

Catechism of the
Ukrainian Catholic Church

CHRIST – OUR PASCHA

SYNOD OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catechism
of the Ukrainian Catholic Church

CHRIST – OUR PASCHA

Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church: Christ – Our Pascha
Kyiv, Edmonton, 2016. Second Edition 2018.

368 p. + 64 illus.

Icon on front cover:

The Resurrection [The Descent into Hades] (2018)

Volodymyr Sviderski

St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, Edmonton

Printed in Canada.

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ISBN 978-0-9809309-2-4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
A. Symbol of Faith.....	1
B. Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great	3
C. Structure of the Catechism.....	9

Part One

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

I. Revelation of the Most Holy Trinity	15
A. God's Revelation	15
1. God's Word in Creation.....	16
2. God in History	17
B. Holy Tradition.....	19
1. Apostolic Tradition	20
2. Faithfulness to Tradition	21
3. Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture.....	22
C. The Holy Scriptures	22
1. Divine and Human Aspects of Holy Scripture	23
2. Unity of the Old and New Testaments	24
3. Reading and Explanation of Holy Scripture	25
D. Kerygma (Proclamation) and Catechesis.....	27
1. Tradition of the Holy Fathers of the Church.....	28
2. Inculturation of the Good News.....	29
3. Growth in Faith: Catechumenate, Illumination, Sacramental Initiation.....	30
4. Environment in which the Faith is Transmitted: Family, Nation, and Church.....	31
II. We Believe in the Trinity, One in Essence and Undivided.....	33
A. We Believe in God the Father.....	34
1. God the Father Revealed in the Holy Scriptures	34
2. The Father without Beginning.....	35
B. We Believe in the Only-Begotten Son	37
1. The Son of God Revealed in the Holy Scriptures	38
2. The Only-Begotten Son.....	38
C. We Believe in the Holy Spirit	39
1. The Holy Spirit Revealed in the Holy Scriptures.....	40
2. The Holy Spirit who Proceeds from the Father	41

III. We Believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life	42
A. The Creator and His Creation.....	42
1. The Father Creates through the Son in the Holy Spirit.....	42
a. The Freedom of the Creator	43
b. The Goodness of Creation.....	44
c. God's Plan	45
2. The Visible and Invisible World.....	46
3. Humankind—the Crown of Creation.....	47
a. Humankind—in the Image and Likeness of God	48
1) Growth of the Person from Image to Likeness of God	50
2) The Created Nature of Humankind	51
3) “Man and Woman He Created Them”.....	52
4) The Freedom and Responsibility of Humankind.....	52
b. The Fall.....	54
1) The Fall of the Angels	55
2) The Fall of Humankind	56
3) The Consequences of the Fall.....	57
c. The Promise of the Messiah's Coming.....	59
1) The Protoevangelium	60
2) The Covenant between God and Humankind.....	61
3) The Promise of a New Covenant	62
4) The Expectation of the Saviour	64
B. “God Became Human that Humans Might Become God”.....	65
1. The Incarnation of the Son of God.....	67
a. The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary.....	67
b. The Nativity of Christ	70
c. Theophany	72
2. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God	74
a. The Announcement of the Kingdom: The Sermon on the Mount (<i>Mt 5:7</i>)	74
b. The Signs of the Coming of the Kingdom	76
1) The Words of Christ.....	76
2) The Works of Christ.....	77
3. The Pascha (Passover) of Christ.....	78
a. Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem	79
b. The Passion.....	81
c. The Resurrection.....	82
d. The Ascension	85

4. The Second Coming of Christ in Glory.....	86
a. The Presence of the Risen Christ.....	87
b. The Union of the Earthly and Heavenly in the Glorified Christ...	87
c. The Resurrection of the Dead.....	88
d. The Divine Judgment	88
e. God—All in All	90
5. Pentecost.....	91
a. The Promise to Send the Holy Spirit.....	92
b. The Sending Down of the Holy Spirit	93
c. The Life-Creating Spirit is the Giver of Grace.....	94
C. The Church—An Icon of the Most Holy Trinity.....	96
1. Biblical Images of the Church	96
a. The Church in the Old Testament	96
b. The Church in the New Testament	97
2. The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.....	99
a. The Church is One	100
b. The Church is Holy.....	101
c. The Church is Catholic.....	101
d. The Church is Apostolic	103
3. The Self-Governing Nature of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and her Communion with other Self-Governing Churches	106
a. The Development of Self-Governance in the Church	106
b. The Development of Communion among Sister Churches.....	107
c. The Development of Ecclesial Communion within the Kyivan Metropolitanate	108
4. The Church—A New Creation.....	109
a. Devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God	109
b. Veneration of the Most Holy Mother of God in the Kyivan Tradition	110
c. Saints of Christ's Church	110
d. New Ukrainian Martyrs and Confessors of Faith	113

Part Two

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

I. We are Created for Intimacy with God and Communion with God.....	119
A. The Trinitarian Character of Divine Services	119
B. The Ecclesial Character of the Divine Services	119
C. The Eschatological Character of Divine Services.....	120
D. The Cosmic Character of Divine Services.....	120

II. The Prayer of the Church Community	121
A. The Divine Liturgy—the Foundation and Summit of the Christian Community’s Life	121
1. Preparation for the Divine Liturgy	122
a. The Proskomide (Prothesis)	122
b. The Participation of the Faithful in the Proskomide	124
2. The Liturgy of the Word (Liturgy of the Catechumens)	124
a. The Exclamation “Blessed be the Kingdom” and the Litany of Peace	125
b. The Antiphons of the Liturgy	126
c. The Little Entrance, the Troparia, and the Thrice-Holy Hymn ..	126
d. Hearing the Word of God, Responding to It, and Prayer	127
3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist (Liturgy of the Faithful)	128
a. Preparation for the Banquet of the Eucharist	129
b. The Anaphora	129
1) Thanksgiving	130
2) Memorial	131
3) Offering	131
4) Invoking the Holy Spirit	132
c. The “Our Father”	133
d. Communion: The Banquet of the Body and Blood	134
e. Thanksgiving for Communion and the Dismissal	134
B. The Three Orders of the Divine Liturgy	135
1. The Orders of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and of Saint Basil the Great	136
2. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts	138
C. The Holy Mysteries of Christian Life	138
a. The Mystery—Christ is in our Midst	138
b. The Seven Sacramental Mysteries	139
c. The Holy Mysteries Are a Synergy of God and Human Persons ..	139
d. The Mystical Life of the Church	140
1. The Holy Mysteries of Initiation into the Church	140
a. The Holy Mystery of Baptism	140
1) Baptism Is the Birth to New Life in Christ	140
2) Baptism Is Dying and Rising in Christ	141
3) Our Baptism Is “the Blessing of the Jordan”	142
4) One Baptism for the Remission of Sins	142
5) The Necessity of Faith	143
6) The Baptism of Children	143
7) The Rite of Baptism	144
8) The Celebrant of the Mystery of Baptism	145

b. The Holy Mystery of Chrismation	146
1) The Gift of Pentecost	146
2) The Royal, Priestly, and Prophetic Ministry.....	146
3) The Rite of Chrismation.....	147
c. The Mystery of the Eucharist	148
1) The Eucharist Is the Body and Blood of Christ	149
2) The Heavenly and the Earthly.....	150
3) Consecration of the Gifts.....	151
4) The Eucharistic Offering	152
5) Holy Communion.....	152
2. The Holy Mysteries of Healing.....	153
a. The Holy Mystery of Repentance	154
1) Spiritual Struggle and Repentance	154
2) The Rite of Confession.....	155
3) The Significance of Confession in the Spiritual Life	157
b. The Mystery of Holy Anointing.....	157
1) Christ Heals Body and Soul.....	157
2) The Rite of Holy Anointing	159
3. The Holy Mysteries of Service: Marriage and Holy Orders.....	160
a. The Holy Mystery of Marriage.....	160
1) Marriage Is a Mystery of Love between a Man and a Woman	160
2) The Rite of Crowning.....	162
3) The Rite of Second Crowning	163
4) The Rite of Blessing of a Couple on Their Twenty-fifth or Fiftieth Anniversary.....	164
b. The Holy Mystery of Orders	164
1) The Priesthood of Christ	164
2) Apostolic Succession	165
3) The Hierarchical Priesthood.....	166
4) The Rites of Ordination of Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop	167
5) The Fostering of Vocations to the Priesthood in the Church ..	169
D. Special Occasional Prayers, Blessings, and Consecrations	169
1. Consecrations and Blessings	170
a. Consecrations	170
b. Monasticism	170
c. Blessings	171
2. Services for the Deceased.....	172
a. Christian Funeral.....	173
b. Commemoration of the Deceased.....	174
3. Exorcism	175

4. Other Prayer Services.....	175
a. The Akathist Hymn.....	175
b. Prayer Services of Intercession and Thanksgiving (Molebens)	176
c. Christmas and Theophany Carols, Religious Hymns (Chorales). 177	
III. The Time and Space of the Church's Prayer.....	178
A. Introduction: Unity of the Visible and Invisible in the Liturgical Life of the Church.....	178
B. The Rhythm of Liturgical Prayer.....	179
1. The Daily Cycle—Horologion (<i>Chasoslav</i>)	179
a. Vespers and Matins.....	180
b. Other Services of the Daily Cycle	182
2. The Weekly Cycle (the Octoechos).....	184
a. Sunday.....	185
b. The Other Days of the Week.....	186
c. The Order of Tones in the Octoechos.....	187
3. The Yearly Cycle of Services	187
a. The Movable Cycle (Lenten and Floral Triodia)	188
b. The Immoveable Cycle of Feasts (the Menaion)	191
B. The Church Building—The Place of the Community's Prayer	193
1. Icons.....	196
a. The Veneration of Holy Icons.....	196
b. The Role of Icons in Prayer	197
c. Wonder-Working Icons	198
d. The Iconostasis	199
e. The Iconographic Program of the Church Building	201
2. Veneration of Saints' Relics	203
3. Liturgical Chant	205
4. Bearing and Gestures during Divine Services.....	206
5. Articles Used in Divine Services.....	208
a. Liturgical Vestments of the Deacon and Priest	208
b. Liturgical Vestments of the Bishop	209
c. Other Articles Used during Divine Services	210
d. Liturgical Books.....	212
e. Church Bells.....	213
C. The Place of Family Prayer—the Domestic Church	213
1. The Icon Corner.....	214
2. Family Prayer	214
3. Family Rituals and Customs	215
4. Reading of Holy Scripture and Spiritual Literature in the Family.....	216

IV. The Personal Prayer of the Christian	217
A. The Need for Prayer	217
B. The Action of the Holy Spirit in the Prayer of the Christian.....	218
C. The “Our Father”	219
D. The Practice of Prayer.....	222
1. Prayer with the Psalms.....	222
2. Short Prayers.....	223
3. The Gift of Tears in Prayer.....	224
4. Vocal Prayer	224
5. The Role of Silence in Prayer	225
6. The Jesus Prayer and Prayer on the Rosary	226
7. The Examination of Conscience	227
E. The Place and Time of Prayer	228
1. Entering into Solitude for Prayer.....	228
2. How Often Should We Pray?	228
3. Keeping Prayerful Vigil.....	229
4. The Mutual Link of Prayer and Fasting	229
5. Prayer before Icons.....	230

Part Three
THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

I. The Spiritual Life—Life in the Holy Spirit	234
A. The Signs, Gifts, and Fruits of the Holy Spirit’s Action.....	234
1. Holiness as a Sign of the Action of the Holy Spirit.....	235
2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.....	237
3. The Fruit of the Spirit.....	237
B. Christian Morality as Liturgy of Life.....	238
II. The Person in Christ as a New Creation in the Holy Spirit.....	239
A. Foundations of the Spiritual Life	239
1. The Vocation to Divine Likeness	239
2. A Human Being as a Moral Person	240
3. Human Freedom and the Moral Person’s Responsibility	240
4. Cooperation with God in the Work of Salvation.....	243
B. The Spirituality of the Heart	244
1. The Heart—The Core of the Human Person	244
2. Internal Watchfulness (Attentiveness) and Guarding of the Heart	245
C. An Asceticism which Purifies	246
1. Sin in Human Life.....	246
2. The Eight Capital Sins and Their Opposite Virtues	247
a. Gluttony and Its Opposite Virtue—Temperance	247
b. Lust and Its Opposite Virtue—Wholeness of Being.....	248

c. Avarice (Love of Money) and Its Opposite Virtue—Generosity	248
d. Melancholy (Sadness) and Its Opposite Virtue—Joy in the Holy Spirit	249
e. Anger and Its Opposite Virtue—Long-suffering	250
f. Acedia (Despondency) and Its Opposite Virtue—Cheerfulness of Spirit.....	251
g. Vainglory and Its Opposite Virtue—Humble-Mindedness	252
h. Pride and Its Opposite Virtue—Humility	253
3. Repentance	254
D. Spiritual Combat in the Life of the Christian.....	255
1. Fasting and Almsgiving	255
2. Evil Thoughts.....	256
3. Conquering Passions.....	257
E. Prayer in the Spiritual Life.....	258
1. Degrees of Prayer.....	259
a. Bodily Prayer	259
b. Prayer of the Mind	259
c. Prayer of the Heart	259
d. Contemplative Prayer.....	260
2. Types of Prayer.....	261
a. Praise	261
b. Thanksgiving.....	261
c. Penitential Prayer.....	262
d. Prayer of Supplication	263
F. Asceticism That Enlightens.....	264
1. Obedience to the Will of God (God's Law as a Calling to True Freedom)	264
2. Spiritual Fatherhood / Motherhood	265
3. Virtues as a Indications of Divinization.....	266
4. Life in Faith, Hope, and Love (The First, Second and Third Commandments)	267
a. Faith—the Foundation of Christian Life	267
b. Hope—the Strength of Christian Life	268
c. Love—the Substance of Christian Life	269
5. The Spiritual Life and Divinization	270

III. The Christian Family as a New Creation (The Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth Commandments)	272
A. Christian Marriage.....	272
1. The Family—a Domestic Church	272
2. Sexuality and Christian Marriage	273
3. Marital Fidelity.....	274
4. Marital Fruitfulness in Love	275
B. Christian Marriage and the Defence of the Dignity of the Beginning of Human Life	276
1. The Problem of Artificial Fertilization	276
2. Human Cloning.....	277
3. The Sin of Abortion	277
4. The Sin of Artificial Contraception.....	278
5. Methods of Recognizing Fertility	280
6. Responsible Parenthood.....	281
C. The Christian Family and the Defence of a Dignified End of Human Life	281
1. Care for Sick Parents and Family Members	281
2. The Christian Understanding of Death	282
3. The Use of Pain Management.....	283
4. Organ Transplantation.....	283
5. Euthanasia	284
IV. Society Transfigured in the Church (The Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth Commandments of God)	286
A. The Christian View of the World and the Preaching of the Gospel...	286
B. The Church as the Model for the Human Community—The Moral Principles Guiding the Social Order	287
1. Unity in Diversity (The Principle of the Common Good).....	287
2. Holiness (The Development of Civil Society).....	288
3. Catholicity (The Principle of Solidarity).....	288
4. Apostolate and <i>Diakonia</i> (The Principle of Subsidiarity)	289
C. The Social Dimensions of the Church.....	289
1. The Social Dimension of Christian Freedom.....	289
a. Democracy and Christian Social Virtues.....	290
2. The Social Dimension of Christian Love.....	291
3. Social Justice	292
a. Private Property, Just Stewardship, Fair Exchange, and Distribution of Material Goods.....	292
b. Morality in Social Relations.....	293
c. The Defence of Honour and One's Good Name	294
d. Morality in the Mass Media	295
e. Christian Upbringing, Education, and Schooling.....	295

D. The Christian Understanding of the State.....	297
1. The Functions of State Rule.....	297
2. The Limits of State Authority and the Death Penalty	298
3. Moral Responsibility for the State.....	299
4. Love for Country and People.....	300
E. Christian Understanding of Economy	302
1. Work and Profession.....	302
2. Globalization	303
F. The Christian Value of Rest	304
G. Preserving Peace in the Modern World.....	305
V. Transfiguration of the Universe	306
A. Responsibility for God's Creation	306
B. The Christian and the Natural Environment	306
C. A Christian Ethic of the Environment	307
D. The New Heaven and the New Earth: The Human Person as Priest of the Universe	308
Appendices	
Daily Prayers.....	309
Catechetical Truths.....	313
The Believer's Social Directives.....	317
Indices	
Index of Citations	319
Holy Scripture	319
Ecumenical Councils	324
Hierarchical Documents.....	325
Ecclesiastical Documents.....	327
Liturgical Books	327
Ecclesiastical Writers.....	329
Subject Index	332

Notes to the English Edition

The *Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church: Christ – Our Pascha* was published in English in 2016. Every effort has been made to retain as nearly as possible the precise phrasing of the original Ukrainian language second edition. One notable exception involves the name of our Church. Rather than calling it the “Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church,” most of the faithful of the English-speaking world use the term “Ukrainian Catholic Church,” and it is rendered this way throughout the Catechism except in cases where there is a reference to a particular institution or body of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

With reference to liturgical days, there exist several styles of citing from our hymnography. We have opted, in every case, to follow the daily order of services as Vespers, (Great) Compline, Matins, and the Hours. Therefore, where a footnote indicates “Great and Holy Monday, Vespers,” it refers to the Vespers service for Great and Holy Monday that would be celebrated on Sunday evening.

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Psalms are taken from *The Kathisma Psalter with the Nine Canticles. Revised According to the Septuagint*. Otego, New York: Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery, 2005. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Abbreviations

PG	Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PL	Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
SCh	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>



*To the Most Reverend Archbishops and Bishops,
the Reverend and Venerable Priests and Deacons,
the Venerable Monks and Nuns, and
the Laity—dear to us in Christ—of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church*

Dear Brothers and Sisters! We present to you this Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC). It is both a profession and an explanation of our Church's faith in the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This faith emerged from a listening to the Gospel of Christ, which—according to tradition—first resounded in the lands of Rus-Ukraine through the preaching of Saint Andrew the First-Called. This same Good News echoed onwards through the mission of the holy apostles to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, and was ultimately ratified in the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine during the reign of Volodymyr the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles. The Word of the Gospel found its response of faith in the hearts of those who listened. Thus Christ's Church spread throughout Kyivan Rus. This new Christian tradition—with the appropriate appellation of Kyivan—became a pearl in the Universal Church's treasury of faith. Countless generations of Christians, of Ukrainian as well as other cultures, were raised in this tradition.

Building upon Tradition, this Catechism opens itself to the present. One of the foremost *signs of the times* is that our Church is found not only in Ukraine, but also in many countries beyond her borders. This requires a strengthening of the spiritual bonds between the faithful of our Church, set upon the foundation of the one Christian heritage. A profound grasp of our Christian roots aids in the discovery of our own identity in the modern world, with its challenges of globalization and assimilation, and also helps us discern the universal value of our Eastern tradition. The current state of the UGCC in Ukraine and throughout the world, and the questions posed by the Church's faithful, define this Catechism's goal: to help the faithful to better understand, and more profoundly embody within their own lives, the Christian

faith handed down to them by the Fathers of our Church—the hierarchs, martyrs, confessors, and venerables—and to nurture our Kyivan-Christian tradition, finding in it the light needed to respond to today’s challenges.

The UGCC Catechism, *Christ – Our Pascha*, expounds the Church’s doctrine of the faith in three parts: the faith of the Church, the prayer of the Church, and the life of the Church. All these sections are prefaced by an Introduction, wherein the *rule of prayer* of the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great provides a methodological principle for the *rule of faith*, as professed by the Church and as taught in the Catechism. Quotations from the Anaphora serve as epigraphs to the separate sections of the Catechism, uniting them into a coherent whole. The themes of the Catechism are developed on the basis of passages from Sacred Scripture, the inheritance of the Church Fathers and UGCC Fathers in particular, the decisions of Ecumenical and Particular Church Councils, theological works, the lives of the saints, and iconography. The Catechism presents both the historical and modern transmission of Tradition, so that the faithful may draw from the treasury of faith, from both “what is new and what is old” (*Mt* 13:52).

This Catechism witnesses to the intrinsic relation of the Kyivan-Christian tradition to universal Christianity. Thus, this Catechism addresses the UGCC faithful, as well as members of other Churches and all people who are sincerely seeking the Truth. The Synod of Bishops offers this Catechism as a source of catechetical education for continuing growth in faith of the UGCC faithful. At the same time, this Catechism is a symbol of our communion in faith with the other Particular Churches within the bosom of the one Catholic Church.

The Catechism *Christ – Our Pascha* continues a tradition of written and published catechisms in the UGCC going back to the sixteenth century. Since then, there has not been a century during which a new catechism has not appeared. Among those deserving mention are the seventeenth-century *Catechism* compiled by the priest-martyr Saint Josaphat, Archbishop of Polotsk; eighteenth-century catechism entitled *The Proclamation or Oration to the Catholic World*; and *The Great Catechism for Parochial Schools* published in the nineteenth-century. Finally, in the twentieth century, there was the catechism, *God’s Teachings*.

The commemoration of the Millennium of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine in 1988, followed by the emergence of the underground UGCC, led to an awareness of the need for a new catechism in which the Christian faith would be handed down as part of the stream of our own thousand-year tradition. An important step in the creation of this Catechism was the publication of the *UGCC Catechetical Directory*,¹ which defined the main characteristics of catechetical ministry that are particular to our Church’s identity.

¹ UGCC CATECHETICAL COMMISSION, *The Catechetical Directory of the UGCC* (1999).

In 1992 the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was published, and a Ukrainian translation appeared in 2002.² One of the goals of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was to serve as an authentic and proper guide for the compilation of future local catechisms. “This *Catechism* is not meant as a substitute for the various local catechisms. ... Rather it is meant to encourage the creation of new and local catechisms that are better equipped to take into account the unique nuances of particular cultures, while at the same time remaining diligently faithful to the unity of faith and Catholic teaching.”³ Our predecessor, His Beatitude Lubomyr, in the introduction to the Ukrainian translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, expressed his confidence that “in due time, our Church will also provide her faithful with theological explanations based on the foundation of her own tradition.”⁴

The particularity of the UGCC theological tradition, which is Eastern Christian in origin, defines the need of a separate catechism for our Church. Blessed John Paul II, Pope of Rome, drew attention to this theological particularity: “In the study of revelation, East and West have followed different methods ... these various theological formulations are often to be considered mutually complementary rather than conflicting.”⁵ His Beatitude Lubomyr expressed this same thought: “Christ’s teaching is one and the same for everyone. Faith in Christ is also the same for all Catholics, regardless of which Rite or Particular Church they belong to. However, the theological understanding of divinely revealed Truths can be different in various cultures, just as liturgical Rites are different.”⁶

In the *Catechism Christ – Our Pascha* we are called to embody in our daily lives the one inheritance of the faith, as transmitted in the light of our theological tradition—to deepen, nurture, and transmit it to future generations. We trust that our bishops, priests, monks, catechists, and all the faithful of our Church, will make every effort to ensure that this *Catechism, Christ – Our Pascha*, enters into all of the spheres of our Church’s life and activity. May this *Catechism*, the fruit of the joint work and prayer of our entire Church, become for all of us a powerful catalyst for renewal as well as confirmation in the Faith, according to our Eastern Christian tradition. This *Catechism* is intended as a foundation and encouragement for catechetical ministry in all its dimensions.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, trans. UGCC Synod of Bishops (2002).

³ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Depositum fidei* [The Deposit of Faith].

⁴ PATRIARCH LUBOMYR HUSAR, Вступне слово до перекладу *Катехизму Католицької Церкви* українською мовою [Introduction to the Ukrainian Translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*].

⁵ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* [The Restoration of Unity], 1964), 17 as quoted in JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* [The Light of the East], 5.

⁶ PATRIARCH LUBOMYR HUSAR, Вступне слово до перекладу *Катехизму Католицької Церкви* українською мовою [Introduction to the Ukrainian Translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*].

The publication of the Catechism *Christ – Our Pascha* coincides with the tenth anniversary of the beatification of the Martyrs and Blesseds of our Church, who by their lives gave witness to an unwavering faith in the Most Holy Trinity, to a faithfulness and commitment to Christ's Church, as well as to a sacrificial love for one's people. May their example and holy prayers accompany us in our own witness of faith in Christ's Truth and the Church's unity.

May the blessing of the Lord be upon you.



+ Святослав

+ Sviatoslav,
Head and Father of the UGCC

Given at Kyiv at the Patriarchal Sobor of the Resurrection of Christ,
on the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord
June 2, 2011

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The source of Christian life is faith in the risen Christ. This faith, formulated by the Church in the Nicene Creed, also known as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan *Symbol of Faith*,¹ is expressed in her liturgical prayer. Through this liturgical prayer we become partakers of Christ's Passover—partakers of *new life* in Christ. In this new life, we grow by means of spiritual work and moral effort. Therefore, a coupling of the Symbol of Faith with the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great forms the methodological key for the text of the Catechism *Christ – Our Pascha*.

A. Symbol of Faith

- 2 Concerning faith in the risen Christ as the very source of Christian life, the apostle Peter preached the following: "Jesus of Nazareth ... God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (*Acts* 2:22-24, 32). The significance of the Resurrection for our salvation is affirmed by the apostle Paul: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" (1 *Cor* 15:17). Thus, for almost two thousand years, the Church has unceasingly witnessed and preached the Resurrection of Christ in order that people may believe and be saved: "How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (*Rom* 10:14, 17).
- 3 By its very name, *Christ – Our Pascha*, our Catechism already points to the Paschal foundations of faith: Christ has "trampled death by death," and by his Resurrection "has granted life eternal." Faith in the Resurrection of Christ leads us to faith in God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for Christ, the Son of God, "one in the Holy Trinity," in the Holy Spirit has revealed God the Father to us. The Church solemnly

¹ See COUNCIL OF NICAEA I, *Symbol of Faith*; COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE I, *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith*.

professes this faith of the apostles in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith:²

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- 4 The title *Symbol [of Faith]* signifies that every word of the Creed not only conveys a concept about God, but also leads us into the very Mystery of Divine Reality, revealing God for our response of faith: “The apostles’ preaching and the Fathers’ doctrine confirmed the Church’s one faith, and wearing the garment of truth woven from theology that descends from on high, she rightly imparts the mystery of godliness and sings her glory.”³
- 5 The profession of the Symbol of Faith is the prayerful contemplation of the Church, and the sign of unity of Christians in faith: “Let your [Symbol of Faith] be, as it were, a mirror to you. Therein see yourself, whether you believe everything you profess to believe, and so rejoice day by day in your faith.”⁴

² *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, The Symbol of Faith; COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE I, *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith*.

³ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Kontakion.

⁴ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, VIII, 13: PL 38, 399.

B. Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

- 6 The Church proclaims to the human race the presence of the Risen Christ within history, and manifests this presence in her liturgical prayer. This happens when the faithful remember the historical events of the Passion and Resurrection and thus become witnesses and communicants of the new life in Christ: “[Historical] truth and the solemnity [celebration of it] are not at variance.”⁵ In the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the Church shows herself to be the one Body of Christ (see *Eph* 1:23).
- 7 In the words of Patriarch Josyf Slipyj, “Liturgical prayer becomes the harbinger of the formulations of the fundamental truths of the faith in the later Symbols, or Professions, of faith.”⁶ Therefore, communal prayer is also a symbol of the common faith of the Church. One such example of the Church’s faith expressed liturgically is the Eucharistic Prayer, the Anaphora (from the Greek lifting-up).
- 8 The Anaphora is at the same time at the very heart of our Catechism. It not only unites all three parts of the Catechism into an integral whole, it also imparts to it the character of worship. With Christ’s Passover as its very centre, the Anaphora is the memorial of this saving event, in the context of the story of the creation and the salvation of the world by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our tradition has two Anaphoras: in the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. In this Catechism, we make use of the Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great, which describes the entire history of salvation:⁷

O Master, the One-Who-Is, Lord God, Father Almighty, who deserve worship: it is truly right and proper, and fitting the majesty of your holiness to praise you, to hymn you, to bless you, to worship you, to thank you, to glorify you, who alone are truly God; and to offer you with a contrite heart and spirit of humility this our rational worship. For it is you who have granted us the knowledge of your truth. And who can tell of all your acts of power, make all your praises heard, or recount all your wonders at every moment?

Master of all things, Lord of heaven and earth and of all creation, visible and invisible, you are seated on a throne of glory and look upon the depths. You are without beginning, invisible, incomprehensible, uncircumscribed, unchangeable, the Father of

⁵ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Sermons*, 220, Vigil of Easter: PL 39, 1089.

⁶ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Завіщання* [Testament] (December 22, 1981).

⁷ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of Our Holy Father Basil the Great. English translation found in *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, 287-298.

our Lord, Jesus Christ, the great God and Saviour, our hope. He is the image of your goodness, the perfect seal of your likeness—revealing you, the Father, in himself—living Word, true God, Wisdom before the ages, Life, Sanctification, Power, and the true Light. Through him the Holy Spirit was made manifest, the Spirit of truth, the grace of sonship, the pledge of the inheritance to come, the first fruit of the eternal good things, the life-giving power, the source of sanctification. Through him every rational and intelligent creature is empowered, worshipping you and ascribing to you the everlasting hymn of glory, because all things are your servants. For Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, and the many-eyed Cherubim praise you. Around you stand the Seraphim; the one with six wings and the other with six wings, and with two they cover their faces, with two their feet, and with two they fly, as they cry to one another with unceasing voices and never-silent hymns of glory, **singing, crying, exclaiming, and saying the triumphal hymn:**

Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

With these blessed Powers, O Master who loves mankind, we sinners also cry out and say: Holy are you—truly, all-holy—and there is no measure to the majesty of your holiness. You are righteous in all your works, because you have brought all things to pass for us in justice and true judgment.

For You fashioned a man by taking dust from the earth, and honoured him, O God, with your own image. You placed him in the Paradise of delight and promised him immortal life and the enjoyment of eternal good things if he kept your commandments.

But when he disobeyed you, the true God, who had created him, and when he had been led astray by the deception of the serpent, and been slain by his own transgressions, you banished him from Paradise into this world by your just judgment, O God, and returned him to the earth, from which he had been taken. But in your Christ, you established for him the salvation which comes through rebirth.

For you did not utterly turn away from your creature, O Good One, nor did you forget the work of your hands, but you visited us in diverse ways through your compassionate mercy. You sent Prophets, you performed deeds of power through your saints, who have been well-pleasing to you in every generation; you spoke to us through the mouths of your servants the Prophets, announcing to us beforehand the salvation that was to come; you gave the law as a help; you appointed angels as guardians.

And when the fullness of time had come, you spoke to us through your Son, through whom you had also made the ages. He is the brightness of your glory and the express imprint of your substance. He bears all things by the word of his power; yet he did not consider equality with you, God and Father, as something to be grasped; and though he is God before the ages, he appeared on earth and lived among mortals. Taking flesh of a holy Virgin, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of our lowly body, so that he might make us in the likeness of the image of his glory. For as sin had entered the world through a man, and through sin death, your only-begotten Son—who is in your bosom, God and Father, being born of a woman, the holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, being born under the law—was well-pleased to condemn sin in his flesh, so that all who had died in Adam might be given life in your Christ himself.

And having lived in this world, giving us saving commandments, and turning us from the error of idols, he brought us to the knowledge of you, the true God and Father, and acquired us for himself as a people all his own, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. And when he had cleansed us by water and sanctified us by the Holy Spirit, he gave himself as an exchange to death, by which we had been held captive, sold under sin.

And when he had descended through the Cross into Hades, so that he might fill all things with himself, he loosed the pangs of death. And rising on the third day and making a way for all flesh to the resurrection of the dead—for it was not possible for the Prince of life to be mastered by corruption—he became the first fruit of those that sleep, the first-born of the dead, so that he might have pre-eminence in all things. And he ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of your majesty on high; and he will come again to reward each according to their works.

But he has left for us these memorials of his saving passion, which we have set forth according to his commandments. For when he was about to go forth to his voluntary, ever-memorable and life-giving death, on the night he gave himself up for the life of the world, he took bread into his holy and immaculate hands, and when he had shown it to you, God and Father, and had given thanks, blessed, hallowed, and broken it,

He gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying: Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Amen.

Likewise, when he had also taken the Cup of the fruit of the vine, mixed it, given thanks, blessed and hallowed it,

He gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying: Drink of it, all of you, this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Amen.

Do this in memory of me; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death and confess my Resurrection.

Therefore, Master, as we too remember his saving passion, the life-giving Cross, the burial for three days, the Resurrection from the dead, the Ascension into heaven, the sitting at your right hand, O God and Father, and his glorious and dread second coming;

We offer to you, yours of your own, in behalf of all and for all.

We sing of you, we bless you, we thank you, O Lord, and we pray to you, our God.

Therefore, O all-holy Master, we sinners and your unworthy servants, whom you have counted worthy to minister at your holy altar, not because of our own righteousness—for we have done nothing good on earth—but because of your mercies and compassion, which you have richly poured out on us: we too boldly approach your holy altar, and as we set forth the sacramental realities of the holy body and blood of your Christ, we beg and implore you, O Holy of Holies, that by the good pleasure of your goodness, your Holy Spirit may come upon us and upon these gifts set forth here, and that he may bless and sanctify them and show:

This bread to be the precious body of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

And this cup to be the precious blood of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

Poured out for the life of the world.

And unite all of us, who share in this one bread and cup, with one another into the communion of the one Holy Spirit, and let none of us partake of the holy body and blood of your Christ unto judgment or condemnation. Instead, may we find mercy and grace with all the saints, who have been well-pleasing to you since time began, the forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, teachers, and every just spirit made perfect by faith.

Especially with our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin, Mary.

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices: the angelic ranks and all the human race. Sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, virgins' pride and boast, from whom God is made flesh and became a little Child; and he who is our God before the ages, he made your womb a throne, and he made it wider than all the heavens. In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices. Glory be to you.

With the holy prophet, forerunner, and Baptist, John, the holy, glorious and all-praised Apostles, with Saint N./NN., whose memory we celebrate, and all your saints, by whose intercessions visit us, O God.

And remember all who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection and eternal life. For the repose and forgiveness of sins of the servants of God NN.. Give them rest, O our God, in a place of light, whence have fled all sorrow and mourning—in the place where the light of your face keeps watch.

Again we pray you: remember, O Lord, your holy, catholic and apostolic Church, from one end of the world to the other, and give peace to her whom you have made your own by the precious blood of your Christ, and establish this holy house until the consummation of the world.

Remember, O Lord, those who have brought these gifts, and those for whom, through whom, and on behalf of whom they have brought them. Remember, O Lord, those who bring offerings and do good work in your holy churches, and who remember the poor. Reward them with your riches and heavenly gifts of grace; for earthly things grant them heavenly ones; for temporal ones, eternal, for corruptible, incorruptible. Remember, O Lord, those in deserts and mountains and caves and in the hollows of the earth. Remember, O Lord, those who live in virginity, piety, asceticism, and purity.

Remember, O Lord, our nation under God, our government and all the military, grant them deep and undisturbed peace; speak good things to their hearts for your Church and for all your people; so that by their tranquillity we may pass our life in quiet and calm, in all piety and purity. Remember, O Lord, all officials and authorities, our brethren in the government and all the armed forces. Keep those who are good in goodness. In your kindness, make good those who are wicked.

Remember, O Lord, the people here present and those who are absent for just causes, and have mercy on them and on us according to the multitude of your mercy. Fill their storehouses

with every good thing; preserve their marriages in peace and concord; nourish the infants, guide the young, strengthen the aged; comfort the fainthearted; gather the scattered; bring back the wayward, and join them to your holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Free those who are troubled by unclean spirits, sail with those who sail, journey with those journeying, champion widows, protect orphans, deliver prisoners, heal the sick.

Remember, O God, those under trial, in mines, exile, bitter slavery and in every tribulation, constraint and trouble, and all who entreat your great compassion; and those who love us, those who hate us and those who have asked us, unworthy though we are, to pray for them.

And remember all your people, O Lord our God. Pour out on them your rich mercy, granting them all their petitions unto salvation. And those whom we have not remembered, either through ignorance, or forgetfulness, or the number of their names, remember them yourself, O God, who know the age and name of each, who know each from their mother's womb. For You, O Lord, are the help of the helpless, the hope of those without hope, the Saviour of the storm-tossed, the haven of those at sea, the physician of the sick. Be all things to all people, O you who know each one and their request, each household and its needs.

Deliver, O Lord, this city (*or*: this village, *or*: this monastery), and every city, town and village, from famine, plague, earthquake, flood, fire, sword, foreign invasion and civil war.

Among the first, remember, O Lord, our most holy universal Pontiff, N., Pope of Rome; our most blessed Major Archbishop and Metropolitan, N., our most reverend Archbishop and Metropolitan, N., our God-loving Bishop, N.. For the sake of your holy churches grant that they may live in peace, safety, honour, and health for many years, and rightly impart the word of your truth.

And remember all men and all women.

Remember, O Lord, the servant(s) of God N./NN., unto their salvation, visitation, and the forgiveness of their sins. Remember, O Lord, the entire episcopate of the orthodox that rightly imparts the word of your truth.

According to the multitude of your mercies, remember also me, your unworthy servant. Pardon my every offence, voluntary and involuntary; and do not, because of my sins, withhold the grace of your Holy Spirit from the gifts set forth here. Remember, Lord, the order of presbyters, the diaconate in Christ, and every order of clergy; put none of us who stand around your altar to shame.

Visit us in your goodness, O Lord. Shine on us with your rich mercies; grant us temperate and fruitful weather; bestow on the earth moderate rains to bring forth fruit. Bless the crown of the year with your goodness; end the schisms of the Churches; quench the ragings of the nations; speedily put down the uprisings of heresies by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Receive us all into Your kingdom, declaring us to be children of the light and children of the day. Grant us your peace and your love, O Lord, our God; for you have given us everything.

And grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and sing the praises of your most honoured and magnificent name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.

Amen.

C. Structure of the Catechism

- 9 This Catechism is composed of three parts: “The Faith of the Church,” “The Prayer of the Church,” and “The Life of the Church.” This division reflects the very essence of Christian salvation. In the prayer of the Anaphora, while remembering all the events of salvation history—the crown being the Passover of Christ—the Church professes the foundational truths of the Christian faith. These truths, along with an explanation of the Symbol of Faith, are presented in Part One of the Catechism.
- 10 Part Two of the Catechism develops the liturgical understanding of Christ’s Passover, based upon the words of Christ’s institution of the Eucharist at the Mystical Supper [Last Supper] and as cited by the Anaphora. This is the Eucharistic heart from which proceed all the cycles of Church’s liturgical prayer (daily, weekly, yearly); from which flow the Holy Mysteries and their celebration; and from which spiritual life is born, and devotion flourishes.
- 11 By faith and prayer the Church is filled with grace for the sanctification of humankind and the transformation of all spheres of human existence. The spiritual and moral dimensions of personal, family, and socio-political life, prayerfully remembered in the Anaphora, are presented in Part Three of the Catechism.

Part One
THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

- 12 Part One of the Catechism presents the contents of Christian faith in the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—one God, who revealed himself to humankind and made known to it his will.⁸ This content of faith is solemnly professed by the Church in her universal proclamation of the Symbol of Faith, and prayerfully experienced in the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy. Thus, Part One of the Catechism, consisting of three sections, is structured upon the explanation of the Symbol of Faith and the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great.
- 13 Section One, “Revelation of the Most Holy Trinity,” presents the contents of the Revelation of God, the Creator and Almighty Ruler (in Greek, *Pantocrator*) of the universe. This Revelation is contained within Holy Tradition and the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and entrusted to the Holy Church, which announces, interprets, and authoritatively teaches it. The Church encourages everyone to come to the knowledge of God, that by reading and listening to the Word of God, they may live by it daily. As a seed planted in good soil, the Word of God grows within us, illuminating and leading us into the mystical depth of God’s life.
- 14 The summit of God’s Revelation is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. In his words and deeds he revealed the love of God the Father. The apostles, Christ’s disciples, received the Word of God and proclaimed the good news about him to the whole world. They witnessed to Christ by the word of their preaching and by the example of their lives. The mission of the apostles was taken up by their successors, the Holy Fathers of the Church, who preserved and safeguarded the unbroken continuity of Apostolic Tradition by means of the episcopal succession down to our times.
- 15 Section Two, “We Believe in the Trinity—One in Being and Undivided,” presents the doctrine of the Church regarding the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Mystery of

⁸ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 2.

the Most Holy Trinity surpasses all human understanding. Receiving this Mystery of the Triune God by faith, we draw near to him and are filled by him. At the same time, we attain an ever greater fullness of the knowledge of God and life in him.

- 16 Section Three, “We Believe in One God the Father Almighty, and in the Only Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,” reveals what God has done, in light of faith, “for us men [people] and for our salvation.” These saving works of God constitute a sacred history: the creation of the world and humankind, the promise of salvation, the incarnation of God’s Son, the Resurrection of Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the second coming of Christ in glory.
- 17 Our salvation is fulfilled in the Church of Christ—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. This one Catholic Church exists in self-governing Churches and is formed *out of them*,⁹ among which is also our Ukrainian Catholic Church. Section Three, and Part One of the Catechism, concludes with the remembrance of the Ukrainian New Martyrs and Confessors of the faith.

⁹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 23.

I. REVELATION OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

*For it is you who have granted us the knowledge of your truth.
And who can tell of all your acts of power,
make all your praises heard,
or recount all your wonders at every moment?
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

A. God's Revelation

- 18 The faith of the Church is founded on God's Revelation. By this Revelation the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, speaks to human beings to make himself known to them and to call them to communion with him: "In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will (see *Eph* 1:9) by which humankind might have access in the Holy Spirit to the Father and come to share in the divine nature through Christ, the Word made flesh (see *Eph* 2:18; *2 Pt* 1:4)."¹⁰ God, who "dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see" (*1 Tm* 6:16; see *Jn* 1:8; *1 Jn* 4:12), "came clothed in flesh ... so that both the living and the dead might know of his visitation and of the coming of the Lord."¹¹ By revealing himself, God, who in his essence is unknowable, "wishes to make [people] capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity."¹²
- 19 God's Revelation is realized simultaneously by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other and shed light upon each other.¹³ It involves a specific "divine pedagogy."¹⁴ God communicates himself to humanity gradually, preparing it in stages for the reception of the Revelation of his own self, culminating in the fullness of this Revelation in the person and activity of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds" (*Heb* 1:1-2). Only in his incarnate Word, which was from the begin-

¹⁰ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 2.

¹¹ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 2.

¹² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 52.

¹³ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 2.

¹⁴ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 53.

ning (see *Jn* 1:1), that is, in Jesus Christ, does God reveal himself in all fullness; for in him, together with human nature, “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (*Col* 2:9).

- 20 In the Old Testament, God manifested himself to Moses on Mount Sinai as *The-One-Who-Is, I AM WHO AM* (*Ex* 3:14), revealing to Moses not something about himself, but his very Self. The name *The-One-Who-Is* points to the personal nature of God, who possesses being in his very Self and who is the Source of all existence and life. In the New Testament, God, who is first to go out to meet humankind (see *Jn* 3:16; 1 *Jn* 4:19), reveals himself as Father through his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit (see *Mt* 11:27).

1. God's Word in Creation

- 21 Only God exists from all eternity, and it is he who has brought all creation from non-being into being. Only he possesses the fullness of life; whereas the world, having been created, owes its existence to him. God creates everything by his Word: “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (*Jn* 1:3; see *Gn* 1). Nature, created by God, and nature's laws proceed from the Word: “For the voice ... and command were as a natural and permanent law for [the earth]; it gave fertility and the power to produce fruit for all ages to come.”¹⁵ The Word of God provides the norm, or law, as well as meaning to all creation: the phrase “God said” means that a wise and creative word has been imparted to every substance or nature.¹⁶ In the contemplation of nature, its established laws and harmony, we come to know the wisdom of the Creator and the beauty of his plan. All creation praises God, his majesty, his glory and wisdom: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (*Ps* 18[19]:2); “Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (*Ps* 8:2).
- 22 By means of the world, as God's creation, we come to know the Creator: “Ever since the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (*Rom* 1:20). The Holy Fathers of the Church have often compared the world to a book through which we discover its Author.¹⁷ By coming to know God through his creation,

¹⁵ BASIL THE GREAT, *Hexaemeron*, Homily 5, 1: PG 29, 96A.

¹⁶ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Hexaemeron*: PG 44, 88-89.

¹⁷ See BASIL THE GREAT, *Hexaemeron*, Homily 4: PG 29, 77; JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homily on Statues*, 9: PG 49, 105-122.

we simultaneously acquire experience of being in the presence of God, and we become capable of glorifying him “in all places of his dominion” (*Ps* 102[103]:22).

2. God in History

- 23 God reveals himself to humanity not only as Creator and Almighty Ruler (*Pantocrator*) of the world but also as Father and Saviour of his people. The history of humankind is a sacred history inasmuch as God himself appears and acts within it. God realizes his plan of salvation within history by deeds and words, which have an inner unity. The deeds wrought by God manifest and confirm the teaching expressed through his words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. The fullness of truth about God and the salvation of humanity are made clear to us in Christ, who simultaneously is the mediator and the fullness of all Revelation.¹⁸
- 24 God revealed to Adam and Eve, and through them to all humankind, their vocation to continue the work of creation: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (*Gn* 1:28). When our first parents fell away from God because of their sin, God did not abandon humankind but promised to send a Saviour: “... he [the offspring of the woman, Jesus Christ] will strike your [the serpent’s] head” (*Gn* 3:15).
- 25 Even having lost true knowledge of God because of the fall, a human being does not stop seeking the One who is the origin of all things. Speaking about this search to the inhabitants of Athens, the holy apostle Paul said:
- Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands (*Acts* 17:22-24).
- 26 Among those who “search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him” (*Acts* 17:27), God reveals himself to Abraham, calling him to become the father of all believers, he grants him the promise of offspring and land. God confirms this promise by giving Abraham a son, Isaac, and to him—Jacob. And so, appearing to Moses in the burning bush in order to call him to lead his people out of Egypt, the house of

¹⁸ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 2.

slavery, the God-Who-Is reveals himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (*Ex* 3:15), “the God of our ancestors” (*Dt* 26:7). By leading the Israelites across the Red Sea, by giving them his commandments on Mount Sinai, and by leading them into the Promised Land, God shows that he not only enters into the history of his people; he also calls them to the fullness of life in him: “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people” (*Lv* 26:12). To David, who wished to build a house for God, a temple, God promises that he himself will build him a “house.” He will bring forth from his loins an offspring, the Christ, and his kingdom shall have no end (see 2 *Sm* 7:11-16). The Church sees this promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ: “And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (*Lk* 1:32-33).

- 27 In the New Testament, the fullness of Revelation is attained in the Only-Begotten Son, who from all eternity is within the bosom of the Father and reveals the Father (see *Jn* 1:18). Jesus himself emphasizes: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (*Jn* 14:9). Jesus thus confirms that he and the Father are one (see *Jn* 10:30). As the “image of the invisible God” (*Col* 1:15), Christ brings the fullness of Revelation. Christ, truly God and truly human, also reveals in himself the image of a perfect human being.
- 28 The Church believes that there is only one unique Revelation of God to humankind, the fullness of which was brought to us and given by Jesus Christ, so that no other Revelation exists.¹⁹ God’s Revelation continues to be transmitted by the Church, the Body of Christ, that we may continue to grow in faith and knowledge of God.
- 29 In her worship life, the Church unites the calendar year with the liturgical year—historical time with the sacred time of salvation. In liturgical celebration, the historical events of the earthly life of the Saviour become for us saving mysteries. In this way, God continues to act in history, until its final consummation in the second coming of Jesus Christ. While in the Old Testament, God revealed himself to chosen individuals—the patriarchs, prophets, and kings—in the New Testament, all the members of Christ’s Church receive his Revelation.

¹⁹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 4.

*You spoke to us through the mouths of your servants the Prophets,
announcing to us beforehand the salvation that was to come;
you gave the law as a help; you appointed angels as guardians.
And when the fullness of time had come,
you spoke to us through your Son,
through whom you had also made the ages.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

B. Holy Tradition

- 30 God the Father, who revealed himself through his Son in the Holy Spirit, offers his life to the faithful through the Church. The gracious action of the Holy Spirit, who reveals truth—and life in that truth—to all who live in communion with God, we call Holy Tradition. God, “who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 *Tm* 2:4), that is, to the knowledge of Jesus Christ (see *Jn* 14:6), reveals to humanity “what has been hidden since the foundation of the world” (*Mt* 13:35). His word remains firm and unchangeable: “In his gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what he had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations.”²⁰ Therefore, Christ is to be preached to all nations and all peoples, so that God’s Revelation may thus reach the ends of the earth.
- 31 According to Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, the essence of Holy Tradition is this—that all Christians share one and the same faith, by which they become partakers of God’s life:

All receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution, and expect the same advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body.²¹

According to the testimony of Saint Basil the Great, Holy Tradition is that which “the Lord himself taught us, what the apostles preached, what the Fathers held fast, and what the martyrs confirmed.”²² It includes all that was transmitted to us by Christ himself, as well as the teaching of the apostles and the faith of the Church. Saint Basil notes:

²⁰ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 7.

²¹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 20, 1: PG 7, 1177.

²² BASIL THE GREAT, *Against Sabellians, and Arius, and Anomeans*, Homily 24, 6: PG 31, 612.

... of the beliefs and practices which are preserved in the Church, some that we possess are derived from written teaching; others we have received, delivered to us through the Mysteries and by Apostolic Tradition; all of these in relation to true religion have the same force ... Were we to attempt to reject such customs as having no written authority, on the ground that the importance they possess is small, we should unintentionally injure the Gospel in its essentials; or, rather, we would make our public definition a mere phrase and nothing more.²³

Saint Basil connects Holy Tradition with liturgical life, noting that in addition to the profession of faith in the Most Holy Trinity, it also embraces the sign of the Cross in the Rite of Reception into the Catechumenate; one's orientation during prayer, that is, facing East; the renunciation of Satan and his dominion; the triple immersion at Baptism; standing during worship on Sundays; the *epiklesis* [i.e., invocation of the Holy Spirit] in the Eucharist; the blessing of water and oil, and so forth.²⁴

1. Apostolic Tradition

- 32 Christ entrusts the word of Revelation to his apostles: "... for the words that you [Father] gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them ... I have given them your word" (*Jn* 17:8, 14). The Church continues the apostolic mission in the transmission of God's Revelation. She is called to preach and to interpret it. To fulfil this, Christ gave his Church the Holy Spirit, who leads her into all truth (see *Jn* 16:13). The Church transmits God's Revelation in two ways: *orally*—"by the apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example, and by observances handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with him, and from what he did, or what they had learned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit;"²⁵ and *in writing*—"by those apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing."²⁶
- 33 Christ chooses his apostles and sends them to preach the Word: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (*Mt* 28:19-20). Having received

²³ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27: PG 32, 190-192.

²⁴ See BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27: PG 32, 185-196.

²⁵ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 7.

²⁶ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 7.

this commission at Christ's Ascension and then receiving the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the apostles began to preach Christ and witness to him: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses" (*Acts* 2:32). Following the example of Christ the Teacher, the apostles transmit his Gospel to their own disciples through the living word of preaching, calling upon all to preserve it: "Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us" (2 *Tm* 1:14).

- 34 The apostles have entrusted us with "all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning" (*Acts* 1:1). The holy apostle Paul testifies to this when he writes to the faithful in Thessalonica: "So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2 *Thes* 2:15). The Church has always called upon Christians to remain faithful to the teachings of the apostles, and thus, she has preserved the immutability of Holy Tradition, and by this token, her faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The essence of Tradition consists in faithfully following Christ within the Church for all generations, until the end of time. Holy Tradition is unchangeable because its content is Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday and today and forever (see *Heb* 13:8).

2. Faithfulness to Tradition

- 35 The unbroken continuity of Tradition is realized in the liturgical life of the Church, and in the teachings of the Holy Fathers, whose witness to the Truth is based not on human recollections, but on a living and uninterrupted experience of the Holy Spirit. The constancy of this experience within the Christian community is the safeguard of our faithfulness to the apostles' teaching, to the heritage of the Holy Fathers, and to the teaching of the Church, which strengthens our hope in the promise of the coming age. Faithfulness to Tradition is faithfulness to new life in Christ, which has been transmitted by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and from them to the bishops, the presbyters, the deacons, and all the faithful.
- 36 The first Christian communities preserved and transmitted the apostolic teaching; they preached the word of God and lived by it (see *Phil* 2:6-11), continually abiding in "the apostles' teaching and fellowship, [devoting themselves] to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" (*Acts* 2:42). Especially in the "breaking of the bread," Christians recognized the fulfilment of the Gospel and the presence of Christ among them (see *Lk* 24:31). At the same time, they announced the arrival of

the coming age. They did so while living in this world, yet not being “of this world” (see *Jn* 15:19; 17:14). These words can be fully applied to the Church today, which maintains within herself the Apostolic Tradition. Following the example of Peter, the Church unceasingly calls all people to repentance and baptism, by which they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit: “For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (*Acts* 2:39). The faithful receive a foretaste of these events and of the coming of the kingdom of God in the Most Holy Eucharist, where the encounter and communion of God and humankind is realized. This is the content of Tradition by which the Church lived in apostolic times, by which she lives today, and by which she will live in the age to come.

3. Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture

37 The Church believes and teaches:

There exists a close connection and communication between Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring ... tend toward the same end. For Holy Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, while Holy Tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known.²⁷

On the basis of the Holy Scriptures, the Church establishes the truth of oral Tradition, which in turn interprets and explains the Holy Scriptures. The oral Tradition is expressed through the teachings of the *Holy Fathers*, especially at ecumenical and local *Councils*. For this reason, the Church teaches us to receive with faith and to respect both the Holy Scriptures and the oral Tradition.

C. The Holy Scriptures

38 In his providence, God envisaged the transmission of his Revelation also in written form. This would give the opportunity to preserve his Revelation unchangeable, and to transmit it from generation to generation throughout human history. People inspired by God transcribed God’s word forming the Bible (from the Greek *Biblia*, meaning *books*),

²⁷ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 9.

which we call *Holy Scripture*. “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful” (2 *Tm* 3:16). Holy Scripture is the Word of God addressed to every human being. Therefore, it is relevant in every time and every place. The Holy Scriptures are a collection of books, written *under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit* by holy people, which the Church of Christ has received and preserves as the Word of God. These books comprise the canon of Holy Scripture, which the Church has identified in the light of Apostolic Tradition. This canon includes 47 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New Testament.

- 39 The Old Testament contains the Revelation which God gave to humankind from the beginning of the world to the coming of the Saviour. The Old Testament includes: the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy); the Historical Books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, two books of Kings, two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, and two books of Maccabees); the Poetic Books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach); and the Prophetic Books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi). The Psalms of David are used in all the divine services of the Church, while selected texts of other books are used as readings at Vespers and at the Hours.
- 40 The Holy Scriptures of the New Testament contain the Revelation which God has given to humanity through his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and his apostles. It consists of 27 books: the Four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which announce the earthly life and teaching of Christ; the Acts of the Apostles, which describes the growth of Christ’s Church, especially the service and preaching of the chief apostles Peter and Paul; fourteen epistles of the holy apostle Paul (one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one each to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, and one each to Titus, Philemon, and the Hebrews); seven catholic [universal] epistles, written by other apostles to various Christian communities (one by James, two by Peter, three by John, and one by Jude); and the Revelation of John the Theologian.

1. Divine and Human Aspects of Holy Scripture

- 41 The fullness of God’s Revelation is Jesus Christ, the God-man, in whom along with a human nature “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (*Col* 2:9). As the divine and human natures are united

inseparably in Christ, so in the Holy Scriptures the divine Word of God is transmitted to us by human language. God's words, expressed in human words, adapted themselves to human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took upon himself the flesh of human weakness, lived just like a human being.²⁸ "The Word of God permeates all of Holy Scripture. That one Word resounds from the mouths of all the holy sacred ministers; that Word which was with God from the beginning does not require syllables because that Word is not dependent upon time."²⁹

- 42 In reading and interpreting Holy Scripture, the Church always takes into account two important dimensions: the divine and the human. Neglect of the human dimension in Holy Scripture leads to literalism, where human forms of transmitting the Word of God are given a divine character. On the other hand, rejection of the divine dimension reduces Holy Scripture to a mere historical-literary work.

2. Unity of the Old and New Testaments

- 43 From the earliest times, the Church has studiously preserved the divinely wise richness of the Old Testament, regarding it as her heritage. "The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and his Revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New, and the New Testament fulfils the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God."³⁰ At first, God chose Israel to receive and carry the truth of Revelation; then, in the New Testament, this truth is received by the Church, which is called the New Israel.
- 44 God, the inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old, and the Old be manifested in the New.³¹ For although Christ established the New Covenant in his Blood (see *Lk* 22:20; *1 Cor* 11:25), all the same, the books of the Old Testament were thoroughly absorbed into the proclamation of the Gospel; they attain and reveal their full meaning in the New Testament (see *Mt* 5:17; *Lk* 24:27; *Rom* 16:25-26; *2 Cor* 3:14-16). In turn, they shed light on the New Testament and explain it.³²

²⁸ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 13.

²⁹ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Exposition of Psalm 103, Sermon 4*: PL 37, 1348.

³⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 140.

³¹ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Seven Books of Questions on the Heptateuch*, 2, 73: PL 34, 623.

³² See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 16.

- 45 In the light of Apostolic Tradition, the Church uses typology to illumine the unity of God's plan of salvation (in Greek, *economia*) in both Testaments. *Typology* is a manner of reading Holy Scripture that allow us to discern in the works that God performed in Old Testament times, prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son.³³ In the persons and events of the Old Testament, the Holy Fathers saw the *prefigurations* and *icons* of events from the life of Christ and his Church. Therefore, Christians reading the Old Testament in light of the Paschal Mysteries discover its deeper meaning.

3. Reading and Explanation of Holy Scripture

- 46 Saint Jerome teaches that “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.”³⁴ Therefore, to know Christ one must read Holy Scripture, which, in the words of Saint Paul, “is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 *Tm* 3:16-17). One must read the Holy Scriptures daily: “Reading Holy Scripture every day, even for a brief moment, should become the custom of every Christian family. This reading should become people’s daily nourishment.”³⁵
- 47 The Word of God is received with faith, and faith comes from what is heard (see *Rom* 10:17). To understand the Holy Scriptures, it is necessary to join reading the Word of God with *hearing* that Word in homilies and catechesis. As related in the Acts of the Apostles, a steward of the Ethiopian queen was reading the prophecies of Isaiah about Christ, but he did not understand them until the apostle Philip explained their meaning to him. Thanks to this explanation, the steward believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized (see *Acts* 8:26-39).
- 48 The Holy Fathers of the Church not only read the Holy Scriptures themselves, they also insistently encouraged all the faithful to read them. Saint John Chrysostom writes:

Reading the Holy Scriptures, dearly beloved, is a great good. It arouses the soul to an appreciation of wisdom, directs the mind

³³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 128.

³⁴ JEROME, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah*, Introduction: PL 24, 17; see Benedict XV, Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* [Spirit Comforter] (September 15, 1920); Pius XII, Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* [Inspired by the Divine Spirit] (September 30, 1943).

³⁵ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Про почитання Святого Хреста* [On the Veneration of the Holy Cross] (September 9, 1940).

to heaven, brings one to a thankful attitude, prevents our getting excited over any earthly reality, brings our thinking to rest in the world beyond, brings ourselves to do everything with a view to reward from the Lord, and to deal with the trials of virtue with great readiness.³⁶

- 49 Following the tradition of the Holy Fathers of the Church, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky refers to the Holy Scriptures as an infinite and unfathomable ocean of truth and goodness:

Holy Scripture is the word of God Most High, one in the Trinity, spoken to us useless sinners, whom the Most High calls to the dignity of being his children and who receives us as his children. It is therefore an inexhaustible treasury of all heavenly blessings, a source of the light of heavenly, infallible truth, and of living water, flowing unto eternal life and the eternal salvation of the whole human race. And so, let us come to understand what medicine for the soul, what angelic nourishment, what strength for life, and what a most wonderful gift from heaven is every word of Holy Scripture.³⁷

- 50 The content of Holy Scripture is discerned most fully in the light of Holy Tradition, by virtue of which the Holy Scriptures always remain relevant and living. To understand Holy Scripture is to discern within it the deepest content and meaning of Revelation as the history of salvation. This is possible only in the Church, where it was born. The best guide to understanding Holy Scripture is the prayer of the Church, by means of which, by the action of the Holy Spirit, Holy Scripture is revealed to us as the Word of God. Christ appears in the Word, just as he appears in the Eucharistic Bread and Wine. For this reason, the Fathers of the Church teach us about two tables—the table of the Word and the table of the Bread—from which the faithful partake during the Divine Liturgy.³⁸
- 51 Inasmuch as Holy Scripture is the Word of God expressed in human words, the efforts of the human mind alone are insufficient for its interpretation. It is necessary to read and explain it in the Spirit, by whom it was written.³⁹ Therefore, to discern the true meaning of the sacred texts, it is necessary to pay attention to the content and unity of all Scripture,

³⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Genesis*, Homily 35, 1: PG 53, 321.

³⁷ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Визнання Вселенської віри* [Profession of the Universal Faith] (March–April 1942).

³⁸ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 21.

³⁹ See BENEDICT XV, Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* [Spirit Comforter] (September 15, 1920); JEROME, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 5, 19–21.

taking into account the living Tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith.⁴⁰ Saint Athanasius the Great warns us that quoting individual passages, torn from the wholeness of Holy Scripture with no regard for the general context, can lead one astray.⁴¹ Saint Jerome professes that the content of the Gospel cannot be reduced to mere words:

We should not suppose that the essence of the Gospel is in the words rather than in the actual meaning of Scripture, or on the surface rather than in the inmost parts, or in the leaves of mere words rather than in the root of reason ... Scripture is advantageous to its hearers when it is spoken with Christ, when it is proclaimed with the Father, and when the preacher introduces it with the Spirit.⁴²

- 52 The criterion for understanding the Word of God is the reading and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures by the Church: “First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pt 1:20-21). Christ entrusted the Church with the authentic interpretation of Holy Scripture in her teaching ministry to God’s word. “This teaching office [of the Church] is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on ... it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.”⁴³

*Therefore, Master, as we too remember his saving passion,
the life-giving Cross, the burial for three days,
the resurrection from the dead, the ascension into heaven,
the sitting at your right hand, O God and Father,
and his glorious and dread second coming;
We offer to you, yours of your own, in behalf of all and for all.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

D. Kerygma (Proclamation) and Catechesis

- 53 The holy apostle Paul teaches that our faith in God and his Revelation is born as a response to the Word that is heard (see Rom 10:17). Therefore, the Church from the very beginning, as we read in the Acts

⁴⁰ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 12.

⁴¹ ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *Against the Arians, Discourse I*, 53: PG 26, 121; see *Against the Arians, Discourse II*, 73-82: PG 26, 299-322; see *First Letter to Serapion*: PG 26, 580-581.

⁴² JEROME, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 1, 11: PL 26, 322.

⁴³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], 10.

of the Apostles, proclaimed the risen Christ (in Greek, *kerygma*) and taught the faith (in Greek, *katekchesis*; see *Acts* 2:14-41). Kerygma is the proclamation of the Paschal event of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, manifested in the witness of the life of a Christian community. Kerygma is united with the call to believe in Jesus Christ. Faith leads to conversion, reception of Baptism, and readiness to follow Christ: "In this do I believe and will not be ashamed; before the nations I will profess this faith, and for its profession I will lay down my life."⁴⁴

- 54 Catechesis is the explanation of Christian teaching, which serves for the preparation of catechumens for Baptism, the churching of faithful and the deepening of their faith (mystagogy). We find examples of apostolic catechesis especially in the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, where the apostle responds to the questions of the faithful, and clarifies the relation between faith and daily life. The goal of catechesis, as the essential work of the Church, is to teach and to form Christians in the faith, leading them into fellowship with Jesus Christ and the Church community. Catechesis has a systematic character. It elucidates a Christian understanding of the personal and social life of the faithful, in light of the teachings of Christ and the Church.

1. Tradition of the Holy Fathers of the Church

- 55 The apostolic proclamation of the Gospel was continued by the Fathers of the Church, of whom the first were disciples of the apostles: the holy hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome; Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer; and Saint Polycarp of Smyrna. Their teaching and witness of the faith was received from Christ's apostles, and for this reason it is held in special esteem in the Christian community.
- 56 The Church acknowledges those who preached the Gospel in truthfulness of teaching and in holiness of life, and refers to them as *Holy Fathers*. For this reason they proclaimed the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Thus, for the Church they became Fathers in the faith, becoming like the apostle Paul, who said: "For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 *Cor* 4:15-16).
- 57 The Holy Fathers of the Church were witnesses of the Apostolic Tradition. They defended its purity and aligned their own theological teaching with it. The fullness of God's Revelation is found in Christ Jesus. However, in the course of history, the Church has progressively

⁴⁴ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Confession of Faith*.

uncovered the depths of this Revelation. In their sermons and explanations, the Fathers of the Church further deepened the understanding of Apostolic Tradition and professed it in a conciliar fashion. Their heritage is an integral part of Holy Tradition. In the course of each liturgical year, the Church commemorates the Holy Fathers, who clearly defined at Ecumenical Councils that which in the Church has been believed always, everywhere, and by all.*

- 58 The unified conciliar thought of the Fathers defined the content of faith. Thanks to this, the faith endured for centuries without error and was professed in the fullness of truth. The definitions of faith provided by the Ecumenical Councils acquired the status of *dogmas*, and they became the unchangeable teachings of the Church. Through these dogmas, the Fathers delineated the true profession of the Mysteries of God, defending the Tradition from erroneous interpretations. The transmission of faith continues to this day through the ministry of bishops, the successors of the apostles. We refer to this ministry as the “Teaching Office” (in Latin, *Magisterium*) of the Church, when bishops transmit with one mind, always and everywhere, that which they have received from the apostles.
- 59 The conciliar dogmatic definitions of faith were based upon the consensus of the Fathers (in Latin, *consensus Patrum*). Saints such as Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, Leo the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory the Great, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, and others all contributed to this unified conciliar thinking of the Church.

2. Inculturation of the Good News

- 60 The Gospel of Christ has been preached to various nations within the diversity of their cultures.⁴⁵ This process has been called *inculturation*—the expression of the one Tradition within the diversity of local traditions, and the convergence of evangelization with the particularities of human cultures, languages, ways of life, and ways of thinking.

Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical, or devotional traditions born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed.⁴⁶

* See VINCENT OF LÉRINS, *Commonitory for the Antiquity and Universality of the Catholic Faith*, 6: PL 50, 615.

⁴⁵ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* [Joy and Hope], 58.

⁴⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 83.

The one Tradition was to be expressed in various cultures that are transfigured by the power of the Gospel, in accordance with the words of the apostle Paul:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews ... To those outside of the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) that I might win those outside the law ... I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some (1 *Cor* 9:20-22).

- 61 The inculturation of the Gospel bore fruit in the formation of various Christian traditions: Byzantine, Latin, Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and others. Already from the very first centuries, Christianity also spread into the lands of the ancient Slavic tribes. By the ninth century, two brothers from Thessalonica, Saints Cyril and Methodius, Equal to the Apostles, translated the Gospel and texts of divine services into a language that the Slavic nations could understand. "By incarnating the Gospel in the native culture of the peoples which they were evangelizing, Saints Cyril and Methodius were especially meritorious for the formation and development of that same culture, or rather of many cultures."⁴⁷ From among the Christian cultures fostered by the Slavs, there also arose the Christian culture of Rus-Ukraine, where the one ecclesial Tradition developed into a particular ecclesial tradition.
- 62 In this way, the one Gospel of Jesus Christ took flesh in the multitude of cultures of Christian peoples; the one Tradition of the Word of God was expressed in a diversity of traditions. Through its own tradition, every particular Church makes its own contribution to the understanding of this one Tradition.

3. Growth in Faith: Catechumenate, Illumination, Sacramental Initiation

- 63 In the first centuries, the catechesis of non-baptized adults in the Church took place in three stages: Catechumenate, Illumination, and Initiation. The Catechumenate (from the Greek *katekhoumenos*, meaning *one being instructed*) began with the presentation of a new candidate to the Christian community. With the agreement of the community, the candidate became a catechumen. The name of this person was announced to the community; and now, the Holy Scriptures would be announced to the catechumen. Such catechumens sometimes remained in the narthex of the church, which served as an outward symbol of the catechumens' inner spiritual state: they were leaving the world behind,

⁴⁷ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* [Apostles to the Slavs], 21.

but had not yet fully entered into the Church, the temple of the faithful. Having listened to the Word of God and the homily at the Divine Liturgy, the catechumens were obliged to leave the church after the prayer of the church community for them—the Litany for the Catechumens.

- 64 The Catechumenate initiated the stage during which catechumens familiarized themselves with the faith and prepared for Baptism. Before the actual Baptism, the status of catechumens was changed to “those being enlightened” [i.e., the stage of Illumination]. During pre-baptismal catechesis, they were taught the Symbol of Faith and the Lord’s Prayer, the “Our Father.” The pre-baptismal catechesis culminated in a *catechetical instruction* delivered by the bishop himself.
- 65 Baptism immerses a person into the mystery of Christ’s Death and Resurrection. It is the beginning of initiation into the mysteries (in Greek, *mystagogia*). Having become a participant in the Death and Resurrection of Christ, the newly baptized person is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, and in the Eucharist receives the food of eternal life.
- 66 In our tradition, Christian sacramental initiation is expressed also in spatial terms. Baptism begins in the narthex or baptistery, Chrismation takes place in the nave or temple of the faithful, and Holy Communion at the threshold of the sanctuary. The newly baptized are clothed in bright garments (in Ukrainian, *kryzhmo*), which in the early Church were worn throughout all of Bright Week. These garments signify the joy of life in Christ and the expectation of the fullness of one’s encounter with God at the second coming of Christ.

4. Environment in which Faith is Transmitted: Family, Nation, and Church

- 67 The primary context in which faith is transmitted is the family. Parents form their children in the faith by the example of their lives and the words of their prayer. In teaching the Gospel and witnessing to it, parents become the first catechists for their children. As they raise children in a Christian manner, parents create in their family a special atmosphere, one of common prayer before icons and the observance of Sundays and feast days.
- 68 From a young age, children enter into the spiritual life. This life is built on prayer, hearing the Word of God, and receiving Holy Communion. As they grow into maturity, with the assistance of their parents, children grow in the grace of the Mystery of Baptism. They learn to

overcome evil and do what is good. For children, the inheritance of faith received from their parents is a token of assurance of eternal life. The godly life of godparents and extended family members also plays an important role in a child's maturing in the faith. Christian family customs establish in children a Christian perspective on human birth and death, the formation of families and familial relationships, and they develop a sense of belonging within a church community and one's people.

- 69 Every nation is a community, with its own historical memory, earthly homeland, and struggle for well-being and perfection. It was to the nations that Christ sent his apostles: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (*Mt* 28:19-20). The Christianization of the nations depends upon the gradual formation of a Christian worldview and structuring of life. The Christian culture of a given nation is a means for transmitting the faith from one generation to the next. It nurtures within a nation a love for God, for one's earthly homeland, sacrificial service for the sake of its well-being, and an honest attitude towards work; it strengthens bonds within families, among relatives, and in society. The mutual permeation of the Gospel and the culture of a people is expressed in the self-governance of a Church.
- 70 The Church, one and at the same time diverse, is a prefigurement of the family of nations, who are all equal and yet different. To all nations the Church proclaims the way of salvation: "And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the world."⁴⁸ In her ministry for the salvation of all nations, the Church draws her strength from the contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity, the divine community of the Persons of the one God. She extends the invitation:

Come, O you peoples, let us worship the Godhead of three Persons ... Holy God, who created all things through the Son, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Holy and Mighty, through whom we have known the Father, and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world. Holy and Immortal, Comforting Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. O Holy Trinity, glory be to you!⁴⁹

⁴⁸ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 20, 1: PG 7, 1177.

⁴⁹ *Floral Triodion*, Pentecost, Vespers, Final Sticheron at Psalm 140.

II. WE BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY, ONE IN ESSENCE AND UNDIVIDED

- 71 The Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—infinately surpasses all possibilities of human understanding. “His divinity [i.e., Godhead] is completely unfathomable, and his essence, which is above all, is not what the mind conceives it to be.”⁵⁰ According to the words of the apostle Paul, the depths of this mystery can be plumbed only by the Holy Spirit: “So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God” (1 *Cor* 2:11). However, that same Spirit, the Spirit of truth, descending upon people, reveals the inner life of God. The Holy Spirit teaches people to express the truth, inasmuch as this is possible, through the language of faith: “Now we have received ... the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed upon us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual” (1 *Cor* 2:12-13). And then, having thus taught, the Holy Spirit keeps vigil, that the faith, “the assurance of things hoped for,” might grow into the contemplation of “things not seen” (see *Heb* 11:1); that humankind may see the invisible as if it were visible, and see what is obscure face to face. “[Christians of the East] perceive that one draws close to this presence above all by letting oneself be taught an adoring silence, for at the culmination of the knowledge and experience of God is his absolute transcendence.”⁵¹
- 72 The presence of the transcendent God is expressed through the symbolism of the liturgy and of the church building: by the curtain behind the Royal Doors of the iconostasis, by the Holy Gifts covered by veils, by the raised *aer* (in Slavonic, *vozdukh*) during the Creed, and by the cloud of incense. “There is the transcendent unity of God and the fruitfulness of God, and as we prepare to sing this truth we use the names ‘Trinity’ and ‘Unity’ for that which is fact beyond every name.”⁵² Even though we refer to God using these titles, we are fully aware that we do not thereby exhaust the mysteries of God.

No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish them [as Persons] than I am carried back to the One. When I think of any One of the Three [Persons] I think of him as the whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking of escapes me.⁵³

⁵⁰ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Oration on the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit*: PG 46, 553.

⁵¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen* [Light of the East], 16.

⁵² PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPOGITE, *The Divine Names*, 13, 3: PG 3, 981.

⁵³ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 40: The Oration on Holy Baptism*, 41: PG 36, 417.

- 73 In our liturgical and personal prayers, through the constant invocation and glorification of the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we simultaneously express our faith and communion with the Most Holy Trinity, which grants us “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁴

A. We Believe in God the Father

*I believe in one God, the Father...
(Symbol of Faith)*

*O Master, the One-Who-Is, Lord God, Father Almighty...
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

- 74 Basing itself on Divine Revelation and its interpretation by the Holy Fathers, in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith⁵⁵ the Church of Christ professes her faith in God the Father as follows: “I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.” The fatherhood of God is understood to mean that the Father eternally begets the Son; and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.⁵⁶ God has created everything and governs all things. The Father is the Creator and Pantocrator for all his creation. The universe came into existence because God the Father willed it. We believe in the one God, because there is only one God the Father.

1. God the Father Revealed in the Holy Scriptures

- 75 God reveals himself as Person: “I AM WHO I AM,” or “THE ONE-WHO-IS” (*Ex* 3:14). This God-who-is-Person is the only one who really *is*. Everything else exists only inasmuch as God wills it to exist. God is holy, that is, totally different from all creation. There is no other like God. He is unique. Thus, it is not possible to imagine him with our thoughts, or to portray him in any material way: “You shall not make for yourself an idol” (*Ex* 20:4). In contrast to lifeless idols, the true God *lives*. Lacking appropriate words to express the mystery of God’s life, Holy Scripture often makes use of anthropomorphisms, thereby applying to God the behavioural traits of a living human being: God *loves, converses, assists, pities, is sad, becomes angry, does battle, punishes...*

⁵⁴ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Blessing prior to the Anaphora.

⁵⁵ CONSTANTINOPLE I, *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith*.

⁵⁶ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Against Eunomius*, I, 32: PG 45, 389.

- 76 In the Old Testament, God reveals himself through various images and events that witness to his presence: in the three travellers whom Abraham received; in the vision of the ladder joining heaven and earth in the dream of the patriarch Jacob; before Moses in the burning bush that was not consumed; in the pillars of fire and cloud (see *Ex* 13:21); over the Ark of the Covenant (see *Ex* 25:22); and as a quiet and gentle breeze (see 1 *Kgs* 19:12).
- 77 The Chosen People of God profess their God, exalting him with various names: Saviour (2 *Sm* 22:2-3; *Ps* 106[107]:21; *Is* 43:3-4; *Is* 45:15); Creator (*Job* 4:17; *Job* 32:22; *Ps* 95[96]:6; *Is* 17:7; *Is* 51:13); Lord (*Ex* 3:15); Father (*Ps* 89[90]:27; *Is* 9:5; *Is* 63:16; *Mal* 1:6); Bridegroom (*Hos* 2:22); and Shepherd (*Ps* 23[24]:1). However, the Old Testament titles were merely prefigurements of the Revelation of God as the Father of the only-begotten Son. "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (*Jn* 1:18).
- 78 The Son of God, Jesus Christ, in whom along with a human nature "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (*Col* 2:9), reveals the Father: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (*Mt* 11:27). Jesus teaches us to address God as "Our Father" (*Mt* 6:9) and to imitate his perfection: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Mt* 5:48). In Jesus Christ, the invisible God becomes visible for people: "The Father and I are one" (*Jn* 10:30) and "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (*Jn* 14:9).

2. The Father without Beginning

- 79 The Church calls "Father" him who has no father, and was never anyone's son.⁵⁷ The evangelist John says that the Word was "in the beginning" (*Jn* 1:1) (in Slavonic, *v nachali*, "as the foundational principle"). The Holy Fathers understood this to affirm that "the beginning" is the Person of the Father.⁵⁸ He who is the personal Beginning of all is himself without a beginning that would cause him to be. In other words, the Father is the Beginning without beginning. This antinomy expresses the freedom of the divine Person of the Father, who is not caused by anything or anyone. "The Father is ... said to be both without origin, and origin himself—origin in that he is the cause and spring and eternal

⁵⁷ See ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *First Letter to Serapion*, 16: PG 26, 568.

⁵⁸ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration* 42, 15: PG 36, 475.

light.”⁵⁹ As the Beginning of all creation, the Father fills all things, and at the same time surpasses all that is created.

- 80 In her experience, the Church always contemplates the Father in relation to the Son and the Holy Spirit, and this Trinity (Triad) as a communion of Persons.

I believe in one God, the Father glorified in the Trinity—unbegotten, beginningless and endless; in the Son—begotten, yet co-beginningless and co-endless with the Father; and in the Holy Spirit—who proceeds from the Father and is revealed in the Son, co-beginningless and equal to the Father and the Son. I believe in the Trinity, one in essence, yet multiple in Persons; Trinity according to names, yet one God.⁶⁰

- 81 The Father is the Father because he is the Father of the Son and the Source of the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Son and the Holy Spirit are “from the Father, although not *after* the Father.”⁶¹ The generation of the Word and the procession of the Spirit are not to be taken according to categories of time: “For the Father eternally begets the Son, co-eternal and co-reigning; and the Holy Spirit is in the Father, glorified with the Son; one power, one nature, and one divinity.”⁶² God the Father is the Beginning of the indivisible and most intimate communion (in Greek, *koinonia*) in love of the divine Persons.
- 82 The personal distinctiveness of the Father from the Son and the Holy Spirit lies in the fact that the *Father is unbegotten*. Himself unbegotten, he is the Beginning of the Person of the Son and of the Person of the Holy Spirit. The fact that God the Father is without beginning means that he is not conditioned by anyone or anything else.

The Father is called thus because he begets the Son; and the Son is called thus because he is begotten by the Father; and the Holy Spirit is called thus because of his procession from the Father, yet being inseparable from him.⁶³

- 83 In the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, the Church calls the Father *incomprehensible* and *uncircumscribable*. The *incomprehensibility* of the Father indicates that no stage of our coming to know God is ever definitive. After all, only God can know God to his very

⁵⁹ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 20, On Theology, and the Appointment of Bishops*, 7: PG 35, 1073.

⁶⁰ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Confession of Faith*.

⁶¹ See GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 29, The Third Theological Oration*, 3: PG 36, 77.

⁶² *Floral Triodion*, Pentecost, Vespers, Final Sticheron at Psalm 140.

⁶³ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Confession of Faith*.

depths: “no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:11). Our knowledge of God will grow in faith, according to the words of the holy apostle Paul, until we see him “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12). For humankind, the incomprehensibility of God guarantees an endless growth in coming to know God, which is “eternal life.”

- 84 Just as the Father cannot be circumscribed, so also his incomprehensibility attests to the impossibility of reducing the Personhood of God to any forms of expression used by human beings, whether through image or word. God the Father is not portrayed on icons, because the Father did not become incarnate, nor take on the image of a human being. The Father is revealed by his only-begotten Son, who is the “image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15).

B. We Believe in the Only-Begotten Son

*And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father.
Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in being with the Father.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*You are without beginning,
invisible, incomprehensible, uncircumscribed, unchangeable,
the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ ... he is the image of your goodness,
the perfect seal of your likeness—revealing you, the Father, in himself—
living Word, true God, Wisdom before the ages,
Life, Sanctification, Power, and the true Light.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

- 85 God the Father begets the Son in freedom and love. The invisible love of the Father, from which the Son is begotten, becomes visible in the Son: “The Father is the invisible [Revelation] of the Son, and the Son is the visible [Revelation] of the Father.”⁶⁴ In this love, the Father and the Son are one. The begotten Son is at the same time hypostatically (as Person) different from the Father. The Father begets Someone other than himself, revealing himself completely within the Son, as Other.⁶⁵
- 86 The Son of God is a reflection of “God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being” (Heb 1:3). His personal generation from the Father is a begetting of “Light from Light, true God from true God.” The Son

⁶⁴ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 6, 6: PG 7, 989.

⁶⁵ See ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *First Letter to Serapion*, 16: PG 26, 568.

of God, “reveals in himself the Father.” He is the “living Word,”⁶⁶ who was in God “from all ages” and was God (see *Jn* 1:1). This Son of God is “the image of [the Father’s] goodness, the perfect seal of [the Father’s] likeness,”⁶⁷ “the image of the invisible God” (*Col* 1:15). Therefore, the Son of God is simultaneously the Word and Image of God.

1. The Son of God Revealed in the Holy Scriptures

- 87 At the Theophany on the Jordan River, the Father himself calls Jesus Christ his own Son: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (*Mk* 1:11). In the Old Testament, the title *son of God* is given to the people of God: “Thus says the LORD, Israel is my first-born son” (*Ex* 4:22). The title is also given to the Messiah, the Anointed One: “The Lord said to me, ‘You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession’” (*Ps* 2:7-8).
- 88 The New Testament gives new meaning to the title *Son of God*, emphasizing the uniqueness of the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father. Christ himself makes a distinction between his own divine sonship and our sonship in God: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father” (*Jn* 20:17; see *Jn* 1:18). The Father witnesses to the exclusiveness of Christ’s sonship in the revelation at the Transfiguration: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” (*Lk* 9:35). The evangelist John professes the divinity of God’s Son: “The Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true ... he is the true God and eternal life” (1 *Jn* 5:20).

2. The Only-Begotten Son

- 89 The Son of God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, equal in dignity and essence with the Father, is “the splendour of the Father, the unchangeable and immutable image of his essence and his nature, the fountain of wisdom and grace.”⁶⁸ Therefore, the Church professes Christ to be the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father (see *Jn* 1:18). Begotten of the Father, the Son is uncreated; he is the only One from the Father, an unrepeatable Person of God, the Word of God.

For God sent forth the Word ... just as the root puts forth the tree, and the fountain [i.e., spring] the river, and the sun the ray ...

⁶⁶ See *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

⁶⁷ See *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

⁶⁸ *Floral Triodion*, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Vespers, Second Kneeling Prayer.

I should not hesitate, indeed, to call the tree the son or offspring of the root, and the river that of the fountain [i.e., spring], and the ray that of the sun; because every original source is a parent, and everything which issues from the origin is an offspring. Much more is this true of the Word of God, who has actually received as his own peculiar designation the name of Son.⁶⁹

- 90 The Church professes the Son to be one in being [essence] with the Father, emphasizing the equality of Persons within the Most Holy Trinity, and the unity of God's nature, thus confirming the divinity of the Son of God. The Son did not come to be in time, as did creatures. Therefore, he is not lower than the Father. He co-exists with him eternally and is equal to him in all things, other than begetting, which belongs to the Father.⁷⁰

C. We Believe in the Holy Spirit

*And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*Through him the Holy Spirit was made manifest, the Spirit of truth,
the grace of sonship, the pledge of the inheritance to come,
the first fruit of the eternal good things,
the life-giving power, the source of sanctification.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

- 91 The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person and proceeds from the Father (see *Jn* 15:26). This procession [i.e., coming forth] of the Holy Spirit can be explained through an image, making use of an analogy: the Father is the source, the Son is the stream, the Holy Spirit is the water. There is only one source for the stream and the water, only one Father for the Son and for the Holy Spirit, which like water flows from the source and fills the river-bed and stream.⁷¹ The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person that is equally worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father, coming to rest in the Word, and expressing the Word.⁷²

⁶⁹ TERTULLIAN, *Against Praxeas*, 8: PL 2, 163.

⁷⁰ See CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *On the Gospel of John*, 16, 13: PG 74, 411.

⁷¹ See TERTULLIAN, *Against Praxeas*, 8: PL 2, 163.

⁷² See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 7: PG 94, 805.

