

A Catechism



By:

The Rev'd C H Klutz, B.A., B.Th., M.Th.
and The Rev'd George Toma, B.A., M.A., D.Min,

The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian
Church of the East

A CATECHISM

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The Benefactor



Dedicated to the beloved
memory of +**Jumbud** Zoudo



+**Jumbud** Zoudo, of Mosul, Iraq, born in 1929, is survived by her beloved partner and husband of 57 years, Mikhail Zoudo; together with six children, Farid, Samir, Sargon, Khalid, Fatin and Flora; and 19 grandchildren.

Mother was a fun loving mom, she cared greatly for the family whom God had given to her. In her own right, she was a loving disciplinarian; rearing children with profound values. All the children are happily married for several years, presenting a progeny of 19 grandchildren. They have been greatly influenced by Mother's family values; a commitment (to justify a good marriage) and sacrificial living, with each the other. Mother was a pious believer; recalls Farid, at the time of his deployment from Baghdad to Jordan. Mother was sick and worried for his safety. It was during that week in which Farid was deployed that Mother had a dream wherein St George the Martyred One appeared to her to assure her of his safety. Following that episode, and in her simple trust she was calmed, and he was returned to safety.

+**Jumbud** cared for those "others" in works of charity, and helps to the needy. Funds and foods were freely donated through the Church and other charitable institutions. A member of the Assyrian Community, she was a very active member of the Ladies Auxiliary.

+**Jumbud** was well known for her culinary art. She kept an immaculate kitchen, where her sumptuous meals were prepared and shared with others. She seemed to be possessed of enormous energies, cooking, cleaning, and preparing for her work-a-day activities before other were up and about.

When our Lord took her into His arms of safety, those of us who survive her blessed memory were surprised at its suddenness. Father was smitten with the awareness of a sudden tragedy, a loss which divided a 57 year profound companionship (they did all things together, which included shopping, enjoying movies, or in a walk about the block. In Modesto, Mother and Father were known as "*Romeo and Juliet.*") My Father's lifetime partner and companion was taken from him, changing his life forever.

Father misses Mother, praying, with tears (in her blessed memory) to join her. Mother possessed a great sense of humor, and would always reason to resolve an issue. To her children, we can unitedly state that she was a great inspiration! Her friends will say the same.

Recalling readily, Mother would remember special days of all the family, including birthdays, anniversaries, or of any special event for her children, grandchildren, cousins, etc. She would telephone them or send a card to commemorate these special occasions.

Mother insisted that to succeed one would have to find their niche in life, and to work hard in order to accomplish goals; "*for you will not win the lotto, nor would anyone die and leave you millions of dollars; you are to be responsible for your own losses.*" Mother was a philosopher in her own simple way.

We, as family, thought it would be a wonderful way to remember our beloved Wife, Mother and Grandmother in this manner by donating for the publication of this wonderful book of knowledge, which is a symbol of Mother and her love for our Holy Church.

"Mom, we miss you very much!"

Abby, Khalid, Jonathan, Jacob, Andrew and Emma Rose Zoudo

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The families of the priests who have so freely shared with us their fathers, to them we are indebted for their sacrifice. We are eternally grateful for the editorial assistance and extensive help offered to us by Sister Barbara Lambourn.

We also thank the many faithful folk who have engaged themselves in reading and editing the initial draft and prepublication of this volume; their services has proved most valuable.

Unto our worshipful God be all glory, bestowing good health, long live, and divine wisdom upon all who have had a part in this sacred endeavor: Amen

Forward



We had laid before us a work which would involve many long hours and serious thought. It is the teaching (*dogma*) embraced within The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. These are the Orthodox, Sacred Traditions and teachings. We have presented in this volume, a beginning work, presented in love to the faithful, and the inquirer, of our beliefs and practices..

A primary question which is often presented to us is: “*who are we?*” or, “*where do we come from?*” or, is there a line of heritage or history which can be reviewed for an outsider to consider?

Let us begin by stating the references we have to our historic existence. We can and do refer to the history books and learning of the Ancient World, where we are prominently featured. The first library of the known world, was established, built and maintained by Hammurabi, where the literature of the known world was collected. All the science texts of that time were collected; all religious texts were there, too

We have references to us as a people in the Sacred Writings of The Church. References are made to the Eastern world in the whole of the Holy Bible. (*Please see: Genesis 2:14, 10:10-11; Isaiah 10:5; 19:23,24; Matthew 12:41*) Whether it is the references to the People of God being held captive by Nebuchadnezzar, or the Silk and Spice Route into Asia for domestic products, to the evangelization of the “people outback.” Our great historical roots are found there!

At the time of the birth of The Holy Church on the Day of Pentecost; in Jerusalem, we were there, too! In the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded: “. . . *Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia . . .*” The People of God had gathered together from great distances to keep this ancient festival of Judaism. It was from among them that the Gospel of Jesus was proclaimed/heard; among that crowd of faithful pilgrims were folk from the Eastern Empire, and they carried back to their homeland the Good News of the redemptive message of Jesus Christ.

The Biblical historical records of the Western World and Church are quite extensive, whereas, that of the Eastern World and the Church of the East is left to extra-Biblical research! The Church in the Eastern World flourished, for by the end of the first century of our present era, there were churches established from the limits of the Romo-Byzantine Empire to the Caspian Sea. St Thomas

the Apostle carried the Gospel and Teachings of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to the regions of Mesopotamia and down into the southern tip of India. St Bartholomew of the Twelve also followed the same route, establishing churches as he went upon his way.

St Thaddeus the Apostle together with his companion, St Mari of the Seventy, preached the life and teachings of Jesus Christ to the Aramaic speaking Kingdom of Edessa (modern day Urhai, Turkey), which was a buffer city-state located between the Roman and Parthian Empires. It was there, a strong Church was established and it flourished; and, other communities which were established 'round about. The reason for the ready acceptance of the Good News of Jesus Christ, was because of their familiarity with the customs, culture, and the language of that ancient people.

Thus the beginning of the non-Jewish Semitic Church in The East. The first and oldest Christian Church is near Ormiah, Iran, Mart Maryam (St Mary)

All the truths proclaimed from the lips of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles have been recorded for us, in both the Sacred Tradition and in the Sacred Writings. The Sacred Tradition practiced by the early Apostles and Church Fathers had been handed down to us unto this present day (in the Original Aramaic or the Modern Assyrian Language), but why this Book of Catechism?

The purpose of this particular book is for the profound need extant within the community of the faithful. The written page will provide exactly that which is taught and believed to the practicing Christian within The Church.

The Questions and Answers presented in this program of study of Catechetical Instructions follows the basic needs for instruction of the young. They will be prepared to carry these Sacred Truths and practices into the generations ahead.

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, a dedicated servant of the Lord Jesus has been a source of encouragement for the development of this precious book of valuable instruction for the faithful of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

The truths presented here in this Book of Catechism are the result of the diligent research of two priests, The Rev'd Fr George Toma, St Andrew Parish, Des Plaines, Illinois, together with the concurring labors of The Rev'd Charles H Klutz, St John Church, Chicago, Illinois, whose love of the Holy Church together with their discovery of a very the urgent need for a systematic study, it is hoped that this book fulfills.



Our Lord help us: Amen





Chapter 1

Basic Instruction



1) What is a Catechism?

A Catechism is an instruction in the teaching of the Apostolic Christian Church. It is to be taught to all inquirers to enable them to please God and to redeem one's own soul.

2) Can we define the word "Catechism."?

Catechism comes into the English language via Greek, it means simply "instruction;" or "oral or written teaching." It has been used in our Church since the days of the Apostles. It is the basic form of instruction or teaching in the Apostolic faith. It is essential for all Christians. ". . . *that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.*" (St Luke 1:4) ". . . *This man was instructed (Apollos) in the way of the Lord. . . .*" (Acts 18:25a).

3) What is essential in order to please God and to redeem one's soul?

First: a knowledge of The True God, and to possess a right faith toward Him; and, **Second:** A simple life of faith and good works

4) Is faith essential or necessary?

Yes; for it is written in the Holy Bible that ". . . *without faith it is impossible to please HIM, for he that comes to God must believe that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*" (Hebrews 11:6)

5) Why must a life of faith and good deeds be considered inseparable?

Because it is written, “. . . *faith without works is dead. . .*” (James 2:20)

6) Can we define “faith”?

St Paul the Treasurer and Doctor of The Church has taught us in his writings: “. . . *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* (Hebrews 11:1) This means an absolute trust in the unseen as though it were seen; in that which was anticipated/hoped for as though it were present.

7) Can we state the difference between knowledge and faith?

a:) Knowledge has as its object those things which are visible and comprehensible; whereas faith, those things which are not visible and incomprehensible.

b:) Knowledge is built upon experience, or, the scrutiny of the object; but, faith is grounded in the testimony/witness of truth;

c:) Knowledge is an act of the human intellect, although it may act upon the human heart; whereas faith is an act of the heart, although it is imparted through human intellect.

8) In religious instructions, why is faith and not knowledge only essential?

The object of religious instruction is that of God, the invisible and incompressible One; and the wisdom of God hidden in mystery; therefore, many parts of this learning cannot be grasped by knowledge; but, it is obtained by a simple trusting faith. “. . . *if you will not believe, you shall not be established . . .*” (Isaiah 7:9b)

9) Can we extend our grasp of the words “necessity of faith”?

From the Greek Fathers we have these words: “. . . *It’s not only amongst us, who hear the Name of Christ, that faith is made so great a thing; but everything which is done in the world, even by men who are unconnected with The Church, is done by faith. Agriculture is founded on faith; for no one who does not believe that he should gather-in the increase of the fruits of the earth would undertake the labor of husbandry. Mariners are guided by faith when they entrust their fate to a slight plank, and prefer the agitation of the unstable waters to the more stable element of the earth. They give of themselves up to uncertain expectations, and retain for themselves nothing but faith, to which they trust more than to any anchors.*” (crysostom.v)



Chapter 2

Divine Revelation



1) From where did the doctrine of the Apostolic Faith come?

It is from Divine Revelation

2) How can we define the words “*Divine Revelation*”?

“Divine Revelation” is: a:) that which God Himself has revealed to man; b:) In order for man to rightly and salvificly serve Him; and, c:) for man to worthily give to Him due honor and praise.

3) Has this revelation been made known to all mankind?

Yes; He has given it to all mankind, for it is necessary to all of humankind, alike; and, it is capable to give salvation to all. However, since all humankind are not capable to receive a divine revelation, immediately from God, He has utilized certain persons, or gifted ones, as heralds of this revelation in order to deliver it to all who desire it and wholeheartedly receive it.

4) Why are all men not capable of receiving “*Divine Revelation*” from The Almighty God and Father?

Owing to sinful impurity of both body and soul they are not capable of receiving the “*Divine Revelation*” from God.

5) Who are the agents who have received and delivered the “*Divine Revelation*”?

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses and other prophets; these received the beginnings of the *Divine Revelation* and proclaimed the same to humankind; but, it was The Incarnate Son of God our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who brought the revelation to earth in its fullness and perfection. It has been spread throughout the whole world by His great commission to the Disciples and Apostles, which is: “. . . *Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” (*Matthew 28:19-20*). St Paul teaches us: “*God, who in sundry times and in diverse manner, spoke to us in times past unto The Father, by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also, He made the worlds*” (*Hebrews 1:1-2*)

And, again the same Apostle writes to the Corinthians the following, “. . . *but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; but God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”

(*I Corinthians 2:7,8, 10*)

And, St John the Evangelist, writes in His Holy Gospel, “. . . *No man hath seen God at anytime; the Only Begotten Son, which is*

in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:18) Our Lord Himself, by His own Divine Lips declared, “. . . All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” (Matthew 11:27)

6) Is it possible for man to have any knowledge of God, without it being revealed to him?

Some knowledge of God can be gained by the consideration or contemplation upon the creation (such as the trees, flowers, the cosmos, etc); however, this knowledge is imperfect and not sufficient to reveal the totality of God. It will only serve as a preparation for faith; or, as a help toward God and His revelation. It is written: “. . . *for the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power, and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,*” (Romans 1:20) and, again, St Luke writes: “. . . *and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times, before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from everyone of us: for in Him and move and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, ‘for we are also His offspring.’” (Acts 17:26-28) “With regard to faith in God, it is preceded by the idea that God IS, which idea we get from the things which have been created. Attentively, examining the creation of the world, we perceive that God is wise, powerful, and good; we perceive, also, His invisible properties. By these means we are led to acknowledge Him as the Supreme Ruler. Seeing that God is the Creator of the whole world, and we form a part of the world, it follows that God is also our creator. On this knowledge follows faith, and on faith adoration.” (Basil. Magn. Epist 2:32)*



Chapter 3

Holy Tradition and Scripture



1) How do we preserve Divine Revelation and spread it among humankind in The True Church?

By utilizing two methods: *a)* The Holy Apostolic and Living Tradition; and, *b)* The Holy Scriptures.

2) What do we mean by “Holy Apostolic and Living Tradition?”

We mean that The Holy, Apostolic, and The Living Tradition is the dogma of The Christian Faith, the Law of God, The Holy Sacraments, and the Rituals as handed to us by the true believers and worshipers of Almighty God, orally (by mouth) and by example from generation to another. (It is a living collection of 2,000 years of the practices, reflections and commentaries of our Apostolic Fathers as introduced and revealed by the Holy Spirit.)

3) What is the true repository for The Holy, Apostolic and The Living Tradition?

All true believers united by the Holy Tradition of the faith, collectively and successively, by the Will of God, compose One Holy Church; and, this Holy Church is the true repository of the Holy and Living Apostolic Tradition. St Paul the Apostle teaches us: “. . . if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the House of God, which is *The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of The Truth.*” (1 Timothy 3:15) St Irenaeus, one of our ancient Church Fathers has recorded for these words: “. . . we ought not to seek among others the truth, which we may have for the asking from *The Church*; for in Her, as in a rich treasurer-house, the Apostles have laid up in its fullness all that pertains to the truth, so that whosoever seeks may receive from Her food of life. She is the door of life.” (Adv. Haeres. Lib. iii.c.4)

4) What is that which you call “Holy Scriptures”?

The Holy Scriptures is a collection of books written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, through men who were sanctified

by God, these men are known as Prophets and Apostles. These books of Sacred Scriptures are collected, canonized, and are entitled “The Holy Bible.” It is written: “. . . *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” (II Timothy 3:16)

5) What does the word “Bible” mean?

It is a Greek word “*biblia*” meaning, books or a collection of books. And, it means to give attention to these sacred and holy books, before secular writings.

6) Which is the more ancient practice, observing the use of the Sacred Scriptures or of the Holy, Apostolic, and The Living Tradition?

The most ancient and original means, or mode, for proclaiming the Divine Revelation is The Holy Apostolic and Living Tradition! From Adam, the Father of humankind to the Prophet Moses there were no written Sacred books. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Himself, delivered His Divine Dogma and practice unto the Disciples by word of mouth and primary example; not by the written page. This same method or mode was followed, also, by the Holy Apostles in their days of Apostolic ministry; proclaiming the Christian Faith, and establishing the Holy Church of our Lord Christ. The necessity of Holy Tradition gives further evidence that recorded books are available to only a very few. But, Holy Tradition is available to all. It is written: “. . . *and they (the early disciples, Apostles and converts) continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” (Acts 2:42)

7) If you say that Holy Tradition is so important, then why is the Holy Bible given to The Church?

The Holy Bible is given to The Church, so that the Divine Revelation may be kept and preserved as it had been given, without change. In the pages of the Holy Scriptures we will read the words of the Ancient Prophets and the Holy Apostles precisely if we were listening to them proclaim God’s Word to humanity. Although the latest of these Sacred Writings were given to The Church almost 2,000 years ago.

8) Why do we abide within the structure of The Holy Apostolic and Living Tradition, even though we have easy access to the Holy Scriptures?

We are to abide in the Sacred Tradition, as it is in line with the Divine Revelation and the Holy Scriptures (all else is to be cast aside as heresy). St Paul records for us: “. . . *therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by our word, or epistle. . . .*” (II Thessalonians 2:15).

9) Why is it necessary to observe or practice Sacred Tradition, even now, in our day?

It is to serve as a right guide to the understanding and grasping of the Holy Scriptures; we are to read the Holy Scriptures as through the eyes and mind of the Holy Church of our Lord; for the right administration of the Holy Sacraments. As an example: The use of dark or red wine for the Holy Blood of our Lord, and not unfermented grape juice; and the use of wheat flour for the Holy Body; and, moving water in Holy Baptism; and again, the use of pure olive oil for anointing; and, a male priesthood, etc. Also, for the preservation of the pure and Sacred Rites of the Holy Church, in the purity of their original institution. A Greek Church Father has written: “. . . of the doctrines and injunctions kept by The Church, some we have from instruction. But some we have received, from Apostolic Tradition, by succession in private. Both the former and the later have one and the same force for piety, and this will be contradicted by no one who has ever so little knowledge in the Ordinances of The Church; for were we to dare to reject unwritten customs, as if they had no great importance, we should insensibly, mutilate the Gospel, even in the most essential points, or, rather, for the teaching of the Apostles leave but an empty name. For instance, let us mention before all else the very first commonest act of Christians, that they who trust in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, should sign themselves with the sign of The Cross who has taught this by writing? To turn toward the East in prayer? What Scripture have we for this? The words of invocation in the change of the Eucharistic Bread and in the cup of blessing, by which of the saints have they been left us in writing? For we are not content with those words which the Apostles nor the Gospel records, but both, before them and after them, we pronounce others also, which we hold to be of great force for the Sacrament, though we have received them from unwritten teaching. By what Scripture is it, in like manner, that we bless the water of baptism, the oil of unction, and the person himself who is baptized? It is not by a silent and Sacred Tradition? What more? The very practice itself of anointing with oil; what written word have we for it? Whence is the rule of triune immersion? And the rest of the ceremonies at Baptism, the renunciation of Satan and his angels? From what Scriptures are they taken? Are they not all from this unpublished and private teaching, which our fathers kept, under reserve inaccessible to curiosity, and profane disquisition, having been taught as a first principle to guard by silence the sanctity of the Mysteries? For how were it fit to publish in writing the doctrine of those things on which the unbaptized may not so much as look? (Can. xcvi. De Spir Sanct. cxvii.)



Chapter 4

On Holy Scripture in Particular



1) When were the Sacred Books of the Bible written?

Through the recorded course of the history of the people of God, they were written before the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ and others, after.

2) Do the divisions of the Holy Scripture have a specific meaning, or purpose?

Yes; the books written before the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, were named in their collection as the Old Testament, whereas, the documents collected following the Advent of our Lord Jesus are named the New Testament.

3) What do we mean by the Old Testament and the New Testament?

We mean to state that there was an earlier covenant of God with man; and the New Covenant of God with mankind.

4) What constitutes the formation of the Old Testament?

The Old Testament is the revelation of the forth-coming of Jesus Christ, and preparing them (humankind) to accept Him.

5) How was humankind prepared to receive the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

God had prepared humankind to receive The Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through the gradual revelation in the preachments of the prophets, and types.

6) What constitutes the New Testament?

The absolute fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in the giving of The Gift of God; His Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ (*see, St John 3:16*)

“For God so loved the world, that HE gave us His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” A point to remember, The Old Testament is the revelation of Jesus Christ, concealed; whereas, The New Testament IS the revelation of Jesus Christ; revealed!

7) We number how many books for the Old Testament?

According to the earliest records of The Church, we have a system of numbering which may confuse the faithful; however let us state that there are a total of 46 books of the Old Testament. The early Church Fathers number a total of 22 Old Testament books, having arrived at that particular, number agreeing with the Jerusalem Jewish community, who had so reckoned them with the ancient original *“Hebrew”* tongue.

8) Why do we need to assent to the Jewish Jerusalem reckoning of these books?

We refer you to the writings of St Paul the Treasurer of the Church, where he states in the Epistle to the Roman Church, “. . . *much every way: chiefly, because that, unto them was committed the oracles of God.*” (3:2), which is by interpretation, meaning simply, that The Holy Writings of the Old Testament had been received from the Hebrew Church (in Jerusalem) by the Christian Church of the New Testament of Jerusalem

9) How do the Church Fathers of the early Church enumerate The Books of the Old Testament?

- 1, The Book of Genesis;
- 2, The Book of Exodus;

- 3, The Book of Leviticus;
- 4, The Book of Numbers;
- 5, The Book of Deuteronomy;
- 6, The Book of Joshua, son of Nun;
- 7, The Book of Judges, and with it as an appendix
The Book of Ruth;
- 8, The I & II Books of Kings, as two parts of one book;
- 9, The III and IV Books of Kings;
- 10, The I and II Paralipomenon (*I & II Chronicles*);
- 11, The I Book of Esdras, and the II or, as it is
Named in Nehemiah;
- 12, The Book of Esther;
- 13, The Book of Job;
- 14, The Psalms;
- 15, The Proverbs of Solomon;
- 16, The Ecclesiastes, also by Solomon;
- 17, The Song of Songs, also by Solomon;
- 18, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah;
- 19, The Book of Jeremiah;
- 20, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel;
- 21, The Book of the Prophet Daniel;
- 22, The Book of the Twelve Prophets.

10) We have other Old Testament Books, but they are not noted here, such as The Wisdom of the son of Sirach, and of others, why?

These books do not exist in the Hebrew language, but they are in the Greek texts.

11) How does the Church of the East regard these other books which are not included in the original Hebrew?

St Athanasius, as a Church Father, had declared that these books were included in the reading requirements of the proselytes who are preparing for admission into the Holy Church through Holy Baptism.

12) Can we give any further distinction to the Old Testament books in our description of their contents?

Yes, we are able to divide them into the following classes: *I*) The Books of the Law; these form the basis of the Old Testament;

2) the Historical Books, these contain the history of religion; 3) the Doctrinal Books, these are the books containing the doctrinal position of our holy faith; and, 4) The Prophetical Books, these contain the prophecies or predictions of the things in the future, and especially of the Advent (the salvific) Good News of Jesus Christ.

13) Can you name the Books of the Law?

Yes, they are the five books written by Moses; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Himself referred to these Books as the Books of the Law of Moses (*see St Luke*) “ . . . and HE said unto them, these are the Words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.” (24:44)

14) The Book of Genesis contains what, particularly?

The creation of the world, and of man, is contained in the Book of Genesis, together with the history and the Ordinances of Law in the first ages of humankind. Also, we note the first 17 chapters tell us of the creation, etc., beginning of the ages; and, then from the 18th chapter to the end of chapter 50 it instructs the faithful in the promises of God and forthcoming Promised One (*Gen 3:15*)

15) What is recorded in the other four Books of Moses?

The development of religious practices, and the Law of Moses, given through him from God, to the chosen people.

16) What are the historical books of the Old Testament?

The Historical Books of the Old Testament are; the Book of Joshua, the son of Nun; the Books of Judges, Ruth, Kings, Paralipomenon, The Books of Esdras, The Books of Nehemiah and Esther.

17) Can you name the doctrinal books of the Old Testament?

Yes, they are the Books of Job, the Psalms, and the Book of Solomon.

18) What can we note, particularly, in the Book of the Psalms?

With this book, together with the doctrine of our religion, discover through its history, the revelation of the Savior Jesus Christ. We can also extract from it, the acts of prayer and praise; for they are continually used in all the divine services of The Holy Church.

19) Can we name the Prophetical Books?

Yes, they are those books of the Prophets, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets.

20) How many Books constitute the New Testament?

The Church of the East and her Ancient Fathers confess 22 New Testament Books. (The five books in the English Bible not included in the Sacred Canon of The Church of the East are: II Peter, II & III John, Jude and The Revelation of John)

21) Among the 22 books of the New Testament, are there any which answer to the fulfillment of the Law of Moses?

Yes; Within the 4 Gospels, we can find these words of fulfillment of the Law of Moses, namely, the Gospel Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We can recognize that which appears in the New Testament writings having roots (remarks) from the Old Testament, by this single phrase “*these things are written that the word of the prophet is fulfilled,*” etc.

22) Can you define the meaning of the word “Gospel”?

Yes; It comes to us from the Greek word, *evangel*, which means “Good News.” In Aramaic it is “*swarta*.” meaning the same thing; good news. In the English language the word “Gospel” (also translated “Good News”, comes from two words, “God’s” Spiel”, which means “God’s Story.”

23) Good News of what?

The Good news of His Advent, His Divinity, His Holy Life on Earth, His miracles, His Holy Teachings, His suffering, His death in His humanity upon the Cross, His burial, His Glorious Resurrection on the Third Day, His appearing on earth, and the ascension into Heaven; and the sending forth (descent) of the Holy Spirit.

24) Why call these four books, “The Gospel”?

There is no more joyful tidings than that which is found (discovered) in these 4 books; a Divine Savior, together with the hope of everlasting salvation. Whenever the Gospel is read in the Holy Church it is followed by the exclamation “*Glory be to Thee, O Christ our Lord!*”

25) Which book of the New Testament can we consider as historical writings?

There is only one available for our enlightenment, and that is the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

26) What does the Book of Acts record for us in our day?

The Birth of the Holy Church through the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Apostles, and the extension of Christ's Church through them to the four corners of the earth.

27) Define the word "an apostle"

The word means "one who is sent," or, "a messenger," or "an ambassador." The name was given to the 12 disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom He had commissioned to ". . . *go into all the world, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*" (*Matthew 28:19*)

28) What are the doctrinal books of the New Testament?

The three Catholic epistles; Peter, James, and John; and the 14 epistles of the Apostle St Paul, and they are, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.

29) Are there other books of the New Testament in which there are prophetic utterances?

No, however in later additions within our sister Apostolic Churches, there will be an addition of the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) they had received following the established New Testament Canon of the Council of Nicea (of *the 318 Fathers*)

30) What rules should we observe when we read the Holy Bible?

Primarily among our reading of the Holy Bible, we must do so devoutly, as they are the Divine Words of our Living God; and accompanied with prayer, in order to understand the truth these Words convey; **Secondly**, we are to read these Words with a pure desire to observe and learn to develop a desire to do good works, we are to take it and understand these Words as through the eyes of The Church and the Holy Fathers.

31) When The Holy Church declares the doctrine of Divine Revelation and of The Holy Scripture to people for the first time, what signs does she offer that this is indeed the Word of God?

- 1) The sublimity of this doctrine, gives witness that it cannot be any invention of mankind's reason; and,
- 2) The purity of the Doctrine shows that it is from the all-pure mind of God; and,
- 3) Prophecies; and,
- 4) Miracles; and,
- 5) The impact of this doctrine upon the hearts of humankind, beyond all, but Divine Power.

32) Can we prove that prophecies are signs of a true revelation from God?

Yes, we will use an example, we will look at the Prophet Isaiah, when he foretold the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ from a Virgin, this was a thing which the natural man could not have so much as to imagine; and when centuries later this prophecy was fulfilled, and our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Most Pure Virgin Mary; it was impossible not to see that the prophecy was the Word of the Omniscient One, and that this fulfillment was of The Words of the Almighty God, wherefore the Evangelist St Matthew, speaks of the birth of Christ, recalling the prophecy of Isaiah “. . . *but all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet saying, ‘behold a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us . . .’*” (Matthew 1:22-23)

33) Can we define ‘miracles’?

Yes; they are the acts or deeds which cannot be done by the powers nor art of mankind; but, only by the Divine Power of the Living and Almighty God. As an example, the raising up of the dead, or, the restoring of sight to the sightless, or the opening of deaf ears. (*Miracles are the supernatural acts which cannot be explained naturally.*)

34) Do miracles serve as a sign that the Words spoken are from God?

He who will do true miracles, does so by The Power of the Almighty God; therefore, he is in favor with God, he is a partaker of the Divine Spirit; but to such it must belong only to those who speak the pure truth, and when such a man speaks in God’s Name, we are sure that from his mouth there speaks the Word of God. And, on account of this our Lord Jesus Christ owns His miracles as a powerful testimony to His Divine Mission. “. . . *But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father has given Me to finish, the same works which I do, bear witness of Me, that The Father has sent Me.*” (John 5:36)

35) Whence may we more particularly see the Mighty impact of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ?

There were 12 Apostles who had come from a variety of the poor and unlearned peoples; namely, fishermen, tax-collectors, and others of the lowest class, and by this doctrine which they had received in three and one-half years overcame and subdued to The Christ, the mighty, the wise, the rich, the kings and their kingdoms. It is written: “. . . *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world the things which are mighty. . . . that no flesh should glory in His Presence . . .*” (1 Cor 1:27, 29)



Chapter 5

The Structure of Catechism



- 1) What is a good order to develop for catechetical instructions in religion classes?

Let us take the basis of our instruction from the writing of St Paul, when he addresses the Christian Faith with this phrase: “. . . *and now abides faith, hope, and charity . . .*” (1 Cor 8:13) The believer needs, therefore, 1:) the doctrine on Faith in God; and the Sacraments which He has revealed (these are the outward revelation of an inward identity or possession); and, 2:) The Doctrine on hope toward God; and on the means to be grounded in it; and, 3:) The Doctrine of Love toward, all that which He commands us to love.

2) What does The Church use as her symbol or instrument to convey the doctrine of faith?

The Creed of the 318 Fathers, the Nicene Creed was accepted in the whole Church by 325 A.D. In the Holy Church of the East, Bishop Marutha from the West brought the document and in the Council of Mar Isaac it was accepted 410 A.D.

3) What instrument can we take as the guide for the doctrine of hope?

We can take as our guide the 8 beatitudes (found in the Book of St Matthew); and the Lord’s Prayer, also recorded for us in the Gospel of St Matthew.

4) Where can the basic elements of the doctrine of charity be found?

They can be found in the Ten Commandments of the Law of God.



Chapter 6

The Doctrine of Faith --- The Creed



1) What is The Creed?

The Creed is an exposition of the Faith handed to us by the Apostles in brief. It is the doctrine that all Christians are to believe, divided into 12 articles of profession.

2) What are the words of The Creed?

The words of The Creed are as follows:

1:) We believe in One God, the Father Almighty maker of all things visible and invisible;

2:) And, in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten, the First born of all created, begotten of His Father before all worlds and not made; Very God of very God, of One Essence with His Father, by whose hands the worlds were established and everything was created;

3:) Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, and became man; and was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary;

4:) He suffered and was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate;

5:) He was buried and He rose again on the Third Day as it is written;

6:) And ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of His Father;

7:) And He shall come again to judge the dead and the living;

8:) And One Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, the Lifegiving Spirit;

9:) And in One Holy, Catholic, Apostolic

Church,

10:) And, we confess one baptism for the remission of sin;

11:) And the resurrection of our bodies;

12:) And the life forever and ever: Amen

3) From whom have we received this symbol?

