

THE BIBLE LIVES IN THE CHURCH

4TH ANNUAL

TEACHERS CONFERENCE

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T H E B I B L E

The Bible holds a CENTRAL place in the faith and the practice of the Orthodox Church: (1) the teaching of the Bible is the teaching of the Church. (2) the prayers of the Bible are the prayers of the Church. (3) the doctrines and the themes of the Bible shape the services and sacramental rites of the church. (4) Biblical symbols are the symbols of Orthodox liturgy and art.

In every aspect of it's life and teaching, the Orthodox Church is formed and molded in the image and spirit of the Bible. She preserves most perfectly and purely the Bible's doctrine and inspiration.

At one time in the church, people who wanted to become Christians had to study the Bible for three years before their Baptism could take place. The BIBLE provided them with the basic information they needed in order to live a Christian life, just as it provides us with that information today. To be CALLED Christian is not enough we must BE Christians. TO BE A CHRISTIAN we must read the BIBLE and live the life of a Christian as it is described in the Bible.

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On the following pages you will find certain information about the BIBLE. You will also find a set of study questions at the back which cover the course.

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W H A T I S T H E B I B L E ?

The Bible is the book of sacred writings of God's people of the Old and New Testaments. The people of God of the OLD TESTAMENT were the Jews, the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose name was changed by God to ISRAEL. These people

are also called Hebrews. Christ, the Son of God, was born from these people.

The People of God of the New Testament are the Christians, those who believe in Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of the Living God', and who belong to the Church which He has founded upon faith in Himself.

THE BIBLE IS NOT A RECORD OF HISTORICAL OR NATURAL SCIENCE.

The Bible is actually a collection of various books. 'Bible' is from a Greek word which means "books". It has two main parts:

- (a) The Old Testament (writings which prepare the world for the coming of Christ.)
- (b) The New Testament (writings which testify or give evidence to the fact that Christ has come and saved the world.)

The Bible or collection of books which CHRISTIANS use is different from that which the Jews use. The Christian Bible has more books. The Jews did not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah and therefore they do not accept any books or letters of the New Testament.

T H E B I B L E A S T H E W O R D O F G O D

The BIBLE is called the written Word of God. This does NOT mean that the Bible fell from Heaven, ready for consumption. Neither does it mean that God dictated the Bible word-for-word to men who were merely His instruments. It DOES mean that God revealed Himself as the true and living God to his people. God inspired His People to produce 'scriptures' (writings) to reveal God's divinity.

The origin of the Bible lies not in man, but in God who willed and inspired it's creation. The form of the Bible is in human words. The revelation in the Bible is God's revelation of Himself. The words which describe the revelation are scriptural witness of God. Through the Bible one can come to a true and

genuine knowledge of Him, of His will, of purpose for man and the world. In and through the Bible, human persons can enter into communion with God. There may be inaccuracies of an unimportant character in the BIBLE but the eternal spiritual and doctrinal message of God is: (1) perfectly consistent (2) authentic (3) true

A U T H O R S H I P

The Bible has many different authors. Some books do not indicate in any way who wrote them. Other books bear the names of persons to whom authorship is ascribed. In some cases it is clear that the author of the book wrote the book with his own hands. In other cases the author had another person (a secretary) write down his words. Whoever and however the books and letters of the Bible were written, it in no way changes or determines the validity of that part of the Bible.

T H E B I B L E L I V E S I N T H E C H U R C H

The Bible is the book of God's people. It is meaningless outside the life of this people. It comes alive in the Church and has the most profound meaning for those who are members of the community called the CHURCH which God has established and in which He dwells. No one outside of the total life and experience of the community of faith, which is the Church Christ established, can completely understand and correctly interpret the BIBLE. It is like witnessing an event. Unless we are directly involved, we can only partially understand what happened. To understand the events of the Bible we have to be directly involved as Orthodox Christians.

THE BIBLE MUST BE APPROACHED WITH EVERY CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

To use the 'greatest three' of the virtues listed by St. Paul for the purpose of example, we can say that all Bible-reading must be undertaken with FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE. There must be faith that the Lord will help us not to be confused or over-imaginative while reading the Bible, that He will come to us Himself as we read so

we can understand. There must be hope that we will always read the Bible with humility because even the greatest Biblical scholars in the world keep learning something new each time they read and re-read passages. There must be perfect love which 'seeks not its own' but which 'desires to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Our personal attitude toward the reading of the Bible, our desires, our purpose, determines what we will gain.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR BIBLE READING

