

**A Manual of Catechesis
For the Diocese of Wichita
And Mid-America
(Draft Copy)**

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Introduction

The goal of Orthodox Catechism

In the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, catechesis assumes an incredibly significant role in molding and shaping the heart and soul of those who desire to enter her holy walls. But catechesis is not limited only to the theoretical teaching of the truths of Faith. It is not a rational analysis. It is the therapeutic treatment of the Orthodox Church. It is our existential rebirth. It is a continuous journey. Only in this process does Christianity cease to be an ideology, moralism, or religious belief system. It is offered by the Church to the faithful to lead us back to Paradise.

Catechetical instruction is indeed more than theoretical teaching, because it is impregnated by the rich atmosphere of Orthodox Tradition. That Tradition is formative in nature, with illumination of the heart by the acquisition of the Holy Spirit as its goal. True catechesis therefore reaches to the very depths of the soul of man, and as an ascetic effort it cleanses the eye of the soul to prepare the person for the journey to deification.

In our information-obsessed society of today, people yearn for this cleansing and healing, knowing that all the information in the world does nothing to soothe the aching soul. We Orthodox have much to give to those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. May this catechetical work be used of God as therapeutic treatment to bring many back to Paradise.

The purpose of this book

This book was compiled as a response to the desire of His Grace Bishop BASIL to create a model for catechesis for the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. It is intended for use by the priest, deacon or appointed catechist who teaches Inquirers classes or who instructs the Catechumens in their journey to the Holy Orthodox Church. The structure of the lessons was deliberately put forth in outline form, so as to allow the instructor a measure of freedom and creativity in the presentation of each lesson. Various resources are available at the end of each lesson to further equip the instructor in the presentation of the material. May the Holy, Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity be glorified in this humble attempt at bringing the grace of God to those seekers of Truth in His Holy Orthodox Church!

1

The Visitor

In the Gospel of St. John, chapter one (verses 38, 39), the disciples of John the Baptist encounter Jesus for the first time. His response to their inquiries about where He is staying is, “Come and see.” It is only in experiencing the fullness of His Presence that the disciples can truly perceive Christ in their midst.

Likewise, the person who desires to experience the fullness of the Presence of Christ in His Holy Orthodox Church must “come and see” and encounter our God in His Holy Temple. The Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services provide that opportunity for the first-time visitor. In fact, because of their depth and richness, our liturgical services are the most powerful and profound evangelistic “tools” we Orthodox possess in proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Since this is the case, we must develop substantial ongoing ministries that accommodate those visitors whom God brings to us. We must establish and maintain greeters and ushers ministry teams that provide hospitality and encouragement to visitors because they may feel somewhat initially overwhelmed by the beauty and depth of our services. A place, a specially designated “event” such as a “Visitor’s Sunday”, or a coffee hour where visitors are invited to relate to church members after Liturgy provide an attractive atmosphere for developing relationships. All in all, a warm welcome and greeting and concern for their needs most often opens the door for visitors to subsequently return to us again and again, thus laying the foundation for future interest in the Orthodox Church.

Also, it is important to place information concerning the Orthodox Church in the hands of every visitor who attends our parishes. Many churches have compiled a “Welcome Packet” complete with a letter of greeting from the priest, a copy of the parish newsletter, and several pamphlets or brochures outlining the faith and practices of the Orthodox Church which is given to all who visit the parish. Some communities even give small gifts (i.e., bookmarks, crosses, pins, etc.) to visitors as a token of

appreciation for their visit. It is critically important that visitors take something with them to remind them of their experience with God in His Church.

Lastly, when reaching out to visitors who attend our churches, it is essential to implement an ongoing follow-up system to maintain contact with them. Many parishes have guest books available for visitors to sign and give address information. Follow-up guest cards sent to visitors make a special impression upon them that the church community is interested in them. The most effective follow-up, however, involves personal visits from the clergy or parishioners who comprise the outreach ministry team. In those cases, the value of meeting the visitor and relating to them in their own environment produces an even stronger potential for them coming to the Orthodox Faith.

In summary, we must consider this visitor “stage” as critically important in the journey of one’s entry into the Church. By His sovereign power, our God has ushered a person (perhaps a seeker) into our midst that will encounter Him through the beauty, depth and fullness of our Orthodox worship. Our role in cooperating with the grace of God in this endeavor is to provide an environment where love and caring can be evidenced in the Church and where desired information relating to Orthodoxy can be acquired. This type of setting is most conducive for visitors desiring to return again, and it prepares the way to the next level of entry, the Inquirer.

2

The Inquirer

Certain Greeks came up to Jerusalem (John 12:20,21) inquiring about Jesus and said to the Apostle Philip, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” The desire of these inquirers to become acquainted with the Lord Christ describes this second “stage” of entry into the Holy Orthodox Church. The Inquirer is one who is interested in knowing more and experiencing more of God in their lives. While this person may not be at the point of totally committing himself or herself to the Orthodox Faith, the Inquirer is definitely interested in knowing more, at least from an educational or informational standpoint. It is assumed that the Inquirer has been attending the liturgical services of the Church for awhile, and their interest in the Faith has compelled them to examine it further.

Therefore, it is important for us to provide a format where general information concerning Orthodoxy can be disseminated. It should be educational in scope and not intensely detailed. Seminars, workshops and ongoing Inquirer’s classes successfully meet the need of supplying the seeker with knowledge about the Orthodox Faith. Excellent works such as The Faith We Hold (Archbishop PAUL), The Orthodox Church (Bp. Ware),

or even The Orthodox Faith series (Hopko) also can be made available to the Inquirer. Remember, though, that this stage of entry is primarily *informative*, not *formative*. The Inquirer simply desires to become more acquainted with the Faith and has not yet made the decision to commit himself or herself to the Orthodox Church in a deeper way.

However, we must at some point make the transition from “giving information” to sharing the Gospel with those who express an interest in the Faith. This involves giving the Inquirer(s) the opportunity to respond to Christ and become a member of His Holy Orthodox Church. We must issue a challenge to the seeker to consider such questions as, “Are you coming here because you love the chanting, incense, history, spirituality, etc.” or “Are you here because you love God and desire to experience the fullness of life in Christ?” These types of queries and their answers essentially determine the next step for the Inquirer.

Sample Outline of Inquirer’s Class Topics

WHAT IS THE ORTHODOX CHURCH? - An Overview

I. Who are we? The Significance of Eastern Christianity

- A. The Orthodox *ethos*
 - 1. Involves a definite paradigm shift from the “classification and dissection” approach (western) to the “contextual and relational” approach (eastern)
 - 2. “Both-and” rather than “either-or” (paradox)
 - 3. Incarnational
 - 4. Mystical
 - 5. Holistic – no dualism (wall between “sacred” and “secular”)
 - 6. Relational and Personal – union and communion with God and each other
 - 7. Experiential – emphasizes the *encounter* with God (as contrasted to a primarily rational or intellectual approach to God)
- B. A demographic view...
 - 1. Orthodox throughout the world
 - 2. Orthodox in the U.S. (and perhaps how they got here)
- C. Orthodox Church and Christian History
 - 1. The Apostolic Age
 - 2. Five Historic Patriarchates
 - 3. The Age of Persecution
 - 4. The Councils (including the heresies they addressed; canons and creeds they produced)
 - 5. Orthodoxy spreads to Russia
 - 6. The Great Schism of 1054 (including the filioque controversy and the papal supremacy issues)

7. Orthodoxy after the Schism
 - a. The Crusades and the fall of Constantinople
 - b. Attempts at re-uniting East and West
8. The Medieval Scholastic Western Church (Roman Catholicism)
9. The Protestant Reformation
10. Orthodoxy comes to America

II. Why do we worship the way we do?

- A. The theology of Church architecture
- B. Iconography (an overview, with perhaps a tour of the local Temple)
- C. Vestments and Symbols
- D. The Church year and the liturgical services (general overview)
- E. The Holy Mysteries (general explanation)
- F. The Divine Liturgy
 1. General elements
 - a. Heavenly worship
 - b. Worship as *celebration, procession, and communion*
 - c. The connection to Old Testament worship
 - d. Early Church worship
 - e. The Priesthood in Action
 1. The four Liturgies celebrated throughout the Church Year (St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Dialogist, St. James)
 2. The components of the Liturgy
 - a. The *Prothesis*
 - b. The Liturgy of the Word
 - c. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

III. What do we believe?

- A. Sources of Christian doctrine
 1. Revelation
 2. The Holy Scriptures
 - a. Their development
 - b. Old and New Testament (with Apocrypha, of course)
 3. Holy Tradition
 4. The Nicene Creed (pass out copies and go through it)
- B. The Orthodox view of Salvation
 1. Understanding of sin
 2. The devil, the world and the flesh
 3. Union with God - *theosis*

IV. How do we live out our Faith?

- A. Orthodox spirituality (define)
 1. Love
 2. The Beatitudes
 3. The Virtues
 4. Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving

- B. Sexuality, Marriage and the Family
- C. Sickness, Suffering and Death
- D. The final Judgment
- E. Heaven and Hell

V. Contemporary Issues and Orthodox Responses

- A. Abortion
- B. The environment
- C. Homosexuality
- D. Bio-ethics
- E.

Sources: The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume I – Doctrine; Volume II – Worship; Volume III – Bible and Church History; Volume IV – Spirituality
The Orthodox Church (Ware),
What Is The Orthodox Church? (Dunaway)
Common Ground (Bajis), Light and Life; Ch.2 – “An Introduction to the Eastern Christian Mind”
Orthodox Worship (Williams and Anstall)
The Resource Book for Orthodox Evangelism (Nasr), “The Development of the Holy Scriptures” (p.57)

3

The Hearer

The Hearer “stage of entry” into the Church is recognized primarily as a transition from inquiry to actual enrollment as a Catechumen. A movement of the Holy Spirit occurs in the heart of the seeker, compelling him or her to make a decision to continue the journey toward full initiation in the Orthodox Church. This decision is best discerned by the local priest who should attempt to visit with the seeker to determine if the person is to proceed further. The priest should look for certain dynamics at work in the Inquirer’s life, including

- ♦ ***Evidence of faith and love of God*** (“Do you have a desire to be in a relationship with God?” “Are you able to willingly embrace the demands of the Gospel of Christ?”)
- ♦ ***Stirrings of Repentance*** (“Do you recognize that there are areas of your life that are wounded and broken, and are you accepting responsibility for areas of failing in your life?”)
- ♦ ***Initial conversion*** (“Have there been any changes in your life, attitudes, or actions as a result of your faith in God?”)
- ♦ ***Desire for Prayer*** (“Do you recognize that prayer is an essential element in the spiritual life and what have you done to implement it in your life?”)

- ♦ *Awareness and sense of the Church* (“Do you have a growing awareness of the uniqueness of the Orthodox Church and her role as the Kingdom of God in this world?”)
- ♦ *Experience of the community* (“Are you interested in getting to know more about the parish and developing relationships with our community?”)

The ancient writing of the early Church, *The Didache*, is an excellent tool for the priest to utilize in this discernment process, for it expounds upon the “Two Ways” (life and death) that the Inquirer must choose in the spiritual life. The Gospels and the book For the Life of the World (Schmemmann) are also excellent reading and reflection for the Inquirer as he or she approaches the next all-important stage of the Catechumenate.

Liturgical Prayer for the Making of a Catechumen

The priest makes the sign of the cross over the forehead, lips and breast of the catechumen and says the prayer:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord our God, we entreat Thee and supplicate Thee, that the light of Thy countenance be signed on this, Thy servant (handmaid) N., and that the Cross of Thine Only-begotten Son be signed in his (her) heart and understanding, so that he (she) may flee from the vanity of the world and from every evil snare of the enemy, and may follow after Thy commandments. And grant, O Lord, that Thy Holy Name may remain unrejected by him (her), and that, in due time, he (she) may be joined to Thy Holy Church, and that he (she) may be perfected by the dread Mysteries of Thy Christ; so that, having lived according to Thy commandments, and having preserved the seal unbroken, he (she) may receive the blessedness of the Elect in Thy Kingdom.

Through the grace and love for mankind of Thine Only-begotten Son with Whom Thou are blessed, together with Thine All-Holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

All: Amen.

4

The Catechumen

The period of the Catechumenate is ushered in publicly before the assembled parish community by the priest signing the Hearer with the sign of the Cross and the prayer (previous page). Whereas the previous stages (Visitor, Inquirer and Hearer) were basically *informative* in nature, the period of the Catechumenate is primarily *formative*. Catechesis is not about passing information; it is about enlivening faith with meaning and application to one's life. It is more than theoretical teaching; it is the molding and sculpting of the heart by the Holy Spirit. The instructions given to the Catechumens shape their spiritual formation and preparation for the reception of the Holy Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism and/or Chrismation and the Eucharist). The goal of this stage is to facilitate a conversion of the heart and maturity of faith.

