Monk's life. Those who reached that state usually spent the rest of their lives in complete seclusion and silence within the Monastery or a specially-prepared Skete or Hermitage, where laymen could not enter even to pray.

It should be noted, however, that not all the fathers and ascetics of the Church divided monasticism into Greater and Lesser Schema. For example, St. Theodore of Studium (826) disagreed with this practice, since he considered that as there was only one Sacrament of Baptism, likewise there should be only one form of monasticism. The practice, however, became widespread, although, in Athonite Greek monasteries, for example, the practice of St. Theodore is generally adhered to.

The Order of the Great Schema differs from that of the Lesser Schema in the following particulars: 1) the monastic vestments are laid on the Holy Table the night before, signifying that the candidate receives them from the Lord Himself; 2) the name of the Monk is again changed; 3) instead of the Paraman, the Monk of the Great Schema receives a garment called the Analavos (to take up in Russian Analav), or the mystical Cross which the Monk is to take up daily in imitation of Christ. This is worn around the neck and reaches to the ankles at the end. Upon it is depicted the Cross of Christ, together with the spear, reed and sponge, as well as the skull and crossbones. Like the Paraman, the Analav is made from the skin of a dead animal and for the same reason; 4) instead of a Kamilavka with veil, the Monk of the Great Schema is given a pointed hat and veil called Koukoulion or Cowl (often called a Cowl of Guilelessness), upon which are depicted five crosses one on the forehead, one on the back between the shoulders, one on the back further down, and one each on the ends of the wings of the veil.

Nuns.

In conclusion, we must make note that in Orthodoxy monasticism embraces both men and women. The general rules for the organization of monastic life, the Monastic Grades, Tonsure, Habit, etc., are the same for all monastics, and the goals and aspirations of monastic life likewise are the same for both men and women. Customarily, female monastics are styled Nuns and their monasteries Convents, and as the Monks are addressed as Brother or Father, so too, the Nuns are addressed as

Sister or Mother. The Superior of a Convent is entitled Abbess (Igumena in Russian; in Greek Hegumenissa). Nonetheless, although sequestered in separate monasteries, each isolated from the opposite sex, all Orthodox monastics, Monks and Nuns alike, are united in a common quest for the Angelic State.

The Monastic Tonsure

It is generally accepted that monasticism began in Egypt towards the end of the Third Century, though its origins may have been older. Indeed, some form of monasticism may have existed almost from the birth of the Church. As the word monastic implies (in Greek *monos* alone), the Monk was one who went into the desert to live alone with God. (Such were also called hermits (or anchorites), which means solitaries.) The first recorded hermitic Orthodox Christian literature was St. Paul of Thebes (341) who lived over sixty years in a cave in the Egyptian desert. But the greatest of these hermits, often called the Father of Monasticism, was St. Anthony the Great (356). Yet, even in the life of this father of monasticism, the desert solitude was gradually modified by the appearance of disciples. These men wished to pursue the monastic life under the guidance of one who was already experienced. A soldier marching into battle would much rather be commanded by an experienced officer than an inexperienced one, no matter how educated the latter may be. Nor, if he himself is inexperienced, would he wish to enter the battle alone. Thus, after struggling many years as a solitary, St. Anthony gathered to himself a community of Monks who lived in separate huts, each working out his own salvation in his own particular way, but under Anthony's supervision, guided by his great experience in spiritual life.

Anthony knew, however, the difficulties of the solitary life and he strongly approved of the establishment of the coenobitic or common life, as it was perfected by another Egyptian father, St. Pachomius the Great (348). In his coenobitic communities the Monks all lived together in one place, everything being held in common (there being no private property), and the individual Monk was under the strict supervision of a spiritual elder (or *starets* in this case Pachomius himself). There were still solitaries inhabiting the surrounding desert, and sometimes the elder would himself choose to live more frequently in the desert than in the more populated central community.

Eventually the central community became the norm of monasticism and the solitary life the exception. Whenever we see examples of solitary monastic life in later Saint's lives, we see it entered into almost exclusively by those who had already acquired considerable experience in communal monastic life. Even as great an ascetic as Saint Seraphim of Sarov pleaded for a long time before he was given permission to withdraw into the forest outside of his monastery in order to pursue the solitary life. Thus, in time, the communal, coenobitic form became the preferred form of Orthodox monasticism and thus, the overwhelming majority of Orthodox monastic communities in the world today are coenobitic communities.

In a coenobitic monastery each of the Monks live in a separate room, called a cell, wherein he sleeps and performs his private rule of prayer (the cell-rule) given to him by his elder. All of the Monks assemble together for the Divine Services, for the common meals (or trapeza) in the Refectory (often called the Trapeza or Dining Hall) and in common work. The head of a coenobitic monastery is the Abbot (or Igumen (Hegumen), meaning leader) or, if the monastery were particularly famous, the higher ranking Archimandrite (chief of a fold). In some monasteries under the direct supervision of the Primate of the Church (who is often called, in such cases, the Great Abbot) a deputy will be appointed (called, in Russian, Namestnik or one who acts in the name of the Abbot Deputy Abbot).

In the 14th Century, on Mt. Athos (a monastic republic which has existed on one of the peninsulas of Greece since the 10th Century), there appeared a relaxed form of the coenobitic monastery called the idiorrhythmic monastery (meaning personal way or manner) in which many of the communal rules were greatly altered. Monks were allowed to hold private property, they often cooked for themselves in their own cells, and were not strictly required to attend all Divine Services as a

community. This form of monasticism, for a time, held sway on Mt. Athos, but at the present time only a minority of the monasteries there, and in the world as a whole, are, in fact, idiorrhythmic.

Another form of monastic life which developed was the skete life, so-called for the famous Egyptian community of Scetis which originated this form. The skete life has often been called the royal or middle path of monasticism, midway between the extreme rigors of solitary life and the common life. A skete, which in modern times is usually situated on the lands of a sovereign monastery, is, in effect, a small monastic village, consisting of a small number of Monks living a stricter ascetical life prayer.

Skete life can take one of two different forms: a) the idiorhythm skete, which consists of separate houses surrounding a small church, in which the Divine Liturgy is usually served on Saturdays, Sundays and Feast Days. The Daily Services are said in a chapel to be found in each house, and the general rules of monastic life are the same as in idiorhythmic monasteries (the holding of private property, etc.), and b) the coenobitic skete, which consists of the common life typical of the coenobitic monasteries in a main house with Daily Services celebrated in common in the Skete church. As in the idiorhythmic sketes, Divine Liturgy is celebrated only on Saturdays, Sundays and Feast Days.

Finally, there were also to be found hermitages on the monastery lands (and elsewhere), where those who had especially progressed in the monastic life were allowed to live as solitaries. In such cases the hermit was granted a food ration from the main monastery, usually brought to him by Monks of the monastery, for the hermit rarely, if ever, left his hermitage, where he spent his remaining earthly days in strict solitude and ceaseless prayer, just as had the ancient solitaries of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and other places.

Considering the predominance of coenobitic monasticism, if the origin of monasticism was the solitary life and the Monk is, by definition, alone, why, then, did monasticism become essentially communal? Why does the Church even seem to discourage those who would lead a life of solitude? Is this not a departure from the essence of monasticism?

The answer lies in that physical solitude is not the essence of monasticism, for this essence is, in fact, the struggle to cast out the very root of man's sinfulness: pride and self-will. The First Sin was none other than the desire to live by man's own will rather than the will of God. It was the desire to be independent, to be as God in a manner that would free man from obeying anyone but himself. This is the sin that caused the Fall of man and which is at the origin of virtually every sin we commit. I steal when my desire to possess surpasses all other thoughts or reason. I lie when my desires overcome reality. I hate when someone stands in the way of what I want. I do not pray when I am the center of my universe, and not God.

Pride and self-will can be eradicated only through the acquisition of their opposites: humility and obedience. A Monk leading a totally solitary life is rarely in a position to effectively test either of these qualities. A humble attitude towards God is genuine only if accompanied by humility towards fellow-men. Obedience to God is empty unless one is able to obey others. Instead of learning humility and obedience, the Monk who lives alone runs the serious risk of falling into a special form of pride, *prelest*, a Russian word sometimes translated as spiritual self-deception. The Monk takes pride in his ascetic labors, in his saintly manner of life and in this state, he can be completely lost, since true monastic sanctity is always self-accusing, always mourning its sinfulness. The more severe the asceticism, the greater the danger of *prelest*.

Humility and obedience can best and most-safely be acquired through the total surrender of the Monk to an instructor experienced in the spiritual life. The Monk confesses even his most intimate thoughts to his elder and does nothing without his blessing. The former teaches humility, the latter teaches obedience.

The problem of pride and self-will is, as we have said, common to all mankind. Obviously, it is not only Monks and Nuns who must struggle to replace them with humility and obedience. True monastic life, however, especially under the direction of an elder, is exceptionally conducive to that particular struggle. The life of a Monk is specifically regulated to the acquisition of these virtues. Life outside the monastery, with its own responsibilities and preoccupations, makes it difficult to discern the state of one's soul and concentrate on the acquisition of spiritual virtues.

For this reason, Orthodox Christian men and women, clergy and laity, have been flocking to the monasteries for over a millennium and a half. They came to learn from those who are, in a sense, at the front line of battle. They came to learn from the experienced, to obtain advice for success and consolation in failure. They were greeted with love, compassion, and deep understanding. They learned that they were not alone in their struggles, that others had suffered as they did. They returned to their homes strengthened, encouraged and wiser, better-equipped to continue the struggle in their own daily lives.

And so, the goal of monasticism was not one of ego and self, but of love of God and the desire to set aright the pernicious influences of pride, self-will and disobedience. Monastic life elevates a Monk to spiritual perfection in the light of Christ's love and, by living in this love, bears light and spiritual warmth to the world. By withdrawing from the world, a Monk does not express contempt for it, but, on the contrary, acquires a perfect love for the world, a pure love in Christ which is alien to worldly passions. By turning away from vanity the Monk strives to perceive himself and his impotence, and to fortify himself spiritually through prayer to God. And thus it was that it was to the monasteries that the faithful turned in order to acquire help and encouragement in their own daily spiritual struggles.

Orthodox Prayer

Communing with God in Prayer

The goal of the Christian's life on earth is salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ and, at the same time, communion with God. The means for this communion is prayer, and through his prayer the Christian is joined in one spirit with the Lord (I Cor. 6:17). Prayer is the focal point and foundation of spiritual life and the source of salvation. Without prayer, as St. John Chrysostom says, there is no life in the spirit. Without prayer man is deprived of communion with God and can be compared to a dry and barren tree, which is cut down and thrown into the fire (Matt. 7:19).

In prayer, the Christian concentrates together all his spiritual acts. Prayer draws down to him the grace of God and is an invaluable instrument of spiritual defense in the Christian's struggles against the sinful passions and vices. By prayer our thoughts, desires and deeds are sanctified, for he who prays receives the blessing of the Lord on his deeds, for, as Holy Scripture tells us, unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Ps. 127:1). Nothing so helps us to grow in virtue as our pure and pious prayers to God. Thus it was the shared opinion of all the Holy Fathers that prayer is the mother of virtues. By repeated and fervent prayer, man is made more worthy of God's mercy and more capable of receiving the gifts of grace which God, by reason of His infinite goodness, is already to bestow on us out of His immeasurable bounties.

In prayer, the Christian prays not only for himself, but for all men, for we all are the children of God. We must pray for the salvation of our neighbor just as we pray for our own salvation, and the best means of correcting our neighbor is to pray for him, because prayer for our neighbor has far greater effect than denunciation of his sins. In addition, we pray not only for the living, but also for the departed, that God may forgive them their sins and grant them repose in the heavenly mansions of the righteous.

As with any spiritual endeavor, however, the Christian must learn how to pray properly. As St. Tikhon of Zadonsk cautions us: Of no value is that prayer in which the tongue prays but the mind is empty; the tongue speaks, but the mind lies silent; the tongue calls God, but the mind wanders amongst created things. We must, therefore, pray in fear and trembling and try in every way to ensure that our minds are with our words, or, as St. John of the Ladder tells us, to enclose our mind in the words of our prayer, [so that] the heart may respond to the words of the prayers.

The reading of prayers and prostrations are essential, of course, but these only express the state of prayer, while the prayer itself should come from the heart. And it is only such prayer, from the bottom of the heart and of the soul, that is the life of the spirit. True prayer, however, is a gift of God, and this gift is not granted to us without diligence and struggle. Therefore it is necessary for us to pray that the Lord should deem us worthy of this gift and grant us the grace to offer up to Him our sincere, pure and heartfelt prayer, for we are only able to pray when strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Therefore we must be mindful that the Holy Spirit is drawn to a soul cleansed of the stain of sin and worldly passions, and only in such a soul will He abide.

Our prayers will gradually grow more perfect as we improve the manner of our lives and cleanse our hearts of sinful passion. This banishment of sinful ways from our lives brings as its reward our success in prayer. At the same time, we must say that prayer cannot achieve perfection in isolation, but must be accompanied by all the virtues, for as we grow in virtue, so does our prayer grow ever more perfect.

Therefore we say that a Christian does not achieve true prayer at once, but only gradually, through various exertions and labor. All of life's deeds require toil and patience, but nowhere more than in the striving after the supreme virtue prayer.

Conditions for Prayer.

The first condition for the attainment of true prayer is a fervent desire to be saved and be pleasing to God a readiness to sacrifice all for the sake of God and the salvation of one's soul. As Bishop Theophan the Recluse states: Consider prayer to be the first and foremost duty in your life and as such keep it in your heart. Go about your prayers as to the fulfillment of your primary duty, and not as to something to be done between tasks.

A habit of absentminded, inattentive and careless prayer breeds a coldness towards God, dejection, a weakening of the faith and a darkening of the mind, and these in their turn lead to spiritual numbness. For prayer to be fruitful it must be fervent, offered up with an awareness of the need for what we are asking (Col. 4:2) and it must be untiring and relentless, pursuing its purpose with the firm resolve of the widow in Our Lord's parable who seeks protection from her adversary (Luke 18:2-8). At the same time, however, we must ensure that our supplications be worthy of God and of His glory and not opposed to His divine will. Surely we must pray: Lord, let Thy, and not my, will be done in all things!

There are different degrees of prayer and for the beginner the effort of prayer consists mainly in attentively reading or listening to prayer, in standing, bowing and making the Sign of the Cross. Here a great deal of self-exertion and patience is called for, because our attention becomes distracted in this process and our heart may not feel the words of the Prayer. Through this verbal prayer through the diligent exercise of it the Christian, with the help of God, gradually trains his mind to collect itself, to understand and penetrate into the words of the prayer and to pronounce them without becoming distracted by outside thoughts.

The Christian must remain constantly mindful of God and must walk in fear of God. He is always before the eyes of God as God is invisibly with him always and everywhere. One's Guardian Angel is also always by his side. One must also be mindful of the fact that earthly life is not eternal. Death, which passes no one by and carries us off in many ways, must always be brought to remembrance

as well as the fearsome Day of Judgment, where we all shall have to answer for our every sinful word, deed and thought. We must always call to mind Hell and the eternal torment which awaits all sinners, as well as the Kingdom of Heaven prepared for the faithful who lived in righteousness. In this way we may lead our lives in the fear of the Lord.

When we pray we must remember that if our prayers will rise speedily to God, they must be said with charity, for prayer said without love is not heard. According to St. John Chrysostom, charity is the wing of prayer. As the Holy Fathers also teach us, we should begin our prayers with glorification of the Creator of all, with a sincere thanksgiving to God for all His mercies, for all the trials and sorrows sent down for our benefit and the benefit of our neighbors. Then we must make a confession of sins in repentance of heart after which we will be deemed worthy to entreat the King of Heaven in prayer.

Mechanics of Prayer.

The Church of Christ teaches us prayers composed by righteous and holy men. The Holy Fathers and Ascetics of the Church, enlightened by the grace of God, have composed many beautiful prayers, filled with holy thoughts and deep feeling for the guidance and admonition of Christians. We hear these prayers in Church during the Divine Services, but for private prayer at home, each Christian must recite the prayers contained in the Prayerbook.

When we begin to pray, we do not immediately break off from our daily tasks and just start praying, but we must prepare ourselves. As the Prayerbook says: Stand in silence for a few moments until all your senses are calmed. Furthermore, as Holy Scripture tells us: Before offering a prayer, prepare yourself; and do not be like a man who tempts the Lord (Sirach 18:23). In addition to this, before entering into prayer, one must prepare himself not only inwardly, but also outwardly.

During prayer one should stand straight with ones eyes fixed on the icon or lowered to the ground, while, at the same time, the eyes of the soul, together with one's soulful aspirations, should be lifted up to God. This outward attitude of piety in prayer is both necessary and beneficial, for the disposition of the soul is in conformity with the disposition of the body.

One must also prepare himself for prayer in the soul, the essence of which consists of purging all vengeful thoughts from one's heart (Mark 11:25-26), in an awareness of one's own sinfulness and with the contrition and humility of soul that such awareness brings. For the only sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise (Ps. 50:17). As the Holy Fathers teach us, whosoever does not avow himself a sinner, his prayer shall not be pleasing to the Lord.

In his daily devotions, the Christian must adhere to a strict home rule of prayer. All the great ascetics had such a rule and kept to it diligently. The extent of our home rule of prayer is determined for each of us in accordance with our manner of life and the state of our spiritual and physical strength. It is better that we offer up a few prayers, made, however, in proper devotion, than that we say many prayers in haste, a danger difficult to avoid if we take upon ourselves too heavy a burden.

In the Prayerbook the Church provides all Christians with a rule of morning and evening prayers. This is a moderate rule and is of special help to those who are just learning to pray. As one fulfills his devotional obligations, one must not be thinking only of reciting all of the prescribed prayers, but must strive to arouse and strengthen in the soul the proper prayerful feelings and devotional attitude. One must strengthen himself against the temptations of sloth and must seek not to excuse himself from prayers on the grounds of lack of time. One must not let off reading the prayers even when fatigued after a day of hard work, since such prayer, done with such great effort, is especially pleasing to God. One must be prepared to sacrifice some moments of bodily repose for the Lord, for

by rushing through one's prayers in the anxiety for bodily rest, one will only deprive himself of both physical and spiritual repose.

An unhurried and devout recitation of the words will greatly help in keeping attention on the prayers. If one only has a little time for prayer, it would be far better to say fewer prayers, but with careful thought and attention, than to rush through many prayers without proper attention. But, one must also not allow the omitted prayers to go unheeded; these can be completed later when there is time. While saying a prayer, especially if reading it from a book, one must not hasten from one word to the next, lest there be a failure to grasp the truth of the text and to receive it into the heart.

The Holy Fathers recommend for greater spirituality of mind and heart the rule of executing bows, prostrations, and making the Sign of the Cross, during prayer, as an expression of heartfelt feelings of penitence, humility, deep piety, fear of God and devotion to Him, for when one's body is prostrate, the soul ascends heavenwards to God!

St. John Chrysostom on Prayers.

In his earthly ministry, St. John Chrysostom was well known as a superb homilist and for his efforts received the well-deserved title Golden-mouth. In his sermons, St. John was especially concerned for the spiritual and moral development of his flock and, as a result, he was especially interested in teaching them how to pray. As trees cannot live without water, so man's soul cannot live without prayerful contact with God, he taught. If you deprive yourself of prayer, you will do as though you had taken a fish out of water: as life is water for a fish, so is prayer for you.

To live in God means that one must always and everywhere be with God, and without prayer, such a union is impossible. Therefore the Holy Father, St. John, did not limit conversation with God in prayer to one set time of day or to one definite place. As he taught, one can say prolonged prayers while walking to the square, while walking about the streets. While sitting and working in a workshop, one can dedicate his spirit to God. One can say prolonged and fervent prayers, I say, both coming in and going out. While in public, St. John did not recommend that prayer be said with the lips, for the power of prayer lies not in words uttered by the lips, but by the heart. One can be heard without uttering any words. While walking about a square, one can pray in thought with great zeal, and while sitting with friends and doing any sort of thing, one can call upon God with a great cry (I mean an internal cry) without making it known to any of those present.

While not diminishing the role and importance of prayer set for definite hours, St. John, nonetheless, sees the time of prayer in much broader terms. We can obtain benefit from praying during our entire lives by devoting to it the greater part of our time. He even asked Christians to pray during the night, for he knew from experience what benefit such prayers bring. Prayers at night are often purer because the mind is more at ease and there are fewer worries. These prayers can be short and few, but, as St. John says, let us rise during the night. If you do not say many prayers, then say one with attentive concern and this is enough. I demand no more. If not in the middle of the night, at least towards morning.

Fasting also proves to be an invaluable aid to man in the achievement of perfect prayer. While fasting, as the Saint notes, a man does not doze off, does not talk a lot, neither does he yawn or grow weak in prayer as often happens to many when not fasting.

Speaking of the content of prayer, St. John advises first of all to thank God for everything. Receiving all gifts from God, a Christian not only must thank God for them, but must also ask them of Him. But, not all that is asked of God can bring benefit to man or can be good for him. Many are not heard because they ask for useless things, because they insist on the fulfillment of their own will and not God's, show indulgence towards their own weaknesses, and do not gather spiritual treasure. A man must also be taught by reason of his limitations and sinfulness that he cannot always correctly determine what will bring him what he asks for in prayer.

Whether we are heard or not when we pray, depends upon the following: 1) Are we worthy to receive? 2) Do we pray according to Divine Law? 3) Do we pray incessantly? 4) Do we avoid asking for worldly things? 5) Do we fulfill everything that is required on our part? and, finally, 6) Do we ask for beneficial things?

When these conditions are fulfilled, prayer acquires a truly ineffable power. It spiritualizes a man, renews him, inspires him, and carries him away to heavenly pastures. As St. John affirms, in truth prayer is the light of the soul, the true knowledge of God and men, the healer of vices, the physician of diseases, the peace of the soul, the heavenly guide which does not revolve around the earth, but which leads up to Heaven! Therefore, the beneficial devotion of prayer is the breath of life.

Church Prayer.

Apart from private or home prayer, which is said in private, according to the words of the Savior, When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you (Matt. 6:6), as a Christian one must also participate in church prayer, conducted during Divine Service, before the gathering of the faithful. The importance and significance of this type of prayer at the Divine Services is stressed in the Gospels. The Lord Himself, during His earthly life, used to visit the Temple of Jerusalem, as well as the synagogue, and pray therein. He often prayed, not only in solitude, but also before the people, and the first Christians were day by day, attending the temple together (Acts 2:46). Therefore our Holy Orthodox Church our Mother strictly commands her children to attend Divine Services, which is particularly essential to our salvation.

By its very significance church prayer is incomparably higher than prayer said at home, for as St. John Chrysostom tells us, a single Lord, have mercy uttered in church together with the congregation of believers, is worth a hundred prostrations during lonely home prayer. Why is this so? Because our Lord said: For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

Some say that it is not essential to go to church to pray, that one can pray just as well at home. Beware, for you deceive only yourselves, warns St. John Chrysostom. You can, of course, pray at home, but you cannot there pray as you can in church, amidst so many people, speaking to God as with one voice. When you pray to the Lord alone you will not be heard as soon as when you pray together with your brethren, for together with them your prayer is great: you pray in unanimity, concord, a union of love and of prayer with the officiating priests. That is why the priests stand before us, that the prayers of the people, who are weak in spirit, may be united with their stronger prayers and thus be uplifted to Heaven. Such prayer has much greater power, is far more bold and effective than private prayer recited at home. During church prayer it is not only people who lift up their voices, but Angels, too, come to the Lord with prayer, and the Archangels also make their devotions to Him.

The Lord's Prayer.

When the Disciples asked Our Lord to teach them how to pray, he gave to them the words of the Lord's Prayer, which, in St. Matthew's Gospel is worded thus:

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from the Evil One.

The words Our Father Who art in heaven bear witness to the truth that God is the Father of all that exists. He not only created the universe, the entire world material and spiritual, visible and invisible but, being the Father, He loves His creation, cares for it, and guides it to the goals of goodness and perfection as He has planned. The Father is He Who calls us to life, Who loves His creation and cares for it. According to Bishop Nicholas of Ochrid, when I open my mouth and cry: 'Father!' love expels fear, and the earth seems to draw closer to Heaven....Egoism cries to Thee: 'My Father,' but love says: 'Our Father!'

The universe created by God is diverse, for, on the one hand, it is our world the world of nature and man and, on the other hand, it is spiritual the world of the Angelic Host and the Church Triumphant-known biblically as Heaven. Therefore God is called the Father of our natural-human world and the Heavenly Father Who art in Heaven, that is, the Father of the spiritual world. Heaven also implies that purity and sanctity of divine life to which man is called, and which does not exist in him if he is entirely captivated by Sin. As Bishop Nicholas says: Heaven is very, very far for a man whose heart and soul have turned away from Thee...but Heaven is very, very close for a man whose soul is open and awaits Thy coming.

The Lord's Prayer consists of seven petitions, and these are things that we should ask of our Heavenly Father.

(1) Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

In the first petition, we should beseech our Heavenly Father that His name, which is always holy in itself, be hallowed, with His blessing, both in us and through us (Matt. 5:16). The Lord is the fullness and perfection of sanctity but, by glorifying Him, we sanctify ourselves and the surrounding world.

(2) Thy kingdom come.

In the second petition, we ask the Lord to help us and make us worthy, through His grace, of the Kingdom of Heaven which begins, as Christ Himself said, here on earth, within us. But it will only come to us in the fullness of its power when Sin ceases to hold undivided sway in us and righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17) abide in us.

(3) Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

In the third petition, we beseech God the Father that He not allow us to live out our earthly lives according to our sinful ways, but according to His will, which is always good, and acceptable, and perfect (Rom. 12:2). By obeying the will of God, we begin to establish the Kingdom of God within ourselves.

(4) Give us this day our daily bread;

In the fourth petition we beseech God to give us our daily bread everything we need in life, spiritual as well as physical. Our spiritual bread is the grace-bestowing Sacraments of the Church, instituted for our salvation. First and foremost, our daily bread means Holy Communion, of which the Lord said: I am the bread of life...and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh (John 6:48, 51). Material bread means all that is necessary for human existence, directly associated with the surrounding world. The words this day warn us against too many cares, and teaches us to

ask only for what is most essential, because the Lord says: But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day (Matt. 6:33-34).

(5) And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

In the fifth petition the Lord teaches us how to ask forgiveness for our sins from the Heavenly Father, and how they may be forgiven. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also Who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mark 11:25-26). Man's sins are called trespasses against God in this petition and here we beg for God's mercy. This is our confession, asking for His forgiveness. Whoever seeks forgiveness should resort to the healing power of repentance and forgive his neighbor, the trespasser. When we forgive our trespassers, then God will also forgive us our sins (Mark 4:24).

(6) And lead us not into temptation,

In the sixth petition we ask of the Lord that He not allow us to fall into sin. We ask Him to preserve us from all that confuses our spirit and from temptations that are beyond our strength to reject. If we encounter on our earthly path trials and temptations sent for our purification from sin and spiritual fortification, then we ask God to send us His timely help. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (I Cor. 10:13). For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted (Heb. 2:18), St. Paul says, indicating the Helper and Accomplisher of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(7) But deliver us from the Evil One.

In the seventh and final petition, we ask that we be protected against and saved from Evil and the Devil, who is a murderer from the beginning and works for our destruction. As St. Peter says, the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Remembering the Enemy of our salvation, the Lord urges us to be vigilant and sober of spirit, to have courage to accomplish a feat, teaches us to pray for one another, and by prayer to the Heavenly Father, to fortify ourselves spiritually and free ourselves from misfortune and disaster.

Thus the Lord's Prayer is the unfailing model and rule for all prayers. The Church uses it in all the sacramental orders, and in all the Divine Services. As St. John Chrysostom says, it is the crown of all prayers.

The Church's Prayer for the Dead

The Church's Prayer for the Dead.

At every Divine Service, the Holy Orthodox Church offers up prayers for her departed children. Special prayers and Troparia are read at Compline (Night Service) and Nocturns (Midnight Service), and at Vespers and Matins the departed are remembered in the Litany of Fervent Supplication. At the Divine Liturgy the departed are commemorated at the Proskomedia, in the Litany following the Gospel and when It is truly meet... is sung. In addition, it is customary to have a Service for the departed on Saturdays, unless this coincides with a feast on that day.

The Third Day.

On the third day after death, it is customary to commemorate the departed, since they had been baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity-Father, Son and Holy Spirit and had kept the Orthodox

Faith they received at Holy Baptism. In addition, as the Apostolic Constitutions point out: Let the third day of the departed be celebrated with psalms and lessons, and prayers, on account of Him Who arose within the space of three days (Bk. 8, Ch. 42], that is, in honor of the Third-Day Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Ninth Day.

On the ninth day after death, the Orthodox Church offers prayers for the departed both in remembrance of the living [Apost. Const.] and that the departed soul be counted worthy to be numbered among the choir of the saints, through the prayers and intercessions of the nine ranks of angels.

The Fortieth Day.

From earliest times the Church had commanded that the departed be commemorated during the course of forty days and on the fortieth day itself, for so did the people lament Moses after his death [Apost. Const.]. This is also done in remembrance of the victory of Christ over Satan after He had spent forty days in fasting and prayer. The Church also commemorates the departed on the yearly anniversary of death and, in some places, on the twentieth day, and the third, sixth and ninth months, as well. It is also customary to commemorate the departed on their birthdays and patronal saint's days.

Koliva (grain or rice, cooked with honey or sugar, sometimes mixed with plums, raisins and other sweets) is often offered on these days of commemoration. The grain and fruit signify that the dead will again rise from the grave by God's might, for both the grain (sown in the ground) and the fruit (which falls on the ground) decay first and then afterwards bring forth abundant, ripe and whole fruit. Sugar and honey signify that after the Resurrection of the righteous, there will come a joyful and blessed life in the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than one bitter and sorrowful.

As St. Simeon of Thessalonica says:

The [Third Day Service] is celebrated for the reason that [the departed one] received his being through the Trinity and having passed to a state of good being and being changed he shall [at the Resurrection] appear in his original state or one superior. The [Ninth Day] is celebrated that his spirit dwell together with the holy spirits the angels being immaterial and naturally similar to them for these spirits are nine in number and by them [the orders] they triply proclaim and praise the God in Trinity and so that he may be united with the holy spirits of the Saints. The [Fortieth Day] is celebrated because of the Savior's Ascension which came to pass after so many days after His Resurrection in the sense that [the reposed], as it were, having also risen and having ascended...being caught away in the clouds, shall meet the Judge and thus being united with Him, he should ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17).

Now the third, sixth and ninth months are also celebrated as proclaiming the Trinity, the God of all, and to His glory in behalf of the deceased, for by the Trinity a man is fashioned, and when loosed from the body he returns to Him, and by the Trinity he hopes to receive resurrection. But the end of the year is celebrated because it is the consummation, and our God, the Trinity, is the Life of all and the Cause of being, and shall be the Restoration of all and the Renewal of human nature [On Things Done for the Departed].

In general, the custom of observing prayers for the dead has been held by the Orthodox Church since earliest times. The Divine Liturgy has always been celebrated in memory of the departed and, on these days, many have increased and continue to increase their offerings in the Church, assisting the poor and needy brethren out of love for their departed loved ones.

In addition to these personal days for remembrance of the departed, the Church has also set aside a number of universal days of commemoration. These are:

Meatfare Sunday.

This Saturday falls during Meatfare Week, which is the last week for eating meat before the start of the Great Fast. On the following day, Meatfare Sunday, the Church commemorates the Dread Judgment of Christ, and for this reason, on the Saturday before she prays for all who have departed in faith and hope of Resurrection, that Christ show mercy to them at the Universal Judgment. This commemoration dates from very ancient times and here the Church especially prays for those who have met untimely deaths and have been left without a proper funeral. This is evident from the hymns of that day, including the following from the Matins Canon:

To those hidden by the deep or cut down in battle, swallowed by earthquake, murdered, or consumed by fire, grant in Thy mercy a place with the faithful and the righteous [Ode 1].

Those whom the creatures of the sea or the birds of the air have devoured, O Christ our God, raise up in glory on the Last Day, as Thou judgest right [Ode 3].

Give rest, O Christ, to all the faithful destroyed by the wrath of God: struck down by deadly thunderbolts from heaven, swallowed by a cleft in the earth, or drowned in the

sea [Ode 9].

Second, Third and Fourth Saturdays of Great Lent.

Since the usual Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is not celebrated on the weekdays of Great Lent, but rather the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, it is the accepted custom of the Church to commemorate the dead on these three Saturdays (the other Saturdays being dedicated to special celebrations: St. Theodore on the 1st Saturday, the Akathist to the Theotokos on the 5th, and the Resurrection of Lazarus on the 6th), so that the dead not be deprived of the Church's saving intercession.

Tuesday of St. Thomas Week.

According to pious custom, a commemoration of the dead is made so that, having celebrated the bright festival of Christ's Resurrection, the joy of the Paschal feast be shared with those that have departed in the hope of their own Resurrection. Thus this day bears the name, Day of Rejoicing (Radonitsa).

Trinity Saturday.

On this day (the Saturday before Holy Pentecost) the Church asks that the saving grace of the Holy Spirit wash away the sins from the souls of all our forefathers, fathers and brethren that have reposed from all the ages, asking that they all be united in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Commemoration of Departed Orthodox Warriors.

The Church has also set aside two days of remembrance for those who have laid down their lives in battle:

Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Aug. 29).

On the day of the Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, the Church prays for all who have died for faith and homeland, as being like the righteous John who suffered for the truth.

St. Demetrius Saturday (Sat. before Oct. 26).

This commemoration was originally initiated by Great Prince Dimitry Donskoy on his Patron Saint's Day (St. Demetrius of Thessalonica Oct. 26) in 1380. In remembrance of his great victory over the Tatars on Kulikovo Field (in the present-day Province of Tula in Russia), Prince Dimitry made a pilgrimage to the Trinity-Sergius Monastery at Zagorsk (Sergiev Posad) (near Moscow). After commemorating all who fell in that war, he later decreed that the annual remembrance be made on the Saturday before October 26. Later, Orthodox Christians began to commemorate on this day, not only Orthodox warriors fallen for the Faith, but also for all Orthodox Christians who have died in the Faith.

The Jesus Prayer Prayer of the Heart.

For the Orthodox, the prayer par excellence is the Jesus Prayer, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner (or, in its shorter form, Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me). From New Testament times, the Orthodox have believed that the power of God is present in the Name of Jesus. When the Apostle Peter healed a crippled man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he was questioned by the High Priest: By what power or by what name did you do this? (Acts 4:7). St. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, answered: Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man is standing before you well (Acts 4:10).

Our Lord Himself, comforting His disciples before His passion and death, told them that Whatever you ask in My Name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in My Name, I will do it (John 14:13-14). Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you in My Name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in My Name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23-24).

Later, in the era immediately following the time of the Apostles, St. Ignatius of Antioch (who had known St. John the Evangelist), when he was being led into the arena in Rome to suffer martyrdom by wild beasts, when he was asked by the soldiers guarding him why he kept repeating the name Jesus unceasingly, replied that It was written in his heart.

Thus, praying this prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ has been a vital part of the Orthodox spiritual tradition from earliest times and has been especially treasured by monastics since the 4th Century. In the Service for the Tonsuring of a Monk, when he is given the Prayer Rope (Komvoschoinlon Chotki), the Abbot says, as it is handed over: Take, brother, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, for continual prayer to Jesus; for you must always have the Name of the Lord Jesus in mind, in heart, and on your lips, ever saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

However, while especially practiced and popularized by monastics, praying in the Name of Jesus is every bit the privilege of all Christians. As the Prayerbook says, At work and at rest, at home and on journeys, alone or among other people, always and everywhere repeat in your mind and heart the sweet name of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' In our busy lives, however, how can an ordinary Orthodox Christian practice this unceasing Prayer of Jesus?

In our daily affairs, there are many things that we do out of habit. At the beginning of the day, for example, we wash, we dress, we have breakfast, and so on. As we go on our way to work, there is usually much free time. During the working day, whether at home doing housework, or at the factory, shop or office, there are many idle moments or moments of repetitious work. Even in such recreational activities as hiking, jogging, or whatever, there are many opportunities to engage in prayer. And what better time to do good, to unceasingly call on the Name of Jesus, can there be than

at times such as these? Even the most monotonous task can be transformed into a sweet and joyful experience!

Even if we are in a crowd, at work, at a family gathering, in situations that demand all our thought and attention, it is possible to say the Prayer of Jesus, perhaps not for long, continuous blocks of time, but from time to time. As Archbishop Paul, Primate of the Orthodox Church of Finland and a Valaam Monk states: If we get into the habit of reciting the Name of Jesus in this way even for half a minute at a time and it is possible to arrange such a pause for oneself in almost any work remembrance of God's presence will remain as an undercurrent in our soul. [This and other passages herein are taken from *The Faith We Hold*, by Archbishop Paul, p.85-86.]

The Jesus Prayer, then, is a prayer of amazing versatility; it is a prayer for beginners and equally a prayer that leads to the deepest mysteries of the contemplative life. For some, there comes a time when the Jesus Prayer enters into the heart, so to speak, which is why it is also called The Prayer of the Heart. At this point, the Jesus Prayer is no longer recited by means of a deliberate effort, but repeats itself spontaneously, continuing even when one talks or writes, is present in one's dreams and wakes him up in the morning.

According to St. Isaac the Syrian,

when the Spirit takes its dwelling-place in a man he does not cease to pray, because the Spirit will constantly pray in him. Then, neither when he sleeps, nor when he is awake, will prayer be cut off from his soul; but when he eats and when he drinks, when he lies down and when he does any work, even when he is immersed in sleep, the perfumes of prayer will breathe in his heart spontaneously [Mystical Treatises].

Thus, both to those who recite this prayer ceaselessly and to those who are only occasional users of it, the Jesus Prayer is found to be a great source of joy and reassurance.

The Psalter a Book of Prayer.

The Psalms have become a part of our Christian life, so much so that we the people of the New Testament sometimes tend to forget that the Psalter is also an Old Testament book. The Apostles mention the use of Psalms during the prayer meetings of the first Christians (1 Cor. 14:26). They called on believers to edify themselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Already by the beginning of the 4th Century the use of the Psalter in private homes was widespread.

How can we explain this widespread use of the Psalms in Christian times, when the Church already had new prayers inspired by the Gospel teaching and compiled with regard for the fundamentally new relationship between God and man a relationship made possible through the act of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ? Did not St. Paul say, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17)? Why do so many of the Holy Fathers, themselves authors of outstanding prayers, speak with such feeling about the ancient prayers of the Psalter?