- 92 The Holy Spirit is often compared to *breath*, by which the spoken word resounds. Appropriately, within the Most Holy Trinity, the Father speaks the Word (begets the Son) by the Holy Spirit: “And it is this [Breath] which in the moment of utterance becomes the articulate word, revealing in itself the force of the word.”⁷³

1. The Holy Spirit Revealed in the Holy Scriptures

- 93 In Holy Scripture, the word *spirit* (in Hebrew, *ruah*) shares a common root with the verb *to breathe*. It means *breath*, *wind*, and *air*. Human life is dependent upon breathing, and when breathing ceases, life ends. We are not masters of our own lives—God gives us life by the *life-giving Spirit*.
- 94 From the first sentences of the Book of Genesis, “the Spirit of God” is the image used to signify the living God (*Gn* 1:2). In the account of the creation of humankind, the Holy Scriptures mention “the breath of life,” which God “breathed into” the man, who then became a “living being” (see *Gn* 2:7). In the Old Testament, many other images are brought forth as examples that in the New Testament become symbols of the Holy Spirit: “rivers of living water” (*Jn* 7:38), “anointing” (*1 Jn* 2:20, 27), “fire of purification” and “tongues as of fire” (*Lk* 3:16; *Acts* 2:3), “wind” (*Jn* 3:8; *Acts* 2:2), “seal of anointing on us” (*2 Cor* 1:22; *Eph* 1:13; *Eph* 4:30), the laying on of hands (see *Acts* 6:6; *Acts* 8:17-19), and “dove” (*Mt* 3:16).
- 95 The New Testament gives the Holy Spirit various titles that emphasize his personhood and divinity: “Advocate” (*Jn* 14:16); “Spirit of truth” (*Jn* 16:13), “Spirit of adoption” (*Rom* 8:15), “Spirit of Jesus Christ” (*Phil* 1:19), “Spirit of the Lord” (*2 Cor* 3:17), “Spirit of God” (*Rom* 15:19), and “Spirit of glory” (*1 Pt* 4:14). These titles indicate that the Holy Spirit is the Lord of life, and for this reason we refer to him as “the Lord, the Giver of life.” The Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great refers to the Holy Spirit as the “life-giving power,” which is the “source of sanctification,” and the “first fruit of the eternal good things.”
- 96 Christ points to the unique mission of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf” (*Jn* 15:26-27). As Christ had prophesied, the Holy Spirit “will teach you everything, and remind you of all” (*Jn* 14:26), “he will guide you into all the truth; ... he will declare to you the things that

⁷³ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 7: PG 94, 805.

are to come” (*Jn* 16:13). “He will glorify me [i.e., the Son], for he will take what is mine and declare it to you [the disciples]” (*Jn* 16:14).

2. The Holy Spirit who Proceeds from the Father

- 97 In teaching about the Person of the Holy Spirit, the Fathers of the Church emphasize first and foremost what differentiates the Person of the Holy Spirit from the Persons of the Father and the Son, that is, that the Holy Spirit proceeds (in Ukrainian, *iskhodyt*; in Greek, *exporeutai*) from the Father. In conciliar unified fashion, they professed this belief through the Symbol of Faith: “I believe ... in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.” On the procession of the Holy Spirit, Saint Cyril of Alexandria teaches: “The Holy Spirit is the one [who] ... pours forth from God the Father, through the Son, and shows to us his existence, in the image of breath of the mouth.”⁷⁴
- 98 The Holy Fathers made a distinction between the interior life of the Most Holy Trinity and the revelation of the Trinity in creation. In the Most Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit *proceeds* (in Ukrainian, *iskhodyt*; in Greek, *exporeutai*) from the Father—the one and only Source of the Most Holy Trinity. When the Holy Fathers spoke about the action of the Persons of the Trinity in creation, they professed that the Father sends the Holy Spirit “through the Son.”⁷⁵ Saint Cyril of Alexandria, professing this very same faith, explained this *sending* of the Holy Spirit “through the Son” as the fact that the Holy Spirit “comes from (in Ukrainian, *pokhodyt*; in Greek, *proenai*) the Father and the Son.”⁷⁶ This interpretation was emphasized by the Fathers of the Council of Florence: “Some [were] saying the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and the Son, others saying the Holy Spirit comes from the Father through the Son. All were aiming at the same meaning in different words.”⁷⁷ This opinion was also expressed in the Articles of the Union of Brest: “The Holy Spirit ... proceeds from one Source, as if from a well-spring, from the Father, through the Son.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Dialogues on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*, 2: PG 75, 722–723.

⁷⁵ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Life of Saint Gregory the Wonderworker*: PG 46, 912.

⁷⁶ See CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Thesaurus on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*: PG 75, 9–656.

⁷⁷ COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, Bull *Laetentur caeli* [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439).

⁷⁸ *Articles of the Union of Brest*, 1.

III. WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND IN OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, AND IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE

*Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*Lord of heaven and earth and of all creation visible and invisible.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

A. The Creator and His Creation

- 99 Our faith in the Creator gives us the opportunity to grasp the sense and essence of the created world. Biblical Revelation unveils for us the presence of God within the reality of the world: we come to know the Creator, and the world—his creation.
- 100 The word *creation* points to the connection between the world and the Person of the Creator; for the world is “the work of his hands.” This is why it is impossible to know creation separately from the Creator. God’s Revelation brings to our attention not so much the laws of nature as the actions of the Creator’s Divine Economy. In the light of faith, the true beauty of creation is revealed to us as a reflection of the beauty and magnificence of its Creator: “Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all” (*Ps* 103[104]:24).

1. The Father Creates through the Son in the Holy Spirit

- 101 In loving humankind, God moved forth from the unapproachable light of his inner divine life and revealed himself in the world created by him: “Today the Sun that never sets has risen and the world is filled with splendour by the light of the Lord.”⁷⁹ The foundation of the world is “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”⁸⁰ (see *2 Cor* 13:13). On the participation of the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity in the creation of the world, Saint Basil teaches: “When you consider creation, I advise you to first think of him who is the first cause of everything that exists:

⁷⁹ *Trebnyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Second Prayer.

⁸⁰ *Liturgycon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

namely, the Father, and then of the Son, who is creator, and then of the Holy Spirit, the perfecter.”⁸¹ Created in love, this world becomes a *temple*, the place and environment of God’s relationship with humanity. The presence of God in the world, as if in a temple, is a prefigurement of the entry of the Son of God into human flesh, the incarnation (see *Heb* 10:5).

- 102 The Incarnation of the Son of God reveals the purpose of the created world. At the appointed moment of history, the Son of God descends into creation in order to raise creation to God. This is accomplished by the action of the Holy Spirit. In the six days of creation, the Holy Spirit prepares an environment for humanity (see *Gn* 1). In the Old Testament, God prepares humanity for the encounter with the incarnate Son of God, so that through Jesus Christ all creation might be brought to the Father, and “that God may be all in all” (1 *Cor* 15:28).

a. The Freedom of the Creator

- 103 Holy Scripture begins the account of the creation of the world with these words: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (*Gn* 1:1). God was, is, and remains always “in the beginning” of everything created, and all that comes forth in time. The evangelist John writes about God as the beginning of everything: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (*Rev* 1:8). Saint Irenaeus of Lyons writes that all things came forth from the hands of God, by the Word and the Holy Spirit.⁸²
- 104 God realizes his plan for the creation of the world through his Word: “Let there be light ... let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters” (*Gn* 1:3, 6). This creative Word reveals himself in Holy Scripture as the Son of God, begotten of the Father: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation ... he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (*Col* 1:15-17).
- 105 God creates freely; nothing limits his creative freedom. God’s creativity is expressed in *creation*, in bringing forth being from non-being. God calls forth into being that which did not exist, and did not necessarily have to exist. In other words, what God called into existence did not come into being out of any necessity. Holy Scripture does not tell us *how* the world came to be. Instead, it speaks about the *who* (the Father),

⁸¹ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 16, 38: PG 32, 136.

⁸² See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 20, 1, 3-4: PG 7, 1031. See also *Against Heresies*, V, 1, 3: PG 7, 1122-1123.

through whom (the Word, the Son), and *in whom* (the Holy Spirit) God called this world into existence.

- 106 God *is* the Creator. This means that God not only created the world, but that he is always present in his creation, and that he is always creating. Hence, creation is a sign and expression of God's creative love. Through human beings, creation is called to respond to love with love, and to long for God as God longs for them: "God desires that he might be desired and he loves that he might be loved."⁸³

b. The Goodness of Creation

- 107 In the account of the creation of the world, Holy Scripture discloses the way in which God assesses the world created by him: "And God saw that it was good" (*Gn* 1:10 et al.). Like an artist, God creates a masterpiece; he examines his creation with attention, and he delights in it. The Father contemplates the world and recognizes within its features the face of the Son—the first-born of all creation, by whom and for whom all was created (see *Col* 1:15f). The face of Christ comes through ever more distinctly throughout history—all the way to the incarnation of the Son of God and his second coming in glory. Creation is the visible icon of the invisible God. As history unfolds, this creation is being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into a "new creation," pre-figured in the glorified body of the Risen Christ.
- 108 Contemplation—a deeper way of looking at the world, to which God calls us—teaches us to see the surrounding world not only as a material thing, or as something useful and pleasurable for our egos, but as the sphere of action of the personal God, who is distinct from us and from the world. The words of prayer from the Rite of the Great Blessing of Water provide us with a wonderful example of the Christian view of the world:

The sun sings your praises; the moon glorifies you; the stars entreat you; the light obeys you; the depths tremble before you; the springs serve you. You have stretched out the heavens like a tent; you have established the earth upon the waters; you have enclosed the sea with sand. You have poured forth air that living things may breathe...⁸⁴

- 109 Contemplation of the world, in light of an experience of the personal God who alone is good (see *Lk* 18:19), provides the foundation for affirming the goodness of the world, of matter, and of all creation. "The

⁸³ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Ambigua*, 31: PG 91, 1280.

⁸⁴ *Trebnyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Third Prayer.

world is good, and all its contents are seen to be wisely and skilfully ordered.”⁸⁵ In Holy Scripture, the image of God’s plan for the world is Paradise (see *Gn* 2). The realization of this plan depends upon the cooperation of humankind with God. Paradise is God’s gift, and at the same time, it is humankind’s vocation.

- 110 Conceived by God as Paradise, the world is God’s gift to humankind and the sphere of our relationship with God, with others, and with nature. For this reason, human beings cannot take a consumerist attitude towards the world, a world that is filled with the love and attention of the Giver. The Christian attitude towards the world is to see it as a gift of God. Growing in faith, Christians ascend in their understanding from the gifts to the Person of the Giver. Regarding the world as God’s gift allows one to avoid two extremes: the reduction of its value (since the world is God’s creation), or turning it into an absolute (since the world is not God).

c. God’s Plan

- 111 God the Creator fills creation with the grace of his presence, and yet at the same time, he remains unattainable in his essence. God’s presence in the world is discovered through prayerful contemplation, which is capable of seeing in the world his divine Prototype, the Christ.
- 112 In accordance with his plan, God acts in the world; he sustains the world in existence and leads it to its final fulfilment. This action of God is referred to as the Divine Plan (Providence) of God. Divine Providence consists in his gracious “foresight” and the “counsel from before the ages” of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit;⁸⁶ this Providence is God’s will for the world and determines the consummation of the world: “By your power you hold together the creation, and by your providence you govern the world.”⁸⁷ This means that in the world and in our lives, there are no coincidences or random occurrences. Faith makes it possible to see the action of Divine Providence in the concrete circumstances of life.

⁸⁵ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Great Catechism*, I: PG 45, 16.

⁸⁶ See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *On the Divine Images*, III, 19: PG 94, 1340.

⁸⁷ *Trebnyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Third Prayer.

*For Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities,
Authorities, Powers, and the many-eyed Cherubim praise you.
Around you stand the Seraphim...
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

2. The Visible and Invisible World

- 113 The Symbol of Faith points to two different dimensions of the world created by God, the visible and the invisible. Saint Maximus the Confessor teaches about the union of everything visible and invisible in creation. Basing himself on the words of Saint Paul that *everything* was created by Christ and for Christ (see *Col* 1:16-17), Maximus understands the word *everything* to mean the earthly visible and the heavenly invisible, the human visible and the angelic invisible. Having become incarnate, Christ has inseparably united himself with creation in the “body and blood” of his human nature.⁸⁸ All creation, visible and invisible, exists not by virtue of its own nature, but by virtue of the action of God’s Son.
- 114 Angels, the heavenly incorporeal beings (spirits)⁸⁹ “have their being by the will of the Father, [they] are brought into being by the work of the Son, and are perfected by the presence of the Spirit.”⁹⁰ God, as the highest Intelligence, fashioned the angelic intellects. He made them partakers of his inexpressible glory and formed their incorruptible essence. The angels are beacons, who reflect the Light of God. Since they have received eternal life from the Origin of Life, and because they contemplate the eternal Glory and Wisdom, they are like mirrors filled with light.⁹¹
- 115 The existence of the invisible angelic realm attests to the wealth and diversity of the world created by God. Both the visible and invisible belong to one creation, which God looks upon as *good*. Human beings and angels, as persons, have the opportunity to build personal and spiritual relationships with God and with one another: “Today things above keep feast with things below, and things below commune with things above.”⁹²

⁸⁸ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Questions to Thalassios*, 35: PG 90, 104.

⁸⁹ Prayerbook *Прійдіте поклонімся* [Come, Let Us Bow in Worship], Prayers for Every Day, Sunday: Prayer to the Most Holy Trinity (translated from Ukrainian).

⁹⁰ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 16, 38: PG 32, 136.

⁹¹ See *Octoechos*, Tone 1, Monday Matins Canon, Troparia for Canticles 7, 8.

⁹² *Trebnyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Second Prayer.

- 116 The Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great mentions nine angelic orders. We read: “Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, and the many-eyed Cherubim praise you; around you stand the Seraphim.” The angelic orders are called “choirs” because of their communion with God and with one another. Unceasingly, the angels offer “praise to God” as they abide in the light of God’s glory.
- 117 In Holy Scripture, angels manifest the presence of God in the world, announcing to human beings the will of God. Holy Scripture refers to some of them by name: Michael (see *Rev* 12:7; *Jude* 1:9), Raphael (see *Tob* 12:15), Gabriel (see *Lk* 1:19, 26). Angels assist human beings in their spiritual growth (see *Heb* 1:14). The Tradition of the Church teaches that God grants every human being a guardian angel: “You appointed angels as guardians.”⁹³ The unity of the visible and invisible creation—human beings and angels—becomes manifest in the Divine Liturgy, where the earthly expresses the heavenly, and humans serve together with angels: “Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the Thrice-holy Hymn to the life giving Trinity...” and “Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”⁹⁴

*For you fashioned a man by taking dust from the earth.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

3. Humankind—the Crown of Creation

- 118 “Lord ... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than God, and crown him with glory and honour. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet” (*Ps* 8:1, 4-6). With these words Holy Scripture extols humankind. The Lord God set humanity to govern creation: “Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (*Gn* 1:26).

⁹³ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

⁹⁴ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Cherubic Hymn, Anaphora.

- 119 In the course of *six days* God creates the world, preparing it for humankind: “It was not to be looked for that the ruler should appear before the subjects of his rule; but when his dominion was prepared, the next step was that the king should be revealed.”⁹⁵ Having created humankind, God crowns his creation. “In what then does the greatness of humankind consist, according to the doctrine of the Church? Not in his likeness to the created world, but in his being in the image of the nature of the Creator.”⁹⁶
- 120 Based on the above, Gregory of Nyssa teaches that the dignity of the human being lies in the fact that by its very nature humanity is higher than all creation, since it was created in the royal image of its creator and freely and with full authority rules over its desires.⁹⁷ The dignity of humankind is in the image of God. The Lord himself preserves human dignity as inviolable and cares for the human being:

Who else is there that ministers to you more faithfully than I? All creation I created to serve you; the heaven and the earth serve you: the one with its moisture, the other with its fruits. For your sake the sun serves with its light and with its warmth, and the moon and the stars lighten the night. For your sake the clouds nourish the earth with rain, and the earth brings forth all manner of grasses with their seeds and the trees with their fruits to serve you. For your sake the rivers bear fish and the wastes rear beasts.⁹⁸

*For you fashioned a man by taking dust from the earth,
and honoured him, O God, with your own image.
You placed him in the Paradise of delight.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

a. Humankind—in the Image and Likeness of God

- 121 The Book of Genesis reveals a profound bond between humankind and God: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” (*Gn* 1:26). In his commentary upon these words, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons explains: “The image of God is the Son, according to whose image humankind was made; and for this reason he appeared in the last times, to render the image like himself.”⁹⁹ It was precisely in the

⁹⁵ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 2: PG 44, 132.

⁹⁶ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 16, PG 44, 177.

⁹⁷ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 3–4: PG 44, 134–136.

⁹⁸ KIRILL OF TUROV, *Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Easter*.

⁹⁹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 22.

image of Christ, the incarnate Son of God, that humankind was created. Humanity is the “image of the Image,”¹⁰⁰ existing “in Christ,” in whom the human being is adopted by God. It can only be understood “through Christ.”¹⁰¹

- 122 As affirmed by the Holy Fathers, humankind in its essence is the image of the Prototype—the inexpressible, unknowable, and immortal God.¹⁰² Humankind has the capacity of “intellect and free will”¹⁰³ and the interior power of self-determination.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the Holy Fathers affirm that the image of God in humankind is the ground of our being, existence, and personal self-determination.
- 123 Humankind, as the image of God, always aspires to its Prototype: “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for you, O God” (*Pt* 41[42]:2). The Holy Fathers referred to this aspiration as the longing of humankind to attain the *likeness of God*. In the words of Gregory of Nyssa, “truly herein consists the real assimilation to the Divine, that is, in making our own life in some degree a copy of the Supreme Being.”¹⁰⁵ Saint John of Damascus believes that “the phrase ‘after his likeness’ means likeness in virtue [to God] so far as that is possible.”¹⁰⁶
- 124 Every human being that comes into the world is called to grow in likeness to God—to achieve *divinization* [also known as deification, the process of *theosis*]: “God has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become partakers of the divine nature” (2 *Pt* 1:4). This partaking in God’s nature constitutes human happiness. Likeness to God can be attained by us only by free choice and assent, and by cooperation with God’s grace. “Our likeness to God requires our cooperation. When the intellect begins to perceive the Holy Spirit with full consciousness, we should realize that grace is beginning to paint the divine likeness over the divine image in us.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ See JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen* [Light of the East], (May 2, 1995), 15; see also GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On Perfection, To the Monk Olympius*: PG 46, 272.

¹⁰¹ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* [The Redemption of Man] (March 4, 1979), 11.

¹⁰² GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 16: PG 44, 177.

¹⁰³ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, II, 12: PG 94, 920.

¹⁰⁴ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 16: PG 94, 177.

¹⁰⁵ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Soul and Resurrection*: PG 46, 89–92.

¹⁰⁶ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, II, 12: PG 94, 920.

¹⁰⁷ DIADOCHOS OF PHOTIKI, *On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination*, 89: PG 65, 1203.

1) *Growth of the Person from Image to Likeness of God*

- 125 Jesus Christ—in the image of whom the human being was created—is the incarnate Son of God, the Second Person of God, who took on human nature. Like Christ, human beings are persons. The growth of the human being from the image to the likeness of God is a personal growth. It takes place in the context of a free relationship between human beings and God. From the state of the *first Adam*, described in the book of Genesis, the human being grows to the state of the *new Adam*—Christ the God-man. “The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit ... The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 *Cor* 15:45-49).
- 126 Created good, humankind was supposed to achieve gradually perfection. For this reason Saint Irenaeus compares the condition of the first Adam in Paradise with the innocence of a child: “It was possible for God himself to have made the human being perfect from the first, but the human being could not receive this perfection, being as yet an infant.”¹⁰⁸ To grow into the second Adam—Christ—is to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit to the point of our permanent abiding in it, “until all of us come to the *unity of the faith* and of the *knowledge of the Son of God*, to maturity, to the measure of the *full stature of Christ*” (*Eph* 4:13; emphasis added).
- 127 In accordance with God’s eternal plan, the divinization of human beings is possible. It is possible because of the incarnation of God’s Son, through which we receive the gift of becoming partakers in the nature of God (see 2 *Pt* 1:4) as *gods by grace*, and attain to eternal life. “We have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely human beings, then finally gods; for God has adopted this course out of his pure benevolence, that no one may impute to him invidiousness or grudgingness [i.e., envy or reluctance].”¹⁰⁹ It is precisely because God has loved us that he desires for us to become like him: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (*Mt* 5:48; see 1 *Pt* 1:16).

¹⁰⁸ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 38, 1: PG 7, 1105.

¹⁰⁹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 38, 4: PG 7, 1101-1102.

2) *The Created Nature of Humankind*

- 128 As the Book of Genesis tell us, God created the human being out of the “dust of the earth”—matter—breathing into us the “breath of life,” by virtue of which the human being becomes a “living being” (*Gn* 2:7). Holy Scripture portrays the Creator with the image of a potter, who *moulds* humankind according to his Image from the clay. This Image (see *Gn* 1:27) is the incarnate Son of God: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (*Col* 1:15). Humankind is created in the image of the Son:

Now God ... modelled [the human being] after his own Son; for by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, the whole human being, and not [merely] a part of it, was made in the likeness of God. ... for the perfect human being consists in the commingling and the union of the *soul* receiving the *Spirit of the Father*, and the admixture of that *fleshly nature* that was moulded after the image of God.¹¹⁰

- 129 The image of God defines the dignity of the human being—already in the bodily state—as being *good*. The goodness of the body especially consists in the fact that in our relationships, through the body, we are able to express ourselves as persons. We receive this ability as a gift from God. The human body is able to receive into itself the Spirit of God; and so, the apostle Paul refers to the human body as the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 *Cor* 6:19). Here lies the *mystery* of the body and the fullness of its destiny. This is why Christianity regards the human body as a temple, consecrated for the service of God and neighbour.
- 130 Having created us in his own image, God calls us to holiness: “May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless” (1 *The*s 5:23). Saint Gregory of Nyssa thus states that Saint Paul uses “the word ‘body’ for the nutritive part; denoting the sensitive [part] by the word ‘soul,’ and the intellectual by the word ‘spirit.’”¹¹¹
- 131 For the sanctification of humankind, God gave one commandment. We read: “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat” (*Gn* 2:17). The fulfilment of this one commandment in Paradise would have permitted humankind to eat of the “tree of life;” it would have allowed them “to receive immortality as reward from [God];”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 6, 1: PG 7, 1136, emphasis added.

¹¹¹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 8: PG 44, 144.

¹¹² THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH, *To Autolycus*, II, 24, 27: PG 6, 1089, 1093.

and it would have transfigured them “into one Spirit with the Lord,”¹¹³ into “a spiritual being, who has surrendered the body to the authority of the Spirit.”¹¹⁴

3) *“Man and Woman He Created Them”*

- 132 The image of God is the foundation not only of the personal uniqueness of every human being, but also of the human community: “God said: ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’ ... So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (*Gn* 1:26-27). The communion of Persons in the Most Holy Trinity is the prototype for human community. Saint John of Damascus explains how the first human community came to be an icon of the Tri-Personal God. He writes that Adam, who had no created cause for his being and was not begotten, distinct from other human beings, is an image of the uncaused Father-God, the Almighty and Cause of all things. Then, the son born to Adam is an image of the begotten Son and Word of God; and Eve, who came forth from Adam (but was not born from him), signifies the procession of the Person of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵
- 133 The image of the Most Holy Trinity in human community is the natural unity of human community that exists within the communion of the love between Adam and Eve. Complementing one another physically, psychologically, and spiritually, Adam and Eve are different, but at the same time, equal persons.
- 134 In the wonderful image of Eve’s creation from the “rib of Adam” (see *Gn* 2:21), Holy Scripture describes the equality and the difference between the man and the woman, who form the first community. Adam professes Eve to be *his own*: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman” (*Gn* 2:23). Adam embraces Eve as a person, his equal and simultaneously his companion for life (see *Gn* 2:24).

4) *The Freedom and Responsibility of Humankind*

- 135 The Lord called humankind to holiness in freedom and responsibility: “If you choose, you can keep the commandments; and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice” (*Sir* 15:15). God settled humanity in

¹¹³ ORIGEN, *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, 35: PG 13, 1888.

¹¹⁴ ORIGEN, *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, 11: PG 13, 1826.

¹¹⁵ See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 8: PG 94, 898.

Paradise. He gave them freedom and the commandment to actualize it, symbolized in the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat” (*Gn* 2:16-17). Saint Gregory the Theologian interprets this commandment in the following way:

[God] gave him a Law as material for his free will to act upon. This Law was a commandment as to what plants he might partake of, and which one he might not touch. This latter was the tree of knowledge; not, however, because it was evil from the beginning when planted; nor was it forbidden because God grudged it to humankind ... But it would have been good if partaken of at the proper time; for the tree was, according to my theory, Contemplation, which it is only safe for those who have reached maturity of habit to enter upon; but which is not good for those who are still somewhat simple and greedy.¹¹⁶

- 136 The Creator, having fashioned humanity freely out of love, calls us to love—the highest creative expression of a person. For this God grants us freedom. Human love flows from God as from a wellspring, for “God is love” (1 *Jn* 4:8). Freedom belongs to God’s image in humankind; therefore, his grace does not abolish our freedom.¹¹⁷
- 137 The most profound dimension of human freedom consists in being able to freely choose God and to be with him. This is the good. Yet with this same freedom, we can also reject our relationship with God—and this is evil. To be free is to possess the capacity for unfettered self-determination.¹¹⁸ Evil, in fact, does not belong to creation; it only appears when humanity renounces the choice for good, and thus abuses its freedom. As God’s gift, freedom is strengthened through every free choice of the good. On the other hand, it is limited when humanity becomes dependent upon evil¹¹⁹ which is a consequence of its renouncing the good.
- 138 A human being is responsible for his or her free choice: “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (*Gn* 2:16-17). This commandment of God does not limit human freedom nor does it interfere in our choice. God gives the commandment as a gift to strengthen us in all that is good. By breaking the commandment, a human being rejects God and by this very means introduces sin

¹¹⁶ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 45: On Holy Pascha*, 8: PG 36, 632.

¹¹⁷ See JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 45, 1: PG 58, 471.

¹¹⁸ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 16; PG 44, 184.

¹¹⁹ See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Great Catechism*, 5: PG 45, 21.

into the world, and through sin death (see *Rom* 5:12). By eating of the fruit of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil,” one forfeits access to the “tree of life” and loses ties to God: “Communion with God is life and light ... But separation from God is death.”¹²⁰

- 139 When Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment, they severed their bond with God. Their choice became the cause of death, and the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” became its instrument. The cross was also such an instrument of death, prepared on Golgotha for the Son of God, Jesus Christ. However, by accepting death on the cross, he transformed the instrument of death, the cross, into a “tree of life:” “Truly, O Christ, the tree of life has blossomed. For the cross, planted in the earth, fed with blood and water from your pure side, has put forth life for us.”¹²¹ It has become a *life-giving cross*.
- 140 The Church witnesses liturgically to this in the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14/27), when we contemplate the Life-Giving Cross in the light of Holy Pascha: “To your Cross, O Master, we bow in veneration; and we glorify your holy Resurrection.” The Lord voluntarily took upon himself the sin of the world and transfigured the cross of death into a sign of the Resurrection, having trampled death by death, and granted us eternal life.

*But when he disobeyed you, the true God, who created him,
and when he had been led astray by the deception of the serpent,
and been slain by his own transgressions,
you banished him from Paradise into this world by your just judgment, O God,
and returned him to the earth, from which he had been taken.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

b. The Fall

- 141 God created everything *good* (see *Gn* 1:31). According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, evil appears later—through the rejection of good. Evil does not appear as a new reality: “Evil does not exist by nature, nor is anyone naturally evil, for God made nothing that was not good.”¹²² Evil is the limitation and corruption of that which already exists: “Evil

¹²⁰ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 27, 2: PG 7, 1196.

¹²¹ See *Octoechos*, Tone 6, Sunday Matins, Canon of the Resurrection, Ode 4; and *Octoechos*, Tone 2, Sunday Matins, Canon of the Resurrection, Ode 9.

¹²² DIADOCHOS OF PHOTIKI, *On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination*, 3: PG 65, 1168.

has its existence in non-being.”¹²³ Sin strips us of life—of God. Evil emerges as a result of personal sin, As we read: “From where did this [evil] come? Is it not the obvious consequence of your libertinism and your choice? It is certainly thus and no one can claim the opposite. Ask yourself.”¹²⁴ As a consequence of the Fall, evil enters into the world; it is permitted by God for the sake of repentance and the conversion of humankind: “From this proceed illnesses in cities and countries, droughts, bad harvests, the destruction of cities, earthquakes, floods, the vanquishing of armies...”¹²⁵

1) *The Fall of the Angels*

- 142 Evil, as the rejection of God, also applies to the invisible angelic world: “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment” (2 Pt 2:4). The angels who opposed God are named *devils*, *demons*, *evil spirits*, or *fallen angels*. “The devil ... was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).
- 143 The fall of the angels was a consequence of pride—self-assertion in opposition to God and in the desire to become his equal. The angels faithful to God spoke out against those who fell: “Who can be equal to God?” “Who is like God?” (in Hebrew, *Michael*). In the liturgical tradition, the Archangel Michael who led the battle against the fallen spirits, is called *Archistrategos Theou*, “the chief commander of God’s army.” The Church commemorates the feast of the Archangel Michael and other bodiless powers on November 8/21, and also dedicates to them the Monday of every week.
- 144 Other names for Satan (from the Hebrew, *the accuser*), who is the antagonist of the Archangel Michael, are the Church Slavonic word *Denytsia* (related to the word for *daylight*), and the Latin word *Lucifer* (meaning *light-bearer*). By his free decision, the former light within him was separated from its Divine Source and became darkness. Christ also warns humankind of this danger: “Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness” (Lk 11:35).

¹²³ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Soul and Resurrection, Conversation with his Sister, Macrina*: PG 46, 93.

¹²⁴ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 59, 2: PG 58, 575.

¹²⁵ BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily Explaining that God is not the Author of Evil*, 5: PG 31, 337.

2) *The Fall of Humankind*

- 145 Holy Scripture recounts the story of the Fall of humankind in Paradise, utilizing the image of the serpent: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made” (*Gn* 3:1). The Holy Fathers perceived in the image of the serpent the enemy of God and humankind—Satan. The serpent proposed a *false divinization*¹²⁶ to humankind, suggesting the thought of becoming like God but without God, by means of one’s own effort. The devil in Paradise “lured Adam with a vain hope for divinization,”¹²⁷ proposing that he consider the measure of goodness resides not in God but within himself.
- 146 The craftiness of the serpent consists in twisting the words of God’s commandment: “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (*Gn* 3:1, see *Gn* 2:16-17). The insidious question of the tempter draws Eve into a dialogue with him, which gives birth to doubt within her about the truthfulness of God. The Evil One takes advantage of this doubt within Eve in order to deceive: “You will not die ... you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (*Gn* 3:4-5). The deceit of the Evil One is based on the premise that God is deceiving humankind with his commandment, thereby undercutting their freedom, and that by eating from the tree of good and evil, they will become like God.
- 147 The deception of the serpent becomes a temptation for Eve: “The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” (*Gn* 3:6). Eve submits to the temptation: “She took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate” (*Gn* 3:6). In this way, our first parents transgressed God’s commandment, and through this, sin and evil entered into the world: “Sin came into the world through one man” (*Rom* 5:12). With the *eating of the forbidden fruit* the illusion of self-deification vanishes, and instead of the expected good, evil and emptiness emerge: “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (*Gn* 3:7). The sin of our first parents resulted in severing humankind from God, the Source of life—humankind then became mortal. “As the body becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of spiritual energy.”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *Octoechos*, Tone 6, Sunday, Matins: Resurrection Canon, Ode 4.

¹²⁷ BASIL OF SELEUCIA, *Third Oration: About Adam*, 3: PG 85, 57.

¹²⁸ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 18, 3: PG 62, 124.

148 The Fall is completed with the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise: “He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life” (*Gn* 3:24). As a consequence of the Fall, that is, of the sin of the first parents (original sin), humankind lost Paradise. We cannot return to the tree of life in any other way except by God’s power, and so, we are in need of God’s salvation.

3) *The Consequences of the Fall*

149 The Fall of our first ancestors is the tragedy of humankind. Instead of being *sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters to all*, and *stewards of creation*, humans by their own sinful choice became *slaves of evil, enemies to other people*. They fell *under the sway of the world*. Created in the image of God, humankind failed to attain God-likeness: “Sin destroyed God-likeness in humankind.”¹²⁹

150 As a consequence of sin, the human will to choose good was weakened and the inclination towards evil increased. Through sin, we found ourselves in a state of interior division, as the *law of sin* within us opposed the *law of God*. Then, as the holy apostle Paul teaches, we do not do the good that we love, but rather the evil that we hate (see *Rom* 7:19-21). “Instead of the visible Eve, I have the Eve of the mind: the passionate thought in my flesh, showing me what seems sweet; yet whenever I taste from it, I find it bitter.”¹³⁰

151 The human intellect is also clouded as a consequence of sin, and humankind has forfeited communion with God—the highest Truth. As a result of sin, human beings cease to understand their own vocation and the destiny of the existence of all creatures to whom Adam himself gave names in Paradise (see *Gn* 2:20).

152 Spiritual death led to bodily death: “This liability to death ... was provisionally made to envelop the nature created for immortality.”¹³¹ Fear and shame were additional consequences of the fall: “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (*Gn* 3:8). Fear deprives us of peace. We avoid contact with God.

¹²⁹ LEONTIUS OF BYZANTIUM, *Against Nestorius*: PG 86, 1348.

¹³⁰ *Lenten Triodion*, Fifth Thursday of the Great Fast, Matins, Great Canon of Repentance by Saint Andrew of Crete, Ode 1.

¹³¹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Great Catechism*, 8: PG 45, 53.

- 153 With the question, “Adam, where are you?” (*Gn* 3:9), the Lord God stirs humankind to repentance through the voice of conscience. However, Adam does not repent, but gives excuses, trying to avoid personal responsibility: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate” (*Gn* 3:12). In a similar way Eve also makes excuses: “The serpent tricked me, and I ate” (*Gn* 3:13).
- 154 Sin injures relationships among people, introducing alienation and opposition between man and woman: “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves” (*Gn* 3:7). After the Fall, the relationship between man and woman became subject to impulsive physical urges. As we read: “Your desire shall be for your husband.” The desire to subordinate others to oneself also comes into play: “[your husband] shall rule over you” (*Gn* 3:16). Sin brings sickness and suffering into human life (see *Gn* 3:16-19).
- 155 Sin distorts human attitudes toward work. From being a blessing, work is reduced to a means of survival: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (*Gn* 3:19). Sin disrupted the harmony between humankind and nature: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field” (*Gn* 3:17-18).
- 156 Sin destroys fraternity among humankind, as when a *brother* becomes a *stranger* and an *enemy* to his own brother (see *Gn* 4:1-16, the story about Cain and Abel). Sin introduces disorder into society, and gives rise to vain efforts to build a society without God (see *Gn* 11:1-9, the story of the Tower of Babel). However, the great expectations of human pride end only in great disillusionment, malaise, confusion, and misunderstanding: “Skilfully have you planned to build a tower, O my soul, and to establish a stronghold for your lusts; but the Creator confounded your designs and dashed your devices to the ground.”¹³²
- 157 The universal consequences of the fall arise before us in the story of the Flood (see *Gn* 6-9): “The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually ... the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence” (*Gn* 6:5, 11). The raging of passions and evil inclinations that predominated among people

¹³² *Lenten Triodion*, Fifth Thursday of the Great Fast, Matins: Great Canon of Repentance by Saint Andrew of Crete, Ode 2.

and defined their behaviour led to God's punishment—the Flood: "You alone, my soul, have opened the windows of the wrath of your God, and you have flooded, as the earth, all your flesh and deeds and life; and you have remained outside the Ark of salvation."¹³³

- 158 However, God did not turn away from humankind, but continued to abide with it, granting it hope for salvation: "Before his visible advent in the flesh, the Logos [i.e., Word] of God dwelled among the patriarchs and prophets in a spiritual manner, prefiguring the mysteries of his advent."¹³⁴ The source of humankind's hope is the love of God the Father, who grants his promise of salvation.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit ... He has spoken through the Prophets.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*For You did not utterly turn away from your creature, O Good One,
nor did you forget the work of your hands,
but you visited us in diverse ways through your compassionate mercy.
You sent Prophets, you performed deeds of power through your saints,
who have been well-pleasing to you in every generation;
You spoke to us through the mouths of your servants, the Prophets,
announcing to us beforehand the salvation that was to come;
you gave the law as a help; you appointed angels as guardians.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

c. The Promise of the Messiah's Coming

- 159 The fall of Adam did not turn away the love of God for humanity. God shows mercy to the fallen human race: "And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them" (*Gen* 3:21). By offering the promise of salvation, God assures us that with respect to our growth in God-likeness, divine adoption, and divinization, God's plan remains immutable. The power of God's promise is stronger than the weakness of human sin: "[We] have gained still greater things through Christ's unspeakable grace than we had lost through the devil's malice."¹³⁵ In the Old Testament preaching of the prophets, God's promise is gradually associated with the figure of God's Anointed One, the Messiah, who "in the fullness of time" (see *Gal* 4:4) appears as the incarnate Word of God.

¹³³ *Lenten Triodion*, Fifth Thursday of the Great Fast, Matins: Great Canon of Repentance by Saint Andrew of Crete, Ode 2.

¹³⁴ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *On Theology and the Incarnation of the Son of God*, II, 28: PG 90, 1137.

¹³⁵ LEO THE GREAT, *Homily 73, For the Feast of Ascension*, 4: PL 54, 396.

1) *The Protoevangelium*

- 160 Immediately after their fall, God announces to Adam and Eve his promise of salvation. Inasmuch as the human race was deceived by the tempter by trusting in him, God sets enmity, a struggle between them, to safeguard humanity from total subordination to evil: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers" (*Gn* 3:15). In this struggle, God promises humanity the ultimate victory: "He [i.e., the offspring of the woman] will strike your [i.e., the serpent's] head" (*Gn* 3:15). In the contest between good and evil, in the end, good shall overcome, as personified by the offspring of the woman. The assurance of this victory emerges not from human efforts, but from the very Word of God, given in the promise. This first proclamation of the Good News about the salvation of the human race is what the Church calls the *Protoevangelium*.
- 161 In the Protoevangelium, God reveals that the plan of salvation will be fulfilled through the cooperation of humankind (see *Gn* 3:15). The fulfilment of the promise granted in the Protoevangelium drew closer and closer throughout the entire history of salvation, up to the time of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: "The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God" (*Lk* 1:35). "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (*Lk* 1:33).
- 162 The road from the Protoevangelium to the Gospel has been travelled by humankind—through people chosen by God who believed and accepted God's promise. The words of the Protoevangelium were being realized in the course of salvation history. The prophet Isaiah unveils the image of *the woman* and *her offspring*: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel" (*Is* 7:14). The virgin's conceiving and giving birth to Emmanuel is the prophetic sign pointing to the fulfilment of the promise. The name Emmanuel (from the Hebrew *God is with us*) reveals the mystery of the newborn Child, in whom the Divine and the human are perfectly united.
- 163 God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ through the Virgin Mary: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God ... to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (*Lk* 1:26-27, RSV-CE). It is precisely to Mary that the archangel addresses the same words of Isaiah's prophecy: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus" (*Lk* 1:30, RSV-CE). In the name Jesus (from the Hebrew, meaning

God saves), the fullness of the meaning of the name Emmanuel—God is with us—is revealed.

2) *The Covenant between God and Humankind*

- 164 Expressed in the covenant between God and humankind, the fulfilment of God's promise proceeded in historical stages: "As for me, *I am establishing my covenant with you* and your descendants after you" (*Gn* 9:9, emphasis added). The covenant between God and Noah and his sons is a first stage. Saint Irenaeus of Lyons emphasizes God's initiative in the establishment of covenant: "How shall humankind pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into humankind?"¹³⁶ The rainbow, which unites heaven with earth, is a visible sign of this covenant. Noah and his descendants, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are the representatives of humankind, of all races, and nations, of peoples united by "their own language, by their families, in their nations" (*Gn* 10:5).
- 165 Abram also belonged to the descendants of Noah, the heirs of the covenant with God. God drew near to him and his family, calling him to become *Abraham*, the father of all believers; and gave him the promise: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (*Gn* 12:2-3). The numerous descendants and the Promised Land (see *Gn* 13:15) are signs of God's protection and the fulfilment of God's promise: "I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous" (*Gn* 17:2). God also confirms this covenant with Isaac (see *Gn* 26:3-4) and with Jacob (see *Gn* 28:13-15). In Egypt, as God promised, the descendants of Jacob grew into a great nation (see *Gn* 46:3); and the exodus from Egypt, the journey through the wilderness, and the entrance into the land promised by God all confirmed the faithfulness of God to the word of his promise.
- 166 After the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, the Lord entered into a covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai. There he promised to make them his "treasured possession among all peoples... a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (*Ex* 19:5-6). The entire nation accepted the covenant, saying: "All that the LORD has spoken, we will do" (*Ex* 19:8). For the people, the observance of the commandments becomes the condition of the covenant (see *Gn* 20). As a sign of this covenant, Moses took blood from sacrificed animals and sprinkled it on the people, saying: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words" (*Ex* 24:8, RSV-CE).

¹³⁶ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 33, 4: PG 7, 1074.

- 167 God continually supports and protects the people of the promise. If the covenant of God with Moses creates a nation of God's people, then the covenant with King David prefigures the kingdom of God.

I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son... your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever (2 Sm 7:12-16).

3) *The Promise of a New Covenant*

- 168 Moses, the great prophet and beholder of God, by prophetic inspiration pointed to the coming of yet another prophet: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet" (Dt 18:15). The people eventually associated the expectation of a coming *Prophet*, awakened by Moses, with the figure of the Messiah, God's Anointed One.

- 169 With the Messiah the people also associated the coming of a promised kingdom, which was primarily imagined as an earthly dominion of the People of God. Thus, the Lord God, through his prophets and by the Holy Spirit, was raising the people to a qualitatively higher level of covenant, which was to be called *new*. The promise to grant such a covenant was transmitted by God through the prophet Jeremiah:

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer 31:31-33, RSV-CE).

And through the prophet Ezekiel, God proclaimed: "I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them" (Ez 11:19-20).

- 170 The New Covenant, recorded on the interior tablets of the heart, was to be brought by the Son of David—the Messiah. The prophets, from Elijah and Elisha to Malachi, prepared the People of God for the encounter with the Messiah. With their prophecies, they painted a kind of *word icon* of the Messiah. In accordance with the prophets, the

Messiah would not only bring the New Covenant, he would also be its personal incarnation.

- 171 Through the prophet Micah, the Holy Spirit discloses the place where the Saviour is to be born: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (*Mi* 5:2). Born in Bethlehem as a man, the Messiah is at the same time also eternally begotten of the Father: "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession" (*Ps* 2:7-8). The anointing of the Messiah will also be from God:

The spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour" (*Is* 61:1-2).

- 172 In addition to the signs of his power, greatness, and glory, the ministry of the Messiah will also include suffering and death, in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; and the bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he establishes justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. (*Is* 42:1-4).

On the path of justice, sufferings shall await him:

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows ... Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... he was bruised for our iniquities; and upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we have been healed ... and the LORD has laid upon him the iniquity of us all (*Is* 53:2-6).

The image of a suffering Messiah did not correspond to human expectations: "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you" (*Mt* 16:22). This is how the apostle Peter reacted to the words of Christ about his coming suffering.

- 173 Christ applies to himself the messianic title *Son of Man* from the prophecies of Daniel. The prophet Daniel describes the glory of the Son of Man, to whom “was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed” (*Dn* 7:14).
- 174 As the time of its fulfilment approached, the word of God’s promise became progressively clearer and more pronounced, in order to finally become the incarnate Word of God:

In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs (*Heb* 1:2-4).

4) The Expectation of the Saviour

- 175 Liturgically the Church re-creates the expectation of the Saviour in the history of salvation by means of the Fast that begins on November 15/28, the day after the feast of the apostle Philip. This Fast lasts until the Nativity of Christ, and is appropriately called the *Nativity Fast*, or popularly, *Saint Philip’s Fast* (in Ukrainian, *Pilipivka*). During the course of this Fast, the Church prepares us for the luminous feast of the Nativity of Christ, reminding us of the consequences of Adam’s sinful lack of self-control: “Refusing to fast, the first Adam tastes of the death-bearing tree.”¹³⁷
- 176 The reading of the holy Gospel on the feast of the apostle Philip is full of hope for salvation (see *Jn* 1:43-51). Philip invites Nathaniel to become better acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth. However, Nathaniel has one reservation: “Can anything *good* come from Nazareth?” To this Philip replies: “Come and see” (*Jn* 1:45-46, emphasis added). Having met Christ, Nathaniel’s reservation dissipates. Herein is the task for every Christian: to “come and see,” in other words, to draw near to Christ in order to know him.
- 177 This expectation of the Messiah and the drawing near to him are fulfilled in the person of the Virgin Mary from Nazareth. Before all ages she was chosen by God. Mary, who in accordance with Tradition was introduced into the temple as a young child, spiritually grew into the

¹³⁷ *Octoechos*, Tone 2, Sunday Matins: Canon of the Cross-Resurrection, Ode 5.

“handmaid of the Lord.” God progressively prepared her to become the womb, the ark, the temple, and the dwelling place for the uncontainable God. “By the good will of God the Father, the Most Holy Spirit prepared a dwelling-place in her for God the Word.”¹³⁸ Mary became the *tabernacle* in which the Word of God came to dwell in the fullness of time: “The Word became flesh and lived among us” (*Jn* 1:14). In celebrating the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple in Jerusalem (November 21/December 4), Christians are called to follow her example, allowing the Lord to prepare them so that they may worthily receive God incarnate into the tabernacles of their hearts.

B. “God Became Human that Humans Might Become God”¹³⁹

*For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*And when the fullness of time had come,
you spoke to us through your Son ...
He appeared on earth and lived among mortals.
Taking flesh of a holy Virgin, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,
being made in the likeness of our lowly body,
so that he might make us in the likeness of the image of his glory ...
so that all who had died in Adam might be given life in your Christ himself.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

- 178 From the creation of the world, God has been present within creation by his grace. “In him we live and move and have our being” (*Acts* 17:28). God revealed himself to the human race progressively until the fullness of time: “When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son” (*Gal* 4:4). The Son of God—“the Word of the Father”—reveals the Father to the world: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (*Jn* 14:9); “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (*Jn* 14:11). He is God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (*Jn* 1:1).

¹³⁸ ДМУТРО ТУРТАЛО, *Життя Святих. Місяця листопада в 21-ий день. Сказання про Введення Пречистої і Преблагословенної Владичиці нашої Богородиці і Приснодіви Марії у Господню Церкву і про життя її в ній* [Lives of the Saints, The Month of November, the 21st Day: A Narrative Concerning the Entrance of Our Most Pure, Most Blessed Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, into the Temple of the Lord and Her Life] (translated from Ukrainian).

¹³⁹ See ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54: PG 25, 192. [This famous and very recognizable phrase by Athanasius expresses the conviction that God assumed humanity that we might become by grace what God is by nature.]

- 179 The Incarnation of the Son of God took place in accordance with God's plan "in the fullness of time" (see *Gal* 4:4). The nativity of the Son of God became the focal point of human history, revealing how much God loved the world (see *Jn* 3:16). In the Incarnation, the union of God with his creation is truly a *self-emptying* of God (in Greek, *kenosis*): "Though [Christ] was in the form of God ... [he] emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (*Phil* 2:6-7). Christ took on the "form of a servant," without the stain of sin, "increasing the human and not diminishing the divine."¹⁴⁰ In the union of the divine and the human, "the incorporeal one takes on flesh, the Word becomes approachable, the invisible one is seen, the impalpable one is touched, the one beyond time enters into time, the Son of God becomes the Son of Man."¹⁴¹
- 180 Saint Gregory of Nyssa teaches that God's "descent to the humility of the human race [i.e., *kenosis*] is a kind of superabundant exercise of power, which thus finds no check even in directions which contravene nature."¹⁴² In the *kenosis* of God, "the Word became flesh and 'shared in flesh and blood just like us:'"¹⁴³ in the Jordan, the sinless Son of God accepted baptism—as a sinner; under Pontius Pilate he was sentenced with criminals; by crucifixion he descended into the abyss of human suffering and death, to find the first Adam (human being) in Hades, the *land of the dead*.
- 181 God becomes of one form with us—he becomes a human being in order to make us of one form with him (see *Phil* 2:7). In *kenosis* (from the Greek meaning *self-emptying*), the Son of God descends into Hades, and finding Adam, he grants humankind the forgiveness of sins, participation in God's nature, and eternal life. "God became human that humans might become god."¹⁴⁴ Deceived by the instigation of the serpent, humankind *in Adam* strived in vain to become like God by the means of its own strength (see *Gn* 3:5). "At one time Adam was deceived, for he desired to become god, and did not. God became a human being, so that Adam might become god."¹⁴⁵ The human being *in Christ*, by growing in likeness to God, can truly *become like God*: "He has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you

¹⁴⁰ See Leo the Great, *Letter 28: To Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople*, 3: PL 54, 764-766.

¹⁴¹ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 38: On the Theophany or Nativity of Christ*, 2 and 13: PG 36, 313 and 325.

¹⁴² GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Great Catechism*, 24: PG 45, 61.

¹⁴³ CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Third Letter Against Nestorius*, *Anathema* 5: PG 76, 165.

¹⁴⁴ ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54: PG 25, 192.

¹⁴⁵ *Lenten Triodion*, Fifth Saturday of Lent, Vespers: Stichera at Psalm 140.

may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pt 1:4).

1. The Incarnation of the Son of God

182 The Incarnation of the Son of God is the eternal divine plan for salvation: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). Precisely this love towards humanity—his *love for humankind* (in Greek, *philanthropia*)—brought about the coming of God into the world. The Fall of the human race did not put a stop God’s love: “Merciful Saviour, you loved me much when I was at enmity with you; in strange self-emptying you came to earth ... While remaining still upon the heights of your ineffable glory, you glorified me, formerly so disgraced.”¹⁴⁶

183 In the Incarnation, Christ united divine and human natures:

With one voice [we] teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ ... consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity ... in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation ... [He is] not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁷

Christ is truly God and truly human:

As a man he grew in his mother’s womb, and as God he departed from it without staining her virginity. As a man he sucked his mother’s milk, and as God he set the angels to sing amongst the shepherds: “Glory to God in the highest!” As a man he was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and as God he led the magi with a star. As a man he lay in a manger, and as God he received gifts and homage from the magi. As a man he fled into Egypt, and the graven images of Egypt worshipped him as God.¹⁴⁸

a. The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary

184 The Lord God chose the Virgin Mary from Nazareth and through the Archangel Gabriel he announced to her that she would become the mother of the Son of God: “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will

¹⁴⁶ *Octoechos*, Tone 8, Sunday Matins: Canon of the Resurrection, Canticle 4.

¹⁴⁷ COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, Session V.

¹⁴⁸ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 26.

be called the Son of the Most High” (*Lk* 1:31-32, RSV-CE). Giving her consent—“I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1:38, RSV-CE)—Mary offers herself to God, and the Holy Spirit descends upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadows her (see *Lk* 1:35). “We confess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God [*Theotokos*]; because God the Word was incarnate and became human.”¹⁴⁹

- 185 Comparing Mary with Eve, Church tradition highlights the obedience of the Virgin Mary in contrast with the disobedience of our foremother Eve. Eve is the mother of all the living; Mary (the new Eve) is the Mother of the Source of life. Eve lost life (*dying in death*); Mary accepted and offered the Life, who in the Resurrection overcame death. Eve listened to the serpent and lost Paradise for humankind; Mary listened to God and returned Paradise in Christ. Adam was before Eve, but Mary, the New Eve, was before the New Adam, the Christ:¹⁵⁰

While Mary hymned praise to the one whom she bore, and caressed the babe whom she alone brought forth, Eve, who had given birth in pain, heard her, and rejoicing, said to Adam: “A virgin has given birth to the Redemption of the curse; who has caused this hoped-for news to ring out in my ears? Her voice alone has released me from my torment. Her childbirth has wounded the one who wounded me. She is the one whom the son of Amos prophesied as the rod of Jesse. It has brought forth a branch on which I shall feed and not die, Mary, full of grace.”¹⁵¹

- 186 The conception of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive” (*Is* 7:14). The Church contemplates this sign in the icon of *The Mother of God of the Sign*. The Son of God comes to dwell within a virginal womb; and the Virgin Mary (in her person the Church), raises her hands and prayerfully contemplates the Child, hidden for the time being from the outside world.
- 187 The Church of Christ, teaching about the Mystery of the Incarnation, focuses on the Person whom Mary conceived, and to whom she gave birth. Therefore, at the Council of Ephesus in the year 431, Mary was solemnly proclaimed to be the *God-Bearing One* (in Greek, *Theotokos*) [often translated in English simply as *Mother of God*]. “For this name embraces the whole mystery of the dispensation.”¹⁵² The title *Theotokos*

¹⁴⁹ CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Letter 39, To John of Antioch* [The Formula of Reunion]: PG 75, 177.

¹⁵⁰ See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 22, 4: PG 7, 958-959.

¹⁵¹ ROMAN THE MELODIST, *Second Kontakion on the Nativity*, 3.

¹⁵² JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 12: PG 94, 1029.

means that it was the eternal Son of God who was born in the flesh from the Virgin Mary and became human. “From the God-bearing One, Jesus took flesh and became one in being with our human nature.”¹⁵³ In a special way the Church expresses this unity in being with the *Icon of Tenderness*, in the embrace of Mother and Son.

- 188 The liturgical tradition of the Church magnifies the most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady and God-bearing One as being “more honourable than the cherubim and more glorious than the seraphim.” The cherubim are the highest angelic order. The Church extols her “holy birth ... and her immaculate conception.”¹⁵⁴ By her purity and her being immaculate the Theotokos surpasses all visible and invisible creation. Nonetheless, at the same time, she belongs to the human race spread forth from Adam and gathered in the Son of God.¹⁵⁵ By conception without seed within the womb of the most holy Mother of God, the Son of God “receives into his bosom the old creation”¹⁵⁶ and “manifests a new birth.”¹⁵⁷ All of this is accomplished by the goodwill of God and the assent of the Virgin Mary.
- 189 In the reality of her being the Mother of God, the Church also contemplates the mystery of Mary’s virginity, magnifying her as the “Ever-Virgin.” In the year 649, the Lateran Council defined “ever-virginity” as virginity *before, during, and after* the birth of Christ. “[For you were a] Virgin before childbirth, and Virgin in childbirth, and still a Virgin after the childbirth.”¹⁵⁸ With respect to the virginity of the Mother of God, the Church understands her integrity, the wholeness of a person filled with grace, in whom bodily and spiritual aspirations are harmoniously united in the fulfilment of a vocation from God. Her virginity is a virginity of “mind, soul, and body.”¹⁵⁹ Church iconography symbolically portrays the virginity of Mary using stars, which are placed upon her forehead and shoulders. She retained virginity and incorruption even in death, which the Church refers to as her Dormition (Falling-Asleep). “Having fallen asleep in the flesh,” Mary was “awakened” by her Son to

¹⁵³ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 12: PG 94, 1029.

¹⁵⁴ *Menaion*, Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (September 8/21), Matins, Second Canon, Ode 6.

¹⁵⁵ See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 22, 3-4: PG 7, 958.

¹⁵⁶ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 22, 4: PG 7, 958.

¹⁵⁷ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 1, 3: PG 7, 1122.

¹⁵⁸ *Octoechos*, Tone 7, Sunday, Resurrectional Theotokion.

¹⁵⁹ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Homily 1: On the Nativity of the Mother of God*, 9 & 5: PG 96, 676 & 668.

life in glory: “You passed into life, for you are the Mother of Life.”¹⁶⁰ The Lord glorified the soul and body of Mary—the first to be divinized from among the human race.

b. The Nativity of Christ

- 190 The Church celebrates the coming of the Son of God into the world with the feast of the Nativity of Christ. The birth of Christ is announced to the shepherds by the angel of the Lord: “To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Christ, the Lord” (*Lk* 2:11, rsv-ce). The Fathers of the Church extolled Christmas night as a day of joy and peace:

Today the Bountiful One became poor for our sake ... Today we receive a gift for which we did not ask ... This present day threw open the heavenly door to our prayers ... Now the Divine Being took upon himself the seal of humanity, in order for humanity to be decorated by the seal of Divinity.¹⁶¹

- 191 According to the liturgical texts, the birth of the Child “from a mother without a father”¹⁶² is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel about the rock hewn from the mountain without human hands (see *Dn* 2:45). In the Incarnation, the Son of God “came from the bosom of the Father, and in his ineffable self-emptying he took on our lowly state.”¹⁶³ Through the most holy Mother of God, he became what he had not been before—a human. The Church sings of the Mother of God thus: “The bright and spiritual cloud, filled with heavenly rain, today rises above the earth, in order to drop dew upon it and to water it.”¹⁶⁴
- 192 At the birth of Jesus, “the spring of grace ... overcomes the winter of unbelief.”¹⁶⁵ The Nativity is a harbinger of Pascha. The manger is understood to be a sign of the Lord’s tomb, and the placing of the Child in the manger is a prefiguration of the placing of Christ in the tomb. The myrrh, brought by the magi, is already an anointing for the future burial.
- 193 As we sing in the divine services of the feast of the Nativity of Christ, God the Word, in the Incarnation, deigned to limit himself in time—“The beginningless Word mysteriously accepts a beginning”—and in space—

¹⁶⁰ *Menaion*, Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28), Troparion of the Feast.

¹⁶¹ ISAAC THE SYRIAN, *Homily on the Nativity*.

¹⁶² *Trebnyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Second Prayer.

¹⁶³ *Menaion*, Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ, Holy Fathers, Matins, Second Sidalen.

¹⁶⁴ *Menaion*, Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ, Holy Fathers, Matins, Stichera at the Praises.

¹⁶⁵ *Menaion*, Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ, Holy Fathers, Matins, Stichera at the Praises.

“The Uncontainable is contained by flesh.” Christ accepted the humility of childhood to counterbalance Adam’s choice of self-exaltation. When the Virgin received in her womb the Word of God, her womb became a noetic paradise [noetic, from the Greek *nous*, meaning *mind* or *intellect*]. Her womb was thus a place of encounter between God and humanity. The ewe-lamb carried the great Shepherd in her womb; and then in the cave, Christ—the Tree of Life—blossomed from the Virgin. The wall of partition separating humanity from God and earth from heaven is now removed. Heaven announces this to the earth through “the voice of the star” and “the starry host”—the angels. The stable itself becomes a royal palace, and the manger a royal throne. Jesus is bound in swaddling clothes in order to unbind humanity from the chains of sin. Although it had been fallen, the royal image of humanity is now being renewed to its fullness in the Resurrection.

- 194 Fulfilling the decree of the Roman Emperor that all people in the empire be enrolled, Joseph, who was of the line of David, sets out with Mary to Bethlehem, the home town of King David, to be recorded in the census rolls. There, in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea, Mary gave birth to the Child (see *Lk* 2:1). Fulfilled are the words of the prophet Micah about the Messiah, the son of David who shall come forth from Bethlehem (see *Mi* 5:2). Obedient to the word spoken by the angel of the Lord, Joseph names the Child Jesus, which means *God saves*, “for he will save his people from their sins” (*Mt* 1:21). The shepherds come to the newborn Child (see *Lk* 2:15-18), and Magi from the East also arrive (see *Mt* 2:1-11). The fact that the magi—representatives of all humanity—worship Christ, points to the universal character of salvation. In the Son of God, God the Father offers salvation to all the nations of the earth.
- 195 Creation joyfully welcomes God in the flesh, bearing gifts for the newborn Child: angels—their song; the heavens—a star; the magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh; the shepherds—their wonder; the earth—a cave; the deserted place—a manger; humankind—the Virgin Mother. The mystery of the Nativity, namely God’s entry into human history, continues to this day: “Today has God come upon earth, and the human race gone up to heaven.”¹⁶⁶
- 196 In our Church’s tradition, the Eve of the Nativity feast, also called Holy Eve (in Ukrainian, *Sviat vechir*), is honoured with particular solemnity. Every home becomes a *Bethlehem of the family*: the table symbolizes the

¹⁶⁶ *Menaion*, Nativity of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (December 25/January 7), Great Complines: Stichera for Lytia.

manger; straw is placed under the tablecloth, and upon the tablecloth are placed the prosphora (Communion bread), a symbol of the Child Jesus. A lit candle is placed next to the prosphora to symbolize the star of Bethlehem. With a meatless supper, the family gathers around the table to prayerfully honour the incarnate Son of God. Christmas carols are sung by the faithful. In hospitality, homes open their doors to everyone who celebrates the Nativity of Christ. The high point of the celebration of the Nativity feast is the solemn divine service, for which all parishioners gather. The Eucharistic Supper at the Divine Liturgy crowns the family supper.

c. Theophany

- 197 At the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan, the public ministry of the Saviour begins (see *Mt* 3; *Mk* 1). John the Baptist points to Christ in the Jordan and identifies Him as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (*Jn* 1:29). During the baptism of Jesus, the Most Holy Trinity is made known: “Worship of the Trinity was revealed; the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming you the beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the word’s certainty.”¹⁶⁷ “The voice of the Father” is the voice of the Heavenly Father, and the “Spirit in the form of a dove” is the Holy Spirit, who descends upon Christ, revealing him to be the Son of God. For this reason, Church tradition refers to the Baptism of Jesus Christ as the Theophany (from the Greek, meaning *divine appearance*).
- 198 The Theophany at the Jordan is liturgically connected with the feast of the Nativity. In her celebration of both these events, Church tradition emphasizes that both the Incarnation and the Baptism of the Lord are when God appears (in Greek, *theophania*). In accordance with the text of the Great Blessing of Water at Theophany, “in the preceding feast we have seen you as a babe, and in this present feast as perfect human, appearing as our perfect God.” At the Nativity, God the Word “was born,” but now he “appears in the flesh to the human race.” At the Nativity, the “Sun of Righteousness” rose, and now it “shines forth.” In the liturgical tradition of the Church, the feast of Theophany is also called the feast of Illumination. The sticheras of the feast of Theophany elucidate the bond between the feasts of the Nativity and Theophany: What was announced by the angel is now announced to the people by the Baptist; the spilling of infant blood caused Bethlehem to become childless, but through the sanctified waters of baptism, the Jordan now

¹⁶⁷ *Menaion*, Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (January 6/19), Troparion.

has many children. What was announced by the star to the magi in Bethlehem is now revealed to the world by the Father himself.

- 199 The Son of God, “who covers himself with light as with a garment ... today is covered by the streams of the Jordan.” Christ himself “has no need to be cleansed by them; but through the cleansing that he himself receives he bestows regeneration on us.”¹⁶⁸ “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness’” (*Mt* 3:13-15). The God-man enters into the Jordan waters: “As a man he came to be baptized, and the Jordan feared him as God and turned back. As a man he bared himself and entered the water, and the Father testified that he was God, saying: ‘This is my beloved Son.’”¹⁶⁹
- 200 Christ brings regeneration to humankind, and he chooses the waters of the Jordan to signify this. In Holy Scripture, water is a symbol of elemental forces and death, and simultaneously a symbol of cleansing, rebirth, life, and the grace of the Holy Spirit. By means of water, God “drowned sin ... in the days of Noah ... [and] at the hand of Moses he set free the Hebrew nation from the bondage of Pharaoh ... [and] by fire and water through Elijah brought back Israel from the error of Baal.”¹⁷⁰ By immersion into water (baptism), Christ *washes away* the record of Adam’s sins. The waters of the Jordan regenerate all creation. In the Jordan, Christ “has renewed through water and the Spirit our nature grown old through sin.”¹⁷¹
- 201 “Transformed into waters of healing,” the waters of the Jordan become “a source of incorruption.” For by means of water, God offers to the world “a salvation of baptism.” Upon receiving it, a human being and all creation are filled with “mysterious streams.” With the sanctification of the human being begins the sanctification and eschatological (from the Greek, meaning *final*) transfiguring of creation.
- 202 In the Ukrainian Christian tradition, the symbolism of Jordan water is closely connected with the memory of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine by Grand Prince Volodymyr. The river Dnipro, in which the people of Kyiv were baptized, is figuratively called the “Ukrainian Jordan.” On

¹⁶⁸ *Menaion*, Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (January 6/19), Great Compline, Stichera for Lytia.

¹⁶⁹ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 26.

¹⁷⁰ *Trebynyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Third Prayer.

¹⁷¹ *Trebynyk*, Rite of the Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany, Third Prayer.

the feast of Theophany in Ukraine, an ice cross is erected as a sign and a memorial of baptism; during the Great Blessing of Water, three triple-branched candles are immersed into the waters. Bringing the holy water home, the faithful partake of it at the beginning of the Theophany Eve supper *Shchedryi vechir* (Ukrainian, meaning *Abundantly Generous Eve*). They bless their homes and farms, and keep the water throughout the year to partake of it, and to bless themselves in times of difficulty and illness.

*And having lived in this world,
giving us saving commandments, and turning us from the error of idols,
he brought us to the knowledge of you, the true God and Father,
and acquired us for himself as a people all his own, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
And when he had cleansed us by water and sanctified us by the Holy Spirit,
he gave himself as an exchange to death.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

2. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

- 203 Christ began his public ministry with the proclamation: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (*Mk* 1:15). The kingdom of God is personified in Jesus Christ. One becomes a participant of the kingdom through faith in Christ and by holy Baptism: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned” (*Mk* 16:16; see also *Jn* 3:5). We were created for the kingdom of God: “Whatsoever good things are sown in the human soul, these are the offspring of the kingdom of God and have been sown by God the Word, who was in the beginning with God.”¹⁷² The kingdom of God is the will of the Father, announced by the Son and fulfilled in the Holy Spirit. This “Blessed ... kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” will last “forever and ever.”

a. The Announcement of the Kingdom: The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7)

- 204 An “icon in words” that portrays the kingdom of God is the Sermon on the Mount, especially the Beatitudes announced by Christ:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

¹⁷² ORIGEN, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 10, 2: PG 13, 837.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
 Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
 for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
 and every utter every kind of evil word against you
 falsely because of me.
 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven
 (*Mt* 5:3-12).

- 205 The Sermon on the Mount reveals life in God's kingdom and points to the fact that the kingdom of God is God's gift, not something earned through works of the Law. Only by receiving the kingdom in faith and obedience to the will of God does a human being become the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (see *Mt* 5:13-16).

- 206 Christ does not replace the Law with the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil them" (*Mt* 5:17). Christ rather discloses the full meaning of the Old Testament commandments:

You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder;" and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment ... You have heard that it was said ... But I say to you ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (*Mt* 5:21-22; 27-28, 48).

- 207 The kingdom of God is a gift of God's love: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (*Jn* 13:34). When we receive divine love into our life, we begin to perceive others in a new way—as our neighbours (see *Lk* 10:25-37). The power of love even conquers hatred towards enemies:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous (*Mt* 5:43-45).

- 208 The kingdom of God is a kingdom of God's justice—the will of the Father, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (*Mt* 6:33). When "sons and daughters of the kingdom" do not live by

the word of Christ, they become like salt that has lost its taste, or as light that has been extinguished: “If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (*Mt* 6:23). Everyone who does the will of the Father builds his life upon rock: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock” (*Mt* 7:24-25).

b. The Signs of the Coming of the Kingdom

1) The Words of Christ

- 209 A sign of the coming of the kingdom of God is the preaching of the Good News (the Gospel): “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the good news of God, and saying: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the gospel’” (*Mk* 1:14-15). The Divine Word, the Son of God, spoke in all his power and with full authority. We read, “Never has anyone spoken like this!” (*Jn* 7:46). The word spoken by Christ is not his own, but the word of the Father, who sent him (see *Jn* 14:24). The power of Christ’s word is professed by the apostle Peter: “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life!” (*Jn* 6:68).
- 210 Christ teaches about the kingdom of God in parables. Using simple yet deep imagery from life, he reveals the mystery of God’s life. The kingdom of God is like a field, where both wheat and weeds grow together, side by side, until the harvest time (see *Mt* 13:24-30); like a seed, which grows into a large tree (see *Mt* 13:31-32; *Lk* 13:19). The kingdom of God is like leaven in flour (see *Mt* 13:33; *Lk* 13:21); and like a treasure hidden in a field, a pearl of great value, and a fishing net (see *Mt* 13:44-50). The kingdom of God is also like a king who forgives the debts of his servants (see *Mt* 18:23-35), like a householder who generously rewards the labourers working in the vineyard (see *Mt* 20:1-16), like a king who invites guests to the wedding of his son (see *Mt* 22:1-14), and like a man who has entrusted his servants with talents that they might increase them (see *Mt* 25:14-30). The kingdom of God grows in the world, as seeds in the earth, until the time of the harvest (see *Mk* 4:26-29).

2) *The Works of Christ*

- 211 In addition to the words of his preaching, Christ points to other signs that indicate the arrival of God's kingdom: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up" (*Lk* 7:22; see *Is* 35:5-6; 61:1). The works of Christ witness to the presence and action of God among his people. "As a man he fasted forty days and became hungry, and as God he defeated the tempter. As a man he went to the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and as God he turned the water into wine. As a man he slept on the ship, and as God he rebuked the wind and the sea and they heeded him."¹⁷³
- 212 Human ailments, suffering, and death are consequences of the Fall. Christ came to conquer sin, the cause of all our woes. Only Christ, as the God-man, has the power to free us from sin. He accomplishes this by means of forgiveness: "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (*Lk* 5:20). Quite often, a physical cure or healing—as a result of forgiveness—becomes the visible sign of a spiritual change (in Greek, *metanoia*) within a person: "Stand up and take up your bed and go home" (*Lk* 5:24). Christ heals us by forgiving our sins and restoring our physical health.
- 213 Healing is only possible when faith—one's openness to God—is present: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (*Mt* 9:28). Faith opens a person to receive God's gift, whereas unbelief becomes an obstacle to the reception of this gift: "And [Jesus] did not do many deeds of power [in Nazareth], because of their unbelief" (*Mt* 13:58).
- 214 As the signs of God's action in the time of Christ were his miracles, so in the life of the Church the signs are the Holy Mysteries. The grace of God acts in the Holy Mysteries through external signs such as water, oil, bread, and wine, as well as various liturgical gestures and actions. By receiving the Holy Mysteries, a person conquers sinful inclinations and grows in virtue.

¹⁷³ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 26.

*He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered, died, and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 (Symbol of Faith)*

*And when he had descended through the Cross into Hades,
 so that he might fill all things with himself, he loosed the pangs of death.
 And rising on the third day
 and making a way for all flesh to the resurrection of the dead ...
 He became the first fruit of those that sleep, the first-born of the dead,
 so that he might have pre-eminence in all things.
 And he ascended into heaven
 and took his seat at the right hand of your majesty on high.
 (Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

3. The Pascha (Passover) of Christ

- 215 The word Pascha, derived from the Hebrew, *Pesach*, means *to pass by, to pass through*. The Pascha of Jesus Christ is his *passing through* suffering and death to his glorification in the Resurrection and Ascension. In the deepest sense, Christ himself is the Pascha (Passover) (see 1 *Cor* 5:6-8), for the passage from death to life takes place in him: “Pascha, Pascha of the Lord, for from death to life, and from earth to heaven Christ God has led us.”¹⁷⁴ Without him, all the efforts of the human race to free itself from slavery to sin and death would be in vain.
- 216 In the Old Testament, the celebration of Passover commemorated the liberation of God’s People from the slavery of Egypt. When Pharaoh refused to let the people go, an angel of death took the lives of the Egyptian first-born. He *passed by* the Israelite homes, the door-posts of which by the directions of Moses had been anointed with the blood of a sacrificed lamb, so that no first-born Hebrew child would die (see *Ex* 12:12-13). In the celebration of Passover, the Jews also commemorated the *passing through* the Red Sea, when the Lord God saved the people of Israel from Pharaoh’s army (see *Ex* 14).
- 217 The Old Testament Passover was a prefiguration of Christ’s Passover (Pascha). It prepared the People of God for final liberation and salvation in the kingdom of God: Christ—the Lamb of God—by his Blood (see 1 *Pt* 1:19) leads the human race in an exodus from slavery to sin and the dominion of death, bringing us to resurrection and eternal life.

¹⁷⁴ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of Pascha, Paschal Matins, Canon of Pascha, Ode 1, Irmos.

- 218 Christ, our Pascha, takes upon himself the sin of the world, suffering, and death: “What suffering did he accept for our sake? This was the suffering of love. Love is long-suffering.”¹⁷⁵ The Passover of Christ is the manifestation of God’s love: “Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (*Jn* 13:1). The Lord willingly accepts his death: “I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again” (*Jn* 10:17-18). Christ offers himself in sacrifice for us, “as the Priest and simultaneously as the Lamb of God, who takes the sin of the world.”¹⁷⁶ Christ conquered death by his Resurrection, for God will not suffer his “holy one to see corruption” (*Pf* 15[16]:10). On account of the Resurrection, the death of Christ has become our passage to new life.
- 219 “The last enemy—death” (see 1 *Cor* 15:26), against which the human race was powerless, is now destroyed by the Pascha of Christ. “We do indeed die, but we do not continue in it; which is not to die at all. For the tyranny of death, and death indeed, is when he who dies is nevermore allowed to return to life. But when after dying is living, and that a better life, this is not death, but sleep.”¹⁷⁷ The Resurrection of Christ is a unique and unrepeatable historical event and the foundation of Christian faith: “If Christ has not been raised ... your faith has been in vain” (1 *Cor* 15:14). Faith in the Risen Christ is the beginning of our Pascha.
- 220 Every year Christians prepare for the celebration of holy Pascha during the time of the Great Fast (Lent). The Fast lasts forty days as an image of the forty-year journey of the People of God into the Promised Land and the forty-day fast of Christ in the wilderness. By training the Christian to abstain from sin, the Fast leads to interior freedom and true joy. Throughout the Fast, the Church liturgically accompanies Christians with hymns from the Lenten Triodion that point to the deeper sense and purpose of the Fast—reconciliation with God and neighbour, service to God and others.

a. Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem

- 221 The Church begins to celebrate the Resurrection as victory over death with the commemoration of the raising of Lazarus, during which Jesus reveals himself to be “the Resurrection and the Life.” “Those who believe

¹⁷⁵ ORIGEN, *Commentary on Ezekiel*, 6, 6: PG 13, 714.

¹⁷⁶ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Oration I: On Holy Pascha*, 1: PG 46, 612.

¹⁷⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Hebrews*. Homily 17, 2: PG 63, 129.

in me, even though they die, will live" (*Jn* 11:25). The Floral Triodion begins with Lazarus Saturday. It leads into Holy Week, which bears the good news about Christ's victory over sin and death through his Passion and the Cross. The sign of the imminent victory is the entrance of Christ, the God-man, into Jerusalem. "As man he wept for Lazarus, and as God he resurrected him from the dead. As man he sat upon the donkey, and as to God they cried out to him: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" ¹⁷⁸

222 In the liturgical hymns of Palm Sunday, also known as Flowery Sunday, we sing of the children of Jerusalem, who greeted Christ as King even though the Pharisees and scribes refused to accept Him: "O, evil and adulterous generation, why have you treated your Lord so faithlessly? ... Why have you rejected the prophet's words which proclaim him? Your own children sang to your shame today: 'Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" ¹⁷⁹ Just as the people greeted Christ with branches from trees, so Christians also greet Christ with "palms of virtue" ¹⁸⁰ as he enters upon his voluntary Passion. Those who have not acquired virtues and have rejected Christ are compared to the barren fig tree: "The rod of Aaron, though dried up and withered, was changed into a green branch that put forth leaves; but the lawless assembly was changed into an unfruitful fig tree." ¹⁸¹

223 The liturgical texts of Holy Week present us the example of the repentant woman, who with expensive ointment anointed the feet of the Saviour (see *Mt* 26:6-16; *Lk* 7:36-50). The repentant harlot, "having recognized the divinity of Christ," receives from him the forgiveness of her sins and moves us towards repentance. "Accept the fountain of my tears, O you who draw down from the clouds the waters of the sea. Incline to the groanings of my heart, O you who in your ineffable self-emptying have bowed down the heavens. I shall kiss your most pure feet and wipe them with the hairs of my head." ¹⁸² Jesus was invited by the Pharisee, but it was the harlot who received the blessing: "O Jesus, life-giving Bread, you have eaten with Simon the Pharisee, that the harlot might gain your grace that is beyond all price, by pouring out the ointment on your head." ¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 26.

¹⁷⁹ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Monday, Vespers, Aposticha.

¹⁸⁰ See *Lenten Triodion*, Sixth Week of the Fast, Monday Matins, First and Second Sessional Hymns.

¹⁸¹ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Monday, Compline, Canon, Ode 9.

¹⁸² *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Wednesday, Matins, Aposticha.

¹⁸³ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Wednesday, Great Compline, Canon, Ode 9.

- 224 The good deed of the harlot enflamed the jealousy of Judas and urged him on to betrayal. “O misery of Judas! He saw the harlot kiss your feet, and deceitfully he plotted to betray you with a kiss. She loosed her hair and he was bound a prisoner by fury ... for envy knows not how to choose its own advantage.”¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Jesus does everything for the sake of Judas’ salvation: He washes his feet, and offers him bread during the Mystical Supper. “O ineffable self-abasement! ... O Saviour, you who are fire have washed the feet of your betrayer, and washing him, you have not burned him up ... but you have given him Bread at the supper.”¹⁸⁵

b. The Passion

- 225 In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah gives witness to the suffering of the Servant of God, which the Church recognizes to be the suffering of Christ:

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (*Is* 53:3-7).

- 226 Jesus himself foretold his future Passion: “Everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again” (*Lk* 18:31-33). Christ voluntarily accepts suffering and death, in order to conquer death. “It was not death which accepted life, but Life which accepted death.”¹⁸⁶
- 227 In her liturgical tradition, with various images presented by the sticheras of the Passion, the Church prayerfully hymns the salvific suffering of the Son of God. Allowing himself to be bound in the garden of

¹⁸⁴ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Thursday, Vespers, Stichera at Psalm 140.

¹⁸⁵ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Friday, Compline, Canon, Ode 8.

¹⁸⁶ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 12, 10-11: PL 35, 1489-1490.

Gethsemane, Christ *unbinds* the chains of sin of the forefather Adam. Christ accepts the sentence of death, in order to offer the forgiveness of sins. With the reed, a sceptre of shame, Christ inscribes people into the Book of Life. With the stripping of his garments on Golgotha, Christ tears away the covering of hypocrisy from human sin. Allowing himself to be nailed to the cross the Lord puts an end to the desire of Adam for the forbidden fruit. Humanity's written record of sins is nailed to the cross, and the lance of the centurion tears asunder our debt obligations. The tree of the cross, an instrument of death, becomes the tree of life. The body of Christ, raised upon the cross, becomes a beacon of light, lit by God, in order to find the lost drachma—the sinner. The arms of Christ spread out upon the cross become the embrace of God and a blessing for all people. The place of the crucifixion becomes Paradise, because the tree of the Cross issues the shoot of life—Christ. He fell asleep on the cross and was pierced with the lance; and from his pierced side poured forth blood and water. Therefore, with blood he redeemed all the nations, and with water he cleansed them. He who dies from the famine of sinfulness feeds the human race with the Body that is flesh of his own flesh.

c. The Resurrection

- 228 Foretelling his death, Christ also proclaims Resurrection from the dead. He identifies the three-day sojourn of the prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale as the sign of his Resurrection (see *Mt* 12:40). Christ will rise “on the third day in accordance with the scriptures” (1 *Cor* 15:4): “After they have flogged him, they will kill [the Son of Man], and on the third day he will rise again” (*Lk* 18:33). Christ likens his Death and Resurrection to the destruction and rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up ... But he was speaking of the temple of his body” (*Jn* 2:19, 21).
- 229 By the miraculous raising of Jairus' daughter (see *Lk* 8:41-42, 49-56), the raising of the widow's son in Nain (see *Lk* 7:11-16), and the raising of his friend Lazarus (see *Jn* 11:1-57), Christ gradually prepared the apostles for his own Resurrection. Christ refers to human death as sleep: “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping” (*Mt* 9:24). Death is not the end of life but a *falling asleep*; humankind is not dead, it has *fallen asleep*. The Church also refers to Christ's death in the same way: “In the flesh you fell asleep as a mere mortal.”¹⁸⁷ Saint John of Damascus unveils the meaning of Christ's death: “Although he died as man

¹⁸⁷ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of Holy Pascha, Paschal Matins, Exapostilarion.

and his holy soul was severed from his immaculate body, yet his divinity remained inseparable from both, I mean, from his soul and his body.”¹⁸⁸ The death of Christ is life-giving: Christ himself permitted death to hold him, so that he might finally conquer it, and grant new life.

- 230 By death on a cross, Christ descends into Hades, to the place of the dead. In Christ’s descent into Hades, the Church hymns the power of the Resurrection: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 *Cor* 15:55). The icon of the descent of Christ into Hades portrays him in the bright garments of the new creation. The light-bearing Christ dispels the gloom of death, scatters the darkness of Hades in order to find Adam and Eve. Together with Adam, Christ brings forth out of the shadow of death those who awaited him, the righteous ones of the Old Testament.
- 231 The descent of Christ into Hades completes the salvation of the entire world, “heaven, earth, and the world beneath.”¹⁸⁹ In his Incarnation, God descends from the heavenly to the earthly, and through death he further descends into the very depths of the underworld, to fill all things with himself. “You were bodily in the tomb, in Hades with your soul as God, in Paradise with the thief, and enthroned with the Father and the Spirit. O Christ, you fill all things but are contained by none.”¹⁹⁰ By dying and descending into Hades, Christ the God-man reveals himself as *the Resurrection and the Life*: he awakens Adam from the sleep of sin and leads him into Paradise. Therefore, he “who apprehends the mystery of the cross and the burial apprehends the inward essences of created things; while he who is initiated into the inexpressible power of the Resurrection apprehends the purpose for which God first established everything.”¹⁹¹
- 232 In the liturgical sticheras, the Church sings of the tomb of Christ, sealed and guarded by the soldiers, as a treasury into which was placed the true treasure—Christ. Christ, the *Sun of Righteousness*, went down into the tomb in order to come forth from it—to rise up. Just as Christ in the Incarnation came forth from the womb of Mary, so also in the Resurrection he came forth from the womb of the earth. He went down into the earth like Adam—*dust of the earth*; but he came forth from it, for as the incorruptible One to dust he returned not. “The tomb received

¹⁸⁸ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 27: PG 94, 1097.

¹⁸⁹ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of Holy Pascha, Paschal Matins, Canon of Pascha, Ode 3.

¹⁹⁰ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Prayer at the Great Incensation.

¹⁹¹ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *On Theology and the Incarnation of the Son of God*, I, 66: PG 90, 1107.

him, but could not hold the Word captive.” And so, the *sign of death* became the *fountain of Resurrection*. What was once death-bearing now becomes life-bearing. “As man he was laid in the sepulchre, and as God he destroyed Hades and set free the souls. As man he was sealed in the sepulchre, and as God he went forth, leaving the seals unbroken.”¹⁹² The empty tomb announces the Good News of the Resurrection: “Tell us, unbelievers, where is he whom you had placed in the grave and sealed with a stone? Gives us his body, O deniers of life. Give us the buried one or else believe in the Resurrection!”¹⁹³

- 233 Angels announced to the myrrh-bearing women: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen” (*Lk* 24:5-6). The Resurrection from the dead is the victory over bodily corruption: “Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him” (*Rom* 6:9). In the Resurrection, the body of Christ is new and glorified, free from earthly limitations of time and space. Precisely because of this, the Resurrection of Christ is the revelation of God’s new creation. On Sunday, the first day after the Sabbath, the Church celebrates the Resurrection of Christ as the first day of the new creation.
- 234 The Resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of our own resurrection: “Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” (1 *Cor* 15:20-22). The faith of the Church is entirely based on the Resurrection of Christ: “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 *Cor* 15:17-18). “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died” (1 *Thes* 4:14).
- 235 At the divine services of Great and Holy Friday, the Church venerates the Shroud (in Ukrainian, *plashchanytsia*) as a sign of Christ’s death. The service of Jerusalem Matins (Matins of Holy Saturday) takes place before the Shroud. The hymnography mourns the One who has died in the hope of the coming Resurrection: “Weep not for me, O Mother ... for I shall rise.” During the Paschal Midnight Office, the Shroud is transferred from the tomb of the Lord to the holy Altar. The faithful leave the church with lit candles and process three times around the church. Before the doors of the church, to the sound of the Paschal Tro-parion, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to

¹⁹² ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 26.

¹⁹³ *Octoechos*, Tone 4, Sunday Matins, Stichera at the Praises.

those in the tombs giving life,” the priest opens the doors of the church knocking with his hand-cross. The faithful enter the church, glorifying the Risen Christ, and like the myrrh-bearing women of the Paschal morning—the first witnesses of the Resurrection—they bring the good news of the Resurrection to the whole world: “This is the day of Resurrection! Let us be illumined by the feast! Let us embrace each other. Let us call brothers and sisters even those that hate us, and forgive all by the Resurrection, and so let us cry: Christ is risen!”¹⁹⁴

d. The Ascension

- 236 During the forty days after his Resurrection, Christ appeared to his disciples, confirming them in faith. He then ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father: “He led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (*Lk* 24:50-52; see *Mk* 16:19). The apostles’ joy lies in the fact that in his Ascension Christ does not abandon the world: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (*Mt* 28:20). Christ invisibly abides in the world, in which humanity is called to attain salvation. The apostles receive from Christ the blessing and commission to preach the Gospel to all creation (see *Mt* 16:15) and to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded them (see *Mt* 28:9-20).
- 237 In his Ascension, Christ raised renewed human nature to divine glory. The liturgical stichera of the Ascension feast sings of the open “doors to heaven” and how Christ enters “into heaven,” where he is greeted by angelic powers in fear and trepidation. He is lifted up “upon the clouds,” above the cherubim and “higher” than heaven. As God, to him belongs a “place” at the right of the Father. In God’s plan, the Ascension is the condition for the descent of the Holy Spirit: “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you” (*Jn* 16:7). Christ ascends to the Father “for us men and for our salvation” (Symbol of Faith). “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also” (*Jn* 14:2-3). Just as Christ ascended in glory, so in glory he will also return again.

¹⁹⁴ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of Holy Pascha, Paschal Matins, Stichera of Pascha.

