

PRAYER ❖ BOOK ❖



To the Glory of God
and in commemoration of the
Enthronement of His Grace Bishop MAXIM
of Western America
St. Steven Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Alhambra, California
in the Year of our Lord 2006





MORNING PRAYERS

Having risen from bed, clothed and groomed yourself, stand before the Icon or the Cross, and collecting your thoughts and crossing yourself, say with piety and fear of God:

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then stand in silence a short while until your feelings have calmed down, and then make three bows, saying:

O Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, and all the saints, have mercy upon us.

Then:

Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who are present everywhere filling all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and dwell in us. Cleanse us of every stain, and save our souls, gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

THE CREED (SYMBOL OF FAITH)

I believe in one God, Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; 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:

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became Man:

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried:

And He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures:

And ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father:

And He is coming again with glory to judge the living and the dead; And His Kingdom will have no end:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of the Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is equally worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets:

And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins.
I look for the Resurrection of the Dead;
And the life of the Age to come. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

O Lord, Who in Thy abundant goodness and Thy great compassion hast granted me, Thy servant, to pass the time of this night without the temptation of any opposing evil, Lord and Creator of all, by Thy true light and with an enlightened heart grant me to do Thy will, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Virgin Mother of God, rejoice, Mary full of grace; the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.



Most Holy Mistress Theotokos, raise us from the depth of sin and deliver us from hunger, sudden death, earthquake and flood, fire and sword, from invasion of aliens and civil war.

DAILY PRAYER

Grant unto me, my Lord, that with peace in mind I may face all that this new day is to bring. Grant unto me grace to surrender myself completely to Thy holy will.

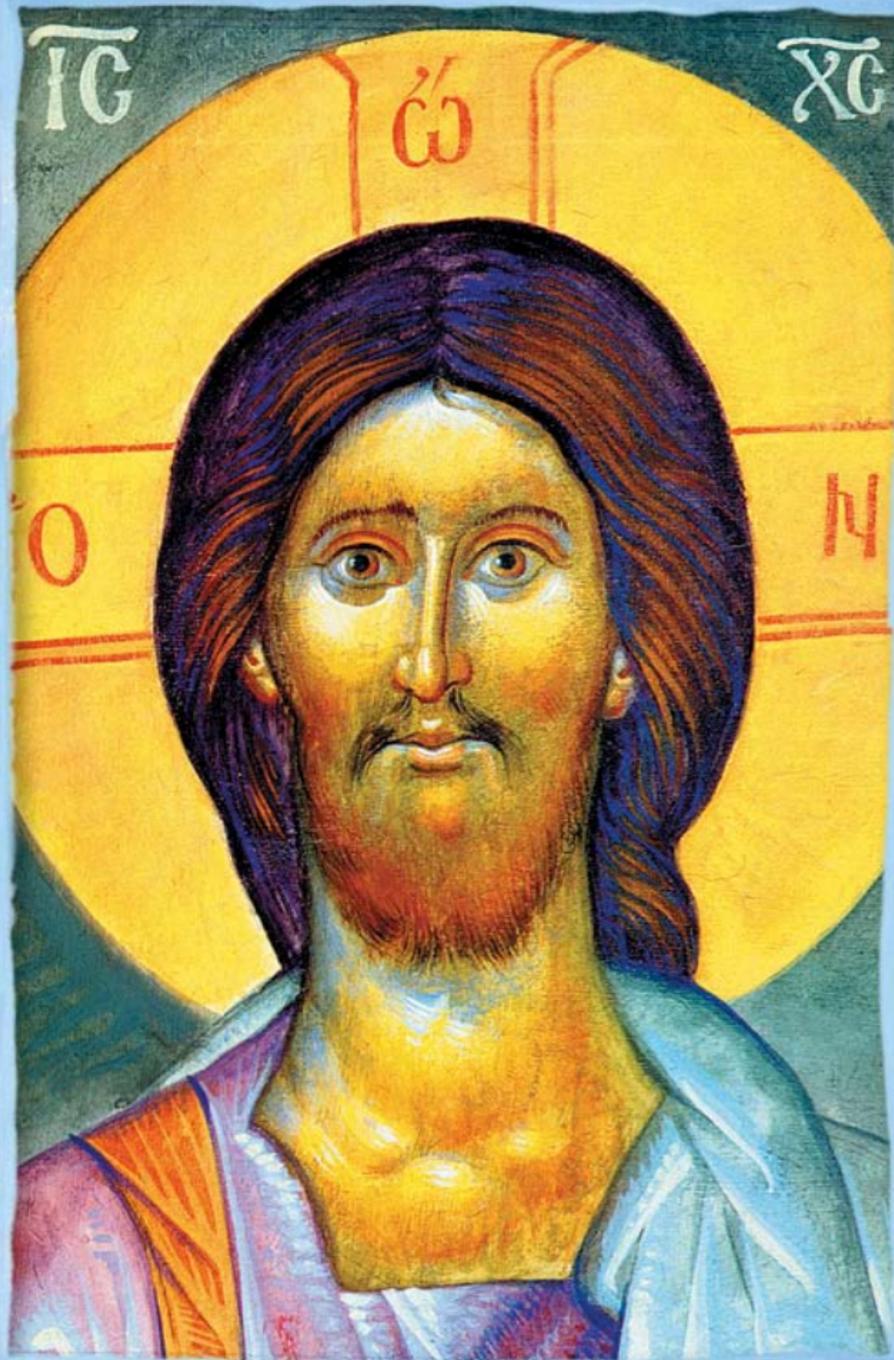
Instruct and prepare me in all things for every hour of this day. Whatsoever tidings I may receive during the day, do Thou teach me to accept them calmly, in the firm conviction that all eventualities fulfill Thy holy will. Govern Thou my thoughts and feelings in all I do and say.

