

Old Testament Book of Micah/Micheas Chapter 4:1 through Chapter 5:4
(edited from <http://ecmarsh.com/lxx/Michaeas/index.htm>)

4:1 And at the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the peoples shall hasten to it. 2 And many nations shall go, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and they shall show us His way, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Sion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And He shall judge among many peoples, and shall rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles; and nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn to war any more. 4 And every one shall rest under his vine, and every one under his fig-tree; and there shall be none to alarm them: for the mouth of the Lord Almighty has spoken these words. 5 For all other nations shall walk everyone in his own way, but we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. 6 In that day, says the Lord, I will gather her that is bruised, and will receive her that is cast out, and those whom I rejected. 7 And I will make her that was bruised a remnant, and her that was rejected a mighty nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion from henceforth, even for ever. 8 And you, dark tower of the flock, daughter of Sion, on you the dominion shall come and enter in, even the first kingdom from Babylon to the daughter of Jerusalem. 9 And now, why have you known calamities? Was there not a king to you? Or has your counsel perished that pangs as of a woman in travail have seized upon you? 10 Be in pain, and strengthen yourself, and draw near, O daughter of Sion, as a woman in travail: for now you shall go forth out of the city, and shall lodge in the plain, and shall reach even to Babylon: from there shall the Lord your God deliver you, and from there shall He redeem you out of the hand of your enemies. 11 And now have many nations gathered against you, saying, "We will rejoice, and our eyes shall look upon Sion." 12 But they know not the thought of the Lord, and have not understood His counsel: for He has gathered them as sheaves of the floor. 13 Arise, and thresh them, O daughter of Sion: for I will make your horns iron, and I will make your hoofs brass: and you shall utterly destroy many nations, and you shall consecrate their abundance to the Lord, and their strength to the Lord of all the earth.

5:1 Now shall the daughter of Sion be completely hedged in: he has laid siege against us: they shall smite the tribes of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. 2 And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, are few in number to be reckoned among the thousands of Juda; yet out of you shall One come forth to Me, to be a ruler of Israel; and His goings forth were from the beginning, even from eternity. 3 Therefore shall He appoint them to wait till the time of her that travails: she shall bring forth, and then the remnant of their brethren shall return to the children of Israel. 4 And the Lord shall stand, and see, and feed His flock with power, and they shall dwell in the glory of the Name of the Lord their God: for now shall they be magnified to the ends of the earth.

Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 7

1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it

will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. 13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." 28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

St. John Chapter 17

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. 6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your

truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

I Corinthians, Chapter 6

1If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! 5I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers! 7The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? 8Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. 9Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 12"Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

2nd Epistle of St. Peter, Chapter 1

1Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: 2Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very

great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 10Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. 16We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. 19And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Great-martyr Barbara
Commemorated on December 4/December 17
(from the "Prologue of Ohrid by St. Nikolai Velimirovic at
<http://www.orthodox.cn/prologue/December4.htm>)

This glorious follower of Christ was betrothed to Christ from early childhood. Her father Dioscorus was a pagan and was renowned for his position and wealth in the city of Heliopolis in Egypt. Dioscorus locked up his only daughter Barbara, brilliant in mind and of beautiful countenance, in a high tower. He surrounded her with every comfort, gave her female servants, erected idols for worship, and built her a bathing room with two windows. Looking through the window at the earth below and the starry heavens above, Barbara's mind was opened by the grace of God. She recognized the One True God, the Creator, despite the fact that she did not have a human teacher to bring her to this knowledge. Once, while her father was away from the city, she came down from the tower and, according to God's providence, met some Christian women who revealed the true Faith of Christ to her. Barbara's heart became inflamed with love for Christ the Lord. She ordered that a third window be cut open in the bath so that the three windows would represent the Holy Trinity. On one wall she traced a Cross with her finger, and the Cross etched itself deep in the stone as if cut by a chisel. A pool of water sprang forth from her footprints on the floor of the bath, which later gave healing of diseases to many. Learning of his daughter's faith, Dioscorus beat her severely and drove her from the tower. He pursued her in order to kill her, but a cliff opened up and hid Barbara from her brutal father. When she appeared again, her father brought her to Martianus, the magistrate, who handed her over for torture. They stripped the innocent Barbara and flogged her until her entire body was covered with blood and wounds, but the Lord Himself appeared to

her in prison with His angels and healed her. A certain woman, Juliana, upon seeing this, desired martyrdom for herself. Both women were severely tortured and with mockery were led through the city. Their breasts were cut off and much blood flowed from them. They were finally led to the place of execution, where Dioscorus himself slaughtered his daughter, and Juliana was slain by the soldiers. That same day, lightning struck the house of Dioscorus, killing him and Martianus. St. Barbara suffered in the year 306. Her miracle-working relics rest in Kiev. Glorified in the Kingdom of Christ, she has appeared many times even in our own day, sometimes alone and sometimes in the company of the Most-holy Theotokos.