*He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*He will come again to reward each according to their works.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

4. The Second Coming of Christ in Glory

- 238 At the trial before the Sanhedrin, in response to the question from the high priest Caiaphas whether he is the “Son of the Blessed” (*Mk* 14:61), Christ quotes the words of the prophet Daniel about the coming of the Son of Man in glory: “And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (*Mk* 14:62; see *Dn* 7:13). After Christ’s Ascension, the angels announced to the apostles: “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (*Acts* 1:11). Just as he ascended in his human nature to divine glory, so he will return again in his glorified human nature for judgment.
- 239 At the glorious second coming of Christ (in Greek, *parousia*), the judgment of the living and the dead will be a moment of blessing for the righteous. At the Judgment, all that is secret and hidden will become manifest and visible: “Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known” (*Lk* 12:2-3).
- 240 The glorious second coming of Christ will also bring about the glorification of the human race (see *Col* 3:4), which is the fulfilment of divinization, the attainment of the “full stature of Christ” (*Eph* 4:13). Christ began the glorification of the humankind with his Resurrection, and from then on, throughout the history of the Church, the glorification has continued through the witness manifested by the saints. “Christ is risen from the dead, he who is the first-fruits of those that had been asleep, the firstborn of creation and the Creator of all created things; he restored in himself the nature of our race grown corrupt.”¹⁹⁵ And then, in response: “O Lord, Maker of nature, the world offers you the godly martyrs as the first-fruits of nature.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ *Octoechos*, Tone 3, Sunday Matins, First Sessional Hymn.

¹⁹⁶ *Horologion*, Daily Service, Saturday, Kontakion for the Martyrs.

a. Presence of the Risen Christ

- 241 The Risen Christ said to his apostles: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (*Mt* 28:20). Christ is always present in his Church, especially in the Holy Mysteries, in the Word of Holy Scripture, in the liturgical assembly, in the lives and struggles of the saints, in their relics, and in holy icons. The risen Christ offers us the grace of rebirth and new life. As the apostle Paul teaches, the old person within us dies and a new person rises in Christ: “Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day” (2 *Cor* 4:16). Having put on Christ in Baptism (see *Rom* 6), a person grows “to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (*Eph* 4:13) until, according to the words of the apostle Paul, one can affirm: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (*Gal* 2:20).
- 242 Through the power of Christ’s Resurrection, human death becomes a passing over (*pascha*) to eternal life. “I fear no longer the return to the dust, Lord Christ, for in your great mercy through your Resurrection you have led me, forgotten, from the dust to the heights of incorruption.”¹⁹⁷ Christ himself is the guarantee for the victory over death and corruption: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (*Jn* 11:25–26).

b. Union of the Earthly and Heavenly in the Glorified Christ

- 243 The Risen Christ, who continues to abide in human history *for all days*, progressively draws all people and all creation to himself through the community of the Church. The consummation of this *drawing to himself* is the second and glorious coming of Christ; for God will unite all heavenly and earthly creation in Christ (see *Eph* 1:10). “[Christ] is himself a harbinger of his spiritual advent, leading our souls forward by his own teachings to receive his divine and manifest advent. He does this ceaselessly, by means of the virtues, converting from the flesh to the spirit those found worthy. And he will do it at the end of the age.”¹⁹⁸
- 244 The transfiguration of the created world will culminate in the mutual collaboration of God and the human race. Only then will the majesty of God’s plan for creation be revealed. Testifying about this transfigured world, “a new heaven and a new earth” (*Rev* 21:1), the apostle Paul

¹⁹⁷ *Octoechos*, Tone 6, Sunday Matins, Canon of the Resurrection, Ode 5.

¹⁹⁸ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *On Theology and the Incarnation of the Son of God*, II, 29: PG 90, 1137.

writes that “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 *Cor* 2:9).

c. Resurrection of the Dead

- 245 The Resurrection of the dead, just as the creation, is a manifestation of God’s creative power. In the Resurrection, Christ will lead humankind out from the dominion of death and corruption.

What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. ... For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality (1 *Cor* 15:42-44, 53).

Saint Gregory of Nyssa notes: “God resurrects the humankind united with himself after the soul and body have separated and then have been reunited. This results in a total salvation.”¹⁹⁹

- 246 In the resurrection of the dead, “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live ... and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (*Jn* 5:25, 29). “The dead shall rise from the tombs and all shall be gathered together from every generation. Then each one’s secrets will be made manifest before you.”²⁰⁰ The resurrection of the dead is “the restoration to a blessed and divine condition, separated from all shame and sorrow.”²⁰¹
- 247 The glorification of a Christian’s body already takes place in the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, when it becomes one with the glorified Christ. “[The Eucharistic] breaking of one bread ... is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying.”²⁰² Thus, a human being grows to become a “spiritual body” (see 1 *Cor* 15:44): “Our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”²⁰³

d. Divine Judgment

- 248 Christ teaches: “I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on

¹⁹⁹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Against Apollinarius*, 17: PG 45, 1153.

²⁰⁰ *Lenten Triodion*, Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare), Matins, Stichera at the Praises.

²⁰¹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Great Catechism*, 35: PG 45, 89.

²⁰² IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, XX, 2: PG 5, 662.

²⁰³ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18, 5: PG 7, 1029.

the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge” (*Jn* 12:47-48). The Judgment of God is this: “The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (*Jn* 3:19). This judgment has already begun and is now; and the standard for judgment is faith in Christ: “Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (*Jn* 3:18). Judgment depends upon faith and works of love: “As you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it ... [or] did not do it to me” (*Mt* 25:40-45, RSV-CE).

- 249 The Judgment of God began with the Incarnation of Christ (see *Jn* 1:9-13) and shall be fulfilled at his glorious second coming (see *Mt* 25:31). However, “about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (*Mt* 24:36). This Judgment will be fearful to all evildoers (see *Mt* 7:23); but for the righteous, it shall be a blessing (see *Mt* 25:34).
- 250 If a person has fallen asleep in God, having repented of all sins, but has not yet achieved spiritual maturity—the fullness of life in Christ—then that person enters the kingdom of God “as through fire” (1 *Cor* 3:15). After death, such a person is still in need of spiritual healing and cleansing of all stain, in order to dwell “in a place of light ... where there is no pain, sorrow, or mourning.”²⁰⁴ In the Church, this healing condition of the dead is referred to as “purgatory.”²⁰⁵

Every fair and God-beloved soul, once it has been set free from the bonds of the body, departs hence, and immediately enjoys a sense and perception of the blessings which await it, inasmuch as that which darkened it has been purged away, or laid aside—I know not how else to term it. It then feels a wondrous pleasure and exultation, and goes rejoicing to meet its Lord.²⁰⁶

For this reason the Church prays for the departed:

Let us then give them aid and perform commemorations for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why do you doubt that when we too offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them? Since God is wont to grant the petitions of those who ask for others.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Burial for a Layperson, Prayer of the ekteny for the deceased.

²⁰⁵ COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, Bull *Laetentur caeli* [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439); See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1030.

²⁰⁶ GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration* 7, 21: PG 35, 781.

²⁰⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 41, 8: PG 61, 361.

251 Being unrepentant until death results in the tragic reality of hell. The fire of hell signifies an unrepentant person's inability to accept God's love. "The Word of God is light, which illumines the minds of the faithful; but at the same time, it is also the fire of judgment, which consumes those, who ... abide in the night-darkness of this life."²⁰⁸ Hell is not so much the punishment of God as it is the condition voluntarily chosen by the person. It is in this state,

the soul shall be found to be outside the order, and connection, and harmony in which it was created by God ... Not harmonizing with itself in the purposefulness of its rational movements, it will experience the chastisement and torture that arises from warring with itself, and feel punished by its own disordered condition.²⁰⁹

e. God—All in All

252 In his glorious second coming, Christ will transfigure the whole world, which will become free of all corruption and all things that pass. "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is" (1 *Jn* 3:2). The transfigured world will serve and assist humankind in glorifying God. Holy Scripture refers to this transfigured world as "the heavenly Jerusalem," where "there will be no more night. [T]hey need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever" (*Rev* 22:5).

253 In renewed creation, the human race will *behold* the face of the Lord: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 *Cor* 13:12). For humankind to be in a glorified state is to participate in the life of the Most Holy Trinity, together with the most holy Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. Tradition calls this state *heaven*.

[Heaven] is the land of the living, in which there is no night, in which there is no sleep (the image of death); in which there is no eating, no drinking (the supports of our weakness); in which there is no disease, no pains, no remedies, no courts of justice, no businesses, no crafts, no money (the beginning of evil, the excuse for wars, the root of hatred); but a land of the living, who have not died through sin, but live the true life in Christ Jesus.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Questions to Thalassium*, 39, 3: PG 90, 392.

²⁰⁹ ORIGEN, *On the Principles*, II, 10, 5: PG 11, 257.

²¹⁰ BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Psalm 114*: PG 29, 493.

- 254 The Son of God will submit himself to the Father together with all creation: “When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 *Cor* 15:28). In his teaching on the presence of God in all things, Saint Gregory of Nyssa notes the following:

For while our present life is lived among a variety of conditions, and the things we have relations with are numerous—for instance, time, air, locality, food and drink, clothing, sunlight, lamplight, and other necessities of life, none of which, many though they be, are God—that blessed state which we hope for is in need of none of these things, but the Divine Being will become all, and instead of all, to us, distributing himself proportionately for every need of that existence.²¹¹

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
who ... has spoken through the Prophets.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*We beg and implore you, O Holy of Holies,
that by the good pleasure of your goodness,
your Holy Spirit may come upon us.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

5. Pentecost

- 255 On the fiftieth day after Christ’s Resurrection, the Church celebrates the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (see *Acts* 2:1-4). This sending of the Holy Spirit signals the fulfilment of God’s condescension to creation, a condescension that began at the creation of the world. In the Holy Spirit, God offers himself to the human race. This gift of God’s life is always a blessing for us, and thus we refer to it as grace. The gift of the Holy Spirit gives us the opportunity to become partakers of God’s nature, to be divinized, to enter into the communion of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit fills creation with his grace and perfects it in accordance with God’s plan: “God’s Spirit was to spiritualize the darkness of matter, to illuminate it, and to draw it into the sphere of God’s life.”²¹²
- 256 The Holy Spirit bestows upon us a wealth of gifts. And though there is one Spirit, there are many gifts (see 1 *Cor* 12:4). “There is not a single

²¹¹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Soul and Resurrection*, 7: PG 46, 104.

²¹² METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Дар П’ятдесятниці* [The Gift of Pentecost] (May-June 1937).

gift that creation possesses that has not come from the Holy Spirit.”²¹³ The Holy Spirit brings meaning and purpose to the history of humankind, directing it toward Christ, the Divine Logos. The Holy Spirit is the Source and Giver of every human life. It is the Holy Spirit who creates humankind *in the image* of Christ, making it a *living soul*, his *temple* and the dwelling place of the Most Holy Trinity.

a. The Promise to Send the Holy Spirit

- 257 The Incarnation of the Son of God and the Descent of the Holy Spirit comprise one salvific event. In the Old Testament, the Descent of the Holy Spirit is prefigured in several ways: the cloud that covered the tabernacle (see *Ex* 40:34-38); the fire that came down upon the sacrifice offered by the prophet Elijah (see *1 Kgs* 18:30-40); and the “moist wind” (*Dn* 3:50) that prefigured the “breath” of the life-giving Spirit. In the description of Pentecost in the New Testament, the signs indicating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles were “fiery tongues” and “the sound like the rush of a violent wind” (*Acts* 2:2).
- 258 Christ himself foretold the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf” (*Jn* 15:26). The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, will come at the request of the Son: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth” (*Jn* 14:16-17). The Risen Christ begins this Pentecost, by granting his apostles the power to forgive sins: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (*Jn* 20:22-23).
- 259 The Holy Spirit descends in order to witness to Christ: “He will testify on my behalf” (*Jn* 15:26). In the words of the apostle Paul, no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit (see *1 Cor* 12:3). The Holy Spirit teaches the apostles everything that Christ had taught: “The Holy Spirit ... will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (*Jn* 14:26). “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (*Jn* 16:13). “Any truth spoken by anyone is spoken by the Holy Spirit.”²¹⁴

²¹³ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 19, 49: PG 32, 158.

²¹⁴ AMBROSE OF MILAN, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 12, 3: PL 17, 245.

260 The grace of the Holy Spirit is indispensable for humankind's salvation. Although gifted with an intellect and will, without grace, a human being is only a soul and body, because it does not understand the Spirit of God.²¹⁵ Being conscious of the absolute necessity of divine grace, the Church begins every divine service with the prayer "Heavenly King" thus invoking the Holy Spirit. The *liturgical invocation* of the Holy Spirit (in Greek, *epiklesis*) "upon us and these gifts here present" completes the consecration of the Holy Gifts and our own selves.

See, Fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore you; see, Fire and Spirit are in the river, in which you were baptized. Fire and Spirit are in our baptismal font; in the Bread and the Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit ... In your Bread there is hidden the Spirit, who is not consumed; in your Wine there dwells the Fire, that is not drunk; the Spirit is in your Bread, the Fire in your Wine—a manifest wonder that our lips have received.²¹⁶

b. The Sending Down of the Holy Spirit

261 The Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles after Christ was glorified in his Resurrection and ascended into heaven, and enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Made worthy to receive the Holy Spirit, the apostles become "new tablets of grace, truly inscribed by God, living scrolls initiated into his mysteries, holding the word of salvation written with the finger of the Father."²¹⁷ Fulfilled are the words of John the Baptist about the expected Saviour: he will baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (*Lk* 3:16).

262 The Holy Spirit grants understanding among peoples, overcoming alienation and divisions planted by sin. These are described in the Old Testament in the image of the tower of Babylon (see *Gn* 11:1-9). The Spirit prepares all nations of the world to encounter Christ:

And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power (*Acts* 2:8-11).

²¹⁵ See МЕТРОПОЛИТАН ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Дар П'ятдесятниці* [The Gift of Pentecost] (May-June 1937).

²¹⁶ EPHREM THE SYRIAN, *Hymn On Faith*, 10.

²¹⁷ *Octoechos*, Tone 2, Thursday, Vespers, Stichera at Psalm 140.

- 263 The Holy Spirit *teaches* the apostles what to say (see *Acts* 4:8-12). That same Spirit directs them to listen more to God than to people (see *Acts* 4:19). The apostles are inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach Christ boldly: “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness” (*Acts* 4:31). The Spirit leads them to preach even among the Gentiles, overcoming human reservations (see *Acts* 10:9-20).
- 264 The Holy Spirit, who descended upon the apostles, builds the Church of Christ: “Pour out now the power which has its origin in you, the sovereign Spirit, whom you have given to your beloved Son Christ, and that he has handed on to the apostles who built the Church.”²¹⁸ The apostles profess the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church at the Council in Jerusalem: “It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (*Acts* 15:28).
- 265 The Holy Spirit fashions the Church and gives life to her as the Body of Christ, making her the *place* of salvation: “For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church.”²¹⁹ All people are called to the Church, “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (*Rev* 7:9; see *Rev* 14:6), regardless of culture and background. It is this same Spirit within the Church who reveals to Christians the very mystery of salvation: “For progress in the knowledge of truth we give thanks to that divine and magnificent Spirit, the Author and Leader of the Church.”²²⁰

c. The Life-Creating Spirit is the Giver of Grace

- 266 The Source of all grace is God the Father. From the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, the grace of God descends upon all creation and sustains its existence. By the power of grace, being has been wisely ordered, the laws of nature have been established, and the beauty of the universe and of humankind has been designed. Of all that was created, only humankind, called to life in God, has been granted the ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, the *Treasury of Blessings*, who grants God’s grace in a variety of gifts (see 1 *Cor* 12:4-13). In this cooperation (in Greek, *synergia*), the natural powers (in Greek, *energiai*) of humankind are united with the divine and uncreated gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- 267 The bearer of God’s grace in the world is Christ’s Church. Through the ministrations of the Holy Mysteries, by means of sanctification and

²¹⁸ HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME, *Apostolic Tradition*, 3:3.

²¹⁹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 24, 1: PG 7, 966.

²²⁰ DIDYMUS THE BLIND, *Commentary on 2 Peter*, 3, 5: PG 39, 1774.

blessing, she apportions grace to those who believe in Christ. Through prayer, ascetical effort, and a life of virtue, Christians grow in the grace of the Holy Spirit to the fullness of divinization. Transfigured by grace, human nature abides in God's nature, "without division or confusion."²²¹ At the same time, in humankind and through humankind, the nature of all creation is transfigured to its final consummation, as "a new heaven and a new earth" (*Rev* 21:1).

- 268 Through his Resurrection, Jesus Christ revealed new life, and in the Holy Spirit he grants this life to us. The Holy Spirit is "Life and Life-giver; Light and Light-giver; absolute Good and Spring of Goodness."²²² The Christian is a kind of "master" of creation who sanctifies and transforms it because of the grace of the Holy Spirit:

For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, fellowship, and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished, and transfigured.²²³

- 269 In the kneeling prayers of Pentecost, the Church invokes the Holy Spirit to descend upon all creation and upon all humankind, living and deceased. In the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, who conquered death, now grants new life to all creation: "In the Holy Spirit all creation is renewed and presses forward to its original state; for he is equal in power to the Father and the Word."²²⁴
- 270 Within the life-giving Spirit, there is no death or division. Therefore, at the feast of Pentecost we visit the graves of the departed and prayerfully experience our living bond with them. "On this all-perfect and saving feast you have deigned to accept the supplicatory prayers of forgiveness for those who are held in Hades; you who grant us great hope that unto the departed, held in the bondage of grief, there be sent from you rest and refreshment."²²⁵ On this feast, churches and homes are decorated with greenery, a sign of Life. This is truly a feast of life—the Green Feast or 'Feast of Greenery,' known in Ukrainian as *Zeleni Sviata*.

²²¹ See COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, *Decree*.

²²² GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, *Oration 41: On Holy Pentecost*, 9: PG 36, 441.

²²³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* [Joy and Hope], 39.

²²⁴ *Octoechos*, Tone 1, Sunday, Matins, Hymns of Ascent, Second Antiphon.

²²⁵ *Floral Triodion*, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Vespers, Third Kneeling Prayer.

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
(Symbol of Faith)*

*And unite all of us, who share in this one bread and cup,
with one another into the communion of the one Holy Spirit, ...
May we find mercy and grace ...
especially with our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady,
the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin, Mary ... and all your Saints.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

*Remember, O Lord, your holy, catholic and apostolic Church ...
bring back the wayward, and join them
to your holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

C. The Church—An Icon of the Most Holy Trinity

- 271 In the “fullness of time” (see *Gal* 4:4) God the Father visits humankind through his incarnate Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, so that the human race in the Holy Spirit, through adoption in Christ, could come to the Father. The place and environment where God’s adoption of human beings is realized is the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. The Church is the People of God the Father, the Body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.²²⁶ The Church, initiated in the eternal plan of the Father, becomes a reality in the Incarnation of God’s Son and is manifested at the descent of the Holy Spirit.
- 272 The Church, as the place where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act, is an icon of the Most Holy Trinity, that is, a community where human beings can commune with God and with each other. As God is one in three Persons, so also the one community of the Church exists in the coming together of self-governing Churches that live in communion with each other.

1. Biblical Images of the Church

a. The Church in the Old Testament

- 273 Humankind was created according to the *model* of the communion of Persons within the Most Holy Trinity: “Let us make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness ... So God created humankind ...

²²⁶ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 2-4.

male and female he created them” (*Gn* 1:26-27). In accordance with the eternal plan of God, the creation of humankind as male and female, initiates the revelation of the Church: “Just as God’s will is action and is called the creation of the world, so too his plan is the salvation of humankind and is called the Church.”²²⁷

- 274 God reveals his plan about the Church, as the fullness of creation, in the account of the life of Adam and Eve in Paradise. It was a life in unity with God and in harmony with all creation. The Holy Fathers describe the bond between Christ and the Church in the vision of God’s creation of Eve from the rib of Adam: “Just as Eve came into being from the rib of Adam, so did [the Church] from the rib of Christ.”²²⁸ The relationship between Adam and Eve is a prefigurement of the relationship between Christ and the Church:

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish (*Eph* 5:25-27).

- 275 Through sin humankind forfeits Paradise (see *Gn* 3:23-24), and weakens its bond with God. Human wickedness and violence upon earth lead to a worldwide flood (see *Gn* 6:5, 11). The ark by which God saves the righteous Noah and his family is a prefigurement of Christ’s Church (see *Gn* 6:13-16; *Heb* 11:7). Entering into a covenant with Abraham, God promises that he will bring forth from him a great nation (see *Gn* 12:2). Abraham accepts this promise with faith and becomes “the father of all who believe” (see *Rom* 4:11).
- 276 From the descendants of Abraham, God creates his People, Israel. Under the leadership of Moses he leads them out of Egyptian slavery; he guides them across the Red Sea; he leads them through the wilderness. He then establishes a covenant with them on Mount Sinai. Faith in the promise and the observance of the commandments of the Sinai Covenant become the signs of belonging to the People of God—the Old Testament Church.

b. The Church in the New Testament

- 277 The Father realizes his eternal plan for the Church, the salvific community of people, through the incarnation of the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. In his teaching about the Church, the incarnate Son

²²⁷ CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *The Instructor*, 1, 6: PG 8, 280.

²²⁸ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *In Praise of Maximus*, 3: PG 51, 229.

of God, Jesus Christ, would often make use of images that were familiar to his listeners. He compared the Church to a flock, for which he is the Good Shepherd (see *Jn* 10:1-18). The Church is also a vineyard (see *Mt* 21:33-43), where Christ is the vine (see *Jn* 15:1-5) and his disciples are the branches. Christ in the Church is also the cornerstone of the building (see *Mt* 21:42-44). The Church is the immaculate “Bride of the Lamb,” being prepared for the arrival of her Bridegroom (see *Rev* 19:6-8).

- 278 The Church is the dawning of the kingdom of God, which Christ announces in all his preaching, especially in parables. We hear the parables about the mustard seed, which grows into a tree (see *Lk* 13:18-19); about the field, where both wheat and tares grow together until the time of the harvest (see *Mt* 13:24-30); about the treasure hidden in a field; about the pearl of great price; and about the fishing net (see *Mt* 13:44-47).
- 279 Christ builds his Church through the words of his preaching and by the witness of his life, which culminates in his death upon the Cross and his Resurrection. “You stretched out your hands upon the Cross, and gathered all the nations to yourself. You showed them to be one Church that praises you, those on earth singing in harmony with those in heaven.”²²⁹ Christ called the twelve apostles for ministry in the Church; this number corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel. Christ entrusts the Church to the apostles of this new People of God: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (*Mt* 28:19-20). Fulfilling the word of the divine Saviour, the apostles went forth into the world, “like arrows shot from a divine bow into the entire world.”²³⁰
- 280 God’s plan with respect to the Church is to unite all humankind into one: “When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, he parted the nations. When he divided the tongues of fire, he called all to unity; thus with one voice we glorify the all-Holy Spirit.”²³¹ What was scattered and alienated (the tower of Babel), is brought together and united by Christ when he bestows the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). Patriarch Josyf Slipyj understood this unity as a communion of self-governing (in Latin, *sui iuris*; in Ukrainian, *pomisni*) Churches: “By his coming Christ fashioned from humankind a family of God, a People of

²²⁹ *Octoechos*, Tone 4, Sunday, Matins, Canon, Ode 8.

²³⁰ See *Octoechos*, Tone 3, Thursday, Matins, Sessional Hymn after the Third Stasis.

²³¹ *Floral Triodion*, Pentecost, Kontakion.

God, which consists of many nations, self-governing Churches, which are also small families of Christ within a great unified community.”²³²

- 281 In the New Testament, the Old Testament People of God are given the Greek name *ecclesia*, which means an assembly of those who have been called out. The Church manifests herself in the *assembly* of the Divine Liturgy, a prefigurement of the future gathering of all nations, which Jesus Christ will fulfil in his second and glorious coming (see *Mt* 25:31f). The place where the faithful gather for liturgical services is the church building (*temple* or *house of God*). The Church-temple becomes the central, unifying, and community-creating factor of generational, racial, and social rapprochement. It becomes a catalyst for people to know each other and to cooperate.²³³
- 282 The apostle Paul calls the Church the “Body of Christ.” The Head of the Body is Christ himself, and we are his members (see *Rom* 12:3-6; *1 Cor* 12:12-30; *Eph* 1:22-23; 4:11-13). At the Mystical Supper [Last Supper] Christ gives his Body in the Eucharist. By partaking of Communion of this Body we become the Body of Christ. As there is only one God and one Intercessor between God and the human race, Jesus Christ, so also there is only one faith, one Baptism and one Church—beyond which there is no salvation. However, the ways and means by which God saves humankind through the Church always remain a mystery of God’s mercy.

2. The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

- 283 The Holy Fathers, in unified conciliar fashion, summarized the most distinctive signs of the Church of Christ in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith.²³⁴ Relying on other professions of faith used from apostolic times, they referred to Christ’s Church as being “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” These four signs of the Church become manifest in the light of faith, to be revealed in full glory at the second coming of Christ.

²³² PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Соборне Різдвяне послання* [Christmas Pastoral Letter] (December 9, 1974).

²³³ See METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирський лист до вірних Львівської та Кам’янецької єпархій *О Церкві* [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Lviv and Kamyanets Eparchy – *On the Church*] (January 14, 1901).

²³⁴ COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE I, *Symbol of Faith*.

a. The Church is One

- 284 The Church of Christ is one, for God is one: there is “one God and Father of all” (*Eph* 4:6); and one is Jesus Christ, the Builder of the Church. As we read in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church.” Built by Christ and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, the Church is “the mystery of indivisible unity, in the image of the Most Holy Trinity.”²³⁵ The unity of the Church is founded on the one common faith in the Most Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and in one baptism: “one faith, one baptism” (*Eph* 4:5). By one faith and one baptism, those who have believed become members of the one Body of Christ: “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (*Rom* 12:5). The one Church is the prefigurement of a unified People of God, which will become perfectly manifest in the kingdom of God.
- 285 The Mystery of God’s Life, “the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations” (*Col* 1:26), was revealed to humankind in the Incarnate Word of God. In the same way, the Church of Christ, the mystical Body of Christ, becomes visibly manifest in self-governing Churches. It is in these, and formed out of them, that the one and unique Catholic Church exists.²³⁶
- 286 Each local Church manifests the unity of the Church in the hierarchical ordering of various ministries around the bishop. These ministries are presbyteral and diaconal, monastic and lay. By virtue of these ministries, which belong to *various members* of the one Body of Christ, “the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (*Eph* 4:16). In his ministry, the bishop discerns the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the faithful, and calls them to various ministries within the Church.
- 287 The unity of faith among self-governing Churches is made manifest in the common profession of the doctrinal teaching of the Ecumenical Councils. The one faith of the Church, the Body of Christ, is the source from which flows the common participation of the faithful in the Holy Mysteries. This happens especially in the Eucharist, when the faithful, partaking of the Body and Blood of the Lord in Holy Communion, themselves become one body: “Our way of thinking is attuned to the

²³⁵ CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *Letters*, 69. 6.

²³⁶ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 23.

Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking.”²³⁷ For every self-governing Church, the standard for orthodox teaching (“rule of faith”) is Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, with the ministry of the Bishop of Rome serving to guarantee the preservation of orthodox teaching, and fidelity to it.²³⁸

b. The Church is Holy

- 288 In Holy Scripture, the Lord God refers to himself as the Holy One: “For I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst” (*Hos* 11:9). This God calls humankind to become like him in holiness: “For I am the LORD your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy” (*Lev* 11:44). God’s holiness is the source of holiness for the Church.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish (*Eph* 5:25-27).

The Church affirms this holiness liturgically, inviting the faithful to approach Communion with the words: “The holy Things for the holy.”

- 289 The Church is where we are to grow in the holiness that is granted by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us on the path of holiness, offering the grace of repentance and divinization in the Holy Mysteries of the Church. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the truth that “the Church, embracing in her bosom sinners, [is] at the same time holy and always in need of being purified.”²³⁹ Those who enter the Church through the *doors of repentance*, pass through the *doors of Paradise* into God’s sanctification and blessing. The greatest miracle that takes place in the Holy Church is the transfiguration of a sinner into a saint. As members of the Church grow in holiness, the Lord transforms all creation, liberating it from the dominion of “this world” and its forces, and directing it towards the fullness of the “new earth” (see *Rev* 21:1).

c. The Church is Catholic

- 290 The Church reveals that she is catholic (from the Greek *katholike*, meaning *according to the whole or fullness*) when she gathers the com-

²³⁷ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18, 5: PG 7, 1028.

²³⁸ See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 3, 2: PG 7, 848-849.

²³⁹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 8.

munity of faithful around the Eucharistic table. The assembled community of the Church creates the Eucharist, and the Eucharist creates the Church. This happens in the communion of the faithful with Christ and of the faithful with each other: “And what do they become who partake of it? The Body of Christ: not many bodies, but one body. For as the bread consisting of many grains is made one ... so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ.”²⁴⁰ The Eucharistic gathering is presided over by the bishop—the “vicar of Christ.”²⁴¹ He is the *presider* (the one who stands in the first place) in as much as he *stands before* God and heads the liturgical gathering. At the same time, he is also the *icon of God* for the community.²⁴² His *primacy* in the community gathered at the Eucharistic *agape*, that is, the “feast of love,” is a *primacy in love*. Since the bishop presides at the Eucharist, which is realized in a specific local community, he heads the local Church (eparchy): “Let no one do anything connected with the Church without the bishop.”²⁴³ The bishop is the head of the eparchy as Christ is the Head of the Church. The bishop’s title identifies the city of the episcopal throne, which is the place where he actualizes the celebration of the Eucharist.

- 291 In the Eucharist celebrated by the bishop, as well as through a common faith, every local Church enters into communion with other local Churches. Local Churches in communion with one another form a self-governing Church, headed by *one who presides*: a bishop, archbishop, metropolitan, or patriarch. The first among self-governing Churches is the Church of Rome, because its presider is the Pope of Rome, the successor of the apostle Peter. He is the teacher and the standard of the apostolic faith; to him the Lord has granted the gift of infallibility in matters of faith and morals [when proclaimed *ex cathedra*], in order to preserve the purity and immutability of divine teaching. As the apostle Peter manifested his love for Christ *more* than others, and received from Christ the mandate to shepherd his flock (see *Jn* 21:15-18), so the Roman See of Peter “presides in love”²⁴⁴ and maintains a primacy (in Latin, *primatus*)

²⁴⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homily on 1 Corinthians*, 24, 4: PG 61, 203.

²⁴¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 27.

²⁴² See IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8,2-9,1: PG 5, 713.

²⁴³ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8, 1: PG 5, 713.

²⁴⁴ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1, 1: PG 5, 688.

among self-governing Churches.²⁴⁵ This primacy is fulfilled through the Petrine ministry of the Bishop of Rome. Our Church professes the Pope's ministry by titling him "the most holy universal Pontiff."

- 292 The communion of self-governing Churches creates the catholicity (*sobornist*) of the Church. The highest manifestation of the catholicity of the Church is the Ecumenical Council. "The Council reveals itself to be the assembly of the chief shepherds of the Church of Christ, who give witness to the faith and life of the Churches entrusted to their pastoral and teaching ministry."²⁴⁶
- 293 Christ entrusts the ministry of serving the catholicity (*sobornist*) of the Church to the apostle Peter: "I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (*Lk* 22:32). The Bishop of Rome, the bearer of the Petrine ministry, convenes Ecumenical Councils, approves their decisions, stands behind and expresses the infallible faith-teaching of the Church, and resolves difficulties that arise in the life of various self-governing Churches. The ministry of the Roman Pontiff is a testimony to the "deepest apostolic past."²⁴⁷ His ministry is to "strengthen the brethren" in common faith (see *Lk* 22:31-42), to be a "rock" (see *Mt* 16:18), and "shepherd" (see *Jn* 21:15-18). "To [the Roman Pontiff] was committed in the person of blessed Peter the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole church, as was established at ecumenical councils and in the sacred canons."²⁴⁸

d. The Church is Apostolic

- 294 Christ called twelve apostles (meaning *those who are sent*). Upon them he founded the Church and sent them into the world to preach the Gospel: "He called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be

²⁴⁵ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 13; also, *ibid.*, 18: "in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, he placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion [See VATICAN COUNCIL I, Session IV, Const. Dogm. *Pastor aeternus* (July 18, 1870), *H. Denziger*, 3059ff]. This teaching concerning the "institution, perpetuity, and nature of the Sacred Apostolic Primacy, in which the strength and solidarity of the whole Church consist, [is] to be believed and held by all the faithful."

²⁴⁶ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Завіщення* [Testament] (December 22, 1981).

²⁴⁷ See ДМУТРО ТУПТАЛО, *Життя Святих. Місяця жовтня в 11 день. Спомин VII Вселенського Собору* [Lives of the Saints, October 11, Commemoration of the VII Ecumenical Council] (translated from Ukrainian).

²⁴⁸ COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, Bull *Laetentur caeli* [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439).

with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message” (*Mk* 3:13-14). The apostolic ministry continues in the ministry of the Church hierarchy and in the apostolate (mission) of all the faithful. “The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith ... [and] carefully preserves it ... proclaiming and teaching them ... with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth.”²⁴⁹ For this reason, in the Symbol of Faith we profess the Church of Christ to be *apostolic*. The apostolicity of the Church is realized in the ministry of bishops, priests, deacons, monastics, and laity, who work together for the sake of salvation of the whole world.

- 295 In the Church, the successors of the apostles are the *bishops*. Through them is handed on the apostolic inheritance—saving grace and the true faith. It is accomplished through the hierarchical imposition of hands (in Greek, *cheirotonia*). “The apostles ... according to the successions of the bishops ... have handed down the Church.”²⁵⁰ The bishops are called to teach, to sanctify, and to shepherd. “We are the successors of the apostles, and we govern the Church with the same authority with which they governed.”²⁵¹
- 296 The bishop, who *presides in love*, ordains for ministry his assistants—the priests (presbyters). “Between presbyters and bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of teachers and presiders in the Church; and what [the apostle Paul] has said concerning bishops is applicable to presbyters.”²⁵² The apostolic role of the priest consists in acting as the head of the Eucharistic community on behalf of the bishop, expressing communion with the bishop by commemorating his name, and ministering for the sanctification and salvation of the people of God entrusted to him.
- 297 The apostolic role of deacons consists of taking care of the daily needs of church communities (see *Acts* 6:3): “Strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests they serve in the diaconate [ministry] of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God.”²⁵³

²⁴⁹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, I, 10, 1-2: PG 7, 549-552.

²⁵⁰ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 33, 8: PG 7, 1077.

²⁵¹ CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *Letters*, 4, 6.

²⁵² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Timothy*, 11, 1: PG 62, 553.

²⁵³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 29.

- 298 The apostolic role of monastics is the sanctification of the world by means of prayer: "The monk is the one who is innocent of the world and converses continually with God alone; who sees God and is seen by him, loves him and is loved by him, and becomes light, because the monk is enlightened in an ineffable manner."²⁵⁴ Monastics unite their prayer with the many-faceted works of the apostolate, going out to meet the needs of the Church. The spiritual life is the source from which "arises their duty of working to implant and strengthen the kingdom of Christ in souls and to extend that kingdom to every clime [i.e., place]. This duty is to be undertaken to the extent of their capacities and in keeping with the proper type of their own vocation. This can be realized through prayer or active works of the apostolate."²⁵⁵
- 299 The apostolic role of the laity consists in bringing the Church into all aspects of social life: "The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They ... work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven."²⁵⁶ In the sanctification of the world, the laity is called to cooperate closely with the hierarchy. Saint John Chrysostom calls upon his faithful to share in his ministry: "Do not then cast all [the burden] on your teachers; do not [cast] all upon those who preside over you."²⁵⁷
- 300 The apostolic nature of a Church is manifested also in its missionary service to "all nations," to fashion from them one People of God. For this the Church evangelizes the cultures of nations, incarnating in them the Good News of Christ and transfiguring them by the Holy Spirit. The Church does this in order to graft within them the awareness of catholicity. The apostolicity of the Church has borne fruit:

By divine Providence it has come about that various churches, established in various places by the apostles and their successors, have in the course of time coalesced into several groups, organically united, which, preserving the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the universal Church, enjoy their own discipline, their own liturgical usage, and their own theological and spiritual heritage. Some of these churches, notably the ancient

²⁵⁴ SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, *Divine Hymns*, 3.

²⁵⁵ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 44.

²⁵⁶ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 31.

²⁵⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 30, 4: PG 63, 428.

patriarchal churches, as parent-stocks of the Faith, so to speak, have begotten others as daughter churches.²⁵⁸

Eparchies, presided over by bishops, were united into Metropolitanates; and Metropolitanates into Patriarchates. The Universal (Catholic) Church will continue to grow to the fullness of Christ, “always, to the end of the age” (*Mt* 28:20).

3. Self-Governing Nature of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and her Communion with other Self-Governing Churches

a. Development of Self-Governance in the Church

- 301 The Son of God took on human flesh in a specific historical time and a concrete place. He was a son of the Jewish nation, accepting their customs, culture, and mentality. Similarly, the Gospel of Christ—the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow—is “clothed” in the preaching of the Church with the mentality and culture of various nations. In this way, distinctive church traditions are formed, and self-governing Churches are born and grow. “Moreover, within the Church particular Churches hold a rightful place; these Churches retain their own traditions.”²⁵⁹
- 302 Patriarch Josyf Slipyj describes the particular nature of the self-governing UGCC in the following way: “The Particularity (in Ukrainian, *pomisnist*) of our Church lies in her unity with the past; her unity as a Church in both Ukraine and the diaspora; the oneness of mind with her Patriarch; and her unity with the Universal Church and her Head, the successor of the holy apostle Peter.”²⁶⁰ In accordance with her particular self-governing nature, our Church possesses a synodal structure. The Synod of Bishops holds the highest legislative and judicial authority in the Church.²⁶¹ It fulfils its ministry to the people of God in matters pertaining to teaching the faith, liturgical life, and pastoral governance. The Synod of Bishops is presided over by the Patriarch, the Head and Father of the self-governing (Particular) Church.

²⁵⁸ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 23.

²⁵⁹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 13.

²⁶⁰ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPIY, *Лист до парохії святих Володимира і Ольги в Чикаго* [Letter to Sts. Volodymyr and Olha Parish in Chicago] (September 27, 1978).

²⁶¹ See *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, canons 102–113.

303 A self-governing (Particular) Church has its own sources of Christian tradition, its own theology, spirituality, and piety (or Christian lifestyle), its own liturgical and canonical heritage; in other words, and its own ways of professing the mysteries of salvation.²⁶² The life of a self-governing Church is crowned by her saints, martyrs, and confessors. A very important sign of a self-governing Church is her missionary orientation, which is made manifest in preaching Christ's Gospel to non-Christians of various nations and cultures. The full stature of the development of a self-governing Church is the Patriarchate: "A Church's patriarchate is the visible sign of the maturity and autonomy of a self-governing Church, and a powerful force in ecclesial and national life."²⁶³

b. Development of Communion among Sister Churches

304 The fullness of Christ's Church operates in every self-governing Church that remains in communion with other self-governing Churches. The visible sign of communion among Churches is the universal Pontiff, the Pope of Rome, whose primacy in love and in teaching ministry belongs to the heritage of faith of all Christianity. Extolling Pope Saint Clement, Metropolitan Ilarion of Kyiv acknowledged him to be "the praise of martyrs, the adornment of hierarchs, and the unshakable foundation of the Church of Christ, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail."²⁶⁴ Communion with the Church of Rome is the sign and condition for belonging to the Universal Church. "For from the coming down of the Incarnate Word among us, all the churches in every part of the world have possessed that greatest church alone as their base and foundation."²⁶⁵

305 "Around the Eucharist and sacred worship, self-governing Churches were formed within the one Church of Christ."²⁶⁶ In every self-governing Church, the mystery of God's love is fulfilled in the ministry of the Eucharist, and on this basis, the custom developed to refer to self-governing Churches as "Sister-Churches."²⁶⁷ Every self-governing Church has the saving faith, an uninterrupted apostolic inheritance, and true Holy Mysteries. Thus, the name "Sister-Church" signifies the

²⁶² See PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Звіт про католицьку Церкву в Україні* [Report on the Catholic Church in Ukraine] (July 18, 1982).

²⁶³ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Завіщання* [Testament] (December 22, 1981).

²⁶⁴ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, *Sermon on the Renewal of the Church of the Tithes*.

²⁶⁵ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Theological and Polemical Treatises*: PG 91, 137-140.

²⁶⁶ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Послання про Євхаристію* [Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist] (August 19, 1976).

²⁶⁷ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Ut unum sint* [That All May be One], 57.

recognition of these attributes in another Church. It also emphasizes the equality of self-governing Churches.

- 306 The communion of Churches has been clouded by the sin of ecclesial divisions. In the history of the Sister-Churches, it became necessary to overcome consequences of human sin and weakness. An example of overcoming such ecclesial division was the communion of Churches achieved at the Council of Florence—and subsequently, on the basis of the Florentine tradition, at the Union of Brest:

“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice” [*Ps* 95[96]:11], for the wall that divided the western and the eastern church has been removed, peace and harmony have returned, since the cornerstone, Christ, who made both one [see *Eph* 2:20; 2:14], has joined both sides with a very strong bond of love and peace, uniting and holding them together in a covenant of everlasting unity.²⁶⁸

The path to renewal of communion among Churches depends upon a renewed awareness of the self-governing Churches that they are Sister-Churches in the bosom of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church: “And now ... the Lord is enabling us to discover ourselves as ‘Sister-Churches’ once more, in spite of the obstacles which were once raised between us.”²⁶⁹

c. Development of Ecclesial Communion within the Kyivan Metropolitanate

- 307 Born in the Baptism of Saint Volodymyr, the Metropolitanate of Kyiv became the Daughter-Church of the Church of Constantinople, and through her remained in communion with the Church of Rome and other self-governing Churches within the Universal Church. Despite the break in communion between the Roman and Constantinopolitan Churches, the Kyivan Metropolitanate remained in communion with both Churches. In 1596, through the Union of Brest, the Kyivan Metropolitanate, faithful to her ancient traditions, reconfirmed her communion with the Church of Rome. Thus, the UGCC is the direct heir of the Kyivan Metropolitanate, in communion with the Church of Rome.
- 308 Christian Churches are aware of the fact that the communion of Churches “is neither absorption nor fusion ... Unity is a meeting in truth and love.”²⁷⁰ This encounter leads to unity in faith and common

²⁶⁸ COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, Bull *Laetentur caeli* [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439).

²⁶⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Ut unum sint* [That All May be One], 57.

²⁷⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* [Apostles to the Slavs], 27.

participation in the Holy Mysteries. Our Church engages in ecumenical activity for the purpose of achieving of such communion among divided Churches, as well as renewing the internal unity of the Kyivan Metropolitanate.

4. The Church—A New Creation

- 309 In his mercy, God the Father consummated the fullness of creation in Jesus Christ, the New Adam. Christ entrusted the sharing of this fullness to the apostles: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (*Mk* 16:15). The Church—the bearer of a new creation—acts “in this world,” even though she herself is not of this world (see *Jn* 17:14-16). She is the sign of “a new heaven and a new earth.” “The establishment of the Church is the same as the creation of a new universe, and as the prophet Isaiah says, a new heaven ... a new earth is created ... and a new humanity is created, renewed according to the Creator’s image.”²⁷¹ The Church refers to these *new people in the image of the Creator* as saints, divinized by the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- 310 In the assembly of all the saints, the first place belongs to the most holy Mother of God. She is the “icon of the Church, the symbol and anticipation of humanity transfigured by grace, the model and the unfailing hope for all those who direct their steps towards the heavenly Jerusalem.”²⁷² Standing together with her before the heavenly throne are “the apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and every righteous soul that finished this life in faith.”²⁷³ They are all living icons of God, witnesses and bearers of the new creation. They stand before God in unceasing prayer; and they are present among us by the grace of God in their relics and icons.

a. Devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God

- 311 In unified conciliar fashion, the Church professes Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the *God-bearing One* (Ukrainian: *Bohordytsia*) or *Mother of God* and Ever-Virgin; and the Church venerates her in the feasts of the liturgical year and in icons. At Marian feasts, the Church prayerfully commemorates the saving events of the life of

²⁷¹ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, 13: PG 44, 1049-1052.

²⁷² JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen* [Light of the East], 6.

²⁷³ See *Liturgicon*, Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

the Mother of God: the Conception by Saint Anne,²⁷⁴ the Mother of God's Nativity, her Entrance into the Temple, the Annunciation, the Encounter in the Temple, and her Dormition. The Church sees in her the perfect model for our growth in holiness.

- 312 The Icon of the Sign portrays Christ in the womb of the Virgin, a sign, foretold by the prophet Isaiah (see *Is* 7:14). The icon *Hodegetria* (from the Greek, meaning *the one who shows the way*) portrays the Mother of God who points to Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6). The icon of *Tenderness* (Tender-Emotion) portrays the intimate communion of Mother and Son. The icon of the *Mother of God of Perpetual Help* presents the Divine Child contemplating his future Passion and emphasizes the co-suffering of the Mother of God in the Passion of her Son. The icon called *Oranta* (from the Latin, meaning *she who prays*) portrays the most holy Mother of God with arms uplifted in prayer, interceding for the human race before the heavenly Father.
- 313 With boldness, the Church addresses the Mother of God, the first to be divinized by grace, with the words, "Most holy Mother of God, save us." The Church does so with the understanding that it is God's grace that saves and acts in her. Her peaceful death, tranquil as sleep in the fullness of grace, became an awakening into heaven itself; it is appropriately called the Dormition (Falling-Asleep). The Dormition of the Mother of God is portrayed on the icon of the feast as a *birth* into heaven: Christ holds in his arms the soul of Mary, wrapped in swaddling clothes. In the celebration of the Dormition, the Church professes that in her death the Mother of God did not undergo bodily corruption, but has been "translated from earth to heaven,"²⁷⁵ "raised body and soul into heavenly glory by the Lord."²⁷⁶ From among the human race, the Mother of God was the first to be glorified in her body. This is an image of our own resurrection as well. The Mother of God, being the Mother of Life, was transferred to Life; and "in her Dormition she did

²⁷⁴ With the decree *Ineffabilis Deus* [Ineffable God] (December 8, 1854), Pope Pius IX promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the most-pure Virgin Mary. "The most blessed Virgin Mary was from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin." (Denziger 2803; also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 491).

²⁷⁵ *Menaion*, Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28), Vespers, Stichera at Psalm 140.

²⁷⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 966; see also 974. With the Apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* [Most-Bountiful God] (November 1, 1950) Pope Pius XII promulgated the dogma stating that "the Immaculate Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

not abandon the world.”²⁷⁷ Her constant intercession before the Creator is celebrated by the Church in the feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God [October 1/14]: “Today the Virgin stands before us in the church, and together with the choirs of saints invisibly prays to God for us.”²⁷⁸

b. Veneration of the Most Holy Mother of God in the Kyivan Tradition

- 314 Devotion to the Mother of God has deep roots in the Kyivan tradition. Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise consecrated Rus-Ukraine to the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God. Many churches were built and many icons written in her honour. The most famous icons of the Kyivan princely period, written in the Byzantine tradition, are the following: the Vyshhorod Icon (today known as the Vladimir Icon), and the Belz Icon (known today as the Częstochowa Icon). From this tradition, the unique form of Ukrainian iconography developed. The facial characteristics of the Mother of God on Ukrainian icons are kind and gentle; her gaze is warm and heartfelt.
- 315 Devotion to the Mother of God spread widely, especially after the miraculous lifting of the Turkish siege of the monastery in Pochaiv. This miracle was attributed to the icon of the Mother of God, today preserved in the church of the Pochaiv monastery. Additional sites of pilgrimage to miraculous Marian icons are: Zarvanytsya, Univ, Hoshiv, Stradch, Zhyrovynsi, Yaroslav, Kholm, Mariapoch, and many others. Particular reliance upon the protection and assistance of the Mother of God has become a devotional tradition among the Ukrainian people.

c. Saints of Christ's Church

- 316 Holiness is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Through this gift, as we become Christ-like we become children of our heavenly Father. The Lord, who alone is holy, grants his own holiness to humankind and comes to dwell within: “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (*Jn* 14:23). Christian holiness is the manifestation of humankind’s divinization. “All you saints who rejoice with a splendour that surpasses every

²⁷⁷ *Menaion*, Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28), Vespers, Troparion.

²⁷⁸ *Menaion*, Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God (October 1/14), Kontakion.

spirit, the psalmist calls you gods because you dwell close to God and receive the deifying rays from his light.”²⁷⁹

- 317 In Christianity, holiness is connected with witnessing to the faith, often expressed through martyrdom. The word *martyr* (from the Greek, *martyrs*, meaning *witness*) emphasizes not so much the fact of suffering as testifying to Christ. “The choirs of saints have shown youthfulness and fortitude in suffering. They have accepted painful wounds for the sake of incorruptible crowns of glory and beauty.”²⁸⁰
- 318 The Church also recognizes as saints the faithful who have chosen the way of ascetical struggle. They are called *venerable ones* (in Slavonic *pre-podobni*, meaning *most like*) for in their ascetical way of life they have obtained the gift of God’s likeness, having made the journey from the “image” to the “likeness” of God: “All you venerable ones, who lived in holiness, you vanquished the demons; and extinguishing torments of conscience, you valiantly endured the burning of the passions.”²⁸¹
- 319 The Church sings the praises of the struggles of the holy hierarchs—the bishops—who by the ministry of the Word and the celebration of the Holy Mysteries strengthened and nurtured the Church of Christ: “Taught by the word of God, the holy hierarchs became divine mouthpieces.”²⁸² The struggle of *confessors* is the fight for truth and its defence against various heresies, as well as the courageous profession of faith in Christ in times of persecution. Yet another manifestation of holiness recognized by the Church is selfless social service to the disadvantaged and the infirm. Thus the Church also venerates *unmercenary wonderworkers*, selfless physicians who took no money.
- 320 At the head of the choir of saints is the most holy Mother of God: “More honourable than the cherubim and by far more glorious than the seraphim.” Together with her the Church venerates the apostles of Christ, the evangelists and preachers—those who have proclaimed the Gospel. The Church also venerates the Old Testament righteous ones—the patriarchs and prophets—as well as the invisible world—angels and archangels. This is because the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit embraces the entire history of salvation.
- 321 The struggles of the Church’s saints are described in the texts of the lives of the saints as *word-icons* of these holy people, written in the light

²⁷⁹ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of All Saints, Matins, Canon, Ode 8.

²⁸⁰ *Octoechos*, Tone 7, Saturday, Matins, Canon for the Departed, Ode 3.

²⁸¹ *Octoechos*, Tone 6, Saturday, Vespers, Stichera at Psalm 140.

²⁸² *Octoechos*, Tone 1, Saturday, Matins, Canon for the Saints, Ode 4.

of divinization by grace. The hagiography of a saint, just as the content of his or her icon, consists not so much in presenting a biography as in portraying his or her spiritual qualities. The fullness of a saint's spiritual life is described in hagiographies as the achievement of the communion with God. This communion is attained by living a life of profound prayer, love of neighbour, and harmony with the surrounding world.

d. New Ukrainian Martyrs and Confessors of Faith

- 322 With a history of more than a thousand years, the Kyivan Church glories in a vast assembly of saints. In the words of Patriarch Josyf, “the Ukrainian Church’s witness of faith in Christ and his one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, was confirmed by the bloodied seal of a fearless profession, and suffering; by martyrdom and the mountains [of bodies] of our sacrificed people.”²⁸³ Truly, the “blood of martyrs,” known and unknown, became the “seed of the Church.”²⁸⁴
- 323 Among the martyrs of our Church, a special place of honour is given to the hieromartyr Josaphat, Archbishop of Polotsk, who suffered for the unity of Christ’s Church in the time of the Union of Brest. His personage as a passion-bearer is an example of self-sacrifice for the sake of reconciliation. Like Saints Borys and Hlib, he preferred to sacrifice his own life than to see the shedding of his brothers’ blood.
- 324 The martyrdom of the Church continued in the following centuries. In 1709, the Basilian monks of Polotsk embraced a martyr’s death at the hands of the Russian Tsar, Peter I; and in 1768 the 68 martyrs of Berdychiv died for their faith. In the nineteenth century, two great waves of persecution took place, in 1839 and in 1875. This martyrdom was crowned by the glorification of the Pratulyn martyrs—simple villagers, who stood faithfully by their home church in Pratulyn (and in the vicinity of Kholm) to their death, killed by the bullets fired by tsarist police. Great was also the martyrdom of the Church in the twentieth century during the reign of the atheistic regime. In 1946, when the activity of the UGCC was prohibited, churches were expropriated, possessions confiscated, and persecution of the faithful began. All the bishops of the UGCC in Ukraine were arrested. Many priests, monks, nuns, and laity were murdered, while others were imprisoned and sent into exile.

²⁸³ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYJ, *Завіщання* [Testament] (December 22, 1981).

²⁸⁴ TERTULLIAN, *Apologia*, 50: PL 1, 535.

- 325 Many faithful continued to witness to their faith in the underground Church gathering for divine services in private homes. They received the Holy Mysteries secretly, and listened to broadcasts of the Divine Liturgy on Vatican Radio. The Communist authorities constantly persecuted the underground Church: priests were imprisoned, and many laypersons were expelled from educational institutions or their jobs. This heroic period of martyrdom lasted from 1946 to 1989. Among the confessors of the faith who experienced imprisonment and exile in the twentieth century were the heads of the UGCC, the Venerable Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky (1865-1944) and Patriarch Josyf Slipyj (1892-1984). Several martyrs and religious were also numbered among the choir of the blessed—bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and one layperson—by Saint Pope John Paul II during his pilgrimage to Ukraine, June 23-27, 2001. They are the new and venerable martyrs (*prepodobnomuchenky*) of the UGCC of the twentieth century.
- 326 Copiously bedewed with the blood of many martyrs, the Church in our time reaps the grace-filled fruits of the holiness of her children. Martyrs and confessors are those who, for the sake of the glory of the age to come, sacrificed themselves in this present age. Their contribution to the future of the Church is beyond measure, because it is the gift of one's entire life, "even to death upon the cross."

May the supplications of the ancient righteous ones of the land of Ukraine and the sufferings of our confessors of the holy Gospel rise as fragrant incense before the throne of the Most High; for it is by their sacrifices that the Church of Christ is regenerated and strengthened in the midst of our people.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ *Floral Triodion*, Sunday of All Saints of Rus-Ukraine, Vespers, Stichera at Lytia.

Part Two

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- 327 Part Two of the Catechism presents the liturgical life of the Church, that is, the Church's prayerful gathering in Christ. This gathering, or assembly, takes place in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to give praise and thanksgiving to the Father. This assembly constitutes a communication of God with his people. Here the Lord continues to speak and here he renews his salvific deeds for his people. At the same time, it is also the response of the Church to all the Lord's deeds and words revealed in the history of salvation, and recognized and received by the Church in faith.
- 328 Chapter One, "The Prayer of the Ecclesial Community," describes the following aspects of the Church's liturgical life: the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as various consecrations and blessings. Liturgical services accompany each Christian from birth to death. With the light of Divine Grace they permeate every daily need, both material and spiritual. Through visible, earthly services—inseparably bound to the invisible and heavenly—the community of the faithful enters into communion with God and shows itself to be a single family of God, "with one heart and one voice."
- 329 Chapter Two, "The Time and Space of the Church's Prayer," explains how the prayer of the Church, closely bound to the rhythms of nature, fills the daily, weekly, and yearly cycles with celebration of the feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God, as well as memorials of the saints. As they pray, God enters into the *time* of people's lives. He places them within salvation history, the heart of which is the mystery of Christ's Pascha. The church building, sacred places, and the homes of Christians are the *space* designated for the prayer of the Church community. The furnishings of the church, iconography, church vessels, liturgical chant, and the domestic icon-corner—all of these are arranged so as to reveal the presence and the acts of God among his people. Within this sacred time and space Christians offer God spiritual sacrifice.
- 330 Chapter Three, "The Personal Prayer of the Christian," explains the place of the Christian's prayer within the prayer of the Church as a whole. Every Christian, as he or she takes part in the prayer of the Church community, also fills his or her everyday life with personal prayer. Precisely in this way is revealed our complete and committed response to the Father's call to be his sons and daughters. The Holy Spirit inspires Christian prayer. The Spirit unites those in prayer with Christ, and unites all personal prayer into a single voice of the Church.

I. WE ARE CREATED FOR INTIMACY AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

- 331 God created human beings in his image and likeness. He thus called them to enter into communion with him. The Lord revealed to his people his desire to communicate with them, and his desire is to hear them respond to his Word. He longs for his people to come to know him in love; he wants to fill them with his love.
- 332 The entire Old Covenant is the expression of God's desire to raise human beings to intimacy with him. The Old Testament law and commandments, the temple and sacrifices, the holy days—all these had as their goal the creation of appropriate conditions for human intimacy with God.
- 333 In the New Covenant, God makes humankind worthy to enter into full communion with himself. This is accomplished through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the New Covenant was realized in Christ, the incarnate Son of God. Christ inseparably united in himself the life of God and the life of humankind. Our life in Christ—our prayer—is the deepening of this gift of communion.
- 334 Humankind grows in communion with God within the community of the faithful, the Church. The Church is Christ's Body. Thus, the fullest expression of prayer is ecclesial, liturgical prayer, that is, Divine Services. In these Services, we are united to God and one another, and "with one heart and one voice" form the family of God.

A. The Trinitarian Character of Divine Services

- 335 The prayer of the Church is commonly directed *to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit*. "To the Father through the Son" because no one can come to the Father except through the Son; "in the Holy Spirit" because the Spirit prays within us "with sighs too deep for words" (see *Rom* 8:26). By the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church's prayer rises to the Father through the Son. Every time that we invoke the name of the Most Holy Trinity at the start of our prayers or daily affairs, we confess our oneness with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and fill our whole life with the light of the Most Holy Trinity.

B. The Ecclesial Character of the Divine Services

- 336 Christ taught his disciples to turn to God together as a community of God's children with the words: "Our Father..." (see *Mt* 6:9ff). The

prayers of Divine Services rise from the entire community of the faithful. The prayer of the Church as the Body of Christ unites all the faithful; the Church on earth is united with the heavenly Church through prayers to the saints and veneration of their icons.

- 337 The liturgical community is richly endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Because of these gifts, each of the faithful is an active participant in the Divine Services. All gifts and all ministries are intertwined and complement each other, so that all are directed to the growth of the entire community as a single body.

C. The Eschatological Character of Divine Services

- 338 The Liturgy of the Church's divine services reveals the kingdom of God which is already among us (see *Lk* 17:21), and which at the same time is yet to come. Indeed, we pray "Thy kingdom come..." Divine Services unite in themselves the already accomplished fullness of the kingdom and the expectation of its manifestation in the "age to come." The ecclesial community *already* finds itself in the fullness of God's presence. At the same time, aware of its limitations and weaknesses, it invokes the Lord: "Have mercy on us," and "Save us."
- 339 In this unceasing growth (of the experience of God's presence) the divine *already* overpowers the human *not yet*. This is evident, for example, in the Liturgy. The Eucharistic Prayer actually memorializes the second and glorious coming as something that has already happened. This is also what we see on the icon of *The Saviour in Glory*. The splendour of liturgical vestments, rites, and vessels already points to the experience of heavenly glory, reflecting "heaven on earth" and the "angelic, heavenly Liturgy."
- 340 The nave of the church (the "temple of the faithful") is the image of the fullness of the Christian community as the Body of Christ. Thus, the faithful are oriented in expectation towards the sanctuary. This area around the Holy Table represents the fullness of the kingdom of God—"what no eye has seen" (see 1 *Cor* 2:9). The iconostasis of the church reveals this fullness and at the same time indicates that we must continue journeying to the kingdom.

D. The Cosmic Character of Divine Services

- 341 "In many and various ways" (*Heb* 1:1) the unseen God revealed himself to humankind through the words of divinely chosen persons—and through creation. "In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (*Heb*

1:2), who is his incarnate Word. As for creation, the world was created good (see *Gn* 1:1), and therefore is a means of our communication with God. However, this world needs the human person as it eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God (see *Rom* 8:19, 22), through whom all creation is able to fulfil completely its purpose.

- 342 Christ himself shows that the created world is a means through which God acts: he cures the man born blind by applying a mud paste to his eyes; he heals the hemorrhaging woman who touched the fringe of his cloak, and in the Transfiguration his clothes shine with divine light (see *Mt* 17:2). All that Christ did during his lifetime he continues to do through the Divine Services of his Church and through the Holy Mysteries.²⁸⁶ Therefore, the Church, through her Divine Services during the Mysteries and on holy days, blesses and sanctifies various material objects through which she witnesses to Christ's presence and salvific action.

II. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

A. The Divine Liturgy—the Foundation and Summit of the Christian Community's Life

- 343 "Do this in memory of me; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death and confess my Resurrection."²⁸⁷ In Christ, human nature partakes of the divine nature (see 2 *Pt* 1:4). Christ grants to everyone who believes in him communion in divine life. Christ accomplished this mystery of Communion at the Mystical Supper, manifested it in his Paschal Mystery, and continues to actualize it in the Divine Services of the Church "now and for ever and ever."
- 344 The summit of the Church's liturgical life is the Divine Liturgy (from the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning *a common work*). It is the service of God to his people and of God's people to him. In the Divine Liturgy the Father leads us into the fullness of his life by giving us his Son. The Son then gives himself to us as nourishment, in the banquet of the Word, and in the banquet of the Body and Blood. He does so in order that we might become *one body and blood* with him²⁸⁸ and partake of his Divinity. Receiving Christ's gift in the Holy Spirit, the Church responds to him by offering herself. She does so in order that he might live and act

²⁸⁶ See LEO THE GREAT, *Homily* 74, 2: PL 54, 398.

²⁸⁷ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, The Anaphora.

²⁸⁸ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Mystagogical Lectures*, 4, 1; 4, 3: PG 33, 1097-1100.

in her as in his Body. And so, Christ, the head of the Church, together with the Church, which is his Body, brings to the Father in the Holy Spirit praise and thanksgiving for the salvation that has already been accomplished.

- 345 The Divine Liturgy consists of (a) the *Proskomide* (from the Greek, meaning *offering*) or *Prothesis* (from the Greek, meaning *setting forth*), that is, the preparation of the gifts; (b) the Liturgy of the Word; and (c) the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the Divine Liturgy the mystery of salvation is accomplished. This salvation is the bringing together of God and humankind in Christ (see *Eph* 1:10), the “building up of the body of Christ” (*Eph* 4:12). Just as at the Mystical Supper [Last Supper] Christ first taught the apostles by his word and then led them into the mystery of his Body and Blood, so in the Divine Liturgy Christ teaches the community of the faithful, nourishes it by his Word, and then makes its members partakers of the Eucharistic banquet. The Christian enters into this mystery through listening to the Word of God and partaking of the Lord’s Body and Blood.

1. Preparation for the Divine Liturgy

- 346 Before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the clergy recite the entrance prayers and put on the liturgical vestments. In the prayers before the iconostasis, they pray for the forgiveness of their faults. Aware of their human frailty, they beseech the Lord, by the prayers of the Mother of God, to strengthen them for this service.
- 347 The meaning and symbolism of all the liturgical vestments are well illustrated by the prayer for putting on the sticharion: “He has placed on me, as a bridegroom, a crown; he has adorned me, as a bride, with jewels.” At the Liturgy, the priest represents Christ the Bridegroom before the community and also the Church as the Bride before God.

a. The Proskomide (Prothesis)

- 348 Vested in the liturgical vestments, the priest begins the celebration of the Proskomide. The Proskomide leads the faithful into the Divine Liturgy. The Proskomide takes its name from the ancient custom of the faithful bringing various gifts for the Liturgy. Bread and wine were used for the Eucharist, while other gifts were applied to the needs of those in want, and for the clergy. In this way, the Eucharistic assembly of the faithful also had a social dimension—the mutual exchange of gifts (see

Acts 3-4). This is why the Lord's Supper was also called the Supper of Love (in Greek, meaning *agape*; see *1 Cor* 11).

- 349 The basic action of the Proskomide is preparation of the bread and wine, as these are the things used by Christ at the Mystical Supper. Bread and wine are God's gifts and also the result of the work of human hands. In the Old Testament, bread signified that which was most indispensable for the maintenance of life, while wine signified festivity, the rejoicing of the soul before God. Bread and wine were the basis of the banquet at which Divine Wisdom offered herself as food to the faithful (see *Prv* 9:5; *Sir* 24). In the New Testament at the Mystical Supper, Christ offered bread and wine as the gift of himself for the life of the world. In response, we bring bread and wine as a sign of the gift of our life to Christ.
- 350 The Proskomide is performed with loaves specially prepared for the Eucharist, the *prosphora* (from the Greek, meaning *offering*). From the first prosphoron the priest cuts out the Lamb and places it on the diskos. The cutting out of the Lamb is accompanied by the words from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the lamb led to slaughter (see *Is* 53:7). Christ is the Paschal Lamb who takes upon himself the sin of the world (see *Jn* 1:29). On the Lamb cut from the prosphoron there is an impressed seal with the words IC XC NIKA (Greek for 'Jesus Christ conquers'). These words foreshadow the fullness of the "age to come," about which Saint Paul wrote: "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all" (*1 Cor* 15:28). The wine and water poured into the chalice symbolize the blood and water that issued from the side of Christ when it was pierced with a lance (see *Jn* 19:34). Saint John Chrysostom teaches: "...there was a symbol of baptism and the [Eucharistic] mysteries in that blood and water. It is from both of these that the Church is sprung ... It is from his side, therefore, that Christ formed his Church, just as he formed Eve from the side of Adam."²⁸⁹
- 351 The priest places the Lamb in the centre of the diskos to signify that the incarnate, crucified, and risen Christ is the centre of the universe and of history. To the right of the Lamb he places a triangular particle cut out of a prosphoron in honour of the most holy Mother of God, and to the left, nine particles in honour of the angelic hosts and saints. Below the Lamb he places a row of particles as he commemorates various living persons, and lower still, a row for the deceased being commemorated.

²⁸⁹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Baptismal Instructions*, 3, 17: SCh 50, 161.

In other words, the priest mentions by name those for whom the faithful have requested prayer. The placing of the particles around the Lamb on the diskos shows that Christ gathers to himself the whole Church.

- 352 During the covering and censuring of the gifts at the close of the Proskomide, the priest recalls the participation of all creation in Christ's salvation and in the Liturgy: he mentions the incense, the star, the universe, the rivers and the waves of the sea, the heavens, all the earth, and all God's world. All this is an expression of God's beauty and power, it all receives God's blessing, it all sings his praise.

b. The Participation of the Faithful in the Proskomide

- 353 The priest serves the Proskomide in the sanctuary behind the closed Royal Doors. Nevertheless, each member of the faithful also participates in it in a direct way. The faithful take part in the Proskomide by presenting requests for prayers for themselves and for others, and by bringing offerings. Placing of the named particles side by side on the diskos shows that all the faithful belong to the one Body of Christ. Their communion with God and with one another is thus expressed. Each of the faithful is a unique person, whom God knows by name, and at the same time no one is sufficient unto themselves. When we bring and offer to God "all the cares of our life," we transcend our private lives and enter into a new and ecclesial, comprehensive and universal communion. Now the faithful are ready for the *communal work*—the Liturgy.
- 354 Blessing the incense during the Proskomide, the priest says: "Christ, our God, we offer you incense as a pleasing spiritual fragrance. Having received it upon your heavenly altar, send us in return the grace of your most holy Spirit." As it rises to heaven, the smoke of the incense signifies our prayers rising to God, and as it fills the church building it is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is why at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word, the deacon censes the Holy Table and the icons—as well as the faithful, who are the living bearers of God's image (in Greek, *eikon*).

2. The Liturgy of the Word (Liturgy of the Catechumens)

- 355 After his baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus began his preaching, crying out: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (*Mk* 1:15). He preaches the kingdom for three years and brings it to fruition in the Paschal Mystery.

At the Mystical Supper, Christ gave the apostles a share in the kingdom—his divine life—through the Word and the Eucharist.

- 356 This joining of the Word and the Mystery is not a coincidence. As the Mother of God first received the Word into her heart and united herself to him, so also we receive the Word into our hearts and put it into practice when we join ourselves to him in the mystery of Communion: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it” (*Lk* 8:21; see *Mt* 12:50 and *Mk* 3:35). This is why in the Divine Liturgy Christ feeds us first with his Word (in the Epistle, the Gospel, and the homily), and then with his Body and Blood (Communion).
- 357 We approach the Liturgy of the Word not as a simple recollection of Christ’s preaching long ago, but rather as the living Word. Christ continues to preach today, and we not only read this Word but also receive it as nourishment (see *Lk* 24:13-34). Through the proclaimed and preached Word in the liturgical assembly, Christ himself addresses the whole Church community and every member individually.

***a. The Exclamation “Blessed be the Kingdom”
and the Litany of Peace***

- 358 As the public activity of Christ began with the proclamation that God’s kingdom was at hand, so the Liturgy begins with the announcement that the kingdom is present. Signing the Holy Table with the Gospel Book cross-wise, the priest exclaims: “Blessed be the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.” To this the participants at the Liturgy respond: “Amen” (from the Hebrew, meaning *let it be so*). By this response they assert that the kingdom is truly among us and that they long for it to thrive and grow.
- 359 In the Litany of Peace we bring before the Lord the Church’s prayer for the whole world. This is the way the liturgical assembly affirms the manifestation of God’s kingdom. The Church’s prayer for the world is an expression of faith that *all is in the hands of the Lord*. It also expresses our readiness to accept from the Lord whatever answer he might wish to give. The name of the Litany of Peace indicates the need for inner peace and reconciliation with all. The first petition of the Litany indicates that Christ himself is our peace (see *Eph* 2:14) and that it is in him that we pray. The petitions of the Litany of Peace express concern for the good of the Church, of the country in which we live, and of all creation. The Litany of Peace teaches the faithful to place common needs before private ones. The prayer “Lord, have mercy,” repeated by the faithful as the community’s response to the petitions, includes both

the request for God's merciful love and the community's faith that he unfailingly proffers that love.

b. The Antiphons of the Liturgy

- 360 The kingdom of God is the fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. In order to understand more fully and to accept more intensely the kingdom, we recall these prophecies and promises. We sing psalm verses that express them and a refrain that conveys their fulfilment in Christ. In the solemn hymn, "Only-begotten Son," we profess that the fulfilment of all that God promised is to be found in the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery of Christ. By singing the refrains "Through the prayers of the Mother of God..." and "Through the prayers of your saints..." we unite ourselves to those in whom this salvation has already been accomplished. This type of singing of the psalms with a refrain is called *antiphonal* because two alternating choirs (*krylosy* or *scholae*) sing them. In the Divine Liturgy there are three antiphons ending with the Little Entrance. In the prayers between the antiphons we profess God's "love for mankind which is beyond expression" and Christ's promise to "grant the request of two or three who join their voices in [his] name."

c. The Little Entrance, the Troparia, and the Thrice-Holy Hymn

- 361 While in the singing of the antiphons we experience anticipation of the kingdom and our *drawing near* to it, the Little Entrance shows that by following Christ we *already enter* the kingdom; we enter heaven, the fullness of God's life. Thus, we pray: "Grant that as we make our entrance, the holy angels may enter too, serving with us and joining in the praise of Your goodness." By the words "Wisdom! Stand aright!" the deacon calls us to direct our attention to the Word of God. The faithful respond by venerating his Wisdom, which is manifested in the Gospel Book. They prepare their hearts to receive the Word during its proclamation. Thus, bowing their heads, the faithful sing: "Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ."
- 362 The priest enters the sanctuary with the Gospel Book. This is a sign that it is Jesus Christ, the only High Priest, who celebrates the Divine Liturgy. Christ is invisibly among us, and it is he who leads us to the altar (just as the Gospel Book carried by the deacon precedes everyone). The bishop or priest represents the eternal High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice once and for all, ascended to heaven, and, having

entered the heavenly sanctuary, sits at the right hand of the Father (see *Heb* 9:11-14, 23-28).

- 363 Then follow the *troparia* and *kontakia*. These are hymns in honour of a feast or saint, with invocations to Christ, the Mother of God, or saints, and they frequently reveal the theological substance of a feast or commemoration. Thus the Church celebrates and manifests the unfathomable paths by which the Lord led, and continues to lead, each of the faithful into his kingdom.
- 364 We express our entrance into the kingdom, our being raised to heaven, and our contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity in the words of the Thrice-Holy Hymn: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us." Thus we join the heavenly choirs in their singing. In the Prayer of the Thrice-Holy Hymn "standing before the glory of [the] holy altar," we entreat the Lord to "accept from the lips of us sinners the Thrice-Holy Hymn and visit us in [his] kindness."
- 365 During the singing of the Thrice-Holy Hymn, the hierarch ascends the "throne on high." As the Epistle is read, the bishop is seated on his throne (in Greek, *cathedra*), along with the priests to his right and to his left. They thus represent Jesus Christ among the apostles, and symbolize the authoritative teaching ministry of the Church.

d. Hearing the Word of God, Responding to It, and Prayer

- 366 By his Word the Lord created the world; by his Word at Sinai he called to ministry his Chosen People; in the incarnate Word he gave his people salvation. We are called to receive the Word of God and to answer to it in faith: "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do!" (*Ex* 24:3). To truly hear the Word of God means to act on it: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!" (*Lk* 11:28). Those who listened to John in the desert and those who listened to Peter on the day of Pentecost asked: "What then shall we do?" (*Lk* 3:10; *Acts* 2:37). When we respond to the Word, we receive its life-giving power and, as did the Mother of God, we preserve it in our hearts and enfold it in our lives.
- 367 The Word of God shines in our hearts "the pure light of ... Divine knowledge," as the Prayer before the Gospel teaches us. To hear the Word of God means "to understand the message of [the] Gospel" in order to accept it as "blessed commandments that we may subdue all carnal desires and follow a spiritual way of life, thinking and doing all that pleases" God. We incline our heads during the reading of the Gos-

pel as a sign of reverent listening and acceptance of the Word of God. In the homily, the priest proclaims the Good News about the mighty deeds of God, calls us to embody the Word we hear: “[He] instructs and exhorts [us] to the imitation of these good things.”²⁹⁰ The faithful listen to the Word of God, which the Lord addresses to them through the reading of the Epistle and Gospel, and through the homily. They receive the Word of God into their hearts as a seed that should bring forth good fruit in their lives. Receiving in this way communion in Christ the Word, they become its bearers and heralds.

- 368 In the Insistent Litany, the Church prays “that we may be accounted worthy, having learned the truth, by our deeds also to be found good citizens and guardians of what is commanded, so that we may be saved with eternal salvation.”²⁹¹ Whereas in the Litany of Peace at the beginning of the Liturgy we prayed for the whole world, in the Insistent Litany we mention the faithful by name, we add the special petitions of the assembly in response to the received Word of God, and we entreat God’s help for the different circumstances in the lives of the faithful.
- 369 In the Litany for the Catechumens, the faithful pray for those preparing for Baptism. They pray that the Lord would “teach them by the word of truth” and (during the second half of Lent) that the Lord “number them among [his] chosen flock.” The catechumens were admitted to the *Banquet of the Word* in order to help them achieve spiritual maturity and heal spiritual illnesses. Before the beginning of the Banquet of the Eucharist, however, they were dismissed. “Only the faithful” (the baptized) remained, those who had gathered to be nourished by the food of eternal life—the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist (Liturgy of the Faithful)

- 370 In the Prayers of the Faithful at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest briefly expresses the meaning and purpose of the Eucharistic assembly: “To stand now at your holy altar ... to offer you petitions, supplications, and unbloody sacrifices for all your people ... to partake of your Holy Mysteries without blame and condemnation, and be made worthy of your heavenly kingdom.”²⁹²

²⁹⁰ JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apology*, I, 67: PG 6, 429.

²⁹¹ JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apology*, I, 65: PG 6, 428.

²⁹² *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, First and Second Prayers of the Faithful.

a. Preparation for the Banquet of the Eucharist

- 371 The *Cherubic Hymn* prepares us for the Banquet of the Eucharist. Before we can “lift our hearts on high” and “sing the Thrice-Holy Hymn,” that is, “Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth,” we need to “set aside all cares of life” so that indeed “we may receive the King of all” in Holy Communion.
- 372 During the Cherubic Hymn the priest prays that the Lord would make him worthy “to stand before this, [his] holy table, and offer the sacrifice of [his] holy and most pure Body and precious Blood.” During the Great Entrance he transfers the gifts, prepared on the Proskomide table, to the Holy Table. This symbolizes the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem for the salvific sacrifice, as well as our reception of him as the King of all—visible and invisible, the living and the dead—in order to be joined to his Paschal Mystery. This is why, as he processes with the gifts to the Holy Table, the priest commemorates the Church hierarchy and all the faithful. He asks that the Lord *remember* them—make them participants of his kingdom.
- 373 In the Litany of Supplications, the priest prays for “the gifts that have been presented.” He asks that “the good Spirit of [God’s] grace may rest upon us, upon these gifts present before us, and upon all [his] people.” Before the Symbol of Faith, that is, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the deacon exclaims: “Let us love one another...” This indicates that a common confession of faith is possible only in love, a love that we receive from our Lord and then offer to our neighbour. As a sign of this love, the priests kiss the Holy Table and exchange the holy kiss among themselves, greeting each other with the words, “Christ is among us.” The response is, “He is and will be.” This expresses the unity of the liturgical assembly in Christ. We also express this unity by pronouncing the Symbol of Faith. In this Creed, each of us, personally and together with others, confesses the faith of the Church in “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in being and undivided.”

b. The Anaphora

- 374 Saint Justin Martyr testifies to the faith of the early Church:

Just as Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh through the Word of God, and took on flesh and blood for our salvation, so too (we have been taught that) through the word of prayer that comes from him, the food over which the thanksgiving has been spoken

becomes the Flesh and Blood of the incarnate Jesus, in order to nourish and transform our flesh and blood.²⁹³

The Eucharistic Prayer, or *Anaphora* (from the Greek, meaning *oblation* or *lifts up*), which the presider proclaims over the bread and wine, expresses the fourfold substance of the mystery of the Eucharist: (i) it is *thanksgiving* to the Father for creating the world and giving his Son for our salvation; (ii) it is the *memorial* of all that the Son of God did for us; (iii) it is the *offering* of ourselves to the Father in “rational and bloodless worship;” and, (iv) it is *prayer for the sending* of the Holy Spirit “upon us and upon these gifts” so that the mystery of salvation be accomplished in us.

1) *Thanksgiving*

375 The prayer of thanksgiving is preceded by the dialogue between the clergy and the faithful. There we hear the basic conditions of the Eucharistic mystery: receiving the “mercy of peace”—God’s gift of reconciliation—we respond with the “sacrifice of praise.” Our response is praise, blessing, thanksgiving, worship, and offering—the entire Eucharistic work. We are able to bring this “holy oblation” because we have received “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship [i.e., communion] of the Holy Spirit.”

376 The mystery of the Eucharist takes its name from this prayer of thanksgiving in which we express gratitude for all that we have received from God. We thank God “for all things which we know and do not know, the benefits bestowed upon us, both manifest and hidden.” This gratitude-thanksgiving precedes all petitions for our needs. This is because we realize that, having given us his Son and the Holy Spirit, he has given us all for our salvation. Praying to God, the “ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible,” we confess that he is infinitely greater than all that we know or can say about him or his deeds. We thank God for creation: “[he] brought us from nothingness into being,” and for salvation: “After we fell [he] raised us up again [and] did not cease doing everything until [he] led us to heaven and granted us [his] future kingdom.” We also thank him “for this liturgy which [he has] designed to accept from our hands.” And then we thank him for making us able to know this gift and to respond to it. Joining the song of the Seraphim “Holy, holy, holy,” we offer praise to the Most Holy Trinity: “Holy are you—truly all-holy—you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit.”

²⁹³ JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apology*, I, 66: PG 6, 428-429.

2) Memorial

- 377 In the Anaphora, we commemorate the salvific work of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father so loved the world that “he *gave* his only-begotten Son;” the Son, fulfilling the will of the Father, “*gave himself* for the life of the world,” (emphasis added). He offers us true communion in himself through communion in his Body and Blood: “He took bread ... gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying: ‘Take, eat’ ... and likewise the chalice: ‘Drink of it, all of you.’” The words of Christ “This is my Body; this is my Blood,” pronounced at the Mystical Supper, show that in like manner, at each Divine Liturgy, Christ deigns to feed us with his Body and Blood. Through communion in his Body, Christ invites the Church, his Bride, to become one Body with him. He does so in order that she may enter the same unity with the Father that the Son has: “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one” (*Jn* 17:22).
- 378 Offering us the gift of his Body and Blood, Christ leads us into the New Covenant, the alliance with God, in which the new commandment (see *Jer* 31:31-33) is written on the heart: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (*Jn* 13:34). In such love is the essence of eternal life, the essence of salvation, the essence of our deification. Human beings cannot achieve this of themselves, but it is possible for those who remain in Christ: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (*Jn* 6:56).
- 379 Through the memorial of the Mystical Supper, the Church makes memorial also of “all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming.” Uniting with Christ, we become participants in all his salvific deeds—whether his suffering and death, or his Resurrection and glorification; his Pascha becomes ours, and we already take part in his glory. His glory will be fully manifested on the Last Day.

3) Offering

- 380 The Church accepts Christ’s invitation to communion in his Body and Blood. In response, she offers the gift of herself: “*We offer to you, yours of your own* in behalf of all and for all,” (emphasis added). It is impossible to become one Body with the One who bestows such love except by offering a gift of love in return. We offer him ourselves and the entire world, even though all this belongs to him. We do so because he came

to teach us this salvific and free offering, and to enable us to offer it. This is the fulfilment of his new commandment; in this is life eternal. This is the integrated “rational [logical] worship” (in the image of Christ the Word, the *Logos*) that Paul speaks of: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [rational] worship” (*Rom* 12:1). By the cross-wise uplifting of the diskos and chalice by the deacon, the Church expresses the gift of herself to God the Father through the crucified Christ. In this she proclaims the eschatological fullness of time, when Christ will bring all to God the Father (see 1 *Cor* 15:28).

4) *Invoking the Holy Spirit*

- 381 The prayer in which we invoke the Holy Spirit “upon us and upon these gifts” is called the *epiclesis* (from the Greek, meaning *call upon* or *call down*). The Holy Spirit descends on the gifts so that they may become for us “sobriety of soul, forgiveness of sins, fellowship of the Holy Spirit, fulfilment of the kingdom of heaven.” In the epiclesis, “we implore the merciful God to send forth his Holy Spirit upon the offering to make the bread the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ. For whatever the Holy Spirit touches is hallowed and changed.”²⁹⁴
- 382 All those who have communion in the Body of Christ become one whole, with him and among themselves: “Unite all of us, who share in this one bread and cup, with one another into the communion of the one Holy Spirit.”²⁹⁵ This is why, together with the whole Church, with the Mother of God and all the saints, we commemorate all the deceased in the hope of resurrection to eternal life. But we also commemorate all the living, along with their spiritual and bodily needs. We ask that the Lord *remember* them—give them life by the gift of his love.
- 383 We complete the holy offering with the words: “Grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and sing the praises of your most honoured and magnificent name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.” Renewed in God’s love through the reciprocal giving of ourselves, “all of us, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 *Cor* 3:18).

²⁹⁴ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Mystagogical Lectures*, 5, 7: PG 33, 1113.

²⁹⁵ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, The Anaphora.

c. The “Our Father”

- 384 In the prayer of the Litany of Supplication before the Our Father, we entrust our whole life and our hope to the Lord. We pray that he would grant us to communicate of the Holy Gifts “for forgiveness of sins, for the pardon of offenses, for fellowship of the Holy Spirit, for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, for confidence before [God], and not for judgment or condemnation,” and that “with confidence and without condemnation, we may dare call ... the heavenly God, Father.” The Lord’s Prayer precedes Eucharistic communion also because God is not *my* or *your* Father, but *our* Father, and he unites us around the Lord’s Banquet table. Such unity also requires forgiveness: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The apostle Paul distinctly warns us about unworthy reception of Communion (see 1 *Cor* 11:27).
- 385 Invoking God the Father in the Lord’s Prayer is “a symbol of the personal and real adoption to be bestowed through the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit. In accordance with it... every human particularity [i.e., faculty] is overcome and disclosed by the coming of grace.”²⁹⁶ In the prayer after the Our Father, the priest prays that the Lord, as the “Physician of our souls and bodies,” grant us his Body and Blood “in accord with each one’s personal need.”²⁹⁷
- 386 The Church invites the faithful to Holy Communion with the exclamation, “The holy Things for the holy!” These words are at once an invitation and a warning. The faithful approach the Holy Gifts not because they consider themselves worthy but because they belong to the holy Church; the faithful are holy not by their own holiness but because they are the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is what we profess in the response: “One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ.” Nonetheless, each of us is responsible for approaching Communion with a clean conscience, so that this union would not be “for judgment or condemnation.”
- 387 Before Communion, the deacon pours some hot water (in Greek, *zeon*) into the chalice, pronouncing the words: “The warmth of faith full of the Holy Spirit.” Doing so he signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church. “[The Church] received the Holy Spirit after our Lord’s Ascension; now she receives the gift of the Holy Spirit after the offerings have been accepted at the heavenly altar; God, who has accepted, then sends

²⁹⁶ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Mystagogy*, 20: PG 91, 696.

²⁹⁷ See *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Prayer after the Our Father.

us the Holy Spirit in return.”²⁹⁸ The adding of hot water also signifies that the Holy Gifts are the Body and Blood of the living Risen Christ.

d. Communion: The Banquet of the Body and Blood

- 388 Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord is the culmination of the Eucharistic Banquet.

[Communion] transforms into itself those who worthily partake of it, making them similar to that good which is [their] source by means of grace and participation. They lack nothing of this good that is possible and can be attained by human beings. Therefore they also are and can be called gods by adoption through grace because all of God entirely fills them and leaves no part of them empty of his presence.²⁹⁹

Through Holy Communion we achieve a divine likeness: we receive Christ into our lives, and Christ makes us partakers of the divine nature.

