



# Prayer and Fasting

# ORTHODOX PRAYER



But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place”

(Matt 6:6)

# Prayer

Form groups of three and answer these questions:

- \* How do you pray now?
- \* When do you pray now?
- \* Where do you pray now?
- \* Are you satisfied with your prayer life and relationship with God?

# Why Do You Pray?

- \* What is aim of Prayer?

Aim of Prayer is to have a personal relationship with God.

- \* Thoughts from St. Theophan:

*The way to God is **an inner journey** accomplished in the mind and heart.*

- \* **Primary work** of the moral and religious life.

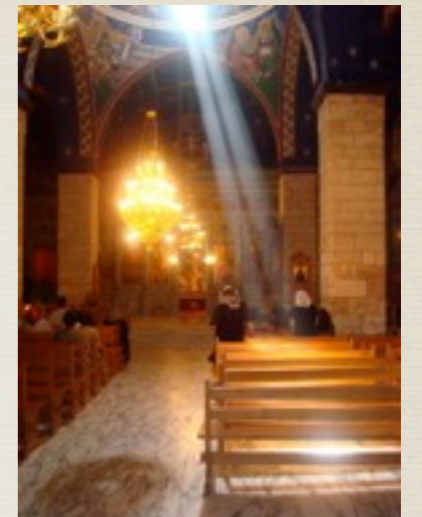
- \* *We must attune the thoughts of the mind and the disposition of the heart so the spirit of man will **always** be with the Lord as if joined with Him.*

Theophan, *Art of Prayer*, 73, 61, 73



# Two Types: Inner and Outer Prayer

- \* 1. Outer prayer - worship and reading
- \* 2. Personal prayer - aims towards inner prayer.
- \* Outer → Inner  
Outer prepares for the inner  
Both are necessary.
- \* To join with God in His kingdom,  
we must learn to withdraw within ourselves.





# What is Inner Prayer?

\* *Prayer is the **raising of the mind and heart to God** in praise and thanksgiving to Him and in supplication for the good things that we need, both spiritual and physical.* St. Theophan the Recluse, p 53 *Art of Prayer*



- \* A mutual personal encounter with God.
- \* When we open our heart to God.
- \* To pray is to stand before God with **our mind in our “heart.”**

# Heart



- \* Jesus: *“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”* Matt 5:8

What did He mean by Heart?

- \* Innermost part of our being & part of our subconsciousness.
- \* Where the knowledge of God is revealed to us.
- \* Soul’s control center that reigns over the body.
- \* Place from which grace penetrates throughout the body and the mind.
- \* Where Christ comes to dwell within us.
- \* Peter says, *“Do not let your adornment be merely outward... rather let it be the hidden person of the heart.”* 1Peter 3:3-4

\* *Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God in praise and thanksgiving to Him and in supplication for the good things that we need, both spiritual and physical.* St. Theophan

*the Recluse, p 53 Art of Prayer*

\* *All our Church service Prayers, prayers composed for home use, are filled with spiritual turning to God.*



# What is Prayer

Saint Theophan the Recluse

- \* It is the **listening** of our mind and heart to God....
- \* To pray brings **pious feelings and attitudes** into action, forming a spirit of devotion.
- \* What is received from God enters our **innermost being** and gives new life to everything there.
- \* The **quickenning of the spirit**, in a sense it is deification (glorification).

# What Do We Ask For?

- \* *We should not ask for lights or miracles, or prophecies, or gifts of the Spirit, **only for repentance**. Repentance brings humility; humility will bring grace from God, because grace always goes to the humble, of necessity. Therefore, repentance is necessary for our salvation and when we have it, the grace of God will come and it will teach us what we need to do for salvation even of our fellows too, if it is necessary.* Elder Porphyrios

From *With Elder Porphyrios: A Spiritual Child Remembers*, by Constantine Yiannitsiotis, pp. 70-74. Published by the Holy Convent of the Transfiguration of the Savior (Athens, 2001).

- \* We should ask for His mercy, forgiveness and strength to overcome our sinfulness

# Stages of Prayer

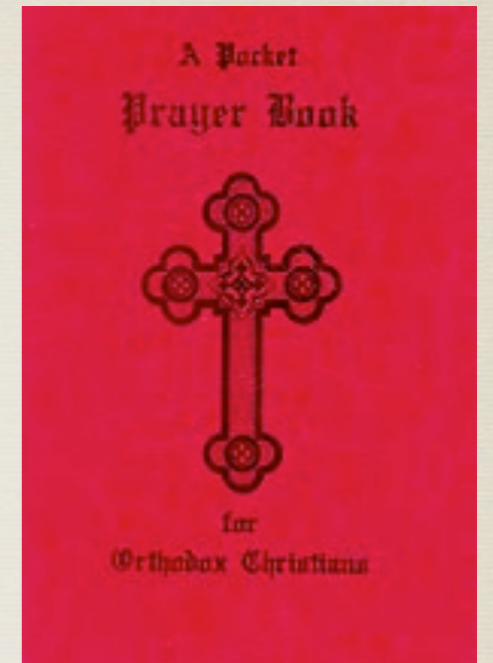


- \* Oral prayer
- \* Mental prayer
- \* Inner (noetic) prayer of the heart



# Oral Prayer

- \* Not in the Orthodox tradition to make up extemporaneous prayers, unless you are in a spiritual state.
- \* If you don't have noetic or inner prayer, you should pray with your mind using prayers from the church services and Prayer Books using prayers handed down through the tradition of the Church.



# Aim is Inner Prayer

- \* Oral prayer leads to inner prayer
  - \* Enter into the spirit of prayers you read and hear, reproducing them in your heart.  
Offer them up from your heart to God as if they were born in your heart under the action of the Holy Spirit.
- \* *Oral prayer is prayer **only if** the mind and the heart also pray.*  
Theophan AP 59
- \* What is essential for this?
  - \* Concentration essential.
- \* Must aim at inner prayer - there is a progression

WHAT DID JESUS  
TEACH ABOUT  
PRAYER?

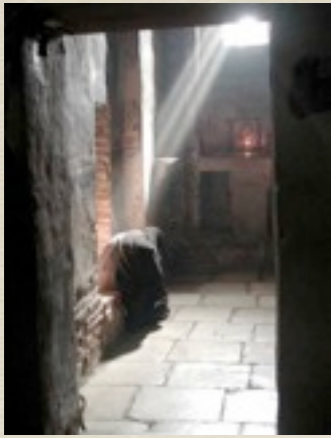
# Orthodox View of Prayer



## What Jesus Taught

- \* When the disciples asked “Master, how should we pray?” Jesus did not respond: “Just talk to me.”  
What did He tell them?
- \* *“He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ And he said to them, ‘When you pray, **say**: Our Father which art in heaven... (Lk 11:1-4)*

*When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is **in the secret place**; and Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mat 6:6)*



# Inner Prayer

- \* Jesus said, “**Ask** and it will be given to you; **seek** and you will **knock** and it will be opened to you” (Matt 7:7)
- \* Seek what?
  - To be part of His Kingdom: “*Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness*” (Matt 6:33)
  - “*Thy Kingdom Come*”: Grace and Divine Light
- \* Knock where?
  - The Heart: “*The kingdom of God is within you*” (Luke 17:21)
- \* Purpose of prayer:
  - To enter this inner kingdom **within** each of us,
  - to **be open** to receive His Grace,
  - to work in **cooperation** with His Grace (synergia).
  - “*Thy Will be Done*”



# Orthodox View of Prayer

- \* When St. Paul talks about prayer and participation in the Body of Christ, he is talking about something **sensed and perceived** inwardly.

