



*A Prayer Book for
Families*

MORNING PRAYERS

The Trisagion Prayers

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

† Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O 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 ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, 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 unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

† For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparia to the Holy Trinity

Having arisen from sleep, we fall down before thee, O Blessed One, and sing to thee, O Mighty One, the Angelic Hymn: Holy, holy, holy art thou, O God. Through the Theotokos have mercy on us.

✠ Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

From my bed and sleep Thou hast raised me: O Lord, enlighten my mind and my heart, and open my lips that I may praise thee, O Holy Trinity: Holy, holy, holy art thou, O God. Through the Theotokos have mercy on us.

✠ Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Suddenly the Judge shall come, and the deeds of each shall be revealed: but with fear we cry out in the middle of the night: Holy, holy, holy art thou, O God. Through the Theotokos have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

A Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Arising from sleep I thank thee, O holy Trinity, because of the abundance of thy goodness and long-suffering thou wast not wroth with me, slothful and sinful as I am; neither hast thou destroyed me in my transgressions: but in thy compassion raised me up, as I lay in despair; that at dawn I might sing the glories of thy Majesty. Do thou now enlighten the eyes of my understanding, open my mouth to receive thy words, teach me thy commandments, help me to do thy will, confessing thee from my heart, singing and praising thine All-holy Name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Creed

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made:

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man;

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets;

And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the Resurrection of the dead. And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

The Litany of Intersession:

† Lord Jesus Christ our God, who in thy mercy and all-loving kindness dost regard the prayers of all who call upon thee with their whole heart, incline thine ear and hear our prayer, now humbly offered unto thee:

† Be mindful, O Lord, of thy Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church; confirm and strengthen it, increase it and keep it in peace, and preserve it unconquerable forever.

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, Of my, our Bishop (*name*) , and of our Priest Father (*name*) , and of every Bishop of the Orthodox; of Priests and Deacons and all the Clergy of thy Church, which thou hast established to feed the flock of the Word; and by their prayers have mercy on us.

✠ Be mindful, O Lord of this city in which we dwell, and of every city and land; grant us peaceful times, that we may lead a calm and tranquil life in all godliness and sanctity.

Parents then pray for their Children:

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of our children (*names...*) whose souls Thou hast entrusted to us to help grow in love for Thee.

Children now pray for their Parents:

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of our Father and Mother and teach us to love, respect and obey them for they were given to us by Thee as our help and protection in this world.

Now both continue to pray:

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of all our relatives and love ones and friends (*names...*); and remember even those who hate us and cause us offence and grant them mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation, and pardon and remission of sins; that they may evermore praise and glorify thy holy Name.

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of those who travel by land, and sea, and air; of the young and the old; orphans and widows; the sick and the suffering; the sorrowing and the afflicted, all captives, and the needy poor; and upon them all send forth thy mercies, for thou art the Giver of all good things.

✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of this family and grant us thy grace to be humble, diligent and faithful in showing Thy love to all, acting

in meekness and mercy at all times; that we may avoid evil company and influence, and resist all temptation; that we may lead a godly and righteous life, blameless and peaceful, ever serving Thee, that we may be accounted worthy one day to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

† Be mindful, O Lord, of all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto life eternal, especially *(names...)* ; pardon all their sins both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word, or deed, or thought. Shelter them in a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away, and where the sight of thy countenance rejoiceth all thy Saints from all the ages. Grant them thy heavenly Kingdom, and a portion in thine ineffable and eternal blessings, and the enjoyment of thine unending Life.

† Hear my prayer, O Lord, for thou art merciful and compassionate, and lovest mankind, and to thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Here may be added some of your own private devotions as shown below (saying only the ones that apply to your life , or simply using your own words:

To the Virgin Mary:

† Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, O 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 Savior of our souls.

Another Version:

† Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Another prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

✠ It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever blessed and all blameless, and Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim. Thou who without stain barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos we magnify thee.

Prayers to your Patron Saint:

✠ Pray unto God for us O holy Saint (name) well pleasing to God, for we run to thee who art the speedy intercessor of our souls.

A Prayer to the Guardian Angel

✠ O holy angel that standeth by my soul please guide me in the way of salvation. Yea, O holy angel of God, guardian and protector of my wretched soul and body, protect me during this present day, and guard me from every temptation of the enemy, that I may not anger God by any sin. And pray to the Lord for me, that he may establish me in His fear, and show me, His servant, to be worthy of His goodness. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

✠ Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant N._____, delivering him from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him up that he may sing to Thee and praise Thee without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

PRAYER BEFORE ANY WORK

✠ Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, Thou hast said, "Without me you can do nothing." In faith I embrace Thy words, O Lord, and bow before Thy goodness. Help me to complete the work I am about to begin for Thine own glory: in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Philaret of Moscow at the beginning of the Day

✠ Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace, help me in all things to rely upon Thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray. And Thou, Thyself, pray in me. Amen.