- 389 As Christ offered the apostles his Body and Blood at the Mystical Supper, so the priest communicates the faithful who piously, with hands crossed on their breast, approach the ambo before the Royal Doors. The words of the Prayer before Communion, “Accept me this day, O Son of God, as a partaker of your mystical Supper,” explain the essence of the Lord’s Banquet, and of the entire Liturgy. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: “Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper, at which he himself sat down. For this is in no respect different from that. For neither does man make this and himself the other; but both this and that is his own work.”³⁰⁰

- 390 Consuming the Holy Gifts, we communicate in the Body and Blood of Christ: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (*Jn* 6:56). We become similar to Christ and acquire a divine *way of thinking*: as God granted himself to us, so we, in fully giving ourselves to God and to others, have life eternal. Through communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, our life is fully in God: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (*Gal* 2:20).

e. Thanksgiving for Communion and the Dismissal

- 391 After Holy Communion, the deacon invites the faithful to render thanks to the Lord for the Gifts received: “Stand aright! Having received ...

²⁹⁸ NICHOLAS CABASILAS, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, 37.

²⁹⁹ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Mystagogy*, 21: PG 91, 696.

³⁰⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, 50, 3: PG 58, 507.

the life-giving ... Mysteries of Christ, let us rightly give thanks to the Lord.” Just as the apostles did on the day of Pentecost, so the faithful carry this gift of new life into the world. “In peace” the Church of Christ began her prayer, by his peace—his blessing—she was enriched, and with his peace she goes out into the world: “Let us go forth in peace.” This is what she asks of the Father, the Source of “every perfect gift” as she leaves the church building: “Grant peace to your world, to your Churches, to our priests, to our nation under God, to our government, and to all your people.”

- 392 The Divine Liturgy *today* has ended, but it continues in the everyday life of the faithful as their service in the world, as “the liturgy after the Liturgy.” The reality of the coming age, which was just experienced liturgically, spreads to the whole world and transfigures it. “Christ our true God, risen from the dead ... will have mercy and save us.” Renewed in him, Christ sends us into the world so that through us he may act in the world. In its final “Amen” the liturgical community expresses its anticipation of the perfect fulfilment of God’s kingdom.

B. The Three Orders of the Divine Liturgy

- 393 In our Church, the Divine Liturgy is served according to three orders, those of the bishops, Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great, and that of the Presanctified Gifts. Ordinarily it is the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom that is celebrated. The Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is celebrated ten times a year, namely: on all five Sundays of Great Lent, on Great and Holy Thursday, on Great and Holy Saturday, on the eves of Christmas and Theophany, and on the feast of Saint Basil the Great. From Monday to Friday during Great Lent, as a sign of the anticipation of Christ’s Pascha and glorious second coming, the Church does not offer the Eucharistic oblation, that is, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom or Saint Basil the Great.
- 394 In order to sustain the faithful in the spiritual effort of fasting during Lent, the Church celebrates the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. At this Liturgy, the faithful partake of the Holy Gifts that were consecrated the previous Sunday. No Divine Liturgy is celebrated on the Wednesday and Friday of Cheesefare Week, the Monday and Tuesday of the first week of Lent, or on Good Friday,³⁰¹ which is why according to tradition these are *non-liturgical* days. It is customary to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on the Wednesdays and Fridays

³⁰¹ See rubrics of the *Lenten Triodion*, Cheesefare Week, Wednesday Vespers; First Week of Lent, Monday Vespers; Great and Holy Friday, Ninth Hour.

of Great Lent, which is why we call all the Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays of Lent non-liturgical. The Church maintains the practice of non-liturgical days in order to remind us that we are only approaching the fullness of the kingdom of God, and in order that the Eucharist not become for us just a habit, but that it may always be a dynamic event.³⁰²

1. The Orders of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and of Saint Basil the Great

- 395 The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and that of Saint Basil the Great, named after these two great bishops of the Church, are identical as to their structure but differ in their Anaphoras and in some of the other prayers.
- 396 The Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is a precious narration of the history of salvation in biblical imagery. A particularity of this Anaphora is the initial prayer of thanksgiving. It begins with praise of God—revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who is “ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, always existing and ever the same.” The priest renders thanks to God for all his good gifts: for bringing the human race from nothingness into being, raising it after its fall, leading it to heaven, and granting it the kingdom. He also renders thanks for this Liturgy, which God has deigned to accept.
- 397 In the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, the community of the faithful praises the Father for his gift of the only-begotten Son, sent into the world so “that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (*Jn* 3:16). In giving his Body and Blood at the Mystical Supper for the remission of sins, the Son of God gave himself for the life of the world. In the Eucharistic memorial we become participants of “all that was done for us:” the passion, the death on the cross, the burial, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the sitting at the right hand of the Father, the second and glorious coming. As a sign of this participation, the community offers itself and the gifts to God: “We offer to you, yours of your own.” The priest then asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit “upon us and upon these Gifts here present.” This is so “that they may sanctify us, that God who sanctified them may sanctify us through them.”³⁰³ The Holy Spirit, descending on us and on the gifts, sanctifies all the communicants; and he makes of them one

³⁰² CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, 63.

³⁰³ NICHOLAS CABASILAS, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, 30.

Body, the Church, which embraces the faithful of all generations, living and deceased.

- 398 In the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, the Church contemplates the glory of the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: “Who can tell of all your acts of power, make all your praises heard, or recount all your wonders at every moment?” All creation, the nine choirs of angels and with them this liturgical community, ministers to the Lord and praises him for his gifts: for the creation of humanity, for paradise, for the promise of immortal life.
- 399 Further, the Anaphora of Saint Basil mentions that humankind, “led astray by the deception of the serpent,” committed the sin of disobedience and thus lost paradise, becoming mortal. Yet the merciful God did not turn away from humankind, but promised the coming salvation. He sent them the prophets, and “gave the law as a help ... appointed angels as guardians.” In the fullness of time God spoke through his Son, who humbling himself, took on our human nature from the Virgin. In his flesh he condemned sin and granted new life. In our stead he offered himself unto death, “and rising on the third day and making a way for all flesh to the resurrection of the dead,” he became “...the first-born of the dead ... ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand” of the Father. As a memorial of his passion he left us this offering of the gifts. He was the first who took bread and wine, named them his Body and Blood, and gave them to his disciples as food and drink. And he commanded us from that time onward to do the same. Today the liturgical community keeps this commandment, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies the gifts and shows them to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- 400 The Holy Spirit unites the living and the dead into a single Church. In the Church’s prayer, expressed in this Anaphora, we ask the Lord to remember those who have brought offerings, those labouring in spiritual struggles, our earthly nation, the government and the military, couples and families, those in need, those who have strayed from the Church, those troubled by unclean spirits, those travelling, widows and orphans, the imprisoned and the sick, those condemned and those persecuted, friends and foes. The Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil culminates in joyous certitude. It concludes with the conviction that the Lord, who gives us his kind gifts and mercies—good weather, rain in due season, and the harvest—will restrain the discord of Churches, the pride of nations, the rise of heresies, and will show us to be “children of the light and children of the day.”

2. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

- 401 The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts accentuates two elements: the preparation of catechumens for Baptism, and the repentance of the faithful. During this Liturgy, the community prays for and instructs the catechumens. In the second half of Great Lent it adds petitions for “those about to be illumined.” These are the catechumens who will be baptized at that year’s celebration of Pascha. The first part of the Liturgy, Vespers with Old Testament readings, has a distinctly didactic character. The readings from the books of Genesis and Exodus present to the catechumens, as well as to the baptized, God’s providence and care for his Chosen People. The book of Proverbs, in turn, offers the teachings of Divine Wisdom for daily living. Through these readings of the Old Testament and the prayers of the Liturgy, the catechumens prepare for enlightenment in Baptism. A symbol of this preparation and reception of the light of God’s Word is the blessing with a candle and incense, accompanied by the words “The light of Christ enlightens all.” This is a sign of Christ who triumphs over darkness, a symbol of the coming light of Pascha, and the baptism of the catechumens into the Death and Resurrection of Christ.
- 402 The penitential character of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is seen in the singing of the verse “Let my prayer rise like incense before you,” which culminates with great prostrations. We also kneel during the solemn transfer of the Gifts from the Preparation Table to the Holy Table—the Gifts that are already the very Body and Blood of Christ. The penitential and fasting character of this Liturgy expresses the expectation of the paschal fullness. The reception of Holy Communion also strengthens the faithful spiritually as they walk the way of repentance and fasting.

C. The Holy Mysteries of Christian Life

a. The Mystery—Christ is in our Midst

- 403 In Holy Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers, the meaning of the term *mystery* [which is the word for *sacrament* in various Eastern Christian languages] is particularly extensive. “The mystery of God’s will” is what Saint Paul calls God’s “plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth” (*Eph* 1:9-10). For Christians, *mystery* ultimately means *Christ in our midst* (see *Col* 1:27). Therefore, knowledge of the mystery of God’s salvation is the knowledge of Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge” (*Col* 2:3). Briefly stated, mystery—the Mystery—is Christ, and all that he did and does for us.

- 404 After his Ascension, Christ continues to remain among his disciples—Christians throughout the ages—and to act for their and the whole world’s salvation. We proclaim this in the kontakion of the feast: “You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, in no way distant, but remaining inseparable.”³⁰⁴ These words echo the Lord’s assurance: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (*Mt* 28:20). In his Church, Christ continues to teach, feed, heal, forgive, and revive. Thus, the Church herself can be called the mystery of his presence, the place where God and people meet. The fifth-century Pope of Rome Saint Leo the Great explained: “that which till then [Christ’s Ascension] was visible of our Redeemer was changed into a sacramental presence.”³⁰⁵

b. The Seven Sacramental Mysteries

- 405 The saving and sanctifying action of the Church is accomplished in seven Holy Mysteries. These are: Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Repentance, Holy Anointing, Marriage, and Orders. Through these sacred actions of the Church, Christ grants the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through these Mysteries the Church sanctifies the faithful on their journey to the fullness of life in Christ. Through visible signs (e.g., water, chrism, bread and wine, the laying on of hands) Christ builds up his Church in the Holy Mysteries. In the liturgical actions of the Mysteries it is God’s grace that acts, and believers enter into God’s life. By participating in the visible form of a Mystery, that is, through the liturgical action, we become partakers of God’s salvific action of grace. “[The unbeliever], hearing of a laver, counts it merely as water: but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul which is by the Spirit.”³⁰⁶ The external form of the rite and its material expressions are vital as they signify our deification and manifest the first fruits of transfigured nature.

c. The Holy Mysteries Are a Synergy of God and Human Persons

- 406 The synergy, or joint operation, of God and human persons in the Mysteries, manifests itself as an exchange in which God discloses himself in love, grants his grace—his very life—to human persons, who receive this gift and in turn respond in love. The salvation of men and women

³⁰⁴ *Floral Triodion*, Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, Kontakion.

³⁰⁵ LEO THE GREAT, *Sermon* 74, 2: PL 54, 398.

³⁰⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 7, 2: PG 61, 55.

consists precisely in their becoming capable, in Christ, of loving as Christ loved us (see *Jn* 13:34). In opening themselves to the gift of grace, human persons fully abandon themselves to the will of God in order to grow in faith, hope, and love, even “to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (*Eph* 4:13).

d. The Mystical Life of the Church

- 407 Through Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist, called the *Mysteries of Christian Initiation*, a person becomes a member of the Body of Christ and is enabled to participate in Christ’s priesthood, kingship, and prophetic mission. Through the Mysteries of Repentance and Anointing, called *Mysteries of Healing*, we receive both spiritual and physical healing. Through the *Mysteries of Service*, Priesthood and Marriage, Christians are consecrated to the service of the ecclesial community or to the *domestic church*.

1. The Holy Mysteries of Christian Initiation

- 408 Participation in the life of the Most Holy Trinity becomes a reality for us through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist. In other words, we partake of God’s life by being united to Christ, receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit, and sharing the Body and Blood of Christ in the community called Church. As a person after birth begins to breathe and then receives nourishment in order to live, so the newly baptized, born to new life in the baptismal font, begins to breathe by the Holy Spirit and receives the nourishment of Holy Communion in order to grow in Christ. Through the prayers and sacred actions of the liturgical rite of each of these Mysteries, the Church leads the faithful (the Greek Fathers speak of *mystagogy*—*leading into the mystery*) into an understanding of the Mystery and perceiving it as a single, unified action of God’s grace. This is why in the tradition of the Eastern Church, these three Holy Mysteries are celebrated together.³⁰⁷

a. The Holy Mystery of Baptism

1) Baptism Is the Birth to New Life in Christ

- 409 The Father reveals and grants us eternal life through his Son in the Holy Spirit. This life of the new creation becomes accessible to us not only after death, but even now. Through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism

³⁰⁷ See CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, 51.

and Chrismation, along with the Eucharist, we are united to Christ. In him we become heirs of divine life, bearers of the Holy Spirit, who reveals to us the full truth of Christ. The Spirit leads us along the paths of Christ's commandments and prays within us: "Abba! Father!" (*Rom* 8:15). Through these Holy Mysteries we become members of the Body of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

- 410 In his conversation with Nicodemus, Christ speaks of the inauguration of the new life as a process of being "born anew" or "from above" (see *Jn* 3:3). This new birth is a birth "of water and the Spirit" (*Jn* 3:5). Performed by water in the liturgical rite, it becomes a reality through the Holy Spirit's power. Baptism is for us the beginning of the fullness of life for which we were created:

John preached a baptism of repentance and the whole of Judea went out to him. The Lord proclaims a baptism of the adoption of sons. Among those who place their hope in [the Lord], who will not obey? The baptism of John was preliminary, that of Jesus a crowning accomplishment. The baptism of John was a break with sin; that of Jesus was union with God.³⁰⁸

In Baptism, God not only saves us from sin, but also grants us the inestimable treasures of new life.

2) Baptism Is Dying and Rising in Christ

- 411 In order to make us partakers of divine life, and to enable us to live by the freedom of God's children, Christ frees us from the bondage of sin. We had descended into this slavery through the fall of Adam and our own sins. Having taken the sin of the world upon himself, Christ also accepted the ultimate consequence of this sin, which is death. But he overcame it by the death he freely accepted on the cross. In Baptism, Christ makes us partakers of his victory over sin and death.
- 412 Our entry into new life also begins with our dying to sin (see *Rom* 6:2), which is a dying with Christ. But this dying culminates in our rising with him: "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (*Rom* 6:4). Through his Death and Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, Christ has led us into divine life. We enter into this life through our death and resurrection in Christ and by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only through the death of the "old self" can one become a "new person"—a "new creation" in Christ (see *2 Cor* 5:17; *Col* 3:9-10; *Gal* 6:15).

³⁰⁸ BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily 13, Protrepitic on Holy Baptism*, 1: PG 31, 425.

3) *Our Baptism Is “the Blessing of the Jordan”*

- 413 In the Rite of Baptism, the Church prays that “the grace of salvation and the blessing of the Jordan”³⁰⁹ descend upon the water. We pray that in this Baptism, that which was revealed at the river Jordan will be realized now. There, the Father, through the Holy Spirit, declared Jesus to be his beloved Son. That which was manifested in Christ—being the Son of God—becomes the reality of all who are baptized.

Upon you also, if you possess sincere piety, the Holy Spirit will descend, and from above will be heard over you the voice of the Father, saying not “This is my Son” but “This has now become my son.” For to Christ alone belongs the “*is*” ... To you belongs “*has now become*,” since you do not possess the sonship by nature, but receive it by adoption. He is Son eternally, but you receive that grace by advancement.³¹⁰

- 414 Baptism is the first Mystery that a person needs to receive in order to enter the Church, the *ark of salvation*. It is the means by which one becomes a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. “Whence is it that we are Christians? Through our faith would be the universal answer. And in what way are we saved? Plainly because we were regenerated through the grace given in our baptism.”³¹¹ Baptism unlocks the access to the other Holy Mysteries and sacred rites in the Church through which the Lord sanctifies, vivifies, and leads his Church as a whole and each believer in particular. This is why the baptized already become “heirs of the kingdom” and receive the “blessedness of the saints.”³¹²

4) *One Baptism for the Remission of Sins*

- 415 In Baptism a person receives remission of all sins: “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (*Rom* 5:20). Having been united to Christ and having become a temple of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is freed from enslavement to sin and death through the action of divine grace. He or she becomes capable of growing into the likeness of God. Divine filiation and the capacity for divine likeness through Christ in the Holy Spirit is given to the baptized person once and for all. That is why this Mystery can be received only once in a lifetime. Even after Baptism, however, the person who is not yet tempered in choosing what is good, is inclined to sin. Therefore, one turns to the Mystery of Repentance. In

³⁰⁹ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Baptism, The Litany of Peace.

³¹⁰ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Catechetical Lectures*, 3, 14: PG 33, 444-445.

³¹¹ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 10, 26: PG 32, 113.

³¹² *Trebnýk*, Rite of Baptism, The Prayer of Exorcism.

this Holy Mystery, one continues on the path of repentance, conversion, cleansing from sin, and strengthening in the virtues.

5) *The Necessity of Faith*

- 416 As he sends his disciples to preach, Christ assures them: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved” (*Mk* 16:16). In order to receive the salvific gift of Baptism, faith is essential—faith in Christ, the Son of God, “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (*Col* 1:14) and the gift of divine filiation: “If you believe with all your heart, you may [be baptized]” (*Acts* 8:37). “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (*Gal* 3:26-27).
- 417 “Faith and baptism are two kindred and inseparable ways of salvation: faith is perfected through baptism, and baptism is grounded on faith ... First comes the confession [of faith], introducing us to salvation, and baptism follows, setting the seal on our assent.”³¹³ Having received the gift of Baptism as a kind of seed, we are called to work together with the Holy Spirit in order to bear abundant fruit: “For though the remission of sins is granted to all alike the communication of the Holy Spirit is granted in proportion to the faith of each ... You are running for yourself, so look to your own advantage.”³¹⁴

6) *The Baptism of Children*

- 418 The Church baptizes both adults and children in order to lead them into the new life of Christ. The Church baptizes children, bearers of the *image* of God, so that they can receive the grace of divine *likeness*. Together with the gift of life, the most precious gift that parents can give is to bring their child to the Mystery of Baptism. When children are baptized, the Church community, represented by the Godparents, expresses faith in Christ on their behalf. Together with the father and mother they accept responsibility before God and the Church for the Christian upbringing of the child. The child is to grow within the Church community in faith, as well as with a Christian lifestyle and in knowledge of God. To become a Godparent, whether of children or adults, it is necessary to be a believer, so that the person’s faith and way of life become models for the future Godchild. The spiritual relationship between Godparents and Godchildren endures throughout their lives. The Baptism of a child cannot be considered a violation of its

³¹³ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 12, 28: PG 32, 117.

³¹⁴ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Catechetical Lectures*, 1, 5: PG 33, 377.

rights or freedom, because just as parents or guardians feed a child and teach it for its own good, so also believing parents, in bringing their child to the Mystery of Baptism, open them to life in God.

7) *The Rite of Baptism*

- 419 The Rite of Baptism begins with the Making of a Catechumen—the preparation of the person for Baptism. In an introductory prayer the priest lays his hand on the catechumen. The Church thus takes the catechumen under her care so that he or she may be “found worthy to flee to [God’s] holy name and find shelter under [his] wings.”³¹⁵ Then, through prayers and exorcisms, the Church safeguards the catechumen from the influence of Satan. Subsequently the catechumen, either personally or through the Godparents, renounces Satan and his works and joins to Christ the Saviour. As a sign of this joining to Christ, the catechumen passes from the narthex of the church (symbol of the world) to the centre of the nave (symbol of Christ’s Church).
- 420 Immediately before the immersion (or the pouring) the priest anoints the catechumen with holy oil. This anointing is a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism. It is given to the catechumen as a “weapon of justice” against “all the action of the devil” and for the “restoration of body and soul.”³¹⁶ The priest anoints the forehead, the breast, the shoulders, the ears, and the hands and feet.³¹⁷ He anoints the forehead so that “the mind might be opened to understand and receive the mysteries of faith.” He anoints the breast so that the baptized “would love the Lord with all his/her heart.” The shoulders are anointed so that he/she “would accept Christ’s yoke.” The ears are anointed “for the reception of the voice of the divine Gospel.” Finally, the baptizand’s hands and feet are anointed so that he/she would “raise his/her hands towards the holy place and always act justly,” and “walk in the ways of Christ’s commandments.” The anointing of the body indicates that in Baptism the entire nature of the person is renewed, along with all its senses.
- 421 Baptism is performed with water, which is a symbol of life but also of death (“the waters of the flood,” see *Gn* 6-9). The passing through the waters of the Red Sea symbolizes salvation (see *Ex* 14), while the washing with water is a symbol of healing (e.g., the curing of Naaman of leprosy; see *2 Kgs* 5:10-14). Immersing the person three times into

³¹⁵ *Trebnyk*, Rite of Baptism, The Prayer over the Catechumen.

³¹⁶ *Trebnyk*, Rite of Baptism, The Prayer for the Blessing of the Oil.

³¹⁷ *Trebnyk*, Rite of Baptism, The Prayer for the Blessing of the Oil.

the water, or pouring water three times over the forehead, the priest declares: "The servant of God, (name), is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Baptism is the death of the "old person" and the birth of the "new person," united with the three Divine Persons—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (see *Mt* 28:19). This occurs through union with Christ's Death and Resurrection (see *Rom* 6). As a sign of the new birth, the baptized person is given a Christian name, by which the Church introduces the neophyte into a spiritual relationship with their heavenly patron.

- 422 The newborn in Christ is given a white garment, the baptismal robe (*kryzhmo*). It is the garment of righteousness and symbolizes the "putting on" of the Risen Christ: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (*Gal* 3:27). To put on Christ means that the newly baptized became new persons: clothed in the raiment of light, they proclaim before others that Christ lives and acts in them. Handing the newly baptized a candle, the priest says: "Take this burning candle and throughout your life strive to be illumined with the brightness of faith and good works, so that when the Lord comes you may go out in radiance to meet him with all the saints." As Christ is "the light that shines in the darkness" (see *Jn* 1:5), so also the one who was illumined by Christ in Baptism is called to be a "light of the world" (*Mt* 5:14).

8) *The Celebrant of the Mystery of Baptism*

- 423 The Mystery of Baptism is usually celebrated by a priest. He is the spiritual father of the parish community to which the newly baptized is united (and thus the appropriate presider). However, if there is danger of death, any Christian may baptize. In that case, Baptism is performed by a triple pouring of water over the person with the words: "The servant of God, (name), is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Frequently, a person who receives Baptism while in danger of death does so without the full liturgical rite. Consequently, if the person lives and recovers, he or she is brought to a priest, who completes the rite and also performs Chrismation. The Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation are received only once in a lifetime because, having been born in Christ through the Holy Spirit, we remain children of the Father forever.

b. The Holy Mystery of Chrismation

1) The Gift of Pentecost

- 424 As the Paschal mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ finds its completion in the sending of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, so our rebirth in Christ is sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Chrismation is the *seal* of the gift that we received in Baptism. It manifests that every baptized person receives the coming of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles at Pentecost. This anointing by the Holy Spirit indicates that every Christian is born to new life in Christ and becomes a child of the Father in order to take part in the royal, priestly, and prophetic ministry of Christ for the salvation of the world. This is emphasized in the prayer of consecration of Holy Chrism on Great and Holy Thursday:

Send, O Lord, your Most Holy Spirit upon this Chrism and make of it a royal anointing, a spiritual anointing by which kings, high-priests, and prophets had been anointed, and all of their successors—bishops and presbyters and all who until this day have received rebirth in the font of regeneration ... Make this Chrism to be the Descent of the Holy Spirit.³¹⁸

2) The Royal, Priestly, and Prophetic Ministry

- 425 Receiving the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Christian becomes a member of a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that [they] may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt 2:9).

All who are reborn in Christ are made kings by the sign of the Cross. And the anointing with the Holy Spirit consecrates them priests, so that besides this special ministry all Christians—filled with the Spirit and knowledge—would acknowledge themselves to be members of this royal nation and participants in priestly ministry. For what is more royal for the soul than to be able to discipline one’s body, to subject it to God? And what is more priestly than to sacrifice to the Lord a clean conscience and to offer on the altar of one’s heart the pure sacrifices of a godly life?³¹⁹

The prophetic ministry of the faithful is fulfilled in at least three ways: the unwavering confession of their faith, the deepening of their understanding of the faith, and witnessing to Christ in the world.³²⁰ This is

³¹⁸ *Arhieraticon*, Rite of Consecration of Great and Holy Chrism.

³¹⁹ LEO THE GREAT, *Sermon 4 for Christmas*, 4, 1: PG 54, 149.

³²⁰ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 12.

why the Church prays for the newly-baptized during Chrismation with these words: "That he (or she) may become firm, strong, and steady in the orthodox faith, and in love and hope; and that he (or she) might always desire to confess the name of Christ our God boldly before everyone, without fear and without timidity."³²¹

- 426 Through Chrismation the gift of the Holy Spirit is sealed so that the Christian can "become Christ our God's courageous and victorious competitor," ready "to suffer and die out of love for him." Through "growth in virtue" he or she can attain full maturity "to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (*Eph* 4:13). This is accomplished in the Christian "through the power, action, grace, and descent of the Most Holy Spirit."³²²
- 427 Just as after Christ's baptism in the Jordan the Holy Spirit led Christ in his salvific mission, and just as the Spirit leads the Church community since the descent on the apostles at Pentecost, so also in the Mystery of Chrismation the Holy Spirit grants to every Christian the capacity to discern and realize the foundational calling (vocation) of his or her life for the salvation and transfiguration of the world.

3) *The Rite of Chrismation*

- 428 The Rite of Chrismation is performed immediately after Baptism because where there is life, there is breath. Holy Chrism, a fragrant mixture of oils and other aromatic components, symbolizes the richness and diversity of the spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit grants to the newborn in Christ.

Beware of supposing that this oil [i.e., Chrism] is mere ointment. Just as after the invocation of the Holy Spirit the Eucharistic bread is no longer ordinary bread but the Body of Christ, so this holy oil, in conjunction with the invocation, is no longer simple or common oil but becomes the gracious gift of Christ and the Holy Spirit, producing the advent of his divinity.³²³

Holy Chrism is consecrated on Holy Thursday by the head of a self-governing Church for use by priests, which evidences the unity of the Church.

- 429 During the Rite of Chrismation, the priest anoints the newly baptized on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, lips, ears, breast, hands, and feet. He pro-

³²¹ *Trebnyk*, Rite of Chrismation, The Litany of Peace.

³²² *Trebnyk*, Rite of Chrismation, The Litany of Peace.

³²³ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Mystagogical Lectures*, 3, 3: PG 33, 1090.

claims: “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, “in every word and deed” the newly baptized is to please God and become “a son (daughter) and heir” of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit transfigures the thoughts, feelings, and deeds of those who are members of the kingdom.

- 430 The words “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” witness to the fact that the Christian belongs to God. Christians are his possession because we “were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory” (*Eph* 1:13-14). It is through the power and the action of the Holy Spirit that the Christian lives in Christ: “The anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him” (1 *Jn* 2:27).

c. The Mystery of the Eucharist

- 431 The Mystery of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is the third of the Mysteries of Christian initiation. In the Eucharist the newly baptized, who was born in Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, receives the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ at the holy Eucharistic table. But unlike Baptism and Chrismation, which we receive only once, we receive the Mystery of the Eucharist throughout our lives, since it is through this Mystery that we grow in the grace received in Baptism and Chrismation—the grace to be sons and daughters of God. For this reason our Church offers Communion to the newly baptized.³²⁴
- 432 In the Mystery of Holy Communion, Christ gives us his very self, his Body and Blood, as nourishment for our growth in the new life. At the Mystical Supper (Last Supper) Christ offered himself for us so that we might be able to offer our lives for our neighbour, as he offered his life (see *Jn* 13:34). Receiving Communion in the Lord’s Body and Blood, we receive a pledge of life eternal: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day” (*Jn* 6:54). Partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we already have eternal life, the fullness of which will be revealed in the glorious second coming of Christ. “For since he bestowed on us his own image and his own spirit and we did not guard them, he took himself a share in our poor and weak nature, in order that he might cleanse us and make us incorruptible, and establish us once more as partakers of his divinity.”³²⁵

³²⁴ See CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, 51.

³²⁵ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1137.

- 433 The Holy Eucharist most fully manifests and creates our communion both with God and with others. All who have communion with Christ become “one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (*Rom* 12:5). In other words, we become one Church. “Because there is one [Eucharistic] bread, we who are many are one body [of Christ], for we all partake of the one bread” (1 *Cor* 10:17). We profess this same truth in the Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great when we ask God to “unite all of us who share in this one bread and cup with one another into the communion of the one Holy Spirit.” Saint John of Damascus teaches:

Participation is spoken of; for through it we partake of the divinity of Jesus. Communion, too, is spoken of, and it is an actual communion, because through it we have communion with Christ and share in his flesh and his divinity: [at same time] we have communion and are united with one another through it. For since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ.³²⁶

1) *The Eucharist Is the Body and Blood of Christ*

- 434 At the Mystical Supper (Last Supper), Jesus Christ reveals the unfathomable mystery of his Body: in the Incarnation he received a body from the Virgin Mary, and in the Eucharist he offers it to his disciples as nourishment, so that in the Church all humanity and all creation may become his Body. Saint John Chrysostom explains the gift of Christ at the Mystical Supper, re-phrasing, as it were, the words of Christ: “I have willed to become your brother. For your sake I shared in flesh and blood, and in turn I give to you the flesh and blood by which I became your kinsman.”³²⁷
- 435 The Divine Liturgy is the memorial, the continuance, of the Mystical Supper: “Accept me this day, O Son of God, as a partaker of your Mystical Supper.”³²⁸ Just as Christ offered the apostles Communion in his Body and Blood at the Mystical Supper, so at the Liturgy he offers us Communion: “When, therefore, you see the priest delivering [the supper] unto you, account not that it is the priest that does so, but that it is Christ’s hand that is stretched out.”³²⁹ *The Communion of the Apostles*

³²⁶ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1153.

³²⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily, 46, 3: PG 59, 261.

³²⁸ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Prayer Before Holy Communion.

³²⁹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, 50, 3: PG 58, 507.

icon, as also the icon of the Mystical Supper, depicts that which takes place at the Liturgy: Christ is offering the Communion of his Body and Blood to his apostles, who represent all the faithful. At the Liturgy, before Communion the priest prays: “Deign to give to us with your mighty hand your most pure Body and precious Blood, and through us to all the people.”

- 436 At the Liturgy, Christ offers us, as he did the apostles, a communion not of simple bread and wine but of his true Body and Blood. “The bread and the wine [of the Eucharist] are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid!) but the deified body itself of the Lord.”³³⁰ The Church solemnly confesses and teaches that at the Liturgy we receive the *true* Body of Christ—a guarantee of the fact that the Church is the Body of Christ.

In order then that we may become this not by love only, but in very deed, let us be blended into that flesh. This is effected by the food which He has freely given us, desiring to show the love which He has for us. On this account He has mixed up Himself with us; He has kneaded up His body with ours, that we might be a certain One Thing, like a body joined to a head. For this belongs to them who love strongly.³³¹

- 437 The fact that we receive the actual Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist is the pledge of hope in the resurrection of our bodies:

How can [the Gnostic heretics] say that the flesh, which is nourished with the Body of the Lord and with his Blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of [eternal] life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the [Gifts] just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion ... Our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.³³²

2) *The Heavenly and the Earthly*

- 438 As two natures—the divine and the human—are united in Christ, so also in the Eucharist “the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly.”³³³ John

³³⁰ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1148.

³³¹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 46, 3 PG 59, 260.

³³² IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18, 5: PG 7, 1027.

³³³ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18, 5: PG 7, 1027.

of Damascus explains the union of the earthly and the heavenly in the Eucharist by the example of fiery coal:

[Burning] coal is not plain wood but wood united with fire; in like manner also the bread of the Communion is not plain bread but bread united with divinity. But a body which is united with divinity is not one nature, but has one nature belonging to the body and another belonging to the divinity that is united to it, so that the compound is not one nature but two.³³⁴

Christ offers his Body and Blood in a way accessible to human beings: "Since it is man's custom to eat [bread] and to drink water and wine he [Christ] connected his divinity with these and made them his Body and Blood in order that we may rise to what is supernatural through what is familiar and natural."³³⁵

3) Consecration of the Gifts

- 439 Christ institutes the Eucharist, making bread and wine to be his Body and Blood, in order to transfigure—by the Holy Spirit—those who communicate. They become "of one body and blood with Him."³³⁶ Saint John Chrysostom comments on the following words of the apostle Paul: "Because there is one bread [of which we partake], we who are many are one body" (1 Cor 10:17). He juxtaposes the consecration of the Gifts with the transformation of those who communicate in them: "For what is the bread?—the Body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it? The Body of Christ: not many bodies, but one body."³³⁷
- 440 The teaching of the Holy Fathers of the Church concerning the Eucharist is rooted in the Incarnation of the Son of God:

If God the Word of his own will became man, and the pure and undefiled blood of the holy and ever-virginal one made his flesh without the aid of seed, can he not then make the bread his Body and the wine and water his Blood? ... But if you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it was through the Holy Spirit, just as the Lord took on himself flesh that subsisted in him and was born of the holy Mother of God through the Spirit. And we know nothing further, save that the Word of God is true and energizes and is omnipotent, but the manner of this cannot be searched out.³³⁸

³³⁴ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1149.

³³⁵ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1144.

³³⁶ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Mystagogical Lectures*, 4, 3: PG 33, 1099.

³³⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 24, 4: PG 61, 205.

³³⁸ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1145.

- 441 While not investigating the manner of the consecration of the Eucharistic Gifts, the Holy Fathers emphasize how the earthly and the heavenly are united in these Gifts, as in Christ are united his divine and human nature. Due to this union, when we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, we truly become one Body with him.

4) *The Eucharistic Offering*

- 442 In the Eucharist, Christ offers us participation in his life, a life both divine and human (i.e., *theandric*). He does this out of merciful love, not because of our merits. The highest expression of this love is Christ's sacrifice in blood on Golgotha, the memorial of which is the bloodless sacrifice—the Eucharist. “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish” (1 *Pt* 1:18-19).
- 443 Christ offers himself to us so that we in turn would offer ourselves to him. Christ offers himself as Gift: “Take, eat ... Drink of it, all of you ...” To these words we respond, offering the gifts and ourselves: “We offer to you, yours of your own ...” We do this because of all that he has done for us. At the Divine Liturgy we perform the memorial of Christ's offering of himself as gift, in order to respond with our gift-offering. Christ's offering is eternal and ever-present, while we need to ever renew and deepen our gift-offering.
- 444 At the Divine Liturgy we pray: “Enable us to offer you gifts and spiritual sacrifices ... so that our sacrifice may be acceptable to you.”³³⁹ Saint Paul speaks of this sacrifice when he teaches us: “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [rational] worship” (*Rom* 12:1; see 1 *Pt* 2:5). Our sacrifice consists in this total offering. In the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy, we declare this verbally; in Communion we fulfil it by consuming the Gifts; and after the Liturgy we actualize it in our daily lives.

5) *Holy Communion*

- 445 Holy Communion crowns the participation of the Christian in the Divine Liturgy. Our Lord said: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (*Jn* 6:53). The Holy Fathers emphasized the need to receive Communion at the Liturgy: “Tell me, suppose anyone were invited to a feast, and were to wash his

³³⁹ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Prayer of the Litany for the Gifts.

hands, and sit down, and be all ready at the table, and after all refuse to partake; is he not insulting the man who invited him? Were it not better for such a one never to have come at all?"³⁴⁰ For the Christian, the fulfilment of the commandment "Observe the Lord's day, to keep it holy" (see *Ex* 20:8 and *Dt* 5:12) means to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and holy days. The Church encourages Christians to receive Communion as frequently as possible for the sake of their spiritual growth. But the apostle Paul teaches: "Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 *Cor* 11:28). In preparation for Communion, the faithful examine their conscience and observe the Eucharistic fast.

- 446 Christians partake of the Most Holy Eucharist "for the forgiveness of his or her sins and life everlasting." "Let us ... partake of the divine coal, in order that the fire of the longing that is in us, with the additional heat derived from the coal may utterly consume our sins and illumine our hearts, and that we may be inflamed and deified by the participation in the divine fire."³⁴¹ The condition for receiving Holy Communion worthily is a clean conscience, repentance for sins before God, and reconciliation with our neighbour: "[On] every Lord's day gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned."³⁴²

2. The Holy Mysteries of Healing

- 447 As a consequence of our first parents' fall, human will became weakened. The capacity to recognize and choose the good was also enfeebled. In their relations with God and neighbour and in their attitude towards themselves and their environment, human persons began to be guided not by love and self-giving but by an egotistic exploitation of the other for personal and consumeristic gain. A consequence of the Fall is the loss of every person's *wholeness*. This manifests itself in physical and spiritual suffering, in sickness and death.
- 448 Christ came into the world to heal and save the human race, to renew the wholeness lost by human persons. During his earthly life, Christ, the healer of human souls and bodies, remitted sins and healed the sick. After his Ascension, he continues to do this in his Church by the

³⁴⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 3, 5: PG 62, 29.

³⁴¹ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13: PG 94, 1149.

³⁴² *Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 14.

power of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Mysteries of Repentance and Holy Anointing.

a. The Holy Mystery of Repentance

- 449 The Holy Mystery of Repentance (or Confession) is a marvellous manifestation of God's love and mercy towards us sinners. This is because the Lord does not reject us and does not turn away from us when we, having been washed of our sins in Baptism and endowed with divine grace, sin again through malice or weakness. Indeed, the Lord awaits our repentance. He forgives us if we repent and confess our sins (see *Lk* 15:12-32).
- 450 In the celebration of the Holy Mystery of Repentance, the Church actualizes the words of the Lord to the apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (*Jn* 20:22-23). Every priest continues the apostolic ministry in the Mystery of Repentance when he absolves the faithful of their sins and reconciles them with the Church. The priest pronounces the prayer of absolution (the loosing from the bondage of sin) and every penitent thereby receives Christ's forgiveness.

1) Spiritual Struggle and Repentance

- 451 The vocation of the Christian to share in the life of Christ and to participate in his mission requires unceasing efforts in the spiritual struggle with passions and sins: "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (*Eph* 6:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian begins with the public renunciation of the devil and the joining to Christ in the Holy Mystery of Baptism. Subsequently, the strengthening of the Christian in his or her spiritual growth is realized through participation in the Mysteries of Repentance and the Eucharist.
- 452 In the spiritual struggle, the Christian is not 'left to fend for himself.' Rather, by the power of the Holy Spirit the Christian acts together with Christ (*in synergy*) under the Church's maternal care. Even though we have been called to grow gradually "to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (*Eph* 4:13), through human weakness we often go astray, lose hope in God's love, or freely and consciously cooperate with the powers of evil. Nevertheless, God does not turn away from the person who sinned. Instead, in his love and mercy he grants the possibility of repenting—that is, to return to the life that flows from Baptism:

“Remember, then, from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first” (*Rev* 2:5).

- 453 To repent means to come to know and confess one’s faults, and to renounce sin:

Those who confess their sins and accuse themselves for them already work with God. God accuses your sins: and if you also accuse them, you are united to God ... And when your own deeds will begin to displease you, from that time your good works begin, as you find fault with your own evil works. The confession of evil works is the beginning of good works: You are doing the truth, and coming to the light.³⁴³

- 454 Ongoing repentance is not about focusing on one’s faults and offenses. It is first of all about discovering God’s love. In the light of God’s love we realize to what extent sin separates us from him and prevents us from abiding in his love. “The one who sins does so because they do not appreciate the value and importance of God’s grace. To bring someone to repentance one must first of all clearly and fundamentally show them the magnitude of God’s gift, which they lose through grave sin.”³⁴⁴

- 455 Frequent Confession allows us to know not only our faults and offenses, but also our weaknesses and inclinations to sin. Through the grace of the Mystery of Repentance, the Christian overcomes sins and the tendency to sin. This grace also raises up the Christian after a fall, and strengthens him or her in the virtues. The fruits of repentance are good works, almsgiving, purity of heart, and sacrificial love. The gift of the Mystery of Repentance is forgiveness from God and reconciliation with him: “[Give] thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (*Col* 1:12-14).

2) *The Rite of Confession*

- 456 Confession is made before a priest, who is a witness of the sinner’s repentance and a mediator of God’s forgiveness:

Know, O child, that Christ himself, our Saviour, who knows all the hidden secrets of people’s hearts, is invisibly present, accepting your confession. Therefore do not conceal from me, whether from

³⁴³ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 12, 13: PL 35, 1491.

³⁴⁴ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *До духовенства* [Letter to the Clergy] (March 15, 1935).

shame or from fear, anything of your sins ... Beware that, having come for healing, you do not leave unhealed.³⁴⁵

At the same time, the priest helps penitents to know the state of their soul, confirms their faith in God's forgiveness, offers spiritual counsel, designates an appropriate spiritual remedy (in Greek, *epitimia*, i.e., penance), and gives the absolution. As regards the contents of a penitent's confession, the priest is obliged to maintain the strictest secrecy, even after the penitent's death.

- 457 Preparation for Confession requires a prayerful examination of one's conscience. This consists of aligning our life with the divine commandments, the Church's precepts, and the Gospel Beatitudes. Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches:

A good Confession requires, perhaps, a lengthier preparation. Before holy Confession we should beseech God in prayer for the gift of repentance, the gift of heartfelt tears. Maybe there is even a need to fast, since you know what Jesus Christ said: "This kind can come out only through prayer and fasting" [see *Mk* 9:29]. There are sins that cannot be expelled from the soul without fasting, without prayer.³⁴⁶

An important condition of Confession is sincere repentance, the desire to change one's life. This means having contrition, or sorrow for sins, and a resolution to make amends.³⁴⁷ Sincere repentance is first of all realizing that one is a sinner in need of God's forgiveness, and seeing that one's sins have caused a turning away from God and rejection of his love. An important requisite of Confession is also reconciliation with one's neighbour: "When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift" (*Mt* 5:23-24).

- 458 Approaching Confession, the penitent receives from the priest a blessing for the Confession. The penitent signs himself or herself with the sign of the holy cross. The penitent then sincerely confesses all the sins committed since the last Confession, and accepts the guidance of the confessor as

³⁴⁵ *Trebnik*, Rite of Confession (Lviv, 1761), f. 91v-93v.

³⁴⁶ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирське послання до тих, що на Пасху не сповідалися [Pastoral Letter to Those Who Did Not Confess at Pascha] (October 15, 1935).

³⁴⁷ The Prayerbook *Прійдіте поклонімся* [Come, Let Us Bow in Worship] lists five conditions necessary for a good Confession: 1) examination of conscience; 2) contrition for sins; 3) resolution to amend; 4) confessing the sins in the Rite of Confession; and 5) fulfilling the penance (*epitimia*; in Ukrainian: *pokuta*) designated by the confessor (Lviv, 1991), 128.

well as the assigned penance (*epitimia*). The priest then pronounces the absolution of sins. The *epitimia* is an ascetic exercise in virtues that are contrary to the sins that had been committed. The aim is to eradicate the habitual inclination to sin and to correct its consequences.

- 459 If a person has no desire to repent, and refuses to amend the damage caused by sin, he or she thereby becomes incapable of receiving forgiveness of sins, even if they have come to Confession. In order to help such a person understand their lack of repentance and motivate them to true conversion, the priest can refuse him or her absolution. Anyone intentionally concealing grave sins in Confession remains unhealed and commits a sin of sacrilege. If a person in such a state approaches Holy Communion, he or she offends the Lord and commits a grave sin.

3) The Significance of Confession in the Spiritual Life

- 460 In the Holy Mystery of Repentance, God grants the Christian growth in the grace of Baptism and the virtues. The closer we come to God, we see our own weaknesses and sinfulness more clearly and thus feel the need for more frequent Confession. According to the spiritual Fathers, if a person confesses rarely, he or she gradually loses the capacity to distinguish between good and evil, which has negative consequences for his or her whole life.
- 461 Frequent Confession makes a person spiritually sound, capable of resisting temptation; and it increases their vigour in the spiritual struggle. Appropriate occasions for Confession are the [four] fasts of the liturgical year, during which, according to Church custom, the whole family approaches the Holy Mystery of Confession.

b. The Mystery of Holy Anointing

1) Christ Heals Body and Soul

- 462 During his earthly ministry Christ taught in synagogues, proclaimed the Good News about the kingdom, and healed all sorts of ailments (see *Mt* 4:23). The preaching of the Gospel and the healing of the sick were signs of the coming of God's kingdom—overcoming the power of the devil and liberating people from sins. To the man presented to Christ by his friends who lowered him through the ceiling Jesus declared: "Son, your sins are forgiven" (*Mk* 2:5)—and he commanded him: "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home" (*Mk* 2:11). The friends brought the sick man, seeking healing for him. But Christ granted him both forgiveness of sins and healing.

- 463 Already in the Old Testament, those afflicted by illness recognized their finitude (that is, the limits of their existence) and reflected on how physical illness was related to sin. At the same time the sickness and suffering of the righteous person was able to become an occasion for expressing hope in the Lord and faithfulness to him (e.g. Job, Tobit). In illness, people turned to the Lord, seeking healing from him and confessing their sins before him (see *Ps* 6:3, 8; *Ps* 102[103]). In the New Testament, through his suffering and life-giving death, Jesus gives our suffering a new meaning: joined to his sufferings they become a means of purification and a path of salvation for ourselves and others.
- 464 Sending the twelve apostles to preach the Gospel, Jesus “gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness” (*Mt* 10:1). He promised that healings would accompany their preaching: “They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover” (*Mk* 16:18). Following Christ’s example, the apostles also enjoined prayers for the afflicted: “Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven” (*Jas* 5:14-15). The Church continues the Apostolic Tradition: it celebrates the Mystery of Holy Anointing for the healing of soul and body, and for the forgiveness of sins.
- 465 The Mystery of Holy Anointing, received at the time of suffering and illness, is celebrated in order to strengthen our faith in Christ’s victory over sin and death. In Holy Anointing, God grants the grace to renew a person’s inner wholeness—their healing and further spiritual growth. The apostle Paul teaches that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (*Rom* 8:28). Therefore our suffering and illness can have great spiritual value: “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (*Col* 1:24).
- 466 The Mystery of Holy Anointing is performed collegially, by the prayer of the whole Church, for the healing of soul and body. Its purpose is to strengthen trust in God and bestow forgiveness of sins as well as physical recovery. This is why the Mystery is administered to the sick and not only to the dying. By the power of the grace of the Mystery of Holy Anointing, the sick person becomes capable of seeing their illness in the light of Divine Providence and receives the strength to bear their illness and overcome it. By changing his or her attitude toward the illness, the afflicted person joins their own suffering to the salvific sufferings of Christ.

467 In the Mystery of Holy Anointing, by the prayer of the Church, the sick person receives forgiveness of sins. This Mystery, however, does not replace the Mystery of Confession. Nonetheless, if the one anointed repents but for some reason does not have an opportunity to approach the Mystery of Confession, they receive forgiveness of sins. The Church teaches that the Mystery of Holy Anointing grants spiritual healing, even if physical recovery does not accompany it.

2) *The Rite of Holy Anointing*

468 The celebration of the Mystery of Holy Anointing takes place in the church or where the sick person lies. If possible, the Mystery is to be celebrated by several priests (the liturgical prescriptions call for seven). This is intended to manifest the prayer of the whole Church (such is the meaning of one of the Slavonic names for the Mystery, *soboruvannia*). The Rite of Holy Anointing includes the consecration of oil, readings from the Epistles and the Gospels, and anointing of the afflicted. Consecrating the oil, a substance traditionally used for medicinal purposes, the priest invokes upon it the power of God. He asks that “those who are anointed by it may be healed and protected from all suffering, and defilement of flesh and spirit.”³⁴⁸ The readings from Scripture proclaim the victory of Christ over sin, illness, and death. As he anoints the sick person (on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, ears, lips, cheeks, breast, hands, and feet), the priest pronounces the solemn supplicatory prayer to God the Father, in which he entreats him “to heal [the ailing] from the physical and spiritual illness that afflicts him (her) and restore him (her) to health by the grace of Christ through the intercession of ... the Mother of God ... and all the saints.”

469 The rite concludes with the placing of the Gospel Book on the head of the afflicted, as a sign that Christ the Lord himself places his holy hand on the sick person for healing and the forgiveness of sins. After the conclusion of the Rite of Anointing the sick person receives Communion of the Holy Gifts, the “medicine of immortality.” Those present at the celebration of this Mystery pray for the sick person, fulfilling the apostolic injunction: “pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (*Jas* 5:16).

³⁴⁸ *Trebnik*, Rite of Holy Anointing, The Prayer over the Oil.

3. The Holy Mysteries of Service: Marriage and Holy Orders

470 In the Holy Mysteries of Marriage and Holy Orders, the Christian receives the grace of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ. In the Holy Mystery of Marriage, the Church blesses a man and woman called by Christ to create a *domestic church*—a Christian family. In the mystery of Holy Orders the Church, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, appoints men, called by Christ for the service of the community of the faithful to proclaim the Gospel, to be pastors for the People of God, and to sanctify them. The perfect model of service both in Matrimony and in Holy Orders is Christ, who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28).

a. The Holy Mystery of Marriage

471 God created human beings male and female: “By you, O God, a woman is joined to man as a helpmate and for the continuance of the human race ... you blessed them, saying: ‘increase and multiply and rule the earth.’ Through wedlock you made the two of them one body.”³⁴⁹ In the Church, the marriage union is a Holy Mystery in which the man and woman manifest the new life in Christ. A Christian marriage is not only a natural relationship, a shared life and experience; it is an occasion of sanctification. Marriage is a Holy Mystery (Sacrament) in which by the grace of the Holy Spirit a man and a woman are united into *one body* and create a *domestic church*. The family union created by marriage is a community of persons which, according to God’s plan, is an icon of the relationship of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

1) Marriage Is a Mystery of Love between a Man and a Woman

472 Marriage is based on the fact that the married couple mutually complements one another. The Church gives witness to this in a prayer of the Rite of Crowning: “Holy God, you created man from the dust and from his side fashioned a woman as a suitable helpmate for him, for such was the good pleasure of your majesty that man should not be alone on earth.”³⁵⁰ In their gender differentiation, a man and woman complete one another, creating an indissoluble union of *one body*.

³⁴⁹ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, Second Prayer for the Betrothed; First Prayer for the Crowning.

³⁵⁰ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, Second Prayer.

473 Through marriage the Lord accomplishes the history of salvation:

You blessed your servant Abraham when you opened Sarah's womb and made him the father of many nations [see *Gn* 12:1-13; 17:1-22; 18:1-16; 21:1-8; *Rom* 4:18]. You gave Rebecca to Isaac and blessed her childbearing [see *Gn* 24-25; 27]. You joined Jacob and Rachel and brought forth the twelve patriarchs from him [see *Gn* 29-31; 35]. You united Joseph and Asenath and gave them Ephrem and Manasseh, the fruit of their procreation [see *Gn* 41:44-52; 46:20]. You joined Zachariah and Elizabeth and gave them the Precursor of your own most pure Birth as their offspring [see *Lk* 1:5-25, 39-80]. From the root of Jesse, according to the flesh, you made the Ever-Virgin spring forth, and from her you became incarnate and were born for the salvation of the human race.³⁵¹

474 In Cana of Galilee, Christ "saw fit in [his] saving providence to show by [his] presence how precious marriage is."³⁵² He "blessed the wedding there to show that lawful marriage and its procreation are [his] will."³⁵³

475 Christian marriage is founded on Christ's commandment of love: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (*Jn* 13:34). The apostle Paul enjoins the husband to love his wife "as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (*Eph* 5:25). He then enjoins the wife to regard her husband as she regards the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church (see *Eph* 5:22-25). This is possible because the husband and wife are united in love not only with each other, but also with Christ. Granting their love to each other, they grant it to Christ, and granting it to Christ, they grant it to each other. In this mutual gift of love they grow together into one Body of Christ (see *Eph* 5:31-32).

476 Marriage as a union of love between a man and a woman derives from the very nature of the human person: "Indeed from the beginning, God appears to have made special provision for this union; and referring to the two as one, he said: 'Male and female he created them.'"³⁵⁴ "The mutual marital love of a husband and wife is the power and foundation for the growth of strong families and the creation of healthy societies."³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, First Prayer.

³⁵² *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, Third Prayer.

³⁵³ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, First Prayer.

³⁵⁴ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 20, 1: PG 62, 135.

³⁵⁵ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* [On the Apostolate of the Laity], 11.

2) *The Rite of Crowning*

- 477 The Rite of Crowning is preceded by the Betrothal. In the narthex of the church, those intending to marry declare their decision before the priest. As a sign of their betrothal, he places a ring on the hand of each and pronounces the words of prayer: “O Lord our God ... Bless now the betrothal of your servants. Affirm the words spoken by them and strengthen them with the sacred unity that comes from you ... Confirm their betrothal in faith and harmony, in truth and love.” The rings symbolize the power of the Lord’s love, which fortifies the love of the betrothed. The Church prays that “the angel [of the Lord] go before them all the days of their lives.”³⁵⁶
- 478 The priest leads the betrothed into the church as the following words are sung: “Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways” (*Ps* 127[128]:1). Then, just as at the Divine Liturgy, he begins the Rite of Crowning. He solemnly exclaims: “Blessed be the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This exclamation indicates the intimate connection between the Holy Mystery of Marriage and the Holy Eucharist, by the grace of which the bride and groom become one body.

The Eucharist is the perfecting of each divine service and the seal of every divine Mystery. The Church does well in preparing the Holy Gifts for the union and blessing of the married couple. This is because Christ himself, who gave us these gifts, and himself is these gifts, came to the wedding [at Cana of Galilee] to bring them [the betrothed] union in peace and harmony. Thus, those who unite in marriage should be worthy of Holy Communion. They should be joined before God in the church—the house of God—because they are children of God.³⁵⁷

- 479 Then, the betrothed, placing their hands upon the Gospel Book, make their wedding vows before God. These are promises of “love, fidelity, and honour in marriage.” They commit not to leave each other “until death.” However, the steadfast foundation of the marriage union is not only the consent of the betrothed, but first of all the power of God: “Stretch forth Your hand now, O Master, from your holy dwelling place and join this your servant (name) with your handmaid (name), for it is you who join a man and a woman.” It is from the Lord that come all the gifts that create and strengthen this union: “Bind them together in oneness of mind, crown them for love, unite them into one flesh, and

³⁵⁶ *Trebnyk*, Rite of Crowning, Third Prayer over the Betrothed.

³⁵⁷ SYMEON OF THESSALONICA, *On Marriage*, 282: PG 155, 512.

grant them the fruit of the womb and fine children.”³⁵⁸ The priest confirms the vows of the bride and groom with the words: “What God has joined together, let no one separate” (*Mk* 10:9).

- 480 The priest completes the rite by crowning the groom and bride, blessing them thrice, and proclaiming: “Lord our God, crown them with glory and honour.” The crowns are a symbol of the dignity of human persons—men and women—created “a little while lower than the angels,” with everything put in subjection under their feet (see *Ps* 8:6-7; see *Heb* 2:7) and called by God to be co-creators with him, receiving progeny from him. The crowns are also a symbol of the couple’s victory over sensual desire during courtship: they subjected their bodily passions to marital love. Likewise, they symbolize the crowns of martyrdom, testifying to a fidelity to Christ’s love unto death.
- 481 The asceticism of Christian marriage is also presented in the troparia sung before the removal of the crowns. In the first troparion we hear the words: “Dance, Isaiah: the Virgin has conceived in her womb and has borne a Son, Emmanuel, who is God and man...” The Church rejoices in the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah about Emmanuel—God-with-us—coming into the new marriage and dwelling there as in a domestic church. In the second troparion, “O holy martyrs, you suffered gloriously and have received your crowns...,” the Church asks the holy martyrs for their intercession. She prays that Christ, the “apostles’ boast and the martyrs’ joy” (as sung in the third troparion), become the boast and joy of this couple, so that in their marriage they may imitate the sacrificial love of the martyrs and proclaim the consubstantial Trinity.
- 482 Removing the crowns from their heads, the priest prays that Christ would receive the couple’s crowns in his kingdom, and “keep them unblemished, undefiled, and unassailed for ever and ever.” This is a sign that by the power of Christ the marital love of the couple is stronger than death and will endure for ages. The Rite of Crowning concludes with the blessing of the couple in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, of whom they are called to be an icon.

3) *The Rite of Second Crowning*

- 483 Love does not cease with the death of one of the spouses. Love is stronger than death. The Church encourages the widower or widow to preserve fidelity to the deceased partner as an indication of their unique relationship. As testimony to the eternity of their love, it invites them to abstain from a second marriage (see *1 Cor* 7:40). If, however, it is too burden-

³⁵⁸ *Trebnik*, Rite of Crowning, Prayer before the Crowning.

some for the widower or widow to remain without a marital relationship, the Church can give a blessing for a second crowning. When a widower marries a widow (that is, when both of the spouses have previously been married), the Church blesses their marriage with a special Rite of Second Crowning. Some of the prayers of this Rite have a penitential character. The priest prays: "Cleanse the iniquities of your servants who find themselves unable to bear the heat and the daily burden of passion, and so are coming together in second marriage. Such was the injunction you gave through your apostle Paul"³⁵⁹ (see 1 *Cor* 7:9; 7:39).

4) The Rite of Blessing of a Couple on Their Twenty-fifth or Fiftieth Anniversary

- 484 The holy Church highly values the witness of those married couples who have shared their lives together for twenty-five, fifty, or seventy-five years. She solemnly and publicly blesses them, thanking the Lord for their witness to mutual fidelity and love, and presents them as a living model for other married couples.

b. The Holy Mystery of Orders

- 485 In his love for humankind, God the Father "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (*Jn* 3:16-17). The Son of God, Jesus Christ, calls himself the Good Shepherd: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (*Jn* 10:11). Christ fulfils in himself God's promise of the *one Shepherd* for the People of God: "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd" (*Ez* 34:23). Christ passes on his pastorship to his chosen apostles whom he called, and also to their successors. This he does so that through them he would continue to remain in the Church and lead it.

1) The Priesthood of Christ

- 486 Christ, as the God-man, renewed the bond between God and the human race, becoming the sole Mediator between God and humanity (see 1 *Tim* 2:5). Ascending to heaven in his human nature, he was revealed as the Intercessor for us before the face of God (see *Heb* 9:24). Christ is the eternal Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek." This means

³⁵⁹ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Second Crowning, Second prayer.

that Christ “has become a priest not through a legal requirement concerning physical [bodily] descent [from Aaron] but through the power of an indestructible life” (*Heb* 7:16), because mediation in him is perfect and abiding. Having brought himself as an offering of reconciliation on the cross, Christ was at once the Priest and the Offering. That is why his sacrifice, offered once for all, is perfect (see *Heb* 7:27).

- 487 By his life-giving Death and Resurrection, Christ destroyed the enmity between humankind and God (see *Eph* 2:14). And he desired that the blessings of the salvific fruits of these actions continue to be available through the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) to every person—until he comes in glory. That is why Christ establishes the hierarchical priesthood in the Church. He did so at the Mystical Supper, when he gave the command to repeat the memorial of his Death and Resurrection (see *Lk* 22:19), and then after his Resurrection, when he gave his apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins (see *Jn* 20:22-23).
- 488 The priesthood of Christ is the actualization in the Church of Christ’s mediation and intercession through persons chosen by God. In the Mystery of Holy Orders, the sacred ministers receive the grace of the Holy Spirit to exercise Christ’s priesthood in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and pastoral service. In all of the sacred minister’s service “it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock ... Teacher of Truth.”³⁶⁰ But pre-eminently in the Eucharistic offering, the sacred minister acts in the name of Christ, the Supreme and Eternal High Priest.³⁶¹ The sacred minister also acts “in the name of the whole Church presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.”³⁶²

2) *Apostolic Succession*

- 489 Christ transmits to the apostles the realization of his salvific action in the world. He entrusts his Church to them when he says to Peter: “Tend my sheep ... Feed my sheep” (*Jn* 21:16-17). Explaining these words, Saint John Chrysostom says: “The Master desired to teach Peter ... how much he himself loved his own Church ... and all of us that we also should show great care for her.”³⁶³ The apostles pass this mission on to their successors: “Tend the flock of God that is in your charge ... Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And

³⁶⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1548.

³⁶¹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 10.

³⁶² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1552.

³⁶³ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *On the Priesthood*, 2, 1: PG 48, 631.

when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away” (1 *Pt* 5:2-4). The apostle Paul enjoined on his disciple Timothy the responsibility of appointing successors through the laying on of hands (see 1 *Tim* 5:22), and he commanded him to transmit to them the Apostolic Teaching: “What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 *Tim* 2:2).

- 490 Establishing new Christian communities, the apostles placed at their head *presbyters* (from the Greek, meaning *elders*) or *bishops* (from the Greek, meaning *overseers* or *guardians*) (see *Acts* 14:23; 20:17, 28; *Phil* 1:1), while *deacons* (from the Greek, meaning *servants*) were appointed for daily service “at tables” (see *Acts* 6:1-6). Saint Clement of Rome bears witness to Apostolic Succession:

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. . . . The apostles appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.³⁶⁴

3) *The Hierarchical Priesthood*

- 491 Priestly ministry in the Church has a hierarchical structure, the essence of which is most fully manifested in the celebration of the Eucharist. In the Eucharistic assembly the *bishop*, as successor of the apostles, presides; the *presbyters* concelebrate with the bishop, while the *deacons* assist the bishop and the presbyters. Saint Ignatius of Antioch stresses the importance of the hierarchical ministry in the Church: “I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ.”³⁶⁵ “Apart from these [i.e., the bishops, presbyters, and deacons] there is no Church.”³⁶⁶
- 492 The fullness of pastoral ministry is given to the bishops. They are heirs to the fullness of the apostolic ministry, that is, to the fullness of the grace of the priesthood. In his eparchy, the bishop is the one who has primary responsibility for teaching the Word of God, leading the People of God, and sanctifying them. The sanctifying ministry particular to a bishop is the ordination of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, the

³⁶⁴ CLEMENT OF ROME, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 42: PG 1, 292.

³⁶⁵ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Magnesians*, 6, 1: PG 5, 668.

³⁶⁶ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Trallians*, 3, 1: PG 5, 677.

consecration of Holy Chrism, and the consecration of antimensia. Presbyters, appointed by bishops at the head of parish communities, celebrate the divine services and teach and lead the flocks entrusted to them. They celebrate the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Repentance, Holy Anointing, and Crowning, and also other blessings and consecrations for the needs of the faithful. The deacons are placed by the bishop for liturgical service with the bishop or presbyter, but also for other ministries related to teaching and assisting the People of God in their needs, especially the poor and the sick.

- 493 In the Church hierarchy's pastoral ministry, that is, in the hierarchy's royal ministry (leadership), prophetic ministry (teaching), and priestly ministry (sanctifying), it is the pastorship of Christ that is realized. The Church's hierarchy fulfils these three ministries within the community and for the community. It does so in the name of Christ and his Church.

4) The Rites of Ordination of Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop

- 494 The ordination of a deacon, presbyter, or bishop takes place during the Divine Liturgy. This is accomplished by the bishop's laying on of hands (in Greek, *cheirotomia*) and the prayer of the Church. Laying his hand on the man being ordained, the bishop invokes upon him the grace of the Holy Spirit. Ordaining a presbyter, the bishop declares: "Divine grace, which always heals the infirm and completes that which is lacking, places the devout deacon in the presbyterate. Let us therefore pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit descend upon him, and let us all say: Lord, have mercy." The prayer of the bishop is joined by the prayer of the Church. By the repeated acclamation *Axios!* (in Greek, meaning *worthy*), the community affirms that through divine grace the one ordained has become worthy of the presbyteral ministry. Just as Baptism and Chrismation, ordination to any hierarchical order confers an indelible seal of grace; therefore, such ordination can be received only once in a lifetime.
- 495 In the prayers for a deacon's ordination,³⁶⁷ the Church asks that the newly ordained deacon, following the example of the protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen, be abundantly granted the faith, love, strength, and sanctity needed to fulfil his ministry in the community. As a sign of this ministry, the bishop gives to the newly ordained: diaconal vestments, a censer, a ripidion (liturgical fan), and, according to custom, a Gospel Book.

³⁶⁷ *Arhieratikon*, Ordination of a Deacon.

- 496 A particularity of a presbyter's ordination is that before the ordination the candidate professes the Symbol of Faith and makes a vow of obedience to his bishop. The presbyteral ministry consists of the following: "to stand worthily and blamelessly before the holy altar, proclaim the Holy Gospel, offer gifts and spiritual sacrifices, and renew the people in the font of rebirth, and perform other ecclesial ministries."³⁶⁸
- 497 At the ordination of a bishop, which requires no less than three other bishops, the candidate declares a profession of faith in which he expounds in detail the Church's doctrine about the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Holy Mysteries. This is because the bishop is the teacher and the one who proclaims the Gospel to his flock. Through the ordaining bishop, the Church asks Christ that the one receiving the grace of the high-priesthood may become "an imitator of the true Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep; a guide to the blind; a light to those in darkness; discipline for the unwise and a teacher to children; a beacon in the world; that he may lead to perfection the souls entrusted to him."³⁶⁹ Symeon of Thessalonica explains that through ordination, the bishop, as the head of the local Church entrusted to him, "accepts as a bride the one who is the bride of Christ," that is, the Church. "This is because [Christ] taught us that pastoral care and concern for her is evidence of love for him."³⁷⁰ The close bond established between the newly ordained shepherd and his flock is expressed several times during his ordination by the explicit naming of the local Church (eparchy) to which he is ordained. The presence of no less than three ordaining bishops, that is, bishops of other eparchies, bears witness to the bond that exists between local Churches. The Church's unity is thus manifested.
- 498 Besides the hierarchical ministry, the Church also established other ministries. The established ranks of these are: candle-bearer, lector or singer (cantor), and subdeacon. These individuals are all called ministers of the Church. Those who have received ordination to a lower order and have attained perfection in that ministry may be ordained into a higher order. Each of the orders is an expression of the variety of gifts of the Holy Spirit for service in the Church.

³⁶⁸ *Arhieraticon*, Ordination of a Presbyter.

³⁶⁹ *Arhieraticon*, Ordination of a Bishop, Prayer after the Litany of Peace.

³⁷⁰ SYMEON OF THESSALONICA, *On Holy Ordination*, 196: PG 155, 436.

5) *Fostering Vocations to the Priesthood in the Church*

- 499 A vocation to the priesthood is God's gift to an ecclesial community and at the same time the fruit of the spiritual life of a community—the family and the parish. That is why the Church prays ceaselessly for good and holy vocations to the priestly ministry. The Church provides appropriate preparation for those called by God. This is so that they can be open to receive the grace of the priesthood—to serve God's people. During this preparation, the candidate grows in the spirit of prayer, knowledge of the Church's teaching, and skill in leading others on the path of salvation. Responsibility for the preparedness of the candidate to the priesthood lies with the bishop, who entrusts him with a ministry in the Church. The ecclesial community, for its part, upholds him in his ministry:

For the good shepherd, who is such as Christ wishes for, is compared to a thousand martyrs. For the martyr died once for Christ; but this man dies ten thousand times for the flock, if, that is, he be such a shepherd as he ought to be; for such a one can die every day. And therefore you [i.e., the laity], being acquainted with what the labour is, cooperate with him, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may be able to boast of you, and you of us.³⁷¹

D. Special Occasional Prayers, Blessings, and Consecrations

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
(1 Tim 2:1–4)

- 500 Special occasional prayers or services (grouped under the category called *treby* in Ukrainian) are an entreaty to God, to the Virgin Mother of God, or to the saints for care, protection, or intercession. They can be for either the ecclesial community or individuals. In these prayers the Church, like a compassionate Mother caring for her children, whether living or deceased, prays for their salvation. Through these prayers of the Church our vocation to sanctify every aspect of our life—that is, to fill it with the memory of God's presence in all—is realized.

³⁷¹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans* 29, 5: PG 60, 660.

1. Consecrations and Blessings

- 501 The Holy Spirit, who is “everywhere present and fills all things,” gives life to the faithful and sanctifies them both in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and in diverse blessings and consecrations. Through them the transfiguring power of the Risen Christ continues to work in us and all creation. The Church instituted these different consecrations and blessings according to the needs of the people. These consecrations and blessings, of every human need, together with the rites of the Holy Mysteries, comprise the liturgical book called the *Trebnyk* (Euchology).

a. Consecrations

- 502 The *consecrations* that the Church performs are realized by the grace-filled action of the Holy Spirit through the prayer of the community of the faithful. The Church consecrates persons for a particular service to God. It also sanctifies different objects, thereby removing them from everyday use and designating them for liturgical use. The consecration of persons or material objects brings about in them a greater nearness to God. This will continue until all has been united in Christ as Head in his glorious second coming, when all will be manifestly glorified (see *Eph* 1:10). The consecrations of people and things that the Church performs now are signs of that full glorification in the future. The Church consecrates persons to ecclesial ministry in the orders of candle-bearer, reader, cantor, and subdeacon. The attainment to each of these orders is testimony to the attainment of a spiritual maturity required for each ecclesial ministry. The interior readiness to *shine* with faith and render service by the word is symbolized by the objects used during the consecrations, such as a candle or the Epistle Book.

b. Monasticism

- 503 Consecration to the monastic life corresponds to the three stages of spiritual growth: a beginning, the consolidation, and perfection—or the novitiate, monastic life, and the *schema* (that is, perpetual vows). The rites and prayers of the small schema (gradual introduction into the monastic or consecrated life), as well as those of the great schema, are the source for our understanding of the monastic state and its profound significance. These are: the calling from God, a renunciation of the world and of all that is in the world, and a lifelong following of Christ for the sake of the heavenly kingdom in the spirit of the monastic or religious community’s founders. Various signs and symbols convey this meaning. Among those signs and symbols are the vesting, the tonsure, reception

of the Rule; the habit, the veil or *skufia*, the *paraman*, the prayer-rope (chotki/rosary), the candle, the cross, etc. All of these visible signs and symbols indicate the internal readiness of a person to radically devote himself or herself to live at the service of God and Church according to the evangelical counsels and Beatitudes. The consecrated person is received by the Church and enjoined to attend wholeheartedly to the matters of God within their order or congregation. By their example, they are to be a sign of the heavenly kingdom toward which the People of God are striving. The rite of initiation into the monastic (consecrated) life is an integral part of the liturgical tradition of the Church. Thus, it is usually joined to the Divine Liturgy.

- 504 The Church consecrates the places where the faithful gather or live (church buildings, chapels, homes), as well as places of their repose (cemeteries). In the churches themselves, all the articles and furnishings of liturgical use (icons, crosses, the altar, church bells, etc.) are necessarily consecrated. Through such consecration “the life of the world to come” is manifested in this world and reveals that “this world” has a future. Consecrated by the Church, the world of people and nature become a sign of the new world, transfigured by grace.

c. Blessings

- 505 A blessing is an action of God for the good of human persons and their salvation. God blesses Adam and Eve so that they might grow and multiply (see *Gn* 1:28); and after the Flood he blesses Noah (see *Gn* 9:1). God blesses Abraham to become a blessing for all the nations of the earth (see *Gn* 12:2-3). This divine blessing is realized in Jesus Christ (see *Gal* 3:14-16). Through the liturgical act of blessing, the Church communicates the blessing of Christ to the whole world. When the priest blesses with his hand, he configures his fingers to form the letters IC XC, which is the Greek abbreviation for “Jesus Christ.” This means that through the priest it is the Lord who blesses, “because it is not the human being that blesses, but God who blesses by his hand and words.”³⁷²
- 506 The Church, as a caring Mother, embraces persons with prayers and blessings on the very first day that they come into the world. She then prays on the eighth day after birth, when they receive their name, and also blesses the mother and child with special prayers on the fortieth day. When children begin going to school the Church blesses their educational endeavours. If a couple does not have children, the Church blesses them for fertility with a blessing of the nuptial bed. Those striv-

³⁷² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 2 Corinthians*, 2, 8: PG 61, 404.

ing on the path of sanctification in marriage³⁷³ are blessed by the Church on the twenty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries of their marriage. When people are sick, the Church prays at their bedside; and she accompanies the dying with “Prayers at the Soul’s Separation from the Body.”

- 507 When people suffer from drought, intemperate weather, or other natural calamities, the Church appeals to God for help in these trials. In that which concerns the procuring of “daily bread,” the Church blesses the circumstances and means of people’s labour: fields, buildings, and farms. Desiring that people might possess material means according to their needs, the Church blesses bread, wheat, wine, and oil during the Lytia service of Vespers. In the past, these gifts were distributed to the needy on the eve of Church feasts, so that they too might be able to participate in the celebration.
- 508 In blessing medicinal herbs on the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Church blesses people for their health and for protection against infirmities. In blessing the first fruits of the new harvest, the Church blesses the consumption of God’s gifts derived from the earth. Likewise, in blessing bread, meat, butter, cheese, and eggs on Pascha (Easter), the Church blesses the consumption of the fruit of people’s labour.
- 509 On the feast of the Encounter of our Lord, the Church blesses candles to remind us of Christ, who is “light for revelation to the nations” (see *Lk* 2:32). On Palm Sunday she blesses branches to remind us to adorn ourselves with “the branches of virtues.” With these we greet Christ’s coming. The Church teaches the need to love God’s creation when she consecrates water at Theophany (Jordan), when she decorates homes with greenery at Pentecost, and adorns churches with the best creations of church art. All of this is done so that every person might understand that every moment of their lives is God’s blessing—a gift from God for the sanctification and salvation of this life.

2. Services for the Deceased

- 510 In funeral rites and memorial services, the Church asks the merciful God to forgive the deceased their sins and to grant their souls “repose in the land of the living, in the place of light, where all the saints and righteous have their rest.” For this the Church also makes “atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin” (2 *Mc* 12:45).

³⁷³ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1642.

a. Christian Funeral

*Give graciously to all the living;
do not withhold even kindness from the dead.
(Sir 7:33)*

- 511 Christians view death in the light of Christ's victory over Death in his Resurrection. This is expressed in a special way when the funeral of a Christian occurs during the Paschal season and the troparion of Pascha is sung over the deceased: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs giving life." The joy of Christ's Resurrection is the divine answer to the sorrow of a person's death.
- 512 A Christian funeral is always filled with hope for the person's resurrection in the flesh. This is why the body of the deceased is censed, sprinkled with holy water, and otherwise shown reverence; and it is why it is carried solemnly to the church and cemetery. Those participating in the funeral procession accompany the deceased with their joint prayers to the place of burial. The hope of Christians for eternal life is expressed in the singing "Everlasting memory" which refers to God's "remembrance" of the person. To be embraced by that memory is to remain in eternal life.
- 513 In keeping with the words of Scripture: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (*Gn 3:19*), the body of the deceased is returned to the earth. According to a widespread Ukrainian custom, the body rests in the ground with the head facing the east, where the sun rises. It thus awaits the coming of Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness." Over the grave is placed a cross. This is a sign of the beginning of the victory over death, won by Christ's death on the cross.
- 514 There are four distinct Rites of Burial: for priests, monastics, laypersons, and children. The rite for priests is used for bishops as well as priests; the rite for laypersons is served for all those baptized and chrismated, including deacons; and the rite for children is celebrated for children up to the age of seven.
- 515 The funeral rite for a priest includes numerous readings from Scripture. These and the profound verses about the sense of human life are a sort of *spiritual testament*, a final homily of the deceased pastor addressed to the living.
- 516 The funeral rite for monks, which is used at all stages and forms of the monastic life—for novices, monks, and priest-monks—differs from other funeral services in the prescriptions concerning the preparation

and the vesting of the body. As for the texts, they speak of the renunciation of the world, monastic dedication, the vows, and separation from the monastic community.

- 517 The texts (stichera) of the funeral rite for laypersons describe the tragedy of death that resulted from the Fall. But the Christian answer to death is heard in the singing of the evangelical Beatitudes. Then, during the *final kiss*—the Christian parting with the deceased—sorrow is joined to hope. The funeral service concludes with the Panakhyda (brief memorial service) at the cemetery and the sealing of the grave “until the second and glorious coming of Christ.”
- 518 The funeral for a child offers words of consolation to the parents, and expressions of faith that God has received the child to himself. This rite does not include prayers for the forgiveness of sins. Children of this age are without sin and possess the innocence of Adam prior to his Fall.

b. Commemoration of the Deceased

*For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again,
it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead.*
(2 Mc 12:44)

- 519 At death, a person leaves this world and stands before God. For a worthy encounter with the Lord, the deceased needs the prayerful support of the living, as well as the intercession of the most holy Mother of God, their guardian angel, and of all the saints. That is why at the notification of death, the family and friends of the deceased gather around (in Greek, *parastasis*) to pray for him or her. Thus, the prayerful commemoration of the deceased begins with the *parastas* service. Subsequently, throughout the night, according to Christian custom, the Psalter is read for the repose of a layperson, and the Gospel for a priest and bishop.
- 520 According to ancient custom, on the day of the funeral, the family and neighbours gather after the services at the home of the deceased [or elsewhere] to prayerfully commemorate him or her at a common meal (in Slavonic, *tryzna*) and to console the bereaved family. Subsequent commemorations are made in the church on the ninth and fortieth days and at every anniversary of the death. Such Christian commemoration overcomes the separation between the living and the deceased.
- 521 The Church also designates other days for commemoration of the deceased. Every Saturday is a day when we remember them together with all the saints. Then there is Meatfare Saturday, as well as the second,

third, and fourth Saturdays of Great Lent, along with the Saturday before Pentecost, which are days of “universal, or general, commemoration of the deceased.” These commemorations occur on Saturdays because the Saviour of the world rested in the grave on Great and Holy Saturday, awaiting the Resurrection. Thus, Saturday became for Christians the day for commemorating the deceased, who await the resurrection on the last day. There is also a custom of commemorating all the departed of a locality or a parish on the day following a church’s patronal feast. This is an additional sign of the unity of the living and the deceased in a parish. During the days of Pascha and Pentecost, the parish community gathers at the cemetery to pray at the graves of the departed and to share with them the joy of Christ’s Resurrection and new life. The cemetery is a hallowed place; and when it is ordered and cared for, it is evidence of a proper attitude of the living toward the deceased.

3. Exorcism

- 522 Holy Tradition refers to the devil and his angels as the enemies of the human race and the adversaries of salvation. The severest instance of the devil’s domination over a person is called *possession*. To free a person from diabolical possession, the Church uses special prayers in a rite for the casting out of the devil. The rite is called an exorcism. Only an actual exorcist, a priest designated for this service by the blessing of the bishop, can perform this rite. Through the prayer of the exorcist, divine grace frees the person from the power of the Evil One.
- 523 God only *allows* diabolical possession because of a sinful and unrepentant life or because of other reasons, such as a person’s willingness to become physically or psychologically dependent on “the wiles of the Evil One.” But even if the devil gains power over the body and the will of a possessed person, the devil can never obliterate the image of God in them. Thus, by the prayers of the Church, the possessed can always be freed from the power of the devil.

4. Other Prayer Services

a. The Akathist Hymn

- 524 Among the most widely celebrated services of worship in our Church, outside the daily cycle, is the *Akathist Hymn*. The word *akathistos* is a Greek term meaning literally *non-sitting* (*hymn*). It designates a special type of song of praise in honour of Christ, the Mother of God, or the

saints, the solemnity of which is stressed by the standing prayer posture. Akathists can be celebrated communally in church or privately. Traditionally akathists are composed of twelve songs that comprise twenty-four strophes. This number corresponds to the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet. Each letter begins a new strophe, forming an acrostic, that is, a phrase derived from the first letters of each verse. This phrase conveys the akathist's contents.

- 525 Each of the songs of the akathist consists of (i) a *kontakion*, which announces the theme of the prayer and concludes with "Alleluia;" and (ii) an *oikos*, which elaborates on the announced theme. The entire akathist ends with a repetition of the *oikos* and *kontakion* of the first song. In this way, the uninterrupted duration of Christian prayer—where the "end" becomes a new "beginning"—is expressed.
- 526 The most ancient among the known akathists is that dedicated to the most holy Mother of God. It is sung at Matins on the fifth Saturday of Great Lent, but it is chanted on other days of the liturgical year. Following the model of this akathist, other akathists were composed to the Most Holy Trinity, to Jesus Christ, to the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of Christ, and to the angels and saints. There are also akathists in honour of wonder-working icons and even for spiritual needs (for the deceased, in preparation before Communion, and others).
- 527 Akathists to Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, and to the saints combine a prayerful exchange with the holy person along with a commemoration of events of their life and a theological interpretation of these events. They also include the prayer of the heart through the rhythmic repetition of key words such as "Alleluia" and "Rejoice."

b. Prayer Services of Intercession and Thanksgiving (Molebens)

- 528 A prayer-service (in Ukrainian, *moleben*; in Greek, *paraklesis*, meaning *advocacy* or *consolation*) is a thanksgiving or intercessory service addressed to Christ, the Mother of God, or the saints. It is served on the occasion of particular events in the life of the ecclesial community, society at large, or individual persons and their needs. In these intercessory prayer-services we ask for God's mercy, protection, and help. In thanksgiving, or praise services, we thank God for his gracious deeds. These prayer services are offered in conjunction with joyous events—or tragic episodes—in the life of a nation. The thanksgiving can be for graces received from God, while prayers for protection can relate to natural disasters (droughts, floods, and famines) or enemy invasions and the like. Frequently, the faithful request such services in connection with diverse

circumstances in their lives, for example, the health of a sick person. Prayer-services (molebens) are also celebrated on the occasion of particular events in the life of an ecclesial community. Thus they can take place during the patronal feast of a church or on saints' feast days.

- 529 The variety of prayer-services (molebens) is grounded in the desire to render human activity spiritual, to engage in it with God's help and blessing. Replete with intercessions, these services have the character of insistent, profound prayer, which unites those praying in a moving love for God and one another.

c. Christmas and Theophany Carols, Religious Hymns (Chorales)

- 530 Indigenous original compositions of sung prayer began to appear on the territory of Rus-Ukraine from the beginnings of Christianity there. Elements of the Old Rus culture were aptly adapted to express the Christian Good News. A particular example of such inculturation is Christmas and Theophany carols. Under Christian influence, folk carols became the re-telling in song of the birth of the God-man from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. Recognizing the true God in Jesus Christ, "heaven and earth" and "angels and people" join in jubilation. The universal joy of all creation is expressed in the images of the sun, moon, and stars, which, like all creation, come to worship the Divine Infant.
- 531 On the eve of Theophany, the Baptism of Christ, special carols of this feast are added to the usual Christmas carols. In Ukrainian they are called *shchedrivky*, from the word for *generous*. The Ukrainian name alludes to the fact that the Theophany in the Jordan River became the *generous* source of the Christian life, from which in turn flow all of God's good gifts: happiness, health, longevity, and the like. Such, in fact, are the good wishes mentioned in these carols and the accompanying greetings.
- 532 The people's faith in Christ and the Mother of God has also found prayerful expression in other folk-religious songs—the metric hymns, or chorales (in Ukrainian, *kanty*). A vivid example of such a prayer-hymn is the *Song About the Pochaiv (Monastery) Mother of God*. These religious songs, grouped in cycles, can be addressed to the Lord, the Mother of God, or the saints. The faithful sing them during pilgrimages to holy places, in churches, in their homes, and elsewhere. These songs express the authentic Christian "soul of the people," and the better examples are veritable "folk psalms."

III. THE TIME AND SPACE OF THE CHURCH'S PRAYER

A. Introduction: Unity of the Visible and Invisible in the Liturgical Life of the Church

- 533 The Church's Divine Services constitute God's service to people and the people's service to God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the God we cannot see—manifests his presence through liturgical actions. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, became human for the salvation of humans, to lift them to the “things not seen” (*Heb* 11:1). In the liturgical services people discover and recognize God's grace, love, peace, and salvation. And they mystically enter the kingdom of God. In the celebration of the liturgical services, people reach the unreachable God, that is, they are divinized (see 2 *Pt* 1:4).
- 534 In Christian worship, the High Priest is Christ himself: “For it is you who offer and you who are offered.” He is the Priest who offers sacrifice and is himself the Sacrifice. In the Church, this offering of Christ becomes visible in liturgical services. There the faithful offer “[themselves] and one another and [their] whole life to Christ.” Through the visible signs of worship people grow in the interior spiritual divine service which Saint Paul called rational worship when he wrote: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [rational] worship” (*Rom* 12:1) (in Church Slavonic, *slavesnoye sluzheniye*, from *slovo*—*logos*).
- 535 The earthly liturgy is inseparably united to the invisible heavenly liturgy: “Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the Thrice-Holy Hymn to the life-giving Trinity now lay aside all cares of life, that we may receive the King of all, escorted invisibly by ranks of angels.” Because of Christ's Incarnation, heaven, which is unseen, *stoops* to earth, and that which is visible on earth, on account of the Resurrection, is filled with the unseen heavenly. This is why the liturgy is heaven on earth, and during its celebration we, who are earthly, partake of *heavenly bread*, that is, Christ. Indeed, the Eucharist is the union of the seen and unseen, the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the divine—of time and eternity. Such joining of time and eternity in the Church's liturgy is vividly described by Saint John Chrysostom:

We believe not the very things which we see, but some things we see and others believe. For such is the nature of our Mysteries. ...
The unbeliever, hearing of a washing, counts it merely as water:

but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul, which is by the Spirit.³⁷⁴

- 536 In a visible way, the Divine Services reveal the ecclesial community as an icon of the unseen community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through visible rites, the services celebrated by the Church act on our bodily senses: we see the church and the icons, we hear the prayerful singing, we smell the fragrance of the incense, we taste “how good the Lord is,” and we touch with our lips the icons and Gospel Book. All our bodily senses take part in worship, so that we may wholly—in body, soul, and spirit—offer the Lord “rational worship” (see *Rom* 12:1).

B. The Rhythm of Liturgical Prayer

- 537 Our existence in time points to the fact that we are limited and transient: time marks the beginning and the end of our earthly life. We measure chronological, historical time by various units of duration: days, weeks, months, and years. It is into this historical time that God enters. Although he is immortal, God became incarnate, was born, lived and died as a human, and by his Resurrection he broke asunder the bonds of transience: “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him” (*Rom* 6:9). In Christ we pass from transience to life eternal—“now and forever and ever.” “It is always one and the same grace of the Holy Spirit acting, and it is always Pascha.”³⁷⁵ In the liturgical life of the Church, the Paschal Mystery is the centre of liturgical time. Here the events of salvation are made present and actual. In the Divine Services, the Church makes memorial of the saving mysteries of Jesus Christ. And while the Pascha of Christ persists in transient time, the divine worship of the Church exists in three cycles. These correspond to the three units of time—the daily, the weekly, the yearly.

