

pray out
with #eagles

Consistory Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry
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Participant Workbook

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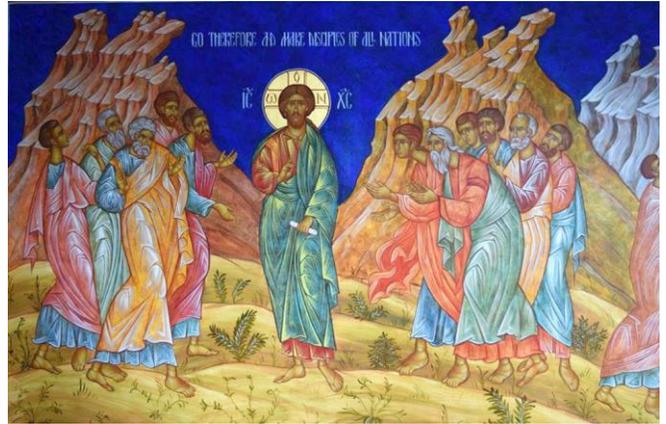
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“Pray Without Ceasing”

Session 1

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” Galatians 5:22-23

“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, A door of enclosure about my lips.” Psalm 140:3



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

After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the Apostles followed Jesus Christ’s instructions to go out into the world to teach the Gospel. Much of the New Testament tells us about their work of starting Churches in cities they, especially Saint Paul, visited. Once a Church was started, Saint Paul would often send letters to remind the new Church of how Christians should live, to help them deal with problems they may be having, to help them stay strong, and to keep growing.

→ These letters gave such important advice, that we still read and listen to them today. When do you hear these letters read?

→ Do you know another word for letters like these?

The words “pray without ceasing” are from an **epistle**, which Saint Paul wrote to the Church in the city of Thessalonica.

→ What does “without ceasing” mean? What are some things that are happening *ceaselessly* right now?

Can *you* really do anything without ceasing? Well, you already do! Your brain never stops working, sending messages to every part of your body...that’s why your heart beats and you keep breathing. What Saint Paul is really telling us is that prayer should be as much a part of our lives as our own breath is.

Why breathing? We never stop breathing as long as our bodies are working. Even when we are asleep, our bodies know...without us telling it every second, to keep breathing in and out; steady and calm. Our prayer should be like breathing, our mind and heart praying – steady and calm, without being told to do so.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

First, let's talk about two things that prayer is **NOT**!

Prayer is NOT making a wish. Lots of people – adults and children – sometimes think that praying is almost the same as closing your eyes before you blow out the candles on your birthday cake! But prayer should **never** be confused with superstition or “luck.”

Prayer is also NOT “making a deal” with God...promising to “be good” or act a certain way if our prayer is answered the way we want it to be.

→ Can you think of why it would be foolish to think about prayer in these ways?

Now, let's start to learn what prayer really is!

Prayer is the language of our Faith.

From your very first words of baby-talk, language is one of the most important things you learn. Why do you think your family was so happy at your first words? How much more useful is your language today?

You probably know someone who didn't learn English as a child...maybe *you* spoke another language first. Depending on the age we learn a language, we may never be comfortable with it or think of it as our own, even after using it for many years. Many people continue to think and have dreams in their first language for their whole lives.

Language also grows as you do. As you've gotten older, you've gotten better at expressing yourself. If you think about prayer as a very special language used when talking to God, you can see how important it is to start learning when you are young. You must try to improve your language skills as you grow so you can express yourselves to God as the person you are.

There are two ways to get better at a language: to read and listen to it as it's used by more experienced people, and to use it yourself until you become comfortable. We want to make sure we will always be comfortable with the language of prayer and that it comes naturally to us.

You know by now that language can be one of our most useful tools, but it can also be a source of hurt or punishment. God Himself shows us this in Holy Scripture.

→ What is one time that God used our human language as a punishment

→ When did He use it in a most helpful way?

Prayer is the way we *communicate* with God.

Spoken or written language is just one way we have of *communicating*. What's the difference between just talking and communicating? Do you always listen to people who are talking to you? Do you always hear what they are really saying?

If communicating were just talking, it would be just about impossible to “pray without ceasing!”

“Communicate” comes from a Latin word that means “common”; that grew into other words meaning “fellowship” and “to do something together.”

→ Can you think of any other words we use that come from the same base word?

→ How are they all related?

People can talk to themselves, but in order to really communicate four things are needed:

1. A message
2. Someone wanting to send the message
3. A way to send the message
4. Someone to receive the message

When we pray, we want to send a message to God. As we learn more about prayer, we'll talk more about what the message might be and ways God has given us, through His Church, to send our message. The most important thing to remember right now is that **GOD IS ALWAYS READY TO RECEIVE OUR MESSAGE.**

We use spoken language to pray but there are other ways we send our messages. We use our bodies and faces to communicate silently every day, sometimes without thinking about it or realizing we are doing so. We call this "body language." Sometimes our body language shows the world what we really mean, even if our words say something else!

Another way we communicate is through our *attitudes* and *actions*. What if you've been asked to do chores at home, but you choose to go spend time with your friends instead? Or you may do the chores, just not as well as you could have, or with lots of pouty body language. What are you communicating? What if you ask someone older to help you with a difficult math problem, and they explain it to you while they sigh out loud and roll their eyeballs, how do you feel?

Remember, actions sometimes speak louder than words!

Our body language, our attitudes and our actions are very important ways we communicate. When we use them to communicate love to those around us and to do our best at all times, we show God that we are living as He wants us to and that we are thankful for all He has given us. They help us to "pray without ceasing."



God's Language

by Lauren Sauter

What strange language is this?
With its enchanting syllables,
And its exotic sounds?
Can it be, has it finally been found?
Is it – Yes! It is indeed,
The Language of God
After years of searching,
And defeat, time after time again;
The Language has been found
Indeed, it took no more searching,
Then going to Church takes trouble.
The Search was so hard,
And yet, the Heart and Soul needed only to be opened
In truth, the Search would have been simple,
Had Belief only been apart of it.
But it makes no difference now,
For the Language has been found
And guess where it was,
During all those years of searching:
It was in my Heart, with my Savior,
Inside of me, all the time.

Lauren, 14, is a parishioner at St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, D.C. She became an Orthodox Christian at age 10

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Love - 1 Corinthians 13

WHY DO WE PRAY?

Session Two, Part 1: Getting closer to God

Begin the session with the Lord's Prayer.

We pray to get closer to God. God is everywhere around us at all times, but most of the time, sadly, we ignore Him. We act as if He is a stranger at a bus stop or in the waiting room at the dentist's office: someone who just happens to be at the same place we are. We don't talk to Him, we just go about our business, and every now and then, out of curiosity, we take a peek to see if He's still there.