*The Spirit Himself bears witness **with our spirit** that we are children of God”* Romans 8:16

- \* This **inner sensation awakened by the Holy Spirit** makes up the patristic Tradition on prayer and worship.
- \* How do you relate to this teaching? Is it clear?

# Where do we begin?

- \* To say prayers and to listen to prayers.
  - \* Oral prayer
  - \* Worship services
  - \* Use prayers in Orthodox prayer books

# Where do we begin?

*Focus on filling your soul with feeling  
so when the tongue speaks in prayer,  
the ear hears that prayer, and  
the body prostrates itself,  
the heart will not be found empty,  
but will be moved towards God by its emotion;*

Theophan the Recluse

# Honoring God's Time

- ① **Daily Prayer**
- ① **Wednesday & Friday Fast**
- ① **Keeping the Sabbath**
- ① **Planning for the Liturgical cycle of worship and fasting.**



# What are Requirements for Inner Prayer?

Inner prayer first requires:

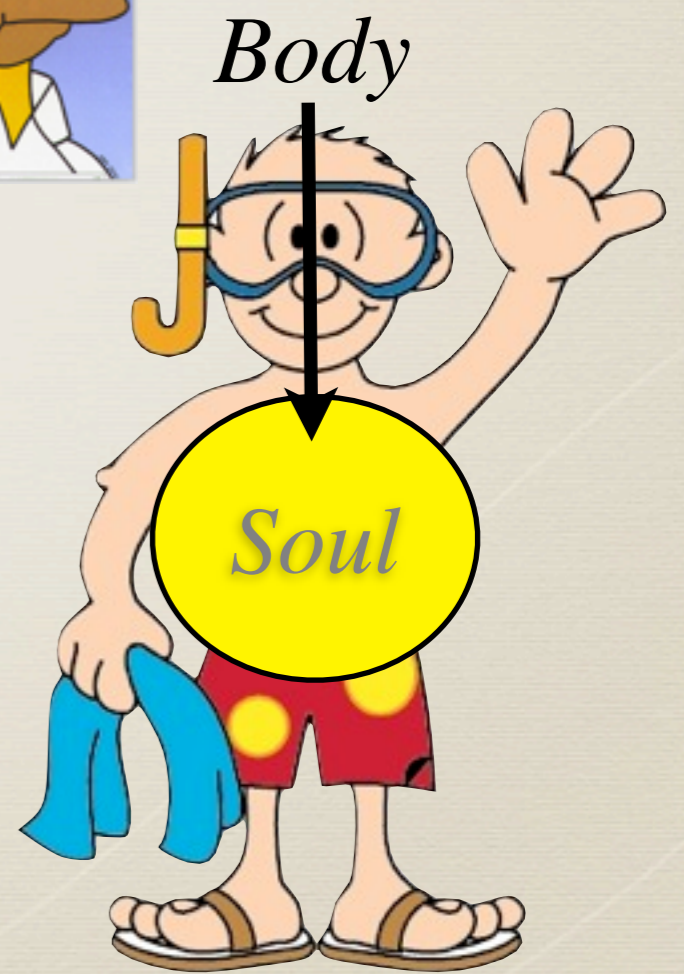
- \* **Faith** based on an **inner** experience of God.
- \* **Fear** (awe) of almighty God—Creator of all.
- \* **Love** of God – God is your top priority
- \* **Humility**: Acknowledgement of His infinite powers.
- \* **Joining** with Christ in His Church.
- \* Attitude of **repentance** (Metanoia).
- \* Commitment & **continual effort** to practice God's commandments.

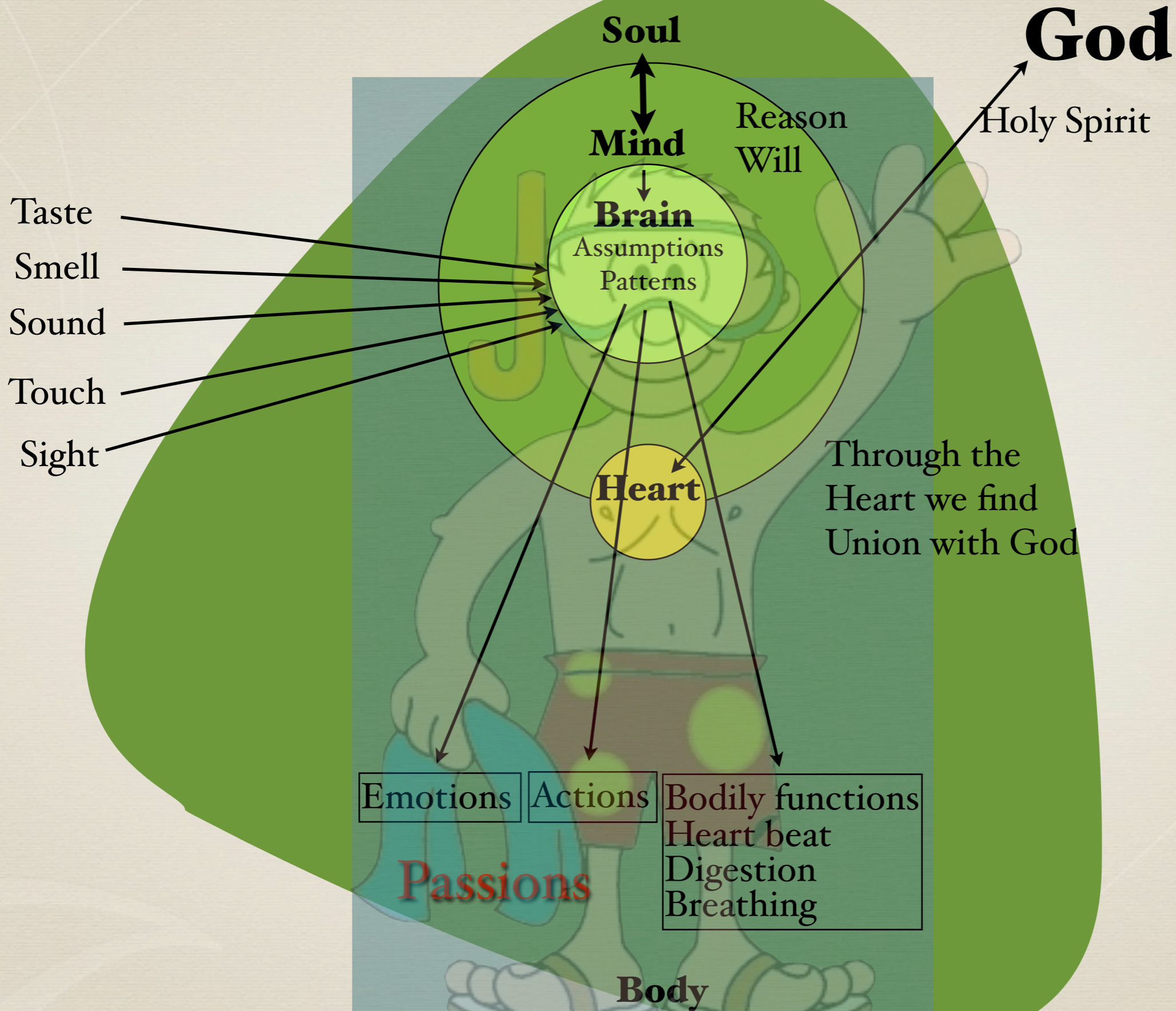
# Why is Prayer so Difficult?

