

Sunday Bulletin
December 7th 2025 – 26th Sunday after Pentecost
The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple



Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church
1025 N Belle Vista Ave, Youngstown, Ohio 44509



Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian
Orthodox Church

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Ministries:

Altar Servers

Church Choir

Church School

Adult Education

St. Mary's Sisterhood

Sts. Peter & Paul Brotherhood

Senior UOL Chapter

Junior UOL Chapter

Youth Ministry

Orphanage Mission Ministry

Bingo Team

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<https://www.stspeterpauluoc.org>

STS Peter & Paul UOC

Let us celebrate the Resurrection of Christ



Sunday Bulletin

December 7th 2025 – 26th Sunday after Pentecost

The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple

In Memory of Ann Klein

- bull 7

Happy 99th Birthday to Nicholas Yurchyk

- bull 10

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Sin. Jesus Christ. Son of God.** - bull 12

CHANGEABLE PARTS OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body, You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life:

“Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your Kingdom!//
Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

Tone 1 Kontakion (Resurrection)

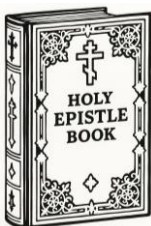
As God, You rose from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself. Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You:// “You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

Tone 1 Prokeimenon – (Resurrection)

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us /as we have set our hope on You! (Ps. 32:22)

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!

The Reading is from the Letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians 5:8-19



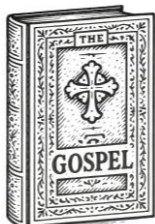
Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

Alleluia and Verses Tone 1

V. God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me. (Ps. 17:48)

V. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. (Ps. 17:51)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



The reading is from the Gospel according to St. Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and

asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

The reading is from the Gospel according to St. Luke 21:12-19

“But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

MEMORY ETERNAL

PLEASE PRAY FOR RESTING OF THE SOULS

Julian, Vasyl Zomchak, Heather Rhodes, Joe Zemko, Jeff Ulrich, Judy Cebriak, William Zylka, Serhiy, Pat Mamajack, Arlene Hawryluk, Mary C. Moon, Lidia Zabrodina, Metro Senediak, Eleanor K. Laise, Julian Naumenko, Patricia Huly, John Senediak, Ann & George Klein.
Victims of the war in Ukraine.



PRAYER LIST

PLEASE PRAY FOR HEALING, COMFORT, AND SPIRITUAL PEACE



Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishop Daniel, Patricia Mogish, Denny Lightner, Dennis Currie, Kevin Finnerty, Alice Dobransky, Ihor Pavlusk, Jamie Maluk, Judith Tipple, Alexandr, Missouri, Jane, Erica Shonn, Sam, Lorenzo, Rick Wilson, Tom Drabick, Walter Duzzny, Lori, Christine Kline, Larry, Soldier Ivan, Dolly Mehalco, Stephen Shonn, Thelma Zemko, Artur Bohuslav, Lori Hayda, Shirley Duffy, Michele (Senediak) Caulder, Dobrodiyka Lilya, Sandy, Marilyn O’Leary, Harold Owens, Marianne Carmack, Nicholas Yurchyk, Pauline Witkowsky, Eileen Maluk, Peter Anderson, Albert Auden, Boris & Kathleen Vuksanovich, Kathy Zebel. People Suffering from any Illnesses. Ukrainian people suffering from war.

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD	On November 23	On November 30
General:	\$ 0000.00	\$ 960.00
Renovation:	\$ 00.00	\$ 00.00
Online Donations on Tithe.ly	\$ 00.00	\$ 00.00

Liturgical Schedule & Feast Days



SERVICE AND FEAST DAY SCHEDULE

* (HEARING CONFESSIONS ON SUNDAYS BEFORE LITURGY 8:30AM - 9:15AM)

- Sunday, December 7, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 26th Sunday** (Lk 10:38-42, 11:27-28)
The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple
- Sunday, December 14, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 27th Sunday** after Pentecost (Lk 18:18-27)
St. Nicholas the Wonderworker
The Rich and the Kingdom of God
- Sunday, December 21, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 28th Sunday** after Pentecost (Lk 17:12-19)
Jesus healing ten lepers
Rite of Induction to the Office of the Newly Elected Board Members & the Sisterhood Officers
- Sunday, December 28, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 29th Sunday** after Pentecost (Lk 14:16-24)
Parable of the Great Banquet
- Sunday, January 4, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 30th Sunday** after Pentecost (Mt 1:1-25)
The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

Upcoming dates & events

- December 7 – **Fellowship at the Hall after Liturgy**
- December 13 – **Sisterhood meeting Sat, Dec 13** at 11:30am. Eat-N-Park in Austintown meeting will follow. All ladies welcome to join for lunch - cost is what you order from the menu.
- December 14 – **St Nicholas Play** in the Church. Fellowship after the Play at the Hall.