1. In the practice of reading the Bible, do not neglect to attend Church, to regularly participate in Confession and Communion, to pray in private, to do Christian reading, and to do good works. In other words, FOLLOW what you read in the BIBLE. It is instructive as well as informative. If you really understand it, you will practice it.
2. Begin reading the BIBLE with parts that are easiest to understand. Begin with the Gospels, Acts, and the First Letter of John, in the New Testament; and the Psalms, Proverbs, and Prophecy of Isaiah in the Old Testament. THEN read books like Genesis, Exodus, and the Letters of the New Testament. Sometimes you can read two parts of the Bible at once. Psalms can be read with the Gospels. The Prophecy of Isaiah can be read with the Gospels of St. Matthew or St. John, etc.
3. It is important to read the Bible slowly, a little at a time. Like prayer, read the Bible briefly but regularly. It is best to read a little of the Bible each day. Some people read a chapter each day, and others read a few verses each day. Read only as much as you personally can each day, and THINK about what you have read.
4. It is good to be under the guidance of a priest or spiritually educated person who can help us in our reading.
5. We should NEVER read the Bible to gather ammunition for an argument. Motives are important. Read for insight.
6. Bible reading should be prayer-like. We should always remember we are communing with God.
7. Tireless effort is required of us if we will accomplish our task.

T H E C A N O N

The canon is the authoritative collection of sacred writings, recognized and received as inspired by the Orthodox Church. Up

until the sixteenth century ALL Christians essentially used the same Bible as the Orthodox. During the sixteenth century when the Roman Church split apart and the Protestant Churches were founded, all developed their own lists of canonical books to suit their own viewpoints. On the following page is found a complete list of books of the Bible which are recognized as canonical by the Orthodox Church. The books, listed under the heading 'the books that are read', are distinguished from the canonical and inspired books. They are considered part of Holy Scripture and are useful, even profitable to CHRISTIANS.

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T H E O L D T E S T A M E N T

The Old Testament is the inspired record of God's working with the people of Israel. It is the history of that community. It shows how God chose one nation out of all the nations, and how he guides and leads them in their knowledge of Him.

The Old Testament is a cherished part of the Bible. The Church always recognized a continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. We use large parts of the Old Testament in our Church services. For example, the first antiphon (hymn) of the Divine Liturgy, is "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul" which is a Psalm.

The division of the Old Testament: we said that the Bible has many books. The Old Testament can be divided into three major divisions:

1. Historical Books
2. Sapiential or Wisdom Books
3. Prophetic Books

Remember - the Bible is not a single unified literary piece, but a library of books in which every style and type of writing is represented.

The Work of God is expressed in the Near Eastern tradition in the Old Testament.

THE BIBLE:

T H E O L D T E S T A M E N T

HISTORICAL BOOKS

(a) Canonical:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Genesis | 10. II Kings |
| 2. Exodus | 11. I Samuel |
| 3. Leviticus | 12. II Samuel |
| 4. Numbers | 13. I Chronicles |
| 5. Deuteronomy | 14. II Chronicles |
| 6. Joshua | 15. II Ezra |
| 7. Judges | 16. Nehemiah |
| 8. Ruth | 17. Esther |
| 9. I Kings | |

(b) The Books that are read:

18. Judith
19. I Ezra
20. I Maccabees
21. II Maccabees
22. III Maccabees

(note the book of Ezra:
among the Slavs, the books are reversed
in numbers.)

DIDACTIC (meaning to instruct)

(a) Canonical

23. Psalms
24. Job
25. Proverbs of Solomon
26. Ecclesiastes
27. Song of SONGS

(b) The Books that are read:

28. Tobit
29. Wisdom of Sirach
30. Wisdom of Solomon

PROPHETIC

(a) Canonical:

- Greater Prophets-
31. Isaiah
 32. Jeremiah
 33. Ezekiel
 34. Daniel
 35. Lamentation of Jeremiah

(b) The Books that are read:

36. Epistle of Jeremiah
37. Baruch

Lesser Prophets:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 38. Obadiah | 44. Nahum |
| 39. Joel | 45. Zephaniah |
| 40. Jonah | 46. Habakkuk |
| 41. Amos | 47. Haggai |
| 42. Hosea | 48. Zachariah |
| 43. Micah | 49. Malachi |

T H E N E W T E S T A M E N T

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Matthew | 10. Ephesians | 19. Hebrews |
| 2. Mark | 11. Philippians | 20. James |
| 3. Luke | 12. Colossians | 21. I Peter |
| 4. John | 13. I Thessalonians | 22. II Peter |
| 5. Acts of Apostles | 14. II Thessalonians | 23. I John |
| 6. Romans | 15. I Timothy | 24. II John |
| 7. I Corinthians | 16. II Timothy | 25. III John |
| 8. II Corinthians | 17. Titus | 26. Jude |
| 9. Galatians | 18. Philemon | 27. Revelation |

THE LAW:

The first part of the Bible is called the TORAH meaning LAW. It is also called the PENTATEUCH which means the five books, or the Books of Moses. They include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The events described in these books, from the calling of Abraham to the death of Moses, probably took place sometime in the 2nd millennium before CHRIST (2,000-1,200 BC). It is basically sacred history. The main author was Moses. He not only led his people out of the bondage (slavery to) Egypt imposed on them, but he also was their lawgiver and religious leader or teacher.