Venerable Sava the Sanctified

Commemorated on December 5/December 18

(from <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2019/12/05/103477-venerable-sava-the-sanctified>)

Saint Sava the Sanctified was born in the fifth century at Cappadocia of pious Christian parents, John and Sophia. His father was a military commander. Journeying to Alexandria on military matters, John and Sophia left their five-year-old son Sava in the care of an uncle. When the boy reached eight years of age, he entered the monastery of Saint Flavian located nearby. The gifted child quickly learned to read and became an expert on the Holy Scriptures. In vain did his parents urge Saint Sava to return to the world and enter into marriage.

When he was seventeen years old he received monastic tonsure, and attained such perfection in fasting and prayer that he was given the gift of wonderworking. After spending ten years at the monastery of Saint Flavian, he went to Jerusalem, and from there to the monastery of Saint Euthymius the Great (January 20). But Saint Euthymius sent Saint Sava to Abba Theoctistus, the head of a nearby monastery with a strict cenobitic rule. Saint Sava lived in obedience at this monastery until the age of thirty.

After the death of the Elder Theoctistus, his successor blessed Saint Sava to seclude himself in a cave. On Saturdays, however, he left his hermitage and came to the monastery, where he participated in divine services and ate with the brethren. After a certain time Saint Sava received permission not to leave his hermitage at all, and he struggled in the cave for five years.

Saint Euthymius attentively directed the life of the young monk, and seeing his spiritual maturity, he began to take him to the Rouba wilderness with him. They set out on January 14, and remained there until Palm Sunday. Saint Euthymius called Saint Sava a child-elder, and encouraged him to grow in the monastic virtues.

When Saint Euthymius fell asleep in the Lord (+ 473), Saint Sava withdrew from the Lavra and moved to a cave near the monastery of Saint Gerasimus of Jordan (March 4). After several years, disciples began to gather around Saint Sava, seeking the monastic life. As the number of monks increased, a lavra sprang up. When a pillar of fire appeared before Saint Sava as he was walking, he found a spacious cave in the form of a church.

Saint Sava founded several more monasteries. Many miracles took place through the prayers of Saint Sava: at the Lavra a spring of water welled up, during a time of drought there was abundant rain, and there were also healings of the sick and the demoniacs. Saint Sava composed the first monastic Rule of church services, the so-called "Jerusalem Typikon", accepted by all the Palestine monasteries. The saint surrendered his soul to God in the year 532.

The Venerable Macarius the Great of Egypt

Commemorated on January 19/February 1

(from <http://www.orthodox.cn/prologue/January19.htm>)

Macarius was an Egyptian and one of the younger contemporaries of Anthony the Great. His father was a priest. Out of obedience to his parents, Macarius married. However, his wife died shortly thereafter and he withdrew to the wilderness, where he spent sixty years in labor and struggle, both inwardly and outwardly, for the Kingdom of Heaven. When they asked him why he was so thin, both when he ate and when he did not eat, he responded: "From the fear of God." So much did he succeed in cleansing his mind of evil thoughts and his heart of evil desires, that God bestowed upon him the abundant gift of miracle-working, so that he even raised the dead from the graves. His humility amazed both men and demons. A demon once said to him: "There is only one thing in which I am unable to surpass you. It is not in fasting, for I do not eat anything. It is not in vigils, for I never sleep." "But what is it?" asked Macarius. "Your humility," answered the demon. Macarius often told Paphnutius, his disciple: "Do not judge anyone, and you will be saved." Macarius lived to be ninety-seven years old. Nine days before his death, St. Anthony and St. Pachomius appeared to him from the other world and informed him that he would die in nine days; and it came to pass. Before his death, Macarius also had a vision in which a Cherubim revealed to him the blessed heavenly world, commended his effort and his virtue, and told him that he had been sent to take his soul into the Kingdom of Heaven. Macarius reposed in the year 390.