When things unforeseen occur, let me not forget that all cometh down from Thee.

Teach me to behave sincerely and reasonable toward every member of my family and all other human beings, that I may not cause confusion and sorrow to anyone.

Bestow upon me, my Lord, strength to endure the fatigue of the day and to bear my share in all its passing events.

Guide Thou my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to suffer, to forgive, and to love. Amen.





EVENING PRAYERS

Having crossed yourself before the Icon and the Cross, say:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, wash away our sins, O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our

daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

THE CREED

(on page 5)

Then:

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us. For at a loss for any plea we sinners offer to Thee, our Master, this supplication: have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy on us, for our trust is in Thee. Be not very angry with us, remember not our sins; but even now regard us, in Thy tender compassion, and deliver us from our enemies. For Thou art our God, and we are Thy people; we are all the work of Thy Hands, and we call on Thy Name.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Open the door of thy loving-kindness, O blessed Mother of God, that we who put our hope in thee may not perish. Through thee, may we be delivered from adversities, for thou art the salvation of Christian people.

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRAYER TO GOD THE FATHER

O Eternal God and King of all creation, Who hast granted me to arrive at this hour, forgive me the sins that I have committed today in thought, word and deed, and cleanse, O Lord, my humble soul from all defilement of flesh and spirit. And grant me, O Lord, to pass the sleep of this night in peace, that when I rise from my bed I may please Thy most holy Name all the days of my life and conquer my flesh and the fleshless foes that war with me. And deliver me, O Lord, from vain and frivolous thoughts, and from evil desires which defile me. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

My most holy Lady, Mother of God, by thy holy and all-powerful prayers banish from me, thy humble, wretched servant, despondency, forgetfulness, folly, carelessness, and all impure, evil and blasphemous thoughts out of my wretched heart and my darkened mind. And quench the flame of my passions, for I am poor and wretched, and deliver me from my many cruel memories

and deeds, and free me from all their bad effects; for blessed art thou by all generations, and glorified is thy most honorable name to the ages of ages. Amen.

Virgin Mother of God, rejoice, Mary full of grace; the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.





PRAYER AT EVERY HOUR OF DAY AND NIGHT

Thou Who at all times and every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who loveth the righteous and hast mercy on sinners, Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PREPARATORY PRAYER FOR HOLY COMMUNION

I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief. And I believe that this is Thy pure Body and Thy own precious Blood. Therefore, I pray Thee, have mercy on me and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown. And grant that I may partake of Thy Holy Mysteries without condemnation, for the remission of sins and for life eternal.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of the Mystery to Thy enemies; I will not give Thee a kiss like Judas; but like the Thief do I confess Thee. Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