Church School Calendar

- Dec 7 - **Church School, St Nicholas Play Practice** • Fri, Dec 12 - **St Nicholas Play Practice**
- Dec 14 - **St Nicholas Play** in Church (after Liturgy), Fellowship at the Hall

Cooking & Baking and Sales Schedule (to place orders - 234-247-1534)

- **STUFFED CABBAGE - \$36/dozen & HALUSHKI - \$7/quart**
Order by Dec 7th • Workdays: Dec 10 & Dec 12 at 9:30 • Pick-up: Dec 13 10am-noon

Pyrohy Schedule

ORDER BY DATE:	WORK DAY (Prep)	WORK DAY (Make)	PICK-UP DAY
December 8	December 9	December 11	December 12

To Order Pyrohy - Call or Text 234-247-1534, Anna

Bulletin Dedication

(in memory of a loved one, or in honor for an anniversary)

Sun Dec 7 1. Dedicated 2. Dedicated	Sun Dec 14 1. Available 2. Available	Sun Dec 21 1. Dedicated 2. Available	Sun Dec 28 Not Available	
Sun Jan 4 1. Available 2. Available	Sun Jan 11 1. Available 2. Available	Sun Jan 11 1. Available 2. Available	Sun Jan 25 Not Available	

ANNOUNCEMENTS & GREETINGS:



- **PRECIOUS ANGELS**

Let's fill the *Christmas Trees* with *Precious Angels*

A great way to Remember and Honor your loved ones.

There are envelopes in the back of the church for sponsoring the Angels. Please fill out the information on the envelope with your donation.

Sponsored by the Jr.UOL

Return the envelopes to Crystal or Yvonne By Sunday Dec 21st !

- **CHURCH GREETERS**

Please consider being a church greeter.

We need greeters for Dec 21 & 28. Jan 4, 7, 18 & 25.

We are trying to get ahead. Please sign in the back of the Church.

Or call or text - 234-247-1534, Anna



- **FOOD & COATS COLLECTION**

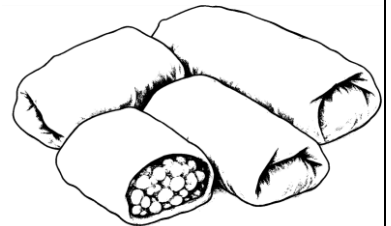


Attention! We are **collecting Non-Perishable Foods & Coats** to help those in need. **Boxes are in the back of the Church**

- **STUFFED CABBAGE (\$36/dozen)**
& HALUSHKI – (\$7/quart)

Order by Dec 7th • Workdays: Dec 10 & Dec 12 at 9:30

Pick-up: Dec 13 10am-noon



THIS MONTH OUR PARISH CELEBRATES

*May the Lord Bless you
with Great Health and
Joy in Your Heart!*

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS	
3 Kevin Semchec	14 Martha Woloschak
4 Gheorghiy Kolosovsky	16 Dorothy Gula Villers
6 Mary Zebel	20 Nicholas Yurchyk
6 Sandy Senedak	20 Jacob Kornblum
8 Bernard Gnat	23 Barbara Novicky
8 Emily Hillard	23 Frank Senediak
10 JoAnn Gnat	24 Jerry Zets
10 Thomas Inchak	25 Charles Ames
10 Aschley Woloschak	26 Diane Demetrios
13 Mike Joe Maluk	31 Melissa Crown



IN MEMORY

ANN KLEIN

+ DEC 7, 2024

**ON THE 1ST ANNIVERSARY
OF HER PASSING AWAY**



MEMORY ETERNAL

**“IN BLESSED REPOSE GRANT,
O LORD, ETERNAL REST”**

**LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY
MARYANN, BOB, & JOHN
FAMILY AND FRIENDS**



Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple

The Feast of the **Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple** reveals something profound about how God works in the quiet, hidden spaces of life—often long before His plans become visible to us.