But God **isn't** a stranger to us; He knows us better than anyone else ever can. He created us and knows each and every one of us from before the time we are born and will be with us "even to the end of the world." He knows our thoughts, no matter how secret. He knows all of our joys, our sorrows, our strengths, and our weaknesses...and He loves us **ANYWAY**. So it only makes sense that we should get to know Him better and better every day of our lives. The best way to get to know someone is through honest communication with Him.

Of course, our communication with God is different than what it would be with just anyone we want to get to know.

There are certain special messages that we should send to God as we learn to pray without ceasing. We should pray:

- **To praise and glorify Him;**
- **To thank Him; and,**
- **To ask His forgiveness for the sins we've committed.**

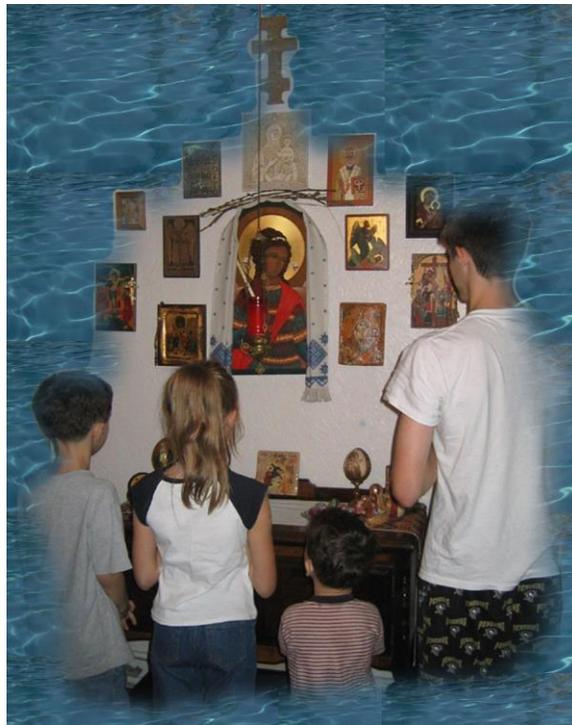
Only then can we ask Him for His continued blessings and for special needs.

To Praise and Glorify

To praise and glorify means to show that we think highly of someone or something. There is no one or no thing that we should ever think more highly of than God!

The word "praise" is used often today: to praise someone for singing beautifully, or for being smart, or for doing anything well...even when an animal learns a trick! We enjoy being praised when we do a good job; this is natural and fine. The thing to remember, though, is that all of our talents and abilities come from God, so the praise is actually due to Him. When someone compliments you, you should say thank you, of course, but also a small prayer: "Glory to God."

Read Psalm 66. There are many beautiful songs of praise in the book of Psalms. [Add Psalm 66 to the personal prayer books/journals.](#)



To Thank

"Thanking prayers" are usually the first prayers we learn when we are young. We thank God for our food, our families, and other blessings that we see around us. We must never take any of these things for granted and should continue to thank Him for them. To pray without ceasing, we show our thanks not only in words, but also by treating these blessings well.

As we get older, we must learn to also thank God for the things we can't see or understand. Our lives, even when we are having problems, are part of God's plan for mankind. As we learn to trust Him, we can give thanks to just be a part of this marvelous plan.

To Ask Forgiveness

When we pray we must honestly look at ourselves and ask God's forgiveness for what we've done wrong. When we ask Him to "forgive us our trespasses," we should take a few moments to think about what those trespasses are. Yes, God already knows what we've done. That is why we ask Him to forgive us for the things we've done "voluntarily and involuntarily...in knowledge or in ignorance." We can tell God anything, even the things that we are too embarrassed to tell anyone else. It's important for us to think about the sins we know we have committed. Then we can honestly apologize and work to do better.

Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us in the same way "as we forgive those who trespass against us." These are strong words! Unless we sincerely forgive the people who hurt us, we are saying that we don't need God to forgive us! Of course this isn't true...we need Him to forgive us and help us in our dealings with others. Forgiving someone, right away, is another way to pray without ceasing.

Jesus Christ taught us the Lord's Prayer. How are praise, thanksgiving, and forgiveness included?

Now that we've praised and thanked God and asked Him for forgiveness, we can ask Him for the things we *think* we need. Some people believe that if they ask God for something and then don't get it, He's not listening to their prayers. They forget that God knows best and that the things we ask for may not be what's best for us. God **always** hears your prayer, and **always** answers it. But sometimes the answer is "no" or "not right now."

He tells us to ask for things (Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you), but to trust and respect His answer.

"Now this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything _____,
He hears us"

Praying for Others

Prayer is a sign of love: our love for God and our love for other people. We pray for the people that we know and love, for strangers in the world, for our enemies, and for the departed. These prayers for others are called "intercessions." *To intercede* means to act for someone else.

Knowing that everyone in the world needs God's help, we add our prayers to theirs. If God hears each one of us, imagine how He hears a whole group of us praying for the same person! We also pray for others because they may not be able to pray for themselves. We pray for the departed, asking God to give them good rest and forgiveness of sins. We pray for our enemies because only God knows what is in their hearts, and we don't want their hatred of us to bring them to further sin.

When we pray for others who we know, we should pray for them by name. Remember, God knows each of them, too.

Our prayer books have *petitions* that include the people for whom we should intercede. There is a simple way to remember everyone you pray for when you don't have a prayer book.

Look at your hand. It is a gift from God that helps you almost every minute of the day. You cannot forget your hand! You can also use your hand to remember what we have learned today.

Next to or inside your thumb write – Those who are closest to me. In this way you can begin praying for those easiest for you to remember.

Next to or inside your index finger write - Teach, Instruct, Heal. Your pointer finger “points” the way and gives direction. People who teach, instruct and heal such as clergy, teachers, doctors and missionaries need wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to “point” those they are with in the right direction.

Next to or inside your middle finger write – Leaders. Your middle finger is the tallest finger. Leaders such as Bishops, government officials, administrators and leaders in business need God's guidance to make good decisions. They make decisions that are for and affect all of us on a daily basis. Their leadership influences one to millions of people.