GENESIS:

The Book of GENESIS contains the pre-history of the people of Israel. It begins with the story of the creation of the world, the fall of ADAM and EVE, and the subsequent, quite sinful, history of the children of Adam. It then tells of God's call and promises of salvation to Abraham, the story of Isaac and Jacob, whom God called Israel, ending with the settlement of the twelve tribes of Israel (the families of the twelve sons of Jacob) in Egypt during the time of Joseph's favor with the Egyptian pharaoh. In traditional church language, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are called the Patriarchs.

EXODUS:

The Book of Exodus relates the deliverance of the people of Israel by Moses from Egyptian slavery to which they were subjected after the death of Joseph. It tells of the revelation of God to Moses...of his divine name YAHWEH - I AM WHO I AM (Exodus 3:14) It gives an account of the passover, exodus, and journey of the Israelites, led by God, through the desert. Also in Exodus is the narrative of God's gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the other laws which God gave to Moses concerning the moral and ritual conduct of His people.

LEVITICUS:

The BOOK OF LEVITICUS is a further book of laws.

NUMBERS:

The BOOK OF NUMBERS concerns itself with a census of the people. It also contains laws given by God to Moses.

DEUTERONOMY:

The BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, which means the "second law", is a law code in which is told again the story of the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic laws. It ends with Moses' death.

HISTORY:

The first books of the Old Testament are LAW books. The second books are the HISTORY books. They cover the history of Israel from the settlement in the promised land of CANAAN to the first centuries before Christ. They include Joshua, Judges, Ruth I and II, Samuel I and II, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, as well as I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, I and II Maccabees, and III Maccabees in the English BIBLE.

WISDOM:

The books of the Bible which are commonly called the WISDOM BOOKS include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, as well as the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach also called Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon from the so-called apocrypha.

PROVERBS:

The Book of Proverbs, called the 'proverbs of Solomon', comes from Solomon's time. The proverbs are short sayings concerning the proper conduct of wise and righteous persons. They are read in their entirety at the week-day Vesper services of the Church during the GREAT FAST. Selections from the Proverbs are also read at the vigils of a number of feasts of the Church since, for CHRISTIANS, the WISDOM OF GOD, is personified in Christ.

PSALMS:

The Psalms are divinely-inspired songs of the People of Israel. They are traditionally called the 'psalms of David', although many

of them come from other authors of much later times. The enumeration and wording of the psalms differ in various scriptural traditions. The Orthodox Church follows the Septuagint version of the psalter. For this reason the numbers and sometimes the texts of certain psalms are different in Orthodox service books from what they are in the Bibles which are translated from the Hebrew instead of the Greek Septuagint. Various psalms and verses of some Psalms are used in all the liturgical services of the Orthodox Church. Virtually all states of man's soul before God are found expressed in the psalms: praising, thanking, blessing, rejoicing, petitioning, repenting, lamenting, questioning, and even complaining. Others recount God's saving actions.

PROPHETS:

There are sixteen books in the BIBLE called by the names of the prophets, although not necessarily written by their hands. A prophet is one who speaks by the direct inspiration of God. Only as a second meaning does the word mean one who foretells the future. Four of the prophetic books are those of the so-called major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Of central importance in Isaiah are the prophecies in the first part of the book, especially #6-12, concerning the coming of the Messiah-King; and the prophecies at the end of the book, about the salvation of all creation in the suffering servant of the Lord.

T H E N E W T E S T A M E N T

THE GOSPELS:

The first books of the New Testament scriptures are the four gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The word "gospel" means GOOD NEWS or GLAD TIDINGS (evangelium Gr.). THE GOSPELS tell of the life of Jesus, and His teachings. None of them is a biography in the classical sense of the word. The gospels were not written merely to tell the story of Jesus. They were written by the disciples of Christ, who were filled with the Holy Spirit after

the Lord's RESURRECTION, to bear witness to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the promised Messiah-Christ of Israel, and Saviour of the world.

In the Orthodox Church, it is not the entire Bible, but only the book of the four gospels which is perpetually enthroned upon the altar table in the church building. Why? This is testimony to the fact that the life of the Church is centered in Christ, the living fulfillment of the law and the prophets...in Christ, who perpetually abides in the midst of His people, the CHURCH, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the SYNOPTIC Gospels, which mean they 'look the same!'. These three books are very similar in content and form. Each of the synoptic gospels follows basically the same beginning: Jesus' baptism by John and His preaching in Galilee. Each centers on the apostles' confession of Jesus as the promised Messiah of God, with the corresponding event of the transfiguration, the announcement by Christ of His need to suffer and die, and the Resurrection on the third day. Each concludes with the account of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. The Gospel of Saint John contains some of the same information, but differs in content, and in form from the other three gospels.