When you have finished, conclude with this prayer:

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

MIDDAY PRAYERS

The Trisagion Prayers

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

✠ Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O 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 ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, 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 unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

✠ For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Christ our God, who at this hour didst stretch out thy loving arms upon the Cross that all men might be gathered unto thee, help us and save us who cry out unto thee: Glory to thee, O Lord.

Here may be added some of your own private devotions as shown below (saying only the ones that apply to your life) , or simply using your own words:

To the Virgin Mary:

† Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, O 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 Savior of our souls.

Another Version:

† Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Another prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

† It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever blessed and all blameless, and Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim. Thou who without stain barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos we magnify thee.

Prayers to your Patron Saint:

† Pray unto God for us O holy Saint (name) well pleasing to God, for we run to thee who art the speedy intercessor of our souls.

A Prayer to the Guardian Angel

† O holy angel that standeth by my soul please guide me in the way of salvation. Yea, O holy angel of God, guardian and protector of my wretched soul and body, protect me during this present night, and guard me from every temptation of the

enemy, that I may not anger God by any sin. And pray to the Lord for me, that he may establish me in His fear, and show me, His servant, to be worthy of His goodness. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

✠ Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant N._____, delivering him from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him up that he may sing to Thee and praise Thee without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

PRAYER BEFORE ANY WORK

✠ Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, Thou hast said, "Without me you can do nothing." In faith I embrace Thy words, O Lord, and bow before Thy goodness. Help me to complete the work I am about to begin for Thine own glory: in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Philaret of Moscow for strength to get through the Day

✠ Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace, help me in all things to rely upon Thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray. And Thou, Thyself, pray in me. Amen.

When you have finished, conclude with this prayer:

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

EVENING PRAYERS

The Trisagion Prayers

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

✠ Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O 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 ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, 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 unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

✠ For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparia of Thanksgiving

Now that the day has come to a close, I thank thee, O Lord, and I ask that the evening with the night may be sinless; grant this to me, O Saviour, and save me.

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

Now that the day hath passed, I glorify thee, O Master, and I ask that the evening, with the night may be without offence; grant this to me, O Saviour, and save me.

† Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Now that the day hath run its course, I praise thee, O Holy One, and I ask that the evening with the night may be undisturbed; grant this to me, O Saviour, and save me.

Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

The Creed

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made:

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man;

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

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

And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead,
Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who
proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets;

And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the Resurrection of the dead.

And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

The Litany of Intercession:

- ✠ Lord Jesus Christ our God, who in thy mercy and all-loving kindness dost regard the prayers of all who call upon thee with their whole heart, incline thine ear and hear our prayer, now humbly offered unto thee:
- ✠ Be mindful, O Lord, of thy Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church; confirm and strengthen it, increase it and keep it in peace, and preserve it unconquerable forever.
- ✠ Be mindful, O Lord, Of my, our Bishop (*name*), and of our Priest Father (*name*), and of every Bishop of the Orthodox; of Priests and Deacons and all the Clergy of thy Church, which thou hast established to feed the flock of the Word; and by their prayers have mercy on us.
- ✠ Be mindful, O Lord of this city in which we dwell, and of every city and land; grant us peaceful times, that we may lead a calm and tranquil life in all godliness and sanctity.

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† Be mindful, O Lord, of those who travel by land, and sea, and air; of the young and the old; orphans and widows; the sick and the suffering; the sorrowing and the afflicted, all captives, and the needy poor; and upon them all send forth thy mercies, for thou art the Giver of all good things.

† Be mindful, O Lord, of this family and grant us thy grace to be humble, diligent and faithful in showing Thy love to all, acting in meekness and mercy at all times; that we may avoid evil company and influence, and resist all temptation; that we may lead a godly and righteous life, blameless and peaceful, ever serving Thee, that we may be accounted worthy one day to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

† Be mindful, O Lord, of all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto life eternal, especially (*names...*) ; pardon all their sins both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word, or deed, or thought. Shelter them in a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away, and where the sight of thy countenance rejoiceth all thy Saints from all the ages. Grant them thy heavenly Kingdom,

and a portion in thine ineffable and eternal blessings, and the enjoyment of thine unending Life.

- ✠ Hear my prayer, O Lord, for thou art merciful and compassionate, and lovest mankind, and to thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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- ✠ Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, O 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 Savior of our souls.

Another Version:

- ✠ Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Another prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

- ✠ It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever blessed and all blameless, and Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim. Thou who without stain barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos we magnify thee.

