

Ninth Catechism

Reading and Clarification of the Symbol of Faith

We will read over and learn the "Symbol of Faith" used by the Church today. It is the Creed established by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, which took place in Nicaea of Bithynia in 325 and in Constantinople in 381, respectively. Some italicised comments are provided in brackets, in order to explain some of the more difficult concepts. The Priest-Catechist will aim to have the Catechumen learn the Creed by heart.

The Symbol of Faith

1. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty [*Master of the Universe*], Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

2. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light [*because Christ was born of the Light, i.e. the Father*]; true God

[*Christ*] of true God [*i.e. the Father*]; begotten, [*was born*] not made [*not created*]; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

3. Who for us men [*human beings*] and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate [*made flesh*] of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man.

4. And He was crucified for us under [*during the time of*] Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.

5. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

6. And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.

7. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom [*Reign*] shall have no end.

8. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

9. In one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

10. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

11. I look for [*I expect, anticipate*] the resurrection of the dead,

12. And the life of the age to come.
Amen.

Central Points

There are five central points to the Creed. (i) The first refers to the Father, who created the whole world through the Son. (ii) The second, mentions the Divinity of the Word (Logos), the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and refers to Him becoming man, for the salvation of human beings. The incarnation includes all the events of Divine Economy, i.e. the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Second Coming of Christ to judge men. (iii) The third is the confession of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person of the All-Holy Trinity. Accordingly, God is One and He has three Persons. In the Divine Liturgy we sing: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one in essence and undivided." (iv) The fourth refers to the Church and the sacramental life, which starts with Holy Baptism. (v) Finally, the fifth point mentions the resurrection of the dead and the future life.

The whole faith of our Church is found within these five central points of the Creed. They are most basic and necessary, because without this faith, our salvation is uncertain. If we do not

believe in the God's Trinity; if we do not believe that God took on human nature in order to save man; if we do not believe in the uniqueness of the Church and if we do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, we then shake the foundations of our entire faith. By rejecting any one of these beliefs we show, in practice, that we are not real Christians.

In the Catechism lessons that follow we will study the "Symbol of Faith" further.

Tenth Catechism

God the Creator and Creation

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

"I believe". The term 'believe' is written in the first person singular because it wishes to denote the personal faith that we should have in the revealed truths preserved by the Church. However, the Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils wrote it in the plural - "we believe". This is because it presupposes the confession of faith of the members of the Church, since they read it during the Divine Liturgy, and during various other services, where many members can be found. Also, people were baptised in groups.

Faith is a revelation. We do not reveal the truth. Rather, Christ revealed it. In the Old Testament to the Prophets, and in the New Testament to the Apostles and Saints, in that he was incarnate and became a man. At first, we accept this

revelatory experience. Then, if we strive to purify our hearts of the passions, we can confirm this revelation. Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Here, the same thing occurs as with human science. University students are taught about the discoveries of preceding scientists. Later, however, if they themselves make personal experiments, they can also be led to confirm the discoveries, as well as to the discovery of new things. In any case, scientist is the term given not only to those who accept the science of others, but also, and more so, to those who advance science. Thus, we have two kinds of faith. Faith from hearing, when we listen to the experience of saints and accept it and faith from vision (theoria), when we attain the revelation ourselves.

"In one God". God is one. In the Church we do not believe in the existence of many deities independent of one another. Certainly, we talk of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but these are not three separate gods. All three have the same essence (one God), but they are three particular Persons. This cannot be comprehended by human reason. Rather, it is a case of revelation from God. All those who have achieved the experience of deification (theosis) and have seen God know this truth personally. We can use an example,

with great care, because an exact equivalence does not exist. All men have a common nature, a common essence, i.e. body, soul, noetic and rational energy, imagination and so on, yet they are different persons. The same is true with God, with the appropriate analogies, of course. The Three Persons have a common nature and essence, but particular attributes.