1. A Child Who Walks Into Her Calling

According to Holy Tradition, the young Mary—only three years old—was brought by her elderly parents, Joachim and Anna, to the Temple in Jerusalem. She didn't hesitate, didn't cling, didn't fear; instead, she **ran forward** to the place where God was inviting her. This is the first lesson of the feast: **Grace makes the soul run toward God.** Even before she could fully understand, Mary's heart was already tuned to God's call. How often do we hesitate when God invites us to something holy—prayer, forgiveness, repentance, or trust? Mary shows us the posture of a willing heart: a heart that moves toward God without reservation.



2. A Temple Prepared to Become a Living Temple

When the priest Zachariah led Mary not just into the Temple but into the **Holy of Holies**, something astonishing occurred. The earthly sanctuary received the one who would one day become the **Living Temple**—the dwelling place of the Word. This is not merely a story about a little girl. It is a revelation: **God prepares His chosen vessel long before the world sees His plan unfold.** Mary spent years in hiddenness—prayer, purity, contemplation—while God quietly shaped her soul to become the Mother of His Son. We want instant answers, instant results, instant clarity. But God's greatest works often begin in silence, discipline, and obscurity—in the “Temple” of our inner life.

3. The Feast Reminds Us of Our Own Entry

This feast is not only about Mary. It is also about **us**. Each of us is invited to make our own “entry” into the temple of God's presence. We enter when:

- we step away from noise and into prayer,
- we say “yes” to God's will even when it costs us,
- we allow God to purify, strengthen, and reshape our hearts.

Mary's entry is our invitation: **Will you allow God to prepare you in the hidden places?**

4. Holiness Begins Long Before the Moment of Calling

Before the Annunciation, before Bethlehem, before the Cross and Resurrection, there was this: A small child walking up the steps of the Temple, offering her life to God. Nothing dramatic. Nothing public. No miracles. Just fidelity. And yet everything that would follow—the Incarnation, salvation itself—was already being formed. This teaches us:

- your quiet prayers matter,
- your humble acts of faithfulness matter,
- your secret struggles for holiness matter.

God sanctifies long before He glorifies.

5. A Feast of Hope for Families

Joachim and Anna brought Mary to the Temple as an act of thanksgiving after years of barrenness and sorrow. Their offering became the means through which salvation entered the world.

For parents and families today, the feast reminds us:

- God receives what we dedicate to Him.
- No offering of love for a child is wasted.
- Even when we feel inadequate, God can take our small faithfulness and turn it into something eternal.

6. The Theotokos Teaches Us How to Enter This Season

Celebrated at the start of the Nativity Fast, the feast gently leads us toward Christmas. Just as Mary entered the Temple, we are invited to enter into:

- deeper prayer,
- quiet repentance,
- joyful expectation,
- and renewed purity of heart.

She enters the Temple so that Christ may enter the world. We enter the season so that Christ may enter our hearts.

The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple is a feast of **hidden preparation, holy willingness, and quiet transformation**. It teaches us that God is already at work in us, even when we don't see it yet. Like Mary, may we walk—step by step, willingly—into the place where God desires to meet us, form us, and fill us with His life.