This conversion and movement to maturity contains many practical aspects throughout this period. From the moment of entrance into the Catechumenate, the person should be given a Prayer Book containing the major Orthodox prayers and be given instruction on establishing a rule of personal prayer. Their spiritual formation also involves further participation in the corporate liturgical life of the Church, and they must be encouraged to attend the various liturgical services in the local parish. Third, they must be challenged to supplement their catechetical instruction with the reading and meditation of Scripture and the spiritual writings.

In addition, a sponsor(s) needs to be chosen or assigned to the new catechumen to guide them by example and urge them on in their journey. It is the sponsor's ministry to pray for the catechumen and to act as a mentor in assisting the person in the spiritual life of asceticism and discipleship. Also, the sponsor should inspire the new catechumen to further integrate into the parish community by deepening their efforts in relating to church members.

All in all, this period of the Catechumenate involves intense instruction and formation in the Faith and the initial application of the Orthodox spiritual life in the Catechumen's heart and mind. When undertaken in the context of a supportive parish community, the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the catechumen to illumination is brought to the next phase – that of becoming one of the Elect.

Theology and Doctrine

Christian Hermeneutics -- Revelation and the Sources of Christian Doctrine

Synopsis: Our God is a God Who has revealed Himself to us in every way – through creation, the Old Testament fathers, the Law and the Prophets (i.e., the Old Testament Church); and in the “fullness of time” through the incarnate Son and Word of the Father, Jesus Christ. God continues to reveal Himself through the New Testament Church, the Body of Christ, the extension of His Incarnation in the world.

♦ Sources of Christian Doctrine

Revelation
Tradition
Bible
Liturgy/Sacraments
Councils
Fathers
Saints
Canons
Church Art

I. Christianity (Life in Christ in the Church) is the revelation of God Himself to man (“God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us” -- *Psalm 117 (118):26-27 Orthodox Matins Service*).

The revelation comes to a *community* -- first in part (in anticipation) to the Church (Greek -- “assembly”) of the Old Covenant community and then completely in the Person of Jesus Christ to the community of the New Covenant, that is the Church. The Revelation of God comes to the Saints (“blessed are the pure in heart for they shall *see* God”)

“The theologian is the one who prays truly, and the one who prays truly is the theologian” -- not an abstract conception of the reason, but the personal experience of the uncreated grace of God which comes to the pure in heart.

A. Through creation -- *Romans 1:20; Psalm 18 (19):1-6*

A. Creation shouts it out!

B. God’s essence cannot be grasped, however...

B. Through the forefathers

1. Before the Law (Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)

2. After the Law (Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, etc)

- C. Through the Law, Prophets, and Sacrificial Worship of the Temple
- D. Through the formation of the community of Jews and O.T. Canon -- *John 4:22*

II. In the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) God reveals Himself to us in the Person of Christ, Who is the fullness and perfection of God's self-revelation.

- A. Teacher – the 1st title given to Jesus by the people; He teaches the will of God and makes God known to men; He reveals fully the mysteries of the Kingdom of God
- B. Christ showed Himself not merely to be speaking God's words but to be Himself the living Word of God in human flesh, the LOGOS Who is eternal and uncreated, but Who has become man as Jesus of Nazareth in order to make God known to the world (John 1)
- C. This revelation, this Incarnation, took place in order to bring us into union with God; to partake of His Divine Nature. "God the Son became man so that we might become god." (St. Athanasius)
- D. What about other "revelations", other religions; is Christ the only revelation from God to mankind? ("Not all Orthodox Christians will get to heaven, but all those in heaven will be Orthodox Christians." – Bp. BASIL)

III. Holy Tradition is the ongoing life of God's People.

- A. Tradition as a word means "that which is passed on and given over from one to another." Holy Tradition is therefore that which is passed on and given over within the Church from the time of Christ's Apostles right down to the present day.
 - 1 Not at all limited to what is written; not merely a body of literature
 - 2. The total life and experience of the entire Church transferred from place to place and from generation to generation.
 - 3. The very life of the Church itself as it is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. What about the "traditions of men" mentioned in the Scriptures? (Mark 7:1-13; Matthew 15:1-10)
 - 5. Sinful and wrong traditions in the life of the Church
 - 6. The Sources of Orthodox Christian Tradition as guided by the Holy Spirit "He [the Holy Spirit] will guide you [plural] into all truth" -- *John 6:13*.
 - * The Bible
 - * The Church's Liturgical life; its Mysteries and its prayer
 - * Dogmatic decisions (doctrines)
 - * Approved Councils
 - * Writings of the Church Fathers
 - * Lives of the Saints
 - * Canon laws
 - * Iconographic tradition together with other inspired forms of creative artistic expression such as music and architecture
 - 7. All of the elements of Holy Tradition are organically linked

together in real life – none of them stand alone.

8. As the Church continues to live by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Tradition of the Church will continue to grow and develop.

IV. *The Bible* is the written record of God’s revelation to humanity.

- A. It is the main written source of divine doctrine since God Himself inspired its writing by His Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20)
- B. The center of the Bible as the written Word of God in human form is the Person of the living Word of God in human form, Jesus Christ.
- C. All parts of the Bible are interpreted in the Orthodox Church in the light of Christ since everything in the Scriptures leads up to Christ and speaks about Him (Luke 24:44).
- D. The Bible is not a science book.
- E. An icon full of grace; a theophany
- F. Many Christians focus on what the Bible *says* but the Orthodox emphasis is on what the Bible *means*, for the Bible does not stand by itself. It requires interpretation. But the question is, “Whose interpretation?”
- G. We interpret the Scriptures within the context of the living Tradition of the whole Church, as St. Vincent of Lerins put it, “what has been believed at all times and by all” -- *2 Peter 1:20* - “no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation.
- H. The Scriptures possess sacramental power, transmitting God’s grace, truth and power to the faithful reader. The Bible brings each one of us to a personal encounter with the living God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

V. When the Church, the assembly of God’s People, come together to worship, this gathering is called *the Liturgy* of the Church.

- A. “common work”
- B. Old Testament liturgy – in the Temple, according to the Mosaic Law, with annual feasts, fasts, private prayers and services held by the Israelites at home or in the synagogues.
- C. New Testament Church – the Liturgy is centered in the Person of Christ and is primarily a “christening” of the O.T. liturgical life.
- D. From the basic foundation of the O.T. liturgical life the Church developed its own sacramental life.
- E. The living experience of the Orthodox Christian sacramental and liturgical life is a primary source of Christian doctrine.
- F. In addition to the living experience of the Liturgy, the texts of the prayers, services and sacraments provide a written source of doctrine that can be studied and contemplated by one desiring to understand the teachings and experience and know God.

VI. The Church throughout the centuries has always settled difficulties and made decisions by reaching a consensus of opinion among all the believers inspired by God who were led by their appointed leaders.

- A. Acts 15 – the template for future councils and decision-making
- B. Seven Ecumenical Councils
- C. The dogmatic definitions (dogma) and the canon laws of the ecumenical councils are understood to be inspired by God; thus, they are essential sources of Orthodox Christian doctrine.

VII. The Holy Fathers of the Church are a source of Christian doctrine in that they are the theologians and spiritual teachers who have defended and explained the doctrines of the Christian faith.

- A. Apologists (against those outside the Church)
- B. Defenders against heresy
- C. Teachers – Ascetical and Mystical
- D. All of the Holy Fathers gave their teachings from the sources of their own Living Christian experience.
- D. The writings of the Fathers are not infallible

IX. The doctrine of the Church comes alive in the lives of the true believers, the saints, who literally share the holiness of God.

- A. Different classifications of Saints
 - * apostles
 - * evangelists
 - * prophets
 - * confessors
 - * martyrs
 - * holy ones
 - * righteous
 - * fools for Christ
- B. The devotional reading of the lives of the saints may be used very fruitfully for the discovery of profound meaning and application of Christian faith and truth to our lives. It is necessary, however, to read them carefully to distinguish the essential points from occasional embellishments which are contained in them.

X. The canons of the Church are a source of Christian doctrine in that they convey norms for Christian doctrine and practice (literally: rule; norm; measure of judging).

- A. Dogmatic and practical canons; those that may be changed and those that are unchangeable
- B. Dogmatic and practical canons which cannot be changed
- C. Practical canons which may be changed

- D. It is not always clear which canons express essential marks of Christian life and which do not.
- E. Taken by themselves, the canon laws of the Church can be misleading and frustrating.

XI. The *artistic tradition* of the Orthodox Church is based upon the Christian doctrine of human creativity rooted in God's image and His love for man and the world in creation.

- A. The icon – the expression of the eternal and divine reality
- B. Musical expression – a source of discovering the Orthodox Christian worldview
- C. Orthodox architecture – expresses “God with us”

Sources: The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume I – Doctrine
Introducing the Orthodox Church, (Coniaris) “What We Believe About the Bible”

God, The Holy Trinity

Synopsis: Our God has revealed Himself as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; a unity in three Persons, one Essence, Indivisible, a Communion of Love. This doctrine is, for the Orthodox Church, “the unshakable foundation of all religious thought, of all piety, of all spiritual life, of all experience. It is the Trinity that we seek in seeking after God, when we search for the fullness of being, for the end and meaning of existence.” – Vladimir Lossky

I. God the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20)

- A. Uncreated ... shall always be a mystery
 - 1. Mystery... something beyond our existence
 - 2. Mystery and the Fear of the Lord
 - 3. Heresy ... the failure to perceive mystery and an attempt to unravel it
 - a. Not simply incorrect teaching ... a disposition of the soul that cannot admit that there is an Uncreated God
 - b. A spiritual illness and madness that makes every individual his own god
 - c. A failure of humility and honesty – a rejection of mystery
- B. The Unity of God in three Persons, One Essence, Indivisible; a Communion of Love
 - 1. Definitions ... Persons (Hypostasis), Essence, Energies, Apophatism
 - 2. Father Almighty; Creator (Pantokrator) of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible
 - 2. Son-Savior (Soter); Word (Logos); Only-Begotten of the Father before all ages; Light from Light; True God from true God; Begotten not made; of one Essence with the Father through whom all things were made
 - 3. Spirit-Sanctifier (Pneumatos); Lord and giver of Life, Who eternally proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke through the Prophets
 - 4. Attributes of God the Trinity
 - a. Omnipresence
 - b. Omniscience
 - c. Immutability
 - d. All-Goodness and Love
 - e. Holy
 - f. Immanence and Transcendence
 - 5. False doctrines concerning the Holy Trinity
 - a. The Father alone is God; the Son and Holy Spirit are creatures (Arianism)
 - b. God is one; the Son and Spirit are merely names for relations which God has with Himself (Monism)
 - c. The Father is one God, the Son another God, and the Spirit a third God (Polytheism)
 - d. The “Filioque”
 - 6. “The Holy Trinity” (Handout showing a Patristic analogy of the essence, energies and persons of the Holy Trinity)

7. “The Holy Trinity in the Bible” (Handout)
8. “The Trinity is, for the Orthodox Church, the unshakable foundation of all religious thought, of all piety, of all spiritual life, of all experience. It is the Trinity that we seek in seeking after God, when we search for the fullness of being, for the end and meaning of existence.” – Vladimir Lossky

Sources: The Orthodox Way (Ware), Ch.1: “God as Mystery” and Ch. 2: “God as Trinity”
The Orthodox Church (Ware), Ch. 11 “God and Humankind”, pp. 208-218
The Faith (Carlton), Ch. 2: “The Holy Trinity”
Introducing the Orthodox Church (Coniaris), “What We Believe About the Holy Trinity”
The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church (Lossky), p.65
A Brief Course in Basic Christianity (Fr. John Winfrey), “God the Holy Trinity”

Man and Creation

Synopsis: God created all that is in existence, and His love is the source of His creation. Mankind, being the crown of God's creation, is created in His image. That image was distorted in the Fall when sin entered into the world; however, in Christ, the image is restored and mankind can move toward the likeness of God in union with Christ.

