

St. Joseph the All Comely Orthodox Texas Prison Ministry Newsletter

Number 1, Sept 8/21 2020, Nativity of the Theotokos

Table of Contents

Contact Info.....	1
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.....	2
History of the finding of the precious cross and the inaugural feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.....	2
The Exaltation of the Cross is celebrated two times in the year.....	3
Regarding prostrations, and prostrations on the Exaltation of the Cross.....	3
Prostrations in your personal prayer.....	3
The meaning of a prostration.....	3
The troparion: "O Lord save thy people...".....	4
The way of the cross.....	4
A word from Fr Seraphim.....	5
Homily on the Nativity of the Theotokos.....	6

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Note: With God helping us will send many newsletters to all of those that we minister to in prison. This is the first, said to 58 souls. Those who wish to contribute to our material needs in our ministry to Orthodox Christians may help us with donations at:

<http://www.orthodox.net/ministries/orthodox-prison-ministry.html>

Contact Info

God bless all of you! We keep reasonably good records, and we pray for everyone we know of that any of us ministers to. We have decided to try to write you a newsletter with reasonable frequency. Hopefully this will compensate to some degree when you don't receive personal email as quickly as you would like.

Patriarch Joseph the All Comely Texas ORTHODOX Prison Ministry

<http://www.orthodox.net/ministries/orthodox-prison-ministry.html>

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NOTE: Fr. David manages our ministry's distribution of Orthodox books, church calendars, icons, and service texts. Contact him if you have a need along these lines.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

We are scrambling to get this newsletter mailed to you before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The window is a little bit tight. We celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Sunday, Sep 14/27 (the first date is the date on the church calendar, and the second date is the date that you see on your wall calendar, or "Joe's Garage Calendar" - it is the calendar that hangs on the wall in Joe's Garage.

History of the finding of the precious cross and the inaugural feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

The pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind. The Emperor Adrian (117-138) gave orders to cover over the ground of Golgotha and the Sepulcher of the Lord, and upon the hill fashioned there to set up a pagan temple of the pagan goddess Venus and a statue of Jupiter. Pagans gathered on this place and offered sacrifice to idols there. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains -- the Sepulcher of the Lord and the Life-Creating Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This occurred under the Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory in the year 312 over Maxentius, ruler of the Western part of the Roman empire, and over Licinius, ruler of its Eastern part, becoming in the year 323 the sole-powerful ruler of the vast Roman empire. In 313 he had issued the so-called Edict of Milan, by which the Christian religion was legalized and the persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the empire were stopped. The ruler Licinius, although he had signed the Milan Edict to oblige Constantine, still fanatically continued the persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the 313 Edict about toleration extend also to the Eastern part of the empire. The Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine, having with the assistance of God gained victory over his enemies in three wars, had seen in the heavens the Sign of God -- the Cross and written beneath: "By this thou shalt conquer".

Ardently desiring to find the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine sent to Jerusalem his mother, the pious Empress Helen (Comm. 21 May), having provided her with a letter to the Jerusalem patriarch Makarios. Although the holy empress Helen was already in her declining years, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. The empress gave orders to destroy the pagan temple and idol-statues overshadowing Jerusalem. Searching for the Life-Creating Cross, she made inquiry of Christians and Jews, but for a long time her searching remained unsuccessful. Finally, they directed her to a certain elderly Hebrew by the name of Jude who stated, that the Cross was buried there, where the pagan-temple of Venus was standing. They demolished the pagan-temple and, having made a prayer, they began to excavate the ground. Soon there was detected the Sepulcher of the Lord and not far away from it three crosses, a plank with inscription having been done by order of Pilate, and four nails, which had pierced the Body of the Lord.