It is known that Christ sometimes used the Psalms in prayer and some scholars consider that He and His disciples sang Psalms after the Last Supper. But even these Gospel references do not fully explain the widespread use of the Psalter.

The popularity and widespread use of the Psalter are due, first of all, to its special spiritual inspiration, poetic expressiveness and theological depth. As St. Basil the Great wrote, the Book of Psalms embraces everything contained in the other Holy Books. It prophesies about the future, and recalls the past, and stipulates laws for life and rules for action. The Psalter is sometimes called, rightfully so, The Little Bible, for it speaks in the tongue of prayer about the creation of the world

and man, and traces in detail the thousands-year-old paths and fortunes of nations. It describes the struggle between Good and Evil and the psychology of sin and virtue with unusual depth.

The theme of most of the Psalms is the providential paths of God and in the course of these paths God is revealed to the Psalmist in all His might, holiness, wisdom, love, righteousness and mercy. The Psalms are filled with deep reflections about God's Law and spiritual and ethical admonitions. The many Messianic prophecies to be found in the Psalter are especially astounding in their historical accuracy.

The Psalter is first and foremost, however, a book of prayer. The Psalmist prays, opening his heart to God. The prayer of the Psalmist is often so emotional and spontaneous that he does not pay attention to its outward form and one feels that the Psalms were born in the process of prayer.

In the Psalter are many Psalms of a contemplative nature. Contemplating the beauty and grandeur of the world and reflecting on God's acts as described in the other books of the Old Testament, the Psalmist recalls times long past and bygone years, and tries to grasp the significance and aim of human life. The language of such Psalms becomes particularly profound and rhythmically expressive. Every word is weighed, and the author strives to endow the Psalms with the stern beauty of an epic literary form.

But even in these instances the Psalmist does not aim to systematize the Biblical teachings upon which he meditates, for Psalms of a contemplative nature are also prayers. Above all, these contemplative Psalms are the prayers of the author himself, who sets the Lord always before him (Ps. 16:8). By spiritually reliving the events of the Bible he learns to perceive God and seek Him. For the Psalmist nothing is accidental and insignificant. He interprets both crucial episodes in biblical history and 'everyday human affairs and aspirations. The Psalmist does not merely write what he has heard from his fathers in order to convey the facts to posterity (Ps. 44:1); he is more concerned with the spiritual comprehension and evaluation of the events enriching his wisdom and helping him to perceive the right hand of the Lord leading His people.

The Psalmist's prayers express concern for the future of his people and the coming generations. These words contain a call not to repeat the mistakes of the past, not to be a people who err in heart (Ps. 95:10), grieving and trying the patience of God. Most often the Psalmist turns to the theme of the Exodus and the Israelites' forty-year wandering in the desert (Ps. 95; 106; 135; 136, etc.). The Psalmist prays for his people and offers his Psalms for the edification of posterity.

The worth and authority of the Psalms are explained by their authors' great experience of prayer. The Psalms contain frequent reminders of how this experience is gained. The Psalmist loves to pray; his soul seeks and thirsts after God (Ps. 27:8; 63:1) as a hart longs for flowing streams (Ps. 42:1); seven times a day he praises Him (Ps. 119:164); he loves the splendor of the temple and the place where [God's] glory dwells (Ps. 26:8). Fervent is his morning prayers (Ps. 63:1) and even the night hours are given over to God (Ps. 63:6; 119:55,62). At night he shed tears in his bed as he recalls the years he has lived, his failings and the errors he has made (Ps. 6:6). However, even his daytime prayer is full of sorrow and weeping, too (Ps. 42:3), accompanied by fasting and sackcloth (Ps. 35:13).

The prayers of the Psalmist are always full of confidence because they are born in a pure heart that knows how to pray and is constantly ready to meet God (Ps. 57:7). God, for him, is his strength and fortress, his shield, his high tower and deliverer, and the horn of [his] salvation (Ps. 18:1-2). The Psalmist lovingly refers to God as his Shepherd, Who makes His people to lie down in green pastures and leads them beside still waters (Ps. 23:1-2), and he refers to himself as the sheep of His pasture (Ps. 100:3).

The Psalmist gives thanks for the bestowal of God's help, even before he receives what he has asked for and he also offers up thanks without asking for anything. Always and everywhere the Psalmist

finds occasion to glorify God, for God is vested in honor and majesty, He is clothed with light as with a garment; His herald is flaming fire; He walks upon the wings of the wind (Ps. 104:1-4).

Turning to the earth, the Psalmist is filled with wonder at God's numerous works of wisdom (Ps. 104:24). Life, man, the beauty and harmony of the world, are an eternal miracle to him. For all this from the rising of the sun until its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised (Ps. 113:3). Praise and thanks are offered up to the Lord in joy (Ps. 92:1-5) and grief (Ps. 109:30-31), for deliverance from danger (Ps. 56:13) and trials encountered (Ps. 119:71), for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever (Ps. 136:1).

The action and power of the prayer of the Psalms extend to every worshiper and the Psalms help one to achieve the constancy and peaceful disposition of spirit so necessary in prayer. The Psalm is silence of the soul, writes St. Basil the Great, the giver of peace, for it calms turbulent and troubled thoughts, soothes irritation of the soul...and man is filled with quiet delight....

While implacably struggling against evil and demanding the triumph of justice, the author of the Psalms shows exceptional compassion for the poor, the persecuted, widows, orphans and the unfortunate. He well realizes that the reasons for the victims' woeful plight are often to be found in the wickedness and greed of evildoers. The Psalmist intercedes in his prayers for the deprived (Ps. 10:2,12,17-18). He knows that all victims of injustice are dear to God (Ps. 86:14-17), that God is the helper of orphans and the poor (Ps. 10:14) and that one of the deeds of the Messiah will be to defend the rights of the needy and the poor (Ps. 72:12).

Thus, the Psalms have such indisputable merits, especially in prayer, that they have been accepted wholeheartedly by the Christian Church and are used, not only for private devotion, but in the Divine Services themselves. It should also be noted that the Church accepted the Psalms as prayer without changing the words, but their meanings were enhanced, for the New Testament Revelation helped to reveal more fully the meaning of the Old Testament images and prophecies contained in the Psalter, and made it possible for all the Psalms to be sung not in the antiquity of the letter but in the renewal of the spirit.

Orthodox Scripture

The Holy Bible

The Old Testament.

The Bible is customarily divided into two books: The Old Testament and the New Testament. We should note, however, that the word testament is not totally appropriate to designate the character of these two books, but rather the designations New Covenant and Old Covenant. (Some Bibles, such as the Slavonic and Russian, use the designations Old Law and New Law to refer to these two parts.) In any case, the Old Testament may be described as the literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel.

This literary expression of Israel's religious life extended over a thousand years from the first to the last books of the Old Testament and reflects many facets of the life of Israel, taking many forms: prose and poetry, myth and legend, folk tale and history, sacred hymns and a superb love song, religious and secular laws, proverbs of the wise and oracles of the prophets, epic poems, laments, parables and allegories. Yet, despite these varied forms, a common theme emerges this book is a history of God acting in history, that is, Salvation History, It is a history of a people chosen by God out of whom would come the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity.

In Jewish tradition, the Scriptures were divided into three parts: The Law (the first five books), the Prophets (Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings; Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets), and the Writings (the remainder of the Old Testament books). Later, just before the New Testament era, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek at Alexandria, Egypt (the so-called Septuagint LXX). This translation included books and portions of books not found in the Hebrew Scriptures (the so-called Apocrypha or Deutero-canonical books). It is this later Greek (LXX) Scripture that is considered the official text for the Orthodox Churches. In any case, the original language of the Old Testament was Ancient Hebrew, although parts were written in Aramaic (a more recent Semitic language).

The New Testament.

More than 500 years before the birth of Christ, the Prophet Jeremiah predicted that the covenant relation of God with His people, instituted on Mt. Sinai, would give place in the future to a more inward and personal one (Jer. 31:31-34). With this in mind, St. Paul regarded the Christian Dispensation as being based on a new covenant, which he contrasted with the old covenant of the books of Moses (2 Cor. 3:6-15). By His sacrificial death, Christ became the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9:15-20).

The books of the New Testament, of which there are twenty-seven, fall into four categories: 1) Gospels from Evangelion or Good News, because they tell the Good News of Jesus Christ Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; 2) Church History The Acts of the Apostles; 3) Epistles (or Letters) of which there are twenty-one, written by Sts. Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude; and 4) an Apocalypse, that is, a Revelation or disclosure of God's will for the future, hence the title: The Revelation to St. John. All of these books were written in the koine or common Greek of the time, which was in common use throughout the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era.

The New Testament

Matthew.

This Gospel presents Christ as the Fulfiller and Fulfillment of God's will disclosed in the Old Testament. Jesus is set forth as Israel's Messiah, by whose words and life His followers, the True Israel, may gain divine forgiveness and fellowship. Matthew presents Christ's deeds and words in a generally biographical order: Birth of Jesus (Ch. 1-2); Activity of John the Baptist (Ch. 3:1-12); Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (Ch. 3:13-4:11); Jesus' preaching and teaching in Galilee (Ch. 4:12-18:35); Journey to Jerusalem (Ch. 19-20); the last week, Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial (Ch. 21-27); the Resurrection and Jesus' commission to His disciples (Ch. 28).

Within this framework we can also see the grouping of Jesus' teachings on specific themes the Five Discourses: 1) The Sermon on the Mount (Ch. 5-7); 2) Instructions for Missionary Disciples (Ch. 10); 3) Parables of the Kingdom (Ch. 13); 4) On True Discipleship (Ch. 18); and 5) On the End of This Age (Ch. 24-25).

In Times of Anxiety

[From the Sermon on the Mount Matt. 6:25-34]

I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the Body more than clothing? Look at the fowls of the air. they neither sow nor reap nor gather into Barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them, Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field) how they grow; they neither toil nor spin) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today

is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Mark.

This Gospel is generally believed to have been the first written of the Gospels. Ancient tradition ascribes it to John Mark (Acts 12:12; 15:37), who composed it at Rome as a summary of Peter's witness. This Gospel is primarily a collection of narratives depicting Jesus as being constantly active (Mark uses the word immediately about forty times in sixteen chapters), characterizing Him as the Son of God (1:1,11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61-62; 15:39), Whose ministry was signified by a succession of mighty works which, to those who had eyes to see, were signs of the presence of God's power and kingdom.

The Great Commandment

(Matt. 22:37-40)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first, commandment And a second is like, it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

The Gospel can be divided as follows: 1) Beginning of Jesus' public life John the Baptist; baptism and temptation of Jesus (Ch. 1:1-13); 2) Jesus' preaching, teaching and healing in Galilee (Ch. 1:14-9:50); 3) Journey to Jerusalem (Ch. 10); 4) The last week Jesus' crucifixion and burial (Ch. 11-15); 5) The Resurrection (Ch. 16:1-8); and 6) Epilogue on events after the Resurrection (Ch. 16:9-20).

Luke.

The author of this Gospel, St. Luke the Physician, a Gentile convert and friend of St. Paul, presents the words and works of Jesus as the divine-human Savior Whose compassion and tenderness extended to all who were needy. Jesus' universal mission is highlighted by a) tracing his genealogy back to Adam (3:38); b) references commending members of a despised people the Samaritans (10:30-37; 17:11-19); c) indication of the new place of importance of women among the followers of the Lord (7:36-50; 8:3; 10:38-42); and d) promising that the Gentile (of whom Luke was one) would have an opportunity to accept the Gospel (2:32; 3:6; 24:47).

When Downcast

(Matt. 11:28-30)

Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

St. Luke presents more episodes of Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem than do the other Evangelists, and this section preserves many of the most beloved of His parables (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, the Unjust Judge, etc.). The Gospel can be divided as follows: 1) (Ch. 1-2) Births of John the Baptist and Jesus; 2) (Ch. 3:1-22) Activity of John the Baptist; Baptism of Jesus; 3) (Ch. 3:23-38) Genealogy of Jesus; 4) (Ch. 4:1-13) Temptation of Jesus; 5) (Ch. 4:14-9:50) Jesus in Galilee; 6)

(Ch. 9:51-19:27) Journey to Jerusalem; 7) (Ch. 19:28-23:56) Crucifixion and Burial; and 8) (Ch. 24) The Resurrection and the Commissioning of the Disciples.

Self-Denial

(Luke 9:23-26)

If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

John.

This Gospel, by the Beloved Disciple, speaks of the Mystery of the Person of Jesus. He is like other men, yet quite unlike them, for He was the Son of God. He was eternally present with God, active in creating the world, and was the source of the moral and spiritual nature of man (life and light). When He became man, He made known the eternal God Whom no one has ever seen (John 1:14,18). St. John records real events, but goes beyond the other Evangelists in interpreting them. He uses symbols from common experience bread, water, light, life, shepherd, door, etc. as well as contrasts light and darkness, truth and lies, love and hatred, etc. to make the meaning of Christ clear. For this reason he is aptly called by the Church the Theologian.

The Gospel is divided in the following manner: Prologue (Ch. 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word...); Jesus Christ as the object of Faith (Ch. 1:19-4:54); Conflicts with unbelievers (Ch. 5-12); Fellowship with believers (Ch. 13-17 (14-17 are generally known as the Farewell Discourses)); Death and Resurrection (Ch. 18-20); and (Ch. 21) An Epilogue.

In Sorrow for the Departed

(John 11:25-26)

I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believes in Me; though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Acts of the Apostles.

The book of Acts the early history of the Church is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, by the same author, who had accompanied St. Paul on parts of his missionary journeys. The Acts trace the story of the Christian Movement from the Resurrection of Jesus to the unhindered preaching of the Christian message in Rome by Paul. Most of the first part is dominated by events in Jerusalem, while the latter part is dominated by Paul himself. The Word spreads from Jerusalem to Samaria (8:5), to the seacoast (8:40), to Damascus (9:10), to Antioch and Cyprus (11:19), to Asia Minor (13:13), to Europe (16:11), and finally to Rome (28:16).

The Golden, Rule

(Luke 6:31)

As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

Romans.

The Epistles of St. Paul are arranged in the New Testament according to length, and this Epistle (or Letter) to the Romans is the longest and most weighty, theologically, thus giving it first place in the canonical order. This letter is probably the last written by St. Paul (that we possess) and, at the time of its writing (between 54 and 58 A.D.), he was at Corinth waiting to take a collection for the needy to Jerusalem (15:25-27), after which he wanted to stop at Rome on his way to Spain (15:28).

After the greeting and thanksgiving, Paul describes first the need for the world of redemption (1:18-3:20). Then he discusses God's saving act in Christ: its nature (3:21-4:25) and the new life which has been made available by this act (5:1-8:39). After detailing the role of Israel the Jewish nation in God's plan (Ch. 9-11), the letter closes with ethical teachings and a few personal remarks (Ch. 12-16).

First Corinthians.

The Gospel was first preached in Corinth by Paul on his second missionary journey (50 A.D.). While living and working there, he preached in the synagogue until opposition arose. He was accused by the Jews before the Roman Governor, Gallio, but the charges were dismissed and Paul remained in the city eighteen months (Acts 18:1-17; 1 Cor. 2:3). Paul's subsequent relations with this Church were disturbed from time to time by doubts and suspicions on both sides, but for no other Church did Paul feel a deeper affection. The whole letter is concerned directly or indirectly with doctrinal and ethical problems that were disturbing the Corinthian Church, including divisions in the Church (1:11), immorality (Ch. 5; 6:9-20), and questions concerning marriage, food, worship and the Resurrection.

Second Corinthians.

Relations between Paul and the Corinthian Church had deteriorated, and having made a painful visit to the Church (2:1), he refrained from making a second trip, knowing that it too would be painful, for which cause he had written to that Church a severe and sorrowful letter out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears (2:4) now lost to us sending it to Corinth by means of Titus, one of his fellow workers. Not able to wait for Titus' return, so anxious was he about the effects of this painful letter, Paul left Ephesus and went to Troas, hoping to meet Titus there. Disappointed there, he went on to Macedonia (2:12-13), where Titus rejoined him, bringing the good news that the Church in Corinth had repented of its rebelliousness against Paul (7:13-16). In relief and gratitude, Paul wrote this letter.

In the letter Paul speaks about the above problems and takes the opportunity to speak at length about the offering for the Church at Jerusalem (8:1-9:15), which was now almost complete. Chapters 10-13 contain a vigorous defense of Paul and his work and throughout the letter we are given many personal and autobiographical glimpses into Paul's life (4:8-18; 11:22-33).

The Way of Love

(1 Cor. 13)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels; But have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal And if I have prophetic powers; and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith; so as to remove mountains; But have not love; I am nothing. If I give away all I have; and if I deliver my body to be burned; but have not love; I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong; but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things; endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies; they will pass away, as for tongues, they will cease, as for knowledge; it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect, but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.

When I was a child; I spoke like a child; I thought like a child; I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly; but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully; even as I have been fully understood.

So faith; hope; love abide; these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Galatians.

This letter was written about 55 A.D. during Paul's third missionary journey and gives many autobiographical details of the Apostle's earlier life and missionary activity. The letter dealt with the question whether a Gentile must become a Jew before he could become a Christian; for certain Judaizing teachers had infiltrated the Churches of Galatia in central Asia Minor which Paul had founded (Acts 16:6), declaring that in addition to having faith in Christ Jesus, a Christian was obligated to keep the Mosaic Law. On the contrary, Paul insisted, a man becomes right with God only by faith in Christ and not by the performance of good works, ritual observances and the like (2:16; 3:24-25; 5:1; 6:12-15). The letter can be divided into three parts: 1) defense of Paul's apostolic authority and the validity of his teachings (1:1-2:21); 2) an exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith alone (3:1-4:31); and 3) justification by faith applied practical applications (5:1-6:18).

Ephesians.

This letter was written while Paul was a prisoner (3:1; 4:1; 6:20) at about the same time as the Epistle to the Colossians, since it shares many of the same phrases and expressions as that Epistle. Because important early manuscripts and Church Fathers make no reference to Ephesus in 1:1 and because the letter contains no personal greetings, etc., most scholars see it as a sort of encyclical or circular letter of which copies were sent to several Churches in Asia Minor.

The theme of the letter is God's eternal purpose in establishing and completing the universal Church of Jesus Christ. Although of various backgrounds and nationalities, the members of this community have been called by God the Father, redeemed and forgiven through His Son, and incorporated into a fellowship, sealed and directed by the divine, indwelling Spirit (1:5,12,13; 2:18-20; 3:14,16,17; 4:4-6). In the letter the figures of the Church as the Body of Christ (1:23; 4:16), the Building or Temple of God (2:20-22) and the Bride of Christ (5:23-32) are developed.

Philippians.

This letter, one of the most cordial and affectionate we have from Paul's hand, was addressed to the Christians at Philippi in Macedonia, the first congregation established by him in Europe (Acts 16:11-15). Written about 61 A.D. while he was in prison, the occasion of this letter writing was the return to Philippi of Epaphroditus (2:25-29), who had been sent by the Church there with a gift for Paul (4:18). The Apostle took this opportunity to describe his own situation and state of mind to the Philippian congregation, thanking them for their gift and giving them certain needed instructions. The whole letter is permeated with Paul's joy and serene happiness in Christ, even while in prison and in danger of death (2:2; 3:8-14; 4:11-13).

Colossians.

This letter was written in the early 60's while Paul was in prison (4:3,10,18) at about the same time as the letter to the Ephesians (with which it has many similarities). The purpose was to correct erroneous speculations which had arisen because of the activities of certain false teachers (perhaps

Gnostics), who claimed to possess superior knowledge of divine matters (2:18), advocated a mixture of ascetical and ritual practices (2:16,20-23) which had certain Jewish parallels, as well as connections with Greek philosophic speculation and oriental mysticism.

The letter is divided into two parts: 1) a doctrinal section in which the supremacy of Christ in the cosmos, in the Church and in the individual is stressed (1:1-3:4) and 2) practical exhortations (3:5-4:18) in which the ascetical and legalistic tendencies are counteracted by a spiritual morality and social ethic bound together by Christian love.

First Thessalonians.

This epistle is probably the first of St. Paul's letters, written from Corinth about 51 A.D. During his second missionary journey, after being driven out of Philippi, Paul, Silas and Timothy came to Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia (Acts 17:1). Here he preached in the synagogue for three Sabbaths, proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah and attracting many followers, both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, annoyed at these inroads, aroused such a disturbance, that Paul and his companions had to leave, going first to Berea and thence to Athens and Corinth.

Paul, anxious about the new congregation at Thessalonica, deprived of his leadership and persecuted, sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage the young congregation. When Timothy returned with the good news of their faith and loyalty, Paul wrote the first letter to the Thessalonians to express his joy and gratitude at their perseverance, to urge them to Christian conduct, and to answer two questions: 1) Is a Christian deprived of the blessings of the Kingdom if he dies before Christ's second Advent; and 2) When will Christ come in glory? The first is answered in 4:13-18 and the second in 5:1-11.

Second Thessalonians.

This letter was sent by Paul to the Thessalonians shortly after the first letter, as a result of continued persecutions by the Jews at Thessalonica. In addition, there were some misunderstandings concerning the Second Coming of Christ and the view was held by some that the Day of the Lord had already come (2:2). Some thought that its judgments had already begun; yet they understood Paul to have taught that they would be exempt from these judgments. As a result, some, thinking the end of the world was at hand, had stopped working and were creating an embarrassing situation (3:6,11). Paul corrected the teaching in this letter and reprimanded the idlers, If any one will not work, let him not eat (3:10).

First Timothy.

The first letter to Timothy (the son of a Greek Gentile Father and a Jewish Mother, Eunice, and closely associated with Paul from the time of the second missionary journey) had a dual purpose: to provide guidance in the problems of Church administration, and to oppose false teachings of a speculative and moralistic nature. Thus it offers suggestions for the regulation of worship (2:1-15), sets out the qualifications for bishops (3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13), and gives instructions as to the attitude of Church leaders towards false asceticism (4:1-16) and toward individual members (5:1-12), especially widows (5:13-16), presbyters (5:17) and slaves (6:1-2).

Second Timothy.

The second letter to Timothy is an earnest pastoral letter from a veteran missionary to a younger colleague, urging endurance as the main quality of a preacher of the Gospel. Here we encounter the theme of a good soldier of Christ (2:3) as well as words concerning the apostasy of the last days (3:1-9), the inspiration of the Scriptures (3:16), and the crown of righteousness (4:8). The letter was written when Paul was probably facing certain martyrdom.

Titus.

This letter, sent to Titus (an oft-mentioned companion of Paul in the Acts) has three main topics, corresponding to the three chapters of this epistle: 1) sets forth what is required of elders or bishops in the face of various false teachers and local problems; 2) the proper approach to different groups in the Church (older men, older women, younger men and slaves), concluding with a summary of what is expected of believers in view of God's grace; and 3) Christians are advised to avoid hatred and quarrels and to manifest the meekness, gentleness, obedience and courtesy made possible by God's mercy in Christ.

Philemon.

While Paul was under house arrest in Rome (ca. 61-63 A.D. (Acts 28:30)), Onesimus, a runaway slave, came under his influence and was converted to Christianity. Paul persuaded him to return to his master, Philemon, a resident of Colossae in Phrygia, who himself had previously become a Christian as a result of Paul's earlier preaching in Asia Minor (vs. 19) and whose home was now a meeting place of a Christian congregation.

Paul, in this letter, while not outwardly condemning the institution of slavery and respectful of Philemon's rights, sets forth a principle which would soften the harshness of slavery (vs. 16) and ultimately banish it altogether.

Hebrews.

This anonymous letter, written prior to the Fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., is an elaborate argument showing the pre-eminence of Christianity over Judaism. The letter is evidently addressed to those who were on the verge of giving up their Christian faith and returning to the Jewish beliefs and practices of their ancestors. The author emphasizes three main points: 1) the superiority of the Person of Christ to the Prophets (1:1-3), Angels (1:5-2:18) and Moses himself (3:1-6); 2) the superiority of the Priesthood of Christ to the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-7:28); and 3) the superiority of Christ's sacrifice offered in the heavenly sanctuary to the many animal sacrifices offered on earth by the Levitical Priests (8:1-10:39). Christians of all ages have also been inspired by Chapter 11, the great Chapter of Faith.

James.

This letter is purported to have been written by James, the brother of the Lord and head of the Church at Jerusalem, to Jewish Christians in the diaspora. He assumes knowledge of the Gospel on the part of his readers and is concerned to remind them how Christians ought to live. In this letter, James makes the famous assertion that/aitfi by itself, if it has no works, is dead (2:15). In addition, he speaks eloquently concerning the use of the tongue for good and evil (3:1-12), as well as prayer for the sick (5:13-16). This text is used by the Orthodox Church concerning the Mystery of Holy Unction or the Anointing of the Sick.

First Peter.

The first letter of Peter was written to give encouragement and hope to Christians in the northern part of Asia Minor, who were undergoing persecution (ca. 64 A.D.). The congregations, mainly of Gentile converts (1:14; 2:10; 4:3), are urged not to be surprised at the fiery ordeal which has come upon them. They are to rejoice in their trials, knowing that they share them with their brotherhood throughout the world (5:9). By participating in the sufferings of Christ (4:13), they will demonstrate the genuineness of their faith (1:6,7). This letter was written from Babylon (Rome 5:13) during the time of the persecutions of Nero.

Second Peter.

This brief letter is a reminder (1:12; 3:1) of the truth of Christianity as opposed to the heresies of false teachers. The author recalls the apostolic witness as the basis of the Church's proclamation (1:16), points to the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament which have been confirmed by the coming of Christ (1:19-21) and explains that the delay of the Second Coming is due to the patience and forbearance of God, Who desires that all should reach repentance (3:9). Because of the text concerning the Transfiguration (1:16-18), the Orthodox Church uses portions of 2nd Peter as one of the readings for that Feast.

First John.

This letter, written toward the end of the 1st Century A.D., has traditionally been attributed by the Church to St. John the Evangelist. The letter has a two-fold purpose: 1) to deepen the spiritual life of its readers (1:3-4), and 2) to correct the heretical views of certain Gnostic teachers who denied that God had really become man in Jesus (4:2). The theme of love runs throughout and the book is full of contrasts: light and darkness (1:6-7; 2:8-11); love of world and love of God (2:15-17); children of God and children of the Devil (3:4-10); the Spirit of God and the spirit of Antichrist (4:1-3); love and hate (4:7-12, 16-21).

Second John.

This letter was written to one specific Church, the elect lady (vs. 1), probably one of the Churches of Asia Minor. Like the first letter of John, it too was written by St. John the Evangelist late in the 1st Century. Here he repeats in briefer form the main teachings of 1st John and adds a warning against showing hospitality to false teachers, lest this further the spread of error (vs. 7-11).

Third John.

This is a personal letter of John to Gaius, focusing on an ecclesiastical problem regarding traveling teachers. Gaius had extended to them hospitality, while Diotrephes, who liked to put himself first (vs. 9), had refused to receive them, challenging the spiritual authority of the Elder (John) (vs. 10). John rebukes Diotrephes, while encouraging Gaius in his practice.

Jude.

This letter, written about 80 A.D., by Jude, the brother of James and the Lord, was set forth to warn against false teachers (Gnostics) who had made their way into the Church, characterized here as being immoral (vs. 4, 7,16) and covetous (vs. 11,16), and rejecting authority (vs. 8,11). They are grumblers, malcontents, and loud-mouthed boosters (vs. 16), worldly people, devoid of the Spirit (vs. 19). Because of their lack of brotherly love (vs. 12), it is not surprising that they create division in the congregations (vs. 19). For their actions, they will experience God's judgment (vs. 5-7).

Revelation (The Apocalypse).

This revelation was extended to St. John the Evangelist at the end of the 1st Century while he was in exile on the isle of Patmos during the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.). This is a revelation of Jesus Christ and He is the center of the entire book (1:1). In His risen glory (Ch. 1) He directs His Churches on earth (Ch. 2-3). He is the slain and risen Lamb to Whom all worship is directed (Ch. 4-5). The judgments of the coming seven-year period of tribulation on this earth are the display of the wrath of the Lamb (Ch. 6-19), and the return to Christ to this earth is described in 19:11-21. The thousand-year reign of Christ is described in Chapter 20 and the new heavens and new earth in Chapters 21-22. The Orthodox Church also sees in Chapter 12:1-6 a portrayal of the Most-holy Theotokos. One of the least understood books of the New Testament, The Apocalypse is the one book of the Bible most distorted by various Protestant sects.

The Old Testament

Genesis.

Genesis, meaning beginning, covers the time from the Creation (i.e., the beginning of history) to the Israelite sojourn in Egypt, the book falls naturally into two main sections: Chapters 1-11 deal primarily with primeval history; Chapters 12-50 treat the history of the Fathers of Israel (or the Patriarchs). The first section speaks of the creation of the world, including man, man's life in Paradise (a symbol of being in God's presence), and his tragic disobedience of God's commandment (the Original Sin) and Fall. It also speaks of the spread of sin in the world and its first destruction in the Flood. The latter section tells the stories of Abraham (Ch. 12-25), of Isaac and his twin sons Esau and Jacob (Ch. 26-36), and of Jacob's family, the chief member of which, in Genesis, was Joseph (Ch. 37-50).

Exodus.

This book speaks of the deliverance of the People of Israel from bondage in Egypt and the making of a Covenant between God and them at Mt. Sinai. It falls into two major sections: 1) Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, including the rise of Moses as leader of the people, the Ten Plagues, etc., and the march to Sinai, including the destruction of Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea (Ch. 1-18) and 2) Israel's sojourn at Sinai, where the Covenant was made and laws governing life and worship were promulgated (Ten Commandments, Ark of the Covenant, Tabernacle, etc. Ch. 19-40). At the center of these events stood Moses, who was called to be the agent of God in delivering Israel from slavery, to be the interpreter of God's redemptive work and to be the mediator of the Covenant.

Leviticus.

The book of Leviticus (the title refers to the Levitical priests set apart to minister at the Sanctuary) is mostly a book of worship and falls into six parts: 1) laws dealing with sacrifices (Ch. 1-7); 2) consecration of priests to their office (Ch. 8-10); 3) laws setting forth the distinction between clean and unclean (Ch. 11-15); 4) the ceremony for the annual Day of Atonement (Ch. 16); 5) laws to govern Israel's life as a holy people (the Holiness Code Ch. 17-26); and 6) an appendix on religious vows (Ch. 27).

Through the various rituals and laws, there breathes the conviction that the holy God tabernacles in the midst of His people during their historical pilgrimage. The nearness of God not only accentuates the people's sense of sin, but prompts them to turn to Him in sacrificial services of worship. For God has provided the means of atonement and forgiveness whereby the community is restored to wholeness and is reconciled to Him.

Numbers.

The title Numbers refers to the census or numbering of the people of Israel at the beginning of this book, but could be better entitled In the Wilderness. The book can be divided into three parts: 1) Preparations for departure from Sinai (Ch. 1-10:10); 2) the journey to Kadesh, from which point an unsuccessful attack upon southern Canaan was made (Ch. 10:11-21:13); and 3) the journey from Kadesh via the Transjordan for the purpose of approaching Canaan from the East (Ch. 21:14-36).

Here we see the Forty-year Sojourn in the Wilderness, in which the people, existing only precariously, are constantly murmuring. They are pictured as faithless, rebellious, and blind to God's signs. Yet, God was marvelously guiding, sustaining, and disciplining His people so that they might know their utter dependence upon Him and thus be prepared for their historical pilgrimage.

Deuteronomy.

The basic theme of Deuteronomy which means Second Law, is the renewal of the Covenant. At the end of the book of Numbers, Israel is encamped in the Plains of Moab, preparing for an attack upon Canaan from the East. Deuteronomy is essentially Moses' farewell address to the people in which he rehearses the mighty acts of the Lord, solemnly warns of the temptations of the new ways of Canaan, and pleads for loyalty to and love of God as the condition for life in the Promised Land. A distinctive teaching of Deuteronomy is that the worship of the Lord is to be centralized in one place, so that the paganism of the local shrines may be eliminated.

This book can be divided into four parts: 1) God's care for Israel from Sinai to Moab (Ch. 1-4); 2) The Covenant Proof of God's love (Ch. 5-11); 3) Moses' explanation of the Law (Ch. 12-26); and 4) Moses' last words and death (Ch. 27-34).

Joshua.

The book of Joshua is the story of the Conquest of the Promised Land. The story opens with the passage of the Jordan River and the sack of Jericho (Ch. 1-6); it then tells how the Hebrew armies moved from the Jordan Valley up into the highlands to conquer Ai (Ch. 7-8) and, through a humorous deception, to become unwilling allies of the Gibeonites (Ch. 9). This led to a great battle with the chieftains of five other Canaanite cities and the conquest of the South (Ch. 10). A final engagement in the North resulted in the complete destruction of Canaanite power in Palestine (Ch. 11). Following a brief summary of Joshua's triumphs (Ch. 12), the book describes the division of the land among the several tribes (Ch. 13-23) and how Israel entered into a Covenant to serve forever the God Whose might had been so awesomely demonstrated (Ch. 24).

Judges.

Despite the initial conquest of Palestine, the process of subjugation continued and, in fact, some parts of the country were never conquered. Heroes (Judges) rose up amongst the people in times of crisis, and this book is primarily an account of their exploits.

The book opens with an account of the conquest of Canaan which is roughly parallel to that in the book of Joshua (Ch. 1-2:5); then follows the main body of the book, which, after a moralizing introduction (Ch. 2:6-3:6), relates the adventures of the individual Judges: Othniel (Ch. 3:7-11), Ehud (Ch. 3:12-30), Shamgar (Ch. 3:31), Deborah (Ch. 4-5), Gideon (Ch. 6-8) and his infamous son, Abimelech (Ch. 9), two minor Judges (Ch. 10:1-5); Jephthah (Ch. 10:6-12:7), three more minor Judges (Ch. 12:8-15) and Samson (Ch. 13-16). The book concludes with an appendix containing tales about the migration of the Tribe of Dan (Ch. 17-18) and the sins of the Benjaminites (Ch. 19-21). In all this, one clear lesson stands out: Loyalty to God is the first requisite for national success and disloyalty a guarantee of disaster.

Ruth.

The book of Ruth speaks of the marriage of Ruth (a Moabitess a foreigner) to a Hebrew man and how, on his death, she chose to return to Judah with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to share the fortunes of her husband's people, rather than remain in the security of her native land (Ch. 1). There, her loyalty and kindness won her the love of Boaz (Ch. 2-4:12), and, through her marriage to him, she became the great-grandmother of David the King (Ch. 4:13-22).

First and Second Samuel.

The two books of the Samuel (1st and 2nd Kings in the Orthodox Bible) are concerned primarily with the history of Israel during the times of the Prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David. Originally one unified work, Samuel was early divided into two parts (1st and 2nd Samuel).

The books can be divided as follows: 1) The last Judges, Eli and Samuel, and the Philistine oppression (1 Sam. 1-7); 2) Samuel and Saul, the institution of the Monarchy, and Saul's rejection (1 Sam. 8-15); 3) Saul and David; David befriended at first by Saul, but later persecuted (1 Sam. 16-31); 4) David, King over Judah after the death of Saul (2 Sam. 1-4); 5) David, King over all Israel and nearby conquered nations (2 Sam. 5-20); and 6) Appendices (2 Sam. 21-24).

The theme of this work is the institution of the Israelite Monarchy and its perpetuity in the dynasty of David, from which one day will be born the Messiah. The last days of Eli are described because they introduce Samuel. Samuel is described because he institutes the Monarchy in Israel. Saul is described because he demonstrates for all time what the Israelite King must not be. David is described because like him and from him will come the desire of the everlasting hills the Messiah.

First and Second Kings.

Like the two books of Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings (in the Orthodox Bibles, 3rd and 4th Kings) were originally one. First Kings begins with the enthronement of Solomon and the death of David (Ch. 1-2) and recounts the history of Solomon's reign (Ch. 3-11). It then continues with the history of the Kings of the Divided Monarchy (Southern Kingdom of Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel, with its capital at Samaria) through the reigns of Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah (Ch. 12-22). Here also we encounter the dramatic story of Elijah the Prophet (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2).

Second Kings continues the story of the Hebrew Monarchies. Chapters 1-17 describe the period from the reigns of Ahaziah of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah until the Fall of Samaria and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in 721 B.C. Included here are the stories of the Prophet Elisha, heir to Elijah. Chapters 18-25 continue the history of the Kingdom of Judah from the Fall of Samaria until the Fall of the Kingdom and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., with the subsequent Deportation to Babylon.

The purpose of the two books of Kings is to show the causes of the Fall of the Kingdom. The catastrophes of 721 (Fall of Samaria) and 587 (Fall of Jerusalem) are seen as a just punishment for the failure of the majority of the Kings of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms to practice monotheism and observe the unity of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem as demanded by the Law. Israel, not God, had been unfaithful to the Sinai Covenant. If Israel is to resume her God-given mission, she must repent and leave the future to God's unswerving faithfulness and to His steadfast love.

First and Second Chronicles.

First and Second Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenen in the Orthodox Bibles) were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible and can be seen as part of a larger history including the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These books are a theological history of the dynasty of David and of the Temple until the Fall of Jerusalem. The purpose of these books were to focus attention on Israel's hope the dynasty of David, and on Israel's glory the Temple of the True God on earth, in Jerusalem.

These books can be divided into four basic parts: 1) (1 Chr. 1-9) a summary of Israel's history from Adam to David, presented by a series of genealogies; 2) (1 Chr. 10-29) David as a great Monarch and the Founder of the Temple and its ritual; 3) (2 Chr. 1-9) King Solomon and the building of the Temple; and 4) (2 Chr. 10-36) the history of the Davidic Kings and their association with the Temple.

Ezra and Nehemiah.

These two books form part of a larger history which includes 1st and 2nd Chronicles (mentioned above). The theme of these books are the religious and political reorganization of Judah after the Return from the Babylonian Exile in the time of the Persian Empire (Kings Cyrus, Darius I,

Ataxerxes I and Ataxerxes II). Attention is focused on the importance of the Temple and religious reforms for the preservation of the Jewish State.

The books can be divided into four parts: 1) The return of the first exiles in 537 B.C., followed by the rebuilding of the altar in 536 and the Temple in 516 (Ez. 1-6); 2) the return of a second group of exiles in 458, led by Ezra the Scribe, and the marriage reforms introduced by him (Ez. 7-10); 3) the return of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in 445 (Neh. 1-7); and 4) the religious reforms and the renewal of the Covenant instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 8-13).