Creed of the 318 Fathers, from the Ecumenical Council of Nicea. This symbol of our faith was adopted as the Creed in the whole Church of the West by 325 A.D. In the Holy Church of the East, Bishop Marutha from the West brought the document and in the Council of Mar Isaac in 410 A.D. it was received as it is used in our worship to this very day.

4) What is an Ecumenical Council?

It is an assembly of Bishops and ecclesiastical doctors of the Universal Church of Christ; they come from throughout the whole world, if at all possible, to meet and assemble to confirm the true doctrine, and the discipline of The Church of our Lord.

5) How many Ecumenical Councils do we recognize?

There were two truly Ecumenical Councils, 1) the Council of Nicea; and, 2) The Council of Constantinople; and, possibly three, the Council of Chalcedon, because the Church in the West (the Roman Byzantine Empire) returned to the Orthodox Faith, embracing two natures in Christ

6) Where did the rule for assembling councils come from?

From the first council held in Jerusalem under the chairmanship of St James The Bishop of Jerusalem, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15. It is also grounded on the Words of Jesus Christ, Himself, who had given the decisions to the Church such weight that anyone who had disobeyed them were considered a heathen deprived of grace. (*Matt 18:17*) “. . . and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto The Church, but if he neglect to hear The Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican . . .”

7) What were the particular occasions for assembling the First and Second Councils at which time the symbol of our faith was defined?

The First was held to confirm the true doctrine, regarding The Son of God, against the error of Arias, who had thought unworthily of the Son of God;

The Second was held to confirm the true doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit against the error of Macedonius, who had taught unworthily of/about the Holy Spirit.

8) When did these two Ecumenical Councils occur?

The Council of Nicea was in 325 A.D.; and the Council of Constantinople convened in 381 A.D.



Chapter 7

On the Twelve Articles of The Creed



1) How can we better understand the Nicene Creed; what methods shall we use to explain the twelve articles or points of our Holy Christian Faith?

We will consider the enumerated twelve articles of faith in the order in which they were given and study each article separately.

2) What is addressed in each of the twelve articles of faith?

1:-- It speaks of God! That HE is the prime origin and in particular the First Qnuma of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, and that HE is the Creator of the Worlds, Visible and Invisible; and,

2:-- This article addresses the Second Qnuma of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ the Son of God the Father; and,

3:-- This article addresses the Incarnation of God the Word, the Second Qnuma of the Holy Trinity; and,

4:-- This article addresses the suffering (passion), the death and the burial of Jesus Christ; and,

5:-- This article addresses the Glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and,

6:-- This article presents the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven, Who now sits at the Right Hand of the Father; and,

7:-- The Second Coming of Jesus Christ from Heaven is addressed in this article; and,

8:-- The Third Qnuma of the Holy Trinity is addressed in this Article, God the Holy Spirit; and,

9:-- This article addresses The Holy Church; and,

10:-- The article of faith here addresses The Holy Baptism, together with the implication of the other Sacraments; and,

11:-- The future resurrection of the dead is considered in this article; and,

12:-- Life everlasting is addressed here.



Chapter 8

God the Creator



1) What is it to “. . . *believe in One God the Father Almighty?*”

To believe in The One God is to have or possess a lively faith in His Eternal Being, His Divine attributes, and His actions; and to receive His revealed Word with a whole heart regarding the salvation of humankind in Jesus Christ

2) Can we show from the Holy Bible, that our faith must consist as noted above?

Yes! It is written, “. . . *without faith it is impossible to please HIM: for he that comes to God must believe that HE is, and that HE is a rewarder of them that diligently seek HIM . . .*” (*Hebrews 11:6*) And, again the sainted Apostle Paul continues this thought in another of his epistle’s; this one to the Ephesians, where he records for us, this prayer, “. . . *that HE would grant unto you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love . . .*” (*Ephesians 3:16-17*)

3) What must be the immediate and constant effect of a hearty faith in God?

The confession of this Holy and Apostolic orthodox faith.

4) What is the “*confession of faith*”? Can we define this confession?

Yes! We proclaim openly before all of humankind; that we steadfastly hold the Holy Apostolic Orthodox Faith; and this is with such sincerity that neither seduction, nor threats, nor torture, nor death itself may be able to make us to deny our Holy Faith in The True God and in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St Paul teaches us, “. . . *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord . . .*” (*see: Romans 8:38,39*)

5) Why is it necessary for us to confess this faith?

It is essential for us to give witness to our confession of faith for our salvation, it is written: “. . . *for with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation . . .*” (Rom 10:10)

6) Why is it not only important to salvation *to believe*, but, also to *confess* “the Holy, Apostolic, Orthodox Faith?”

To preserve our life and temporal possession and to fail to give witness to this Holy, Apostolic, Orthodox Faith, means that we have failed to recognize a true faith in God, the Savior, nor do we desire to enjoy the blessings of Eternal Life. (“ . . . *whosoever shall deny Me before men, him shall I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven . . .*” St Matthew 1:33)

7) Why do we confess belief in One God?

The heathen have taken the created creature for god and gods, and therefore, they think that there are many gods.

8) How does the Holy Bible teach us about the unity of the One God?

The very words of this Holy Apostolic Orthodox creed is taken from the writings of the Apostle Paul; “. . . *but there is no other God but One . For though there be those who are called gods, whether in Heaven or Earth, but to us there is but One God, The Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him. . .*” (I Cor 8:4b,5,6)

9) Can we know *the very essence* of God?

No! It is above all human knowledge and that of the Angelic hosts.

10) How does the Holy Bible address this point of our knowledge concerning the “*essence of God?*”

St Paul records: “. . . *in His time, He shall show, Who is the blessed and Only Potentate, The King of kings, The Lord of lords, Who alone hath immortality, dwelling in The Light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honor, and power everlasting: Amen . . .*” (I Tim 6:15-16)

11) What can we derive from Divine Revelation as it defines *essence and the essential attributes* of God?

That God is spirit, eternal, all-good, omniscient, all-just, Almighty, omnipresent, unchangeable, all-sufficing to Himself, all-blessed, etc.

12) Show all of these attributes of our Holy God from the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus Christ Himself has said that God is Spirit “ *God is Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth . . .*” (John 4:24) Regarding the eternity of God, David the King records in the Psalms these words, saying: “ . . . *before the mountains were brought forth, or ever that Thou didst form the Earth and the worlds, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God . . .*” (Psa 90:2) And, again: “ . . . *Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever . . .*” (Hebrews 13:8) “ . . . *but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment **The Everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith . . .***” (Roman 16:26). The goodness of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself declared: “ . . . *why callest thou Me good? For there is none good but One, that is, God*” (Matthew 19:17), “ . . . *we have known and believed the love that God has for us, for God is Love, and he that dwells in Love dwells in God, and God in him. . .*” (I John 4:16) David the King records: “ . . . *for the Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works . . .*” (Psa 145:8-9). About the omniscience of God, “ . . . *for if our heart condemns, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things . . .*” (I John 3:20) St Paul the Apostle writes to the Roman Church, saying: “ . . . *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out!*” (11:33) David the King says, regarding the justice of God, “ . . . *for the righteous Lord loves righteousness; His countenance does behold the upright. . .*” (Psa 11:7) And again, God will “ . . . *render to every man according to his deeds . . . for there is no respect of persons with God. . .*” (Roman 2:6, 11). Regarding the Almighty Power of the God, David the King records: “ . . . *for HE spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast . . .*” (Psa 33:9). “ . . . *for with God nothing shall be impossible . . .*” (Luke 1:37). The Omnipresence of God, the King David says: “ . . . *such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whether shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or, whether shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost of the seas; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. . .*” (Psa 139:6-10) In the catholic epistle of St James we read: “ . . . *Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. . .*” (Jas 1:17) Again in the Acts of the Apostles the record states: “ . . . *God who hath made the world, and all things therein, seeing that HE IS the Lord of Heaven and Earth, does not dwell in the temples made with hands; neither is He worshiped with mens hands as though He needs anything, seeing, HE gives to all life and breath, and all things . . .*” (Acts 17:24-25)

13) Since God is Spirit, then, how is it that we ascribe to Him parts of the human-body, according to the Scriptural writings; i.e. a heart, or a body, eyes, ears, hands, etc.?

In ascribing to God parts of a body, the Holy Bible adepts itself to the language of mankind; but we are to understand this only from a higher and spiritual sense; by way of an example, “*the heart of God,*” is to give an illustration to the great goodness and love of our worshipful God; and, of “*eyes,*” or of “*ears*” these are the expressions of His omniscience; and of the “*hands*” of God

addresses His Almighty Power or omnipotence.

14) Since God is in all places, then, how do we as human beings say that God is in The Church or in Heaven?

Yes, God is everywhere present! However, in Heaven, God does have a special Presence, which is manifested in everlasting glory to the blessed celestial beings; also, in The Church, God has through Holy Grace and Holy Sacraments, an especial Presence is devoutly recognized and felt by believers and manifested sometimes by extraordinary signs. Jesus said: “. . . *for where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them . . .*” (Matt 18:20)

15) How can we, therefore, grasp these words: “*We believe in One God the Father,*” within our confession of the mystery of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity?

God is One, He is One in Nature in three qnume; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Nature of the Holy Trinity is ONE, and undivided. We have the example of the sun hanging in the heavens, it is one, but we can discern, it has a circle, it has heat, and it has light, it is one; demonstrated in three characteristics. Water is the same; a substance in steam, ice, or liquid; but it is the same material.

16) Does the Holy Bible say anything about the Holy Trinity?

Yes, it is written: “. . . *Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in The Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” (Matt 28:19). And again, we have reference to the baptism of Jesus by John when the Holy Trinity was revealed on the banks of the Jordan River, as follows: “*Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the Heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, ‘this is my Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’*” (Matt 3:16,17). We have another reference in the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Annunciation to The Virgin Mary, “. . . *the Angel said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, all that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called The Son of God. . .*” (Luke 1:35) “. . . *There are three which bear record in Heaven, The Father, The Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One. . .*” (1John 5:17)

17) Can we find evidence of the Holy Trinity recorded in the Old Testament?

Yes! David the Psalmist instructs us: “. . . *By the Word of the LORD, the Heavens were made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth . . .*” (Psa 33:6) The Prophet Isaiah records for posterity: “. . . *And one cried unto another, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is The LORD of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of His Glory. . .*” (Isa 6:3)

18) How is it that we say One God in three qnume?

We cannot fully understand in human terms this unique mystery of the revelation of God in Holy Trinity; however, we do believe it is based upon the infallible teaching of the Divine Words of God. It is written in St Paul's epistles: "*. . . what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. . . .*" (1 Cor 2:11)

19) Can you name the differences in the three qnume of The Holy Trinity?

- 1 --- God the Father begets (is not begotten), neither proceeds from any other qnume; and,
- 2 --- God The Son, He is eternally begotten of God the Father, He does not proceed from any other qnume; and,
- 3 --- God The Holy Spirit, He eternally proceeds from God The Father, and He is not begotten by any other qnume.

20) Are the Three qnume equal?

Yes! They are equal in majesty, authority, power, love and will. The Father is Truly God, the Son is Truly God, the Holy Spirit is truly God; One God eternally revealed in Three qnume!

21) Why have we called God The Almighty One?

We call God the Almighty God, because all that He has created is sustained and upheld by Him, His Power and His Will.

22) When we recite these words from the 318 Fathers, "*maker of all things visible and invisible,*" what do we confess?

Our confession states that all which was made is by God! And, that nothing exists which was not created nor made by Him, whether visible or invisible.

23) Can we state that these words are to be rooted in The Holy Scriptures?

Yes! Please refer to the following passages of The Sacred Scriptures; Genesis 1:1, "*. . . In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth . . .*" St Paul records, when referring to Our Lord Jesus Christ, "*. . . for by HIM, were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and HE is before all things, and by HIM all things consists: . . .*" (Col 1:16-17); The Holy Gospel records: "*. . . in the beginning was The Word . . . everything was made by HIM, and without Him was not anything made, that was made . . .*" (John 1:1-3)

24) What do we mean by the word (from the Creed) “invisible”?

The word “invisible” means, simply, the spiritual world, or that which is inhabited by the Angels, arch-Angels, etc. Or, that world which is not comprehended by the physical mind.

25) What are Angels?

They are incorporeal beings which have no physical being, but that do have intelligence, will, and power.

26) What is the meaning of the word “Angel”?

It is a Greek word meaning “messenger.”

27) Why have they been so named?

It is our worshipful God who sends them forth to announce His Will; by way of example, The Arch-angel Gabriel was sent to the Blessed and ever-Virgin Mary to announce to her the conception and birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man. “. . . *in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a City of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David; and the Virgin’s name was Mary, and the Angel came to her and said, ‘hail, Thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among Women.’ And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said unto her, ‘fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. . .’*” (Luke 1:26-31) (also see: Matthew 1:18-all)

28) Which was first created? The invisible? Or, the visible?

According to the Sacred Scriptures and the Church Fathers, the invisible was first created. And that the Angels were first created before humankind.

29) Where in the Sacred Scriptures can we find a witness to these creative acts?

Let us turn to the writings of Job concerning creation of the visible: “. . . *where upon are the foundations thereof fastened, nor Who laid the cornerstone therefore, when the morning star sung together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” (Job 38:6,7)

30) Where does the idea of “guardian Angel” come from?

From the Psalms of David, we quote: “. . . *for HE shall give HIS angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. . .*” (Psalms 91:11)

31) Do we (each one of us), as humans, have a guardian angel?

Yes! Jesus taught us in these words; “. . . *take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the Face of My Father which is in Heaven.*” (Matthew 18:10)

32) Can we say that all angels are good and beneficent?

No! There are good and evil angels; the evil angels are called “*Devils,*” or, “*Demons.*”

33) How is it that there are evil angels?

In the beginning all angels were created “good” but they turned from their duty of perfect obedience and love toward God their creator, and so fell away from Him, into self-will, pride and malice. The Jude states that these created beings are: “. . . *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgement of That Great Day . . .*” (Jude 6)

34) What does the name “*devil*” mean?

The word devil means “*slanderer,*” or “*deceiver.*”

35) Why do we call these fallen angels, “*slanderers,*” or, “*deceivers?*”

We have named them slanderers or deceivers for they are ever laying snares for humankind, always seeking to deceive them, and to inspire them with false notions and evil wishes or ideas. Jesus said, “. . . *ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father, ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of them.*” (John 8:44; see also: Rev 12:9,) “. . . *and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called The Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world; he was cast out into the Earth, and His angels were cast out with him.*”

36) What is revealed to us from Holy Scriptures concerning the creation of the World?

In the Beginning God created, from nothing, the Heaven and the Earth and the Earth was without form and void (Genesis 1:1,2) Following that, God on the following days consecutively created: First day, the creation of the world and light; The Second day, the visible firmament (or the heavens); Third day, the gathering together of the waters, the dry land and that which grows thereupon; The Fourth Day, the sun, moon and the stars; on the Fifth Day, the fish and the fowl of the air; the Sixth day the animals; and humankind; and with man he crowned His creation. The Seventh day our Lord and God rested from all of His works. (See the

following: Genesis 1:1-end; 2:2)

37) The visible creatures now seen before us, were they created as we see them now?

No! Why? Because they were, in the beginning created good, pure and beautiful and harmless. It is written: “. . . *and God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.*” (Gen 1:31)

38) In the Creation of man, are not we informed of something special or in particular? Did God create humankind different?

In the beginning we have this record, from God in the Holy Trinity, said: “. . . . *let us make man in our Image, after our likeness.* ” (Gen 1:26) “. . . *and Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life, and man became a living soul.* (Gen 2:7); and God then placed him into the Garden (which is Paradise), and gave to mankind food, which was provided by the trees, and other plant life. Finally, in the creation of humankind, a companion was formed, for the man Adam; Eve (and not Steve) to bless his creation with the gift of life; “. . . *and the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof, and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said that his is ‘bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh: and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.’*” (Gen 2:21-23)

39) How is it that humankind is in the Image of God?

St Paul explains to The Church, that humankind expresses the Image of God in righteousness and holiness of truth, “. . . . *that ye put on the new man, which after God is created, in righteousness and true holiness.*” (Eph 4:24)

40) What is the breath of life?

We answer by saying that it is the soul, a substance both spiritual and immortal.

41) What is Paradise?

It means a “garden” It is the name given to fair and blissful abode (dwelling place) of the first man, as described in the Book of Genesis, as like unto a garden. “. . . *and the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep.* .” (Gen 2:15)

42) Was man placed into a spiritual or a material Paradise (Garden)?

A two fold answer, for the body it was material, a visible and a blissful abode, but for the human soul it was a spiritual garden

with state of communion and fellowship, by grace, with God. A place for spiritual contemplation of the created beings (humankind).

43) What was the Tree of Life?

The Tree of Life produced a fruit, if perchance humankind should eat of it, he would have been kept from disease and death. “. . . *The Lord God said, behold, the man is become as One of Us, to know good and evil, and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore, the Lord God, sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man: and He placed at the East of the Garden of Eden, Cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. . .*” (Gen 3:22-24)

44) Why did God make Eve from the rib of Adam?

So that all of humankind, might be by origin naturally disposed to love and to defend one another. From earth Adam is created and formed by God, and from the rib of Adam his life’s companion Eve, was created/formed. The joining of the two is seen in the replications in Holy Marriage. God joins together, once again, his creation to his created.

45) What was the purpose in the creation, by God, of man?

In the Holy Church we state that God created mankind for him to love God, worship and glorify God, to know God, and thus be happy in service unto Him. “. . . *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and thy might . . .*” (Deut 6:5)

46) How does the Holy Church define “predestination”?

It is the will of God by which humankind is designed for Eternal happiness or bliss.

47) Does God’s predestination of man toward happiness remain unchanged or changed?

It remains unchanged, inasmuch as God, of His knowledge and infinite mercies, has predestined to open for all of humankind, even after his departure from the way of happiness, a new way to happiness through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, exists. “. . . *according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. . .*” (Eph 1:4)

48) How do we understand the predestination of God with respect to humankind in general and to each individual severally?

God has predestined to give to all mankind and has actually given to humankind preparatory grace and means sufficient for the attainment of happiness.

49) What do the Scriptures say about this?

From the Scriptures: “*for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” (Rom 8:29)

50) How does the Church address this point?

To those who have confessed Christ and seek to reflect His Image, He has directed to the glorious Life eternal; however, those who have chosen to the contrary, the Church Fathers and Holy Synods declare them to be destined to eternal banishment (separation from God).

51) With respect to the world, and more particularly to that of mankind, what follows immediately upon their creation?

It is Divine Providence, so the Church declares which follows immediately upon their creation

52) What is the definition of “Divine Providence?”

The Church defines the Divine Providence, as that constant energy of the Power of the Almighty, the wisdom and the goodness of our worshipful God, by which He will keep and preserve the being and faculties of His created beings; directing to a good end, assisting all that is good; but as to evil, which will spring-up from the departure of good, He will either cut it off or correct it; and, turns that into good results. It is written: “. . . *My Father works hitherto, and I work . . .*” (John 5:17)

53) How does the Bible speak of the providence of God?

Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew: “. . . *behold the fowl: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?*” (Matt 6:26) The Church Fathers inform us here that these words, at once, we can see God’s general providence over the creatures, and again, His special providence over humankind. When reading and meditating upon the Psalm 91, we can see the entire providential care of our worshipful God.



Chapter 9

The Second Article Jesus Christ -- The Son of God



1) How are we to define, the Name Jesus Christ, The Son of God?

Son of God is The Name of the Second Qnuma of The Holy Trinity. This same Son of God the Word, became man, and was called Jesus. He was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary and He was called Jesus. **Christ** is the Name given to Him by the Prophets of old, who had expected the coming of Him to save humankind. (*see Matthew's gospel 1:21*) “ . . . and she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sin . . .” (*see St Luke 1:31*) . . . “ . . . behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His Name Jesus” (*St Matthew 1:16*) “ . . . and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ. . .” (*St Matthew 27:17*) “ . . . when they were together, Pilate said ‘whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabas, or Jesus which is called The Christ?’”

2) What does the Name Jesus mean?

The Name means Savior. (*see Matt 1:21*) “ . . . and He shall save His people from their sin.”

3) Who had given the Name Jesus for the first time?

The Name Jesus was given for the first time by the Angel Gabriel.

4) Why was this Name given to the Son of God at His conception and birth?

He was so named, because He was conceived and born to save humanity from their sin through the ultimate death upon the Cross.

5) What is the meaning of the word “Christ” ?

The Greek furnishes the word “to anoint” *christos* for the English language, however, in the Aramaic it is “*m'shikha*” meaning The Anointed One! “ . . . the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent

me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. . .” (Luke 4:18-19) “. . . God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with The Power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

6) Where does word “*anointed*” come from?

From the anointing with the Holy Oils, through which are bestowed the gifts of the Holy Spirit are conferred upon the anointed one. “. . . and the priest, Whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate, to minister in the office of the priest, in his father’s stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen cloths, even the holy garments . . .” (Leviticus 16:32) “and, thou shalt put them upon Aaron, thy brother, and his sons with him; and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office.” (Exodus 28:41)

7) Can we call anyone else, except for Jesus Son of God the “anointed-One”?

Yes! The kings, high-priests, and prophets are also anointed! “. . . Samuel took the Horn of Oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David, from that day forward.” (1 Samuel 16:13) “. . . touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm . . .” (1 Chron 16:22)

8) Why then is Jesus Christ, the Son of God called “The Anointed-One”?

Because to His manhood were the Gifts of The Spirit imparted (*conveyed*) without measure; therefore, He possessed in the highest degree, the knowledge of The Prophet, the Holiness of the High Priest, and the absolute Power of the King. “. . . Thou lovest righteousness, and hateth wickedness: therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Psa 45:7)

9) Why is it that Jesus the Christ is called “The Lord”?

He is called “Lord” because He is God, as The Name of God is “The Lord.” It is written, “. . . The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation, He is my God, and I will prepare for Him a habitation, my father’s God, and I will exalt Him; the LORD is a man of War, the LORD is His Name. . . .” (Exodus 15:2,3) “. . . Then said He (that is Jesus) to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither Thy hands, and thrust into My side, and be not faithless but believing, and Thomas answered and said unto Him, ‘My Lord and my God.’” (John 20:27-28)

10) What does the Holy Book say is The Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God?

“In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God; and The Word was God” (John 1:1)

11) Why is Jesus Christ called “the Only Begotten Son of God?”

He is the only begotten Son of God because of His Divine Nature; others like Angels, and saints of the past, and believers of the present, as called “sons of God” by Grace in adoption. “. . . to as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed in His Name. . .” (John 1:12). “Have predestined us unto the adoption of Children; by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” (Ephesians 1:5)

12) Can you show where in the Holy Scripture Jesus is called, “*the Only Begotten Son of God*”?

Yes! The Holy Bible does declare Him to be the Only Begotten Son of God. “. . . and The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of The Father, full of grace and truth. . .” (John 1:14) “. . . no man hath seen God, at any time; The Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of The Father, He hath declared Him.” (John 1:18)

13) In the Creed it says that “*He is begotten of the Father,*” Why?

Through this expression He is distinguished from the quoma of God the Father and from the quoma of God Holy Spirit; for in truth, He who is Begotten IS The Son; and He who begets is the Father, and the Holy Spirit is neither begotten, nor begets, He proceeds.

14) We confess in The Creed that “*Jesus Christ was begotten before all worlds*” Why?

We need to be assured that there was no time in which Jesus Christ did not exist; we teach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God from everlasting unto everlasting as is God the Father from everlasting unto everlasting.

15) In the Creed we confess “*Very God of Very God, of one Essence with His Father,*” Why?,

Jesus Christ is of the same divinity as The Father, He is not lesser, nor greater, He is the same in authority, will, majesty, and worship. “. . . I and My Father are One . . .” (John 10:30)

16) Can we locate these same words in the Holy Scriptures?

Yes! “. . . we know, that the Son of God is come, and He hath given to us an understanding, that we may know HIM as truth; and we are in Him, that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” (1 John 5:20) We continue with the following: “. . . Jesus said, have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou known Me, Philip? He that hath seen

Me hath seen The Father; and how sayest thou then, show us The Father? ” (John 14:9)

17) Why do we confess in the Creed that “*Jesus Christ is begotten of His Father before all worlds and not made?*”

The impious Arius taught that The Son of God was made and that there was a time when He was not (existing), and for this purpose this phrase was placed into The Creed to declare the truth of the Orthodox Faith, that Jesus Christ in His Divinity is not made but that He is the Creator (in fact), in contradistinction to the heresy of Arianism

18) We confess, “*by whose hands the worlds were established and everything was created*” What is meant by this phrase?

It means that God the Father created all things by His Son, as by His eternal wisdom and by His eternal Word. *All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made*” (John 1:3)



Chapter 10

The Third Article Jesus Christ -- The Son of God On the Incarnation



1) Of whom is it said, when we confess in the Creed; “*who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven*”?

We are confessing the Second Qnuma of the Holy Trinity, God The Word, Son of God.

2) How did He come “*down from Heaven*” even though we declare that “God is everywhere present?”

In truth God is Spirit and He is everywhere present, He is always in Heaven and always upon earth. Before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, The Father was not visible upon Earth, as in Jesus we have the appearance of God in flesh (the Father was revealed in Jesus Christ); and in this sense we confess “*He came down from Heaven.*” In the 2nd Corinthian letter St Paul records: “. . . *for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich . . .*” (II Cor 8:9) And, again we have this record for the Philippian Letter of St Paul, saying: “. . . *let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of The Cross.*” (Phil 2:5-8)

3) Can we shed additional light or information on this creedal confession?

Yes! We present these additional biblical references for the consideration of this statement of the confession, namely, that which our Lord Jesus says: “. . . *no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.*” (John 3:13)

4) Based upon the preceding biblical statement, did Jesus come down from Heaven?

Yes! The Creed further confesses, “. . . *who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the*

Holy Spirit, and became man, and was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary. . . .”

5) What is meant by the phrase “. . . *who for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven . . .*”?

We confess that He had come to Earth to redeem the total human race, and was not just limited to an ethnic group nor a particular nation. That means we confess that He came to bring the hope of eternal life and the joy of communion with The Holy Trinity without regard to color, language, or race of man; which He himself had created, in the beginning. “. . . *for ye are all The Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus . . . for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ; there is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus, and if you be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” (Galatians 3:26-29) “. . . *go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in The Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . .*” (Matthew 28:19) and, again about the universality of the message of Christ Jesus, St Luke records: “. . . . *ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in both Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth.*” (Acts 1:8)

6) Jesus Christ had come down to Earth; to save humankind from what?

To save humankind from sin, Satan, and death; and, to restore the communion relationship with God the Father as humankind had with Him in The Garden of Eden before the fall. “. . . *whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. . .*” (John 3:15-17) “. . . *I have delivered unto, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sin according to the Scriptures;*” (1 Cor 15:3)

7) What do we mean by sin, how do we define the word sin?

According to the Holy Bible, sin is the transgression of the Law (of God). “. . . *whosoever commits sins transgresses also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law.*” (1 John 3:4)

8) Since man was created in the Image of God, from whence comes man’s desire to sin?

Man sinned because he had acted on his free will by an enticing act of testing or temptation from the evil-one. “. . . *but every man is tempted when he is drawn of his own lusts, and enticed. . . .*” (James 1:14) “. . . *whosoever abides in Him sins not; whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you, he that does righteousness is*

righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this are the children of God manifest; and the children of the devil, whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.” (1 John 3:6-10)

9) How was the ability to sin transferred to humankind?

It is recorded in the Law of Moses, that Eve was enticed by the delectable fruit of a certain forbidden tree; the fruit of the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil. She was enticed by its beauty, or fragrance, and through the power of a darkened suggestion, she willingly broke the Law of God, and participated in eating that which was forbidden; then she turned to Adam; and, Eve offered the same to him, and he did eat! “ . . . of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the Garden God hath said ‘ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.’ And the serpent said to the woman, ‘ye shall not surely die for God doth know that the day in which ye eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing for the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also unto her husband, with her; and he did eat.”(Gen 3:3-6)

10) What commandment did our foreparents break in the sojourn in the Garden?

They broke the command which God had laid out in the beginning to not eat of the tree of good and evil; because it was also accompanied with a promise of God; “. . . for the day you eat of it you will die!” (Gen 3:3)

11) Why was eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil (knowledge) certain to bring death to humankind?

Because it involved either obedience or disobedience unto our worshipful God; and it was so that which it alienated brought separation from communion with God the Holy Trinity; and abandoning grace. “. . . your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear you. . .” (Isaiah 59:2) [see also: Gen 3:8] “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking of the Garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the Garden. ” Therefore, The Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken, so He drove out the man; and He placed at the East of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every which direction in order to protect and keep the Tree of Life.

12) What was the outcome of the foreparents eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

When they consumed the fruit of the tree, they instantly became aware, through experience the end result of participating in disobedience. They are now aware of what good there is in being obedient, versus the evil in disobedience. What good there is in

obeying the Divine Will of God, versus, that which is evil in disobedience.

13) Why did Adam and Eve listen to the appealing voice of the evil-one versus that of the Divine Will of The God?

In the beginning God who had created Adam and Eve, from His goodness and grace, had ennobled them with the gift of a free-will. Instead of loving God and the graces bestowed upon them, they misused their free-will and chose, instead, to listen to the appeal of the world, and utilized their free-will to do evil (*disobedience*).

14) How were the foreparents deceived?

Their deception was by reason of the human will to enjoy a fruit which was forbidden; why? it was beautiful to look upon, its texture was desirable; and then again the underwritten suggestion by the beautiful serpent in the Garden is, they would become like a god or gods, knowing good and evil and that they would not die.

15) What was the consequence of the sin of the foreparents in the Garden?

To the beautiful serpent in the Garden, God cursed him to be crawling about on his belly; and, to the woman, discomfort in child-bearing; and, submission to her husband, and to the man, God cursed the ground and forced him to work by the sweat of his brow to provide food for his wife, family, and himself; and death to the human creature. [*see Scriptures: Genesis 3:14-19*]

16) Define the word “*curse*,” what does it mean?

It is a condemnation of sin and sinful behavior, by the just judgment of God; and the evil from sin which was brought forth upon the Earth, for the sake of the punishment of humankind. “. . . *cursed is the ground for thy sake. . .*” [*Genesis 3:17*]

17) Which kind of death came about upon our foreparents, because of their sin; physical or spiritual?

Both, either physical or spiritual death visited humankind. Physical death, when the human soul separates from the body; and, spiritual death when the soul separates from God.

18) Can both the soul and the body die?