In order to discern on which of the three crosses the Saviour was crucified, Patriarch Makarios alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord was placed to it, the dead one came alive. Having beheld the rising-up, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found. Christians, having come in an innumerable throng to make veneration to the Holy Cross, besought Saint Makarios to elevate, to exalt the Cross, so that all even afar off, might reverently contemplate it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual chief personages raised up high the Holy Cross, and the people, saying "Lord have mercy", reverently made a poklon/prostration before the Venerable Wood. This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross there occurred also another miracle: a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. The elder Jude and other Jews there believed in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Jude received the name Kyriakos (i.e. lit. "of the Lord") and afterwards was ordained Bishop of Jerusalem. During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) he accepted a martyr's death for Christ (Comm. of Priest-Martyr Kyriakos is 28 October). The holy empress Helen journeyed round the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Saviour -- the reason for more than 80 churches -- raised up at Bethlehem the place of the Birth of Christ, and on the Mount of Olives from whence the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Saviour prayed before His sufferings and where the Mother of God was buried after the falling-asleep. Saint Helen took with her to Constantinople part of the Life-Creating Wood and nails. The Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine gave orders to raise up at Jerusalem a majestic and spacious church in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, including in itself also the Sepulcher of the Lord, and Golgotha. The temple was constructed in about 10 years. Saint Helen did not survive until the dedication of the temple; she died in the year 327. The church was consecrated on

13 September 335. On the following day, 14 September, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross was established. (This description of the history of the feast is from the Orthodox Menologion, available on-line)

It's good to know the history of this week, but it is even more important to understand how Orthodox think of the cross. It is substantially different than the way Protestants or Roman Catholics think of the cross. For us, the cross is a symbol of victory and of the resurrection, and of baptism. We do not believe that Jesus Christ was punished on the cross so that our punishment would be forgiven.

The Exaltation of the Cross is celebrated two times in the year.

This feast is served in September, on the very day that it was inaugurated, and it also is served the Third Sunday of Great Lent. Therefore, this feast is always celebrated at least on one Sunday of the year. I've never heard an explanation of why the feast was inaugurated during Great Lent, but it makes great spiritual sense. In order for the Lord to be resurrected, He had to die, and therefore He had to first ascend the Cross. The feast is in this middle of Great Lent, and for those who have struggled during Great Lent, they know that in the middle of the fast, we sometimes get tired, and the Feast of the Cross on the 3rd Sunday always give us a great amount of spiritual energy.

Regarding prostrations, and prostrations on the Exaltation of the Cross.

On Sundays throughout the year, we never prostrate, with the exception of the Sunday of the Holy Cross. A prostration is when we make the sign of the cross, and say some prayer, and get down on our knees and usually bow our head to the ground, and then stand back up. During Great Lent we do many prostrations, and you should also, in your private prayers. During normal times, we do several prostrations during Divine Liturgies if they are not on Sunday.

Prostrations in your personal prayer

It is a very good idea for you to incorporate prostrations in your daily prayer. Of course, you might be concerned with being conspicuous, especially if you live in the dorms, but if you can find any privacy at all, it is very fruitful to do a certain number of prostrations daily. A typical way to incorporate prostrations would be to say the Jesus prayer for yourself and for others. For example, you would say **"Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me"**, while making the sign of the cross and a prostration. And you might say also: **"Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon N."** (Anyone you care about, which is your family or friends, and also those that you have trouble forgiving). Some might do 12 prostrations, or 10, or more or less, saying the same prayer each time. Of course, during Great Lent, we say the prayer of a Saint Ephrem with four prostrations.

Another idea for doing prostrations would be to do what we have called the **"Four Bows"**. These are best to do as soon as possible after you rise in the morning. For each one of these prayers, you would make the sign of the cross and do a prostration. Perhaps you are too tired in the morning or feel "creaky"; in this case do a deep bow (when you're warmed up, maybe later in the day, try to remember to do prostrations). The four prayers are: **"Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me"**, **"Most holy Theotokos save us"**, **"Holy angel of God, my guardian, pray to God for me"**, and **"Holy St. N. (the name of your patron saint), pray to God for me"**. You may add other prayers after this if you wish. The great advantage of the four bows, if they are said consistently, is that we at least say *something* in our morning prayers, even if our morning doesn't go very well and we don't say any other prayer, and they are an excellent introduction to the rest of our morning prayer, because they get our body and our mind warmed up a little. Those who do them will understand.

The meaning of a prostration

Prostrations remind us of death because we go down to the ground and come back up. It also is an act of penitence and compunction, and usually with a mixture of sorrow. Anyone who does prostrations regularly will know that they focus our attention, and help us to be more compunctionate and fervent in our prayer.