"Father". Here we make particular mention of the First Person of the Holy Trinity, who is called Father, because He gave birth to the Son. This occurred before the creation of the world. Since time was created concurrently with the creation of the world, the Son was born outside of time, before all ages. Moreover, the Father never existed without the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"Almighty". God is the Almighty, the *Pantocrator*, which means that He upholds the Universe. This concept is related to God's governing energy. That is to say, following the Creation of the world God preserves the world. God is not like a watchmaker, who makes a watch, winds it up and abandons it, letting it work of its own accord. Rather, He continues to govern the world Himself personally. The world was created from nothing, i.e. there was no matter at all beforehand. It cannot return to nothingness, because God upholds it with His energy.

"Maker of heaven and earth, and of all

things visible and invisible". God created the heaven and the earth, that is, the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon; as well as the entire earth, with all that exists upon it, that is, the plants, the animals, the birds and man. Moreover, he created what is visible and what is invisible. All that is visible includes the things we see. All that is invisible includes all that we cannot see with our eyes.

The angels belong to the invisible. They are liturgical spirits and minister for man's salvation. There are saints who purified their hearts of the passions, and became worthy of seeing angels. For example, St. Spyridon, who saw the angels celebrating the liturgy together with him. Likewise, the shepherds, at Christ's birth, saw angels and heard their songs of praise. Many Prophets of the Old Testament, such as Isaiah, saw angels and the works that they do. The angels are divided into nine orders namely: the Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Rulers, Archangels, and Angels.

Demons also belong to the invisible world. In the beginning, they were good angels. However, they fell because they became proud and wanted to acquire even greater glory from God. Thus, from being good spirits, they became evil ones. From angels of glory, they became demons. The demons hate man excessively and want to destroy

him. Through thoughts and other means, they attempt to lead him away from God. The saints have often seen demons and apprehended their destructive madness. Certainly, before Christ became man, the demons had great authority, but they lost it following the Incarnation, and now man can overcome them with the power of Christ.

Man, who is the pinnacle of creation, belongs to the visible realm. Indeed, God first created the noetic spirits, i.e. the angels, then the sensible realm and finally, on the sixth day, he created man. Man consists of soul and body, and is, therefore, a microcosm of the world, the recapitulation of creation and the choicest thing that exists in the world. Man is God's most perfect creation.

In the beginning man lived in Paradise, in a special place where he had communion with God. The Old Testament presents the blessed life that he led there. However, at the devil's instigation and through his own consent he was disobedient towards God and lost His grace and communion with Him. So, he left Paradise, and corruption and death entered his life. Christ delivered him from this death and this power of the devil with His Incarnation.

Eleventh Catechism

The Divinity of the Word

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God". The word "Lord" means "ruler" or "master", because Christ is also Lord of the world, like His Father. The Father created the world through the Son, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. All Three Persons uphold and rule the world, since they are equal in both honour and power. The Son is not lower than the Father; He is God. In the Creed we see that the Father is called the Almighty, the Son, Lord and the Holy Spirit also, Lord. "Jesus" means "saviour" (Matthew 1:21) and refers to the human nature that was deified by the Divine Nature. "Christ" means the "anointed one", the "Messiah". Thus, "Lord" denotes the divine nature, "Jesus" the human nature of Christ, whereas

"Christ" denotes the union of human and divine nature in the Person of the Word.

"The Son of God". Christ is the Son of God, who was born of the Father before all ages. The Father Himself revealed this truth at the Jordan River and on Mount Tabor, when His voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son. Listen to him" (Mark 9:7).

"The Only-Begotten". The Father has no other Son according to nature. He is the only one. We, human beings, can also become sons of God, but according to grace. We can use an example. A father begets a child, while at the same time he adopts another. Both children live in the same home, but there is a vast difference. The first child is natural offspring, whereas the other child is adopted. This is just one image to show the difference between Christ and man.

"Begotten of the Father before all ages". We cannot understand what the birth of the Son is, or what the procession of the Holy Spirit is, by using our reason. This was revealed to us by the Son in human images. The fact of the matter is that the word "begotten" denotes the Divinity of the Word, His relationship with the Father, that He has the same essence as Him. The terms "begotten" and "proceeded" show the particular way in which the Persons of the Holy Trinity have their existence. It shows that while they have

the same essence, nevertheless, they have particular attributes. The saints understand this when they become worthy of seeing God. The same thing that we maintained in another Catechism also holds true here. We accept the revelation of Christ and the saints and later, when we attain a personal revelation, we can come to know the relationship of the Persons of the Holy Trinity by experience.