Esther.

The book of Esther is concerned primarily with the story of Esther, the Jewish wife and Queen of the Persian King Ahasuerus. The story portrays the foiling of a plot by Esther and her adoptive guardian, Mordecai, hatched by the evil Haman against the Jews. This account, which shows God's love and care for His people, is greatly venerated by the Jews as the basis for their Feast of Purim.

This book can be divided into four parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2) the setting of the scene in the Court of the King; 2) (Ch. 3-7) the development of the plot and its overthrow by Esther and Mordecai, resulting in the hanging of Haman and his sons; 3) (Ch. 8-10) the destruction of the enemies of the Jews and the institution of the Feast of Purim; and 4) (Ch. 11-16) further additions to the story. [We note here that Chapters 11-16 are not found in the Hebrew Bible, as well as most English Bibles, but form a part of the Orthodox Bible (LXX). In other Bibles, this section constitutes part of the so-called Apocrypha or Deutero-canonical books.]

Job.

The book of Job is concerned with the problem of suffering in the world. It does not attempt to explain the mystery of suffering or to justify the ways of God with men, but rather aims to probe the depths of faith in spite of suffering. It is the story of a righteous man, Job, who loses everything in the material and physical sense, but who maintains his faith in God despite his personal sufferings. The Church sees here a parallel between Job and Christ.

The book can be divided into eight parts: 1) Prologue (Ch. 1-2); 2) 1st Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 3-14); 3) 2nd Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 15-21); 4) 3rd Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 22-28); 5) Job's final summary of his case (Ch. 29-31); 6) Elihu's speeches (Ch. 32-37); 7) God's speeches (Ch. 38-42:6); and 8) an Epilogue (Ch. 42:7-20). [We note that the last three verses are found only in the Orthodox Bibles (LXX).]

Psalms.

The book of Psalms contains the hymns of Israel. This book, called The Psalter, holds a central place in the worship of the Orthodox Church and the Psalms are customarily ascribed to David and Solomon. The book of Psalms is divided into Five Books (in imitation of the Pentateuch the first five books of the Bible): Book I (Ps. 1-41); Book II (Ps. 42-72); Book III (Ps. 73-89); Book IV (Ps. 90-106); and Book V (Ps. 107-150). [Orthodox Bibles also include Psalm 151 a Song of David after he fought with Goliath.]

The Psalms may be classified as follows: Hymns (acts of praise suitable for any occasion); Laments (in which an individual seeks deliverance from an illness or a false accusation, or the nation asks for help in times of distress); Songs of Trust (in which an individual expresses his confidence in God's readiness to help); Thanksgivings (in which an individual expresses his gratitude for deliverance); Sacred History (in which the nation recounts the story of God's dealings with it); Royal Psalms (for use on such occasions as a coronation or royal wedding); Wisdom Psalms (which are meditations on life and the ways of God); and Liturgies (Psalms composed for special cultic or historical occasions).

In the Orthodox Church, the LXX version of the Psalms are generally used and these are numbered differently in Orthodox Bibles; in most cases the LXX numbering of the Psalms is one less than the customary numbering (Cf. Table in Chapter 3 of this Book). In addition, for liturgical use, the Psalter is divided into twenty parts called kathismas (from *kathizo*, meaning to sit, since it is permitted to sit during these readings).

Proverbs.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of moral and religious instruction to the youth of Israel. It can be divided into four main parts and five appendices: 1) (Ch. 1-9:18) Ten discourses of admonition and warning, two poems personifying Wisdom (1:20-33; 8:1-36), Wisdom vs. Folly (9:1-6, 13-18), and various shorter admonitions and poems; 2) (Ch. 10-22:16) 1st Collection of Sayings of Solomon; 3) (Ch. 22:17-24:22) The Sayings of the Wise, with the 1st Appendix added (Ch. 24:23-34), also entitled Sayings of the Wise; 4) (Ch. 25-29) 2nd Collection of Sayings of Solomon; 2nd Appendix (Ch. 30:1-14), entitled The Words of Agur; 3rd Appendix (Ch. 30:15-33) a collection of numerical proverbs; Appendix 4 (Ch. 31:1-9), entitled The Words of Lemuel, King of Massa; and Appendix 5 (Ch. 31:10-31) praise of the ideal wife.

Ecclesiastes (or The Preacher).

This book begins, The Words of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem (Eccl. 1:1), and its theme is the vanity of all things, Vanity of vanities....All is vanity! (Eccl. 1:2). The author explores man's happiness and can see no lasting, certain, secure happiness in this earthly existence. This questioning will point men to the everlasting happiness in the world to come.

The Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon).

This book is a collection of poems of human love and courtship, but beneath its secular appearance, lies some great religious truths. In the prophetic books, the Lord God was often seen as the husband of His people (e.g., Hosea 2:16-19) and in later Christian tradition, this book was interpreted as an allegory of the love of Christ for His bride, the Church (e.g., Rev. 21:2, 9).

Isaiah.

The Prophet Isaiah proclaimed his message to Judah and Jerusalem between 742 and 687 B.C., when the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria and Judah lived uneasily in its shadow. Isaiah attacks social injustice which shows Israel's weak adherence to God's laws. He exhorts the people to place their confidence in the Almighty (Omnipotent) God and to lead private and public lives which demonstrate this.

In Chapters 40-66, this theme is extended further and the author demonstrates the significance of historical events in God's plan, which extends from Creation to Redemption and beyond. In this section we find the beautiful Suffering Servant oracles, referring to the Messiah our Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of the Prophet Isaiah has always been held in highest esteem by the Orthodox Church, and is quoted and used above all other prophetic books of the Old Testament in her liturgical life. This is especially evident during the Great Lent when it is read every day at the service of the Sixth Hour.

Jeremiah.

This book contains the words of Jeremiah the Prophet which he dictated to his aide, Baruch. His ministry began in 627 B.C. and ended some time after 580, probably in Egypt. The Prophet is much concerned with rewards and punishments, the recompense for good and evil, faithfulness and disobedience. He criticized Judah for its worship of gods other than the Lord and proclaimed that

God's Covenant people must return to Him. The judgment must come, but the ominous future (later, the unhappy present) would be replaced by a new and more enduring relationship with God.

The book can be divided into five parts: 1) (Ch. 1-25) sermons against Judah; 2) (Ch. 26-35) narrative passages, interspersed with sermons; 3) (Ch. 36-45) biographical narratives about Jeremiah, probably by Baruch; 4) (Ch. 46-51) oracles against the foreign nations; and 5) (Ch. 52) a historical appendix. The Orthodox book of Jeremiah differs significantly in many places from that of the Hebrew Bible.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah.

This book, ascribed to the Prophet Jeremiah, is a small book of laments over Jerusalem after its destruction by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. The dominant ideas of the Prophet are sentiments of sorrow, amendment and conversion. The punishment which was from God has not been in vain, but has been a healing medicine. The book is divided into five chapters, the first four of which are acrostic poems (a verse for each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet each beginning with that letter) and the fifth, although not an acrostic, consists, again, of twenty-two verses.

Ezekiel.

This book is the work of Ezekiel the Priest, whose ministry extended from 593 to 563 B.C., when he was in Babylon with the Exiles. As Prophet to the Exiles, he assured his listeners of the abiding presence of God among them, constantly emphasizing the Lord's role in the events of the day, so that Israel and the nations will know that I am the Lord. The integrity of the individual and his personal responsibility to God is stressed and hope of restoration to homeland and temple by a just and holy God is brought to the helpless and hopeless people.

The book can be divided into three parts: 1) (Ch. 1-24) Oracles of warning; 2) (Ch. 25-32) Oracles against the foreign nations; and 3) (Ch. 33-48) Oracles of hope. The famous reading concerning the dry bones which is read at Holy Saturday Matins comes from this Prophet (Ch. 37).

Daniel.

The Prophet Daniel lived in Babylon in the time of King Nebuchadnezzar. The book itself consists of six stories (Ch. 1-6), which illustrate how faithful Jews, loyally practicing their religion, were enabled, by God's help, to triumph over their enemies (e.g., the Three Youths in the flaming furnace Ch. 3), and four visions (Ch. 7-12) interpreting current history and predicting the ultimate triumph of the saints in the final consummation. In addition, the Orthodox Bible (LXX) contains two more chapters (13-14) concerning the stories of Susanna, a righteous Virgin, and the Prophet Daniel, the false god Bel, and the Dragon. The LXX Daniel also contains an additional 68 verses inserted after 3:23, The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men in the furnace, which is sung at the Liturgy of St. Basil on Holy Saturday.

Hosea.

This book is part of the Book of the Twelve, also known as The Minor Prophets. Hosea preached in the time of the Northern Kingdom (750-722 B.C.). He can be characterized as the Prophet of Divine Love, since he preaches much of God's love for His people and His anger at His beloved's faithlessness. The book can be divided into two parts: 1) (Ch. 1-3) The Allegory of the Marriage; and 2) (Ch. 4-14) Sermons based on the Allegory.

Joel.

This book was written by a Prophet, Joel, the son of Pethuel, who lived in Judah during the Persian period, probably from 400-350 B.C. He views a locust plague which ravished the country as God's punishment on His people and called them to repentance (Ch. 1-2:27) and using this catastrophe as

a dire warning, went on to depict the coming of the Day of the Lord and its final judgment and blessings (Ch. 2:28-3:21), which constitutes the second major division of this book.

Amos.

The Prophet Amos preached in the period from about 760-750 B.C. A shepherd from the Judean village of Tekoa, he was called by God to preach at the Northern shrine of Bethel. He denounced Israel, as well as her neighbors, for reliance on military might, for grave social injustices, foul immorality and shallow, meaningless piety. The book is divided into three parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2) oracles against Israel's neighbors; 2) (Ch. 3-6) indictment of Israel herself for sin and injustice; and 3) (Ch. 7-9) visions of Israel's coming doom.

Obadiah.

The prophecy of Obadiah, who prophesied sometime after the Fall of Jerusalem, consists of an oracle against Edom, one of Israel's neighbors. This book is the shortest book of the Old Testament and consists of three parts: 1) an indictment of Edom for hostile actions against Israel in her time of peril (vs. 1-14); an announcement of the Lord's recompense upon the nations for their shameful behavior (vs. 15-18); and 3) a proclamation of the return of the Exiles to the Promised Land, their dominion over Edom and the Lord's universal sovereignty (vs. 19-21).

Jonah.

The prophecy of Jonah and his three days in the belly of a great fish comprise one of the most-remembered of the books of the Prophets indeed, our Lord uses this image concerning his own three days and nights in the tomb (Matt. 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32). The Prophet calls Israel to repentance and reminds her of her mission to preach to all the nations the wideness of God's mercy and His forgiveness. The book conveniently divides into two parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2) Jonah's first call and disobedience, culminating in his sojourn in the belly of the fish; and 2) (Ch. 3-4) his second call to preach to Nineveh.

Micah.

The Prophet Micah preached in Judah at the same time as the Prophet Isaiah (742-687 B.C.). Like the Prophet Amos, he spoke out against the oppression of the poor by the rich as a crime crying out to Heaven for vengeance. Despite prophesying the Fall of Jerusalem, he looks beyond to the time of divine forgiveness and hope when the expected Messiah would come in person and rule not only Judah but all the nations of the world. The book is divided into three parts: 1) Judgment of Israel and Judah (Ch. 1-3); 2) Israel in the Messianic Age (Ch. 4-5); and 3) Accusations and Judgments (Ch. 6-7). His prophecy concerning Bethlehem (Micah 5:2-4) is read on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ.

Nahum.

The Prophet Nahum prophesied between 626-612 B.C. and concerns himself with an oracle against Nineveh and the destruction of Assyria. It is a triumphant song asserting boldly that the Lord is the avenger of cruelty and immorality.

Habakkuk.

This Prophet, who lived at the time of the height of Babylonian power, wrote probably between 608-598 B.C. He confronts the disturbing problem of why a just God is silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he (Hab. 1:13), for which he receives the answer that is eternally valid: God is still Lord and in His own way and at the proper time He will deal with the wicked; but the righteous shall live by his faith (Hab. 2:4). The book is divided into three parts: 1)

(Ch. 1-2:5) a dialogue between the Prophet and God; 2) (Ch. 2:6-20) five woes against a wicked nation; and 3) (Ch. 3) a lengthy poem obviously intended for liturgical use.

Zephaniah.

The Prophet Zephaniah's ministry dates to the reign of King Josiah (640-609 B.C.), and this prophecy can be divided into three sections: 1) (Ch. 1) proclamation of doom on Judah in the form of the destructive Day of the Lord, which is near and hastening fast; 2) (Ch. 2) divine judgment is extended to other nations; and 3) (Ch. 3) comfort and consolation are promised to those who wait patiently for the Lord and serve Him with one accord.

Haggai.

The Prophet Haggai preached in Jerusalem from the 6th to 9th months of 520 B.C. In five addresses, he exhorted Zerubbabel the Governor and Joshua the High Priest to assume official leadership in the rebuilding of the Temple and urged the priests to purify the cultic worship. The Prophet saw these steps also as necessary preparations for the Messianic Age. Upon the completion of these projects, the wonderful era foreseen by the earlier Prophets, would come; for God would bless His people with fruitfulness and prosperity, overthrow the Gentiles, and establish Zerubbabel as the Messianic King on the throne of David.

Zechariah.

The prophecies of Zechariah (found in Chapters 1-8) date from 520-518 B.C. and share with Haggai the zeal for a rebuilt Temple, a purified community, and the coming of the Messianic Age. The second part (Chapters 9-14) were probably written later in the Greek period (4th and 3rd Centuries B.C.) by disciples of Zechariah, for instead of peace and rebuilding, it speaks of universal warfare and the siege of Jerusalem. In this second part we encounter the Messianic Prince of Peace and the Good Shepherd smitten for His flock. Chapter 9:9 forms part of the Old Testament readings for the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.

Malachi.

The Prophet Malachi (meaning My Messenger) lived in the period from 500 to 450 B.C. One central theme dominates this Prophet's thought: faithfulness to the Lord's Covenant and its teachings. The book is divided into two parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2:16) the sins of the people and the priests; and 2) (Ch. 2:17-3:24) the coming of God to judge, to punish and to reward. This prophecy is used in the New Testament as part of the prophecies concerning John the Baptist, Behold, I send My messenger to prepare the way before Me... (Mal. 3:1).

The Old Testament Apocrypha

Greek Additions to the Old Testament (Apocrypha).

The Orthodox Bible contains certain other Scriptures besides that normally found in the Hebrew Bible and most English language Bibles. The word Apocrypha means things that are hidden, although why so is not positively known. Sometimes these books are given the title Deuterocanonicals contrasted to Proto-canonical to distinguish the first (or *proto*) canonical books from those that came later (*deutero* second). This term is to be preferred over Apocrypha since that word may have negative meanings.

The Deutero-canonical books appeared as part of Holy Scripture with the translation of the Hebrew Scripture into Greek by Alexandrian Jews who had been gathered together for that purpose in Egypt

just prior to the New Testament times. Over the centuries, however, these books have been disputed by many; many hold them to have little or no value as Scripture. However, both the Orthodox and Roman Catholics accept them as part of the Biblical Canon, whereas, since the Reformation, most Protestants have rejected them as being spurious. Although the Orthodox Church accepts these books as being canonical, and treasures them and uses them liturgically, she does not use them as primary sources in the definition of her dogmas.

The Greek Additions to the Old Testament that are accepted by the Orthodox Churches are the following:

First Esdras

Second Esdras

[The Greek Orthodox accept 1st Esdras, but not 2nd Esdras, considering 2nd Esdras to be the proto-canonical Ezra-Nehemiah. The Russian Church accepts both, but titles them 2nd and 3rd Esdras, 1st Esdras being the proto-canonical Ezra-Nehemiah.]

Tobit

Judith

Additions to Esther

The Wisdom of Solomon

Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach

Baruch

The Letter of Jeremiah

Additions to Daniel:

Song of the Three Youths

Susanna

Daniel, Bel and the Dragon

The Prayer of Manasseh

First Maccabees

Second Maccabees

Third Maccabees

Fourth Maccabees

[Fourth Maccabees is not accepted by the Russian Church and is placed in an Appendix by the Greek Church.]

First Esdras.

This book (2nd Esdras in Russian Bibles) was written probably in the 2nd Century B.C. by an unknown Greek-speaking Jew, whose purpose was to emphasize the contributions of Josiah,

Zerubbabel and Ezra to the reforms of Israelite worship. It basically reproduces 2 Chronicles 35-36, all of Ezra and Nehemiah 7:38-8:12.

Second Esdras.

This book (3rd Esdras in Russian Bibles not used by the Greek Church) was probably written by an unknown Palestinian Jew near the close of the 1st Century A.D. The main part of this book consists of seven revelations, in which the seer is instructed by the angel, Uriel concerning some of the great mysteries of the moral world.

Tobit.

This pious story was written probably in the 2nd Century B.C. by an unknown author. The setting of the story is Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, where the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been taken captive in 721 B.C. with the Fall of Samaria. A pious Jew, named Tobit, lived in the city and was known for his many charitable deeds. Yet, despite these deeds, he became blind and poverty-stricken (Ch. 1-2). At the same time, in faraway Media, there lived Sarah who was haunted by a demon. God heard the prayers of both and sent the angel, Raphael to save them (Ch. 3). Tobit commissioned his son, Tobias, to go to Media to collect a sum of money he had deposited there many years before. The Angel Raphael, his identity hidden from Tobias, accompanied him to Media, revealing to him magic formulas which would heal his father's blindness and also exorcise Sarah's demon-lover, Asmodeus (Ch. 4-6). The mission was successfully completed by Tobias and he married Sarah (Ch. 7-14).

Judith.

This pious, yet nationalistic tale was probably written in the 2nd Century B.C. and is concerned with a Jewish heroine, Judith, who saves her people from the depredations of Holofernes, a general of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. The purpose of the book seems to be to encourage the Jews in a time of persecution. It is divided into two parts: 1) (Ch. 1-7) This sets up the battle between the overpowering forces of paganism and helpless, little Israel. 2) (Ch. 8-16) Here we have a description of the defeat of these forces by the hand of a woman, Judith.

The Wisdom of Solomon.

This book is probably the last book of the Old Testament and was written around 100 B.C. by an Alexandrian Jew, although he probably used earlier materials even those possibly written by King Solomon. Here the concept of wisdom is personified (and this will ultimately lead to the New Testament idea of the Word of God, that is, Christ). The book can be conveniently divided into three parts: 1) Chapters 1-5 deal with the vital importance of Wisdom in determining the eternal destiny of men; Chapters 6-9 speak of the origin, nature and activities of Wisdom, as well as the means to acquire it; and Chapters 10-19 are a description of Divine Wisdom directing the destiny of Israel from Adam to the Exodus from Egypt. This book is used by the Orthodox for Old Testament Readings on the occasion of many Feasts of Saints.

Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.

This book is the work of Jesus, the son of Sirach, probably a Jewish Scribe who committed his teachings to writing about 180 B.C. Soon after 132 B.C., his grandson (see the Prologue) translated the book into Greek. The book is an important link between the Wisdom Literature of ancient Israel and the rabbinical schools of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It basically consists of one man's lifetime of meditation on the Scriptures, on life in general and on his own broad experience. The book can be divided into two basic parts: 1) (Ch. 1-43) practical moral instructions for all and 2) (Ch. 44-50:24) a eulogy of the great men of Israel's past. This is followed by an Epilogue containing biographical details and several songs (Ch. 50:25-51).

Baruch.

This book, purported to be written by Baruch, the Prophet Jeremiah's secretary, to the Exiles in Babylon, was intended to instruct the Israelites as to how to make the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It can be divided into three parts: 1) (Ch. 1-3:8) Introduction and confession of Israel's guilt in a long penitential prayer; 2) (Ch. 3:9-4:4) The nature of true wisdom which comes from God alone and is found in His holy law; and 3) (Ch. 4:5-5:9) A penitential psalm leading to the preparation for the happy return of the Exiles to Jerusalem and her own future Messianic glory.

The Letter of Jeremiah.

This is usually found as Chapter Six of Baruch (although obviously written by someone else) and purports to be a letter from Jeremiah to the Jews who were about to be taken, as captives, to Babylon. This is an impassioned sermon against participation in the worship of idols, showing that they are simply impotent things.

The Prayer of Manasseh.

This beautiful penitential prayer (read at the Great Compline Service) is purported to be a prayer of wicked King Manasseh of Judah, while in exile, entreating divine forgiveness for his many sins.

First Maccabees.

The author of this book was probably a Palestinian Jew living in Jerusalem, who wrote not long after the death of the High Priest John Hyrcanus I (134-104 B.C.). After an introduction briefly sketching the conquests of Alexander the Great, the division of the Empire and the origin of the Seleucid Empire (Ch. 1:1-10), he recounts the main events of Judea's history from the accession of Antiochus IV (175 B.C.) to the reign of John Hyrcanus I, which marked the period of the successful struggle for Jewish independence. Thus the book can be divided into four parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2) Prelude to the Maccabean wars; 2) (Ch. 3-9:22) Military exploits of Judas Maccabeus; 3) (Ch. 9:23-12:54) Exploits of Jonathan Maccabeus; and 4) (Ch. 13-16) Exploits of Simon Maccabeus.

Second Maccabees.

This book is an abridgment of a five-volume history, now lost, by one Jason of Cyrene, and is a theological interpretation of Jewish history from the time of the High Priest Onias III and the Syrian King Seleucus IV to the defeat of Nicanor's army (180-161 B.C.), paralleling 1 Mac. 1:10-7:50. The author is the first known to us to celebrate the deeds of the martyrs and clearly teaches that the world was created out of nothing. He believes that the saints in Heaven intercede for men on earth (15:11-16), and that the living might pray and offer sacrifices for the dead (12:43-45). The book can be divided into three parts: 1) (Ch. 1-2) Two letters from the Jews of Jerusalem to the Jews of Egypt; 2) (Ch. 3-10:9) Events relating to the Temple, priesthood and the Syrian persecution of the Jews from 176-164 B.C.; and 3) (Ch. 10:10-15:39) The successful military campaign of Judas Maccabeus and the defeat of Nicanor.

Third Maccabees.

This book, written during the 1st Century B.C., deals with the struggles of Egyptian Jews who suffered under the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203 B.C.) and the persecution of Palestinian Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.). It was written obviously to console, exhort and teach Egyptian Jews who, during the 1st Century B.C., were several times threatened with alteration of their civic status by the Roman Administration of Egypt.

Fourth Maccabees.

This book is included in the Greek Orthodox Bible (in an Appendix), but is not found in Russian Bibles, and is a classic example of the interpretation of Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy. It is a lecture on religious reason, as exemplified by the story of the martyrdom of Eleazar, the Seven Maccabean Brothers, and their mother, Solomonia, and was probably written about 20-54 A.D.

Additions to Esther.

[Cf. proto-canonical Esther.]

Additions to Daniel.

[Cf. proto-canonical Daniel.]

Used in Church

Scripture Readings Throughout the Year.

Epistle Gospel

Sunday of Holy Pascha Acts 1:1-8 John 1:1-17

2nd Sunday after Pascha Acts 5:12-20 John 20:19-31

3rd Sunday after Pascha Acts 6:1-7 Mark 15:43-16:8

4th Sunday after Pascha Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15

5th Sunday after Pascha Acts 11:19-26, 29-30 John 4:5-42

6th Sunday after Pascha Acts 16:16-34 John 9:1-38

Holy Ascension (Thurs.) Acts 1:1-12 Luke 24:36-53

7th Sunday after Pascha Acts 20:16-18,28-36 John 17:1-13

8th Sunday Holy Pentecost Acts 2:1-11 John 7:37-52; 8:12

1st Sunday after Pentecost Heb. 11:33-12:2 Matt. 10:32-33,37-38;

19:27-30

2nd Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 2:10-16 Matt. 4:18-23

3rd Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 5:1-10 Matt. 6:22-33

4th Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 6:18-23 Matt. 8:5-13

5th Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 10:1-10 Matt. 8:28-9:1

6th Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 12:6-14 Matt. 9:1-8

7th Sunday after Pentecost Rom. 15:1-7 Matt. 9:27-35

8th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 1:10-18 Matt. 14:14-22
9th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 3:9-17 Matt. 14:22-34
10th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 4:9-16 Matt. 17:14-23
11th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 9:2-12 Matt. 18:23-35
12th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 15:1-11 Matt. 19:16-26
13th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 16:13-24 Matt. 21:33-42
14th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 1:21-2:4 Matt. 22:1-14
15th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 4:6-15 Matt. 22:35-46
16th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 6:1-10 Matt. 25:14-30
17th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1 Matt. 15:21-28
18th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 9:6-11 Luke 5:1-11
19th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Cor. 11:31-12:9 Luke 6:31-36
20th Sunday after Pentecost Gal. 1:11-19 Luke 7:11-16
21st Sunday after Pentecost Gal. 2:16-20 Luke 8:5-15
22nd Sunday after Pentecost Gal. 6:11-18 Luke 16:19-31
23rd Sunday after Pentecost Eph. 2:4-10 Luke 8:26-39
24th Sunday after Pentecost Eph. 2:14-22 Luke 8:41-56
25th Sunday after Pentecost Eph. 4:1-6 Luke 10:25-37
26th Sunday after Pentecost Eph. 5:9-19 Luke 12:16-21
27th Sunday after Pentecost Eph. 6:10-17 Luke 13:10-17
28th Sunday after Pentecost Col. 1:12-18 Luke 14:16-24
29th Sunday after Pentecost Col. 3:4-11 Luke 17:12-19
30th Sunday after Pentecost Col. 3:12-16 Luke 18:18-27
31st Sunday after Pentecost 1 Tim. 1:15-17 Luke 18:35-43
32nd Sunday after Pentecost 1 Tim. 4:9-15 Luke 19:1-10
Sundays Preparatory to Great Lent.
33rd Sunday after Pentecost 2 Tim. 3:10-15 Luke 18:10-14

Publican and Pharisee

34th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32

Prodigal Son

35th Sunday after Pentecost 1 Cor. 8:8-9:2 Matt. 25:31-46

Meatfare

Sunday of Cheesefare Rom. 13:11-14:4 Matt. 6:14-21

Great Lent.

1st Sunday of Great Lent Heb. 11:24-26, John 1:43-51

Sunday of Orthodoxy 32-12:2

2nd Sunday of Great Lent Heb. 1:10-23 Mark 2:1-12

St. Gregory Palamas Heb. 7:26-8:2 John 10:9-16

3rd Sunday of Great Lent Heb. 4:14-5:6 Mark 8:34-9:1

Adoration of the Cross

4th Sunday of Great Lent Heb. 6:13-20 Mark 9:17-31

St. John of the Ladder Eph. 5:9-19 Matt. 4:25-5:12

(Sat.) Akathist to the Heb. 9:24-28 Mark 8:27-31

Most-Holy Theotokos Heb. 9:1-7 Luke 10:38-42;

11:27-28

5th Sunday of Great Lent Heb. 9:11-14 Mark 10:32-45

St. Mary of Egypt Gal. 3:23-29 Luke 7:36-50

Lazarus Saturday Heb. 12:28-13:8 John 11:1-45

Palm Sunday Phil. 4:4-9 John 12:1-18

Passion Week.

Holy Thursday 1 Cor. 11:23-32 Matt. 26:2-20

John 13:3-17

Matt. 26:21-39

Luke 22:43-45

Matt. 26:40-27:2

Holy Friday 1. John 13:31-18:1

12 Passion Gospels 2. John 18:1-28

3. Matt. 26:57-75

4. John 18:28-19:16

5. Matt. 27:3-32

6. Mark 15:16-32

7. Matt. 27:33-54

8. Luke 23:32-49

9. John 19:25-37

10. Mark 15:43-47

11. John 19:38-42

12. Matt. 27:62-66

Holy Saturday Rom. 6:3-11 Matt. 28:1-20

Matins Resurrection Gospels.

1. Matthew 28:16-20 7. John 20:1-10

2. Mark 16:1-8 8. John 20:11-18

3. Mark 16:9-20 9. John 20:19-31

4. Luke 24:1-12 10. John 21:1-14

5. Luke 24:12-35 11. John 21:15-25

6. Luke 24:36-53

Scripture Readings For the Twelve Great Feasts*

Feast Epistle Gospel

The Nativity of the Most-Holy Phil. 2:5-11 Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Theotokos

The Exaltation of the 1 Cor. 1:18-24 John 19:6-11, 13-20,

Precious Cross 25-28, 30-35

The Entry of the Most-Holy Heb. 9:1-7 Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Theotokos into the Temple

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Gal. 4:4-7 Matt. 2:1-12

Christ

The Theophany of Our Lord Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 3:13-17

Jesus Christ 3:4-7

The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Heb. 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40

Christ

The Annunciation to the Most- Heb. 2:11-18 Luke 1:24-38

Holy Theotokos

The Transfiguration of Our Lord 2 Peter 1:10-19 Matt. 17:1-9

Jesus Christ

The Dormition of the Most-Holy Phil. 2:5-11 Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

NOTE: The Readings for Holy Pascha and the Movable Great Feasts (Palm Sunday, Ascension and Pentecost) are to be found in the previous Table.

Scripture Readings for Special Occasions.

For the Departed:

Monday Rom. 14:6-9 John 5:17-24

Tuesday 1 Cor. 15:39-57 John 5:24-30

Wednesday 2 Cor. 5:1-10 John 6:35-39

Thursday 1 Cor. 15:20-28 John 6:40-44

Friday 1 Cor. 15:47-57 John 6:48-54

Saturday 1 Thess. 4:13-17 John 5:24-30

For Other Occasions:

For the New Year 1 Tim. 2:1-7 Luke 4:16-22

For Civil Holidays Rom. 13:1-7 Matt. 22:15-22

In Times of Strife Eph. 6:10-17 Mark 11:23-26

In Times of Drought James 5:10-16 Matt. 16:1-6

In Times of Fear of Earthquake Heb. 12:6-13, 25-27 Matt. 8:23-27

For the Sick James 5:10-16 Matt. 8:14-23

Mark 5:24-34

John 4:46-54

For Travelers by Land Acts 8:26-39 John 14:1-14,

For Travelers by Air or Sea Acts 21:1-7 Mark 4:35-41

At the Beginning of Instruction Eph. 1:16-19; 3:19-21 Mark 10:13-16

At the Beginning of Every Good

Work Phil. 2:12-16 Matt. 7:7-11

For Every Need (Special Eph. 5:9-21 Luke 18:2-8

Petitions) 2 Cor. 1:3-7 Matt. 7:7-11

Mark 11:23-26

For Giving Thanks Eph. 5:9-21 Luke 17:12-19

For Baptism Rom. 6:3-11 Matt. 28:16-20

For Marriage Eph. 5:20-33 John 2:1-11

For Burial of Infants 1 Cor. 15:39-57 John 6:35-39

For Burial of Laymen 1 Thess. 4:13-17 John 5:24-30

For Burial of Monastics 1 Thess. 4:13-17 John 5:24-30

For Burial of Priests 1 Thess. 4:13-17 John 5:24-30

Rom. 5:13-21 John 5:17-25

1 Cor. 15:1-11 John 6:35-39

1 Cor. 15:20-28 John 6:40-44

Rom. 14:6-9 John 6:48-54

Where to Find

Psalms for Special Needs.

The following Psalms are especially appropriate for times of special need:

When Afraid: Ps. 27; Ps. 56

When Anxious: Ps. 46

When Disaster Threatens: Ps. 34; Ps. 91; Ps. 121

When Discouraged: Ps. 23; Ps. 37; Ps. 42; Ps. 55; Ps. 90

When Facing a Crisis: Ps. 34; Ps. 46; Ps. 118; Ps. 121

When Friends Fail: Ps. 27; Ps. 35

When Leaving Home: Ps. 27; Ps. 121

When Needing God's Protection: Ps. 27; Ps. 62; Ps. 91; Ps. 139

When Needing Inward Peace: Ps. 37; Ps. 85

When Needing Prayer: Ps. 4; Ps. 6; Ps. 20; Ps. 22; Ps. 25; Ps. 42; Ps. 51
 When Sick: Ps. 32; Ps. 38; Ps. 91
 When We Sin: Ps. 6; Ps. 51; Ps. 139
 When Sorrowing: Ps. 40; Ps. 42; Ps. 43; Ps. 51
 When Tempted: Ps. 1; Ps. 73; Ps. 101; Ps. 110; Ps. 139
 When Thankful: Ps. 65; Ps. 84; Ps. 92; Ps. 95; Ps. 100; Ps. 103; Ps. 116; Ps. 136; Ps. 147
 When In Trouble: Ps. 2; Ps. 16; Ps. 31; Ps. 34; Ps. 37; Ps. 38; Ps. 40; Ps. 139
 When Weary: Ps. 6; Ps. 27; Ps. 55; Ps. 60; Ps. 90

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures.
 He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul.
 He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; I fear no evil.
 For Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
 Thou anointest my head with oil, and most excellent is Thy Cup which brings me joy!
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.
 And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Bible Helps.

Where to Find:

The Ten CommandmentsExodus 20:1-17
 The Shepherd Psalm Psalm 23
 The Birth of Jesus..... Luke 2:1-20
 The Baptism of Jesus..... Matthew 3
 The Temptation of Jesus.....Matthew 4:1-11
 The Transfiguration of Jesus.....Luke 9:28-36
 The Entry Into Jerusalem..... Matthew 21:1-10
 The Crucifixion.....John 19
 The Resurrection Matthew 28
 The Ascension..... Acts 1:1-12
 The Descent of the Holy Spirit Acts 2
 The Lord's Prayer.....Matthew 6:9-13
 The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5-7
 The Beatitudes.....Matthew 5:1-12
 The Great Commandments Matthew 22:34-40
 The Last Judgment Matthew 25:31-46
 The Parable of the Good Samaritan.....Luke 10:29-37
 The Parable of the Prodigal Son.....Luke 15:11-32
 The Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee.....Luke 18:10-14
 The Great Commission..... Matthew 28:19-20
 The Golden Rule Matthew 7:12
 The New CommandmentJohn 13:34
 The Chapter on Love..... 1 Corinthians 13
 The Gospel Condensed.....John 3:16

Sayings of Jesus:

Salt of the earth Matthew 5:13
 Left hand knowing what the right hand does.....Matthew 6:3
 The Eleventh Hour..... Matthew 20:6

No Prophet accepted in his own countryLuke 4:24
Turning the cheek..... Matthew 5:39
It is more blessed to give than to receive Acts 20:35
The blind leading the blind Matthew 15:14
Get behind Me, Satan! Matthew 16:23
I am the way, the truth, and the lifeJohn 14:6

Sayings from St. Paul:

All things to all men 1 Corinthians 9:22
Practice hospitality.....Romans 12:13
Heap coals of fire on his headRomans 12:20
A thorn in the flesh.....2 Corinthians 12:7
A labor of love..... 1 Thessalonians 1:3
Temperate in all things1 Corinthians 9:25
The wages of sin is deathRomans 6:23
In the twinkling of an eye..... 1 Corinthians 15:52
Tribute to whom tribute is dueRomans 13:7

Other Sayings:

Faith without works is dead.....James 2:17,26
The tongue is a fire.....James 3:6
With the Lord one day is as a thousand years2 Peter 3:8
Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer..... 1 John 3:15
God is love 1 John 4:8
I am the Alpha and the Omega.....Revelation 1:8

Great Prayers of the Bible.

Prayers of Jesus:

The Lord's Prayer.....Matthew 6:9-13
Thanksgiving..... Matthew 11:25-26
For His followersJohn 17
In Gethsemane..... Matthew 26:39
For forgiveness of His enemies.....Luke 23:34

Prayers of the Old Testament:

Prayer for the offering of tithes..... Deuteronomy 26:10-15
Solomon's prayer for wisdom 1 Kings 3:5-9
Prayer of hope in troublePsalms 42 and 43
For the presence of God..... Psalm 90
Prayer of repentance..... Psalm 51
To the All-seeing God Psalm 139
When God seems far away Isaiah 63:15-64:12

Three Benedictions.

Numbers 6:24-26 Hebrews 13:20-21 1 Timothy 1:17

Hymns of the Old Testament.

The Song of Moses in the Exodus.....	Exodus 15:1-19
Another Song of Moses	Deuteronomy 32:1-43
The Prayer of Hannah	1 Samuel 2:1-10
The Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet	Habakkuk 3:1-19
The Prayer of Isaiah the Prophet	Isaiah 26:9-20
The Prayer of Jonah the Prophet	Jonah 2:3-10
The Prayer of the Three Holy Children	Daniel 3:26-56 (LXX)
The Song of the Three Holy Children	Daniel 3:57-88 (LXX)

The Earliest Christian Hymns.

Ave Maria (Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos...)Luke 1:28-33
Magnificat (My soul magnifies the Lord...)Luke 1:46-55
Benedictus (Blessed be the Lord God...)Luke 1:68-79
Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the highest...)Luke 2:14
Nunc Dimittis (Lord, now lettest Thou...)Luke 2:29-32

Orthodox Symbolism

The Cross

The world of Christian symbols is a hierarchy of signs that have their origin in divine forms of which they are images, according to St. John of Damascus [Three Apologies Against the Iconoclasts]. The sacred central point of this world is the sign of the Holy Cross, symbol of the New Testament, symbol of victory over death, and the intersection of the heavenly and the earthly. As St. John Damascene further states: As the four ends of the Cross are held together and united by its center, so are the height and the depths, the length and the breadth, that is, all creation visible and invisible, held together by the power of God [The Orthodox Faith}. This is affirmed by St. John Chrysostom, who pointed out that the Cross is the joining of the heavenly and the earthly and the defeat of Hell [Works, Vol. II, Bk. 1, St. Petersburg, 1905, p.953].

The whole purpose of a man's life is knowledge of the Cross, that, at the end of his road, he might say: I have been crucified with Christ:, it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me (Gal. 2:20). In order to become a temple, a repository of the Spirit of God, the soul should follow the Lord step by step along the way of the Cross until, at last, all that remains for it is to be lifted up on the Cross in spirit, after which follows spiritual resurrection in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did not the Lord Himself tell us, that he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me (Matt. 10:38)?

The Holy Apostles, having heard the Savior speak of His own crucifixion and death on the Cross, and knowing the words of Old Testament Scripture that had been fulfilled, were wont to say: What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled (Acts 3:18). And the early Fathers, faithful to the Apostolic Tradition, explained that, as the forces of death had entered into man with the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, even so would eternal life enter into the world with the tree of life which, on earth, has been transformed into the Cross of Christ.