Ukrainian Orthodox League Sunday

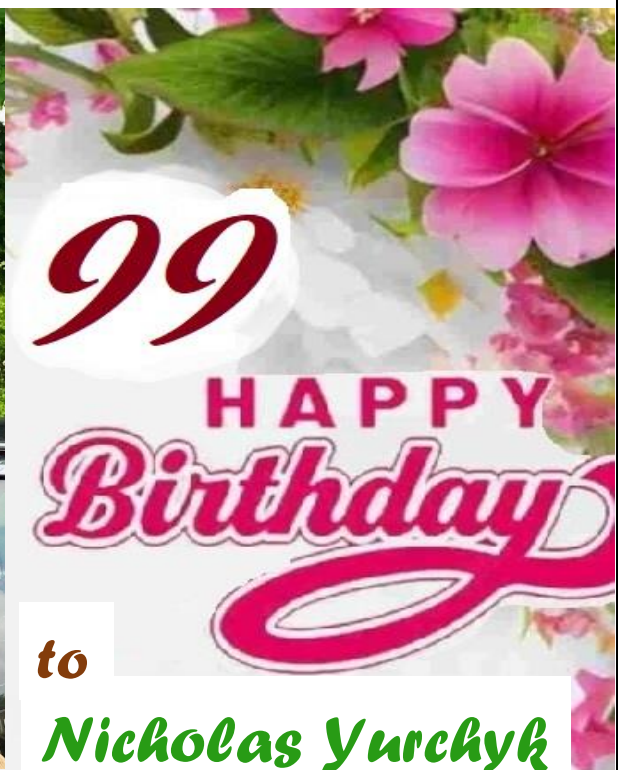
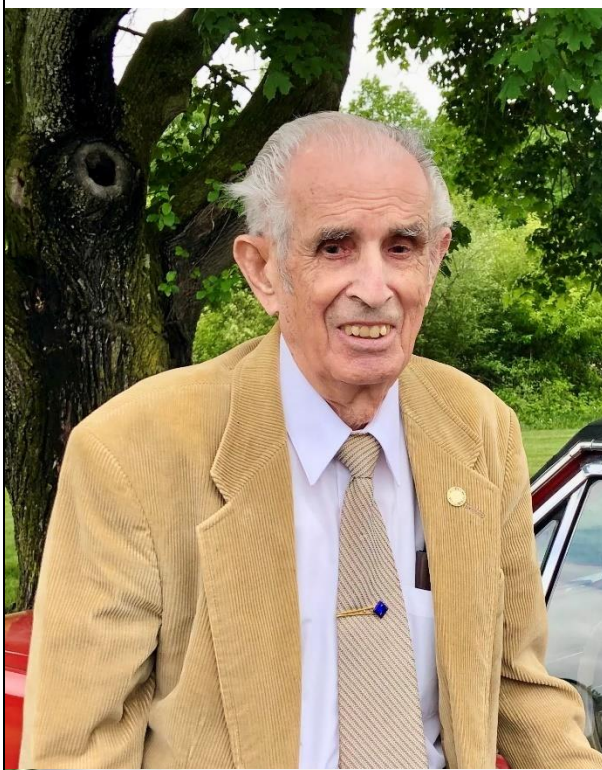
Ukrainian Orthodox League Sunday, a designated day throughout the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, recognizes the ministries of the UOL. Since its founding in 1946, the UOL has served as a national fellowship of dedicated Orthodox Christians committed to strengthening parish life, nurturing youth and young adults, supporting education and leadership development, and assisting the Church in her pastoral and missionary work.

The UOL helps the faithful deepen their Orthodox identity through prayer, stewardship, service projects, retreats, charitable outreach, and the formation of future leaders. Its support for St. Sophia Seminary, for seminarians, and for various youth programs has shaped generations of clergy, teachers, and parish volunteers. The Junior UOL continues this legacy by engaging children and teens in service, fellowship, and spiritual learning.

As we enter the Nativity Fast—a season of prayer, generosity, and preparation—UOL Sunday invites us to reflect on the vital role this organization plays in the life of our Church. We offer prayers today for the members and leadership of both the Senior and Junior UOL. We give thanks for their work, and we encourage all parishioners to consider participating in or supporting their ministries. May the Lord bless the UOL and all who labor for the building up of His Holy Church.