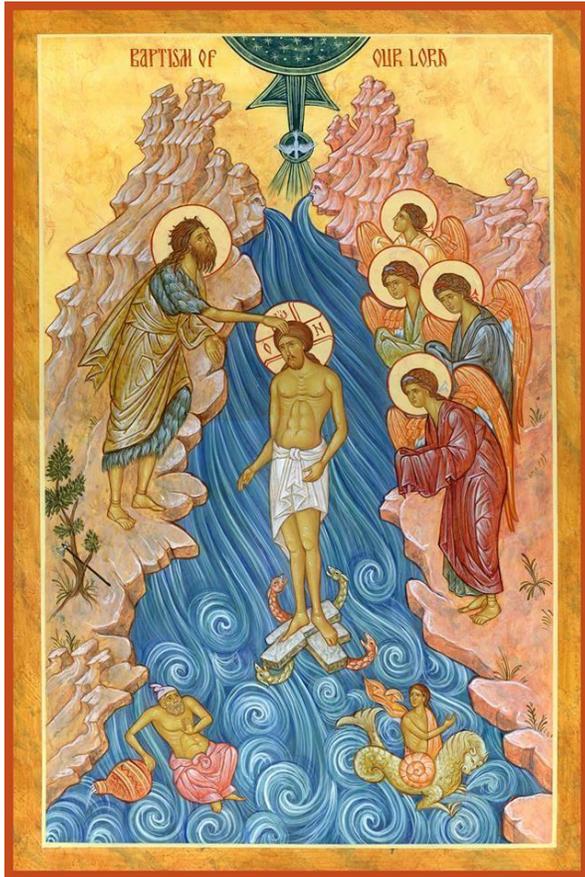
Next to or inside your ring finger write – Those in trouble, pain or departed. The ring finger is the weakest of all fingers. It is the only finger that does not have an independent tendon to make it work. This will help to remind you to pray for those who are weakened by pain, sorrow, stress, troubles or have left his life. These people are in constant need of prayer.

Next to or inside your pinkie finger write – Me. Your pinkie finger is the smallest. This will help you to remember that your relationship in respect to God and all the other people you have prayer for. Once you have prayed for others, you should have a better understanding and perspective of your own blessings, needs, and troubles.



WHY DO WE PRAY?

Session Three, Part 2: The Holy Spirit lives in us



Do you remember what happened as soon Jesus came out of the Jordan after He was baptized?

The same thing happened to you when you were baptized! When you came out of the baptismal water, you were anointed with oil as the seal of the Holy Spirit, the sign that God has adopted you as one of His children and sent His Spirit to live in you, making you a temple of God. This Mystery is called Chrismation, because the oil used by the priest is called Holy Chrism.

As a child of God, it's only natural that you should communicate with your Father often. The life of the Holy Spirit within you gives you another important reason to pray. Just as you need to exercise your muscles to keep them strong and growing, prayer is the "work out" for the holy part of you...and that part is just as real as your heart and other muscles. Prayer is part of your "total fitness program!"

But the wonderful thing about the Holy Spirit is that He actually gives us the power to pray.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can honestly bring our prayers to God. The more we do, the stronger the Holy Spirit grows in us. The Holy Spirit will even do the work for us when we honestly can't. Read Romans 8:26. Maybe the Holy Spirit is groaning because we're making Him do all the work!

With the gift of the Holy Spirit comes responsibility. We are to "bear fruits" in our life.

→ What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? (Read Galatians 5:22-23. Discuss each of the fruits.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Prayer will help us bear these fruits and show the world around us the wonderful gift that is a life with God.

Prayer for our enemies: Lord Jesus Christ, in Your great mercy You prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified You, and You taught us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. Lord, I pray that You forgive those who treat me unjustly and speak out against me, and that You bless them and guide them according to Your will. Take away any bitterness I may have in my heart against them. Lord, may Your forgiveness, goodness and love be revealed in all of us, to Your praise and glory. Amen

Final Thought from the Church Fathers: Prayer is a conversation directly with God, being always with God, having one's soul united with Him and one's mind inseparable. A person becomes one with the angels and unites with them in perpetual praise and longing for God.
-St. Symeon of Thessaloniki

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Peace - Proverbs 16:3-4

Supplemental Materials:

The Prologue of Ochrid

A true friend prays to God for his friend. A true friend cares about the salvation of his friend's soul. To draw a friend back from false ways and set him on the true path - that is a precious friendship. The saints of God are a man's greatest friends.

The two young men, Barnabas and Saul, were friends and went together to Gamaliel's school. When Barnabas became a Christian, he persistently and with tears prayed to God that He would enlighten Saul's understanding and turn his heart, that he too might become a Christian. Barnabas often spoke to Saul about Christ the Lord, but Saul mocked him and thought him misguided.

But the gracious Lord did not leave Barnabas's prayer unfruitful. He appeared to Saul, turned him from the false way and set him on the way of truth. The converted Saul fell at the feet of his friend and cried: "O Barnabas, teacher of the truth, now I am convinced of the truth of what you said to me about Christ!"

Barnabas wept for joy and embraced his friend. The friend saved his friend's soul by his fervent prayer. If Barnabas had succeeded in making Paul Emperor of Rome, he would have done less than he in fact did by bringing him to the truth by his prayers.

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY? Part 1

Session Four

Begin the Session with prayer to the Holy Trinity, *O Heavenly King*.

When we go to Church every week, we *worship* God with our parish family. This is a very, very important form of prayer that also allows us to receive Holy Communion. There are also times, like here and today, when we pray in a group outside of church services. We should try to find various times to pray as a family when we are home, as well.

Jesus taught us that we must also pray privately, which means to have our own personal time with God. Private prayer doesn't take the place of going to church or praying with others. It's an important addition...like a plant needs light **and** water, we need public and private prayer to grow.

→ Read Matthew 6: 6. Where does Jesus tell you to pray?

That certainly doesn't sound like it would make it possible to pray without ceasing! But Jesus is telling us that our prayer should be between God and ourselves. We don't have to announce to the world that we are praying. Sometimes the room we go into can be a room in our hearts. Whether we are praying in words or through our actions and attitudes, we can trust that God is receiving our message...and that's what matters.

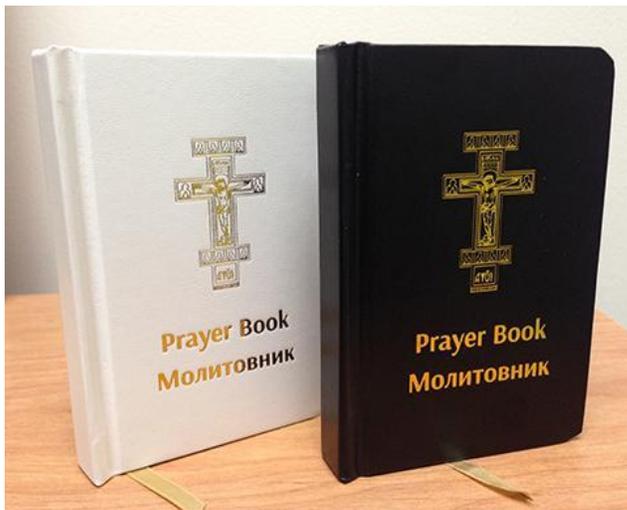
How we pray is very important. First, we must try very hard to clear our minds of everything else. This is very difficult at first because we have so much around us and so many things in our life to think about, but with practice it will get easier. Having a certain place to pray will help; maybe in your room or somewhere else in your house that is quiet. We should have at least one icon in our prayer corner to help us focus on what we are about to do. Maybe you can ask your parents to help you set up a family prayer corner that everyone can use. This can have a candle and incense or oil (*but these should only be used with your parents' permission and when they are at home with you!*)

Once we've cleared our minds we should think about what we want to say...for what do we need to ask forgiveness, do we have something for which we are especially thankful, do we know someone who needs extra help? Now we are ready to start.