Prayers to your Patron Saint:

- ✠ Pray unto God for us O holy Saint (name) well pleasing to God, for we run to thee who art the speedy intercessor of our souls.

A Prayer to the Guardian Angel

† O holy angel that standeth by my soul please guide me in the way of salvation. Yea, O holy angel of God, guardian and protector of my wretched soul and body, protect me during this present night, and guard me from every temptation of the enemy, that I may not anger God by any sin. And pray to the Lord for me, that he may establish me in His fear, and show me, His servant, to be worthy of His goodness. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

† Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant N._____, delivering him from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him up that he may sing to Thee and praise Thee without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

A Brief Examination of Conscience before bed:

(This can be done privately or together)

In Relation To God:

† Have I omitted my morning or evening prayer; Have I spent my time today in laziness, or excessive entertainment neglecting spiritual reading, praying, or other pious exercises; Have I spoken irreverently of God and holy things; Have I taken his name in vain, or told untruths; Have I been zealous to honour God in justice, virtue and truth; Have I faithfully resisted impure thoughts?

In Relation to Myself and Others:

† Have I disobeyed my parents or superiors, murmured against their commands, or spoken badly of them; Have I offended any one by injurious threatening words or actions – or shared or participated in gossip about them – or spread any report, true or false, that exposed others to hurt; Have I hurt anyone with my words or actions; Have I encouraged any one to take pleasure in sin; Have I mocked or made fun of anyone; Have I let anger, jealousy or other negative emotion towards other take control of my mind and rob me of the peace of Christ; Have I failed to

be long-suffering with faults and imperfections of others knowing that I too am full of faults and imperfections; have I objectified others see them as objects to fulfill my own desires, wants and needs, failing to see them as children of God.

A Prayer for Forgiveness

† O Lord our God, if during this day I have sinned, whether in word or deed or thought, forgive me all, for thou art good and lovest mankind. Grant me peaceful and undisturbed sleep, and deliver me from all influence and temptation of the evil one. Raise me up again in proper time that I may glorify thee; for thou art blessed: with thine Only-begotten Son and thine All-holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

As you lie down to sleep, say:

† Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul and my body. Do thou thyself bless me, have mercy upon me, and grant me life eternal. Amen.

Spiritual Aids and Guidelines

The 4 Major Duties of a Christian

Pray
Fast
Give Alms
Confession

The Christian Duty of Prayer

Daily prayers in the Home:

- ✠ Every Orthodox Catholic Christian home should have a special place set aside for family prayer. This can be on any wall or corner in any room of the house (except the bathroom) where they hang a cross or holy icons to pray before. Each family should develop a set prayer rule using either this prayer book or another Orthodox Catholic prayer book. The bare minimum for any Orthodox Catholic Christian is to offer at least some form of morning and evening prayers.

The Sunday Liturgy:

- ✠ The Orthodox Catholic Church teaches us that we have an obligation to go to Liturgy every Sunday. In the Third Commandment, God tells us to “Remember to keep holy the sabbath day” which is Sunday, the day of Jesus Christ’s

resurrection from the dead. The Church tells us that we have an obligation to fulfill the Third Commandment by refraining from unnecessary work on Sunday and by participating in the Divine Liturgy, our chief form of worship as Christians.

✝ From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have understood that being a Christian isn't a private matter. We are called to be Christians together; while it is necessary to do daily private or family prayer in our homes throughout the week, our primary form of worship is public and communal, which is why we must attend Sunday Liturgy. To miss Church without good reason (such as illness) and to cause others to do so is a grave sin. In the early Church if one of the faithful missed the Sunday Liturgy without good reason they were excommunicated, meaning they were cut off from the saving Grace of Christ, and still today by canon law if a member of the Church has been absent for 3 consecutive Sundays they are considered to have excommunicated themselves.

Beside Sunday Liturgy and Feast that fall on Sundays listed below are the other Christian Days of Holy Obligation:

- ✝ September 8, the Nativity of the Theotokos
- ✝ September 14, the Exaltation of the Cross
- ✝ November 21, the Presentation of the Theotokos
- ✝ December 25, the Nativity of Christ/Christmas
- ✝ January 6, the Baptism of Christ
- ✝ February 2, the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple
- ✝ March 25, the Annunciation
- ✝ Good & Holy Friday
- ✝ Forty Days after Pascha (Easter) -- the Ascension of Christ
- ✝ August 6, the Transfiguration
- ✝ August 15, the Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos

The Christian Duty of Fasting

It is the duty of every Orthodox Christian to fast with the exception for the very young, those who are sick or suffer from ongoing condition like diabetes, and those over the age of sixty.