I. Creation (Genesis 1)

- A. God's love is the source of His creation
- B. *Ex Nihilo* ... God said "Light be...Light was"(Gen.1:3)
- C. All creation is good... "God saw that Light was good" (Gen. 1:4); No dualism in Orthodox Christianity
- D. The created cosmos
 - 1. Invisible creation
 - a. The heavens
 - b. Angelic hosts
 - c. Evil spirits
 - 2. Visible creation

II. Man

- A. The crown of creation (Psalm 8:4,5)
- B. Created in the image of the Holy Trinity (Genesis 1:27)
 - 1. Image (*ikon*) of God
 - a. every person has the "stamp" of the Divine
 - b. soul's immortality, freedom of will, reason, and capability for pure love without thought of gain
 - c. also means that we are God's offspring (Acts 7:28); we can know Him and experience communion with Him
 - d. denotes our *potentiality* for life in God
 - e. obscured but not obliterated by the fall of Adam; so weakened that Grace cannot work from within (in need of redemption)
 - 2. Likeness of God
 - a. what we grow into as we are deified (made more like God)
 - b. the ultimate goal of human existence
- C. Body, soul and spirit ... or body and soul (some Fathers)
- D. A relational being...physically, intellectually and morally interdependent
- E. Male and female
- F. Man as prophet, priest and king
- G. Man as a sacramental being

III. The Human soul

- A. Animates the body
- B. The "organ" of spiritual communion
- C. Aspects of the soul:
 - 1. Appetitive... desiring power

2. Incensive... the force provoking vehement feelings
3. Intelligent... the seat of thinking; the discursive and rational aspect
- D. The Nous
 1. "The eye of the soul" – St. John of Damascus
 2. The organ of spiritual contemplation which is "engaged in pure prayer" – St. Isaac the Syrian
 3. The energy of the soul
 4. When it is healthy and in balance, the *nous* directs the intellect and the rest of the soul towards God and into a deeper communion with Him.
- E. The Heart
 1. The essence of the soul
 2. "The spiritual center of man's being; his deepest and truest self; the inner shrine... in which the mystery of the union between the divine and the human is consummated" (Philokalia, Volume II, p.383)

IV. Fallen Man - Sin

- A. *Amartia*...missing the mark
- B. Lawlessness or wrongdoing (I John 3:4; 5:17)
- C. A condition brought about by the distortion or loss of something good which was originally present
- D. What does sin do to us?
 1. breaks our communion with God
 2. withers the soul
 3. hardens the heart and makes it unresponsive to the voice of God
 4. clouds the mind and distorts our reasoning capacities
 5. further weakens the will and (with continual sinning) produces a sinful passion
- E. Not considered to be a normal and natural part of human being and life
- F. Not to sin is the goal of human life; not to sin is to be like God (I John 3:4-10)
- G. But we *do* sin ...it is for this reason that Christ comes to offer us freedom from sin and the overcoming of it (I John 1:8-2:6)
- H. Original sin: not an Orthodox concept (we inherit Adam's mortality but NOT his guilt)

V. Effects of Man's Fall

- A. Physical – subject to pain, disease, physical death
- B. Moral – subject to moral weakness, emotional imbalance, inward alienation
- C. NOT total depravity!!

Sources: The Orthodox Way (Ware), Ch. 3 "God as Creator"
The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume I – Doctrine; Volume IV - Spirituality
The Faith (Carlton), Ch. 3 "Creation"
For the Life of the World (Schmemmann), p.15 (man as priest)
The Philokalia, Volume II (Glossary)
Counsels from the Holy Mountain (Elder Ephraim), Glossary
A Brief Course in Basic Christianity (Fr. John Winfrey), "Man and Creation"

Christology and the Incarnation

Synopsis: Jesus Christ, the eternal only-begotten Son and Word of the Father, has taken to Himself human nature in its entirety, yet without sin. The human and divine natures within His one Person exist without separation, division, mixture or confusion.

I. “Who do men say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13ff)

- A. The Christ (“Anointed One”; Messiah) (John 1:33; Mark 1:10).
- B. Jesus (“God is Salvation”) (Hebrew = Joshua) (Luke 2:11; John 4:25, 4:42).
- C. Lord
- D. The second Person of the Trinity (of one divine essence with the Father and the Spirit); the eternal, uncreated, only-begotten Son and Word of the Father - John 1:1, Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 9:7, John 8:58
- E. The icon of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15)
- F. The second Adam (Romans 5:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-24, 45-48)
- G. The perfect revelation of God; we know God through Jesus -- (John 1:18)
- H. The One through whom God acts in the O.T. -- “and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4)
- I. Divine -- (John 10:30); God Incarnate (in the flesh) -- (Colossians 2:9)
- J. Jesus shows us God the Father -- (John 14:8)
- K. Jesus reveals God’s love for us on the cross -- (1 John 4:19)

II. The Incarnation (enfleshment) - The divine Son of God was born as a man from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1, Luke 1)

- A. Christ remains God, but has taken to Himself human nature in its entirety (without sin). He is the *Theanthropos* or ‘God-man’.
- B. Divine and human natures exist in Christ without mixture or confusion
- C. Although the two natures remain distinct, they are united in one Person without separation or division
- D. Kenosis (Philippians 2: 6-8)
- E. Purposes of the Incarnation
 - 1. Reversal of Adam’s sin
 - 2. The destruction of death
 - 3. Healing and restoration of humanity to communion with God; we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
 - 4. “An essential stage upon man’s journey from the divine image to the divine likeness” (Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, p.93)

Sources: The Orthodox Way (Ware), Ch. 4 “God as Man”
The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume I – Doctrine (pp. 50-62)
The Faith (Carlton), Ch.6 “The Incarnation”
Introducing the Orthodox Church (Coniaris), “What We Believe About Jesus”
The Living God (Dunlop), Volume I, Ch.3 - “The New Adam – The Incarnation”

Mariology

Synopsis: The veneration of the Virgin Mary as Theotokos is inseparably linked to our understanding of Christology and to our own destiny in Christ.

- I. **Theotokos**...God-bearer, the birth-giver of God, the Mother of God
 - A. Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus, 431) stated that the Virgin Mary is Theotokos in order to preserve the divinity of Christ. Who was it in Mary's womb? *God was born* from her womb - a single, undivided Person who is God and man at once.
 - B. The Virgin Mary is not the source of Christ's divinity (He is the eternal Logos of the Father), but it was she who gave Him His humanity. For this "all generations will call her blessed" and venerate her.

- II. **The Mother of God prefigured in the Old Testament**
 - A. The New Eve (Genesis 3: 15)
 - B. Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28: 12-19)
 - C. The Burning Bush (Exodus 3)
 - D. The Red Sea (Exodus 14)...St. John of Damascus in *The Dogmatic Theotokian of Tone 5*: "In the Red Sea, the image of the unwedded Bride was written..." The ever-virginity of the Mother of God is compared to the Red Sea, the Archangel Gabriel to Moses, and Israel to Jesus Christ.
 - E. Jar of Manna (Exodus 16: 32-36)
 - F. Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25: 10-22)
 - G. Psalm 44
 - H. Wisdom (Proverbs 9:1)
 - I. The Eastern Gate of the Sanctuary (Ezekiel 44: 1-3)

- III. **Titles and Ministries of the Mother of God**
 - A. Ever-virgin
 - B. All-holy (*Panagia*)
 - C. "More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim..."
 - D. Without stain or corruption in birth-giving
 - E. Sinless (regarding personal sin)...*discuss Immaculate Conception dogma*
 - F. Mother of all the Faithful
 - G. Intercessor
 - H. Protectress of Christians
 - I. The Archetype of Mankind (Fr. Schmemmann; Celebration of Faith – The Virgin Mary; Volume 3, pp.45-55)

- IV. **The Theotokos as an Example for our Life**
 - A. Total surrender to the Will of God (Luke 1:38)
 - B. Concern for Others (John 2:5)
 - C. Perfect union of Man with God

- D. Prototype of Virgins and Mothers
- E. Prototype of the Church (*Platytera* icon)

V. Feasts of the Mother of God

- A. Nativity (September 8)
- B. Entrance into the Temple (November 21)
- C. Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (February 2)
- D. Annunciation (March 25)
- E. Assembly in Honor of the Theotokos (December 26)
- F. The Protection of the Theotokos (October 1)
- G. The Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15)

Sources: The Orthodox Way (Ware), Ch. 4 – “God as Man” (pp.94, 100-103)
Introducing the Orthodox Church (Coniaris), “What We Believe About the Saints and the Theotokos”
Celebration of Faith (Schmemmann) Volume 3 – The Virgin Mary

* Also recommended reading: The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos (Holy Apostles Convent, P.O. Box 3118, Buena Vista, CO 81211)

Hagiology (the Saints)

Synopsis: God is wondrous in His saints (holy ones) and the Church on earth communes with them mystically and venerates them for the glorious work that God has accomplished in their lives.

“How the Creator and Provider of all has honored and adorned our nature! The saints shine with His light; they are hallowed by His grace, having conquered sin and washed away every impurity of body and spirit; they are glorious with His glory; they are incorruptible through His incorruption. Glory to God, Who has so honored, enlightened, and exalted our nature.” (St. John of Kronstadt, The Spiritual Counsels)

I. A word about veneration...

- A. *Latreia*...worship reserved for God alone
- B. *Duleia, Proskynesis*...honor or veneration due to the Theotokos and the saints
 1. They are the “heroes” of our Faith; the role models for a pious Orthodox spiritual life
 2. Enhanced through the use and veneration of icons

II. A saint is...

- A.** One who is *called* by God (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2) and *set apart* (*hagios*) for God by Baptism, and becomes what he/she was destined in Christ to be
- B. A forgiven sinner living out in his/her life the forgiveness God has imparted
- C. One who sees himself in the sins of others (humility)
- D. The “aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved” through whom Christ “spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere” (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)
- E. One who literally *shares* the holiness of God (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16)
- F. One who has faithfully finished the course of life and has been recognized and canonized by the Church (discuss the process of canonization in the Orthodox Church)

III. The Communion of the Saints

- A. The union of all who share in the life of Christ, whether on earth or in the other world.

“We live together with them (the Saints in heaven) in the House of the Heavenly Father, only in different parts of it. We live in the earthly, they in the heavenly half; but we can converse with them and they with us.” (St. John of Kronstadt)

- B. A communion of never-ending prayer in the Church (Militant and Triumphant)

- C. We gather with the Theotokos, the angelic hosts, and all the Saints (living and departed) to worship the Holy Trinity in the Liturgy

IV. Relics of Saints

- A. Veneration of relics dates back to the early Church (“The Martyrdom of Polycarp”)
- B. Theology is that the body remains a Temple of the Holy Spirit even after death...

“Though the soul is not present, a power resides in the bodies of the saints because of the righteous soul which has for many years dwelt in it, or used it as its minister” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catechetical Lectures XVIII, 16)

- C. Proceeds from a highly developed theology of the body...

“Belief in the deification of the body and in its eventual resurrection helps to explain the Orthodox veneration of relics. Since the body is redeemed and sanctified along with soul, and since the body will rise again, it is only fitting that Christians should show respect for the bodily remains of the saints. Reverence for relics is not the fruit of ignorance and superstition, but springs from a highly developed theology of the body.” (Bp. KALLISTOS Ware, quoted in Introducing the Orthodox Church, p. 103)

Sources: Introducing the Orthodox Church (Coniaris), “What We Believe About The Saints and the Theotokos”
The Orthodox Church (Ware), Ch. 12 “The Church of God” (pp.255-257)
The Faith We Hold (Archbp. PAUL of Finland), p.27,28
The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume I – Doctrine (p.20)

Soteriology and Ecclesiology

Synopsis: Salvation (soteriology) is the journey and process of restoration and healing of the human person in union with God. It is accomplished in Christ as we are united to Him in His Body, the Church.

I. Salvation: What? Why? How? & Where?

A. What?

1. The cure (health) of the soul (Greek “sozo” - health, wholeness, restoration, safety)
2. Union with God...the Spiritual Life...True Life...Trinitarian (Acts 2:38-39).

B. Why?

1. Saved from what?
 - a. Sin and death (Romans 5:12)
 - b. The fall of Adam, Loss of communion with God (“sin”, Greek: amartia = to miss the mark/target)
 - c. Dis-ease and Darkening of the “nous” and the disordering of the Passions (Galatians 5:24)
 - d. “Original Sin” is the consequences of Adam’s sin (listed above), not original “guilt”.

C. How?

1. Jesus - Incarnation, Death, Resurrection
(In His Person, He restores/heals human nature and potential for communion with God, He unites our human nature with His Divine nature, lifts us from our fallen state, heals our passions, takes upon Himself our sin and death).
2. We have salvation if we are united to Jesus (to the extent that we are “in Christ”).
(If we are in Christ we are also, “adopted sons of God” and are anointed by the Holy Spirit -- Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6)
3. How we are united to Jesus? Through Repentance (the way of the cross)

Three stages of the spiritual life: Purification, Illumination, Deification.

This is the process of salvation which St. Paul refers to as “being saved.” St. Seraphim calls it the “acquisition of the Holy Spirit.”

a. **Purification** (of the heart)

This is our effort to acquire the grace of God by being purified of all passions, free of demonic influence, and sinful habits.

♦ By obedience to the commandments and by true doctrine

In the early Church the catechumens were in the stage of purification by learning and embracing the teachings of the Church, keeping Christ’s commandments, and through the prayers of the Church. This is why baptism is called “illumination” because it takes place after the stage of purification.

b. **Illumination** (of the nous) (“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God”) In this stage the heart has been purified of the passions and the nous

remains in the heart. Therefore one understands the essence of things, has true inner spiritual prayer and the vision of God. The natural energy (will) of human nature is restored to the state before the fall of Adam).

c. **Deification**

In this stage one has truly become a theologian (which means to know God intimately through one’s own experience of Him), has attained “perfect” unceasing prayer, has “become prayer”, participates in the uncreated energies of God. This is to become “by grace everything that Christ is by nature. Through the soul the body participates in the uncreated Light. Examples: St. Gregory Palamas, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. John Maximovich. The Relics of the Saints. Depending on the stage we are in God’s grace works to purify, illumine or deify.

4. Contrast the Orthodox view of salvation with “western” theories.

- a. Anselm of Canterbury - Satisfaction Atonement
- b. Calvin - Total depravity of man
- c. Luther - “Justification” by “faith” alone
- d. “Once saved, always saved”

All of these are dependent upon a “static” model of salvation to artificially emphasize salvation as “grace” or as a free gift.