This Tree of Life, united in the Cross of Golgotha, was seen in the Old Testament as the brass serpent which Moses made on the tree in obedience to God's command, by which those who had been bitten by poisonous serpents, upon looking at this brass serpent would remain alive. This was

referred to by the Lord, Who said: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Now everyone who looks to the Cross with faith receives salvation and protection; and as pointed out in the words of the Savior earlier, it is bound up with the idea of bearing a Cross (Matt. 10:38). The only way to union with Christ is union through an imitation of His death; to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ is to be baptized into His death. Thus all the preaching of the Apostles is of Christ crucified: We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23-24). This teaching of the Apostles led to the transformation of mankind into the Body of Christ.

The Holy Apostles created the Church, the destiny of which was to suffer crucifixion together with Christ and, like Him, to be buried and to rise again from the dead. This process, then, is the Church's meaning and justification, summed up in the words of the Apostle Paul: For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (Rom. 6:5-8).

The earliest forms of the Cross in Christian art took the form of the depiction of the Cross as a monogram of the name of Jesus Christ. One of the earliest pictorial form of the Cross, for example, was the Greek letter X (dating from the 2nd Century), which later became known as the Cross of St. Andrew. Later this X was bisected vertically by the Greek letter I, forming, in Greek, the name Jesus Christ. By the middle of the 3rd Century, the meaning of this Cross as a monogram gave way to the idea of a six-pointed Cross symbolizing the original image of the universe, for its six points represented the six days of the creation of the world.

The actual instrument of execution used in the Roman Empire, however, normally consisted of a three-pointed cross made of two planks knocked together in the shape of the Greek letter T. According to Tertullian (2nd Century), both the Greek letter T and the Latin T were images of the Cross of Christ. According to Church Tradition, St. Anthony the Great (f 356) wore the T-Cross on his clothing and St. Zeno, Bishop of Verona, had a T-shaped Cross erected on the dome of a basilica built by him in 362 A.D. Thus, with a greater desire of Christians to imitate the actual Cross of Christ, the T-Cross became prevalent.

By the 5th Century, however, the four-pointed Cross became more popular under two forms: the so-called Greek Cross (+) and the Latin Cross (t). In the Greek the cross-piece is of equal length to the upright, in the Latin the upright is of greater length. The tradition that the Cross of Golgotha had four points was upheld by St. Irenaeus of Lyons and by St. Augustine; but the Church did admit a variety of forms of the Cross. As St. Theodore of Studium says, a cross of any shape is a true cross!

By the 6th Century, Christian art had arrived at the direct representation of the crucifixion; but even then, almost three hundred years after the Emperor Constantine had abolished execution by crucifixion, for many the direct representation of the crucified Christ remained a stumbling block. Only gradually was the symbolic representation of Christ on the Cross replaced by the depiction of the actual crucifix (i.e., the crucified Christ), which in the East, culminated in the eight-pointed Cross most common in the Russian Orthodox Church. The first written mention of the veneration of the crucifix only occurs at the end of the 7th Century.

According to St. John of Damascus: By the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ death was overcome, original sin was absolved, hell deprived of its prey, resurrection given and the strength to despise the present and even death itself, and the way was prepared to the blessedness that had been in the beginning, the gates of Paradise opened, our nature took up its seat upon the right hand of God and we became the children and heirs of God. All this was done by the Cross [The Orthodox Faith]. The

instrument of shameful execution was transformed into the gateway of Paradise and it became the sacred task of Christian art to express all of this. For this reason the use of gold and precious stones was connected with the desire to represent the Cross as the radiant beginning of a world transformed, as the tree of immortality, as the torch of the knowledge of God.

To the Inner Liturgical Tradition of the Church belongs the teaching of the liturgical use of the Cross and the significance of the Sign of the Cross. According to the Blessed Augustine: Unless the Sign of the Cross is made on the foreheads of the faithful, as on the water itself wherewith they are regenerated, or on the oil with which they are anointed with chrism, or on the sacrifice with which they are nourished, none of these things is duly performed [From A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship. London, 1972, pp. 185-186]. By the Sign of the Cross the gates are opened through which the grace of the Holy Spirit is poured forth upon the faithful, transfiguring the earthly and the heavenly in their souls, laying low sin, conquering death and breaking down the barrier, invisible to the sensual eye, that separates us from the knowledge of God.

In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Priest receives the power to celebrate the Sacraments from the moment of the laying-on of hands when the Bishop, making the Sign of the Cross over him three times, calls upon the Holy Trinity to send down the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit upon him. A newly-erected church building is transformed into a temple of the Lord only after the Altar and walls have been signed with the Cross in Holy Oil.

At the Divine Liturgy, the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross with the Holy Lamb, and this is one of the most mysterious moments of the Eucharist. The first Sign of the Cross at the elevation of the whole Lamb sanctifies the air. The second Sign of the Cross, made as the four parts of the Lamb are arranged upon the paten, sanctifies the ground. The third Sign of the Cross, as the particles are placed in the chalice, sanctifies the four corners of the world. After this, the warmth (warm water) is added to the chalice, poured in the Sign of the Cross. The communicants approach the chalice with crossed arms. Thus, without the Cross, there is no sacrament, no life and no salvation. It is for this reason that we sing the triumphant hymn of the Holy Cross: Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify!

Types of Crosses.

Tau (or T): This is so-called because it resembles the Greek letter of that name. This was the typical Cross used for Roman crucifixions.

St. Andrews: According to Church tradition, this is the type of Cross on which St. Andrew the First-called Apostle was put to death.

Greek: This Cross has arms of equal length and was probably developed by the Greeks as having a more perfect form.

Patriarchal: This Cross has two horizontal arms with the upper one shorter than the lower. The top arm represents the inscription placed by Pilate on the Cross (Matt. 27:37).

Three-Barred: This Cross existed very early in Byzantium, but was adopted by the Russian Orthodox Church and especially popularized in the Slavic countries. The upper arm represents the inscription over Christ's head, and the lower slanting arm represents His footrest. Many of these Crosses are also found with the lower arm straight, rather than slanted.

Latin: This is the most common style of Cross in the Western Churches, and is so-called since it was originally popularized by the Roman Catholic (Latin) Church.

Graded (or Calvary): This is the Latin Cross with a base of three steps, representing (from the top) faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13).

Papal: This has three arms, each longer than the other, the two top ones signifying the crosses of the two thieves crucified beside Christ. This Cross is used only in Papal processions.

Cross Botonnee (or Budded): This Cross received its name because the points appear to be capped with what appears to be a tree bud. The three-fold points (Trefoil) stand for the Holy Trinity.

Celtic: This is also called the Iona or Irish Cross, since it dates back to very early times in Great Britain and Ireland. It is said to have been taken from Ireland to the island of Iona by St. Columba in the 6th Century. The circle, symbol of eternity, suggests the eternity of Redemption.

Jerusalem (or Crusader): This Cross has four small crosses between the arms, symbolizing the five wounds of Christ. It also stands for missionary work, the small crosses indicating the four corners of the earth.

Maltese: This consists of four spearheads with points together. The eight points represent the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10). This Cross is named for the island of Malta (the place where St. Paul was shipwrecked Acts 27:14-44), since it was the headquarters of one of the Crusader group that utilized this Cross.

Cross Patee: This is often confused with the Maltese Cross. The former is made up of straight lines, while the Cross Patee has curved arms.

Cross Barbee: This Cross has ends like fish hooks, suggesting the Christians as fishers of men (Matt. 4:19).

Fleur-De-Lis: This is French for *flower of the lily*. It symbolizes the Holy Trinity.

Fylfot: This is better known to us by the name swastika, and is a symbol that seems to have been connected with sun worship as early as 1500 B.C. It was used in the catacombs as a symbol of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness.

Egyptian (or Coptic): This Cross with a loop at the top appeared in Egyptian hieroglyphics meaning life. It has been adopted by the Coptic Christians since Christ is the Tree of Life (John 14:6).

Anchor: This symbol combines an anchor with a Cross, symbolizing hope (Heb. 6:19), and was used by the early Christians in the catacombs.

Cross And Orb: This is a Cross resting on a globe, symbolizing the triumph of the Gospels throughout the earth.

Cross And Crown: This is a Cross in a crown, symbolizing the reward of the faithful after death (Rev. 2:10).

Cross Fitchee: This is any Cross whose lower arm is sharpened. This is said to have been used by the Crusaders who carried Crosses with a pointed lower end so they could be thrust into the ground easily at the time of devotions.

Cross Of Lorraine: This has two horizontal arms, a short one near the top and a longer one near the base.

Cross Trefflee: This is another form of the Cross Botonnee, with arms of equal length, with each end formed as a trefoil.

Cross Crosslet: These are four Latin Crosses joined at their bases, representing Christianity spreading in the four directions. This is seen as a missionary symbol

The Other Symbols

Monograms

Alpha And Omega: These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, signifying that Jesus Christ is the beginning and end of all things (Rev. 22:13).

Chi Rho: This is a monogram of the first two letters X and P of the Greek word for Christ.

Chi Rho with Alpha and Omega: This symbol for the Lord comes from the catacombs and indicates that he is the beginning, continuation and end of all things.

Chi Rho with Alpha and Omega in a Circle: The symbol for Christ is within the symbol for eternity (the circle), thus signifying the eternal existence of the Savior.

IHC or IHS: This is more often seen in Protestant churches and is almost as common as the Cross. They are the first three letters of the Greek word for Jesus. IHC is more ancient, but IHS is more common.

I X: This symbol for the Lord consists of the initial letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ The Victor: This is a Greek Cross with the abbreviated Greek words for Jesus Christ, the lines above the letters indicating that the words are abbreviated. The letters NIKA are translated victor or conqueror.

I.N.R.I.: These are the initial letters for the Latin inscription on the Cross of the Crucified Christ. Iesus Nazaremus Rex Indaeorum: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (John 19:19).

I.H.B.I [Greek]

[Slavonic]

Sun and Chi Rho: The sun is the source of light and Jesus is referred to as the Light (John 1:4). The sun is combined with the CHI RHO, another symbol for Christ (Mai. 4:2).

The Four Evangelists.

Winged Man St. Matthew: The winged man is his symbol, for he traces the human lineage of Jesus.

Winged Lion St. Mark: The winged lion symbolizes St. Mark because he begins his Gospel by describing St. John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Winged Ox St. Luke: St. Luke is symbolized by a winged ox because his Gospel describes the sacrifice of Christ.

Winged Eagle St. John: The winged eagle symbolizes him because his Gospel seems to soar on eagles' wings.

The four images portrayed above, find their first expression in the writings of the Prophet Ezekiel, who describes his famous inaugural vision:

The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the form of men, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings.... As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man in front; the four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle at the back. Such were their faces.... (Ez. 1:3-6, 10).

Other Symbols.

All-Seeing Eye: The All-Seeing Eye of God looks out from the triangle, which represents the Trinity. This reminds us that God always watches over us in love (Ps. 33:18).

Ark: This is a common symbol of the Church, since, like the Ark of Noah, all can find life in the safety of the Church.

Candle: Candles are used in the Church as symbols of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).

Censer: This is a symbol of prayer, for as the smoke of incense soars upward, so too prayer ascends to God (Rev. 8:4 and Ps. 141:2).

Chalice and Cross: This represents the cup used at the Last Supper, the Cross standing for the suffering of Christ (Luke 22:42). Sometimes, instead of a Cross, there is placed a square loaf, Christ the Bread of Life. Thus, this symbol can also be seen as symbolizing the Holy Eucharist.

Dove Descending: This symbol, white, with a three-rayed nimbus descending, is the most common representation of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22).

Fish: This is one of the most ancient symbols for Christ. The letters of the Greek word for fish, also signify the first letters of each word of the phrase Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.

Grapes: A bunch of grapes signifies the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. It also is a symbol of Christ the Fruit of Life.

Lamb of God: This symbol emphasizes the sacrificial role of Christ (John 1:29). The lamb carries the banner of victory over sin and death (1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:13).

Lily: This is a symbol of Easter and immortality. The bulb decays in the ground, yet from it new life is released.

Olive Branch: The olive branch is the symbol for peace, harmony and healing.

Peacock: This is an ancient symbol of the Resurrection. When the peacock sheds his feathers, he grows more brilliant ones than those he lost.

Phoenix: This is a mythical bird which at death bursts into flames and rises from its own ashes. Thus it is a symbol of the Resurrection and life immortal.

Seven-Fold Flame: This is a symbol of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

Seven Lamps: This represents the seven lamps burning before the Throne of God (also a seven-branched candlestick) and symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2-3; Rev. 5:12).

Shamrock: This was supposedly used by St. Patrick of Ireland to teach the Trinity. The leaf is one, yet distinct, equal, and of the same substance.

Ship: The Church has been likened to a great ship bearing men through a violent storm to the safety of the Kingdom of Heaven. The main part of the church building is called the Nave, which comes from the Latin word for ship, *navis*.

Ten Commandments: These are pictured as tablets of stone, with numbers on each, symbolizing the Ten Commandments. Sometimes there are three commandments on the first and seven on the second; sometimes there are four and six; and sometimes there are five on each tablet.

Triquetra: This is an early symbol of the Trinity in which the three equal arcs express eternity in their continuous form, indivisible in their weaving.

Triquetra and Circle: The Triquetra, denoting the Trinity, is combined with the circle of eternity, producing a figure recalling several spiritual truths.

Wheat: Wheat is the symbol of the Bread of Life, based on the Gospel of Mark

Orthodox Worship

Fasting

Seeing that bodily disposition is important in worship and spiritual life, in general, great emphasis is placed in the Orthodox Church on fasting; if one should add up all of the fasting seasons and days of the Church calendar, he would find that more than half of the year is devoted to this ascetic labor. The question might rightfully be asked, then, as to why this is so.

According to St. Basil the Great, Adam, the first-created man, loving God of his own free will, dwelt in the heavenly blessedness of communion with God, in the angelic state of prayer and fasting. The cause of this first man's fall was his free will; by an act of disobedience he violated the vow of abstinence and broke the living union of love with God. That is, he held in scorn the heavenly obligations of prayer and fasting by eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Lack of abstinence, then, was the cause of the Fall and, as a result, because of this original greed, the soul becomes dimmed, and is deprived of the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ calls all of us to salvation through self-denial (Luke 14:26) and this is addressed to the free will of fallen man: If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me (Matt. 16:24). Thus, the Savior calls man to the voluntary fulfillment of those heavenly obligations, which he freely forsook, of observing prayer and fasting.

Repentance without fasting is made ineffectual since fasting is the beginning of repentance. The aim of bodily fasting is the enslavement of the flesh, for fasting bridles the lust of the stomach and of that below the stomach, meaning the removal of the passions, the mortification of the body and the destruction of the sting of lust. Thus it is necessary to overcome the stomach for the healing of the passions.

The personal example of the Lord Himself bears witness to the absolute necessity of bodily fasting. Did not the Savior fast for forty days and nights after His baptism to prepare for His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:2)? So too, many of the Saints of the Church were especially noted for their ascetic labors, which saw fasting as being of especially great importance.

In fasting the flesh and the spirit struggle one against the other. Therefore bodily fasting leads to the triumph of the spirit over the body, and gives a man power over the stomach, subdues the flesh and

permits it not to commit fornication and uncleanness. Abstinence is the mother of cleanliness, the giver of health and is good for rich and poor, sick and healthy, alike. It strengthens the seeker after godliness in spiritual battles and proves to be a formidable weapon against evil spirits. As the Lord Himself said, concerning the casting-out of certain demons: This kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21).

This fasting, however, is not to be done out of pride or self-will; It must be observed in the praise of God and must be in accordance with the canons of the Church, since it consists in the complete renunciation of self-will and of the desires. At the same time, we must realize that for fallen man to attain perfection, even intensive fasting is insufficient, if in his soul he does not abstain from those things which further sin. Fasting is not only the abstinence from food, but also from evil thoughts and all passion, for, as the Savior says: Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man... (Matt. 15:17-20). Thus exterior fasting, without the corresponding interior fasting is in vain.

Fasting Rules

The fasting rules, found for the most part in the Typikon (mainly Chapters 32 and 33), and repeated in appropriate places of the Menaion and Triodion, are dependent on the Church's cycle of feasts and fasts. In general, with a few exceptions, all Wednesdays and Fridays (Mondays also, in some monasteries) are kept as days of fasting, with no meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, wine or oil to be eaten. This includes, as well, the four canonical fasting periods (Great Lent, the Apostles' Fast, the Nativity Fast and the Dormition Fast), and certain other days, including the Eve of Theophany, the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, and the elevation of the Cross. It must be noted, however, that there are many local variations in the allowances of wine and oil (and sometimes fish), such as on patronal feast days of a parish or monastery, or when the feast of a great Saint (or Saints) is celebrated which has particular local or national significance.

While most Orthodox Christians are perhaps aware of the rules of fasting for Great Lent, Wednesdays and Fridays, the rules for the other fasting periods are less known. During the Dormition Fast, wine and oil are allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays (and sometimes on a few feast days and vigils). During the Apostles' Fast and the Nativity Fast, the general rules are as follows (from Chapter 33 of the Typikon):

It should be noted that in the Fast of the Holy Apostles and of the Nativity of Christ, on Tuesday and Thursday we do not eat fish, but only oil and wine. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday we eat neither oil nor wine.... On Saturday and Sunday we eat fish. If there occur on Tuesday or Thursday a Saint who has a Doxology, we eat fish; if on Monday, the same; but if on Wednesday or Friday, we allow only oil and wine.... If it be a Saint who has a Vigil on Wednesday or Friday, or the Saint whose temple it is, we allow oil and wine and fish.... But from the 20th of December until the 25th, even if it be Saturday or Sunday, we do not allow fish.

In another place the Typikon prescribes that if the Eve of Theophany or the Eve of the Nativity fall on Saturday or Sunday, wine and oil are permitted.

The rule of xerophagy is relaxed on the following days:

1. On Saturdays and Sundays in Great Lent, with the exception of Holy Saturday, two main meals may be taken in the usual way, around mid-day and in the evening, with wine and olive oil. Meat, animal products and fish are not allowed.
2. On the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and Palm Sunday fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but meat and animal products are not allowed.

3. Wine and oil are permitted on the following days, if they fall on a weekday in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth or Sixth Weeks: First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (Feb. 24), Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (Mar. 9), Forefeast of the Annunciation (Mar. 24), Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (Mar. 26), Holy Greatmartyr George (April 23), Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark (April 25), as well as the Patronal Feast of a Church or Monastery.

4. Wine and oil are also allowed on Wednesday and Thursday of the Fifth Week, because of the Vigil for the Great Canon. Wine is allowed and, according to some authorities, oil as well on Friday in the same week, because of the Vigil for the Akathist Hymn.

It has always been held that these rules of fasting should be relaxed in the case of anyone elderly or in poor health. Personal facts also need to be taken into account, as, for example, the situation of an isolated Orthodox living in the same household as non-Orthodox, or one obliged to take meals in a factory or school lunchroom. In cases of uncertainty, however, one should always seek the advice of his or her spiritual father.

At all times, however, it is essential to bear in mind that you are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and that the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). The fasting rules, while they do need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with the strict legalism of the Pharisees of Holy Scripture, for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

Fasting Seasons and Days

Paschal Cycle:

1. Meatfast the week before the beginning of Great Lent
2. Great Lent and Holy Week

Yearly Cycle:

1. Nativity (St. Philip's) Fast Nov. 15 through Dec. 24
2. Apostles' (Peter and Paul) Fast from the Monday after All Saints Sunday through June 28
3. Dormition (Theotokos) Fast Aug. 1 through Aug. 14

Fast Days:

1. The Wednesdays and Fridays of the Year, except for Fast-free Weeks
2. The Eve of Theophany Jan. 5
3. The Beheading of St. John the Baptist Aug. 29
4. The Elevation of the Cross Sept. 14

Fast-free Weeks:

1. Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ to Theophany Eve Dec. 25 through Jan. 4
2. The week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
3. Bright Week the week after Pascha

4. Trinity Week the week after Pentecost, concluding with All Saints Sunday

Glossary of Liturgical Terms

Alleluia.

(See Prokeimenon.)

Antiphons.

The first three hymns sung at the Divine Liturgy (Ps. 103; Ps. 146 and Only-begotten Son... the Beatitudes) are called Antiphons (steps) because they are sung in steps or stages by two Choirs singing opposite each other. Hence this type of singing in steps is called antiphonal.

Apostikha.

These are Stikhera accompanied by verses usually taken from the Psalms. The Apostikha is found at the end of Vespers and also at the end of Matins on ordinary weekdays.

Canon.

The Canon is a series of nine Canticles (or Odes) containing a number of Troparia in each, as well as a Theme Song (Irmos). The Canons are found at Matins, Compline, and certain other services in the Liturgical Cycle. Originally the nine Biblical Canticles were sung and short refrains inserted between each verse of the Canticle, but in time the Canticles themselves dropped out of general usage (except during Great Lent) and only the Theme Song (or Irmos), based on the theme of the original Canticle, and the refrains (now expanded) remained. The Second Ode is sung only as part of the Lenten Cycle and a tenth Biblical Canticle, the Magnificat is almost always sung after the Eighth Ode of the Canon.

Dogmatic.

This is a musical composition sung at Vespers and are so named because they speak of the dogma of the Two Natures of Christ.

Ikos.

This is a short composition that follows the Kontakion, between the Sixth and Seventh Odes of the Canon.

Irmos.

This is the Theme Song of each Ode of the Canon. The word Irmos means link, since originally the Troparia that followed it were sung in the same rhythm, and thus were linked to it.

Katavasia.

This is the concluding stanza of a Canticle of the Canon, so-called because, as the title implies (to go down), the Choir members came down into the center of the church to sing it. These are found after each Ode of the Canon on major Feasts and on ordinary days, the Irmos of the last Canon sung (there are usually several Canons sung together) is sung as Katavasia after Odes Three, Six, Eight and Nine.

Kathisma.

From the word *kathizo* I sit, these are selections from the Psalter, read at Vespers, Matins, and various other services, during which the Faithful are permitted to sit.

Kathisma Hymn.

These are short hymns sung after the Kathisma readings, during which the Faithful are permitted to sit (except for certain prescribed days). These are sometimes referred to as Sedalens or Sessional Hymns.

Kontakion.

The word means pole, since the Kontakion was originally a long poetic composition rolled up on a pole. Now only the brief preliminary stanza remains and is sung before the Ikos after the Sixth Ode of the Canon, at the Liturgy, Hours, and various other services.

Prokeimenon.

These are verses from the Psalter sung immediately before Scripture Lessons, primarily at Liturgy, Vespers and Matins. [Except for Feasts and during Great Lent, the Scripture Lessons themselves have generally fallen out of use at Vespers.] The Prokeimenon sung immediately before the Gospel Lesson is called the Alleluia.

Stikheron (Stikhera).

A Stikheron is a stanza sung between verses taken from the Psalms, primarily at Vespers (at Lord, I have called... and the Apostikha) and Matins (at the Apostikha).

Theotokion.

These are Troparia or Stikhera sung in honor of the Theotokos. On Wednesdays and Fridays, these Theotokia usually take the theme of the Theotokos at the Lord's Crucifixion, and thus are called Cross-Theotokia (or Stavro-Theotokia).

Troparion.

This is simply a short musical composition similar in length and style to the Kontakion. They are sung at the end of Vespers, after God is the Lord... and the Apostikha at Matins, at the Liturgy and other services.

Ypakoe.

This is a short Troparion sung at Matins on Great Feasts and Sundays.

Great Lent and Pascha

The Feast of Feasts the Holy Pascha the Resurrection of the Lord-is the climax of the Church's liturgical year and is also the most glorious, most joyful and bright festival of the Christian Church. On it Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ arose as victor over death, destroying the power of death over man once and for all and annulling the curse pronounced upon man in Paradise. But, before the bright joy of Pascha, the Church has ordained a lengthy period of repentance and spiritual searching a period of preparation, so to speak the 40-day Great Lent.

The Forty Days of Great Lent commemorates Israel's forty years of wandering in the Wilderness the forty years of painful struggle as Israel longed for and then received entrance into the Promised Land (Ex. 16:35) Moses remained fasting on Mt. Sinai for forty days (Ex. 34:28) and the Prophet Elijah fasted for forty days as he journeyed to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). Great Lent also recalls the forty days the Lord spent in the Wilderness after His Baptism, when He contended with Satan, the Temptor.

The time of Great Lent encompasses forty days, to which must be added Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Passion Week. In addition, the Holy Church prescribed three weeks of preparation for the Great Lent itself the Sundays of the Publican and the Pharisee, Prodigal Son, Meatfare and Cheesefare. In all, the Orthodox Church prescribes ten weeks of spiritual and bodily preparation for the joyous Pascha of the Lord.

The Date of Pascha.

The time of the Great Lent is dependent on the date of Pascha, which varies from year to year. According to a Canon of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicea 325), Holy Pascha is the first Sunday after the first Full Moon which falls upon or immediately after the Spring Equinox (according to ancient reckoning March 21). In addition, this Council decreed that Pascha cannot precede or fall on the Jewish Passover (14th day of the Month Nissan). The Full Moon used for the purposes of calculating the date of Pascha is the fourteenth day of a Lunar Month reckoned according to an ancient ecclesiastical computation and is not the actual astronomical Full Moon.

The number of days between each Full Moon (the Lunar Month) is not exact according to the Solar Calendar (usually about 29½ days) and ancient calendars added or subtracted a period called an epact to harmonize the Lunar and Solar Calendars. These epacts as calculated by the Orthodox Church, vary from those calculated by the Western Churches. In addition, the Western Churches do not follow the Nicean Council's decree that Pascha must not precede or fall on the Jewish Passover, and it is for these reasons that there is often a great variance from one year to the next between the Orthodox Church and the Western Churches concerning the date of Holy Pascha.

Sundays of Preparation.

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.

The first Sunday of Preparation (three weeks before the start of Great Lent) is the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, in which we are exhorted to true repentance and encouraged to follow the self-abasement of the Publican rather than the spiritual pride of the Pharisee. At the Matins Service we sing for the first time the beautiful Lenten hymn, Open to me the gates of repentance.../reminding us of the open gateway through which all must enter on the way to Pascha. We also note that this week is fast-free.

Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

The next Sunday of Preparation (two weeks before Great Lent) is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, which reminds us that not only must we repent and undergo a change of heart, but that we must also exercise an act of will, in that we must get up and actually set off on our journey. In our own lives we can see a parallel; for how often do we repeat the cycle of the Prodigal son willful departure from God's house, a life of wantonness, misery at our fallen state, repentance, return to God the Father and divine forgiveness? On this Sunday, at the Matins Service we also sing the beautiful hymn of remembrance, By the waters of Babylon... (also sung the next two Sundays), reminding us of the heavenly Zion from which we have been exiled.

Sunday of Meatfare Sunday of the Last Judgment.

The next Sunday of Preparation, Meatfare Sunday, is the last day on which meat is permitted to be consumed until Holy Pascha. Otherwise, during the course of this week, on each day, all other animal products (including milk, cheese, eggs, butter, as well as fish) may be consumed. This is to remind us of the upcoming rigors of the Great Fast. The theme of this Sunday is the Last Judgment and the lot of those who turn from God, and those who return to Him.

Sunday of Cheesefare Forgiveness Sunday the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise.

The last Sunday before the Great Lent, Cheesefare Sunday, is also the last day of preparation. It is called Cheesefare because on the next day we begin a total fast from all animal products, as well as from fish, wine and oil (fish, wine and oil will be allowed only on the Feasts of the Annunciation and Palm Sunday), continuing until Holy Pascha. An important theme of this day is the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise, which reminds us of that from which we have fallen. Another theme is forgiveness, since we cannot even begin our spiritual journey without granting forgiveness to those who have offended us and asking forgiveness of those whom we have offended. A special feature of this day is the very moving Forgiveness Vespers, at which we all ask and grant mutual forgiveness. At this Service, after the singing of the Great Prokeimenon, the liturgical vestments and furnishings are changed to dark colors, and the special Lenten melodies used.

Great Lent.

On the Monday following the Sunday of Cheesefare, we formally begin the 40-day Great Lent and, of course, one of its features is its rigorous fasting (cf. the section entitled Fasting in this chapter). In addition, there are some special features of the liturgical Services. The usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is not served on the weekdays of Great Lent (with the exception of the Feast of the Annunciation), but is replaced by the special Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, at which the faithful commune of the Holy Gifts which were presanctified at the previous Sunday's Liturgy. In addition, the penitential Service of Great Compline is sung, at which, on the first four days of this first week (as well as on Thursday of the Fifth Week) the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read. This Canon is a long penitential composition of 250 verses expressing the longings of a guilty and penitent soul.

This week we are also introduced to the moving Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, setting forth the essence of spiritual life. This prayer is said at each of the liturgical Services throughout the weekdays of Great Lent and the first half of Passion Week.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian.

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair? lust of power and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant,

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my Brother; for Blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.

All of the Sundays of Great Lent (with the exception of Palm Sunday) the usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is replaced by the longer Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. This Liturgy is especially characterized by its longer and very moving prayers.

First Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy.

The First Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to the final triumph of the Church over the iconoclasts and the restoration of the Holy Icons to the churches, which took place on the First Sunday of Lent,

March 11, 843. Thus it is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy. As the Orthodox triumphed during the iconoclastic controversy because of the dedication of the Martyrs and Confessors who suffered for the Faith, so too, we strive to imitate these Martyrs by our own ascetical self-denial. A special feature of this day is the Office of Orthodoxy, at which a procession with the Holy Icons is made, and sixty anathemas pronounced against various heretics and heresies of the 4th-14th Centuries.

Second Sunday of Great Lent St. Gregory Palamas.

The Second Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica. St. Gregory's triumph over the heretics of his time is seen as a renewal of the Triumph of Orthodoxy of the previous Sunday. Another theme of this Sunday is that of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance, for which a special Canon is devoted at this Sunday's Matins.

Third Sunday of Great Lent Veneration of the Cross.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to the Cross and the bringing-out of the Precious Cross, which closely parallels the ceremonies of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on Sept. 14. At this time we are reminded of the upcoming crucifixion of the Lord and strengthened to persevere in our Lenten struggles.

The Fourth Sunday of Great Lent St. John Climacus.

The Fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus (of The Ladder), Abbot of Sinai, who, because of his ascetical writing (The Ladder) serves as a model of a true Christian ascetic. The Ladder is appointed by the Church to be read during Great Lent. In the course of this week (the Fifth Week of Great Lent) the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read on Thursday in its entirety, as well as a Canon to St. Mary of Egypt. In addition, St. Mary's Life is read. On Saturday of this week the Akathist Hymn to the Most-Holy Theotokos is sung with everyone standing (Akathistos means not sitting). It reminds us that we are dependent on the protecting intercession of the Holy Theotokos at all moments of crisis and danger.

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt.

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt. St. Mary was a harlot living in the Egyptian city of Alexandria who later repented and lived the rest of her life in solitude in the Egyptian desert, serving as a model of repentance to all Christians. The end of this week the Sixth marks the end of Great Lent and the beginning of Passion Week.

Passion (Holy) Week.

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday.

Immediately after the end of the forty days of penitence and before the days of darkness and mourning of Passion Week, the Holy Church celebrates the bright festivals of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Lazarus Saturday commemorates the raising of Lazarus from the dead and serves as a reminder that Jesus is the Master of life and death, and foreshadows the

Lord's glorious Resurrection eight days later. Palm Sunday, of course, commemorates Our Lord's glorious entrance into Jerusalem. On this day Palm branches are blessed and held by the faithful (pussy-willow branches in the Russian Church) in remembrance of that joyous day.

Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

The next three days (Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) are characterized by the beautiful and moving melody sung at Matins, Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight..., for which reason the Matins of these three days is called Bridegroom Matins. The theme is taken from the Parable of the

Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) and serves to remind us of the urgency of the End it is near at hand and we must be watchful and repent while there is still time.

Holy Thursday.

On this day we commemorate the washing of the disciple's feet, the institution of the Holy Eucharist (the Last Supper), the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal of Christ by Judas. In certain cathedrals and monasteries a special Service is celebrated in which the Bishop (or Abbot), taking the place of Christ, washes the feet of twelve Priests, representing the Twelve Apostles. In addition, the Holy Chrism is consecrated on this day by the various Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches.

Holy Friday.

On this day we commemorate Christ's suffering and death. The Matins Service is characterized by the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels which relate events connected with the final hours from the Last Supper to the Lord's Crucifixion, Death and Burial. That morning the more solemn Royal Hours are said, and at the Vespers Service sung that afternoon, the Burial Shroud (Russian *Plaschanitsa*; Greek *Epitaphion*) is brought out in a solemn procession and placed in a specially-prepared place (the Grave) for veneration. On this day neither the full Liturgy (except if the Feast of the Annunciation falls on this day) nor that of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated.

Holy Saturday.

On this day we commemorate the burial of Christ and His descent into Hell. At the Matins Lamentations Service the Praises are sung before the Burial Shroud in the center of the church and culminates in a solemn procession with the Holy Shroud around the church. On Holy Saturday (according to the *Typikon*, at 4:00 p.m.), the Vespers with the Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated with the reading of fifteen Old Testament lessons which refer to Passover, the Resurrection and Baptism. At this time the liturgical vestments and furnishings are changed to white. [Here we must remember that in the ancient Church the Catechumens were baptized on this day, which accounts for the singing of *As many as have been baptized into Christ... instead of the Trisagion at the Liturgy, and the changing of the liturgical colors to white the Baptismal colors.*]

At the conclusion of the Service (which in ancient times ended about 8:00 p.m.) the Faithful assemble in the now-darkened church for the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. Shortly before Midnight, the Resurrection Nocturns is sung and all of the lights are extinguished. The faithful wait in silence for the moment when the Priest will come out of the Altar with a lit candle, symbolizing the Light of the Risen Christ and the beginning of the Holy Pascha of the Lord the Feasts of Feasts.

Holy Pascha.

At the stroke of Midnight, the clergy come out of the Holy Altar, all of the candles are lit, and a joyous, festive procession circles the church three times with the singing of the hymn: *Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels in heaven sing. Enable us on earth to glorify Thee in purity of heart. Stopping before the closed outer doors of the church, the Priest exclaims the Paschal verses, Let God arise..., while the Faithful sing the triumphant Paschal hymn, Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

The Clergy and Faithful now re-enter the church and the singing of the Paschal Canon, *This is the Day of Resurrection..., with numerous repetitions of the Paschal hymn, Christ is risen..., begins. At many points during the Service the Clergy exclaim, Christ is risen! and the Faithful respond, Indeed, He is risen! The church is filled with the Faithful holding lit candles and the Clergy in bright vestments. At the conclusion of the Matins, the catechetical address of St. John Chrysostom*

is read, summoning all, even those who have come only at the eleventh hour, to the great Paschal Banquet. Matins is then followed by the Paschal Liturgy.

The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom.

[The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read by the Celebrant at the end of the Pascha Matins. No one sits during the reading, but all stand and listen with reverence.]

If any man be devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal Feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him, with, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the Feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in no way be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, a(so, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, Who is jealous of His honor, will accept the Cost even as the first; He gives rest to him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as to him who has wrought from the first hour. And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first, and to the one He gives, and upon the other He Bestows gifts. And He both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering.

Wherefore, enter all of you into the joy of your Lord, and receive your reward, both, the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both, you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the Fast. The table is fully-laden) all of you feast sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away. Enjoy all of you the Feast of faith: Receive all the riches of Coving-fondness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shone forth from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain, It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, a special bread, called the Artos, is placed before the opened Holy Doors and the clergy and faithful proceed to the Blessing of the Paschal Baskets in which the faithful have placed specially prepared foods from which they had abstained during the Great Lent. A special item among these foods is the decorated Pascha bread (in Russian Kulich), as well as specially-prepared cheese and egg dishes. Thus we celebrate the Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Artos.

In the Orthodox Church it is the custom for a single loaf of blessed bread (Greek Artos) to lie before the Iconostasis throughout Bright Week in memory of the Risen Christ, before it is shared out among the whole congregation. Depicted on the top of the Artos are either the symbol of Christ's

victory over death the Cross, surmounted by a crown of thorns, or the Resurrection of Christ. On the first day of Pascha, during the Liturgy, after the Prayer Before the Ambo, the Artos is blessed by a special prayer and sprinkling with Holy Water. Throughout Bright Week, at the end of the Liturgy, the Artos is carried around the church in solemn procession. On the Saturday of Bright Week it is distributed as a blessing of the Archpastor to the congregation (sometimes after Sunday Liturgy on St. Thomas Sunday).

The significance of the Artos is that it serves to remind all Christians of the events connected with the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. While still living on earth, the Lord called Himself the Bread of Life, saying: *I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and He who believes in Me shall never thirst* (John 6:35). After His Resurrection, more than once Jesus appeared to His disciples, ate before them and blessed their own food. For example, as evening fell on the first day of His Resurrection, He was recognized in Emmaus by two of His disciples as He blessed and broke bread (Luke 24:13-35).

On the 40th day after His Resurrection, the Lord ascended into heaven, and His disciples and followers found comfort in their memories of the Lord: they recalled His every word, His every step and His every action. When they met for common prayer, they would partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, remembering the Last Supper. When they sat down to an ordinary meal, they would leave a place at the head of the table empty for the invisibly present Lord and would lay bread on that place.

Remembering this custom of the Apostles', the Fathers of the Church made it their custom to put out the Artos at the Paschal Feast in memory of the appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples, and also in memory of the fact that the Lord Who suffered and was resurrected for our justification has made Himself the true Bread of Life and is invisibly present in His church always, to the close of the age (Matt. 28:20).

Whereas special Paschal breads, called kulichi are broken and eaten on the first day of Pascha, the Artos is kept whole throughout the whole of Bright Week as a reminder of the presence of the Risen Savior in the midst of those who believe in Him and is only divided and distributed on Saturday. In this way Bright Week begins and ends with the eating of especially baked and blessed bread.

The Artos may also be compared to the unleavened bread of the Old Testament, of which ancient Israel, delivered from their captivity in the land of Egypt, ate during the week of the Passover (Ex. 12:15-20). As Cyril, Bishop of Turov, who lived during the 12th Century in Russia, said in a sermon for the Sunday after Pascha: Even as the Jews bore the unleavened bread upon their heads out of Egypt through the desert (Ex. 12:34) until they had crossed the Red Sea, after which they dedicated the bread to God, divided it amongst all their host, and having all eaten thereof, became...terrible to their enemies, even so do we, saved by our Resurrected Lord from the captivity of that Pharaoh of the mind, the Devil, bear forth the blessed bread the Artos from the day of the Resurrection of Christ and, finally, having dedicated this bread to God, we eat of it and preserve it to the health of body and soul.