- \* Because of our separation from God - our sinfulness.
- \* The body's programming in brain
- \* Takes Time
- \* What happens when try to pray in silence?
- \* Need to develop skill of **concentration.**
- \* How to do this?



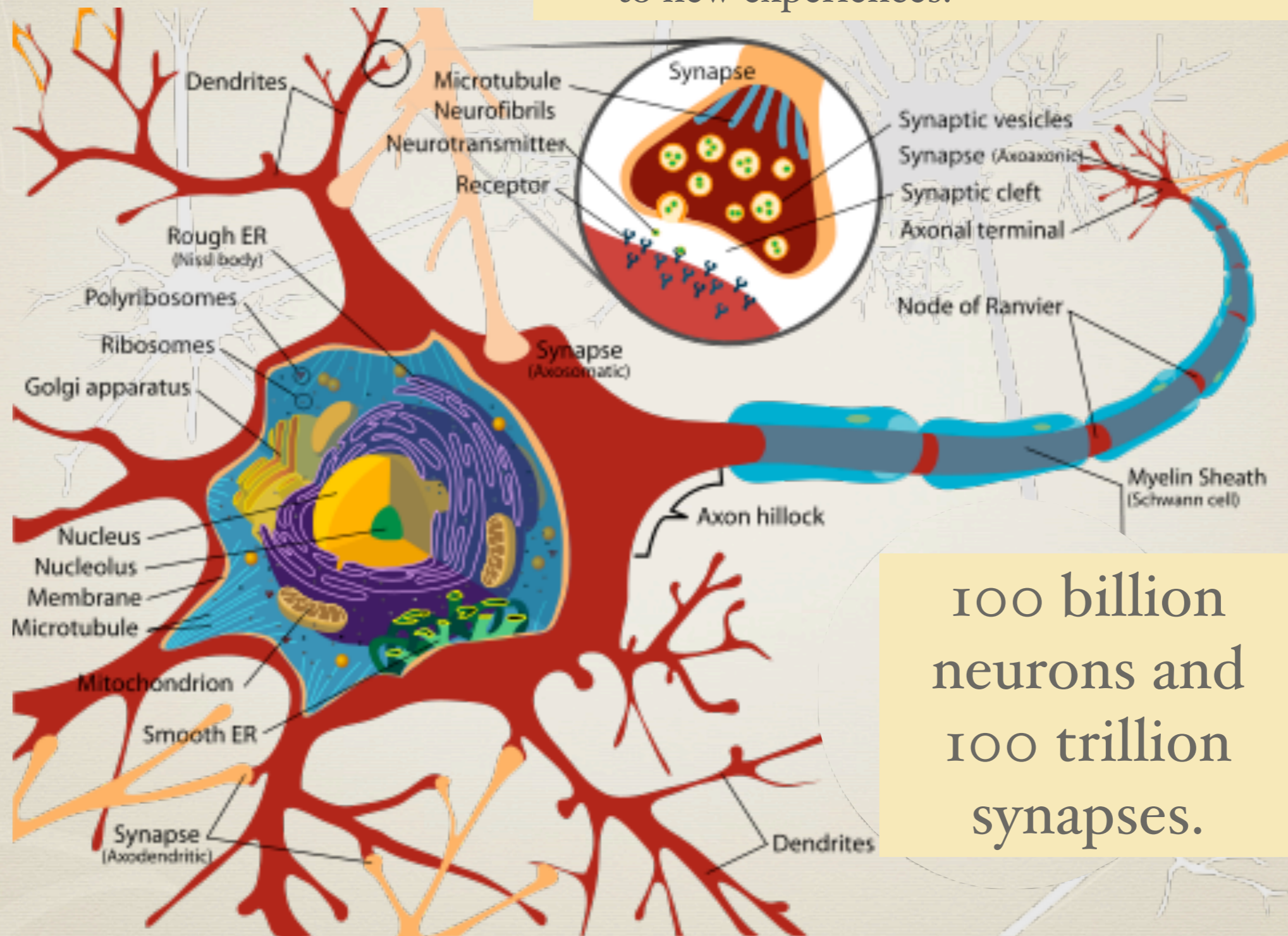
*God*





# Neurons

Synapses are awash in hormones and neurotransmitters that modulate the transmission of signals, and they constantly form and dissolve, weaken and strengthen in response to new experiences.



100 billion neurons and 100 trillion synapses.





# Where do we begin?

1. Make **commitment** to **daily** prayer.
2. Establish a **clear rule** for our prayer.
3. **Commit to the rule.**

# What is a Rule of Prayer?

- \* **Personal** and individual
- \* Determined by **you**, and confirmed (the rule, as well as any changes) — by your Spiritual Father.
- \* Once determined, the rule becomes a **commandment**.
- \* Purpose — To dispose the soul towards active association with God, to awaken repentant thoughts, and purify the heart of sinful corruption.
- \* Start **slowly** - do not over commit
- \* Example of simple Rule of Prayer

# Beginning Prayer Rule

Hand Out

- \* **Place:** In the icon stand in the spare bed room
- \* **Time:** 6:30am and 11:00pm for ~20 minutes each time
- \* Begin by lighting a candle, and making three prostrations and then stand quietly to collect yourself in your heart
  - \* Trisagion Prayer
  - \* One of six Morning or Evening Psalms
  - \* Intercessions for the living and the dead
  - \* Psalm 51 and confession of our sinfulness
  - \* Creed
  - \* Doxology and the morning or evening prayer
  - \* Occasional prayers from prayer book or private prayer.
  - \* Jesus prayer - repeat 100 times.
- \* Reflect quietly on the tasks of the day and prepare yourself for the difficulties you might face, asking God to help you.
- \* Dismissal prayer
- \* Remember to stop mid morning, noon and mid afternoon to say a simple prayer.
- \* Repeat the Jesus Prayer in your mind whenever you can throughout the day.
- \* Offer a prayer before and after each meal thanking God and asking for His blessing.

# Beginning Rule of Prayer

- \* Not excessive in length.
- \* Fit your schedule and able to be said in difficult times, when traveling, or in deep distress.
- \* *I will repeat once again that the essence of prayer is the lifting of the mind and heart to God; these little rules are an aid. We cannot get by without them because of our weakness.*

Theophan: From *The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996), Ch. 47, pp. 204-209.



# Rule of Prayer

- \* Recited at the same time each day (morning and evening).  
Be specific.

Develop a routine - a new habit.

(reprogramming your brain - changing its habits)

Easiest way is create new structures.

What routines do you now have?

How can you make time for prayer?

# Time of Prayer

- I. Begin with morning and evening.  
Then add times during the day.
- \* How can you make time for this?



# Where To Pray?

- \* Specify a private space for your prayer.
- \* Set up a small home icon stand.
- \* Icons of Christ, Theotokos, and your patron Saint
- \* Oil lamp or candle
- \* Incense burner
- \* Cross
- \* Prayer book and Bible
- \* How can you make a place for Prayer?