- ✠ **Weekly Fast** : All Orthodox Catholic Christians are to fast every Wednesday and Friday from meat and dairy.
- ✠ **Communion Fast**: So that the Body and Blood of our Lord may be the first thing to pass our lips on the day of communion, we abstain from eating from midnight the night before. Married couples should abstain from marital relations also from midnight the night before communion. When communion is in the evening, as with Presanctified Liturgies during Lent, then we fast from at least 5 hours before. So if you are taking communion at 7pm no food should be taken from 2pm onwards.
- ✠ **The Lenten Fast**: Great Lent is the longest and strictest fasting season of the year. Week before Lent ("Cheesefare Week"): Meat and other animal products are prohibited, but eggs and dairy products are permitted, even on Wednesday and Friday. The strict fasting rule is kept every day in Great Lent: avoidance of meat, meat products, fish, eggs and dairy. The Fast of Great and Holy Friday is the strictest fast day of the year: even those who have not kept a strict Lenten fast are strongly urged to fast on this day. On the feast of the Annunciation | (March 25) and Palm Sunday, fish is permitted.
- ✠ **Apostles' Fast**: The rule for this variable-length fast is more lenient than for Great Lent and on Saturdays and Sundays fish is permitted.
- ✠ **Dormition Fast** (*August 1st -14th*): Fasting during the two-week Dormition fast is like that during Great Lent:

† **Nativity Fast.** (*November 15 - December 24*): The Nativity Fast is divided into two periods. The first period is November 15 through December 19 when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, dairy, eggs) is observed. The second period is December 20 through 24 when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish) is observed Monday through Friday.

The Christian Duty of Alms Giving

The sacrificial giving of money to the poor and to the God's Holy Church is the duty of all Orthodox Catholic Christians. No place in the Gospel is the giving of money isolated from the rest of the Christian message. For example, in Matthew 6:2-4, Christ says:

† "When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do...that they might be praised by men...But when you give alms do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

In Keeping, every faithful Christian needs to give of their time, talents and money to provide for the needs of the Church and the to help the poor and needy.

Another place, when Jesus saw a poor widow put two copper coins in the treasury he called his disciples together and said:

† "Truly I say unto you, this widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put everything she had, her whole living." (Mark 12:43-44)

We see that the giving of money to the Church is a basic Christian duty, but the Christian message does not stop at that. The Gospel says that the

giving of money becomes an act meaningful for one's salvation especially when it is done in secret—to please God and not men—and when it is a true sacrifice—like the widow who gave all that she had.

The Christian Duty of Confession

It is the Duty of All Orthodox Catholic Christians to go to Confession.

Within the Orthodox Catholic Church it is understood that the Mystery of confession and repentance has more to do with the spiritual development of the individual and much less to do with purification. Sin is not seen as a stain on the soul, but rather a mistake that needs correction or a sickness that needs healing. The confession often takes place before an icon of Jesus Christ. Orthodox understand that the confession is not made to the priest, but to Christ, and the priest stands only as witness and guide.

Orthodox Catholic Christians should go to confession at least four times a year; often during one of the four fasting periods (Great Lent, Nativity Fast, Apostles' Fast and Dormition Fast). **It is mandatory for every Orthodox Catholic Christian to receive absolution at least once every year.**

A Proper Confession

Before confession one should attempt to recall all the sins which one has committed voluntarily or involuntarily. Using the Examination of Conscience in this Prayer Book will make that easier. One must attentively reexamine one's life in order to recall not only those sins committed since the last confession, but also those which have not been confessed through forgetfulness. Then, with compunction and a contrite heart, approach the Cross and the Gospel and begin the confession of your sins.

- † Confess your sins honestly, remembering that you open them not to a man, but to God Himself. God knows your sins already and only wants your admission of them.

- † Be specific when you confess, listing all your sins separately. We are all spiritually ill to some degree, and the priest is the physician or healer. It stands to reason that one must confess or tell about one's sins in the same way as one who is physically ill describes the symptoms of his illness to a physician from whom he expects to receive healing.
- † Do not mention the sins of anyone else during confession?
- † We must confess with sorrow and a contrite heart the sins by which we have grieved our Lord God. It is not good that many tell of their sins matter-of-factly, without any remorse.
- † Finally, confess your sins with faith in Jesus Christ, with hope in His mercy. Only with faith in Jesus Christ and hope in Him can we receive forgiveness of our sins.

This then, is how we must confess in order to receive remission of our sins from our Lord God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

Preparing for Confession

Going to Confession:

To prepare for Confession simply use the Examination of Conscience found in this Prayer Book and then make a time to go to the Church for Confession whether it during set Confession time or by appointment.