It is a custom among Russian Orthodox Christians to this day to keep the Artos throughout the year and with due reverence and faith to eat of it in time of illness or distress. This is eaten, often together with a drink of Holy Water, which had been blessed at the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord.

Bright Week.

On the afternoon of Paschal Sunday, a special Paschal Vespers is served, characterized by the singing of the Great Prokeimenon. All of the services of this Bright Week are characterized by the joyous Paschal Hymns which had been sung on Pascha itself and the constant, Christ is risen from the dead.... All of the Faithful, when encountering each other at home, at work, in church, etc., greet

each other with the Paschal Greeting and Response, Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is risen! and the threefold Kiss of Peace. During the course of this week all the doors of the Iconostasis remain open, symbolizing our free access to the Holy of Holies that our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, opened to us by His Blood. The Burial Shroud remains on the Holy Table and the Liturgies are celebrated upon it. No fasting is permitted during this week and no kneeling until the Vespers of Holy Pentecost, fifty days hence.

Paschal Hymn to the Theotokos.

[Sung after the 8th Ode of the Paschal Canon.]

The Angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace:
Rejoice, O Pure Virgin!
Again I say: Rejoice!
Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb.
With Himself He has raised all the dead.
Rejoice, all ye people!
Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem,
The glory of the Lord has shone on you.
Exult now and be glad, O Zion,
Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos,
In the Resurrection of your Son!

Liturgical Books

The Liturgical books used in Orthodox worship fall into three main groups. The first of these are three books containing readings from Holy Scripture. These are the Book of Gospels, the Book of Epistles (Apostol), and the Book of Psalms (Psalter).

Book of Gospels.

This book contains the text of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) arranged in sections called pericopes (or zachalo in Russian). This book normally rests on the Holy Table, and is customarily treated in the same way as the Holy Icons, itself being regarded as an Icon of the Savior in His teaching ministry.

Book of Epistles (Apostol).

This contains the readings from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles for the whole year i.e., the entire New Testament outside of the Gospels and the Apocalypse (Revelation) of St. John. It too is divided into pericopes and also includes the Prokeimena and Alleluia verses which precede and follow the Epistle readings.

Book of Psalms (Psalter).

The Psalter contains the 150 Psalms of David, divided into twenty Kathismas, as well as the text of the Nine Biblical Canticles sung at Matins.

The Division of the Psalter in Kathismas***

Kathisma Stasis 1 Stasis 2 Stasis 3

1 1-3 4-6 7-8 (D (4-6) (7-8)

2 9-11 12-14 15-17 (9-10) (11-13) (14-16)

3 18 19-21 22-24

(17) (18-20) (21-23)

4 25-27 28-30 31-32 (24-26) (27-29) (30-31)

5 33-34 35-36 37

(32-33) (34-35) (36)

6 38-40 41-43 44-46 (37-39) (40-42) (43-45)

7 47-49 50-51 52-55 (46-48) (49-50) (51-54)

8 56-58 59-61 62-64

(55-57) (58-60) (61-63)

9 65-67 68 69-70 (64-66) (67) (68-69)

10 71-72 73-74 75-77 (70-71) (72-73) (74-76)

11 78 79-81 82-85 (77) (78-80) (81-84)

12 86-88 89 90-91 (85-87) (88) (89-90)

127

13 92-94 95-97 98-101 (91-93) (94-96) (97-100)

14 102-103 104 105 (101-102) (103) (104)

15 106 107 108-109 (105) (106) (107-108)

16 110-112 113-116:9 116:10-19;! 17-118 (109-111) (112-114) (115-117)

17 119:1-72 119:73-131 119:132-176 (118:1-72) (118:73-131) (118:132-176)

18 120-124 125-129 130-134 (119-123) (124-128) (129-133)

19 135-137 138-140 141-143 (133-136) (137-139) (140-142)

20 144-145 146-147 148-150 (143-144) (145-147) (148-

The Kathismas are here divided into their respective Stases or divisions. They are numbered according to the Hebrew rendering. The Septuagint (LXX) divisions are to be found within the parentheses.

The Old Testament lessons, usually read at Vespers, are not normally found in a separate book. These are usually found in appropriate sections of the Triodion, Pentecostarion or Menaion, as the case may be.

The next grouping of Liturgical books are those pertaining to the fixed parts of the services, which usually do not change according to the season or Saint. Among these are the Euchologion and the Book of Hours.

Euchologion.

The Euchologion (or Book of Prayers) is for the use of the Priest and Deacon and contain the Sacraments and other services, as well as many special prayers and blessings. The Euchologion is usually divided into several books:

Great Euchologion.

This contains the fixed parts of Vespers, Matins and the Liturgy (primarily the Priest's parts), the six remaining Sacraments (Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Orders, Confession, Marriage, Anointing of the Sick), and other services (Monastic Profession, Consecration of a Church, Blessing of Waters, etc.).

Priest's Service Book. (Greek Ieratikon; Russian Sluzhebnik).

This is an Altar Book containing primarily the Priest's parts at Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy.

Book of Needs. (Russian Trebnik).

This book contains five of the Sacraments (the Divine Liturgy and Holy Orders are omitted), the Funeral Service, and various other services commonly used.

Pontifical Service Book. (Greek Archieratikon; Russian Chinovnik).

This is a special book of prayers and blessings used by the Bishop.

Book of Hours.

The Great Book of Hours (Greek Horologion) is a Choir book for the use of the Reader and Singers. It contains the fixed portions of the Daily Offices (Vespers, Matins, etc.) with most of the Priest's and Deacon's parts omitted. It also contains a list of Feasts and Saint's days throughout the year as well as appropriate Troparia and Kontakia for each. In addition there is a section containing Troparia and Kontakia for Sundays and movable Feasts of the period of the Triodion and Pentecostarion, as well as Theotokia for the whole year. There are also contained in this book various Canons and other services in frequent use. In the Russian Church, there is also an abbreviated form of the Great Book of Hours, called simply the **Book of Hours** (Russian Chasoslov).

For the movable parts of the services (those which change every day) there are four volumes constituting the three main cycles of the Church Year: 1) the Weekly Cycle Octoechos; 2) the Annual Cycle of Movable Feasts Triodion and Pentecostarion; and 3) the Annual Cycle of Fixed Feasts the Menaia.

Octoechos.

The Octoechos (or Book of the Eight Tones) contains the movable parts of the Daily Offices sung throughout the week. Eight series of Offices, one for each of the Eight Tones, are provided, within which are seven sets of services, one for each day of the week. The First Tone begins on St. Thomas Sunday and proceeds in sequence each week until Tone Eight is completed, at which time the whole cycle is repeated. The texts of the Octoechos are combined, more or less, with fixed Feasts from the Menaia, and on Saturdays and Sundays during Great Lent (except from Lazarus Saturday to the Sunday of All-Saints).

Triodion.

This book, characterized by its extensive use of Three-Ode Canons (although there are also some Four-Ode Canons contained within), is generally termed the Lenten Triodion, within which are found the Texts for the services of Great Lent.

Pentecostarion.

This companion to the Lenten Triodion (often called the Flowery Triodion) contains the texts from Pascha to the Sunday of All-Saints (the first after Pentecost).

Menaia.

This book is divided into twelve volumes (corresponding to the twelve months) and contains the texts for the fixed Feasts of each day of the year. In addition, there is sometimes found two companion volumes which contain certain texts from the major Fixed Feasts (the Festal Menaion) or general Offices for certain classes of Saints (the General Menaion).

In addition to these three main groups of liturgical books, there are two further books the Irmologion and the Typikon.

Irmologion.

This book gives the texts of all of the Irmosi (or Theme Songs) sung at the beginning of the various Canticles of the Canon. Often some editions of the service books, such as the Menaia and Triodion, only give the opening words of the Irmos, necessitating the use of the Irmologion, which provides the full texts.

Typikon.

This book contains the rules and rubrics governing every aspect of the Church services and their celebration throughout the year. According to Church Tradition, the Typikon was drawn up by St. Sabbas of Jerusalem (f.532) and later revised by St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (tea.638). A further revision was made by St. John of Damascus (tea.749), a Monk at St. Sabbas' Monastery, hence the name the Jerusalem Typikon of St. Sabbas' Monastery.

In 1888, a new edition of the Typikon was prepared at Constantinople, which, in modern times, is used primarily by the Greek-speaking Churches. The Church of Russia, as well as, for the most part, the Orthodox Church in America, still adheres to the Jerusalem Typikon, as do the older Greek monasteries, such as those of Mt. Athos, St. Sabbas at Jerusalem, and St. John on Patmos.

Liturgical Gestures

Orthodox worship is characterized by a complete utilization of the senses sight, smell, hearing, speech and touch. We see the candles, Icons, frescoes, etc., we hear the sounds of singing and reading, at times lifting up our own voices, and we smell the characteristic odor of the incense. The whole of the human person is involved in worship, and important among the senses is the actual deportment of the human body. The attitude of the Orthodox Believer to worship is reverential, and certain types of bodily movements are utilized to reinforce this sense of reverential piety we stand during the services, we make bows and prostrations, and with great frequency, we make the Sign of the Cross. Accordingly, there are several types of Bows, depending on the solemnity of the moment.

Prostration (Great Metanoia Great Poklon).

Here the worshipper prostrates the whole body, throwing the weight forwards onto the hands and touching the ground with the forehead.

Bow (Small Metanoia Poklon).

The worshipper bows from the waist, touching the ground with the fingers of the right hand. Both Prostrations and Bows are preceded by the Sign of the Cross.

Reverence.

At certain times the worshipper merely bows the head; sometimes this is accompanied by the Sign of the Cross.

Sign of the Cross.

The Sign of the Cross is made with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand joined at the tips (the third and fourth fingers being closed on the palm). By joining the thumb and the first two fingers, we express our belief in the Most-Holy Trinity. The two fingers closed on the palm represent the two natures of Christ divine and human. With the thumb and first two fingers joined, we touch first the brow, then the breast, the right shoulder and then the left, making on ourselves the Sign of the Cross and signifying by the four points that the Holy Trinity has sanctified our thoughts (mind), feelings (heart), desires (soul) and acts (strength) to service of God. By making the Sign of the Cross on ourselves we also signify that Christ has saved us by His sufferings on the Cross.

Bishops and Priests, in bestowing a blessing, make the Sign of the Cross from left to right (appearing to us from right to left), while holding the fingers in such a manner as to represent the Greek letters IC and XC the first and last letter of the name Jesus Christ.

Liturgical Music

Liturgical Music.

In the Orthodox Faith, our singing in church is meant to be an Icon of worship. We sing our prayers. Our prayers are sung. And hardly ever do we hear prayers simply said. The Orthodox Church's tradition is to offer up prayers to God in uttered heightened speech called sacred singing. It is important to understand that liturgical music is not something added to prayer. Rather, it is the way we pray in church when we assemble together as God's People.

This tradition of sung worship is fundamentally Biblical. For both the people of the Old Testament as well as the New, worship means first to gather as a group, and then to sing praise with one mouth and one heart. As a matter of fact, more than two-thirds of the Bible is phrased in such a way that it is obviously meant to be sung. Especially the Book of Psalms the essential prayer-book of the Church in essence, is a song-book. Orthodox hymnody developed from the singing of Psalms and Scriptural Odes, first as simple responses and refrains, later developing into Troparia, Kontakia and strophic hymns on these Biblical verses.

The word antiphon in our prayer-books describes how the people originally divided themselves into two parts and sang the Psalm verses back and forth, from one side to the other. Our liturgical texts show that the assembly responds in a type of song to whatever is chanted by the Bishop, Priest, Deacon, or Cantor. St. Justin the Philosopher, writing in 150 A.D., calls special attention to the way the people sing the Amen as their assent to the great Eucharist Prayer. St. Augustine reflects on the Orthodox tradition of the 4th Century, when he remarks: ...truly, is there a time when the faithful

assembled are not singing? Truly, I see nothing better, nothing more useful or more holy that they could do.

We can see from the earliest tradition that choirs developed later. Choirs, however, were never meant to completely replace the voice of the people in worship. Not only must the chants and music help the people make the prayer their own, but, clearly, somewhere in every Orthodox Divine Service, the people themselves must take some part in singing.

At first the Church melodies were probably very simple, resembling a rhythmic song-speech, following the natural inflections and nuances of word-groupings. From Hebrew and Hellenic beginnings, the melodic kernels, patterns and formulae have been expanded, enriched and developed according to local practices in specific cultures that became Orthodox. Each Orthodox nationality has adapted the verbo-melodic models to the natural rhythmic and melodic sounds of their own unique language and culture.

Yet, in this process of absorbing and making one's own a liturgical music, the inculturation does not make the sacred singing of one Orthodox culture unrecognizable to another. There are in all Orthodox sacred singing those elements that are ancient, universal and constant. These familiar elements are found particularly in what we call canonical chant.

Russian Orthodox church music has its particularly unique development. Byzantine music remains basically monophonic (single-line unison singing). But part-singing appeared in Lvov and began to spread in Southern Russia and the Ukraine as early as the 15th Century. From this we can trace early experiments with harmonization, and in the 17th Century the influence of the Kievan schools of harmony on Moscow. Choirs of sorts began to be schooled in the Imperial Court, although they sang in small groups and were made up of male singers only.

It was Peter the Great in the 18th Century who gave rise to the Imperial Chapel Choir. The movement to introduce Western European harmonization and the chorale style spread very quickly, initiating the new period of concert-like choir singing. Bortniansky, under the patronage of Catherine the Great, still remains the best example of the composer-conductors and their church choirs of the choral tradition.

By the beginning of the 20th Century there was already a great interest among Church musicians to return to the traditional roots of the canonical chant systems. Kastalsky particularly stands out among them. While choral compositions and choir singing remain popular to this day, among serious students of Church music more and more is sacred singing looked upon as a discipline of liturgical theology rather than simply as a musical art.

This is particularly so in America, as we accept the responsibility for an Orthodox inculturation of a new land, a new language and a new people. As we attempt to find our own style in response to new needs and situations (especially those of the small missions), above all we seek to be anchored to the great Tradition.

This great Tradition, however, insists neither on a rigid formalism nor a return to a hypothetically more primitive practice. There is room in Orthodox culture for both choir singing and congregational participation, for ancient chants and familiar harmonized works, as well as perhaps for new adaptations based on the timbre of the English language, developed from the local materials of our own particular time and place. All of this is possible so long as none of it contradicts our ecclesial identity as the Orthodox Church.

Indeed, what must be understood is the function of sacred singing in Orthodox worship. What is singing in Church supposed to do? A sacred song is not unlike a holy Icon; except that the holy Icon is seen and the sacred song is heard, the functions are the same. This painting of words and sounds

has as its purpose the bringing of the community into the presence and the awareness of sacred mystery.

Bringing us together is no small part of sacred music's function. Just as receiving Holy Communion together is a sacred sign that all who partake become one body in Christ, so singing must be the expression of this same unity of hearts and minds, drawing us harmoniously together into one voice. For ultimately, it is Christ Who is our Song.

Services of the Daily Cycle

Services of the Daily Cycle.

The services of the Daily Cycle are divided into three groups of three services each, conveniently entitled: Evening Service (9th Hour, Vespers and Compline), Morning Service (Nocturns, Matins and 1st Hour), and Midday Service (3rd Hour, 6th Hour and Divine Liturgy or Typical Psalms). In addition, on Saturday evenings, as well as on Major Feasts, All-Night Vigil, which consists of a joining of Great Vespers and Matins into one Service, may be served. In ancient times and now in many monasteries, this service literally lasts all night (from early evening until daybreak of the following day), but in parish life, as well as certain cathedrals and monasteries, the All-Night Vigil may last for only two to four hours.

9th Hour.

The first service of the Evening Service is the 9th Hour, which is usually appointed to be said at 3:00 p.m. (the 9th Hour in antiquity). The structure of each of the canonical Hours is basically the same. The 3rd and 9th Hours begin with the full beginning O Heavenly King..., the Trisagion, etc., since they begin their respective Service groups whereas the 1st Hour (joined to Matins) and the 6th Hour (joined to the 3rd Hour) begin with the next part of all the Hours, Come, let us worship... and then three Psalms appropriate to that Hour. Then follows the Troparion of the day (connected with the Yearly or Weekday Cycle), the Theotokion (a hymn in honor of the Mother of God), the Trisagion and Lord's Prayer, the Kontakion of the day, Lord, have mercy! (40 times), the Prayer of the Hour, Thou Who at every season and every hour..., and the concluding prayers (one is especially appointed for each Hour). The general theme of the 9th Hour is the Passion and Death of Our Lord: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?...And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit (Matt. 27:46-50).

Vespers.

The Church invites all her faithful children to make a journey with her, passing through the millenniums by Divine Providence in order to re-enter into communion with God's love and, by retracing the long way already trodden, to live again the sacred events of our salvation. Thus, the next service in the Evening Cycle, Vespers, begins with the exclamation, Blessed is our God... without the Trinitarian invocation of the All-Night Vigil, Glory to the holy, consubstantial and life-creating Trinity..., symbolizing that as yet, the name of the Holy Trinity has not been manifested. Vespers will lead through the Old Testament to the New and thus, appropriately, after the exclamation, the beautiful hymn of Creation, Psalm 104, is read.

At the All-Night Vigil, this Psalm is sung while the Priest censes the entire church, signifying that at the Creation, the Spirit of God, the True Light and Incense to the elect, moved over the face of the waters: And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Gen. 2). The opening Holy Doors (closed at Daily Vespers) signifies that from the creation of the world, man was appointed to dwell in Paradise. This blessed condition, however, was of short duration, and the closing of the doors at the conclusion of the singing of Psalm 104, symbolizes the expulsion of man from Paradise and the barring of its gates by cherubim and a flaming sword: [God] drove out man;

and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24).

During the reading of Psalm 104 at Daily Vespers and at the conclusion of the censuring at the All-Night Vigil, the Priest stands before the Holy Doors, reading silently the Prayers of Light, with head uncovered. He symbolizes Adam sorrowing before the closed gates of Paradise in penitence and humility. These prayers originally were called the Lamp-lighting Prayers, since the lamps in the church were lit at the setting of the sun. In these prayers the Lord Who dwells in the Ineffable Light is glorified as the Priest prays for the material light and the illumination of the soul.

This is followed by the Great Litany, which is sometimes called the Litany of Peace, since from the very first petition, In peace let us pray to the Lord, this theme is evident. Except for Sunday evenings and the evening after a Great Feast, the Great Litany is followed by a specially-appointed Kathisma (from *kathizo* I sit), one of the twenty divisions of the Psalter. On Feast Days and Saturday nights, the 1st Kathisma, Blessed is the man..., is sung either in part or in its entirety. This Psalm refers to the Savior and in it we sing, Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God..., which is addressed to the coming Resurrection.

This is followed by a censuring of the whole church and the singing of Psalms 140, 141, 129 and 116, Lord, I have called upon Thee, hear me.... This expresses Adam's repentance for his sins, as well as his request for the Paradise which he had lost; it also is his exhortation to his posterity that they should utterly obey the will of God. The prophetic verses from the Psalm, Bring my soul out of prison... symbolizes Old Testament humanity awaiting liberation from the darkness of the Old Covenant. To these verses are joined special Stikhera (hymns) which expand the particular theme of the day (Monday angels, Tuesday St. John the Baptist, etc.). In addition, there are compositions of praise for a particular Saint or Saints venerated on that day. The Stikhera may expand on a particular Feast which may be celebrated on that day, or expound upon the Resurrection Gospel which will be read at Matins (if it be Saturday evening). These Stikhera are taken from the Octoechos and/or the Menaion. (During the time of Triodion and the Pentecostarion, special Stikhera from these books are also sung here.)

The censuring, at this point, has particular significance apart from that done at the singing of Psalm 104 of the All-night Vigil. It is the expression of our desire that our prayers, which after the Fall were unable to ascend to heaven without the mediation of Christ the Son of God, now by His intercession, like the smoke soaring upwards from the censer, ascends to the Lord God. It symbolizes that the Holy Spirit, by Whom the censer is blessed, is always present in the church and particularly enlightens us at the time of prayer. It signifies that the angels bear our prayers to God by means of the censer: And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden cense; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne... (Rev. 8:3). It also is an imitation of the Old Testament ritual wherein God, through Moses, commanded Aaron to make such a censuring in the tabernacle day and night (Ex. 30:7-8). The censuring can also be seen as an image of the divine glory which came on the Tabernacle in the time of Moses (Ex. 40:27-35).

The last Stikheron, now sung at Now and ever... on Sundays or Great Feasts is called the Dogmatic, since, in addition to praise of the Most-Holy Theotokos, it contains certain dogmatic teachings concerning the person of Jesus Christ. On ordinary days, a Theotokion, a hymn of praise to the Theotokos, is sung at this point, which reminds us that the Theotokos was the Mediatrix of our salvation.

At the All-Night Vigil and Feast Days, the Holy Doors are opened and an entrance is made by the Priest, preceded by a Deacon with the censer and a Candle-Bearer. The opened Holy Doors symbolize that with the coming of the Lord the gates of Paradise have been opened. The Deacon precedes the Priest (who is an Icon of Christ) as if he were St. John the Forerunner, and the candle going before denotes the spiritual life brought to earth by the Savior.

The hymn, O Jesus Christ, the Joyful Light... (O Gladsome Light... in some translations), as the first ray of the New Testament light, is now sung. It tells us that the light of the sun, the created, creature light, is not the same as the light uncreated and divine. The golden light of evening is a symbol pointing to another Divine Light, in the same way as the world below is an image and likeness of the primary world above.

From this moment of the prayer, O Jesus Christ..., Vespers becomes more and more oriented towards the Savior and salvation. If, up till now, the prayers of Vespers have been basically penitential in character and have expressed the mood of the old nature which belongs to [the] former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22) and has consisted of Psalm-singing and readings, largely from passages written before the birth of Christ, so now the captivity of the soul is coming to an end: the darkness is dispersed by the rising light of the New Testament.

Solemnly and joyously the Church glorifies the humble event of the Incarnate Word. The Old Testament supplications to and hope in the ever-springing fountain of life and truth are answered in the fulfillment of the New Testament, in the entry into the world, into the prayerful foregathering of believers, of the true Light of Life Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The entrance bearing a lantern which symbolizes the invisible rising and presence amongst the worshippers of Christ Himself and the singing of the prayer, O Jesus Christ, the Joyful Light... which teaches the true meaning of this light-symbolism are together the central moment of the Vesper Service.

At last peace reigns in the soul; the world sinks into darkness but the wondrous light in the soul grows and widens; and the Christian can no longer tear away his marveling eyes. Our eyes are lifted up to the Lord our God Who this day has shown great bounty towards us.

At the conclusion of this hymn, the Prokeimenon (Alleluia at certain other times e.g., the Service for the Dead on Memorial Saturdays) is appointed to be sung. These verses from the Psalms normally preceded Scripture Readings and here is a remnant of the ancient practice of reading Old Testament lessons (preserved only on Great Feasts and the weekdays of Great Lent) at Vespers. There are appointed special Prokeimenon verses for each day of the week, which are connected with the particular theme of that day. For example, on Saturday evening the Prokeimenon, The Lord is king... stresses the coming of the Lord Who reigns in supreme beauty and majesty.

The Old Testament Readings (Paramaea Parable) which are read at this point on Great Feasts contain prophecies of the event commemorated on that day, or certain relevant materials pertaining to the Saint whose festival it is. [For certain Apostles, e.g., Sts. John, Peter, James and Jude, selections from their New Testament Epistles are read.]

At Great Vespers (All-Night Vigil) the Litany of Fervent Supplication is now chanted (characterized by the three-fold Lord, have mercy), although at ordinary Vespers it is transferred to the end of the Service. In this Litany we entreat mercy for all Christians.

After the Prokeimenon (Daily Vespers) or the Litany of Fervent Supplication (Great Vespers), the prayer, Grant, Lord, that we may be kept this evening without sin... is read. In abbreviated form, it corresponds to the Doxology which is read (Daily) or sung (Festal) at the end of Matins. After Grant, Lord... the Evening Litany (or Litany of Supplication) is chanted, wherein we specify which mercies we desire, and is characterized by the refrain, Grant it, O Lord!

After the Litany of Supplication, special hymns are sung in honor and memory of the person or event to which the services of that day are dedicated. These hymns are separated by verses taken from various parts of Holy Scripture which are related to the Saint or Feast and thus are called the Apostikha (or Stikhera (Verses) on Verses).

At Great Vespers (All-Night Vigil) the Apostikha is preceded by the Litya (Lity a fervent prayer). The Litya, characterized by many repetitions of Lord, have mercy! is celebrated in the porch of the

church or on the steps, or sometimes in the back of the church itself. In ancient times this was done in order that the Catechumens and Penitents who stood in the porch might participate in the gladness of the festival. The faithful and clergy came out with candles (symbolizing the Light of Christ come to sinners) to signify their humility and brotherly love towards those who had sinned. In our times the Litya serves to remind us that we must take care for our souls so that we may be worthy to enter into the House of God. After the Litya, the clergy return to the center of the church.

When the singing of the Apostikha has ended, the dismissal prayer of St. Simeon, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace... (Luke 2:29-32) follows. Only now that we have traveled the long, hard road and seen at last the dawn of a new life, has our Christian soul acquired the right to ask leave to depart. The prayer is followed by the Trisagion and Lord's Prayer, after which are sung the Troparia (hymns) relating to that day of the week or celebration, as well as a hymn of praise (Theotokion) to the Mother of God.

On Feast days, at this point, before a table on which have been placed five loaves of bread and three vessels one with wheat, one with wine, and one with oil the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the loaves and prays that the Lord may bless and multiply them. In the early Church, when the All-Night Vigil lasted until the morning, it was customary to distribute the common offerings of bread, wine and oil after the Vespers. Thus the faithful who intended to remain throughout the Service would be strengthened and refreshed. After the Priest had pronounced the final Blessing upon the people, he and the Deacon descended from the Altar, and sitting down with the people, they consumed with them the food which had just been blessed, during this time selections from the Acts of the Apostles, or from the Epistles, were read aloud. The distribution of the blessed bread during Feast-Day Matins to the faithful who have received the blessing by the anointing with the blessed oil, commemorates this in ordinary churches.

Vespers then concludes with the Litany of Fervent Supplication and the usual Dismissal (if Daily Vespers) or the response to the petition, Blessed be the Name of the Lord, henceforth and for evermore The blessing of the Lord be upon you... (if Great Vespers). The Vesper Service is thus filled with memories of the Creation, the Fall, the Expulsion from Paradise and the anticipation of the Coming of the Savior Who brings light to the world.

In this way the whole of Vespers, beyond which lies a new kind of creation, of spiritual life in God, passes beneath the Sign of the Cross, of repentance, of separation from the old, and ends in expectancy and acceptance of the new, true Light that is Christ. This Light shone steadily and peacefully, drawing to itself those who had formerly wandered in darkness and who had been sunk deep in the night, experiencing what it is to be apart from God, that they might come to a true awareness of their own weakness and learn humility.

Compline.

Compline, most often served in monasteries, is the Service of Prayer before retiring to bed and thus it is sung after Supper (Greek Apodeipnon after supper). As sleep is the image of death, Compline is filled with the thought of death and repentance. On Great Feasts and Saturday evenings, if All-Night Vigil is served, Compline is omitted. There are two types of Compline: Great Compline and its shorter form, Small Compline.

Great Compline consists of three parts, each of which begins with the introductory Come, let us worship... and ending with a concluding prayer and the Priest's blessing. The first part begins with a special set of six Psalms and then the special hymn, God is with us..., taken from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Savior Who was to come into the world. Then follows prayers addressed to the Holy Trinity, the Creed, the Invocation of the Theotokos and all the Saints and the Prayer of St. Basil the Great. Thus, in this first part of Compline, we give thanks to God for the day that has just passed and we express the hope that He will grant us a restful sleep during the coming night, as well as a peaceful repose after death with all the Saints.

The second part of Compline is penitential, and here we find the penitential Psalm of David, Have mercy on me, O God... (Ps. 51) and the moving penitential Prayer of Manasseh the King, followed by the hymns (based on Ps. 51), Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us....

The third part of Compline consists of glorification of God and His Saints. A Canon is sung in honor of the Saint of the Day or the Mother of God and shortly after, the hymns, O Lord of Hosts, be with us.... This part ends with the Prayer of the Hours, Thou, Who at every season and every hour..., a prayer to the Undeclared Theotokos, as well as a prayer to Christ, asking for a peaceful sleep.

The Small Compline is considerably shorter, and is simply an abridgment of the Great Compline. Besides the usual beginning, it consists of three Psalms, the Small Doxology (read), the Creed, a Canon to the Theotokos or Saint of the Day, Troparia of the Day or Feast (if it be), the Prayer of the Hours, the two final prayers of Compline to the Theotokos and the Savior, and the Dismissal. Small Compline usually replaces Great Compline in parish use and is prescribed on the weekdays outside of Great Lent. Thus the Evening Service is ended.

Nocturns.

Nocturns (or the Midnight Service) is the first service of the Morning Cycle. This is a service of prayer which is appointed to be said at Midnight in remembrance of Our Lord's Midnight prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. It also reminds us of the angels who glorify God, night and day. A primary theme of Nocturns is death and judgment, and thus it serves to remind us that we must always be ready to give an answer at the dread Judgment of Christ, Who will come unexpectedly, just like the bridegroom who comes in the night in the Gospel Parable (Matt. 25:1-13).

There are three types of Nocturns (besides the very special Resurrection Nocturns celebrated once a year just before the Paschal Matins): Daily, Saturday and Sunday Nocturns. Daily Nocturns consists of two parts, each beginning with the customary Come, let us worship.... After the exclamation, Blessed is our God... and the usual introductory prayers, the first part begins: Come, let us worship..., Psalm 51, and the 17th Kathisma, Blessed are the undefiled..., which, in parish life, is usually recited in full only at the Lamentations Service of Holy Saturday and in part at the burial of laymen and Priests. Then follows the Creed, the Troparia, Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight..., two morning prayers, the Prayer of the Hours, and the final prayer of this first section. The second part begins with two Psalms (121 and 134) and a prayer for the dead, serving to remind us of the Last Judgment and death. Then follows a short litany and the Dismissal.

On Saturdays, the 17th Kathisma is replaced by the 9th, and other Troparia are sung in place of Behold, the Bridegroom.... Certain other prayers are also changed, in keeping with the diminished penitential character of the weekend services. Sunday Nocturns has no Kathisma at all, but after Psalm 51 there follows a Canon to the Most-Holy Trinity as well as Trinitarian Troparia. This Sunday Service ends with a long prayer to the Holy Trinity.

Matins.

The Light of Christ which shone at Vespers now begins to shine at the next service of the Morning Cycle Matins. It shines faintly, at first, through the Star of Bethlehem, Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men! (chanted at the beginning of the Six Psalms) and then, as Matins proceeds, this Light gradually burns brighter and brighter and then flares up into an all-encompassing divine flame. It renews, communicates itself so that men may become bearers of light. It fills all creatures with love and tenderness; and then all Christians cry out anew to the Lord in gladness, Glory to Thee, Who hast shown us the Light! Here in the Great Doxology immediately following this exclamation, is the high point and culmination of the Matins cycle.

Daily matins begins with the exclamation, Blessed is our God..., and then two Royal Psalms (20 and 21) addressed to the rulers, according to the command of St. Paul on prayer for the Emperor and those who are in power (Rom. 13:1-7; cf. 1 Pet. 2:13-14). The Psalms are followed by the Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer, and then the Troparion and Kontakion of the Cross, followed by a short litany and then the beginning of Matins proper. At the All-Night Vigil, this introductory part is omitted.

Matins proper begins with the Trinitarian exclamation, Glory to the Holy, Consubstantial and Life-Creating Trinity... (transferred to the beginning of Vespers at the All-Night Vigil) which, in contrast to the Old Testamental character of Vespers, gives to Matins the content of a New Testament prayer. This is especially seen in the opening exclamations of the Reader at this point, Glory to God in the Highest... (the Song of the Angels at the Birth of Christ Luke 2:14) and the verse from Psalm 51, O Lord, open Thou my lips.... Now follows the Six Psalms, which are penitential in character and refer to the wretched condition of the human race in the Old Testament days, as well as the hope of a Savior from on High. The Six Psalms concludes with a Psalm expressing the firm hope of the righteous in all hostile actions, on God's help.

The Six Psalms (during which the Priest reads special Morning Prayers) are followed by the Great Litany (just as at the beginning of Vespers) and then God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! [During the Great Lent and on Memorial Saturdays, this is replaced by Alleluia.] When the Lord revealed Himself to the people assembled beside the Jordan River, St. John the Baptist greeted Him with joy and reverence. At this point of Matins, the Priest (or Deacon) makes the proclamation beholding the Lord Himself coming to minister to the world. This is followed by Troparia dedicated to the Feast, Sunday or the Saints, depicting the flourishing of the Church after Christ's Coming to earth and it also constitutes the end of the first part of Matins.

The second part of Matins begins with the reading of the Kathismas, selections from the Psalter, at which the faithful are permitted to sit. This part of Matins, consisting of long, continuous readings of Psalms, interspersed only by brief doxologies in honor of Christ's coming into the world and in memory of the mercies which He brought by His coming, reminds us of the time when He already lived on earth, but was recognized by almost no one, while men continued waiting for His coming and prayed to God for mercy, listening in doubt and perplexity to the news that the Lord had already appeared on earth. Because of the primarily penitential nature of these Psalms, the Holy Doors are closed during this part of Matins.

At the conclusion of the Kathismas, there are appointed special Kathisma Hymns (Sessional Hymns Sedalens) related to the day or Feast. At the conclusion of the Kathisma readings, at the All-Night Vigil, the Polielely now follows. The Priest, preceded by a Deacon bearing a lit candle, comes out of the Altar and censes the whole church and the faithful. This reminds us of the time when the holy Myrrh bearing Women, as well as the other Disciples of the Lord, came early to His sepulcher, before the dawn, and there learning of the Savior's Resurrection, brought to the remaining Disciples the joyous news. The incense typifies the sweet spices which the women brought to the tomb of the Lord and the candle typifies the light and joy of the glad tidings of the Resurrection, and the light of faith therein and in our future life. The procession of the Priest around the inside of the church typifies the return of the Myrrh bearers and the Disciples from the grave of the Savior, bringing the good news to the remaining Disciples.

The Polielely, consisting of Psalms 135 and 136, is so called, from the Greek words *poll* (much) and *elea* (oil or mercy), because the word mercy is frequently repeated in these Psalms and because all of the lamps, filled with pure oil, are lit, while the Psalms are being sung. On Feast days the Polielely is followed by a short verse (the Magnification) magnifying the person or event celebrated, and is sung before an icon placed on a stand in the middle of the church. The Magnifications are interspersed with the singing of special selected verses from the Psalms, which illustrate the inner meaning of the Feast.

The Polielely (and Magnifications, if any) are followed by a Little Litany, a short Kathisma Hymn glorifying the Saint or event commemorated, and then the 1st Antiphon of the 4th Tone, From my youth.... This moving hymn reminds us, in the midst of the festal celebrations, of how far we have fallen from the joys of the life with God that rejoices the soul, which we have lost because of our sins. Those who would wage war against God and His Church shall be put to shame by the Lord. And we, who have fallen, will again be enlivened by the Holy Spirit, be exalted and illumined by the bright radiance of the Holy Trinity.

On Sundays, whether a Great Feast or not, the Polielely (and Magnifications, if any) is followed by verses from Psalm 119, Blessed art Thou, O Lord... and special verses which speak of the Resurrection of Christ and invite the faithful to worship the Holy Trinity, ending with a hymn in honor of the Mother of God (Theotokion). These are followed by a Little Litany, the Ypakoe (a short hymn) and several Antiphons (sung alternately by two choirs in the ancient practice) according to the Tone of the Week.

On Great Feasts and Sundays, a Gospel Reading is prescribed, preceded by a Prokeimenon (as before all Scripture Readings). On Feast days, the text of the Reading is appropriate to the Feast, and on Sundays it is appropriate to the Resurrection. Our Lord Jesus Christ, after He had arisen from the dead, quickly showed Himself to His Disciples. Thus, the Church, by the reading of the Gospel after the Song of the Myrrh bearers, announces to the people one of the manifestations of the Risen Savior to His Disciples, in the form of eleven Resurrection Gospel Readings prescribed for Sundays.

At the conclusion of the Gospel Reading, on Sundays the Resurrectional Hymn, Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ... is sung, followed by Psalm 51 and special supplications to the Apostles and the Mother of God, as well as entreating the Lord to have mercy on us. On Great Feasts a special supplication is made to the Saint (s) commemorated that day and also a special Stikheron dedicated to the Saint (s) or event being commemorated. As at the Litya of Vespers, the Litya prayer, O God, save Thy people... is read. The faithful venerate the Gospel Book placed on a stand in the center of the church and if it be a Feast, the Icon of the day, after which, on Feast days, they are anointed with oil and given a piece of the holy bread (anointed with wine) which had been blessed at Vespers. On weekdays, the Polielely, Magnifications, Gospel, etc., are omitted and only Psalm 51 is read. This ends the second part of Matins.

The third part of Matins begins with the singing of the Canons. The Church has appointed to be sung the Nine Songs (or Odes) of the Canon, which contain the Hymns of those godly persons of the Old Covenant, from Moses to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, who magnified the Lord in spiritual songs. Each Song, in the vast number of Canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, is inspired by the Biblical Canticle appointed to precede it. These Canticles, however, are generally omitted, with the exception of the Song of the Theotokos, My soul magnifies the Lord..., which precedes Ode Nine. The second Song of Holy Scripture (Deut. 33) is not, properly speaking, so much a hymn as an announcement of God's judgments upon the Israelites. Therefore it is sung only on the Tuesdays of Great Lent.

In the shortened version of the Canons, as they are actually sung in modern practice, only the Theme Song (based on the Biblical Canticle which precedes it) is sung, here called the Irmos, and at the end of each Ode, the choirs normally came down from the soleas into the center of the church to repeat the Irmos of the Ode (or sometimes a special Irmos) for which reason this repeated Irmos is called the Katavasia (descent).

The singing of the Canon is divided into three parts by Little Litanies after the 3rd, 6th and 9th Odes. After the 3rd, a special Kathisma Hymn is sung (sometimes a Kontakion, too, or an Ypakoe) and after the 6th, the Kontakion of the Saint or event of the Day (on Saturday night the Resurrection Kontakion is usually sung) and the Ikos, if there be one. On Great Feasts, the Song of the Theotokos (the Magnificat) is often replaced by special magnifications.