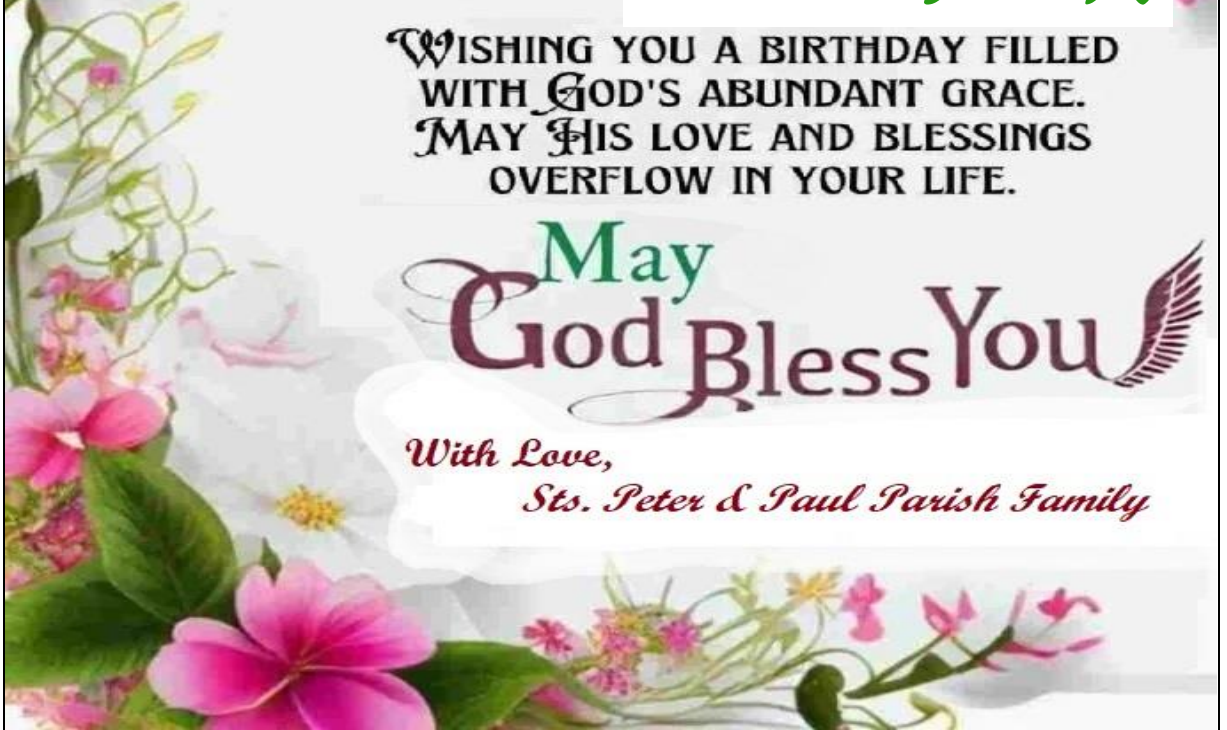
Marianne S. Carmack



WISHING YOU A BIRTHDAY FILLED
WITH GOD'S ABUNDANT GRACE.
MAY HIS LOVE AND BLESSINGS
OVERFLOW IN YOUR LIFE.

May
God Bless You

*With Love,
Sts. Peter & Paul Parish Family*



Christmas Shopping

As the years pass, we begin to understand that the truest gifts are often the ones we cannot wrap or place in a shopping cart. While the world hurries through crowded stores and endless online deals, our hearts quietly learn that what we long for most cannot be bought. We stop dreaming of shiny things or impressive achievements, and instead we yearn for peace within, for health for our loved ones, and for the simple blessing of having the people we cherish close by.

Christmas shopping can tempt us to believe that joy comes from what we purchase. But time itself gently teaches otherwise. It opens our eyes to the real treasures: the beauty of a morning when everyone is alive and well; the warmth of an embrace that heals more than we realize; the sacred stillness after prayer where God's presence is more real than anything wrapped in paper and ribbon.

Standing in line at a store or scrolling through gift ideas, we may suddenly realize that the best gifts are not found on shelves. They are around us—in the people we love, in small moments of kindness, and in a heart that remembers to say “thank you.” No sale or discount can compare to the richness of gratitude, forgiveness, or love.

So as we prepare for Christmas, may our shopping lists be accompanied by a deeper awareness: that everything essential we already possess, and everything truly important remains with us as long as there is love. The most precious gifts are never purchased—they are lived, shared, and cherished.

Because at the heart of Christmas is not what we give or receive, but the quiet prayer whispered in faith: **“Lord, protect us. Bless our homes. Keep our hearts full.”**



PRAYER FOR THE PEACE IN OUR HEARTS

Teach me, Lord, not to hold anger in my heart.

For no resentment is worth the peace of the soul.

Give me the wisdom to see even a drop of goodness in every person,
even when pain clouds my eyes.

Let there always be more love than anger in my soul.

More compassion than pride. More faith than doubt.

And if I fall, lift me up, Lord. If I lose my way, lead me back to Your path.

If I weep, wipe my tears and remind me that forgiveness heals
even what once seemed incurable.

For only You, O God, can make the heart pure like spring water.
And only through You can I learn to love again, even after the pain.

Amen.

Orthodox Christianity 101

Sin

The word sin means literally “missing the mark.” It means the failure to be what one should be and to do what one should do.

Originally man was made to be the created image of God, to live in union with God’s divine life, and to rule over all creation. Man’s failure in this task is his sin which has also been called his fall.

The “fall” of man means that man failed in his God-given vocation. This is the meaning of [Gen 3](#). Man was seduced by evil (the serpent) into believing that he could be “like God” by his own will and effort.

In the Orthodox tradition the eating of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” is generally interpreted as man’s actual taste of evil, his literal experience of evil as such. Sometimes, this eating is also interpreted (as by Saint Gregory the Theologian) as man’s attempt to go beyond what was possible for him; his attempt to do that which was not yet within his power to realize.