1. The Daily Cycle—Horologion (*Chasoslov*)

- 538 The Lord God created the world in time, with an alternation of light and darkness—that is, day and night—as well as the seasons of the year: “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years” (*Gn* 1:14). The sequence of night and day in the story of creation of the world is a sign of the creative act of God, who brought all from non-existence into existence. This is why, as a memorial of this act, the

³⁷⁴ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 7, 2: PG 61, 55.

³⁷⁵ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Timothy*, 5, 3: PG 62, 529.

services of the daily cycle begin in the evening: “And there was evening and there was morning...” (*Gn* 1:5ff).

- 539 A day, according to the Holy Scripture, is a period of life. The Lord God created the light, separating it from darkness. This is the meaning of the daily liturgical cycle: the raising of creation from the darkness of non-being to the light of being, and then, from visible light to light unseen. This is why the biblical day, as a symbol of the nearing of the world to God and the entering of God into the world, is at the same time the liturgical day.
- 540 Our Church’s daily cycle of prayer is built on the ideal of unceasing prayer, expressed in the biblical number seven. This number is a symbol of fullness and perfection. The Scriptures proclaim: “Seven times a day I praise you, for your righteous ordinances” (*Ps* 118[119]:164). Saint Basil the Great also exhorts us to such prayer: “Let it also be a rule for us, to praise God seven times a day.”³⁷⁶ The foundation of this rule of prayer is the Psalms. In Divine Services, these biblical Psalms are interspersed with other prayers: hymns, stichera, troparia, kontakia, prokeimena, litanies, etc. The services of the daily cycle—namely, Vespers, Compline, the Midnight Office, Matins, and the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours, as well as the Service of Typica—all of these are found in the liturgical book called the Horologion (*Chasoslov*).

a. Vespers and Matins

- 541 Of the Divine Services of the daily cycle it is *Vespers* and *Matins* that have entered parish life most consistently. *Great Vespers* is celebrated each Saturday evening and *Resurrection Matins* every Sunday morning. On the feasts of the Lord and of the Mother of God and on the major feasts of saints, Vespers with Vigil is celebrated, which includes a Lytia service. At the Lytia, bread, wheat, wine, and oil are blessed to signify the bounty we have received from God, and to pray for their multiplication throughout the world. The unique theological, spiritual, poetic, and artistic riches of Vespers and Matins help us to integrate more deeply into our lives the history of salvation.
- 542 Fundamentally, Vespers is a prayer in which we alternately glorify the Lord, ask for his gifts, and repent for our sins. In Psalm 103[104] we praise the Lord for his creation. Then, in a series of penitential psalms (“Lord, I have cried out to you” – *Ps* 140[141]; 141[142]; 129[130];

³⁷⁶ BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Asceticism*, 1, 4: PG 31, 878.

116[117]) we express repentance and ask for forgiveness. Important elements of Vespers are *incense* and *light*. The rising smoke of incense expresses our penitential prayer ascending to the Lord. Then, in the ancient hymn “Tranquil Light,” we sing of Christ who, through the weakness that he endured on the cross, overcame the devil’s power and “gave life to all the world.” In the hymn “Deign, O Lord,” we ask for protection from sin “this evening.” We pray that the light of God’s commandments will provide that protection.

- 543 Vespers culminates in the singing of the Song of Simeon, “Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord” (see *Lk* 2:29-32). Simeon is known as “the one who received God.” In this canticle, the whole community, along with Simeon, expresses the joy of having encountered the Lord “this evening.” But the hymn also voices our readiness to encounter him in glory, when we see him “face to face” (see *1 Cor* 13:12). Then, we shall fully see the salvation of God, “prepared before the face of all peoples.”
- 544 The core parts of Matins are the Six Psalms, the Gospel reading (when appointed), the Canon, the Psalms of Praise, and the Doxology. The Six Psalms (also known as the Hexapsalm), which open Matins, reveal the faithful keeping watch in expectation of the victorious approach of Christ’s light. In the history of salvation the “morning,” or “sunrise,” is a theophany, the coming of “light into darkness.” Its beginning was in Bethlehem. Thus, at the beginning of Matins we sing the angelic hymn of Christmas: “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, among people good will.” God’s light shone on the river Jordan, and we confess this too when we sing: “The Lord is God and has appeared to us. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” The Resurrection of Christ is another victory of light over darkness. The joy of this victory is wonderfully expressed in the hymn “The angelic host was amazed,” (the *Evlogataria*) sung every week at Sunday (Resurrection) Matins. Indeed, as the myrrh-bearing women hurried at sunrise to the Lord’s tomb, an angel appeared to them proclaiming “the great Light,” Christ’s Resurrection.
- 545 In the Resurrection Gospel we hear the angel announce: “He has risen, he is not here” (*Mk* 16:6). And Christ himself declares: “Put your finger here ... do not doubt but believe” (*Jn* 20:27). Similar to the myrrh-bearing women, the faithful confess the Risen Lord in the hymn “Now that we have seen the Resurrection of Christ,” and approach the tetrapod to kiss the Gospel.
- 546 After Psalm 50[51] (“Have mercy on me, O God”), the Canon is sung. This is a poetic composition that narrates the liturgical event being celebrated. It does so in the light of biblical salvation history. The nine

odes of the Canon (though the second ode is only sung in Great Lent) begin by hymning Israel's liberation from Egyptian slavery. Subsequently, the prayer-hymns of several Old Testament prophets comprise the other odes. The Canon culminates with the ninth ode and its praise of the most pure Virgin Mary. She is extolled as "the Mother of God [Theotokos] and the Mother of Light." After the Canon, as the sun becomes brighter, the Church exalts Christ, the life-giving Light: "O Christ God, send me your light, and enlighten my heart."³⁷⁷

- 547 The joy of the soul illumined by Christ's Light is expressed in the Psalms of Praise (*Ps* 148-150). Here we call on all creation to glorify God and bless him for the gift of light—the revelation of his Son. Hence, at the culmination of Matins the priest introduces the Great Doxology with the words: "Glory to you, who have shown us the Light!" Beholding this light, we are led to divine contemplation. We thus sing: "In your light we shall see light." Indeed, in the *light* of Christ we are able to see the unapproachable *light* of God's glory. Matins concludes with thanksgiving and petitions for the entire Church community and for the life of the world.

b. Other Services of the Daily Cycle

- 548 *Compline* is a service celebrated after Vespers—before retiring to bed. During Lent and on the feasts of Christmas, Theophany, and Annunciation, we celebrate *Great Compline*. On other days we celebrate *Small Compline*. The service includes thanksgiving to God for the day just concluded and the work accomplished. It also contains petitions for the forgiveness of sins, for a tranquil night, and peaceful sleep. Saint Basil teaches: "The examination of our past actions is a great help toward not falling into similar faults again. Wherefore the Psalmist says: 'The things you say in your hearts, be sorry for them upon your beds' [*Ps* 4:4]." ³⁷⁸
- 549 At *Midnight Prayer* (or *Nocturne*), as we keep vigil awaiting the coming of the Lord, we entreat him that the night be peaceful and without sin. Keeping also in mind death itself, we ask that it not come upon us unexpectedly. "We should anticipate the dawn by prayer," Saint Basil exhorts us, "so that the day may not find us in bed, according to the words: 'My eyes have preceded the morning that I might meditate on your words' [*Ps* 119[120]:147]." ³⁷⁹ The Saviour himself prayed in the middle of the night and called on his disciples to keep watch. The Mid-

³⁷⁷ *Horologion*, Matins, Hymn of Light (Photagogica) in Great Lent, Tone 3.

³⁷⁸ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Longer Rules*, 37, 4: PG 31, 1009.

³⁷⁹ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Longer Rules*, 37, 4: PG 31, 1009.

night service, like Compline, concludes with mutual forgiveness and intercessions for all the living and deceased.

550 In the *Hours*, which have a biblical and patristic theological foundation, the faithful commemorate salvific events narrated in the Scriptures. They also ask the Lord for the grace to complete their everyday affairs and the labours of the day in a Christian manner.

551 The usual daily *Hours*, just mentioned, are the prayer of the faithful who are aware of the difficulties and dangers of the day, and thus beseech the Lord for help. During the Great Fast (Lent), these same Hours have additional elements. In the *Lenten Hours*, the faithful contemplate the Crucified Christ, drawing from him the strength to bear their daily cross, in order to become participants in the redemption of humankind. There is also another form of Hours. The *Royal Hours*, celebrated in anticipation of three great feasts, direct the attention of those praying to these major salvific events: the Birth of Christ, the Theophany, and the Passion and Resurrection.

552 The *First Hour*³⁸⁰ is celebrated at the end of Matins, since together with Matins it is a prayerful beginning of the day: “O Christ, the true Light, you enlighten and sanctify everyone who comes into the world; let the light of your countenance be signed upon us, that in it we may see your unapproachable light.” The *Third Hour* serves to commemorate the hour when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. Saint Basil teaches:

At the third hour, the brethren must assemble and betake themselves to prayer, even if they may have dispersed to their various employments. Recalling to mind the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles at this third hour, all should worship together, so that they also may become worthy to receive the gift of sanctity. And they should implore the guidance of the Holy Spirit in what is good and useful, according to the words: “Cast me not away from Your face, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” [*Ps* 50[51]:11]. Again, it is said elsewhere: “Your good spirit shall lead me into the right land” [*Ps* 142[143]:10]. And having prayed thus, we should again apply ourselves to our tasks.³⁸¹

553 At the *Sixth Hour*, the Church commemorates Christ’s Passion on the cross. The psalms of this Hour, which describe the sufferings of a just man who placed his hope in the Lord, prophetically point to the suffer-

³⁸⁰ The names “First,” “Third,” “Sixth,” and “Ninth” Hours reflect the Roman imperial system and correspond approximately to our 6:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 3:00 PM.

³⁸¹ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Longer Rules*, 37, 4: PG 31, 1009.

ings of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour's example shows that our salvation is joined to struggles and possible sufferings. They become for each of us the daily *crosses* from which we should not shrink. Instead, we must bear them boldly until the moment of our own passage to eternity. Therefore, at the Lenten Sixth Hour we entreat the Lord: "O you who on the sixth day and at the sixth hour nailed to the cross the sin which the presumptuous Adam committed in paradise: tear asunder also the record of our sins, O Christ God, and save us."³⁸² The Lenten Sixth Hour has other particular features. It includes daily readings from the prophet Isaiah and from the ascetic roadmap—*The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by Saint John Climacus (whose appellative means of *the Ladder*).

- 554 In the *Ninth Hour* we prayerfully commemorate the life-giving death of the Saviour on the wood of the Cross (see *Mk* 15:30). We entreat him in prayer: "O Lord, who for our sake endured bodily death at the ninth hour, mortify the desires of our flesh, O Christ our God, and save us."³⁸³ In praying the Ninth Hour we overcome the fear of death, because we know that death cannot annul God's will for us.

2. The Weekly Cycle (the *Octoechos*)

- 555 According to the Book of Genesis, during six days God did the work of creation, then "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation" (*Gn* 2:3). Consequently, people also ordered their life according to a similar rhythm of seven days. Six days of the week they work, as God did. And then they set aside their cares to celebrate "the day of the Lord."
- 556 Sin, and together with it, death, which entered into history through humanity's Fall, indicates the transitory, and therefore incomplete, nature of the seven-day cycle. As people grew in their awareness of the lack of plenitude of historical time, this led to a spiritual quest for a new Lord's Day, an extraordinary, exceptional *eighth day*, in which the plenitude of time would be renewed. This quest is evident already in the time of the Old Testament prophets.
- 557 This *Day of the Lord* became the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Bringing to fulfilment the Old Covenant, Christ accepted death on the Cross on the sixth day of the week (Friday). On the seventh day, the Sabbath, he rested in the tomb "from all the work he had done" (*Gn* 2:2). The Church sings of this on Great and Holy Saturday: "What is

³⁸² *Horologion*, Sixth Hour, Lenten troparion.

³⁸³ *Horologion*, Ninth Hour, Lenten troparion.

this repose today? It is the Eternal King, who through sufferings accomplished salvation, keeping the Sabbath in the grave and offering us a new Sabbath.”³⁸⁴ After the Sabbath *repose*, on the “first day of the week” (see *Mk* 16:1-2), that is, on Sunday, the Lord shone forth from the tomb. For Christians, this first day became the true *Day of the Lord*—exceptional and salvific. “Accordingly, the eighth day, which is the first day of the week, represents to us that original life [given before the Fall], not taken away but made eternal.”³⁸⁵ The Church celebrates the Day of the Lord’s Resurrection by the liturgical “breaking of bread,” that is, with the Eucharist, offering the faithful Communion unto life eternal.

- 558 From early on, the Church honoured Saturday as the holy *seventh day* of rest, on which we commune with God in a holy manner. Sunday, then, became the *eighth day*, the day of celebrating Christ’s Resurrection. Consequently, to the present day, Saturday and Sunday in the Churches of the Byzantine tradition are always Eucharistic days, even during Great Lent. “Truly, how can you look Sunday in the face, if you do not honour Saturday? Are you aware that these two are sisters, and that if you wrong one, you dishonour the other?”³⁸⁶

a. Sunday

- 559 The event of the Death and Resurrection of Christ was and remains the foundational theme of the Christian Good News. Christians not only proclaim it; they actually re-present and relive it in the Eucharist. On the one hand, the day of Christ’s Resurrection was, of course, a specific day in the history of humankind. However, in its exceptionality it rises above history. This is because human history is a record of the finiteness of creation, whereas Christ’s Resurrection overcame the transitory nature of history. Therefore, the event of the Resurrection endures, *it happens*, in the variable and transitory episodes of history. The Church liturgically emphasizes the historical character of the Resurrection by the yearly celebration of Pascha (Easter), whereas the divine permanence of this event in history is manifest in each Sunday’s Eucharist. Every Sunday is a commemoration of Pascha, when at the Divine Liturgy the Risen Christ manifests his presence. Sunday is an icon of the glorious second coming. In this way the Resurrection, as the *Feast of Feasts*, enters a person’s entire life; it sanctifies it and transfigures all of it into a feast. Sunday—the Eighth Day—is praised in song through

³⁸⁴ *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Saturday, Matins, Stichera for the Praises.

³⁸⁵ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Letter 55: Replies to Questions of Januarius*, 9, 17: PL 33, 212.

³⁸⁶ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On Chastisement*: PG 46, 309.

the eight tones (or modes), which successively follow one another each week throughout the year. This weekly cycle in Christianity is Paschal in its foundation, because it is from Pascha that we begin the *countdown* of the New Creation and its history. This New Creation and its history occurs in everyday events and relationships—within *the old creation*, which is mortal creation.

b. The Other Days of the Week

560 Just as Christian tradition views the daily cycle as an icon of the history of salvation, so also the week is viewed as such an icon. The week has its beginning in the creation of the world and its culmination in the glorious second coming of Christ. *Sunday*, which is the Eighth Day, the first and unique day of the New Creation, becomes the first day of the week. Sunday as the Eighth Day is a prophetic sign and beginning of the coming “resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). In the remaining six days of the week, from Monday to Saturday, the Church celebrates the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation—from the creation of the world to the achievement of its fullness and completion.

561 *Monday* is dedicated to the “second day of creation,” when God separated the waters within creation and made the firmament—“And God called the firmament heaven” (*Gn* 1:8)—the dwellers of which are the angels. As the angels personify the invisible creation, so humans personify the visible. In fact, humans are the crown of visible creation. Among the human race, however, according to the testimony of Christ, there was none greater than John the Baptist. To him is dedicated *Tuesday*. The Church dedicates *Wednesday* to the life-giving Cross of the Lord, remembering how through the “craving for pleasure” the human race was expelled from paradise and the “tree of disobedience” brought death into the world; Christ’s “tree of the Cross,” on the other hand, renewed life and granted incorruption.³⁸⁷ For the salvation of the world, the Father sends into the world his Son, “born of a woman” (*Gal* 4:4). This is why Wednesday is also dedicated to the most holy Mother of God. The incarnate Son of God establishes his Church on the apostles, whom he sends into the world: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (*Jn* 20:21). The pastoral solicitude of the Church for the people is personified by Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia. This is why *Thursday* is dedicated to the apostles and Saint Nicholas.

³⁸⁷ See *Octoechos*, Tone 3, Wednesday, Vespers, Aposticha.

562 Fulfilling the will of the Father, Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sin of the world (see *Jn* 1:29)—willingly accepts death on the Cross, and through the Cross conquers death. This is why *Friday* is the memorial of Christ’s saving crucifixion. The liturgical meaning of Saturday is expressed in the kontakion “O Lord, Maker of nature, the world offers you the godly martyrs as the first-fruits of nature.” In the services of *Saturday*, the Church embraces the entirety of the history of salvation, rendering praise to all the saints: “Apostles, prophets, martyrs, bishops, venerable and righteous ones, [you] finished the fight well and kept the faith.”³⁸⁸ On Saturday the Church also prays for the deceased. It does so in the faith and hope that they will find rest with the saints: “To the souls of your servants, O Christ, grant rest among the saints, where there is no pain, no sorrow, no mourning, but only life without end.”³⁸⁹

c. The Order of Tones in the Octoechos

563 The prayers and hymns of the weekly cycle are incorporated into the Divine Liturgy and the services of the daily cycle. These prayers are chanted according to one of the designated tones (in Greek, *echos*, meaning *sound* or *echo*), which occur in succession. The tradition of church singing according to eight tones flows from the Paschal event—the *Eighth Day*. The full cycle of eight tones lasts eight weeks. Collected together, the prayers of the eight tones comprise the liturgical book called the *Octoechos* (from the Greek meaning *eight tones*).

564 The eight-tone cycle of the weekly services forms a *column*, the base of which is the first tone and the crown is the eighth tone. This crown in turn becomes the foundation for the first tone, which is sung on the following Sunday. In this way, the tones resemble the rungs of a *spiritual ladder* which joins the present time to the Day of the Lord’s coming. Each year the building of this ladder begins on Thomas Sunday and concludes on Palm Sunday. Thus, the Paschal time of the weekly cycles *encompasses*, as it were, historical time and allows us to accept all of life in the light of Paschal joy.

3. The Yearly Cycle of Services

565 The services of the liturgical year, or Church year, are built upon the *immoveable* and *movable cycles*. The former is linked to the fixed dates of the year, and the latter—to the movable date of Pascha. The liturgi-

³⁸⁸ *Horologion*, Saturday propers, troparion for All Saints.

³⁸⁹ *Horologion*, Saturday propers, kontakion for the deceased.

cal year is joined to the astronomical year in such a way that the year is *crowned* with the goodness of God.³⁹⁰ This is accomplished by commemorating, rendering present, and experiencing all the major events of salvation history in the Divine Services.

- 566 The immoveable cycle of the Church Year begins on September 1; according to the Old (Julian) Calendar calculation, this occurs on September 14. The two calculations of the liturgical calendar (new and old) result from the fact that eventually it was noticed that every 128 years the civil calendar (in use since Julius Caesar) differed by one day from the actual astronomical cycles. In 1582, in order to renew the correspondence between the calendar year and the astronomical cycles, Gregory XIII, Pope of Rome, ordered a calendar reform, cancelling ten days from the calendar of the time. The reformed calendar was called the *New* or *Gregorian calendar*, while the unreformed remained the *Old* or *Julian calendar*. Since the time of the calendar reform, the difference between the two calendars has grown to thirteen days, and will continue to grow. A result of the different calculations is also the different dates for Pascha (Easter) and, consequently, of the feasts of the moveable cycle. Sometimes the date of Pascha coincides, but sometimes the difference between the Gregorian and Julian Calendar dates can reach five weeks.

a. The Movable Cycle (Lenten and Floral Triodia)

- 567 The centre and pivotal point of the liturgical year's movable cycle of feasts is Pascha. The date of its celebration falls on the first Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox. This means that every year the date of Pascha will *move*, falling on different calendar dates. Thus, on the Gregorian calendar it can fall as early as March 22 and as late as April 25; and on the Julian calendar, as early as April 4 and as late as May 10. Accordingly, the dates of the beginning of Great Lent, and of the feasts of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem, Ascension, and Pentecost will also move. During this period, the Church accompanies the faithful with the services of the Lenten and Floral Triodia (from the Greek, meaning a *three-canticle hymnic composition*). The Lenten Triodion contains the services for the four Sundays before Great Lent and for Great Lent itself; the Floral Triodion for the period from Lazarus Saturday to the Sunday of All Saints. [The Floral Triodion is also called the Pentecostarion.]

³⁹⁰ See *Liturgicon*, Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora

568 The services of the Triodia guide the Christian liturgically from an awareness of their own sinfulness to a spiritual transfiguration. Great Lent is preceded by four preparatory Sundays: the Sunday of the Publican (Tax Collector) and the Pharisee; the Sunday of the Prodigal Son; Meatfare Sunday; and Cheesefare Sunday. As preparation for Great Lent, on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Church calls us to imitate the humbleness of the Publican and shun the pride of the Pharisee. On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, the Church points to the necessity of repentance as a return from the foreign land of sin to the Father's home. On Meatfare Sunday, when the Gospel about the Divine Judgment is read (see *Mt* 25:31-46), the Church defines the aim of the coming Lenten fast: to recognize our sins, confess them, and perform works of mercy. On Cheesefare (or Forgiveness) Sunday the Church calls us to take the first step in repentance—mutual forgiveness. During the Lenten fast, Christians practice restraint in eating, but this is not an aim in itself, only a means to cleanse ourselves of passions: “If you refrain from eating but do not purify yourself of the passions, then your fasting is in vain, for it will not serve for correction. Rather, through insincerity the soul will become similar to the evil demons, who in fact never eat.”³⁹¹

569 Authentic fasting means “to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to resist anger, and to abstain from lust, slander, falsehood, and perjury.”³⁹² The meaning of fasting for the Christian is presented in a sticheron from the Vespers of Cheesefare Sunday:

Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat. Let us purify our soul and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion. Rejoicing in the virtues of the Spirit, may we persevere with love, and so be counted worthy to see the solemn Passion of Christ our God, and with great spiritual gladness behold his holy Passover.³⁹³

The Lenten liturgical services progressively reveal the essence of true fasting: if we sow the “seeds of repentance” (First Sunday of Lent), our “shoots of virtues” will grow to maturity (Second Sunday of Lent), to allow us to consume the fruit of the life-giving Tree “which leads us back to paradise” (Third Sunday of Lent, the Veneration of the Holy Cross), and by way of the “spiritual ladder” (Fourth Sunday of Lent, Commemoration of Saint John of the Ladder) reach the summits of

³⁹¹ *Lenten Triodion*, Cheesefare Week, Wednesday Matins, Apostichon.

³⁹² *Lenten Triodion*, First Week of Great Lent, Tuesday, Vespers, Apostichon.

³⁹³ *Lenten Triodion*, First Week of Great Lent, Monday, Vespers, Sticheron at Psalm 140.

spiritual purification and repentance (Fifth Sunday of Lent, Commemoration of Saint Mary of Egypt).

- 570 Saint John Chrysostom, in his teaching on fasting, emphasizes the fruits of fasting in the moral and spiritual life:

What advantage is it, if we have gone through the Fast devoid of good works? If another says, "I have fasted the whole of Lent," then you should say, "I had an enemy, but I was reconciled; I had a habit of speaking evil of others, but I put a stop to it; I had a habit of swearing, but I have broken through this evil practice."³⁹⁴

If we engage the Fast with zeal, we will experience what is described by Saint John Chrysostom in his teaching:

Having in this week attained the practice of not swearing at all; and in the following having extinguished wrath; and in that which succeeds it, having pulled up evil-speaking by the roots; and after that, having amended what yet remains; thus going forward in our course, we shall come by little and little to the very summit of virtue.³⁹⁵

- 571 Once we have "completed the Forty days that bring profit to our soul," on Lazarus Saturday, the day that begins the Floral Triodion [in the Kyivan tradition], the Church beseeches the Lord: "Grant us also to behold the Holy Week of your Passion, that in it we may glorify your mighty acts."³⁹⁶ Indeed, we pray to behold the Resurrection, the Ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the glorious second coming. On the days of Passion Week, we liturgically commemorate and experience anew the last days of the earthly life of Jesus—his passion, death and burial—and we await his Resurrection, when the Lord, as a "grain of wheat, buried in the earth, has yielded a rich harvest, raising to life the mortal sons of Adam."³⁹⁷
- 572 The growth of the Christian in deification is marked by the services of the Sundays from Pascha to Pentecost: it begins with the encounter with the Risen Christ (*Sunday of Pascha*, *Thomas Sunday*, and *Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women*), which leads to radical changes in particular persons—and in us as well (Sundays of the *Paralytic*, of the *Samaritan Woman* and of the *Man Born Blind*). The image of "living water" at the feast of Mid-Pentecost indicates the promise of the Holy Spirit, through whose grace we receive divinization.

³⁹⁴ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Statues*, 16, 6: PG 49, 169.

³⁹⁵ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Statues*, 4, 6: PG 49, 68.

³⁹⁶ *Floral Triodion*, Lazarus Saturday, Vespers, Sticheron at Psalm 140.

³⁹⁷ See *Floral Triodion*, Great and Holy Saturday, Matins, Stasis 1.

573 On the fortieth day after Pascha, the Church sings the praises of Christ's Ascension. But Christ does not depart from his Church. On the contrary, those who are in Christ are taken up with him "into heaven."³⁹⁸ This is why the Holy Fathers of the First Nicene Council (whom we commemorate on the *Sunday of the Holy Fathers*) already contemplated the Most Holy Trinity, and in the Creed and in conciliar fashion together pass on the experience of the knowledge of God. Imitating the Holy Fathers, the entire liturgical assembly ascends to the contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity on the day of Pentecost: "Today the nations have acquired wisdom through the glory of the vision of God."³⁹⁹ The Floral Triodion reaches its climax, attaining this summit of the knowledge of God by commemorating on the Sunday after Pentecost all the saints—the fruits of the Spirit.

b. The Immovable Cycle of Feasts (the Menaion)

574 Another series of Church feasts—of the Lord, of the Mother of God, and of the saints—always falls on the same day of the year and they are thus called immovable (fixed) feasts. Chief among the fixed feasts of the Lord are the Birth (Nativity) of Christ (Christmas, December 25/January 7) and Theophany (January 6/19). Their meaning lies in the manifestation of Christ, the Light that overcomes the darkness of sin. On the second day of each of these feasts the Church celebrates the persons principally involved in the salvific events of Christ's Birth and his Baptism in the River Jordan: the Synaxis of the most holy Mother of God and the Synaxis of John the Baptist, respectively (*synaxis* is a Greek word which means 'gathering' and refers to the fact that we gather for a Eucharist to celebrate their memorial). Moreover, linked to the Birth of Christ is the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God (March 25/April 7), which is nine months before Christmas.

575 Another feast linked to the Birth of Christ is the Birth of John the Baptist. Since he was born six months before Christ (see *Lk* 1:26), we celebrate his birth on June 24/July 7, and his conception on September 23/October 6. The Christmas cycle of feasts also includes the Circumcision of the Lord (January 1/14), celebrated on the eighth day after Christmas, and the Encounter of Our Lord (February 2/15). The latter celebrates Christ's presentation in the Jerusalem Temple as the first-born Son and the offering of a sacrifice from him on the fortieth

³⁹⁸ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

³⁹⁹ *Floral Triodion*, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Matins, Sticheron at the Praises.

day after his birth. In this feast, the Church celebrates the *meeting* or *encounter* of the Old and New Covenants, in the persons of the elder Simeon and the prophetess Anna with the Mother of God and the Child Jesus in her arms. In the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor (August 6/19), the Church celebrates the manifestation of the fullness of the divine light, begun at the Theophany in the Jordan. As “our Saviour shone forth to the world, God manifested as light from light”⁴⁰⁰ in the Incarnation, so in the Transfiguration “the entire human nature divinely shone”⁴⁰¹ and the Light of Christ effects the transfiguration of all creation. In the feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14/27), the Church sings the praises of “the Tree of true life, planted on the Place of the skull” (Golgotha). On it “the Eternal King has rendered salvation in the centre of the earth, and today through its exaltation the ends of the earth are sanctified.”⁴⁰²

- 576 With particular love the Church venerates the most Blessed Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. She is inseparably tied to the salvific work of her Son. In the course of the yearly cycle, besides the feasts of the Mother of God (the Encounter and the Annunciation), we celebrate her Nativity (September 8/21), her Entrance into the Temple (November 21/December 4), and her Dormition (August 15/28). The Nativity of the Mother of God is the beginning of our salvation,⁴⁰³ the Entrance is its proclamation,⁴⁰⁴ and her Dormition is a sign of its fulfilment.⁴⁰⁵ Related to the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God is the feast of the Conception of Saint Anna when She Conceived the Most Holy Mother of God. This feast is also called the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God (December 9/22, nine months before her Nativity). Since in her Dormition the Mother of God “did not abandon the world,”⁴⁰⁶ her “standing before us in the Church” and

⁴⁰⁰ *Menaion*, Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (January 6/19), Matins, Sticheron at the Praises.

⁴⁰¹ *Menaion*, The Fore-feast of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ (August 5/18), Kontakion.

⁴⁰² *Menaion*, The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14/27), Vespers, Sticheron at Litya.

⁴⁰³ *Menaion*, The Nativity of our Most holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (September 8/21), Vespers, Sticheron at Litya.

⁴⁰⁴ *Menaion*, The Entrance into the Temple of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (November 21/December 4), Troparion.

⁴⁰⁵ *Menaion*, The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28), Vespers, Sticheron at Litya.

⁴⁰⁶ *Menaion*, The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28), Troparion.

her unfailing intercession for humankind before her Son are expressed in the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (October 1/14). In the Dormition, the Mother of God was bodily taken up to heaven. However, she left us her precious relics—her robe and her sash—as “a powerful safeguard”⁴⁰⁷ for her faithful children. These relics are venerated in the feasts of the Placing of the Precious Robe of Our Most Holy Lady in the Church at Blachernae in Constantinople (July 2/15) and the Placing of the Precious Sash (August 31/September 13).

577 The Church also professes the Paschal mystery in the feasts of her saints, who suffered with Christ and with him were glorified. The Church offers the example of the lives of the saints to the faithful for imitation, in order to bring all to the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰⁸ The liturgical commemoration of saints is effected in the services and in the veneration of their icons and their relics. The date of the veneration of saints is usually the day of their death, that is, their *birth to heaven*. It can also be the day of the finding or transferral of their relics. Every day of the Church Year is dedicated to one or more particular saints. The liturgical services (hymnography) for the saints are collected month by month in twelve volumes called the *Menaia* (from the Greek, meaning *monthly*).

578 In the Mystery of Baptism, Christian parents usually give their newborn children names of Christian saints. In giving a name, a spiritual relationship is established between the saint and the person who receives their name. According to an ancient Church custom, children receive the name of the saint on whose day they were born.

B. The Church Building—The Place of the Community’s Prayer

579 The Old Testament mentions how the patriarchs singled out the places in which God manifested himself to them: “[Abram] built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him” (*Gn* 12:7). At this place Abraham raised his prayer to God (see *Gn* 12:8). The patriarch Jacob named the place where the Lord appeared to him the “house of God” (see *Gn* 28:17). In the time of Moses, the sacred place of encounter with God was the “tabernacle (or tent) of the Covenant.” The Israelites built it according to God’s instructions: “Have them make me a sanctuary, so

⁴⁰⁷ *Menaion*, The Placing of the Precious Robe of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God in the Church at Blachernae, (July 2/15), Troparion.

⁴⁰⁸ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [On the Sacred Liturgy], 104.

that I may dwell among them” (*Ex* 25:8). The tabernacle of the Covenant was the place where the people gathered and the Lord spoke to them.

- 580 In the time of Israel’s kings, the tabernacle of the Covenant was replaced by the temple that King Solomon built on Mount Sion in Jerusalem. It had three sections: the court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies were placed the principal sacred memorials of the Chosen People from the time of the Exodus from Egypt and the Sinai Covenant: (i) the Ark of the Covenant with the tablets; (ii) a golden urn holding the manna; and, (iii) the staff of Aaron that budded (see *Heb* 9:4). The temple, in which sacrifices were brought according to the Law of Moses, was a visible sign of God’s presence among his people.
- 581 The Jerusalem temple was a foreshadowing of Christ—the true *place* of the encounter between God and humankind. Such a *place* is also the Church of Christ—the community of believers: “For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people’” (2 *Cor* 6:16). The place where the Church community gathers “in remembrance of” Christ (see *Lk* 22:19) for the “breaking of bread” (see *Acts* 2:42)—for celebrating the Eucharist—is the Christian temple.
- 582 At first, Christians gathered for prayer and the breaking of bread in their homes, and in times of persecution it was in places where martyrs had been buried. Eventually, church buildings were erected over these burial sites. Unlike pagan temples, where there was no place for the people, Christian churches were built as places of gathering for the community. In fact, it is the community—the temple of the Living God—that sanctifies the building, not the building that sanctifies the community.
- 583 An explanation for the origin of the Ukrainian word for temple (*kbram*, translated from the Greek *oikos*, meaning *house*) is that it derives from the word for *palace* (*kbhromy*). This points to the grandeur and beauty of the “house of God.” The Christian house of worship is also called *church*, from the Greek *kyriake*, which means *of the Lord*, that is, a *building dedicated to God*. The Ukrainian name *sobor* (*unified or conciliar gathering*) indicates a special place for the assembling of a Church community, headed by a bishop.
- 584 The church’s dome is a symbol of heaven, and the joining of the dome to the *nave* (Greek for *boat*) is an image of the union of Christ the Head with his Church—his Body. It also symbolizes the joining of heaven and earth in Christ’s incarnation. Ukrainian churches are usually built with one, three, or five domes. One dome symbolizes the one God, three domes the Most Holy Trinity, and five domes Christ and the four evangelists.

- 585 The division of the church building into narthex, nave (or ‘temple of the faithful’), and sanctuary shows us that the Church is oriented to the fullness of the kingdom. We enter the church through the narthex, which symbolizes the passage from everyday cares to “the one thing necessary” (see *Lk* 10:42)—the kingdom of God. The narthex is the place where the catechumens and the penitents remained during the Liturgy of the Faithful; the initial Rites of both Baptism and Crowning are performed in the narthex, as are several other services.
- 586 The nave (“temple of the faithful”) is the image of the fullness of the Church: the community gathers around Christ, her Head, whose image is in the centre of the dome. On the walls of the church are many icons of the saints, manifesting the communion of the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. In the centre of the nave, on a table called the *tetrapod* (Greek for *four-legged table*), along with a cross and candles, are placed the patronal icon of the church or of the current feast. Bowing from the waist, the faithful venerate the icon and cross with a kiss as they enter or exit the church. In the temple of the faithful the community raises its prayers to God and is joined to him in these ways: the Word of God is proclaimed and preached before the iconostasis; the faithful receive Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; the Rites of Baptism, Chrismation, and Crowning are celebrated before the tetrapod; and the Rite of Repentance takes place before the icon of the Saviour.
- 587 The *sanctuary*, to which the entire liturgical assembly is oriented, is a symbol of heaven. There we find the throne of the Heavenly King, and of his kingdom. In the centre of the sanctuary stands the Holy Table (Altar), a symbol of the throne of God before which the assembly of believers is gathered. The Holy Table is also the table of the Mystical Supper, to which the Lord invites his Church. This is why the Book of the Gospels is placed on the Holy Table and the Eucharistic Gifts are consecrated there. The Holy Table is consecrated by a bishop because only with his blessing may the Eucharist be celebrated on any Holy Table. During the consecration the bishop anoints the Holy Table with holy Chrism, because every consecration is effected by the Holy Spirit. Relics of holy martyrs are also mounted into the Holy Table in honour of the fact that they followed Christ to the end. At the Holy Table the bishop performs the Rite of the Laying on of Hands (Ordination). On the north side of the Holy Table is found the Proskomide Table (or Table of Offering), on which the precious gifts are prepared. Behind the Holy Table is the *High Place*, designated for the bishop who presides at the Liturgy. It is a sign of the presence of Christ, the great High Priest (see *Heb* 4:14).

588 The nave and sanctuary are united by the *iconostasis*. This is because the icons on the iconostasis manifest the invisible presence of Christ and the saints. The raised area before the iconostasis is called the *solea*, in the centre of which is a semicircular protrusion, the *ambo*. From the ambo the priest proclaims Christ's victory over death, as did the angel from the stone of Christ's tomb, and here he communicates the faithful. On both sides of the solea are the cantors' stalls (*krylosy*), the place assigned to the readers and singers.

1. Icons

a. The Veneration of Holy Icons

589 In the Incarnation of the Son of God, people "saw the one inaccessible as God become a man accessible to all."⁴⁰⁹ The Old Covenant forbade the making of an idol or even the representation of God, in order to protect the people from idolatry: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (*Ex* 20:4). In the New Covenant, the incarnate God, Jesus Christ, became accessible to our sight, hearing, and touch (see 1 *Jn* 1:1). Therefore it became possible to depict him.

590 According to Christian tradition, the oldest icons are the *Saviour Not-Made-by-Hands*—the face of Christ miraculously copied to a cloth—and the icon of the Mother of God, which, according to tradition, was written by the apostle and evangelist Luke. Such a tradition witnesses to the conviction that icons and icon veneration accord with the apostolic faith.

591 One of the first Fathers who elaborated a theological foundation for icon veneration was Saint John of Damascus. He teaches: "I venerate the icon of Christ the incarnate God ... because the honour that we render unto the image belongs to the Prototype."⁴¹⁰ In the icon, we venerate not the image but the imaged person, whom we prayerfully contemplate. This is because the icon raises our mind from the image to the Prototype. The Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787 condemned Iconoclasm and confirmed the veneration of icons of the Lord Jesus Christ, the most holy Mother of God, and the angels and saints. Along with this, the Council distinguished between *adoration*, which is due exclusively to God (in Greek, *latreia*), and *veneration* (in Greek, *proskynesis*), which we

⁴⁰⁹ *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God*, Kontakion 9.

⁴¹⁰ JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *First Homily for the Defense of the Holy Icons*, 21: PG 94, 1252.

render unto icons, the Gospel Book, the cross, and the relics of saints.⁴¹¹ We venerate icons by kissing and censing them, and lighting candles and lamps before them. The icon is also the Church's teaching expressed in images. Therefore it should be written not arbitrarily but only according to iconographic canons which ensure that the faces of Christ, the Mother of God, and of the saints are recognizable in all instances.

b. The Role of Icons in Prayer

- 592 An icon is written (painted) *in* prayer and *for* prayer. To recognize and understand an icon one needs to *contemplate* it prayerfully. Someone who only *views* an icon will understand it only as a work of art. The process of contemplating an icon needs to be learned. The word “contemplation” here means “to look to the depth.” The first step toward contemplation is to concentrate the gaze on the icon. Thus, we place a lamp before the icon—a sign of divine light. Concentration leads to interior silence. When we raise our gaze to the icon, we see a figure or group of figures. The inscription on the icon informs us as to whom or what event we are gazing.
- 593 The person of Christ is depicted on the icon with certain recognizable signs. One of these signs is the cross-in-halo around the head of Christ. Within this halo is the Greek inscription *ὁ ὢν* (*ho On*), which means *The-One-Who-Is* (see *Ex* 3:14). Christ is usually depicted in a red tunic, covered with a blue mantle. The royal red of the tunic signifies the divine nature of Christ, which in his Incarnation was clad in his human nature, represented by the blue mantle. In icons of the Transfiguration, Resurrection, Ascension, and Fearful Judgment, as well as icons of the Christ-Child with the Mother of God, the vestments of Christ are depicted in gold or white, signifying the divine nature and the glorified human nature of Christ.
- 594 The Mother of God is depicted on icons in a red veil that covers her head and shoulders, a symbol of the divine grace with which God fully gifted her. The veil covers a blue tunic, a symbol of her humanity. On her forehead and shoulders are three gold stars that symbolize her perpetual virginity. She is a “virgin before childbirth, a virgin in childbirth, and remains a virgin after childbirth.”
- 595 On icons of the saints, the light of God's presence is represented by the icon's gold background and the gold in their garments. Thus is symbol-

⁴¹¹ COUNCIL OF NICAEA II, *Definition*: DS 302.

ized the grace of God that permeates and fills the entire person. In this way we ascend from contemplation of symbols and signs to contemplation of the persons manifested on the icon. Prayer before an icon is communication with the person depicted on the icon. This is expressed when we make the sign of the Cross in front of an icon, or kiss and cense it.

- 596 Through the icon, God addresses us, reveals our vocation, and calls us to life with him. To *see* God who lovingly gazes at us from the icon is a great gift of God, a manifestation of “heaven on earth.” Having *seen* God in an icon, we become capable of seeing him in other people.

c. Wonder-Working Icons

- 597 According to Church tradition, a newly written (painted) icon is blessed. The Church rite bestows upon the icon “divine blessing, the grace of the Holy Spirit, healing power against all the wiles of the devil.”⁴¹² The blessing makes it “a place of healing and a source of healing for all who will turn to it in illness.”⁴¹³ Contemplating the icon gives us strength to imitate “the lives and deeds of the saints and thus become pleasing to God and heirs of the kingdom.”⁴¹⁴ Once the icon is blessed, it is included in the Church’s liturgical services and prayerful veneration in homes.

- 598 Due to this blessing, the icon becomes, as an image, a place of presence of the person depicted therein. Inasmuch as the icon manifests the presence of the living person of Christ, the Mother of God, or a saint, every icon is graced. However, this graced character of the icon, by the will of God, may be manifested in conspicuous miracles. Such icons are called *wonder-working*. The indication that they are wonder-working is the healing of the sick, the conversion of sinners, and protection against enemy attack or natural disasters. Other signs of this wonder-working nature is when the icon *renews itself*, in other words, is miraculously cleansed; or when the icon gives forth oil, tears, or blood. Of course, these miracles are not performed by the icon itself, but by the Lord God, who through the icon gives his grace to all who approach it with faith.

- 599 Our Church venerates many wonder-working icons of the Mother of God, among them the icons of Pochaiv, Zarvanytsia, Univ, Hoshiv, Belz (now in Częstochowa), Kholm, Vyshhorod (now commonly known as the Vladimir icon), and Zhyrovtytsi.

⁴¹² *Trebynyk*, Rite of Blessing of an Icon of Christ.

⁴¹³ *Trebynyk*, Rite of Blessing of an Icon of the Mother of God.

⁴¹⁴ *Trebynyk*, Rite of Blessing of an Icon of Saints.

d. The Iconostasis

600 In our Church tradition the veneration of icons is organically bound up with liturgical services in church. The church building is a place of encounter of the heavenly and the earthly, of the invisible and the visible, of God and people. This encounter takes place in the Divine Liturgy, while the icons visibly manifest the heavenly, invisible, divine world. Icons are placed on the iconostasis. This is a *wall* that separates and at the same time unites the sanctuary and nave. The sanctuary represents the invisible presence of God—heaven—to which we are directed. The nave, in turn, represents the visible world of our earthly life, within which we make the pilgrimage of our life.

601 The Venerable Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches:

The part [of the church] behind the iconostasis where the Holy Table is found and the Divine Liturgy is celebrated is the image of heaven, whereas that part where the people stand is the image of the Church on earth. The iconostasis is, as it were, the doors to God's eternal kingdom. On the iconostasis is gathered all that Jesus Christ gives to Christians in the Church, all that he did for them. On the icons is represented all that the Holy Church teaches people and the entire way along which she leads people to heaven.⁴¹⁵

602 The iconostasis has three doors: in the centre are the Royal Doors (also called the Doors of Paradise or Holy Doors), and on either side are the Deacons' Doors. The doors symbolize the link between heaven and earth; they are opened as a sign that God and his angels manifest their presence during the divine services. This exchange between heaven and earth is symbolized by the entering and exiting of the bishop (or presbyter) and deacon through the doors of the iconostasis during divine services. On the Royal Doors are icons of the Annunciation and of the four evangelists. On the side doors are icons of archangels or deacons. These icons show that the Good News of the Messiah's coming was addressed first of all to Mary of Nazareth and that her assent to accept divine motherhood opened the gates of paradise that were previously closed due to sin. The Good News of Christ the Messiah was proclaimed to the world by the four evangelists. The icons of the evangelists on the Royal Doors, and of the Mystical Supper above them, indicate that we enter into God's kingdom by receiving the Gospel proclamation and Holy Communion.

⁴¹⁵ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирський лист до вірних Львівської та Кам'янецької єпархій *О Церкві* [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Lviv and Kamyanets Eparchy - *On the Church*] (January 14, 1901).

- 603 Behind the Royal Doors is a curtain (in Greek, *katapetasma*). Usually it is closed, but its opening during the Divine Services shows that the incomprehensible and inconceivable Lord opens himself to us, becomes accessible.
- 604 To the right of the Royal Doors is the icon of Christ, usually depicted as the *Pantocrator* (Almighty Ruler) and dressed in a tunic and mantle. In his left hand he holds a book; with his right hand he blesses. To the left of the Royal Doors we see the icon of the Mother of God, depicted as the *Hodegetria*, or *The One Who Shows the Way*. With one hand she holds the Christ-Child and with the other she points to him, showing the way. On some iconostases the *Hodegetria* icon can be replaced by an *Eleousa* (or *Tenderness*) icon of the Mother of God. On this icon the Christ-Child and his mother lean into one another cheek-to-cheek. Sometimes other Marian icons may be seen here, such as the *Mother of God Enthroned with Child*. Together, these two icons on either side of the Royal Doors—that is, of the Saviour and the Mother of God—express the entire plan of salvation: the Son of God became human (Christ’s purple tunic is covered by a blue mantle) in order to make humans, represented by the Mother of God, partakers of his divinity (the blue tunic of the Mother of God is covered by a purple veil or maphorion).
- 605 Alongside the Deacons’ Doors on both sides of the iconostasis are two more icons. On the south (right) side is the patronal icon, that is, of the person or event to which the church is dedicated. On the north (left) side we frequently find the icon of Saint Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. This first row of the iconostasis, which includes the Royal and Deacons’ Doors and the main icons, is usually called the *stationary* or *foundational* row. Above this row the second, or *festal*, row presents the icons of twelve great feasts of the Lord and Mother of God. This row may also include more than twelve icons. Their order of succession may vary: it may follow the order of the Church Year, or, on the other hand, the north side may contain the icons of the Mother of God, and the south side—icons of the Lord. These icons depict not only past realities, that is, events of the past. Rather, these are the principal milestones in the history of salvation. Through the feasts of the Church Year the community experiences these events anew, receiving the particular grace of Christmas, or Theophany, or the other feasts.
- 606 Above the Royal Doors is the icon of the Mystical Supper. It is placed here because under this icon the faithful approach to receive Communion, to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

When therefore you see the priest delivering [the supper] unto you, account not that it is the priest that does so, but that it is Christ's hand that is stretched out ... Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper, at which he himself sat down. For this is in no respect different from that.⁴¹⁶

- 607 The main icon of the third row is the *Deisis* icon (Greek for *supplication*). It depicts Christ in the centre with the Mother of God and John the Baptist on either side. Sometimes the Archangels Michael and Gabriel are also included. To the right and left of the Deisis icon are icons of the apostles. The whole Deisis composition represents the Church in prayer before Christ: the heavenly Church and the Church on earth are united in a single intercession before the throne of the Lord. This signifies the calling of the Church to incessantly keep vigil and offer prayers for the whole world.
- 608 In the fourth row of the iconostasis are icons of the Old Testament prophets who in their writings announced the coming of the Messiah. This row indicates the unity of the two Testaments in the Revelation of the Word of God. Images of the prophets may also be seen in the upper levels of the nave or sanctuary. In the centre of this row of prophets is the icon of *Our Lady of the Sign*. On her breast is a round medallion depicting the Christ-Child, Emmanuel. This icon represents the fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation of the coming of Christ the Saviour: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive" (*Is* 7:14, RSV-CE). The iconostasis is topped by the Cross, the image of "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 *Cor* 1:24).
- 609 The iconostasis thus presents to us all the stages of salvation history: the past (events of the Old and New Testaments), the present (Christ and the saints present among us) and the future (Christ in glory). The iconostasis symbolically manifests the fact that the Church community assembles and remains in the presence of Christ, and at the same time—by the power of the Holy Spirit—advances toward the place God has prepared for those who love him: towards "what no eye has seen, nor ear heard" (1 *Cor* 2:9).

e. The Iconographic Program of the Church Building

- 610 After visiting the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the envoys of the Kyivan Prince Volodymyr described the majestic beauty they witnessed:

⁴¹⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, 50, 3: PG 58, 507.

They led us to the place where they worship their God, and we did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth. Because there does not exist on earth such a sight and such beauty—we cannot describe it. This we know: that their God surely remains among the people and their worship is the best of all the lands. We cannot ever forget that beauty, for everyone who first tastes of the sweet cannot thereupon take of the bitter.⁴¹⁷

- 611 Contemporary people realize that in the beauty of the church's iconography they see before them the embodiment of the eternal in the temporal, of the heavenly in the earthly. According to the words of Saint Maximus the Confessor, the Christian church is an icon, that is, an image, of the entire universe, both the visible and the invisible.⁴¹⁸
- 612 The entire church may be covered with frescoes or mosaics of images of the events of salvation history. The central dome is the place for the image of Christ the Almighty Ruler (in Greek, *Pantocrator*). Placing this image in the centre of the church proclaims that the Ruler of heaven and earth is at the same time the Head of his Body, the Church. In his left hand he sometimes holds a globe—the symbol of the universe—and with his right he blesses. Angels are also depicted in the dome. The four pendentives that unite the dome to the nave carry the images of the four evangelists who proclaimed to the world the Good News of Christ.
- 613 Scenes and persons of salvation history are depicted on the walls of the nave. On the northern and southern walls are icons of the Lord's feasts or Marian feasts, or icons of the Passion of Christ or episodes from the lives of the saints. Below these are icons of martyrs, confessors, venerable monks and nuns, and unmercenary healers. The images of these saints show that the earthly Church and the heavenly Church are united in a single liturgical prayer. The saints and the faithful in the church stand together before the face of the Most High.
- 614 In the eastern end of the church, in the sanctuary, is sometimes located the church's patronal icon, but also the icon of the *Communion of the Apostles*: two rows of apostles reverently approaching a Holy Table to receive Communion while Christ on one side of the Holy Table offering the Holy Bread, his Body, and on the other, the cup of his Blood. This icon of the Eucharist is a liturgical image of the Church. Indeed, the Church is born of the Eucharist and grows at the Lord's Table with the apostles and all the saints. On both sides of the sanctuary wall we also

⁴¹⁷ *Tale of Bygone Years (The Primary Chronicle)*, Years 6495 [987] to 6521 [1013]: The Tale of the Choice of Faith.

⁴¹⁸ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Mystagogy*, 2: PG 91, 668D.

find icons of holy bishops, especially the authors of our two Anaphoras, Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom. On the western wall it is customary to depict the Dormition of the Mother of God or the Fearful (Last) Judgment. These icons at the exit of the church remind us that we are to think of the end of our earthly life in light of the Mother of God's blessed Dormition, totally offering ourselves into the hands of the Lord, or—if it is the Fearful (Last) Judgment—to be ready to answer before God for the life we are living. In the narthex we frequently find an icon of Christ's Crucifixion. A church thus filled with icons is truly a *sobor*, an *assembled gathering* of the entire Church.

2. Veneration of Saints' Relics

- 615 At funerals, the Church shows respect to the body of every deceased person. She shows particular respect to the bodies of the righteous who have been glorified (canonized as saints). When during his or her earthly life a righteous person grows in sanctity, the grace of God that he or she receives transforms not only their soul but also their body. The body that subjects itself to the soul and together with the soul strives for sanctity is also glorified after death. During the general resurrection and into eternity, a person takes part in communing with God in his or her glorified body. Relics are the remains of a deceased Christian whom the Church has numbered among the choir of saints.
- 616 As the body of Christ shone in the Transfiguration, and his garment was a source of healing for the woman suffering from a haemorrhage (see *Mt* 17:2; 9:20) and as healing came through the shadow of Peter and the handkerchief of Paul (see *Acts* 5:15; 19:12), so also, after their death, the bodies of saints—and even objects they used—can transmit the grace of healing, and strengthen in faith as well as sustain in their ascetic efforts those who venerate them in faith. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: “God shared the martyrs with us. He took to himself their souls and left their bodies to us so that their holy bones might remind us continually of their virtues.”⁴¹⁹ And again: “The relics of the holy martyrs cast away the evil demons. The devils tremble not only before the Crucified One, but also before the relics of those who gave their life for him.”⁴²⁰
- 617 In Ukrainian the word for *relics* (*moshchi*), which designates the bodily remains of a righteous person (whether incorruptible or not), comes from the Slavonic *moshch*, meaning *strength* or *power*. It expresses the

⁴¹⁹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Encomium to Julian Martyr*, 4: PG 50, 672.

⁴²⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Encomium to the Holy Apostle Paul, Homily*, 4: PG 50, 490.

wondrous power of God's life in the frailty of human death. Holy Scripture mentions the miracle of God's power by which a dead man was brought back to life through the relics of God's prophet Elisha (see 2 *Kgs* 13:21). Christians venerated the relics of saints from early centuries, in particular when on the graves of martyrs they celebrated the Eucharist, which unites the living and the dead. These places, together with the buried relics, were considered holy—more precious than gold or jewels.

Who would allow me to touch the body of Paul, accost his tomb and see the remains of his body? I much desire to see the remains of those lips by means of which Christ proclaimed such great and ineffable mysteries; to see the remains of his hands that were put in chains; to see the remains of his eyes that were blinded and saw again for the salvation of the world; to see the remains of those feet that journeyed throughout the world and were not exhausted.⁴²¹

618 The tradition of celebrating the Divine Liturgy over the relics of the saints lives on in the Church. During the consecration of an altar, relics are mounted into it, and on it is placed an *antimension* (from the Greek, meaning *instead of a table*). The antimension is a cloth with an image of Christ being laid in the grave with relics sewn into it and signed by the local bishop. This special cloth is a symbol of the communion of the priest and the community with their bishop. Therefore, the Liturgy is not celebrated without it. There exists also a pious custom of placing relics or objects that the saints used during their lives into their icons. The Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787 solemnly confirmed the tradition of venerating relics along with the tradition of venerating icons. The Lord glorifies the relics of martyrs in different ways: some are incorruptible, others stream forth myrrh (for example, the relics of Saint Nicholas, the great-martyr Demetrius, and many venerable Fathers of the Kyivan-Caves Monastery). The Church sometimes venerates also instruments of martyrdom, for example, the chains of the apostle Peter (January 16/29).

619 Christians attributed great significance to finding the relics of a saint, or their transfer to a permanent place of deposition. Such an event, for example, was the finding in Khersones of Crimea of the relics of the bishop-martyr Clement, Pope of Rome (commemorated November 25/December 8). The transfer of a part of these relics to Rome by Saint Cyril in the ninth century and a part of them to Kyiv by Saint Volodymyr in the tenth century were also significant events. The relics of Saint

⁴²¹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Selections from Various Homilies: Homily 30 - In Praise of Saint Paul*: PG 63, 798.

Clement were traditionally used to bless the new metropolitans of Kyiv during their installation. In the eleventh century the myrrh-streaming relics of Saint Nicholas were transferred from Myra of Lycia (in present-day Turkey) to the Italian city of Bari. This event is commemorated on May 9/22, and the feast is called “the summer Saint Nicholas.” In the Kyivan-Caves *Patericon* there is also mention of the transfer of the relics of Saint Theodosius of the Caves (August 14/27). The relics of Saint Josaphat, archbishop of Polotsk, journeyed for several centuries, evading desecration, until in 1963 they found a place of veneration in Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

- 620 In our day, after the glorification of numerous new martyrs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the relics of several of them have been transferred from their original place of burial to an appropriate site of veneration. Pilgrimages to these locales, where pilgrims receive numerous healings through the prayers of the righteous or through contact with their relics, are yet another confirmation of God’s victory, through time and space, over suffering, illness, and death. These miracles occur due to the grace of the Holy Spirit, bestowed through the intercession of the righteous and the faith of the pilgrims themselves.

3. Liturgical Chant

- 621 Liturgical or church singing is an expression of worship. Church singing is doxological prayer by which the Church is united with the angelic choirs in glorifying the Most Holy Trinity. The source of this doxology (glorification) is contemplation of the Trinity. Indeed, this is why liturgical singing is exalted *theological music*. In liturgical singing we take part in the angelic choirs’ “incorporeal”⁴²² singing, thus “mystically representing the Cherubim.”
- 622 In order to *resonate* the Cherubim’s singing, a person needs the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. That is why a person at prayer may be compared to an “instrument” of the Holy Spirit.⁴²³ As a wind instrument emits sound because it is filled with breath, so a person produces the sounds of prayer because he or she is filled with the “breath” of the Holy Spirit. Thus, sung prayer is a double form of prayer: the person prays at an audible level but the Holy Spirit also prays through the Son to the Father (see *Rom* 8:26). The liturgical singing of a Church choir is an earthly icon of the heavenly singing of the angelic choirs.

⁴²² *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God*, Oikos 1.

⁴²³ *Floral Triodion*, Pentecost Friday, Matins, Sessional Hymn; see *Menaion*, The Three Holy Hierarchs (January 30/February 12), Vespers, Apostichon.

- 623 The texts of Scripture, as well as patristic and conciliar texts, are proclaimed in liturgical chant. The Church's divinely inspired singers, saints such as Roman the Melodist and John of Damascus, composed liturgical hymns on the basis of Scripture and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. According to their particular forms, these hymns received the names troparion, kontakion, sticheron, heirmos, oikos, etc. Through liturgical singing the assembled Church community prays with scriptural texts and enriches its spiritual culture by absorbing the mindset of the Holy Fathers. In time, this spiritual and prayerful experience of the ecclesial community becomes a source of its own particular tradition, expressed in distinctive liturgical chants. The most renowned liturgical chants of our Church are the Kyivan and the Galician.
- 624 Through liturgical chant, the church singer, keeping humbly to the proper ritual prescriptions, becomes an authentic instrument of the Holy Spirit, called to attune the assembly to communal prayer. Liturgical singing is not a "concert of sacred music" during which people are divided between "performers" and an "audience." Rather, this singing incorporates everyone into an act of common prayer. Thus, the singing in which God's people take part at worship always becomes an unrepeatable event in which free persons unite and act as one in order to pray "with one voice and one heart."

4. Bearing and Gestures during Divine Services

- 625 The physical bearing and gestures of a Christian during prayer are elements of the Church's prayer and visible signs of personal faith and piety. These include: the sign of the Cross, standing, the raising of hands, kneeling, bows and prostrations, and the kissing of holy objects.
- 626 By the *sign of the holy Cross*, the Christian professes faith in the Most Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of God's Son. We make the sign of the Cross with our right hand, devoutly and without haste, pronouncing the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Joining the first three fingers of our hand is a sign of our profession of faith in the Holy Trinity, while bending the remaining two to the palm of the hand signifies our confession of two natures—divine and human—in the incarnate Son of God. Signing ourselves crosswise, from the forehead to the breast and from the right shoulder to the left, we profess the Paschal Mystery of Christ—his dying and rising. Every time we sign ourselves with the holy Cross, saying "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," we profess

that our salvation, accomplished on the cross by Jesus Christ, is the work of the Holy Trinity.

- 627 *Standing* as a posture of prayer of the Christian is an expression of spiritual attentiveness and readiness to do God's will, as we hear in the exclamation: "Wisdom! Stand aright!" Our standing before the Lord is a sign of our participation in the resurrection. According to the words of Tertullian, "we count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's Day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Pascha [Easter] to Pentecost."⁴²⁴ Likewise, Canon 20 of the First Nicene Council (325 AD) prescribes: "Forasmuch as there are certain persons who kneel on the Lord's Day and in the [fifty] days of Pentecost, therefore, to the intent that all things may be uniformly observed everywhere (in every church), it seems good to the holy Synod that prayer be made to God standing."
- 628 *Leaving the arms hanging alongside* the body is an expression of openness and readiness to accept the will of God. *Folding the hands crosswise* on the breast during Communion expresses a reception of God's life with our entire being. *Raising the hands* signifies the lifting of our mind and heart to God, as well as insistent prayer. At the Divine Liturgy the priest prays in this way during the Cherubic hymn, and then at the words, "Let us lift up our hearts," as well as during the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father").
- 629 A *bow* (*poklin* or *metania* in Ukrainian, from the Greek *metanoia*, meaning a *change of thinking*) is a sign of repentance, and an expression of worship. Falling to the ground we recognize our sinfulness, while rising we acknowledge our liberation from sin by the power of the cross, signing ourselves each time with this symbol. This bow may be a so-called *great bow* (a prostration to the ground) or a *small bow* (bending from the waist). Great bows, or prostrations, are usually made during Great Lent and small bows throughout the year as we venerate icons, relics, and other holy objects, crossing ourselves as we do so.
- 630 *Kneeling* is an expression of the penitent's contrition before God: "As for bending one's knees, this is required when one is going to confess their sins before God and beseech him for the healing that derives from his forgiveness. One ought to know that this is the attitude proper to one who humbles and submits oneself."⁴²⁵ Kneeling is also a sign of intercessory prayer:⁴²⁶ every year on the day of Pentecost the entire

⁴²⁴ TERTULLIAN, *On the Crown*, 3: PL 2, 79B-80A.

⁴²⁵ ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, 31, 3: PG 11, 531.

⁴²⁶ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8, 9-10: PG 1, 1083-1088.

community of the faithful prays the solemn *kneeling prayers* for themselves and the whole world.⁴²⁷

- 631 By *kissing* the cross, Gospel Book, icon, or relics, we express love for, and worship of, the Lord and a veneration of the saints. With a kiss we show our love for others: the clergy exchange the “kiss of peace” during the Creed, as do the faithful, where customary, at the Rite of Forgiveness at the beginning of Great Lent and during the Paschal services.
- 632 To ask for or receive a *blessing* means to open oneself to God’s grace and aid in diverse circumstances of our life. Through the bishop or priest Christ blesses us today, as he blessed the apostles on the day of his Ascension. When we ask for a blessing we place our palms crosswise, right over left, and say: “Master (or Father), bless.” Having received the blessing, we kiss the hand that blesses.

5. Articles Used in Divine Services

a. Liturgical Vestments of the Deacon and Priest

- 633 When celebrating the Divine Services, members of the clergy wear liturgical vestments that symbolize new life in the Risen Christ. The splendour and beauty of the vestments express the “good beauty”⁴²⁸ of the coming kingdom of God. The prayers said as the vestments are put on convey the meaning of the vestments.
- 634 The first liturgical vestment of a deacon, priest, or bishop is the *sticharion* (from the Greek, meaning *tunic*). This is a long garment, donned over the head and falling to the ankles. The sticharion is “the garment of salvation” and “the robe of gladness,” a reminder of the Christian’s bright baptismal robe. Over the sticharion the deacon puts on the *orarion*. This is a long band which hangs over the left shoulder and which the deacon raises as he calls the faithful to prayer. The orarion symbolizes the wings of angels: deacons, like the angels who are “ministering spirits” (*Ps* 103[104]:4; *Heb* 1:14), are at the service of the liturgical community.
- 635 Over the sticharion the priest puts on the *epitrachelion* (from the Greek, meaning *on the neck*). This vestment signifies the grace that the Lord pours down on the ecclesial community through him, and the “honourable yoke” of the priestly ministry. Without the epitrachelion the priest does not perform any liturgical service. Over the epitrachelion the priest

⁴²⁷ *Floral Triodion*, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Vespers, Kneeling Prayers.

⁴²⁸ *Trebnyk*, The Rite of Blessing of Priestly Vestments.

puts on the *belt*. This signifies his readiness to fulfil his ministry by the power of God. The *epimanikia*, or *cuffs*, that the priest puts on, are a sign that it is the Lord himself who acts through the hands of the priest.

- 636 Over all the other vestments the priest dons the *phelonion* (from the Greek, meaning *coat*). It signifies the righteousness and sanctity with which the Lord vests the priest as he singles him out for sacred ministry.

b. Liturgical Vestments of the Bishop

- 637 The outer liturgical vestment of the bishop is the *sakkos* (from the Greek, meaning *sackcloth*). It symbolizes the authority of the bishop—the servant of Christ—to lead God’s people by the example of repentance. Over the *sakkos* the bishop wears the *omophorion* (from the Greek meaning *to carry on the shoulder*). This is a sign that as a good shepherd following the example of Christ, the bishop cares for his spiritual flock and seeks out the lost sheep (see *Mt* 18:12). The *epigonation* (from the Greek meaning *on the knee*), a stiff diamond-shaped cloth worn by the bishop on his right side, indicates the “spiritual sword” which is God’s Word (see *Eph* 6:17). It is a sign of the bishop’s teaching authority. On his head the bishop wears a *mitre* (from the Greek, meaning *headband*) which indicates the spiritual authority that he receives from the heavenly King.
- 638 To the bishop’s emblems belong also the staff, the panagia, and the mantle. The *staff* is a sign of pastoral service, which entails leading and defending the flock. The *enkolpion* (from the Greek, meaning *on the breast*) or *panagia* (from the Greek, meaning *all-holy*, referring to the Mother of God) is a round icon of the Saviour or the Mother of God. The bishop wears it on his breast as a sign of his fervent and public confession of the faith. The bishop wears a *mantia* (cape) as a sign that he is wholly consecrated to God and to sacrificial service to the Church. It is characterized by *tablets* (images of the Old and New Testaments), from which stream coloured ribbons (called *rivers*)—signs of consecration to God and the mission to teach, sanctify, and lead the People of God.
- 639 In our tradition, the liturgical vestments of the sacred ministers are of different colours, depending on the nature of the celebration. White or gold vestments are used for feasts of the Lord, blue for the Mother of God, green for Pentecost, and deep red (or violet) are used for Great Lent and funeral services.

c. Other Articles Used during Divine Services

- 640 A church—the holy place of prayer—contains many special furnishings, sacred articles needed for the celebration of the divine services. When we walk into a church we notice an abundance of *lights*. There are chandeliers, lamps before icons, the *perpetual light* before the iconostasis, the seven-lamp candelabra in the sanctuary behind the Holy Table, and candles on the tetrapod. With lit tapers we accompany liturgical processions, the reading of the Gospel, and the Communion of the faithful. A bishop blesses with a *trikirion* and a *dikirion* (a *triple candle* and a *dual candle*). The use of all these lights is deeply symbolic. Their purpose is not only to illuminate the church, but to image forth Christ, the uncreated Light that illumines all.⁴²⁹
- 641 The *Cross* occupies an important place in every church. We see it on the Holy Table, and on the *analo*y or *tetrapod*. It crowns the iconostasis, and in the sanctuary we see it behind the Holy Table. It also crowns churches, chapels and graves. The Cross is the sign of Christ's victory over sin and death, the manifestation of God's love for us. For this reason we venerate the Cross by prostrating ourselves before it and kissing it.
- 642 In the church there are also *banners* (or flags), with embroidered or painted icons on them. Banners are the Christian insignia. They remind us that with the sign of the holy Cross on his army's banners, the Emperor Constantine defeated his enemies. Thus, banners are used today in processions and during services as a sign that we profess our Lord and his victory over evil. Behind the Holy Table are *ripidia*, metal fans with an image of the Seraphim. These are a sign of the angelic hosts' invisible presence around the Holy Table of the Lord.
- 643 At a Vigil service on the eve of great feasts, we place on the tetrapod a *litya-plate* with five small loaves. These commemorate Christ's miraculous multiplication of bread. Along with the loaves are also wheat grains, wine, and oil. The priest blesses these gifts, praying that the Lord would always "multiply them in this city and throughout the whole world." In the course of the Vigil service, the priest anoints the faithful with the blessed oil, and the faithful kiss the festal icon and partake of the bread with the wine poured over it.
- 644 For censuring during the services, a bowl-like vessel (*censer*) is used containing burning coals onto which fragrant incense is placed. As a sign of our adoration of God present in church, the clergy cense the church and the icons, as well as the faithful, who are images of God. The smoke and

⁴²⁹ See *Liturgicon*, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Invocation after the Second Prokeimenon.

fragrance of the incense signify the grace of the Holy Spirit descending upon the faithful. The smoke also symbolizes the Church's prayer, rising to God: "Let my prayer rise straight before you like incense" (*Ps* 140[141]:2).⁴³⁰ During the censuring, the faithful bow their heads before the mystery of the Holy Spirit's presence.

- 645 For the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, consecrated liturgical vessels are used. These are the *diskos*, the chalice, the star, the lance, and the spoon. The *diskos* is a golden plate on which the priest places the Lamb and the particles prepared during the *Proskomide*. The *chalice* is a gold-plated vessel for the Eucharistic wine. From the chalice the priest distributes Communion to the faithful at the Liturgy. To cut out the Lamb and the particles from the *prosphora*, a *lance* is used. This is a knife in the form of a spear; it commemorates the piercing of Christ's side with a spear. Once the Lamb and the particles have been placed on the *diskos*, they are covered with a *star*, two metal arches joined together, one inside the other so that when extended they form a cross. The star symbolizes the star of Bethlehem, which led the wise men to the newborn Christ—the Lamb of God. The prepared gifts are covered with three cloth *veils*: the smallest covers the chalice, a larger one covers the *diskos*, and the largest, called the *aer*, covers both. As the Liturgy is the commemoration of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the veils symbolize the swaddling-cloths of the Infant and the shroud of the Crucified One.
- 646 For the Communion of the faithful, a gold-plated *spoon* is used. In the vision of the prophet Isaiah, the angel took a burning coal with tongs and cleansed the prophet by touching it to his lips (see *Is* 6). Similarly, with a spoon, the priest gives the faithful the most pure Body and precious Blood of Christ for the cleansing from sins.
- 647 The *antimension* is a piece of linen (or silk) cloth with relics sewn into it, which carries an image of Christ being placed into the grave. The antimension lies on the Holy Table. On it the Holy Gifts are consecrated. The antimension is consecrated by the head of a self-governing Church or by another bishop on Great and Holy Thursday. At the same Liturgy, holy Chrism is also consecrated, and with this special oil the hierarch anoints the antimension. By his signature a bishop certifies when and for which church it was consecrated. Over the antimension, an *eileton* is spread out, symbolizing the headband that covered Christ's head in the grave.

⁴³⁰ See *Liturgicon*, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Great Prokeimenon after the Readings.

d. Liturgical Books

- 648 For the celebration of liturgical services, the Church uses several liturgical books: the Gospel Book, the Epistle Book, the Psalter, the Liturgicon, the Horologion, the Octoechos, Menaia, the Lenten and Floral Triodia, the Heirmologion, the Trebnyk (Euchology), and the Typicon. These books contain the rich treasury of the Christian tradition. They accompany the community and each Christian individually in their spiritual growth and progress in the knowledge of God.
- 649 Principal among the books are those that contain parts of Holy Scripture. The *Gospel Book* is the liturgical book that contains the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is divided into sections, called *pericopes*, that are read during the liturgical year. The *Epistle Book* contains the readings from the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Saint Paul, and the universal epistles of Saint Peter, Saint John, Saint James, and Saint Jude. In the Psalter we find the 150 Psalms of King David, divided into 20 *kathismata* (from the Greek, meaning *sittings*). Each *kathisma* is a section of the Psalter, read sequentially during services throughout the week. When a lay Christian dies, the entire Psalter is read over the deceased as an expression of vigilant prayer before God.
- 650 The texts of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great, along with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, are contained in the *Liturgicon* (in Slavonic, *sluzhebnyk*). A bishop's liturgicon, on the other hand, is called an *Arhieratikon*. It contains the hierarch's order of the Liturgy, along with the additional prayers, rites, and services performed only by a bishop.
- 651 The *Horologion* is the book that contains the services of the daily cycle: Vespers, Compline, the Midnight Service, Matins, the Hours, and the Typika. These services are intended to sanctify by prayer the times of day and night. To the fixed parts of the services of the Horologion are added the changeable prayer texts (troparia, stichera, canons, etc.) of the weekly, monthly, and yearly cycles. The weekly propers are contained in the *Octoechos* (from the Greek, meaning *eight tones*). The propers of the monthly cycles are in the *Menaia* (from the Greek, meaning *monthly*). The *Lenten* and *Floral Triodia* (from the Greek, meaning *three odes*) contain the propers for Great Lent, Holy Week, Pascha, and the period of Pentecost. Instructions for celebrating the services and the way to harmonize the several liturgical cycles are found in the ordo book called the *Typicon*.
- 652 The order of service for the Holy Mysteries, funerals, diverse blessings, and consecrations (together called *treby*—*prayer-offerings*—in Slavonic)

are contained in a liturgical book called the *Trebnyk*. Unique among the liturgical books is the *Heirmologion*, which contains the musical notations for the melodies of the *heirmoi* and other texts sung during the church services.

e. Church Bells

- 653 From early on in the history of Christianity, the faithful were called to church with the help of acoustic implements of various kinds. At first these tended to be a wooden board or metal plate struck with a rod or mallet. Eventually, these were replaced with bells. In our day, bells are an inseparable part of liturgical life. They are rung before services to gather the faithful, and then during the Marian hymn “It is truly right,” sung at the Divine Liturgy. Bells announce the death and funeral of a parishioner, and bells accompany processions around the church. The *continuous bell* (*peredzvin*) rings during the first three days of Pascha. At that time, anyone who desires to do so can come and ring the bell. Bells are consecrated and given the names of saints, then hung in a belfry. A belfry may have the form of a tower with a dome or a set of arches, and is located over the entrance to the church grounds.

C. The Place of Family Prayer—the Domestic Church

- 654 A Christian family’s home is the place where members of the family share with God and among themselves the intimacy of love. The family is a community of love, which Saint Paul often calls the *domestic church* (see *Rom* 16:5; *1 Cor* 16:19; *Col* 4:15). In this community, the husband and wife, the parents and children, liturgize: they render worship to God by serving one another. It is in the home that a person obtains his or her principal spiritual inheritance: knowledge of God, and respect for parents, the family hearth, the Church, and the earthly homeland.
- 655 Because the family has a calling to become a domestic church, the home in which the members of a family live becomes a church consecrated to achieving this vocation. This domestic *temple* is consecrated after it is built; it is then adorned with holy icons and blessed every year with Jordan water. As the parish church, the home is a place of prayer and the living out of the Holy Mystery of Marriage. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit received in the Holy Mystery of Marriage, the members of the family grow in the awareness of their vocation, in love for God and among themselves. Through their common faith they achieve salvation.

656 The *domestic church* is a miniature community, united by blood and spiritual bonds. It is part of the great family of God, the Universal Church, which unites in one Christian family all who were born of God. This common birth makes them all brothers and sisters. The family as a domestic church is the primary cell of the Christian community, because it possesses the three principal ministries of the Universal Church: *sharing the Good News, praying, and witnessing with one's life*. This means that the parents are the first evangelizers and educators of their children. The family is a community of prayer, conversing with God in everyday life, and as it builds new relationships grounded in evangelical love, the family is called to become a school of social solidarity.

1. The Icon Corner

657 The part of the home where icons are placed is called the *icon corner*. The name in English (as also the Ukrainian, *pokuttia*) derives from the custom of placing the icons in a corner (*kut*). For Christians, the corner of a house is a reminder of Jesus Christ, “the cornerstone.” Arranging such an icon corner in a home truly consecrates a place for God in the life of the family. Customarily there were three icons in such a corner: one of Jesus Christ, another of the Mother of God, and a third of Saint Nicholas. Christ, as the Head of the Church Body, is the model for the husband, the head of the family. The most holy Mother of God with the Child Jesus is the perfect model for the mother and the children. And Saint Nicholas is an example of compassion and hospitality.

658 In significant moments of family life, the parents bless their children with these icons. Before beginning the school year, or leaving home for military service, the children are blessed with the icon of Christ, and before marriage with the icon of the Mother of God. A family prays together and grows together in virtue in the presence of these icons. This corner is also the place for the main Christian books: Holy Scripture, a prayerbook, and a catechism.

2. Family Prayer

659 The family as a blessed community grows in the spouses' personal communication with God and between themselves, that is, in prayer. Having arranged a place in their home for prayer (the icon corner), the family also sets aside time for prayer. According to Christian tradition, the family prays in the morning and in the evening, before a meal and after it. The Daily Prayers in the Horologion (or prayerbook) are an initial rule of prayer for a family. During family prayer, the children learn as

they pray with their parents: they listen to the daily prayers and progressively absorb them. As they grow in common prayer, members of the family overcome the temptation to mutual estrangement and egoism. Family prayer prevents domestic quarrels and divorces; it reduces generational conflicts and teaches reconciliation and forgiveness.

- 660 The Christian family prays for the parents and family members (living and deceased). It asks God that children be educated and brought up well. It prays for spiritual and material benefits, and for the family's earthly homeland. It also invokes God's blessing on each day and especially difficult needs, so that in this way prayer "without ceasing" (see 1 *Thes* 5:17) will be achieved in the domestic church.

3. Family Rituals and Customs

- 661 The family—the domestic church—is a liturgical community of mutual, unselfish, and dedicated service to God and one another. Besides common prayer, the *family liturgy* includes a common reading of God's Word and Christian literature, as well as blessings and thanksgiving for God's gifts at common meals: "We give you thanks, O Christ our God, for you have satisfied us with your earthly good things. Do not deprive us of your heavenly kingdom, but as you came into the midst of your disciples, O Saviour, granting them peace, so also come to us and save us."⁴³¹ This is how we pray after the noon meal.
- 662 The solemnity of the family liturgy is particularly evident at the vigil suppers on the eve of Christmas and Theophany, and at the Paschal breakfast. The prayerful service of the family members is seen in the festive greeting and blessings that they exchange. For example, the father solemnly initiates the vigil supper by distributing the Christmas prosphora to each family member, and then the consecrated Jordan water. At Pascha (Easter), he also distributes a portion of the Paschal egg. The Christmas and Jordan carols, as well as the Easter songs that accompany the festive meal, are a majestic proclamation of the "great deeds of the Lord," a joining to the ceaseless praise of the angels. Indeed, both common prayer and common meals are Christian family treasures.
- 663 A special form of marital love is the intimate relations of husband and wife. With God's blessing, the two become one body, reflecting in the domestic church the mystery of Christ's unity with his Church (see *Eph* 5:31-32). The joining of husband and wife is conducive to mutual love; it sanctifies them and opens them to conceiving new life. This is why

⁴³¹ *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, Prayer after Noon Meal.

the Church prays that God would “keep their marriage bed undefiled ... that their common life be without flaw.”⁴³² The sanctity of a daily family routine, the introduction of Christian rituals and customs into the household’s way of life, a liturgical spirit of domestic interaction—all this creates a solid foundation for the spirituality of family relations.

4. Reading Holy Scripture and Spiritual Literature in the Family

- 664 Daily reading of Scripture, especially the New Testament, should be joined organically to the practice of daily prayers. For in prayer we address God and in Holy Scripture God speaks to us. The Word of God helps parents to raise their children and helps children to respect their parents. Having understood this, the family will turn to Holy Scripture as to their best counsellor.
- 665 Spiritual literature, which includes the Lives of the Saints, the works of the Fathers of the Church, and ascetical literature, favours the establishment and development of one’s personality in the grace of the Holy Spirit. As one reads spiritual literature (e.g., the *Patericon* of the Kyivan-Caves Monastery, or the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine), one learns the experience of repentance and conversion. In the process of spiritual growth, a person must walk along the difficult path of asceticism—overcoming sinful habits and temptations, and struggling with passions. This path was described by the ascetics in their works (e.g., Saint John of the Ladder in his *Ladder of Divine Ascent*).
- 666 Through the centuries, the most accessible and beneficial work for family reading was and remains the Lives of the Saints. In their lives, the saints are shown in a variety of situations of life that they resolve because of the sanctity of their lives—a sanctity derived from cooperation with God’s grace. Every family member’s growth in sanctity, similar to the saints, is the principal aim of the family community.
- 667 Besides the reading of religious literature, the spiritual life of the domestic church is fostered by the viewing of religious films, television programs, religious sites on the internet, and by listening to religious radio programs and recordings on evangelical themes, as well as by reading Christian magazines. All this will help the contemporary family to find eternal spiritual treasures. It will also help them to draw responsibly and constructively from authentic spiritual and cultural springs, to react against a simplistic and coarse understanding of the family, as well as

⁴³² *Trebnik*, The Rite of Crowning, Prayer after the Gospel.

erroneous views of the human person, society, and the natural environment. Thus all that is sacred and magnificent in the church building will also have its place in the *domestic church*.

IV. THE PERSONAL PRAYER OF THE CHRISTIAN

[You] need to pray always and not lose heart.
(Lk 18:1)

A. The Need for Prayer

668 The mature prayer of the Christian has two dimensions: liturgical and personal. This prayer is called to fulfil the task of unceasing worship. Jesus Christ teaches us “to pray always and not lose heart” (Lk 18:1; see Lk 11:5-8). The apostle Paul in turn calls us to “pray without ceasing” (1 *Thes* 5:17). The life of the Christian—beginning from the Holy Mystery of Baptism, when the person is *immersed* (the literal meaning of the word *baptism*) in the life of the Most Holy Trinity, chrismated by the Holy Spirit and joined to Christ in Holy Communion—this life becomes a time of prayer, filled with praise, thanksgiving, and glorification of the Creator. Our life is then transformed into a prayerful state,⁴³³ or stance, a constant readiness of the heart. Christians should ceaselessly cultivate this state: “They ‘pray without ceasing’ who join prayer to works that are of obligation, and good works to their prayer ... It is only in this way that we can understand the injunction ‘pray without ceasing’ as something that we can carry out.”⁴³⁴ Saint Basil the Great in his Rules coupled work to sevenfold liturgical prayer in the course of the day, in order thus to consecrate the entire day to the Lord.⁴³⁵

669 Personal or private prayer always has an ecclesial dimension. Saint Cyprian teaches: “When we pray, we pray not only for ourselves but for the entire people, because we all are one people ... Christ himself, our teacher and master, desired that each would pray for all, as he, having gathered all within himself, brought them to the Father.”⁴³⁶ Therefore, those who pray in the name of Christ, always pray *in* the Church, the Body of Christ, and *for* the Church. Christians who praise the Lord or thank him or ask for something for themselves or for others, become

⁴³³ See JOHN CASSIAN, *Conferences*, 10, 14: SCh 54, 95.

⁴³⁴ ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, 12, 2: PG 11, 452.

⁴³⁵ See BASIL THE GREAT, *The Longer Rules*, 37, 2-3: PG 31, 1009.

⁴³⁶ CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 8.

the voice of their neighbour. The basis of this prayer is the common partaking of Christians in Christ's priesthood, for the sanctification of the world.

*You, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith;
pray in the Holy Spirit.
(Jude 1:20)*

B. The Action of the Holy Spirit in the Prayer of the Christian

- 670 Christian prayer is generally directed to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. The prayer of the Church begins with the prayer to the Holy Spirit, "Heavenly King," and is performed by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. In his prayer, Christ prayed to the Father in the Holy Spirit: "In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth'" (*Lk* 10:21). To "rejoice in the Holy Spirit" is the beginning of prayer.
- 671 During his earthly ministry Christ often prayed alone, sometimes throughout the night (see *Lk* 6:12), choosing solitary places for his prayer (see *Mk* 1:35; *Lk* 5:16). He prayed to his Father, and such also is the prayer of his disciples: "Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (*Gal* 4:6). The Spirit of Christ creates in the hearts of Christians the awareness of divine childhood, the consciousness of those who inherit God's kingdom. Without the Holy Spirit, prayer cannot be Christian. "Being in Christ" (see *Rom* 8:1) is the same as "living in the Spirit" (see *Rom* 8:2). The Spirit unites our prayer to the prayer of the Son of God, and joins our personal prayers into a single voice of the Church.
- 672 The Holy Spirit beckons us to "watch and pray" (see *Mt* 26:41) in order to counter temptations. This same Spirit "helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (*Rom* 8:26). In this way, the Spirit "gives voice" to the "groaning in labour" of all creation before God (see *Rom* 8:19, 21-22). Being subject to corruption, it awaits with hope the revealing of the children of God. According to God's will, the Spirit intercedes for the saints (see *Rom* 8:27). Inspiring us to pray, it is the Spirit himself who prays within us. And we, as we pray, "breathe" by the Holy Spirit.

C. The “Our Father”

673 The model of the Christian’s prayer is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The Saviour prayed often, be it alone in solitary places (see *Lk* 5:16) or together with his disciples (see *Lk* 9:18). Sometimes he prayed into the night (see *Mt* 14:23), and sometimes he rose to pray long before dawn (see *Mk* 1:35). Jesus also prays in special moments associated with important events in his life: at the time of his baptism in the Jordan (see *Lk* 3:21-22), in the desert as he struggled with temptations (see *Mt* 4:1-11; *Lk* 4:1-14), before the calling of the twelve apostles (see *Lk* 6:12f), on the eve of the recognition of his Messiahship by the apostle Peter (see *Lk* 9:18f), at the time of his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (see *Lk* 9:28-29), before raising Lazarus (see *Jn* 11:41), at the Mystical Supper (see *Lk* 22:19; *Jn* 17), in the garden of Gethsemane before his Passion (see *Mt* 26:36; *Mk* 14:32; *Lk* 22:40f), and as he died on the Cross (see *Lk* 23:46).

674 The disciples, impressed by the prayerfulness of their Teacher, asked him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples” (*Lk* 11:1). Desiring to introduce his disciples into the mystery of his prayer to the Father, Jesus teaches them, and through them entrusts to his Church the pre-eminent Christian prayer. The evangelist Luke gives it to us in five petitions (see *Lk* 11:2-4), whereas the evangelist Matthew presents it in seven (see *Mt* 6:9-13). Matthew’s text became the basis of the accepted liturgical form:

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.