We do not do prostrations on all Sundays except when the Exaltation of the cross is commemorated. This is because every Sunday is a commemoration of the Resurrection, since Jesus Christ made His resurrection known to us on Sunday. This is also the reason why most the important day of the week for Christians shifted from the Jewish Sabbath, which is Saturday, to

Sunday, because we wish to put in the center of our faith and worship that Christ is resurrected. In church we remember the resurrection by standing, as free men and women, alive. It is not appropriate to do active penitence with a prostration on such a high day. We are standing, and looking with great hope to the time when we will stand in heaven in the eternal resurrection, where there will be no sorrow, or sighing, but only life everlasting. Therefore, we do not prostrate or kneel on Sundays.

Why do we do prostrations when we are commemorating the Exaltation of the Cross on a Sunday? Our prostration in this case is not one of penitence, but it is because of joy, and like children, we are acting out our death and our subsequent resurrection. We only do the prostrations when we are seeing the exuberant hymn: **“Before Thy cross, we bow down in worship O Master** (and as we are singing this, we are making the sign of the cross and making the prostration to the ground, hopefully with our forehead touching the ground), **“And Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify!”** (As we sing the second part of the hymn, we stand up). We are dramatizing Christ’s death and resurrection, which of course will lead to our resurrection. The whole “atmosphere” surrounding the singing and the prostration is one of great joy and exuberance.

In the church, at the very end of Matins (if we are doing it correctly, we’ve already been praying for two hours or more, and there is something wonderful that happens in the soul in church or even at home when we have prayed for a long time), we bring out a decorated cross, and the priest stands in front of the Royal doors, making the sign of the cross with the decorated cross in the air, as he says **“Wisdom! Aright!”**. We then bring the cross to the center of the church, and sing the Troparion of the Cross, three times, while the priest walks around the cross, censing it. You can find this hymn in your prayer book. It is not only in the section where the Troparia and Kontakia for the great feasts are shown, but it is also said every Wednesday and Friday in our daily troparia.

The troparion: **“O Lord save thy people...”**

This troparion (the word basically means a hymn, and it is always a hymn that more or less summarizes something, such as in this case, the Holy Cross) is: (Tone 1) **“O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victory to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries. And by the power of Thy cross preserve Thy habitation”**. You can see in this hymn how we equate the cross with victory, since the Lord used it to accomplish His victory over sin and death, which He offers to us through baptism. The adversaries that we are thinking of may be other people, but the better and more spiritual meaning is the demons. Through the way of the cross, with God’s grace, we will indeed have victory over our adversaries, the demons. And we asked the Lord to preserve His habitation, of course we are asking Him to protect our homes and our countries, but also, we are asking Him to protect us since indeed because of the Cross and the Resurrection, we are habitations, or temples, of the Holy Spirit.

After we sing the Troparion to the Cross three times, the clergy sing “O Lord save thy people...”, 3 times with prostrations, and everyone prostrates during the singing. Then the entire congregation answers by singing the hymn again another three times, with prostrations. This is one time in church when we should not try to be quiet, we should sing loudly and exuberantly. The melody that we use is pretty easy, and even if you’re not a good singer, it doesn’t matter because it will be loud.

We encourage you to sing the Troparion **“O Lord save Thy people”**, and **“Before Thy cross...”**, And make the prostrations, every day and all the week following this great feast until Saturday evening. If you cannot sing, then just say the words!

The way of the cross

When we are bowing down before the cross, we are also emulating Christ, Who “bowed down”, by becoming incarnate and taking on our fallen nature so that He would raise it up. All of our Christian Life is imitation. We are trying to be like Christ and we are using His life as an example (e.g., “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” Ephesians 4:13), and also the lives of the Saints and those who pleased Him as examples. This leads us to speak about the “Way of the Cross”.

The Lord speaks of the way of the Cross in the Gospel:

“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. “Mark 8:34

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Matthew 16:24-26

We must understand this “way” if we are to be saved. The way of the Cross clearly and plainly is to follow Christ. We tried to live as He lived. We cannot preach to thousands and die on a cross and live a perfect life, but we can struggle to become perfected, and to love our enemy, and to live according to the Evangelical Commandments. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did. He lived according to the will of His Father, which was sometimes difficult because it led him to the Cross but He was pleased to do this because He was pleased to be obedient to his Father. Of course, we are speaking of our Lord’s human nature here.