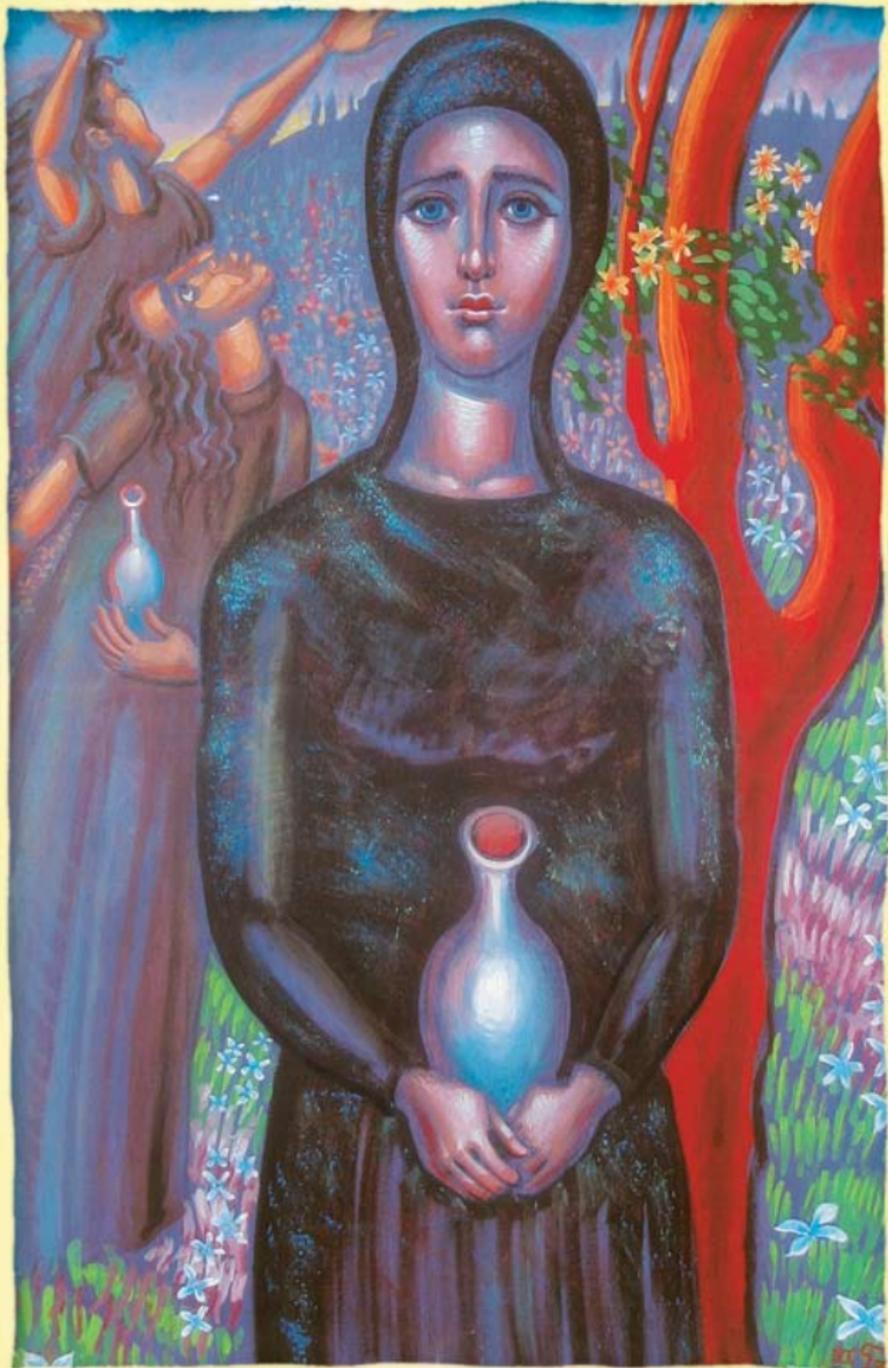
Let not the communion of Thy Holy Mysteries be unto me for judgment or condemnation, O Lord, but for healing of soul and body. Amen



THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Lord Christ our God, King of the ages and Creator of all, I thank Thee for all the blessings Thou hast granted me and for the communion of Thy pure and life-giving Mysteries. I pray Thee, therefore, good Lord and Lover of men, guard me under Thy protection and within the shadow of Thy wings; and grant me with a clear conscience till my last breath worthily to partake of Thy holy Things for forgiveness of sins and for life eternal. For Thou art the Bread of Life, the Source of Holiness, the Giver of all that is good, and to Thee we send up the glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.







PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS

Before Breakfast

Having crossed yourself, say the prayer:

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, wash away our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Names sake.

After Breakfast

Having risen from the table, cross yourself and say:

It is meet and right to bless thee, the ever-blessed and all-pure Virgin and Mother of our God. More honourable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, thou who in virginity didst bear God the Word, thee, true Mother of God, we magnify.

Before the Noon Meal

Having crossed yourself, read the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

After the Noon Meal

Having risen from the table, cross yourself and say:

We thank Thee, o Christ our God, that Thou hast satisfied us with Thy earthly gifts; deprive us not of Thy heavenly kingdom, but as Thou earnest among Thy disciples, O Saviour, and gavest them peace, come to us and save us.

Before the Evening Meal

Having crossed yourself, say the prayer:

The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise Him; their hearts shall live for ever.

After the Evening Meal

Having risen from the table, cross yourself and say:

Thy womb is become an holy table, bearing Christ the heavenly bread. All that eat from it shall not die, as hath said the Nourisher of all, O Mother of God.

PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER LESSONS

Before Lessons

Most gracious Lord! Send down upon us the grace of Thy Holy Spirit to grant us intelligence and strengthen the powers of our soul, that we may attend to the instruction given us, and grow up to glorify Thee, our Creator, to gladden our parents, and to serve the Church and our people.

After Lessons

We thank Thee, our Creator, that Thou hast granted us Thy grace to attend to this instruction. Bless our parents and teachers who are leading us to knowledge of good, and grant us energy and strength to persevere in our studies.



PRAYER AGAINST BAD THOUGHTS

Having crossed yourself, say with a humble heart:

O Lord, my God and Master in whose hands is my fate, protect me according to Your mercy and permit me not to perish with my transgressions, nor to follow the will of my body which through lust wars against the spirit. I am Your creation, do not despise the work of Your hands. Turn not from me; have mercy but do not let me be humiliated. I am weak, do not despise me, O Lord, because I flee to You, my Protector and my God: heal my soul for I have sinned against You; save me for Your mercy's sake, for I have been faithful to You from my youth; let them be put to shame who seek to separate me from You through unclean deeds, bad thoughts, useless memories; drive away from me every uncleanness, every evil, for You alone are Holy, Mighty, Immortal, infinitely powerful in all things, and You grant to all people strength to fight against the devil and his armies. For to You is due all glory, honor and worship, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE DEPARTED

Remember, O Lord, fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep in hope of resurrection and eternal life, and all the departed and killed in piety and faith, and grant them forgiveness of every sin, voluntary and involuntary, committed in word, thought or deed. Let them abide in places of light, places of green, places of rest, whence flees every torment, sorrow and sighing, and where the sight of Your face has gladdened all Your Saints throughout the ages. Grant them Your Kingdom, grant them partaking in Your unspeakable and eternal goods, and the enjoyment in Your endless, blessed life. For You are the Life and the Resurrection and the blessed rest of Your servants, O Christ our God, and to You do we send up glory, together with Your Father, and Your All-holy, Blessed and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



THE TWO GREATEST COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.

2. You shall love you neighbour as yourself.

(Luke 10,27; Mathew 22,37-39).





THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before Me.

2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

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

4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

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

10. You shall not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.

(Exodus 20,1-17).



WHY DO I BELIEVE?

What is faith?

„Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen“ (Heb. 11: 1). I believe, because the Living and True God exists, and I exist, and the world around me exists. (John 14: 1, 17: 3) I believe, because I am a living part of a wondrous world which was created by God's will out of God's Eternity, brought into being and existence, and is moving toward Eternal Life in the union of Holy Trinity.

I believe, because I have a living, sensible soul whose essence cannot be reduced to or explained by anything that exists in the visible world. Thought is faster than Light, more expansive than the universe, more piercing than lightning. And the soul, the thought and the heart are a gift to man from the Living and Personal God – the Father, the Son-Logos and the Holy Spirit.