# How Do I Begin My Prayer?

2. Incorporate standing, making the sign of the cross, prostrations, kneeling, reading and at times, singing, silence.

# Preparation - St Theophan

- \* Stand, sit or walk for a while.
- \* Quiet your body and Steady your mind.
- \* Turn your mind away from all your worldly activities.
- \* Think about who God is - on who you will be addressing.
- \* Waken a feeling of humility and reverent awe.
- \* Prostrate yourself a few times.  
Make the sign of the Cross.



# Sign of the Cross

- \* Originally made with the right hand thumb and across the forehead only.
- \* 4th century, the sign of the Cross began to be traced by two (the index and middle) fingers
- \* 8th century shows the shift of tracing the sign of the Cross to over the body in the wake of the Iconoclastic Controversy.
- \* 9th century the “three fingers” are replacing the “two finger sign”
- \* 13th century in the West, we have the first mention of some who “make the sign of the Cross from the left to the right,” the reasons varying from crossing from misery (left) to glory (right) to mirroring the priest blessing them.

# Sign of the Cross

- \* put together the first three fingers of the right hand, which symbolizes Trinity. The other two fingers should be bent towards the palm signifying the descent of the Son of God to earth from Heaven - two fingers being the image of two natures of Christ.
- \* First touch the forehead , then the belly near the solar plexus, then to the right and finally to the left shoulder .



# Sign of the Cross



- \* Signifies Christ's suffering, death and resurrection for our salvation.
- \* Forehead symbolizes Heaven; the stomach, the earth; the shoulders, the place and sign of power.
- \* The hand to the forehead may be seen as a prayer to the Father for wisdom; the hand to the stomach as a prayer to the Son who became incarnate; and the hand to the shoulders as a prayer to the Holy Spirit.
- \* Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on us.
- \* Marking the four points of the Cross on Calvary over one's body.
- \* Represents loving God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength.

# Sign of the Cross

- \* Why right to left?
  - \* right hand signifies strength, skill, and dexterity
  - \* right hand represents God's almighty power, His omnipotence, particularly in bestowing salvation, deliverance, victory, and preservation
  - \* also signifies the position of honor, blessing, and preeminence - Jesus seated at the right hand of God.
  - \* The Lord separated the sheep from the goats, putting the faithful sheep on His right side, and the goats on the left. The Church treats the right side as the preferred side.
- \* In the Roman Catholic Church, the faithful crossed themselves from right to left until the 15th or 16th century.

# Sign of the Cross



- \* Us as short prayer any time.
- \* Most often made at the name of the Holy Trinity, to show reverence for Theotokos or a saint, holy object, or person, at the beginning or end of a prayer, to show humility or agreement.

# Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

\* *Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Let the Cross be our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake; when we are in the way and when we are still. Great is that preservative; it is without price, for the poor's sake; without toil, for the sick, since also its grace is from God. It is the Sign of the faithful, and the dread of evils; for He has triumphed over them in it, having made a show of them openly; for when they see the Cross, they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him, Who hath bruised the heads of the dragon. Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the Gift; but for this rather honor thy Benefactor.*      4th Century



# Prostrations



St-Takla.org

# Where do we begin?

3. Use the prayer books and read the prayers.  
(See example in your book)

# Do Not Pray Carelessly - St. Theophan

- \* Understand every word of the prayers. Learn them by heart.
- \* Concentrate the attention on words of prayer. Still the brain.
- \* When your mind wanders, recite again what you said while your mind was elsewhere.
- \* Enter into every word.
- \* Bring meaning down into your heart.



When Finished,  
Do Not Go Onto Something Else Immediately  
- St. Theophan

- \* Stand for a while.
- \* Consider to what this commits you.
- \* Hold in your heart what has been given to you to feel.

*“He who tastes sweetness does not then wish to taste something bitter.”*



# Beginning Prayer Rule

- \* Trisagion Prayer
- \* One of six Morning or Evening Psalms
- \* Intercessions for the living and the dead
- \* Psalm 51 and confession of our sinfulness
- \* Creed
- \* Doxology and the morning or evening prayer
- \* Personal dialogue with God
- \* Jesus prayer - repeat 100 times.

# Where do we begin?

1. Begin with a short rule for morning and evening.
2. Incorporate standing, prostrations, kneeling , making the sign of the cross, reading and at times singing.
3. Use the prayer books and read the prayers.
4. Keep your awareness in the heart.
5. Once you establish a rule always fulfill it.
6. Work with your spiritual father.

- \* Key is to make time to pray
- \* Form groups of three and discuss how you can make time for prayer in your life.
- \* Share what changes you need to make for this to happen and What will make this difficult.

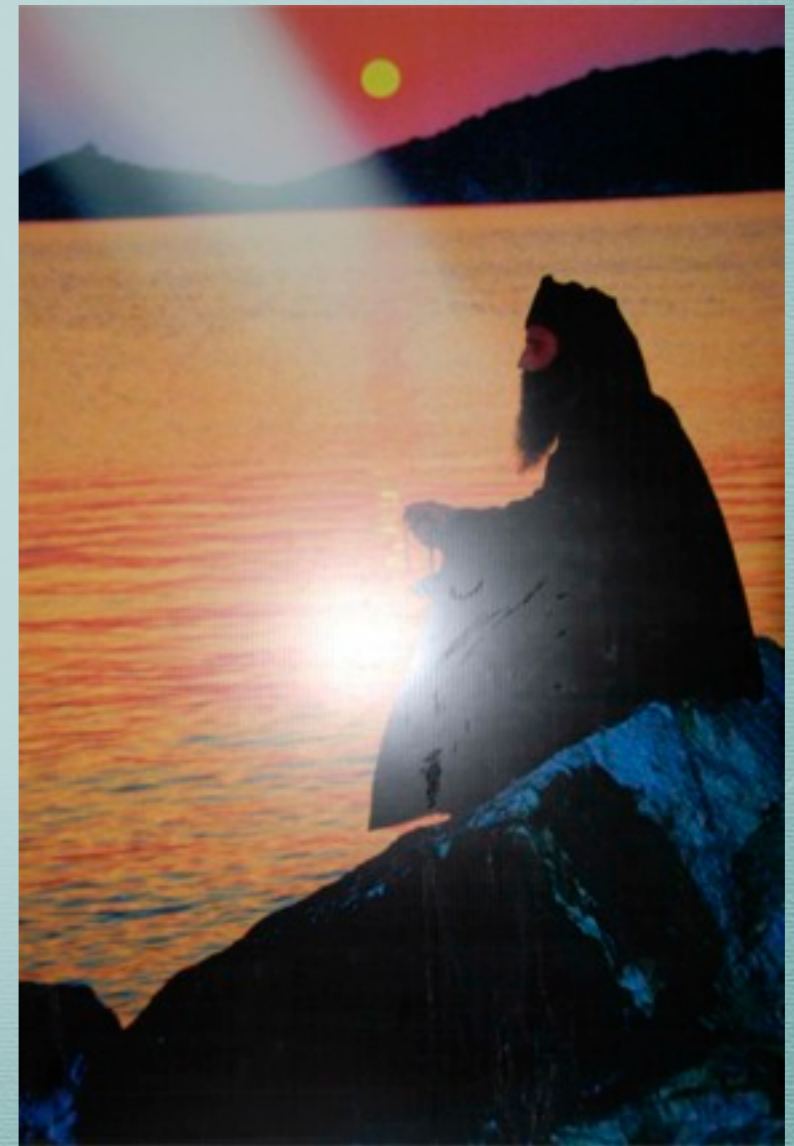
# JESUS PRAYER

*“LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME A SINNER”*

Incredibly Simple

Incredibly Difficult

Incredibly Powerful





# Jesus Prayer

\* *More than any other prayer, the Jesus Prayer aims at bringing us to stand in God's presence with no other thought but the miracle of our standing there and God with us, because in the use of the Jesus Prayer there is nothing and no one except God and us."* From "The Jesus Prayer" by Metropolitan

Anthony Bloom



# Difficult in Practice

\* We learn to **continually** recite it so that it permeates our hearts and focuses our mind...