With the priest by your side and n from of the Icon of Jesus say:

- † I confess to the Lord my God and before thee, venerable father, all my countless sins, committed by me unto this very day and hour, in deed, word and thought. I sin daily and hourly by mine ingratitude toward God for His great and countless blessings and benevolent providence over me, a sinner.

I have sinned through: idle talking, judging others, stubbornness, pride, hard-heartedness, envy, anger, slander, inattention, negligence concerning my salvation, carelessness, indifference, impertinence,

irritability, despondency, rendering evil for evil, bitterness, disobedience, complaining, self-justification, contradicting others, self-will, being reproachful, gossiping, lying, light-mindedness, tempting others, self-love, ambition, gourmandizing, eating and drinking to excess, vanity, laziness, entertaining unclean thoughts, acquisitiveness, impure glances, absence from divine services because of laziness and carelessness, absent-mindedness at prayer both in church and at home; I have sinned in deed, word thought; in sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and the rest of my mental and physical senses; of all my sins I repent and beg forgiveness.

(Here one should mention specifically any other sins which may be burdening the soul.)

† I also repent and ask forgiveness for all those sins that I have not confessed because of their multitude and my forgetfulness. Forgive and absolve me, venerable father, and bless me to commune of the holy and life-creating Mysteries of Christ unto the remission of sins and life everlasting.

Then the priest will give advice and spiritual guidance after which he will put his stole on your head and pronounce the absolution.

Examination of Conscience

The Seven Deadly (Spiritual Sicknesses) Sins and the Opposite (Spiritual Medicines) Virtues

- † (Sickness) Pride.....(Medicine) Humility
- † 2. (Sickness) Covetousness..... (Medicine) Liberality
- † 3. (Sickness) Lust..... (Medicine) Chastity
- † 4. (Sickness) Anger..... (Medicine) Meekness
- † 5. (Sickness) Gluttony..... (Medicine) Temperance
- † 6. (Sickness) Envy.....(Medicine)Unconditional Love of Others
- † 7. (Sickness) Sloth..... (Medicine) Diligence

Examination on the Seven Major Spiritual Sicknesses

† **Pride**

Pride is the mother of all sin. It is a craving for excellence beyond what is reasonable. It makes a person hate being equal to others, and hate being less than God.

- Have I refused to admit my own weaknesses?
- Have I dwelt on the failings of others?
- Have I judged others, in my thoughts or words?
- Have I ranked myself better than others?
- Have I borne hatred for another?
- Have I refused to learn from others?
- Have I been stubborn? Refused to admit I was wrong? Refused to accept that another person had a better idea?
- Have I been arrogant?
- Have I held others in contempt?
- Have I given into false-humility?
- Have I neglected to use the talents that God has given me?

† **Vanity**

Vanity is excessive concern about manifesting my glory before others.

- Have I been overly concerned about what others think of me?
- Have I allowed this to motivate my actions?
- Have I lied or exaggerated to make myself look good?
- Have I wasted undue time and money on clothes and appearance?

- Have I been content with my lowly position, or have I resented the role that Christ asks of me?

† Lust

Lust is disordered desire for sexual pleasure, isolated from its natural use within Christian Marriage.

- Have I viewed other people as mere sexual objects rather than as persons to be loved?
- Have I viewed Pornography: On internet? or TV?
- Have I entertained impure thoughts? Impure Acts: Alone, or with another?

† Anger/Wrath

Anger is undue desire for vengeance -undue in cause or in amount.

- Have I harboured resentment, grudges, and hatred in my thoughts?
- Have I nurtured imaginary angry conversations?
- Have I been slow to forgive?
- Have I lost my temper?
- (Impatience) How have I carried my cross?
- Have I been impatient with people, family, events, sufferings, sicknesses?

† Covetousness/Greed

Greed is the excessive love of possessing things.

- Have I been overly concerned about my own comfort and well-being?
- Have I been resentful of my lack of money?
- Have I been generous in giving?
- Have I given with a cheerful heart?
- Have I cheated, stolen, or failed to pay my bills on time?
- Have I used people for my own ends and advantage?
- Have I wasted money?

† Envy

Envy is sadness at the happiness of another

Jealousy—is coveting what belongs to another.

- Have I envied or been jealous of the abilities, talents, ideas, good-looks, intelligence, clothes, possessions, money, friends, family, of another?
- Gossip: Have I judged others in my thoughts?
- Have I damaged the reputation of another person by my words, attitude, or looks?
- Have I repeated accusations that feel might not be true but do not know for sure?
- Have I exaggerated?
- Have I failed to defend the reputation of others?
- Have I failed to keep secrets?
- Do I despise others of different race, class, religion or culture?
- Lies: Have I lied or exaggerated?