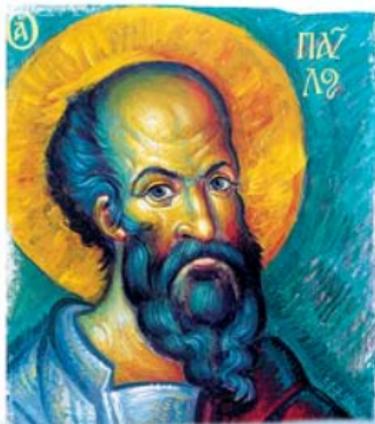
I believe because the world is interwoven with the eternal moral law of God, the law of reason, harmony and order. That law is: in universe – order, in nature – harmony, in the soul – conscience, in society – morality, and in every man – the inborn law of good.

I believe, because everything in this world has a beginning. Science is counting the years of the Sun, Earth and Moon, Stars and the whole Universe. Therefore, everything started at some point, everything has its first day, and everything has been created. And the Creator of everything is only God Himself and can be only the living God, and not just a

coincidence. The world and man are the work of the All-Reason – God the Logos.

I believe, because the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, came into the world and became true Man, awaited for centuries, prophesied by the holy Prophets, and so His birth from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, His message, His death on Golgotha and His resurrection from the dead, is the fulfillment of the promise and the realization of the plan of God's Providence for the salvation of the world and fallen man, and of granting the Eternal Life to every creature.

I believe also in God's Church because Christ's Orthodox Church is the home of God the Father, the Body of Christ, the Dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and therefore – our home, and family, and the living environment of eternal life: in faith, love and grace of the Holy Trinity. The Church is the pillar and the fortress of the Eternal Truth and of the deification of all people. In the Church-Temple, the greatest mystery of our faith is accomplished – the Divine Liturgy, the foretaste of Life Eternal.



ABOUT PROPER CONDUCT IN CHURCH

1. When you go to church, think that you are going to the Home of the Heavenly King, where you should stand with faith, reverence and joy, just like you would stand in Heaven before the Heavenly King. Church hymns instruct us to do this also when they say, „When you stand in the temple, think that you are standing in heaven!“

2. If you want your prayer to be of any benefit, forgive each one who offended you so that you could also say, „Our Father, Who art in Heaven, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us!“ Know that if you don't forgive your neighbor for his offences, neither will God forgive you your sins. (Matt. 6: 15)

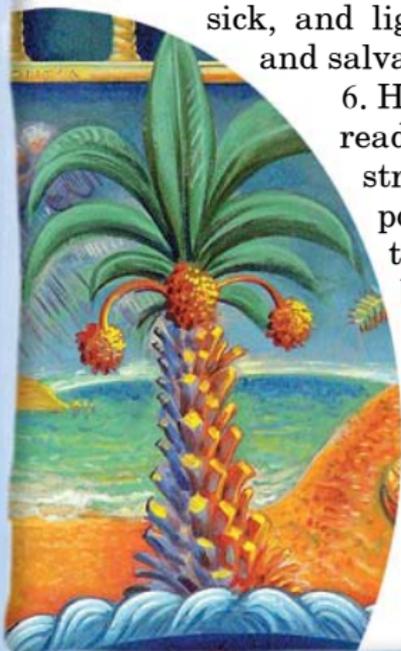
3. When you stand in church, don't look left and right; don't look at how others are standing and praying because you will be condemned like the Pharisee, since it is not up to you but up to God to judge these things; you only need watch yourself before God. Look at the altar where the Most Holy Sacrifice of Holy Eucharist is being offered, and repeat within yourself like the publican, „God, be merciful to me a sinner!“

4. Beware, as of burning fire, of laughter and talking in the church because through this you offend God, since you thus show not only that you don't respect the Church as the most holy place, but you also lead others into sin and don't allow them to pray. Listen carefully to what is sung and read, and

savor it. If your mind wanders off somewhere else, strive to bring it back and make it listen to the hymns and prayers which glorify God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

5. When coming to church, remember the dead and think of the day when you will go bodily into the arms of mother earth and up before God with your soul. Pray for the dead, that God would have mercy on them and light candles for the repose of their souls. This will be beneficial not just for them but for you also, because you will thus be showing your love for your near ones. Thinking of your death, you will pray to God more earnestly, but you will also lead your life more decently. Remember also, when you are in church, your loved ones who are alive. Remember your parents, children, relatives, friends, the suffering ones, the poor, the sick, and light candles for their health and salvation.