Why?

\* Predisposes us to follow God's will instead of our own ego directed will.

# Power in the Name

*Lord, Jesus Christ*



\* *There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.* Saint Peter - Acts 4:12



\* *Only with the help of this prayer can the necessary order of the soul be firmly maintained...* St. Theophan AP 92



\* *By the power of the name of Jesus the mind is freed from doubt, indecision and hesitation, the will is strengthened and correctness is given to zeal and other properties of the soul.* Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov PJ 25

# Attitude of Repentance

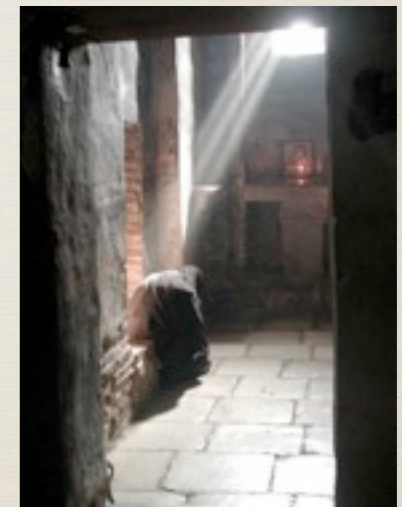
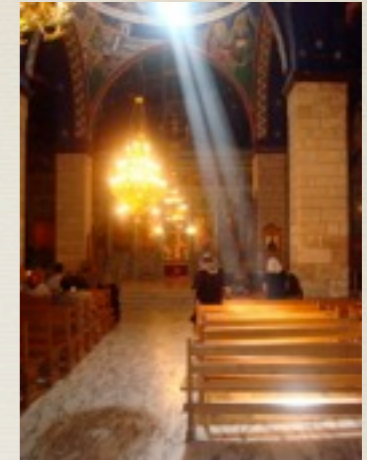
*Have Mercy on Me a Sinner*

- \* As we complete this prayer we cry out for God to “*Have mercy on us.*” Why?
- \* We are all sinners
- \* **Humility** a prerequisite
- \* Our salvation requires:  
faith in Christ **and** awareness of our sinfulness - humility.



# Two Functions

- \* Jesus prayer has two functions
  - a. **Worship** with repentance like all prayer. Must be sincere with awe of God and repentant with contrite heart aware of our limitations.
  - b. **Means of concentration** for our inner life to still and focus our attention on God. Counteract over active brain and its programming.  
An ascetic discipline.



*Lord Jesus Christ Son of God,  
Have Mercy on Me a Sinner*

# Jesus Prayer

- \* Not a method for meditation or disciplining the mind.
- \* It is participating in a life in Christ, calling Him into our thoughts and feelings, our minds and hearts, our entire life.
- \* We must not seek some kind of spiritual experience.

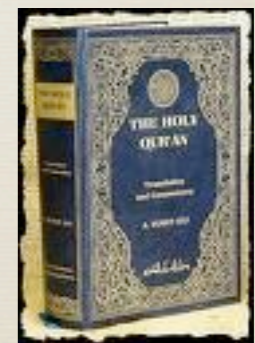
# Not Form of Eastern Meditation

- \* Buddhism teaches use of a mantra - “*Om mani padme hum.*”
- \* Aim of Buddhism is to free oneself from all suffering and attain what the Buddha called Nirvana or the perfect peace of mind.
- \* The Buddha never taught about any form of God.
- \* Practice this form of meditation to gain calmness in their lives — self-centered



# Not Form of Eastern Meditation

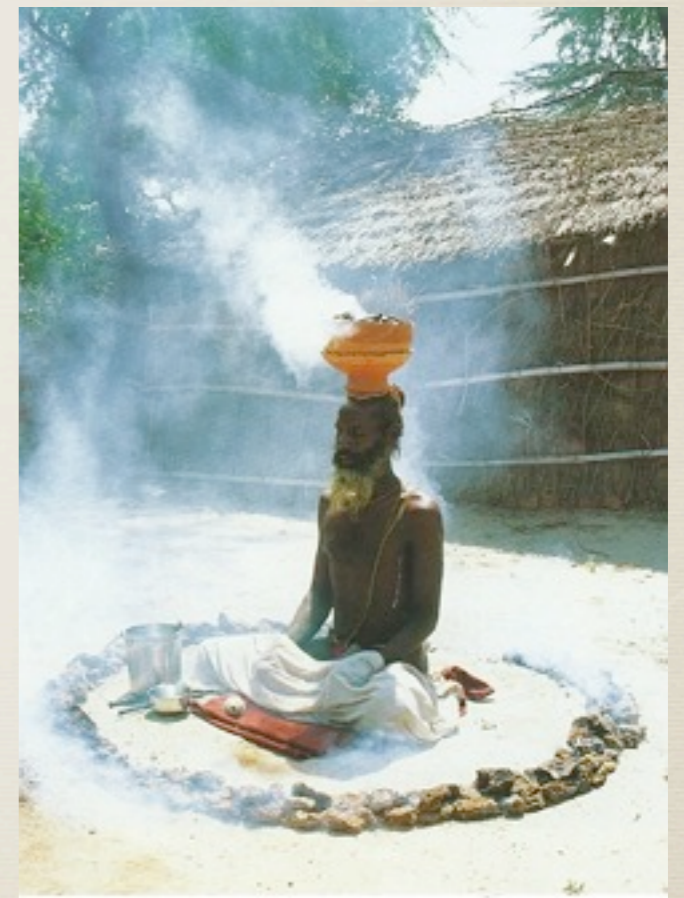
- \* Sufi meditation - aim to reach an awareness of oneness with the universe, believing that in doing so we can attain fundamental truths.
- \* Do not believe that Jesus is God - Based on Islam





# Not Form of Eastern Meditation

- \* Hinduism the chief aim is to gain release from the cycle of reincarnation caused by karma - the consequences of past actions.
- \* Release leads to some kind of absolute Truth.



# Not Form of Eastern Meditation

\* Many of these approaches have been adapted to serve as means of relaxation and lessen our stress of our over active lives.

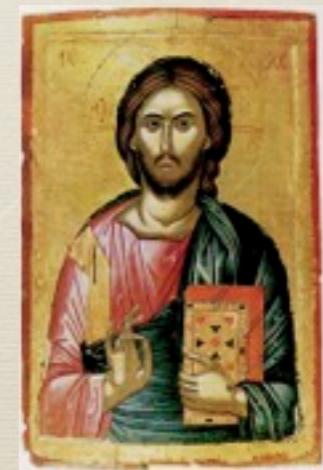


\* They form the basis of the “New Age” spiritual movement.



\* Taught without any specific aim of repentance, nor to do the will of God, or to seek union with Christ.

\* In the practice of the Jesus Prayer *with an attitude of repentance* we seek an encounter with the living Christian God, Jesus.