ST. MARK:

The gospel of St. Mark is the shortest, and perhaps first written of the gospels, although this always has been a matter of debate. Its author was not one of the twelve apostles, and it is the common view that this gospel presents the 'tradition' of SAINT PETER.

ST. MATTHEW:

The gospel of Saint Matthew, who was one of the twelve apostles, is considered by some to be the earliest written gospel. There is also the opinion that it was originally written in Aramaic (the language Christ spoke) ... not in Greek. It is a commonly held

view that the gospel of St. Matthew was written for the Jewish Christians to show from the scriptures of the Old Testament that Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham, is truly the Christ, the bearer of God's Kingdom to men.

ST. LUKE:

Like the first gospel of St. Matthew, the third gospel of ST. LUKE was not written by one of the twelve apostles. It was written by one of the original disciples, a physician or doctor known for his association with the apostle Paul. This gospel claimed to be an 'orderly account...delivered by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word'.(1:1-4) Together with the Book of ACTS which was also written by St. Luke, for a certain Theophilus, this gospel forms the most complete 'history' of CHRIST and the early Christian Church that we have.

ST. JOHN:

St. John is different from the synoptic gospels. It is the latest written because it was the work of the beloved apostle of Christ at the end of his life which came near the end of the first century. In most Orthodox versions of the Bible, this gospel is printed before the others as it is the one which is first read in the Church's lectionary beginning at the Divine Liturgy on Easter night.

The gospel of St. John begins with its famous prologue which identifies Jesus of Nazareth with the divine Word of God of the Old Testament. This "WORD OF GOD" was 'in the beginning with GOD,'; 'is God'; and is the One through Whom 'all things were made.' (1:1-3)

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:

The book of the Acts of the Apostles was written by ST. LUKE toward the end of the first century as the second part of his history for a man called Theophilus about Christ and His Church. The book begins with an account of the Lord's ascension and the election of Matthias to take the place of Judas as a member of the twelve apostles.. Then follows the record of the events of

the day of Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Christ empowering them to preach the gospel of new life in the resurrected Saviour to the people of Jerusalem.

The book of Acts of the APOSTLES forms the apostolic lectionary (readings) of the CHURCH'S liturgy during the time from Easter to Pentecost. Selections from it are also read at other feasts of the Church, for instance, on St. Stephen's Day because it is in the book of Acts that we read about the stoning of the first martyr, the disciple, STEPHEN. It is also the custom of the Church to read the Book of Acts over the tomb of Christ on Holy Friday, and over the body of a deceased priest at the wake prior to his funeral.. burial.

THE LETTERS OF ST. PAUL:

Fourteen letters, called EPISTLES, which are ascribed to the Apostle Paul, are included in the New Testament. We will comment on these letters in the order in which they are normally printed in the English Bible and read in the CHURCH'S liturgical year. These letters were written to young mission churches who were unsure of the teachings of the Church, or who were having trouble with non-Christian teachers persuading the Christians that they were wrong. In some of the letters, St. Paul talks about moral and ethical habits that should be developed in the life of a Christian family. Especially in the case of Corinth is this noticeable, because Corinth was never known for its moral standing. In other letters, St. Paul commends the Christians for their strength in resisting the temptation to give up their new-found way of life.

ROMANS:

The letter to the Romans was written by St. Paul while he was in Corinth, sometime at the end of the fifties of the first century. It is one of the most formal and detailed expositions of the doctrinal teaching of St. Paul that we have. It is not one of the easier parts of the Bible to understand without careful study.

FIRST CORINTHIANS:

The first Christian community in Corinth was noted neither for

its inner peace and harmony, nor for the exemplary moral behavior of its members! The two letters to Corinth are filled with doctrine, ethical teachings, answers to questions, replies to problems, some scolding, and finally some of the sternest words St. Paul wrote in any of his letters.

SECOND CORINTHIANS:

This letter is a detailed enumeration and description of St. Paul's suffering and trials as an apostle of Christ, as ST. PAUL writes in his own defense.

GALATIANS:

The letter of ST PAUL to the Galatians was sent from Antioch. Paul was angry because he heard that the people of Galatia were being weak in the faith, so he vented his distress in his letter.

EPHESIANS:

The letters of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Philippians, and the Colossians are called the CAPTIVITY epistles. Why? Because they were written while St. Paul was under house arrest in Rome about 60 A.D. In some early sources, the letter to the EPHESIANS does not contain the words 'who are at Ephesus' which leads us to conclude that the letter may have been intended as a general letter to all churches.

PHILIPPIANS:

This is probably the most intimate letter of all that St. Paul wrote. He sincerely loved this Christian community in Christ because these people were his faithful partners in the gospel 'from the first day until now'. (1:5) In this letter, St. Paul exposes the most personal feelings of his mind and heart as he sees the approaching end of his life.