675 The “Our Father” is the core of Holy Scripture, an “epitome of the whole Gospel.”⁴³⁷ Located in the Sermon on the Mount—the teaching about the new life of the Christian—it unites within itself the revelation of God as Father, and our filial response of faith, in which “with confidence” we ask the Father for “that which we need” (see *Mt* 6:32; *Lk* 12:30). We call this prayer, which we received and learned from the Lord himself, the *Lord’s Prayer*. Thus, he is both the Teacher and Model of our prayer.

⁴³⁷ TERTULLIAN, *On Prayer*, 1, 6: PL 1, 1153.

676 In the invocation “Our Father” we profess that God is Father, and that we are his children. Calling him “our,” we embrace all people in this prayer—children of the one God, we become brothers and sisters among ourselves. The word “Father” is a word of grace and love. It may be pronounced only by the Father’s sons and daughters in Christ: “Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then an heir, through God” (*Gal* 4:6-7). In this first word of the prayer, and then in all the subsequent phrases, we pronounce our filial “yes” to God the Father and to our brothers and sisters in service to each other. Calling God the Father who is “in heaven,” Christ teaches us that heaven is the aim of our life: heaven is where the glory of God is manifested, and where the righteous will receive the eternal reward. Heaven is what we await in the “hope [in which] we were saved” (*Rom* 8:24).⁴³⁸

677 By the words “hallowed be Thy name” we confess that holiness belongs to God alone. At the same time, we ask that we who were sanctified through Baptism,⁴³⁹ might be made partakers of God’s sanctity, and that we would “be holy and blameless before him” (*Eph* 1:4). This is so that through our prayer and righteous life the Name of God may be hallowed among people (see *Mt* 5:16) and in all creation. In the petition “Thy kingdom come,” we ask that the grace of God that is in us (see *Lk* 17:21) might grow and increase in the whole world. This petition, just like “*Maraná tha*” (meaning *Come, Lord*), refers to the final coming of the kingdom of God, but it is also already answered: this kingdom is revealed in the Eucharist and is active in the new life of Christians as they live according to the commandments of the Beatitudes.

678 With the words “Thy will be done,” we accept the Father’s Plan concerning us. This is because we imitate Christ’s prayer in the garden of Gethsemane: “Father ... not my will but yours be done” (*Lk* 22:42). In other words, we profess our faith that the will of the Father is the life and salvation of every person; God does not desire that any should perish (see *2 Pt* 3:9), but that “everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (*1 Tim* 2:4). The Father, who in his will so loved the world that he gave us his Only-Begotten Son (see *Jn* 3:16), awaits from us in turn this same kind of love. He expects us to love one another as the Lord has loved us (see *Jn* 13:34). Fulfilling the will of the Father, we become like Christ, the Son of God, cultivating within ourselves the

⁴³⁸ See METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Про молитву Отче наш в Божя Мудрість [On the Lord’s Prayer in *The Wisdom of God*] (1933).

⁴³⁹ See CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, 12.

same thoughts and manner of life that were in him (see *Phil* 2:5). In this way, we shall attain the freedom of the children of God. When “the will of God is ‘done on earth as it is in heaven,’ the earth will remain earth no longer... we shall all become heaven.”⁴⁴⁰

- 679 As children of God, with confidence we can ask for that which we need most: bread, forgiveness, the overcoming of temptation, and liberation from the Evil One. When we ask for the bread “that is for existence” (as the text of Matthew literally suggests), we ask the Father to give us daily bread, necessary for earthly life, and “heavenly” bread, the Eucharist. Anyone who eats of this heavenly Bread will not die but will live forever (see *Jn* 6:50-51). By this petition, Jesus Christ teaches us “to desire and ask for that which is indispensable for our life and the life of our neighbours, but also to be satisfied with the essential and not to crave the superfluous. He also teaches us to desire life in evangelical poverty, to which all are called.”⁴⁴¹
- 680 By reciting the words “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” we receive forgiveness from God the Father for ourselves inasmuch as we forgive those who have wronged us. The Father who forgives us our sins desires that we do the same: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (*Mt* 6:14-15; see *Mk* 11:25-26). An offense is not only a sin or wrong that has been committed; it is also the debt of a good deed not rendered. Thus a gift from God wasted or not made use of for God’s glory and the service of our neighbour is an offense.
- 681 In the petition “lead us not into temptation,” we express our faith that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our endurance, and that with every temptation he will give us the strength to resist (see 1 *Cor* 10:13). We do not ask God to remove all temptations because trials are a testing for the soul and an occasion for good works. Struggles with temptations strengthen the soul in goodness and so the apostle James teaches: “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy” (*Jas* 1:2). We pray that “temptations may not overcome us, that we not succumb to them, and that we not fail in the struggle; we ask God not to allow our fall in temptations.”⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, 26, 6: PG 11, 504-505.

⁴⁴¹ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Про молитву Отче наш в Божя Мудрість [On the Lord’s Prayer in *The Wisdom of God*] (1933).

⁴⁴² METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Про молитву Отче наш в Божя Мудрість [On the Lord’s Prayer in *The Wisdom of God*] (1933).

- 682 In the words “deliver us from evil,” we express awareness of our frailty, and pray to the Father that through the wiles of the Evil One we should not fall away from him who is our greatest Good.⁴⁴³ In asking God’s protection from the Evil One, who takes advantage of the propensity of our will to wrong and of our mind to error, we profess our faith in our victory over evil, for “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (*Rom* 5:20). At the Divine Liturgy the priest concludes the “Our Father” with a doxology praising the Triune God, to whom belong the kingdom, the power and the glory, now and for ever and ever. “Then we say, ‘Amen,’ which means ‘So be it,’ thus setting [our] seal upon the petitions of the prayer given to us by the divine teacher.”⁴⁴⁴
- 683 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches the following about the significance of the “Our Father” for the Christian’s spiritual life:

If we pray in a properly Christian way we cannot say more than what is contained in the Lord’s Prayer. This is because we cannot desire anything better or higher or more suitable for us than the desires we express in the petitions of the Our Father. The Our Father is the last word in prayer, it is the absolute prayer. We might even say that outside of this prayer, there is no prayer. Everything that is prayer is contained in this prayer.⁴⁴⁵

D. The Practice of Prayer

1. Prayer with the Psalms

*With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms.
(Col 3:16)*

- 684 The practice of praying with the words of Holy Scripture reaches back to Old Testament times. An example of such prayer is the psalms—a model and *school* of prayer. Psalms are spiritual songs. The Old Testament prophets, kings, priests, as well as the entire people of God prayed the psalms. Jesus Christ prayed the psalms and was brought up on them. He prayed with the words of the psalms even on the cross. As we pray the psalms we become aware of God’s majesty and beauty, his wisdom and power. At the same time we recognize our frailty and sinfulness

⁴⁴³ See METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Про молитву Отче наш в Божя Мудрість [On the Lord’s Prayer in *The Wisdom of God*] (1933).

⁴⁴⁴ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Mystagogical Lectures*, 5, 18: PG 33, 1124.

⁴⁴⁵ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Про молитву Отче наш в Божя Мудрість [On the Lord’s Prayer in *The Wisdom of God*] (1933).

before him. We grow in simplicity, humility, sincerity, trust, acceptance, and love.

A psalm implies serenity of soul; it is the author of peace, which calms bewildering and seething thoughts. ... A psalm forms friendships, unites those separated, conciliates those at enmity. ... A psalm is a city of refuge from the demons; a means of inducing help from the angels. ... It is the elementary exposition for beginners, the improvement of those advancing, the solid support of the perfect, the voice of the Church. It brightens the feast days; it creates a sorrow that is in accordance with God ... A psalm is the work of angels, a heavenly institution, the spiritual incense.⁴⁴⁶

2. Short Prayers

Lord, have mercy.

- 685 As the Christian abides in the presence of God, he or she is seized with rapture and an admiration expressed in short prayerful exclamations. Such exclamations are the conclusions of all liturgical prayers, when we praise God, “the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The very mention of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, accompanied by the sign of the holy Cross, is an example of a short prayer. Likewise, the sign of the Cross is one. The invocation of each of the Divine Persons by name—“Lord,” “God,” “Father,” “Son of God,” “Jesus Christ,” “Spirit of truth”—all of these are also prayers of this kind. Pronouncing in such short prayers the names of the Divine Persons, we express our joy or our anxiety, and we commend ourselves to God’s protection. The invocation of God’s name is never futile. However, we must beware never to “take the name of the Lord our God in vain,” that is, irreverently, or in jest, or worse, in order to blaspheme.
- 686 Christian greetings are also brief prayers. We say: “Glory to Jesus Christ!—Glory forever!” “Christ is risen!—Truly he is risen!” “Christ is born!—Glorify him!” With such greetings Christians sanctify their encounters and their farewells. “Everlasting (or eternal) memory” is a prayer the living raise to God for the dead. Some brief prayers were so important from the very beginnings of Christianity that they have been preserved to this day in the languages of the first Christian communities. For example, the prayer “Alleluia!” (from the Hebrew meaning *Praise the Lord!*) is still used by all Christians without translation. “Amen” (from the Hebrew meaning *so be it*) is a brief prayer that

⁴⁴⁶ BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Psalm 1*, 2: PG 29, 212.

expresses the readiness of those praying to accept in peace all that the Lord might send.

- 687 Besides short prayers or exclamations, there are also short prayers that are petitions: “Lord, have mercy,” and “Grant this, O Lord,” for example. These petitions to the Lord are joined to a conviction that the mercy of God contains all that we need. Another short prayer, “To you, O Lord,” is the prayer of dedication of ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our God. The simplicity of brief prayers is an expression of our renunciation of “extraneous words,” trusting in the Lord who knows all that we need (see *Mt* 6:32).

3. The Gift of Tears in Prayer

Prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears
(*Heb* 5:7)

- 688 Saint Gregory of Nyssa taught: “Tears are like the blood of the soul’s wounds.”⁴⁴⁷ Prayer with tears is God’s gift to us. It enables us to lament our sins and feel inner longing for God. It is a deep sensation that descends upon us when God reveals his Divine beauty on the one hand, and our own imperfection on the other. It is the tension between the *Divine perfect* and the *human imperfect*. Shedding tears over our imperfection, we commiserate with all creation which, due to our sin, “groans and suffers.”
- 689 The spiritual ascetics teach that the fear of God yields tears of repentance. Tears bring spiritual joy while joy gives strength. In virtue of this the soul bears fruit. Thus, pain, suffering, and tears culminate in blessedness.⁴⁴⁸ The gift of tears cleanses our spiritual eyes and enables us to see everything around us the way that God sees it. We then do not judge our neighbour but are filled with merciful love, having become capable of feeling the suffering and needs of others.

4. Vocal Prayer

Hear my voice, O Lord, when I cry aloud!
(*Ps* 26[27]:7)

- 690 We pray with our lips, our mind, and our heart. Usually in the beginning, prayer is only verbal. But such prayer should be joined to the prayer of

⁴⁴⁷ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Homily for the Funeral of the Empress Flacilla*. PG 46, 877-892.

⁴⁴⁸ See SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, *Fourth Catechetical Discourse*.

mind and heart, aroused and upheld by verbal prayer. The prayer of the lips is spiritually fruitful when it is united with inner attention. The masters of the spiritual life stress that if one's attention is distracted from the words of prayer, one should bring it back to the place where it was lost and repeat the words of the prayer until we are able to recite the whole prayer from beginning to end without distraction.⁴⁴⁹ Distraction may be caused by lack of experience or by an external temptation. If we are insistent, even temptations will not impair our prayer. Those who pray vocally are similar to the angels and together with them participate in the praise of God.

- 691 Throughout their lives, the Holy Fathers and Mothers joined vocal prayer to prayer of the mind and heart. This kind of union causes prayer to permeate the soul and body of the one who prays. When the heart is joined to the mind in prayer, the words truly communicate their meaning and the heart feels that which the mind is pondering.

5. The Role of Silence in Prayer

*Pay heed, Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak.
(Job 33: 31)*

- 692 A prerequisite for prayer is the silence that we achieve with God's help once we have rebuffed troubling thoughts. Achieving silence within us is a requirement for hearing God and conversing with him. The closer God is to us, the deeper our prayer becomes. There comes a moment when our remaining, or dwelling, in God's presence no longer requires words. We fall silent once again, though this silence indicates the kind of communication that transcends words and concepts.⁴⁵⁰ Such remaining, or dwelling, in God's presence is called authentic, vigilant devotion. As the Holy Fathers teach,⁴⁵¹ silence is both the beginning of our prayer and an expression of a prayerful contemplation of God.

⁴⁴⁹ See JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 28: PG 88, 1132.

⁴⁵⁰ See PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *On the Divine Names*, 11, 1: PG 3, 949.

⁴⁵¹ See JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 27: PG 88, 1096.

6. The Jesus Prayer and Prayer on the Rosary

*There is no other name under heaven
given among mortals by which we must be saved.
(Acts 4:12)*

*Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you!
(see Lk 1:28)*

- 693 Down through the ages and to our own day our spiritual tradition has transmitted the experience of a profound and yet simple prayer. It consists in a continual repetition of the words, "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." It is called the *Jesus Prayer* because of the continual invocation of the name of Jesus Christ. The practice of the Jesus Prayer aims at rooting within us, within our heart, a continual and vivid consciousness of God's presence.⁴⁵²
- 694 The Jesus Prayer is recited on a prayer cord (the Ukrainian *vervytsia* comes from the Slavonic *verv* meaning a cord), which frequently comprises a circle of one hundred knots for a hundredfold repetition of the words, "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The Jesus Prayer on the prayer cord begins, as do the Daily Prayers, with the *Usual Beginning* (Heavenly King, the Thrice-Holy Hymn, Most Holy Trinity, Our Father) up to and including the Creed. After this beginning, we start the first hundred prayers (or *century*). One may recite a single century, or two or more. Every century concludes with the hymn to the Mother of God, "It is truly right to bless you, O God-bearing one." The subsequent century begins with "Come, let us bow in worship." However, the number of repetitions is not an aim in itself; it is a means to implant in the heart an awareness of the Saviour's presence.
- 695 Together with the Jesus Prayer, some in our Church also pray the Marian Rosary. The Rosary, or Psalter of the Most Pure Virgin Mary is a pious form of prayer to God, easy and accessible to all. It consists in extolling the most holy Mother of God through the repetition of the prayer "Rejoice, Mother of God, Virgin Mary" 150 times. This is the number of the Psalms of David. Within these 150 prayers, every decade is measured off by the "Our Father" and by appropriate meditations on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (or mysteries).⁴⁵³ The Roman Pontiff Saint John Paul II added to the traditional fifteen mysteries of the Rosary five more Luminous Mysteries.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² See *Beneath the Mantle of your Mercy Prayerbook*, On the Jesus Prayer, 239.

⁴⁵³ PIUS V, *Consueverunt Romani* [*Call to Prayer*].

⁴⁵⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* [*On the Most Holy Rosary*], 21.

7. The Examination of Conscience

When he came to himself he said ... 'I will get up and go to my father.'
(Lk 15:17-18)

696 In the evening before retiring to sleep, we perform a prayer practice called the examination of conscience. It consists in reviewing the day that has passed in the light of God's commandments. The purpose is to see in the day that has passed the signs of God's care and providence as well the expressions of our sinfulness and weakness. To contemplate the events of the day *through God's eyes* is an occasion to see them in truth—as they really are. This perspective will allow us to transfer the events of the passing day from our memory to our conscience and to evaluate them by God's measure.

697 The great blessing of a prayerful examination of conscience is self-knowledge. We start paying attention to what we are doing, saying and thinking. We observe within ourselves things that we would never notice without this prayer. At the same time we become aware of our deficiencies without self-justification. While trusting in God's mercy, Saint Basil the Great teaches:

When the day's work is ended, thanksgiving should be offered for what has been granted us, or for what we have done rightly therein, and confession made of our omissions voluntary or involuntary, or of a secret fault, if we chance to have committed any in words or deeds, or in the heart itself. For by prayer we propitiate God for all our misdemeanours. The examination of our past actions is a great help toward not falling into like faults again.⁴⁵⁵

698 A fruit of a prayerful examination of conscience is the grace to forgive "those who trespass against us," and to find inner peace. An important part of the examination of conscience is perceiving God's plan for us within the events of the passing day. When we recognize God's action in the day's events and the people we have met, we become capable of accepting all that happened with gratitude and sense God's nearness in what we experienced. To conclude our examination of conscience before falling asleep, we may say with the psalmist: "I lie down and sleep; I awake again, for the Lord sustains me" (Ps 3:5).

⁴⁵⁵ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Longer Rules*, 37, 4: PG 31, 1009.

E. The Place and Time of Prayer

1. Entering into Solitude for Prayer

*Whenever you pray, go into your room.
(Mt 6:6)*

- 699 In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught us that during prayer we should “go into our room and shut the door.” The Fathers of the spiritual life frequently offered interpretations of these words. They understood them as an injunction to direct our attention deep within ourselves. This is the interior attention to which Saint Basil the Great refers in his appeal to “Attend to yourself!” The liturgical “Let us be attentive!” continually reminds us of this. The most important reaction to this call is to increase our attention to what is going on within ourselves.

2. How Often Should We Pray?

*Pray without ceasing.
(1 Thes 5:17)*

- 700 The Church guides us on our path of prayer and proposes that we rely on her accumulated experience of prayer. This experience indicates that we need to set aside designated times to speak with God. As a minimum this would be twice a day—in the morning and in the evening. Appropriate prayers for the morning and evening are found in every prayerbook along with other prayers that accompany the believer through the various situations he or she encounters during the day. Prayer is our main rule of life. As we pray more often, we progressively bring prayer closer to our daily affairs until prayer becomes one of our main daily activities and all other endeavours are filled with the spirit of prayer. This is why prayer and work are two mutually dependent aspects of the Christian way of life. If filled with communion with God, the Christian’s life is transformed into a feast, and it becomes a time for our sanctification and the world’s transfiguration.

3. Keeping Prayerful Vigil

Blessed is the one who stays awake.
(*Rev* 16:15)

- 701 “Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial” (*Mt* 26:41; *Mk* 14:38). With these words Christ cautioned the apostles in the garden of Gethsemane, and in the parable of the Ten Virgins he warned: “Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (*Mt* 25:13). The spiritual Fathers used the image of sleep to depict the state of the sinful person who “in their sin has fallen asleep unto death.” Through sin the person sinks into a dreamy state of self-deception. If this sinful “dreaminess” persists, it ends in *death*—the full incapacitation of the person toward the good, and the lack of will to do what is right.

4. The Mutual Link of Prayer and Fasting

Prayer with fasting is good.
(*Tob* 12:8)

- 702 In the Gospels, Christ emphasizes the mutual relationship between prayer and fasting. Both are needed if one is to overcome the influence of the Evil One, that is, if one is to be freed from sin. “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting” (*Mk* 9:29, RSV-CE). The Holy Fathers stressed the inseparability of fasting and prayer: “To the measure that you take away from the body, to that measure you will fortify the soul with spiritual strength.”⁴⁵⁶ Through fasting, we restrain and check the *outer person* so that through prayer, the *inner person* might thrive. When prayer is separated from fasting, the inner person lacks the necessary conditions for growth.

⁴⁵⁶ BASIL THE GREAT, *On Fasting*, 2, 1: PG 31, 183.

5. Prayer before Icons

*Let your face shine on your servant.
(Ps 30[31]:16)*

703 Icons serve prayer so that as the Christian grows spiritually, he or she might gradually pass from faith in the Mystery of God to the contemplation of him “face to face.” The Seventh Ecumenical Council teaches that we come to know God through God’s Son—the Word and Image of God. Each of the ways of divine knowledge is equally valid and important. In prayer before icons the main *organ* of our communication with God is not our lips, which pronounce the words, but our eyes. With our eyes we look at the image in order to contemplate the imaged Person. Like vocal prayer, prayer before icons is a gradual process, in which we progress as if climbing the rungs of a ladder.

Part Three
THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- 704 Part Three of the Catechism presents the life and action of the Christian as a new person in Christ in light of Divine Revelation and on the basis of the Eastern Christian tradition. God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit grants a person new life. That person is called to mature to the fullness of this new life. A Christian discovers, develops, and expresses this divine gift through good works.
- 705 The gift of divine life, which a person receives in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), grants one the ability required to lead a Christian life according to the grace that has been received. To live in Christ means to act in him and with him. This gift of divine life acts in the Christian as the Gospel's "leaven of the kingdom of heaven," capable of transfiguring contemporary culture and society (see *Mt* 13:33). This transfiguring reality of Christian life is examined in this part of the Catechism in four dimensions: person, family, society, and creation.
- 706 The first dimension of being and acting in Christ (Chapters I–II) relates to the personal, interior life of a Christian. This interior life of a person who is born of water and the spirit is built on fundamental principles of the spiritual and ascetic life. The foundation of Christian morality and of the rules and principles of Christian conduct is the activity that transfigures a person from within. It is the foundation of the "unseen warfare" with one's own sins and of growth in the virtues.
- 707 The second dimension of a Christian life (Chapter III) transfigured by the Holy Spirit is the Christian family. The Christian family is the environment that safeguards the dignity of the beginning of a person's earthly life, and the dignity of the end of that life. The gift of Divine Love, granted to a man and a woman in the Mysteries of Christian Initiation and Marriage, makes them capable of realizing God's plan regarding the purpose of human sexuality and respect for the dignity of the human person. This respect encompasses all stages of human life, beginning with conception and ending with natural death.
- 708 Human society (Chapter IV) is the third dimension of the new life and action of one who believes in Christ. Society and the state are seen as the *dough*, which Christians—the evangelical leaven—are called to elevate and transfigure (see *Lk* 13:20–21). Christ's Church is the embryonic beginning of the kingdom of God and that transfiguring power for humanity. Through the Church's unity, holiness, universality, and apostolic service, that power is present and active in the life of human society. It illumines with the light of Christ every person who comes into this world.

709 The fourth dimension of a Christian's activity is his or her responsibility for all of God's creation—the environment and the earth's natural resources (Chapter V). The activity of the Christian as “a priest of creation” in the world created by God involves the vocation to protect, nurture, and develop it, and to prepare its transformation (see *Rev* 21:1-4).

I. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE—LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 710 We call the life in Christ a *spiritual life* since its source is the Holy Spirit, and it is brought to fulfilment by his grace. Grace is the action of the Holy Spirit in a person, that is, the Spirit's *unconditional gift*. Grace in no way constrains a person, nor does it restrict one's freedom. The apostle Paul emphasizes this when he writes: "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 *Cor* 3:17). The Spirit of God invites us and calls us to growth in Christ, and makes this growth possible.
- 711 Every Christian has the grace of being called, that is, the grace of vocation. This calling involves the possibility of living a meaningful and happy life, which can only be realized in God. This vocation is fulfilled in the spiritual life, which is an inseparable condition for personal growth and development. Just as physical development requires physical activity, and intellectual development demands learning and education, similarly spiritual growth requires the grace of the Holy Mysteries, prayer, and good works.

A. The Signs, Gifts, and Fruits of the Holy Spirit's Action

- 712 The Holy Spirit inspires each person to recognize their life's vocation. In fulfilling this vocation, a person achieves happiness. It is the life-creating Spirit that allows a person to overcome the narrow confines of particular life circumstances and reveals to them ever-expanding horizons of existence. That same Spirit stirs in a person the deep and true needs of life: the search for the meaning of life, truth, goodness, and beauty.
- 713 When a person turns from God through sin, it is the Holy Spirit who rouses in their conscience a salvific restlessness through pangs of conscience. The light of grace reveals itself in allowing a person to see his or her deeds as they truly are. The Holy Spirit enlightens those languishing in sin, helps them to be free from its slavery and to experience the gift of freedom. The Lord calls us to this in the Book of Deuteronomy: "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ... blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live" (*Dt* 30:15, 19b). A person enlightened by the life-creating Spirit is able to overcome evil with good (see *Rom* 12:21) and to choose life instead of death.
- 714 God looks upon each of us with love, desires our salvation, and through the Holy Spirit reveals to us the true good. At the outset of our spiritual life, we do not fully understand what is good for us. However, through

the action of the Holy Spirit we can learn to look at ourselves and the world through God's eyes, and distinguish between good and evil.

- 715 As we develop in our spiritual life, we see ever more clearly through the fabric of our daily lives the action of the Holy Spirit. Maximus the Confessor wrote of the particular contemplation that a Christian gradually achieves—the contemplation of Divine Providence.⁴⁵⁷ Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Christians “see” God’s will for themselves, and accept it joyfully. Hence, a Christian’s entire life becomes a sign of the action of the Holy Spirit and acquires meaning and fulfilment.

1. Holiness as a Sign of the Action of the Holy Spirit

- 716 Only the one Lord is holy in the true sense of this word. We read about this in the book of the prophet Isaiah, who saw God on the heavenly throne. The seraphim sang of his ineffable holiness, proclaiming: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (*Is* 6:3). The Holy Scriptures also calls believers “saints” (literally “the holy ones”)—those who are sanctified through God’s salvific action (see *Rom* 1:7; *1 Cor* 1:2). The Holy Spirit cleanses a person of all defilement and leads him or her into divine life and holiness. The apostle Paul teaches:

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (*1 Cor* 6:9-11).

- 717 Christian holiness is not a perfection grounded in our nature, but is achieved rather through the active participation of a person in the holiness of God. Saint John Cassian teaches:

All holy people have certainly had God within them. For we know well that God was in the patriarchs, and that he spoke in the prophets. We believe that not only apostles and martyrs but all the saints and servants of God have within them the Spirit of God, according to this: “For we are the temple of the living God” (*2 Cor* 6:16) And again: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (*1 Cor* 3:16). And thus we are all receivers of God.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Mystagogy*, 24: PG 91, 701ff.

⁴⁵⁸ JOHN CASSIAN, *On the Incarnation of the Lord*, V, 3: PL 50, 102.

718 All Christians receive holiness in embryonic form through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation, and they are called not to squander it, but to nurture it to fullness. Again, John Cassian reminds us:

As far as human weakness permits, [people] should humble themselves before God, be subject to God, make themselves dwellings for God, and by their faith and piety win this, to have God as their guest and indweller. For in proportion as anyone is fit for God's gift, so does the Divine grace reward that person: in proportion as a person seems worthy of him; in proportion as a human being seems worthy of God, so does that person he enjoy God's presence, according to the Lord's promise, "those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them" (*Jn* 14:23).⁴⁵⁹

2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

719 The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the capacity granted to a person to accept God and to be open to communion with him. There are seven such gifts: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about these gifts as attributes of the awaited Saviour: "The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD" (*Is* 11:2).

720 In their instructions about these gifts, the Holy Fathers developed a teaching on the *spiritual senses* which a Christian discovers within himself or herself. Just as sight, hearing, and natural intellect allow a person to see, hear, and understand the visible and created world, similarly, the Holy Spirit grants a person the means to perceive and understand the invisible and divine world. Symeon the New Theologian speaks of a spiritual sight that is illumined and becomes active in the light of the Most Holy Trinity, and of other spiritual senses that help us perceive and correctly understand the Word of God, as well as see God in the created world.⁴⁶⁰

3. The Fruits of the Spirit

721 The fruits of the Holy Spirit are the marks of a Christian's mature spiritual life and action that flow from the person's cooperation with divine grace. In order to live as a true Christian and bear witness to Christ, both the assistance of the Holy Spirit as well as the openness and effort

⁴⁵⁹ JOHN CASSIAN, *On the Incarnation of the Lord*, V, 4: PL 50, 104.

⁴⁶⁰ See SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, *Ethical Discourses*, III.

of a human being are needed. The apostle Paul teaches the following about the fruits of the Holy Spirit: "... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity [goodness], faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (*Gal* 5:22-23).

- 722 Commenting on these words of the apostle Paul, Saint John Chrysostom exhorts:

If then we wish to enjoy pleasure, above all things else let us shun wickedness and follow after virtue; since it is not in the nature of things for one to have a share thereof on any other terms, even if we were mounted upon the king's throne itself. This is why Paul also says, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (see *Gal* 5:22). Therefore, zealously guarding this fruit within us, we will be able to be happy even here [on earth] and some day we will become worthy to receive the future kingdom.⁴⁶¹

B. Christian Morality as a Liturgy of Life

- 723 The spiritual life flows from God's action in us and for us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (*Jn* 3:16). This action of God is also called a service, a "liturgy" of God for us: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (*Mt* 20:28). Therefore the Christian's entire spiritual life is service to God and neighbour—"a liturgy of life." Thus, we join ourselves to God's service with our own service; the Divine Liturgy becomes our personal liturgy, our service. To live this liturgical life means to show love for God and neighbour through thought, word, and deed.
- 724 This *liturgy of life* is an icon of the Divine Liturgy. In it the Christian, who is served by the Lord, begins to serve God and neighbour. Jesus Christ gave an example of this service when at the Last Supper he washed the feet of his disciples and then said, "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (*Jn* 13:15). Christ's service becomes the source and foundation of Christian life. Having received mercy, forgiveness, and healing from Christ, we recreate them in the actions we perform every day.

⁴⁶¹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans*, Homily 1, 4: PG 60, 400.

II. THE PERSON IN CHRIST AS A NEW CREATION

*Remember, O Lord, those who bring offerings and do good work ...
for earthly things grant them heavenly ones.
for temporal ones, eternal; for corruptible, incorruptible
(Anaphora from the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

A. Foundations of the Spiritual Life

1. The Vocation to Divine Likeness

- 725 The Fathers of the Church teach that the human person, transfigured in Christ, is called to imitate God's way of life in his or her own way of life. Only in Christ is it possible to understand God's plan, according to which and for which human beings were created, and to recognize the fullness of human life.
- 726 Life in Christ, offered in the Holy Mysteries, is the foundation of Christian morality, of the rules and norms of Christian behaviour. Christian moral life is a *witness to faith*. The active manifestation of Christian faith in personal, familial, socio-political, and other areas of human life demands true heroism and courage. Created in the image of God, one is called to reflect God in his or her Christian life, to mystically reveal the life of the Most Holy Trinity, and in so doing, to grow from the image to the likeness of God. Every Christian is called to reveal the mysterious reflection of the divine life in their own life ever more clearly. *Achieving divine likeness through concrete actions defines Christian morality.*
- 727 In accordance with the ancient tradition of the Church, through the grace of the Holy Mystery of Baptism, all the faithful are consecrated to God and are, therefore, called to holiness, that is, to be like God. This vocation is realized in a variety of ways: in Christian marriage, in the monastic life, and in the virginal state—in accordance with the gifts of the Holy Spirit that each of us generously receives. The apostle Paul witnesses to this when he writes: "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:4-7).

2. A Human Being as a Moral Person

- 728 Human beings reveal themselves in their personal actions and at the same time through them “create” themselves. A person’s actions have a clearly marked personal character and constitute the style or manner of his or her existence. According to the teaching of Saint John of Damascus,⁴⁶² a human being is the author of his or her moral behaviour. Just as the divine Person, the human person initiates their own actions. Created in the image of God, a human being is a rational being, capable of self-control and self-determination, and is, therefore, morally responsible for his or her actions.
- 729 Actions influence the person who performs them. Through one’s own actions a person either becomes more like a divine Person or conversely diminishes one’s divine likeness. Such acts we define as *moral*. Actions that have no influence on a person achieving divine likeness are called *neutral*. Depending on how actions influence the person who performs them, we can distinguish between neutral and moral acts.
- 730 *Neutral acts*, from the point of view of Christian morality, are those human actions which are performed involuntarily and unconsciously. Through them, a person does not reveal oneself to be their active source, and therefore such actions can neither build up nor destroy a person’s moral life. Precisely because these actions do not influence a person’s moral character, the Holy Fathers called them morally neutral. For example, such actions would include the deeds of children who have not yet achieved full awareness of their actions, the fulfilment of the natural needs of the human organism, spontaneous movements, and the like.
- 731 *Moral acts* are those actions performed consciously with the assent of one’s personal will. Like God, a human being is the author of his or her own actions, is capable of planning them deliberately and performing them without external coercion. The capacity to control oneself, to initiate actions independently, and to execute them is the foundation of a person’s dignity as well as of his or her responsibility. Unlike the actions of God, the moral acts of a human being may be morally good or morally evil.

3. Human Freedom and the Moral Person’s Responsibility

- 732 Freedom is a human being’s conscious and voluntary choice of God as Father and the acceptance of God’s call to participate in the eternal life

⁴⁶² See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, II, 25: PG 94: 958.

of the Most Holy Trinity. At their creation, man and woman received the capacity to make choices and, by choosing correctly, to pass to *true freedom*. Only by consciously and willingly choosing God does a human being become fully free, living in the freedom of God himself.

- 733 In paradise man and woman received God's commandment as a guide along the way. The commandment is to assist us in making the right choice and provides the opportunity to choose true freedom. *God's commandment is liberating because it gives a human being freedom*. True freedom can never be in opposition to God's Truth and Law, or separated from them. Christ teaches: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (*Jn* 8:31-32).
- 734 The Holy Fathers teach that as a consequence of the sin of our first ancestors we lost the fullness of freedom, that is, we became inclined to choose evil. Because of this, we found ourselves enslaved by sin, from which we can be rescued only by the Saviour. Christ—the way, the truth, and the life (see *Jn* 14:6)—opened the road to the Father in the Holy Spirit and showed humankind the way to true liberation and growth in divine freedom.
- 735 Before the coming of Christ, the Law of Moses (see *Gal* 3:24), expressed in God's Ten Commandments, was the guardian leading to Christ the Saviour. These Commandments were given by God on Mount Sinai (see *Ex* 20:2-17; *Dt* 5:6-21):⁴⁶³

I am the Lord your God.

1. You shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that is your neighbour's.

⁴⁶³ From the prayer book, *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, The Ten Commandments, 9-11.

- 736 Humans as rational beings are capable of understanding the aim and consequences of their actions. As a Christian grows spiritually, communicating with the Creator, he or she acquires an ever deeper sense and knowledge of self, and better understands that one's actions can either bring one closer to or further away from God. Such a "walking before the face of God," that is, a life in constant interaction with God, is the very foundation of Christian consciousness.
- 737 Humans are endowed with a personal will and they orient themselves. Consequently, their moral actions have a voluntary character. A person's every voluntary decision determines the kind of person he or she becomes. For example, a person who courageously performs an act of heroic love becomes a hero, while a person who willingly agrees to commit murder becomes a murderer.
- 738 There is an indissoluble connection between the moral value of a person's every individual act and the ultimate goal of one's life. The *ultimate goal* is a calling to eternal life in the Most Holy Trinity; while the Christian's *fundamental choice* is the voluntary response in faith to this calling from God. This choice is the foundation for all other life decisions. Individual actions ought to flow from this fundamental Christian choice, and they should reflect and confirm it daily.
- 739 Every moral action is directed towards a concrete determinate end. A moral act is good if its aim coincides with the ultimate aim of Christian life and brings a person closer to participation in the life of God. If the aim of the action is not oriented towards God, the choice of such an action renders both the act and the person who performs it morally wrong and sinful.
- 740 We judge the moral goodness or sinfulness of human actions on the basis of the action's *content* (*what* exactly a person wishes to do), its *aim* (*to what end* a person wishes to perform the act), and its *intention* (which makes concrete a person's choice and directs the individual's will toward a stated goal). Also important are the *circumstances* in which a person performs his or her actions, inasmuch as they can have a bearing on whether the individual is more responsible or less responsible for the action.
- 741 It is important that the Christian understand *what exactly* he or she is doing and whether it contradicts one's fundamental choice and God's commandments. If the *content* of a person's action corresponds to one's call to holiness, then the act is morally good.

- 742 *Intention* is the directing of an individual's will to a specific end. It exposes the internal reasons for the action and reveals *why a person performs the act*. Intention is always the internal measure of a person's conduct, but it is not always externally apparent. Intention can lie at the heart of more than one act—it can direct a number of human acts to a chosen end. The *aim of an act* answers the question, *to what end is a person doing something*. This is the anticipated result that the person hopes to achieve through their action. For example, a person desires to give alms (the intention), and in doing so sacrifices a certain sum of money (the content) in order to help a neighbour (the aim).
- 743 If even one of the criteria for the moral assessment of human actions—content, aim, or intention—opposes the ultimate aim of Christian life, then such an action must be regarded as sinful. It would be a mistake to judge the morality of human actions by assessing only the intentions that prompt them or the aim that a person strives to achieve. Actions that contradict God's commandments are sinful and ruinous for the person who performs them by the very content of such actions (murder, adultery, and the like), regardless of intention, aim, or circumstances. The circumstances of an action (environment, social pressure, coercion) influence the moral weight of the action, but they do not determine it.

4. Cooperation with God in the Work of Salvation

- 744 The cooperation of humanity with God in the work of salvation involves joining human effort to God's grace. In Christ, a personal dialogue and union between God and humanity occurs when human efforts are joined to God's grace. Grace, acting within a person finds expression in his or her actions, and a person's vocation lies precisely in the willingness to allow grace to inhabit and act within him or her. A person is called to remain open to grace in all his or her actions and to always confirm this openness by saying "yes" to God every day.
- 745 Grace acts where an individual provides personal assent. All stages of the spiritual life require cooperation between human freedom and the grace of God. Grace cannot be achieved or merited as a result of zealous spiritual labour. Such labour is necessary, but God's grace is given to a person solely as a gift, and not as a reward for something. The very essence of relations between God and the human race is reflected in the giving of grace.
- 746 The capacity of a human being to receive the gift of grace depends on one's degree of openness and commitment to God. In accepting God's grace, a person cooperates with it and grows in it. Perfect cooperation

between human will and God's grace is exemplified in the Annunciation of the Most Pure Virgin Mary. This is evident in Mary's own words: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (*Lk* 1:38, RSV-CE). By virtue of her assent, the God-bearer became a participant in the mystery of salvation.

B. The Spirituality of the Heart

1. The Heart—The Core of the Human Person

- 747 Holy Scripture speaks of the heart as the inner essence of a human being and the core, or centre, of the entire person. "Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another." (*Prv* 27:19). The spiritual and moral state of the whole person depends on the state of the heart. The heart is the seat not only of feelings, but also of cognition, self-awareness and consciousness, as well as a human being's other spiritual powers.
- 748 The heart is the sanctuary of the human being, where one stands before the face of God. In Holy Scripture, we read about the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" (*Heb* 4:12), where the heart constitutes the very essence of a person, the "place" where a person assumes responsibility and opens or closes oneself to God's actions. The heart is also the seat of the will. It makes decisions (see *1 Cor* 4:5; *2 Cor* 7:9, 8:16), and from it come good and evil intentions (see *Mt* 15:19; *Rom* 10:1; *Is* 57:17), and love of God and neighbour (see *Mt* 22:37; *Mk* 12:30-33; *Lk* 10:27).
- 749 According to Holy Scripture, all human emotions are proper to the heart: it rejoices (see *Jer* 15:16; *Ps* 27[28]:9), sorrows (*Ps* 24[25]:17), suffers anguish (*Jer* 4:19), rages (*Prv* 19:3) and envies (*Jas* 3:14). God alone can plumb the depths of the human heart: "for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (*1 Sam* 16:7). God tests the mind and searches the heart (see *Jer* 17:10). In God, human beings come to recognize themselves and contemplate the depths of their own hearts.
- 750 One of the active manifestations of the heart is a person's conscience. The term "conscience" comes from the Latin *conscientia* (joint knowledge). Similarly, the Ukrainian term *sovist* comes from the Church Slavonic *so-vidaty* (to know jointly). Conscience involves not so much the knowledge held by an individual, or some kind of "subjective truth," but *joint knowledge* with the Divine Persons for the purpose of *joint action* with them. Holy Scripture tells of the human heart's capacity to distin-

guish between good and evil. King Solomon prayed for “wisdom of the heart” in order to discern between good and evil (see 1 *Kgs* 3:9). In the Gospels, Christ indicates that the heart can be the source of both moral good and moral evil (see *Lk* 6:45; *Mt* 12:35).

- 751 In accordance with the tradition of the Holy Fathers, conscience is the most important factor in a person’s being. As Abba Dorotheus teaches:

When God created man, he breathed into him something divine, as it were, a hot and bright spark added to reason, which lit up the mind and showed him the difference between right and wrong. This is called the conscience, which is the law of his nature ... it is something divinely implanted in us, as we have said, and it can never be destroyed. It always patiently reminds us of our duties.”⁴⁶⁴

Saint Clement of Alexandria teaches: “One’s own conscience is best for choosing accurately or shunning. And its firm foundation is a right life.”⁴⁶⁵ Saint John Chrysostom declares: “God put within our mind a judge so ever-watchful and vigilant—I mean conscience. It is impossible that any judge among men and women should be so indefatigable as our conscience is.”⁴⁶⁶

2. Internal Watchfulness (Attentiveness) and Guarding of the Heart

- 752 Human thoughts and decisions are born in the heart; it is where intentions and aspirations emerge; it is the source of will and desires. The Christian is called to cultivate the “field” of his or her heart and be careful that the “seed of the enemy” not enter therein (see *Mt* 13:24-30).
- 753 Being attentive to the heart is first and foremost about dismissing evil thoughts and guarding the heart with sensitivity. Saint Macarius the Great teaches the following:

[As with the eye] so it is with the mind toward the heart. And the heart itself is but a small vessel, yet there also are dragons and there are lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. And there are rough and uneven roads; there are precipices. But there is also God, also the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the treasures of grace—there are all things.”⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁴ ABBA DOROTHEUS, *Instructions and Epistles*, Instruction 3: On Conscience, 1-2.

⁴⁶⁵ CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *The Stromata*, 1: PG 8, 693.

⁴⁶⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Discourses on Lazarus*, 4:4: PG 48, 1011.

⁴⁶⁷ PSEUDO-MACARIUS, *Spiritual Homilies*, 43, 7: PG 34, 776.

754 When the inner watchfulness of the intellect turns its attention to the heart, a person becomes capable of knowing himself or herself better. The intellect, directed to the heart, becomes liberated from flawed intentions and thoughts. The spiritual Fathers refer to this state as the quieting (from the Greek *hesychia*) of the intellect. Internally watchful persons can “see” themselves in the light of God’s grace and discover what is happening within the world of their interior self. They discover the strong and weak aspects of their character, and their capabilities and talents; they begin to perceive their secret inclinations and aspirations.

C. An Ascesis which Purifies

755 Ascesis (from the Greek meaning *exercise*) is a Christian’s constant battle with one’s faults, passions, and sinful inclinations. Ascetical efforts have a therapeutic character, inasmuch as they help a person cooperate with God’s grace. Grace cleanses one of sin and heals the wounds that it inflicts. Such cleansing requires that we not only renounce whatever leads to sin, but also whatever encourages it. The apostle Paul calls every Christian to undertake that kind of ascesis:

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness (*Rom 6:11-13*).

1. Sin in Human Life

756 Having been created by God, human beings are called to grow into the freedom of the children of God (see *Rom 8:21*). But they have not always been faithful to this vocation. Adam and Eve, having succumbed to deception, rejected God’s will and thus weakened their ability to exercise the gift of freedom. Christian tradition refers to this refusal to obey God as sin. Having sinned, humanity placed itself in an unnatural condition: separation from God and alienation from neighbours.

757 Christian tradition regards sin as an illness, which distorts one’s divine image. In one of the troparia of the Parastas service, we sing, “I am the image of your ineffable glory, though I bear the brands of transgressions.” Therefore, a sinful person does not so much deserve condemnation as require healing—God’s mercy and forgiveness. Thus, a sinner is

ill and Christ is the physician. “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (*Mt* 9:12).

- 758 Sin is, first of all, a person’s state that manifests itself in actions, and a sinful deed is the conscious and voluntary violation of God’s commandment. Violation of even one of God’s commandments is a violation of all of God’s Law. “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable [guilty] for all of it. For he who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law” (*Jas* 2:10–11). As one illness can cause another, so one sin leads to another. Saint John of Damascus emphasizes that there are eight evil “thoughts” (in Greek, *logismoi*), that give rise to sin: gluttony, lust, avarice (love of money), melancholy, anger, acedia (despondency), vainglory, and pride.⁴⁶⁸ We call them the capital sins as they are the root of all other sinful acts.

*Keep those who are good in goodness.
In your kindness, make those who are wicked good...
bring back the wayward.
(Anaphora from the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

2. The Eight Capital Sins⁴⁶⁹ and Their Opposite Virtues

a. Gluttony and Its Opposite Virtue—Temperance

- 759 Human beings have a natural need for food and drink; food is necessary to support life. However, an excessive desire for food distorts a natural human need. This leads to the sin of gluttony, wherein food becomes an end in itself. There are various manifestations of this sin. The first of these is *excess in food and drink*. The Holy Fathers taught that food consumed in excess harms the soul. The second manifestation of gluttony is the *quest* for food and drink primarily for pleasure. A lack of self-control in eating and drinking leads to voraciousness in everything else, since one seeks to satiate the hunger and thirst of the soul by overindulging the body. Saint John Cassian notes: “We cannot possibly scorn the gratification of food presented to us, unless the mind is fixed on ... the delight of things celestial.”⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *On the Eight Evil Spirits*, 1: PG 95, 80.

⁴⁶⁹ The tradition of eight evil tempting-thoughts is generally used in the East. In the West, Saint Gregory the Great established a tradition of seven capital sins (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1866).

⁴⁷⁰ JOHN CASSIAN, *Institutes*, 5, 14: PL 149, 229.

760 The sin of gluttony can be overcome by the virtue of temperance in food and drink, which we achieve through fasting. Saint John Chrysostom teaches:

We have, you see, a gentle and loving Lord who demands nothing of us beyond our capabilities. In other words, it is not arbitrarily that he looks for fasting and abstinence from food to be performed by us, nor simply for the sake of our remaining without food, but rather that we may be detached from things of this life and devote all our spare time to spiritual matters.⁴⁷¹

b. Lust and Its Opposite Virtue—Wholeness of Being

761 The sexual impulse is natural for a human being. The essence of the passion of lust lies in the *unrestrained and disordered quest for bodily gratification*, when a person is driven by self-love and a desire to please oneself, often at the expense of one's own dignity and the dignity of another person. Lust leads to a variety of sins: pre-marital sexual relations (fornication) and extramarital sexual relations (adultery), sexual slavery, and the commodification of the person. This passion is dangerous not only for the body but also for the soul, because it enslaves a person and destroys the ability to love. The spiritual Fathers consequently stress the necessity of constantly struggling against this passion.

762 Saint Cyril of Jerusalem affirms that the decisive rejection of lust is an essential element of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body: "He who believes that his body shall remain to rise again, is careful of his robe, and defiles it not with fornication; but he who disbelieves the resurrection, gives himself to fornication, and misuses his own body, as though it were not his own."⁴⁷²

763 A human being achieves chastity in the sexual life through the virtue of wholeness of being. This virtue orders the sexual impulse through love of neighbour and self. Chastity allows a person to control one's sexual impulse and restores the harmony of body, soul, and spirit.

c. Avarice (Love of Money) and Its Opposite Virtue—Generosity

764 Avarice is a *passion for money and material goods*. The Holy Fathers taught that love of wealth is not part of man's innate nature, but appears as a distortion of man's desire for eternal life.⁴⁷³ The passion

⁴⁷¹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Genesis*, 10, 1: PG 53: 82.

⁴⁷² CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Catechetical Lectures*, 18, 1: PG 33, 1018.

⁴⁷³ See JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Statues*, 2, 5: PG 49, 39-41.

for acquiring wealth, which takes possession of a person, makes one a slave to money. The acquisition of wealth becomes an end in itself and leads to various sins. Such a passion gives rise to the illusion of one's self-sufficiency as we come to rely solely on material goods. Saint John Chrysostom teaches:

Wealth is not a bad thing, but avarice and love of money are. A covetous person is one thing, and a rich person is another thing. The covetous person is not rich; he is in want of many things, and while he needs many things, he can never be rich. The covetous man is a keeper, not a master, of wealth; a slave, not a lord.⁴⁷⁴

Saint John Climacus regards avarice and greed as idolatry, since in such blindness a person places all his hopes in earthly goods.⁴⁷⁵

- 765 The virtue of generosity and its concrete expression, almsgiving, make a person capable of properly managing material goods and growing rich in God. Saint John Chrysostom exhorts:

And let there be no gold lying by in your houses, but that which is more precious than millions of money, that is, alms and love to man, for your treasure. For this gives us boldness toward God, but the other... causes the devil to bear hard upon us... Arm your right hand against him... stow away all your fortune in your mind, and instead of a chest and a house, let heaven keep your gold... Why then do we, to the neglect of our own selves, waste all our attention upon those things, which when we are gone we can no longer reach, and often even while we stay here we cannot keep hold of, when we might have such riches as to be found not in this life only, but also in that, in the easiest circumstances?⁴⁷⁶

d. Melancholy (Sadness) and Its Opposite Virtue—Joy in the Holy Spirit

- 766 The Holy Fathers, in accordance with the teaching of the apostle Paul, distinguished between salvific sorrow for one's sins and melancholy as a passion: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death" (2 *Cor* 7:10). Sinful melancholy as a passion reveals itself in one of two ways. Most often it is roused by some other passion, when we desire something but cannot satisfy this yearning. This gives rise to depression, which can lead to despair and even suicide. Melancholy can also arise from

⁴⁷⁴ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Statues*, 2, 5: PG 49, 50.

⁴⁷⁵ See JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 16: PG 88, 924.

⁴⁷⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans*, 14: PG 60, 538.

excessive anxiety about one's future, from attempting to control one's life by relying only on the self and not on God. Saint Basil the Great teaches that melancholy is a sign of the weak in spirit, since they lose spiritual equilibrium, inflict spiritual suffering on themselves, and thus risk definitively losing their hope in God.⁴⁷⁷

- 767 The Spirit-Comforter (or Advocate) is the source of the virtue of Christian joy, which liberates from the passion of melancholy. He grants one the joy of experiencing closeness with God. The apostle Paul exhorts: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (*Phil* 4:4-6).

e. Anger and Its Opposite Virtue—Long-suffering

- 768 Anger as a passion is not merely a feeling of malice. It is the state of a person who aggressively defends his or her existence without hope in God and to the detriment of one's neighbour. The Holy Fathers differentiate between three types of anger: 1) *anger that burns within* – this is a state of the soul in which a person loses internal tranquillity and is overcome by feelings of malice, offence, and irritation; 2) *anger manifested in word and deed*, in speech that is coarse and devoid of gentleness and love. The most common manifestations of this anger are flashes of rage, the intentional humiliation of one's neighbour, giving offence to another, and calumny. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: "When you inflict insults, then you are defeated, not by another person, but by what is far more disgraceful, by the slavish passion of anger. However, if you remain silent, then you will conquer,"⁴⁷⁸ and 3) *anger that seethes for a long time or resentment* – this sort of anger is particularly ruinous for a person, since he or she consciously refuses to forgive an insult or a wrong, and burns with a yearning for revenge.
- 769 Anger is an especially dangerous passion because it gives rise to violence, murder, division, and war. In *The Shepherd of Hermas*, anger is called the angel of evil which rules over a person: "When anger comes upon you, or harshness, know that he [the angel of malice] is in you."⁴⁷⁹
- 770 The virtue of long-suffering, which we also call patience or quiet gentleness, is characterized by confidence in the protection of God, and

⁴⁷⁷ See BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Thanksgiving*, 5-6: PG 31, 227-234.

⁴⁷⁸ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans*, 22: PG 60, 612.

⁴⁷⁹ HERMAS. *The Shepherd*, Commandments, 6, 2: PG 2, 929.

thus allows one to resist human anger. “Fret not yourself because of the wicked, be not envious of wrongdoers! ... Hope in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land and be fed with its wealth ... Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him” (*Ps* 36[37]:1, 3, 7). Saint John Chrysostom teaches: “For if we show patience, we shall be invincible; and there is nobody either great or small, who will have power to hurt us.”⁴⁸⁰

f. Acedia (Despondency) and Its Opposite Virtue—Cheerfulness of Spirit

771 The Holy Fathers described despondency (in Greek, *akedia*) as exhaustion and fatigue of the soul. A melancholic person underestimates the power of the Lord, but a despondent person underestimates God’s mercy. Melancholy drives a person to rely only on his or her own strength, while *acedia* completely deprives him or her of hope. The Holy Fathers called *acedia* the “noonday demon” (see *Ps* 90[91]:6). It extinguishes one’s vigour for spiritual development. *Acedia* gives rise to feelings of desolation and aversion for life, and a sense of its emptiness, as well as to a loss of confidence in one’s salvation. It leads to a person’s psychological and physical exhaustion; one succumbs to laziness and becomes discouraged and incapable of spiritual combat.

772 Evagrius Ponticus describes the manifestations of *acedia*:

[The noonday demon] instils in the heart of a monk a hatred for the place, a hatred for his very life itself, a hatred for manual labour. He leads him to reflect that charity has departed from among the brethren, that there is no one to give encouragement... This demon drives him along to desire others places where he can more easily procure life’s necessities, more readily find work and make a real success of himself... No other demon follows close upon the heels of this one (when he is defeated), but only a state of deep peace and inexpressible joy arise out of this struggle.⁴⁸¹

Prayer, work, and constant spiritual training (ascesis) help to combat *acedia*.

773 The virtue of cheerfulness of spirit or sobriety of mind gives a person the means to renew one’s spiritual strength and continue spiritual combat with the help of God’s grace. “Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed” (1 *Pt* 1:13). Saint Isaac the Syrian

⁴⁸⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans*, 22: PG 60, 175.

⁴⁸¹ EVAGRIUS PONTICUS, *The Praktikos*, 12: PG 40, 1274.

teaches: “If we observe the law of vigilance and practise discernment with knowledge, from which the fruit of life is reaped, then the struggle with the assaults of the passions will in nowise draw near our mind.”⁴⁸²

g. Vainglory and Its Opposite Virtue—Humble-Mindedness

774 Vainglory (also known as *vanity*) is the passion for earthly and human glory, and all manner of honours. The root of vainglory is found in a person’s dependence on what others think of him or her. Manifestations of vainglory include intolerance of criticism, a refusal to acknowledge one’s mistakes, and a constant desire for praise from others. Vainglory manifests itself in boasting of one’s material achievements or intellectual abilities and talents, as well as bringing attention to one’s spiritual accomplishments.

775 Attachment to earthly glory makes a person’s spiritual growth impossible. This is because it replaces the pursuit of God’s glory with a pursuit of human glory. In teaching about the vanity of temporal glory, Saint John Chrysostom asks:

If you are looking forward to the resurrection and retribution, why go chasing the values of this life to such an extent? ... The cause of all evils, however, is vainglory and the desire to give one’s own name to property, baths, houses. What good is it to you, human being that you are, when in no time a fever comes upon you, your soul suddenly takes wings and leaves you alone and naked—or, rather, stripped of virtue but encumbered with injustices, robberies, acts of greed, groanings, lamentations, orphans’ tears, plots, intrigues? ... You would therefore have to remain outside, and lumbered with these burdens to repent too late.⁴⁸³

776 The virtue of humble-mindedness makes a person capable of perceiving oneself as a creature of its Maker and of living for God rather than for oneself. When one humbly accepts oneself as he or she is in God’s eyes, that person becomes truly wise. The humble-minded person accepts all things sent him or her by God and does everything for his glory. “Strive first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (*Mt* 6:33). Saint Isaac the Syrian teaches: “Humble-mindedness is the raiment of the Godhead. The Word who became human clothed himself in it, and therewith spoke to us in our body. Every person who has been clothed with it has truly been made like unto him who came down from his own exaltedness.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² ISAAC THE SYRIAN, *The Ascetical Homilies*, 38.

⁴⁸³ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Genesis*, 22, 6–7: PG 53, 194–195.

⁴⁸⁴ ISAAC THE SYRIAN, *The Ascetical Homilies*, 20.

b. Pride and Its Opposite Virtue—Humility

- 777 Pride is the most dangerous passion and the mother of all sins. It was because of pride that Satan fell from God, and it is precisely pride that has ruined the prolonged endeavours of many an ascetic. Pride is a person's idolatrous self-deification: a person exalts oneself over other people and puts oneself in the place of God. The proud person is closed to God's grace: "The Lord opposes the proud; but he gives grace to the humble" (*Prv* 3:34, LXX; see 1 *Pt* 5:5 and *Jas* 4:6). Saint Augustine teaches that pride is the source of all evil, and in order to overcome all other sins, one must rid oneself of the root cause—pride: "Whence does iniquity abound? From pride. Cure pride and there will be no more iniquity. Consequently, that the cause of all diseases might be cured, namely, pride, the Son of God came down and was made low."⁴⁸⁵
- 778 The proud person usually does not see his or her own sin. This person is filled with self-love, finds it difficult to forgive, and to ask forgiveness of others, and has trouble relenting. Such a person rejects all forms of authority and frequently flares up in anger. He or she bears grudges, constantly judges other people, and envies their successes. Pride deceitfully takes control even of those who, having achieved virtue, regard themselves, rather than God, as the cause of their achievements.
- 779 The most effective means of combatting pride is to train oneself in humility. This opens a person toward God and neighbour, and makes a person capable of receiving God's transfiguring and liberating power. The apostle Paul declares: "We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 *Cor* 10:4-5). Through the virtue of humility, a person stands in truth before the face of God. Therefore, Christian humility does not demean a person, but allows one to recognize one's true dignity as a child of God. Saint John Chrysostom teaches:

He who places humility as the foundation of his character can safely build a building of any height. It [humility] is the strongest palisade, an immovable wall, an impenetrable fortress; it supports the entire edifice and does not allow it to fall... it makes it inaccessible to all attacks... and through it God, the lover of mankind, pours out on us his plentiful gifts.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 25, 16: PL 35, 1604.

⁴⁸⁶ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Genesis*, 36, 7: PG 53, 330.

3. Repentance

- 780 Christ, the Good Shepherd, who came to find the “lost sheep,” calls all to repentance: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (*Mt* 4:17). Without repentance, there can be neither salvation nor new life. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Christ reveals the essence of repentance as a return to the Father and the acceptance of his gift of forgiveness. In repentance, we come to know God as a loving and merciful Father. He accepts repentant sinners and rejoices at their conversion, “for he is good and loves mankind.”⁴⁸⁷
- 781 Repentance allows a Christian not only to experience God as a merciful Father, but to rediscover oneself in God’s embrace—to see oneself as the son who returned from the foreign land of sin to the Father’s home of righteousness. On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, the Church sings: “As the Prodigal Son I come to you, merciful God. I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land; I have scattered the wealth which you gave me, O Father. Receive me in repentance, O God, and have mercy on me.”⁴⁸⁸
- 782 Repentance forms the foundation of Christian spirituality, since all movement toward God, inaugurated by him and suggested by his grace, is characterized by repentance. The beginning of this movement is a fundamental interior change (conversion) which brings about a new way of seeing oneself, others, and the Lord God. The goal of this movement is liberation from sin and a return to the fullness of life in God. During Matins on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee we sing: “Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of life. As we worship in your temple this morning, teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in your compassion, purify me by the goodness of your mercies.”⁴⁸⁹
- 783 Repentance has a positive character—it is liberating and life-creating rather than demeaning. It is the force of renewal and rebirth, the fruit of hope, and the negation of despair. This is so because repentance is not looking down at one’s own faults, but looking up towards the Lord’s love; not backwards with self-reproach, but forward with faith. One must focus not on what one has failed to achieve, but on that which, with the mercy of Christ, one may still become. Repentance is a continuous path toward personal healing and growth. Saint John Climacus teaches:

⁴⁸⁷ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Dismissal.

⁴⁸⁸ *Lenten Triodion*, Sunday of the Prodigal Son, Vespers, Stichera at Psalm 140.

⁴⁸⁹ *Lenten Triodion*, Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, Matins, Penitential Stichera after Psalm 50.

The person turning away from the world in order to shake off the burden of his or her sins should imitate those who sit outside the tombs in the city. Let this person not desist from ardent raging tears, from the wordless moans of the heart, until this person sees Jesus himself, coming to roll back the rock of hardness off them.⁴⁹⁰

It is precisely for this kind of constant transfiguring of our lives in repentance that we pray during divine services: “That we may spend the rest of our lives in peace and repentance, let us ask the Lord.”⁴⁹¹

- 784 Thus, repentance is enlightenment, the crossing from darkness to light. Until we see the light of Christ we will not be able to recognize our own sins. The closer we come to God, the more clearly we see how sinful we are. The light of Christ illumines us and leads us to repentance, to a vision of beauty rather than deformity, to an awareness of God’s glory rather than of our own destitution.

D. Spiritual Combat in the Life of the Christian

- 785 From the moment of one’s Baptism, every Christian enters into spiritual combat. There we die to sin, in order to live for God. This battle, as the apostle Paul teaches, is not about wrestling “... against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (*Eph* 6:12). The Christian engages in spiritual warfare by being armed with prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; we thus cleanse our thoughts and achieving dispassion. Saint John Cassian teaches that spiritual combat helps a person achieve perfection: “This battle is in accordance with the will of God. It serves human good and awakens in a person ardent striving for greater perfection.”⁴⁹²

1. Fasting and Almsgiving

- 786 Christians have fasted since ancient times. It was and is a way of imitating the forty-day fast of Christ during which he fought the devil’s temptations and overcame them. Fasting as a means of spiritual combat was further developed by monastics, who saw it as a means of achieving purity of heart. Fasting takes hold of the entire being: the body through restraint in food and drink, and the soul through restraint of the passions. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: “Do you not eat flesh? Feed not

⁴⁹⁰ JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 1: PG 88, 633.

⁴⁹¹ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Litany of Supplication.

⁴⁹² JOHN CASSIAN, *Conferences*, 18, 13.

upon indecency by means of the eyes. Let the ear fast also. The fasting of the ear consists in refusing to receive slander and calumnies ... For what does it profit if we abstain from birds and fishes; and yet bite and devour our brothers and sisters?"⁴⁹³

787 Fasting is inextricably linked with almsgiving:

In the day on which you fast you will taste nothing but bread and water; and having reckoned up the price of the dishes of that day which you intended to have eaten, you will give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to some person in want, and thus you will exhibit humility of mind, so that he who has received benefit from your humility may fill his own soul, and pray for you to the Lord.⁴⁹⁴

Almsgiving as a manifestation of love for one's neighbour is an imitation of God himself. It was God who first revealed his mercy towards us.

2. Evil Thoughts

788 We are constantly under the influence of various thoughts, ideas, and views, and we choose from among them those that we consider important. These thoughts can be either good or evil, and so they affect our spiritual life in different ways.

789 In the book of Genesis, we read how the serpent deceived the human race, saying that they will become like God if they reject his commandment. Temptation is a "nudge" or incitement to sin. Confronted by such instigation, humanity can either succumb or resist it. Adam and Eve succumb to the sinful temptation (evil thought) and become, therefore, personally responsible for the sin.

790 The same occurs in our lives. If we give our assent to evil thoughts, then we sin. The beginning of every sin is the acceptance of an evil thought coupled with the desire to bring it to life. If a person does not take possession of an evil thought, this thought is not a sin but only a temptation. Saint John of Damascus distinguishes various stages in the process by which evil thoughts penetrate the heart.⁴⁹⁵ Among these are: suggestion, internal conversation, struggle, assent, and passion (captivity).

791 Temptation begins with a *suggestion*. Suggestion can manifest itself in various images, fantasies, or recollections; it can come through material things and circumstances, making evil appear attractive. Such thoughts accompany a person throughout life. Christ had a similar experience

⁴⁹³ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Statues*, 3, 4-5: PG 49, 53.

⁴⁹⁴ HERMAS, *The Shepherd*. Similitudes, 5, 3: PG 2, 960.

⁴⁹⁵ See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *On Virtues and Vices*: PG 95, 93.

while being tempted in the desert. If a suggestion is not dismissed, the evil thought will continue to penetrate a person's heart.

- 792 The second stage is the *conversation*, as it were, with the suggested thought. A person considers and weighs arguments *for* and *against* the suggestion. We know about the danger of this *conversation* with the Evil One from the book of Genesis: the conversation between Eve and the serpent was the first step of our ancestors toward sin. Christ, on the other hand, while being tempted in the desert refused to engage the tempter in conversation, and decisively rejected his suggestions with quotations from Holy Scripture (see *Mt* 4:1-11; *Lk* 4:1-13).
- 793 The third stage is *struggle*. A thought that has penetrated the heart through conversation is difficult to dismiss. A person cannot be rid of it without struggle and effort. The Word of God and prayer assure victory in this battle.
- 794 The fourth stage is *assent*, that is, acceptance of an evil thought, which is equivalent to defeat in battle. By making an evil thought one's own and deciding to make it a reality, a person has already sinned, even if the evil intention is not be acted upon.
- 795 The final stage is the actual passion. This is a state of *captivity* that results from sinful activity. A person given over to passion experiences a constant inclination towards evil. The inclination can become so powerful that a person loses the strength to resist, becomes addicted to evil, and a slave to passion.

3. Conquering Passions

- 796 The battle against evil thoughts and passions, and the acquiring of virtues, is the essence of Christian asceticism. The effects of passions are so ruinous that they are often compared to a debilitating illness.

If the Christian is aroused to defection and is done in by evil, he becomes like a city without walls which robbers invade from any part they wish, for there is absolutely no resisting force and they plunder it and set it on fire. Thus, while you are neglecting yourself and hardly taking stock of yourself, the evil spirits enter into you and destroy and lay barren your mind, dissipating your thoughts on things of this world.⁴⁹⁶

Therefore, a Christian should strive with the utmost diligence to conquer passions and free himself or herself from them.

⁴⁹⁶ PSEUDO-MACARIUS, *Spiritual Homilies*, 15, 47: PG 34, 608.

- 797 Freedom from passions (in Greek, *apátheia*) is a precondition of Christian perfection. The struggle against passions consists of three elements: *awareness*, *resistance*, and *eradication*. Human reason, illumined by grace, is capable of achieving an awareness of passion; the human will, in cooperation with God's grace, can resist passion; the eradication of passion is the crown of spiritual combat and a sign of the healing power of grace. Freedom from passions is strengthened by ascetical practices. However, its only source is the love of God, which conquers all passions, and brings together all of a person's efforts under the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹⁷
- 798 Being free from passions does not mean that a person is free from tempting thoughts, for the intrusion of such thoughts does not always depend on us. However, when a person achieves the state of *apatheia*, he or she dismisses the evil thoughts that lead to passion.⁴⁹⁸

E. Prayer in the Spiritual Life

- 799 Prayer is one of the important manifestations of the spiritual life. Together with fasting and almsgiving, prayer is a component of spiritual warfare. Prayer confirms a person in the good and fosters communication with God. Prayer is a great blessing—a deep connection with God in love.⁴⁹⁹ “Prayer is by nature a dialogue and a union of a human being with God. Its effect is to hold the world together. It achieves a reconciliation with God.”⁵⁰⁰
- 800 Prayer is a conversation with God initiated not by us but by God. He speaks to us continually through his Son (see *Heb* 1:1), although we are not immediately aware of it. When parents lean over a cradle and talk to their infant, initially the child cannot understand their words. With time, the child begins to understand and tries to imitate the sounds it hears. In this manner, a child learns to speak. However, this would not be possible if the parents had not first spoken to the child.
- 801 In a similar fashion, we begin to speak to God in response to his speaking to us. Gradually, through the practice of prayer, God teaches us that the conversation begins not with our words, but rather with our listening. In addition to the ability to listen, prayer teaches us something else—to regard what the person speaking with us is saying as more important than what we have to say.

⁴⁹⁷ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Centuries on Charity*, III, 50: PG 90, 1281.

⁴⁹⁸ See ISAAC THE SYRIAN, *The Ascetical Homilies*, 1.

⁴⁹⁹ See JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Genesis*, 30, 5: PG 53, 280.

⁵⁰⁰ JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 28: PG 88, 1129.

1. Degrees of Prayer

a. Bodily Prayer

- 802 Bodily prayer takes place through the recitation of words, prayerful gestures, and bodily posture. This includes the sign of the Cross, prostrations, kneeling, the prayerful folding of our hands, and standing. Through these actions, a person's body also participates in prayer. A person's prayerful posture helps one concentrate one's thoughts and elevate them to God. The body should take on the form of the prayer for which the soul is preparing. For example, when we praise God, we stand, and when we confess our sins and ask forgiveness, we kneel.⁵⁰¹

b. Prayer of the Mind

- 803 Prayer of the mind is the next level of prayer. It consists in focussing one's attention on the words being recited. The mind is the highest power of the soul. With the mind the soul regards the invisible world. The mind, awakened by prayer, uncovers the internal sense of the spoken words, and makes that the focus of its attention. Aided with the working of the mind, by internal attention and understanding, we protect ourselves against evil thoughts and turn to God alone, in awareness of his presence. In prayer of the mind, God allows us to recognize our thoughts, desires, and feelings. The prayer of the mind allows a person to free oneself from dependence on memories and fantasies, to control one's thoughts, and to focus attention on the prayer itself.
- 804 The working of the mind leads to the words of the prayer speaking to us with increasing fullness. As a longing arises to listen carefully to each word, the tempo of prayer decelerates. When the mind is not yet prepared for continual inner attention and becomes distracted, the spiritual Fathers advise us to return to the place in prayer where the distraction began, and to repeat the prayer, but this time, attentively. The purpose of this repetition is to create the possibility for deeper prayer, that is, for a transition from external bodily prayer to prayer of the mind.

c. Prayer of the Heart

- 805 Prayer of the heart is prayer that encompasses the entire person—one's inner "I." Prayer of the heart creates a continual bond between a person and God. It is therefore unceasing. The apostle Paul exhorts us to "pray

⁵⁰¹ See ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, 31, 2-4: PG 11, 550.

without ceasing” (1 *Thes* 5:17). Through this bond with God, a person is counted worthy of divine grace, and experiences God’s love and spiritual joy. In prayer of the heart, a person comes to know God as Father, sees oneself as God’s child, and recognizes all others as brothers and sisters, children of one and the same Father.

- 806 In prayer of the heart, a person gradually makes a transition from prayer as a separate action to prayer as an inner state of permanently abiding with God. A person no longer needs many words to pray. An example of such prayer of the heart is the Jesus Prayer: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner (us, sinners)*.
- 807 The fruit of prayer of the heart is healing—the restoration of a person’s wholeness of being. Prayer does not separate a person from life; on the contrary, it encompasses one’s entire life, bringing into it peace and equilibrium.

d. Contemplative Prayer

- 808 Contemplative prayer, which cannot be expressed in words, is the highest degree of prayer. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift can be received only by a person who has completely purified one’s mind and heart with the help of an experienced spiritual guide. When a person in prayer meets God in the depths of one’s heart, one already here on earth directly experiences that which the apostle Paul describes as seeing God “face to face” (1 *Cor* 13:12). The person “sees” the One in whom he or she has believed. The person abides in God’s presence. The apostle Paul compares this new state of the person to a “seeing” of God. Contemplative prayer consists in God allowing himself to be seen by a human being; therefore, it is a “seeing” of the Invisible One. Naturally, this is not a matter of physical vision with the eyes of the body. Contemplation begins in silence, which a person achieves through laying aside words, images, and conceptions born in thought.
- 809 In contemplative prayer a person experiences more deeply that divine Archetype (Model) according to which we were created. When one abides with God, one gradually comes to see things the way God sees them. The human intellect is incapable of contemplating God as long as it is disturbed by anxious thoughts. The Holy Fathers compared restless thoughts to waves on the sea. As long as the sea is covered in waves, the water is murky. On the other hand, when the sea is calm, one sees through the water to the very bottom.

2. Types of Prayer

a. Praise

- 810 The prayer of praise is the fruit of our communication with God. It blossoms as we become aware of God's inexpressible greatness, as well as his unspeakable goodness and infinite mercy towards us. Feeling ourselves to be in the light of God's glory, we express our spiritual enthusiasm in a prayer of praise: "For all glory, honour and worship befit you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen."⁵⁰²
- 811 Saint Irenaeus of Lyons teaches that human beings are called to praise the Lord, since they were created to partake of his glory.

Those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light. Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but he grants to those who follow and serve him life and incorruption and eternal glory ... we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us and prepared us for this, that when we are with him, we may partake of his glory.⁵⁰³

"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving ... The one who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!" (*Ps* 49[50]:14, 23).

- 812 The fruit of such prayerful praise is that the Lord illumines us and fills us with the light of his unapproachable glory. The person who praises the Lord comes to bear the likeness of the One who is praised. This is explained by the apostle Paul when he writes: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 *Cor* 3:18).

b. Thanksgiving

- 813 The prayer of thanksgiving flows from a person's realization that all that one is and all that one has is a gift from God. Only by standing before the face of the Creator in prayer can we understand the words: "You brought us from nothingness into being, and after we fell, You raised us up again. You did not cease doing everything until You led us to heaven

⁵⁰² *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Litany of Peace.

⁵⁰³ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 14: PG 7, 1010.

and granted us Your future kingdom.”⁵⁰⁴ Our grateful response for such infinite divine gifts is a heartfelt shout of thanksgiving to our Creator and Saviour for his work of creation and salvation. “I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol” (*Ps* 85[86]:12-13).

814 The summit of thanksgiving to God is the Divine Liturgy, in which the Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist. The word *eucharistia* means thanksgiving. Consequently, to participate in the Eucharist also means to be a partaker in the universal thanksgiving of Christ’s Church. In the Eucharistic Prayer (Anaphora) the Church prays to the Heavenly Father: “For all this we give thanks to You, to Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit; for all things which we know and do not know, the benefits bestowed upon us both manifest and hidden.”⁵⁰⁵

815 Saint Basil the Great describes for us a profound experience of the prayer of thanksgiving:

Now if we bear a natural love and good will toward our benefactors and undergo any kind of hardship to make a return for what was first rendered to us, what words can fitly treat of the gifts of God? So many are they in number as even to defy enumeration; so great and marvellous are they that a single one of them claims for the Giver all our gratitude.⁵⁰⁶

c. Penitential Prayer

816 Penitential prayer (or *prayer of repentance*) is not only a manifestation of sorrow for trespasses committed but also a turning of the penitent to his Creator: “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for you, O God” (*Ps* 41[42]:2). A person’s repentance goes through three stages: 1) *conversion*—turning away from sin and returning to life in God; 2) *purification*—healing from passions and cleansing from the consequences of sin; and 3) *union with God* in contemplation. All three stages find expression in the penitential prayers of the Church.

817 Penitential prayers typically consist of two parts. Initially, the penitent realizes who the Lord is, acknowledges his majesty, holiness, and purity, and his active mercy towards a sinner. The penitent then recognizes the difference between God’s holiness and their own sinfulness, and the dissimilarity between themselves and God. “For you [God] are just

⁵⁰⁴ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

⁵⁰⁵ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

⁵⁰⁶ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Long Rules*, 2:2: PG 31, 911.

in all that you have done to us ... For we have sinfully and lawlessly departed from you" (*Dan* 3:27, 29). Penitential prayer consists in the sinner asking for mercy, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, they may achieve likeness to God and union with him. The words of the publican, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (*Lk* 18:13), are an example of penitential prayer. The liturgical petition "Lord, have mercy" is the most common form of such prayer.

- 818 The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete is the finest and most complete model of penitential prayer. This ancient text serves as a school of prayer for communal-liturgical and individual penitential prayer. The Canon contains penitential meditations on Holy Scripture, as well as moral and ascetical teachings and exhortations; it reflects deep emotion and the experience of remorse. It is sung to a particular chant and is accompanied by penitential gestures, that is, deep prostrations (the great *metania*). Thus, the entire person—intellect, will, emotions, and body—is incorporated into the dynamic of penitential prayer. The fruit of such penitential prayer is the capacity to accept the grace of conversion, purification, and union with God. In other words, the person who prays thus is able to receive inner transfiguration.

d. Prayer of Supplication

- 819 Supplication, the act of prayerfully requesting something of God, holds an important place in our relationship with God. Prior to his passion, Christ prayed to the Father for all the apostles, asking that the Father would keep (preserve) them so that they may all be one (see *Jn* 17:11). He also prayed for all of us, those who would come to believe in him through the word of the apostles (see *Jn* 17:20-21). In the litanies of supplication of the Divine Liturgy, the Church asks God for the salvation of the entire world.
- 820 Christ exhorts us to direct our supplication to God, "Ask, and it will be given to you ... For everyone who asks receives" (*Mt* 7:7-8). At the same time Christ assures us that the heavenly Father already knows what we need even before we ask (see *Mt* 6:8). Prayer of supplication is important for us in that we learn what it is that we should be requesting of God. The Church turns to God that he may grant us "all that we request for salvation."⁵⁰⁷ Sometimes people turn to God in prayer demanding unconditional fulfilment of their desires and needs. True supplication, however, is not a demand, but rather a readiness to accept God's reply,

⁵⁰⁷ *Horologion*, Vespers, Third Prayer of Light.

fully trusting in him. This is because we realize that he always grants us what we need (see *Lk* 12:30).

- 821 At times it may seem that God does not fulfil our supplications; however, even then we must persevere in prayer. Prayer transfigures the one who prays, makes them steadfast in doing good, teaches them about what they truly need, and makes them open to God's will. In persistent prayer, the Lord teaches us to grow from asking that he do our will to accepting his will: "Your will be done" (*Mt* 6:10). Saint John Chrysostom encourages steadfast prayer: "If you are heard praying, continue to give thanks in the prayer; if you are not heard, remain praying so that you may be heard... God protects you with the pretext of need so that you may converse with him more closely and devote yourself to prayer."⁵⁰⁸

F. Asceticism that Enlightens

1. Obedience to the Will of God (God's Law as a Calling to True Freedom)

- 822 In the history of salvation, the Lord calls humankind to participation in his eternal life. To this end he makes a covenant with Israel, and subsequently, through the blood of his Only-Begotten Son, he enters into a new and eternal covenant with his People. In accepting this covenant, a person fulfils God's will and keeps his Law. The psalmist sings: "If your law had not been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts; for by them you have given me life" (*Ps* 118[119]:92-93).
- 823 Out of love for us, the Lord reveals to us his Law as the "path of life" (see *Ps* 15[16]:11). We are called to walk along this path which leads from the slavery of sin to the freedom of God's children. This paschal character of God's Law indicates the goal and substance of the Christian calling. Therefore, God's Law in no way contradicts human freedom; rather, it grants freedom through the grace of the Holy Spirit: "The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. With my open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments" (*Ps* 118[119]:130-131).
- 824 Saint John Chrysostom notes that God's will, which the Lord has revealed in the moral law, is humanity's support and the measure of moral judgments:

⁵⁰⁸ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Repentance*, 3, 4: PG 49, 297.

Consider that the judging faculty of the soul is disordered. Just as a balance, if its beam be unsteady, moves round, and does not show accurately the weight of things placed in it; so the soul, if it has not the beam of its own thoughts fixed, and firmly riveted to the law of God, being carried round and drawn down, will not be able to judge aright of its actions.⁵⁰⁹

- 825 Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray to the Father: “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (*Mt* 6:10). In explaining these words, Saint Cyprian notes: “We who desire to abide for ever should do the will of God, who is everlasting. Now that is the will of God which Christ both did and taught ... [To do the will of God] is to desire to be fellow-heirs with Christ (see *Rom* 8:17); this is to do the commandment of God; this is to fulfil the will of the Father.”⁵¹⁰

2. Spiritual Fatherhood / Motherhood

- 826 In his ministry, a spiritual father (or mother) is called to lead his spiritual children on the path of holiness. In addition to the proclamation of God’s Word, and the sanctification of people by grace in the Holy Mysteries, spiritual direction is one of the important forms of the Church’s ministry as regards our salvation. This fatherhood or motherhood consists of caring for people’s spiritual growth. It provides direction during their entire journey of Christian living.
- 827 Spiritual fatherhood/motherhood in the Church flows from the life of the Most Holy Trinity. In the Most Holy Trinity, the Father is the source of the begetting of the Son and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit. The Father grants us eternal life through his Only-Begotten Son in the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Christian, born in the bosom of the Church “from above” (see *Jn* 3:7) “of water and the Spirit” (see *Jn* 3:5), is called to transmit divine life through preaching and witness. This is emphasized by the apostle to the Gentiles writing to the Corinthians: “For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel” (*1 Cor* 4:15).
- 828 In spiritual direction, individuals with greater spiritual experience direct the less experienced along the path of their spiritual perfection. Spiritual direction is accomplished by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who inspires the guide and enlightens the disciple. Therefore, in spiritual direction one is led in the ways of God and is taught to listen to the Lord’s voice

⁵⁰⁹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Second Timothy*, 5, 19: PG 62, 627.

⁵¹⁰ CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, 14-17: PL 4, 528-529.

and live according to his commands. With the help of the spiritual father/mother's counsel, a spiritual child makes a choice enlightened by a calling from God. This calling determines the kind of service that one will render with his or her life. It also discloses and enfleshes *God's plan* for daily living.

- 829 The primary goal of spiritual fatherhood/motherhood is to facilitate the perfecting of a person, so that they may achieve the holiness to which God is calling them. This, in fact, is the shared goal of both disciple and teacher. Therefore, spiritual direction takes place in the context of sincere friendship between spiritual father/mother and son/daughter. In the spiritual tradition of the Fathers of the Church, the point is to have a *divine friendship* in an atmosphere where both teacher and disciple ascend to the heights of divinization and mature to a *divine fullness* of life in the Holy Spirit.⁵¹¹
- 830 The spiritual father/mother performs his or her service with the blessing of the Church. This blessing is given to people called by God to lead others to holiness. They have personal experience in the spiritual life. A Christian freely chooses a spiritual director as a guide on the common road of salvation, travelling together in a spirit of friendship and trust. The experience of the spiritual father/mother allows him or her to recognize the gifts of God's grace and to propose concrete ways for the person to grow spiritually. In parish life, spiritual direction is exercised primarily, though not exclusively, in holy Confession.

*Pour out on them your rich mercy.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

3. Virtues as Indications of Divinization

- 831 The apostle Paul teaches that the Gospel is the power of God granted to one who believes; the power by which the righteous one lives (see *Rom* 1:16-17). The apostle Paul calls this power of God a "virtue," pointing to the interior possibilities of a person renewed in Christ and his or her capacity for good (see *Phil* 4:8-9). Through virtue, a person becomes capable of living and acting in Christ.
- 832 The Holy Fathers believed that virtue is a capacity placed in the human soul. It is a source of one's natural strengths, which develop and are perfected in cooperation with God's grace. Virtue is the power and capacity of a person, created in God's image, to become like God and attain deification.⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ See ORIGEN, *Against Celsus*, III, 28: PG 11, 955-956.

⁵¹² See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Beatitudes*, Homily 1: PG 44, 1193.

4. Life in Faith, Hope and Love (The First, Second, and Third Commandments)

a. Faith—the Foundation of Christian Life

- 833 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches: “As heaven is far from the earth, so far is the unbeliever from the believer ... who has a living and strong faith. Only this kind of faith gives eternal life, only this kind of faith saves (see *Jas* 2:14-16), such faith alone leads from death to life, only such faith alone grants the ‘power to become children of God’ (*Jn* 1:12).”⁵¹³
- 834 Faith is an openness of the entire person to the action of the Holy Spirit and a personal union with the risen Christ. Unlike non-Christian attempts to achieve perfection which relies on human power alone, Christianity proclaims a new, genuine foundation for human holiness and righteousness, which is faith in Jesus Christ.
- 835 Faith gives birth to a new creation in the Holy Mystery of Baptism (see *2 Cor* 5:17). Whoever believes in Christ puts off the old self and puts on the new (see *Eph* 4:22-24). The apostle Paul describes life in faith as the life of Christ in us and our life in Christ (see *Gal* 2:20-21; *Phil* 1:21).
- 836 Faith lies at the foundation of Christian morality. It is the beginning of a virtuous life and virtuous action. Faith is, first of all, a divine gift received in Baptism; it is a great spiritual force given to us. It is also our vocation. Faith grants us knowledge of God and of things unseen (see *Heb* 11:1). It precedes hope and love since they are tied to the Truth, which can be perceived only through faith. One could say that it places Truth into the core of the human person.⁵¹⁴
- 837 Through the virtue of faith, one becomes capable of keeping the first three of the Ten Commandments. Faith opens us to God and joins us inwardly with the Creator and Saviour. It is precisely by faith that we become capable of worshipping the One God in Spirit and Truth. True faith excludes the worship of any other gods, as well as fortune-telling, superstition, and magic. These violate the first Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (*Ex* 20:3; *Dt* 5:7).
- 838 Biblical tradition teaches that the righteous person lives by faith (see *Hab* 2:4; *Rom* 1:17; *Gal* 3:11; *Phil* 3:9; *Heb* 10:38). Living by faith

⁵¹³ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Божя мудрість* [The Wisdom of God] (1932-1933).

⁵¹⁴ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Letters*: PG 91, 364ff.

prompts the Christian to glorify the Lord's Name. The Holy Spirit, who acts in Christians, calls from within their being, "Abba! Father!" (*Gal* 4:6). In other words, he teaches them to glorify God rightly in Christ. The Christian, taught by the virtue of faith about the holiness and greatness of God's name, is able to fulfil the second Commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain"⁵¹⁵ (see *Ex* 20:7, RSV-CE; *Dt* 5:11). The Christian will not blaspheme, will not swear an oath falsely, and will avoid cursing, committing sacrilege, and the like.

- 839 On Sunday the Church of Christ celebrates the Lord's Day, which the Church Fathers called "little Pascha." Through Baptism the believer becomes a partaker in the Paschal Mystery. He or she also becomes inwardly tied to the Liturgy of the Church. Thus, every Christian is called to participate in its celebration. Our participation in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and holy days is a manifestation and confirmation of unity with God and the Church in faith and love. Therefore, the Lord instructs us in the third Commandment: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"⁵¹⁶ (see *Ex* 20:8; *Dt* 5:12). In addition to participating in the Divine Liturgy and other services, faithful Christians celebrate the holy Day of the Lord by deepening their knowledge of the faith, refraining from hard work, and performing acts of mercy (visiting the sick, the infirm, helping the needy, etc.). By celebrating the Lord's Day, we as Christians openly profess our faith, acknowledge ourselves to be a new creation in Christ and members of his Body, the Church; and we await "a new heaven and a new earth" (see *Rev* 21:1).

b. Hope—the Strength of Christian Life

- 840 Hope is born of faith. Hope is the expectation of the *fullness* of God's kingdom given us. The Christian outlook on life and the aim of our aspirations transcend the limits of human expectations, and also go beyond suffering and death. The Christian who believes in the risen Christ, who ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, awaits in hope their own glorification with Christ at the time of his glorious second coming (see *Col* 3:1-4).
- 841 Hope is an unshakeable confidence in the Saviour. It characterizes the believer who awaits the fullness of Christ's coming: "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (*Rom* 8:24-25). Metropolitan Andrey teaches:

⁵¹⁵ *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, The Ten Commandments.