Saint Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus
Commemorated on January 19/February 1

(from <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2019/01/19/100228-saint-mark-archbishop-of-ephesus>)

Saint Mark Eugenikos, Archbishop of Ephesus, was a stalwart defender of Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence. He would not agree to a union with Rome which was based on theological compromise and political expediency (the Byzantine Emperor was seeking military assistance from the West against the Moslems who were drawing ever closer to Constantinople). Saint Mark countered the arguments of his opponents, drawing from the well of pure theology, and the teachings of the holy Fathers. When the members of his own delegation tried to pressure him into accepting the Union he replied, "There can be no compromise in matters of the Orthodox Faith."

Although the members of the Orthodox delegation signed the Tomos of Union, Saint Mark was the only one who refused to do so. When he returned from Florence, Saint Mark urged the inhabitants of Constantinople to repudiate the dishonorable document of union. He died in 1457 at the age of fifty-two, admired and honored by all.

The Venerable Maximus the Confessor
Commemorated on January 21/February 3
(from <http://www.orthodox.cn/prologue/January21.htm>)

Saint Maximus was born into one of the great families of Constantinople in 580. At first he was a high-ranking courtier at the court of Emperor Heraclius, and after that he was a monk and abbot of a monastery not too far from the capital. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the so-called Monothelite heresy, which proceeded from the heresy of Eutyches. As Eutyches claimed that there is only one nature in Christ [Monophysitism], so the Monothelites claimed that there is only one will in Christ. Maximus opposed that claim and found himself an opponent of the emperor and the patriarch. Maximus did not frighten easily, but endured to the end in proving that there were two wills, as well as two natures, in Christ. Because of his efforts, a council was held in Carthage, and another in Rome. Both councils anathematized the teachings of the Monothelites. The suffering of Maximus for Orthodoxy can hardly be described: he was tortured by princes, deceived by prelates, spat upon by the

masses of the people, beaten by soldiers, exiled and imprisoned—until finally, with his tongue and one hand severed by the torturers, he was condemned to exile for life in the land of Skhimaris [near Batumi on the Black Sea], where he spent three years in prison and gave up his soul to God in the year 662.

**From Fr. Thomas Hopko, "The Orthodox Faith: An Elementary Handbook on
the Orthodox Church--Volume 2: Worship--The Sacraments"**

Baptism

The practice of baptism as a religious symbol did not begin with Jesus. Baptism, which means literally the immersion in water, was practiced among the people of the Old Testament as well as the people who belonged to pagan religions. The universal meaning of baptism is that of "starting anew," of dying to an old way of life and being born again into a new way of life. Thus, baptism was always connected with repentance which means a moral conversion, a "change of mind," a change in living from something old and bad to something new and good.

Thus, in the Gospel we find John the Baptist baptizing the people as a sign of repentance in preparation for the Kingdom of God which was coming to men with Christ the Messiah. Christ himself was baptized by John not because he was sinful and needed to repent, but because in allowing himself to be baptized he showed that indeed he was God's "Beloved Son," the Saviour and Messiah, the "Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sins of the world" (See Mt 3, Mk 1, Lk 3, Jn 1-3).

In the Christian Church the practice of baptism takes on a new and particular significance. It no longer remains merely a sign of moral change and spiritual rebirth. It becomes very specifically the act of a person's death and resurrection in and with Jesus. Christian baptism is man's participation in the event of Easter. It is a "new birth by water and the Holy Spirit" into the Kingdom of God (Jn 3:5).

Baptism in the Church begins with the rejection of Satan and the acceptance of Christ. Before being baptized, a person—or his sponsors or godparents for him—officially proclaims the symbol of Christian faith, the Creed. Because the godparent speaks on behalf of the child, sponsors his entrance into the Church and "receives" the child out of the baptismal waters into the Church and cares for his spiritual life, the godparent himself must be a member of the Church.

After the proclamation of faith, the baptismal water is prayed over and blessed as the sign of the goodness of God's creation. The person to be baptized is also prayed over and blessed with sanctified oil as the sign that his creation by God is holy and good. And then, after the solemn proclamation of "Alleluia" (God be praised), the person is immersed three times in the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Through the act of immersion, the baptized person dies to this world and is born again in the resurrection of Christ into eternal life. He is clothed with the "garments of salvation" symbolized by the white baptismal robe which is the "new humanity" of Jesus himself who is the new and heavenly Adam (See Jn 3, Rom 5, 1 Cor 15). Thus, the words of the Apostle Paul are chanted as the newly-baptized is led in procession around the baptismal font three times as the symbol of his procession to the Kingdom of God and his entrance into eternal life: "For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia" (Gal 3:27).