At the conclusion of the Canon and the following Little Litany, the fourth part of the Matins begins. Here is sung the Hymns of Light, which are also called the Exapostilaria. They are called Hymns of Light because their subject is chiefly the illumination of the soul from on High, and because the singing of them at Matins precedes the daybreak and the Doxology. They are called Exapostilaria because in ancient times a Cantor was sent out into the center of the church to sing them (Greek: Exapostilarion one who is sent forth).

These are followed by the singing of Psalms 148, 149 and 150 the Praises (on weekdays they are read), Let every breath praise the Lord.... All God's creatures are summoned to praise the Lord their Creator. On Feast days and Sundays, the final verses of the Praises are interspersed with special stikhera in honor of the Saint or event of the day and end with a hymn to the Theotokos (Theotokion).

The Exapostilaria had anticipated one more part of Matins which praises the Light, and which now immediately follows the Priest's (or Deacon's) exclamation, Glory to Thee, Who hast shown us the Light! the Doxology. On Feast days and Sundays, the Doxology is sung the Great Doxology; on ordinary days it is read the Small Doxology. Each begins with the words, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men! The Great Doxology ends with the Trisagion.

At the All-Night Vigil, the Great Doxology is followed by petitions for all Christians and the asking of special mercies in the words of the Litany of Fervent Supplication and the Morning Litany (just as did the Litany of Fervent Supplication and the Evening Litany at Vespers), after which the Dismissal is made. At Weekday Matins, the Doxology is followed by the Morning Litany, Apostikha, Trisagion, Lord's Prayer, Troparia and the Litany of Supplication, just as at Daily Vespers. At the All-Night Vigil the 1st Hour follows immediately after the Matins Dismissal and after the Litany of Fervent Supplications at Daily Matins. Thus we have now come into the full Light of Christ, the Dayspring from on High.

1st Hour.

The 1st Hour is served just as the 9th Hour (but beginning with Come, let us worship...), with its own Psalms. In it we thank God for the light of day which He has given us and we beseech Him that we may pass the day without sin. In Church time, the 1st Hour corresponds to about 7:00 a.m. Thus ends the Morning Service.

The next cycle of Daily Prayer is the Midday Service which consists of 3rd and 6th Hours, and the Divine Liturgy. If the Liturgy is not served, an abbreviation, Typical Psalms, is served in its place. Here we must note, however, that in the Greek tradition, 3rd and 6th Hours are usually omitted before the Liturgy, which comes immediately after the Matins.

3rd and 6th Hours.

In structure the 3rd and 6th Hours are the same as the 9th and 1st Hours, corresponding to 9:00 a.m. (3rd Hour) and 12:00 Noon (6th Hour) in ancient times. The 3rd Hour, which has a full beginning, just as the 9th, commemorates the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples at the Third Hour. When some of the assembled people supposed that the Disciples were drunk, Peter chided them, saying: Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the THIRD HOUR [emphasis added] of the day (Acts 2:14-15). The 3rd Hour also commemorates Pilate's judgment of Christ, as well as the scourging and mocking of the Lord. The 6th Hour commemorates the Crucifixion of Christ (death coming at the Ninth Hour). It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed (Luke 23:44).

Typical Psalms.

When the Divine Liturgy is not served, it is usually replaced by the Typical Psalms, which consists of Psalms 103 and 146 (the First and Second Antiphons of the Liturgy, including Only-begotten Son and Immortal Word of God...), as well as the Beatitudes (the Third Antiphon), the Creed, and certain other hymns and prayers. As this, in a sense, typifies or is a type of the Liturgy itself, it bears the title Typical Psalms.

Interhours.

In certain monasteries and cathedral churches, a further service, called the Interhours, is also served. These are constructed like the regular Hours and each has its own special three Psalms. These are celebrated between the regular Hours (hence the title Interhours) and bear the titles 1st Interhour, 3rd Interhour, etc.

Royal Hours.

On the Eves of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany, as well as on Holy Friday, all of the Hours, as well as the Typical Psalms, are sung as one Service, characterized by special Psalms and hymns, as well as special Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel Readings, relating to the particular Feast or events of that day. In ancient times, it was customary for the Byzantine Emperor to be present for the whole Service, hence the title Royal Hours.

The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy has its origins in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, instituted by the Lord Himself: Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where will You have us prepare for You to eat the passover? He said, Go into the city to a certain one, and 'say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.' And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover. When it was evening, He sat at table with the twelve disciples.... Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins... And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:17-20; 26-28, 30). This Eucharistic Supper and the Lord's commandments concerning it were held sacred by the Apostles; for when they met together, they spent the time in prayer, in the singing of sacred hymns, and the breaking of bread in memory of Christ. That is, they celebrated the Holy Eucharist. This custom became the cornerstone of the new Christian community, and is witnessed to by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians: / received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

In the course of time the Eucharistic gathering became more developed. Originally the public portion of the Liturgy (the Synaxis, or gathering), consisting of instruction, Scripture readings, etc., primarily for the Catechumens who were about to receive Baptism, and the Eucharist (a private gathering of the faithful only) were celebrated separately; but about the 4th Century they were linked together, and eventually expanded. In time, the Service of Preparation (or Proskomedia) was joined to it.

Customarily three Liturgies are celebrated by the Orthodox the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. The first two are entitled ...of Saint John..., ...of St. Basil..., since each contains prayers undoubtedly composed by St. John

and St. Basil, respectively. The Presanctified Liturgy (at which no consecration takes place, since the Holy Gifts are presanctified on the previous Sunday) probably contains prayers composed by Pope St. Gregory Dialoges, to whom this Liturgy is attributed. In addition, in a few places, such as at Jerusalem, the Liturgy of St. James the Brother of the Lord is celebrated only on the patronal feast day of St. James (Oct. 23).

The Divine Liturgy can be celebrated only by a Bishop or a Priest, and neither can celebrate more than one Liturgy in one day. This is because they must partake of the Holy Gifts, having, of necessity, prepared themselves beforehand by fasting, prayer, etc. [If the Holy Gifts would be consumed before another Liturgy, the fast would therefore be broken!] The Liturgy can be celebrated only at an Altar (Holy Table) upon which is placed an Antimension consecrated by a Bishop this constitutes his permission to serve the Liturgy although the Liturgy may be served at another place, as long as the Antimension is present. Not more than one Liturgy may be celebrated at one Altar (Holy Table), upon one Antimension, in one day.

Upon entering the church before the Divine Liturgy is to be served, the Priest (and Deacon) stand before the Holy Doors and say the Entrance Prayers. Then, after asking for and receiving in turn forgiveness of the faithful, they enter the Altar; and having made three prostrations before the Holy Table, they kiss the Holy Gospel (Priest) and the Table itself (Priest and Deacon). After this they vest with appropriate prayers and blessings the Deacon in Stikharion, Cuffs and Orarion (Stole), and the Priest in Cassock, Epitrachelion, Belt, Cuffs, Nabedrennik and Palitsa (if so awarded), as well as the Phelonion. Then both wash their hands and prepare to celebrate the Liturgy of Preparation (the Proskomedia).

Liturgy of Preparation.

The first part of the Divine Liturgy (not really part of the Liturgy proper) is the Proskomedia (Greek the bringing of gifts). In ancient times the faithful brought gifts of bread and wine and from these the Priest selected that to be used at the Holy Eucharist. At the present time, the Priest usually prepares five loaves (one loaf in the Greek tradition), in remembrance of the five loaves that fed 5,000 people in the Gospel, called Prospophora (oblations) made of wheat flour, mixed with plain water, and leavened. On the top of each loaf is a Cross with the Greek inscription IC, XC, NI, KA, in the four corners, meaning (in Greek) Jesus Christ conquers. The wine must be made from the juice of red grapes with nothing added.

From the first loaf a cube, the size of the entire seal on top, is cut out. This cube, called the Lamb, signifies Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb. This is placed on the center of the Paten. A Cross is incised on the top of the Lamb and with the spear the side is pierced in remembrance of the piercing of the Savior's side. At the words ...blood and water came out, wine and water are poured together into the Chalice.

From the second loaf a particle is taken out, signifying the Mother of God, and placed at the Lamb's right (the left, looking down at the paten). From the third loaf, nine particles are taken out, signifying nine classes of Saints: 1) St. John the Baptist, 2) Prophets, 3) Apostles, 4) Sainted Hierarchs, 5) Martyrs, 6) Holy Monks and Nuns, 7) Holy Unmercenaries and Physicians, 8) the Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, the Saint whose church it is, the Saint of the day (one particle for all), and 9) the Saint whose Liturgy it is. These are placed in three rows of three particles each, at the Lamb's left (the right, looking down).

From the fourth loaf particles are taken out for the living and placed in a row below the Lamb, and from the fifth loaf particles are taken out for the departed and placed in a row below that of the living. Thus all of the particles are arranged on the Paten around the Lamb, depicting the Church Militant and Triumphant, united in the Liturgy as in common divine service.

The Star (or Asterisk) is then placed over the particles to keep them in place, at the same time signifying the Star of Bethlehem which came over the place where the Christ Child lay. Then the Paten and Chalice are covered by veils, respectively, and both covered by a larger veil the Aer signifying that Christ was clothed in glory, that His glory covered the whole world and that He covers us also with His grace. The prepared elements are then censed by the Priest, who prays that the Lord may bless the gifts and accept them in memory of those offering them and on behalf of those for whom they were offered and also that he, the Priest, be worthy to celebrate the Holy Mystery.

Liturgy of the Catechumens.

The second part of the Divine Liturgy (the Liturgy proper) is called the Liturgy of the Catechumens (or the Liturgy of the Word). In ancient times, not only the faithful, but also the Catechumens (those preparing for Holy Baptism) and Penitents (those excluded from Holy Communion for a time) were present at this portion of the Divine Liturgy, which consists of prayers, hymns in honor of the Holy Trinity, and readings from the Word of God. This, of course, was taken over from the old Synagogue worship with which the earliest Christians were familiar. It begins with the opening of the Holy Doors, signifying the heavens opened at the Baptism of the Lord, and the exclamation of the Priest, Blessed is the Kingdom..., which is a glorification of the Kingdom of the Most-Holy Trinity, which Jesus has come to establish on earth.

The Deacon (or Priest if no Deacon; this holds true for most of the Deacon's parts) begins the Great Litany (often called the Litany of Peace because of the words, In peace let us pray to the Lord!) which consists of twelve petitions dealing with man's most pressing needs peace, seasonable weather, God's help for travelers, the sick, etc. After the Priest's exclamation at the end of the Great Litany, For unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship..., ideally two Choirs sing the Antiphons (Greek sounding in answer responsive singing of two Choirs standing opposite each other), which are divided by the Little Litanies into three parts, in honor of the Holy Trinity.

One of three types of Antiphons are sung, depending on the importance of the day. The type most frequently sung are the Typical Antiphons (Ps. 104, 146 and the Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3-12), so-called because they form part of the typical service. These are sung on Sundays and major Feast Days. On Great Feast Days, special Antiphons are sung, consisting of prophetic verses selected from the Psalms, appropriate to the particular Feast being celebrated, to which are joined hymns relating to the Feast. For this reason, these Antiphons are commonly called the Festal Antiphons. On ordinary weekdays, if it not be a major feast, the Daily Antiphons are sung, consisting of Psalm 92, 93 and 95. To the Second Antiphon of the Typical group is joined a hymn glorifying the Incarnation of the Son of God Only-begotten Son and Immortal Word of God....

During the singing of the Third Antiphon, the Holy Doors are opened, signifying the going-out of the Savior to preach to the world. The Priest, preceded by the Deacon holding the Holy Gospels, and a Candle-Bearer, make a solemn entrance (the Little Entrance), going out through the North Deacon's Door and entering the Altar again through the opened Holy Doors. The Book of the Gospels here represents Christ Our Lord, and the candle going before signifies that Christ, represented by the teachings of the Gospels, is the Light of the World.

In ancient times, during the persecutions, the Gospel Book was borne out from a secret place (where the sacred vessels also were kept). This also marked the first entry of the Celebrant into the Sanctuary (the main body of the Church) and signaled the beginning of the Liturgy. The clergy vested in a separate room, called the Sacristy, where the Gospel and Cross were kept and then proceeded to the Sanctuary. The Catechumens were then commanded to depart and the Celebrants, headed by the Bishop, entered into the Sanctuary itself.

According to ancient rules of the Jerusalem Church of the Resurrection and the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, the Liturgy of the Catechumens was held in a separate place from the

Liturgy of the Faithful. After the entrance into the Sanctuary, breads, etc., were selected from among those offered by the faithful and the Proskomedia performed. Later the Proskomedia was transferred to the beginning of the Liturgy, although in a room separate from the Altar; the Little Entrance was made from this room, to the Sanctuary and then into the Altar. This ancient practice is preserved somewhat in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, although the Proskomedia is now usually performed at the side of the Altar itself, the Procession proceeding through the North Deacon's Door.

After the Little Entrance, which is an expression of entering into the Sanctuary and joining there the Saints, the Church glorifies those Saints or the sacred event of the Feast Day by singing triumphant hymns in their honor Troparia and Kontakia. The Troparia and Kontakia are special short hymns sung in one of the Eight Tones composed in honor of the Feast or Saint (s) commemorated and express the essence of the Feast or the life and spiritual feats of the Saint (s).

The Troparia and Kontakia are similar to each other in length, literary form, etc., but each stresses a different aspect of the essence of the commemoration. While the Troparion provides us with a picture of the external side of the commemorated event, the Kontakion draws attention to the inner aspect, and vice versa. The Kontakia, however, usually reflect more fully the essence of the sacred event. This can be seen, for example, in the following Troparion and Kontakion of the Feast of Holy Pentecost:

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of Man, Glory to Thee! [Troparion]

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-Holy Spirit! [Kontakion]

After the Troparia and Kontakia, the Choir sings the Trisagion Hymn: Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! According to Church Tradition, the origin of the Trisagion is as follows. At the beginning of the 5th Century there was a great earthquake in Constantinople. In connection with this, services were held in all the city churches, followed by a procession around the city. Among the worshippers was a young boy who heard the miraculous singing of the Angels: Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! He recounted what he had heard to all those around him, whereupon the Christians began to sing the hymn, adding the words, Have mercy on us! and the earthquake stopped. From this time, the prayer was adopted by the Holy Church.

Through the singing of this prayer, the Church arouses believers to a spiritual contemplation of the Lord of glory Whom the heavenly powers extol, to repent of their sins and turn to Him for mercy and grace bestowing aid. During the singing of the hymn, Christians recall the vision of the Prophet Isaiah, who saw the Throne of God surrounded by the holy angels, singing: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory! Shaken by this vision, the Prophet cried: Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips (Is. 6:3, 5)!

At Hierarchical services, the Trisagion is sung seven times, since, in Sacred Tradition, seven is seen to be a symbol of perfection: And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done (Gen. 2:2). On certain Feast Days (Elevation of the Cross and the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent), the Trisagion is replaced by, Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master.... On other Feast Days (Nativity of Christ, Theophany, Lazarus Saturday, Holy Saturday, Bright Week, Pentecost), the Trisagion is replaced by, As many as have been baptized into Christ....

Next comes the Epistle and Gospel lessons, which are preceded by special Prokeimena (Greek proceeding), which serve as an introduction to lessons from the Epistle and Gospel (the

Prokeimenon before the Gospel being the Alleluia). These are usually taken from the Psalms, serving to prepare our minds to comprehend what is read, indicating in brief the significance and importance of the Scripture Lessons. In ancient times, Old Testament lessons were also read here (preserved at Festal Vespers).

During the reading of the Epistle lesson, the Deacon censes the Altar, Iconostasis, the Celebrant(s), Reader, Singers and Faithful. This is prescribed as a sign of reverence before the reading of the Gospel lesson and indicates that through the preaching of the Gospel, the grace of the Holy Spirit, which has spread to all corners of the world, fills men's hearts with the taste of life eternal (2 Cor. 2:14).

At the conclusion of the Epistle lesson, the Prokeimenon Before the Gospel is chanted (now called the Alleluia) with the threefold refrain Alleluia! Then the Gospel is brought out and the Gospel lesson is read by the Deacon. Before the Gospel is placed a lit candle as a sign of veneration for the Word of God 'and as a symbol of the Light of God which emanates from the Gospel, illumining the listeners to the attainment of saving mysteries. The Gospel is read from the Ambo (Greek anabaino I ascend), signifying an elevated spot a boat, or a hill from which the Lord preached to the people.

After the Gospel reading follows the Sermon (sometimes moved to the end of the Liturgy) and then the Litany of Fervent Supplication, since it is meet, that after hearing the Word of God, we should pray to Him with redoubled fervor for the things necessary for soul and body. On certain days this Litany is followed by the Litany for the Dead. Then follows the Litany of the Catechumens, referring to that ancient class of people the Catechumens who were being instructed in the Christian faith and prepared for Baptism. Immediately after this Litany, the Catechumens were dismissed, Depart, Catechumens! Catechumens, depart!.... The institution of the Catechumenate has now fallen into disuse, but the Litany still remains, to remind us of the vows made at Baptism and to arouse in the faithful a humble consciousness of sin. With the Dismissal of the Catechumens, who were not considered to be sufficiently prepared by the early Church to behold the Holy Mysteries without understanding them, this second part of the Divine Liturgy the Liturgy of the Catechumens ends.

Liturgy of the Faithful.

The third part of the Divine Liturgy is called the Liturgy of the Faithful, since only the Faithful in ancient times were permitted to be present for the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Faithful can be divided into four parts: 1) the final preparation of the Holy Gifts and the faithful for the Sacrament of the Eucharist; 2) the Sacrament of the Eucharist (primarily the Eucharistic Canon Anaphora); 3) the preparation for Communion and the partaking of Communion; and 4) the Thanksgiving for Communion and the conclusion of the Liturgy.

After two Little Litanies for the faithful, the Holy Doors are opened and the Cherubic Hymn is sung, so-called because we are preparing to minister at the Throne of God even as the Cherubim minister at the Heavenly Throne. During the singing of this hymn, during which the Deacon censes the Altar, Iconostasis, Clergy and Faithful, the Great Entrance is made, typifying the Lord going to His voluntary Passion and Death. The Angels are with us at Christ's going-out; for Christ, as King, is upborne invisibly by them.

In this Entrance, the Holy Gifts are borne from the Table of Oblation to the Altar, by passing out through the North Deacon's Door and then in through the Holy Doors. In the early days of the Church, during this Entrance all those who had brought or sent offerings for the use of the Church were mentioned by name. This is retained, but in expanded form, by the Russian Church. The Greeks retain only the last phrase, You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember.... The Chalice and Paten are then placed on the Holy Table and covered with the large veil (Aer).

The removal of the Chalice and Paten from the Deacon's head symbolizes the removal of the Body of Christ from the Cross. We the faithful are present at the placing of the Body in the tomb (the

Holy Table) and wrapped in linens (the Aer), which also symbolizes the stone rolled across the door of the tomb for which reason the Holy Doors are closed and the curtain drawn in the Russian tradition. At the same time, the conclusion of the Cherubic Hymn is sung, with the addition of Alleluia, followed by a Litany of Supplication, in which we ask for spiritual mercies.

After the Litany, the Clergy exchange the Kiss of Peace at the summons of the exclamation, Let us love one another.... In ancient times the faithful would also observe this Kiss of Peace, now only preserved by the Clergy. In response to the summons, the Choir sings the short confession of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, One-in-Essence, and Undivided! The Deacon then intones, The Doors, the Doors..., which, in ancient times, were guarded so that no unworthy persons or pagans might enter the Sanctuary during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This custom is not adhered to now, but still serves to remind us to guard the doors of our soul against all evil thoughts as we prepare to confess our faith in the words of the Creed, and to give heed to the Holy Mysteries.

The Creed, which was formulated during difficult times in the Church's history, during the heretical divisions and the struggle for purity in her dogmas, is now sung. The first part of the Creed (which is discussed in more detail in a separate place in this book) is our confession of God the Father, and an extensive confession of the Son. This confession of faith is an introduction to the acceptance of our salvation and our participation in eternity.

The Eucharistic Canon (Anaphora).

Having sung the Creed together with the Congregation, the Deacon then turns to the people and intones: Let us stand aright.... These words are a summons to inner spiritual concentration, to be attentive and reverent towards the Sacrament about to be celebrated. We must bear in mind that the Holy Gifts must be offered to God in spiritual peace, as this Sacrifice is made to God not only for us, but from us; we are assisting at it as participants in the Divine Liturgy. With these words, begins the most sacred part of the Divine Liturgy the Eucharistic Canon (or Anaphora, Greek offer). The Choir responds, A mercy of peace..., signifying that the Eucharistic Sacrifice on God's part is His great mercy towards us and is the result of our reconciliation with God through Our Savior; while on our part it is our praise of God's Majesty, revealed in the Divine Economy of our salvation (Heb. 13:15; Ps. 50:14).

In keeping with ancient custom, the Priest turns to the people with St. Paul's words, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you (2 Cor. 13:14). By this blessing the Celebrant wishes the worshippers that the highest spiritual gifts grace, love and communion be sent down from the Throne of the Holy Trinity. On behalf of the Congregation, the Choir responds to the Priest's blessing with the mutual wish for spiritual well-being, And with your spirit! that is, they wish his soul the same gifts and blessings from God the Almighty.

In order to focus the feelings of the soul upon the celebration of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the Priest summons all in the church to elevate their hearts from earth heavenwards, to the eternal and heavenly, to Our Lord God: Let us lift up our hearts! The human heart is that spiritual organ through which man perceives the spiritual world on high and enters into communion with God. As the Lord Himself says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8). The Congregation responds through the Choir: We lift them up unto the Lord, which affirms that their hearts and minds are striving after the heavenly, God's Throne, and God Himself.

Following the example of Christ our Savior, Who thanked God the Father at the Last Supper (Luke 22:17-19), the Priest then summons the Faithful to give thanks to God: Let us give thanks to the Lord. The Choir responds: It is meet and right..., during the singing of which the Priest reads the First Eucharistic Prayer, It is meet and right to sing of Thee..., in which is contained a thanksgiving for the Sacrifice which was offered for us by the Son, and further, for making us ascend to Heaven,

concluding with the exclamation, Singing the triumphant hymn.... The Choir responds with the Song of the Seraphim, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth..., taken partly from the Prophet Isaiah and partly from the Apocalypse (Revelation) of St. John.

As the Choir sings, the Priest reads the Second Eucharistic Prayer, in which, mentally among the hosts of Angels present at the celebration of the Eucharist, he praises the Lord for the Economy of Salvation of mankind: With these blessed powers..., ending with the exclamation, Take, eat... and Drink of it, all of you..., the words of the Savior at the Last Supper, when the Holy Eucharist was instituted. The Choir sings Amen after each; and during the second Amen, the Priest reads the Prayer of Commemoration: Remembering this saving commandment.... Then as the Deacon raises the Paten and Chalice with crossed arms, the Priest exclaims, Thine own, of Thine own, we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all and for all! We note here that what is being offered is not that which belongs to us, but that which belongs to the Savior.

As the Choir sings, We praise Thee..., the Priest prays, Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable and bloodless worship, and ask Thee, and pray Thee, and supplicate Thee: Send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here offered. Thus the Priest and worshippers fervently pray the Heavenly Father to send down the Holy Spirit both upon the worshippers and the Holy Gifts upon the worshippers to cleanse them of all evil and make them worthy to partake of Christ's Sacrifice; upon the Holy Gifts to consecrate them and make them into the precious Body and Blood of Our Lord.

This invocation of the Holy Spirit is called the Epiclesis (meaning invocation). In it the Church confesses her faith in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, considering this to be the loftiest moment in the Prayer. In the Russian Church, the Troparion of the Third Hour, O Lord, Who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles at the third hour..., is recited thrice, and although it appears only about the 15th-16th Centuries, it well conveys the tender and penitent feelings with which the celebrants of the Eucharist accomplished the consecration of the Holy Gifts.

The next prayer is that of intercession, Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable worship..., in which the Priest commemorates the members of the Church, in whose behalf the Holy Eucharist has been offered, ending with a commemoration of the Most-Holy Theotokos, Especially for our Most-Holy, Most-Pure, Most-Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. The Choir sings, It is truly meet... (or some other hymn if it be a Great Feast).

While this is being sung, the Priest continues with the commemoration of St. John the Baptist, the Departed, the Episcopate and the ruling authorities, ending with the exclamation, Among the first, remember, O Lord.... This is a prayer for the Church in her earthly activity for the life of men. And grant that with one mouth and one heart... is a Trinitarian doxology which concludes the Eucharistic Prayer. The worshippers respond with Amen, symbolizing their participation in the offering of the Sacrifice and in the commemoration of the members of the Church.

Immediately after this part of the Liturgy begins the Preparation of the Faithful for Communion. The Deacon chants the Litany of Supplication which, appropriately, is followed by the Lord's Prayer, perfectly expressing the Eucharistic sense of the petition, Give us this day our daily bread. After the exclamation, For Thine is the Kingdom..., the Priest blesses the people: Peace be unto all! The curtain is drawn, and as the Lamb is elevated by the Priest, he exclaims: The Holy Things, for the holy! a call to the Saints (the Faithful) to communion after which the Choir responds, One is Holy... and then the Communion Hymn, which relates to the memories of the day and the Lessons from the Gospel and Epistle.

Holy Communion.

Communion is preceded by the fraction of the Lamb. The Priest and concelebrating Clergy, if any, communicate from the portion XC and the portions NI and KA are for the Communion of the laity.

The portion 1C is placed in the Chalice last. Hot water is poured into the Chalice after the 1C portion, symbolizing the water that poured forth from the Lord's side, showing that although He was dead, His body was not devoid of divine virtue that is, the warmth and vitality of the Holy Spirit.

After the Communion of the Clergy, the curtain is opened and the Priest comes out with the Chalice, at the exclamation, In the fear of God and with faith, draw near! Before the Communion of the Faithful, the Communion Prayer a brief Symbol of Faith in Christ is recited.

Prayer:

I Believe, O Lord and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who earnest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first, I Believe also that this is truly Thine own most pure Body, and that this is truly Thine own precious Blood, Therefore, I pray Thee: have mercy upon me and forgive my transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, of knowledge and of ignorance. And make me worthy to partake wit/tout condemnation of Thy most pure Mysteries; for the remission of my sins, and unto fife everlasting. Amen.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant for I will, not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies; neither like Judas wilt I give Thee a kiss; But like the thief wilt I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

May the communion of Thy holy Mysteries Be neither to my judgment, nor to my condemnation, O Lord, But to the heating of soul and Body.

All the Faithful, adults and infants, alike, are communicated, partaking of the mingled Holy Body and Blood by means of a special spoon. Infants receive Holy Communion by virtue of their having received Holy Chrismation immediately after Baptism, which makes them full members of the Church of Christ. The approaching faithful receive the Holy Gifts with arms crossed on the breast; after receiving, very gently, they kiss the edge of the Chalice, as if it were the side of Christ Himself. As the Priest communes each of the faithful, he says, The servant (handmaid) of God (name) partakes of the precious and holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and unto life everlasting. During the Communion the Choir sings, Receive the Body of Christ... (or another hymn at certain other times).

After the Communion, the Priest carries the Chalice into the Altar and places it on the Holy Table, after which he turns and blesses the people, O Lord, save Thy people..., at which the Choir sings the hymn setting forth what mercies the people have received: We have seen the True Light.... Then, taking up the Chalice, the Priest faces the people, saying quietly, Blessed is our God.../and then aloud, Always, now and ever..., which symbolizes the Lord's Ascension into Heaven. As the Priest carries the Chalice to the Table of Oblation, the Choir sings the Hymn of Thanksgiving, Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise, O Lord.... Thus, in the Liturgy the earthly life of Jesus Christ passes before us.

The Liturgy concludes with a short Litany of Thanksgiving and the Prayer Before the Ambo, O Lord, Who blessest those who bless Thee.... The Choir responds with, Blessed be the Name of the Lord... (thrice) and (rarely done now), the first eleven verses of Psalm 34: / will bless the Lord at all times.... The final blessings are bestowed, and the Faithful come up to kiss the Handcross held by the Priest. Those who had not communed, then receive a piece of the bread which remained after the Lamb was cut out at the Proskomedie, for which reason it is called Antidoron (in place of the Gifts). The communicants remain after the Dismissal to listen to more prayers of thanksgiving for Communion. The Holy Gifts, if not consumed by a Deacon, are consumed by the Priest. The particles which had been taken out at the Proskomedie, other than the Lamb i.e., for the Theotokos, Saints, living and dead having by now been placed in the Chalice, are likewise consumed.

The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

The Liturgy of St. Basil differs from the usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the following particulars. The Prayers at the time of the Eucharistic Canon are substantially longer and the hymns sung at this point are sung to special melodies to accommodate the length of the Prayers. The Words of Institution, Take, eat... and Drink of it... are somewhat different and instead of It is truly meet..., the hymn, All of Creation rejoices...is sung. At the Proskomedia and at the final Dismissal of the Liturgy, St. Basil is commemorated rather than St. John Chrysostom.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

The Holy Fathers considered that it was unbecoming the contrition of Great Lent to serve the full Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great, so that these Liturgies are allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays of the Fast, as well as on the Feast of the Annunciation and Holy Thursday. In its place, on Wednesdays and Fridays of Great Lent, as well as on Thursday of the Fifth Week and the first three days of Passion Week, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated. [If the patronal feast of a church or monastery falls on a weekday of Great Lent, or if one of a small handful of major feasts fall thereon, the Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated on that day.] This Liturgy is called Presanctified, since the Holy Gifts were presanctified (or consecrated) on the previous Sunday. This Liturgy consists of Vespers, followed by a portion of the full Liturgy, omitting the consecration of the Holy Gifts.

The structure of the Vespereal part of the Presanctified Liturgy is identical to the first half of ordinary Vespers regular beginning, Psalm 104, Great Litany, Kathisma (usually the 18th), Lord, I have called..., with ten appointed Stikhera, accompanied by a censuring of the whole church, Entrance with either the censer or Gospel Book (if there will be a Gospel reading because of a Feast), O Jesus Christ, the Joyful Light..., and then the Prokeimenon. During the reading of the Kathisma, the Presanctified Gifts are solemnly transferred from the Holy Table to the Table of Oblation.

After the Prokeimenon, an appointed Old Testament Lesson is read, followed by another Prokeimenon. Then, as everyone makes a prostration, the Priest turns and faces the Faithful with a candle and censer, intoning, The Light of Christ illumines all! This signifies that the Prophets, from whose writings we have heard and shall hear were illumined by the same light (the Light of Christ) that still enlightens all men. A second Old Testament lesson is now read. At the conclusion of the second Old Testament Lesson, the moving hymn of supplication, Let my prayer arise... is sung, with the Faithful and Clergy on bended knees:

Let My Prayer Arise:

Let my prayer arise in Thy sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

Lord, I have called to Thee, hear me! Attend to the voice of my prayer when I call to Thee!

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, a. secure around my lips!

Incline not my heart to words of evil, to invent excuses for my sins.

Let my prayer arise in Thy sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands Be an evening sacrifice.

This is followed by the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian and three prostrations. If Gospel and Epistle lessons are prescribed (usually if it be a feast), they are said here. Then, whether Gospel and Epistle lessons or not, the Litany of Fervent Supplication is chanted, as well as a Litany for the Catechumens and finally their dismissal. [In the ancient Church, among the Catechumens there

were some who were soon to be baptized (illuminated) usually on Holy Saturday and after the midpoint of the Great Lent, a special Litany was inserted for them at this point at the Presanctified Liturgy: All catechumens, depart. Depart, catechumens. As many as are preparing for illumination, draw near. Pray, you who are preparing for illumination, etc.]

With the Dismissal of the Catechumens, the Liturgy proper begins. After two Litanies for the Faithful, as at the full Liturgy, the Choir sings the special Cherubic Hymn: Now the powers of heaven do serve invisibly with us. Lo, the King of glory enters. Lo, the mystical sacrifice is upborne, fulfilled. A Great Entrance is made from the Table of Oblation to the Altar by the Priest bearing the Presanctified Gifts, in profound silence. At this time the faithful make a prostration before Christ, Who passed before them in the Sacrament. At the conclusion of the Cherubic Hymn and the Alleluia, the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim is again recited with three prostrations.

The Holy Doors are now closed and the Preparation for Communion begins with the Litany of Supplication (which begins, Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord, since this is an evening service) and the Lord's Prayer. During this the curtain is drawn only half-way, signifying that this is not the full Liturgy. After the Lord's Prayer and the usual exclamations, the Holy Gifts are not elevated, since this was done previously at the Sunday Liturgy, but the Priest only touches them, saying, The Presanctified Holy Things are for the holy! The Choir responds, One is holy..., as usual, and then the Communion Hymn, O taste and see that the Lord is good! Alleluia!

The Communion of the Clergy and Faithful take place, as usual, except that instead of Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord..., the Choir sings, I will bless the Lord at all times.... A special Prayer Before the Ambo, O Almighty Master, Who in wisdom hast fashioned all creation..., is said after the usual Litany of Thanksgiving and then the Dismissal is said, as usual, except that St. Gregory Dialoges, Pope of Rome, is commemorated instead of St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great.

The Five Cycles

The Great Cycle of Life.

The life of an Orthodox Christian can be seen as being composed of five cycles. There is, first of all, the great cycle of life, which embraces the whole life of a man from birth to death, and which consists in liturgical actions which are not repeated, occurring only once in a person's lifetime. These are Holy Baptism, Holy Chrismation, and the Burial Service. In addition, there also belongs in this great cycle the Sacraments or Sacramental Blessings which bestow special grace for a particular office or vocation with the community. These are Holy Matrimony, the Monastic Tonsure and Holy Orders.

The Daily Cycle.

Another major cycle which involves the entire life of an Orthodox Christian is the daily cycle of prayers and praises offered by the Church, once every twenty-four hours. These services express our remembrance of events which happened at certain hours and contain petitions relevant to these memories.

In antiquity the day was considered to begin at sunset and thus was divided according to the following order. Night began at 6:00 p.m. (according to our reckoning) and was divided into four parts (called watches the time of changing guards): Evening (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.); Midnight (9:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight); Cock-crow (12:00 midnight to 3:00 a.m.); and Morning (3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.). Day began at 6:00 a.m. (our reckoning) and it, too, was divided into four watches (or hours). First Hour (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.); Third Hour (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon); Sixth Hour (12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.); and Ninth Hour (3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.).

Following this ancient pattern, Orthodox Christians begin each portion of the day with common prayer, which has resulted in the following eight Services, customarily divided into three groups: Ninth Hour, Vespers, and Compline; Nocturns (Midnight Service), Matins, and First Hour; Third and Sixth Hours. In addition to this daily pattern, in certain monasteries during certain periods of fasting, each of the Hours is followed by an intermediate Office called the Interhour. Also included in the daily cycle are the Offices for the Blessing of the Table and the Morning and Evening Prayers.

The Divine Liturgy is often included in this daily cycle, normally being served after the Sixth Hour (although, during Fast Periods it is celebrated after Vespers). Often treated as part of the daily cycle, the Divine Liturgy is not prescribed to be celebrated every day (as it is in many cathedrals and monasteries) and in a theological and mystical sense actually stands outside of chronological time since it also serves as a point of contact with the eternal, where its participants (by virtue of their partaking of the Holy Eucharist) are transported to a point outside of time where there is no past, present or future, but only the eternal Now [The Festal Menaion, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, p. 40]. On days when the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated, the Service of the Typical Psalms is celebrated in its place after the Sixth Hour (it also sometimes precedes the Liturgy), thus forming part of the third group of Daily Services with the Third and Sixth Hours.

In addition to these two cycles, there are also three others: The Weekly Cycle of the Eight Tones (Octoechos), the Annual Cycle of Movable Feasts (dependent upon Pascha), and the Annual Cycle of Fixed Feasts, beginning on the first day of the Church Year September 1. These three cycles are combined and superimposed on each other, giving the Liturgical Year a constant and unending variety.

The Weekly Cycle.

Each day of the Weekly Cycle is dedicated to certain special memorials. Sunday is dedicated to Christ's Resurrection; Monday honors the Holy Bodiless Powers (Angels, Archangels, etc.); Tuesday is dedicated to the prophets and especially the greatest of the Prophets, St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord; Wednesday is consecrated to the Cross and recalls Judas' betrayal; Thursday honors the Holy Apostles and Hierarchs, especially St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia; Friday is also consecrated to the Cross and recalls the day of the Crucifixion; Saturday is dedicated to All Saints, especially the Mother of God, and to the memory of all those who have departed this life in the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

Each week of the Weekly Cycle is centered around the Eight Tones (the basis for Orthodox Church music) and each Week has its appointed Tone. On Saturday Evening of Bright Week (the Eve of St. Thomas Sunday), the cycle of Tones begins with Tone One and, week by week, the sequence continues through the successive Tones, One to Eight, changing to a new Tone every Saturday Evening, throughout the year.

The Annual Cycle of Movable Feasts.

The yearly cycle of Movable Feasts is that centered around Holy Pascha and is called movable because, being linked with the Feast of Feasts, it shifts from year to year as Pascha itself falls on a different date each year. The Feasts which comprise this cycle are Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Pascha), Holy Ascension (the fortieth day after Pascha) and Holy Pentecost (the Descent of the Holy Spirit the fiftieth day after Pascha).

The Annual Cycle of Fixed Feasts.

Each day of the year is dedicated to the memory of particular events or Saints and these memorials always fall on the same Calendar date each year. Thus, in honor of each event or Saint(s), special hymns have been composed which are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the day.

The Great Feasts.

Among the feasts of the Church Year, a place of special honor belongs to the Feast of Feasts, Holy Pascha. Next in importance come the Twelve Great Feasts, which can be divided into two groups: Feasts of the Lord and Feasts of the Mother of God.