The Way of the Cross is what you do today, as you interact with people, who are good and bad, easy to get along with and hard to get along with, kind and devious. The way of the Cross is to put prayer above all things, and love above all things, and obedience to God because of love above all things. The way of the Cross may include suffering but that is not the focal point. The way of the Cross includes obedience and love and wherever that obedience and love leads us, we should be happy.

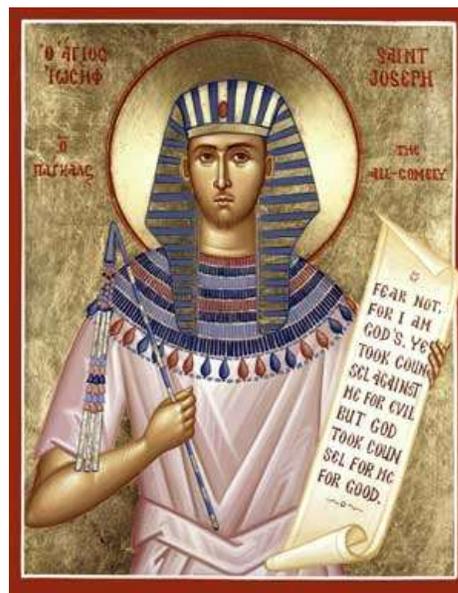
The way of the Cross is one of two ways that are possible for all human beings in life. It is the only way that leads to eternal life. The other way, that of the world, which is self-indulgence or following our ego or our own desires, will always lead to death. Even in this life, for most of us, if we follow the path away from the cross, there will be also unhappiness, and there will never be fulfillment. Only in the way of the Cross is there happiness, a deep internal happiness, from the Holy Spirit abiding in us and comforting us. There is no comfort in the world to compare. The only way to obtain this comfort is to live according to the Gospel. It is to struggle to live as Jesus Christ lived.

We are very much incapable of this, but with God all things are possible, and God will help us to live in this way. Remember that when you prostrate before the cross. Hopefully this letter will reach you before Sunday, and you will get out your prayer book and you will sing or recite the hymns and do the prostrations.

The Western conception of Jesus death on the cross is that Jesus paid a penalty to His Father for our sins. This penalty was the one that was required of us, but Jesus Christ substituted for us and paid that penalty. That's the so-called “substitutionary atonement” which inflicts the theology Roman Catholics and most Protestants alike. Jesus Christ did no such thing. He did not pay a penalty in place of us in order to appease His Father! What an idea! He indeed did make an “atonement”. He died the death that we would have been required to die eternally in order to destroy death. His death was not one of taking a punishment, but it was one of, shall we say, subterfuge. The devil thought that he trapped all of mankind in Hades forever, because Christ was dying on the cross. But when Christ came to Hades, He destroyed Hades and broke the doors, that is, he freed mankind from the necessity of eternal death because of sin. That's what we celebrate on Pascha, that Christ trampled down death by Death. We remember this Victory every time we look at the cross and venerate it.

A word from Fr Seraphim.

Saying “a word” from Fr. Seraphim is a bit of an oxymoron. I'll try to be succinct this time. Our ministry is called **Saint Joseph the All-Comely Texas Prison Ministry**. I really love St Joseph. Read his story in Genesis, chapter 37, and 39-50. I think he is someone we should emulate. He also is someone that can be a great comfort to a prisoner. It doesn't matter if you're guilty or innocent, being in prison is terrible. Prison also was terrible for innocent Joseph; however, he



was patient, and he was bold when the time came, and because of his purity, God spoke to him. I'm convinced that some of you are innocent, and some of you who are guilty certainly shouldn't have the sentence you have. Texas loves to put people away. And even those of you who are guilty and think you deserve your sentence, I think this still can apply to you.

