

Thankfulness to God

Each year we celebrate the American Thanksgiving holiday in November and this can be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our thankfulness to God. In the Gospel of Luke 17: 11-19 there is an account of how ten men who were lepers called out to Jesus ‘Master, have mercy on us,’ and Jesus healed them. One of them was a Samaritan who received healing, and he glorified God and prostrated himself before Jesus and gave thanks. Jesus said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.’

St. Theophylact says that Of the ten lepers, the nine who were Israelites showed themselves to be ungrateful, while it was the Samaritan, an accursed foreigner who returned to voice his gratitude...The ten lepers represent human nature, which was leprous with wickedness...but Christ healed the whole leprous nature of man, when, for every man’s sake, He took flesh and tasted of death. Although the Jews had been cleansed of the uncleanness of their leprous sin, as far as it was the Lord’s part to do, they showed themselves ungrateful and did not return from the path of

their vain foolishness to give glory to God Who saved them...but the foreign and accursed people of the Gentiles recognized the One Who makes clean and they glorified Him by believing in Him.

St. John of Kronstadt wrote:

* Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness—an intelligently free and immortal life.

* Especially thank God for having restored and guided you again unto life eternal after you had fallen into eternal death, and for having done so not simply by the action of His omnipotence, for this would not have been in conformity to His justice, but by having given for our redemption His only begotten Son, Who suffered and died for us.

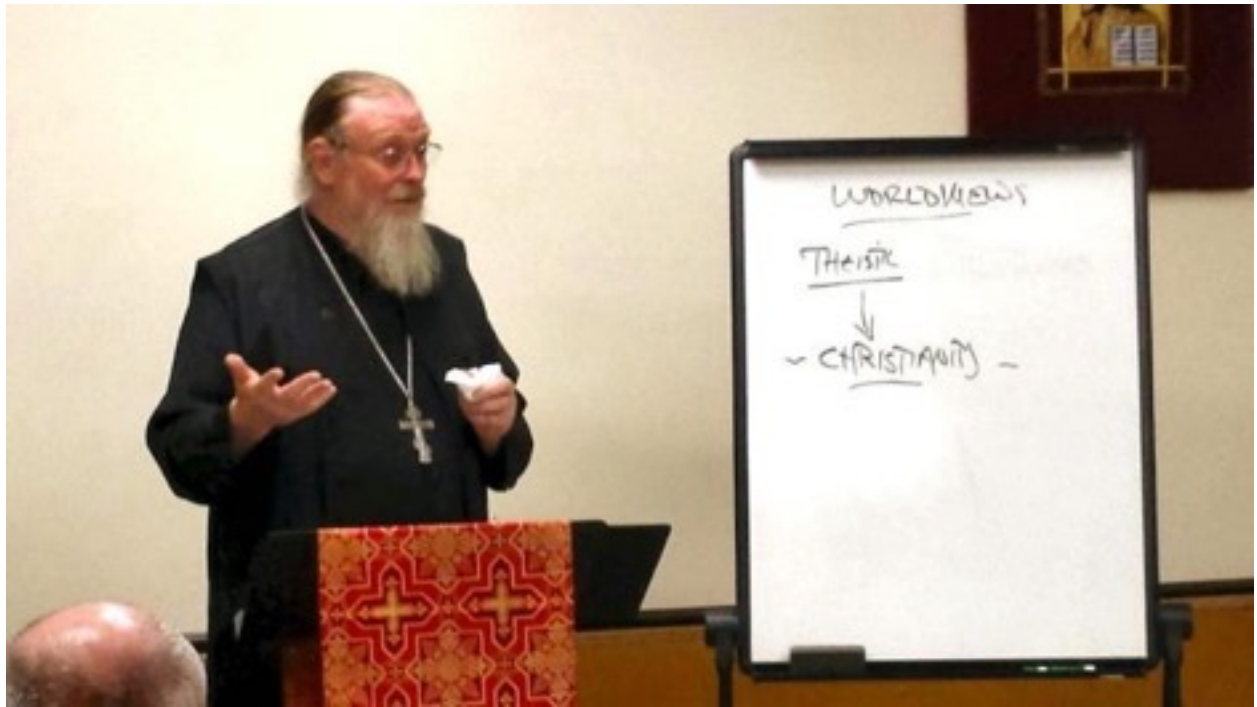
* Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life into death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!”