These three stages are characterized in the Scriptures and the Fathers.

St. Paul speaks about the “carnal man”, the “spiritual man” and also speaks of being “caught up into the third heaven”...having a vision of God, “whether in the body or out of the body I do not know.”

St. Maximos the Confessor: “the 3rd heaven” that St. Paul speaks of is the third stage deification.

St. Nikitas Stethatos: The three stages correspond to 1. Paradise, 2. The tree of knowledge and 3. The Tree of Life.

D. Where? Salvation is in the Church.

1. Images used to describe the Church
 - a. The Body of Christ (4 Stages of the Church)
 - (1) Creation of the Angels (the angels are part of the Church -- see Hebrews 12:22-23)
 - (2) Creation of Paradise
Eden - paradise was a specific place that through Adam was to be spread throughout the entire creation. Eden was the "Church". The Fathers teach that God would have sent His Son as man even if Adam did not sin...because of His love and desire to have communion with His creation.
Illumination of Adam - before the fall Adam & Eve lived in the state of "illumination." Adam was to become deified. Temptation of Eve -- if you eat you will "become like God."
After the Fall, the Old Testament - the O.T. Saints knew Christ (i.e. Moses, see 1 Cor. 10:4)
 - (3) The Church in the N.T. - The Church is the restoration of paradise. The purpose of the Church is to deify its members. We partake of the deified Humanity (Body and Blood) of Christ. The spiritual reality of the Church experienced in former times is made flesh in the Body of Jesus. The members of the Church are members of His Body.
 - (4) The Age to Come (St. Gregory of Sinai "the Angels and saints ever increase in gifts of grace...and longing for further blessings)
 - b. The Church as Noah's Ark (St. Cyprian of Carthage)
 - c. The Vine and the branches
 - d. Hospital to cure man of sin

ESCHATOLOGY

Synopsis:

1. Eschatology is the study of the last things, i.e., death, the end of the world, the Second Coming of Jesus, etc.
2. Simply stated, our Orthodox Christian eschatology is expressed in the Nicene Creed when it says that Jesus “will come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end...I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come”.
3. The end of life for the Christian is moving day. We move from a temporary room in our Father’s house (which St. Paul calls a tent) to a permanent room in heaven.
4. At the Particular Judgment, which takes place immediately after death, we receive a foretaste of our reward or punishment, which will be received in its entirety at the Second Coming of Jesus.
5. God never told us exactly when Jesus will come again. He wants us to maintain a constant state of watchfulness and purity.
6. On the last day: Jesus will return, the dead will be raised, judgment will take place, and the new heaven and new earth will be established.
7. The resurrection of Lazarus is a living image of the general resurrection of the dead, which will occur on the last day. Every dead body will be resurrected and united again with the soul as a spiritual body similar to the one Jesus had after the resurrection.
8. Life continues eternally beyond the grave in the same direction as in life. If we lived with Christ on earth, we shall continue to live with Him in heaven. If we lived without Him on earth, we shall continue to live without Him in the life beyond.
9. Having been created with free will, man is allowed the privilege of facing the eternal consequence of either his *yes* (heaven) or his *no* (hell) to God. To deny hell is to deny free will.
10. Christian eschatology offers us great perspective for living. To see the direction toward which the whole of life is moving is to see more clearly exactly what our true mission in life is.

⊙

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT LIFE AFTER DEATH

Is based on the Bible and the Sacred Tradition of the Orthodox Church.

WHAT IS ESCHATOLOGY?

- ◆ Study of Last Things
- ◆ “Eat drink and be merry...”

- ◆ Or the life we live will not come to an end
- ◆ God's plan of salvation
 - Preparation—to be converted
 - Justification—baptism & repentance
 - Sanctification—gradual growth in Christ
 - Glory—what happens after death

THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE CREED

- ◆ Christ has overcome sin and death
- ◆ John 17:24

THE LAST CHAPTER

- ◆ Life complex
- ◆ Makes sense only by knowing last chapter, the Parousia

DEATH

- ◆ Jesus defeated death, actually trampled upon it by His own death.
- ◆ 2 Cor. 5:1-4
- ◆ Earthly body compared to a tent
- ◆ John 14:1-3
- ◆ Separation body and soul

THE PARTICULAR OR INTERMEDIATE JUDGMENT

- ◆ Immediately after death
- ◆ Foretaste of our punishment or reward
- ◆ Body, not soul sleeps at this time
- ◆ Fixed and unchangeable, no moral improvement

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

- ◆ Time for repentance is today

JUDGMENT TODAY

- ◆ Three stages of life
 - Life on earth
 - Particular judgment
 - Resurrection of the dead and the Final Judgment

THE LAST DAYS

- ◆ The preaching of the Gospel to all nations (Matt. 24:14)
- ◆ The return of Israel to Christ (Rom. 11:25-26)

WATCHFULNESS

- ◆ Heart beat away from judgment
- ◆ Luke 12:35-40
- ◆ 2 Cor. 5:10

THE VICTORY MADE MANIFEST

- ◆ Resurrection victory remains hidden in today's world
- ◆ Second Coming seen by all
- ◆ Everyone will have a personal & private audience with Jesus

WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THAT DAY?

- ◆ Matt. 24:30,31
- ◆ Dead raised up 1 Thess. 1:16-17
- ◆ Judgment 2 Thess. 1:7-10

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

- ◆ Body and soul reunited
- ◆ Spiritual body, perfected
- ◆ I Cor. 15:42-44
- ◆ I Cor. 15:35
- ◆ I Cor. 15:51

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

- ◆ Matthew 25
- ◆ Love key
- ◆ Moment of truth

HEAVEN

- ◆ Deliverance from suffering, pain, grief, corruption
- ◆ Joy, vision of God
- ◆ Graduation of blessedness
- ◆ Eternal life now in Eucharist (John 6:54)
- ◆ Heaven a complete and perfect communion

HELL

- ◆ Begins on earth, our choice
- ◆ Exclude God from our lives
- ◆ Free to choose
- ◆ As we live, we die (Romans 14:8-9)
- ◆ Worldly goods temporary (I Cor. 7:30-31)

Sources: Introducing The Orthodox Church - Its Faith and Life, (Coniaris), pages 105-122.

Orthodox Spirituality

Deification and Union with God

Synopsis: Orthodox Christian spirituality is centered in the Holy Trinity with the goal being theosis (becoming like God). This union with God is accomplished in the Church through repentance, participation in the Holy Mysteries, prayer, and obedience to the divine commandments.

I. What does “spirituality” mean?

- A. The everyday activity of life in communion with God (I Corinthians 10:31)
- B. The goal: union with God which is attainable through the accomplishment of His will
- C. Central teaching of the Orthodox Faith: “Man is called to become by divine grace all that God Himself is by nature” (St. Maximus the Confessor)
- D. Contrast this to spirituality in the West – intellectual, rational, and man-centered ...”scholastic theology” (Orthodox Spirituality - Met. HIEROTHEOS; pp.25,26)

II. Orthodox Christian spirituality is centered in the Holy Trinity

- A. Centered in God the Father: to be what the Father wants us to be is the sole meaning of our human existence (Matt. 5:48)
- B. Centered in Jesus Christ: the goal of human life is to be continually “in Christ” so that one can accomplish God’s will and not sin (I John 3:4-10)
- C. Centered in the Holy Spirit: spiritual life is in and by the Holy Spirit
 - 1. John 14:15-17

2. Romans 5:5; 8:1ff
3. I Cor. 2,6,12-14
4. Galatians 5

III. Some highlights of Orthodox Spirituality

- A. God *reveals* Himself to man in *mystery*
- B. Man acquires faith by *hearing* (the response), not to understand it rationally, but so that we can cleanse our hearts and experience this Revelation and be transformed
- C. Emphasis is on God operating and man co-operating (synergism) with the result being man's union with God
- D. A spirituality of the *heart* with but one goal: *theosis* or *deification*

IV. Deification (Theosis or Divinization)

- A. The process where we grow into the likeness of God through direct union with Him; the total transformation of the human person by divine grace and glory so that we can become authentically human
- B. "Man is nothing less than a creature that has received the order to become god" (St. Basil the Great)
- C. "He was made man that we might become god" (St. Athanasius); He became incarnate that we might be "in-godded"
- D. John 17...Christ prays that we become one with Him as He and the Father are one
- E. II Peter 1:4...we are made "partakers of the divine nature" – we can come to have the same kind of life and existence and being as God has, but without becoming identical with God.
- F. We do not acquire God's *essence*...we partake of (or are deified) by His *energies*
 1. God's essence – His nature, inner Being, His other-ness or radical transcendence; this is beyond our comprehension
 2. God's energies – His operations, acts of power, grace, mercy, forgiveness, etc.; His immanence; this we experience
 3. "No one has ever seen the essence of God, but we believe in the essence because we experience the energy" (St. Basil)
- G. Involves the body – redemption and salvation of the whole person
 1. divine light (St. Seraphim of Sarov)
 2. relics of the saints – incorruption, fragrance, etc.
- H. Involves the whole of the material creation (Romans 8:19-22; Revelation 21:1)

V. How is Theosis accomplished? The Holy Spirit brings the divinizing grace (energies) of the Holy Trinity to the believer in numerous ways:

- A. Through the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) – "The Holy Mysteries make it possible for man to enter freely and personally into communion with the divinizing grace which the *Logos* of God bestowed upon human nature in assuming it" (St. Gregory Palamas – 14th century)
- B. Through repentance...(metanoia – a change of mind)

1. theosis keeps producing within us an increased sensitivity to sin which leads to a continual attitude of repentance
 2. not the mood of the moment, but a way of life; a person's return journey to God; the cure for a diseased and unnatural state (sin)
 3. a renewal of our Baptism
- C. Through prayer ... (discuss the Jesus Prayer)
1. personal prayer – the rule of prayer
 - a. important discipline; brings steady rhythm to chaotic lives
 - b. forces us to pray

“If you pray only when you are inclined to, you will cease praying altogether; this is what the flesh desires. The Kingdom of God suffers violence. You will not be able to work out your salvation without forcing yourself” (St. John of Kronstadt)
 2. corporate prayer – Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Matins, special services
- D. Through keeping the divine commandments and pursuing the virtues
1. linked to repentance
 2. our regeneration not dependent upon the development of our purely mental capabilities, but on the purity of the heart and the fulfillment of God's will in our lives
 3. requires our cooperation and struggle (*ascesis*)
 - a. struggle in renouncing our sinful will in order to yield ourselves totally to God in self-surrender
 - b. involves fasting and alms-giving
 - c. never to gain merit or payment or reward from God
- E. Through the Church
1. The Fathers state that the Church is a hospital which cures the wounded person through its Bishops and Priests who are the therapists of the People of God...Christ Himself is the Healer
 2. The divinizing grace of the Holy Spirit is present in the Church; St. Gregory Palamas defines it as a “communion of deification”

Sources: The Orthodox Way (Ware), Ch. 3 “God as Creator” (pp.27-29)
The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume IV - Spirituality
Orthodox Spirituality (Met. HIEROTHEOS); pp.25-26
Achieving Your Potential In Christ: Theosis (Coniaris)
The Orthodox Church (Ware), Ch. 11 “God and Humankind” (pp.236-238)

The Holy Mysteries

Synopsis: The life of Grace of the Holy Spirit is accomplished in the Church, for each member, in His own special ways, mysterious and unfathomable. The Holy Spirit does not depend on human cognizance. He “breathes” on whom He wills. Nevertheless, God has established Holy Mysteries within the Church, accessible to all, for the reception of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. These Mysteries are sacred acts, when, under a visible sign, are conferred to the soul the invisible Grace of God.