# Not Form of Eastern Meditation

- \* Like a beautifully framed Masterpiece
- \* Similarities are like the frame. Christ is the masterpiece.
- \* The postures, techniques and outer form may be similar, but the content is unique.



# Jesus Prayer



*It leads the practicer from earth to heaven, and places him among the celestial inhabitants. Dwelling with the mind and the heart in heaven and in God -- that is the chief fruit, that is the end of prayer.*

Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov PJ 35

# Practice of Jesus Prayer

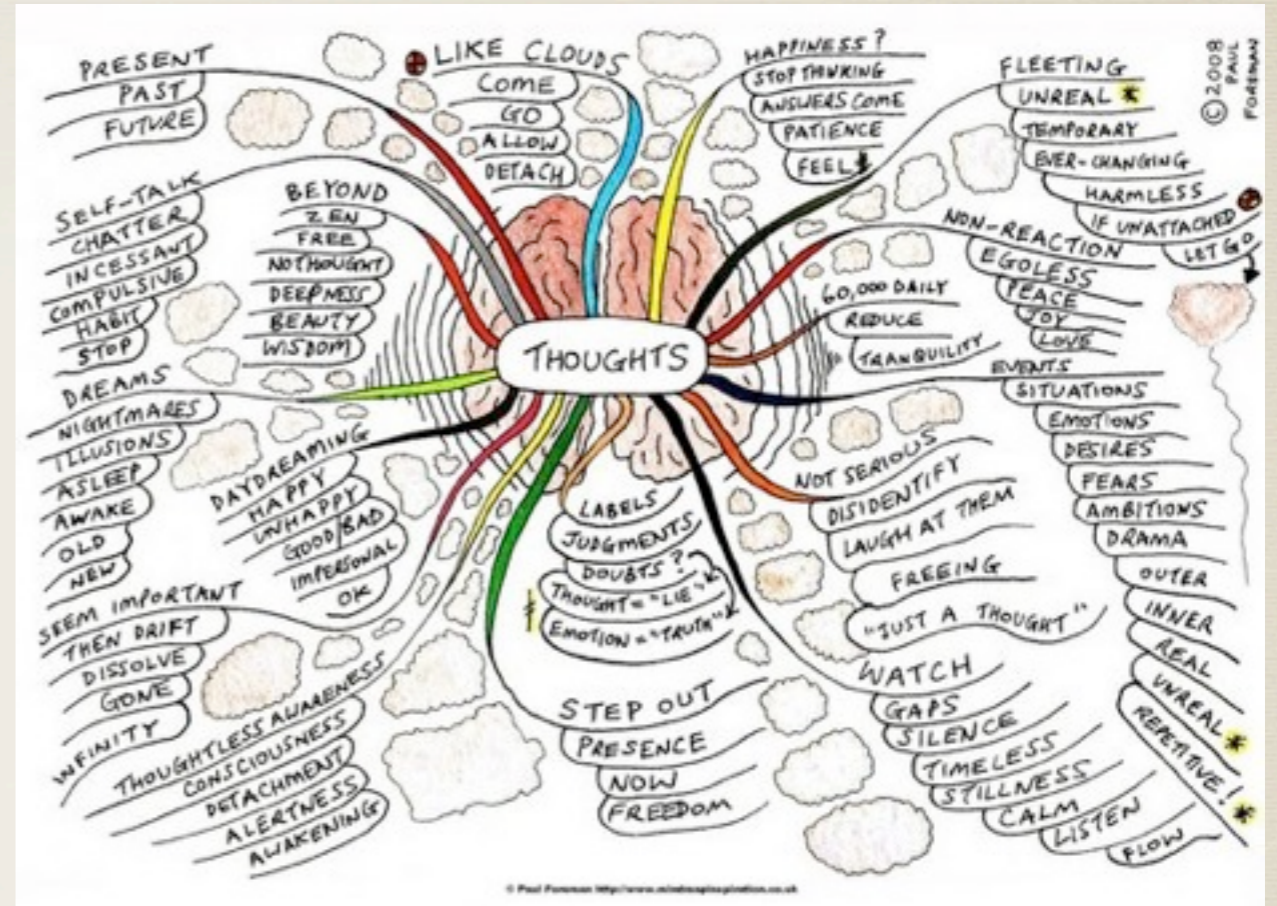
- \* Begin with Glory to you..., Our Heavenly King Comforter..., the Trisagion, 51st Psalm, and the Creed.
- \* Say the Jesus Prayer loud enough so the ears can hear it, slowly and concentrating on the meaning of the words.

*Lord .... Jesus Christ .... Son of God ....  
Have Mercy .... on Me .... a Sinner.*

- \* Spacing of the words must fit your own make-up
- \* When you reach the end of the prayer immediately begin to say it again.
- \* Keep your mind from escaping from its concentration on the words.

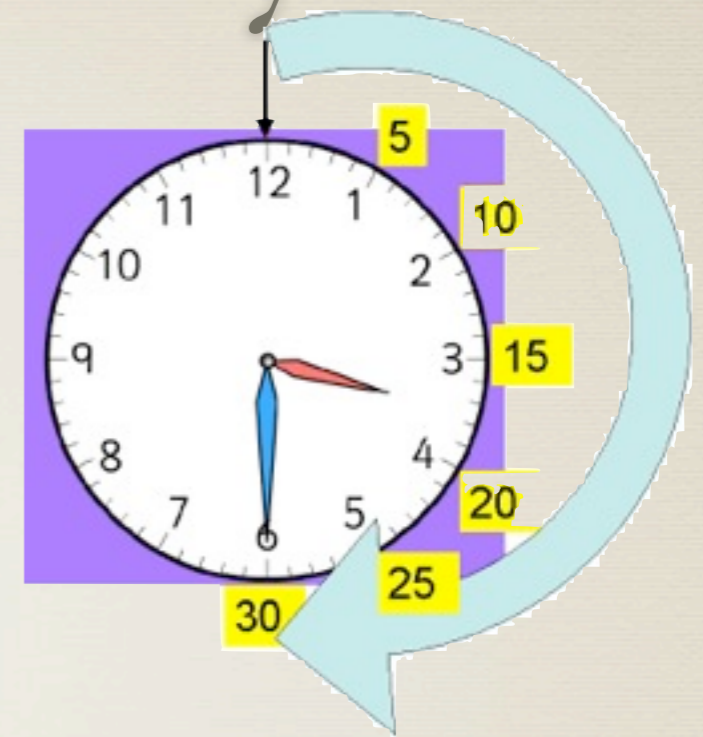
# Practice of Jesus Prayer

- \* Expect to be bombarded with thoughts like a swarm of gnats. What to do when distracted?
- \* Be polite and gentle, Firmly nudge your mind back to the concentration on the words of the prayer and seeking God.
- \* If you don't intercede to bring your attention back to your prayer exclusively, you will not progress in your aim to come closer to God.



# Practice of Jesus Prayer

- \* How long to pray?
- \* Be sure to consult your spiritual Father
- \* General rule you should repeat it for a **minimum of 15 minutes** at any one prayer session.



# Cautions

- \* 1. **Do not** practice this method of prayer unless you are regularly attending worship services, participating in the Sacraments of the Church, and reading the Scriptures.
- \* 2. **Do not** force yourself into the discovery within yourself of the action of the prayer of the heart.
- \* 3. **Do not** connect this practice with breathing exercises or other yoga techniques unless you are directed by your spiritual father.
- \* 4. Remember, delusion is your enemy. *“An insignificant, unnoticed hope or trust in something outside God can stop the advance of progress... Faith in God is leader, guide, legs and wings.”*



# Cautions

- \* Pride through these efforts will stop you dead in your tracks.
- \* Grace comes with humility.
- \* As soon as you feel pride,  
recognize it and ask for forgiveness.  
If you don't,  
you will fail and  
prayer will become cold and dark.