Yes! Both can die, the body when it dies deteriorates and loses its faculties (“. . . *for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return . . .*” *Gen 3:19*); whereas, the soul when it dies, loses the potential joy of the fellowship with the Holy Trinity, but it does not deteriorate and pass away, but is kept in a state of perpetual anguish and suffering. [It is written in the Gospel, (*Luke 16:22-24*): “. . . *it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom; . . . the rich man died, and was buried,*

and in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torments and seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. He cried and said 'father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'] The Gospel of St Matthew (27:52-53), says, once again: “. . .*The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and they came out of the graves, after His resurrection and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.*”

19) Why should humankind be condemned because of one man's sin of disobedience?

We are descendants of Adam, and of the same nature as he, although Adam is responsible for his sin we have inherited the tendency of self-willfulness, and pursuing the areas of our own interests in sin. The human posterity had been infected by sin, consequently mortality had been inherited, accordingly.

20) What does the Holy Scriptures teach on this matter of sin from Adam to our present day posterity?

“ . . . wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all men have sinned . . . for until the law was in the world, but sin is not imputed, never-the-less death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come, but not as the offense, so also is the free gift; for if through the offense of one many be dead much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift righteousness shall reign in life by One; Jesus Christ. . .” (Romans 5:12-17) (continuing) [. . .*“Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto the justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.”* (Roman 5:12-19)

21) What benefits did mankind have after the consuming of the forbidden fruit?

From the time of his consuming of the fruit of the forbidden tree, he could no more eat of it, for he had been driven forth from the Garden of Eden [see Genesis 3:23,24]

22) Did humankind have any hope for salvation?

Yes! When Adam and Eve had confessed their sin, God the Almighty promised them a hope for salvation. *“And, I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.”*

(Genesis 3:15) This prophetic utterance was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of the Second Eve, the eternally blessed Virgin Mother Mary, who had crushed the head of the serpent by His death upon the Cross, and thus humankind was delivered once and for all from the grasp of sin, death and Satan..

23) Why is it written that Jesus Christ was of the “*seed of the woman?*”

The response to this question is: He was born as a man, of the Holy Virgin Mary, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, without benefit of an earthly father. So, therefore, Jesus had an earthly mother; with a heavenly Father.

24) What was the benefit of “*the Promise?*”

That from the time of “*The Promise?*” [see above, Gen 3:15] humankind was enabled to believe in the forth coming of the redemptive message of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. As, now we who are believers know for certain that the promise has been fulfilled by the coming of Him who is Messiah (m’shikha), while awaiting the coming the Second time from Heaven.

25) In the times past, did people believe in the coming of the Messiah (m’shikha)?

Some folk did, but the greater number of humankind forgot that God had made a promise to send a savior.

26) In the course of history, did God remind people of His forgotten promise?

Yes! The recorded history of the salvation, clearly indicates to the readers of the Sacred Scriptures that God, indeed, reminded His creation of His promises. To Abraham a promise was made, and elaborated upon: “*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My Voice.*” [Gen 22:18] To King David it is written: “*The Lord has sworn in truth, unto David, that He will not turn from it (the promise), of the fruit of thy body while I set upon thy throne.*” (Psalm 132:11)

27) What is meant by the word “*incarnation?*”

By the word *incarnation* we mean that God the Word the Second Qnuma of the Holy Trinity took upon Himself human enfleshment (that is a human body), without sin, and was made man, without ceasing to be God the m’shikha who is perfect man and perfect God. [“*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” (John 1:14)]

28) Why do we confess “. . .*He became man. . .*”

We confess “*He became man*” because of the importance to give emphasis to the rôle of our Lord as perfect man (in, as we understand in monophysite setting), there is no recognition of Him in both the human body and in His divinity) “*for there is One*

God, and One Mediator between God and man, The Man Christ Jesus . . .” (1 Timothy 2:5)

29) How many natures do we confess in Christ?

We confess that there are two natures in Christ; His humanity, and His Divinity. These are not mixed, nor are they co-mingled, nor confused, but they are eternally united in one Sonship. Jesus Christ The Son of God, the son of Man (in One Sonship), possessing two qnuma, two natures, One Sonship. It is written: “One is Christ, the Son of God, worshiped by all in two natures, in His Godhead, begotten of The Father. Without beginning in the fullness of time, in a united body. In His manhood, born of Mary, in the end of time, in the body which was united. Neither His Godhead was of the nature of the mother, nor His manhood of the nature of the Father. The Natures are preserved in their qnume, in One Person of One Sonship. And as the God head is three qnuma, One Essence, likewise the Sonship of the Son, is in two natures, One Person, so the Holy Church has learned to confess the Son who is Christ, we worship, O my Lord, Thy Godhead, and Thy manhood, without division, One is the Power, One the Majesty, One the Will and One the Glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever: Amen (*Mar Bawai the Great*)

30) Are there not two persons in Jesus Christ?

No! The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East has always confessed, “Jesus Christ, two qnume, two kyane (natures), eternally united in One Sonship.

31) Regarding the Holy Incarnation, what does the Holy Bible teach us about this unique mystery of the birth of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, by the Power of the Holy Spirit?

St Luke the gospeler writes about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mother; in these words: “. . . *Then said Mary unto the Angel, how shall this be, seeing that I know not a man? The Angel answered and said unto her, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called The Son of God. . . .’* (Luke 1:34-35)

32) Who is this Virgin Mary?

The holy Virgin of the lineage and The House of Abraham and David; (that is from the same line), the Redeemer Jesus Christ, was to come according to the Promise of God, this blessed Mary was betrothed to Joseph, a man from the same lineage, so that he might fulfill his ministry to the Holy Family as its guardian. She had dedicated her entire life unto God through her vow of preserving her perpetual virginity. “. . . *the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Abraham . . . Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, out of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ . . .*” [Matthew 1:1--17] [see also the genealogy of Jesus in the 3rd chapter of St Luke’s Gospel]

33) Did the Blessed Virgin Mary remain pure and untouched following the birth of Christ

Yes! The Virgin Mary was pure and virginal for the rest of her life, we will use these points for our examples of this unique role of the perpetual Virgin Mary: the Old Testament example of the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam, he remained a complete man; the sun when entering into the window reflects light, undivided; and, again the rock in the desert land, which Moses struck for giving water to the thirsty . . it always was and continues to be a stone. The Second Eve was not distressed by the birth giving of Him who is her Lord.

34) What names, other than the Perpetual Virgin Mother, are the possession of St Mary?

We have named her with these titles: The Mother of Christ, The Mother of our Lord, The Second Heaven, The Mother of The Church, The Daughter of Zion, The Burning Bush, The Mother of Immanuel, The New Ark of the Covenant, The Second Ark, The Second Eve, etc. In the Prophets it is written: “. . . *therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign, behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel . .*” (Isaiah 7:14) “. . . *and she shall bring forth a Son, and Thou shall call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin. . .*” (Matthew 1:21) Then, again, Elizabeth states: “. . . *whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord shall come to me?*” (Luke 1:43) In the Church of the East we recognize her as bearing and bringing forth Him who is God with us; however, we prefer to say: “Mother of Christ, perfect God and perfect man.. .”

35) In what sense can we recognize or acknowledge certain theological terminology used by our beloved sister apostolic churches who will address The Ever Virgin Mary as “The Mother of God”??

The Orthodox position will declare this: The Blessed Mother did not give birth to His Godhead, which is from eternal; but rather she had given birth to His manhood, at the end of time, still it is right to be called “the Mother of God,” why? Because He who is born of her is at once God and Man. By way of example: The mother of the President of the United States did not give birth to his presidency, she gave birth to the man; and indeed we call her the mother of the President; and again, the Catholicos Patriarch of the East received his office from The Church, and not from his mother who bore him, and we do call her the mother of the Patriarch.

36) What exalted thoughts can we entertain concerning the Mother of our Lord, the Ever-blessed Virgin Mary?

As the Mother of our Lord she excels in graces and nearness to God; also in dignity, the Holy Church honors her far above the Angels, Cherubim, Seraphim, and the whole of the Angelic Hosts, her blessed name is used by mothers naming their daughters, many churches are built to her honor, institutions of healing (hospitals), she is commemorated in The Holy Church at least 3 times

through the year, and many prayers and petitions are offered to the Lord in her name. “. . . *The Angel came in unto her, and said, hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed are thou among women. . . for He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed . . .*” (St Luke 1:28; 48) .

37) What are the signs which God’s providence prepared for men in order to recognize the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior?

Many signs in the Old Testament declare His coming, by way of example The Prophet Isaiah declares in foretelling the birth of Jesus from a Virgin (*see, Isa 7:14*); the Prophet Micah (*see Matthew 2:4-6*); “. . . *and when all the chief priests, and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, where the Christ should be born, and they said unto him in Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written of the prophets, and thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah are not the least of the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel . . .*” following the completion of the 2nd temple, in Jerusalem, Malachi states that at the coming of the Lord, a forerunner would be sent before Him, like that of the prophet Elijah; this shows the coming of John the Baptist the forerunner of Jesus; “. . . *behold, I shall send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, who ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come saith the Lord of Hosts.*” (*see Malachi 3:1, and also, 4:5*); The Prophet Zechariah foretold of the triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem; “. . . *rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King comes to thee; He is just, and having salvation; glory, and riding upon an ass; upon a colt a foal of an ass . . .*” (*Zechariah 9:9*) The Prophet Isaiah foretold of His suffering (*see Isaiah 53:all*) In Psalm 22, we can see with great exactness the abandonment and suffering upon the Cross, described by King David as though he was present at the whole affair. The Prophet Daniel foretold the coming of the Savior and the death upon the Cross, and the destruction of the Temple and the City of Jerusalem (*see Daniel 9*)

38) When Jesus was on Earth, did the populace recognize Him as the Savior of humankind, sent by God?

Yes! The Holy Bible teaches us that many did recognize Him as from God. In the Gospel of St Luke (2:8-20) the shepherds of the field knew He was from God, by the announcement from the Angels saying, “. . . *in Bethlehem a Savior was born*” and again the coming from the eastern region of the Magi; they had seen His starry sign and came to worship before Him, (*Matthew 2:1-3*); in the presentation in the Temple of our Lord, Simeon and Anna expressed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that this Babe is the salvation of God, (*Luke 2:24-32*); again, the witness of John the Baptist, whose confession/witness was confirmed on the banks of the River Jordan, by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove; and the Voice of God, saying: “. . . *This is My beloved Son in whom I AM well pleased, hear Him . . .*” (*Matthew 3:16-17*); the time of the Transfiguration of Jesus the same Voice of God was heard

by the three of His disciples (Peter, James and John, (*Mark 9:2-7*))

39) Did Jesus the Christ work miracles? If yes, can you name some of them?

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus healed the sick, cast out devils, raised the dead to life, calmed the troubled seas, cleansed the lepers, turned water into wine, fed the multitudes of people, gave sight to the blind, he walked upon the waters, people were healed by the touching of His garments, etc. These miraculous acts were done by the touch of His Hands and the Words from His mouth. He was the benefactor for the suffering masses of humankind, to discover these acts, it is essential to the student of faith to read the four Gospels, and more particularly the Gospel of St John which is known as “*the Gospel of Miracles . . .*”

40) What do we mean by the term “incarnation,” and how does it affect our salvation?

The incarnation (*i.e.* the enfleshment of our Lord Jesus Christ) affected our salvation by His dogma (teachings), His Earthly life, His suffering and death on The Cross, burial, and resurrection.

41) What is the dogma (teaching) of our Lord Jesus?

His dogma (teaching) was the Gospel of Love, the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven (meaning, the doctrine of salvation or that of eternal joy) “ *after John was placed in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God . . .*” (*Mark 1:14*)

42) How can we say that Christ’s teaching grants to us salvation?

We receive salvation when we accept it (that is the teachings) with all our heart, mind, and soul; and we begin to live by it. The deceitful lying words of the serpent in the Garden to our foreparents, became to them the seed of sin, death and the devil, so to the contrary in this matter of our Lord Jesus’ words, the Divine Words of Him who had come to us, are heartily received by the faithful believer of all ages, become in them the seed of a holiness and immortality (everlasting). “. . . *being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever . . .*” (*1 Peter 1:23*)

43) How can we say we have “salvation” by Christ’s life?

Salvation is from our Lord Jesus Christ; we, therefore, by imitating Him in our daily lives, will reflect Him and His gift to humankind. “. . . *if any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve me, him will My Father honor . . .*” (*John 12:26*)



Chapter 11

The Fourth Article The suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ



1) The words of our Lord Jesus Christ should have convinced humankind to follow Him, but, in fact they turned on Him, and crucified Him, why?

The Scripture records that the High-priests, The Scribes, the Pharisees, the learned theologians of that time in history were possessed of a particular hatred for Him; why? **1)** the majority of the “*little-people*” followed Him and His teachings, accepted His miracle, etc.; and, **2)** He was straight forward with His teachings, and revealed their teachings as false. “. . . *the high chief priests and the scribes heard it and they sought how they might destroy Him, because all the people were astonished at His teachings . . .*” (Mark 11:18) “. . . *(the Pharisees wanted) to arrest Him, they feared the multitude because they took Him as a prophet. . .*” (Matthew 21:46 compare with Luke 19:47-48) Again, their false teachings were revealed “. . . *they come again to Jerusalem, and while walking in the Temple, there came to Him the Chief Priests, scribes and elders, and said to Him, ‘by what authority, do You do these things, and who gave this authority to You to do these things?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things, the baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of men? Answer Me . . .’ They reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say, ‘from Heaven; He will say, ‘why did ye not believe him? But if we shall say of men,’ they feared the people, for all men counted John, as a prophet indeed. They answered and said to Jesus, ‘we cannot tell.’ Then Jesus answered and said to them, neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things . . .*” (Mark 11:27-33, compare with Matthew 21:23-27) Again, “. . . . *woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in, woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows houses, and for a pretense make long prayers, therefore, ye shall receive the greater damnation, woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass seas and lands to make one proselyte and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves . . .*” (Read all of this 23rd chapter of Matthew’s Gospel compare this with Luke 11:44)

2) Why is it said, in the Creed, that “*Jesus Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate?*”

This will lend credence to the historical period, time, and approximate year in which He was nailed upon the Cross. “. . . *And Jesus stood before the Governor, and the Governor asked of Him, saying: ‘Art Thou the King of the Jews?’ and Jesus said to him, ‘thou sayest it.’* (Matthew 27:11)

3) Who was Pontius Pilate, what was his role?

He was the Governor of the region Judea, as laid out by the Roman Caesars, or the Palestine of the Roman Byzantine Empire. (Please see the above question and answer #2)

4) What is the reason for mentioning Judea; is it of considerable importance; or what?

Yes! It is of considerable importance. In this reference we can recognize the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jacob as it is mentioned in the writings of Moses . . . “ . . . *the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh comes; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. . .*” (*Gen 49:10*)

5) In the Creed we confess: “. . . *He suffered and was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate . . .*” what is the purpose for this statement?

To show to the believer, that our Lord did indeed and in fact suffered and died, to give evidence of His humanity, contrary to the heresy of one of the early centuries of The Church history, who taught that Jesus Christ was a phantom. “. . . *know ye that the Spirit of God, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God . . . and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God . . . and this that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come and even now is already in the world . . .*” (*1 John 4:2,3*)

6) Why do we say: . . . “ *He was buried . . .*”?

This confession is made in order for us to confirm and state publicly that He died, indeed and in fact, in His humanity, and that He arose in His humanity; which is to be transformed into immortality when He ascends into Heaven to be seated at the right hand of The Father. The crucifiers had posted soldiers/guards to keep watch over the sealed sepulcher. It is written . . . “*they laid it (Jesus Body) in his (Joseph of Arimathea) tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed . . .*” (*Matthew 27:60*) and, again, “. . . *Pilate said unto them, you have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can. So, they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. . . .*” (*Matthew 27:65-66*)

7) How is it possible to apply suffering and death to our Lord Jesus Christ, since we confess Him as God?

His suffering is not applied to His Godhead, but rather to that of His humanity (*manhood*), not because He could not have avoided it, but by an act of love and willingly accepted the consequences of humanity and their sin. It is written, “. . . *My Father doth love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This have I received of My Father . . .*” (*John 10:17:18*)

8) Why do we confess, Jesus Christ, “. . . *was crucified for us men. . .*”?

In this statement we clearly declare that our Lord Jesus Christ through His death upon the Cross, delivered us from the curse of death, sin and Satan.

9) Does the Holy Bible teach about being freed from the curse of death, sin and Satan?

Yes! The Ephesian letter states: “. . . *in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace. . .*” (1:7) and, again, in the Galatian letter: “. . . *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs from a tree.*” (Gal 3:13) “. . . *For as much, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, HE also, Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him, that hath the power of death, that is the devil; and delivered them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . .*” (Heb 2:14-15)

10) How is it that we confess that Jesus Christ has delivered us from the curse of sin; and of fear and death?

So that humankind can more readily believe in this unique mystery of salvation, the Sacred Scriptures teach it, so that we can be positioned to receive it readily by comparing Lord Jesus Christ with the first man; Adam. By nature the head of all mankind is Adam. It is at once with Him by natural descent from Him, Jesus Christ in Whom the Godhead is united with manhood, in the person of Immanuel, graciously made of Himself, the new Adam (or the Second Adam) whom He unites to Himself through faith in the womb of the Virgin. Therefore, as in Adam sin had entered into humankind, and in the Second Adam (Jesus Christ) we are delivered from that curse of sin and death. His voluntary suffering and subsequent death upon The Cross, for us, being of infinite value and merit shrouded in mystery, as the death of a Sinless Man, God and man in One Person, is both at once a perfect satisfaction to the justice of God, which had condemned us for sin unto death, and it is a fund of infinite merit, which has obtained Him the right, without prejudice to justice, to give to the sinner pardon of our sin and granting grace unto us to have victory over death; “. . . *even the mystery which had been hidden from ages unto generations hath now been made manifest to His saints; to whom God hath made known, what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” (Col 1:26-27). And, again, “. . . *if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which received the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. . .*” (Rom 5:17) “. . . *there is, therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent forth His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; for that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” (Roman 8:1-4)

11) Does our Lord’s coming to earth mean that He came for the benefit of all humankind?

Yes! He had offered for all of humankind, Himself as a pure living sacrifice and did indeed obtain for us grace and salvation.

This benefits only those who'll for their parts of their own freewill have fellowship in His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. “ . . . *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.*” (Phil 3:10)

12) How is it possible to participate in the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We do participate in His suffering and death by an active, lively, and hearty faith; through the Holy Sacraments, in which is contained and sealed the total saving sufferings and death of our Lord, through the crucifixion of our human weaknesses with its affections and lusts. “. . . *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*” (Gal 2:19, 20) “. . . *know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?*” (Rom 6:3) And, again . . . “*for as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He comes . . .*” (1 Cor 11:26) “. . . *they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof..*” (Gal 5:24)

13) How are the human weaknesses crucified, that is the affections, lusts, the flesh, etc?

By controlling these normal desires before they are out of control; by not being obedient to them, but re-directing these “feelings” to a normal and constructive action. For it is written: “. . . *and they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts . . .*” (Galatians 5:24) And, again, “. . . *knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . .*” (Romans 6:6) We will suggest, that when anger rises up to revile an enemy by doing harm, we will resist this desire of the flesh for revenge, and look to Jesus; and there to reflect upon Him and His action toward His enemies which He encountered. Look at the Cross, when He prayed for His enemies, asking The Father to forgive them. “. . . *then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do . . .*” (Luke 23:34) And from St Stephen the first martyr “. . . *kneeling down, and with a loud voice he cried out, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, and when he said this, he fell asleep*” (Act 7:60)



Chapter 12

On the Fifth Article The Glorious Resurrection



1) Can we prove that the death of Jesus Christ provided salvation for the whole of humankind?

Yes! We can firstly position ourselves stating: He is Risen! He is truly Risen. And, again we can state from the Holy Bible these words of the Gospel, “. . . *then said Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of Me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered abroad, but after I am risen, again I will go before you into Galilee.* .” (*Matthew 26:31-32*) “. . . *saying, sir, we remember that, that deceiver said, while HE was yet alive, ‘after three days, I will rise*

again.”” (Matthew 27:63) “. . . the angel answered and said unto the women, ‘Fear not, ye; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified, He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Now, come see the place where the Lord was laid.’” (Matthew 28:5,6) “. . . but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept . . .” (1 Cor 15:20)

2) At the time of the death of Jesus Christ on The Cross, and before the Resurrection of our Lord, where was He?

According to the Church Fathers He was in three areas at the self same time. **1)** with God; “ *when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, He said, ‘Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit; and having said thus, He gave up His Spirit.’* (Luke 23:46); and, **2)** in Paradise; “. . . (to the thief) *today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise . . .*” (Luke 23:43); and, finally, **3)** in the prison of Hades; “. . . Christ also, hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; He went and preached unto the souls in prison . . .” (1 Peter 3:18,19). In His flesh, He was entombed in the new grave of Joseph of Aramathea, it is written: “. . . when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.” (Matt 27:59,60)

3) Can we define “Hades,” or “Hell,” or “Sheol?”

These are synonymous terms, one is the Greek word, the other is the English term, and the later is our own Aramaic term. This is the place of darkness; or as the term implies “*a place without light.*” It is a place of spiritual imprisonment; by definition the state of those who are separated from the sight of God by sin, and they are unable to delight themselves in the comforts of His light nor countenance and the blessedness it confers, etc. (see: 1 Peter 3:18,19; and, compare the following Scripture) “. . . in Hell, the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom . . .” (Luke 16:23); Please see this passage, too: “. . . the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgement of The Great Day.” (Jude 6)

4) What was the purpose of the descent into Sheol by our Lord?

First, to proclaim His victory over death; and **Secondly**, to deliver the righteous souls who had, in faith, anticipated His coming. “. . . the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, coming forth from the graves which were opened, and came out after His resurrection; and went into the Holy City and appeared unto many.” (Matt 27:52-23)

5) What can we say about the phrase we confess in The Creed, when it says: “. . . and rose again on the third day, as it is written . . .”?

This is the passage from the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, when it says: “. . . *for I have delivered unto you, first of all, that which I received, how that Christ died for our sin, according to the Scriptures, and, that He was buried, and that He rose up again on the third day, according to the Scriptures . . .*” (1 Cor 15:3,4; compare with: John 2:19–22)

6) Why do we recognize the phrase which we confess as an important statement of faith, “. . . *according to the Scriptures . . .*” ?

These are the very words which teach us and explain, that Christ suffered, died and rose again. As it is written and prophesied of Him in the various books of the Old Testament; from the Prophet Isaiah, we have this quote of His suffering and death on behalf of all humankind, “. . . *surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted . . . but He was wounded for our transgressions, and He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. . .*” (Isaiah 53:4,5) Regarding the Resurrection of our Lord from the tomb St Peter records the words of the Psalms: “. . . *because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption . . .*” (Acts 2: 27; compare with Psalm 16:10)

7) Where can we find a reference in the Old Testament writings that our Lord Jesus Christ would rise on the third day?

We direct our attention to the Prophet Jonah. He was swallowed by a great fish, and three days later he was spewed-out upon dry land. This is a picture of the “*death, burial, and resurrection, of Jesus Christ.*” “. . . *the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow-up Jonah. And, Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights.*” (Jonah 1:17) Jesus relates this passage to Himself in the Gospel writings: “. . . *for as Jonah was three days and three night in the whale’s belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*” (Matthew 12:40)

8) How can we know the truth of the resurrection of Christ; and by what means?

We can quote the Sacred Scriptures which have demonstrated to us the fact of the Resurrection; and, **First:** by the soldiers present at The Tomb, by their actions and observations which are recorded there. “*When the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying ‘. . . truly this was the Son of God. . .*’”(Matt 27:54); **Second:** The Angels announced the resurrection to Mary of Magdala, and to the other women who had come to the tomb to anoint His body; “. . . *He is not here; but, is risen; remember how He spoke to you when He was yet in Galilee? . . . ‘the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful man, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again’*” (Luke 24:6,7) **Third:** Jesus Christ, on the very day of His resurrection (He) had appeared to many of His disciples; to the women who were bringing spices to complete His burial anointing, etc. “. . . *when Mary of Magdala had spoken, she turned herself about, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus . . . He said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned herself and said: ‘Rabbuli! ...*” (John 20:14,16);

Fourth: to the Disciples on the road to Emmaus, “. . . *two disciples on their way to Emmaus, it came to pass, that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself, drew near and went with them. . .*” (Luke 24:15); **Fifth:** Jesus appeared to the Disciples, in an Upper Room where they had gathered, with the doors and the windows closed, “. . . *on the same day, at the evening hour, being the first day of the week, where the doors were shut, and where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, saying to them, ‘Peace be with you.’*” (John 20:19); **Sixth:** The resurrected Jesus appeared for some 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension and He appeared more than 10 times to His disciples and others; **Seventh:** St Paul records that Jesus appeared and was seen by more than 500 brethren and disciples; “. . . *He was seen of above 500 brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain until this present day, but some are fallen asleep. . .*” (1 Cor 15:6) **Eighth:** He walked with the brethren on “The Way” to Emmaus, “. . . *did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by The Way and opened unto us The Scriptures . . .*” (Luke 24:32) **Ninth:** The Way to Damascus, St Paul was encountered by Risen Lord: “*Who art Thou Lord . . . I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest*” (Acts 9:4-5)

9) During the space of forty days, Jesus Christ showed Himself to His Disciples, can you tell us why?

Yes! To teach them the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. “. . . *to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God...*” (Act 1:3)



Chapter 13

The Sixth Article of the Creed The Mystery of the Ascension into Heaven



1) Can we say that the sixth article of The Creed about “*the Ascension of our Lord into Heaven*” is taken from the Holy Scriptures?

Yes, indeed! It is written in the Epistle of St Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, “. . . *He that descended is the same that also ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things.* . . .” (Eph 4:10); “. . . *of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum, we have such a high priest, who is set upon the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens.* . . .” (Hebrews 8:1)

2) In what form did Jesus Ascend into Heaven? In His humanity? or, in His divinity?

In His manhood! As God He was always in Heaven!

We believe that this same Jesus was born of Mary the Virgin, that He was crucified, died and was buried. That He arose from the grave, transformed into a spiritual body, and Ascended into Heaven. “. . . . *Jesus Christ the same, yesterday and forever . . .*”

(*Hebrews 13:8*) In the Gospel of St Luke these words are recorded: “. . . *Jesus took them out to Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them . . . and it came to pass that while He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven . . .*” (*Luke 24:50-51*)

- 3) Since God is Spirit and is everywhere present, how can we confess that “*Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God*”?
We understand this statement in the Creed, to be a profound spiritual truth, in which we confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is of equal authority, glory, majesty, honor, power with God the Father within the Holy Trinity, forever.



Chapter 14

The Seventh Article of Faith The Second Coming of Jesus Christ



1) What do the Holy Scriptures declare about the “*coming of Jesus Christ the Second time from Heaven.*”

It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, “. . . *this same Jesus which is taken up from among you, into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven . . .*” (Acts 1:11b)

2) In the Holy Bible, is there any reference to the future judgment or the last judgement?

Yes! It is written for these are the very words of our Lord Jesus: “. . . *marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*” (John 5:18,29)

3) Does the Bible address this matter: “*His Kingdom which will have no end?*”

Yes! Luke’s Gospel states these very words of the Angel Gabriel: “. . . *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the Throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.*” (Luke 1:32,33)

4) Can you explain the difference of the first coming of Jesus and that of His second coming?

In the first coming, He came as a lamb to be offered as a living sacrifice on behalf of sin of humankind. The Prophet Isaiah, records: It is written: “*Behold, The Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29) and, “. . . *He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before shearers is dumb so He opened not His mouth. . .*” (Isaiah 53:7) And, again, in His first coming He came as a servant; it is written; “. . . *even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many . . .*” (Matt 20:28) And, again, St Paul declares: “*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made of Himself no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross . . .*” (Philippians 2:6-8)

In the Second coming of Jesus from Heaven, He will come in glory to judge the living and the dead; accompanied with angels, archangels, the hosts of Heaven. From the Holy Gospel it is written in the Book of St Matthew: “. . . *then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory, and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds from one end of Heaven to the other . . .*” (Matthew 24:30,31) “. . . *when the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. . . .*” (Matthew

25: 31-32)

5) Will all humankind be judged by Jesus at the Second coming?

Yes! Without regard to race, creed, nor color! It is recorded, “. . . before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another . . .” (Matthew 25:31)

6) How will they be judged by our Lord?

The conscience of every man shall be laid bare before all to see, and not only all works which had ever been done while upon earth, but also all the words which were spoken, and all the secret thoughts and wishes revealed. “. . . judge nothing before its time, till the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God . . .” (I Cor 4:5)

7) Will evil-words or thoughts be judged by our Lord?

Yes! God will judge them, if we fail to confront them with Godly sorrow and repent of our sin, whether in thought, word or deed. “. . . I say unto Thee, that every idle word, which man shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the Day of Judgement . . .” (Matt 12:36)

“. . . I say unto thee, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother *raca*, shall be in danger of the counsel, but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of Hell fire . . .” (Matt 5:22)

8) Can we say that Jesus Christ is coming soon?

We do not know. Since we do not know when He will return to claim the believer, we need to be ready to meet Him, in godly living, in charity with our brothers and sisters in Christ; and, to be ready for His second coming. “. . . for ye yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night . . . but, ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. . .” (I Thess 5:2-4) “. . . the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise and elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the Earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . .” (II Peter 3:10) The Lord says according to the writings of St Matthew: “Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour in which the Son of Man comes . . .” (Matt 25:13) And, again: “know this that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up” (Matt 24:43)

9) Are there not signs about us which testify to the nearness of the coming of our Lord the second time?

The only signs we have in the Holy Scriptures reveal to us, that there is a decrease of faith and love among men, and the abundance of iniquity and calamities, that there is the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, and a forthcoming of an anti-Christ.

(Consult Matthew 24, the whole chapter)

10) Define the term “anti-Christ.”

It is a person or persons who strive to overthrow the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures, instead of meeting with success in destroying Jesus Christ and His revelation; shall instead come to a dreadful/fearful end. “. . . *the wicked shall be revealed, whom our Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy at the brightness of His coming . . .*” (II Thess 2:8) Again we have written for us: “*and the devil who had deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night and forever and ever.*” (Revelation 2:20)

11) What is the Kingdom of Christ?

His Kingdom is **first**, the whole-world; **secondly**, all of the faithful believers upon Earth; and, **thirdly**, all those of the blessed in Heaven. **The first** is addressed as the *Kingdom of Nature*; **the second** is the *Kingdom of the Races*; and **the third** is the *Kingdom of Glory*.

12) Which of the above kingdoms is meant when we confess, of Thy “*Kingdom there shall be no end*”?

We mean the Kingdom of Glory!



