



THE PRAYER TO THE SAINTS

The Prayer to the Saints is animated by the Orthodox Church. Why? For physical death is not the defeat of the Christian. It's a glorious road to heaven.

The Christian does not cease to be part of the church when he dies, nor is he set apart, idle, until the Day of Judgment.

The true church is made up of all who are in Christ - in Heaven or on Earth. **Their membership is not limited to just those living in the present.**

Those who are in heaven with Christ are alive, in communion with God, worshipping God, fulfilling their part in the Body of Christ. **They actively pray for those in the Church** – and perhaps, they really pray for the whole world (Ephesians 6:8; Revelation 8:3).

We pray to the departed saints for their prayers, as we ask our Christian friends to pray on earth for us.

O Lover of mankind, Thou hast bestowed upon Thy Saints the fountain of Thy Gifts, that they may drink it entirely. The fountain that never diminishes from exhaustion and that satisfies the whole world with its divine currents that pour out of their hearts. (Ode 5, Canon 1)



IN THIS WE BELIEVE III

THE LITURGY

Liturgy is a term used to describe the model or form of **communal worship** of God. The word liturgy is derived from the Greek word meaning "common work." All biblical references to worship in heaven involve the use of the liturgy.

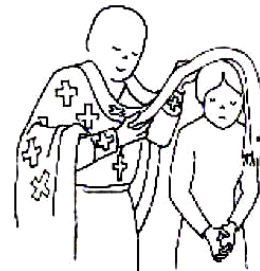
In the Old Testament, God ordained a liturgy, or specific pattern of worship. We find it described in great detail in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

In the New Testament we find that the Church maintains the Old Testament worship of Israel expressed in both the synagogue and the temple, adjusting it to maintain its fulfillment in Christ.

The Orthodox liturgy, which developed over many centuries, still retains that ancient form of worship. **The main elements of the Liturgy include hymns, the reading and proclamation of the Gospel, prayers, and the Eucharist itself.** For Orthodox Christians, the expressions "The Liturgy" or "The Divine Liturgy" refer to the Eucharistic rite instituted by Christ Himself at the Last (Mystic) Supper.



CONFESSION



It is the open admission of known sins before God and man.

It literally means "agreeing" with God about our sins.

James the Apostle exhorts us to confess our sins to God before presbyters, or priests, as they are called today (James 5:16). **We are also exhorted to confess our sins directly to God** (1 John 1:9).





The Orthodox Church has always followed the New Testament practices of confession before a priest as well as private confession to the Lord.

Confession is one of the most important means of repentance, and of receiving the assurance that our worst sins are truly forgiven. It is also one of the most powerful aids in forsaking and overcoming those sins.



DISCIPLINE

It is necessary to maintain purity and holiness in the Church and to encourage repentance in those who have not responded to the admonition of their brothers and sisters in Christ, and of the Church, to renounce their sins.

Church **discipline** often **focuses on exclusion from communion** (excommunication). The New Testament records how St. Paul ordered the discipline of excommunication for an unrepentant man involved in sexual relations with his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:1-5).

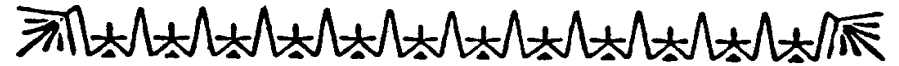
The Apostle John warned us not to receive into our homes those who willingly reject the truth of Christ (2 John 9:10).

Throughout its history, **the Orthodox Church has exercised discipline with compassion when necessary**, always to help bring about the necessary change of heart and to help God's people live pure and holy lives, **never as a punishment.**



*"Repent ye therefore, and be converted,
that your sins may be blotted out"*
(Acts 3:19).

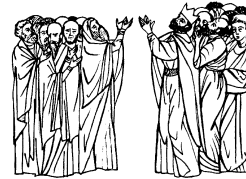
*"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to
salvation"*
(2 Cor. 7:10).



THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS



When Christians leave this life, **they remain an active and vital part of the church**, the Body of Christ. **They are alive in the Lord** and are "written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23).



They worship God (Revelation 4:10) and **dwelt in His heavenly mansions** (John 14:2).

In the Eucharist we draw "to the City of the Living God" and **join in communion with the saints** in our worship of God (Hebrews 12:22). They are that "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds us and that we want to imitate by running "the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1, KJV).

To reject or ignore the communion of saints is the denial of the fact that **those who died in Christ are still part of His Holy Church.**

THE VIRGIN MARY

Mary is called **Theotokos**, which means "She who gave birth to God" or "Mother of God," for she bore the Son of God in her womb and from her took His Humanity.

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, recognized this reality when she called Mary "the Mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43).



Mary said of herself, "All generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). So, we Orthodox have **never ceased to call her blessed throughout all our generations.**

Mary lived a chaste and holy life, and we hold her to great honour as **the model of holiness, the first of the redeemed, the Mother of the new humanity** in her Son. It is very disconcerting to orthodox Christians that many professing Christians who claim to believe in the Bible never call Mary blessed or honour the one **who bore and raised God the Son in his human flesh.**