⁵¹⁶ *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, The Ten Commandments.

Hope is certain because it is grounded in God's testimony, in his promise, in his goodness, in the fact that it is simply impossible for God to fail to keep his promise. No one and no thing can weaken this certainty; it grows to the extent that we grow closer to the Lord our God, that is, as we progress in God's grace or simply how we live Christian lives.⁵¹⁷

- 842 The virtue of hope is an assurance and confirmation of all that is founded on faith and performed in love.⁵¹⁸ Hope is like a link that unites the beginning (faith) and the culmination (love) of the virtuous life. Hope is the motivating force of a person's total fulfilment in God. Hope is the virtue of the "sojourner," the one who, being a partaker of divine life, grows in it, that is, becomes divinized.

c. Love—the Substance of the Christian Life

- 843 The most important virtue, born of faith, is the virtue of divine love, which is granted by God to the Christian as a new creation in Christ. The Evangelist John emphasizes that love is the essence of life in God: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 *Jn* 4:7-8).
- 844 The virtue of love is not only the human capacity to love; it is the love by which God himself lives. This is why such love as the apostle Paul teaches is greater than all the other marks of the divine life in human-kind, that is, greater than the other virtues. It is God's greatest gift to us, which we have received in the Holy Spirit: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (*Rom* 5:5; see 1 *Cor* 12-13).
- 845 Love has as its source God: it is the Love of the Father revealed in the Son and granted to us in the Holy Spirit (see *Rom* 8). Anyone who participates in this kind of Love becomes capable, in the Holy Spirit, of loving the Father as the Son loves him. They can also love their neighbour to the very end, for "no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (*Jn* 15:13).
- 846 The Venerable Metropolitan Andrey teaches: "Without love everything in the soul is dead, [for in such a soul] the will is not primarily directed

⁵¹⁷ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Божя мудрість* [The Wisdom of God] (1932-1933).

⁵¹⁸ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Letters*, 3: PG 91, 409.

towards true goodness, which is the highest good and simultaneously the ultimate truth, that is, the Almighty God.”⁵¹⁹

- 847 In and through God, the believer who has received the gift of divine love loves others and all of creation. Therefore, love of neighbour is an expression of love for God: “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 *Jn* 4:20-21).
- 848 The divine love by which the Christian loves their neighbour, is selfless and sacrificial. “It does not insist on its own way” (see 1 *Cor* 13:4-7). This love manifests itself in the capacity to love even one’s enemies (see *Mt* 5:44-45). It is precisely in this kind of love that a Christian reveals the face of the loving God who saves sinners through his love, and reconciles them to himself, transforming them into believers justified in Christ (see *Rom* 5:10-11).
- 849 The substance and motivation for all of a Christian’s moral actions is love. Jesus Christ teaches us that the entire Law is contained in the commandment to love God and neighbour (see *Mt* 22:40; *Dt* 6:5; *Lv* 19:18). Through the gift of divine love the Christian obtains “the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (*Rom* 8:21) and fulfils the entire Law “for the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law” (*Rom* 13:10). “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 *Cor* 13:13).

5. The Spiritual Life and Divinization

- 850 In the tradition of the Holy Fathers, the primary goal of the Christian’s spiritual life is active and dynamic participation in the divine life. Such participation is called *divinization* (*théosis* in Greek). Divinization takes place in the cooperation between the human person and God, and consists of the person’s transfiguration in the Holy Spirit. The grace of transfiguration is granted to those who have completed the path of ascetic purification and live a virtuous life.
- 851 Divinization became possible due to the incarnation of the Son of God. Saint Athanasius the Great teaches: “God became human that humans might become god.”⁵²⁰ Saint Irenaeus of Lyons teaches: “He [Jesus

⁵¹⁹ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Божя мудрість* [The Wisdom of God] (1932-1933).

⁵²⁰ ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54: PG 25, 192.

Christ] would become the Son of Man for this purpose, that a human being also might become the son of God.”⁵²¹ He also emphasizes: “The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ ... did, through his transcendent love, become what we are, that he might bring us to be even what he is himself.”⁵²² The martyr, Hippolytus of Rome, emphasizes the dynamics of divinization:

And you shall receive the kingdom of heaven, you who, while you sojourned in *this* life, knew the Celestial King. And you shall be a companion of the Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved by lusts or passions, and *never again* wasted by disease. For you have become God: for whatever sufferings you underwent while being a man, these he gave to you, because you were of mortal mould, but whatever it is consistent with God *to impart*, these God has promised to bestow upon you, because you have been deified, and begotten unto immortality.⁵²³

- 852 For the Holy Fathers, spiritual struggle is the primary path to divinization. The first (“purgative”) stage of this spiritual asceticism is purification from passions and passionate intentions through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.⁵²⁴ The second (“illuminative”) stage is the illumination of the mind and contemplation or vision of God (in Greek, *theoria*). The third (“unitive”) stage is the actual attainment of divinization.⁵²⁵
- 853 The mystical and dynamic process of divinization takes place in the Body of Christ, which is the Church. A Christian is a living member of Christ’s divinized Body to the extent in which he or she fully participates in the Church’s mystical life. In divinization, God’s life becomes our life and our life becomes divinized. The unique mission of the Church is to be the place and path of divinization. This mission manifests itself in the proclamation of the good news of God’s Word, in the Holy Mysteries, in prayer and worship, and in the moral and ascetical life.
- 854 Divinization is the meeting of God and the human person in faith. It is impossible without one’s openness to grace and one’s spiritual efforts. Only by fulfilling God’s commandments and purifying one’s heart can a Christian, in cooperation with God’s grace, rise to ever higher degrees of perfection. Interior purification, a virtuous life, and life in holiness are the primary conditions for divinization, for union with him who is the Source of Holiness, Purity, and Perfection.

⁵²¹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 10, 2: PG 7, 874.

⁵²² IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, Preface: PG 7, 1120.

⁵²³ HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 10, 30.

⁵²⁴ See MACARIUS THE GREAT, *Homilies*, 17, 21.

⁵²⁵ See MACARIUS THE GREAT, *Homilies*, 7.

855 Divine love, which is the summit of the virtuous life, is also the force that accompanies our divinization. In his love for humankind, God became one of us, and through our love for God we grow toward divinization. In divinization the human mind becomes illumined and enraptured by divine light. The human person becomes a partaker of divine love⁵²⁶ and their entire being is transfigured: the person becomes a god by grace.

III. THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY AS A NEW CREATION (THE FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH, AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS)

*Preserve their marriages in peace and concord;
nourish the infants, guard the young; strengthen the aged;
comfort the fainthearted; gather the scattered.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

A. Christian Marriage

1. The Family—a Domestic Church

856 In the unity and love of the first married couple the Holy Fathers see an image of the Church. The marital union of a man and woman is ecclesial by its very nature, just as the nature of the Church is reflected in the unity of the married couple. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul teaches us that the mystical union between Christ and the Church is the archetype of the marital bond: “This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church” (*Eph* 5:32). Marriage is a “type of the Church,”⁵²⁷ the place of the presence and action of Christ, and a sign of new life. Saint John Chrysostom calls a marriage a little Church, which walks before the face of God both day and night.⁵²⁸

857 The Lord our God blesses marital love and endows it with a spirit of sacrifice, and with fruitfulness. It unites two people—a man and a woman—into a single whole that no one can break apart: “Therefore what God has joined together let no one separate” (*Mt* 19:6). Marital unity is realized through mutual self-giving to the point of self-sacrifice: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (*Eph* 5:25).

⁵²⁶ See MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Centuries on Charity*, 1, 27: PG 90, 965.

⁵²⁷ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Colossians*, Homily 12, 5: PG 62, 587.

⁵²⁸ See JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Ephesians*, Homily 20: PG 62, 143.

858 The Holy Spirit—"Treasury of Blessings and Bestower of Life"—grants marriage the gifts needed for a devout life in peace, truth, harmony, and love. Marriage serves the Church by building up the Body of Christ in a community of faith, love, and mutual sanctification. The community of marriage becomes a "domestic church" through the action of the Holy Spirit. In the prayers of the Order of Crowning, the priest addresses God with the petition "Lord our God, crown them with glory and honour."⁵²⁹

2. Sexuality and Christian Marriage

859 Sexuality is a gift from God to be a man or a woman, a gift that we receive at the moment of our creation. Therefore, we are called to accept this gift from God and enfold it in our lives.

860 Sexuality embraces all the natural dimensions of human existence: it marks not only the body, which is the visible sign of one's gender, but also a person's soul and spirit. In the Book of Genesis, it is written that God created humankind as male and female (see *Gn* 1:27); therefore, one's sex (being male or female) is a gift from God, and not a matter of human choice. Each person is called to accept the Creator's plan for his or her life as expressed in one's sex.

861 Human sexuality can be understood only in the light of the Christian understanding of love as a communion of persons. Such communion is realized in love as the self-giving of one person to another. This love is granted to a person by the Holy Spirit, who opens that person to another individual.

862 In marital life, a man and a woman open themselves to God through mutual love, which becomes the foundation of their indissoluble union, fidelity, and fruitfulness. In the virginal state of consecrated life, sexuality is transfigured in the Holy Spirit in order to serve God and one's neighbour in love for the sake of the heavenly kingdom (see *Mt* 19:12).

863 Any selfish exploitation of another person as a means for obtaining sexual pleasure contradicts God's gift of love, deforms the essence of sexuality, and deeply wounds the person. It opposes the sixth and ninth commandments. Therefore, sexual activity outside the Mystery of Matrimony, marital infidelity, the destruction of marital fruitfulness through abortion or contraception, polygamy and polyandry, homosexual acts, and autoeroticism—all of these demean human dignity and are grave sins.

⁵²⁹ *Trebnýk*, Rite of Crowning, Exclamation at the crowning of the couple.

- 864 Every person is called from early childhood to love both God and neighbour. The essence of Christian sexual education is in teaching one how to love. The goal of such education is to help a maturing young person discover in himself or herself God's gift of sexuality and learn to value the personal character of this gift.
- 865 A child's parents have a particular responsibility for Christian sexual education. It is precisely they who are called to be gentle and wise guides. It is they who must lead the child on its path of discovering God's gift of sexuality in himself or herself, revealing its nature and meaning in a manner appropriate to the age, needs, and depth of the child's inquiry. The Church and society should assist parents in the realization of this vocation but they can never adequately replace them.

3. Marital Fidelity

- 866 An essential characteristic of Christian marriage is fidelity. It is based on Christ's faithful love and not merely on the human efforts of the spouses. Marital fidelity flows from God's faithfulness to his promise and Christ's fidelity to his Church. To be faithful means to know how to be courageous in one's choice and responsible for one's promise (vow). Fidelity is strengthened through participation in the Holy Mysteries (Confession and Communion), joint prayer, mutual understanding, support, trust and forgiveness, as well as constant spiritual battle against temptations. "Joint prayer by the entire family preserves it at least partially from disagreement and argument ... If a husband and wife were thus to pray together every day, they would be compelled to forgive each other every offence, day in and day out."⁵³⁰
- 867 Marital fidelity is weakened and even ruined by deception, insincerity, jealousy, and thoughtless behaviour. These in turn can lead to marital betrayal and the squandering of the graces received in the Mystery of Marriage. Christ equates even lustful thoughts with adultery: "Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (*Mt* 5:28).
- 868 The Church, faithful to the words of Jesus Christ, emphasizes the indissolubility of marriage: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (*Mk* 10:11-12).

⁵³⁰ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Пастирське послання О супружестві і родині* [Pastoral Letter *On Marriage and Family*] (February 17, 1902).

4. Marital Fruitfulness in Love

- 869 The most important aim of marital life is the communion of a man and a woman in love so that, abiding in it, they may come increasingly to know God, who is Love. Abiding in God's love, their love will also be fruitful: "What the soul is for a human being, love is for the family. Where the soul is no more, life also disappears; there will be a body, but it will be dead. A family without love is like a body without a soul."⁵³¹ Marital love exists first of all for the good of the spouses themselves.
- 870 In marriage, a man and a woman are called to co-creation with the Lord in the birth of children: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (*Gn* 1:28). The Lord is the source of human life, so in accepting the gift of a new life, spouses become partakers of this Source. This is why the gift of fertility is God's blessing for a marriage and strengthens it in love. Marriage is an icon of Christ's Church, which gives birth to people for eternal life.
- 871 The marital love of a man and a woman is expressed in their sexual life together. In the sexual act, spouses are joined in love, expressing the indissoluble unity of marital life. True marital love is fruitful love, therefore the bodily union of spouses is open to procreation. The sexual act has a double aspect: unitive and procreative. Only such a conjugal act is virtuous and pure. The loss of one of these aspects of the sexual act distorts its substance, destroys the virtue and purity of marital life, and is therefore a sin.⁵³²
- 872 In bearing and raising children, a man and woman are *co-workers of God's love*. This is what characterizes responsible parenthood in marriage. A particular responsibility in marriage lies in the *planning of births*, which is related to the parents' ability to provide their children an appropriate upbringing, having ensured their proper physical and spiritual development. Thus it sometimes occurs that a husband and wife decide to delay temporarily the birth of children. However, such a decision should not be based on selfish and consumerist motives; it should not completely exclude childbearing, which is a fundamental good of married life. In other words, it ought not to become a rejection of fatherhood and motherhood *per se*.⁵³³
- 873 The Venerable Metropolitan Andrey teaches: "If God has given someone children, that person has been given a great responsibility to raise

⁵³¹ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирське послання *О супружестві і родині* [Pastoral Letter *On Marriage and Family*] (February 17, 1902).

⁵³² See PAUL VI, Encyclical *Humanae vitae* [On Human Life], 12.

⁵³³ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* [The Church in the Modern World], 51.

those children devoutly. Someday at the Last Judgment God will demand a severe accounting from those parents who cared little about their children.”⁵³⁴

B. Christian Marriage and the Defence of the Dignity of the Beginning of Human Life

1. The Problem of Artificial Fertilization

- 874 In the examples of numerous blessed marriages that were initially infertile—Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, Elkanah and Hannah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joachim and Anne—the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition teach us that the birth of a child is always a gift from God, for which one ought to pray with fervour.
- 875 Many marriages experience infertility as a drama, a challenge, a loss and insurmountable obstacle to complete self-realization. Contemporary biomedical technologies grant the infertile couple the possibility of obtaining a child via artificial fertilization. However, medical intervention is permissible only if it will facilitate the effectiveness of the sexual act to conceive children, but by no means replace it. This is because the dignity of conceiving a child necessarily requires the marital sexual act of a man and a woman as the spiritual and corporal union of persons in love.⁵³⁵ Artificial fertilization excludes the sexual act, reducing spouses to donors of biological materials and the child to a product of biomedical manipulation. The price of such conception is the destruction of so-called “surplus embryos” or the manipulation of their lives. In reality, the birth of a new person, through the cooperation of a man and a woman with the power of the Creator, ought to be the fruit and sign of the mutual self-giving of the spouses, of their love and fidelity.
- 876 Contemporary biomedical technologies of artificial fertilization involve external parties in the conception and carrying to term of a child (for example, gamete donors, doctors, or “surrogate mothers”). The interference of such external individuals in the mystery of conception of a new life is in itself a moral evil. Surrogate motherhood, in which a woman carries and gives birth to a child conceived in a test tube for clients, constitutes a real disregard for the gift of motherhood: a woman traffics her motherhood, and the child born in this way is reduced to an object

⁵³⁴ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Пастирське послання О супружестві і родині* [Pastoral Letter *On Marriage and Family*] (February 17, 1902).

⁵³⁵ See PAUL VI, Encyclical *Humanae vitae* [On Human Life]; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Donum vitae* [The Gift of Life], 1.

of commerce. Surrogate motherhood, the conception of a child with the intention of selling it after birth, and other similar acts are grave sins against the dignity of the beginning of human life. Such actions are an affront to God and the dignity of the child as a human being, created in the image and likeness of God.

2. Human Cloning

- 877 Cloning is an experimental method of asexual reproduction. Today scientists are attempting to apply it to humans as well, in order to create genetically identical persons for therapeutic or other technological uses. Advocates of cloning do not recognize the dignity of human clones as persons.
- 878 Cloning violates human dignity; it reduces a person to “biological material.” Such a method of conception detaches the sphere of childbearing (procreation) from the authentically human context of the conjugal act, and eliminates the need for a loving union of spouses who cooperate with God in receiving the gift of human life. The very idea of human cloning negates marriage and the family as such; in this way a person attempts to take the place of the Creator, deciding for himself or herself how and when to begin or end human life.
- 879 In addition, cloning can create the danger of social manipulation in the selection of “genetically superior” people; it can lead to the production of living human clones solely as material for organ transplantation. This reduces people to utilitarian objects. This is entirely impermissible from the perspective of Christian respect for the human person and esteem for human dignity.

3. The Sin of Abortion

- 880 Abortion is the deliberate and direct killing of a human being during the period between its conception and birth—at the very beginning of its life.⁵³⁶ Generally, abortion takes the form of an artificial termination of pregnancy. Abortion also consists of all actions involving a manipulation that leads to the destruction of human embryos obtained through the use of reproductive technologies.
- 881 The Holy Scriptures teach us that the dignity of the human person exists from conception: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (*Jer* 1:5). The *sacredness* and

⁵³⁶ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* [The Gospel of Life], 58.

inviolability of human life is founded on the Creator's personal regard for every human person.

882 St. Basil the Great teaches:

The woman who destroys voluntarily a fetus incurs the pain of murder. There is with us no inquiring whether the fetus was formed or not. In these matters, justice is demanded not only for the child that was to be born, but also against her who has schemed against herself, since most of the time women die in these circumstances. To this is added the destruction of the fetus, just another murder, in the intention of those who dare to commit this sin.⁵³⁷

883 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, in his pastoral letter, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, emphasizes:

Cases of parents killing their own children are particularly abominable, horrible and unnatural. But perhaps even worse cases are those when the child has not yet come into the world. The very fact that the crime is committed by the child's own father or mother and that the child cannot defend itself... all this makes abortion a most particular kind of crime.⁵³⁸

884 From its very conception a human child is entrusted to a *mother and father* who care for and look after it. However, sometimes dramatic circumstances (rape, family pressure, and so forth), or selfish considerations can compel a woman to destroy the life she is carrying within her. These do not remove the mother's responsibility. However, others are also responsible for the abortion; for example, the *father* of the child who forces the mother to have an abortion or abandons her during her pregnancy. Accomplices in the sin of abortion are also relatives, acquaintances, and friends who sometimes pressure the woman to abort using the excuse that this can help "preserve one's good name," etc. And finally, the ultimate fault—a great one—lies with the doctors and other medical personnel who actually perform the abortion. Also, all those who *defend and advocate* for abortion in society are indirectly culpable.

4. The Sin of Artificial Contraception

885 Contraception is a deliberate action by which a person ruins the fecundity of the reproductive sphere and makes the conception of new human life impossible. Contraceptive actions impact the entire human person by limiting his or her ability to accept the gift of new life. The

⁵³⁷ BASIL THE GREAT, *Letters*, 188, 2: PG 32, 671.

⁵³⁸ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *He ybui* [Thou Shalt Not Kill] (November 21, 1942).

consequences of such actions can be not only the physiological but also the spiritual, moral, and psychological inability of a married couple to give birth to children. The formation of a contraceptive mentality can also become a consequence.

- 886 No medical contraceptive methods are entirely effective in preventing conception. In families where a married couple is physiologically fertile but unable to receive new life due to contraception, “unwanted children” will be conceived and “unwanted pregnancies” will arise, leading to the birth of “unwanted children” or even abortion. Therefore, the contraceptive mentality leads inexorably to an abortion mentality. Rather than reducing the number of abortions, as its defenders contend, contraception merely stimulates disordered sexual life and actually leads to an increase in the number of abortions.
- 887 Contraception is frequently a sign of an already existing crisis in family relations and destroys the unity of Christian marriage. Typically the decision to use contraceptive methods is tied to a fear of pregnancy and a rejection of fertility. If the care of children falls entirely on only one of the spouses, then resistance to conception is usually a sort of “protest” against such solitude within marriage. Contraceptive acts are a moral evil because they eliminate the marital vocation to fatherhood and motherhood.
- 888 Contraception not only impedes the joining of male and female gametes, but also destroys the spouses’ ability to cooperate with the Creator in the acceptance and introduction of new life into the world. Such a married couple rejects God’s plan for themselves and reduces family life merely to the “private sphere,” scorning the fact that God alone is the Master of the beginning and the end of human life.
- 889 The use of contraception deforms the natural meaning of the sexual act by ruining not only its procreative but also its unitive essence. Contraception leads to irresponsible cohabitation, the aim of which is the quest for personal gratification. This does grave damage to the true foundation of marital life, self-sacrificing love, in which spouses give of themselves and accept each other in total fullness, especially their own fertility.
- 890 Hormonal contraceptive methods have a dual action: contraceptive and abortifacient, and are therefore immoral. These methods obstruct normal physiological processes in a woman’s body and render her infertile. Nevertheless, these methods do not always prevent conception of a child. Therefore, hormonal contraception is also designed to prevent the further development of the child in the mother’s womb and to bring about its death at an early stage of development. Consequently, the

Church, concerned about every life of every person from the moment of his or her conception, opposes the use of contraceptive methods. The sole exception can be the use of hormonal agents with *potentially* contraceptive actions for *medical* treatment and only for a limited time, as prescribed by a doctor.

- 891 Metropolitan Andrey expresses the particular harm of contraception thus:

Similar to the killing of children, although an entirely different sort of sin, are actions by which parents limit the number of their progeny. Such instances are obviously not sins of murder, but it is difficult not to regard them as a grave offence... for although a life has not been taken away, a life has not been allowed to be! A people whose women do not wish to submit... to the responsibilities of motherhood and whose men seek sexual satisfaction without regard for the responsibilities and burdens of family life and irrespective of the goal of marriage: such a people is doomed to annihilation.⁵³⁹

5. Methods of Recognizing Fertility

- 892 Responsible fatherhood and motherhood also manifests itself in natural family planning. It consists in spouses always being open to God's calling to transmit life. In order to answer this calling, a married couple understands and recognizes the inherent nature of intimate relations, included in nature by God. The inherent nature of these relations involves the possibility of participating in the bestowal of new life. Natural planning is tied to a search for the appropriate moment to conceive new life.
- 893 The vocation to fatherhood and motherhood is not contradicted by periodic abstinence and the application of methods to regulate birth that are based on using periods of infertility of the female body.⁵⁴⁰ Married life remains chaste because it respects the bodily aspect of love and does not deprive it of natural fertility.
- 894 The *natural* regulation of conception is fundamentally different from contraceptive actions because the married couple remains open to the acceptance of new life. This method of regulation rejects any interference in the procreative sphere of a man or woman for the temporary or long-term exclusion of their ability to conceive. Natural family plan-

⁵³⁹ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *He ybui* [Thou Shalt Not Kill] (November 21, 1942).

⁵⁴⁰ See Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* [On Human Life] (July 25, 1968), 16.

ning teaches the married couple to understand and respect each other's fertility and to recognize the periods of fertility of a woman's body.

- 895 Openness to God's gift of life and the search for God's will allows a married couple to accept new life with love, even when they "had not planned" to give birth. In such a family, each child given by God will be wanted and accepted with trust in God. By preserving the chastity of the sexual act in its openness to life, natural methods of family planning strengthen the unity of a marriage. Openness to acceptance of one's own children makes a couple capable also of adopting orphaned children.

6. Responsible Parenthood

- 896 Responsible fatherhood and motherhood consists in not only accepting the gift of new life but also creating suitable conditions for a child's full development. Christian parents ought to understand that children, given to them by the Lord, belong primarily to him. These children of God are merely entrusted to the care of their parents during their earthly life. The vocation of parenthood requires a sacrificial love for children. The good of the child is the highest aim of responsible parenthood. Therefore, parents cannot regard children as their "property" or use them solely as a means to achieve some other aim. Rather, every child has the natural right to be born and raised in a genuine family.⁵⁴¹ The best means of raising a child is through the parents' example of mature Christian behaviour, as well as through the parents' relationship with each other, and with other members of their family and society.
- 897 Saint John Chrysostom reminds Christians that they are called to give birth to their children not only for temporal life but for eternal life as well.⁵⁴² In addition to material and psychological needs, children also have spiritual needs. Religious and spiritual formation are an inseparable aspect of a child's upbringing and his or her growth in God's grace.

C. The Christian Family and the Defence of a Dignified End of Human Life

1. Care for Sick Parents and Family Members

- 898 In the Holy Scriptures we read: "With all your heart honour your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; how can you repay what they

⁵⁴¹ See JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Committee of European Journalists for the Rights of the Child*.

⁵⁴² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, 59, 7: PG 58, 574.

have given to you?” (*Sir* 7:27-28). Respecting parents means relating to them with love, especially when they are weak and in need of assistance, for example, in old age.

- 899 In teaching about the family, Metropolitan Andrey emphasized the responsibility of children toward parents:

Good Christians are in life able to keep God’s fourth commandment to “Honour your father and your mother” even when parents are not good and, God forbid, are not deserving of respect; children are to respect them all the same, for such is God’s law. Christians know how bitter the fate of those who had not honoured their parents.⁵⁴³

Metropolitan Andrey also cautioned children thus: “May God forbid that there should be any godless children among us who could dare one day to disrespect their parents or worse, raise their hands against them. God forbid that any parents should have reason to curse their children!”⁵⁴⁴

- 900 Children ought to care for their parents in their illnesses and provide them material and moral support in their old age. “My child, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if his mind fails, be patient with him; because you have all your faculties do not despise him... Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord” (*Sir* 3:12-13, 16). Children ought to remember that respect and love for one’s parents carries an obligation to look after them for the duration of their lives. No one can ever be relieved of this duty. If parents have already left this life, then children are obliged to conduct a Christian funeral, carry out their final wishes, pray for them, look after their grave sites, and remember the anniversary of their deaths.

2. The Christian Understanding of Death

- 901 A Christian, having been made worthy of the divine life through the mystery of Baptism, already here on earth, lives the eternal life. For the believer, death is a consequence of the sin of our first ancestors. However, death was defeated once and for all by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who “to those in the tombs granted life.” For a Christian, one’s mortality is not a dead end, an exit into non-being, or

⁵⁴³ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Пастирське послання О подружестві і родині* [Pastoral Letter *On Marriage and Family*] (February 17, 1902).

⁵⁴⁴ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Пастирське послання О подружестві і родині* [Pastoral Letter *On Marriage and Family*] (February 17, 1902).

the end of a human person's existence. Death, like life, has meaning—a meaning which we discover in the light of Christ's Pascha. Death is a passing over to new life, from earth to the heavens.

- 902 Death cannot be an escape from or a negation of life. Therefore, *suicide*—the conscious and wilful taking of one's own life—is a grave sin, and the Church condemns it. Many social, psychological and other factors can lead a person to suicide, but the chief causes are hopelessness, loss of the meaning of life, rejection of God's mercy, and despair.

A person does not have the right to dispose of his own life. Like a soldier who does not have the right to abandon his assigned post, when he leaves it wilfully, is considered a deserter; in the same way, a deserter is one who abandons his responsibilities and the post at which he was placed by God's providence.⁵⁴⁵

3. The Use of Pain Management

- 903 In accordance with Christian teaching, suffering, especially in the last moments of life, has a particular role in God's saving plan. Our suffering witnesses to participation in Christ's suffering and his salvific sacrifice. Therefore, some Christians favour limited use of palliative (pain-reducing) measures as a voluntary acceptance of the sufferings of the crucified Christ, at least in some small measure. However, such heroism should not be undertaken as a general rule. On the contrary, according to human and Christian prudence, it is fitting to offer the sick the use of medications, under the supervision and advice of a physician, that would reduce or eliminate pain, even if such medicines may impair a patient's awareness. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that use of such drugs does not interfere with the infirm person's ability to prepare for a dignified death, that is, to express final wishes, to make a Confession, and to receive Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion.

4. Organ Transplantation

- 904 Our greatest gift to our neighbour lies in self-sacrifice, especially for the preservation of another's health and life. Contemporary medicine through organ transplantation can treat many of the sick, who until recently could only have expected death or, at best, a life of suffering and constraints.

⁵⁴⁵ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *He yбui* [Thou Shalt Not Kill] (November 21, 1942).

- 905 Transplantation is a manifestation of compassion for our neighbours and of solidarity with them. Making a gift of one's organs for transplantation is heroic service for the purpose of saving lives. This service was esteemed highly by Saint John Paul II: "Thanks to science, and to the professional training and commitment of doctors and health-care workers ... new and wonderful opportunities are presented ... to love our neighbour in new ways; in evangelical terms, to love 'to the end'" (see Jn 13:1).⁵⁴⁶
- 906 The selfless gift of a part of one's own body (organ or tissue) for the good of another who has urgent need of it, is a manifestation of Christian love for one's neighbour. On the other hand, the trafficking of human organs is intolerable and a moral evil: "Any procedure which tends to commercialize human organs or to consider them as items of exchange or trade must be considered morally unacceptable, because to use the body as an 'object' is to violate the dignity of the human person."⁵⁴⁷
- 907 A living person (the donor) can donate only one of a pair of organs on the condition that it will not jeopardize his or her own life. "[V]ital organs which occur singly in the body can be removed only *after death*, that is from the body of someone who is certainly dead. This requirement is self-evident, since to act otherwise would mean to cause intentionally the death of the donor in disposing of his organs."⁵⁴⁸

5. Euthanasia

- 908 Euthanasia (from the Greek meaning *good death*) is an action or inaction which by its nature or its intention causes a person's death with the purpose of eliminating all sorts of diverse suffering.⁵⁴⁹ Euthanasia is used not only on the gravely ill but also on newborn infants with birth defects. In addition to euthanasia "by individual request," there is also "social euthanasia," in which the decision to terminate a life comes not from the person himself but from society, when further medical treatment is deemed futile or excessively expensive, since the necessary resources could be used to treat many other people.

⁵⁴⁶ JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Participants of the First International Congress of the Society for Organ Sharing* (June 20, 1991).

⁵⁴⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society* (August 29, 2000), 3.

⁵⁴⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society* (August 29, 2000), 4.

⁵⁴⁹ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* [The Gospel of Life], 65.

909 The Church teaches:

Nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it, either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action. For it is a question of the violation of the divine law, an offense against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity.⁵⁵⁰

- 910 Sometimes, because of prolonged and unbearable pain, people may ask for death for themselves or for another. However, such pleas for death are not always a manifestation of a true desire for assisted suicide or euthanasia. In reality, the gravely ill person needs *love, attention, prayer, and spiritual support*. Those who are close to the infirm—parents, children, family members, friends, and also doctors, nurses, clergy and other members of the church community—are called to surround the infirm with such care.

⁵⁵⁰ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Declaration on Euthanasia* (May 5, 1980), 2.

*Remember, O Lord, those who have brought these gifts,
and those for whom, through whom,
and on behalf of whom they have brought them...
those who love us, those who hate us...
And remember all your people, O Lord our God.
Be all things to all people
O you who know each one and their request, each household, and its needs.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

IV. SOCIETY TRANSFIGURED IN THE CHURCH (THE FIFTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD)

A. The Christian View of the World and the Preaching of the Gospel

- 911 The Church of Christ as the people of God, united in the Holy Spirit, exercises its ministry at all times and in every nation. “[A]mid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,” she walks through history, in order to “reveal to the world” the mystery of the risen Christ.⁵⁵¹
- 912 The world and society are the place of interaction between the human person and God. The mission of the Church and the matters of the world intersect, but do not blend in confusion. The Church recognizes the value of temporal things and their meaning in human life, therefore in her service she assists people in their earthly matters.
- 913 At the centre of the Church’s attention is the human person and his or her activities that possess social, political, and spiritual dimensions. Human action is seen in the light of the transfiguration of the world and Christ’s salvific mission. For “Christ is now at work in human hearts through the energy of his Holy Spirit, arousing not only a desire for the age to come, but by that very fact animating, purifying, and strengthening those noble longings too by which the human family makes its life more human.”⁵⁵²
- 914 The Christian perception of the world derives from gratitude to God for the gift of the world. This gratitude generates an openness to the world and to earthly matters, and brings to light their spiritual dimen-

⁵⁵¹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Lumen gentium* [Light of the Nations], 8.

⁵⁵² VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Gaudium et spes* [The Church in the Modern World], 38.

sion. Through our activity and love for work, we are linked to God's own artistry and wisdom, making creation and the cosmos—already wisely arranged by the Father—even more beautiful.⁵⁵³

- 915 Christian life in the world is the Christian's response in faith to a call from God. This call also embraces the Christian's attitude towards the world and to participation in society. Christians discover their place in the world and their life's vocation in the light of faith, which spurs them toward concrete action.
- 916 The Christian is a leaven in the world, as suggested by the Gospel (see *Mt* 13:33). Herein lies the Christian's true vocation: to be active in the world, witnessing to Christ everywhere. By his or her activity in the world, the Christian, as *a new person in Christ*, participates in the realization of God's plan, whose culmination will be a new heaven and a new earth (see *Rev* 21:1).
- 917 The Church, in proclaiming the Gospel and fulfilling her salvific mission, facilitates the ordering of human life in society. She strengthens the foundation of social life through her teaching and pastoral work.

B. The Church as the Model for the Human Community— The Moral Principles Guiding the Social Order

1. Unity in Diversity (and the Principle of the Common Good)

- 918 The Church—the icon of the Most Holy Trinity—leads humanity into the experience of communion with God, and grows as a community of persons in the Holy Spirit. The unique experience of the Church is that a person can be himself or herself (that is, a person) only in communion with other persons. Just as the unity of Christ's Church always exists in diversity, so the communion of persons in the Church does not diminish the uniqueness of the individual; on the contrary, it is a guarantee of one's development and of the preservation of one's identity. Therefore, this kind of communion of persons is actually their *common good*.
- 919 In a (secularized) society segregated from the Church, the human person is viewed either as a self-sufficient individual closed off from others, or as a member of a collective deprived of freedom—a “means” required for the existence of social institutions. In the first case, the individual places his or her own interests ahead of those of society, and in the

⁵⁵³ See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 32, 2: PG 7, 1210-1211.

second instance the collective dominates the individual. As a result, the understanding of the common good is distorted: it is either denied or reduced to group interests.

- 920 Fulfilling her mission to transfigure society, the Church communicates to society her own experience of communion in the moral principles of Christian life. The principle of the common good, in particular, requires that society create conditions for the free development of the person, who simultaneously works for the good of society.

2. Holiness (and the Development of Civil Society)

- 921 The Church is a life-giving environment for people's sanctification and individual perfection. In the Church, one can also grow towards perfection in his or her social dimension. A holy person who lives a life of love for God and neighbour in the Holy Spirit is guided by God's law and becomes a model of the law-abiding citizen. It is precisely the yearning for holiness that opens the Christian to serve neighbour and society. This is why the Christian is a creative participant in civil society.
- 922 Civil society is characterized by the ability of its members—motivated from within—to organize themselves, as well as by their openness and autonomous activity for the sake of the common good. In her social dimension, the Church is a model of civil society in that she educates a Christian who is a citizen capable of sensing the needs of his or her neighbour and responding to them appropriately.

3. Catholicity (and the Principle of Solidarity)

- 923 The catholicity of the Church reflects her mission to gather together people and entire nations and to cultivate in each person a sense of responsibility not only for self, but also for others and, ultimately, all humanity.⁵⁵⁴ In addition to providing a sense of personal responsibility and participation in the life of one's own Christian community, catholicity opens a person to other individuals and communities for the purpose of creating communion with them, and actually offers the experience of such communion. Catholicity brings a spirit of conciliation, in which various communities outgrow their own group interests and engage in a culture of dialogue and mutual support in order to overcome misunderstandings and conflicts of all kinds.

⁵⁵⁴ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 192.

- 924 The principle of solidarity flows from the experience of ecclesial catholicity. In this principle of solidarity, the communion of persons is expressed as a mutual dependence of individuals, while responsibility for the Church is expressed as a duty to participate in society and cooperate with others—the members of that society.

4. Apostolate and *Diakonia* (and the Principle of Subsidiarity)

- 925 The Church, imitating the Saviour, performs her mission (apostolate) in society through service (*diakonia*): “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many” (*Mt* 20:28). The Church’s highest calling is not to dominate but to serve. The Church does not lord it over others, she helps others. She does not strive for influence or material gain, but serves the poor, the sick, and the destitute.
- 926 The Church’s understanding of social activity as service is expressed in the *principle of subsidiarity*.⁵⁵⁵ According to this principle, associations of citizens at various levels each act within the limits of their competence. This allows every level of society (municipal, regional, national) to mobilize the greatest initiative and creative energy. Higher levels of state government should not interfere in the jurisdiction of local communities or supplant them. Such interference, which is rooted in a desire to dominate, limits the initiative of citizens and their communities. The *principle of subsidiarity* is based on the idea that social groups of a higher order ought to help when those of a lower order cannot manage by themselves. Such assistance (*subsidium*) is the social manifestation of service. It brings truth, fairness, freedom and love—the main “pillars” of social life—to social relations.⁵⁵⁶ Subsidiarity is destroyed by the loss of a spirit of service, which can lead to excessive control on the part of the state or to the community’s collapse.

C. The Social Dimensions of the Church

1. The Social Dimension of Christian Freedom

- 927 Given his or her dignity, the human person stands at the centre of social life. Therefore, the foundation of social morality is respect for every person and the priority of the person over society. This emphasis

⁵⁵⁵ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 186.

⁵⁵⁶ See JOHN XXIII, Encyclical *Pacem in terris* [*Peace on Earth*] (April 11, 1963), V.

on the person does not imply an individualistic view of human life, for a human being is called to *freedom within community*.

- 928 The mystery that is the person discloses the meaning of Christian freedom. This freedom is *freedom from* sin and from everything that enslaves a person. It frees him or her from everything that makes one dependent on external and internal compulsions, including the social structures of sin (defined below). At the same time, such freedom is a *freedom to serve* God and neighbour in love: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another” (*Gal* 5:13).
- 929 As a “new person” in Christ (see *Eph* 2:15), the Christian manifests this freedom in concrete areas of life, especially in social aspects. One is called to cooperation with Christ in all facets of human life. The behaviour of this “new person” in society flows from the gift of new life in Christ, and therefore the perfection and maturity of the person in the moral life is not only a result of his or her effort, but is also a fruit of unity and joint action with Christ in the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵⁷
- 930 Freedom is always associated with a person’s *responsibility* before other people. Owing to the reality of *freedom in community*, a human being is capable of manifesting social virtues (defined below) and building areas of cultural life that require the efforts of the entire community (art, scholarship, the economy, etc.).
- 931 The Church community brings dynamism to the life of society. It does this by proposing a direction for social development and perfection that surpasses the temporal horizons of human life. The most perfect model of a community of persons is the Most Holy Trinity. However, Christians understand that sin deforms interpersonal relations, gives rise to misunderstandings within society, and interferes with society’s formation and growth in perfection. Every personal sin always has social implications. This leads to the emergence of structures of sin—social constructs in which a person is induced to commit sinful deeds. In order to overcome the structures of sin and build up society, Christians reject sinful actions and courageously witness to the good and to justice.

a. Democracy and Christian Social Virtues

- 932 Democracy—as a social system aimed at safeguarding the dignity of every human person and their rights, and also protecting a concern for

⁵⁵⁷ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Gaudium et spes* [The Church in the Modern World], 19.

the common good as the criterion for political life—can be considered consistent with the Christian world-view.

The Church values the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate.⁵⁵⁸

- 933 The existence of formal democratic institutions is not yet proof that democracy has been implemented. True democracy reflects the diversity of interests evident in society. When the democratic order is reduced to a collection of egoisms, society loses its high moral core: in such a society the human person is regarded primarily as a consumer and an object for manipulation. Such illusory democracy is incapable of safeguarding respect for the dignity of every person and facilitating solidarity among people. Where democratic systems serve only the interests of the most powerful, simply because they are more effective at manipulating the levers of power, democracy becomes an empty word.⁵⁵⁹
- 934 The foundation of the democratic system is respect for human rights, the most important of which are: the right to life, family, a formative upbringing and education, the ability to choose one's own path in life, as well as the right to employment, and the right to obtain the means for a dignified existence. A guarantor for the attainment of these rights is religious freedom, that is, the right to seek and confess the true God.⁵⁶⁰
- 935 The moral criteria of political life in a democratic society should become such social virtues as: responsibility, honesty, justice, mutual respect, diligence in work, truth, a sense of duty, solidarity, and concern for the common good. Democratic society requires moral values for its survival and growth. It is responsible to defend them.

2. The Social Dimension of Christian Love

- 936 Christian love is the foundation of all interpersonal relations and all social life. It is precisely love that discloses the dignity of the human person and teaches us how to love him or her. Acts of mercy are the social manifestations of Christian love. The religious character of acts of mercy stems from the fact that Jesus Christ identified himself with every destitute person: "As you did it to one of the least of these who are

⁵⁵⁸ PIUS XII, *Christmas Radio Message on December 24, 1944*: AAS 37 (1945), 10–20. Quoted in JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* [One Hundredth Year], 46.

⁵⁵⁹ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* [The Gospel of Life], 70.

⁵⁶⁰ See Vatican Council II, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* [On Human Dignity], 1.

members of my family, you did it to me” (*Mt 25:40*). Love for the sake of Christ is the primary motivation for acts of mercy.

- 937 The Christian ascetical tradition teaches us about seven spiritual works of mercy and seven corporal works of mercy. The seven spiritual works of mercy are: to counsel the doubtful, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish the sinner, to comfort the sorrowful, to sincerely forgive injuries, to bear wrongs patiently, and to pray for the living and the dead. The seven corporal works of mercy are: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless, to minister to the sick, to visit the imprisoned, and to bury the dead.
- 938 Neglecting mercy is a sin against Christian love. “As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me” (*Mt 25:45*). A social sin is both a sin against an individual at the level of their societal interaction (murder, theft, robbery, fraud, etc.) as well as a sign of an entire structure of sin which exists in society or the international community (corruption, human trafficking, drug trafficking, etc.).

*Remember, O God, those under trial, in mines, exile,
bitter slavery and in every tribulation, constraint and trouble
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

3. Social Justice

a. Private Property, Just Stewardship, Fair Exchange, and Distribution of Material Goods

- 939 The right to private property and a fair distribution of material goods in society are conditions for guaranteeing the dignity of the individual who lives in that society and a guarantee of the means needed for one’s full development. It is precisely the defence of the dignity and rights of a human being, created in the image of God, and the safeguarding of peace and harmony among people and communities as a manifestation of the social dimension of Christian love, that are the aims which all of society’s material goods serve. The just stewardship and distribution of material goods is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve the comprehensive development of each individual person, as well as of society as a whole.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶¹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Gaudium et spes* [The Church in the Modern World], 69.

- 940 Private property is a form of personal control of the goods that are required for a person's full and comprehensive development. With the help of such property, each person obtains the "space" for individual and familial independence. Consequently, private property is an important element in the realization of personal freedom in social life. Respect for this form of ownership and the guaranteeing of one's right to it are important elements of a just and free society.⁵⁶²
- 941 In defending one's right to personal property, Christian tradition does not make this right an absolute, but regards it in the context of the universal appointed purpose of all material goods. In this appointed purpose lies the social function of private property. Only the Lord, as Creator of heaven and earth, is Master of the whole world that he created. We are but stewards in the Lord's vineyard. He has entrusted it to our care. Thus, in timely fashion we are to return its fruits to their true Master (see *Mk* 12:2-11).
- 942 Justice as a social virtue consists in giving God and each person—each member of society—that which is their due. Such justice in social life is realized in two basic forms: in a fair distribution of material goods, on the one hand, and their fair exchange, on the other. Distributive justice is safeguarded when communal goods—in accordance with just laws—become accessible to all members of society. Examples of this are: appropriate social security, health care, pension protection, etc. Fair or just exchange is achieved through the fair trade of material goods between different members of society. One example is when the price of a product corresponds to its quality. Distributive justice regulates what the community owes its citizens in proportion to their contribution and needs; it ensures that no member of society is denied access to basic goods and services (for example, appropriate social protections, health care, pension income, and the like). Legal justice concerns what the citizen owes in fairness to the community, and insures that all citizens have equal protection under the law, regardless of status or wealth.

b. Morality in Social Relations

- 943 Human society is impossible without interpersonal relations. The fundamental condition for human interaction, and by extension for social dialogue, is recognition of the dignity of others and respect for them. This respect, which begins with traditional gestures of politeness, includes truthfulness and trust between those communicating with each other. One form of social dialogue is the dissemination and exchange

⁵⁶² See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 176-181.

of information. The truthfulness of information is a foundation for the creation of association among people.

- 944 Christ said of himself: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (*Jn* 14:6). The Christian, who lives in Christ, is a servant of the Truth. Christian truthfulness has a deeply religious character: to witness to the Truth, to Christ. The eighth commandment demands truthful speech: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour”⁵⁶³ (see *Ex* 20:16). A Christian is responsible for his or her words: “On the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter” (*Mt* 12:36). Every word must be treated with special reverence, and therefore one ought to avoid idle talk, chatter, calumny, and lies. Every such abuse of words is itself a sin. However, it becomes an even greater evil when it harms a neighbour.
- 945 We live in an information environment created by the mass media. In this setting, we, as Christians, are called to be servants of Truth. The ability to speak the truth and to be faithful to the truth also means being able to keep silent and to maintain confidentiality for the good of one’s neighbour.

c. The Defence of One’s Honour and Good Name

- 946 For the human individual, one’s honour and good name are a treasure. Every person is entitled to honour, respect, and the social manifestation of such respect. In the Christian understanding, honour is also the social expression of the dignity of a person created in God’s image. One of the tasks of a society is to care for the preservation of its citizens’ honour and good name.
- 947 A person damages the honour and good name of another both through personal actions as well as through the structures of sin acting in society. Defamation of the good name of another, calumny, gossip, and slander are personal sins against the honour of another. Personal sins also include participation in the sins of another: counselling someone to sin, assisting in sin, defending sin, praising sin, and being silent in the face of sin. By partaking in the *sins of others*, we also become participants in the social structures of sin: by commanding someone to commit a sin, by provoking someone to sin, by consenting to sin, and by failing to punish it.

⁵⁶³ From the prayer book *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, The Ten Commandments, 9–11.

d. Morality in the Mass Media

- 948 The mass media is a positive characteristic of the contemporary age. Those engaged in social communication are called to build up civil society, to promote unity within society.⁵⁶⁴ In its development, the mass media has become a powerful social force. This places great responsibility on those working in this field as regards the information being disseminated. Information content can unify people, facilitate mutual understanding in society, and heighten social consciousness, or, on the contrary, can deceive and manipulate popular opinion. One should avoid engaging in those methods of providing information that distort the truth, increase the passivity and depressiveness of its recipients, and reduce their capacity to make critical judgments.⁵⁶⁵
- 949 Advertising and various entertainment programs are sometimes directed toward arousing artificial human needs; they engender a consumer mentality and can become a powerful means of spreading ideas contrary to the Christian worldview.⁵⁶⁶ The unscrupulous commercialization of the mass media, the drive for profit, and the creation of various technologies designed to influence and manipulate the public—all of these distort authentic values and human needs, and promote artificial norms and examples of behaviour.
- 950 The positive influence of the mass media on popular opinion and social consciousness is possible only when the activities of those who engage in the mass media are firmly based on moral principles. This means that priority should be given to the dissemination of information and diverse media productions that foster the development of solidarity and peace, and which also form the conscience and a sense of dignity in people.⁵⁶⁷

e. Christian Upbringing, Education, and Schooling

- 951 The Christian family is not only the most important environment for receiving the gift of new life, it is also the primary sphere of its development. As a family raises and forms children, it develops and educates

⁵⁶⁴ See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, Pastoral Instruction *Communio et progressio* [Unity and Advancement], 1.

⁵⁶⁵ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Inter mirifica* [Among the Wonders], 11.

⁵⁶⁶ See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, Pastoral Instruction *Communio et progressio* [Unity and Advancement], 59–62.

⁵⁶⁷ See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, Pastoral Instruction *Communio et progressio* [Unity and Advancement], 13–15.

them in a full array of dimensions.⁵⁶⁸ Parents are the primary, although not the only, educators of their children, and no one can deprive them of this responsibility. Christian parents have both a right and a duty to raise their children in a Christian manner. Therefore, they ought to seek the best means of fulfilling this responsibility effectively. Parents are responsible for passing on the treasure of faith to their children, and are called to bring their children to “the stature of the fullness of Christ” (see *Eph* 4:13). The person involved in raising children possess a high honour: “For if those who make statues and paint portraits of kings enjoy so great an honour, shall not we who adorn the image of the King of kings (for a human being is the image of God) receive ten thousand blessings, if we effect a true likeness?”⁵⁶⁹

952 The state and society, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, ought to help parents fulfil their parental responsibilities, but they cannot assume the role of the family in the raising of children.⁵⁷⁰ Society may assume the responsibility of raising the young only when parents cannot fulfil their parental obligations. The state ought to create the necessary conditions for education and schooling in accordance with the wishes and the will of parents. The Christian family has a right to send its children to schools that can guarantee their education in a Christian spirit.

953 The educational mission of the Church as Mother and Teacher is to proclaim the path to salvation and to promote growth in Christ. The Church forms and educates her children through the liturgical life; she leads them into the depths of the Christian faith through catechesis, and nurtures them with the Word of God as well as Body and Blood of Christ. At the same time, the Church establishes Catholic schools, from preschool to university, in order that each new generation may grow in Christian and civic consciousness, and thus become capable of transfiguring the culture in which they live.⁵⁷¹

*Remember, Lord,... our government and all the military;
grant them deep and undisturbed peace;
speak good things to their heart for your Church
and for all your people;
so that by their tranquillity we may pass our life in quiet and calm...*

⁵⁶⁸ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 238-239.

⁵⁶⁹ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Ephesians*, Homily 21, 4: PG 62, 156.

⁵⁷⁰ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 240.

⁵⁷¹ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* [The Importance of Education], 2-8.

*Remember, O Lord, all officials and authorities.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

D. The Christian Understanding of the State

- 954 The state is a form of organizing the life of a nation. Every people strives to preserve its identity through the creation of a state. As a political community, the state exists for the common good when, through its pertinent activities, it deepens, actualizes, and defends the moral values of a people. Such a state can successfully promote the development of every individual, if it does not neglect the fundamental social values of freedom, justice, and equality.
- 955 The state performs its functions through the mechanism of political rule. Governance is needed to coordinate the efforts of citizens in achieving the common good. One of the fundamental responsibilities of the state is to limit various manifestations of evil through due process of the law. In this respect, political governance is the moral force of society. State power, which resides supremely in the people, ought to promote the development of civil society and democratic institutions, as well as guarantee the freedom and rights of its citizens.

1. The Functions of State Rule

- 956 The aim of state rule lies in creating conditions for the harmonious development of individuals, social groups, and society as a whole. From this aim flows the sphere of activity of state rule in the areas of legislation, administration, and judicial procedure.
- 957 The Venerable Metropolitan Andrey taught that “The aim of governing authority is to service the social good, to preserve and protect the natural and truly authentic freedom of citizens, families, and community organizations.”⁵⁷² Representatives of state rule are bound by the moral mandates that society places before the government. Christians who hold political power are accountable not only to society and the law, but to God as well.
- 958 Among the primary functions of state authority are: defence against external aggression; maintenance of foreign policy; defence of constitutional order, defined by economic, civil, and criminal law; just state administration and a fair judiciary; and finally, concern for general

⁵⁷² METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Як будувати рідну хату?* [How Shall We Build Our Home?] (1942), 7.

welfare. A government is called to care for the common good, whose distinguishable characteristics are religious liberty, culture, education, and scholarship.

2. The Limits of State Authority and the Death Penalty

- 959 In accordance with Church teaching, the limits of state authority are delineated by its earthly and temporal character. State authority acts within the limits of its functions. The state cannot fulfil its functions if it violates the dignity of the individual and the moral principles of society. The limits of state authority are defined by a constitution.
- 960 The Church directs her children to submit to state authority, and prays for it regardless of the religious affiliation of its representatives, for “there is no authority except from God... for [the governing authority] is God’s servant for your good” (*Rom* 13:1, 4). However, the Church does not consider the authority of government or its representatives to be absolute and does not accept the idea of its complete autonomy from God. Nor does the Church accept the government’s autonomy from the earthly order of things established by God. “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution” (1 *Pt* 2:13). In other words, the criterion of the lawfulness of state power is its conformity to the Lord’s law. When state authority loses its legitimacy through its lack of conformity to God’s law, the people have a right to resist such a government and to oppose it.⁵⁷³ The Christian is bound to follow divine law even in difficult circumstances: “We must obey God rather than any human authority” (*Acts* 5:29).
- 961 According to a Christian understanding, punishment for a crime is not society’s revenge against a criminal. Rather, punishment is intended to create the foundation for a criminal’s conversion, reconciliation with God, and return to society. Therefore, punishment ought to be open to the possibility of a criminal’s future reintegration into the life of society.
- 962 In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ challenges the logic of revenge with a new logic of forgiveness, and he teaches us to understand justice from the eschatological perspective of the kingdom of God. This new logic proposed by our Lord creates a *new Christian ethic*. According to this ethic, the protection of society takes place not by means of capital punishment but through other forms of punishment. Being conscious of the mystery that is the person, and defend-

⁵⁷³ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 400–401.

ing the value and dignity of life, the Church supports the non-use of capital punishment.⁵⁷⁴

- 963 In his encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, Saint Pope John Paul II describes the growth in society's consciousness of a yearning to resolve conflicts using non-violent, peaceful means as one of the *signs of hope*. "In the same perspective there is evidence of a growing public opposition to the death penalty, even when such a penalty is seen as a kind of 'legitimate defence' on the part of society. Modern society in fact has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform."⁵⁷⁵

3. Moral Responsibility for the State

- 964 In accordance with Christian social teaching, every member of society has moral obligations towards the state. These obligations entail the performance of a citizen's civic duties. They also require the citizenry to reject the transformation of the state into an instrument in the hands of social groups of various kinds.
- 965 In a democratic system, all citizens are responsible for the welfare of all, both at the level of the local community, and of the region and country as a whole. Civic duties include: participating in elections, paying taxes, defending one's country against aggressors, abiding by the law, solidarity with others, and mutual respect among members of society. Christians who run for elected office or serve in government in other ways must not compromise their faith. Metropolitan Andrey states: "The more that citizens participate in government, the more it is necessary that these citizens be righteous, that is, that they possess a moral formation permeated with gospel principles."⁵⁷⁶
- 966 A particular manifestation of self-interested abuse of state authority is corruption and bribery. These ruin the state and deform social relations. A state's level of corruption is sometimes an indication of the moral state of society as a whole, and of each individual member thereof. Both those who demand and accept bribes and those who offer and pay them perform a corrupt act.

⁵⁷⁴ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2267.

⁵⁷⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* [The Gospel of Life], 27.

⁵⁷⁶ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Як будувати рідну хату?* [How Shall We Build Our Home?] (1942), 13.

967 Corruption is a dangerous phenomenon for society, and—from the Christian point of view—a sin.⁵⁷⁷ A government loses its purpose: it ceases to represent and defend its citizens, and instead becomes a menace to them. A Christian may not participate in corrupt acts, and should not remain silent when others commit them.

*Remember, Lord, our nation under God.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

4. Love for Country and People

968 The road to our heavenly homeland passes through our earthly homeland.

Christians benefit their country more than others. For they form and channel the devotion of their fellow citizen to the God of all creation. They also help those who live in their small cities on earth to ascend to the heights of the divine and heavenly city. Thus is fulfilled the word of the Lord: “You have been faithful in the smallest city, come into a great one” (see *Mt* 25:21).⁵⁷⁸

For us, a country is a person’s native land, which connects that person to a people and culture. Christian moral teaching refers to love for one’s country as the virtue of patriotism. Love for one’s country derives from the fourth commandment: “Honour your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (*Ex* 20:12).

969 In the words of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky:

A fatherland can be a powerful organization, guaranteeing happiness for all its citizens, only when it is not a whole that has been artificially constructed of different and diverse parts. Rather it should be similar to a monolithic organism, that is, a body vivified by a single spirit which develops from an inner vital force and makes up for its inherent deficiencies. And by its nature, this organism is a healthy, strong body that is conscious of its purpose and not only material but moral as well.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ See ПАТРИАРХ ЛУБОМЬР, Звернення до вірних на Великий піст Єпископів Києво-Галицького верховного Архієпископства УГКЦ *про явище хабарництва у нашій країні та як його поборювати* [Letter to the Faithful of the Bishops of the Kyiv-Galician Major Archbishopric for Great Lent *On the Phenomenon of Bribery in Our Nation and How to Fight It*] (March 5, 2008).

⁵⁷⁸ ORIGEN, *Against Celsus*, VIII, 74: PG 11, 1629.

⁵⁷⁹ МЕТРОПОЛИТАН АНДРЕЙ SHEPTYTSKY, *Як будувати рідну хату?* [How Shall We Build Our Home?] (1942), 3–4.

970 Patriotism, as the virtue of love for country, is incompatible with a hatred or belittlement of other nations or races. These are manifestations of chauvinism and racism. True patriotism is active: it promotes the preservation and development of national culture and self-awareness. A patriot will never replace God with the nation, and will not reduce faith to one of the aspects of national culture.

971 In view of this, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches:

A Christian should love all people, but this does not impede one from loving his or her family and country first. And just as love of neighbour does not run counter to love of family, so too, it is not contrary to a love of country. The Christian can and should be a patriot, but his patriotism cannot be hatred, nor can it demand obligations contrary to faith. That which appears to be patriotism, but would entail hatred or would contradict the faith, is not true patriotism.⁵⁸⁰

972 Love for one's people is also a manifestation of patriotism. A people is a spiritual community of persons united by language, tradition, history, and cultural heritage. A people cultivates national values that are the foundation of its identity. In a time of nation-building, Metropolitan Andrey wrote:

The task of the Ukrainian people will be to create such social Christian conditions that would ensure the true and continued happiness of citizens, so that they may find enough inner strength to overcome the centrifugal forces of internal disintegration, and successfully defend its borders from external enemies.⁵⁸¹

973 A nation is a source and environment for the transmission of both national and Christian values to the individual. One of the greatest treasures of a nation is its native language, a point which Metropolitan Andrey emphasizes: "What makes a group of people one nation? First of all, language. All who speak Ukrainian or regard Ukrainian as their native language will constitute the Ukrainian people."⁵⁸²

974 A people's culture develops in the religious, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and social fields. Every Christian, whose life consists of love for God and neighbour, is called to love his or her nation deeply, and to contribute to the preservation and development of its cultural and spir-

⁵⁸⁰ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Пастирське послання до вірних Християнська робота* [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful *On Christian Labour*].

⁵⁸¹ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Як будувати рідну хату?* [How Shall We Build Our Home?] (1942), 3.

⁵⁸² METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Як будувати рідну хату?* [How Shall We Build Our Home?] (1942), 22.

itual heritage. The task of every Christian is to build up and develop an authentic Christian culture, which forms the conscience and assures a person's spiritual growth and development.

*Fill their storehouses with every good thing.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

E. The Christian Understanding of Economy

1. Work and Profession

975 The Lord creates man and woman in his image and invites them to work on the earth (see *Gn* 2:5-6, 15). Labour becomes a blessing if it is a form of cooperation with the Lord, as well as a participation in his plan for the world and humanity. Our likeness to God is fostered by such work. Through the fall of Adam work became "toil" (see *Gn* 3:19). However, in Christ, work, united with prayer, transfigures the world and sanctifies individuals.

976 Metropolitan Andrey wrote:

Work, according to Christian teaching, brings a person honour because it provides the means to support oneself honestly. Work does not demean a person. A person's labour is a part of his or her life, and not a commodity whose value rises or falls depending on demand. Exploitation of human labour is inhuman and a detestable crime; and withholding a worker's rightful wage is a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance.⁵⁸³

977 The withholding of a worker's wage is a grave sin and an offence against God, inasmuch as a labourer in his or her professional activity acts as God's co-worker and co-steward of earthly goods.

Therefore, justice demands that a salary somewhat exceed a minimal sum necessary for life. A lower salary will surely be unfair, and even in the event of a voluntary agreement to accept lower pay because of the pressures of the employer's financial distress, the employer is obliged to compensate in accordance with the appropriate level.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ МЕТРОПОЛИТАН ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирське послання до духовенства *О kwestії соціальній* [Pastoral Letter to the Clergy *On the Social Question*] (May 21, 1904).

⁵⁸⁴ МЕТРОПОЛИТАН ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирське послання до духовенства *О kwestії соціальній* [Pastoral Letter to the Clergy *On the Social Question*] (May 21, 1904).

978 Through one's profession, a person realizes their personal life calling in accordance with their talents, abilities, and professional training. Every profession as a form of service to God and country is honourable. Therefore, it is incumbent upon society to ensure the right of every citizen to work and receive fair compensation.

979 In his pastoral letter *Christian Labour*, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky makes an appeal:

Be hard-working, frugal, sober; do not squander your labour. But most of all, hold on to your plot of land; do not let it out of your hands. Avoid laziness, whatever your social standing may be; laziness is a disease, a wasting of your goods. For the time for work is also a gift from God—a precious gift. Using your time you can turn work into wealth, while wasting it in idleness, you can bring about your own ruin.⁵⁸⁵

2. Globalization

980 The contemporary phenomenon of globalization is primarily characterized by the creation of a global culture, which leads to the formation of a global civil society. It can be positive if it succeeds in combining the diversity of existing cultures in such a way that one culture enriches other cultures while preserving its own identity. At the same time, the creation of a global culture carries the risk of reducing all cultures to one *mass culture* geared toward a consumer society.

981 Another element of globalization is the creation of a global economy through which it may be possible to solve such global human problems as poverty, hunger, social injustice, and illiteracy, as well as environmental and natural resource issues. At the same time, in the creation of a global economy there exists the risk that individual states may lose some of their politico-economic sovereignty. As a result of this, the influence of national governments on the economies of their own countries becomes greatly reduced.

982 Globalization could become a genuine *sign of the times* for the Church in the contemporary world, opening up new possibilities for the evangelization of peoples. The Church, with her experience of unity in diversity, can inspire the peoples of the world to live in mutual understanding. The proclamation of the Gospel will bring to the consciousness of the world community the conviction that there is no contradiction between morality and production, or between solidarity and competition, but, on

⁵⁸⁵ METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, Пастирське послання до вірних Християнська робота [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful *On Christian Labour*].

the contrary, that they are interconnected. In the vortex of globalizing processes, the living presence of Christ's Church is capable of transfiguring conflict into cooperation, the clash of civilizations into mutual enrichment, and fear of unbearable enslavement into the freedom of the children of God.

F. The Christian Value of Rest

- 983 Rest corresponds to the will of God himself. The creation account in the book of Genesis testifies to this (see *Gn* 2:2-3; *Ex* 20:8-11). Rest is a “holy” matter, for it allows a person, who is sometimes excessively preoccupied with earthly concerns, to be reminded that everything is God's creation. Having been endowed by God with magnificent dominion over creation, we can sometimes forget that it is God who is the Creator. It is for this reason that for Christians, rest is the celebration of the “Lord's Day.” Sunday is also *a day of man*—a day of rest, joy, fraternal fellowship with neighbour, a day for works of mercy and apostolic works.⁵⁸⁶
- 984 Christians are obliged to arrange their rest on Sundays and holy days in such a way that they may be able to participate in the Divine Liturgy and refrain from the kind of work and activities that are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord's Day.⁵⁸⁷ In order to avoid rest becoming an empty absence of activity that elicits a sense of boredom, rest should be a fount of spiritual enrichment, as well as a source of renewed spiritual and physical strength. Rest should serve the growth of personal freedom and foster fraternal community. Christian rest confirms the priority of the human person in relation to the demands of social and economic life.
- 985 On Sundays and holy days, it is not permitted to perform heavy physical labour or to compel others to do so. One is also not allowed to engage in an activity aimed at earning money. Forms of recreation that occupy time intended for the praise of God and works of mercy are also contrary to the Christian approach to rest.

⁵⁸⁶ See JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* [The Lord's Day], 7, 64-73.

⁵⁸⁷ See JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* [The Lord's Day], 65-67.

*Deliver, O Lord...
from ... sword, foreign invasion and from civil war...
quench the ragings of the nations.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

G. Preserving Peace in the Modern World

- 986 Peace is a gift from God. It is not merely the absence of war. Peace cannot be attained without the defence of people's welfare as well as unfettered communication among them. It also requires respect for the dignity of individuals and nations, as well as a constant fostering of fraternal fellowship. Peace is a matter of justice and the fruit of love.
- 987 Peace is an important value, essential for the development of not only the individual, but whole nations and states. As a value, peace is based on the principle of respect for the human person—his or her life and dignity.
- 988 Preservation of peace is the obligation of every person, but especially of the Christian. Everyone is called to make a contribution toward establishing and strengthening peace through concrete gestures of peace in families, the workplace, in communities, in civic life, and in national and international organizations. First and foremost, peace should rule the human heart. The way to strengthen peace is through tireless prayer for peace, as well as through the cooperation of Christians with those who sincerely desire to preserve peace.
- 989 The attainment of peace is also a struggle in the cause of life. Threats to peace, and therefore causes of war, are: injustice, jealousy, suspicion, and pride. These rage among individuals and nations. War is a crime against life, for it brings with it suffering and death, grief and injustice. War cannot be regarded as a means of resolving conflicts. This can be achieved by other means which correspond to human dignity: international law, honest dialogue, solidarity among states, and diplomacy.
- 990 The use of military force can be justified only in the event of extreme necessity as a means of legitimate self-defence, and the Christian soldier is always a defender of peace. Given the destructive nature of contemporary means and methods of conducting war, practically no conditions exist for a just launching of war. This is because war becomes a terrible threat to humanity owing to new weapons of mass destruction that have the potential to destroy life on earth.

V. TRANSFIGURATION OF THE UNIVERSE

*Grant us temperate and fruitful weather;
bestow on the earth moderate rains to bring forth fruit.
Bless the crown of the year with your goodness...
Deliver, O Lord... from famine, plague, earthquake, flood, fire.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

A. Responsibility for God's Creation

- 991 Humankind carries responsibility for all creation. This responsibility manifests itself on different levels: in daily personal life, in the use of technical means and various technologies, in the use of natural resources and sources of energy. The environment cannot be reduced to an object of manipulation and exploitation, nor can it be made absolute and placed above the dignity of the human person.⁵⁸⁸
- 992 Every person is called to responsible behaviour in all spheres of life. Ecological responsibility refers to all actions that have an impact on the quality of a person's natural environment. The Christian, as a believer in God, the Creator of the universe, is bound to fulfil responsibly his or her role as steward of the created world, a task delegated by God.

B. The Christian and the Natural Environment

- 993 Belief in God the Creator also entails an understanding of the world as God's creation. The word "creation" means that, like humankind, all other living beings as well as inanimate matter have their source, foundation, substance, and perfection in God.
- 994 Our vocation to have dominion in the world does not entail our reckless subjugation of the environment nor its exploitation. Humanity's vocation is to be the crown of creation and to represent creation before the Creator. Humankind can have dominion over the earth responsibly only when it is obedient to God, and maintains the order and aims established by him. When we, through the work of our hands and our talents, uncover the secrets of nature and the proper order to things in this world, we come to recognize the greatness and presence of God the Creator.
- 995 When we harm the environment through our actions, we ruin God's creation, of which we ourselves are an integral part. We sin not only

⁵⁸⁸ See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 463.

as regards creation, but also in relation to our own selves and God. It is in this sense that we speak of *ecological sin*,⁵⁸⁹ which consists of our irresponsible behaviour towards God's creation. This sin is a grave crime against contemporary civilization and the life of future generations.

C. A Christian Ethic of the Environment

- 996 Our love for the invisible and omnipresent God is manifested and confirmed by our attitude toward God's visible creatures. We cannot fully realize our love for God if we ignore the value of the world as God's creation.
- 997 As those who love God the Creator, we also respect his creation, treating the environment responsibly. Creation, on the one hand, serves humanity, but on the other, has a value in and of itself. Respect for creation manifests itself in a protective attitude toward nature, in the preservation of natural resources and in other forms of interaction between creation and ourselves. By respecting God's creation, we give glory to God.
- 998 An important precondition for human development is the conservation of natural resources and the diversity of plant and animal life. The future of our civilization is impossible without an awareness of the limits of nature's ability to renew its resources and to neutralize the harmful substances and by-products of manufacturing that pollute it. Vital human activity that adheres to all of the moral demands stemming from the interconnectedness of all creatures is the sole condition for the sustainable development of human civilization.

⁵⁸⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* [The Church in America], 25.

D. The New Heaven and the New Earth: The Human Person as Priest of the Universe

*Receive us all into your kingdom,
declaring us to be children of the light and children of the day.
Grant us your peace and your love, O Lord, our God;
for you have given us everything.
And grant that with one voice and one heart
we may glorify and sing the praises of your most honoured and magnificent name,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

- 999 The Risen Christ, our Pascha, is the New Man, for by his Resurrection, death is overcome. In his glorified body, his Divine Person is the bearer of the new creation—of the new *heaven and earth* that God created *in the beginning*, but which humanity—through sin—subjected to transitory fading and vanity. The renewal of creation—“Behold, I make all things new” (*Rev* 21:5)—begins with the Resurrection of Christ and passes through the spiritual rebirth and renewal of each of us: “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation” (*2 Cor* 5:17).
- 1000 The world can be renewed by every person that has “put on” Christ—the new Adam—who therefore experiences the “new creation” spiritually. The apostle Paul teaches: “The creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (*Rom* 8:20-21).
- 1001 Hope for the successful completion of the world’s transfiguration comes from the prophetic words of Christ: “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (*Jn* 16:33). Christ speaks of things that are to come as being already completed, seeing them as such in his Divine Providence. It has been entrusted to us to bring this victory of Christ to completion: “Do this in remembrance of me” (*Lk* 22:19).

DAILY PRAYERS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (3)
Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory be to You, our God, glory be to You.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of truth, Who are everywhere present and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life, come and dwell within us; cleanse us of all that defiles us; and, O Good One, save our souls.

Trisagion

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. (3)

Doxology

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer to the Most Holy Trinity

Trinity most holy, have mercy on us. Cleanse us of our sins, O Lord; pardon our transgressions, O Master; look upon our weakness and heal them, O Holy One; for the sake of Your name.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Worship of Jesus Christ

Come, let us bow in worship before the King, our God.

Come, let us bow in worship before Christ the King, our God.

Come, let us bow in worship and fall down before the very Lord, Jesus Christ, our King and God.

Psalm 50 [51]

Have mercy on me, O God, in the greatness of your compassion;
according to the multitude of your mercies blot out my offence.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my iniquity,
and my sin is always before me.

Against you alone have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.

That you may be justified when you speak
and win when you judge.

Behold, in wickedness I was conceived,
and in sin my mother bore me.

For see, you have loved truth;
you have shown me the hidden and secret things of your wisdom.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.
Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow;

Make me hear joy and gladness;
the bones that were crushed shall rejoice.

Turn your face from my sins,
and blot out all my lawlessness.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not from your presence,
nor deprive me of your Holy Spirit.

Give me again the joy of your salvation,
and sustain me with your sovereign Spirit.

I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood-guilt, O God, the God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall ring out your justice.

Lord, you will open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

For if you wanted sacrifice, I would have given it,
you will not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit,
a humbled and contrite heart God will not spurn.

Deal favourably, O Lord, with Sion in your good pleasure
and let the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt.

Then you will be well pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness,
oblations and whole burnt offerings;
then they will lay calves upon your altar.

Symbol of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.

Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures;

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Penitential Prayer

O God, remit, remove and forgive our sins, committed wilfully or through neglect, by word or deed, knowingly or in ignorance, in mind or thought, during the day or during the night; forgive all our sins, for you are good, and you love humankind.

Prayers to the Most Holy Mother of God

Rejoice, Mother of God, Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb; for you have borne Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of our souls.

It is truly right to bless you, O God-bearing One, as the ever-blessed and immaculate Mother of our God. More honourable than the cherubim and by far more glorious than the seraphim; ever a virgin, you gave birth to God the Word, O true Mother of God, we magnify you.

We flee to the shelter of your mercy, O Virgin Mother of God. Do not reject our prayers of anguish, but free us from tribulations, O only pure and blessed one.

Most glorious, ever-virgin Mother of God, receive our prayers and bring them to your Son and our God, that because of you, he may save our souls.

Prayer to the Angels

All you heavenly powers, holy angels and archangels, pray to God for us sinners.

Prayer to All the Saints

Holy, glorious and all-praiseworthy apostles, prophets, martyrs, and all you saints: pray to God for us sinners.

Glorification of the Most Holy Trinity

The Father is our hope, the Son our refuge, the Holy Spirit our protection: O Holy Trinity, our God, glory to you.

Prayer of the Publican

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. I have sinned without number, forgive me, O Lord.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (3)

** During the Great Fast we recite this penitential prayer with prostrations:*

Prayer of Saint Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life! Drive from me the spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust for power, and idle chatter. (*prostration*)

Instead, grant to me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. (*prostration*)

Yes, O Lord and King! Let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed for ever and ever. Amen. (*prostration*)

Followed by 12 small prostrations, with the sign of the Cross:

God, be merciful to me a sinner! (*prostration*)

God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me! (*prostration*)

I have sinned without number, forgive me, O Lord! (*prostration*)

O Lord and Master of my life! Drive from me the spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, grant to me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King! Let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for You are blessed for ever and ever. Amen. (*prostration*)

** From Pascha to the Ascension we recite this prayer instead of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:*

Resurrection Troparion

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs giving life. (3)

And to us he has granted life eternal: we bow down before his Resurrection on the third day.

CATECHETICAL TRUTHS

COMMANDMENTS

The Two Great Commandments (see Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:30)

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment.
2. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.

The Ten Commandments (see Ex 20:2-17)

I am the Lord your God.

1. You shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day (the Lord's Day), to keep it holy.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that is your neighbour's.

The Six Precepts of the Church

1. To worship God with the Church every Sunday, and on all holy days of obligation, participating in the Divine Liturgy and abstaining from hard work.
2. To fast and practice abstinence on the days appointed by the Church.
3. At least once a year, to confess one's sins in the Holy Mystery of Repentance (Confession), and to receive Holy Communion during the Paschal season.
4. Not to hold weddings or dances during prohibited times.
5. To shun immoral publications and internet sites; and to not distribute them, including electronic media.
6. To help the Church in her material needs according to one's ability.

Christian Righteousness

Shun evil and do what is good.

VIRTUES

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Seven Holy Mysteries

1. Baptism
2. Chrismation
3. The Most Holy Eucharist
4. Repentance (Confession)
5. Anointing of the Sick
6. Marriage
7. Holy Orders

Theological Virtues

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Love

Moral Virtues

1. Prudence
2. Justice
3. Fortitude
4. Temperance

Primary Good Deeds

1. Prayer
2. Fasting
3. Almsgiving

Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Admonish the sinner
2. Instruct the ignorant
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. Comfort the afflicted
5. Bear wrongs patiently
6. Forgive offenses from the heart
7. Pray for the living and the dead

Corporal Works of Mercy

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked

4. Shelter the traveller
5. Minister to the sick
6. Visit the imprisoned
7. Bury the dead

Gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa 11:2)

1. Wisdom
2. Understanding
3. Counsel
4. Fortitude
5. Knowledge
6. Piety
7. Fear of the Lord

Fruits of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22-23)

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Generosity
7. Faithfulness
8. Gentleness
9. Self-Control

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church adds
three more Fruits of the Holy Spirit:*

10. Goodness
11. Modesty
12. Chastity

Evangelical Counsels

1. Voluntary poverty
2. Lifelong chastity
3. Perfect obedience

Evangelical Beatitudes (see Mt 5:3-12)

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

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

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

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

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

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

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you

and utter every kind of evil word against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

FASTS AND EXEMPTIONS

Major Fasts

1. The Great Fast (Lent) and Holy Week – from Monday following Cheesefare (Forgiveness) Sunday to the Feast of Holy Pascha.
2. The Fast of the Holy Apostles (*Petrivka*) – from Monday after All Saints Sunday to the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul (June 29/July 12).
3. Dormition Fast (*Spasivka*) – from August 1/14 to the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God (August 15/28)
4. Nativity Fast (*Pylypivka*) – From November 15/28 to the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (December 25/January 7).

Obligatory One-Day Fasts

1. Every Friday excluding days of exemption from fasting, and feast days of our Lord and the Mother of God.
2. The eve of the Nativity of our Lord (December 24/January 6) and the eve of Holy Theophany (January 5/18).
3. The Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist (August 29/September 11) and the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14/27).
4. The first day of the Great Fast (Monday after Forgiveness Sunday)
5. Great and Holy Friday

Exemptions from Fasting

** There is a general exemption from fasting on Fridays at the following times:*

1. From the Nativity of our Lord to eve of Holy Theophany
2. From the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee until the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.
3. Bright Week – from Holy Pascha (Easter Sunday) to Thomas Sunday.
4. From Pentecost to the Sunday of All Saints.

SINS

Passions Leading to Sin and Their Opposite Virtues

1. Gluttony – Temperance
2. Lust – Wholeness of Being
3. Avarice (Greed) – Generosity
4. Melancholy (Sadness) – Joy in the Holy Spirit
5. Anger – Long-suffering
6. Acedia (Despondency) – Cheerfulness of Spirit
7. Vainglory – Humble-mindedness
8. Pride – Humility

Participation in Another's Sin

1. By commanding to sin
2. By provoking to sin
3. By counselling to sin
4. By consenting to sin
5. By assisting in sin
6. By failing to discipline for the sin committed
7. By defending the sin committed
8. By praising the sin committed
9. By remaining silent about the sin committed

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

1. Presuming God's mercy
2. Despair of God's mercy
3. Resistance to the known truth of the Christian Faith
4. Envy of another's spiritual good
5. Obstinacy in sin
6. Impenitence unto death

Sins Crying to Heaven for Vengeance

1. Wilful murder
2. Sodomy
3. Oppression of the poor, widowed and orphaned
4. Depriving labourers of their just wages

The Last Things

Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven

CHRISTIAN GREETINGS

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

During the Christmas Season

Christ is born! Glorify him!

During the Easter Season

Christ is risen! Truly, he is risen!

At the anointing with oil

Christ is among us! He is and will be!

THE BELIEVER'S SOCIAL DIRECTIVES

Adopted by the Third Session of the Patriarchal Sobor of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church that took place in Lviv on June 28 – July 5, 2002 and confirmed by the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on July 15, 2002 in Kyiv.

Being baptized in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, having the example of the saints, confessors and martyrs, remaining under the heavenly intercession of the most holy Mother of God, as a believer of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, I adhere to the following principles:

1. I live by faith in Jesus Christ according to the teaching of the Church. I help society through my personal life according to God's grace. I respect the image of God in every human being. I avoid superstitions and fortune-telling.
2. I respect my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and do not defile it with alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, or sexual promiscuity. I oppose these with the wisdom and power of the Gospel and with Christian morality. I seek to influence the mass media that they may reflect Christian culture.
3. I show my allegiance to Jesus Christ. I embody my faith in my daily work and everyday life. I participate in the Divine Liturgy and cleanse my soul through the Mystery of Repentance.
4. I perform my duties conscientiously. I make every effort to overcome discord, malice, and hatred among people. I teach myself to value social unity through participation in community and political life.
5. I thank God for the gift of life. I defend human life from conception to natural death. I help the sick, the vulnerable, and those deprived of rights.
6. I preserve chastity in both married and celibate life. I cultivate marital love and strengthen the family through common prayer and mutual respect and care. I maintain marital fidelity. I teach children and youth through my personal Christian example. I help them resist temptation.
7. I practice selflessness. I do not covet the shared or personal goods of my neighbours be they material, spiritual or intellectual. I will do everything possible to prevent my taking or giving bribes.
8. I seek truth and just laws. I respect the right of others in their quest for goodness and truth. I oppose all forms of violence.
9. I respect the natural riches of the earth as God's gift, and use them prudently.
10. I live in the hope given to me by God. I bear trials courageously and patiently. Through my good deeds, I strive to bring about the kingdom of God.