COLOSSIANS:

The intent in this letter is to instruct the faithful of Colossae in the true Christian gospel because heretical teachers were threatening the community there. It is interesting to note that St. Paul's

concern for his Christian sisters and brothers was so great that even if he could not visit them because he was under arrest, he could and did write to them as soon as he heard news of their community. St. Paul kept track of all the Churches that he founded, wrote to them, and at times even sent young apostolic representatives, like Timothy, to help out.

THESSALONIANS:

These two letters are likely the apostle's first letters. And, they are the earliest written documents of the New Testament scriptures. Authorities say that they were written from Corinth at the end of the forties because a report was received from Timothy who was in Thessalonica which indicated that certain difficulties had arisen in the community. The Christians were confused about the second coming of Christ, and about the resurrection of the dead.

TIMOTHY:

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles. The two letters to Timothy have the same message: to teach 'how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth'. (I Tim. 3:15)

TITUS:

Titus was in Crete when he received the letter from St. Paul outlining the moral requirements of the bishop in the Church, and urging the pastor always to 'teach what befits sound doctrine'. (1:9)

HEBREWS:

Virtually none of the modern scholars of the Bible think that St. Paul wrote this letter. Likely it was a disciple of his. It speaks of the comparison of Christ's sacrifice of the priests of the Old Testament.

LETTER OF ST. JAMES:

The author of this letter was the 'brother of the Lord' meaning not the apostles, but the first bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. It is addressed to the "12 tribes in the dispersion" meaning the Christians other than in the Jerusalem Church. It urges Christians to be steadfast in faith and to do those works which are called for by the 'perfect law' of Christ which is the 'law of liberty'.

LETTERS OF ST. PETER:

Like the letter to the Hebrews, modern scholars have their ideas about this one too! They don't think that St. Peter wrote either one of the letters. But the Tradition of the Church maintains the testimony of the letters...the first being a plea to all 'God's people' to be strong in their sufferings as Christ was strong in His; the second letter being a sermon addressed to those who were newly baptized into the Christian faith.

LETTERS OF ST. JOHN:

Saint John, the writer of the fourth gospel, also wrote these three letters at the close of the first century. They were written as an attack on the heretical 'antichrists' who were changing the doctrines of Christ, and denying His genuine appearance 'in the flesh' for the salvation of the world which lead to grave implications about who Christ really was. The first letter of St. John is the simplest and deepest exposition of the Christian faith that exists.

THE LETTER OF ST. JUDE:

This general epistle is directed to 'those who are called' to 'contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints'.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION:

Also called the APOCALYPSE (disclosed), and the REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, this book is written by St. John the Apostle, too. Dated in the middle of the last half of the 1st century, on the island of Patmos, this book is a vision which caused the Church to hesitate in including it in the New Testament because of difficulty in interpretation.

S T U D Y Q U E S T I O N S

1. What is the place of the Bible in the CHURCH?
2. Why is it important for us to read the Bible?
3. What is the Bible?
4. What are the two major divisions of the Bible?
What are the three major divisions of the Old Testament? Explain briefly.
5. What does it mean that the Bible is the Word of God?
6. Who wrote the Bible? Explain.
7. Who interprets the Bible?
8. What are some hints on reading the Bible?
9. What is the canon of Scriptures?
10. What does it mean to say the Bible lives in the Church?
11. What are Psalms?
12. With what kind of attitude should we approach the Bible?

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W O R D S T O I D E N T I F Y

Scripture	Synoptic
Torah	Canon
Pentateuch	Captivity Epistles
Books of Moses	Epistle
Psalms	Pastoral Epistles
Prophet	Apocalypes
Gospel	Bible

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T H E B I B L E A N D T H E L I T U R G Y

In the Book of Acts 2:42,46 we read of the early Christian Community:

These remained faithful to the teachings of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone.

By this, we see that the early believers prayed to God as a unified body of worshipers and that they followed a definite order of prayer. They observed the established worship of the Temple and they established their own particular observance of the command of Christ to "break bread in his memory".

The Divine Liturgy is a continuation of that same early worship and has elements of both forms of worship. The founts of psalms, hymns and prayers were taken directly from the Old Testament and others were composed to reflect the Good News of salvation brought by Jesus Christ. The words of St. Paul to the Colossians are still addressed to Orthodox Christians today:

With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God. (3:16)

The following selection of sung parts of the Divine Liturgy comprises all three of these elements: psalms, hymns, and inspired songs. It should be kept in mind that the Bible is the source of all these texts and is quoted either directly or indirectly. The Orthodox Christian who is interested in knowing more about his faith can learn both about it and the Bible from the presented materials. It is hoped that with a Concordance and the Bible and a book on the Divine Liturgy one can fathom the deep of our Orthodox, Catholic, Holy and Apostolic Faith.