# Cautions

- \* Regular practice is necessary
- \* Every day
- \* Don't let sickness or travel disrupt your efforts.



Brush, brush, brush your teeth.  
At least two times a day.  
Cleaning, cleaning, cleaning, cleaning,  
Fighting tooth decay.  
Floss, floss, floss your teeth.  
Every single day.  
Gently, gently, gently, gently,  
Whisking plaque away.  
Rinse, rinse, rinse your teeth  
Every single day.  
Swishing, swishing, swishing, swishing,  
Fighting tooth decay.

# Other Uses

- \* Take every opportunity you can to say the Jesus Prayer
- \* Waiting in a checkout line in the store
- \* Waiting for an appointment in the doctors office
- \* Facing difficulty during the day or becoming angry  
Take a prayer walk.
- \* Before and after meals as your prayer
- \* Going to sleep
- \* Recurring painful memories
- \* Pain - present or anticipated.
- \* Every chance you get - helps you keep your mind focused on God.

# Prayer Rope

(Comboschini)



# Fasting

- \* Fasting is one of main disciplines in our Spiritual battle
- \* What are some of the questions you have about this activity?
- \* Common questions:  
Why do we fast? Did Jesus fast? When did fasting originate? What is purpose of fasting? Is it only a matter dieting? What is inner significance of fasting? How do we fast?

# FASTING

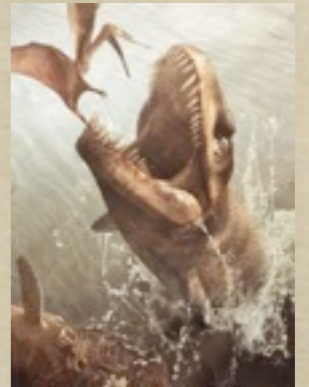
# Fasting



- Why such an important discipline?
  - Desire for food one of our most basic desires.
  - What do we experience when we hunger?
  - What is at work when we deny hunger?
  - Fasting lifts us up  
to a greater awareness of our soul  
and exercises its authority.  
humble ourselves - self-sacrifice for God
  - Lifts us above passions and brain's domination

# Fasting

- Gluttony - excessive craving for food.  
Lust - excessive craving for anything—and  
Greed - excessive desire to accumulate things.  
How do you see these related?
- Lust and greed are never satisfied, as James says:  
*"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain."* James 4:1-2
- Why are gluttony, lust and greed sins?
  - They control our will and separate us from God.
- Control of desire for food leads to control of these other desires.





# Fasting is Scriptural

- *Old and New Testaments  
Moses, Prophets, Jesus, Apostles  
and Church Fathers.*
- Proverbs  
*The righteous has enough to satisfy  
his appetite, But the stomach of the  
wicked is in need.* Proverbs 13:25



# Moses



OK, but they're  
not gonna like it!

- *When I went up into the mountain to receive the tables of stone...I was in the mountain forty days and forty nights, I ate no bread and drank no water.* Deuteronomy 9:9  
(LXX)



# Jesus Fasted

- Immediately after His Baptism, what did He do?

*And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungry.*

- What was His instruction for Apostles in the case of the epileptic boy whose demon the Apostles could not cast out?

*This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.*

- When challenged by Pharisees about His disciples what did He say?

*Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*



# Jesus Fasted

- The Lord Himself gave instructions for fasting:
- *But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; That you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret.* Matthew. 6:17-18
- Why did he say this?

# Apostles

- The Apostles taught about fasting

Paul says,

*Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.*

Romans 14:20



# Apostles

- Coupled fasting with liturgical acts
- Acts of the Apostles:  
*As they ministered (liturgical rite) to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*



# Apostles



Apostle Paul describes his own spiritual life as one of sacrifice, vigils, thirst, and fasting lived “*in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*”

- He refers to fasting in the context of marriage saying by mutual consent husband and wife abstain from marital relations periodically while fasting and prayer.

# Apostles

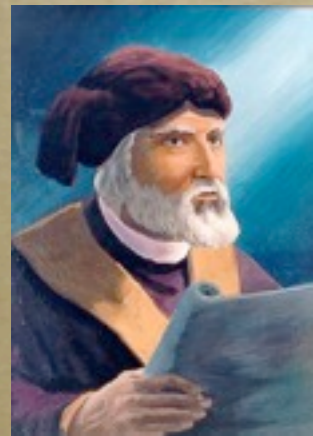
- The first century - Didache  
*“The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”*
- *Your fasts must not be identical with those of the hypocrites. They fast on Mondays and Thursdays; but you should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.*
- The fasting referred to here was a complete abstention from both food and drink until sundown.



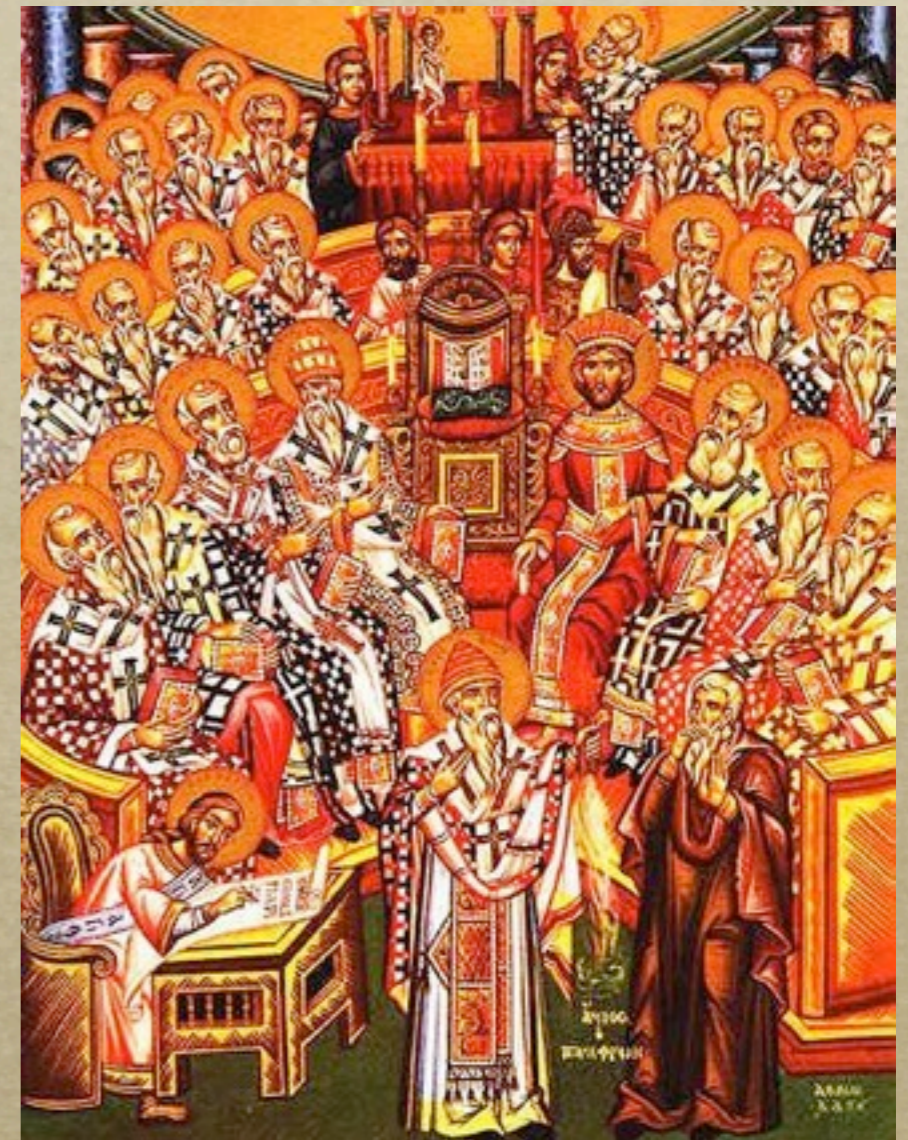


# Church Fathers

- o Church Fathers fasted.