Chapter 15

The Eighth Article of the Creed The Third Person of the Qnuma The Holy Spirit



1) Why do we name or call the Third Person of the Holy Trinity “Lord God?”

We use this term in the same fashion as we refer to the entire qnume of the Holy Godhead; “Lord God.”

2) Where in the Sacred Writings do we find the reference of Him, God the Holy Spirit, as, “Lord God?”

A reference can be found in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, in the very words of the Apostle Peter, in the rebuke of Annanias; “. . . *but Peter said, Annanias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land, while it remained, was it not thine own? And, after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God.*” (Acts 3:4)

3) The Holy Spirit is called “The Giver of Life,” what is meant by this statement?

That He, together with God the Father, and God the Son gives life to all creatures which had been created from the beginning; especially in the matter of humankind in which the spiritual life is recognized as primary. Jesus answered, “. . . *verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*” (John 3:5)

4) From whom or what does the Holy Spirit proceed?

In the Holy Gospel and the preaching of St John, the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father; “. . . *when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify concerning Me*” (John 15:26)

5) WE confess the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father; therefore, can we make any additional theological changes in this matter?

No! It has been sealed by the decrees of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea, which is based upon the direct quote of the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, (*see the above question #4 and the response*). These words are the very reflection of Divine truth. In the Council of Nicea, that is of the 318 Fathers meeting in 325 A.D. it had been confirmed, in the 8th article of the Creed, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father only. This had been acknowledged by the entire united Church, which forbids any change of the Creed, past, present or future.

6) Where in the Sacred Scriptures can we substantiate the phrase that “*the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are to be worshiped and glorified,*” equally?

In The Gospel of St Matthew, we read these words, from The great commission; “. . . *go, ye, therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in The Name of The Father, Son and The Holy Spirit . . .*” (Matthew 28:19). In addition, to this great biblical truth, within The Church we use this very phrase in The priestly prayers, to begin and end utilizing this holy expression, “*O Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit . . . Amen*”

7) Where can we read from The Sacred Scriptures that The Holy Spirit spoke by The prophets?

In The Second Epistle of The Apostle Peter, it is written, “. . . *for The prophecy came not in old time by The will of man but holy men of God spake as they were moved by The Holy Spirit. . .*” Again, “. . . *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . .*” (II Timothy 3:16) In the writings of Moses, The Book of Numbers we have this passage: “. . . *and Moses said unto them, ‘enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all The LORD’s people were prophets, and that LORD would put His spirit upon them’ . . .*” (Numbers 11:9). The Apostles, Saints Paul and Peter, confirmed in their epistles, that The Holy Spirit spoke through prophets of old in order to close The mouth of heretics who had been teaching that the books of The Old Testament were not inspired by The Holy Spirit

8) Can we state that The Holy Spirit also spoke through The Apostles?

Yes, indeed and without a single doubt! It is recorded in The Holy Bible “. . . . unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister The things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached The Gospel unto you with The Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven, which things The angels desired to look unto . . . ” (1Pet 1:12) Again in the Holy Gospel, Jesus declared: “*blessed art thou Simon bar Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto Thee, but my Father, which is in Heaven.*” (Matt 16:17)

9) Was The Holy Spirit manifested to The Apostles by some special means?

Yes! The Holy Spirit came upon our Lord Jesus Christ in The form of a dove, at His baptism, which means He received completely The embodiment of The Holy Spirit in His Person. “*and Jesus when He was baptized went straightway out of The water, and lo, The Heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw The Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. . . .*” (Matthew 3:16) Whereas, The Holy Apostles, 10 days following upon The Ascension of Jesus, were gathered together in an Upper Room, when the Apostles, equally and together, received The Holy Spirit in the form of a tongue of fire, which symbolizes a small part of the whole body. The Church Fathers give testimony that this is the day of the birth of Holy Church; “*and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as that of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with The Holy Spirit; and began to speak with other tongues, as The Spirit gave to them utterance . . .*” (Act 2:3-4)

10) Can we say that The Holy Spirit is given to man in our day and time?

Yes! The Sacred Writings state: “*know ye not that ye are The Temple of God, and that The Spirit of God dwells in you?*” (1Cor 3:16) The Prophet Joel has given to us these Sacred Words; “*and it shall come to pass, afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions, and upon the servants, and handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit.*” (Joel 2:28-29). In The Baptismal Rite of The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of The East, The newly Baptized receives The Gift of The Holy Spirit; “*May The earnest of The Holy Spirit which ye have received, and The Mysteries of Christ which ye have taken, and His living sign which ye have received, and The new life which ye have gained, and armor of righteousness which ye have put on, keep you from The evil-one and his hosts. . . .*”

11) How may we become partakers of The Holy Spirit?

We are partakers in The Holy Spirit by The grace of Holy Baptism in which we are made “*partakers in The Beloved,*” for it is written; “. . . if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give The Holy Spirit to them that ask of Him?” (Luke 11:13) “. . . whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises

that by these ye might be partakers of The Divine Nature, having escaped The corruption that is in The world through lusts . . .” (1 Peter 1:4) “ . . . after that, through the kindness of the love God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercies He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of The Holy Spirit which He has shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. . .” (Titus 3,4,6)

12) Are we able to identify the chief gifts of The Holy Spirit?

Yes! It is written in The Holy Book; “ *The Spirit of The Lord shall rest upon him, The Spirit of wisdom, and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, and The Spirit of knowledge and of The fear of The Lord . . .*” (Isaiah 11:2) To read of other spiritual gifts, please refer to writing of The Treasurer of the Church St Paul, the Apostle, his first epistle to The Corinthian Church, chapters 12, 13, and 14.



Chapter 16

Article nine

The One Holy Apostolic Catholic Church



1) Define what is meant by “*The One Holy Apostolic Catholic Church*”?

We define The Church as a Divine Institution composed of all levels of humankind who are united in one communion of faith, of Sacraments, law of God, and hierarchy.

2) Why do we confess “*we believe in The Church*”?

It is a pious confession that we honor The true Church of Christ, obey the doctrine and commandments, which arise from our confidence that the Holy Spirit forever abides in her, and works, teaches, and governs unto us salvation, flowing from her One and only Head, Jesus Christ our Lord God and Savior

3) The Scriptures that declare that, “*faith is The evidence of things not seen*” therefore, how can The visible Church be The object of faith?

Firstly: Let us state clearly that The Church is visible; yet The Grace of our worshipful God which dwells within her, and within those who are sanctified in her is not visible. It is this which properly constitutes The object of faith in The Church. **Secondly:** The Church though visible, because she is upon Earth, and contains all The right-believing Christian souls upon Earth, yet, and at The same time The Church is invisible, so far as she is partially in Heaven and unseen, containing The souls of all those

who have departed this physical earth in The true faith and holiness. St Paul taught us: “. . . *I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, nevertheless to abide in The flesh it is more needful for you.*” (Phil 1:23-24)

4) How can we align this idea that The Church is at once on Earth and in Heaven?

We refer our catechumens to The writings of St Paul, The Epistle to The Hebrews, which records for us: “*but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto The City of The Living God, The Heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of Angels, to The General Assembly and The Church of The First born, which are written in Heaven, and to God The Judge of all, and to The spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus The Mediator of The New Covenant, and to The blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel*” (Heb 12:22-24) In time past we have witnessed the Church graveyard; it surrounded the edifice, thereby giving to us the common witness of both The Church Militant and The Church Victorious. We are not divided, we are one communion in the Living Faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is written by our Church Father Mar Esho-dad of Merv: “the word “*ee'ta*” (*church*) it is related to the word “*eh-dah*,” (*festival*), and both are derived from reduplicated root, “*ah'teht*” means to celebrate a festival. There also a connection to the word “*wah'dah*,” an appointed time and place for a meeting. From the word “*ee'tah*” (the church), itself comes the denominative word “*ahd'tett*” (to congregate). The word “*ee'tah*” occurs in the Old Testament, (*see: Psalm 107:32*), where we do not expect to find “The Church,” where it is usually translated into English as “assembly.” Indeed the institutional Church is not to be found there, nevertheless, the presence of this singular word, allows us to see that which is called “the pre-existence of The Church” (*i.e.: The people of God united in belief and practice*).

5) How are we certain that The Grace of God abides within The True Church of Christ?

–(1): We are certain that The Grace of God eternally abides in The True Church because our Lord Jesus Christ The Son of God is her head; and, He is full of grace and truth, and He fills His mystical body, The Church, with grace and truth as well (*see: John 1:14-17*); and, therefore, it is written: “*and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be The Head over all things to The Church, which is His body, The fullness of Him that fills all in all!*” (*Ephesians 1:22-23*)

–(2): Our Lord Jesus had promised The Disciples that He would send The Holy Spirit who will abide with them forever; according to The promises of our Lord it is He who appoints those who serve in the Apostolic Succession; “*and I will pray The Father, and He will give to you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.*” (*John 14:16*) From The Acts of The Apostles, it is written: “*take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all The flock over that which The Holy Spirit has made you overseers to feed The Church of Christ, which He hath purchased with His own blood.*” (*Acts 20:28*)

6) How can we be certain that The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will remain with The Church forever?

We know this from The words of The Sacred Scriptures, uttered by our Lord Himself, and by The Holy Apostles who succeeded Him even unto this present day; it is recorded: “*and I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Matt 16:18); again, “*and lo, I AM with you always, even unto the end of the world, amen.*” (Matt 28:20b); “. . . unto HIM be glory, in The Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end: Amen” (Eph 3:21)

7) Why do we confess that our Lord established One Church?

He created One Church, for she is The One and Only Spiritual body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is her head; and, she lives by One Spirit of God. “. . . *for there is One body, and One Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* . . .” (Eph 4:4-6)

8) Can we find further or additional references which will provide us with The assurance that Jesus Christ is The Only One Head of The One Church?

St Paul writes to us that The Church has no other foundation other than that of Jesus Christ: “*for other foundations can no man lay, than that which is laid in Jesus Christ!*” (1 Cor 3:11) Therefore, The Holy Church can have no other head other than Jesus Christ our Lord; The Church which must be alive and living throughout The centuries for The generations to embrace must have a viable unity in Him as a witness to The Lord Jesus is alive. “*Who now rejoices in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body’s sake, which is The Church: whereof, I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God.*” (Col 1:24-28). It is here we will note that The Holy Apostle (St Paul) addresses himself as “a minister,” of The Gospel, and no other higher rank, as The Head of The Church was always understood to be The Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

9) What duty does the Holy Church challenge us to do?

The Holy Church instructs the faithful to keep and maintain “the unity of The Church.” The purpose of The Church is creating an extended family, in spiritual fellowship; in service to one another. (Without unity there is no fellowship; and in like manner, where there is no unity, there is no Church!) “*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” (Eph 4:3) We can state here that when a division occurs in The Church, there is no forgiveness for the tearing of the unity of The Holy Church into private segments of pleasure, and self aggrandizement.

10) How does this (*i.e.* the unity of the Church) reconcile the manifold differences within the Apostolic Traditions (Church), such as that of Rome, Greece, Armenia, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Seleucia/Ctsiphon, etc?

These Apostolic Traditions within the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church on the face, or primary appearance, would

indicate separateness but in fact they are not; these identities are the result of understanding the revelation of our worshipful God and merciful Lord Jesus Christ within their national and traditional experience. This for certain does affect differences. These differences, which appear to be divisive, are not so! They do not prevent any Apostolic Church from being a vital part of the spiritual oneness of The Church of Christ. They are under One Head (Jesus Christ), of One Spirit of faith and grace. This unity is fully expressed, visually, by the unity of the Nicene Creed and by communion in prayer and Sacraments. The beauty of the Apostolic Church is the room for the people of various ethnic colors to worship the Living God in their tradition and familiar settings. Therefore, these varied differences are not the weakness of the Apostolic Church, but, rather, they are considered the richness and beauty of The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church.

11) Is there unity between the earthly Church and the Heavenly Church?

YES! Without doubt through the unity in communion with the One Head, Jesus Christ, and in communion with one another; *“for we being many, are One Bread, and One body, for we are all partakers of that One Bread . . .”* (1 Cor 10:17)

12) What means of communion does the earthly Church have with the Heavenly Church?

The primary or initial means of communion is prayer. Therefore, when a faithful upon earth calls upon the merciful Lord and God of us all, to/will offer their prayers intentions unto God, they are inviting the Saints who have preceded us in death, and are already in the Presence of our worshipful Lord God, they carry and purify our petitions, to present them before the Throne of the Almighty God and Father of us all. *“ . . . I said unto Him, Thou knowest, and He said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, therefore, they are before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sits upon the throne shall dwell among them. . . .”* (Rev 7:14,15) *“ . . . and another angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer and there was given unto him, much incense that he should offer it **with the prayers** of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before The Throne, and the smoke of the incense **which came with the prayers of the saints**, ascended up before God out of the angels hand. . . .”* (Rev 8:3-4)

13) Why does The Church invoke the names of various saints in their petitions?

The principle of beseeching the aid, prayer and comforts of the Saints is rooted in Holy Scriptures and Sacred Tradition handed to us from our forefathers of old. King David called upon Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, making mention of the effectiveness of the saints of old to aid in his prayer, exactly and now the Holy Church calls upon Christ our true God, by the Prayers of His Blessed Mother and all His Saints. *“May the Prayer, O my Lord, of the Holy Virgin, the request of the blessed Mother, and the beseeching and entreating of her who is full of grace, St Mary the blessed, and the great power of the conquering*

Cross, and the divine help, and the request of St John the Baptist be with us continually, at all seasons and times, O Lord of all, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit forever: Amen (from the Church of the East Prayer Book)

14) Can Holy Scriptures substantiate any apparitions of saints from Heaven?

Yes! The Evangelist St Matthew writes in the Holy Gospel that after the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ upon the Cross, many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves, after the resurrection and went into the Holy City of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many (*see: Mat 27:52,53*) Again, we read in the I Epistle of Peter, “. . . *He (Jesus) preached to the souls held imprisoned in Sheol . . . confessing God with a clean conscience. . .*” (*Pet 3:19,21*)

15) In the Sacred Scriptures is there any reference to miracles performed after the saints departure in death?

Yes! It is written in the Second book of Kings that the bones of Elisha raised a dead man to life “. . . *it came to pass as they were burying a man that behold they spied a band of men and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet.*” (*II Kings 13:21*); and again, St Paul the Apostle, not only by his person or presence, but by kerchiefs and cloths which were taken from his body do work miracles: “*God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them.*” (*Act 19:11,12*) Thus, by this example we can claim that even though the saints following upon their falling asleep into the arms of our Lord, in like manner can and do work through earthly means Holy Miracles.

16) Why is The Church “Holy?”

She is sanctified by Jesus Christ, by His Most Precious Blood, by His prayers, His doctrine and truth. “. . . *Sanctify them, through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth! . . . and for their sakes, I sanctify Myself, that they all might be sanctified through the truth. . .*” (*John 17:17,19*) “*Christ Jesus loved The Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, nor wrinkle nor any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish.*” (*Eph 5:25,27*)

17) Is the Church holy, even though she has within her sinners?

Yes! Individuals who sin, but will seek purification through repentance and receive absolution from The Church will not prevent The Church from being “holy unto the Lord” she is a bride pure and trusting before Him. But, the unrepentant, by the visible act of The Church and her authority and by the invisible judgement of our worshipful God; are cut off from the body of The

Church. And, so she is in respect of these, kept holy unto Him. *“Those who are without God, judgeth, therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person . . .”* (I Cor 5:13) And, again, *“. . .nonetheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal the Lord knows them that are His. Let everyone that names the Name of Christ depart from iniquity!”* (II Tim 2:19) Please remember that humankind cannot make The Church holy, neither can humankind make The Church unholy. The Church is holy, because Jesus Christ IS the head of The Church, and the Holy Spirit IS the soul of Church.

18) Why is The Church called “catholic?” or, “universal?”

The Holy Church is not limited to place, nor time, nor national identity; she is, rather, the institution which embraces faithful believers of every national stripe, place and time . . . unto all ages! Jesus taught us *“. . . go ye into all the world, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit . . .”* (Matt 28:19) The Apostle St Paul, The Treasurer of Truth states: *“. . .for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven whereof ye heard before in the word of the Truth of the Gospel, which has come unto you, as it is **in all the world** and brings forth fruit as it doth also in you, since the day you had heard of it, and knew grace of God in truth. . . .”* (Col 1:5,6) And, once again St Paul states, in The Church, *“. . . where there is neither, Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, nor Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”* (Col 3:11) *“. . .for you are all The Children of God, by Christ Jesus . . .for as many of you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female for we are all one in Christ Jesus, and if you be Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed and heir according to the promise . . .”* (Gal 3:26,29)

19) What are the privileges in The Church Catholic?

It is The Church alone who has the noble privileges of promise from Christ; namely, **Firstly:** *“. . . The Gates of Hell cannot prevail against her . . .”* To St Peter the Chief of the Apostles of our Lord said; *“. . . I say unto thee, Peter, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it . . .”* (Mat 16:18); **Second:** The Lord had promised The Church that He would be with her till the end of the ages, *“. . . and lo I Am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”* (Matt 28:20b); **Third:** The glory of God shall abide in The Church, forever, through Jesus Christ . . . *“. . . unto HIM be glory in The Church, by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end: Amen . . .”* (Eph 3:21); **Fourth:** The Church shall never apostatize from the Holy Faith, nor sin against the revelation of truth . . . *“. . .for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord . . .”* (Rom 8:38-39) **Fifth:** The Holy Church can never err in the confession of faith, which simply means, *“the One Catholic Church cannot err, nor sin, nor proclaim heresy in place of orthodoxy”*, it is the Holy Spirit, presently living within The Church who is continuously active through the faithful fathers,

doctors, ministers of The Holy Church; preserving them from doctrinal error; “. . . *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is The Church of the living God, the **Pillar and Ground of the Truth** . . .*” (1 Tim 3:15)

20) Since The Apostolic Church is; then, why is it necessary to be identified in membership in her for our salvation?

It is written in the Ephesian letter that Jesus Christ is the Head of The Church, and that He is The Savior of the Body. Therefore, to be so identified, it is necessary to be incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ; the Church. (See: Eph 5:23) At the time of Noah, only 8 persons were saved in the Ark; those who were outside of the Ark died in their sin; after the same manner only those who are in The Church at the coming of Christ will be saved from condemnation. It is written: “. . . *which sometime were disobedient when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.*” (1 Pet 3:20)

21) Why do we refer to The Church of the East as The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of The East?

First we will state that The Garden of Eden (Paradise) was planted in the East; Jesus Christ, our Lord established His Church in the East; **Second:** Our Lord fulfilled His Divine mission on Earth, by redeeming humankind on the brow of Golgotha, which is in The East. (see: John 19:30) **Third:** from Jerusalem our Lord Jesus commissioned His twelve Apostles to go and teach all the nations of the world, and to baptize them in The Name of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (Matt 28:19) And, once again we have the written word of the Acts of the Apostles, “. . . *ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you will be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and Judea and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the Earth*” (Acts 1:8) **Fourth:** The coming of our Lord the second time from Heaven will be from the East, “*for as the lightning comes forth from the East, and shines even unto the West so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.*” (Matt 24:27) **Fifth:** Geographically and politically the Apostolic Sees of The Holy Church were in the West and under the Western Roman Byzantine Empire; only the Apostolic See of The Church of the East in Selucia/Ctesiphon was under the Persian Eastern Empire. So therefore, The Church in the Eastern region was called and known as **The Church of the East**. “*The Church that is at Babylon, elect together with you salutes you and so does Mark my son.*” (1 Pet 5:13)

22) Why do we call The Church “Apostolic?”

The Church was established by our Lord’s commission to the Holy Apostles, and they in turn instructed the converts to This Way, the very words of our Lord Himself, which is the basis of Apostolic Sacred Tradition, Holy Dogma, the Holy Laying-on-of Hands in Apostolic Succession, which established the Holy Fatherhood of The Church through the Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

The Apostolic Church of the East had been established by the very Apostles themselves, giving to us the traditional practices, sacramental observances, etc. The Holy Church is also known as, “Orthodox” which means the True Faith (as that given by the Holy Apostles) St Paul writes, “*now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the house of God and built upon the foundation of The Apostles, and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself, being the Chief Cornerstone . . .*” (Eph 2:19,20)

23) What does The Creed teach us when it calls The Church “*One Holy and Apostolic Church?*”

The Creed teaches us to confess and hold fast to the teachings of the Apostolic Sacred Tradition and Doctrine. The Apostle St Paul writes, “. . . *therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word or our epistle . . .*” (II Thes 2:15) We have been taught to reject those who teach to the contrary, or they are outside that of the Apostles teachings “. . . *A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject . . .*” (Titus 3:10) “. . . *for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre . . .*” (Titus 1:10,11) Therefore, The Church is the solemnly charged guardian of this Holy and Apostolic Faith; and, is fully empowered to excommunicate those who do not submit to, nor proclaim this Apostolic Faith. “. . . *and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto The Church, but if he neglect to hear The Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican . . .*” (Matt 18:17)

24) How is the Apostolic ministry preserved in The Apostolic Church?

The Apostolic ministry is preserved in The Church by the Laying on of Hands, by the hierarchy who are the guardians of This Holy Faith, they are the successors of The Holy Apostles. St Paul has taught us, “. . . *lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sin, keep yourself pure . . .*” (I Tim 5:22); Again, “*I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the Gift of God which is in thee by the putting of my hands . . .*” (I Tim 1:6)

25) From where does The Holy Church receive this role of the hierarchy?

The hierarchy is received from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He breathed upon them and said to them, “*receive ye the Holy Spirit, whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained unto them,*” This empowerment of our Lord was fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles received gifts of tongues of fire, (see: Acts 2:1-13). Since that time until our present day, this very gift of the Apostolic empowerment has been kept in The Church through the Laying-on-of Hands, in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Apostle teaches us: “. . . *and He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the*

work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: . . .” (Eph 4:11-12)



Chapter 17

Article Ten On Holy Baptism together with the other Sacraments



1) Why does The Creed state that “*we believe in One Baptism for the remission of sin?*”

Unless we are born we cannot become a member of a human family, likewise, unless we are born a second time through Holy Baptism, we cannot be incorporated into The Family of God: The Church. “*Jesus said, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God . . .” (John 3:3)* Therefore, Holy Baptism is The Gate through which we enter into The Holy Church (the Kingdom of God on Earth).

2) What is a Sacrament, or a Mystery, or Raza?

A Sacrament is, a visible sign of the invisible Love of God, which confers grace upon the recipient, who has received it in faith.

3) How many Sacraments are there in The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East?

According to the writings of Mar Odisho Metropolitan of Suwa, there is a list of seven, they are: *1) Holy Orders, 2) Holy Baptism, 3) Oil of Unction, 4) Holy Qurbana, 5) Absolution, 6) Holy Leaven, 7) the Sign of the Life Giving Cross.*

4) Why does The Creed mention only Holy Baptism?

At the time The Creed was formulated, Holy Baptism was the subject of question. For some folk, who were heretical in their belief system, the question was raised should they or should they not be baptized, so this required an ecclesiastical (or Synodal) decision, subsequently within the statement of the confession of The Faith, this was added to identify those who embraced the Apostolic Faith/Tradition.



Chapter 18

Article Ten On Holy Baptism



1) What is The Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

In the Apostolic Church it is listed as one of the seven Sacraments of the Holy Church. It is the Holy act of the New Birth into the Family of God (which is The Church). The baptizand is immersed into the Holy Font of consecrated waters (known as “the Jordan”). The candidate is immersed three times in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (The Most Holy Trinity). This Holy act indicates a death, that is the death of a life steeped in carnality; (now) being “born again,” into the Family of God to a life of righteousness and holiness, through the power of the Holy Spirit. St John’s gospel records: “. . . *Jesus answered, saying, ‘verily, verily I say unto Thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God . . .’*” (John 3:5)

2) When was Holy Baptism initiated in The Church?

First, It was John the Baptist who was preparing the people for the coming of Jesus by inviting people to be baptized for the remission of sin. “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! . . . I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that comes after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with Fire.’*” (Matthew 3:1-11) St Paul taught us, “*John did indeed baptize, with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after Him that on Christ Jesus.*” (Acts 19:4) **Second**, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan River by John, setting forth an example in sanctifying the waters of baptism by His baptism. “*Jesus when He was baptized went up straightway out of the waters, and lo, the Heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like that of a dove and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from Heaven saying this is my beloved Son in Whom I Am well pleased . . .*” (Matt 3:16,17) **Third**, The Lord Jesus Christ when He had commissioned His twelve Apostles instructed them to go into all of the world and baptize, etc., “. . . *go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . .*” (Matthew 28:19)

3) What is essential in administering the Holy Sacrament of Baptism?

There are two requirements for the administration of The Sacrament of Baptism, **1)** Matter, which is pure water; and, **2)** The Formula, which is in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

4) What is required of an adult who will seek to be baptized in The Holy Church?

First, repentance with godly sorrow, and turning from the abuse of the past life, is required. “. . . *Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin, and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit . . .*” (Acts 2:38)

Second, faith, which is demonstrated by a life of confidence in Jesus Christ together with confessing with the mouth the Creed of The Apostolic Church. “. . . *He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. . . but he that believes not shall be damned . . .*” (Mark 16:16)

5) If “repentance” and “faith” are the requirements for Holy Baptism, then why does the Apostolic Church practice infant baptism?

Based upon the faith of The Holy Church, the parents, and the sponsors have a very serious responsibility to rear the child in the Holy Faith and in the fear of God, until such time as the child assumes the responsibilities for his/her life as a maturing soul. “. . . *but when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is The Kingdom of God.*” (Mark 10:14); “*Jesus called them, and said, suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for us such is the Kingdom of God.*” (Luke 18:16) In the Gospel of Mark, we have a story of an unconscious man who was presented to/at the feet of Jesus by his friends through a hole cut into the roof of the house where Jesus was a guest. Jesus remarked upon the profound faith of the friends of the unconscious man, and addressed it and upon the strength of their particular faith, He healed the man; and, sent him on his way. (See: Mark 2:4ff) Now, if Jesus healed the unconscious man through the faith of his friends, how much more will our Lord Jesus save a child through the faith of his parents, together with the worshiping community?

Let us further expand on this thought by bringing to your attention, the infant newly born into your home. Do you want the child to be encumbered with the various diseases prevalent in the world today? Your answer will be, obviously, and emphatic “no!” Why? Because we take our children to the local office of the attending physicians (or medical clinic) and they are injected with various “shots” or vaccines. This practice wards off the diseases extant in the world of childhood today, this is done even though it is against the will of the infant (child), why? Because it is good for him/her. We do not wait until he/she is grown-up to let him/her decide to receive the vaccine or not. Why not Holy Baptism? This is good for the child! He/she is reared “*in the fear and admonition of the Lord.*” (Eph 6:4) In the same fashion the child is sent off to school to educate, now, rather than at the time when a “*choice can be made*” perhaps at the age of 18?

6) Where do we learn about infant baptism within the pages of the Holy Bible?

In the ancient of days, our father Abraham was instructed by God to include those who were to confess The Covenant to be

circumcised. All were circumcised, from the servants through to the infant child. Through circumcision mankind had been given access into the community of the Abrahamic (Old) Covenant. In the same fashion, Holy Baptism becomes the gate of mercy through which mankind enters into this New Covenant of Jesus Christ; It is for all of humanity, men, women, children, boys and girls. *“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between Me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man child among shall be circumcised and you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt ME and you and he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed, he that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant and the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people for he hath broken My covenant.”* (Gen 17:10-14) Therefore, the Holy Baptism of the New Covenant (Testament) has replaced the Old Covenant of that which is of the flesh. Thus, so the Holy Church teaches that infants are to be baptized into the Family of God

7) Where in the New Testament does it speak of the rite of circumcision which is to be replaced by Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

St Paul the Treasurer of The Church writes to the Church of Colosse (Colossians) *“ . . . in Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sin of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”* (Col 2:11,12) The Rite of Holy Baptism indicates a burial of the flesh which is corrupt and leans toward sinful behavior. The Holy Act also indicates a resurrection (or a coming to life again, by the Power of the Holy Spirit) Our witness to this awesome act of Holy Baptism, is to clothe the baptizand in white garments, to show forth to the world a new life in purity, holiness, and sanctifying graces, and to impress upon us the importance of developing our spiritual nature in Christ (which has been made new by the awesome Power of the Holy Spirit).

8) Why is it important to have “god-parents” when celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

The answer to this role of god-parent is considered by The Church as the taking of the responsibility of another soul added to the Roll of Salvation (eternal life), therefore, The Church acknowledges the importance of the oversight of the spiritual development of the newly baptized soul. The god-parent is chosen from among the ranks of the believers being of sound faith, and upright in this Holy Orthodox Catholic faith. The god-parents are to function as unto that of surrogate parents. The god-parents will keep an eye upon the child and the child’s spiritual development of the faith of The Church of our Lord, and will give counsel and spiritual guidance, accordingly. Therefore it is a requirement that those who are to serve as god-parents must be members in good standing of The Holy Apostolic Catholic of East. They must be knowledgeable in the dogma, the traditional practices, and be

able to teach the basics of the Christian truths to the child, by word and example.

9) Does The Holy Church practice exorcism in the Rite of Holy Baptism?

This practice is observed only through the symbolism of The Holy Church. The candidate for Holy Baptism is presented on the arms of the god-parents (sureties/spon-sors) to the Deacon. The principle celebrant of Holy Baptism will anoint the child with the Sign of the Cross three times, and the child will be turned over, to be placed face down (toward the west) and the anointing continues until the time of the presentation for Holy Baptism with the child's face continually toward the west, and at which time the priest will turn the child hurriedly toward the East and the Light of Christ. Thence the child is baptized thrice in the Holy Font. These are pictures clearly drawn for us, to demonstrate that the West is darkness and evil; the sudden change (or turning-about) to face the East is a picture of turning from that darkness to The glorious Light which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us read from St Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, "*wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience . . .*" (Eph 2:2)

10) From whence comes the power of exorcism in the priesthood?