Whatever the details of the various interpretations of the Genesis story, it is the clear doctrine of Orthodoxy that man has failed in his original vocation. He disobeyed God’s command through pride, jealousy and the lack of humble gratitude to God by yielding to the temptation of Satan. Thus man sinned. He “missed the mark” of his calling. He transgressed the Law of God (see [1Jn 3.4](#)). And so he ruined both himself and the creation which he was given to care for and to cultivate. By his sin-and his sins-man brings himself and all creation under the rule of evil and death.

In the Bible and in Orthodox theology these elements always go together: sin, evil, the devil, suffering and death. There is never one without the other, and all are the common result of man’s rebellion against God and his loss of communion with Him. This is the primary meaning of [Genesis 3](#) and the chapters which follow until the calling of Abraham. Sin begets still more sin and even greater evil. It brings cosmic disharmony, the ultimate corruption and death of everyone and everything. Man still remains the created image of God-this cannot be changed-but he fails to keep his image pure and to retain the divine likeness. He defiles his humanity with evil, perverts it and deforms it so that it cannot be the pure reflection of God that it was meant to be. The world also remains good, indeed “very good,” but it shares the sorry consequences of its created master’s sin and suffers with him in mortal agony and corruption. Thus, through man’s sin the whole world falls under the rule of Satan and “lies in wickedness” ([1Jn 5.19](#); see also [Rom 5.12](#)).

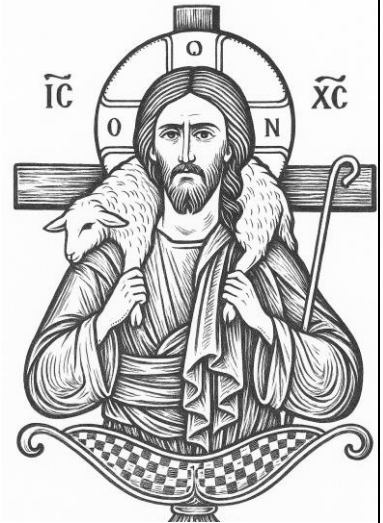
The Genesis story is the divinely-inspired description in symbolic terms of man’s primordial and original possibilities and failures. It reveals that man’s potency for eternal growth and development in God was turned instead into man’s multiplication and cultivation of wickedness and his transformation of creation into the devil’s principdom, a cosmic cemetery “groaning in travail” until saved once more by God ([Rom 8.19–23](#)). All the children of Adam, i.e. all who belong to the human race, share in this tragic fate. Even those born this very minute as images of God into a world essentially good are thrown immediately into a deathbound universe, ruled by the devil and filled with the wicked fruit of generations of his evil servants.

This is the fundamental message: man and the world need to be saved. God gives the promise of salvation from the very beginning, the promise which begins to be fulfilled in history in the person of Abraham, the father of Israel, the forefather of Christ.

And the Lord said . . . ? . . . to Abram [later named Abraham] “I will make you a great nation . . . ? . . . and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed” ([Gen 12.3](#); also 22.15).

Abraham believed God; and from him came the people of Israel from whom, according to the flesh, came Jesus Christ the Saviour and Lord of Creation (see [Lk 1.55, 73](#); [Rom 4](#); [Gal 3](#)).

The entire history of the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Jesus. All that happened to the chosen children of Abraham happened in view of the eventual and final destruction of sin and death by Christ. The covenants of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel which means “the one who struggles with God”); the twelve



tribes of Israel; the story of Joseph; the passover, exodus and reception of God's Law by Moses; the entrance into the promised land by Joshua; the founding of Jerusalem and the building of the temple by David and Solomon; the judges, kings, prophets and priests; everything in the Old Testament history of God's chosen people finds its final purpose and meaning in the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and glorification of God's only Son Jesus the Messiah. He is the one who comes from the Father to save the people from their sins, to open their tombs and to grant eternal life to all creation.

Jesus Christ

And In One Lord Jesus Christ.

The fundamental confession of Christians about their Master is this: Jesus Christ is Lord. It begins in the gospel when Jesus himself asks his disciples who they think that He is:

But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16.16).

Jesus is the Christ. This is the first act of faith which men must make about Him. At His birth, the child of Mary is given the name Jesus, which means literally Saviour (in Hebrew Joshua, the name also of Moses' successor who crossed the Jordan River and led the chosen people into the promised land). "You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1.21; Lk 1.31). It is this Jesus who is the Christ, which means the Anointed, the Messiah of Israel. Jesus is the Messiah, the one promised to the world through Abraham and his children.

But who is the Messiah? This is the second question, one also asked by Christ in the gospels-this time not to his disciples, but to those who were taunting him and trying to catch him in his words. "Who is the Messiah?" he asked them, not because they could answer or really wished to know, but in order to silence them and to begin the inauguration of "the hour" for which he had come: the hour of the world's salvation.