Great Feasts of the Lord:

1. The Universal Exaltation (or Elevation) of the Life-creating Cross (Sept. 14)
2. The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Christmas Dec. 25)
3. The Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Jan. 6)
4. The Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday Sunday before Pascha)
5. The Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (40 days after Pascha)
6. The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Holy Pentecost 50 days after Pascha)
7. The Transfiguration of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Aug. 6)

Great Feasts of the Mother of God:

1. The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Sept. 8)
2. The Entrance (or Presentation) of the Theotokos into the Temple (Nov. 21)
3. The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple (Feb. 2)
4. The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos (Mar. 25)
5. The Falling-Asleep (or Dormition) of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Aug. 15)

All of the Feasts listed above, with the exception of Palm Sunday and Holy Pentecost are preceded by a period of preparation known as the Forefeast. In addition, The Nativity of Christ and the Dormition are preceded by a special fasting period (the Nativity Fast begins on November 15 and the Dormition Fast begins on August 1). Three of the Feasts are followed, on the next day, by a distinctive commemoration known as a Synaxis: The Nativity of Christ is followed, on Dec. 26 by the Synaxis of the Most-Holy Theotokos; the Theophany is followed, on Jan. 7 by the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist; and the Annunciation is followed, on Mar. 26 by the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel. In addition, all except one (Palm Sunday) are followed by a festal period called the Afterfeast, during which the prior Feast is continually observed. The last day of the Afterfeast the actual close of the Feast is called the Leavetaking.

Sacraments of the Church

Church Mysteries

The Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, like the Church Herself, can be said to possess a double character, for they are at the same time inward and outward, visible and invisible. They combine in themselves both an outward visible sign with an inward spiritual grace. For example, in the Holy Eucharist, we eat the Body and Blood of Christ, although visibly they appear to be bread and wine. Likewise, in Holy Baptism there is an outward washing with water, but simultaneously an inward cleansing of sins. Thus, we often speak of the Sacraments as being mysteries, for, in the sense outlined above, what we see is not what we believe.

In most of the Sacraments, the Holy Church takes things that are material, e.g., bread, wine, water, and oil, and make them vehicles of the Holy Spirit, in imitation of our Lord's Incarnation, when, as the Second Person of the Trinity, He took material flesh and made it a vehicle of the Holy Spirit. We also note here another characteristic of the Sacraments, in that they are personal. That is, the grace of God is given to every Christian individually. Therefore, in most of the Sacraments, the Priest pronounces the Christian name of each person as the Sacrament is administered. Thus, for example, at the Holy Eucharist, when giving Holy Communion, the Priest says, the Servant (or Handmaid) of God [Name] partakes....

Customarily, in the Orthodox Church we speak of Seven Sacraments, although we must note that this was not fixed until about the 17th Century. The Fathers themselves disagreed as to the actual number some said two, some six, some ten, and there were even those who said seven, but differed among themselves as to what constituted that seven. Many other sacramental acts, such as the Blessing of Waters at Theophany, the Monastic Tonsure, the Burial Service, and the Blessing of Any Object, for example, possess the same criteria as the earlier definition of sacrament. In any case, the number seven has no absolute dogmatic significance in our Orthodox theology, but is used only for teaching convenience.

The Sacraments, as they are traditionally numbered, are:

1. Holy Baptism
2. Holy Chrismation
3. The Holy Eucharist
4. Repentance (Penance, Confession)
5. Holy Orders
6. Holy Matrimony
7. The Anointing of the Sick

Holy Baptism

First place among the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church is occupied by Holy Baptism, by which a man, who has come to believe in Christ, by being immersed three times in water in the Name of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), is cleansed through Divine Grace of all sins (Original Sin and personal sins) and is reborn into a new holy, and spiritual life. This Baptism serves as the door through which man enters into the House of Eternal Wisdom the Church for, without it, a man cannot be united completely with the Savior, become a member of His Church, receive the other Sacraments, and be the heir to Eternal Life. As the Lord Himself said, in His discourse with Nicodemus, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5)

This Sacrament of Holy Baptism, however, is not the same as the baptism performed by St. John the Baptist, for although this baptism of John was from heaven (Mark 11:30), it was only a prototype of Christ's Baptism: / baptize you with water; but He Who is mightier than I is coming...;

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16). The baptism of John prepared a man for the reception of the Messiah and His Kingdom (Matt. 3:1-2; Luke 1:16; 3:3). John's baptism was, in effect, a baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4; Acts 19:4) and not in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Therefore those baptized by him were not reborn through the grace of the Holy Spirit and had to be rebaptized later (Acts 19:35).

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was instituted by Our Lord after His resurrection, when He appeared to His disciples and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (Matt. 28:18-20). The necessity of this baptism was further stressed by the Savior when He said to them, He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).

On the day of Holy Pentecost, the Holy Apostles were themselves baptized by the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire and began to administer the Sacrament of Baptism themselves to all who believed in Christ, wanted to repent and to change their life in accordance with His teaching. And Peter said to [the people], 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:38,41).

According to the Holy Apostle Paul, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) and thus the regeneration of man's personality begins with the Sacrament of Baptism. As Scripture says, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27) and these words show that in Baptism the believer is united with Christ, a member of Christ's Church and through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature in spirit and body. In Baptism a new element a supernatural one which remains hidden and acts secretly is poured in and the newly-illuminated receives a new name. Through this essential change in his human nature, he turns into a new creature.

This essential change in man's nature takes place through the free and moral participation of man himself and only on this condition is sin abolished in man in the Sacrament of Baptism. The dominion of sin over the power of the soul loses its strength in Baptism: It is Christ Who now dominates. But the element of sin still remains before the conscience as a seductive principle. That is why it is necessary for man to perfect himself morally even after Baptism; there is still the possibility of his fall. In Baptism man is given the power to struggle with sin and he faces the task of translating into life the Gifts of Grace of the Holy Spirit given to him in this Sacrament.

The Savior commanded His disciples to teach the Faith and to baptize all nations (Matt. 28:19), for as descendants of Adam all are in need of rebirth. This rebirth is accomplished only through Baptism, which is why all men seeking salvation, regardless of sex, nationality, or any other condition, must be baptized. Thus the Orthodox Church holds Baptism to be as necessary for infants as for adults, since they, too, are subject to Original Sin and without Baptism cannot be absolved of this sin.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the prototype of the Sacrament of Baptism in the New Testament, by which the believer enters into a new covenant with God (Col. 2:11-12). If circumcision was performed in the Old Testament on all males, adult and infant (being prescribed for infants on the 8th Day after birth), so much the more, according to the grace of the new covenant, the Sacrament of Baptism should be administered to infants. Having become a member of the Church through Baptism, infants can receive Holy Communion and from the first days of their life on Earth, they can become vessels of the Holy Spirit. Holy Scripture itself speaks of the baptism of whole families by the Apostles (Acts 16:14-15; 30-39; 1 Cor. 1:16), and there is no reason to consider that there were only adults in these families or to assume that when adults were baptized, the children in these families were not baptized. Christianity, above all, is a new life in Christ Jesus,

and this life, according to the belief of the Orthodox Church, is given to all, and of course to children, for as the Lord Himself said, Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 19:14).

As St. Paul says, we are called upon to confess one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism (Eph. 4:5). The Church teaches one Baptism because rebirth through grace experienced by man in this Sacrament is one and unrepeatable, just as one and unrepeatable is our natural birth, our death and the Resurrection of Christ. Baptism was, however, repeated, and still is, in cases where the first Baptism was administered incorrectly not in the Name of the Holy Trinity and not according to the way instituted by Our Lord.

The Baptism of both adults and children takes place in the presence of sponsors, who act as guarantors for the one being baptized. Only one sponsor is actually necessary, although there are usually two (or more). According to Church tradition, the sponsor for a male is a male and for a female is a female. The sponsor(s) are responsible for following after the spiritual and religious upbringing of the child, for which reason it is absolutely necessary for the sponsor in question to be Orthodox.

In earlier times, Baptism was done, on occasion, on the 8th Day after birth and (in Russian practice, at least) the child was given the name of that Saint whose feast was on the 8th Day, for it was usually the day of spiritual, not physical, birth that was celebrated. In modern practice, the Baptism is usually administered on or after the 40th Day after birth, the day of Churching, although we do note that in ancient times the Baptism and the Churching were administered separately. The custom of Churching is connected with Old Testament rites and, in particular, with the life of Christ when, on the 40th Day, He was brought by His parents to the Temple, fulfilling the terms of the Jewish Law.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is preceded by a preparatory rite which, in Antiquity, was not a part of the Sacrament itself. This preparatory rite consists of:

- 1. The Catechumenate**, which takes place through the Priest's breathing on the one to be baptized, accompanied by the Sign of the Cross and the laying-on of hands upon his head, as well as a prayer to expel from him the ancient deception and that he be united to the flock of the Church.
- 2. The Exorcism**, which consists of four prayers, commanding the Devil and the powers of darkness to depart from the one to be baptized, as well as entreating that a Guardian Angel be given to aid him.
- 3. The Renunciation of the Devil**, in which the catechumen, along with his sponsor(s) turns to the west, which personifies the region where in the powers of darkness abide, and renounces Satan and all his works, breathing and spitting on him as a sign of this renunciation. The catechumen then turns back to the east (which symbolizes the region wherein Light resides) and declares himself ready to unite himself to Christ.
- 4. The Adherence to Christ**, in which the catechumen, three times, declares that he unites himself to Christ.
- 5. The Recitation of the Symbol of Faith**, wherein the catechumen bears witness to his readiness to unite himself to Christ, after which he adores the Holy Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit in confessing the essence of the Faith.

This preparatory part leads to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism itself, which begins with the same exclamation by the Priest as at the Divine Liturgy: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... after which follows:

1. The Great Litany and

2. The Sanctification of the Water, which is an obligatory rite. [The practice of using, for brevity, water blessed on Theophany is strictly forbidden.] After the petitions for the Sanctification of the Water, the Priest signs the water thrice, immersing his hand in it, making the Sign of the Cross, breathing on it and anointing it with oil.

3. The Unction With Oil. The Priest now anoints, according to ancient custom, the body of him to be baptized with the Oil of Gladness, after which there takes place

4. The Triple Immersion in Water. According to the meaning of the ancient practice, absolutely there is required immersion in water and not sprinkling (or even pouring). Immersion in water signifies dying to sin and coming up out of the water signifies a resurrection for a new life in Christ, something that the Baptismal Epistle reading speaks of clearly. The obligatory formula in so doing is the recitation of the Name of the Holy Trinity: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, just as was commanded the Apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Psalm 31 is read after the Immersion in Water.

6. The Vesting. The newly-illuminated one is now vested in white garments and a cross is given to him.

Holy Baptism is the only Sacrament which, in extreme cases, a layman can also perform (both a man or a woman). The only requirements are that the one baptizing must be an Orthodox Christian and the Baptism must be done by immersion, if possible, according to the following formula: The servant (or handmaid) of God [Name] is baptized in the Name of the Father, Amen, of the Son, Amen, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. If the one being baptized in such a case were dying and later recovered, the Sacrament must be supplemented according the Church Order, i.e., the Priest must read the corresponding prayers of the Sacrament and administer the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation.

Holy Chrismation

In the Sacrament of Baptism man is called out of spiritual darkness into the light of Christ and is initiated into the economy of salvation by the Son of God. This initiation is effected, however, in the Sacrament of Chrismation. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter preached to the people on Pentecost, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Since that time the Divine Gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon each person who rises from the baptismal font. And everything the Holy Spirit touches receives the seal of an invaluable treasure, a ray of eternal light, the reflection of Divine action.

The Sacrament of Chrismation awakens in the soul that inner, spiritual thirst which does not let one grow satisfied solely with the earthly and material, but always summons us to the Heavenly, to the eternal and the perfect. It makes the baptized person the possessor of the Spirit bearing beauty and a partaker of sanctity, of the Unwaning Light and Divine Life. It is for this reason that in Chrismation the new member of the Church not only receives the Spirit within, but is outwardly encompassed by Him, being robed henceforth as if in special spiritual garments.

The Prayer at Anointing with the Holy Chrism contains an assertion that the one who has been graced to receive the seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit receives aid to remain indomitable, unchanging, unharmed, untouched, unoppressed, safe from the designs of the Evil One, to abide in the Faith and to await the heavenly rewards of life and the eternal promises of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Such a lofty gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed in Chrismation, obliges the person being anointed to remember constantly the words of St. Paul: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you (1 Cor. 3:16)?

The prayer to God for the bestowing of the Holy Spirit, which precedes the anointing, and the anointing itself of certain parts of the body crosswise with the Chrism, accompanied by the words, The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Amen, have always comprised the basis for the Office of this Sacrament. It concludes the grace-giving process of the new member's joining the Church, making him an equal among the faithful and rendering him worthy, henceforth, to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Originally the Apostles conferred the Holy Spirit on those who gladly received the Word of the Gospel (Acts 2:41) and were baptized through prayer and the laying-on of hands. In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and John were sent to the Samaritans who had received the word of God and they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.... Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15, 17). The need to administer the Sacrament of the spirit through the laying-on of hands required the personal participation of the Apostles, but later they blessed the Bishops and Presbyter whom they consecrated to conduct the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon believers through anointing them with the Holy Chrism, and permitted Bishops alone to consecrate the Chrism. As St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, Holy Chrism...is a gift of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, which is validated by the presence of His Divinity.... And when the body is anointed in a visible fashion, the soul is consecrated with the Holy and Life-Giving Spirit.

The Chrism here used consists of olive oil, to which has been added white grape wine and a number of aromatic substances symbolizing the various grace-bestowing gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred through Chrismation. The Holy Chrism, which has been prepared at the beginning of Holy Week, is formally consecrated, usually by the Primate of the Church, on Holy Thursday and then distributed to the Bishops who, in turn, distribute it, as needed, to the Priests, for use in the Sacraments.

In the Office of the Sacrament of Chrismation, the anointing is performed with the recitation of the words, The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit, during which the Priest anoints crosswise with the Holy Chrism the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands and feet of the Newly-illuminated. After the anointing, the Priest then leads the Newly-illuminated and sponsor (s) three times around the font to the singing of As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia! This circular procession is seen as a symbol of joy.

Then follows the reading of the Epistle and Gospel which (along with the preceding hymn) refer to Baptism, since, from antiquity, the two Sacraments have been linked into one rite. After this, the Chrism is washed off and the white baptismal garments removed. [In ancient times this was customarily done on the 8th Day after, i.e., St. Thomas Sunday.] The hair is then cut in a crosswise manner The Tonsure as a sign of humility and readiness for sacrificial service to the Lord an initiation into the Army of Christ.

Holy Communion

The central place among the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church is held by the Holy Eucharist the precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In modern times the Holy Eucharist is celebrated in the Orthodox Church at the following Liturgies:

- 1. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom** the usual Liturgy of Sundays and Weekdays.
- 2. The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great** celebrated on the Sundays of Great Lent and certain Feast Days.
- 3. The Liturgy of St. James the Brother of the Lord** celebrated on October 23 (St. James' Day) in certain places only (e.g., Jerusalem).

4. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts celebrated on Weekdays of Great Lent and Holy Week. (At this Liturgy there is no consecration of the Holy Gifts, but rather Communion is given from the Gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday hence Pre-sanctified.)

The Savior Himself said, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst....If any one eats of this bread he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh (John 6:35,51). At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'. And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matt. 26:26-28; cf. Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13; 1 Cor. 11:23-30).

This institution of the Eucharist by our Lord is the means whereby we become united with Christ and with each other as a church, for, as St. Paul says, the goal of every Christian is to grow up in every way into Him Who is the head, into Christ, from Whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied...makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love (Eph. 4:15-16). This is so since Christ is the head of the Church, His body, and is Himself its Savior (Eph. 5:23). We become part of the Mystical Body of Christ by our communion of the Holy Eucharist. As St. Paul says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

Only by belonging to the Church, or in other words, being in communion with the very essence of Christ through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, can one attain salvation unto eternal life, thus we can answer the question, Who can be regarded as a member of the Church of Christ? by saying, All those who have been properly baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the true Son of God come in the flesh (1 John 4:2-3), and are united by the grace of the Sacraments in particular the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist administered by the Priesthood of Apostolic Succession.

The unity of all Christian believers in the Holy Eucharist is strongly stressed by the Fathers of the Church. St. Ignatius of Antioch, in his Letter to the Ephesians reminds them that all of you to the last, without exception, through God's grace are united in common faith and in Jesus Christ..., so obey the Bishop and the Presbyters in complete harmony, breaking one bread, this remedy for immortality. Moreover, the Eucharist is not only a testament to the internal and external unity of the Church, but is also the means for strengthening this unity. Therefore St. Ignatius stresses more frequent Communion: Try to gather more often for the Eucharist and glorification of God. For if you gather together often, the forces of Satan are overthrown, and his destructive deeds are wrecked by your single-hearted faith [To the Ephesians].

The union of believers with Christ in the Eucharist is also stressed by St. Cyprian of Carthage who, speaking of the mixing of water and wine in the cup, gives an extended meaning to this mixing: The people are designated by water, the blood of Christ by wine. Mixing water and wine in the cup shows the people's union with Christ, the believers' union with Him in Whom they believe. Water and wine after mixing in the Lord's Cup are so inseparably and closely united that they cannot be separated one from another. In just this way nothing can separate from Christ the Church, that is, the people that make up the Church, firmly and unshakably abiding in faith and joined by eternal, indivisible love [Letter to Cacaelius].

This is reaffirmed in the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great when, after the blessing of the Holy Gifts, we pray that the Heavenly Father unite us all, as many as are partakers in the one bread and one cup, one with another in communion with the One Holy Spirit. Thus we can say that whereas entrance into the Church begins with Holy Baptism, its fulfillment lies in the Holy Eucharist.

Orthodox Theology sees the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice and this is affirmed in the words of the Priest, when he says, during the Eucharistic Canon, Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee on behalf of all and for all. The sacrifice offered at the Eucharist is Christ Himself, but He Who brings the sacrifice is also Christ. Christ is, at one and the same time, High Priest and Sacrifice. In the prayer before the Great Entrance, the Priest prays: For Thou art the Offerer and the Offered, the Receiver and the Received, O Christ our God.... This Eucharist is offered to God the Holy Trinity, and so if we ask the threefold question, What is offered? By Whom is it offered? To Whom is it offered? we say in answer, Christ. In addition, the sacrifice is offered on behalf of all and for all, for it is a sacrifice of redemption which is brought for the living and the dead.

According to St. Nicholas Cabasilas, a medieval Orthodox teacher, the Church's understanding of the Eucharist is, as follows: In the first place, the sacrifice is not only an enactment or a symbol, but a real sacrifice. In the second, that which is sacrificed is not bread, but the very Body of Christ. In the third place, the Lamb of God was immolated only once and for all times. The Eucharist sacrifice consists not of the real or blood sacrifice of the Lamb, but in the transformation of bread into the sacrificed Lamb [Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, 32].

According to the Orthodox Church, then, the Eucharist is not just a reminder of Christ's sacrifice or of its enactment, but it is a real sacrifice. On the other hand, however, it is not a new sacrifice, nor a repetition of the Sacrifice of the Cross upon Golgotha. The events of Christ's Sacrifice the Incarnation, the Institution of the Eucharist, the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, are not repeated during the Eucharist, yet they become a present reality. As one Orthodox theologian has said, During the Liturgy we are projected in time to that place where eternity and time intersect, and then we become the contemporaries of these events that we are calling to mind [P. N. Evdokimov, L'Orthodoxie, p. 241]. Thus the Eucharist and all the Holy Liturgy is, in structure, a sacrificial service.

How all this takes place is a mystery. As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow wrote in his Longer Catechism, concerning the changing of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, this none can understand but God; but only this much is signified, that the bread truly, really and substantially becomes the very true Body of the Lord, and the wine the very Blood of the Lord. Furthermore, as St. John of Damascus states, If you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it is through the Holy Spirit.... We know nothing more than this, that the Word of God is true, active and omnipotent, but in the manner of operation unsearchable [On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 13).

Concerning the Communion itself, in the Orthodox Church both laity and clergy always receive Communion of both the Body and Blood of Christ. The Communion is given to the laity in a spoon containing a small piece of the Holy Bread together with a portion of the wine, and it is received standing. A strict fast is observed, usually from the night before, and nothing can be eaten or drunk after waking in the morning before Communion. As a theologian of the Church has well put it, You know that those who invite the Emperor to their house, first clean their home. So you, if you want to bring god into your bodily home for the illumination of your life, must first sanctify your body by fasting [Gennadius, Hundred Chapters].

After the final blessing of the Liturgy, the faithful come up to kiss the Hand Cross held by the Priest and those who have not communed receive a small piece of bread, called the Antidoron, which, although blessed, was not consecrated, having been taken from the same bread(s) from which the Lamb was taken in the Proskomedia. This bread is given out as an expression of Christian fellowship and love (agape).

Holy Matrimony

In the theology of the Orthodox Church man is made in the Image of the Most-holy Trinity, and, except in certain special cases (such as monasticism, for example), he is not intended by God to live

alone, but in a family situation. Just as God blessed the first humans, Adam and Eve, to live as a family, to be fruitful and multiply, so too the Church blesses the union of a man and a woman. Marriage, however, is not a state of nature, but is rather a state of grace, and married life is a special vocation (no less than the special calling of monasticism), requiring a gift or charism from the Holy Spirit this gift being conferred in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

That Holy Matrimony has divine sanction comes no less from the words of the Lord Himself, Who says: Have you not read that He Who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' [Gen. 2:24]. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:5-6).

The Holy Apostle Paul sees this mystical union of husband and wife as reflecting the mystical union of Christ with His Church: Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, His body.... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.... Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of His body.... This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church... (Eph. 5:22-25, 28-30, 32).

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony consists of two parts: Betrothal and Crowning. The Betrothal is, in some way, the civil act, sanctified by the blessing of the Church. It sanctifies the intention of two persons to enter into the martial union and reflects Old Testament customs, when on those who had expressed their intentions to marry, rings were placed. This exchange of rings in the Office of Betrothal is an outward token that the two partners join in marriage of their own free will and consent, for without free consent on both sides there can be no Sacrament of Christian marriage.

The Office of Crowning also contains an Old Testament element in the crowning itself, which reflects the ancient practice of placing crowns on the heads of the betrothed. This is the outward and visible sign of the Sacrament, signifying the special grace of the Holy Spirit received by the couple. These crowns are crowns of joy and martyrdom joy for the new union and martyrdom since every true marriage involves immeasurable self-sacrifice on both sides.

In the Greek Churches, the crowns are usually made of leaves and flowers, while in the Russian Church they are usually made of silver or gold. Customarily in the Russian Church the crowns are held over the couples' heads by the best man and maid of honor, but in many places (as in Romania, for example) they are actually worn by the bride and groom.

The Gospel for the day contains the account of the Wedding in Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11). The blessing, given by God to man in Paradise was renewed by Christ in the New Testament, when, at the beginning of His ministry, He performed the miracle of changing water into wine. Thus, at the end of the Marriage Service the newly-married couple drink from the same cup of wine, which recalls this miracle of Our Lord. The common cup here is also a symbol that henceforth they will share a common life with one another.

Divorce and Remarriage.

The Holy Orthodox Church does, however, permit divorce and remarriage, quoting as her authority the words of the Savior: For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery (Matt. 19:8-9). Here Our Lord allows an exception to the indissolubility of marriage, and so, too, the Church is willing to allow an exception.

While in principle the church regards the marriage bond as lifelong and indissoluble, and condemns the breakdown of marriage as a sin and an evil, she still desires to help the sinners and to allow them a second chance. Thus, when a marriage has ceased to be a reality, the Church does not insist on the preservation of a legal fiction. Divorce, therefore, is seen as an exceptional, but necessary concession to human weakness. Yet, while helping men and women to rise again after a fall, the Church does not view a second or third union as being the same as the first and thus, in the ceremony for a second or third marriage, several joyful ceremonies are omitted and replaced by penitential prayers. Orthodox Canon Law permits a second or third marriage, but more than that is strictly forbidden.

When Weddings are Not to be Celebrated.

There are certain times during the year when the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony may not be celebrated. These are:

1. On the Eves of Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year.
2. On the Eves of Sundays throughout the year.
3. On the Eves of the Twelve Great Feasts, patronal feasts of the parish or monastery, and other great feasts.
4. In all of the Fasts (Great Lent, Apostles' Fast, Dormition Fast and Nativity Fast).
5. From the Nativity of Christ (Dec. 25) through the Synaxis of the Baptist (Jan. 7).
6. During the course of Cheesefare Week (from Sunday of Meatfare through the Sunday of Cheesefare).
7. During the course of Bright Week.
8. On the Day and the Eve of the Beheading of the Baptist (Aug. 29) and the Elevation of the Cross (Sept. 14).

Holy Orders

In the Orthodox Church there are to be found three Major Orders-Bishop, Priest and Deacon and two Minor Orders Subdeacon and Reader (although in ancient times there were other Minor Orders which have now fallen into disuse). The Holy Apostles appointed seven men (Church Tradition calls them Deacons) to perform a special serving ministry (Acts 6:2-6) and in his first Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks of various ministries in the Church (1 Cor. 12:28). Likewise, he addresses his Letter to the Philippians, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philip pi, with the bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). In his first Letter to Timothy, the Holy Apostle also speaks of the qualifications of Bishops and Deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13), as well as in his Letter to Titus (1.5-9).

Ordinations to the Major Orders always occur during the course of the Divine Liturgy, whereas those to the Minor Orders usually take place during the Hours preceding the Liturgy. Only the Bishop has the power to ordain (although in cases of necessity an Archimandrite or Archpriest, as representative of the Bishop, may be granted permission to ordain a Reader). Because of the collegial nature of the episcopacy, a college of Bishops (at least two or three) are necessary to consecrate another Bishop. And since any ordination requires the consent of the whole people of God, at a particular point in the Service the assembled congregation proclaims Axios! (He is worthy!), showing their assent.

The rite of consecration to the episcopacy is very solemn and the Bishop is ordained in the Sanctuary, in the midst of the Congregation before the singing of the Trisagion (Holy God]. Thus the reading of the Holy Gospel is done already with his blessing.

The Priest is ordained after the singing of the Cherubic Hymn before the sanctification of the Holy Gifts. The rite of ordination to the Diaconate is less solemn and takes place before the singing of the Lord's Prayer, when the sanctification of the Holy Gifts has already taken place, since the Deacon only assists at the performance of the Sacraments and does not perform them. At the conclusion of the Liturgy the Priest goes out to the people in order to read the Prayer Before the Ambo and the Deacon to say the final litany, these actions being the first external signs of their ministry.

In all cases of ordination to the Major Orders, there is a laying-on of hands on the head of the one being ordained and the grace of the Holy Spirit is invoked. Like ordination to the Major Orders, ordination to the Minor Orders also involves a laying-on of hands, but there is no invocation of the Holy Spirit in these ordinations.

Orthodox Priests and Deacons are divided into two distinct groups the married (white or parochial) clergy and the monastic (or black) clergy. The monastic clergy are by nature unmarried, but one seeking ordination to the ranks of the white clergy may now choose to be celibate (unmarried) or married, but must make the choice prior to ordination since, under Orthodox Canon Law, one may not marry after ordination. A celibate Priest or Deacon may not later marry and a married Priest or Deacon whose wife dies may not remarry. Also, one who has been divorced may not be permitted to be ordained. Bishops are drawn exclusively from the ranks of the monastic clergy, although a celibate or widower may be consecrated Bishop after having taken monastic vows. In ancient times married men were permitted to become Bishops (such was the case of St. Peter himself), but such has not been the case since at least the 6th Century.

Ecclesiastical Titles Patriarch.

This is the title borne by the heads of certain autocephalous (self-heading i.e., independent) Churches. At the present time the heads of the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria (Pope and Patriarch), Antioch, Jerusalem, Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania bear this title. The heads of the other Churches are entitled Archbishop (i.e., Greece, Albania, Cyprus) or Metropolitan (Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Orthodox Church in America, OCA). The head of the autocephalous Church of Georgia is entitled the Catholicos.

Metropolitan, Archbishop.

Originally a Metropolitan (from metropolis) was the Bishop of the capital of a province, while Archbishop was a more general title of honor given to Bishops of special eminence (e.g., Bishops of long tenure) the Church of Russia still generally uses these titles in the original way, but the Greek Churches (except Jerusalem) give the title Metropolitan to every Diocesan Bishop and grant the title Archbishop to those who formerly would have been styled Metropolitans. Thus an Archbishop now ranks above a Metropolitan in the Greek Churches, but in the Slavic Churches the rank of Metropolitan is pre-eminent.

Archimandrite.

Originally this title was given to a Monk supervising several monasteries or who was the superior of an especially important monastery. Now it is usually given as a title of honor for distinguished Priestmonks.

Abbot (Hegumen or Igumen).

Originally a Priestmonk who was the Superior of a monastery was entitled Abbot (a practice strictly adhered to by the Greek Church), but in the Russian church, this is more often a title of honor given to Priest-monks. In the Russian Church, an Igumen ranks below an Archimandrite.

Archpriest, Protopresbyter.

These are titles of honor given to non-monastic Priests, and are generally equivalent to that of Archimandrite.

Hieromonk.

A Hieromonk is a Monk who happens to be a Priest.

Hierodeacon.

A Hierodeacon is a monastic Deacon.

Archdeacon.

This is a title of honor given to monastic Deacons usually those attached to a Bishop.

Protodeacon.

This is a title of honor given to non-monastic Deacons usually those attached to cathedrals or to Bishops.

Holy Repentance

Holy Repentance (Penance Confession).

The Sacrament of Repentance developed early in the Church's history in the time of the persecutions of the 3rd and 4th Centuries, when many people, giving in to the threats of the persecutors, apostasized and fell away from the Church. Apostasy was considered to be a very serious sin; many held the extreme position that such could not be received back into the Church in their lifetime, while others held that those who had lapsed should be re-baptized that is, their sins should be washed away by a second baptism. Moderation, in the course of time, prevailed and a penitential discipline the Sacrament of Repentance developed, taking on the meaning of Second Baptism; for this reason it was eventually numbered among the Sacraments of the Church.

After the end of the persecutions, the Sacrament of Repentance remained, so that in the event of sins committed after Baptism, forgiveness could be obtained and the sinner reconciled to the Church. This Sacrament acts also as a cure for the healing of a soul, since the Priest also confers spiritual advice to the Penitent.

Since all sin is not only against God, but also against one's neighbor, confession and the penitential discipline in the early Church were a community affair and took place publicly before the whole local Christian community. In time, however, Confession has developed into a private action between the Priest and the Penitent, and the Priest is forbidden to reveal to any third party what he has learned in Confession.

In ancient times, before the beginning of Confession, it was appointed to read an entire series of Psalms from which Psalm 51 has been preserved in the present rite, being known as the Penitential Psalm. Then the Priest reads certain prayers, the first of which recalls King David who repented before Nathan the Prophet when he had caused the death of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba whom

David loved. After being rebuked by Nathan, David confessed, I have sinned against the Lord! Upon hearing David's repentance, Nathan proclaimed God's forgiveness, The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die (2 Sam. 12:13).

After this, begins the second part of the Sacrament the Confession itself before which the Priest speaks of himself as being only a witness, Christ standing invisibly before the Penitent. The Confession itself consists of questions put by the Priest to the Penitent regarding his sins, his attitude towards the Faith, fleshly temptations, thoughts and words. Thoughts are considered to be the beginning of sin, according to the words of the Savior, for in speaking of adultery, for example, He says, I say to you, that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5:28). The Sacrament of Confession here aids in revealing these thoughts and the struggle against them that follows.

After the Confession, the Priest may, if he deems necessary, impose a penance, but this is not an essential part of the Sacrament and is often omitted. After this, the Priest lays his Epitrachelion (stole) on the Penitent's head and says the Prayer of Absolution, which differs in the Russian and Greek practices. In the Greek practice, the Priest says: Whatever you have said to my humble person, and whatever you have failed to say, whether through ignorance or forgetfulness, whatever it may be, may God forgive you in this world and the next.... Have no further anxiety; go in peace. The Slavonic formula of absolution, introduced by Peter Moghila, Metropolitan of Kiev and adopted by the Russian Church in the 18th Century, is as follows: May Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, through the grace and bounties of His love towards mankind, forgive you, my Child [Name] all your transgressions. And I, an unworthy Priest, through the power given me by Him, forgive and absolve you from all yours sins.

In the ancient Church, not all Priests had the right to hear Confessions; special Confessors, often experienced Monks, were entrusted with this responsibility. From the 16th Century, however, it was accepted that every Priest could be a Confessor once he had reached a mature age. In many monasteries an experienced Monk who was not even a Priest was often the Confessor (such is the practice in many places on Mt. Athos), but the Penitent was always sent to a Priest for the Sacramental Absolution. In modern times it is also the custom for a baptized person to begin receiving this Sacrament when he or she reaches the age of moral discernment, usually around the age of six or seven.

Repentance the Road to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Man is weak, and thus sins and falls often, again and again falling into the same pits, driving the soul to utter despair. The urge here is to give in to one's sinful nature and to cease resisting the powerful forces of sin. There is, however, an answer to this. A disciple came to a certain Elder, one day, and said, Father, I have fallen! The Elder answered, Get up! Again and again he came to the Elder and said, I have fallen! and the Elder invariably answered, Get up! Until when must I continue getting up? the disciple asked, and the Elder answered, Until the day when you give up your soul to God! Thus, every time when we feel that we have fallen, the Sacrament of Repentance tells us to get up.

When one wishes to partake of the Sacrament of Repentance, it is good to consider the meaning of sin and repentance, for sin is what separates us from God. Sin plunges the soul into darkness and we often lose peace, joy, and the courage to address ourselves to the Lord God. According to St. John the Evangelist, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8), for every man sins and falls short before the glory of God.

God, Who reads the heart of man, knows not only our everyday affairs, but also our thoughts and intentions. Everything is open to Him. In response to sin, Our Lord Jesus Christ says, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matt. 3:2). Thus He expects from us true, heartfelt faith and

true, heartfelt repentance. But what does repentance mean and what kind of repentance is agreeable to God and serves for our salvation?

To repent means to be fully aware of our sins and our iniquities and of their consequences of all that is pernicious to man, all that insults God and excludes us from His love, of all that creates discord in family life, in society, and of all that disturbs the soul's peace and tranquility. When we become aware of our sinful state, and consider ourselves at fault before God, then our heart sorrows and is full of contrition. This heartfelt contrition is, according to St. Paul, that godly grief [which] produces a repentance that leads to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10), that is, true repentance. Tears of contrition are the only means of purifying the soul, so that it may rise up, become cleansed, luminous, joyful, capable of good deeds and of attaining perfection.

St. John says that if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). It is not easy, however, to confess, not easy to mourn over one's iniquities; for each of us has a sense of pride and, sometimes, also a coarse and stony heart that interferes with the sincerity of our repentance before God. Prayer, fasting, and mutual forgiveness, however, soften our hardened hearts and dispose our soul to true repentance. Then, in the Sacrament of Repentance we can, without shame or fear, confess our sins with faith to our Father Confessor, so that nothing vile or unclean should remain in us that could interfere with our lifelong striving to attain with all the Saints to the longed-for Kingdom of Heaven.

The following confession (originally printed in the Athos Paper of 1907, and translated from the Russian) is especially appropriate for all of us to consider before receiving the Sacrament:

A Lament for Sin.

St. Basil the Great says, Weep over your sin: it is a spiritual ailment; it is death to your immortal soul; it deserves ceaseless, unending weeping and crying; let all tears flow for it, and sighing come forth without ceasing from the depths of your heart.

In profound humility I weep for all my sins, voluntary and involuntary, conscious and unconscious, covert and overt, great and little, committed by word and deed, in thought and intention, day and night, at every hour and minute of my life.

I weep over my pride and my ambition, my self-love and my boastfulness;

I weep over my fits of anger, irritation, excessive shouting, swearing, quarreling and cursing;

I weep for having criticized, censured, gossiped, slandered, and defamed, for my wrath, enmity, hatred, envy, jealousy, vengeance and rancor;

I weep over my indulgences in lust, impure thoughts and evil inclinations; covetousness, gluttony, drunkenness, and sloth;

I weep for having talked idly, used foul language, blasphemed, derided, joked, ridiculed, mocked, enjoyed empty gaiety, singing, dancing and every pleasure to excess;

I weep over my self-indulgence, cupidity, love of money and miserliness, unmercifulness and cruelty;

I weep over my laziness, indolence, negligence, love of comfort, weakness, idleness, absent-mindedness, irresponsibility, inattention, love of sleep, for hours spent in idle pursuits, and for my lack of concentration in prayer and in Church, for not observing fasts and not doing charitable works.

I weep over my lack of faith, my doubting, my perplexity, my coldness, my indifference, my weakness and unfeelingness in what concerns the Holy Orthodox Faith, and over all my foul, cunning and reviling thoughts;

I weep over my exaggerated sorrow and grief, depression and despair, and over sins committed willingly.

I weep, but what tears can I find for a worthy and fitting way to weep for all the actions of my ill-fated life; for my immeasurable and profound worthlessness? How can I reveal and expose in all its nakedness each one of my sins, great and small, voluntary and involuntary, conscious and unconscious, overt and covert, every hour and minute of sin? When and where shall I begin my penitential lament that will bear fitting fruit? Perhaps soon I may have to face the last hour of my life; my soul will be painfully sundered from my sinful and vile body; I shall have to stand before terrible demons and radiant angels, who will reveal and torment me with my sins; and I, in fear and trembling, will be unprepared and unable to give them an answer; the sight and sound of wailing demons, their violent and bold desire to drag me into the bottomless pit of Hell will fill my soul with confusion and terror. And then the angels of God will lead my poor soul to stand before God's fearful seat of judgment. How will I answer the Immortal King, or how will I dare, sinner that I am, to look upon My Judge? Woe is me! I have no good answer to make, for I have spent all my life in indolence and sin, all my hours and minutes in vain thoughts, desires and yearnings!

And how many times have I taken the Name of God in vain!

How often, lightly and freely, at times even boldly, insolently and shamelessly have I slandered others in anger; offended, irritated, mocked them!

How often have I been proud and vainglorious and boasted of good qualities that I do not possess and of deeds that I have not done!

How many times have I lied, deceived, been cunning or flattered, or been insincere and deceptive; how often have I been angry, intolerant and mean!

How many times have I ridiculed the sins of my brother, caused him grief overtly and covertly, mocked or gloated over his misdeeds, his faults or his misfortunes; how many times have I been hostile to him, in anger, hatred or envy!

How often have I laughed stupidly, mocked and derided, spoke without weighing my words, ignorantly and senselessly, and uttered a numberless quantity of cutting, poisonous, insolent, frivolous, vulgar, coarse, brazen words!

How often, affected by beauty, have I fed my mind, my imagination and my heart with voluptuous sensations, and unnaturally satisfied the lusts of the flesh in fantasy! How often has my tongue uttered shameful, vulgar and blasphemous things about the desires of the flesh!

How often have I yearned for power and been gluttonous, satiating myself on delicacies, on tasty, varied and diverse foods and wines; because of intemperance and lack of self-control how often have I been filled past the point of satiety, lacked sobriety and been drunken, intemperate in food and drink, and broken the Holy Fasts!