T H E A N T I P H O N S

There are three manners of singing: declamatory (one voice); symphonic (all voices together); and antiphony (two groups alternately singing). This form of singing goes back to Moses and his sister Miriam. He and the men sang the song and she and the women sang the refrain (Exodus 15).

As is seen from the opening antiphon, the purpose of the singing of psalms is to bless God. The singing gives honor, glory and worship to God. It generates in us fidelity, gratitude and devotion.

The Church in Europe still sings all the psalm and monasteries do as well. The following is according to the Liturgy Book published by the Episcopate.

FIRST ANTIPHON

*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless his holy name: Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
Psalm 102, v. 1, 2.*

SECOND ANTIPHON

Normally Psalm 145, v. 4, 10 are sung but these have been omitted from this edition.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed are thou, O Lord!
Bless the Lord, O my souls! And all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul!
And forget not all his benefits! Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases! The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed are thou, O Lord!*

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

This is a composed hymn and concludes the second Antiphon. It is attributed to the Emperor Justinian (527-565) who wrote it to refute two heresies: Nestorianism which denied unity of person to Christ and also Monophysitism which denied the two natures of Christ.

O Only begotten Son (I Jn. 4:9) and Word of God (Jn. 1:1) who art immortal (I Tim. 6:16) and did deign for our salvation (Jn. 1:14) to become incarnate of the Holy Mother of God and ever virgin Mary (Lu. 1:26; 2:1ff) and without change became man (I Tim. 2:5) and was crucified also, (I Cor. 2:2), O Christ Our God, (Mt. 16:16), trampling down death by death (II Tim. 1:10) who are one of the Holy Trinity, (Mt. 28:19), and are glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: (Jn. 13:31) save us! (Mt. 8:25)

THIRD ANTIPHON

The third antiphon is a stating of the words of Christ in Matthew 5:1 also called the Sermon on the Mount .

In thy kingdon remember us, O Lord: when thou comest into thy kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdon of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that are persecuted for the sake righteousness; for theirs is the Kingdon of heaven.

Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven.

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE HYMN

This hymn is from the time when the bishop entered the church. It was later transformed to fit the entrance with the Gospel Book.

*Come, let us worship and fall down before (Psalm 94:6)
Christ, O Son of God (Mt. 9:27) who are risen from the
dead, save us who sing to thee: Alleluia.*

THE TRISAGION HYMN

This hymn takes its name from the Greek meaning: thrice-holy. It appears to have been sung around 430-450 AD. Verses are from Psalm 98: 9,4.

*Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal, have
mercy on us.*

THE EPISTLE READING

The first part of the Divine Liturgy was the teaching part. It still teaches today, drawing lessons from the Epistles and the Gospels. The Epistle reading begins with the blessing of the celebrant: Peace be with you all. And the reply follows: And with your spirit. These are based on John 20:19.

THE PROKIMENON

These verses from the Psalms introduce the Epistle reading. They vary Sunday to Sunday, weekday, feastday and occasions. The first line is chanted, then sung. A verse is changed and the first line is again sung. Finally, the first half of the first line is chanted and the second half sung.

THE EPISTLE

This is one of the two most direct uses of the Bible in the Orthodox Liturgy. A reading from the Epistle of one of the many in the New Testament follows the rules for a Sunday, weekday, feastday, or specific occasion. The book is called The Epistle Book and the Prokimenon and the Alleluias are there.

THE GOSPEL READING

The introduction to the Gospel reading is like that before the Epistle reading. It is taken from Psalms and at least two verses are chanted. Before, between and after the verses are sung three "Alleluias". These follow the rules for the Prokimenon.

THE GOSPEL

This second of the two readings is the most reversed as it comes from the Gospel Books which represents Christ God himself. It is a reading from one of the four Gospels and follows the same regulations as for the Epistle.

THE GREAT ENTRANCE

The Cherubic Hymn is a composed hymn based on Bible references. This Hymn is sung as the holy gifts of bread and wine, symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ are brought to the Holy Table. It is after this offering that they become the real Body and Blood, that is, after the Epiklesis.

THE CHERUBIMIC HYMN

We who mystically (I Cor. 4:1) represent the Cherubim, and sing to the life-giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn (Isaiah 6:1), let us now lay aside all earthly care, (Mt. 4:19) that we may receive the King of all (I Tim. 6:15) who comes escorted by invisible armies of angels. (Heb. 1:6) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRELUDE TO THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY GIFTS

Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear! Let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation in peace.

(Mt. 26:41)

A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise. (Lv. 7:11)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (II Cor. 13:13)

And with your spirit.