Joseph was good and pious. He was sold away by his brothers, because to be honest with you, he was a bit of a smart-alec. Therefore, he made a really big mistake, but certainly not one that should be punished by being put in a prison! He got his brothers really angry at him, and because of this and a confluence of events, he was sold into slavery in Egypt. He was owned by Potiphar, an Egyptian noble, and his wife lusted after the slave Joseph, and tried many times to seduce him. Joseph could have taken the easy way out and given in to her. This would've been a safer option for him, and probably a very prosperous one, but he kept his purity, and the final time that he rebuffed her, he left his garment behind because she was grabbing onto him so tightly.

Potiphar's wife did what many people do when they want to sin, but are frustrated. She accused him of the very thing she wanted. Of course, he was just a slave, so there was no due process and he was thrown into prison. Most of you have struggled with due process and have seen gross inequities either in your own treatment or in the treatment of others around you.

Joseph was in prison for many years, and then by the grace of God he was not only released from prison, but became a high official in Pharaoh's court and by the grace of God prepared the Egyptians and his own people far away for an upcoming 7-year famine. Because of this family, Jacob was forced to send his sons to Egypt to get grain, and met Joseph (whom they did not recognize, but Joseph recognized his brothers), and Joseph and his brothers were fully reconciled because of the greatness of Joseph in his soul, and his capacity to forgive his brothers.

The things that I love about Joseph are his deep humility, his ability to forgive, his purity, and that he didn't complain about his situation but waited on God. I think there are a lot of parallels with the things that you should be doing in prison, and everyone should be doing out of prison.

Why is it that we complain about situations? No matter how bad our situation is you can find somebody who's doing worse. And do we have purity in our heart? And do we forgive everyone? Do we have such love of God that God speaks to us even in our dreams? No, I don't want you to be looking to interpret your dreams or visions. None of us are worthy of those things. We should work to just be good Christians. Those are some of the reasons why Joseph is the patron of our ministry. In the Liturgy I would always sing his Kontakion, but I've done you a disservice by not publishing it for you and asking you to learn it and use it in your daily prayers. I will correct that now. May God bless you and help you in all things through the prayers of the Holy Joseph the All-Comely, may the Lord God Jesus Christ have mercy upon us and save us.

Patriarch Joseph the All-Comely (Holy Monday) - Kontakion 8th Tone

Jacob lamented the loss of Joseph, / but his righteous son was seated in a chariot and honored as a king. / For he was not enslaved to the pleasures of Egypt, / but he was glorified by God who sees the hearts of men // and bestows on them a crown incorruptible

It would be very good for you and for us if you read the account of Joseph and wrote us letters about your impressions.

Homily on the Nativity of the Theotokos

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” Why do we err? Why do we sin? Because we don't have the mind of Christ at that moment.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Sometimes in the Services, you just have a moment of clarity, and something touches you. Don't you just wait for those moments - those times when it just seems that you understand? I do. It's only for a moment. You feel the mercy of God so present. You feel God so close to you. You feel so much the desire to do good, and you feel that hope springing up within your breast that you can.

I hope that you have these moments. **I hope that you pray to God, when you come to the services, that God will enlighten you, and you will come away better than when you came.** We don't come just to worship God; we come to be fed, to be helped, to be healed. And there's great Grace present in all of the services, whatever they are. A moment came for me when the Epistle from the Nativity of the Theotokos was being read. It is about the Incarnation. This makes sense; the Theotokos is always associated with the Incarnation.

“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.”

That's enough right there. If we live our life according to what the Apostle said, we will be saved. That's the totality of the Gospel, just as the greatest Commandment is the totality of the Law. So, one could say, that the Epistle read here is all we need to know to save our souls, to have the mind of Christ.

The Church has the mind of Christ, and we are part of the Church. If we have the mind of Christ, then we have all wisdom, all holiness; *nothing would confuse us*. We would always choose the right way, because Christ always chose the right way.

I was recently speaking about something to someone and saying that the scripture, and the services for that matter as well, have many phrases in them that could be, as it were, a mnemonic device, a memory aid for us. These phrases are not always something to be put on a flash card that we'd memorize but something that is in our heart, deeply in our heart, and that motivates us. This could be one of those things.

There are all kinds of silly and stupid things that happen daily. And we participate in these things: things that don't matter, things that go away, almost as soon as we are concerned about them and they are gone.

Why do we err? Why do we sin? Because we don't have the mind of Christ at that moment.