All the powers which are exercised in the Holy Priesthood, come from our Lord Jesus Christ through the laying-on-of Hands by the successors to the Apostles. "*. . . and these signs shall follow them that believe, in My Name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover.*" (Mark 16:16,17)

11) What is the power of The Cross when used in The Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

When pronounced with the lips, and signed with the hands the Sign of The Cross we are engaged in a powerful act, for it bespeaks of seeking for the absolute protection of "The Name" (which is Jesus Christ, the Crucified One!) In the Aramaic language, whenever we say "*sliwa*" we confess "*the Crucified One*" which is Jesus Christ our Lord, and whenever we gaze upon The Cross of our Lord, through the eyes of the spirit, we behold Jesus Christ our Savior, crucified upon that Cross for our sin. It is written in the prayer book on the Feast of the Holy Cross: "*. . . The Great King of Glory who hath by His Cross saved our race, Jesus the hope of all creation, blessed it The Holy Cross, by which Thou has saved us from error, and by which Thou has liberated us from the oppression of sin. The Cross has become for us the source of all blessings, all aids flow from it by His grace. The Cross became for us the liberator and the Savior from the slavery of corruption, wickedness and death. The Cross has become for us the anchor in the tempest tossed sea of this world. The Cross has become for us the source from which flows new life. The Cross has become for us The Redeemer from strong winds of opposition, The Cross has become for us the High wall and the strong*

armor by which we fight the wicked one and his hosts. Unto Thee Glory, for saving us from all suffering, and hath us made to be worthy of the new life in Thy Kingdom, O Lord of all Father, Son, and Holy Spirit forever and ever: Amen” St Paul records: “. . . for the preaching of the Cross, is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us, which are saved it is the Power of God . . .” (1 Cor 1:18) Therefore, so the Holy Church teaches, that we should boldly make the Sign of the Holy Cross upon all that we do, whether on the piece of bread we eat, or the water which we drink, of the sleep of rest in the night hours, or the going forth from our homes into the work force, etc.

12) The Sign of The Cross has been used since what period of time?

From the beginning of The Church, it was the Sign the Lord Jesus gave to the Apostles in His commissioning to the 12 by stating, “. . . go and baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, and The Son, and The Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)

13) Why is a white garment placed upon the baptizand following Holy Baptism?

The white garments are placed upon the newly baptized to indicate a new resurrected life in Jesus Christ. White reflects purity, holiness, glory and spotless/sinlessness. It is the sign which indicates the pure beauty of the life in the world to come.

14) Why is The Cross and the crown given and placed upon the newly baptized?

This a visible sign of an indelible imprint upon the souls of the newly baptized ones, it remains upon their souls throughout their sojourn on this earth (or, course of life). It serves to remind them of the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; “*if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*” (Matthew 16:26) This act indicates that the parents of the child are handing down to their offspring the traditions and practices of the home in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith. This act of transference indicates what is to be done throughout future generations until the coming of our Lord the second time from Heaven. This act is a seal to their spiritual responsibilities toward their children before God.

The crowning uses 3 colored ribbons which are placed upon the newly baptized to indicate the old life which is dead and in the trespasses of sin, the life as redeemed through the Precious gift of His life on Calvary, and by the beauty and glory of the sanctified life in the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven. These colors are black, red and white. In today’s general practice three ribbons are seldom used, we see the common usage being but two colors, red and white indicating redemption and life everlasting.

15) Why do we use candles, the Cross, the Censer, and the Gospel in Holy Baptism?

The candle is the representative of Jesus Christ, The Light of the World; and the baptizand is drawn near to Him by the illuminating Power of that Divine Presence; therefore, he will live in Light, abandoning the darkness of sin and evil which has been

driven forth by the Light of Christ. The Cross is the witness of Jesus Christ and the graces we receive in our lives, henceforth, are forthcoming from Him (*see question 11* above). The Gospel is the witness of the Living Word of God, representing the Divinity of Jesus our Lord, and as Christian believers we are committed to life in these Holy Words, and; the Censer represents the sweet smelling words of our Living God; we can also recall the hymn which says: “. . . *as the sweet smelling incense wafts before Thee, O my Lord, let our petitions become before Thee, accept the petitions and the prayers of Thy servant . . .*”

16) Why do we confess “one Baptism for the remission of sin?”

For there is only one birth and that it cannot be repeated over and over again. St Paul teaches us, “. . . *for there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. . .*” (*Eph 4:4-6*)

17) Why can we not rebaptize (or baptize over again)?

Man is once born of his parents of his flesh. Thus in the realm of the Spirit, can a person be born of the Holy Womb of Baptism, but once.

18) What does the Holy Church say about those who will sin after Holy Baptism?

Those who are baptized, are freed of their sin and placed into the state of sanctifying grace; thus God through the grace of perseverance helps us to resist sin; so, therefore, those who participate in acts of sin are worse than those who are unbaptized. The reason is this, the baptized soul has not utilized the special power given unto the believer by the Holy Spirit at the time of their baptism. “. . . *if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome the later end is worse with them than in the beginning . . . It had been better them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them, but it has happened unto them, according to the true proverb, ‘the dog has turned to his own vomit’ again; and ‘the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire’.*” (*II Peter 2:20-22*) And, again our Lord taught us: “. . . *whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven . . .*” (*Luke 12:10*)

19) What provisions are offered in The Holy Church for those who confess their sinfulness and desire to be restored to the worshiping community of Christ?

First, there is to be an acknowledgment of the sinful behavior, because the entire community of believers have been affected by

the evil behavior; **Second**, there is to be a godly sorrow and deep regret affixed to the confession, for the damage done to the family of God; **Third**, there will be a confession by the mouth of the sinful behavior; and **Fourth**, there is to be an absolution pronounced by an authorized priest.

The Prayer Book teaches from one of the anthems of The Church:

“Be ye watchful and sin not: Ye disciples of Christ, and sons of the Mysteries, beware of mixing with heathen and apostates, that your faith be not made void, and the Baptism ye receive made useless by the customs ye would acquire from them: destructive of body and soul.

He heals those that are broken in heart: Our Lord gave the medicine of repentance: to the skilled physicians who are the priests of The Church, let him whom Satan hath stricken with the wound of wickedness: come and show his sores to the Disciples of the Wise Physician, and they will heal him with spiritual medicine.”

20) In the Church, what is “completion”?

In many Christian communities in the Western world, the act is called the Sacrament of Holy Confirmation, which is conferred upon the candidate which reaches the age of reason, 7 through 12 years. However, in the Church of the East, both Holy Baptism and Holy Confirmation are considered one Sacrament, and performed together upon the candidates present, at the time of the celebration of this divine mystery.

It is written in the Liturgy of Holy Baptism,

“The principle Celebrant signs, those who are the newly baptized souls upon their forehead with the Oil of Unction, utilizing the thumb of the right hand, from below upwards and from right to left, saying: “. . . *NN is Baptized and Complete in The Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, forever: Amen.*” **The Church administers three anointing** upon those candidates who are to be baptized and confirmed, as follows:

First: from below upwards with the index finger of the right hand upon the forehead, signifying that the candidate, puts off the old man of sin; and,

Second: is from above downward with the three middle fingers, upon the chest, signifying that the candidate puts on the worshipful Jesus through the Holy Anointings; (indicating that the knowledge of the Holy Trinity is from above and written upon the heart of the candidate) and,

Third: this sign, with the use of the thumb of the right hand, upon the forehead, from down upwards, signifying that the baptized is raised up from the depth of the earth to the highest Heaven by the power of Absolving Baptism (*from: The Liturgy (Rite) of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism*) Mar Timotheus II Catholicos Patriarch (+1318) writes concerning these three signings; as follows: “Why are the first and the last signing made with one finger, and the second with three fingers? We say, although the first and the last signing is made with one finger, they are not performed with the same fingers. The first signing is made with the index finger and

the last with the thumb, and the second is with the three remaining fingers. The first is to make known the unity of The Divine Nature, in which we believe. The second with the three finger is to make known The Trinity of Qnuma (*Persons*) and their properties; and the last with the thumb, to declare the unity of action and operation of the nature as well as that of the Person (*which is: the revelation of the unity of The ONE God*)

21) Can we find a reference in the Sacred Scriptures of “completion” or “confirmation?”

Yes! It is written: “. . . when the Apostles which were in Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they went forth, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He was not fallen upon any of them, only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit. . .” (Act 8:14-17) Again, “. . . now, He which stablishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of The Spirit in our heart. . .” (II Cor 1:21-22) Therefore, The Holy Church calls this last signing with the Holy Oil of Unction, “The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

22) Who conveys the Gift of Completion or Confirmation?

There are two Sacred Traditions in the Holy Apostolic Church; **1)** in the Western (or Latin) Tradition this Sacred Act is reserved for the rôle of the Office of the Bishop, this is done in that ancient tradition because the Office of the Bishop is the successor of the Holy Apostles whose practice was to lay their hands upon the faithful to convey the Gift of the Holy Spirit; this Sacred Act was performed on the same day of the Sacred Rite of Holy Baptism. Since there was a lack of Bishops, this Sacred gift was postponed or preserved to a later date, and in time it developed the idea of “the age of reason” for the candidate. **2)** And, however, in The Eastern Sacred Traditions, this Sacred Rite is entrusted to and conferred by the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest has the Oil of Unction (Qarna) which is directly connected to The Bishop of the Diocese in which the parish is situated.

Even though a physical being is the instrument from/through whom The Gift of Holy Baptism is conveyed; and, the Gift of the Holy Spirit descends, it is Christ who completes the work. You will note that Holy Baptism does not precede the words “. . . I baptize, so and so . . .” but, rather the words “. . . so and so is Baptized and Complete in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit: Amen”

23) What is the effect of Holy Baptism and Confirmation upon the candidate?

In the Prayer of The Imposition of Hands, immediately preceding the final signing of Confirmation, states in full and complete detail the affects of Holy Baptism and Confirmation. . . “. . . may the earnest of the Holy Spirit which you have received, and the Mysteries of Christ which you have taken , and His Living Sign which you have accepted, and the new life which you have gained,

and The Armour of Righteousness which you put on, keep you from the evil-one and his hosts, and sanctify your members in chastity. May this signing which you have accepted, be to you unto the blessings to come that pass not away at the Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the New World, may HE sit you at His right hand, may you lift up glory, confession, and adoration, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now, always and forever and ever: Amen ”

24) What are these anointings with pure blessed olive oil?

The rubric on the anointing instructs the baptizer saying; “ *those who are prepared anoint the whole body of the one who has been anointed by The Priest in a discreet and orderly manner . . . and when they have anointed him leaving no spot unanointed, they then bear him to the priest who stands before the Font.*”

The care exercised in this Holy Act of anointing by beginning with that of the forehead is signifying the act of sanctifying of both mind and thoughts; and, then with the three fingers, we anoint the heart-region, for these two reasons, ❶) to imprint upon the heart the knowledge of the Holy Trinity; and ❷) to sanctify the desires of the human heart; in anointing of the eyes, ears and the lips, we declare the sanctifying of the senses (*see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil*); in the anointing of the hands and the feet we declare and signify the deed/works of the Christian, effectively sanctifying these acts of human conduct.

✦

Chapter 19
On the Holy Offering
Qurbana Qaddisha

✦

1) What is the Holy Offering (*Qurbana Qaddisha*)?

It is one of the Sacraments of the Holy Church; it is the central focal point of our communal worship. It is within this worship that the worshiper receives under the species of bread and wine the Precious Body and Sanctifying Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2) What is the origin of The Holy Offering (*Qurbana Qaddisha*)?

It was an act instituted by Jesus our Lord with The Twelve on the night in which He was betrayed to give witness to His betrayal, His abuses, His death, and subsequent resurrection. It was He who had commanded them to keep on doing these things in order to perpetuate the memory of His suffering, death and resurrection. In the Gospel of St Matthew we read: “. . . *as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and break it and gave it to the Disciples, and said, ‘take eat, this is My Body,’ and, again, He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘drink ye all of it, for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sin . . .’*” (*Mat 26:26-28*)

3) What is the name of the Holy Service in which The Holy Offering (*Qurbana Qaddisha*) is offered and consecrated?

It is called in Aramaic “*Quddasha Raza*” which is by interpretation “The Liturgy of the Divine Mysteries.” The word “*The Liturgy*” has come to the English language from the Greek word “*leitourgia*” which means simply “*the people work*” or “*the public*”

works.” It is further defined as in the act of hallowing the Holy Offering, performed by the clergy together with the attending community, each one functioning in their own rôle, which is the active participation of the faithful in the solemn celebration of the Holy Offering, as it is explicitly stated in the Liturgy of The Church of the East. There is no rôle, nor is there mention of a choir in public worship, but rather, “*priest,*” “*deacon,*” and “*all the congregation.*”

4) Where is the proper place to celebrate the Divine Liturgy?

It is in the area which has been especially set aside, consecrated, and blessed, for the sole purpose to celebrate The Holy Things (Mysteries) of God; which is called The Holy Sanctuary; an Altar. However, in The Holy Church of the East, because of missionary enterprises, and harassment of enemy forces, and other disturbances, it had become necessary for the Holy Men of God, our Fathers the Bishops to decide to consecrate “*a depa*” for use as a transportable altar (a board of blessed and consecrated wood by the Bishop) which is to be carried about by the priests and to be used to gather the faithful about them in worship, being mindful of our Holy Martyrs, Bishops, etc.

5) Why do we call the building in which we worship our Lord and God, “the Church”?

The word “church” does not mean a building or hall, but indicates “a summoning forth in a collective body of citizens to engage in public works.” It is used today to signify the calling forth a collective body of believers to engage in the solemn worship of our Lord and God Jesus Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship engaged in worship of our Lord in praise and thanksgiving for the mercies extended to the believers.

6) Into how many major parts is the church edifice divided?

Into two parts, namely; 1) The Sanctuary; and, 2) the Nave.

7) What is the purpose of the Nave, what does it mean?

The Nave is a picture of the Earth. It is the place where humankind reside or occupy.

8) What is the “bema”?

It is a platform built in circular form in the middle of the Nave, where the first part of the Liturgy is celebrated. It is the Liturgy of the Word; why? The Word was proclaimed first to the hearers on Earth, thus preparing the hearers to receive the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

9) What is the “*shqa-qona*”?

The shqa-qona is a narrow passage through which the clergy, after fulfilling the Liturgy of the Word go. It is The Way into the Holy Sanctuary to celebrate the Holy Offering. Jesus taught us: “. . . *enter ye into the straight gate . . . for straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads unto life and few there be that find it. . . .*” (Matt 7:14)

10) What is the purpose of the Sanctuary?

It pictures for us The Kingdom of Heaven, where all the angels and the saints stand before the Throne of God constantly singing praises before Him. After the same manner the clergy, in the Holy Altar, clothed in white stand, before the Throne of God, singing praises and glorifying Him. It is written: “. . . *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before The Throne and before The Lamb clothed in white robes, and palms their hands, and cried with a loud voice saying; ‘salvation to our God Which sits upon the Throne and unto The Lamb!’*” (Revelation 7:9,10)

11) What is the significance of the Holy Altar?

The Holy Altar is the picture of “*the Skull*”(Golgotha), the place where Jesus was offered up and crucified as The Perfect Sacrifice for the redemption of humankind; and, we can also consider that this is The Throne of God.

12) What is placed upon the Holy Altar? Or, in the Sanctuary?

There is a tabernacle in which The Holy Things are kept; namely, The Holy Oil, The Malka, The Consecrated Species, The Sacred Relics, The Chalice, and Paten, The Crowns for the Weddings, etc. To give witness to the Presence of our Lord, a lamp was kept continuously lit and burning. Also, in the Holy Sanctuary, upon the Holy Altar was the Holy Gospel and the Holy Cross. These are pictures for us to grasp the depth of the Revelation of our Lord and God in both His humanity and divinity. (And, according to the Takhsa, in order for the priest to celebrate the Holy Qurbana (Holy Offering) there must be these three things; namely, The Holy Gospel, the Holy Cross, and the Icon of Christ.)

13) Why is there a curtain to divide the Nave (that is the haikla) from the Sanctuary (qanke)?

The whole of the Eucharistic Celebration is to establish the faithful in the wonders of God’s redemptive rôle and the development of the history of Salvation. In The Garden of Eden, the Father of humanity, the man named Adam, had violated The Commands of God, participated in sin, and plunged humankind into separation from God. God set a guard at the entrance of Paradise, with a promise of a coming redeemer to re-establish His friendship with humankind. (see, Genesis 3:24) God had placed a cherubim with a flaming sword at the entrance of The Garden of Eden. Why? For man had participated in wilfulness and sin, bringing death upon humankind. Sinful man and the holiness of God cannot dwell in the same place, so the sinful pair were cast

out of Paradise (Eden). The separation between God and man is expressed in the existence of the curtain between the Sanctuary (a picture of Heaven) and the Nave (a picture of the world and humankind). It is written in the Prophet Isaiah: “. . . *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sin have hid His Face from you, that He will not hear . . .*” (Isa 59:2) This separation remained, in the world upon humankind, until the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross who fully paid for our sin, and the curtain in the Temple was torn in two (see: *Matthew 27:51*) It is through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ who opens up Heaven to all of humankind, thus restoring us to open communication with our Heavenly Father.

14) Why are the Deacons standing on the two sides of the Holy Altar?

The Deacons clothed in white and standing at the Holy Altar are the symbols of the two Angels who stood in the Tomb, one at the head and one at the feet of Him who was buried; and they announced the Resurrection of their Lord to the women who came to anoint the Body of Jesus.. (see: *Luke 24:3-6*)

15) In what order or sequence of events is the Holy Liturgy of Qurbana Qaddisha arranged?

The Holy Qurbana is ordered in the following sequence:-

- a) The preparation of the Sacrifice of the Holy Qurbana, by the kneading and baking of The Holy Bread and the mixing of the Sacred Chalice; and,
- b) The Liturgy of the Catechumens, by which the worshipers are prepared to receive the Holy Body and Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus; and,
- c) The Hallowing of the bread and the wine, to become for us The Precious Body and the Absolving Blood of Jesus Christ; and,
- d) The pronouncement of absolution, and the communicating of the faithful; and,
- e) The conclusion, the final blessings are pronounced and the faithful will offer their prayers of thanksgiving, and together with the priest and the deacons leave in peace.

16) What ingredients are used in the preparation of the bread and wine?

Pure flour of wheat grains, salt, water, olive oil, yeast and Holy Malka are used for the preparation of the bread which become for us The Body of Christ, (see: *St Paul's writing, I Corinthians 10:17*), The wine is of pure fermented black or red grape, which is mixed with water to bear witness to the blood and water which flowed forth from His pierced side (see: *St John 19:34*)

17) In the Qurbana Qaddisha, do we call the bread which will become for us the Precious Body, “*The Lamb*” or, “*The Lamb of God*”?

Yes, indeed! Why? Because, we have pictured before us a figure of Jesus who had suffered for us and our sin. In the Old Testament the paschal lamb is the type of redemption which will be offered for us in the passion, crucifixion, and death of our Lord; (*see: John 1:29*) It is written in the Liturgy of The Church of the East for the Feast of Pentecost: “. . .on the Feast of the Passover, He sacrificed Himself in the **type of a lamb** and on the Festival of Pentecost He sealed His victory. . .” And, again from the Takhsa of the Qurbana Qaddisha: “. . . The living and reasonable Oblation of our First-fruits, and **the unslain and acceptable sacrifice of The Son** of our race, which the prophets prefigured in mystery, and The Apostles openly declared, and the martyrs bought with the blood of their necks, and the doctors expounded in The Church, and **the priests sacrifices upon The Holy Altar** and the Levites bare upon their arms, and the nations partook-of for the pardon of their debts, for all created things to their utmost bound, is offered unto God the Lord of all.”

18) Why do we call or refer to the Holy Offering as the “the Eucharist?”

We call the Holy Gifts placed upon the Holy Altar the Eucharist, because originally the word indicates an act of thanksgiving; exactly what are we doing in this act? We offer unto God the gifts which God has given to us as thanksgiving in an expression of our gratitude unto HIM for all HE has done for us. Bread and wine are the fruits of the Earth, which sustain life. In the Last Supper it is recorded in the Gospel of St Matthew, Jesus gave thanks “. . . and as they were eating Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it and gave it to the disciples, and said ‘take eat this is my body.’ And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying ‘drink ye all of it . . .’” (*Matt 26:26-27*)

19) How do we know that the Sacrament of the Holy Offering was established by Jesus, and then handed down to succeeding generations (unto this present day)?

St Paul the Treasurer and Doctor in The Church states in his recorded First Epistle to the Corinthian Church. “for I have received of the Lord that which also I had delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which HE was betrayed took bread and when HE had given thanks, HE broke it and said, ‘take eat this is My Body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of ME; after the same manner also HE took the cup when HE had supped, saying, ‘this cup is the New Testament of My Blood, this do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of ME for as often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death until HE comes” (*1 Cor 11:23-26*)

20) Why do we celebrate this Sacred practice of the Holy Offering on appointed days throughout the liturgical cycle?

The Holy Church, through the good counsel of the Apostolic Ministry and the Order of the Priesthood celebrates these days of the Holy Offerings because it fulfills the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says: “. . . this do in remembrance of Me. . . .” (*1*

Cor 11:24b) And, again, from the Hallowing of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, “. . . . may Christ who was sacrificed for our Salvation and who hath commanded us to make a commemoration of His death, burial, and resurrection, accept this sacrifice at our hands in His grace and mercies forever: Amen” These Sacred acts, therefore, are not the machinations of the human mind, but of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the Author of our Salvation and the solid foundation of our Holy Apostolic Tradition and Faith.

21) Since when has the Holy Church celebrated these Holy, Divine and Life-giving Sacraments?

From the very beginning, of The Holy Church, and from the days of The Holy Apostles. They celebrated these with the faithful followers of our Lord “. . . and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ Doctrine, and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers” (*Act 2:42*)

22) How does receiving Holy Qurbana effect the recipient (or the believer); or, how does it affect the one who receives it in faith?

Those who receive Holy Qurbana **(a)**, are united to God, and to those others in the household of faith. “ *he that eats my Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells in Me and I in Him. . .*” (*John 6:56*) In the matter of the union with those of the household of faith, St Paul the Treasurer of The Church writes: “. . . the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ, the bread which we break is it not the communion of the Body of Christ, for we being many, are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that One Bread. . . .” (*1 Cor 10:16-17*); **(b)**, gives eternal life, it is written: “. . . this is The Bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I AM the Living Bread, which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever, and the Bread which I shall give is my Flesh, which I will give for the life of the World” (*John 6:50-51*); and, **(c)**, Holy Qurbana forgives sin; “. . . This is My Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (*Matt 26:28*), and, again, “. . . In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of His Grace” (*Eph 1:7*); “In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sin.” (*Col 1:14*); **(d)** The Holy Qurbana will raise up those who receive this life-giving gift from God, “. . . then Jesus said unto them, ‘verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you have no life in you; whoso eats My Flesh, and drinks My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the last day. For my Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. . . .’” (*John 6:53-55*); **(e)**, receiving Holy Qurbana supplies us with sufficient grace to fight against the evil-one and his hosts, and for the faithful to grow in holiness, as nourishing foods are necessary for the physical body to grow and mature; so, too, receiving the Holy Qurbana is essential for the human soul to be strengthened against the evil of this world. All these affects of receiving the Holy Communion (Qurbana) are recited for us in the epiclesis in the Hallowing of Mar Addai and Mar Mari; “. . . and

may Thy Holy Spirit, O my Lord, come and rest upon this oblation of Thy servants, and He bless it, and may He hallow it, and may it be to us, O My Lord, for the pardon of debts and for the forgiveness of sins, and the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, for new life in the Kingdom of Heaven, with all those who have been well pleasing unto Thee; for all this great and wonderful dispensation toward us, we give Thee thanks, and glorify Thee without ceasing within Thy Church, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Thy Christ, with unclosed mouths and unveiled faces . . .”

23) When does the substance of bread and wine become the Body and Precious Blood of our Lord?

The Holy Church teaches us, and so we believe, that the Precious Gifts are ours through the prayer of the epiclesis or consecration when The Church is at worship, but, as to how these change to become for us the Body and Blood, remains a mystery; we do know and believe that The Holy Spirit comes down and unites with the bread and wine and they become for us the Very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, as He taught us; “. . . *I AM the Living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever, and the Bread which I shall give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world . . .*” (John 6:51)

24) Now, then, are these the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, or are they merely symbols?

Yes, indeed, they are The Real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! Jesus did not teach us that these are merely “the symbols of His Body and Blood” but, rather, The Real Body and Blood of Him who came “*down for us and for our salvation;*” for nowhere in all of the Holy Bible is there written any reference that these gifts of Jesus were a symbol or symbolic, “. . . *and, HE took bread and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them saying, ‘This is my Body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me,’ likewise, also the cup, after supper, saying ‘This cup is the New Testament of My Blood, which is shed for you. . .’*” (Luke 22:19-20) Again it is written by the Treasurer of The Church, St Paul the Apostle: “. . . *the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ, for we being many are One Bread, and One Body; for we are all partakers of That One Bread.*” (1 Cor 10:16,17)

25) What is the effect upon the one who receives the Holy Qurbana unworthily?

To receive the gifts unworthily brings condemnation upon themselves, “. . . *wherefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord . . . but let a man examine himself and so let him eat of That Bread and drink of That Cup, for he that eats and drinks unworthily, drinks damnation unto himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body, for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep . . .*” (1 Cor 11:27-30) The mere bread and wine cannot have, nor does it have the power to forgive our sin and grant unto us a blessed life in Christ, here on Earth and

eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven; and, also, these mere substances of bread and wine have absolutely no power to bring condemnation upon those who receive them unworthily. Therefore, we who believe that the gifts of life require us to examine ourselves and to prepare ourselves to receive Him, under the species of Bread and Wine which is upon the Holy Altar, do in fact receive HIM!

Because we undoubtedly believe that which we receive is the Real Body and Blood we examine ourselves to receive Him worthily!

26) At what point in time did the Holy Qurbana become the focal point of the worship of The Holy Church?

From the very beginning, they gathered together to break bread and to offer prayers (*see Acts 2:42*). Please note, also, that from the time of the beginning, the Apostles gathered together on the first day of the week, to break bread and to offer their prayers. “*Upon the first day of the week when the disciples gathered together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight . . .*” (*Acts 20:27*)

27) In The Church of the East, who has been set aside or especially gifted to celebrate the Holy Qurbana? and who has authorized their function?

In the Church of the East, only those who have been ordained or set aside by the Apostolic Laying-on-of-hands, are authorized and commanded to celebrate the Holy Qurbana or to convey any other of the gifts in ministry. The Scriptures record: “. . . *for every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, therefore, it is of necessity that this man have something to offer also for if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, because there are priests that offer gifts according to the Law. . .*” (*Heb 8:3b-4*) At the time of the celebration of the Last Supper, Jesus our Lord had with Him only the 12 (and no others); it was to these 12 that our Lord had given the commission and the permission to celebrate this Holy and everlasting Memorial Service, of the Qurbana. “. . . *after the same manner, also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, ‘this cup is the New Testament in My Blood, **this do you as often as you drink it, do it in remembrance of Me**’ . . .*” (*1 Cor 11:25*) The celebration of the Holy Qurbana, is an act of obedience by the priest of any given parish as unto The Lord. “. . . *from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering for My Name shall be great among the heathen, sayeth the Lord of Hosts . . .*” (*Malachi 1:11*)

28) Because the Holy Qurbana is offered by the especially set-aside men (*the Priesthood*), what is the rôle of the laity in the celebration of this Holy Offering?

All faithful present in The Church at the time of the celebration of the Holy Offering of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, by

the very virtue of sharing in the common priesthood of Jesus Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism are actively participating with the priest in the act of the Holy Offering. “. . . you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into this Marvelous Light. . .” (1 Pet 2:9) Because the clergy and the laity, together, are going to fulfill the solemn act of offering their gifts unto God; it is of utmost importance to participate in the sharing of the “Peace of Christ,” (i.e. The Kiss of Peace) with one another examining their conscience to determine if any conflict exists between them. If an unresolved conflict exists between them, there cannot be a perfect communion; for it is written: “ *therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled with thy brother, and then, offer thy gift.*” (Matthew 5:23-24)

Thus all the faithful present who are in peace with one another, fully participate in the celebration of the Holy Offering. Their worship, prayers, singing joyful spiritual hymns, are in fact a witness to their active participation, physically and spiritually, in the celebration of The Offering. Thus, the Priest, as the representative (and the voice) of the entire community, in their name completes the offering, as the soul of Christ. Mar Narsai in his commentary of the Holy Offering, refers to the priest as the mouth of the congregation who with an audible voice prays on behalf of the entire congregation, and The Congregation in their heart pray, responding “Amen” to the priest.

29) Then, as a community of believers, why do we celebrate the Holy Mass on a regular basis?

By our act of celebration, or hallowing The Mystery of The Holy Offering, we, the sons and daughters of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East, openly and actively reveal our true love and absolute obedience to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who is our only hope and life and thus fulfill His Holy Commandment, which He had directed to His Holy Apostles before His passion and death, while sitting with them, eating the Mosaic Passover. He commanded them to “. . . *do this in remembrance of Me. . .*” (see Luke 22:19) . . . “. . . *He took bread and gave thanks and break it, and gave unto them saying, ‘This is My Body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me.’*” By our gathering in the Holy Church at the time of celebrating the Holy Offering, we confirm that we are not strangers to the household of God, but rather we are members of the very body of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is written, “. . . *now you are The Body of Christ, and members in particular.*.” (1 Cor 12:27).

30) What does the Holy Church teach us concerning those who abstain from participation in receiving the Holy Offering?

The souls who freely choose to abstain from attending the solemn celebration of the Holy Offering, and reject the Gifts of Life (that is of the Body and Blood of Christ), are cutting themselves off from the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ; it is written: “. . . *if a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire; and they are burned. . .*” (John 15:6), and again, it is written: “. . . *He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, dwells in Me and I in him. . .*”

(*John 6:56*) Therefore, whenever the faithful gather together at the time of the celebration of the Holy Offering our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Himself, is present in the community of believers, for it is written: “*for where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them . . .*” (*Mat 18:20*) The Risen Lord is truly and really, in fact, present under the species of the bread and wine; in the Scriptures we read: “. . . *it came to pass as He sat at the table with them, He took bread and blessed it and break it and gave to them, their eyes were opened, and they knew HIM and He vanished out of their sight, and they said to one another, did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and HE opened up to us The Scriptures?*” (*Luke 24:30-32*) Our Lord Jesus Christ is also present in the priesthood; as is witnessed in the Solemn and Sacred Rite of Holy Baptism, the priest says: “(NN) *is baptized and complete in The Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . .*” (*The Liturgy of the Holy Baptism*) Within pages of The Prayer Book of the Church of the East, it is recorded there, that in order for the Holy Offering to be valid, there must be present at the Holy Altar, “*the Priest, who is the soul of Jesus, the worshipful Cross, and the adorned icon of His manhood.*” And, finally, Jesus Christ is present in words of the Sacred Scriptures.” (*See Luke 24:30-32*) It is written in the Gospel of St John, “. . . *In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God. . . . And The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” (*St John 1:1-14*)

31) How many hallowings does the Church of the East use in the solemn celebration of the Holy Offering? And, why?