You should have your own Orthodox prayer book. Many of the prayers may be difficult for you now, but you will "grow into" them. Your parents, priest, church school teachers, or godparents can all help if you have trouble with any of the words. When you are saying the words of the

prayers in your prayer book, you are using words from our Holy Tradition. The Church has prayed these words for centuries so we can trust that they are true and proper and pleasing to God.

While we use prayers from a prayer book to guide us through Holy Tradition of the Church, this doesn't mean that you can *only* say prayers from a prayer book. You shouldn't skip prayer if you don't have your book. Perhaps you would like to add a prayer in your own words when you have finished the prayers of the Church. This is fine, and sometimes necessary for us. Just remember, who you are talking to! Even in our own words, prayer should be *reverent*.



One way to make your own words into a reverent prayer is to remember it can be G-R-E-A-T.

Greeting...the special way we call upon God

Reason...are you asking for help, or giving special thanks, or just saying, "I love you?"

Emotion...explain how you feel: sad, afraid, happy?

Action...ask God for what you want...help with a special problem, good health, etc., and remember that it will be according to His Will

Thanks...thank God for His blessings in the past and for accepting your prayer

Write a GREAT prayer here.

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Longsuffering - Psalm 11 (12)

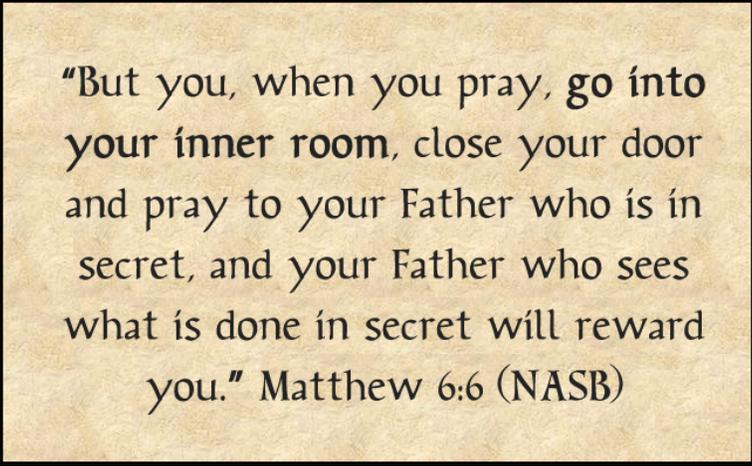
G R E A T!
G R E A T!

Once we realize how important and wonderful prayer is, we will want to pray more often. We will want to make sure that we have enough private time with God to say everything we need and want to say. The best way to do this is by building our own *Rule of Prayer*. Very simply, this means choosing a regular time and place to pray everyday, and choosing which prayers we will use. Not quite as simply, it means we then follow our rule!

The Church gives us beautiful prayers, and even tells when they should be used. But you may not be able to say them completely everyday when you have to get ready for school and out of the house in time for the school bus. Without allowing the proper time, you would have to say them so quickly that you wouldn't understand a single word. But you can still make them a part of your rule, by choosing a few of the prayers and *committing* to saying them every morning. Remember, being busy in the morning isn't an excuse to not pray. You may have to get up a few minutes earlier, or rearrange your routine, in order to have time to pray. But a rule's a rule!

Following your rule will get easier the longer that you keep at it. Just as your body lets you know it's time to eat, your heart will remind you that it's time to pray

You can start to build your rule of prayer right now. Think about your days at home. Look at the schedule that you just wrote down.



"But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." Matthew 6:6 (NASB)

→ Are there times that you pray now? Do you have enough peace and quiet at those times to pray sincerely? Is there a time that would be better? What can you do to make a time better? Do you think you should *add* a time for prayer? Take a few minutes to think about these questions, and write the time or times you will *commit* to being part of your rule.

Once you have chosen the time you will pray, choose the prayers you will start with. Keep it simple at first, and choose only prayers that you know you will not have to hurry through, ones you can concentrate on and say sincerely.

Now that you've set a place and time to pray and chosen which prayers you'll say, you're ready to start living your rule. Give yourself some time, you may find that you have to make some changes once you get started. The important thing is to stick with it! Don't give up, even if you've skipped or haven't been able to keep to it perfectly. Just start again. This takes *discipline*. Remember, the Holy Spirit is in you, helping you.

Your rule of prayer should grow and change over time, just as you will. From time to time you can add specific prayers based on what is going on in your life. You might say a special prayer for a family member who is sick or to ask God for help when you are trying something new. When the sick person gets better you would change your prayers to say thank you to God for their health. After trying your new activity, thank God for helping you. If things didn't go according to plan, thank God for showing you an opportunity to get better at something. Don't worry if you aren't sure what to say, the church provides many specific prayers and our priest or your parents can also help you to find the right words.

Another way to grow your rule of prayer is to incorporate Holy Scripture, perhaps not every day at first, but once or twice a week. The Good News of the Bible can provide us with support, comfort, and encouragement.

→ Do you know where to locate the daily scripture reading?

The Psalms are beautiful prayers you can read. Find out the Epistle and Gospel reading for Sunday, and read them on the Saturday before.

Your rule of prayer will become a part of your life. Make sure that it grows as you do. You'll know when the time has come to add some time and another prayer or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Starting to live a rule of prayer at a young age is truly a wonderful gift to give to yourself. It will help you keep the Holy Spirit alive in you, growing with you, ready to share all the many joys and sorrows that are to come.

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Faithfulness - Proverbs 15:26-33.

My Prayer Rule

Where I will pray

When I will pray

What I will Pray

THE CHURCH PRAYS WITHOUT CEASING

Special People Pray for Us

Session Six

Begin the Session with prayer to the Theotokos, *O Hail Mary, Full of Grace* (available on next page).

When you were Baptized and Chrismated, you became a member of the Holy Orthodox Church, the living Body of Jesus Christ. We here on earth are called the Church Militant because we are still striving each day to live according to God's teachings and commandments. In addition to those of us living in the Church today, this Body also includes all the righteous people who lived before us and are now living in the Kingdom of God, the Saints. Those in heaven are called the Church Triumphant because they have already fought the good fight and continue to pray for us. Together we make the Holy Orthodox Church. The Saints of the Church help us in two ways. When we learn about their lives of great faith and love of God, they become our role models...people we want to be like. But the Saints help us in another wonderful way: they pray to God for us.