Ecclesiastical writer Tertullian (220 d.) notes that spiritual growth requires confession and prayer fed by “*fasting, ...not for the stomach’s sake, ...but for the soul’s.*”



# Church Fathers

- Saint Gregory (391) - practice of receiving the Eucharist after fasting.



Saint Basil (379) wrote much on fasting.



John Cassian (435): *Therefore, fastings, vigils, meditation on the Scriptures, self-denial, and the abnegation of all possessions are not perfection, but aids to perfection: because the end of that science does not lie in these, but by means of these we arrive at the end.*

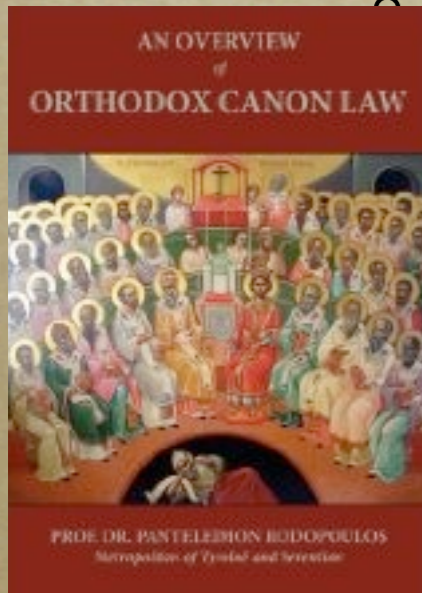


- Many others

# Canons of Church

Canons of Church affirm fasting

- If you do not honor the **Wednesday** and **Friday** fast you are to be **excommunicated**.
- Must fast **prior** to taking Communion
- Strict fast during entire **Lenten** period
- Do not fast on Sunday and Saturday
- If ill or weak relaxation of guidelines appropriate



# Fasting



- *Fasting guidelines*

# Severity of Fasts

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1. Abstention from meat



2. Abstention also from animal products, such as eggs, milk, butter and cheese.



3. Abstention from fish



4. Abstention from oil and wine.



# When Do We Fast?

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*Wednesday and Friday fast*



*Fasting in preparation for receiving  
Communion*

# When Do We Fast?

- Day before **Christmas** (Dec 24)
- Day before **Theophany** (Jan 5)
- **Exaltation of the Cross** (Sept. 14)
- **Beheading of John the Baptist** (Aug. 29)
- Five fasting periods



# When Do We Fast?

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## Five Fasting Periods

- Great Lent
- Holy Week
- Apostles Fast  
Second Monday after Pentecost and continues until the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29
- Fast of the Dormition (Aug 1-14)
- Fast of Nativity (Nov 15 - Dec 24)



# Fasting

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## *Fast-free Periods*

- Nativity to Eve of Theophany.
- Week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee.
- Bright Week — the week after Pascha.
- Trinity Week — the week after Pentecost, ending with All Saints Sunday.

<b>26</b> 🐟 <b>9:00a Orthros</b> <b>10:00a Divine Liturgy</b> <b>1 yr memorial - Pete L. Kythas</b>	<b>27</b> 🐟	<b>28</b> 🐟 <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>29</b> + <b>4:00p Greek School</b> <b>7:00p Choir Practice</b> <b>10:00a Bible Study</b>	<b>30</b> 🐟 <b>9:30 Divine Liturgy - Andrew the Apostle</b> <b>4:10p Greek School</b> <b>6:00p Orthodoxy Class</b>	<b>1</b> +	<b>2</b> 🐟 <b>2:00p Greek School bakes Koulourakia</b>
<b>3</b> 🐟 <b>9:00a Orthros</b> <b>10:00a Divine Liturgy</b> <b>Greek School Carolers</b>	<b>4</b> 🐟 <b>10:00am Divine Liturgy</b> <b>12:00n Saint Barbara Nameday celebration luncheon at Hilton</b>	<b>5</b> 🐟 <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>6</b> 🍷 <b>9:30a Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas</b> <b>4:00p Greek School</b> <b>7:00p Choir Practice</b> <b>10:30a Bible Study</b>	<b>7</b> 🐟 <b>4:10p Greek School</b> <b>6:00p Orthodoxy Class</b>	<b>8</b> + <b>4:30pm Nativity Pageant Rehearsal</b>	<b>9</b> 🐟
<b>10</b> 🐟 <b>9:00a Orthros</b> <b>10:00a Divine Liturgy</b> <b>Santa's Luncheon</b> <b>6:00p AHEPA Christmas Party at Ceaser's</b>	<b>11</b> 🐟 <b>7:00p Laconian Meeting at Olive Tree</b>	<b>12</b> 🍷 <b>9:30a Divine Liturgy for St. Spyidon</b> <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>13</b> + <b>4:00p Greek School</b> <b>5:30p Agape trip to Hollywild and Dinner</b> <b>7:00p Choir Practice</b> <b>10:00a Bible Study</b>	<b>14</b> + <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>15</b> 🍷 <b>4:30pm Nativity Pageant Rehearsal</b>	<b>16</b> 🍷
<b>17</b> 🍷 <b>9:00a Orthros</b> <b>10:00a Divine Liturgy</b> <b>Nativity Pageant</b> <b>Greek School Carolers</b>	<b>18</b> +	<b>19</b> + <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>20</b> 🍷 <b>4:00p Greek School</b> <b>7:00p Choir Practice</b> <b>10:00a Bible Study</b>	<b>21</b> + <b>4:10p Greek School</b>	<b>22</b> +	<b>23</b> 🍷

Fasting guidelines from the Archdiocese calendar: 🐟 fish allowed 🍷 Wine and oil allowed + Strict Fast 🍳 Dairy, eggs and fish allowed

# Fasting

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- Do not try and invent special rules
- Learning Obedience is part of discipline
- Humble yourself - surrender to guidance of Church
- Follow the acceptable pattern given by Holy Tradition.  
Contains collective conscience of the people of God.

# How to Begin

- Difficult
- Begin with **Wed. and Fri.** fast
  - commit
  - Meat
  - Then dairy
  - Build a habit
- Go to Confession
- Get permission for Frequent Communion
- Lenten fast - strict first week and Holy Week
- Then all other fasts w/o meat



# Fasting



- A means to an end.
- Not a virtue - an ascetic discipline
- Engage in it to grow spiritually and walk the path towards Theosis.
- Exercise your free-will & make this a **rule** for your Life
- What changes do I need to make to follow the fasting guidelines.