There are three which are used according to the Seasons, or the Feasts, or the commemoration of the Saints of The Church of the East. The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles, Mar Mari and Mar Addai; The Hallowing of Theodoros of Mpsuestia; and The Hallowing of Mar Nestorius Patriarch of Constantinople.

32) When compared with our sister traditions, at what time does the bread and wine offered upon the Holy Altar become The Body and The Blood of Jesus our Lord?

In Western Tradition and that of the Orthodox, the commonly held belief is at the time of the recitation of the Words of Institution pronounced by the celebrant (“*this is My Body and this is My Blood . . .*”) these species of bread and wine; become truly the Body and Blood of Christ. However, within the Apostolic Tradition of The Church of the East, it is held that the species of bread and wine become the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ when the celebrant (as the *alter Christus*) invites the Holy Spirit to come down upon the offering. “. . . *and may Thy Holy Spirit, O my Lord, come and rest upon this oblation of Thy servants, and may He bless it and hallow it, and may it be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of debts and for the forgiveness of sins and for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead; and for new life in the Kingdom of Heaven with all those who have been well pleasing with Thee . . .*”

33) Do we have a type which prefigures the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Gift on the Holy Altar?

Yes! In the writing of Moses the Book of Leviticus we have these words recorded: “. . . *this is the thing which the Lord commanded that you should do, and the glory of the Lord shall appear to you . . . Aaron lifted up his hands to bless the people . . . the glory of the Lord appeared in the presence of the people . . . there came forth a fire from before the Lord and consumed the offering upon the Altar, and all the people saw it, they fell upon their faces and gave praise . . .*” (Lev 9:6,22,23,24) This descent of fire, then, gave witness to the acceptance of these gifts of the people; and after the same manner in The Holy Church when the priest calls upon the Holy Spirit, the hidden fire which is The Holy Spirit, comes down, and rests upon the offering of the people, and consecrates them; they become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus. Thus, these Sacred Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Jesus, receive the Power of the Fire of the Holy Spirit, the purifying flame purges the recipient from sin. The fire of the Holy Spirit is also noted in the prophetic writings of Isaiah the Prophet, as follows: “. . . *then one of the seraphim flew unto me, having a Live Coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from off the Holy Altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said ‘Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged. . .*” (Isa 6:6-7)

34) How many physical elements have been entrusted to The Church by our Lord Jesus to celebrate His Mysteries of His Body and Blood?

The Lord had commissioned His Apostles to make the bread of His Holy Body from the grain of wheat; and that fruit of the vine, which is wine offered for His Holy Blood. The bread of wheat grain is a living substance and so is the fruit of the vine, a living substance. Jesus never referred to these gifts after the offering of thanksgiving as neither “*bread and wine*”, nor “*symbols*” but rather, they are the real Body and Blood, as it is written in Matthew’s Gospel (“*this is My Body . . . this is My Blood*” [Matt 26:26])

When looking upon these unique vivifying gifts of life, even after the recitation of the prayer of consecration, with our earthly eyes, these gifts appear as bread and wine, and their taste is the same, to the believer they are in fact The Precious Body and Sacred Blood of Jesus. At the time of the crucifixion of Jesus, those who stood below and gazed upon Him saw only the man Christ Jesus in His humanity, unable to see in their gaze the salvific nature of Divinity.

As in Jesus, God the Word and the humanity taken of the blessed Virgin Mary, are eternally united in the One Person of Jesus Christ; it is He who heals and gives life, so in the Holy Offering, the Holy Spirit is eternally united in the consecrated bread and wine set upon the Holy Altar, and becomes One Body and Blood of Jesus and gives life and forgives sin.

As we approach the Holy Altar through worshipful bowing, prayers, praise, and thanksgiving, we do so because we are approaching Jesus Christ our Lord in the Sacred Gifts.

Thus the Holy Church teaches her faithful “*The Very Jesus Who sits at the right hand of the Father, is the very same Jesus which is upon The Holy Altar; beloved this is That which is consumed in the Qurbana Qaddisha (the Holy Offering)*”

35) Why do we offer both species of the Bread and Wine of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus at the time of the celebration of the Holy Offering?

Christ Jesus IS The Lamb which was slain/crucified on behalf of the sin of the whole of humanity. Whenever a lamb is offered unto God, there is the shedding of blood, also. Jesus Christ at the time of the Last Supper offered Himself under both species of Bread and Wine, This is the reason The Church of the East will not only offer The Body, but the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ as well. .

36) What is the reason for The Church of the East to consecrate the Holy Altar?

The Holy Scriptures record for us, that in order for us to offer sacrifices for God, we must build and establish an altar for that purpose (as a place where we can go to offer praise and thanksgiving before HIM). “. . . *an altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me and shall sacrifice thereupon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thy oxen, in all places where I record My Name . . . I will come unto thee and I will bless thee . . .*” (Ex 20:24) therefore, in obedience to the commandments of our Lord, and of our forefathers, both the Old Testament and those of the New Testament built an altar; as we do in accordance with their instructions.

In the Church of the East, the Holy Sacrifices, are always offered upon the Holy Altar unto God; where there is neither built, nor established an altar, there is a consecrated Altar Board (called a *depa*, in Aramaic) to be used as a portable Altar.

The Altar table is a symbol of the tomb of our Lord Jesus; and the holy sacrifices which are set upon that Holy Altar are the symbols of our Lord Jesus Christ entombed. The Precious Body and Blood are covered with a veil/sheet symbolizing the heavy stone rolled against the door of the tomb, sealing out the world. When the veil is lifted from above the Body and Blood of our Lord, and surrounds the chalice and paten, we have an additional symbol of that very rock/stone being rolled away from the door of the tomb. When the veil/sheet is completely removed and set-aside, the symbol is that Jesus Christ our Lord is no longer in the tomb, but that He is risen!

With two deacons, at the Holy Altar, one at the foot and the other at the head, they are the witnesses to the solemn act. The two deacons are the representatives of the two angels standing at the head and foot of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The priest, as the soul of Jesus is offering The Holy Sacrifice upon the earthly altar unto God in behalf of the sin of the world.

37) What does the Holy of Holies (*sanctuary*) stand for?

In the Holy Church of the East, the Holy of Holies is the representation of Heaven, and the nave (*the haikla*) is the picture of the whole earth, and the curtain which is divided in half from top to bottom is the picture that our Heavenly Father, through the death

of Jesus Christ, is reconciled with man through His ultimate sacrifice and the decree of condemnation has been torn, and the access between Heaven and Earth is open! Jesus Christ is that very door through which we can enter into Heaven. It is written: “. . . behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; the earth did quake and the rocks rent; the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints arose, and came out of their graves at His resurrection, and went into the Holy City and appeared unto many . . .” (Mat 27:51,53)

38) Why is the gift of the assurance of confessed sin forgiven, to the worshiper, by the lips of the Sacred Priesthood pronounced/declared before receiving the Holy Qurbana?

It is required by the Holy Church that each participant in the Sacramental Life of the Church is to confess their sin, in General Confession, unto God before receiving Holy Communion. The Sacred Priesthood, by the gift of Holy Ordination is granted the power to pronounce the Good News of the forgiveness of sin to those who truly repent of their sin and evil ways. (See Luke chapter 15) The Prodigal Son approached his father, seeking favor to be restored to the fathers’s household as a mere servant. The father in turn received his erring son as his son who was lost and is to be restored to his position of sonship within the household, in the same manner as sinners we are to approach God the Father, confess our sinfulness, and He in turn accepts us with open arms welcoming us back into His Holy Household.

39) How often shall we receive the Holy Offering? We should receive the Holy Offering on a daily basis, if this is at all possible! It is written in The Holy Gospel, “. . . . give us this day our daily Bread . . .” (Matthew 6:11) and again it is written: “. . . and they continued daily, in one accord, in The Temple, and breaking Bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart . . . praising God and having favor with all people. . . and the Lord added to The Church daily such as should be saved . . .” (Act 2:46,47) However, celebrating the Holy Offering on Sunday’s is giving emphasis to our Lord’s Day, a miniature Easter Resurrection Day of great joy! It was on this day when Jesus came to meet with the Disciples behind closed doors after His resurrection, saying: “peace be unto you. . .” (John 20:19) And, again, it is written, He appeared to His Disciples on a Sunday, “. . . After eight days His Disciples, were with Him, and Thomas with them, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and He stood in the midst, saying: ‘peace be unto you’ . . .” (John 20:26) The Resurrected Lord Jesus celebrated The Holy Offering in Emmaus with those who had gathered with Him; in the evening of The Sunday of The Resurrection. (“ . . but they constrained Him saying, abide with us for it is toward evening and the day is far spent, and He went in to tarry with them, and it came to pass as He sat at table with them, He took bread and blessed it, and break it, and gave it to them . . . their eyes were opened, and they knew HIM, and He vanished out of their sight . . .”(Luke 24:29-31)

40) Why is the Holy Offering prayed/celebrated on Sunday morning?

In the writings of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, we have the record stating that on the Day of Pentecost, which was a Sunday morning, the Disciples received the Holy Spirit, the Church was born, and they spake in foreign languages, the people around them were certain that they were drunken with wine or some intoxicants, but they were not . . . they were filled with the Holy Spirit. “*for these are not drunken as you suppose, seeing it that it is but the third hour of the day . . .*” (Acts 2:15) In the Jewish reckoning the morning first hour is 6:00 A.M., and the 3rd hour of the day is 9:00 A.M., etc.

41) How should we approach and receive the Holy Offering?

It is expected that the faithful will approach the Holy Gifts devoutly, reverently, in all piety and humility. We are encountering our Lord and Savior Jesus Himself face to face. Therefore, we will either bow before our Lord in the Holy Offering, or make the Sign of the Holy Cross before receiving Him. Praying all the while this Prayer of Preparation; Which is: “*Sanctify our bodies by Thy Holy Body, pardon our debts by Thy Precious Blood, purge our conscience with the hyssop of Thy compassion, O Christ the hope of our nature, O Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever: Amen*”

There are two methods to receive Him. The first is to tilt the head backward, and to open the mouth, to receive Him upon the tongue; and, the second method of receiving Him in the palm of the right hand is in this manner; **1)**, bring the two hands together, in the form of the Holy Cross, the left hand under the right hand, **2)**, the priest will place the Holy Body in the center of the palm of right hand, saying “The Body of Christ to the Pious Believer NN for the pardon of debts” and the communicant will respond “Amen.” **3)**, then the communicant will kiss the Precious Body, and receive Him into the mouth, devoutly and in all reverence consuming the Same. Then the participating communicant will proceed to the Angelic Deacon to receive the Precious Blood from the Holy Chalice, “*the precious blood to the pious believer(NN) for the pardon of sin and a spiritual feast unto eternal life.*” The communicant responds: “*Amen*”

The communicant who has participated fully in receiving our Lord Jesus will then return to their pew and there to offer thanksgiving unto our Lord for the sheer joy of being fed upon the Lifegiving Gift of the Holy Offering.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving: “*Let not Thy living Body, O my Lord, which we have eaten, or Thy victorious Blood be to us, O my Lord, for judgement, and vengeance but for the pardon of debts, and for the forgiveness of sin, and for the great hope for resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the Kingdom of Heaven, and for confidence before Thee, with the just and righteous who have pleased Thee, O Christ, the hope of our nature, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever: Amen*”

(or another) “*Since we have received Thy Body openly, may Thy Spirit dwell in us in a hidden manner, and may we go out to meet Thee cheerfully, and to sing to Thee threefold glory with the just who have fulfilled Thy will, O Christ, the hope of our nature, Lord of all, Father, Son, Holy Spirit: Amen*”

(or another) “Since we have taken Thy Body from the paten, and have drunk Thy Blood from the chalice, make us worthy, O my Lord, to sing glory with robber in Paradise, along with the just who have fulfilled Thy will, O Lord of all Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever: Amen”

42) How should the faithful participant be attired when presenting oneself to the Lord of lords, King of kings?

The suggestion which The Church has presented to the faithful to observe, is based in the Sacred Scriptures. St Paul the Apostle writes to the Bishop Timothy in the first epistle these words: “. . . *I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting . . . and, in like manner, also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness, and sobriety, not with braided hair, nor gold, nor pearls nor costly array . . . but with good works, which becomes women professing godliness . . .*” (1Tim 2:8,9,10) Therefore, men should be properly attired, as though being received formally by the Holy King Jesus Himself; and the ladies are to be clothed in modesty, taking care that the lipstick is blotted, the head properly covered; in other words, do not uncover what God had covered.

43) Who is permitted to receive Holy Communion?

All who have been born again through Holy Baptism, into the family of God.

Those who have denied Christ, who have been excommunicated are forbidden to approach the Life-giving Sacraments. In the Holy Liturgy it is written: “. . . *whoso hath not received Baptism, let him depart, whoso hath not received the Sign of Life, let him depart, whoso doth not accept it, let him depart, go ye hearers and watch the doors. . .*”

The Synodical Canons do forbid certain people from receiving the Holy Sacraments if they are possessed of mouth disease; or an infectious disorder of one sort or another.

The communicant is to be fasting from solid foods to receive the Lord; however, a Christian soul who is on medication has a dispensation to participate in receiving the Gifts of Life, after they have taken foods and taken their medication.

44) At what age level is it permitted to receive the Life Giving Gifts of our Lord and God?

According to the Church Fathers, the child at the time of its birth into the human family desires to be nourished with sustenance, and therefore the child is nursed at its mother’s breast. So, too, in the Holy Church when a child is Baptized in Holy Baptism, and is confirmed into the Family of God is nursed at the breast of the Holy Church and fed the Holy Gifts of sustaining spiritual and Life-giving Gifts of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is written in the Baptismal Liturgy: “. . . *may the earnest of the Holy Spirit which you have received, and the Mysteries of Christ which you have taken, and His Living Sign which you have accepted, and the new life which you have gained, and the armour of righteousness which you have put on, keep you from the evil-*

one and his hosts, and sanctify your members in chastity. . .”

Infants receive the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord from a spoon; through intinction which had been previously dipped for the young children. They are communicated directly into the mouth with the Precious Body and Blood these Life-giving gifts.

45) Who can celebrate the Holy Offering?

Only those who are the ordained by the Apostolic Laying-on-of-hands, into the rank of Holy Priesthood, are authorized to celebrate these holy and life-giving mysteries of the Holy Offering. However, no priest can celebrate these Holy and Life-giving mysteries without the service of one fully ordained Deacon. Those with certain impediments, cannot celebrate the Holy Mysteries in the Holy Altar.

46) Can the Holy Mysteries be taken from the Church and transported elsewhere for distribution?

The Holy Mysteries cannot be taken out of the Church, however, the Synodical Canons grants permission to the priests to carry the Holy Mysteries to those Christian Souls who are imprisoned, hospitalized, in convalescent homes, or housebound at the Season of the Holy Resurrection of our Lord. If this is done, the priest is to be very, very cautious exercising great reverence, spiritually sensitive while bearing of the Holy Body of our Lord Jesus. The priest is to offer prayers and recite the Psalms, when in transit to those who are so confined or disposed. No conversation is permitted with the priest who bears the Holy Gifts to these afflicted souls.

47) Are there certain days in which the Holy Offering is not celebrated?

Yes! Good Friday, or the day in which our Lord was entombed.

48) What language is considered and used as the official language of The Church?

The Language of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is Aramaic is the official tongue of the Church; however, The Church gives official sanction to celebrate the Holy Offering in the language of the people, for those who do not understand the official Liturgical Language, such as that of Malayalam in South India; English for Assyrian Americans, and for pure Americans and English for the new generation, now within the diaspora.

49) When the Holy Mysteries are celebrated in The Holy Church, are there special clothing pieces to be worn by the clergy?

Yes! The clergy use special clothing and shoes to celebrate the Holy Mysteries. In the Old Testament it is written: “. . . *Aaron, and his sons shalt thou bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and shall wash them with water, and thou shalt*

take the garments and put them upon Aaron, the coat and the robe of ephod, and the ephod, and the breast plate and gird him with curious girdle of the ephod, and they shalt put on the mitre upon his head and put the holy crown upon the mitre, then thou shalt take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head and anoint him, and thou shalt bring his sons and put coats upon them and thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put bonnets on them and the priests office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons . . .” (Exodus 29:4-10) Special shoes are to be put on the feet, and they are not to be used outside of the Altar area. It is written: “. . . and he said ‘draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground . . .” (Ex 3:5)

In the Church of the East, the common color used is white vestments for the celebration of all the Mysteries of The Church. When Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared white in the brilliance of the sun, and so, in The Church the clergy who are the “alter Christus” are to be bright and brilliant as the sun at noon-day reflecting the Lord and God of the Resurrection. It is written: “. . . *His countenance was like lightening, and his raiment white as snow . . .*” (Matthew 28:3) Since the Deacons are the representatives of the Holy Angels, they too, are wearing the brilliant white reflecting the light of Heaven and the purity of the angelic hosts, for it is written: “. . . *and sees two angels in white sitting, the one at the Head and the other at the Feet, at the place where the Body of Jesus was laid . . .*” (John 20:12)

50) Why do we face the East at the time we worship within the Holy Church?

The Apostolic Canon directs that we worship toward the East, as the source of light comes to us from the East. The Holy Church has taught us that the land of Paradise is in the East, and our longing to return there encourages us to look toward the East, where we will return to Paradise to be with our Lord forever. From the Marganitha we have these words of instruction, “. . . *worshiping toward the East is an Apostolic law, the rule is founded upon the saying of our Blessed Lord, for just as the shining light flashed from the East, it is seen unto the West, so will be the coming of the Son of Man . . .*” (Matthew 24:27) “. . . *and because concerning that day and that hour, no man knows not even the angels of Heaven . . .*” (Mark 13:32) *it is necessary, therefore, that we should ever be on the watch with our faces turned toward the promise of His shining forth (coming). . . this is profitable in two ways: **First**, because it stirs up the remembrance of the end, and of the judgement to come, and which checks us from doing evil things; **secondly**, so that we may remember our old home, from which we were driven out on the account of our sins, namely, Paradise, which is situated in the East, and thereby, we are led to take refuge in repentance.” (Margnitha, pg 64ff; for additional information consult this text, Part V; chapter 1 “**On Worshipping towards the East**”)*

51) What keeps the Holy Church in being?

Through the efficacious Sign of the Presence of the Holy Offering (which is the Holy Eucharist). It is the sublime Cause of the

Divine Life of the Holy Church through it The Holy Church is kept in unity and in perpetuity through her communicants.

52) What names can be used for the Holy Offering?

The Holy Offering is possessed of limitless names used in the Holy Church to define the unique Gifts of Life. A few of these names given to the Holy Offering are: Eucharist, The Lord's Supper, The breaking of the Bread, The Memorial of the Lord's Passion, Qodasha, The Divine Liturgy The Hallowing, The Holy Mysteries, Raza Qaddisha, The Holy Communion, The Holy Things, etc.

Eucharist which means Thanksgiving, is a thanks-giving act of praise offered unto God for His eternal mercies shown toward us as His worshiping children (*see: Luke 22:19, 1 Cor 11:24*); *The Lord's Supper* is defined in the final act of our Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed (*see, 1 Corinthians 11:20*); *The breaking of the Bread* is one act of our Lord in the observance of the final Passover before He was crucified, in His passion, death, etc. (*see: Matthew 14:19; 15:36; Mark 8:6-19*)

The Memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection is that week of His agony leading up to the crucifixion; *The Divine Liturgy* is the source of our worship of Him who gave Himself for humankind.

The Hallowing, is one of the Holy Offering Rites in which are the combined prayers used in the body of worshiping believers for the purpose of offering the unbloody Sacrifice of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in thanksgiving. (*see: Hebrews 13:15*)

The Holy Mysteries, Raza Qaddisha, a commonly used name to identify the action of The Church in celebrating the Holy Offering, it commemorates the Sacrifice once offered for humankind by our Lord Christ..

The Holy Communion is the sublime act of The believer, in the inexhaustible Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, (*see: 1 Corinthians 10:16,17*) thus, uniting the entire body of the Holy Church in One Faith, One Lord.

The Holy Thing; used in the Liturgy of Mar Mari and Mar Addai, “. . . *The Holy Things are perfectly meet for the holy . . .*”

53) What are some other benefits for the believer who actively participates in the Sacramental life of The Holy Church

He is, first, united to Jesus Christ Himself; second and in Jesus Christ, he becomes a partaker of everlasting life. It is written, “. . . *He that eats My Flesh and drinks My blood, dwells in Me and I in Him . . .*” (*John 6:56*) “. . . *whoso eats My flesh and drinks My blood hath eternal life . . .*” (*John 6:54*)

54) When the priest comes forth with the Holy Gospel, of what should the faithful be mindful?

The faithful are to be mindful of Jesus Christ coming forth to proclaim/preach the lively Gospel; and, also, while the celebrant proclaims the Holy Gospel, those present in the congregation are to be mindful that Jesus Christ Himself is speaking to us. That is the reason why the Deacons declare that we are to remain still and silent to hear Jesus's very words spoken to us.

55) Why do the clergy receive The Communion, together in the Sanctuary, while behind the closed veil?

Our Lord Jesus Christ was with the 12, away from the press of the crowds, participating with Him (Jesus) in the Last Supper, so we give recognition to the role of the clergy in the celebration of the Holy Offering, and thus they commune together, before communicating the faithful, to give witness to the fact that even the clergy are in need of the Sacramental and Life-giving Sacrament; then follows the opening of the veil, we then witness the enactment of the Resurrection from the dead, and our Lord meeting them at the water's edge, (that is to come to the people) saying, “. . . *the gift of the grace of our Giver of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ be fulfilled in mercies with us all . . .*” which is the picture of our Lord Jesus and His post-resurrection declaration to the Disciples, saying: “. . . *come and dine . . .*” (See: *John 21:9*)

56) The remaining portion of the Gifts of Life are returned to the Holy Altar, with thanksgiving, and subsequently consumed, why?

It gives witness to the completed work of the Lord Jesus, He hath ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, until He returns to receive the Church unto Himself; therefore, the remains of the Sacrament are to be consumed by the ministers of the Holy Altar . . . this witnesses to the fact of our Lord's Ascension.

57) Why is the Holy Offering steadfastly celebrated in The Church of our Lord Jesus?

We celebrate Him, as He has directed us from His Presence with us, it is written: “. . . *for as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come . . .*” (*1 Cor 11:26*)



Chapter 20

On Holy Orders (Apostolic Laying on of Hands)



1) What is/are Holy Orders?

This is the primary Sacrament in the Holy Church whereby the Bishop's hands are placed upon the head of a male candidate, and through them the power of the Holy Spirit, ordains, rightly so, conveying the gift of ministry for the sole use within the Holy Church. This gift of Holy Orders conveys the responsibilities of ministry in celebration of the Sacraments; and, to feed and nourish the flock of Christ entrusted to them. It is written: “. . . let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of the words God.” (1 Cor 4:1) And, again, it is written: “. . . take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of Christ which He hath purchased with His own blood . . .” (Acts 20:28)

2) What does it mean to “*feed the Church of Christ*”?

It means for those in Holy Orders to faithfully instruct the believer in the Holy Faith, the Sacred Tradition, good works, and sober piety. He is to feed the Church the manna from Heaven, namely the Holy Offering of the Eucharist (*The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ*)

3) How many levels or degrees are there in Holy Orders?

There are three levels in the conveying of Holy Orders to the qualified and elected candidate. The first is that of Bishop, the second is that of Priest, and the third is that of the Deacon. This division is like unto that of our Lord's description of the ranks of the Angelic Hosts in Heaven, namely, that of Archangels, Angels, and Principalities.

4) Are there differences between each level of Holy Orders?

Yes! The Bishop has the power of the Holy Spirit to impart to others by the laying-on-of Apostolic hands, the grace to hallow the life giving Sacraments; whereas, the Priest's role is to hallow the Holy Gifts in dependence upon the Bishop of the Church; and the role of the Deacon, is to serve at the Holy Altar with his priest.

The Bishop's powers are noted within the pages of the Sacred Scriptures in St Paul's letter to Titus, the Bishop in Crete, these words of instruction, “. . . for this cause I left you in Crete, that you should set in order they that are wanting and ordain qashishe (elders/priests) in every city where there is a need, as I have commanded to you . . .” (Titus 1:5) It is written by the same Apostle Paul to the young Bishop Timothy: “. . . do not lay hands hastily upon any man, neither be a partaker of other men's sin, keep yourself

pure . . .” (I Tim 5:22)

5) Can we discover the names of the earliest Bishops in the Holy Bible?

Yes, indeed! From the Holy Bible, we can find the names of the early Bishops of The Holy Church, first there are the 12 Apostles, St Paul, St Barnabas, St Titus, St Timothy are some of the ancient Bishops, among others.

6) Can we name some of the first priests of the Early Church?

Yes! The Apostle St Paul lists some of the early Church priests/elders; namely, those in the Church of Ephesus (*Acts 20:17*).

7) Can we name some of the first Deacons in The Holy Church?

Yes! The first martyrs of the Holy Church are the Deacons of the Church, namely, St Stephen the Protomartyr, and St Phillip. (*Acts 6:5*) The others named for us, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas the Proselyte.

8) How did our Lord Jesus grant His authority to His Disciples?

It is written: “. . . *Jesus said to His Disciples, ‘peace be with you, just as My Father hath sent Me so send I you,’ and when He had spoken these things He breathed upon them giving them courage, saying to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit!’ . . .” (John 20:21,22)* Furthermore, we also note from the Sacred Scriptures the additional authority given to the 12, namely: “. . . *if you forgive a man his sin, they shall be forgiven to him; and, if you hold a man’s sin, they are held . . .” (John 20:23)*

9) Can members in the Fatherhood of The Church, that is the Bishops and Priests, forgive sin?

Yes! Based upon what is written in The Scriptures, those who have been endued with the Power of the Holy Spirit have the authority and power to forgive sin, “. . . *if you forgive a man his sin, they shall be forgiven to him; and, if you hold a man’s sin, they are held. . .” (John 20:23)* (See question and answer, #12)

10) What is the purpose or need for the Holy Laying-on-hands?

The Holy Spirit does not come, unless there is an Apostolic Laying-on-of Holy Hands. (*I Tim 4:14; II Tim 1:6; Acts 8:17,18; 13:2-4; 19:6*), as such, if there is no Apostolic Laying on of hands, there will be no Church, no Truth, and no Salvation; there are no Sacraments to keep and to sustain the Church of our Lord Jesus.

11) How did our Lord Jesus, and when did He, ordain the 12 to serve the Holy Church?

It is the foundational promise of Jesus to Simon Peter, saying: “. . . *I will give to thee, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and*

that whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, and shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matt 16:19)

The building of and establishing of The Apostolic Priesthood is rooted in the words of Jesus to the Apostle Peter, saying: “. . . . *feed my male lambs, . . . feed my sheep, . . . feed my female lambs. . .*” (John 21:15-17)

12) Was this Apostolic Ministry conveyed only to the Apostle St Peter?

No! The entire company of the Lord’s Twelve Disciples received this Sacred and Holy gift of the Apostolic ministry, together! The entire super-structure of the building of the Holy Church was conveyed to the entire Apostolic Body, when Jesus said unto them (all were present): “. . . *He breathed upon them, saying, receive ye the Holy Spirit, whosoever sin your remit they are remitted unto them and whosoever sin are retained, they are retained . .*” (John 20:22)

13) Did the Apostolic Authority die or cease to exist within The Church upon the death of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus?

No! The Holy Apostles conveyed their Spiritual Authority (as they had received it from the Lord Himself) to their successors by the laying-on-of-hands. To the Bishop St Timothy, it is written: “. . . *do not neglect the gift that is in thee, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying-on-of-the-hands of the episcopate. . .*” (1Tim 4:14) The Bishop St Timothy lays his hands upon other candidates, with these words of instruction from St Paul the Apostle: “. . . *lay hands on no man suddenly, neither be a partaker of other men’s sin, keep thyself pure . . .*” (1Tim 5:22)

14) Can the Apostolic Priesthood within The Holy Church, forgive sin?

Yes! Indeed the authority has been given to the Holy Church, however, we do note here, that it is only God Himself Who forgives sin. Yet, we see in Jesus that He being perfect God and perfect man, forgave sin, and promised life to the penitent. The Apostolic Church of our Lord, upon the Ascension of our Lord Jesus into Heaven, becomes for us the Mystical Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ, it is the Apostolic Church which is the only mediator between man and God, and thus through The Church, we see Jesus Christ continues to forgive human sin for it is written: “. . . *to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the Person of Christ . .*” (1Cor 2:10) In the Lord’s Prayer it is written: “. . . *forgive us our sin as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.*” (Matthew 6:12) In this prayer, we who are in union with the Apostolic Church are authorized to forgive sin. It is in union with this unique body that we are able to function as our Lord’s limbs and member to administer healing, forgiveness, comfort and His Divine love to all who seek it.

15) Can we state that the Holy Priesthood is a ministry of mediation?

Yes! It is the ministry of mediation between God and man in those things which imparts forgiveness of sins, conveys blessings,

and puts away wrath (*see: Numbers 16:17-26*) In this reference, to the Levitical priesthood, there were times in which God was going to consume and destroy all the people, but through the mediation of the priesthood, God withheld the flames of destruction and granted life when the sin was removed from the encampment of the people of God. Again, it is written, that the act of the Priesthood was to stand before God, and to minister to the people of God! (*see: Numbers 16:9 & 16:46*) “. . . it seemeth but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel has separated you from the Congregation of Israel to bring you near unto Himself, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord. To stand before the Congregation to minister unto them? . . .”

16) Is there a difference between the serving Priesthood of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament?

Yes! The Old Testament priesthood was one of generation to generation (see Numbers 16:40); whereas in the New Testament it is based upon the life, manner and will of the candidate. The new priesthood, through Apostolic Succession, imparted in The Church, through the laying-on-of-hands, is bestowed upon those who are determined worthy, after the examination of their manner of life and thought. (*see: 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; Titus 1:5*) It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, thus: “. . . *when they set them before the Apostles, they prayed, and laid their hands upon them.* . . .” (6:6) In the Old Testament the anointing was by material substance; whereas in the New Testament it is by the anointing/unction of the Holy Spirit (*the spiritual Oil of Anointing*) (*for material Oil; see: Exodus 29:7; 30:22-33; Leviticus 8:12; for the supernatural Anointing see: Acts 2:4; 6:6; 8:15-18*)

17) What is the test or examination that a candidate must “*pass*”(or “*to complete*”) in order to receive the Apostolic Ordination (*Laying-on-of-hands*)?

The examination involves the life of the candidate, the thoughts on the things of God by him; their knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord of The Church, etc., for it is written: “. . . *an elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, nor striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? . . . not a novice, lest he being lifted up in pride, he falls into the condemnation of the devil . . . moreover he must have a good report of them who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil . . .*” (1 Tim 3:1-13)

18) How many ranks are in the Apostolic Priesthood?