I. The whole of the Christian life must be seen as a mystery (sacrament), for in it God reveals Himself to us and imparts His Grace through creation and the physical aspect of our existence

- A. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. Everything becomes an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world
- B. Everything which is in and of the Church is sacramental or mystical

II. The Holy Mysteries – the life of God

- A. Holy Baptism – The birth into the eternal life of God (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Cor. 1:16)
 - 1. One baptism for the remission of sins
 - 2. Restoration by adoption through immersion; united to Jesus Christ; inheritors of the Kingdom

3. The door to the reception of other Grace-giving gifts.
 4. All pre-baptismal sin eradicated
 5. Spiritual regeneration bestowed
 6. Initiation into Jesus Christ and His Body the Church
 7. Two essential elements: invocation of the Holy Trinity and three-fold immersion into water
 8. Infant and adult Baptism
 9. Linked to Holy Chrismation and Eucharist
- B. Holy Chrismation – The gift of power to live the eternal life of God (Acts 8:17;19:6; II Cor. 1:21,22; I John 2:20,27)
1. Chrism and its sanctification
 2. Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit
 3. “Ordination” of the Laity (Laos) into the people of God
 4. Sacrament of reconciliation of apostates and other non-Orthodox Christians to the Holy Orthodox Church
 5. Linked to Holy Baptism and Eucharist
- C. Holy Eucharist – the sustenance of the eternal life of God (Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:48-51; Acts 2:42)
1. Establishment of this Holy Mystery
 2. The Holy Anaphora: the thanksgiving and offering prayers of the gifts of Bread and Wine
 - a. Epiklesis: The prayer invoking the Holy Spirit to transform the Bread and Wine into the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ
 - b. The Presence of Christ: reality vs. manner of change (transubstantiation)
 3. The Eucharist as a sacrifice
 4. Holy Communion – receiving both Bread and Wine
 5. Fasting as a preparation
 6. Frequency of reception
 7. *Antidoron*
- D. Holy Repentance – the remedy for spiritual sickness for the participant in the eternal life of God
1. The elements of *sorrow for sin*, *confession of sin* (to speak forth one’s sins), and *absolution of sin* (the forgiveness of God bestowed upon the repentant sinner)
 2. Only God forgives sin, and He does so through Christ in His Church
 3. Mercy seat of forgiveness and restoration; grace for further resistance of Temptation
 4. God’s conditions for forgiveness – genuine repentance and promise of change as witnessed by confession
 5. Watchfulness- warfare
- E. Holy Unction – the healing anointing to live in the eternal life of God (James 5:14-16; Mark 6:13)
1. Christ is the Healer, and since He remains in the Church through the Holy Spirit, the power of healing is in the Church
 2. Anointing of the sick with oil for restoration of health of body, mind and soul
 3. No “Last Rites” in the Orthodox Church

- F. Holy Marriage – the *charisma* of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon a man and woman to live the eternal life of God together (Genesis 1:27; Matt. 19:4-6; John 2:1,2; Eph. 5:22-32)
 - 1. The Trinitarian mystery of unity in diversity as imaged in marriage
 - 2. Mystical union as between Jesus Christ and the Church
 - 3. Eternality of marriage – the Orthodox teaching is that only one marriage can contain the perfect meaning and significance which Christ has given to this reality
 - a. second and subsequent marriages
 - b. divorce (Matt. 19:9)
 - 4. Marriage and the Divine institution of the Christian Family
 - 5. The liturgical service - Grace imparted for blessing and strengthening
 - 6. Sexual relations outside of marriage; homosexuality; birth control; abortion
- G. Holy Orders – The perpetual Presence of Christ in His Church actualizing the eternal life of God on earth
 - 1. Christ is the only Priest, Pastor, Teacher, Forgiver and Healer of His Church
 - 2. Bishops, priests and deacons have no other function or service than to manifest the presence and action of Christ to His people; not vicars of Christ; don't act on behalf of Christ or instead of Christ
 - 3. The four “orders” – bishops, priests, deacons and the people (*laos*)
 - 4. Bishops, priests and deacons chosen from the *laos* and set apart for their specific ministry in the Body of Christ
 - a. Three Bishops consecrate a Bishop
 - b. The Bishop ordains Priests and Deacons
 - c. Celibate and married clergy

III. Monasticism as Mystery

- A. Not considered as one of the sacraments of the Church *per se*, but has played an important role in the Church
- B. A personal calling to repentance in a life solely dedicated to God
- C. Pursuit of the Christian virtue of love through:
 - 1. Prayer and fasting
 - 2. Poverty
 - 3. Chastity
 - 4. Obedience
 - 5. Humility
- D. The monastic ranks
- E. Types of Monasticism

Sources: The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume II – Worship, Chapter II
The Orthodox Church (Ware), Ch. 14 “Orthodox Worship: The Sacraments (pp.274-297)
Introducing The Orthodox Church - Its Faith and Life, (Coniaris), “What We Believe About the Sacraments”

PRAYER, FASTING & ALMSGIVING

Synopsis: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving are three basic disciplines, along with a moral and ethical life, to the Orthodox faith. Progress in the spiritual life presupposes one's participation in these spiritual practices.

I. PRAYER

1. Personal/Private Prayer

- ② “WHEN you pray”. Prayer is mandatory for the Christian.
- ② Prayer must be in secret
- ② Closed off physically
- ② Enter within ones self

A. God knows the needs of His people.

- ② God already knows our needs, even better than we do

We Pray:

- ② To unite our mind and heart to God
- ② That God's will be done in our life
- ② Whatever we need from God will be given

B Prayer as:

- ② Doxology (Praise)
- ② Intercession

- ② Thanksgiving
- ② Petition
- ② Worship

C. Using the whole body in prayer

D. Establish a Personal Rule of Prayer

- ② Establish a regular time for prayer
 - ② Must be brief! One that you can keep. Preferably 15 – 30 minutes
- ② Choose prayers that give you life
- ② Read them over before hand. Think them over and feel them.
- ② Personal attention and fervor
- ② Work at memorizing them
- ② After reciting your prayer rule, pray a little longer on your own
- ② If it becomes a routine, rather than an encounter with God, change it
 - ② The most important thing is to stand before God with your mind in your heart with reverence and humility

E. Spontaneous Prayers vs. Written, Established Prayers

- ② All written prayers were, at one time, spontaneous prayers
- ② Prayers of the Church
 - ② The prayers of the Saints
- ② Find and use those prayers that speak for you, that give your spirit and your heart life

- ② The Psalms
 1. Psalm 51 – *“Have mercy on me O God...”*
 2. Psalm 103 – *“Bless the Lord O my soul...”*
 3. Psalm 146 – *“Praise the Lord O my soul...”*
 4. Psalm 23 – *“The Lord is my shepherd...”*
 5. Psalm 24 – *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof...”*
 6. Psalm 116:12-19 – *“What shall I render to the Lord...”*
 7. Psalm 70 – *“O God, be attentive unto helping me...”*

F. The wandering mind and Intrusive thoughts: What to do?

- ② Make a deliberate and conscious effort never to let them wander
 - ② When they do, immediately bring them back
 - ② Arm yourself with patience and self discipline
 - ② Persistence is vital
 - ② Focus on the words of your prayer
 - ② Ask God to help

G. Silence

- ② The 3 stages of Hesychia:
 1. “Flee from others” both externally and physically - External

2. “Keep silent” desist from outward speech– External
3. Internal – Active and creative silence

② Distinction between the levels of Hesychia and their importance to society today.

H. Tears:

1. The five main motives for authentic prayer and five kinds of authentic, fruitful tears:
 - A. Tears of remorse for sin, which break the heart
 - B. Tears that come out of contemplating the benevolence of God and the glory that is prepared for us.
 - C. Tears of terror.
 - D. Tears shed over others
 - E. Tears of tribulation
2. Two main traits that link these five kinds of prayers together
3. A sixth acceptable kind of tears
4. The destructive kind of tears

I. Praying for the Dead

1. Why Do We Pray For The Dead?

- A. Out of love.
- B. It gives us an opportunity to do something for our loved one.
- C. God is a God of the living, not of the dead
- D. We believe they continue to love us, remember us, and pray for us now that they are closer to God.
- E. Whether on earth or in heaven, the Church is a single family
- F. Praying for the dead is also very beneficial for us as well.

2. When Do We Pray For The Dead?

- A. Funeral Services
- B. Saturday of Souls
- C. During the Divine Liturgy every Sunday
- D. Memorial Services

J. Coldness in Prayer

1. Coldness in prayer is not the fault of the prayer, but of the one who prays
2. Careless and hurried prayer
3. You pray just to get through your Rule of Prayer.
4. Inattention to the words of the prayer
5. A wandering mind with distracted thoughts
6. Develop zeal for your prayer.

7. Perseverance is imperative
8. Develop a Rule of Prayer.
 - a. Establish a certain Rule of Prayer and pray the entire Rule.
 - b. Establish a certain length of time to pray
 - c. Use a prayer rope

K. Experiencing the Absence of God:

1. We should not pray to go through a range of emotions
2. May be His will
3. Become aware of His presence
4. We must listen
 - a. How do we listen?
 1. Reading Holy Scripture
 2. Reading the lives of the Saints
 3. Reading the works and writings of the Fathers and the Saints

L. Unanswered Prayer

M. Meditation

- ◆ Thought about God and contemplation of His word and His works
- ◆ Reading the Bible
- ◆ Psalmody

N. Praying with Icons

2. THE LORD'S PRAYER - The heart of Christian prayer

1. Our Father
2. Which art in heaven
3. Hallowed be Thy name
4. Thy Kingdom come
5. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
6. Daily Bread
7. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us
8. Lead us not into temptation
9. Deliver us from evil (or the evil one)
10. St. John Cassian – What we do NOT ask for.

3. THE JESUS PRAYER

A. The words:

1. “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner”
2. Other alternatives:
 - a. Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me.
 - b. Lord have mercy.
 - c. Lord Jesus, my Savior, have mercy on me.

B. How Do We Say It?

1. Standing or sitting
2. Audibly to start
3. Silently
4. Breathing

C. The Words of The Jesus Prayer and Their Meaning

1. Lord
2. Mercy
3. Sinner
4. The

D. Used three ways

1. Sit alone
 2. Mind in the heart
 3. Silence
 4. Spiritual Guidance
- a. Continual mental and unceasing prayer
- b. Brief prayer used to ward off temptations

4. UNCEASING PRAYER

5. THE FOUR ANSWERS TO PRAYER

6. CORPORATE PRAYER

A. The Divine Liturgy

1. Official prayer of the assembled Church
2. We pray with the whole Church, both on earth and in heaven

B. Other Corporate Prayer Services

1. Matins
2. Vespers
3. Compline
4. The Hours
5. Typika
6. Akathist Hymn

II. FASTING

1. Holy Scripture On Fasting:

- A. Fasting in the Old Testament
- B. Fasting in the New Testament

2. Jesus On Fasting

3. Why Do We Fast?

Fasting is a tool for spiritual growth

Jesus fasted & taught His disciples to fast.

1. Fast in secret
2. Must also be free from pride, vanity, & hypocrisy

4. Fasting has always been connected with:

- A. Repentance for our sins
- B. An aide to helping us overcome temptations
- C. A strengthening of our sensitivity to God in our lives
- D. An orienting of our wills to direct our lives in the Lord's path

5. How Do We Fast?

- A. The Outward/Bodily Fast
- B. The Inward/Spiritual Fast
 1. St. John Chrysostom on Fasting
 - a. The eye
 - b. The ear
 - c. The hands
 - d. The feet
 - e. The mouth
 - f. The heart
 2. Fasting and Obedience

6. When Do We Fast?

- A. Wednesday and Friday
- B. Before each Divine Liturgy
- C. Before each Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- D. The Great Fast (Lent) – Begins seven weeks before Pascha
- E. The Fast of the Holy Apostles – Starts on the Monday 8 days after Pentecost, and ends on June 28th, the eve of the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. This fast can vary in length from a few days to 6 weeks
- F. The Dormition Fast – From August 1st to August 14th. Lasts 2 weeks
- G. The Christmas (Advent) Fast – Lasts 40 days – from November 15th through December 24th
- H. The Exaltation of the Cross, the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, and the eve of Epiphany are also strict fasts.

7. The Categories of Fasting

8. The Results of Fasting

- A. Fasting enlightens the mind
- B. Strengthens the spirit
- C. Controls the emotions
- D. Tames the passions
- E. Opens our hearts and minds to God, and the leading of the Holy Spirit
- F. Is the doorway to a deeper spiritual experience of Christ
- G. Is the path that leads to heaven

FINAL WARNING: Fasting without increased prayer is nothing more than a diet and is of no value or benefit to the soul.

III. ALMS-GIVING

1. The Saints on Almsgiving

2. Alms giving goes together with fasting and prayer

- A. In secret
- B. Love for other
- C. Spiritual person must share what he has
- D. Cheerful giver
- E. Sacrificial act, not what is left over
- F. 10% or more
- G. Cannot be saved without it, St John Chrysostom

Sources:

The Art of Prayer; An Orthodox Anthology, (Igumen Chariton of Valamo)
 The Way of A Pilgrim, (Anonymous)
 Orthodox Prayer Life; The Interior Way (Matthew the Poor)
 The Communion of Love (Matthew the Poor)
 Living Prayer (Metropolitan Anthony Bloom)
 Prayer of Jesus, Prayer of the Heart (Alphonse & Rachel Goettman)
 The Spiritual Life; And How to Be Attuned To It, (St. Theophan the Recluse)
 The Inner Kingdom, (Bishop Kallistos Ware)
 The Orthodox Way, (Bishop Kallistos Ware)
 The Orthodox Church, (Bishop Kallistos Ware)
 Introducing the Orthodox Church, (Anthony M. Coniaris)
 Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain (Priestmonk Christodoulos)
 Praying With Icons, (Jim Forest)
 The Lenten Spring, (Thomas Hopko)
 When You Fast, (Bishop Kallistos Ware)
 Why Fast? And How Should I Fast?, (Fr. John G. Winfrey)
 The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers, (Stanley S. Harakas)

Iconography and Church Architecture

Synopsis: In the Orthodox Church, iconography and church architecture bear witness to the reality of the Kingdom of God on earth and His Presence with us in the mystery of faith. Icons are not only permissible in worship but spiritually necessary because God Himself in Christ has become visible and dwelt among us. Therefore, we can depict Him, His Beloved Mother, and the Saints and Angels who gather to worship with us to provide us with the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven in our midst.