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question saying, "What do you think of the Christ [i.e., the Messiah]? Whose Son is he?"

They said to him, "The Son of David."

He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I put thy enemies under thy feet" (Ps 110). If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?"

And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

(Mt 22.41-46)

After Jesus' resurrection, inspired by the same Holy Spirit who inspired David, the apostles and all members of the Church understood the meaning of his words. Jesus is the Christ. And the Christ is the Lord. This is the mystery of Jesus Christ the Messiah, namely that He is the One and Only Lord, identified with the God Yahweh of the Old Testament.

We saw already how Yahweh was always called Adonai, the Lord, by the people of Israel. In the Greek Bible the very word Yahweh was not even written. Instead, where the word Yahweh was written in Hebrew, and where the Jews said Adonai, the Lord, the Greek Bible simply wrote Kyrios-the Lord. Thus, the Son of David, which was another way of saying the Messiah, is called Kyrios, the Lord.

For the Jews, and indeed for the first Christians, the term Lord was proper to God alone: "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us" (Ps 11.8). This Lord and God is Yahweh; and it is Jesus the Messiah as well. For although Jesus claims that "the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14.28), he claims as well: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10.30).

Believing in "One Lord Jesus Christ" is the prime confession of faith for which the first Christians were willing to die. For it is the confession which claims the identity of Jesus with the Most High God.

Son of God

The only-begotten Son of God .

Jesus is one with God as His only-begotten Son. This is the gospel proclamation formulated by the holy fathers of the Nicene Council in the following way: *and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages: Light of Light. True God of True God. Begotten not made. Of one essence with the Father. Through whom all things were made .*

These lines speak about the Son of God, also called the Word or Logos of God, before his birth in human flesh from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem.

There is but one eternal Son of God. He is called the Only-begotten, which means the only one born of God the Father. Begotten as a word simply means born or generated.

The Son of God is born from the Father "before all ages"; that is, before creation, before the commencement of time. Time has its beginning in creation. God exists before time, in an eternally timeless existence without beginning or end.

Eternity as a word does not mean endless time. It means the condition of no time at all-no past or future, just a constant present. For God there is no past or future. For God, all is now.

In the eternal "now" of God, before the creation of the world, God the Father gave birth to his only-begotten Son in what can only be termed an eternal, timeless, always presently-existing generation. This means that although the Son is "begotten of the Father" and comes forth from the Father, his coming forth is eternal. Thus, there never was a "time" when there was no Son of God. This is specifically what the heretic Arius taught. It is the doctrine formally condemned by the first ecumenical council.

Although born of the Father and having his origin in Him, the only-begotten Son always existed, or rather more accurately always "exists" as uncreated, eternal and divine. Thus, the Gospel of Saint John says:

In the beginning was the Word [the Logos-Son], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ([Jn 1.1](#)).

As the eternally-born of God and always existing with the Father in the "timeless generation," the Son is truly "Light of Light, True God of True God." For God is Light and what is born of Him must be Light. And God is True God, and what is born of Him must be True God.

We know from the created order of things that what is born must be essentially the same as what gives birth. If one comes from the very being of another, one must be the very same thing. He cannot be essentially different. Thus, men give birth to men, and birds to birds, fish to fish, flowers to flowers.

If God, then, in the super-abundant fullness and perfection of His divine being gives birth to a Son, the Son must be the same as the Father in all things-except, of course, in the fact of his being the Son.

Thus, if the Father is divinely and eternally perfect, true, wise, good, loving, and all of the things that we know God is: "ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, ever-existing and eternally the same" (to quote this text of the Liturgy once more), then the Son must be all of these things as well. To think that what is born of God must be less than God, says one saint of the Church, is to dishonor to God.

The Son is "begotten not made, of one essence with the Father." "Begotten not made" may also be put "born and not created." Everything which exists besides God is created by Him: all things visible and invisible. But the Son of God is not a creature. He was not created by God or made by Him. He was born, begotten, generated from the very being and nature of the Father. It belongs to the very nature of God-to God as God-according to divine revelation as understood by the Orthodox, that God is an eternal Father by nature, and that He should always have with Him his eternal, uncreated Son.

It belongs to the very nature of God that He should be such a being if He is truly and perfectly divine. It belongs to God's very divine nature that He should not be eternally alone in his divinity, but that His very being as Love and Goodness should naturally "overflow itself" and "reproduce itself" in the generation of a divine Son: the "Son of His Love" as the Apostle Paul has called him ([Col 1.13](#), inaccurately translated in English).