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself divided the priesthood ranks/orders, as the three ranks of Angels in Heaven.

19) How many ranks of Angeles are there in the Kingdom of Heaven?

There are three ranks of Angels, with each rank again divided into 3 levels/ranks.

20) In the Ministry of Holy Orders within the Apostolic Church what similarity do we note that we have in common with the Ranks of the Angels in Heaven?

The Angels in Heaven minister before the Great Throne of God, to fulfill His Holy and Divine Will among all His creatures; however His priesthood on Earth, minister before The Throne of God the Word, to fulfill His Holy and Divine Will within The Holy Church purchased with His Precious Blood. And, as God the Father and God the Word, are One nature, thus by and through the Holy Spirit all the ministers of The Kingdom of God are One. By which we mean The Church in Heaven (victorious) and the Church on Earth (militant) is one, and, is fulfilling The One Divine Will in glorifying, worshiping and honoring God.

21) Is the ministry in priesthood the same as that of the of the Angels in Heaven?

Yes! If the ministry of the Priesthood is not higher than that of the Angels it is not less their ministry; it is written: “. . . *do you not know that we shall judge Angels? How much more to things that pertain to this life . . .*” (1 Cor 6:3)

22) What is the highest rank in the Holy Priesthood?

The highest rank is resting upon he who is the overseer of the Flock of our Lord; namely, the occupant of the primary chair of the Episcopacy. Jesus Christ our Lord bestowed this rank upon Simon Peter at the time He had entrusted the shepherding of His flock onto him; “. . . *feed my lambs . . . feed my sheep . . . feed my ewes . . .*” (see John 21:15-17)

23) What is the second rank of the Holy Priesthood?

The second rank of the Priesthood is “*the priest.*” This particular rank was bestowed upon the 12 who had gathered together with Him in the Upper Room on the night in which our Lord was betrayed; and He celebrated the Last Supper. He commanded them saying: “. . . *this cup is the New Testament in My Blood, this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me . . .*” (1 Cor 11:25b)

24) Can you name the third rank of The Holy Priesthood?

The third rank of the Holy Priesthood is the Diaconate, this is conferred upon the 12 when our Lord Jesus washed their feet. It is written: “. . . *if I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also are to wash one another’s feet . . .*” (John 13:14)

25) What are the three ranks of the Episcopacy?

The Three ranks of the Episcopacy are; **1-**) The Catholicos Patriarch (The Universal Father), **2-**) Metropolitan/Archbishop, and **3-**) Bishop Ordinary. These three ranks of the Episcopacy are equal with the first three ranks of the Holy Angels in Heaven; namely Cherubim, Seraphim, and Thrones.

26) What are the three ranks of the Priesthood?

The three ranks of the second group of the Priesthood are; The Archdeacon, The Chorbishop, and the Simple Priest. These three ranks are equal to the three ranks of the second group of angelic hosts, which are powers, rulers, and lords. These ranks are lower than the first group in power and authority.

27) What are the three ranks of the Diaconate?

The three ranks are the full Deacon, sub-Deacon and the Reader; these three ranks within the diaconate are equal to the three ranks of the angelic hosts; Arcos, Arch-angels and Angels. These three are lower than the previous in spiritual power and authority

28) Can we state that our Lord Jesus Christ functioned in any or all of these offices in His earthly sojourn?

Yes, indeed! Our Lord did serve all of these offices during His earthly sojourn. **①** Our Lord ministered as a Reader, when He was given the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (in synagogue) (*see Luke 4:16-18*); **②** Jesus ministered as a sub-Deacon when He made a whip and drove out those who were buying and selling animals, turning over the tables of the money changers in the temple. (*see John 2:15,16*). **③** Jesus functioned in the Office of the Deacon when He put water into the basin and washed the feet of the Disciples, and dried their feet with a towel (*John 13:5*); and also, when Jesus preached saying, “. . . *repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand . . .*” (*Matt 4:17*)

Jesus ministered as a **④** Priest when He was in the Land of Judea baptizing while John the Baptist was baptizing in the land of Aenon (*see John 3:22,23*), and also, on the Day of Passover, when He broke the bread and gave it to the Disciples (*Matt 26:28*). Jesus ministered as a **⑤** Chorbishop when saying to His Disciples “. . . *I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities as well, therefore, am I sent . . .*” (*see Luke 4:43*); Jesus ministered as an arch-Deacon, **⑥** when He, “. . . *commanded the twelve saying, ‘go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not, but go, rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel’ . . .*” (*see Matt 10:5-7*).

Jesus ministered as a Bishop, **⑦** when He rose up from the tomb, and met His Disciples saying, “. . . *all power is given unto Me in Heaven and on Earth . . .*” (*see Matthew 28:18*); and when He breathed upon them saying, “. . . *receive ye the Holy Spirit, and breathed upon them. . .*” (*see John 20:22,23*); again, Jesus ministered in the rank of the Metropolitan **⑧** when He was seen by His Disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, He said to Peter the Apostle, “. . . *Simon feed my lambs . . . feed My sheep . . . feed My ewes*” (*see*

John 21:16,18) and, also, He commanded His Disciples to go forth into the world and baptize in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (*see Mat 28:19*); Jesus ministered as the ☩ Catholicos/Patriarch when He said Simon Peter, “. . . and I will give unto you, the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven . . .” (*Matt 16:19*) And, also, when He raised His hands and blessed them and departed from them. (*see Luke 24:51*)

29) What is the duty of the Catholicos Patriarch?

The duties incumbent upon the Sacred Office of the Catholicos Patriarch is that of the universal oversight upon the Church Universal (*Church of the East*). And, it is his duty to oversee the consecration of any and all Metropolitan and Bishops, to grant letters of confirmation to the bishops so ordained by other Metropolitan/Archbishops or Bishops.

30) What is the duty of a Metropolitan/Archbishop?

A Metropolitan/Archbishop can fulfill all the duties of a diocesan Ordinary Bishop; it is also his duty to consecrate to the Office of Bishop Ordinary the candidate to serve in his diocese under his jurisdiction.

31) What are the duties of the Bishop Ordinary? (or Simple Bishop?)

The duty of a Simple Bishop is to elect and ordain men into the Offices of Reader, sub-Deacon, Deacon, Priests, etc., and to convey upon the candidates the Office of Chorbishop or Archdeacon for the service in his diocese only.

32) Is a Bishop who is consecrated by a Metro-politan/Archbishop able to function in his office prior to obtaining The Letter of Confirmation from the Catholicos Patriarch?

No! The Bishop who is consecrated by a Metropolitan or by Bishops cannot function legitimately within his Diocese without receiving The Letter of Confirmation from the Office of the Catholicos Patriarch. This is from the Canons of the 318 Fathers of Nicea (however, this is not an Apostolic Canon, in accordance with the witness of the Synodal Decrees of the Church of the East).

33) What are the duties and responsibilities of an Archdeacon?

The duties of an Archdeacon is to organize the ecclesial services of worship within the Cathedral Church of his bishop; for each bishop is to have an Archdeacon to organize the services of worship within the/his Cathedral Church, in line with the directives of the Bishop of the Diocese. The word “archdeacon” is a Greek word which means, the head (*arch*), and the servants (*diaconos*). The Archdeacon will also be privileged to fulfill the ecclesial services of the Priesthood and/or the Diaconate; he is not permitted to ordain.

34) What are the duties and responsibilities of an Chorbishop?

His duties are to visit the various village parishes which are within the jurisdictional diocese of his Ordinary. He will gather together the faithful of The Church and there he will proclaim the unsearchable riches within the pages of the Sacred Scriptures; he will determine if the order of the Holy Services are in order and remain unchanged. Moreover he will be certain that there is no foreign doctrine, nor heresy introduced into the local village parish. He will attempt to resolve any conflict which arises within the village parish, however, if the situation is beyond his ability to rescue, he will appraise his Ordinary of the matter. The Chorbishop will also be privileged to fulfill the ecclesial services of the Priesthood and/or the Diaconate; he is not permitted to ordain.

35) What is the duty of the local parish priest?

The duties and responsibilities of the local parish priest are encumbered, as follows:

- ① to Baptize the converts; and,
- ② to celebrate the Holy Offering; and,
- ③ to celebrate Holy Marriage: and,
- ④ to celebrate the life of the deceased in the funeral service; and,
- ⑤ to proclaim the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ and to interpret the same for the faithful; and,
- ⑥ to pronounce Absolution upon the penitent soul; and,
- ⑦ to visit and encourage his congregation, offering prayers upon them; and,
- ⑧ to pray over the shut-in, the hospitalized, the sick anointing them with the Oil of Unction in/with prayers; and,
- ⑨ to bless new homes; and,
- ⑩ to have general oversight over the congregation in all things pertaining to educating the young, to maintaining a choir, etc.

36) What is the duty and responsibility of the Sacred Office of Deacon?

His duties and responsibilities are to serve his assigned parish, the priest, the people of God; and, in the Holy Altar, he will cense the Holy Place, the priest and the faithful; and, he offers in proclamation the Litany of the Prayers of Intercession (*the Karazootha*); and, he reads the Holy Apostle, and if necessity requires he will read/proclaim the Holy Gospel and delivers a sermon/homily on the Holy Gospel. He will assist in ministry the priests in all things celebrated or observed within the local parish. In the absence of a priest, he is authorized to celebrate part of the Holy Baptism and the Funeral Service; and, the Evening and Morning Prayers; and, He will/can do those things which the Sacred Office of sub-Deacon and Reader offer for the local parish

37) What is the duties and responsibilities of a sub-Deacon?

His duties are, to be certain the Altar is clean and kept clean and in order, to trim the wick of the candles, to light them; and he to fulfill all that the Reader will do; namely; reading aloud from the 5 books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Acts of the Holy Apostle for the faithful to hear during the worship services in the parish he has been ordained to serve. He is to keep the doors at the time of the proclamation of the departure of the unbeliever, hearers.

38) What is the duty and responsibility of the Reader?

The Reader in a service of public worship will stand before the congregation of the faithful to read those books of the Old Testament which are the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, also from the New Testament book of the Acts of the Apostles.

39) How is the livelihood of all the clergy maintained?

According to the Holy Scriptures and the Apostolic practice, these men have been called “*to labor full-time in the vineyard of our Lord, Jesus Christ*” which is the Holy Church of our Lord. Each one of those in service according to their rank, and position of service, to the sons and the daughters of the Holy Church are to be remunerated. It is written: “. . . *a workman is worthy of his hire . . .*” (*Matt 10:10*) and, again, “. . . *for the laborer is worthy of his hire . . .*” (*Luke 10:7*) “. . . *do not muzzle the ox as he treads out the grain . . .*” (*Deut 25:4 & 1 Cor 9:9*) “. . . *For the Scriptures says . . . the laborer is worthy of his reward,*” and again we read, “. . . *do you not know that they which minister about Holy Things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar . . .*” (*1 Cor 13*)

However, within the Sacred pages of the Holy Bible, there are servants or priests of the Holy Church who rule well; and, in great compassion within their congregation. In this case we have been instructed to give them honor doubly so! (*See: 1 Timothy 5:17*, as follows: “. . . *let the elders (Qashishee) who rule well, be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine . . .*”)

40) How was the priesthood sustained/maintained in the writings of Moses?

When the Israelites arrived to the Promised Land, to all the tribes of the Children of Israel they received those portions allotted to them by God to cultivate, to farm, etc. the only exception was to the Tribe of Levi, as they had been called to minister to the people unto God, as the servants and priests. It is written in the Book of the Deuteronomy, that “*the priests, the Levites and all of the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance; therefore, shall they have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD is their inheritance, and He had said to them, . . . ‘This shall be the priests, due from the peoples, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, and they shall*

give unto the priests, the shoulder and the two cheeks the maw . . .’” (1:3) Therefore, it is essential for the progress of the proclamation of the Holy Gospel, and the continuous growth of the Holy Church that the tithes and offerings be set aside in the Holy Church at the time designated within the worshiping community. It is written: “. . . will a man rob God? Yet, ye have robbed me. But ye say, ‘wherein have we robbed Thee?’ In tithes and offerings, ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the store house that there may be provisions in Mine house; prove Me no herewith saith the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open unto you the windows of Heaven and pour forth upon you a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. . .” (Malachi 3:8-10)



Chapter 21

On the Oil of Unction



1) What is the Oil of Unction?

The Oil of Unction is an Apostolic Tradition, which had its origin with the Apostles themselves and which by succession has been handed down in The Holy Church until this present day. This oil was consecrated by the very Holy Apostles themselves for the use in special services, etc. It is written . . . “*is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, and anoint him with the oil in the Name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he has committed any sin, they shall be forgiven him.*” (James 5:14-15) Again, it is written in the Word of God: “. . . and they (that is the twelve-disciples) cast many devils and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them . . .” (Mark 6:13)

2) Why is the Oil of Unction used? or, does it have any curative powers?

In the Church of the East the Oil of Unction is counted as among the seven Sacraments. The body is anointed with the Oil of

Unction, the grace of our Lord and God is bestowed upon the afflicted soul; the result is that the individual is healed both physically and spiritually! (See question "1" above for the references from the Sacred Scripture).

3) Where did the Oil of Unction have its origin?

The origin has its roots in the revelation of The God in the pages of The Law (the books of Moses). The mixture or recipe is clearly spelled out for the use of the same in the writings of the Book of Exodus. The usages were for the anointing of all things separated unto The God, namely, from the Holy Tabernacle to the Holy Altar, all of the Holy Vessels which are used in worship, and those who were set in authority to minister to the Children of God and the sovereign who were to rule over the nation. (see: Exodus 30:22-30) It is written, concerning Aaron the High Priest: “. . . then shalt thou take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head and anoint him . . .” (Exodus 29:7) Again, beloved it is written: “he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him to sanctify him . . .” (Leviticus 8:12) It is written concerning Saul the King: “. . . Samuel took a horn of oil and poured it upon his (Saul’s head) and kissed him, and said, ‘is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?’” (1 Samuel 10:1) and, again it is written concerning King David; “. . . Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. . .” (1 Samuel 16:13) “. . . Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet and all the people said, ‘God save King Solomon.’ . . .” (1 Kings 1:38)

4) How is applied to the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East? and her Apostolic Tradition?

Those who are set apart to serve the Holy Church, in like manner do so in accordance with that which had been given by the Holy Forefathers (the Apostles) of the Church, for the Kingdom of Heaven and for the Holy Priesthood; they are anointed with the same manifold symbolic Holy Unction, so that they are the truly anointed ones and brethren of Christ, who by Oneness and in His union with God is truly and supernaturally anointed. It is written: “. . . wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sin of the people . . .” (Heb 2:17)

A prophetic reference concerning Jesus and His anointing from the Sacred Scriptures, we declare here that it is written: “. . . Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows, all Thy garments smell like myrrh, aloes, cassia . . .” (Psa 45:7,8) Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Anointed One and the Anointer. The Church declares that Jesus Christ is The Anointed One by the gift of His humanity (as perfect man); and that He is the Anointer by His divinity, for He Very God of Very God.

5) What further can we understand by the use of the Oil of Unction?

Let us consider the natural properties of oil: we learn from the most imminent of artists that following the completion of a portrait or a painting, together with all of its rich colorings, shades and variations, they will anoint it with oil so that it may not be easily be injured/damaged; when brought into contact with other objects. And again, we say from observation that fruits are waxed (anointed) so as to keep them fresh and undamaged . . . also in various sports some of the athletes will anoint themselves with oil in order to keep themselves from being seriously injured or grasped where severe injury may occur. So we can state that in the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East, to those who are drawn after the likeness of The Heavenly King are for the same reason anointed, lest they receive damage from the snares of the evil-one and his hosts.

6). What is the substance (*i.e.* matter) and form of the Oil of Unction?

The matter or substance of the oil is pure olive oil. The form used is the Apostolic Benediction “ . . . *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Amen . . .*”

7) How many kinds of Holy Oils are used in The Holy Church of the East?

There are “two oils”used, first, the Oil of Unction (*mish-khah qar-nah, or, the Oil of the Horn*) which is consecrated by the Apostolic Fathers (namely the Patriarch or Bishops), it is used by the/a priest in the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and in the restoration of the deliberate sinner/penitent and the Bishops will use this very same oil when consecrating the Holy Altars; and, secondly the Oil of the Healing of the Sick, this oil is consecrated by the either the bishop or the priest, and it is used only for the prayer of the sick, suffering or dying by those who request the same.



Chapter 22

On the Remission of Sin and Repentance



1) What is the remission of sins and repentance?

According to the Holy Church of the East this is considered one of the seven Holy Sacraments. In this particular Sacrament, the penitent who confesses their sin, either to the priest in private confession, or to Almighty God in general confession, we thus, conclude, that the priest pronounces the words of absolution audibly and outwardly, and inwardly the penitent is released/forgiven of his sin by Jesus Christ Himself.

2) Why was this Sacrament considered and important to establish within The Holy Church?

“To err is human; to forgive is Divine” therefore, since it is humanity’s nature to enter into unrighteous behavior and to committing sin or is easily inclined to sin, it is not impossible that all of humanity would be tried with spiritual diseases; therefore, on this account, the healing priesthood was given to heal the suffering soul, freely. It is written: “. . . *whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto him; and, whosoever sins you retain, they are retained . . .*” (*John 20:23*); and again, “. . . *they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . but go ye and learn what it means ‘I will have mercy, not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinner to repentance’ . . .*” (*Matt 9:12-13*) Our Lord Jesus taught us within three of His parables which are to increase the hope of the sinner, and to open unto them the gate of repentance, which will lead into Heaven, and that of Heavenly joys imparted to the penitent. (The three parables are, ‘The Prodigal Son,’ ‘The Lost Sheep,’ and, ‘The Two Debtors’” all of these are written in St Luke’s Gospel 15:11-32)

3) Do we have scriptural examples of the love of God for/or toward the sinner who will repent?

Yes! ❶ St Peter’s denial and repentance following the judgement of Jesus before the High Priest and the Roman governor, see: Matthew 26:69-75; ❷ the Apostle St Paul, in the midst of his persecution of the Holy Church, resulting in his conversion unto Jesus

Christ, who is *The Way, the Truth and the Life*, see the Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19: and once again, ❸ The Woman with an Alabaster-box, see the Gospel of St Matthew, 26:6-13: and, ❹ the Publican together with the Pharisee, St Luke 18:9-14. And for the final consideration, see the story of ❺ The Thief on the cross, side by side, crucified with Jesus, St Luke 23:42-42

4) What is a *spiritual dispensary*? or *hospital*?

The “*Spiritual Dispensary*” or “*hospital*” is the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is incumbent upon all believers, that when through the affliction of the human nature, sin has possessed us, it is important, therefore, that to recover from sin-sickness the soul seeks the Christian Dispensary, and there to open to the spiritual physician those wounds which sin has imposed, and that through penance and absolution they will obtain the cure of their souls; then after that they will go to the Lord’s Feast, and enjoy Him in peace and purity, with joy! Mar Narsai the Harp of the Spirit one of the early Church Fathers had written, thus: “*Our Lord gave the medicine of repentance: to the skilled physicians who are the priests of The Church, let him whom Satan hath stricken with the wound of wickedness: come and show his sores to the Disciples of the Wise Physician, and they will heal him with spiritual medicine.*”

5) What is the origin of the Sacrament of Absolution?

In the Gospel of St Mark, we have these words recorded from Evangelist: “. . . *John did baptize in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, and there went out unto him, all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and they were all baptized of him in the River of Jordan, confessing their sins . . .*” (1:4,5) Jesus Christ gave the power and authority to His Disciples to forgive sin! (*Matt 18:18*) “. . . *Verily, I say unto you whatsoever you bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose shall be loosed in Heaven. . .*” Again, it is written: “. . . *when He had said this, He breathed upon and said to them, ‘receive ye the Holy Spirit, whosoever sin ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sin ye retain they are retained.*”

6) What is the prerequisite to a penitent to participate in the Holy Sacrament of Absolution?

It is written in the Sacred Scriptures that **the first requirement** the “intention” for make an amendment of life, or to change the direction of ones life “. . . *if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things . . .*” (1 John 3:20 compare with James 1:26) And, again it is written in the Prophets “. . . *but if the wicked turn from wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby . . .*” (Ezekiel 33:19) **the second requirement** is “confession,” the penitent is aware of their sinful behavior, and expresses their knowledge of the violation of the laws of God, and makes it known that a deep desire resides in their heart to be relieved of the “guiltiness,” of the souls weight, “. . . *if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness . . .*” (1 John 1:9) **The third requirement** is “contrition,” for the damage done by the sinful acts to the

vertical relationship with God, and to the horizontal relationship with others. For it is written, “. . . *for godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death . . .*” (II Cor 7:10) **The fourth requirement** is “assurance” in the confidence that God is able to do He as has said. “. . . *that being confident of this very thing that He who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ. . .*” (Philippians 1:6); “. . . *to Him give all the prophets witness that through His Name, whom shall believes in Him shall have the remission of sins . . .*” (Acts 10:43)

7) What is penance?

This is an act prescribed by the priest, as the father confessor, to help the penitent make reparation for his/her sinful behavior; such as, to return the stolen items, seek forgiveness for the gossiping lips or slur, to participate in almsgiving, fasting, prayers, reading sacred literature, etc. All of these acts help the offending soul to be restored to full communion within the family of God and to be at peace with God. The penitent may be prohibited from receiving Holy Qurbana for a period of time prescribed by a father confessor (the priest), based upon the seriousness of the offense toward God and the community of believers.



Chapter 23

On the Holy Cross



1) Why is The Holy Cross considered “*Sacrament*” in the Holy Church of Christ of our Lord?

It is through the Holy Cross we see Christ, and worship Him as our Lord and Savior. It is through the Holy Cross that we see His greatness, confessing Him, for it is the Holy Cross which provides salvation for humankind, for Christ is our Lord and our God by His cross the power of the evil-one is broken, and destroyed, protecting His Holy Catholic Church causing it to multiply. The

Holy Cross is the Name of Christ, for it is equivalent to our saying the killed One, or the worshiped One; it does not designate gold, silver, nor brass. It is written: “. . . *for the preaching of the Cross is to those who perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the Power of God, unto salvation . . .*” (1 Cor 1:18) The Prayer Book further records: “. . . *Let us consider this as the defining revelation of Jesus Christ as “The Holy Cross” for by The Cross the Creation came into existence, and by The Cross creation stands; by The Cross the creation is redeemed (saved); and it is He who is the Maker of the Creation (see: John 1:1-4; Psalm 33:6)*

2) Why is the cross considered here? or, what was the cross before the Church accepted it and sanctified it to identify the Worshiped-One, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior?

In the historical past, the cross was use as an instrument of cruel torture and death. In the New Testament writings we discover that the cross is considered a testing point to develop the Christ-like character and Christian virtues, in such phrases from the written word, “. . . *if any man come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me . . .*” (Matt 16:14).

3) Why is the Cross considered the foundation of our Holy Faith?

The great foundation of the Holy Christian Faith is the confession that through the Cross, renewal and universal salvation had been obtained for all humankind. It is that same sign which will appear at His Second Advent, as He Himself had foretold; it is written: “. . . *then shall The Sign appear of the Son of Man in Heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, for they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory . . .*” (Matt 24:30) The Holy Cross is the foundation of The Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East, because we have proclaimed from the very beginning, “*Jesus Crucified, died, buried and Resurrected from the dead . . .*” For it is written: “. . . *if Christ be not risen, then is our preachment in vain, and your faith is also in vain . . .*” (1 Cor 15:14)

4) Do we worship the material substance of the cross?

No! we do not worship the substance of any cross, nor do we idolize the cross! However, we must give deference to this simple fact, The Holy Cross in its salvific rôle is looked upon, seeing in our heart of hearts, the as though we were beholding our Savior Jesus Christ outstretched upon it for the remission of our sin and for the renewal of all of creation. We, therefore, offer a fervent and profoundly grateful worship, not for the fashion matter of the cross, but unto Him Whom we figure (as in our minds eye) placed upon it, and above all, unto God the Father who had in His mercies provided salvation, though being unworthy, in the giving to us of His Son to be the cross of death for us. It is written: “. . . *for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of His Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life . . .*” (Rom 5:10)

5) How does the Holy Church express honor or praise God for this Holy Sacrament of the Holy Cross? or, how are the faithful

instructed to offer praise or to participate in thanksgiving for this Holy Sacrament of salvation?

The Khudra has profound doctrinal truths to convey to the faithful; when in prayer and daily exercise of prayers; the following are offered to benefit the faithful: “Behold in the four-corners of the earth, and among all nations, His Sign (*The Holy Cross*) is proclaimed! At all hours all tongues weave a crown of praise. The four-corners (of the world) are the symbols of the worshipful cross; unto Him, do all humankind worship. The Holy Cross, which hath showed its miraculous power to mankind orders (drives away) from the souls who have been signed with the living sign of the Holy Cross.

“Thy Cross, O our Lord, let it be to us as a high wall for those who glorify Thee; for by it (the Holy Cross), may we be protected from the wounds of inflicted by the evil-one. In the Feast of the Holy Cross, the celestial beings with audible voice sing out Hallelujah, blessed is the Cross; and we together with them sing with in audible voice, saying hallelujah, worshipful is thy discovery, O Holy Cross.

“Throughout the world, in this Feast the Church proclaims hallelujahs! This great Feast is the commemoration of the Crucifixion of our Jesus Lord, Hallelujah!”

6) Do we have a reference to The Holy Cross as a “mystery” within the pages the Church Prayer Book?

Yes! we do have Prayer Book references. “He the Creator, in the beginning, willed the creation of the World; He established and adorned it with His wisdom and love, for the mystery of the Crucifixion.

“And, in Paradise a tree was planted, this indicated the salvific symbol of The Cross, also, the Ark of the Blessed Noah indicated this (*salvation*), too. Jesus our Lord was hanged upon it at the end of time. By it, He provided (made) salvation for us from death and Satan.

“The promise was made unto us the for eternal kingdom and blessings. For this reason, we all, thus, glorify Him, saying, ‘by Thy Cross, O our Lord, save us from the evil-one and his hosts at all time’.”

6) Can we compare this Sacrament with Adam and Jesus our Lord and Savior?

Yes! In the Prayer Book, we have the picture drawn for us in type: “.. Our father Adam, in Paradise, sinned, breaking the Commandment of his Lord and God; and he was cast away into the land of curses. He (Adam) surrendered unto death and evil-one. (But) by the Cross of Jesus Christ, he (Adam), together with his off-spring was liberated from the captive hand of death and corruption; and, in the place of an abode in (earthly) Paradise, a Kingdom in Heaven is given unto Him, to- gather with the great blessing which pass not away!

“Come let us raise glory unto Jesus our Savior who by His Cross, liberated us (mankind) from sin and death; and, let us sing unto Him, saying, ‘thanksgiving, unto Thy Holy Name for by Thy Cross, for Thou has hast saved us from the oppression of sin.’”

7) How does the Holy Cross benefit the community of believers?

The beneficence of The Holy Cross is two fold. *1).* Protection; and, *2).* Reconciled through His Cross.

Firstly: under the heading of Protection, The Holy Cross, so the Holy Church believes and teaches, the Sign of the Cross protects the believers who take will refuge and recourse unto themselves, though the act of a visible signing of themselves with the Holy Cross. It is written in the Prayer Book of The Church, *“Thy Cross, O our Lord, becomes the High-wall, to the Congregated faithful who worships and believes in Thee, and behold they await the Day of Thy Second Coming, so that they may go out to await Thee with the voices of ‘hosannas’ when Thou dost come. For Thou, O Lord, in Thy strengths granteth victory to all; protect Thy servants from harm and affliction, and fulfill and complete within us Thy will that we may keep and do all that Thou has commanded us to do, O Good Lord have mercy upon us.”* And, again in the pages of the Prayer Book this is written: *“Thy Cross, O our Savior, let it be unto us, the strong high-wall and place of refuge, and may we be protected under the shadow of ITS wings from the evil-one and his hosts, O our Lord and God, have mercy upon us.”*

Secondly: The Holy Church also instructs and believes that the Holy Cross is The Sign of Reconciliation, vertically, between errant man and the commandments of God; and, horizontally, between man and man. It is written: *“The Cross which is the source of all aids, made peace in Creation, for those above and those beneath; the Spiritual ones rejoiced for the finding of the Cross which was lost; and with them, together with all the people; to His beloved Constantine He gave him victory in the war.”* And, once again in the Prayer Book it is written: *“ . . for by Thy Cross Thou hast promised unto us new life which dies not; and, instead of the Land of the Curse; the heights of above is prepared for us; He (the Cross) will become for us The Sign of mercy at all times (for us); and (Thou) wilt command peace upon the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof; and under His (its) wings will protect us. It is written: “ . . . that He might reconcile both unto God in one body, by The Cross . . having slain the enmity thereby.” (Ephesians 2:16)*

8) What do the four points of the Holy Cross signify or convey?

The four corners of The Holy Cross, according to the Apostolic and Church Fathers indicate the four rive issuing forth from the Garden of Eden . . and they in turn irrigated the four corners of the World. (*see: Genesis 2:11-14*) This signifies the carrying forth of life and maintaining the same throughout the whole World.

9) Are there further types or references within the Sacred Scriptures pointing to the Life-giving Cross of Jesus?