INDEX OF CITATIONS

HOLY SCRIPTURE

OLD TESTAMENT			
Genesis		12:2-3	505
		11:1-9	156, 262
		12:1-13	473
		12:2-3	165
		12:7	579
		12:8	579
		13:15	165
		17:1-22	473
		17:2	165
		18:1-16	473
		21:1-8	473
		24-25	473
		26:3-4	165
		27	473
		28:13-15	165
		28:17	579
		29-31	473
		35	473
		41:44-52	473
		46:3	165
		46:20	473
		Exodus	
		3:14	20, 75, 593
		3:15	26, 77
		4:22	87
		12:12-13	216
		13:21	76
		14	216, 421
		19:5-6	166
		19:8	166
		20	166
		20:2-17	735
		20:3	837
		20:4	75, 589
		20:7	838
		20:8	445, 839
		20:8-11	983
		20:12	968
		20:16	944
		24:3	366
		24:8	166
		25:8	579
		25:22	76
		40:34-38	257
		Leviticus	
		11:44	288
		19:18	849
		26:12	26
		Deuteronomy	
		5:6-21	735
		5:7	837
		5:11	838
		5:12	445, 839
		6:5	849
		18:15	168
		26:7	26
		30:15, 19b	713
		1 Samuel	
		16:7	749
		2 Samuel	
		7:11-16	26
		7:12-16	167
		22:2-3	77
		1 Kings	
		3:9	750
		5:10-14	421
		18:30-40	257
		19:12	76
		2 Kings	
		13:21	617
		Tobit	
		12:8	702
		12:15	117
		2 Maccabees	
		12:44	519
		12:45	510
		Job	
		4:17	77
		32:22	77
		33:31	692
		Psalms	
		2:7-8	87, 171
		3:5	698
		4:4	548
		8:2	21
		8:5-7	118
		8:6-7	480
		6:3, 8	463
		15[16]:9	749
		15[16]:10	218
		15[16]:11	823

INDEX OF CITATIONS

18[19]:2	21	35:5-6	211	NEW TESTAMENT	
23[24]:1	77	42:1-4	172	Matthew	
24[25]:17	749	43:3-4	77		
26[27]:7	690	45:15	77		1:21 194
30[31]:16	703	51:3	77		2:1-11 194
36[37]:1, 3, 7	770	53:2-6	172		3 197
41[42]:1	816	53:3-7	225		3:5-12 204
41[42]:2	123	53:7	350		3:13-15 199
50[51]	546	57:7	748		3:16 9
50[51]:11	552	61:1	211		4:1-11 673
85[86]:12-13	813	61:1-2	171		4:17 780
89[90]:27	77	63:16	77		4:23 462
90[91]:6	771	Jeremiah			5:7 204
95[96]:6	77				5:13-16 205
96[97]:11	306		881		5:14 422
102[103]	463		749		5:14-16 724
102[103]:22	22		749		5:16 677
103[104]	542		749		5:17 44, 206
103[104]:4	634	31:31-33	169, 378		5:21-22 206
103[104]:24	100	Lamentations			5:21-26 962
106[107]:21	77				5:23-24 457
116[117]	542		749		5:27-47 206
118[119]:92-93	822				5:28 867
118[119]:130-131	823		169		5:43-45 207
118[119]:164	540	34:23	485		5:44-45 848
119[120]:147	549	Daniel			5:48 78, 127, 206
127[128]:1	478		191		6:6 699
129[130]	542		817		6:8 820
140[141]	542		257		6:9 78, 336
140[141]:2	644		238		6:9-13 674
141[142]	542	7:13	238		6:10 821, 825
142[143]:10	552	7:14	173		6:14-15 680
144[145]:1-3	811	Hosea			6:23 208
148-150	547				6:32 675, 687
Proverbs			77		6:33 208, 776
			288		7:7-8 820
	777				7:23 249
	349	Micah			7:24-25 208
	749		194		9:12 757
27:19	747		171		9:20 616
Sirach		Habakkuk			9:24 229
					9:28 213
	900		838		10:1 464
	898	Malachi			11:27 20, 78
	511		77		12:35 750
15:15	135				12:26 944
24	349				12:40 228
Isaiah					12:50 356
	646				13:24-30 210, 278, 752
	162, 186, 312, 608				13:33 210, 704, 916
	77				13:35 30
	719				13:44-47 278
	77				13:44-50 210
					13:58 213

INDEX OF CITATIONS

14:23	673	16:1-2	557	15:17-18	696
15:19	748	16:15	236, 309	17:21	338, 677
16:18	284, 293	16:16	203, 416, 545	18:1	668
16:22	172	16:18	464	18:13	817
17:2	342, 616	16:19	236	18:19	109
18:12	637			18:31-33	226
18:23-35	210	Luke		18:33	228
19:6	857	1:5-25, 39-80	473	22:19	487, 581, 673, 1000
19:12	862	1:26	575	22:20	44
20:1-16	210	1:26-27	163	22:31-42	291
20:28	470, 723, 925	1:28	693	22:32	293
21:33-43	277	1:30	163	22:40	673
21:42-44	277	1:31-32	184	22:42	678
22:1-14	210	1:32-33	26	23:46	673
22:37	748	1:33	161	24:5-6	233
22:40	849	1:35	161, 184	24:13-34	357
24:36	249	1:38	184, 746	24:31	36
25:13	701	2:1	194	24:27	44
25:14-30	210	2:5	462	24:50-52	236
25:21	968	2:11	190, 462		
25:31	249, 281	2:29-32	543	John	
25:31-46	568	2:32	509	1:1	19, 79, 86, 178
25:34	249	3:5	203	1:3	21
25:40	936	3:10	366	1:5	422
25:40-45	248	3:16	94, 261	1:8	18
25:45	937	3:21-22	673	1:9-13	249
26:36	673	4:1-14	673	1:12	833
26:41	672, 701	5:16	671, 673	1:14	177
28:9-20	236	5:20	212	1:18	27, 77, 88, 89
28:19	421	5:24	212	1:19	117
28:19-20	33, 69, 279	6:12	671, 673	1:16	117
28:20	236, 241, 300, 404	6:45	750	1:29	197, 350, 562
		7:22	211	1:31	908
Mark		7:36-50	223	1:43-51	176
1	197	8:21	356	1:45-46	176
1:15	355	8:41-42, 49-56	229	2:19, 21	228
1:11	87	9:18	673	3:3	410
1:14-15	209	9:28-29	673	3:5	410, 706, 827
1:15	203	9:35	88	3:7	827
1:35	671, 673	10:21	670	3:8	94
3:13-14	294	10:25-37	207	3:16	20, 179, 397, 678, 723
3:35	356	10:27	748	3:16-17	485
4:26-29	210	11:1	674	3:18	248
9:29	457, 702	11:2-4	674	3:19	248
10:9	479	11:5-8	668	5:25, 29	246
10:11-12	868	11:28	366	6:50-51	679
11:25-26	680	11:35	144	6:53	445
12:2-11	941	12:2-3	239	6:56	378, 390, 432
12:30-33	748	12:30	675, 820	6:68	209
14:32	673	13:18-19	278	7:38	94
14:38	701	13:19	210	7:46	209
14:61	238	13:20-21	708	8:31-32	733
14:62	238	13:21	210	8:44	142
15:30	554	15:12-32	449	10:11	485

INDEX OF CITATIONS

10:17-18	218	4:8-12	263	4:7-8	843
10:30	27, 78	4:12	693	4:8	136
11:1-57	229	4:19	263	4:12	18
11:25	221	5:15	616	4:19	20
11:25-26	242	5:29	960	5:20	88
11:41	673	6:1-6	490		
12:47-48	248	6:3	297	Jude	
13:1	218	8:17-19	94	1:9	117
13:34207, 378, 432, 475, 678		8:26-39	47	1:20	670
14:2-3	237	8:37	416		
14:6	30, 312, 734, 944	10:1-18	277	Romans	
14:9	27, 78, 178	10:9-20	263	1:7	716
14:11	178	14:23	316, 490	1:16-17	831
14:16	95	15:1-5	277	1:17	838
14:16-17	258	15:28	264	1:20	22
14:24	209	17:22-24	25	4:11	275
14:26	96, 259	17:27	26	4:18	473
15:13	845	17:28	178	4:20-21	847
15:19	36, 912	19:12	616	5:5	844
15:26	91, 258, 259	20:17, 28	490	5:10-11	848
15:26-27	96	21:1-4	255	5:12	138, 147
16:7	237			5:20	415, 682
16:13	32, 95, 96, 259	James		6	241, 421
16:14	96	1:2	681	6:2	412
16:33	1000	2:10-11	758	6:4	412
17	673	2:14-16	833	6:9	233, 537
17:8, 14	32	3:14	749	6:11-13	755
17:11	819	4:6	777	7:19-21	150
17:14	36	5:14-15	464	8	845
17:14-16	309	5:16	469	8:1	671
17:20-21	819			8:2	671
17:22	377	1 Peter		8:15	95, 409
19:34	350	1:13	773	8:17	825
20:17	88	1:16	127	8:19, 21-22	672
20:21	561	1:18-19	442	8:20-21	1000
20:22-23	450, 487	1:19	217	8:21	756, 849
20:23	258	2:5	444	8:24	676
20:27	545	2:9	425	8:24-25	841
21:15-18	291, 293	2:13	960	8:26	335, 622, 672
21:16-17	489	4:14	95	8:27	672
		5:2-4	489	8:28	465
Acts		5:5	777	10:1	748
1:1	34			10:14	2
1:11	238	2 Peter		10:17	2, 47, 53
2:2	94, 257	1:4	18, 124, 127, 181, 343,	12:1	380, 444, 534, 536
2:3	94	533		12:3-6	282
2:8-11	262	2:4	142	12:5	284, 433
2:14-41	53	3:9	678	12:21	713
2:22-24, 32	2			13:1, 4	960
2:32	33	1 John		13:10	849
2:37	366	1:1	589	15:19	95
2:39	36	2:20	94	16:5	654
2:42	36, 581	2:27	94, 430	16:25-26	44
3-4	348	3:2	252		

INDEX OF CITATIONS

1 Corinthians

1:2	716
1:24	608
2:9	244, 340, 609
2:11	71, 83
2:12-13	71
3:15	250
3:16	717
4:5	748
4:15	827
4:15-16	56
5:6-8	215
6:9-11	716
6:19	129
7:9	483
7:39	483
7:40	483
8:19, 22	341
9:20-22	60
10:13	681
10:17	433, 439
11	348
11:25	44
11:27	384
11:28	445
12-13	844
12:3	259
12:4	256
12:4-3	266
12:4-7	727
12:12-30	282
13:4-7	848
13:12	83, 253, 543, 808
13:13	849
15:4	228
15:14	219
15:17	2
15:17-18	234
15:20-23	234
15:24, 28	1001
15:26	219
15:28	102, 254, 350, 380
14:42-44, 53	245
15:44	247
15:45-49	125
15:55	230
16:19	654

2 Corinthians

1:22	94
3:14-16	44
3:17	95, 710
3:18	383, 812
4:16	241

5:17	412, 835, 999
6:16	581, 717
7:9	748
7:10	766
8:16	748
10:4-5	779
13:13	101

Galatians

2:20	241, 390
2:20-21	835
3:11	838
3:14	505
3:24	735
3:26-27	416
3:27	422
4:4	159, 178, 179, 271, 561
4:6	671, 838
4:6-7	676
5:13	928
5:22	722
5:22-23	721
6:15	412

Ephesians

1:4	677
1:9	18
1:9-10	403
1:10	345, 502
1:13	94
1:13-14	430
1:22-23	282
1:23	6
2:14	306, 359, 487
2:15	929
2:18	18
2:20	306
4:5	284
4:6	284
4:11-13	282
4:12	345
4:13	126, 240, 241, 426, 452, 951
4:16	286
4:22-24	835
4:30	94
5:22-25	475
5:25	475, 857
5:25-27	288
5:26-27	274
5:31-32	475, 663
5:32	856
6:12	451, 785
6:17	637

Philippians

1:1	490
1:9	95
1:21	835
2:5	678
2:6-7	179
2:6-11	36
3:9	838
3:20	912
4:4-6	767
4:8-9	831

Colossians

1:12-14	455
1:14	416
1:15	84, 86, 107, 128
1:15-17	104
1:16-17	113
1:24	465
1:26	285
1:27	403
2:3	403
2:9	19, 41, 78
3:1-4	840
3:4	240
3:9-10	412
3:16	684
4:15	654

1 Thessalonians

4:14	234
5:17	660, 668, 700, 805
5:23	130

2 Thessalonians

2:15	34
------	----

1 Timothy

2:4	30, 678
2:5	486
5:22	489
6:16	18

2 Timothy

1:14	33
2:1-4	500
2:2	489
3:16	38
3:16-17	46

Hebrews

1:1	341, 533
1:1-2	19
1:2	341
1:2-4	174

INDEX OF CITATIONS

1:3	86	9:24	486	11:7	275
1:14	117, 634	10:5	101	12:7	117
2:7	480	10:38	838	14:6	265
4:4	587	11:1	71, 836	16:15	701
4:12	748	13:8	34	19:6-8	277
5:7	688			21:1	244, 289, 839, 916
7:16	486	Revelation		21:1-4	709
7:27	486	1:8	103	21:15	999
9:4	580	2:5	452	22:5	252
9:11-14, 23-28	362	7:9	265		

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

NICAEA I (325)		Decree <i>Inter mirifica</i> [Among the Wonders] (December 4, 1963)	948
<i>Creed</i>	1		
<i>Canons</i>	627	Constitution <i>Lumen Gentium</i> [Light of the Nations] (November 21, 1964)	12, 17, 271, 285, 289, 290, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 425, 488, 911
CONSTANTINOPLE I (381)		Decree <i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> [The Restoration of Unity] (November 21, 1964)	preface
<i>Creed</i>	1, 3, 74, 283	Declaration <i>Gravissimum educationis</i> [The Importance of Education] (October 28, 1965)	953
EPHESUS (431)		Constitution <i>Dei Verbum</i> [The Word of God] (November 18, 1965)	12, 18, 23, 29, 30, 32, 37, 41, 44, 50, 51, 52
<i>Cyril's Letter to John of Antioch</i> (April 23, 433)	184	Decree <i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> [On the Apostolate of the Laity] (November 18, 1965)	476
CHALCEDON (451)		Constitution <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> [The Church in the Modern World] (December 7, 1965)	60, 268, 872, 889, 913, 929, 939
<i>Decree</i>	267	Declaration <i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> [On Human Dignity] (December 7, 1965)	934
<i>Session V</i>	183		
NICAEA II (787)			
<i>Definition</i>	591		
FLORENCE (1439-1445)			
Bull <i>Laetentur caeli</i> [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439)	98, 250, 293, 306		
VATICAN I (1869-1870)			
<i>Session IV</i>	293		
VATICAN II (1962-1965)			
Constitution <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> [On the Sacred Liturgy] (December 4, 1963)	577		

HIERARCHICAL DOCUMENTS

ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, METROPOLITAN

Дар П'ятдесятниці [The Gift of Pentecost] (May-June 1937) 255, 260

Як будувати рідну хату? [How Shall We Build Our Home?] 957, 967, 969, 972, 973

До духовенства [Letter to the Clergy] (March 15, 1935) 454

Пастирське послання О супружестві і родині [Pastoral Letter On Marriage and Family] (February 17, 1902) 866, 899

Про молитву Отче наш в Бога Мудрість [On the Lord's Prayer in Wisdom of God] (1933) 676, 679, 681, 682, 683

Про почитання Святого Хреста [On the Veneration of the Holy Cross] (September 9, 1940) 46

Пастирське послання до духовенства О kwestії соціальній [Pastoral Letter to the Clergy On the Social Question] (May 21, 2904). 976, 977

Пастирське послання до вірних Християнська робота [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful On Christian Labour] 971, 979

Пастирський лист до вірних Львівської та Кам'янецької єпархій О Церкві [Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Lviv and Kamyanets Eparchy - On The Church] (January 14, 1901) 281, 601

Пастирське послання до тих, що на Пасху не сповідалися [Pastoral Letter to Those Who Did Not Confess at Pascha] (October 15, 1935) 457

Визнання Вселенської віри [Profession of the Universal Faith] (March-April 1942) 49

Божа мудрість [The Wisdom of God] (1932-1933) 833, 841, 846

Не убий [Thou Shalt Not Kill] (November 21, 1942) 883, 891, 902

BENEDICT XV, POPE

Encyclical Spritus Paraclitus [Spirit Comforter] (September 15, 1920) 46, 51

ILARION OF KYIV, METROPOLITAN

Confession of Faith 53, 80, 82

Sermon on Law and Grace 18, 183, 199, 211, 221, 232, 183

Sermon on the Renewal of the Church of the Tithes 304

JOHN PAUL II, ST. POPE

Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society (August 29, 2000) 909, 910

Address to Participants of the First International Congress of the Society for Organ Sharing (June 20, 1991) 908

Address to the Committee of European Journalists for the Rights of the Child (January 13, 1979). 896

Apostolic Constitution Depositum fidei [The Deposit of Faith] (October 11, 1992) xix

Apostolic Letter Dies Domini [The Lord's Day] (May 31, 1998) 983, 984

Apostolic Letter Orientale Lumen [The Light of the East] (May 2, 1995) preface, 71, 121, 310

Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae [On the Most Holy Rosary] (October 16, 2002) 695

Encyclical Centesimus Annus [One Hundredth Year] (May 1, 1991) 932

Encyclical Evangelium Vitae [The Gospel of Life] (March 25, 1995) 880, 904, 933, 963

Encyclical Slavorum Apostoli [Apostles to the Slavs] (June 2, 1985) 61, 308

Encyclical Redemptor Hominis [The Redemption of Man] (March 4, 1979) 121

Encyclical Ut Unum Sint [That All May Be One] (May 25, 1995) 305, 306

INDEX OF CITATIONS

JOHN XXIII, POPE

Encyclical *Pacem in terris*
[Peace on Earth]
(April 11, 1963) 926

JOSYF SLIPYJ, PATRIARCH

Соборне Різдвяне послання [Christmas
Pastoral Letter] (December 9, 1974) 280

*Лист до парохії святих Володимира і
Ольги в Чикаго* [Letter to Sts. Volodymyr
and Olha Parish in Chicago] (September
27, 1978) 302

Послання про Євхаристію [Pastoral Let-
ter about the Eucharist]
(August 19, 1976) 305

Звіт про католицьку Церкву в Україні
[Report on the Catholic Church in
Ukraine] (July 18, 1982) 303

Завіщання [Testament] (December 22,
1981) 7, 292, 303, 322

LUBOMYR HUSAR, PATRIARCH

Вступне слово до перекладу *Катехизму*
Католицької Церкви українською
мовою [Introduction to the Ukrainian
Translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic*
Church] xix

Звернення до вірних на Великий
піст Єпископів Києво-Галицького
верховного Архиепископства УГКЦ *про*
явище хабарництва у нашій країні та
як його поборювати [Letter to the Faith-
ful of the Bishops of the Kyiv-Galician
Major Archbishopric for Great Lent *On*
the Phenomenon of Bribery in Our Nation
and How to Fight It] (March 5, 2008) 967

PAUL VI, POPE

Humanae Vitae [On Human Life]
(July 25, 1968) 870, 875, 892

PIUS V, ST.

Consueverunt Romani [Call to Prayer]
(September 17, 1569) 695

PIUS IX

Ineffabilis Deus [Ineffable God]
(December 8, 1854) 311

PIUS XII, POPE

Christmas Radio Message on December 24,
1944 932

Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*
[Inspired by the Divine Spirit]
(September 30, 1943) 46

INDEX OF CITATIONS

ECCLESIASTICAL DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church 18, 19, 43,
45, 60, 250, 302, 311, 313, 488,
759, 873, 876, 878, 942, 962, 990

Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches 302

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine
of the Church* 923, 926, 940, 951, 952, 960,
991

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

Declaration on Euthanasia
(May 5, 1980) 905

Donum Vitae [The Gift of Life]
(February 22, 1987) 875

CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

*Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Pre-
scriptions of the Code of Canons
of the Eastern Churches* 394, 408, 431

PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE

*Declaration on the Production and the Scien-
tific and Therapeutic Use of Human Embry-
onic Stem Cells*
(August 25, 2000) 879

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Pastoral Instruction Communio et progressio
[Unity and Advancement]
(May 23, 1971) 948, 949, 950

UGCC CATECHETICAL COMMISSION

The Catechetical Directory of the UGCC
(November 1, 1999) preface

LITURGICAL BOOKS

Arbieration

Ordination of a Deacon 495
Ordination of a Priest 496
Ordination of a Bishop 497
Consecration of Holy Chrism 424

Lenten Triodion

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee 782
Sunday of the Prodigal Son 781
Sunday of Meatfare 246
Week of Cheesefare
Wednesday 394, 568
First Week of Great Lent
Sunday 394
Monday 394, 569
Tuesday 569
Fifth Week of Great Lent
Thursday 150, 156, 157
Saturday 181
Sixth Week of Great Lent
Monday 222

Floral Triodion

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First
Ecumenical Council of Nicaea 4

Lazarus Saturday 571
Great and Holy Monday 222
Great and Holy Tuesday 223
Great and Holy Wednesday 223
Great and Holy Thursday 224
Great and Holy Friday 224, 394
Great and Holy Saturday 557, 571
Pascha (Easter Sunday) 215, 229, 231, 235
Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ 404
Pentecost Sunday 70, 81, 280, 622, 630
Pentecost Friday 622
Monday of the Holy Spirit 89, 270,
573, 630
Sunday of All Saints 316
Sunday of All Saints of Rus-Ukraine 326

Liturgicon

The Divine Liturgy of Our Holy Father
John Chrysostom 3, 73, 101, 117, 231, 234,
310, 370, 385, 435, 444, 534, 535, 573, 780,
783, 810, 813, 814
The Divine Liturgy of Our Holy Father
Basil the Great 8, 86, 117, 343, 382, 565
The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
640, 644

INDEX OF CITATIONS

Menaion

The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (September 8/21)	188, 576
The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14/27)	575
The Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God (October 1/14)	313
The Entrance into the Temple of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (November 21/December 4)	576
Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (Holy Fathers)	191
Nativity of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (December 25/January 7)	195
Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (January 6/January 19)	197, 199, 575
The Three Holy Hierarchs (January 30/February 12)	622
The Placing of the Precious Robe of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God in the Church in Blachernae (July 2/15)	576
The Fore-feast of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ (August 5/18)	575
The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (August 15/28)	189, 312, 576

The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship (Sheptytsky Institute, 2004)

Prayer After Noon Meal	661
Ten Commandments	944

Octoechos

Tone 1	
Sunday	269
Monday	114
Saturday	319
Tone 2	
Sunday	175
Thursday	261
Tone 3	
Sunday	240
Wednesday	561
Thursday	279

Tone 4	
Sunday	232, 279
Tone 6	
Sunday	139, 145, 242
Saturday	318
Tone 7	
Sunday	189, 594
Saturday	317
Tone 8	
Sunday	182

Trebnyk

Rite of Baptism and Chrismation	413, 414, 419, 420, 425, 426, 429
Rite of Blessing of an Icon of Christ	597
Rite of Blessing of an Icon of the Mother of God	597
Rite of Blessing of an Icon of Saints	597
Rite of Blessing of Priestly Vestments	633
Rite of Burial	250, 757
Rite of Confession	456
Rite of Crowning	471, 472, 473, 474, 477, 479, 663, 858, 873
Rite of Second Crowning	483
Rite of Holy Anointing	468
Rite of the Great Blessing of Water on Theophany	101, 108, 112, 115, 191, 200

Horologion

Vespers	
Prayers of Light	820
Matins	546
Daily - Saturday	240, 562
Hours	
First	552
Third	552
Sixth	553
Ninth	554

Archieraticon

Order of Consecration of Holy Chrism	424
Ordination of a Deacon	495
Ordination of a Priest	496
Ordination of a Bishop	497

Akathist Hymn

To the Mother of God	589, 621
----------------------	----------

INDEX OF CITATIONS

ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS

A		C	
<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>	630	Clement of Alexandria, St.	
Abba Dorotheus		<i>The Instructor</i>	273
<i>Instructions and Epistles</i>	751	<i>The Stromata</i>	751
Athanasius the Great, St.		Caesarius of Arles	
<i>Against the Arians</i>	51	<i>Sermons</i>	882
<i>First Letter to Serapion</i>	51, 79, 85	Clement of Rome, St.	
<i>On the Incarnation of the Word</i>	178, 181, 851	<i>First Epistle to the Corinthians</i>	490
Ambrose of Milan, St.		Cyprian of Carthage, St.	
<i>Commentary on 1 Corinthians</i>	259	<i>Letters</i>	284
Augustine of Hippo, St.		<i>On the Lord's Prayer</i>	669, 677, 825
<i>Commentary on the Gospel of John</i>	226, 453, 777	Cyril of Alexandria, St.	
<i>Exposition of Psalm 103</i>	41	<i>Dialogues on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity</i>	97
<i>Homilies on Time</i>	6	<i>On the Gospel of John</i>	90
<i>Letter 55: Replies to Questions of Januarius</i>	557	<i>Letter 39, to John of Antioch [Formula of Reunion]</i>	69
<i>The Long Rules</i>	815	<i>Thesaurus on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity</i>	98
<i>Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament</i>	5	<i>Third Letter Against Nestorius</i>	180
<i>Seven Books on Questions on the Heptateuch</i>	44	Cyril of Jerusalem, St.	
		<i>The Catechetical Lectures</i>	413, 417
		<i>The Mystagogical Lectures</i>	344, 428, 439, 682
B		D	
Basil of Seleucia		Diadochos of Photiki	
<i>Third Oration: About Adam</i>	145	<i>On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination</i>	124
Basil the Great, St.		<i>Didache</i>	446
<i>Against Sabellians, and Arius, and Anomeans</i>	31	Didymus the Blind	
<i>Hexaemeron</i>	21, 22	<i>Commentary on 2 Peter</i>	265
<i>Homily 13: Protreptic on Holy Baptism</i>	410		
<i>Homily Explaining that God is not the Author of Evil</i>	141		
<i>Homily on Asceticism</i>	540		
<i>Homily on Psalm 1</i>	684		
<i>Homily on Psalm 114</i>	253		
<i>Letters</i>	882		
<i>On Fasting</i>	702		
<i>On the Holy Spirit</i>	31, 101, 114, 256, 414, 417		
<i>The Longer Rules</i>	548, 549, 668, 697		
		E	
		Ephrem the Syrian, St.	
		<i>Hymn on Faith</i>	260
		Evagrius Ponticus	
		<i>The Praktikos</i>	759, 772
		G	
		Gregory the Theologian, St.	
		<i>Oration 7</i>	250
		<i>Oration 20: On Theology, and the Appointment of Bishops</i>	79

INDEX OF CITATIONS

<i>Oration 29: The Third Theological Oration</i>	81
<i>Oration 38: On the Theophany of Christ</i>	179
<i>Oration 40: The Oration on Holy Baptism</i>	72
<i>Oration 41: On Holy Pentecost</i>	268
<i>Oration 42</i>	79
<i>Oration 45: On Holy Pascha</i>	135

Gregory of Nyssa, St.	
<i>Against Apollinarius</i>	245
<i>Against Eunomius</i>	74
<i>Commentary on the Song of Songs</i>	309
<i>Great Catechism</i>	109, 137, 152, 180, 247
<i>Hexaemeron</i>	21
<i>Homily for the Funeral</i> <i>of the Empress Flacilla</i>	688
<i>On Chastisement</i>	558
<i>On Perfection</i>	121
<i>On the Beatitudes</i>	832
<i>On the Life of Saint Gregory</i> <i>the Wonderworker</i>	98
<i>On the Making of Man</i>	119, 120, 122, 130, 137
<i>On the Soul and Resurrection</i>	123, 254
<i>Oration 1: On Holy Pascha</i>	218
<i>Oration on the Divinity of the Son</i> <i>and the Holy Spirit</i>	71

H

Hermas	
<i>The Shepherd</i>	769, 787
Hesychius the Priest	
<i>Larger Commentary on the Psalms</i>	811
Hippolytus of Rome, St.	
<i>Apostolic Tradition</i>	264
<i>The Refutation of All Heresies</i>	851

I

Ignatius of Anitoch, St.	
<i>Epistle to the Ephesians</i>	247, 469
<i>Epistle to the Magnesians</i>	491
<i>Epistle to the Romans</i>	291
<i>Epistle to the Smyrnaeans</i>	290
<i>Epistle to the Trallians</i>	491
Irenaeus of Lyon, St.	
<i>Against Heresies</i>	31, 69, 85, 103, 126, 127, 128, 138, 164, 188, 247, 265, 287, 294, 295, 437, 438, 851, 914
<i>Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching</i>	121

Isaac the Syrian, St.	
<i>The Ascetical Homilies</i>	773, 776, 798
<i>Homily on the Nativity</i>	190

J

Jerome, St. 46
Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah
Commentary on the Epistle of the Galatians 51

John Cassian, St.	
<i>Conferences</i>	668, 785
<i>Institutes</i>	759
<i>On the Eight Vices</i>	759
<i>On the Incarnation of the Lord</i>	717, 718

John Chrysostom, St.	
<i>Baptismal Instructions</i>	350
<i>Encomium to Julian</i>	616
<i>Encomium to the Holy Apostle Paul</i>	616
<i>Discourses on Lazarus</i>	751
<i>Homilies on 1 Corinthians</i>	250, 290, 405, 439, 535
<i>Homilies on 2 Corinthians</i>	505
<i>Homilies on 1 Timothy</i>	296, 537
<i>Homilies on 2 Timothy</i>	824
<i>Homilies on Colossians</i>	856
<i>Homilies on Ephesians</i>	147, 445, 476, 856, 897, 951
<i>Homilies on Genesis</i>	48, 760, 775, 779, 799
<i>Homilies on Hebrews</i>	219, 299
<i>Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew</i>	136, 389, 435, 606, 897
<i>Homilies on the Gospel of John</i>	434, 436
<i>Homilies on Repentance</i>	821
<i>Homilies on Romans</i>	499, 722, 765, 768, 770
<i>Homily on Statues</i>	22, 570, 764, 786
<i>In Praise of Maximus</i>	274
<i>On the Priesthood</i>	489
<i>Selections from Various Homilies: Homily 30</i>	
- <i>In Praise of St. Paul</i>	617

John Climacus. St.
The Ladder of Divine Ascent 690, 692,
764, 783, 799

John of Damascus, St.
Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith 91,
 92, 122, 124, 132, 187, 229, 432,
 433, 436, 438, 440, 446, 728, 757
First Homily for the Defense of Icons 591
Homily 1: On the Nativity of the Theotokos 189

INDEX OF CITATIONS

<i>On the Divine Images</i>	112
<i>On the Eight Evil Spirits</i>	758
<i>On Vices and Virtues</i>	790
Justin Martyr	
<i>Apology</i>	367, 368, 374

K

Kirill of Turov, St.	
<i>Sermon for the Fourth Sunday</i>	
<i>after Easter</i>	120
Leo the Great, St.	
<i>Homily 73: For the Feast of the Ascension</i>	159
<i>Homily 74</i>	342, 404
<i>Letter 28: To Flavian,</i>	
<i>Bishop of Constantinople</i>	179
<i>Sermon 4 for Christmas</i>	425

L

Leontius of Byzantium	
<i>Against Nestorius</i>	149

M

Macarius the Great, St.	
<i>Homilies</i>	852
Macarius, Pseudo	
<i>Spiritual Homilies</i>	753, 796
Maximus the Confessor, St.	
<i>Ambigua</i>	106
<i>Centuries on Charity</i>	797, 855
<i>Mystagogy</i>	385, 388, 611, 715
<i>Letters</i>	836, 842
<i>On Theology and the Incarnation</i>	
<i>of the Son of God</i>	158, 231, 243
<i>Questions to Thalassium</i>	251
<i>Theological and Polemical Treatises</i>	304
Nicholas Cabasilas	
<i>Commentary on the Divine Liturgy</i>	387, 397

O

Origen	
<i>Against Celsus</i>	829, 968

<i>Commentary on Ezekiel</i>	218
<i>Commentary on the Gospel of Luke</i>	131
<i>Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew</i>	203
<i>On Prayer</i>	630, 668, 678, 802
<i>On the Principles</i>	251

P

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite	
<i>On the Divine Names</i>	72, 692
<i>The Primary Chronicle (Tale of Bygone Years)</i>	610

R

Roman the Melodist, St.	
<i>Second Kontakion on the Nativity</i>	185

S

Symeon of Thessalonica, St.	
<i>On Holy Ordination</i>	497
<i>On Marriage</i>	478
Symeon the New Theologian, St.	
<i>Ethical Discourses</i>	720
<i>Fourth Catechetical Discourse</i>	689

T

<i>Tale of Bygone Years (The Primary Chronicle)</i>	610
Tertullian	
<i>Against Praxeas</i>	90, 91
<i>Apologia</i>	322
<i>On Prayer</i>	675
<i>On the Crown</i>	627
Theophilus of Antioch	
<i>To Autolycus</i>	131

V

Vincent of Lérins	
<i>Commonitory for the Antiquity and</i>	
<i>Universality of the Catholic Faith</i>	57

SUBJECT INDEX

A

- Aaron, 222, 486, 580
- Abba, 410, 671, 676, 751, 838
- Abel, 156
- abortion, 863, 880, 883, 884, 886
- Abraham, 26, 76, 165, 275, 276, 473, 505, 579, 874
- absolution, 450, 456, 458, 459
- action, 30, 50, 98, 102, 108, 112, 113, 211, 214, 273, 320, 342, 349, 405, 408, 415, 420, 426, 430, 489, 505, 698, 704, 708, 710, 714, 715, 716, 723, 739, 740-743, 750, 773, 806, 834, 836, 856, 858, 885, 890, 908, 909, 913, 915, 929
- Adam, 8, 24, 125, 126, 132-134, 139, 145, 151, 153, 159, 160, 175, 178, 180, 181, 185, 188, 193, 200, 227, 230-234, 274, 309, 350, 411, 505, 518, 553, 571, 756, 789, 975, 1000
- adultery, 735, 743, 758, 761, 867, 868
- Advocate, 95, 96, 237, 258, 767
- aer*, 72, 645
- agape, 290, 348
- Almighty, 3, 8, 13, 16, 74, 103, 132, 311, 604, 612, 846
- altar, 8, 25, 354, 362, 364, 370, 387, 425, 457, 496, 504, 579, 618
- ambo, 389, 588
- anaphora, 375, 378, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 433
- angel/angels, 8, 30, 114-117, 142-144, 159, 163, 174, 183, 184, 190, 193-195, 198, 216, 233, 238, 249, 253, 320, 361, 398, 399, 477, 480, 519, 522, 526, 530, 535, 544, 545, 561, 588, 591, 602, 607, 612, 634, 646, 662, 684, 690, 753, 769
- anger, 569, 758, 768-770, 778
- Annunciation, 184, 311, 548, 574, 576, 602, 746
- anointing, 94, 171, 192, 420, 424, 425, 430, 464, 468
- apostle, 47, 54, 175, 176, 489, 590, 618, 668, 673, 681
- Equal-to-an-apostle Prince Volodymyr 202, 302, 307, 610, 619
- Paul 2, 25, 34, 40, 46, 53, 54, 56, 60, 61, 71, 83, 113, 121, 129, 130, 150, 241, 244, 259, 282, 296, 305, 306, 308, 310, 325, 350, 381, 384, 404, 439, 444, 445, 465, 475, 483, 489, 534, 616, 617, 649, 654, 668, 695, 710, 716, 721, 722, 727, 755, 766, 767, 779, 785, 805, 808, 812, 831, 835, 844, 849, 856, 870, 875, 880, 892, 896, 904, 908, 909, 910, 932, 933, 960, 963, 983, 984, 1000, 1001
- Peter 2, 36, 40, 172, 209, 265, 291, 293, 302, 324, 366, 489, 616, 618, 619, 649, 673
- apostolate, 294, 298, 925
- Apostolic Succession, 489, 490
- Apostolic Tradition, 14, 31, 32, 36, 38, 45, 57, 464
- archangel/archangels, 8, 113, 116, 143, 144, 163, 184, 320, 602, 607
- artificial contraception, 885
- artificial fertilization, 874-876
- Ascension, 8, 33, 53, 215, 236-238, 379, 387, 397, 404, 448, 567, 571, 573, 593, 632
- asceticism 8, 481, 852
- Assumption. See Dormition
- Authorities (angels), 8, 113, 116
- authority, 31, 120, 131, 209, 295, 302, 464, 637, 778, 909
- state, 957-959, 960, 962, 964, 966
- avarice, 758, 764

SUBJECT INDEX

B

banners, 642

baptism, 3, 31, 36, 53, 54, 64-66, 68, 180, 197, 198, 200-203, 241, 271, 282, 284, 350, 369, 401, 405, 407-424, 428, 431, 449, 451, 452, 460, 492, 494, 578, 585, 586, 668, 673, 677, 718, 727, 785, 835, 836, 839, 901

—of Jesus, 180, 197, 198, 355, 427, 531, 574, 673

—of Saint Volodymyr, 307

Beatitudes, 204, 457, 503, 517, 677

beauty, 21, 100, 172, 266, 317, 352, 583, 610, 611, 633, 684, 688, 712, 784

behaviour, 157, 726, 728, 867, 896, 929, 949, 992, 995

betrayal, 224, 867

birth, 68, 146, 162, 185, 187-192, 194, 313, 328, 408-410, 421, 506, 530, 551, 574, 575, 577, 656, 870, 872, 874-876, 880, 885, 886, 893, 895, 897, 898, 908

bishop, 35, 58, 64, 286, 290, 294-297, 300, 319, 324, 325, 362, 365, 393, 395, 424, 490-492, 494-497, 499, 514, 519, 522, 562, 583, 587, 602, 614, 618, 619, 632, 634, 637, 638, 640, 647, 650

blaspheme, 685, 838, 900

blessing/blessings, 31, 49, 155, 165, 223, 227, 236, 239, 249, 250, 255, 267, 289, 328, 352, 354, 375, 391, 401, 413, 458, 478, 480, 482-484, 487, 492, 500, 501, 505, 506, 508, 509, 522, 529, 587, 597, 598, 632, 652, 660-663, 697, 713, 799, 830, 870, 951, 975

Body of Christ, 6, 28, 265, 271, 282, 284-287, 290, 336, 340, 353, 381, 382, 386, 407, 409, 414, 428, 436, 439, 470, 475, 669, 853, 858

burial, 8, 53, 192, 231, 397, 512, 571, 582, 620

C

canon, 38, 293, 544, 546, 591, 627, 651

canonical, 303

catechesis, 47, 53, 54, 63, 64, 953

Catechism, 1, 3, 8-12, 17, 313, 327, 704, 705

catechists, 67

catechumen, 54, 63, 64, 355, 369, 401, 419, 420, 585

Catechumenate, 31, 63, 64

chalice, 350, 371, 380, 387, 645

charity, 297, 772

Cherubic Hymn, 117, 371, 372, 628

Cherubim, 8, 113, 116, 117, 148, 188, 237, 320, 353, 621, 622

Children of God, 341, 416, 478, 672, 678, 679, 756, 833, 849, 896, 982, 1000

choice, 124, 135, 137-139, 141, 149, 193, 732, 733, 738-741, 828, 860, 866, 932

Chosen People, 77, 366, 401, 580

chotki, 503

Chrismation, 65, 66, 405, 407-409, 423-429, 429, 431, 492, 494, 586, 718

Christian

—churches, 308, 582

—community, 35, 53, 55, 63, 340, 343, 656, 923

—culture, 61, 69

—death, 510-521

—education, 711, 934, 951-953, 958

—ethic, 962, 996

—faith, 9, 12, 219, 726, 953

—family, 46, 68, 470, 654, 656, 660, 662, 707, 856, 898, 951, 952

—formation, 68, 69

—freedom, 927, 928

—funeral, 510-521

—heritage, 43, 304

—home, 196, 654, 655, 657, 659

—life, 1, 2, 403, 531, 705, 707, 724, 726, 739, 743, 833, 840, 843, 915, 920

—love, 906, 936-939

—marriage, 471, 475, 481, 727, 856, 859, 866, 874, 887

—morality, 706, 723, 726, 730, 836

—parents, 578, 896, 951

SUBJECT INDEX

- saints, 578
- schooling/schools, 951-953
- tradition, 61, 202, 303, 560, 590, 648, 659, 704, 756, 757, 941
- understanding, 54, 861, 901, 946, 954, 961, 975
- Christianity, 61, 129, 304, 317, 530, 559, 653, 686, 834
- Christians 5, 31, 34, 36, 45, 54, 71, 110, 177, 220, 222, 265, 267, 303, 329, 403, 404, 407, 414, 425, 430, 445, 446, 511, 512, 521, 557, 559, 568, 582, 601, 617, 619, 657, 668, 669, 671, 677, 686, 708, 715, 718, 723, 786, 838, 839, 897, 899, 903, 915, 931, 945, 957, 965, 968, 983, 984, 988
- Church Fathers. (See Fathers of the Church)
- churching, 54
- Circumcision, 575
- citizens, 368, 926, 932, 942, 946, 955, 957, 965, 967, 969, 972
 - associations of, 926
- commandment/commandments, 8, 26, 31, 131, 135, 138, 139, 146, 147, 166, 203, 206, 207, 276, 332, 367, 378, 380, 399, 409, 420, 445, 457, 475, 542, 677, 696, 733, 741, 743, 758, 789, 823, 825, 847, 849, 854
- commemoration, 221, 250, 363, 519, 520, 521, 527, 559, 577, 645
- common good, 727, 918-920, 922, 932, 935, 954, 955, 958
- Communion, 6, 66, 68, 138, 282, 287, 288, 301, 304, 307, 343, 356, 371, 384, 386-389, 391, 402, 408, 431-433, 435, 438, 444-446, 459, 469, 478, 526, 557, 586, 602, 606, 614, 628, 640, 645, 646, 668, 866, 903
- community, 35, 53-55, 63, 68, 69, 70, 132-134, 243, 272, 277, 280, 281, 290, 296, 328, 329, 330, 334, 336-338, 340, 345, 347, 357, 359, 393, 398-400, 402, 408, 409, 419, 423, 427, 470, 471, 494, 495, 499, 500, 502, 503, 516, 521, 528, 536, 543, 547, 581, 582, 583, 586, 605, 609, 618, 623, 630, 634, 635, 648, 654, 656, 659, 661, 666, 723, 858, 906, 918, 921, 923, 927, 930, 931, 938, 942, 954, 965, 972, 982, 984
- Christian, 35, 53, 55, 63, 340, 343, 656, 923
- liturgical, 337, 392, 398, 399, 634, 661
- Ukrainian, 315, 973
- conception, 707, 875-877, 879-881, 884-887, 890, 894
 - Immaculate, 188, 311, 576
 - method, 875, 876, 878
 - of the Son of God, 186
 - of Saint Anne, 311, 576
 - of Saint John, 575
 - preventing, 886, 890
- confession, 626, 638, 697
 - frequent, 455, 461
 - Mystery (Sacrament) of, 449, 453, 455, 456, 458, 459, 460, 467, 830, 866, 903
 - of faith, 183, 373, 417, 425
 - preparation for, 457
 - rite of, 456
- confessors, 8, 17, 303, 310, 319, 322, 325, 326, 613
- conscience, 153, 318, 386, 425, 445, 446, 457, 696-698, 713, 750, 751, 950, 974
- consecration
 - of antemensia, 492
 - of Holy Chrism, 424, 492
 - of monastic life, 503
 - of oil, 468
 - of the Holy Table, 587, 618
 - of the Holy Gifts, 260, 439, 441
- 502, 504, 587, 618, 638
- consecrations, 328, 500-502, 652
- consent, 184, 479, 909, 947
- consubstantial, 183, 481
- contraception, 863, 885-891
- conversion, 53, 141, 415, 459, 598, 665, 780, 782, 816, 818, 961
- corruptible, 8, 247, 437, 725

SUBJECT INDEX

cosmos, 914

Counsellor. (See Advocate)

creation, 8, 16, 21, 22, 24, 74, 75, 79, 94, 98, 99, 100-113, 115, 117-120, 128, 134, 137, 149, 178, 179, 188, 200, 201, 230, 233, 236, 240, 243-245, 253-256, 266-269, 273, 274, 289, 309, 310, 332, 341, 352, 359, 376, 398, 409, 412, 434, 476, 501, 509, 530, 538, 539, 542, 547, 555, 559, 560, 561, 575, 672, 677, 688, 705, 709, 732, 813, 835, 839, 843, 847, 859, 870, 914, 943, 949, 954, 968, 980, 981, 983, 991, 993-997, 999, 1000

Cross, 8, 31, 53, 140, 215, 221, 227, 279, 425, 526, 554, 557, 561, 562, 569, 575, 595, 608, 625, 626, 641, 642, 673, 685, 802

culture, 60-62, 69, 265, 300, 301, 303, 530, 623, 705, 923, 953, 958, 968, 970, 974, 980

curse, 165, 185, 713, 899, 900

D

day

—of Pentecost, 33, 366, 391, 573, 630

—of the Lord, 555, 557, 564, 839

—eighth, 506, 556-560, 563, 575

—holy, 332, 342, 445, 839, 984, 985

—last, 248, 379, 432, 521

—seventh, 555, 557, 558

—third, 3, 8, 215, 226, 228, 379, 399

deacon/deacons, 35, 294, 297, 354, 361, 362, 373, 380, 387, 391, 490-492, 494, 495, 514, 602, 605, 633, 634

deceased, 250, 269, 351, 382, 397, 483, 500, 510-513, 515, 517, 519-521, 526, 562, 615, 649, 660

death, Christian (see Christian death)

death penalty, 959, 963

deification, 124, 405, 572, 832 (see divinization)

deity, 19, 41, 78, 851

democracy, 932, 933

demon, 142, 318, 568, 616, 684, 771, 772

descent, 180, 230, 231, 237, 255, 257, 258, 271, 387, 424, 426, 427, 486

desire, 143, 154, 172, 227, 331, 332, 425, 457, 459, 480, 529, 617, 678, 679, 683, 759, 761, 764, 766, 772, 774, 775, 790, 825, 910, 913, 926, 988

destiny, 129, 151

devil, 142, 145, 159, 420, 451, 462, 522, 523, 542, 597, 606, 765, 786

diaconate, 8, 297

diakonia, 925

dialogue, 146, 375, 744, 799, 923, 943, 989

dignity, 49, 89, 120, 129, 268, 480, 500, 707, 731, 761, 779, 863, 874-879, 881, 906, 909, 927, 932, 933, 936, 939, 943, 946, 950, 959, 962, 986, 987, 989, 991

diskos, 350, 351, 353, 380, 645

Divine Liturgy, 12, 50, 63, 117, 196, 203, 231, 281, 325, 328, 343-346, 348, 356, 360, 362, 377, 392-394, 435, 443-445, 478, 494, 503, 559, 563, 600, 601, 618, 628, 645, 650, 653, 682, 723, 724, 814, 819, 839, 984

divinization, 124, 127, 145, 159, 240, 267, 289, 316, 321, 572, 829, 831, 850-855 (see deification)

—false, 145

doctrine, 4, 15, 119, 497

Domestic Church, 407, 470, 471, 481, 654-656, 660, 661, 663, 667, 856, 858

Dominions, 8, 113, 116

Dormition, 189, 311, 313, 508, 576, 614

doubt, 146, 250, 545, 937

E

economy, 100, 930, 975, 981

Ecumenical Council, 57, 58, 287, 292, 293, 591, 618, 703

education,

—Christian, 711, 934, 951-953, 958

—sexual, 864, 865

egoism, 659, 933

embryo, 708, 718, 875, 880, 909

enemies, 149, 207, 451, 522, 642, 848, 972

enemy, 145, 156, 207, 219, 528, 570, 598, 752

SUBJECT INDEX

end of life, 229

enlightenment, 401, 784

environment, 67, 101, 102, 447, 667, 707, 709, 743, 921, 945, 951, 973, 981, 991-997

envy, 127, 224

eparchy, 290, 492, 497

epiklesis, 31, 260

episcopate, 8, 291

equality, 8, 90, 134, 305, 954

Equal to the apostles, 61

eternal, 3, 8, 22, 41, 49, 65, 68, 79, 81, 83, 88, 91, 95, 114, 127, 140, 181, 182, 187, 209, 217, 242, 271, 273, 277, 362, 368, 369, 378, 382, 397, 409, 432, 437, 443, 485, 486, 488, 512, 557, 575, 601, 611, 667, 676, 723, 732, 738, 764, 811, 822, 827, 833, 870, 897, 901

eternity, 21, 27, 247, 437, 483, 535, 553, 615

Eucharist, 10, 65, 282, 287, 290, 291, 305, 345, 348, 350, 355, 369, 370, 371, 376, 394, 408, 431, 433, 434, 437, 438, 440, 442, 446, 451, 478, 491, 535, 559, 574, 587, 614, 617, 677, 679, 814

euthanasia, 908, 910

evangelical counsels, 503

evangelization, 60, 982

evil, 68, 131, 135, 137-139, 141, 142, 146, 147, 149, 150, 157, 160, 204, 207, 222, 246, 248, 253, 451-453, 460, 568-570, 616, 642, 674, 682, 713, 714, 731, 734, 748, 750, 753, 758, 769, 777, 785, 788-792, 794, 795, 796, 798, 803, 876, 887, 906, 944, 95

Evil One, 146, 522, 523, 679, 682, 702, 792

existence, 11, 20, 21, 74, 97, 105, 112, 115, 122, 141, 151, 254, 266, 463, 537, 538, 679, 712, 728, 768, 860, 901, 919, 933, 934

exorcism, 419, 522

exorcist, 522

exploitation, 447, 863, 976, 991, 994

F

fair exchange, 939, 942

faith

—in Christ, 203, 248, 319, 322, 416, 418, 465, 532

—in God, 3, 53, 74, 456

—of the Church, 7, 9, 18, 31, 234, 287, 373

—Symbol of, 1-3, 5, 9, 12, 64, 74, 85, 91, 97, 99, 113, 159, 178, 215, 237, 238, 255, 271, 283, 294, 373, 496

faithfulness, 34, 35, 165, 463, 721, 866

Fall, 8, 25, 141-143, 145, 148, 149, 152, 154, 157, 159, 160, 182, 212, 396, 411, 447, 455, 517, 518, 556, 557, 681, 682, 692, 779, 975

family, 11, 46, 67, 68, 70, 165, 196, 275, 280, 328, 334, 336, 461, 470, 471, 499, 519, 520, 654-664, 666, 667, 705, 707, 856, 866, 869, 878, 884, 887-896, 898, 899, 910, 913, 934, 936, 951, 952, 971

—Christian, 46, 68, 470, 654, 656, 660, 662, 707, 856, 898, 951, 952

—of God, 280, 328, 334, 656

—planning, 892, 894, 895

—prayer, 654, 659

famine, 8, 227, 528, 991

Fast, 175, 220, 222, 551, 569, 570

fasting, 394, 402, 457, 568, 569, 570, 627, 702, 760, 785, 786, 787, 799

Father,

—God the, 3, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 27, 30-32, 41, 51, 53, 64, 69-71, 73-75, 77-92, 96-98, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107, 112, 114, 117, 127, 128, 132, 142, 158, 171, 177, 178, 183, 191, 194, 197-199, 203, 206-209, 215, 218, 231, 236, 237, 249, 254, 258, 261, 266, 269, 271, 272, 275, 277, 279, 284, 309, 312, 316, 327, 330, 335, 336, 344, 358, 362, 373-375, 377, 380, 383, 384, 385, 391, 396-399, 409, 412, 413, 421, 423, 424, 435, 455, 468, 478, 485, 533, 536, 561, 562, 568, 573, 577, 622, 626, 628, 632, 662, 669-671, 673-676, 678-680, 682, 683, 685, 694, 695, 704, 718, 724, 732, 734, 735, 780, 781, 805,

SUBJECT INDEX

810, 814, 819, 820, 825, 827, 838, 840, 845, 914, 999

—Our Father, 64, 78, 336, 384, 385, 628, 673-676, 682, 683, 694, 695

—UGCC, 302

father, 56, 167, 418, 473, 662, 735, 883, 884, 899, 900, 968

—of believers, 26, 165, 275

—of lies, 142

—spiritual, 423, 460, 701, 754, 761, 804, 826-830

fatherhood, 74, 827, 829, 876, 889, 892, 896

Fathers of the Church, 4, 14, 22, 31, 35, 37, 45, 48, 49, 50, 55-59, 74, 79, 97, 98, 122, 123, 145, 190, 274, 283, 403, 408, 440, 441, 445, 460, 573, 591, 618, 623, 665, 691, 692, 699, 701, 702, 720, 725, 730, 734, 751, 759, 761, 764, 766, 768, 771, 804, 809, 829, 832, 839, 850, 852, 856

faults, 346, 453-455, 548, 697, 755, 783

favour, 171, 665, 903

fear, 152, 237, 242, 425, 456, 478, 554, 689, 719, 887, 982

feast days, 67, 528, 684

feasts, 198, 311, 329, 507, 541, 548, 551, 559, 566, 567, 574-577, 605, 613, 639, 643

fertility, 21, 506, 870, 887, 889, 892, 893, 894

fidelity, 287, 479, 480, 483, 484, 862, 866, 875

Flood, 157, 505

floods, 141, 208, 528

forgiveness, 3, 8, 181, 212, 223, 227, 270, 271, 346, 381, 384, 416, 446, 450, 455-457, 459, 462, 464, 466, 467, 469, 518, 542, 548, 549, 568, 630, 646, 631, 659, 679, 680, 724, 757, 778, 780, 802, 866, 962

forgiveness of sins, 3, 8, 181, 227, 271, 381, 384, 416, 455, 459, 462, 464, 466, 467, 469, 518, 548

free, 60, 123, 125, 144, 212, 215, 233, 252, 381, 522, 624, 710, 713, 732, 733, 757, 796, 798, 803, 920, 928, 940, 986

—choice, 124, 137, 138

—set, 200, 232, 250, 1000

—will, 122, 135

freedom, 79, 85, 103, 105, 135-138, 146, 220, 268, 411, 418, 678, 710, 713, 732-734, 745, 756, 797, 822, 823, 849, 919, 926-930, 934, 940, 954, 955, 957, 982, 984, 1000

friend/friends, 212, 229, 400, 462, 519, 845, 884, 910

friendship, 684, 829, 830

fullness, 15, 18, 19, 28, 41, 57, 66, 78, 129, 163, 193, 267, 283, 289, 303, 313, 321, 338, 340, 344, 350, 361, 381, 395, 402, 432, 492, 540, 560, 575, 585, 704, 715, 718, 725, 734, 804, 840, 888, 892

—of the Church, 586

— of Christ, 300, 304, 841, 951

— of creation, 274, 309

— of life, 21, 26, 250, 405, 410, 782, 829

— of revelation, 27,

— of time, 8, 30, 45, 159, 177, 178, 179, 271, 380, 399, 403

— of truth, 23, 58

G

gathering, 281, 290, 325, 327, 574, 582, 583, 614

generation, 8, 38, 69, 81, 86, 159, 222, 246, 953

gestures, 214, 625, 802, 818, 943, 988

gift, 8, 31, 36, 49, 65, 109, 110, 127, 129, 137, 138, 190, 205, 207, 213, 255, 256, 266, 291, 316, 318, 326, 333, 344, 349, 375, 376, 378, 380-382, 384, 385, 387, 391, 397, 399, 406, 412, 416-418, 424, 425, 426, 428, 429, 430, 434, 436, 443, 454, 455, 457, 475, 487, 499, 509, 547, 552, 596, 680, 688, 689, 704, 705, 707, 710, 713, 718, 745, 746, 756, 780, 808, 813, 836, 844, 847, 849, 859, 860, 863, 864, 865, 871, 874, 877, 885, 894, 896, 898, 907, 908, 914, 929, 951, 962, 979, 986, 1001

glorification, 73, 215, 240, 247, 324, 379, 502, 620, 621, 668, 840

goal, 54, 332, 738, 740, 782, 823, 829, 850, 864, 891

SUBJECT INDEX

God

- adoration, 644
- Creator, 13, 21-24, 74, 77, 99-101, 103, 106, 111, 120, 128, 136, 156, 240, 309, 313, 668, 736, 813, 816, 837, 860, 875, 878, 881, 888, 941, 983, 992-994, 997
- knowledge of, 13, 15, 25, 28, 83, 418, 573, 648, 654, 779, 836
- God's promise, 159, 162-165, 174, 485

godless, 899

God-man, 41, 125, 199, 212, 221, 231, 486, 530

good, 8, 13, 14, 33, 46, 48, 68, 91, 95, 107, 109, 115, 126, 129, 131, 135, 137, 138, 139, 141, 146, 147, 150, 160, 171, 176, 188, 203, 207, 209, 221, 224, 235, 246, 255, 264, 268, 309, 341, 355, 367, 368, 374, 389, 397, 401, 415, 418, 447, 457, 460, 465, 472, 505, 531, 536, 552, 627, 633, 661, 680, 701, 702, 710, 713, 714, 723, 724, 727, 731, 739, 748, 750, 759, 768, 770, 775, 785, 788, 821, 831, 846, 853, 869, 872, 873, 896, 899, 904, 908, 918, 919, 920, 922, 931, 932, 935, 945, 954, 955, 957, 958, 960, 965, 968, 975, 977, 979, 991, 1001

—Friday, 394

—name, 884, 946, 947

—Shepherd, 277, 485, 499, 637, 780

—will, 177, 544, 815

—works, 422, 453, 455, 570, 668, 681, 704, 711

Good News, 56, 60, 160, 209, 232, 300, 367, 462, 530, 559, 602, 612, 656

Gospel, 31, 33, 36, 40, 44, 51, 55, 56, 60-62, 67, 69, 161, 162, 176, 209, 236, 294, 301, 303, 320, 326, 356, 367, 420, 457, 462, 464, 470, 490, 496, 497, 519, 544, 545, 568, 602, 640, 663, 675, 702, 705, 750, 827, 831, 911, 916, 917, 965, 982

Gospel Book, 358, 361, 362, 469, 479, 495, 536, 591, 631, 648, 649

gossip, 947

Grace

—divine, 260, 328, 415, 449, 494, 522, 594, 718, 721, 805

—of God, 214, 266, 310, 595, 615, 677, 745

—of our Lord Jesus Christ, 101, 375

—of the Holy Spirit, 126, 200, 260, 266-268, 289, 309, 385, 405, 470, 471, 488, 494, 537, 597, 620, 644, 655, 665, 817, 823, 828, 852

grandeur. (see Greatness)

grave, 232, 270, 454, 459, 513, 517, 521, 557, 618, 647, 863, 876, 889, 891, 900, 902, 977, 995

Great Lent, 393, 394, 401, 521, 526, 546, 558, 567, 568, 629, 631, 639, 651

greatness, 119, 172, 811, 838, 994

growth, 40, 63, 83, 117, 125, 159, 286, 311, 337, 339, 426, 432, 445, 451, 460, 465, 476, 503, 572, 648, 665, 666, 702, 706, 710, 711, 734, 775, 783, 826, 897, 931, 935, 953, 963, 974, 984

H

harmony, 21, 155, 251, 274, 279, 294, 306, 321, 477, 478, 491, 763, 858, 939

hatred, 207, 253, 772, 970, 971

healing, 201, 212, 213, 250, 407, 421, 447, 456, 462-467, 469, 597, 598, 616, 630, 724, 757, 783, 797, 807, 816

heart, 8, 10, 77, 157, 169, 170, 204, 223, 244, 328, 329, 334, 356, 378, 383, 416, 420, 425, 455, 527, 546, 624, 628, 668, 690, 691, 693, 694, 697, 742, 747-750, 752-754, 772, 783, 786, 790, 791, 793, 805-808, 813, 854, 867, 898, 954, 988, 999

heaven, 3, 8, 25, 48, 49, 53, 74, 76, 99, 117, 120, 125, 164, 178, 193, 195, 204, 207, 215, 231, 236, 237, 238, 244, 249, 253, 261, 267, 279, 309, 313, 339, 354, 362, 364, 377, 379, 381, 384, 396, 399, 403, 486, 530, 535, 561, 573, 576, 577, 584, 586, 587, 589, 596, 600, 601, 602, 610, 612, 670, 674, 676, 678, 693, 705, 765, 780, 813, 825, 833, 839, 840, 851, 916, 941, 976, 999

SUBJECT INDEX

- heavenly, 8, 49, 78, 113, 114, 117, 127, 190, 191, 206, 231, 243, 252, 310, 312, 313, 316, 328, 336, 339, 354, 362, 364, 370, 384, 387, 421, 438, 441, 451, 503, 535, 600, 607, 611, 613, 622, 637, 661, 679, 680, 684, 716, 725, 785, 820, 862, 968
 heavens, 8, 21, 103, 108, 195, 223, 306, 352, 901
heirmos, 623
 hell, 142, 251, 304
 heresies, 8, 319, 400
 hierarch, 365, 647, 650
 hierarchs, 304, 319
 hierarchy, 294, 299, 372, 493
 history, 6, 8, 9, 16, 23, 26, 29, 38, 50, 57, 96, 102, 107, 161, 162, 175, 179, 195, 240, 243, 256, 306, 320, 322, 327, 329, 351, 396, 473, 541, 544, 546, 556, 559, 560, 562, 565, 605, 609, 612, 613, 653, 822, 911, 972
 holiness, 8, 56, 130, 135, 288, 289, 311, 316, 317, 318, 319, 326, 386, 677, 708, 716, 717, 718, 727, 741, 817, 826, 829, 830, 834, 838, 854, 921
 Holy Anointing, 405, 448, 462, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 492
 Holy Fathers (See Fathers of the Church)
 Holy Gifts, 72, 260, 384, 386, 387, 390, 394, 469, 478, 647
 Holy Mysteries, 10, 214, 241, 267, 287, 289, 305, 308, 319, 325, 328, 342, 370, 403, 405, 406, 408, 409, 414, 447, 448, 470, 487, 488, 497, 501, 652, 705, 711, 718, 726, 826, 853, 866
 Holy Scripture, 37, 38, 41, 42, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 75, 93, 103, 104, 105, 107, 109, 117, 118, 128, 134, 141, 145, 200, 241, 252, 287, 288, 403, 539, 617, 649, 658, 664, 675, 684, 747, 748, 749, 750, 792, 818
 Holy Spirit,
 —action of, 670, 716
 —descent of, 237, 257, 258, 271, 387
 —filled with, 237, 257, 258, 271, 387
 —fruits of the, 712
 —gift of, 36, 65, 255, 316, 387, 412, 424, 425, 426, 429, 430, 487, 552, 808
 —grace of the, 126, 200, 260, 266, 267, 268, 289, 309, 385, 405, 470, 471, 488, 494, 537, 597, 620, 644, 655, 665, 817, 823, 828, 852
 —inspiration of, 38
 —instrument of, 624
 —life in the, 710, 829
 —Person of the, 82, 97, 132
 —power of the, 3, 33, 56, 107, 178, 277, 327, 420, 448, 452, 609, 622, 670, 797
 —presence of the, 264, 354
 —procession of the, 81, 97, 98
 —sanctifies, 399
 —sending of the, 16, 98, 255, 374, 412, 424, 571
 —temple of the, 129, 271, 386, 415
 Holy Tradition, 13, 30, 31, 34, 37, 50, 57, 287, 522, 874
 homeland, 69, 654, 660, 968
 homily, 63, 356, 367, 515
 homosexual acts, 863
 honour, 8, 119, 197, 315, 324, 352, 364, 480, 481, 525, 527, 559, 588, 592, 811, 859, 899, 947, 948, 952, 977
 hope, 8, 36, 146, 159, 177, 236, 248, 255, 271, 311, 383, 385, 407, 411, 426, 438, 453, 464, 513, 518, 554, 563, 673, 677, 767, 769, 772, 774, 784, 837, 841, 842, 843, 850, 964, 1001
 Horologion, 241, 539, 541, 547, 553, 554, 555, 563, 649, 652, 660, 821
 Hosanna, 8, 117, 222
 hospitality, 657
 human cloning, 877, 878
 humanity, 20, 24, 31, 41, 102, 103, 119, 121, 136, 137, 138, 160, 161, 179, 183, 184, 191, 194, 195, 237, 310, 311, 399, 435, 487, 557, 595, 709, 745, 757, 790, 825, 910, 919, 924, 976, 991, 998, 1000
 humility, 8, 181, 194, 685, 780, 788
 hunger, 204, 759, 981

SUBJECT INDEX

I

ice cross, 202

icon, 108, 133, 171, 187, 205, 231, 273, 291, 311, 313, 314, 316, 322, 330, 340, 436, 472, 483, 537, 560, 561, 587, 591, 592, 593, 594, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 612, 615, 623, 632, 639, 644, 658, 659, 660, 725, 871, 919

icon corner, 657

iconography, 190, 315, 330, 612

iconostasis, 73, 341, 347, 587, 589, 601, 602, 603, 606, 609, 610, 641, 642

idolatry, 589, 764

idols, 8, 75, 203

illness, 203, 464, 466, 467, 469, 598, 621, 758, 759, 797

image

- divine, 124, 757
- God's, 136, 354, 832, 946
- liturgical, 614
- of Christ, 122, 257, 381, 613, 619, 648
- of God, 110, 121, 122, 123, 124, 129, 130, 133, 150, 419, 524, 727, 729, 940, 952
- of humanity, 193
- of the Church, 601, 614, 856
- of the Son, 128
- royal, 120, 193
- use of, 277

immaculate, 8, 188, 229, 277, 576

Immaculate Conception, 188, 576

immortality, 131, 152, 245, 247, 469, 851

Incarnation, 17, 32, 102, 108, 128, 171, 278, 585, 852

incense, 73, 327, 353, 355, 402, 403, 537, 543, 645, 685

incorruptible, 8, 115, 233, 318, 433, 618, 619, 726

inculturation, 60, 61, 530

infallibility, 291

inheritance, 8, 69, 92, 296, 306, 385, 431, 456, 655

injustice, 775, 981, 989

innocence, 126, 518

intellect, 123, 125, 152, 194, 261, 721, 755, 810, 819

intention, 741, 743, 744, 795, 877, 883, 909

intercession, 314, 469, 482, 489, 501, 520, 577, 608, 621

intercessor, 282, 486

intimacy, 331, 332, 654

invisible, 8, 19, 23, 28, 72, 79, 85, 86, 87, 100, 105, 108, 114, 116, 118, 129, 143, 180, 189, 321, 329, 373, 377, 397, 536, 562, 589, 601, 612, 643, 721, 804, 997

Israel, 44, 88, 167, 170, 172, 201, 217, 277, 280, 547, 581, 823

J

jealousy, 224, 867, 989

Jesus Christ

- Son of God, 3, 15, 32, 79, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 102, 103, 105, 108, 122, 126, 127, 129, 140, 159, 162, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, 195, 197, 198, 200, 210, 228, 232, 244, 247, 249, 255, 258, 278, 302, 334, 375, 390, 398, 414, 417, 436, 441, 486, 534, 562, 590, 605, 627, 672, 679, 686, 694, 695, 778, 807, 852

Jesus Prayer, 694, 695, 696, 807

Jews, 60, 216, 262

Joseph, 163, 194, 473

joy, 67, 191, 221, 237, 482, 512, 522, 531, 544, 545, 548, 565, 570, 682, 686, 690, 722, 723, 768, 773, 806, 984

justice, 8, 173, 209, 254, 421, 883, 932, 936, 943, 955, 963, 978, 987

- legal, 942
- social, 939

SUBJECT INDEX

K

kerygma, 53

key, 1, 527

kindness, 8, 365, 512, 722, 760

kingdom of God, 37, 168, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 218, 251, 279, 285, 300, 339, 341, 356, 361, 395, 534, 586, 634, 678, 709, 717, 777, 963

kontakion, 405, 526, 563, 624

Kyivan Metropolitanate, 307, 308

L

labour, 500, 508, 509, 673, 746, 773, 977, 980, 986

laity, 295, 300, 325, 500

lamb, 194, 217, 226, 351, 443

last days, 20, 175, 342, 572

Last Supper, 11, 283, 346, 433, 435, 725

law, 8, 22, 31, 61, 151, 160, 170, 207, 333, 400, 752, 759, 774, 823, 825, 900, 910, 922, 943, 956, 958, 959, 961, 966, 990

laying on of hands, 95, 406, 490, 495

liberation, 217, 218, 547, 630, 680, 735, 783

lies, 83, 121, 130, 143, 237, 303, 469, 500, 575, 648, 745, 762, 837, 873, 885, 905, 917, 942, 945, 957

life

—Christian, 706

—in Christ, 1, 6, 36, 67, 251, 254, 334, 406, 425, 472, 711, 836, 930

—new, 1, 6, 36, 219, 230, 242, 269, 270, 392, 400, 409, 411, 413, 419, 425, 433, 472, 522, 634, 664, 676, 678, 705, 709, 781, 857, 871, 877, 886, 887, 889, 893, 895, 896, 897, 902, 930, 952

—of the Most Holy Trinity, 99, 254, 409, 669, 727, 733, 828

likeness, 8, 86, 87, 120, 122, 124, 125, 126, 129, 133, 150, 160, 179, 180, 182, 274, 319, 332, 389, 416, 419, 727, 730, 813, 818, 877, 952, 976

litany, 64, 359, 360, 369, 370, 374, 385, 414, 426, 427, 445, 498, 784, 811

liturgical books, 648, 652

liturgical year, 30, 58, 312, 462, 527, 566, 568, 650

lives of the saints, 322, 578, 614

Logos, 158, 256, 380, 534

Lord's Supper, 348, 606

love

—God's, 183, 208, 219, 252, 306, 384, 450, 453, 455, 642, 806, 845, 870, 873

—of God, 15, 74, 102, 159, 160, 376, 749, 798

lust, 125, 182, 570, 759, 762, 763, 868

M

manna, 580

marriage, 212, 472, 474, 475, 479, 480, 482, 484, 507, 659, 664, 857, 859, 869, 871, 873, 879, 888, 892, 896

—as type of church, 475

—Christian, 472, 476, 482, 728, 867, 888

—indissolubility of, 868

—Mystery of, 470, 471, 478, 655, 867

—sanctification in, 506

—second, 483

martyrs, 8, 32, 241, 304, 305, 311, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 482, 500, 563, 583, 588, 614, 617, 618, 619, 621, 718

Mary, 3, 8, 15, 32, 164, 178, 179, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 195, 233, 272, 312, 314, 435, 531, 547, 570, 577, 603, 696, 747

mass media, 945, 948-950

Matins, 115, 140, 146, 151, 157, 158, 176, 183, 189, 192, 193, 216, 223, 224, 230, 232, 233, 236, 241, 243, 247, 270, 280, 317, 318, 320, 527, 541, 542, 545, 547, 548, 553, 558, 569, 572, 574, 576, 623, 652, 783

Menaia, 577, 648, 651

Menaion, 574

SUBJECT INDEX

merciful, 205, 360, 382, 400, 443, 511, 690, 781, 782, 818

mercy, 8, 9, 160, 205, 243, 272, 283, 310, 339, 360, 365, 376, 393, 450, 453, 495, 529, 547, 569, 686, 688, 694, 695, 698, 725, 758, 772, 782, 784, 788, 807, 811, 818, 832, 840, 903, 937, 938, 939, 984, 986

merits, 442

Messiah, 88, 160, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 178, 195, 603, 609

metropolitan, 292

Metropolitanate, 308, 309

miracle, 289, 315, 617

misery, 224

mission, 15, 33, 97, 295, 408, 428, 452, 490, 639, 854, 913, 914, 918, 921, 924, 926, 954

monastery, 9, 316

monastic life, 504, 517, 728

money, 254, 320, 743, 759, 765, 766, 986

monks, 325, 326, 517, 614

mother, 9, 184, 185, 186, 192, 357, 419, 507, 605, 658, 736, 778, 827, 829, 830, 831, 884, 885, 891, 899, 900, 901, 969

motherhood, 603, 827, 828, 830, 873, 877, 888, 892, 893, 894, 897

murder, 207, 738, 744, 759, 770, 883, 892, 939

murderer, 142, 737

mystagogy, 54, 408

Mystical Supper, 11, 225, 283, 344, 346, 350, 356, 378, 380, 390, 398, 433, 435, 436, 488, 588, 603, 607, 674

N

name, 3, 8, 20, 21, 63, 69, 72, 73, 89, 117, 162, 163, 165, 174, 184, 187, 221, 222, 248, 279, 281, 296, 305, 335, 348, 351, 353, 359, 360, 368, 376, 383, 419, 421, 423, 425, 464, 479, 482, 488, 493, 506, 531, 544, 578, 583, 626, 657, 669, 674, 677, 685, 693, 716, 735, 775, 813, 838, 884, 946, 947, 999

nation, 8, 69, 165, 166, 167, 200, 203, 265, 275, 301, 391, 400, 425, 528, 911, 954, 968, 970, 972, 973, 974

Nativity of Christ, 175, 179, 190, 191, 192, 193, 196

nature, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 41, 78, 81, 89, 90, 100, 110, 113, 119, 120, 124, 125, 127, 128, 141, 142, 152, 155, 178, 180, 181, 187, 200, 237, 238, 240, 241, 255, 266, 267, 268, 291, 300, 302, 329, 343, 388, 399, 405, 413, 420, 432, 438, 441, 476, 486, 504, 535, 556, 559, 562, 575, 593, 598, 639, 717, 722, 751, 764, 799, 856, 865, 892, 908, 969, 990, 994, 997, 998

—divine, 18, 22, 124, 181, 343, 388, 593

—human,

nearness, 502, 698

neighbour, 129, 207, 220, 321, 373, 432, 446, 447, 457, 669, 680, 689, 723, 724, 735, 742, 748, 763, 768, 779, 787, 845, 847, 848, 849, 862, 864, 904, 905, 906, 921, 922, 928, 944, 945, 971, 974, 983

neighbours, 207, 520, 679, 756, 905

New Testament, 5, 13, 20, 27, 29, 38, 40, 43, 44, 88, 94, 95, 257, 277, 281, 349, 463, 609, 638, 664

non-existence, 538

O

obedience, 185, 205, 496, 811

Octoechos, 114, 139, 145, 175, 182, 189, 232, 240, 242, 261, 269, 279, 317, 318, 319, 555, 561, 563, 594, 648, 651

oikos, 525, 583, 623

oil, 31, 214, 420, 428, 464, 468, 507, 541, 598, 643, 647

Old Testament, 20, 29, 38, 39, 43, 44, 45, 76, 77, 87, 94, 102, 159, 206, 216, 217, 225, 230, 257, 262, 273, 276, 281, 320, 332, 349, 360, 401, 463, 546, 556, 579, 608, 684

only-begotten, 8, 40, 77, 84, 89, 183, 376, 377, 397, 814

Only-Begotten, 27, 85, 89, 678, 822, 827

SUBJECT INDEX

orthodox

—faith, 425

—teaching, 287

P

Pantocrator, 14, 24, 75, 605, 613

parable, 702

paradise, 8, 194, 399, 400, 554, 562, 570, 603, 734

Parastas, 758

parents, 25, 68, 69, 148, 149, 419, 448, 519, 579, 655, 657, 659, 660, 661, 665, 801, 866, 873, 874, 884, 892, 897, 899, 900, 901, 911, 952, 953

participation, 102, 182, 288, 309, 353, 389, 398, 443, 446, 447, 452, 628, 718, 740, 823, 840, 851, 867, 904, 916, 924, 933, 948, 976

Pascha, 1, 3, 136, 141, 193, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 230, 232, 236, 330, 380, 394, 402, 458, 509, 512, 522, 538, 560, 566, 567, 568, 573, 574, 628, 652, 654, 663, 840, 902, 1000

passions, 158, 319, 452, 481, 569, 666, 756, 774, 787, 797, 798, 799, 817, 852, 853

patriarch, 77, 292, 580

patriarchs, 8, 30, 159, 321, 474, 580, 718

peace, 8, 9, 131, 153, 191, 307, 360, 376, 392, 479, 534, 545, 632, 662, 685, 687, 699, 722, 723, 773, 784, 808, 857, 859, 940, 951, 955, 988, 989, 990, 991, 1000

Pentecost, 34, 71, 82, 256, 258, 259, 261, 269, 270, 271, 281, 367, 392, 425, 428, 510, 522, 568, 573, 574, 623, 628, 631, 640, 652

perfection, 70, 79, 127, 498, 499, 504, 541, 718, 786, 798, 829, 835, 855, 922, 930, 932, 994

perjury, 570

persecution, 320, 325, 583

Pharisee, 224, 569, 783

piety, 8, 304, 414, 626, 719, 720

plan, 22, 24, 44, 46, 105, 110, 113, 128, 160, 162, 180, 183, 238, 245, 256, 272, 274, 275, 278, 281, 300, 404, 472, 561, 605, 699, 708, 726, 829, 861, 889, 904, 917, 976

polyandry, 864

polygamy, 864

Pontiff, 8, 292, 294, 305, 696

poor, 8, 191, 205, 433, 493, 926

Pope, 8, 56, 292, 305, 312, 314, 326, 405, 567, 620, 964

poverty, 680, 982

Powers, 8, 114, 117

praise, 8, 114, 117, 186, 305, 328, 345, 353, 362, 376, 377, 397, 431, 525, 529, 541, 543, 547, 563, 663, 669, 670, 686, 691, 775, 803, 811, 812, 813, 986

prayer

—communal, 7, 625

—family, 660

—of repentance, 817

—personal, 74, 331, 672

preaching, 4, 15, 33, 34, 41, 71, 160, 210, 212, 279, 280, 302, 304, 356, 358, 463, 465, 828

prefigurement, 71, 102, 275, 276, 282, 285

presbyters, 8, 36, 297, 425, 491, 492, 493

presence, 6, 23, 37, 72, 73, 77, 100, 102, 112, 115, 118, 153, 212, 255, 265, 330, 339, 340, 343, 355, 389, 405, 475, 498, 501, 534, 560, 581, 588, 589, 596, 599, 601, 603, 610, 643, 645, 659, 686, 693, 694, 695, 719, 804, 809, 857, 983, 995

priesthood, 8, 204, 408, 426, 488, 489, 493, 498, 500, 670

priestly, 425, 426, 494, 500, 636

priests, 167, 295, 297, 298, 325, 326, 366, 374, 392, 425, 426, 429, 469, 515, 685

private property, 940, 941, 942

proclamation, 13, 45, 54, 56, 161, 162, 204, 359, 362, 577, 603, 663, 827, 854, 983

promise, 17, 27, 36, 37, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 170, 175, 276, 277, 361, 399, 486, 573, 719, 842, 867

prophecy, 53, 164, 173, 187, 192, 351, 482

prophet, 8, 163, 169, 170, 172, 174, 195, 223, 226, 229, 239, 258, 310, 313, 554, 618, 647, 717, 720

SUBJECT INDEX

Prophets, 3, 8, 31, 92, 160, 256
 prosphora, 197, 351, 646, 663
 protection, 166, 316, 501, 509, 529, 543, 599,
 683, 686, 771, 943, 963
 providence, 39, 113, 402, 475, 697, 903
 punish, 948
 punishment, 158, 226, 252, 962, 963
 purgatory, 251

R

rape, 885
 reason, 38, 51, 52, 56, 57, 96, 111, 122, 127,
 198, 251, 295, 432, 468, 642, 752, 798, 900,
 984
 reconciliation, 221, 324, 360, 376, 447, 456,
 458, 487, 660, 800, 962
 redemption, 417, 431, 456, 552
 relics, 242, 311, 577, 578, 592, 617, 618, 619,
 620, 621, 630, 632, 648
 remembrance, 18, 513, 582, 1002
 remission of sins, 398, 418, 488
 renewed creation, 254
 repentance, 37, 142, 154, 224, 290, 402, 403,
 411, 416, 447, 450, 455, 456, 457, 458, 460,
 543, 569, 570, 630, 638, 666, 690, 767, 781,
 782, 783, 784, 785, 817
 repose, 8, 505, 511, 520, 558
 responsibility, 136, 154, 419, 490, 493, 710,
 732, 749, 866, 873, 874, 885, 900, 924, 925,
 931, 936, 949, 952, 953, 992, 993
 rest, 8, 49, 92, 271, 374, 511, 559, 563, 720,
 784, 810, 984, 985, 986
 Resurrection, 2, 3, 6, 8, 17, 54, 66, 124, 140,
 141, 142, 146, 176, 183, 186, 194, 216, 219,
 220, 222, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235,
 236, 237, 241, 243, 246, 255, 256, 262, 269,
 280, 344, 380, 398, 402, 413, 422, 425, 488,
 512, 522, 536, 538, 542, 545, 546, 552, 558,
 559, 560, 572, 594, 902, 1000
 reverence, 513, 945

righteous, 8, 208, 231, 240, 250, 276, 311,
 321, 327, 464, 470, 511, 541, 563, 616, 618,
 621, 677, 678, 832, 839, 966
 rosary, 504
 Royal Doors, 73, 354, 390, 603, 604, 605, 607
 ruler, 120, 172
 rulers, 452, 786

S

Sacraments, 329, 488, 502, 706
 saints, 8, 160, 241, 242, 254, 304, 310, 311,
 314, 317, 318, 319, 321, 322, 323, 330, 337,
 352, 361, 364, 383, 415, 423, 456, 469, 501,
 511, 520, 522, 525, 527, 528, 529, 533, 542,
 563, 574, 575, 578, 579, 587, 589, 592, 596,
 598, 610, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 624,
 632, 654, 667, 673, 717, 718
 salvation, 2, 3, 8, 10, 17, 18, 24, 30, 31, 32, 33,
 46, 71, 149, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163,
 177, 179, 183, 195, 202, 218, 225, 232, 237,
 238, 246, 261, 262, 266, 274, 283, 295, 297,
 304, 330, 345, 346, 353, 361, 367, 375, 377,
 379, 400, 404, 405, 407, 414, 415, 418, 422,
 425, 428, 464, 474, 500, 501, 506, 510, 523,
 534, 538, 544, 554, 558, 561, 562, 566, 576,
 577, 605, 610, 613, 614, 618, 627, 635, 656,
 679, 715, 745, 767, 772, 781, 812, 814, 820,
 821, 827, 831, 954
 —biblical, 547
 —Christian, 10
 —eternal, 50, 369
 —history of, 8, 51, 97, 162, 176, 321, 328,
 397, 474, 542, 545, 561, 563, 606, 823
 —mystery of, 266, 346, 375, 747
 —promise of, 17, 159, 160, 161
 Satan, 32, 145, 146, 420, 778
 Saviour, 8, 24, 25, 30, 40, 78, 172, 176, 183,
 191, 196, 198, 200, 224, 225, 262, 280, 340,
 375, 420, 457, 501, 522, 550, 554, 555, 576,
 587, 591, 605, 609, 639, 662, 674, 695, 720,
 735, 736, 814, 838, 842, 926
 second coming, 8, 17, 30, 54, 67, 108, 240,
 241, 250, 253, 284, 394, 433, 503, 560, 561,
 572, 841

SUBJECT INDEX

- second crowning, 484
- self-deification, 148, 778
- self-governing Churches, 18, 273, 281, 286, 288, 292, 293, 294, 302, 305, 306, 307, 308
- sepulchre, 233
- Seraphim, 8, 114, 117, 377, 643
- service, 41, 70, 130, 197, 221, 236, 261, 301, 320, 345, 347, 393, 408, 471, 479, 489, 491, 493, 499, 503, 504, 508, 518, 520, 523, 529, 534, 535, 542, 549, 550, 635, 636, 639, 644, 653, 659, 662, 663, 677, 681, 709, 724, 725, 758, 812, 829, 831, 906, 913, 926, 927, 958, 979
- sex, 861
- sexuality, 708, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866
- shelter, 420, 938
- shepherd, 292, 294, 296, 486, 490, 498, 500, 638
- shepherds, 184, 191, 195, 196, 293
- sick, 8, 401, 449, 463, 465, 467, 468, 469, 470, 493, 507, 529, 599, 758, 840, 904, 905, 926, 938
- sickness, 155, 448, 464, 465
- sign
—of the Cross, 32, 426, 596, 626, 627, 686, 803
—prophetic, 163, 561
- sin
—and death, 216, 222, 412, 416, 466, 642
—of the world, 141, 198, 219, 351, 412, 563
—original, 149, 312
- singing, 8, 280, 361, 362, 365, 366, 403, 513, 518, 537, 544, 564, 622, 623, 624, 625
- slander, 570, 787, 948
- Slipyj, Josyf, 7, 281, 293, 303, 304, 306, 323, 326
- solidarity, 292, 657, 906, 925, 934, 936, 951, 966, 983, 990
- song, 196, 377, 525, 526, 531, 560
- soul, 32, 49, 50, 124, 129, 131, 148, 157, 158, 173, 190, 204, 230, 232, 246, 251, 252, 257, 261, 311, 314, 350, 382, 406, 421, 426, 457, 458, 465, 467, 533, 536, 537, 548, 569, 570, 572, 616, 682, 685, 689, 690, 692, 703, 760, 762, 764, 769, 772, 776, 787, 788, 803, 804, 814, 817, 825, 833, 847, 861, 870
- spirit
—Spirit of the Lord, 96, 711
—unclean, 8, 401, 465
- spirituality, 304, 664, 783
- staff, 581, 639
- stewardship, 940
- subdeacon, 499, 503
- subsidiarity, 927, 953
- suffering, 155, 173, 181, 213, 216, 219, 226, 227, 228, 313, 318, 323, 380, 448, 464, 466, 467, 469, 617, 621, 690, 767, 769, 771, 841, 904, 905, 909, 910, 990
- suicide, 767, 903, 911
- Sunday, 4, 115, 121, 140, 146, 176, 183, 190, 192, 193, 216, 223, 230, 232, 233, 234, 236, 241, 243, 247, 270, 280, 317, 327, 395, 510, 542, 545, 558, 559, 560, 561, 565, 568, 569, 570, 573, 574, 782, 783, 840, 984
- supper, 197, 203, 225, 390, 436, 607, 663
- symbol, 7, 64, 197, 201, 311, 351, 386, 402, 420, 422, 481, 540, 541, 585, 588, 595, 613, 619, 630
- Synod, 303, 628
- Synod of Bishops, 303
- ## T
- table, 51, 197, 291, 373, 385, 432, 446, 587, 588, 619
- temple, 8, 27, 64, 67, 102, 130, 178, 229, 257, 272, 282, 333, 341, 416, 581, 582, 583, 584, 586, 587, 656, 718, 783
- Temple, 178, 312, 387, 576, 577
- testimony, 32, 142, 294, 484, 503, 562, 842
- Theophany, 88, 102, 109, 113, 116, 180, 192, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 394, 510, 531, 532, 549, 552, 575, 576, 606, 663

SUBJECT INDEX

theosis, 124 (see deification, divinization)

toil, 156, 976

traditions, 35, 61, 62, 63, 302, 308

Transfiguration, 89, 343, 576, 594, 617, 674, 992

trespass, 385, 675, 681, 699

trespasses, 385, 675, 681, 817

trial, 8, 239, 702, 940

Trinity, 3, 13, 14, 16, 32, 50, 71, 72, 73, 74, 81, 90, 91, 93, 98, 99, 102, 115, 118, 133, 134, 198, 254, 256, 257, 272, 273, 274, 285, 336, 365, 374, 377, 378, 399, 409, 472, 482, 483, 498, 527, 536, 574, 585, 622, 627, 669, 686, 695, 721, 727, 733, 739, 828, 919, 932

troparion, 482, 512, 554, 555, 563, 624

truth, 4, 6, 8, 9, 19, 24, 31, 33, 38, 44, 50, 57, 59, 72, 73, 92, 96, 97, 143, 259, 260, 266, 290, 309, 313, 320, 369, 370, 410, 434, 454, 478, 501, 679, 686, 697, 713, 734, 735, 751, 780, 847, 859, 927, 936, 945, 946, 949

U

unborn, 882

Ukraine, 62, 203, 303, 304, 315, 325, 326, 327, 531

Ukrainian Catholic Church, 18, 302, 621

Ukrainian people, 316, 973, 974

understanding, 11, 16, 51, 53, 55, 58, 63, 72, 89, 111, 263, 314, 409, 426, 504, 668, 720, 737, 804, 824, 862, 867, 920, 927, 947, 949, 962, 983, 994

Union of Brest, 99, 307, 308, 324

unmercenary healers, 614

unselfish, 662

V

vainglory, 759, 775, 776

veil, 504, 595, 605

Virgin Mary, 3, 8, 15, 164, 178, 179, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 272, 312, 314, 435, 531, 547, 577, 696, 747

virginity, 8, 184, 190, 595

virtue, 49, 51, 114, 124, 129, 215, 223, 268, 287, 312, 427, 571, 659, 690, 723, 747, 761, 764, 766, 768, 771, 774, 776, 777, 779, 780, 832, 833, 838, 839, 843, 844, 845, 872, 943, 969, 971

vocation, 25, 110, 152, 190, 299, 300, 428, 452, 500, 501, 597, 656, 710, 712, 713, 728, 745, 757, 837, 866, 888, 894, 897, 916, 917, 995

W

wage, 977, 978

warfare, 707, 786, 800

wedding, 211, 475, 479, 480

wedlock, 472

wisdom, 19, 22, 49, 72, 90, 101, 404, 574, 609, 685, 720, 751, 915

witness, 34, 36, 54, 56, 77, 198, 212, 226, 241, 260, 280, 293, 318, 323, 326, 431, 457, 473, 485, 491, 498, 722, 727, 736, 828, 932, 945

woman, 8, 25, 135, 148, 154, 155, 161, 163, 224, 343, 471, 472, 473, 477, 480, 562, 617, 708, 733, 734, 857, 858, 860, 863, 868, 870, 871, 872, 873, 876, 877, 883, 885, 891, 895, 976

Word of God, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, 31, 33, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 53, 63, 64, 69, 90, 133, 160, 161, 175, 178, 194, 252, 286, 346, 362, 367, 368, 369, 375, 441, 493, 587, 609, 665, 721, 794, 852, 954

work, 1, 8, 25, 43, 47, 55, 70, 101, 115, 156, 160, 295, 300, 345, 350, 354, 376, 378, 390, 418, 454, 466, 502, 549, 556, 558, 577, 593, 627, 667, 669, 685, 698, 701, 726, 745, 773, 814, 840, 914, 915, 918, 936, 976, 979, 980, 985, 995

world, 3, 8, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 31, 37, 40, 49, 64, 71, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 120, 125, 139, 141, 142, 148, 150, 179, 180, 182, 183, 187, 191, 198, 199, 202, 204, 206, 211, 219, 232, 236, 237, 241, 245, 249, 253, 256, 263, 268, 274, 280, 290, 295, 299, 300, 305, 310, 314, 322, 342, 343, 350, 351, 353, 360, 367, 369, 375, 378, 381, 392, 393, 398, 405, 412, 420, 423, 425, 426, 428,

SUBJECT INDEX

449, 486, 490, 498, 504, 505, 506, 507, 517,
520, 522, 539, 540, 542, 543, 548, 553, 561,
562, 563, 576, 577, 601, 603, 608, 613, 618,
631, 644, 670, 678, 679, 701, 709, 710, 715,
721, 724, 755, 784, 797, 800, 820, 884, 889,
912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 933, 942, 976,
983, 993, 994, 995, 997, 1001, 1002

—angelic, 143

—invisible, 321, 804

—visible, 601

worldview

—Christian, 70, 950

worship, 8, 26, 30, 32, 71, 195, 306, 362, 375,
376, 381, 445, 525, 531, 535, 537, 538, 553,
584, 611, 622, 625, 628, 630, 632, 655, 669,
695, 783, 811, 838, 854

wrath, 158, 571

Y

youth, 317