6. Hearing the Word of God being read, sung or preached in church, strive to fulfill it, and always ponder how you might be able to do so. Otherwise, you will be condemned for knowing what to do but not doing it. Blessed are those who hear God's word and keep it (Luke 11: 28). Teach also your children and members of your household to do so and you will be rewarded by God.



THE PRAYER BOOK

which you are holding is a supporting booklet of basic prayers for children and beginners in the faith which ought to be read throughout the day with the purpose of spiritual strengthening and bringing God's peace into our soul, heart and body through the prayer to the Living and True God.

What prayer is, what is its meaning and significance for the spiritual life of a Christian, we learn best from the words and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. It can be seen in the Gospel that He, as a man, prayed often and remained in prayer all night (Luke 6:12; 5: 16; Matt. 26: 39; John 7: 1). Once, after He had prayed, stopping at the request of His disciples to also teach them how to pray, He uttered the greatest prayer – *Our Father*, which is the *example for all prayers*. Christ tells the Apostles and all the faithful that they are to pray always and never falter (Luke 18: 1-7), and that their prayer mustn't be hypocritical but sincere, since God sees everything, even the most hidden secrets of the heart (Matt. 6: 5-7). He also teaches us that we are to pray *individually*, alone in our heart and our rooms (Matt. 6: 6), but that it also necessary to pray *together*, in the church, with other brethren in the faith, during common services, especially during the Divine Liturgy. Because He says, „Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I will be in the midst of them“ (Matt. 18: 20). We need both types of prayer, *individual* and *congregational*; one type cannot replace or prevail over the other.

The prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Man, to God the Father, and the prayer *Our Father* tell us that our prayer is an address, a *conversation* of us children with our Heavenly Father, like a conversation within a family here on earth.

In our physical and spiritual life, we talk to our Heavenly Father through three types of prayer. In one type of prayer, we *magnify* God for His glory, power, goodness and love. The other type of prayer is the prayer of *thanksgiving* to Him for all the good things He has done and keeps doing for us. The third type is the prayer in which we *entreat* God for our physical and spiritual needs.

God speaks back to us through Holy Scripture, and through science of the Holy people – Apostles, Prophets and Saints, and also through the Mysteries of the Church and through church services. But everything that our Father does for us and gives us is done in His Son, Christ, through the Holy Spirit in the Church.

In spiritual life, like in physical life, we ought to observe moderation, accept easier struggles and commitments at first, and then go on to bigger ones as our strength increases. We ought to do as Saint Paul instructs us when he says that beginners should be given softer food, and after they grow and strengthen, then go on to harder food (Heb. 5: 12). We should do likewise with prayer, beginning with a small amount, and after establishing the small rule, accepting more and more until we reach the full prayer rule for grown-ups in Christ (Eph. 4: 13). Holy Fathers give us the same instructions and note that we should not do this of our own accord, but under the guidance of an experienced spiritual father.

Prayer should be conducted by standing reverently before a holy Icon or the Honorable Cross or a Holy Temple, and making the *sign of the cross*.

Whenever we cross ourselves, we should do it not carelessly and in all kinds of manner, but carefully and correctly. *Putting together the three fingers of the right hand (the thumb and the first two fingers), the other two fingers should be bent in the palm of the hand.* The

three fingers in this position represent the **Holy Trinity**, and the **two fingers** bent in the palm of the hand represent Christ as God and Man. The hand with the fingers in this position should be placed on the forehead with the words ***In the name of the Father***, then on the belly with the words ***and the Son***, then on the right shoulder and while moving it from right to the left shoulder saying ***and the Holy Spirit***, finishing with the hand on one's chest and saying ***Amen***.

It will happen that various thoughts will come to us during prayer (both good and bad), leading the mind into a scattered state. Holy Fathers advise that the mind should be tied to the words of the prayer, saying them quietly, just loud enough that we can hear ourselves or inaudibly but clearly in our mind. If the mind wanders off, we should return to the last words that remain in our memory.

Just like every good allows for another good to be done, so the living and earnest prayer will, like a fruitful tree, bring a good fruit of other virtues to those who pray with faith and carefully, sincerely and in purity before the Living and True God.

In all of our prayers, we should humbly feel that we do not know how to pray and what to pray for, but that the Holy Spirit Himself is praying for us, within us, through *groanings which cannot be uttered* (Rom. 8: 26).

(What is true prayer, see above, pg 2 cover).

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ
ΑΡΧΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΛΟΣ

Illustrations

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