In ancient times this procession was made from the baptistery to the church where the newly-baptized received Holy Communion at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Baptisms were normally done in connection with the Easter Liturgy; our present procession around the church building on Easter night is nothing more than our remembrance that we are baptized, that we have left the life of this world to enter the eternal life of the Risen Christ in the Kingdom of God. This new life is given to us in the life of the Church, most specifically in the Divine

Liturgy. Before the baptismal procession and the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel is fulfilled in the reception of Holy Communion, however, the newly-baptized is given the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Chrismation.

**From Fr. Thomas Hopko, "The Orthodox Faith: An Elementary Handbook on
the Orthodox Church--Volume 2: Worship--The Sacraments"
Chrismation**

In the sacrament of Chrismation we receive "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" (See Rom 8, 1 Cor 6, 2 Cor 1:21-22). If baptism is our personal participation in Easter—the death and resurrection of Christ, then chrismation is our personal participation in Pentecost—the coming of the Holy Spirit upon us.

The sacrament of chrismation, also called confirmation, is always done in the Orthodox Church together with baptism. Just as Easter has no meaning for the world without Pentecost, so baptism has no meaning for the Christian without chrismation. In this understanding and practice, the Orthodox Church differs from the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches where the two sacraments are often separated and given other interpretations than those found in traditional Orthodoxy.

Chrismation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, is performed in the Orthodox Church by anointing all parts of the person's body with the special oil called holy chrism. This oil, also called myrrh [miron] is prepared by the bishops of the Church on Holy Thursday. It is used in chrismation to show that the gift of the Spirit was originally given to men through the apostles of Christ, whose formal successors in the world are the bishops of the Church (see Acts 8:14; 19:1-7).

In chrismation a person is given the "power from on high" (Acts 1-2), the gift of the Spirit of God, in order to live the new life received in baptism. He is anointed, just as Christ the Messiah is the Anointed One of God. He becomes—as the fathers of the Church dared to put it—a "christ" together with Jesus. Thus, through chrismation we become a "christ," a son of God, a person upon whom the Holy Spirit dwells, a person in whom the Holy Spirit lives and acts—as long as we want him and cooperate with his powerful and holy inspiration. Thus, it is only after our chrismation that the baptismal procession is made and that we hear the epistle and the gospel of our salvation and illumination in Christ.

After the baptism and chrismation the person newly-received into God's family is tonsured. The tonsure, which is the cutting of hair from the head in the sign of the cross, is the sign that the person completely offers himself to God—hair being the symbol of strength (Jud 16:17). Thus, until the fifteenth century the clergy of the Orthodox Church—the "professional Christians," so to speak—wore the tonsure all their lives to show that their strength was in God.

The Rite of Churching

Together with being baptized and chrismated, the new-born child is also "churched." The rite of churching imitates the offering of male children to the temple according to the law of the Old Testament, particularly the offering of Christ on the fortieth day after his birth (Luke 2:22). Because of this fact, baptism in the Orthodox tradition came to be prescribed for the fortieth day or thereabouts. In the New Testament Church both male and female children are formally presented to God in the Church with special prayers at this time.

Also at this time, once more in imitation of Old Testament practice, the mother of the new-born child is also "churched." Here we have the specific example of the purification ritual of Jesus' mother Mary (Lk 2:22). In the Orthodox tradition the churching of the mother is her re-entry into the assembly of God's people after her participation with God in the holy act of birth and after her separation from the Liturgy during her confinement. Thus, the mother is blessed

to enter once more into communion with the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood in the Divine Liturgy of the Church from which she has been necessarily absent.

The new mother should be churched before the baptism of her infant so that she can be present at the sacramental entrance of her child into the Kingdom of Christ. The official service book indicates that this should be done.

It is also the Orthodox tradition that the mysteries of baptism and chrismation, called officially "holy illumination," are fulfilled in the immediate reception by the "newly-enlightened" of Holy Communion in the eucharistic liturgy of the Church. This is the case with infants as well as adults.

**From "The Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church" by Fr. Alciviadis C. Calivas
in A Companion to the Greek Orthodox Church**

MARRIAGE

Christian Marriage. Orthodox theology has always presented Christian marriage as something absolutely unique, and indeed, eternal. In marriage, human love "is being projected into the Kingdom of God" (John Meyendorff), reflecting the intimate union between Christ and the faithful which St. Paul speaks of (Ephes.5). Married life is a special vocation which requires the grace of the Holy Spirit; and it is this very grace which is conferred in the Marriage Service.