The first of these people is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mary is greater than all of the Saints; the Orthodox Church calls her "Theotokos" or "Birth-giver of God." She is the greatest "role model" that we Orthodox Christians have in our lives because she happily accepted God's plan for Her life. She is the Mother to all Orthodox Christians and the greatest helper we have in bringing our prayers to God.

From Holy Scripture, we know that the first miracle that Jesus performed in public happened because Mary asked Him to help her friends. (Read John 2:1-11).

→ Mary, Jesus and His disciples were invited to _____ in the town of _____. Mary told Jesus that the hosts ran out of _____. She told the servants to _____ Jesus turned _____ into wine.



Of course, seeing a miracle performed is a marvelous thing that helped people believe that Jesus truly is the Son of God. But there is another wonderful thing we learn here: when Mary sees that people are in need, She asks Her Son to help them. She prays to God for all of us, and through her prayers we are saved! Because of His great love for His Mother, Jesus hears her and answers those prayers according to the will of His Father. Here is the most simple and fervent prayer to the Theotokos: "O Holy Birth-giver of God, Save Us!"

Every service in the Orthodox Church includes at least one prayer to the Theotokos, and we should remember her in our own private prayer. We thank her for giving herself to be a part of God's plan for our salvation, we recognize her life as one to follow, and we ask her to pray for us. It's very important that we understand and remember that Orthodox Christians don't *worship* the Theotokos; worship is only for God in the Holy Trinity.

Read Luke 1:28 and 1:42.

→ Who said these verses? _____ and

→ What does this tell us about Mary?

Hail, Mary, full of grace
the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your women
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

A little further in the same chapter Mary says a beautiful prayer thanking God. (Luke 1:46-55)

→ What does she predict about herself?

Of course, this has come true!

The Theotokos is not the only one in God's Kingdom who is praying for us. We also ask our guardian angel and all the saints to remember us in their prayers.

We can, and do, pray to *all* of the saints. There are also many saints to whom we pray in special times of need. But each one of us should come to know and pray to our *patron saint*. You may have been born on the day when the Church remembers that saint, or you may be named after him or her. You may have been given that saint's name at your Baptism and use that name when you receive Communion or participate in other Mysteries in the Church. If you don't know who your patron saint is, you can talk to your spiritual father and ask him to help you find one. As you learn about your patron saint's life, you will have a hero to follow and a very special friend praying to God for you. The simplest way to pray to your Patron Saint or any Saint is: *O Holy Saint (insert name), pray unto God for me a sinner.*

Having the Theotokos, all the saints, and our guardian angels praying for us is a wonderful comfort, but the Church doesn't stop there. We've already talked about how we, in our own prayers, remember and *intercede* for many people and how the Church prays for us, as well. There are people who live in the world with us and have responsibilities that might keep them from attending church every day or fully praying all the daily services – that is why we pray FOR them.

There is a group of people within the Holy Orthodox Church who devote their entire lives to praying without ceasing. These men and women live in communities called *monasteries*, so they are called *monastics*. Monastics who are men are called "monks", and women monastics are called

“nuns”. Monastics give up the worldly life, so that they can dedicate themselves entirely to God through prayer, fasting, obedience, and good works. You may be thinking that we *all* are taught to pray, fast, obey, and do good works, and you’re right. But monks and nuns work hard to perform these spiritual tasks constantly and more strongly than we can. They fast more often and more strictly than we do, they obey the will of God by humbly obeying their spiritual elders. They may teach or care for the sick or needy, and they pray for us, even when we “forget:” or are too tired or are “too busy” or just can’t find the words within ourselves.



Prayer is the first and most important job of the monastery. Monks and nuns spend several hours a day in church, praying the services of the Church. They also spend time in personal prayer. They work to master prayer without ceasing by learning to pray in their hearts at all times. Many monastics are able to pray the Jesus Prayer in this way, repeating it hundreds of times.

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

You may think that giving up worldly responsibilities and living in a religious community makes it easier for monastics to concentrate on prayer. But actually, their task may often be more difficult. They still have many of the same responsibilities and problems that we all face.

→ Can you think of another problem that would affect the life of a monastery?

Many, many great saints of the Church have come from the monastic life. When we pray, we should always remember these men and women of God who keep us in their prayers constantly,

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Self-Control - Wisdom of Sirach 18:29-32.

Supplemental Resources (next page)

Saints Called Upon in Particular Needs

Praying with the Saints

For Spiritual Help

St. Ephraim the Syrian
St. Alexis
St. Seraphim of Sarov

For a Good End to One's Life

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary
St. Barbara
Archangel Michael

For Brides and Happy Marriages

St. Nicholas of Myra
St. Joseph

For Eye Disorders

St. Lucy
Archangel Raphael
St. Paraskevia

For Those Who are Chronically Ill

St. Erasmus (St Elmo)

For Those with Stomach/Abdominal Illness

St. Erasmus (St. Elmo)

For Those with Tuberculosis, Respiratory Illness, Patron of Physicians

St. Panteleimon

For Those with Lethargy, Nervous Disorders (ADHD),

Bites of Venomous or Rabid Animals
St. Vitus

For Those Possessed by Evil Spirits

St. Cyriacus
St. Dennis of France

For Protection against Epilepsy, Panic Attacks and Nocturnal Terrors

St. Giles

For Protection Against Fire

St. Eustis
St. Barbara

For Those With Pain in Loins and Legs

St. Marina (Margaret)

For Those With Alzheimer's Disease

St. Catherine of Alexandria

For Travelers

St. Nicholas

For Those in Prison and Court Cases

St. George the Great Martyr
St. Simeon the God-receiver
St. Dismas the Good Thief
St. Barbara

For Help in Distress and Poverty

St. Nicholas of Myra

For Finding Lost Objects

St. Phanourios the Great Martyr
St. Menas the Great Martyr of Egypt

For Deliverance from the Scourge of Anger

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

For Mothers/Grandmothers

St. Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary
St. Eleutherius

For Fathers/Grandfathers

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary
St. Joachim, Father of the Virgin Mary

For Finding Employment

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg

For Help in Studies

St. Basil the Great
St. John Chrysostom

For Good Marriages

Martyrs Adrian and Natalia

For Meeting Difficult Situations/People

St. David the Psalmist

For Teachers

St. Catherine of Alexandria

THE CHURCH PRAYS WITHOUT CEASING

All Time is Holy

Session Seven

Begin the session with the prayer of the Hours (below):

You who at every season and every hour, in Heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified, O Christ God; long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; Who love the just and shows mercy upon the sinner; Who calls all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come. O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications, and direct our lives according to Your commandments.

Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Correct our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels; that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.



God lives in eternal time...the past, the present, the future, all are His, without passing away or being used up as our earthly time is. This is a very confusing idea for us, but all we need to understand is that, in God's hands, it makes sense and that we were created to be a part of this eternal life.

We know that we all are given time to live on earth. (It's much easier for us to understand this time: yesterday is gone, today is happening, and tomorrow will be here!) This time is one of God's most precious gifts to us, but we must remember that even though it is given to us to use, it still belongs to Him. Using our time in a way that is pleasing to God is one way that we pray without ceasing.

The Church helps us to understand that the gift of time is holy by dedicating special prayers and services to our hours and days. Our whole year follows a *cycle* of Feasts and fasts that help us live the important events in the life of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Most of us, and even most of our parishes, can't fully follow the daily cycle of prayer; we rely on monasteries to pray these services for us. We usually can, and should, try to follow the yearly cycle. When these Feasts come on days when we have work and school, we can ask our parish priest to help us find ways to celebrate them at home.

As we grow, we learn that certain times and certain places call for certain kinds of behavior. You don't act the same way in your classrooms as you do at a ball game. You don't act the same in church as you do hanging out at your best friend's house. You've learned this over the years, and now it comes naturally to you (well, maybe you still have to work at it a little bit!)

Learning about the yearly, weekly and daily cycles of the Church should help us to remember that all of our time is holy...whether we are using it to work, eat, study, play, sleep, or pray. As we think about this, it becomes much easier for us to try to behave as God wants us to: showing our

love for Him by caring about others, sharing our talents, always doing the best we can, respecting His creation. As this behavior starts to come naturally to us, we'll find ourselves getting closer to praying without ceasing!

The Daily Cycle (the Daily Office)

During the time of the New Testament, a day was divided into eight equal parts which matched the guard duties, or "watches," of Roman soldiers; each watch was three hours long. Starting at 6:00 a.m., the start of the day, these watches were called:

Watch of the 1st Hour - 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Watch of the 3rd Hour - 9 a.m. to noon

Watch of the 6th Hour - noon to 3 p.m.

Watch of the 9th Hour - 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Evening Watch - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Midnight Watch - 9 p.m. to midnight

Cockcrow Watch - midnight to 3 a.m.

Morning Watch - 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

These watches and hours are mentioned many times in the Bible. Read Mark 13:35

→ What times are mentioned?

→ Can you figure out at about what time Jesus died? (Matt 27:45-50)

→ At about what time did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles? (Acts 2:15)

This table shows how the Roman watches and hours came to match the daily cycle of prayer. (Over the years, times have been shifted a bit and some services may be combined)

→ How many of these have you heard of? Have you participated in any?

Ancient Roman "Watch"	Our Modern Time	Liturgical Service	Theme
Evening Watch	6 - 9 p.m.	Vespers Complines	Creation/the Fall Start of new day
Midnight Watch	9 p.m. - midnight	Nocturnes	
Cockcrow Watch	midnight - 3 a.m.	Midnight	The Resurrection
Morning Watch	3 - 6 a.m.	Matins	Preparing ourselves for Christ
1 st Hour	6 - 9 a.m.	First Hour	the prayer of sunrise
3 rd Hour	9 - 12 a.m.	Third Hour	Descent of the Holy Spirit
6 th Hour	noon - 3 p.m.	Sixth Hour	Christ's Passion/ Crucifixion
9 th Hour	3 - 6 p.m.	Ninth Hour	The Death of Christ

The Weekly Cycle

Just as every hour of the day is blessed with special prayers, every day of the week is dedicated to someone or something that helps us remember God's great love for us.

Sunday - *the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*

Every Sunday is a "little Pascha," a remembrance of the Resurrection. Each of the Tropars and Kondaks (special hymns) of the Divine Liturgy, teach about Christ's victory over death and His destruction of Hades. Pascha is the greatest Feast of the Church year; Sunday is the greatest day of the week. We must always try to keep this as the Lord's Day, attending Divine Liturgy and receiving Communion.

Monday - *the Angels*

On Monday, the Church asks us to remember the Bodiless Powers who serve God. We know many stories from Holy Scripture that tell us how angels give us important messages and protect us.

Tuesday - *the Prophets, especially John the Baptist*

When we say the Creed, we say that we believe that before Christ came to live on earth, the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. The prophets tried to keep the Israelites true to God. They often *prophesied* the coming of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was the last of the prophets. Even though we read about his life in the New Testament, he is an Old Testament prophet because he died before the Resurrection.

Wednesday - *Judas' betrayal of Christ; a day of repentance and fasting*

Wednesday is the day that Judas betrayed Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. Because this makes us remember the times we choose something above Christ, we fast as a sign of *repentance*.

Thursday - *the Apostles, Church Fathers, and great Bishops, especially St. Nicholas*

When the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles at Pentecost, the Holy Orthodox Church began. As the Church grew, the Apostles chose men to be bishops. Those men eventually chose others, and so on. All bishops of the Holy Orthodox Church today follow a line right back to the Apostles who lived with Jesus Christ. That's why we are "one holy, catholic, and *Apostolic* Church." We especially remember St. Nicholas, because he was a great Bishop who fought to keep the true teachings of the Church. We should always pray for our Bishops to have the strength of their spiritual forefathers to lead the Church wisely. Do you know the names of your Bishops?

Friday - *Christ's suffering and crucifixion; a day of repentance and fasting*

Friday is the day that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified. Even as He suffered on the Cross, He showed His great love for man. For this reason we fast on Friday.

Saturday - the Theotokos, and all the Saints; Memorial Saturdays when we remember the those 'fallen asleep in the Lord' – the departed.

→ Do you remember why we pray to the Theotokos and the saints?

Saturday is when we also remember those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

→ What do you think that means – 'fall asleep in the Lord'

Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Kindness - Titus 3:4-8.



Time Schedule Game

You will be asked to estimate times throughout your session. When asked, write down the time that you think it is at that moment. The real times will be revealed at the end of the session

Time One

Time Two

Time Three

Time Four

Time Five

Time Six

Time Seven

Time Eight

Time Nine

Time Ten

"THE WORLD" TRIES TO STOP US FROM PRAYING UNCEASINGLY

Session Eight

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."



We've learned that "praying without ceasing" really means always sending the message to the world that we are children of God, living our lives for His glory. But do you ever feel that no matter how much you may want to SEND that message, the world doesn't want to RECEIVE it, or that somehow the message gets "blocked" or lost, like a dropped conversation on a cell phone. The truth is that "the world" **doesn't** always want to receive this message, so it does try to block it.