If we cultivated this “mind” at all moments in our life, we would not sin. The man who knows Christ intimately would never sin, ever. He would never be confused, would never be despondent, never be angry. Christ did none of those things, because He was always with a mind towards obeying His Father. He always knew what the right thing to do was. He always valued the right thing.

Look at us; *we value things that go away*, every day, things that just don't matter. How much time do we waste: reading things that don't matter, talking about things that don't matter, being all angry and upset about things that don't matter?

Only one thing matters: To know Jesus Christ. That's all.

The only thing in your life that is important is who you are becoming. What kind of person are you? You were born for greatness. You were born to know God, to become holy, to become all, as the Scriptures say or as the Services say, “All eye,”ⁱ like the Angels. That's what we were born for.

And what do we spend our time with? Silly things. Sinful things. But what if we always evaluated everything that we are going to do, whether it be getting on a bus or going to work or cutting the lawn or fixing dinner? Or whatever it is in our daily lives. If everything was evaluated by: Do we have the mind of Christ at this moment? Would we sin if the mind of Christ was in us richly? No.

When you're presented with some situation, is the mind of Christ in you? If it is, then you will not sin. And to the extent that it isn't, then that's when we fall into these sins. All pettiness in our lives, foolishness about what we want, things that upset us, bad habits and our daily life style: all of it is going away. **The only thing that will be left is what we become** - so

that when in the end, the Lord will see us, He will know us, and recognize us, He will look at us, and we will have the likeness of God, the image of God within us.ⁱⁱ

Otherwise, He will look at us and say, I don't know you. And those that are confused will say, Lord, when did I not help you? When did I see you hungry and not feed you or naked and did not clothe you or sick or in prison?ⁱⁱⁱ And the Lord will tell them. Well, it's not just that we should help everyone, the least of these. Yes, that is the application of having the mind of Christ within you. That's the result of having the mind of Christ within you. That's not the goal of life, to help all people. That's the result of our goal: To have the mind of Christ in us.

How much would we be saved from sin if we took the Apostle seriously here? If we fully understood what Christ did for us, oh, yes, we can recount it, we can say, yes, the prophets proclaimed Him. And we could even talk about this parable which is really about the Incarnation and the Jews' rejection of Christ and the bringing in of the Gentiles. All beautiful, exalted theological ideas.

We could say that Jesus Christ became Man through the Theotokos and lived and showed us how to live and died on the cross and went to hell and preached to those in Hades and rose from the dead, making us capable of breaking the bonds of death. Yes, that's all true and I hope you know it. But do you feel it? Is it uppermost in your mind when you are doing something - especially when you are considering something that's sinful or foolish or a time waster?

We must emulate what He did. Examples are much more powerful than expressions of teaching. You can say to someone how to live, but if you show them how to live, then they will learn. Well, Christ showed us, in ways that words cannot express. But the mind can know.

Here is what to do the next time you are presented with something that is foolish or a time waster or petty -- and that will be probably within the next ten minutes, right? Because we are always getting upset about the silliest things, that someone crosses in front of us or that a baby cries or that we are hungry or that whatever it is. Foolishness, silliness, unfruitfulness. The next time that you're presented with such a thought, evaluate it: Is it the mind of Christ or not? What did Christ do for you? Since He did so much for us, can't we do a little for Him? If we think this way, then we will be saved.

"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 Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross."

Let's remember this. Not just such that we remember it as facts, but that it lives in our heart. Amen.

Philippians 2:5-11 (Read on Feasts of the Theotokos) ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Priest Seraphim Holland 2008

ⁱ And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, *were* full of eyes round about, *even* the wheels that they four had. (Ezekiel 10:12, describing the cherubim)

ⁱⁱ I had in mind here: "His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Mat 25:21), from the parable of the talents, and "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." (Mat 25:12). Both verses describe the encounter of the soul with God at the judgment.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Matthew 23:31-66, read on the Sunday of the Last Judgment. Homilies here:

[http://www.orthodox.net/sermons/index.html#Sunday_of_the_Last_Judgment_\(Meatfare\)](http://www.orthodox.net/sermons/index.html#Sunday_of_the_Last_Judgment_(Meatfare))