How often, through selfishness, pride or false modesty, have I refused help and attention to those in need, been uncharitable, miserly, unsympathetic, mercenary and grasped at attention!

How often have I entered the House of God without fear and trembling, stood there in prayer, frivolous and absent-minded, and left it in the same spirit and disposition! And in prayer at home I

have been just as cold and indifferent, praying little, lazily, and indolently, inattentively and impiously, and even completely omitting the appointed prayers!

And in general, how slothful I have been, weakened by indolence and inaction; how many hours of each day have I spent in sleep, how often have I enjoyed voluptuous thoughts in bed and defiled my flesh! How many hours have I spent in empty and futile pastimes and pleasures, in frivolous talk and speech, jokes and laughter, games and fun, and how much time have I wasted conclusively in chatter, and gossip, in criticizing others and reproaching them; how many hours have I spent in time-wasting and emptiness! What shall I answer to the Lord God for every hour and every minute of lost time? In truth, I have wasted my entire life in laziness.

How many times have I lost heart and despaired of my salvation and of God's mercy or through stupid habit, insensitivity, ignorance, insolence, carelessness, and hardness sinned deliberately, willingly, in my right mind, in full awareness, in all goodwill, in both thought and intention, and in deed, and in this fashion trampled the Blood of God's covenant and crucified anew within myself the Son of God and cursed Him!

O how terrible the punishment that I have drawn upon myself!

How is it that my eyes are not streaming with constant tears? ...If only my tears flowed from the cradle to the grave, at every hour and every minute of my tortured life! Who will now cool my head with water and fill the well of my tears and help me weep over my soul that I have cast into perdition?

My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me? Be it unto me according to Thy will, O Lord! If Thou wouldst grant me light, be Thou blessed; if Thou wouldst grant me darkness, be Thou equally blessed. If Thou wouldst destroy me together with my lawlessness, glory to Thy righteous judgment; and if Thou wouldst not destroy me together with my lawlessness, glory to Thy boundless mercy!

Holy Unction

This Sacrament is described in Holy Scripture by St. James the Brother of the Lord: Is any among you sick? Let him, call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven (James 5:14-15). From the above text, we can see that this Sacrament has a twofold purpose bodily healing and the forgiveness of sins. The two are joined, for man is a unity of body and soul and there can be no sharp distinction between bodily and spiritual sicknesses. Of course, the Church does not believe that this anointing is automatically followed by recovery of health, for God's will and not man's prevails in all instances. Sometimes the sick person is healed and recovers after receiving the Sacrament, but in other cases he does not recover, but the Sacrament, nonetheless, gives him the spiritual strength to prepare for death.

The Sacrament is formally performed by seven Priests, reflecting an ancient practice of performing in the course of seven days, each day having its own prayers, although, if due to necessity, it can be performed by three or even one Priest. At each of the anointings the following prayer is repeated: Holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, Who sent Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ Who healed every illness and delivered from death, heal Thy servant from the weakness that holds his/her body, of either body or soul, and enliven him/her by the grace of Thy Christ, by the prayers of the All-holy Lady Theotokos and all the Saints.

Seven Epistle and Gospel readings are said and seven anointings are performed. After the seventh, the open Gospel Book is placed over the head of the one receiving the Sacrament, during which the senior Priest reads the Absolution Prayer containing the following: I do not lay my sinful hands on

the head of him who comes...but Thy mighty and powerful hand, which is in the Holy Gospel. This replaces an ancient practice of laying-on of hands.

We must note that this Sacrament is not only for those on their deathbed, but for anyone who is sick. It may also be performed over the healthy as well (as is the custom on Holy Wednesday in many places) and in Greece it is often performed over the healthy before Holy Communion, since the rite also contains elements of repentance, although it should be noted that this does not replace the Sacrament of Penance.

The Church Building and Its Servers

The Altar and Its Furnishings

The Altar which lies beyond the Iconostasis, is set aside for those who perform the Divine services, and normally persons not consecrated to the service of the Church are not permitted to enter. Occupying the central place in the Altar is the Holy Table (Russian Prestol), which represents the Throne of God, with the Lord Himself invisibly present there. It also represents the Tomb of Christ, since His Body (the Holy Gifts) is placed there. The Holy Table is square in shape and is covered by two coverings. The first, inner covering, is of white linen, representing the winding-sheet in which the Body of the Lord was wrapped. The outer cloth is made of rich and bright material, representing the glory of God's Throne. Both cloths cover the Holy Table to the ground.

Antimension.

In the first centuries of Christianity, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the tombs of the Martyrs and this was celebrated by the Bishop. Later, as the Church expanded and the size of a typical Diocese with it, the Bishops of the early Church began to ordain Priests as their representatives to the growing number of Christian communities. Only with the Bishop's permission could a community and its Priest serve the Liturgy and the same holds true today. One of the vehicles by which these important ancient practices are effected today is a simple piece of cloth, folded within another, and resting always on the Holy Table of every Orthodox church the Antimension.

The Antimension is a rectangular piece of cloth, gold in color, measuring about 18 by 24 inches, and while on the Holy Table it is folded within another cloth, red in color, called the Iliton, which represents the swaddling clothes and the burial shroud of Jesus Christ. Depicted on the top of the Antimension is an Icon of the Burial of Christ, along with Icons of the four Evangelists, as well as Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, for whom the usual Divine Liturgies are named. Sewn into every Antimension is an incorruptible relic of a Saint, making real the early liturgical connection with the Martyrs who died rather than renounce Christ, and whose blood, after the Blood of Christ, formed the very foundation of the Church.

Printed on every Antimension are the words: By the grace of the All-Holy, Life-giving Spirit, this Antimension, the Holy Table, is consecrated for the Offering on it of the Body and Blood of our Lord in the Divine Liturgy. Each one is signed by the ruling Bishop of the Diocese and placed on the Holy Table, constituting his permission for the community to exist as an Orthodox parish and to celebrate the Liturgy. This is so, since true Christianity has always held that without the Bishop there is no Church and through the Bishop comes our unity of Faith and Communion which is Orthodoxy.

The word Antimension is a combination of Greek and Latin which means in place of the table. While Holy Tables were always to have been consecrated and relics placed inside of them, it was not always possible for the Bishop to visit each community to do so. For that reason, Bishops consecrated cloths or boards and sent them to each community to be used in place of the consecrated Holy Table. This also allowed for portable Holy Tables for travelers. The use of the

Antimension is mandatory, even on Holy Tables which have been consecrated, and a Priest is not permitted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy without it. Military Chaplains and Missionaries also use it instead of the table when serving in remote areas.

Also placed on the Holy Table are two indispensable items: the Cross and the Book of the Gospels. The Cross is placed there both as a sign of Christ's victory over the Devil and of our deliverance. Since the Lamb of God was slain on the Cross for our salvation, it is especially appropriate that it be placed upon the Holy Table where the Bloodless Sacrifice is offered on behalf of all and for all. As it is the Word of God, the Book of the Holy Gospels is placed on the Holy Table, signifying that God is mystically present. It is usually richly-adorned and as it is the Book of Life, its Governing may not be of the skins of dead animals (i.e., leather), but is usually made of precious metals adorned with jewels. At the center of the cover is usually represented Christ, with the four Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John at the four corners.

As the Holy Table represents the sepulcher of the Lord, upon it, at the rear, is placed the Ark (or Tabernacle), so-called because of its general shape, within which are placed the Holy Gifts (Reserved Sacrament) used for the Communion of the sick. Candlesticks are also placed on the Holy Table, signifying the Light of Christ which illumines the world.

In addition to the above, a natural (not artificial) Sponge is usually placed beside the Antimension with which to brush off the particles from the Paten into the Chalice. Also found is a vessel containing the Holy Chrism used for Chrismation, and also a Sick-Call Kit (the Ciborium) within which are to be found a small chest for the Holy Gifts, a small Chalice and Spoon, a small vessel for wine and a sponge to clean the Chalice with. In addition, a small chest, called the Artophorion is placed on the Holy Table during Great Lent, within which is placed the consecrated Lamb (s) used for the Presanctified Liturgy (if the same is not placed in the Tabernacle). Often a canopy is suspended over the Holy Table, representing the heavens over the earth, from which is suspended a dove with outstretched wings (the Fix), representing the Holy Spirit. (In many places, the presanctified Lamb was placed in the Fix during Great Lent.)

Behind the Holy Table a seven-branched Candlestick is usually placed (seven being the sacred number), and sometimes a large Processional Cross. Behind this, at the extreme East end of the Altar is a raised place, called the High Place (or Bema), upon which is placed the Cathedra (Bishop's Throne), with seats for the Priests on either side. During the Liturgy, the Priests (representing the Holy Apostles) sit at either side of the Bishop (representing the King of Glory). [In modern times, the Cathedra is usually found only in Cathedrals and large Monasteries.]

On either side of the Bishop's Throne are placed ceremonial Fans, with which, in ancient times, the Holy Gifts were fanned to keep away insects. Now they are carried in solemn processions, signifying the six-winged Seraphim who minister at the Divine services, and who are represented iconographically upon them. Above the High Place is an Icon of the Savior and on both sides Icons of the Holy Apostles or (more often) Holy Bishops. Before the Icon of the Savior is suspended a lampada, called the High Light.

The Bells

A striking component of Orthodox worship is the ringing of bells. Every daily cycle of public divine services starts with the ringing of bells and no one who has witnessed the procession around the church at Holy Pascha can forget the almost continuous ringing of all the church bells. In Pre-Revolutionary Moscow, for example, travelers invariably commented on the stirring clamor of the more than 1600 bells of the city ringing simultaneously at the Pascha of Our Lord. Usually a separate structure, the Bell Tower, was constructed to contain the bells, but more often in modern times a belfry is erected over the entrance to the church building, within which the bells are placed.

The purpose of ringing the bells is to call the faithful to services, to inform those absent from divine services of the various important liturgical moments of the services, as well as calling the worshippers to concentrated attention at these same moments. It is also used to signal the arrival of the Archpastor at the church or monastery. There are four basic types of bell-ringing in the Russian Church: The Announcement (Blagovest announcing); the Peal (Trezvon three bells); Chain-ringing (Perezvon across (or linked) bells); and the Toll (Perebor broken (or interrupted)).

The Announcement (Blagovest').

This is a slow rhythmic, unhurried striking of one bell, which is usually rung for the announcing of the beginning of services: Before the All-Night Vigil (also accompanied by the Trezvon); before each group of services of the daily cycle (9th Hour Vespers Compline; Nocturns Matins 1st Hour; 3rd Hour 6th Hour Liturgy or Typical Psalms); and before Great Compline). The Announcement is also employed at other important moments of the services. For example, there are Twelve strikes for the twelve parts of the Creed and also before It is truly meet... of the Divine Liturgy; before the Molieben (if there be) following the Liturgy.

During Great Lent on weekdays, the Announcement Bell is rung at the 3rd, 6th, and 9th Hours, as well as at Great Compline three strikes for the 3rd Hour, six for the 6th Hour, nine for the 9th Hour, and twelve for Great Compline. During Passion Week, the Announcement Bell is rung at the beginning of each Passion Gospel (Holy Friday Matins), according to the number of the Gospel one strike for the first, two for the second, etc. (At the conclusion of the reading of the Passion Gospels, the Trezvon is rung.) At the Royal Hours of Holy Friday, the Bell is rung three strikes for the 3rd Hour, six for the 6th and nine for the 9th.

Before the Divine Liturgy, the Announcement Bell is rung until the Hours begin (usually accompanied by twelve recitations of Psalm 51 for twelve strikes of the Bell or the recitation of Psalm 119), usually about one-half hour before the Liturgy.

The Peal (Trezvon).

This is the ringing of bells in three modes, three times repeating a musical measure with a definite harmony of many selected bells. The Peal is used at the beginning of major services: Combined with the Announcement, the Peal is rung at the beginning of the All-Night Vigil, at Matins, before the Six Psalms, the Gospel, and at the end of the Vigil. At the Liturgy the Peal is rung after the 6th Hour and before the actual start of the Liturgy and after the conclusion of the Liturgy. If there be a Molieben on the church or monastery Feast Day, the Peal is rung before and after it. It is also rung at the end of the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels of Holy Friday Matins, as well as after the Gospel reading during the Liturgy of the first day of Holy Pascha.

Chain-Ringing (Perezvon).

This is a successive ringing of all the bells from the largest (lowest pitch) to the smallest (highest pitch), with the striking of each bell a number of times before the next bell is struck, and repeating this method several times. It is used before the Blessing of Waters, before the carrying-out of the Holy Cross on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14) and the Third Sunday of Great Lent, as well as at the Hours before the Consecration of a Bishop. It is also rung, together with a short ringing of the Peal at the immersing of the Holy Cross during the Great Blessing of Waters and after the carrying-out of the Holy Cross to the center of the church.

This mode of ringing is also used during the Vespers of Holy Friday when the Plaschanitsa is taken from the Altar to the center of the church, and also at the Great Doxology of the Matins of Holy Saturday when the Plaschanitsa is carried out around the church. (When the procession re-enters the church, the Peal follows.) Chain-Ringing is also used at the burial of Priests and Bishops.

The Toll (Perebor).

This is the slow tolling of each bell, beginning with the largest to the smallest and ending with a striking of all the bells at once. It is used at the carrying-out of the deceased from the church for burial and is known as the funeral toll. There is no Peal after the Toll.

At the Hierarchical Liturgy, the Announcement is rung at the appointed time; then the Peal is rung at the arrival of the Bishop. The Announcement then continues to ring up to the time of the vesting of the Bishop. The Peal is rung again at the 6th Hour.

The Candles and Their Symbolism

Lit candles and Icon lamps (lampadas) have a special symbolic meaning in the Christian Church, and no Christian service can be held without them. In the Old Testament, when the first temple of God was built on earth the Tabernacle services were held in it with lamps as the Lord Himself had ordained (Ex. 40:5, 25). Following the example of the Old Testament Church, the lighting of candles and of lampadas was without fail included in the New Testament Church's services.

The Acts of the Apostles mentions the lighting of lamps during the services in the time of the Apostles. Thus, in Troas, where Christ's followers used to gather on the first day of the week (Sunday) to break bread, that is, to celebrate the Eucharist, there were many lights in the upper chamber (Acts 20:8). This reference to the large number of lamps signifies that they were not used simply for lighting, but for their spiritual significance.

The early Christian ritual of carrying a lamp into the evening service led to the present-day order of Vespers with its entry and the singing of the ancient hymn, O Jesus Christ, the Joyful Light..., which expresses the Christian teaching of spiritual light that illumines man of Christ the Source of the grace-bestowing light. The order of the morning service of Matins is also linked to the idea of the Uncreated Light of Christ, manifested in His Incarnation and Resurrection.

The Fathers of the Church also witnessed to the spiritual significance of candles. In the 2nd Century, Tertullian wrote: We never hold a service without candles, yet we use them not just to dispel night's gloom we also hold our services in daylight but in order to represent by this Christ, the Uncreated Light, without Worn we would in broad daylight wander as if lost in darkness [Works, 3rd ed., Kiev, 1915, p.76]. The Blessed Jerome wrote in the 4th Century that In all the Eastern Churches, candles are lit even in the daytime when one is to read the Gospels, in truth not to dispel the darkness, but as a sign of joy...in order under that factual light to feel that Light of which we read in the Psalms (119:105): Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path [Works, part IV, 2nd ed., Kiev, 1900, pp.301-302].

St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, wrote in the 7th Century: Lampadas and candles represent the Eternal Light, and also the light which shines from the righteous [Writings of the Holy Fathers..., St. Petersburg, 1855, Vol. I, p.270]. The Holy Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council decreed that in the Orthodox Church, the holy Icons and relics, the Cross of Christ, and the Holy gospel were to be honored by censing and the lighting of candles; and the Blessed Simeon of Thessalonica (15th Century) wrote that candles are also lit before the Icons of the Saints, for the sake of their good deeds that shine in this world [Works, Moscow, 1916, p. 108].

Orthodox faithful light candles before the Icons as a sign of their faith and hope in God's help that is always sent to all who turn to Him and His Saints with faith and prayers. The candle is also a symbol of our burning and grateful love for God. During the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospel at Holy Friday Matins, the faithful hold candles, re-living our Lord's sufferings and burning with love for Him. It is an ancient custom of Russian Orthodox Christians to take home a lit candle from this Service and to make the Sign of the Cross with it on their doors in remembrance of Our Lord's sufferings and as protection against evil.

At Vespers on Holy Friday, when the Plashchanitsa (Epitaphion) is borne out of the Altar and also during the Lamentation Matins of Holy Saturday, the faithful stand holding lit candles as a sign of love for Christ Crucified and Dead, showing their faith in His radiant Resurrection. On Pascha itself, from the moment of the procession around the church, in memory of the Myrrh-bearers who proceeded with burning lamps to the sepulcher of the Lord, the faithful hold lit candles in their hands until the end of the Paschal Service, expressing their great joy and spiritual triumph

Since ancient times, at hierarchical services special candle-holders have been used. The faithful reverently bow their heads when blessed by the Bishop with the dikeri, representing the two natures of Christ His Divinity and His humanity, and the trikeri, representing the Holy Trinity. Candles are also lit during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Holy Baptism is celebrated with the Priest fully vested and all the candles lit. Three candles are lit before the baptismal font as a sign that the Baptism is accomplished in the Name of the Holy Trinity; and the person to be baptized (if an adult) and the sponsors hold lit candles in their hands during the procession around the font as an expression of joy at the entry of a new member into the Church of Christ.

At the betrothal ceremony, the Priest hands the bride and bridegroom lit candles before they enter the church to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony, throughout which they hold the lit candles as a symbol of their profound love for each other and of their desire to live with the blessing of the Church. At the Sacrament of Holy Unction, seven candles are lit around the vessel of Holy Oil as a sign of the grace-bestowing action of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And when the body of a deceased person is brought in the church, four candles are placed about the coffin to form a cross to show that the deceased was a Christian. During the Funeral service, as well as Memorial services, the faithful stand with lit candles as a sign that the deceased's soul has left this world and entered the Kingdom of Heaven the Unwaning Light of God.

During the Vespers portion of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the Priest blesses the congregation with a lit candle and censer, proclaiming, The Light of Christ illumines all! On the Eve of the Nativity of Christ and the Theophany, a lit candle is placed before the festal Icon in the middle of the church to remind us of the birth and appearance on earth of Christ Our Savior, the Giver of Light. At all Divine Liturgies, lit candles are carried in procession at various parts of the service.

Thus candles and lampadas are lit at all Church services, all with a wide variety of spiritual and symbolic meanings; for it is God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, [and] Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (1 Cor. 4:6). So too, lit candles in the church are also an expression of the worshippers' adoration and love for God, their sacrifices to Him, and at the same time of their joy and of the spiritual triumph of the Church. The candles, by their burning, remind one of the Unwaning Light which in the Kingdom of Heaven makes glad the souls of the righteous who have pleased God.

The Church Building

External Arrangement.

Orthodox churches generally take one of several shapes that have a particular mystical significance. The most common shape is an oblong or rectangular shape, imitating the form of a ship. As a ship, under the guidance of a master helmsman conveys men through the stormy seas to a calm harbor, so the Church, guided by Christ, carries men unharmed across the stormy seas of sin and strife to the peaceful haven of the Kingdom of Heaven. Churches are also frequently built in the form of a Cross to proclaim that we are saved through faith in the Crucified Christ, for Whom Christians are prepared to suffer all things. Less frequently churches are built in the shape of a circle, signifying that the Church of Christ shall exist for all eternity (the circle being one of the symbols of eternity)

or in the shape of an octagon, signifying a star, for the Church, like a star, guides a man through the darkness of sin which encompasses him. Because of the difficulties of internal arrangement, however, the latter two shapes are not often used.

Almost always Orthodox churches are oriented East West, with the main entrance of the building at the West end. This symbolizes the entrance of the worshipper from the darkness of sin (the West) into the light of Truth (the East). This rule is violated only if the building had been previously constructed for another purpose, or if services are conducted in a private home, for example, when the entrance and main portion have been arranged according to convenience.

On the roof of Orthodox churches are usually found one or more cupolas (towers with rounded or pointed roofs), called crests or summits. One cupola signifies Christ, the sole head of the Christian community; three cupolas symbolize the Most-Holy Trinity; five cupolas represent Christ and the four Evangelists; seven cupolas symbolize the Seven Ecumenical Councils which formulated the basic dogmas of the Orthodox Church, as well as the general use in the Church of the sacred number seven; nine cupolas represent the traditional nine ranks of Angels; and thirteen cupolas signify Christ and the Twelve Apostles.

A peculiar feature of Russian Orthodox churches is the presence of onion-shaped domes on top of the cupolas. In the early history of the Russian Church, especially in Kiev, the first capital, the domes of the churches followed the typical Byzantine rounded style, but later, especially after the Mongol Period, Russian churches tended toward the onion domes, which, in many places, became quite stylized. Historians are not in agreement as to the origin of this particular style, but some point to the possible influence of Persia on this peculiar feature of Russian church architecture, while others argue that since this style was more popular in the far North of Russia, it had a practical application, in that the shape was particularly suited to shed the large amounts of snow common in the region.

Every cupola, or where there is none, the roof, is crowned by a Cross, the instrument of our salvation. The Cross may take one of many different shapes, generally according to the national tradition of a particular local Church. In the Russian Church, the most common form is the so-called three-bar Cross, consisting of the usual crossbeam, a shorter crossbeam above that and another, slanted, crossbeam below. Symbolically, the three bars represent, from the top, the signboard on which was written, in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews (John 19:19); the main crossbeam, to which the hands of Jesus were nailed; the lower portion, to which His precious feet were nailed.

The three-bar representation existed in Christian art from very early times in Byzantium, although usually without the bottom bar slanted, which is particularly Russian. The origin of this slanted footboard is not known, but in the symbolism of the Russian Church, the most common explanation is that it is the pointing upward to Paradise for the Good Thief on Jesus' right and downward to Hell for the Thief on His left (Luke 23). Sometimes the bottoms of the Crosses found on Russian churches will be adorned with a crescent. In 1486, Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) conquered the city of Kazan which had been under the rule of Moslem Tatars, and in remembrance of this, he decreed that from henceforth the Islamic crescent be placed at the bottom of the Crosses to signify the victory of the Cross (Christianity) over the Crescent (Islam).

Internal Arrangement.

The interior of an Orthodox church is divided into several parts. One enters the church through the Porch where, in ancient times, the Weepers (Penitents forbidden to enter the church proper) stood. From the Porch one entered the Vestibule (Narthex; Lity Greek; Pritvor Russian), in ancient times a large, spacious place, wherein the Catechumens received instruction while preparing for Baptism, and also where Penitents excluded from Holy Communion stood. Here was found the Baptismal Font and it is here that the Church Typikon specifies that penitential services (such as Compline,

Nocturns and the Hours) be served. In modern times, except for certain monasteries, the Vestibule has fallen into disuse with the decline of the Catechumenate, and has virtually disappeared in church architecture.

The main body of the church is the Nave, separated from the Sanctuary (Altar) by an Icon screen with doors, called the Iconostasis (Icon stand). The walls of the Nave are usually decorated with Icons and frescoes or paintings, before many of which are hanging lit lamps (lampadas). On each side, near the front, are usually found portable Icons called Banners which are fastened to staffs. These are carried in triumphant processions in like manner to the ancient military banners of victory, which they imitate. Especially noticeable in traditional Orthodox churches is the absence of any seating (except perhaps for benches placed along the walls and at the rear). The Holy Fathers deemed it disrespectful for anyone to sit during the Divine services (except at certain explicit moments of instruction or Psalm reading) and the open spaces were seen to be especially conducive to the many bows and prostrations typical of Orthodox worship.

At the extreme Eastern end of the church is found the Altar (or Sanctuary), with two small rooms the Sacristy and the Vestry at either side, separated from the Nave by the Iconostasis. The Iconostasis is placed near the edge of the platform upon which stands the Altar and the part of the platform which projects out into the Nave is called the Soleas (an elevated place) where the Communicants stand to receive Holy Communion and where the Celebrants come out for public prayers, sermons, etc. At either side of the Soleas are places for two Choirs, called the Kleros (meaning lots, since in ancient times Readers and Singers were chosen by lots). At the front of the Soleas, before the Holy Doors, is an extension of the Soleas, called the Ambo (ascent) which is the specific spot where the faithful receive Communion and where sermons are given. In many Greek churches, there is a separate place to the side of the Soleas for the delivery of sermons the Pulpit.

Sometimes placed in the center of the Nave is a raised platform called the Cathedra. Here the Bishop stands when he is vested and it is from here that parts of the services are performed by him. In some churches a special throne is set at the side of the Nave for the Bishop's use.

A Russian Orthodox Church of the Most Usual Type. (Interior Plan).

The Altar.

0. The Iconostasis

1. The Holy Table

2. The Table of Preparation

3. The High Place

4. The Vestry

5. The Holy Doors

6. The South Door

7. The North Door

8. The Ambo

9. The Kleros (Choirs)

10. The Soleas

11. The Nave
12. The Vestibule
13. The Bell-Tower
14. The Porches

The Clergy

In the Orthodox Church there are three Major Orders Bishop, Priest and Deacon and two Minor Orders Subdeacon and Reader. All of these have specific functions in the Church and all have distinctive vestments relative to these functions. [For a further study of these Holy Orders, please see the section of this book entitled The Sacraments.]

Reader.

The universal garment worn by all classes of ordained persons is the Stikharion (or Dalmatic), a long garment with sleeves, reaching to the ground. Except for a short garment barely covering the shoulders when he is set apart by the Bishop (Reader's Phelonion symbolizing his dedication to the service of God), the Reader's basic ecclesiastical garment is the Stikharion. This garment (for Readers, Sub-Deacons and Deacons with wide sleeves; Priests and Bishops with narrow sleeves) is called the robe of salvation and the garment of joy, symbolizing a pure and peaceful conscience, a spotless life, and the spiritual joy in the Lord which flows in him who wears it.

Sub-Deacon.

In addition to the Stikharion, a Sub-Deacon wears, crossed upon the breast and back, a long, wide band of material, called an Orarion (or stole), typifying the wings of angels who serve at the Throne of God, just as do the Sub-Deacons, Deacons, Priests and Bishops. Sometimes the words, Holy, Holy, Holy are embroidered upon the Orarion.

Deacon.

Whereas the Sub-Deacon always wears his Orarion crossed, the Deacon, for the most part, wears his on his left shoulder, only crossing them at the time of the Communion of the clergy and the faithful. The Orarion is the Deacon's principal vestment, without which he cannot serve at any service whatever. In ancient times Deacons used to wipe the lips of communicants after they had partaken of the Holy Gifts.

In addition to the Orarion, the Deacon also wears the Cuffs (as do the Priests and Bishops) for convenience during services and also to remind him that he must not put his trust in his own strength alone, but in the right hand of the Almighty God.

Priest.

In addition to the Stikharion (called a Cassock (or Podriznik), in this case) with narrow sleeves, the Epitrachelion (what is worn around the neck an Orarion worn around the neck so that both ends hang down the front, being buttoned or sewn together for convenience), and the Cuffs (which for the Priest also symbolizes the bonds with which Christ's hands were bound), the Priest also wears a Belt (Zone) around his Cassock and Epitrachelion, for convenience in serving at the Altar. It symbolizes that the Celebrant must place his hope, not in his own strength, but in the help of God.

If so awarded, the Priest may also wear the Nabadrennik and the Palitsa (thighshields), which are worn at the hip and are either rectangular (Nabadrennik or Epigonation) or lozenge-shaped (Palitsa).

The Nabedrennik is worn on the right hip, but if the Palitsa is awarded, it is worn on the right hip, and the Nabedrennik on the left. These symbolize the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Over the Cassock and Epitrachelion, the Priest wears a long garment, sleeveless, with a hole for the head, called a Phelonion (Chasuble). [In the Russian tradition, the Phelonion is shorter in the front than in the back, with the back part extending up behind the neck.] This signifies that the Priests are invested with truth, and are ministers of the truth.

As tokens of honor, a Priest also may be awarded a pointed hat (the Skufia) or a tall flat-brimmed hat (the Kamilavka), such as Monks wear, except that they are of purple color. [If the Priest be a Monk, he wears the Kamilavka with the veil the Klobuk.] In addition, at ordination to the Priesthood, the Priest is given a Pectoral Cross, symbolizing that he must confess the Cross of Christ before all men as a Preacher of the faith. As further distinctions of honor, a Priest may also be awarded a Gold Cross or a Jeweled one. A Priest may also be awarded the right to wear a Mitre (a headpiece decorated with precious stones and Icons, similar to that worn by the Bishop).

Bishop.

The Bishop wears all the vestments of the Priest, except the Phelonion and the Nabedrennik. Originally the Phelonion was part of the Bishop's vestments, but in Byzantine Imperial times, this was replaced by a garment, similar to the Deacon's Stikharion, called a Saccos (sackcloth garment), symbolizing that the Bishop must rise to holiness of life, wearing this garment of humility. As Christ's robe was without seam, so too, the Bishop (as an Icon of Christ) wears the Saccos, either sewn or buttoned at the sides.

Draped over the Saccos, the Bishop wears a wide Orarion, called the Omophorion (shoulder-covering), which, in ancient times, was made of sheepskin. This hangs down in front and back, and symbolizes the wandering sheep which Christ took upon His shoulders as the Good Shepherd, which the Bishop also must be. At other moments of the Divine services, the Bishop may wear a shorter Omophorion (with both ends hanging down the front), usually called the Small Omophorion.

Upon his head, the Bishop wears a richly embroidered headgear, called a Mitre (headband), dating from Byzantine times and now symbolizing, as does a crown, the power bestowed upon a minister of the Church. [The Mitre is sometimes awarded to Archimandrites, Abbots, and certain Archpriests.]

Upon his breast, in addition to the Pectoral Cross, the Bishop also wears a small, circular Icon of the Savior or of the Mother of God, called the Panagia (All-Holy), reminding him that he must always bear in his heart Our Lord and His Holy Mother, and thus his own heart must be pure, and his spirit upright.

As a symbol of his pastoral service, the Bishop bears a Staff (Crozier), as a reminder of the Shepherd's Crook and that he is a shepherd of Christ's flock. The Episcopal Staff has a double crook at the top, and above that a Cross. [Sometimes this double crook is in the shape of serpent's heads, symbolizing the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the Wilderness, which symbolizes Christ lifted up on the Cross, and whose Icon the Bishop is.] The Staff is also given to some Archimandrites and Abbots as a token of their spiritual authority over the monastery which they rule.

In addition, at certain times the Bishop wears a monastic garment, the Mantiya, which covers his whole body except his head. Its flowing lines symbolize the wings of angels, for which reason it is often called the angelic vestment. It has no sleeves (nor do any monastic Mantiyas), symbolizing for all Monks (of whom the Bishop is one) that the fleshly members are dead to the world. Unlike the

typical monastic Mantiya, however, which is black, that of the Bishop is some other color, usually red (blue in the case of Russian Metropolitans) and upon it are sewn the Tables of the Law (square patches at the neck and feet), typifying the Old and New Covenants from which the ministers of God receive their doctrines. In addition, strips of cloth (called fountains) are sewn horizontally around the Mantiya, representing the streams of teachings which flow from the Bishop's mouth.

During Divine services, the Bishop stands on a small round or oval rug, upon which is represented an eagle hovering over a city. The view of the city symbolizes his rule over a city and the eagle (for which reason this rug is called an Orlets (eaglet)) reminds the Bishop that by his teaching and life he must rise above his flock and be to them an example of one aspiring to the things of heaven.

At various times during the Divine services, the Bishop blesses the faithful with two candlesticks one with two candles (dikiri) and the other with three (trikiri). The one symbolizes the two natures of Christ, while the other symbolizes the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The Iconostasis

The most prominent feature of an Orthodox church is the Iconostasis, consisting of one or more rows of Icons and broken by a set of doors in the center (the Holy Doors) and a door at each side (the Deacon's Doors). In ancient times, the Iconostasis was probably a screen placed at the extreme Eastern end of the church (a tradition still preserved by Russian Old-Believers), but quite early it was moved out from the wall as a sort of barrier between the Nave and the Altar, with the opening and closing of curtains making the Altar both visible and inaccessible.

The Holy Fathers envisioned the church building as consisting of three mystical parts. According to Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople, a Confessor of Orthodoxy during the iconoclastic controversies (7th-8th Centuries), the church is the earthly heaven where God, Who is above heaven, dwells and abides, and it is more glorious than the [Old Testament] tabernacle of witness. It is foreshadowed in the Patriarchs, is based on the Apostles..., it is foretold by the Prophets, adorned by the Hierarchs, sanctified by the Martyrs, and its high Altar stands firmly founded on their holy remains.... Thus, according to St. Simeon the New Theologian, the [Vestibule] corresponds to earth, the [Nave] to heaven, and the holy [Altar] to what is above heaven [Book on the House of God, Ch. 12].

Following these interpretations, the Iconostasis also has a symbolic meaning. It is seen as the boundary between two worlds: the Divine and the human, the permanent and the transitory. The Holy Icons denote that the Savior, His Mother and the Saints, whom they represent, abide both in Heaven and among men. Thus the Iconostasis both divides the Divine world from the human world, but also unites these same two worlds into one whole a place where all separation is overcome and where reconciliation between God and man is achieved. Standing on the boundary between the Divine and the human, the Iconostasis reveals, by means of its Icons, the ways to this reconciliation.

A typical Iconostasis consists of one or more tiers (rows) of Icons. At the center of the first, or lowest, tier, are the Holy Doors, on which are placed Icons of the four Evangelists who announced to the world the Good News the Gospel of the Savior. At the center of the Holy Doors is an Icon of the Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos, since this event was the prelude or beginning of our salvation. Over the Holy Doors is placed an Icon of the Last Supper since, in the Altar beyond, the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist is celebrated in remembrance of the Savior Who instituted the Sacrament at the Last Supper.

At either side of the Holy Doors are always placed an Icon of the Savior (to the right) and of the Most-Holy Theotokos (to the left). In addition, next to the Icon of the Savior is placed that of the church, i.e., an Icon of the Saint or Event in whose honor the church has been named and dedicated. Other Icons of particular local significance are also placed in this first row, for which reason the lower tier is often called the Local Icons. On either side of the Holy Doors, beyond the Icons of the

Lord and His Mother, are two doors Deacon's Doors upon which are depicted either sainted Deacons or Angels who minister always at the heavenly Altar, just as do the earthly Deacons during the Divine services.

Ascending above the Local Icons are several more rows (or tiers) of Icons. The tier immediately above are those representing the principal Feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos. The next tier above that contains Icons of those Saints closest to the Savior, usually the Holy Apostles. Just above the Icon of the Last Supper is placed an Icon of the Savior in royal garments, flanked by His Mother and St. John the Baptist, called the *Deisis* (prayer), since the Theotokos and the Forerunner are turned to Him in supplication. As these Icons (Apostles, Theotokos, and Forerunner) are arranged in order on either side of the Savior the tier is usually called the Tchin (or rank). Often this tier was to be found just above the Local Icons and below the Feast Day Icons.

The next row usually contains the Old Testament Saints Prophets, Kings, etc. in the midst of which is the Birthgiver of God with the Divine Infant Who is from everlasting and Who was their hope, their consolation, and the subject of their prophecies. If there are more tiers, Icons of the Martyrs and Holy Bishops would be placed above the Old Testament Saints. At the very top of the Iconostasis is placed the Holy Cross, upon which the Lord was crucified, effecting thereby our salvation.

As pointed out, the central place of the Iconostasis is occupied by the Holy Doors, because the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist celebrated within the Altar, is brought forth through them to the faithful. They are also called the Royal Gates (or Doors), since the King of Glory passes through them in the Holy Eucharist. Behind the doors is placed a curtain which is opened or closed, depending on the solemnity or penitential aspect of a particular moment of the Divine services.

The Sacristy and Vestry

The Sacristy.

At the North end of the Altar (in ancient times a separate room, called the Sacristy or Chapel of the Oblation (sometimes Chapel of Preparation in Russian, Zhertvinnik) is placed the Table of Oblation (offering or Prothesis) where the offerings are prepared during the Proskomedie or Liturgy of Preparation. Like the Holy Table, the Table of Oblation is covered with rich coverings and the wall around it is decorated with Icons. Upon it are placed the sacred vessels used in the preparation of Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Paten (Diskos).

This is a round vessel with a foot, upon which are placed the Lamb and the particles taken out from the breads (prosphora) in memory of the Theotokos, the Forerunner, the Saints, the Living and the Dead.

Star-Cover (Asterisk).

This consists of two bands of metal joined by a screw which, when put together, form the shape of a Cross. This is placed over the Paten after the Lamb and particles have been placed thereon, to support the veil above the Paten and also to keep the particles in order.

Spear.

This is a lance-shaped knife, representing the spear with which the Savior's Body was pierced, used to take particles out of the breads.

Chalice.

This is a cup with a foot into which the wine, mixed with water is poured during the preparation of the Sacrament. To the Chalice also belongs a small Ladle (Zeon) with which the mixed wine and water are poured into the Cup, and also used for the warm water (hence the name Zeon hot water) poured into the Chalice at the Communion of the Clergy.

Spoon.

This is used to administer the Sacrament at the Communion of the Faithful.

Sponge.

There are two Sponges (cut from natural sponges) one used at the Holy Table and one used at the Table of Oblation. That used at the Holy Table to wipe the particles from the Paten into the Chalice, is usually kept in a fold of the Antimension and thus is called the Antimension Sponge. The other is kept on the Table of Oblation to wipe the Chalice after it has been washed at the end of the Liturgy and thus is called the Cleansing Sponge.

Veils.

Three Veils are used: two smaller ones to cover the Paten and Chalice, protecting the Lamb and particles from dust and insects, and a larger Veil, with which the Paten and Chalice and their respective Veils are together covered. This is usually called the Aer since it covers the Holy Vessels even as air covers the earth.

Censer.

This is a cup-shaped vessel with a cover held by three chains uniting into one handle, within which are placed a piece of burning charcoal and incense. This is swung at many places during the Divine services, representing the prayers of the faithful ascending to Heaven. At the Liturgy of Preparation, the Censer, with the incense, represents the gifts offered by the Magi to the Infant Christ gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The Vestry.

At the right (South) side of the Altar is a space reserved for the sacred vessels, books and vestments, called the Vestry (or Diakonnikon, since the Deacons are usually in charge of these items). In ancient times this was a separate room and here the faithful would bring all sorts of edible gifts (cheese, eggs, boiled rice or wheat, etc.) for the clergy.