Let us lift up our hearts. (Jer. Lament 3:41)

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord. (II Cor. 9:15)

THE TRIUMPHAL HYMN

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of thy glory; Hosanna in the highest; Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Is. 6:1-5) (Mt. 21:9)

THE WORDS OF CHRIST

Take, eat: this is my Body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins. (Mt. 26:26)

Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. (Mt. 26:28)

Thine own of thine own we offer to thee in behalf of all and for all. (Chron. 29:14)

THE CONSECRATION

We praise thee, (Ps. 75:1) we bless thee (Ps. 34:1)

we give thanks to thee, (Ps. 100:4) O Lord, and we pray to thee, O Lord, O our God. (II Thes. 1:11)

And grant that we with one mouth and one heart glorify (Ez. 11:19) and praise thine all honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages.

And may the mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all. (II Cor. 13:13)

THE OUR FATHER

Our Father, who are 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. (Mt. 6:10)

THE HOLY ELEVATION

One is Holy, one is Lord; Jesus Christ in the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:11)

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the highest, Alleluia. (Ps. 148:1)

THE COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

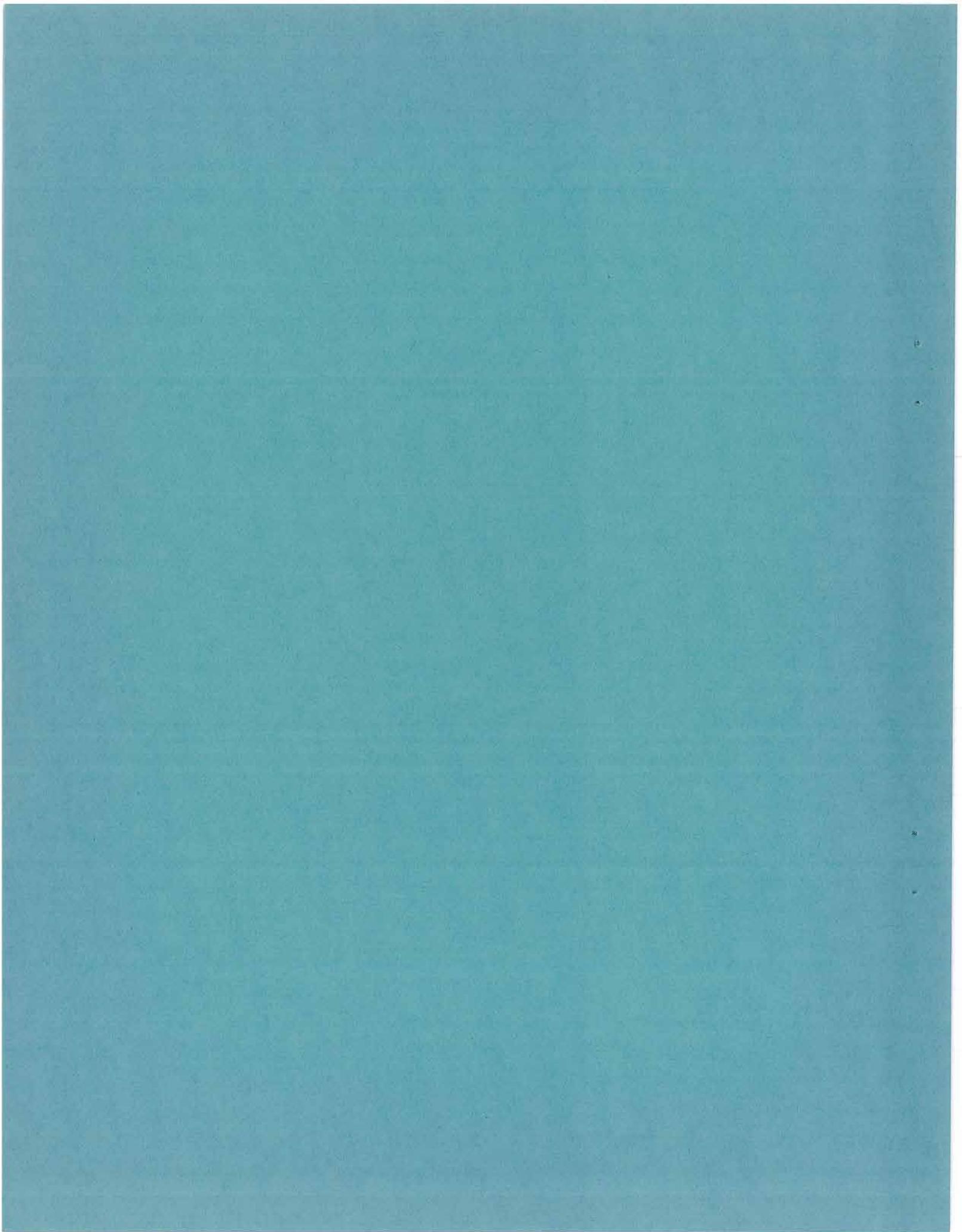
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God and has revealed himself to us. (Mt. 21:9) (Ps. 118:27)

O God, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. (Ps. 27:9)

Let our mouths be filled with thy praise, O Lord, that we may sing of thy glory. For thou hast permitted us to partake of thy holy, divine, immortal and life-giving mysteries. Establish us in thy sanctification, that all the day long we may meditate on thy righteousness. Alleluia (3) (Ps. 71:8)(Jn. 6:59 6:50 6:33-59) (I Cor. 11:27)

FINAL HYMN OF PRAISE

Blessed be the name of the Lord, henceforth and for evermore. (Ps. 112:2)



T H E B I B L E A N D T H E S A C R A M E N T S

BAPTISM

'Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.'