The contemporary Marriage Service of the Orthodox Church is itself divided into two parts: the office of betrothal and the office of crowning. In the first, the rite includes the exchange of rings, demonstrating that both partners enter into marriage of their own volition. At the second, "crowns" placed upon the heads of the partners signify the grace of the Holy Spirit. These crowns are crowns of both joy and martyrdom. Because the couple has been united for eternity, there is joy; but because every marriage involves enormous self-sacrifice on the part of each partner, both also become "martyrs" in their own right.

The complete love each of the partners has for the other, should be the motivating factor in Christian marriage. In such a context marriage exists not only for the procreation of children, but also that a mutual love may be expressed, sustained and extended to others. While it is not to be denied that God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, children must always be considered a gift from God and not the sole reason for marriage. Certainly, children do contribute to making marriages an authentic image of the Trinity; and St. John Chrysostom spoke of the family as "a little Church"

Divorce. Because marriage implies a decision of free will on the part of both partners, there will always be the possibility of error. When a marriage fails, the Orthodox Church has generally declared that . . . the bond did not demonstrate its necessarily eternal character. It would not be totally accurate, however; to say that the Orthodox Church grants divorces, although such a practice has crept into the practice of some local Churches. Divorce is actually a civil matter which recognizes the breaking of a legal contract; the Church can merely recognize that an attempt at building up a true marriage has failed. Without going into an exhaustive analysis of the historical and canonical developments, it should be mentioned that the Orthodox Church today normally allows the laity three attempts at establishing a true marriage. A fourth marriage is positively forbidden. Clergy, however, are permitted to marry only once and this must be prior to ordination. Finally, it remains only to comment upon the penitential character assigned to a marriage rite in which both partners are being married for the second or third time. A special service exists for these situations in which the prayers are more somber and the entire service far more subdued. In this way, the Church reminds both

the partners and the entire people of God that one lasting marriage is the Christian norm.

Addendum by the Bible and Church History Tournament Committee

According to the canonical tradition of our Church, an Orthodox Christian should marry only another Orthodox Christian. This is the ideal. However, by the principle of Orthodox economy, an Orthodox Christian is permitted to marry a Catholic or Protestant Christian who has been baptized by water in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity. This marriage must take place in the Orthodox Church. If an Orthodox person marries his/her Catholic, Protestant or even Orthodox spouse in a Catholic or Protestant wedding or in a civil ceremony, the Orthodox person **chooses** to excommunicate him/herself from the Church—please see what this means below. (S)he may reinstate him/herself in the Orthodox Church by the Sacrament of Holy Confession and by having his/her marriage blessed in the Orthodox Church.

An Orthodox Christian may not marry in the Church a member of a non-Christian religion (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.) or a member of the following cults who deny the Holy Trinity or in any other way depart from traditional Christianity: such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons (Church of Latter-Day Saints), Christian Science, Quakers, Seventh Day Adventists, some Pentecostal groups who do not baptize their members in water in the Name of the Holy Trinity, etc. An Orthodox Christian who marries any member of these religions **chooses** to excommunicate him/herself from the Church and may not receive Holy Communion. (S)he also may not serve as a sponsor at a wedding or at a baptism, and (s)he may not have an Orthodox funeral. (S)he may be reinstated in the Church by the Sacrament of Holy Confession.

St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1908)

On Love for One Another

(from <http://livingorthodoxfaith.blogspot.com/2009/11/on-love-by-st-john-of-kronstadt.html>)

The love of our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, of God the Father, and of the Holy Spirit to us is so great, so immeasurable, that, in comparison to it all human dislike, enmity and hatred against us become insignificant, and seem to vanish entirely. It is because of this boundlessness of God's love to us and the insignificance of human enmity that the Saviour commanded us all to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them who despitefully use and persecute us. [St. Matthew 5:44] We are in the love of God; does it greatly matter to us if men are not well disposed towards us? What can they do against us when God has so loved us?

Up till now you have not learned to love your neighbour. You answer men's dislike towards you by dislike on your part. But do the contrary; answer others' dislike by heartfelt goodwill and love; the more dislike you see towards you, the more you should love. Dislike is a malady, and a sick person should be more pitied, should be shown greater care and greater love, exactly because he is ill. Do you not know that the bodiless enemy uses his craftiness against all, infects all with the poison of his hatred? And you, too, are not exempt from his craftiness. Do not serve him, then, the spirit of enmity, but serve the God of love with the utmost zeal. Remember that God the Word died for your brethren.

Contemplate in man his Divine origin, the soul, which is created after the image and likeness of God; and for the sake of this origin always respect and love man with your whole heart, unfeignedly.