→ What or who is this "world" that's causing us these problems?

We know that our world is God's Creation; He made it and everything in it, to be perfect and holy. But when Man chose to bring sin into this perfect Creation, Satan saw his chance to gain power over it by gaining power over us. Often, in the Bible and Church writings, "the world" is used to describe this difference between the life God intended for us and what we have chosen instead.

But God never stopped loving his Creation. John 3:16-17 tells us exactly how God feels:

"For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever _____ in Him shall not perish but have _____ For God did not send _____ into the world to _____ the world, but that the world through Him might be _____."

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came into this world to show us how to live so that one day we can be with Him in the Kingdom of God. Jesus understood that we would not have an easy time following Him; even Jesus was tormented by Satan and made to suffer because the world had fallen so far away from God.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 and talk about it.

→ What does this tell us about Satan?

→ What are some other ways that Jesus suffered in this world

Knowing how difficult it is to follow Christ while we are in this world, St. Paul often tells us that we have to be like soldiers: training, keeping in shape, and never giving up no matter how tough things look. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. List some of the things St. Paul tells us we can use as soldiers facing battle:

Shield of
Helmet of
Sword of
The whole

Prayer is one of the best weapons we have in our war against the Evil One, and a good soldier always makes sure his weapon is always working!

→ What are some of the tricks that Satan tries to use on us?

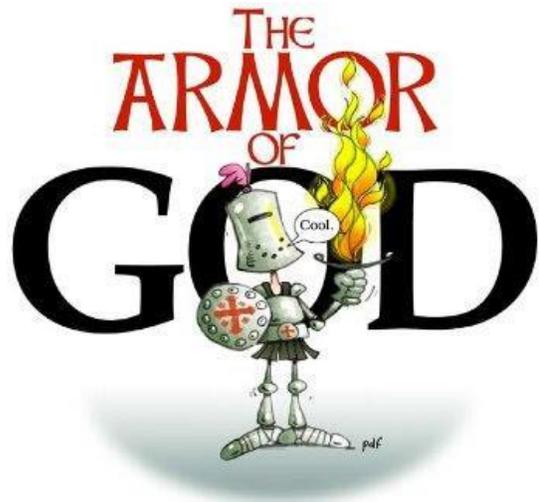
Read 1Kings 19:11-12 Now think about your day...Make a list of everything you hear from the time you wake up.

Do you think that you would ever be able to hear “the still, small voice” if it speaks to you? There's probably nothing on your list...music, TV, crowds of people, even video games... that 's all “bad.” But, when we get lost in these noisy distractions, we aren't giving ourselves the time we need to listen for God, and to think about the people around us.

The world also uses those same noisy distractions to tell us how to live, how to think about ourselves, and about other people. Think of some messages that the world sends to you:

When we hear these messages again and again, they start to fill our heads and our lives until we believe them and start putting God further and further down on the list of things that are important to us. St. John, in his first epistle, tells us “Do not love the world, or the things in the world...” because these things don't last like the love of God does.

Sometimes we can just walk away from things that we know are wrong, but we can't live in a cave, hiding from the world and the things that it tempts us with. Prayer without ceasing, with our words, our minds and our actions, will let us keep the things of the world where they belong and leave room for God in our lives.



Silent Contemplation Time: Scripture Reading on Goodness - Psalm 33(34)

The Breastplate Prayer of St. Patrick

The Breastplate Prayer of St. Patrick

I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness of the Creator of creation.

I arise today through the strength of Christ with His Baptism, through the strength of His Crucifixion with His Burial through the strength of His Resurrection with His Ascension, through the strength of His descent for the Judgment of Doom.

I arise today through the strength of the love of Cherubim in obedience of Angels, in the service of the Archangels, in hope of resurrection to meet with reward, in prayers of Patriarchs, in predictions of Prophets, in preachings of Apostles, in faiths of Confessors, in innocence of Holy Virgins, in deeds of righteous men.

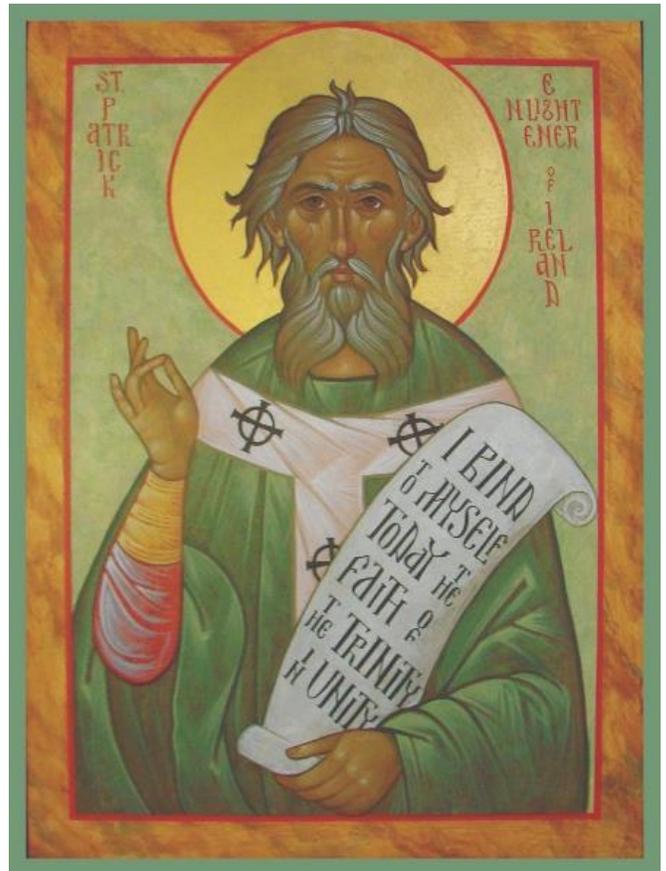
I arise today, through the strength of Heaven: light of Sun, brilliance of Moon, splendour of Fire, speed of Lightning, swiftness of Wind, depth of Sea, stability of Earth, firmness of Rock.

I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me,
God's host to secure me:
against snares of devils, against temptations of vices,
against inclinations of nature, against everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and anear, alone and in a crowd.

I summon today all these powers between me (and these evils):
against every cruel and merciless power that may oppose my body and my soul,
against incantations of false prophets,
against black laws of heathenry,
against false laws of heretics, against craft of idolatry,
against spells of women [any witch] and smiths and wizards,
against every knowledge that endangers man's body and soul.
Christ to protect me today
against poison, against burning, against drowning,
against wounding, so that there may come abundance of reward.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right,
Christ on my left, Christ in breadth, Christ in length,
Christ in height, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness of the Creator of creation.
Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord.
Salvation is of Christ. May Thy Salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.