✝ **Sloth/Apathy/ Laziness**

Laziness, especially laziness in the things of God. Sloth is a sorrow in the face of spiritual good -it makes a person lethargic and want to do nothing or depressed and have no joy in the things of God.

- Have I sought God above all else, or have I put other priorities ahead of him? (e.g. friendships, ambition, comfort and ease)
Have I got so caught up in the things of this world that I've forgotten God?
- Have I risked losing my faith/piety by bad company, bad reading, cowardice, or pride?
- Have I trusted God, especially in times of difficulty?
- Have I attended Liturgy each and every Sunday?
- Have I neglected to say my daily prayers?
- Have I entertained distractions in prayer, or failed to give God due concentration in prayer or in the Liturgy?

(Note: Not giving God the effort he deserves in prayer is a sin, but it is not the same thing as involuntary weakness in mental distractions.)

- Have I made a prayerful preparation before Liturgy and a good thanksgiving after?
- Have I received Holy Communion carelessly and without examination of conscience?
- Have I continually neglected to seek Confession before Holy Communion?
- Have I taken the Lord's name in vain?
- Or used other foul language?

FIRST COMMANDMENT

† **"I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me." (Ex 20:2,3)**

- Did I doubt or deny that God exists?
- Did I refuse to believe what God has revealed to us?
- Did I believe in fortune telling, horoscopes, dreams, the occult, good-luck charms, tarot cards, palmistry, Ouija boards, seances, reincarnation?
- Did I deny that I was Christian?
- Did I deny the Orthodox Faith?
- Did I give time to God each day in prayer?
- Did I love God with my whole heart?
- Did I despair of or presume on God's mercy?
- Did I have false gods in my life that I gave greater attention to than God, like money, profession, drugs, TV, fame, pleasure, property, etc.?

SECOND COMMANDMENT

† **"You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain." (Ex 20:7)**

- Did I blaspheme or insult God?
- Did I take God's name carelessly or uselessly?
- Did I curse, or break an oath or vow?
- Did I get angry with God?

THIRD COMMANDMENT

✠ **"Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath Day." (Ex 20:8)**

- Did I miss Sunday Liturgy or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- Did I come to Liturgy late or leave early?
- Did I do work on Sunday that was not necessary?
- Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a family day?
- Did I show reverence in the presence of Jesus in the when I received His precious Body and Blood ?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

✠ **"Honor your father and your mother." (Ex 20:12)**

- Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors?
- Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children or parents?
- Did I neglect to give good religious example to my family?
- Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?
- Did I fail to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?
- Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?
- Did I cause anyone to leave the faith?
- Did I cause tension and fights in my family?
- Did I care for my aged and infirm relatives?
- Did I give a full day's work for a full day's pay?
- Did I give a fair wage to my employees?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

✠ **"You shall not kill." (Ex 20:13)**

- Did I kill or physically injure anyone?
- Did I have an abortion, or advise someone else to have an abortion?
- Did I attempt suicide?

- Did I get angry, impatient, envious, unkind, proud, revengeful, jealous, hateful toward another, lazy?
- Did I give bad example by drug abuse, drinking alcohol or smoking to excess, fighting, quarreling?
- Did I abuse my children?

SIXTH & NINTH COMMANDMENT

† **"You shall not commit adultery." (Ex 20:14) "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." (Ex 20:17)**

Note: In the area of deliberate sexual sins listed below, all are grievous sins if there is sufficient reflection and full consent of the will. "No fornicators, idolaters, or adulterers, no sodomites,... will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor 6:9-10) "Anyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his thoughts." (Mt 5:28)

- Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or desires?
- Did I use impure or suggestive words? Tell impure stories? Listen to them?
- Did I deliberately look at impure TV, videos, plays, pictures or movies? Or deliberately read impure materials?
- Did I commit impure acts by myself?
- Did I commit impure acts with another - fornication (premarital sex), adultery (sex with a married person)?
- Did I marry or advise anyone to marry outside the Church?
- Did I avoid the occasions of impurity?
- Did I try to control my thoughts?
- Did I engage in homosexual activity?
- Did I respect all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects?
- Did I abuse my marriage rights?

SEVENTH & TENTH COMMANDMENTS

† **"You shall not steal." (Ex 20:15) "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." (Ex 20:17)**

- Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?
- Did I fulfill my contracts; give or accept bribes; pay my bills; rashly gamble or speculate; deprive my family of the necessities of life?
- Did I waste time at work, school or at home?
- Did I envy other people's families or possessions?
- Did I make material possessions the purpose of my life?