I. Church Architecture

- A. Structure of the Building (Show pictures)
- B. Influence of the Temple in Jerusalem
 - 1. Concept of sacred Space

II. Icons

- A. Early Church Art and Symbols
- B. First Icons
 - 1. Virgin Mary by St. Luke
 - 2. Holy Napkin -
 - a. Christ allows an Image to be transferred to the Napkin.
- C. Iconoclasts – Who were they?
- D. Orthodox Response
 - a. Biblical
 - b. Orthodox Sources

- (1) St. John of Damascus
- (2) St. Theodore the Studite
- (3) Seventh Ecumenical Council
- (4) Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy
- E. Worship vs. Veneration
- F. Necessity of icons in Worship
- G. Basic decrees of the Council

III. Tour of Church

- A. Explanation of Architecture
- B. Explanation of the Placement of Icons
- C. Iconostasis

IV. Theology of the Icon

- A. Concept of Presence
- B. Dogmatic Instruction
 - 1. Icon of Christ
 - 2. Icon of the Theotokos - "Indicator of the Way"
 - 3. Selected Feastday Icons Explained.
- C. Use of Color and facial features
- D. Other Symbols in Icons

Sources: “No Graven Image” (pamphlet) by Jack Sparks, PhD.
The Art of the Icon: A theology of Beauty by Paul Evdokimov,
 Oakwood Publications, 1996
Theology of the Icon by Leonid Ouspensky, St. Vladimir's
 Press, Crestwood, New York 1978
The Doors of Perception by John Bagley, St. Vladimir’s Press,
 Crestwood, New York 1988
The Meaning of Icons by Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir
 Lossky; St Vladimir's Press, Crestwood, New York 1989
The Orthodox Faith (Hopko) Volume II “Worship”

Liturgics

Orthodox View of Time

Synopsis: Time, being an element of creation, is offered to man as a context for his dealings and encounters with God and with his neighbor. Although time became a curse for us rather than a gift because of the Fall, Christ has sanctified time by entering into it in His Incarnation. We are called upon to cooperate with the Grace of God and sanctify and redeem time and infuse it with eternal meaning as we experience the Kingdom of God now in this time and space.

I. The Theology of Time

- A. What is time?
 - 1. An element of creation (Genesis 1:15)
 - 2. Psalm 90; II Peter 3:8
- B. God exists outside of time and is in no way limited by time or space
- C. Man is finite and requires a linear standard by which to measure his progress (Ps. 103)
- D. What is the purpose of our presence in space and time, and why were we created?
 - 1. To manifest the glory of God in the created order
 - 2. To turn all of creation into the Paradise of God
- E. However, mankind fell and marred the image of God
 - 1. The Fall made us slaves to time; it has lost its meaning for us
 - 2. Time has become a curse rather than a gift (Eccl. 9:11,12)
- F. Two words for time in Greek: *chronos* and *kairos*

1. **Chronos:** the unrelenting movement of time (chronological)
 2. **Kairos:** the time of the Kingdom; redeemed, sanctified time...”It is time (kairos) for the Lord to act; Father give the blessing”
- G. The Orthodox Church’s theology of time is concerned with turning the “chronos” of our lives into the “kairos” of the Church – redeeming, sanctifying time; infusing it with meaning
- H. “Today He is suspended...Today the Virgin cometh” – the Kairos of the Kingdom; the “eternal present” of the Kingdom of God

II. The Orthodox view of time as a synthesis of the Hebrew and Hellenic views

- A. The Hebrew view
1. A linear progression – beginning with creation and ending with the Day of the Lord
 2. Eschatological – time has meaning only as it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God
- B. The Hellenic view
1. Cyclical in orientation – time runs in cycles that are all self-contained
 2. Revolution of the seasons; rotation of planets in solar system, etc.
- C. The Orthodox Christian view
1. A Hebrew/Hellenic synthesis (“both-and”)
 2. Time will have beginning and end, but Christ has entered it and sanctified it by His Incarnation. We therefore experience His Kingdom **now** through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and it will be fully manifested at the Second Coming of Christ – the Day of the Lord.
 3. Time is also cyclical in that it possesses a liturgical rhythm which we offer back to the God Who gave it to us
- D. How does the Orthodox Church turn “chronos” into “kairos”?
- “Just as the Church though “not of this world” is present in this world for its salvation, so also the Sacrament of the Lord’s Day, the Sacrament of the new aeon is joined with time in order that time itself might become the time of the Church, the time of salvation. It is precisely this fulfillment of time by the “Eschaton,” by that which overcomes time and is above it and bears witness to its finitude and limitedness, which constitutes the sanctification of time” (Introduction to Liturgical Theology - Schmemmann, p.64)

Time and Man

Time is offered to man as a context for his dealings and encounters with his neighbor and with God. Time is also to be seen as the sphere wherein the love of God is revealed. It is in time that man encounters, or fails to encounter, God. It is in time that man shows, or fails to show, love for his neighbor. It is in time that he achieves, or fails to achieve, his correct orientation within the world around him. It is man’s correct orientation within the world that allows him to respond to God’s love for him. Love, as a virtue of time present, is the bridge over which everything that the future has in store can be conveyed,

so that it can then be placed in the past. Finally, love, like the present, is all that man has at his disposal as long as he lives in the world. Not only this, but love is also the only thing that will continue to exist when the world and time have come to an end.

Sources: [Introduction to Liturgical Theology](#) - Alexander Schmemmann; SVS Press

The Liturgical Cycles of the Church

Synopsis: The Liturgical cycles of the Church are the scheduled times of when the Church gathers for worship. The Liturgical worship of the Church is appropriate for the time of day, week, month, and year. Through this worship the Church "sanctifies (or redeems) the time," as St. Paul said, by offering it, and referring it, to God and His acts of salvation in the world.

What is a cycle?

- ① Define the word "cycle"
- ① How does that apply to the Church?

The Word "Today"

- ① Examples of the use of the word "today" in the services of the Church
 1. **Good Friday:** Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung on a tree. The King of the angels is decked with a crown of thorns
 2. **Christmas:** Today He who holds the whole creation in the hollow of His hand is born of the virgin. He whom in essence none can touch is wrapped in swaddling clothes as a mortal.
 3. **Epiphany:** Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has descended...Today the sins of mankind are blotted out...Today the Lord comes to baptism to elevate mankind...
- ① What does this mean to us?

Pascha (Easter) – The Foundation of The Liturgical Calendar

Daily Cycle

These are the liturgical services that can be served each day:

1. Vespers (Major/Official Service)

- ① Inaugurates the beginning of the new day (at setting of the sun)
- ① Themes of creation (Psalm 104), sin and fall from God, (Psalm 141, 142, 130), and salvation in Christ
- ① Includes thanksgiving for the day now coming to an end and God's protection for the evening
 - ① The coming of darkness reminds us of the darkness of our sins and of death and makes us long for the light
 - ① One of the great themes of vespers is the coming of Christ the Light to dispel the darkness. Jesus is praised as the "*Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory of the Immortal Father*"
 - ① Commemoration of and hymns for the Saints for the next calendar day.
 - ① Preparation for coming day and for Divine Liturgy if to be served the following day.
 - ① Theme of Resurrection takes precedence on Saturday evening (unless a Great Feast of Christ).

2. Compline (Minor Service)

- ① Psalm 51, 143 (repentance, cry of deliverance from evil and darkness)
- ① "Bed Time" prayers ("Grant, O Master, when we go to sleep, repose of body and soul. Keep us from the murky slumbering of sin and the dark passions of the night...").

3. Midnight Office (Nocturns) - usually only in monasteries

Designated as a time for prayer for 3 reasons:

- ① The Jewish people were lead out of Egypt at midnight (Exodus 12:29)
- ① In remembrance of this event, the Messiah was expected to come at midnight. This expectation was fulfilled when Jesus was resurrected in the early morning while it was still dark. (Matthew 28:1)
- ① Midnight also became associated in early Christian thought with the hour of the Second Coming of Jesus (Mark 13:35). He was expected to come "as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. (5:2,4)

4. Matins/Orthros (Major)

- ① Morning service of prayer and preparation for Divine Liturgy if is to be served. (Psalms 3, 38, 63, 88, 103, 143).
- ① Commemoration of and hymns for the Saints for the next calendar day.
- ① Theme of Resurrection (esp. on Sunday).

5. First Hour, 7am (Minor)

- ① Early morning service of prayer (Psalm 5, 90, 101)
- ① Central theme is the coming of the light of the new day. Reminds us of the coming of Him who is the Light of the world. The physical light is an icon of Christ
- ① We pray that His light will guide us and show us the way for the new day in all that we do.

6. Third Hour, 9am (Minor)

- ① The single theme is the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. This is the exact time the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:15)
- ① A reminder that the life of the faithful Christian remains empty without the inner presence of the Holy Spirit.
- ① Psalms 17, 25, 51 (themes of righteousness and wisdom, vs. iniquity and foolishness).
- ① The 51st Psalm says in part, *“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me...Uphold me with Thy free spirit.”*

The Liturgical Cycles of the Church (cont' d)

7. Sixth Hour, 12 noon (Minor)

- ① The theme is the crucifixion of Christ, for at this hour Christ hung on the cross. (Matt. 27:45; Luke 23:44; John 19:14)
- ① Psalms 54, 55, 91 (themes of adversity -- noon is time of temptation to despair).
- ① Our prayers include petitions that He save us from the sins and temptations of the day

8. Ninth Hour, 3pm (Minor)

- ① The time when Jesus died on the cross. *“And at about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, “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)
- ① Prayers of thanksgiving to Him whose death destroyed death
- ① Concludes with a petition that we put to death the old sinful nature within us so we can live a new life in Christ
- ① The last service of the day (sometimes held directly before Vespers)
 - ① Psalms 84, 85, 86 (themes of the coming of the Messiah).

In addition to these basic formal daily services, we must also add:

- ① The more informal Morning and Evening prayers,
- ① The Commemoration of the Saints of the day, the Living and the Dead, and
- ① The prayers before and after meals.

Weekly Cycle:

Monday:	The Angels
Tuesday:	John the Baptist and the Prophets
Wednesday:	Betrayal of Jesus (Fast Day)
Thursday:	Apostles and St. Nicholas
Friday:	The Cross and Passion of Jesus (Fast Day)
Saturday:	All Christians Departed (Includes the Theotokos and Saints)
Sunday:	The Resurrection of Jesus

Monthly Cycle

The monthly cycle relates to all fixed feasts of the year. On each day of the month, various Saints are commemorated (usually the day of their repose or martyrdom). The "Menaion" Book (or book of the "months") contains the special hymns for each Saint and for other fixed Feasts (same day each year).

The Liturgical Cycles of the Church (cont' d)

Yearly Cycle

The Church year consists of the Feast Days of Christ, the Theotokos and the Saints. Some of the Feast Days of Christ are "movable", meaning that they depend upon the date of Pascha (Easter). The Church year begins in September. There are Twelve Great Feasts of the Church (7 for Christ and 5 for the Theotokos).

<i>Fixed Feasts:</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Celebrating</i>
1. Birth of the Theotokos	Sept. 8	Theotokos
2. Exaltation of the Cross	Sept. 14	Christ
3. Entry of Theotokos into the Temple	Theotokos	Nov. 21
4. Nativity of Christ	Dec. 25	Christ
5. Theophany (Baptism of Christ)	Jan. 6	Christ
6. Meeting of our Lord in the Temple	Feb. 2	Theotokos
7. Annunciation of the Theotokos	March 25	Theotokos
8. Transfiguration of Christ	August 6	Christ
9. Dormition of the Theotokos	August 15	Theotokos
<i>Movable Feasts:</i>		
10. Palm Sunday	One week before Pascha	Christ
11. Ascension of Christ	40 days after Pascha	Christ
12. Pentecost	50 days after Pascha	

Examples

The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas):

- ① Forty Day Fast beginning on November 15.
- ① Five days of fore-feast (special hymnography and themes in the services)
- ① Eve of the Nativity: "Royal Hours" (special service combining all the services of the Hours with hymnography for the Nativity)
- ① Nativity Feast Day (Dec. 25)
- ① Dec. 26: Liturgy in special remembrance of the Theotokos
- ① Six days of after- feast (hymnography continues in remembrance). (Dec. 26-31)
- ① Leave-taking (Celebration almost identical to the Feast itself) (Dec. 31)

Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ (Baptism of Christ):

- ◆ Four days of fore-feast (Jan. 2-5)
- ◆ Eve of Theophany: Royal Hours (Jan. 5)
- ◆ Theophany (Jan. 6)
- ◆ Jan. 7: Liturgy in special remembrance of St. John the Baptist
- ◆ Eight days of after-feast (Jan. 7-14)
- ◆ Leave-taking (Jan. 14)

There are four fasting periods in the Church:

1. Great Lent (for Pascha)
2. Nativity Fast (for Christmas)
3. Dormition Fast (August 1, two weeks prior to Feast of Dormition of Theotokos)
4. Apostles Fast (usually two weeks prior to the Feast of St. Peter and Paul, June 29)

Reordering Our Priorities

- ① Worship - The ideal vs. The actual
- ① What we can do?