REJOICE ALWAYS!

1Thess. 5:14-22

Session Nine (final)

Begin the Session with prayer to the Theotokos, *O Hail Mary, Full of Grace.*

REJOICE ALWAYS!

1Thess 5:14-22

The early Church grew through the work of the Apostles as they traveled, spread the Gospel, started churches, and taught the faithful how to continue to grow in Jesus Christ and His Church. Their instruction was left to us in Holy Scripture because, after 2000 years, it is still meant for us to follow.

In the letter where St. Paul told the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing," he also gave these instructions:

Respect and love the clergy and spiritual teachers, which God has put in your life. Along with your parents and Godparents, God has given you bishops, priests, and other teachers to help you grow in the Faith. Often, you may not want to hear the things they tell you. Always remember that they've been given the responsibility to teach the Truth, and that doesn't change just because we want it to.

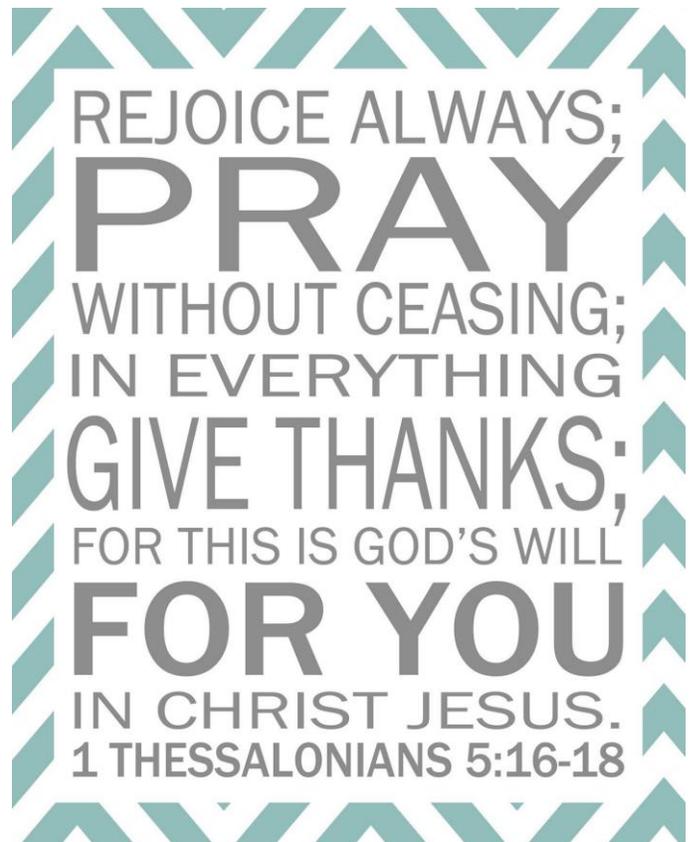
Pray for others who are feeling weak in their Faith, or who want to change the Church. Even if you don't know someone personally, always remember to pray for those who are questioning God's will or the Truth of the Church.

Be patient with everyone. Patience is an act of love!

Never pay back a wrong someone has done to you with another wrong; always look to do the right thing for yourself and for others. When someone hurts us, our first thought is usually to fight back. But this always makes the problem worse, because when we hurt another we also hurt ourselves. Say a prayer and look for a way to pay back with love!

Rejoice always. The world teaches us that we have a "right" to be happy all the time, but every life will have its problems. If we can learn to keep joy in our hearts, these problems will be easier to live through. And that joy comes from knowing that God loves you and that the Theotokos, the saints and the Church are praying for you!

In everything give thanks. We are blessed with so much that it's easy to take God's gifts for granted. We should develop the habit of thanking God as soon as we wake up for each day He gives us. Even when things in our lives don't seem to be going well, we



should thank Him for the strength to work through our problems and for the people in our lives who are there to help and pray for us.

Let the Holy Spirit, Who you received at your Chrismation, continue to live in you. Pray every day that the Holy Spirit will "come and dwell" in you.

Use your judgment to choose good over evil.

We must remember that as a member of the Holy Orthodox Church, we are a part of Christ's Living Body on earth. The only way for this Body to stay healthy and growing, is for every part to be strong. When one part weakens, it relies on the other parts to help it heal and get strong again. When each and every one of us follows the teachings of the Apostles, we not only become closer to God ourselves, we also help to keep the entire Church strong.

This is an awesome responsibility, but with the Grace of God, you will be able to take it on if you pray without ceasing!

There is a perfect example of "rejoicing always" and of always being thankful

→ What terrible things happened to Job?

→ Even after all of these things, what did he do and say?

As you continue reading the book of Job you will learn that he is tested yet again. And he still will not "sin against God with His lips." As the story continues, Job's friends come to talk with him about what has happened. Job begins to feel sorry for himself and his friends do not help. God comes to Job and reveals to him His greatness. In the end, Job is restored to God, and God awards Job for his faithfulness by granting him more in life than he had before the tests.

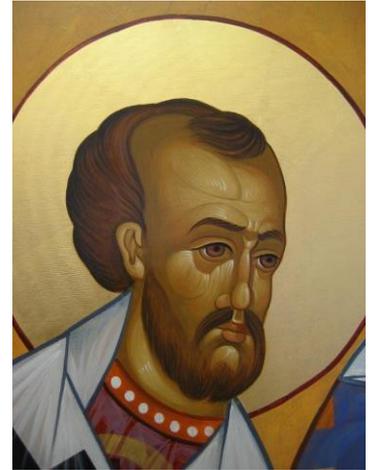
→ How can we learn from Job? How do St. Paul's words from the New Testament "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" relate to the Old Testament story of Job?

There are many people who find God's beauty at what may seem a very dark time. A more recent occurrence of this is of a priest, Fr. Gregory Petroff, who was in a concentration camp in Siberia in the 1930-40's. He wrote one of the most beautiful Akathists (songs) to praise God. The title

“Glory to God for All Things”, are from the words of St. John Chrysostom as he was dying. Here is a short verse from the service:

Ikos 1 – Verse

Glory to You for calling me into being
Glory to You, showing me the beauty of the universe
Glory to You, spreading out before me heaven and earth
Life the pages in a book of eternal wisdom
Glory to You for Your eternity in this fleeting world
Glory to You for Your mercies, seen and unseen
Glory to You through every sigh of my sorrow
Glory to You for every step of my life’s journey
Glory to You, O God, from age to age.



We must learn to find our own path of being able to pray without ceasing. God, as we have learned, has given us many rules and tools to aid us on our path. In the end, we must always be thankful and joyful for all God has given us and pray with all of our heart, our mind, our body and spirit to His Glory.

Glory to God for all things!

Glory to God for all things!