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

† "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex 20:16)

- Did I lie?
- Did I deliberately deceive others, or injure others by lies?
- Did I commit perjury?
- Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
- Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

Accessory to another's sin

As practicing Orthodox Catholic Christians, we are not merely compelled to avoid sinning. We are compelled to avoid the occasion of sin, to avoid the temptation of sin and try to live by the example that Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, gave us. We all have a responsibility for the sins of others. When we cooperate in them, we are an accessory to these sins, and this is possible in nine ways:

Nine ways of being an accessory to another's sin:

1. By Counsel
2. By Command

- 3. By Consent
- 4. By Concealment
- 5. By Defense of Evil Done
- 6. By Partaking
- 7. By Provocation
- 8. By Praise
- 9. By Silence

Seven Stages of Spiritual Sickness

1. Suggestion (a impure thought or memory)
2. Pleasure (developing the suggestion through imagination)
3. Consent (ready for an opportunity fulfill)
4. Act (Putting the sinful thought into action)
5. Habit (Repeating the same sin)
6. Slavery (Loss of control)
7. Spiritual Blindness

Examination of Conscience Based on the Beatitudes

† **1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

*Do I live a spirit of detachment from worldly things and generosity?
Do I sacrifice for others?*

† **2. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

*Do I console and help those who mourn and suffer?
Do I show compassion?*

† **3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.**

*Am I authentically humble and self-giving?
Have I been egotistical, self-centered or boastful?*

† **4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness, for they will be satisfied.**

*Am I passionate for the things of God?
Do I work for the triumph of love, peace and justice?*

† **5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

Am I forgiving and merciful?

Do I give others the benefit of the doubt?

Do I harbour anger or resentment?

Am I quick to judge or anger?

Am I harsh with words judgments?

† **6. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.**

Am I single-minded in the practice of my faith?

Have I allowed a particular sin or vice to distract me from God?

† **7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**

Am I a person of reconciliation, peace and mercy?

Do I hold grudges or seek revenge?

† **8. Blessed are they who are persecuted, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Do I suffer well?

Am I willing to sacrifice anything for my faith?

Do I allow human respect to keep me from being a Christian witness?

Spiritual Aids

The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy

Have I neglected to do the following when circumstances obliged me:

The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy

- † To admonish sinners.
- † 2. To instruct the ignorant.
- † 3. To counsel the doubtful.
- † 4. To comfort the sorrowful.
- † 5. To bear wrongs patiently.
- † 6. To forgive all injuries.
- † 7. To pray for the living and the dead?

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy

- † To feed the hungry.
- † 2. To give drink to the thirsty.
- † 3. To clothe the naked.
- † 4. To visit shut-ins and the captives.
- † 5. To house the homeless.
- † 6. To visit the sick.
- † 7. To bury the dead?

The 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom
Understanding
Counsel
Fortitude
Knowledge
Piety
Fear of the Lord

Class of Gifts of the Holy Spirit known as Charismata

Gift of speaking with wisdom
Gift of speaking with knowledge
Faith

Grace of healing
Gift of miracles
Gift of prophecy
Gift of discerning spirits
Gift of tongues
(The ability to speak foreign languages unknown by natural reason)
Gift of interpreting speeches

(The 12 Fruits of the Holy Ghost are the effects of the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit)

The 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Charity
Joy
Peace
Patience
Benignity
Goodness
Long-suffering
Mildness
Faith
Modesty
Continency
Chastity

Remember our Holy Orthodox Catholic Faith teaches us
that ... *as the body without the spirit is dead; so also faith
without works is dead.* (James, 2:26)

The last seven words of Jesus Christ from the Cross

THE FIRST WORD

✠ *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
Gospel of Luke 23:34*

At the height of his physical suffering, Jesus' Divine love for us prevails and He asks His Father to forgive even his enemies.

THE SECOND WORD

✠ *"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
Gospel of Luke 23:43*

Then, turning to Jesus, the good thief asks, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). What wonderful faith this repentant sinner had in Jesus. Ignoring his own suffering, Jesus mercifully responds with His second word.

THE THIRD WORD

✠ *"Jesus said to his mother: "Woman, this is your son".
Then he said to the disciple: "This is your mother."
Gospel of John 19:26-27*

This passage offers proof that Jesus was the only child of Mary, because if he did have brothers or sisters, they would have provided for her. But Jesus looks to John to care for her. Early Christian teachings taught that Joseph was a widower, and his children by his former wife were the "brothers and sisters of Jesus." And Jesus does not only give to St. John as a Mother but to us as well.