Sources:

Introducing The Orthodox Church, (Coniaris)

The Orthodox Church, (Ware)

Living in the Liturgical Cycles of the Church, (Reader Daniel Olson)

The Divine Liturgy

Synopsis: The Divine Liturgy is the official common action of the people of God gathered together to worship Him in spirit and in truth. This assembly of the community of the Church constitutes the Orthodox Church. Christ Himself, the Great High Priest, celebrates the Liturgy acting through the priest with the people being co-celebrants with Christ. The Liturgy is resurrectional, processional and eucharistic in nature, with numerous biblical references and actual quotations throughout the service.

I. What is “liturgy”?

- A. From the Greek: “common work” or “common action”
- B. The common action of Orthodox Christians officially gathered to constitute the Orthodox Church
- C. One community in common gathered to worship, pray, sing, hear God’s Word, be instructed in God’s commandments, offer itself with thanksgiving in Christ to God the Father, and commune with Christ Who is present in the Holy Mysteries and in His people by the Holy Spirit
- D. A specific pattern of worship ordered by God
 - 1. Old Testament: Exodus and Leviticus describe it in detail
 - 2. New Testament: the Church carried over the worship of the O.T. (synagogue and temple) adjusting it in keeping with its fulfillment in Christ
 - 3. Orthodox Liturgy still maintains that ancient shape of worship

II. General Elements of the Divine Liturgy

- A. Christ Himself is the Great High Priest and the celebrant of the Liturgy acting through the priest; the people are co-celebrants with Christ
- B. The one common sacrament of the very being of the Church itself
 - 1. Not an act of personal piety or a prayer service
 - 2. Not one of the sacraments
 - 3. Not celebrated by the clergy alone and only celebrated once on any given day
- C. Always resurrectional in spirit
- D. Begins in heaven (eternally occurring around the throne of God)
- E. A procession from earth to heaven and heaven to earth
- F. Two Main parts:
 - 1. Synaxis -(taken from synagogue gatherings in the O.T.)... Liturgy of the Word
 - 2. Eucharistic sacrifice -(O.T. temple worship)... Liturgy of the Faithful

III. Structure of the Divine Liturgy

- A. Prothesis (preparation)
- B. “Blessed is the Kingdom...”
- C. Great Litany
- D. Antiphons
- E. Little Entrance
- F. Epistle Reading
- G. Gospel Reading
- H. Homily
- I. Fervent Supplication
- J. Cherubic Hymn
- K. Great Entrance
- L. Kiss of Peace
- M. The Creed
- N. The Anaphora (“lifting up”)
- O. Epiklesis
- P. Remembrances
- Q. Our Father
- R. Communion
- S. Thanksgiving
- T. Benediction and Dismissal

Sources: The Orthodox Faith (Hopko), Volume II – Worship; Ch.5 “The Divine Liturgy”
The Orthodox Church (Ware), Ch. 13 “Orthodox Worship – The Earthly Heaven” (pp.264-273)
Orthodox Worship (Williams and Anstall), Ch.5 “Heavenly Worship”
Service Book (Antiochian Archdiocese)

Liturgical Practicum

I. Liturgical Etiquette

- A. Preparation: Appropriate Dress
 - 1. Should always be becoming of a Christian
 - 2. Offer Christ our best
 - 3. No shorts, tank-tops, mini-skirts or shirts with writing on them!
- B. Entering the Temple
 - 1. Ninth Apostolic Canon forbids us from arriving late at Liturgy or leaving early
 - 2. One cannot receive Holy Communion if arrival is after the Scripture readings
 - 3. Sign of the Cross; Metanias; Prostrations; Veneration of Icons (holy kiss);
Lighting Candles
- C. Conduct in Church
 - 1. Have a reverent attitude and demeanor at all times in Church
 - 2. Not proper to cross legs, chew gum or talk during the Divine Liturgy or turning one's back on the Altar during the Great Entrance
 - 3. Standing vs. sitting
 - 4. Making the sign of the cross and bowing
 - 5. No "in and out" during the Liturgy
- D. Receiving Holy Communion
 - 1. Be a faithful practicing Orthodox Christian
 - 2. Prepare by prayer, repentance, and fasting from food, drink and smoking upon rising in the morning
 - 3. Approach the chalice with reverence, with arms crossed or hands folded and with one's mind on Christ
- E. Leaving the Temple

II. Asking for the blessing of a Priest or Bishop

III. Monastery Etiquette

Sources: The Word magazine (January, 1997 issue) “Some Things You Should Know While In Church” (Fr. David Barr)
“Parish Etiquette” (booklet) Kh. Maggie Hock; Conciliar Press

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The Elect (*Photozomenoi*)

This stage represents the final intense preparation of the Catechumen for reception of the Mysteries of Initiation. It commences on the Third Sunday of Lent with a liturgical prayer before the assembled parish community (see next page). The priest or catechist should plan to present a focused explanation on the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, Confession and Eucharist, including rubrics and what the Catechumen must do to prepare himself or herself in body and soul for the reception of these Mysteries.

The Catechumen must be further instructed and strongly encouraged to embrace various Christian disciplines (i.e., fasting, attendance at services and examining one’s conscience in preparation for Confession) in order to fully prepare for the event of initiation. Sponsors should take the opportunity to spend as much time as possible with the one in their charge and answer any questions they might have.

Finally, if necessary, the Catechumen may be given a Saint’s name at this time. It is most appropriate and pious for the Catechumen to call upon the Saint whose namesake they possess, asking them for their intercessions and protection during this critical final period of preparation. The priest

should encourage the Catechumen to develop a deep and abiding relationship with their patron saint from this moment onward in their spiritual life.

Recommended book: The Life in Christ (Cabasilas)

Liturgical Prayer for the Elect

The Priest breathes three times in his/her face and signs him/her upon the forehead and the breast, and he lays his hand upon his/her head, saying:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: In Thy Name, O Lord God of truth, and in the Name of Thine Only-begotten Son, and of Thy Holy Spirit, I lay my hand upon Thy servant (handmaid) N., who has been counted worthy to flee unto Thy Holy Name, and to be protected under the shelter of Thy wings. Remove far from him/her the former delusion, and fill him/her with the faith that is in Thee, and with hope and love, that he/she may understand that Thou alone art the true God, with Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Thy Holy Spirit. Enable him/her to walk in all Thy commandments, and to observe those things which are acceptable unto Thee; for if a man do these things, he shall find life in them. Inscribe him/her in Thy Book of Life, and unite him/her to the flock of Thine inheritance. May Thy Holy Name be glorified in him/her, together with that of Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and of Thy life-giving Spirit. Let Thine eyes ever regard him/her with mercy, and let Thine ears attend unto the voice of his/her

supplication. Make him/her to rejoice in the works of his/her hands, and in all his/her generation, that he/she may give praise unto Thee, worshipping and glorifying Thy great and exalted Name always, all the days of his/her life.

For all the powers of heaven praise Thee, and Thine is the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

All: Amen.

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Post-Baptism or Chrismation Catechesis

In the early Church, the period of time after the reception of the Holy Mysteries was critically important in finishing the formation of the neophyte Christian. From directly after Pascha to Pentecost, the newly-illuminated entered into the Mystagogy (“deepening of the mysteries”) and was further instructed in their new life in Christ.

For our purposes today, this time may be utilized to provide deeper instruction on *theosis* or any practical element of the spiritual life. Perhaps the priest, sponsor or catechist could give the newly-illuminated person the opportunity to inquire about anything else concerning the Orthodox Faith they would like to know. This is also an excellent time to discuss practical elements of parish life, such as parish organizations and ministry teams, pledging and tithing, or the dynamics of offering Holy Bread and Memorial Wheat.

Finally, a newcomer’s packet or Member’s Handbook should be given to the neophyte in order for them to further integrate into the community. They should at least receive a welcome letter from the parish council, a directory of families in the parish, and perhaps a spiritual handbook outlining the major feasts of the Church and the fasting disciplines.

All in all, it is vitally important for all of the parishioners to make the effort to develop a relationship with those whom God brings into their midst as neophyte Orthodox Christians. They come to the Church having invested much time and energy in seeking God for their salvation. Having progressed through catechesis, they are not the same as when they first entered the Church as a visitor. They indeed now have much to offer, and our parishes will be all the better for the investment of time and effort we have put into them. God is truly wondrous in His saints!

Living the Faith -Orthodox Morality and Ethics (2-3 lessons)

Note to Catechist: It is recommended that these lessons be presented at this time, since they are a natural progression for instruction and discussion following the Mysteries of Baptism and/or Chrismation. However, they may also be inserted (in the “Orthodox Spirituality” section) before the catechumen receives the Mysteries.

Synopsis: The power of the Holy Spirit transforming us into the likeness of Christ is expressed through righteous behavior and moral living. The Orthodox Christian, being the “icon of Christ” to the world, must act in accordance with the commandments and teachings of the Gospel so as to bring the light of Christ into the darkness of the world.

**“O Lord, who may abide in Thy tabernacle? Who may dwell in Thy holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.”
(Psalm 14:1,2 LXX)**

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2: 6,7)

**“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk as He walked.”
(I John 2: 6)**

I. Introduction: Foundations of Orthodox Morality and Ethics

A. The place of morality and ethics in the faith pattern of the Church

“For the method of godliness consists of these two things: pious doctrines and virtuous practice. Neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what profit is it, to know well the doctrines concerning God, and yet to be a vile fornicator? And again, what profit is it, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer? A most precious possession therefore is the knowledge of doctrines: also there is need of a wakeful soul, since there are many ‘that make spoil through philosophy and vain deceit.’” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem – *Catechetical Lectures*)

B. Good and Evil

1. The Good God – The Triune God is “THE Good”
 - a. Good is understood not as an abstract principle or logical construct, but as a community of Divine Persons in an ordered relationship, existing in loving communion.
 - b. St. Gregory of Nyssa – “God is the primary and main good, Whose very Nature is goodness.”
 - c. Goodness in human life is iconic (reflective) of the Divine Goodness. Consequently, all good in the created sphere gets its content, inspiration, direction and force from God. There is no independent or autonomous “good.”
2. Evil in the human condition
 - a. Evil is the absence of God from created life, the absence of Good, the absence of communion with God. This absence of Good creates not a vacuum, but a serious corruption and deformation of created existence.
 - b. In our Orthodox tradition evil is not some separate, co-eternal power, principle, or being.
 - c. Evil is, in an ultimate sense, non-existent, but in empirical reality, creation experiences evil and its disastrous impact.
 - d. Evil and sin are understood as both the cause and the result of the creature’s separation from God, and when submitted to, they achieve a force of their own that pervades our existence; however, never to the point where the potential for good is completely obliterated.

C. The Role of Conscience in the life of the Orthodox Christian

1. The internal spiritual strength of a person, the manifestation of the soul
2. The internal law of God present in every person
3. The whole human being is brought to focus in the conscience, which deals with all manner of experience as ethical questions (i.e., what is right, wrong, good or evil, etc.)
4. It appropriates for the self “objective” moral standards and personalizes and adopts them as one’s own – or rejects them or modifies them.

5. It is cultivated or deformed as one grows and matures; it requires development and improvement along with the other spiritual faculties of the person (mind, heart, will), because all these faculties have been darkened and weakened from the time of Adam and Eve.
6. Conscience more than a processor of moral information – it also stands as an inner judge of one’s motives, intents, values, and deeds.