Yes! There are many references to signify The Holy Cross in ante-type within the pages of the Old Testament. The next few lines will bring forth a few to help us in our learning of this Holy and Life-giving Sacrament of the Holy Cross; such as: *1)* The

Tree of Life: *“The Tree of Life which was planted in Paradise, symbolizes The Cross, The Son promised by His Cross that He would redeem our race which was lost (see Genesis 2:9): 2) Noah’s Ark, and the relevance of this floating vessel, “. . . the Ark of the Blessed Noah saved mankind from The Flood, signifying the Life-giving Mysteries; that by His Cross He has saved humankind.” (see: Genesis 7:1-3,23). 3) Abraham and the sacrifice of his son; a lamb was caught in the branches of the tree, thereby in the mercies of God a lamb was provided: “. . . Abraham through revelation saw this Mystery of the Cross by the lamb caught in the tree, by which his (Abraham’s) son was saved;” thus, through this symbol God had provided a salvific lamb to keep alive the whole of humankind. through Jesus Christ, who Himself had been caught and sacrificed: The Crucified One (see: Genesis 22:7-13). 4) “. . . also, Jacob when he was dying, Joseph brought his two sons before Jacob, and made his arms/hands in the sign of The Cross and blessed them. . .” (Genesis 48:9-14); 5) The Sign of The Holy Cross is reflected in the Rod of Moses when Moses struck the Red Sea waters and they parted and the Israelites crossed into new life on the other side, and the Egyptians in their evil behavior drowned.(see Exodus 14:29-15:4); 6) the tree which was exceedingly bitter, when cast into brackish waters the miracle of the waters which became sweet, thus signifying The Cross of the Lord which made our bitterness sweet through the bitter experience of the death (see: Exodus 15:25). 7) The Rod of Moses when in the heat of the Battle against the Amelikites, Moses held up the rod and his armies were victorious, signifying The Cross, that by The Holy Cross we are victorious over the evil one and his hosts (see: Exodus 17:11,12) 8) “. . . the brass serpent which was hanged on the rod (of Moses), it proclaimed the Mystery of The Son by whom it was prepared to heal the many wounds of our sinful race . . .” (see: Numbers 21:8,9) 9) “. . .The Rod of Moses struck the rock the wilderness from which water gushed forth . . .for the lost masses of humankind, and this Mystery is signified as the Blood and Water which issued forth from the side of Our Lord and Savior . . .” (see: Exodus 17:6) 10) Elijah cast iron upon the waters, and it did not sink but floated upon the surface of the waters, for it is written: “. . . as one was falling a beam, the axe head fell into the water, and he said ‘alas Master, for it was borrowed,’ and the man of God said. ‘Were fell it?’ and he showed the place and he cut down a stick and cast it into the waters, and the iron did swim.” This signifies the Mystery of the Holy Cross which cannot be hidden, and by which the fallen human nature was raised-up in Christ*

10) What is the significance of the use of the Holy Cross in all of the Sacraments of the Holy Church?

The Holy Apostles through this Sign wrought miracles; and, the Laying-on-of-Hands for the Holy Priesthood, and all Sacraments of the Holy Church are perfected thereby. There are two ways in which the Holy Sign of The Holy Cross is note. In the Western Apostolic Church the sign is made with the middle finger of the right-hand, beginning at the forehead, straight down to the heart, and thence to the left shoulder and to the right shoulder, all the time pronouncing in “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Amen” The blessing of the Bishop is observed by the faithful in this fashion and therefore they adopted the motion of the Bishop, head, heart, left and right shoulder.

Whereas in the East, and all Apostolic Christians will sign themselves with the thumb, forefinger and middle finger creating a trinity, and the two remaining finger rest upon the cheek of the hand; beginning by kissing the symbol of the Holy Trinity, saying “*In the Name of the Father,*” and continuing up to the forehead, and thence to the heart, saying: “*and of the Son,*” and, to the right shoulder, “*and of the Holy,*” to the left shoulder . . . “*Spirit . . . Amen*” This action of the believer states to the world and to the Christians everywhere that a manual prayer has been offered unto God the Lord of all, by simply showing that we petition God to “ . . . *let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my mind, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee, O LORD, my strength and Redeemer. . . Amen.*” (Psalm 19:14)

And again, in The Holy Church of the East, we will see with the same formation of the fingers on the right hand, saying: (beginning from the mouth) “*Glory,*” to upwards to the head, “*to The Father,*” then downward to the heart/chest, “*to The Son,*” then on the right and left shoulder, saying: “*to The Holy Spirit.*” This practice, according to the forefathers begins with glory proceeding from the mouth, glorifying the Holy and Almighty God who is in the Highest heights, and to the Son who had descended from the Heights on High, and dwelt among us; and He gave the Holy Spirit to those of the priesthood at His Right Hand. And, in turn gives holiness to those of the Kingdom of the left hand.



Chapter 24

On Holy Malka (Leaven or Yeast)



1) What is Holy Malka, where does it come from, what are its benefits?

We will respond to this inquiry by stating three aspects of this ancient Sacrament: *1)* Traditional; and, *2)* Liturgical; and, *3)* Theological.

The ancient Apostles, Thomas and Bartholomew, of the 12 and Addai and Mar Mari of the 70, who had disciples in the eastern region, committed to the whole of the Church in the East the Holy Leaven, which is to be kept for perfecting the administration of the Sacrament of our Lord's Body in the Holy Eucharist, till He comes again. This is in keeping with the Sacred Tradition of the Holy Church.

2) Where did the Holy Leaven (*Malka*) and its practice come from?

We have a pious Sacred Tradition, written by our forefathers, that at the time of the Last Supper, when He had celebrated with the 12 He gave the bread after giving thanks, giving to each of the disciples a single piece, except for the Beloved John, to whom He had given two pieces. They ate the same, while the Beloved John kept aside the other single remaining piece. When our Lord Jesus was crucified and His side was pierced by the spear of the Roman soldier, and "*forthwith came there out blood and water . . .*"

John the Beloved was to have used the extra piece of the bread as a sponge, and sopped the gushing of blood and water, let it dry, and in the forthcoming days, crushed the piece into flour, instructing his fellow disciples to use this mixture, to fold into the making of the Eucharistic bread. And, to always keep a small portion aside in order to maintain in perpetuity the Sacred Action of the kneading into the bread dough a portion of The Lord's Last Supper (with His Twelve).

2) What are the liturgical aspects of this Holy Sacrament?

The liturgy states to us in the following prayers, the liturgical aspects of this blessed Sacrament, when the priest prepares the Eucharist bread saying, over the dough mixture: “. . . *may this dough be Signed and Sanctified by this ancient and Holy Leaven, of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given and handed down unto us from our Holy Fathers Mar Addai, and Mar Mari and Mar Thomas the Apostles, who made disciples of this Eastern Region in the Name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit: Amen.*”

3) How is the Holy Leaven (*Malka*) perpetuated, kept, or reserved?

There is a special liturgy in the Priest's Prayer Book, in which instructions are clearly outlined for the continuation of the Holy Leaven in The Church. On the Day of the Passover (Passover Thursday) the clergy of the Parish “*bring pure fine flour that is of the finest wheat, 2/3rds and another 1/3 pounded and sifted salt, sprinkle upon the mixture a little pure reserved olive oil and three drops of water, mixing thoroughly together upon the mixing stone for the preparation The Host . . . then the sacristan and another priest, or more, and the deacons with them, place The Cross and Gospel, with the censer and the lights in the place of the preparation of The Host. . .*” The ministers of the parish will continue in the Order of Prayers, until the time when the old leaven is used to sign the new mixture, saying, “. . . *this flour is signed, hallowed, mingled, renewed, and made one with this Holy and Ancient Leaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was handed down to us from our spiritual fathers, Mar Mari, Mar Addai, and St Thomas, the blessed Apostles, who discipled this eastern region, that it may be taken from place to place, and from one land to another for the completion and mingling of the Living Host of the Life giving Mysteries as often as a reason of necessity calls, in The Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Amen*” According the customary signing with the Holy Cross, The priest will begin to mix vigorously the old and new leaven together, etc. When this action is complete it is placed into the container which will hold this Sacred Mixture; and, then to take the Renewed Holy Leaven to the North niche in the Holy Altar, where it will be kept and removed as needed for the preparation of the Holy Mass.

4) What are the theological implications in the observance, and the practice, of The Holy Leaven?

First: It is that Sacred act which binds us together with our Lord Jesus (and His 12) in the first Eucharistic celebration after they had consumed The Last Supper in the Upper Room. This is the connecting link of a perpetual act between the time past (in the day of our Lord Jesus), to this very present day, and in the time to come; so, thus it makes our sacrificial service as The One unbroken

continuation of the selfsame sacrifice of Jesus Christ (to Him be everlasting glory, praise and thanksgiving!!) **Second:** In the Holy Leaven there IS present our very Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! It is for this very reason a light is kept burning in The Church as a viable Sign to witness the Presence of The Risen Lord Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World. Now, therefore, when a faithful soul will visit The Church, they are to enter with honor and respect, and in awe and silence; and, if female, with a covered head. **Third:** In union with and in active participation in The Holy Mass we encounter the “. . . *pardon and heal(ing) from the scars of sin and from the filth of wickedness, for the assistance of all the Community for the honor and the worship of the Glorious Trinity. . .*” For it is written in the Order of the Renewal of the Holy Leaven the following prayer: “. . . *O, Lord, God of Hosts, (repeat), Holy and incomprehensible, Thou who didst appointed in Thy Holy Church spiritual stewards, the blessed Apostles, to feed Thy flocks in tranquil meadows of doctrine, saying to them, ‘make disciples of every nation, and baptize, them in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit;’ and when you have baptized them, give the Communion in the Life Giving Mysteries in Holy Church; and the Apostles gave this symbol delivering it to the priests and leaders of the flock of Christ, and on the strength of Authority, we too, Thy weak and miserable, and wretched servants, through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, are perfecting and renewing this Holy Leaven, that it may impart, holiness to the mingling of the Holy and Life giving Mysteries, and may pardon and heal from the scars of sins and from the filth of wickedness, for the assistance of all the community, and for the honor and worship Thy glorious Trinity, now and always, and forever and ever: Amen.* Then once again the Order of Renewal records for us the following prayer intention: “. . . *in Thy Name O, Lord God, Compassionate Father, (repeat) and in the Name of Thy Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, The Merciful One, and in the Name of Thy Living Holy Spirit, we call upon Thee, and beseech Thee, to send The Power of Thy Grace, with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to bless the Leaven and sanctify it, that Thy Godhead may dwell IN it and Thy Lordship be honored in IT, so that the Life-giving Mysteries which upon The Throne of Thy Lordship are offered, may be filled with IT, and perfected by it for the pardon forgiveness of sins: Amen.*”



Chapter 25

On The Eleventh Article and The Resurrection of our Bodies



1) What is meant by the term or phrase “*the Resurrection of the body?*”

The term *resurrect* is an old English word conveying the meaning “*to bring back to life.*” or “*to rise up again.*” In the Holy Church and the common parlance of interpreting into English the position of The Church it can be said, that it is an act of God Almighty and His Power, through which all the bodies of the righteous dead in Christ and those wicked, are reunited to their souls; they return to life as spiritual and immortal beings. For it is written: “. . . *it is sown a natural body, it is raise a spiritual body, there*

is a natural body and there is a spiritual body . . .” (I Cor 15:44) And again it is written: “ , , for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”(I Cor 15:53) Let us continue as it is written, “. . behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . .” (I Cor 15:51,52)

2) How is it possible for the dead to be raised up life again?

For those who are deceased, having passed-on through the natural causes, or by being mingled with the dust, or have been devoured by wild beasts, consumed by the flames, or by drowning, etc., we simply state that the mystery of God can best be demonstrated by this illustration; in the event a piece of iron is ground into dust and powder, and that cannot be seen; being mixed with dust and sand, through the hidden power of a magnet it can attract the iron particles from the dust and sand; or any other body into which the iron is hidden, how much more it is true, then, that the Power of the Creator in His eternal wisdom, separates and brings together and will remodel the bodies of humankind at the time of the resurrection. It is written: “. . . *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened if it does not die . . .*” (I Cor 15:36)

3) Will all humankind be raised-up from the dead?

Yes! All will be raised-up again, without exception; but to those who are alive at the time of the general resurrection of the body they will, of necessity, undergo a change, according to the writings of the Holy Scriptures, as follows: “. . behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . .” (I Cor 15:51,52)

4) What do the Church Fathers say about this glorious promise of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the time of the resurrection of the dead?

It is written by the Church Fathers, summarized here their ancient teachings, “. . . *He who begins a work with a design, does so to complete it, otherwise he has wasted his time. However, in the all wise Mind of God, His creation was not done in vain, He has had a divine plan behind His unique creation; it is considered a creation with an exalted purpose; with a reasoning Mind and a perfect image; when the time decreed within His Wisdom shall have come to pass HE will bring the world to an end . . and call for the resurrection of the dead, and the change of the mortal into the immortal . .*” (see: *The Marganitha*, ch 7, pg 77)

5) Can we substantiate from the Holy Bible stating, for our Holy and Orthodox faith, the declaration from the Creed, saying: “. . that He shall come again to judge the living and the dead . . .”?

Yes! It is written for us: “. . . after the tribulation of those day the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from Heaven, the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; then shall appear The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, for they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. . .” (Matthew 24:29-30: compare with question 3 above) Again it is written: “. . . for as the lightning comes out of the East, and shines even unto the West, so shall, also, the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt 24:27) Therefore, the Church Fathers declare: “The glorious appearance shall shake all the ends of the Heavens, and all the foundations of the Earth, and HE shall cry out with His Life-giving Voice, ‘Let the resurrection and the renewal be!’ This the last trumpet! At the sound of which the air of revivification shall blow and enter into those who shall be alive and shall divest them of corporeal denseness and suddenly as in the twinkling of an eye they shall be changed into the likeness of Angels. And, it shall likewise enter into the dead, and these shall also rise up incorruptible, then shall the righteous ascend up into the Kingdom of Heaven. They shall enter into the bride chamber and exalt in His Light with unspeakable joy.” (see: Mat 25:10-41)

6) When will the end of the world take place?

It is written by one of the Church Fathers: “. . . Heaven and Earth shall pass away, if I wish it, sayeth the Lord My words cannot be falsified; He does not say that in every way they will pass away, but of that which maybe if the Lord wills, He does not will, in as much as also, in the world to come they will be required, never the less they will be renewed and changed, they will rest and cease from the accomplishment of their service. It is like this that all of them shall wax old, as does a garment and like a vesture, and like this that we shall be changed, etc. If HE knows not the day, nor the hour, how is it said, “that I and My Father are One?” (John 10:30), for if HE is not One in knowledge, in what is HE One? And if HE knows not the day like the Father, how is it that He says ‘all the things that the Father has are mine’ (John 16:15)? And if the Father hath anything that the Son knoweth not, The Son has something that the Father knows not, and how is it said that ‘no man knows the Father, but the Son, nor the Son will reveals to Him’ (see Matthew 11:17); and how are they One when the Father knows something that the Son knoweth not, and this among things which are remote and precious; but things are less in comparison with one another? Again, if He knows the Father, as the Father knows Him, and knows not the day, then the day is of greater importance than the Father; and, again if all is in His hands, and by Him all things were created that is in the Heavens, and upon the Earth, as it is said, and ‘He knows not the day’, how did He create anything of which He does not know, when it will end? (see: John 13:3; Col 1:16) Now, then, can it be that the day is not of creatures, and if ‘The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God,’ but IS the Spirit of The Christ, how does He not know the things that are in His hands? How does He know that the end will come in the night? (see I Cor 2:10; Lu 12: 38) ‘two shall be in bed, one taken and the other left; and yet He does not know the day! And, how does He know the things that are before and after that day?’ Let us note here that the hour and day of the second coming of Jesus Christ is not important, as much as our life which

is hidden in God; in Christ, every moment of our lives is to be centered in Him, as we anticipate His arrival upon the scene momentarily. Please be aware that our Lord taught us that life is to proceed in its normal course, marrying, giving in marriage, laboring with that which is good, etc.

In the matter of the tribulation, often heard in our days, these are the days of trial and testing, and we know that our Lord Christ, *'knows the time of His return, but we do not.'* even when the sun darkens; as a fellow human knows the out of doors, and the limits of his home, and even the safety provision which are available, yet our Lord does not share with humankind the time for His *'coming again from Heaven.'*

"After the tribulation, immediately, the sun shall be darkened, etc., but yet He does not know the day which comes into the middle of these things, like a man who knows that which is outside the city walls, and the things that are within the city, shall say of the wall that is between them, 'I know it not.' Which one of these is it? Is it either that the Son does not wish to ask and learn of the day? Or that the Father is not persuaded to reveal it? Therefore, He spake the work providently and suitably; for because there was along period in the interval, but they supposed that the time of the end of the world was at hand, and that His manifestation should be in their days, as St Paul also wrote to those who were of this opinion, saying 'that ye be not shaken in mind, neither by word, nor by spirit, as if behold! the day of Christ is at hand;' (1 Thess 2:2) He cherishes them like children, in as much as they have reaped no advantage from a knowledge of the day, either they or the ages afterwards, but rather no little loss: just as God also has not revealed to us the hour of our death, because of the great losses we would reap from a knowledge of it; for even in this our Lord gives to us an illustration, that there are times when we should abstain from an unsuitable question and that we should take refuge providentially in ignorance, that He does not give 'a serpent to the children instead of a fish.' Therefore, as it as useless that 'The Day' should be known, that forbade them to ask, and hid it from them, in order that they might be assiduous and not idle; and this is evident from He said from what He said afterwards 'watch, for ye know not when your Lord shall come; for it was also a custom of our Lord, to speak, with a purpose like this such as, 'do ye not yet understand?' And like this, which He said to the Foolish Virgins, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not;" (see Matt 15:17), and like this, "it is not Mine to give, but to those for whom it is prepared," etc., (Matt 25:12), and like this ". . . I judge no man" (Matt 20:20), and like this ". . .that now I had known that all things comes from Thee . . ." (John 8:15; 17:7) etc., and other such sayings.

7) Will this material world also come to an end?

Yes! It is recorded for us: *" . . because the creature itself, also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of The Children of God . . ." (Rom 8:21)* Again, it is written: *" . . never the less, we, according to His promise look for the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness . . ." (II Peter 3:13)*

8) Will there be another or a New Earth?

Yes! This present earth will be purged as by fire; it will be cleansed from sin and darkness. It is written: “. . . *but the Heavens and the Earth which are now by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men . . .*” (II Peter 3:7)

9) Where or in what state are the souls of the deceased are kept until the Day of the General Resurrection?

They are kept in a place called *Sheol* or Abraham’s Bosom. This place is also called Paradise, the Land of the Light or the land of The Rest. Those righteous souls are kept in that land of Perpetual Light or in the Presence of Jesus our Lord; it is only a foretaste of the glorious promises of our Lord and God. Whereas the wicked and ungodly will be kept in the lower regions of *Sheol* which is the region of darkness and torments, and is only a foretaste of eternal damnation. The Church Fathers have written for us: “. . . *as to the wicked, they shall remain upon the earth in darkness, in which none can walk, and shall be consumed with the flames of remorse for those which they have committed, and because they betrayed everlasting bliss for the temporal and deceptive enjoyments and a real possession for the dung of the Earth. This is the true Hell, whose fire will not quench and worm will not die’ ..*” (Matt 25:30-41, see also, Luke 16:19-26)

10) Why can we not ascribe to the righteous souls immediate complete and perfect happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven at the time of death?

It is ordain that the perfect retribution is rewarded to the righteous soul and its deeds which shall be received following the resurrection of the body at the time of the final judgement, St Paul clearly records for us: “. . . *there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, The Righteous Judge shall give to me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all those who love His appearing. . .*” (II Tim 4:8) And again it is written, “. . . *for we must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that which he has done, whether it be good or bad . . .*” (II Cor 5:2)

11) The foretaste of glory, does it include being joined to or in the Sight of His glorious Countenance?

Yes! It is so! Even more so when in the presence of those “*others*” who have entered into the Promise of our Lord to be with His, as it is written concerning the righteous thief at the time of the crucifixion: “*in/on this day shall ye be with Me in Paradise.*” (see: Luke 23:43) St Paul states in his writings to us: “. . . *I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. But having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for the furtherance of the joy of faith . . . in Jesus Christ. . .*” (Philippians 1:23-25)

12) Why do we recite prayers which includes both the living and the deceased (*dead*)?

The Church Universal will offer the names of those who have proceeded us into the eternal life who are in the Presence of our Lord (called '*the Church Victorious*'); together with those who are joined in the Church militant (in community, here and now present) anticipating the joining together of The Whole Church in the Eternal Kingdom. We have a foretaste of The Glorious reality of The Kingdom of Heaven and of the eternal bliss in each celebration of the Holy Mass. The Departed and the Living are all alive and joined together with the Church militant as previously noted: it is written: “. . . *I AM the God of Abraham; and, the God of Isaac; and, the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the Dead but of the Living . . .*” (*Matthew 22:32*)

13) Why do we pray for those who are dead?

We offer prayers for those who have proceeded us, as is noted in the Memorial Service to commemorate those, thanking God for the holiness and righteousness which we have obtained through Jesus Christ. We will also glorify our worshipful Lord for destroying the vicious and evil enemy death; thus returning to us, once again Paradise Home, or to the Righteous Judge.

14) From The Service Book for the Memorial for the Righteous Dead, what can we extract from the collection of praises, prayers, psalms, hymns and readings?

All these “things” reminds of us of the “mansions” which our Lord has gone forth to prepare for us who anticipated His salvific message and pleased the Heavenly Father here on Earth in their confident trust in the Promises of Jesus, having lived their lives in accordance with His teachings and will. And, they also will counsel the living to please God in their spiritual deportment, in order to be made worthy to dwell in such Heavenly places at the time when they will depart this world.

15) What is symbolized by bringing into The Church the corporeal remains of the deceased?

In our world, The Church edifice is a witness to the Ark of Safety, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Upon the death of a faithful follower, he enters, in type, the Ark of Safety of our Lord Jesus Christ. We, therefore through visible illustration, to those who have gathered together to commemorate the life of the faithful who has fallen asleep in Jesus Christ, demonstrate that we have entered into that rest, which as been promised to us by our Lord. It is written: “. . . *he that is dead is freed from sin, now if we be dead in Christ, we believe that we shall also live Him, and knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He died unto once, but in that He lives, He lives unto God, likewise reckon ye, also to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. . .*” (*Rom 6:7-11*)

16) In the Memorial for the Righteous Dead; what is the benefit; and for whom is it offered?

We know, based upon the Holy Scriptures, promises are made to the faithful, as well as to those who are the unregenerate of this world. All human life will be rewarded, accordingly. To those who die in Christ Jesus, eternal life is promised in Paradise; and, to those who willfully disobey God and the commandments of our Heavenly Father, eternal death or separation. None of us know the hour nor the day when our lives will be taken from us; therefore, we should take heed, and to be prepared to enter with Him and to abandon this world having been called to leave this earthly sphere joining into His glorious presence. We bestow praise upon those who have completed their sojourn upon this earth; for they will be filled with joys of Heaven; they had bravely persevered in this Holy Faith and died in faith believing. In the Holy Church of the East, those who die in faith, our prayers and sacrifice is not offered for the remission of their sin, but while here with us they did weep with tears of contrition and of repentance seeking and sorrowing for forgiveness of sin, beseeching the mercies of God, the Lord of all for they had faithfully taken up their Cross and followed Him.

17) In faith there are those who are theoretically spiritual healthy, but in their deportment they seriously lack; why?

In the face of the common human weakness which is imposed upon all of humankind; and, as we know, there is no man among men who lives upon Earth who has not fallen under the weight or influence of this weak, miserable and sinful nature, except The Man Christ Jesus. So the prayer of the faithful together in community offer prayer intentions for those who are from this group of the weakened ones. Through these supplicatory petitions, we beseech that our Lord would be merciful to them, and for Him to grant them forgiveness based upon the strengthen of their baptism. However, in another group there are those who are poor in faith and deeds even if all of the prophets and apostles pray on their behalf, there is no benefit to nor for them. It is written in the Old Testament, that the Prophet Samuel's prayer petition did not help, nor benefit Saul, the fallen king (*1 Samuel 28:11-15, 18*) It is known to us, as a matter of fact, that as a man will sow grains of wheat, he will reap that particular grain, and not that "*of tares nor thistles.*" (*see Galations 6:7*)

The human soul will offer prayer intentions in the physical body and while fully conscious; Simon Peter offered a prayer intention, at the time of his denial of His Lord at the time of the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus. Because Simon Peter was alive he was able to offer his repentance unto the Lord and was subsequently forgiven (*see Matthew 26:69-75*), however, in the case of Annias and Sapphira were unable to do so, for they were dead (*see Act 1:11*) When the soul is united to its human body, prayer intentions and choices can be readily made/offered, without a living corporeal being, no petitions can be offered unto God the Lord of all.

So the Viable Institution, known as the Holy Church of the East offers prayer intentions in behalf of the departed soul, seeking the mercies of God; the soul of the departed, prays through The Church. Simply reiterated the Holy Church becomes that Body of that soul thus enabling it to pray and seek for repentance. (*see Psalm 6:1-5*) In a doctrinal anthem is written: ". . .*Have mercy upon me*

according to Your grace: Have mercy upon me O Lord my God for I have sinned against You; not because I do the things I like, but the wicked (things) which I hate, I do, and, I like to repent, and to offer unto You my yearnings. And rejoice with your commandments, a victorious coming forth from sin. Have pity upon my souls, O Merciful One to mankind; and pluck my soul from the sea of trespasses which troubles me at all times.”

18) Can we substantiate through the Sacred Writing that the prayer intentions offered in behalf of the righteous deceased will benefit the soul departed?

Consider the book of Maccabees (*II Mac 12:43*) at the time of Juda who had sent to Jerusalem an offering to be presented for forgiveness at the Temple for one who had died. #2, Animals were offered for the sins for the people, in the Old Testament, and their sin was forgiven, according to the Sacred Scriptures (*see: I Peter 3:19-20*). This is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, who IS “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World*” (*John1:29*). When Jesus gave His life upon the Holy Cross, His death affected all who had died since Adam, to the time in which He lived here upon Earth, and from that time thenceforth until that day of our redemption. Here we have covered by the Blood of the Lamb of God (that is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior), the whole of the past, present, and the future of humankind. The effectiveness of this Sacred act will carry the human soul which will commit sin, into The Church, through the Gates of righteousness into Eternal Life, as promised through type and deed shown in the Holy Writings.

19) What about the souls who survive the family member who is departed and taken from among us.

We pray for those who survive and are grieving for the memory of their beloved one who sleeps in Christ Jesus, and has been interred into the earth: “. . . *those who sleep raise them by Thy mercies, and those who are alive keep them in the abundance of Thy great mercies, grant a fruitful resurrection to this Thy beloved one, who sleeps in the hope of the resurrection, O Lord of our life and death, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Amen*” And, again, “. . . *be O my Lord the consoler of Thy worshipers, shroud and cover them under The wings of Thy grace, and may they with openness of face be worthy to receive Thy revelation from Heaven and to raise unto Thee glory, worthy unto the honor of Thy Lordship, O Lord of our live and death, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Amen.* In The Farewell Hymn, as the deceased one is taken to his rest in the earth, this segment is sung: “. . . *The blessing of the LORD be upon you: Farewell, O, my brothers and friends: May our Lord reimburse the wage of your love. When you stand-up in the Holy Place remember me in your prayers . . .*



Chapter 26

On The Twelfth Article Life forever and ever



1) What is everlasting life?

Everlasting life is an eternal encounter with The Eternal and Most merciful God. The process begins at the spiritual birth in Holy Baptism. The life begun in Holy Baptism must be nourished and maintained through the various Sacraments, with the ultimate fulfillment in The Kingdom of Heaven, following the Resurrection and the judgment. This is the spiritual aspect of our human creature. It is written: “. . . *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. . .*” (1 Cor 2:9)

2) When or how was mankind cut-off from everlasting life?

Man came under severe judgement of God when he willfully participated in eating that which had been forbidden for him to consume, thus a tendency or potential toward sin was introduced in the race of humankind. It is written: “. . . *the Lord God took man, and placed him into the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it, and the Lord commanded the man, of every tree of the garden*

thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for the day in which you eat of it thou shalt surely die . . .” (Genesis 2:15-17)

3) How did this disobedient act of our foreparents affect their offspring till this present day?

Sin has been visited upon humankind from that day until this present generation. “. . . as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned . . .” (Rom 5:12)

4) How was this fallen nature (tendency) restored to a right relationship with The Creator (our Heavenly Father)?

Immediately following the willful disobedient act of Adam and Eve, an awareness of their sin was obvious; so as they were cast out of the land of Paradise with a promise by the Lord God Himself, that a son of a woman would come and release/free man from the dreaded curse of sin, death and the devil; it is written: “. . . and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Gen 3:15) Our Lord Jesus Christ came, as God’s greatest good and perfect gift, bringing humankind back to the very spiritual life which he had forfeited in the Garden of Eden, through sin and disobedience: it is written: “. . . the thief comes not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy, I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly . . .” (John 10:10) Our Lord is addressing the spiritual life which He gives to us through His ineffable gift. He is addressing the truth and depth of a spiritual reality, which God had been breathed unto his nostrils of His initial creation, in the beginning. And, it is written, “. . . the first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a *Quickening Spirit*; howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual, the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also are they that are Heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earth, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly . . . (1 Cor 15:45–49).

5) How is eternal life obtained or gained ?

In the fulness of time God the Father sent forth His only Begotten Son, in order to bring the Children of Adam back unto Himself. So that mankind can participate in the verities of life everlasting, and, the life everlasting is in His Only Begotten Son: “. . . this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son, He that hath the son hath life and he that hath not the son has no life. (1 John 5:11,12) We are to accept and to believe that Jesus Christ is our unique gift from Heaven in order for us to become a partaker of Eternal/Everlasting life. It is written: “. . . he that believes; on the Son has everlasting life; and he that does not believe has not the Son and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. (see John 3:36)

6) Why does The Church of the East have such a emphatic doctrinal (dogma) concerning the Holy Eucharist; with the proviso that the faithful must participate in receiving these Holy Gifts in order to be built up spiritually in Jesus Christ?

It is written: “. . . *Jesus said unto them, ‘verily, verily I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, hath eternal; and I will raise him up at the last day, for My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed; he that eat My Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells in Me and I in him . . .’*” (John 6:53-56)

7) In the gift of Eternal life, how does it affect our frail human frame (human body)?

The frail human frame will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, and in that change it will be glorified with the Light of God, as Christ’s Body was glorified at His Transfiguration, on Mt Tabor, it written: “. . . *it is sown in dishonor, it is raised up in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is sown in power, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body . . . and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also the image of the Heavenly. . . .’*” (1 Cor 15:43-49)

8) What will happen to those who have chosen not to follow after Jesus Christ and the truth in His Holy Church?

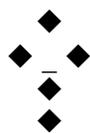
These sad souls who had chosen to reject our Lord Jesus Christ will be give over to everlasting death, that is to everlasting fire and torments, together with the evil-one (Satan) and his hosts; it is recorded for us, “. . . *and whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire . . .this the second death . . .’*” (Revelation 20:14-15) Jesus instructed those who had rejected Him in these words: “. . . *depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels . . . and these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into Life Eternal. . .’*” (Matt 25:41,46)

9) Why is such harsh punishment meted out for those sinners who reject Jesus Christ?

It not the willfulness of God, but it was by an act of freewill by the unrepentant sinner chose to pursue a course of rejection of Him who had come to benefit all of humankind by a sacrifice of love upon a cross, giving of Himself totally that mankind would be saved from the uttermost. God is merciful and just, but as an individual would practice rejection, physically and willfully, in His justice that sinning soul is cast aside and it is destroyed in the place of banishment which had been prepared for the rebellious evil-one and his hosts. It is written, “. . . *with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . .’*” (1 Thess 2:10)



Here ends the beginning of our walk in The Holy Faith; to God be the constant glory: Amen



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