THE FOURTH WORD

✠ *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34*

His fourth Word is the opening line of Psalm 22, and thus his cry from the Cross recalls the cry of Israel, and of all innocent persons who suffer. Psalm 22 of David made a striking prophecy of the crucifixion of the

Messiah, at a time when crucifixion did not exist: "They have pierced my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones" (22:16-17). The Psalm continued: "they divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots" (22:18). There cannot be a more dreadful moment in the history of man as this moment. Jesus who came to save us suffers is crucified for us, and every sin we commit crucifies him afresh.

THE FIFTH WORD

† *"I thirst"*

Gospel of John 19:28

The fifth word of Jesus is His only human expression of His physical suffering. The wounds inflicted upon him in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the nailing upon the cross are now taking their toll—it is the way of the Cross. "He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

THE SIXTH WORD

† *When Jesus had received the wine, he said,
"It is finished";
and he bowed his head and handed over the spirit.
Gospel of John 19:30*

The sixth word is Jesus' recognition that his suffering is over and his task is completed. Jesus was obedient to the Father and gave his love for mankind by redeeming us with His death on the Cross. However, what was the darkest day of mankind became the brightest day for mankind.

THE SEVENTH WORD

† *Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit":
Gospel of Luke 23:46*

The seventh word of Jesus is from the Gospel of Luke, and is directed to the Father in heaven, just before He dies. Jesus recalls Psalm 31:5 - "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God." Jesus fulfilled His mission: "They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:24-25).

The Seven Sorrows of Mary

✠ **First Sorrow of Mary - The prophecy of Simeon**

Luke 2:22-35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples. And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

✠ **Second Sorrow of Mary - The flight into Egypt**

Matthew 2:13-21

When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream He said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage. He sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to

Joseph in Egypt. "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

✠ **Third Sorrow of Mary - The Loss of Jesus in the Temple**

Luke 2:41-50

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; When the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, They sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." He said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

✠ **Fourth Sorrow of Mary - Mary meets Jesus on the way to the cross**

John 19:1; Luke 23:26-32

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross. And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).

† **Fifth Sorrow of Mary - Jesus Dies on the Cross**

Mark 15:22; John 19:18, 25-27; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46

And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his Mother, and his Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your Mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?" which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

† **Sixth Sorrow of Mary - Mary receives the dead body of her son**

John 19:31-34, 38; Lamentations 1:12

In order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.

† **Seventh Sorrow of Mary - Jesus is laid in the tomb**

Matthew 27:59; John 19:38-42; Mark 15:46; Luke 27:55-56

Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, Nicodemus also, who had at first come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. And Joseph rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

THE JESUS PRAYER AS A PERSONAL DEVOTION

The Jesus Prayer is usually done as a private devotion and not as a family group. The prayer is beautiful in its simplicity using only the small statement: "Lord, Jesus Christ—have mercy on me." Find a quiet place to kneel, sit (cross-legged) or stand. Using your prayer rope pray on each knot while breathing in through your nose slowly "Lord Jesus Christ" —then breathing out slowly through your mouth "have mercy on me". Do this 100 times keeping your breathing and body relaxed and natural and your mind concentrating only on the words of the prayer and free from imagination and idle thoughts.

(Note: It is good to find an advanced practitioner of this prayer to help guide you.)

THE THREE LEVELS OF PRAYER

Because prayer is a living reality, a deeply personal encounter with the living God, it is not to be confined to any given classification or rigid analysis. However, in order to offer some broad, general guidelines for those interested in using the Jesus Prayer to develop their inner life, Theophan the Recluse, a 19th century Russian spiritual writer, distinguishes three levels in the saying of the Prayer:

1. It begins as oral prayer or prayer of the lips, a simple recitation which Theophan defines as prayers' "verbal expression and shape." Although very important, this level of prayer is still external to us and thus only the first step, for "the essence or soul of prayer is within a man's mind and heart."
2. As we enter more deeply into prayer, we reach a level at which we begin to pray without distraction. Theophan remarks that at this point, "the mind is focused upon the words" of the Prayer, "speaking them as if they were our own."
3. The third and final level is prayer of the heart. At this stage prayer is no longer something we do but who we are. Such

prayer, which is a gift of the Spirit, is to return to the Father as did the prodigal son (Luke 15:32). The prayer of the heart is the prayer of adoption, when "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit that cries 'Abba, Father!'" (Gal. 4:6).

ENDLESS GROWTH

"Growth in prayer has no end," Theophan informs us. "If this growth ceases, it means that life ceases." The way of the heart is endless because the God whom we seek is infinite in the depths of his glory. The Jesus Prayer is a signpost along the spiritual journey, a journey that all of us must take.

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me.