(Matthew 28:19, 29)

Epistle Reading: *Romans 6:3-11*

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 28:16-20*

References: *Galatians 3:27; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11, 16:15-16
Luke 3:21-22, 24:46-48; John 1:29-34, 3:5; Acts 2:41-47
Colossians 2:12*

CHRISTMATION

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and have all received the knowledge. *(I John 2:20)*

References: *Acts 1:2, 2:38, 1:45, 8:14-17, 19:1-7, 10:38;*

I John 2:27; II Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30

CHURCHING

And when the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.... *(Luke 2:22)*

Reference: *Luke 2:22-38*

EUCCHARIST

Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat;' he said 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had

returned thanks he gave it to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said 'for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.' (*Matthew 26:26-29*)

'I tell you most solemnly, you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat. Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal.'
(*John 6:26, 27*)

'I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.' (*John 6:53-58*)

References: *Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; John 6:32-40, 44-51, Chapter 13; Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 10:14-22, 11:23-27.*

PENANCE

'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'
(*Matthew 16:19-20*)

The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and this will cure you; the heartfelt prayer of a good man works very powerfully. (*James 5:15, 16*)

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.' (*John 20:21-23*)

References: *Matthew 6:14, 15; 18:18; Mark 1:4,5, 11:25; Luke 5:20
John 5:22; I John especially I John 1:8 - 2:2,
3:3-9, 4:20.*

MATRIMONY

Epistle Reading:

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body - - and we are it's living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church. To sum up; you too, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

(*Ephesians 5:21-33*)

Gospel Reading: *John 2:1-12*

References: *Genesis 1:28, 2:18, 2:24*

LAYING ON OF HANDS OR ORDINATION

People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God.

Do not be too quick to lay hands on any man, and never make yourself an accomplice in anybody else's sin; keep yourself pure.

(I Timothy 5:22)

References: *Matthew 28:19; John 20:22-23; Acts 14:23, 20:28.*

ANOINTING THE SICK OR UNCTION

Epistle Reading:

For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord: remember it is those who had endurance that we say are the blessed ones. You have heard of the patience of Job, and understood the Lord's purpose, realizing that the Lord is kind and compassionate. Above all, my brothers, do not swear by heaven or by the earth, or use any oaths at all. If you mean 'yes', you must say 'yes'; if you mean 'no', say 'no'. Otherwise you make yourselves liable to judgement. If any one of you is in trouble, he should pray; if anyone is feeling happy, he should sing a psalm. If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up again; and if he has committed any sins he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and this will cure you; the heartfelt prayer of a good man works very powerfully. (*James 5:10-17*)

Epistle Readings: *Romans 15:1-8; I Corinthians 12:27 - 13:8;*

II Corinthians 6:16 - 7:1; II Corinthians 1:8-12;

Galatians 5:22- 6:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:14-24

Gospel Readings: *Luke 10:25-38; Luke 19:1-11; Matthew 10:1, 5-9;*

Matthew 8:14-24; Matthew 25:1-14; Matthew 14:21-29

Matthew 9:9-14.

References: *Mark 6:13, 16:17-18*

FUNERAL

Epistle Reading: *I Thessalonians 4:13-18*

Gospel Reading: *John 5:24-30*

PROFESSION OF MONKS

Epistle Reading: *Ephesians 6:10-17*

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 10:37, 38, 11:28-30; Matthew 10:37-42, 11:1*

BLESSING OF WATER

Epistle Reading: *Hebrews 2:11-18*

Gospel Reading: *John 5:1-4*

N A M E S O F J E S U S

Christ (Greek-Christos; Hebrew-Mashiah)

1. Anointed One
2. Expected from David's line
3. No one, not even the disciples associated suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection with the Messiah.
4. Among the Jewish people suffering and divinity were not associated with a Messiah.

Son of Man

1. Used to qualify the title of Christ
2. The Son of Man is identified with the Suffering Servant of the Lord.
3. The Son of Man is used only by Jesus in the Gospels.
4. The term is used when speaking of suffering, passion and death
5. Two comings of the Son of Man:
 - a. first coming in humiliation
 - b. second coming in glory