D. Faith and Works in the life of the Orthodox Christian

- 0 1. No conflict between the two in Orthodox theology or practice; both are
- 1 involved in the mystery of salvation and theosis (James 2:14-26)
- 2 2. Roman Catholic tendency: emphasis on works
- 3 3. Protestant tendency: emphasis on faith alone

II. How Shall We Then Live?

A. Seven Capital Virtues (define “virtues”)

1. **Humility** – spiritual lowliness; the foundation of the virtues
2. **Liberality** - selfless giving of time, money, talents; a general spirit and attitude of sacrificial giving in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ
3. **Chastity** – purity in thought, word, and deed
4. **Meekness** – peaceful, fully developed Christian love, free from all malice
5. **Temperance** – Godly moderation and balance in all things, especially eating, drinking, etc.
6. **Happiness** – the blessedness of holiness and closeness to God; true joy as it is found in God
7. **Diligence** – mindfulness, attentiveness and application given especially to spiritual activity

B. Seven Grievous Vices (define “vices”)

1. **Pride** – arrogance; thinking oneself better than one is; lack of humility; introduced all evil into the world
2. **Greed** – inordinate desire for money, worldly goods, status, etc.; attitude of selfishness, self-absorption
3. **Lust** – impure and unworthy desires in thought, word or deed
4. **Anger** – unworthy irritation and lack of self-control
5. **Gluttony** – over-indulgence; lack of moderation and balance in all things, especially eating and drinking
6. **Envy** – jealousy in thought and in deed towards others
7. **Sloth** – laziness; lack of diligence that prevents one from accomplishing important tasks and duties to God and one’s neighbor

C. The Ten Commandments - the two aspects of love: love for God and love for neighbor (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5)

1. **I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me.**
 - a. Asserts God’s existence and commands us to render divine homage to no one but Him

- b. Imposes upon us specific obligations of worship – we must believe in God, place our hope in Him, glorify Him and give thanks to Him, and fearlessly confess Him before all
 - c. Sins against this commandment: atheism, polytheism, unbelief, heresy, schism, apostasy, despair, sorcery and superstition, loving any creature more than God, and self-sufficiency
- 2. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image.**
- a. Asserts again the worship due to God alone
 - b. Our theology of icons does NOT contradict this commandment (distinction of “veneration” and “worship”; icons in the Old Testament – Exodus 25: 18,22; I Kings 6: 27-29; II Chronicles 3: 7-14)
 - c. Sins against this commandment: idolatry - in our culture this sin expresses itself as covetousness (Colossians 3:5), gluttony (Philippians 3:19), pride and vanity
 - d. Virtues inspired by this commandment: generosity, self-denial, fasting, humility
- 3. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.**
- a. Intimacy with God is always expressed with reverence and awe; His Name should not be used carelessly, thoughtlessly or disrespectfully
 - b. Sins against this commandment:
 - ◆ Swearing – thoughtless habitual oaths in casual conversation
 - ◆ Blasphemy – calling God evil; ascribing evil to God; blaming God falsely
 - ◆ Sacrilege – scoffing or jesting at sacred things
 - ◆ Breaking promises given to God
 - ◆ Perjury – oath breaking
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**
- a. Old Testament Sabbath understanding (rest in remembrance of God’s creation of the world)
 - b. For Orthodox Christians, the Lord’s Day (the Day of the Resurrection of Christ) is to be celebrated as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God in our midst, and also to be devoted to the service and worship of God, for holy work and acts pleasing to God, which are understood to be:
 - ◆ Work for the salvation of one’s soul
 - ◆ Prayer both in home and at church
 - ◆ Study of the commandments of God, which includes reading of the Holy Scriptures and other spiritually helpful books
 - ◆ Helping the poor, visiting the sick and prisoners, comforting the grieving
 - c. Observing the Feasts and fasts of the Church also pertain to the keeping of this commandment
- 5. Honor thy father and thy mother.**
- a. Commandment with a promise – a happy and long life

- b. To honor parents means to love them and be respectful toward them; to refrain from offending them in word or action; to obey them and help them in labor; to care for them when they are in need, especially when they are sick or old; to pray for them to God both during this life and when they die
 - c. Honor and respect also due to others in authority; i.e., pastors and spiritual fathers, government officials, teachers and benefactors
 - d. Sins against this commandment: disrespect and slander against parents, elders or superiors
- 6. Thou shalt not kill.**
- a. Respect for life and the human person; respect for the image of God in man are the foundations for this commandment
 - b. Sins against this commandment: murder, abortion, suicide, wishing someone dead; maintaining hatred, envy or malice toward others; inciting quarrels, fights and distress among others; doing anything which injures the weak, especially children; also spiritual murder (seducing someone to unbelief or into a life of vice)
 - c. Virtues inspired by this commandment: helping the poor and serving the sick; being kind and loving to all; reconciling with those who are angry and forgiving offenses; and refraining from harmful examples, especially before children
 - d. Killing that occurs in war – a sin against this commandment?
 - e. Capital punishment – a sin against this commandment?
- 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.**
- a. Refers to unfaithfulness to one's spouse and all unlawful lust
 - b. The body a Temple of the Holy Spirit – we must maintain our bodies in purity (I Corinthians 6:18-20) and avoid a "mentality of the flesh" which leads one away from God (Romans 8:5-8)
 - c. Sins against this commandment: fornication, adultery, prostitution, incest, homosexual and lesbian acts, bestiality, auto-eroticism (masturbation), pedophilia
 - d. Virtues inspired by this commandment: sexual purity in marriage ("maintain their marriage bed pure and undefiled") and sexual purity outside of marriage
- 8. Thou shalt not steal.**
- a. This commandment forbids us to take or hold unjustly anything that belongs to others; we are to give to all men what belongs to them and to respect their property
 - b. Sins against this commandment: dishonesty of all sorts; theft (of money, things, time, etc.) robbery, extortion, bribery, fraud and usury
 - c. Virtues inspired by this commandment: honesty, industriousness, mercy and truthfulness
- 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.**

- a. The foundations of this commandment are based upon honoring the image of God in others by using the gift of speech to speak the truth in all things and carefully preserving the reputation of others (Matthew 12: 36-37)
- b. The power of the tongue (read James 3 and St. John Climacus The Ladder of Divine Ascent – Step 11 “On Talkativeness and Silence”)
- c. Sins against this commandment:
 - ◆ Lying – deliberate attempts to deceive by use of any form of untruth (words, gestures, circumstances, silence, etc.) (read “Step 12 – On Lying” – The Ladder of Divine Ascent)
 - ◆ Bearing false witness – starting and spreading lies and false rumors about others
 - ◆ Slander – accusing someone of something they did not do (read “Step 10 – On Slander and Calumny” – The Ladder of Divine Ascent)
 - ◆ Gossip, Backbiting, Defamation – saying, without necessity, the mistakes or omissions of others; an off-hand judgment about others without proof
 - ◆ Indiscretion – disclosing a confidential secret that should be kept to oneself
 - ◆ Mockery – magnifying the faults of others in a comical way; making fun of others
 - ◆ The major sin behind all the above is Judgmentalism; it is never appropriate to engage in this behavior if we have not been specifically required to do so because of the responsibility of our position or duty
- d. None of the above sins will reform or change a neighbor; only love, godly patience and good will and harmony and the grace of God will accomplish that. We must always bear in mind that each of us possesses many weaknesses and faults

10. Thou shalt not covet.

- a. The essence of this commandment is that we should be satisfied with what we have in purity of heart; being free of any earthly attachment; rejoicing in our neighbor’s welfare; giving thanks to God for all things, and not falling victim to evil desires (read St John Climacus The Ladder of Divine Ascent – Step 2 “On Detachment”)
- b. Coveting – an inordinate desire (stemming from a condition of the heart) to have something that someone else has
- c. Greatest sins against this commandment: envy, jealousy and greed
- d. Virtues inspired by this commandment: liberality, thankfulness, rejoicing in others’ blessings

D. The Beatitudes – The completion and fulfillment of the Ten Commandments; the commandments of eternal blessedness and promise. The Ten Commandments

and the Law of the Old Testament prepared man for the Kingdom of God; the Beatitudes describe this Kingdom and invite man to enter into it

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

- a. The poor in spirit are those who are conscious of their imperfections and unworthiness before God; those who are humble and never think they are better or more holy or spiritual than others
- b. Spiritual lowliness – humility; a “nameless grace in the soul” (St. John Climacus – Ladder of Divine Ascent – Step 25); the foundation of all Christian virtues
- c. Poverty of spirit – describes a person “who understands the limitations of his intelligence, the relative quality of his knowledge, the scantiness of his virtues, the weakness of his will, and the dryness of his heart, and who knows very well that all true riches are found in God, and that without Him, he is nothing” (The Living God – Vol. I; p.117).
- d. Those who are poor in spirit realize deeply in the soul that their entire life and all spiritual and physical blessings and every good thing are gifts of our Creator God
- e. The life of eternal blessedness, the life of the Kingdom (which begins here and now by faith and hope in God) belongs to those who are poor in spirit

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

- a. This mourning primarily refers to weeping for our sins and guilt before the merciful God in repentance (II Corinthians 7:10); also compared to a second Baptism
- b. Tribulation and tears coming from misfortunes in life can result in blessed mourning, if the sorrow is permeated with faith and hope, patience and devotion to the will of God (i.e., the death of a loved one)
- c. Worldly grief (grief without hope in God) is not the same as blessed mourning (i.e., the grief of Judas Iscariot)
- d. Our Lord promises comfort for those who mourn with blessed mourning – the forgiveness of sins, internal peace and eternal joy

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

- a. Meekness is peaceful, fully developed Christian love, expressing itself mainly in patient endurance of insults inflicted by others; and is the opposite of anger, malice, self-exaltation and vengeance
- b. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme example of this virtue as He prays for His enemies from the Cross
- c. A meek person has no personal agenda – he is concerned only for God’s will, and he is willing to wait calmly for God to accomplish His purposes. When he must act, he does so out of calm faith rather than panicky unbelief
- d. This virtue, seen as weakness in the world’s eyes, is powerfully awesome because it displays a glimpse of God’s power (not passive gentleness but strength under control)

- e. The promise is that God in His justice will give the earth to the meek (Ps. 36:11) and they will exercise dominion over it; also the promise indicates that the meek in this life will be preserved on earth by the power of God in spite of the intrigues of men
- 4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.**
- a. Our yearning for righteousness must be very strong – as strong as our desire to appease our appetite and thirst (Ps. 4: 1,2)
 - b. The Presence of God and His Kingdom are the most important thing for the person hungering and thirsting after righteousness
 - c. The promise given is that they will be filled – with what?
Spiritual satisfaction, comprised of internal spiritual peace, a calm conscience, justification and forgiveness
- 5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.**
- a. Mercy is compassion and love set in motion; godly pity and love expressed in action
 - b. Physical works of mercy
 1. Feeding the hungry
 2. Giving drink to the thirsty
 3. Clothing the naked
 4. Visiting those in prison
 5. Visiting the sick and helping them to recover or preparing them for a Christian death
 6. Inviting strangers, foreigners, or travelers into one's home and giving them rest
 7. Burying the dead
 - c. Spiritual works of mercy
 1. By word and example admonishing and converting the sinner from the error of his ways (James 5:20)
 2. Instructing and teaching the ignorant truth and goodness
 3. Giving good counsel and timely advice to those in distress or danger
 4. Comforting the grieving and sorrowful
 5. Suffering wrongs patiently and refraining from returning evil for evil
 6. Forgiving injuries and offenses with all one's heart
 7. Praying to God for all (living and departed)
 - d. The promise is that God will in return show mercy to those who are merciful. They will be delivered from eternal punishment and inherit the Kingdom to the degree to which they showed mercy on earth (Matt. 25: 31-46).
- 6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**
- a. A pure heart is one in which the deepest emotions and unconscious desires correspond to the openly proclaimed intentions
 - b. A pure heart truly loves and is not self-centered

- c. The pure in heart are devoted to the worship and service of God, not being conscious of any evil in themselves; free from attachment and infatuation with earthly things
 - d. The promise is that the pure in heart will see God – behold Him, by grace, mysteriously, with the spiritual eyes of the heart. They will behold the glory of God in His revelations, communing with Him in blessedness on earth (“through a mirror dimly”) and beholding His glory “face to face” in eternity
- 7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children (sons) of God.**
- a. Peacemakers share God’s peace and concord with those around them and with all creation, living with everyone in harmony and fostering peace among people (see Romans 12:18)
 - b. They are reconcilers, participating in the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5: 18) by attempting to reconcile others or at least pray to God for their reconciliation
 - c. It is the peace of Christ that is conveyed (John 14:27), not the peace of the world that is transient and tied to earthly circumstances
 - d. The promise is that the peacemakers will be called sons of God because they participate in the work of God’s Son (reconciling all creation to God). They become, by grace, Who Christ is by nature
- 8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**
- a. Those who live righteously according to the commandments of God and who are dedicated to upholding God’s truth and refuse to compromise with the ways of the world will be persecuted for their pious life
 - b. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our supreme example of this, and He predicted the same for His disciples (John 15:20; II Timothy 3:12). When we are persecuted and employ only the “weapons” of truth and love, we become one with the Persecuted One
 - c. In order to endure persecution patiently for righteousness’ sake, one must possess love for the truth, be steadfast and firm in virtuous living, have courage and patience, and faith and hope in the help and protection of God
 - d. The promise is the Kingdom of Heaven – spiritual triumph, joy and blessedness
- 9. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.**
- a. Blessed are those who, for the sake of Christ, patiently bear disgrace, persecution, malice, defamation, mockery, privation and even death
 - b. Martyrdom – no higher spiritual feat

- c. Christian courage must be exercised in these situations. This courage is based on the highest of Christian virtues – on unshakeable faith and hope in God; on love for God and neighbor; and on complete obedience and utter submission to the will of God
- d. I Peter 4:14-16

Resources: Living the Faith (Harakas); Ch.1- “Foundations for Christian Praxis”
Ch. 4 – “Ethical Relations with the Self”
The Law of God (Slobodskoy); Part IV – “Christian Faith and Life”
The Orthodox Study Bible (NKJV); “Works in Paul’s Writings” (p.441)
“Justification by Faith” (p.348)
A Pocket Prayer Book (Antiochian Archdiocese); pp.28, 29
The Living God (SVS Press); pp. 101-127
A Catechetical Handbook of the Eastern Orthodox Church (Stamatis);
Ch.12 – “What To Do For Our Salvation”
The Ladder of Divine Ascent (St. John Climacus)
Ascending the Heights (Mack); p.126