* Thank Him also for often delivering you from sickness, you who imprudently throw yourself into danger and sickness, the precursors of bodily death, for correcting your faults, and for not depriving you of earthly life; for everything is from Him, the All-merciful Father; everything comes from the First Origin of Life, Who has apportioned and lent life to all.

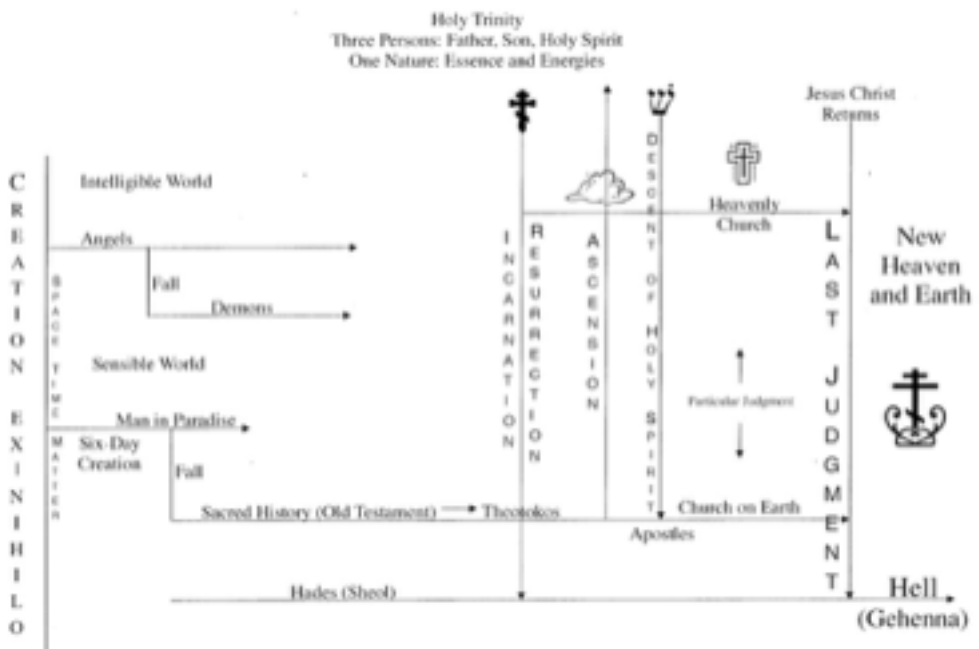
As we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with our family and friends, let us remember to give thanks to God for all the countless blessings He has given us, and which we often take for granted. Let's consider that while we may have struggles, there are people who have a much more difficult life than we do. Some live in

unimaginable poverty while others are sick and dying or in prison. Some do not have the blessing of a church to attend or do not know about the Christian faith. Let us pray for those who are less fortunate than we are and let us give generously to those in need. Let us be thankful that we have been given a church to worship God in and that we have received the grace of Orthodox Christian Baptism! And let us pray for one another and give thanks to God for our church community and support our church with our talent, treasure and time that we may demonstrate our gratitude to God for His abundant mercy.

Guest Lecture at St. Michael's on Friday, October 30th. Fr. Michael Oyer presented an inspiring lecture on the importance of building an Orthodox Christian "worldview" in order to support a strong spiritual life. This talk was advertised in various online publications such as the Huntsville Times as well as on our website, Facebook page, emails and announcements. About 20 people attended, including several who are not members of our church but who are interested in the Orthodox Faith. An audio recording will soon be available on our website.







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