Thus, there is an abyss drawn between the created and the uncreated, between God and everything else which God has made out of nothing. The Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, is not created. He was not made out of nothing. He was eternally begotten from the divine being of the Father. He belongs "on the side of God."

Having been born and not made, the Son of God is what God is. The expression of one essence simply means this: what God the Father is, so also-is the Son of God. Essence is from the Latin word *esse* which means to be. The essence of a thing answers the question, What is it? What the Father is, the Son is. The Father is divine, the Son is divine. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated. The Father is God and the Son is God. This is what men confess when they say "the only-begotten Son of God .??. of one essence with the Father."

Being always with the Father, the Son is also one life, one will, one power and one action with Him. Whatever the Father is, the Son is; and so whatever the Father does, the Son does as well. The original act of God outside of His divine existence is the act of creation. The Father is creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in the act of creation, as-we confess in the Symbol of Faith, the Son is the one by whom all things were made.

The Son acts in creation as the one who accomplishes the Father's will. The divine act of creation-and, indeed, every action toward the world in revelation, salvation, and glorification-is willed by the Father and accomplished by the Son (we will speak of the Holy Spirit below) in one identical divine action. Thus, we have the Genesis account of God creating through His divine word ("God said .??."), and in the Gospel of St John the following specific revelation:

"He [the Word-Son] was in the beginning with God [the Father]; all things were made through [or by] him and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn 1.2-3).

This is the exact doctrine of the Apostle Paul as well:

.".?. in him [the Son] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers-all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together (Col 1.16-17).

Thus, the eternal Son of God is confessed as the one "by whom all things were made" (Heb 1.2; 2.10; [Rom 11.36](#)).

The Symbol of Faith continues: .??. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man .??.

The divine Son of God was born in human flesh for the salvation of the world. This is the central doctrine of the Orthodox Christian Faith; the entire life of Christians is built upon this fact.

The Symbol of Faith stresses that it is "for us men and for our salvation" that the Son of God has come. This is the most critical biblical doctrine, that "God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" ([Jn 3.16](#), quoted at each Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom at the center of the eucharistic prayer).

Because of His perfect love, God sent forth His Son into the world. God knew in the very act of creation that to have a world at all would require the incarnation of His Son in human flesh. Incarnation as a word means "enfleshment" in the sense of taking on the wholeness of human nature, body and soul.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as the only-begotten Son of the Father. And from his fullness have we all received grace upon grace" (Jn 1.14-16).

... came down from heaven...

The affirmation that the Son came "down from heaven" also should not be interpreted in the sense that before the incarnation the Son of God was totally absent from the world. The Son was always "in the world" for the "world was made through Him" ([Jn 1.10](#)). He was always present in the world for He is personally the life and the light of man ([1Jn 4](#)).

As "created in the image and likeness of God," every man-just by being a man-is already a reflection of the divine Son, who is Himself the uncreated image of God ([Col 1.15](#); Heb 1.3). Thus, the Son, or Word, or Image, or Radiance of God, as He is called in Scriptures, was always "in the world" by being always present in every of his "created images," not only as their creator, but also as the one whose very being all creatures are made to share and to reflect. Thus, in his incarnation, the Son comes personally to the world and becomes Himself a man. But even before the incarnation He was always in the world by the presence and power of his creative actions in his creatures, particularly in man.

In addition to this, it is also Orthodox doctrine that the manifestation of God to the saints of the Old Testament, the so-called theophanies (which means divine manifestations), were manifestations of the Father, by, through and in his Son or Logos. Thus, for example, the manifestations to Moses, Elias or Isaiah are mediated by God's divine and uncreated Son.

It is the Orthodox teaching as well that the Word of God which came to the Old Testament prophets and saints, and the very words of the Old Testament Law of Moses, which are called in Hebrew the "words" and not as we say in English, the "commandments", are also revelations of God by his Son, the Divine Word. Thus, for example, we have Old Testamental witness to the revelation of God's Word, such as that of the Prophet Isaiah, in almost the same personalistic form as is found in the Christian gospel:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I propose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Is 55.10-11).

Thus, before His personal birth of the Virgin Mary as the man Jesus, the divine Son and Word of God was in the world by His presence and action in creation, particularly in man. He was present and active; also in the theophanies to the Old Testament saints; and in the words of the law and the prophets, both oral and scriptural.