"Light of Light". When the saints attain the experience of the revelation, they then see that God is light. In Church, we chant, "God is Light, the Word is Light, the Holy Spirit is Light". This was clearly manifest at Christ's Transfiguration. The face of Christ shone from His Divinity, the Holy Spirit was present with the "bright cloud", and the Father was heard through the voice, which shed light. In liturgical texts God is hymned as light much more often than He is as love.

This light is Divinity. It is not created light. That is to say, it is not the light of the sun, which is created; rather, it is the light of divinity, which has not been created; it is uncreated. Of course, we must say that we are made worthy to partake of God's energies and not of His essence. An example from sensible light: the sun lies beyond the earth's atmosphere, yet we partake of its energy. The same thing also happens comparatively

with God. The Persons of the Holy Trinity partake of God's essence, whereas we partake of His energies; we partake of divine grace.

"True God of true God". The term "true God" is used in contrast to false gods. This is the faith of the Church. Many things presented and present themselves as gods, but they are not true gods, since they are fabrications of human imagination. We believe in the true God solely within the Church, because Christ revealed him to us. For this reason, we entrust our salvation to Christ alone.

"Begotten, not made". We mentioned some things about the term "begotten" above. Here it is contrasted with the term "made", because the Arian heresy was current at the time. According to this heresy, Christ is a creature, made by God. This, however, shakes the very foundations of the faith. Being begotten is one thing, and being made is quite another. A blacksmith begets children, but he also produces iron. There is a vast difference between the two. Thus, the word "begotten" denotes the Divinity of the Son.

"Of one essence with the Father". This term was also added to combat Arianism. The Son has the same essence as the Father. In the example of the blacksmith, mentioned above, it is obvious that the children he begets are of one essence and the iron objects he produces are quite another.

"By whom all things were made". In a previous Catechism we said that God created the world. The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council said this, because, at the time, there were certain heretics who maintained that a lower god, which they identified with the Word, made the world. In this way, they explained the evil that exists in the world. However, the Fathers teach that the world was created by the Father, through the Son with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. With this, they wanted to show that the Son was God. The evil that exists in the world is a result of man's fall; it is an interloper and parasite and not the creation of a lower god. Just as a parasite can sprout upon a tree, without bearing any relation to the nature of the tree the same thing can be said about the evil that exists in the world. God made the world so that it was very good ("And God saw that it was good" Genesis 1), but the disorder found its origin in man's Fall.

Twelfth Catechism

The Incarnation of the Word

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.

Man is God's most perfect creation. However, through his Fall he was enslaved to the devil, sin and death. God could not bear to see his creation suffering and tormented. Therefore, out of love, He sent His Son, to become a man and to save man. This work is called the work of Divine Economy, because it shows how God accommodated things in order to save man.

"Who for us men". The Word (Logos) of God did not need to become man for His own sake; He became man solely for man alone. This shows God's great love, in taking on human nature and uniting it with divine nature.

"And for our salvation". The salvation spoken of here is not the deliverance of the soul from the body, which the ancient philosophers taught, and which many oriental religions also teach

today. Rather, it is man's deliverance from sin, death and the devil, and his union with God.

"Came down from heaven". This phrase does not mean that the Word stopped being God, when He became man. Nor does it mean that he abandoned the heavens and the throne of God. In the Akathist Hymn we say, "This was a divine condescension, not a change of place." By the expression "came down" we mean that the Son and Word of God took on human nature in order to save man.

"And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary". Christ's Incarnation is a great mystery. Christ was not conceived in the way that men are conceived. The conception took place from the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Consequently, a man did not participate. We can see this if we study the event of the Annunciation of the All-Holy Theotokos (see Luke 1:26-38). The Virgin Mary is called the Theotokos, which is a Greek word, used by the Fathers. It means Birthgiver of God. This is because she gave birth (*tokos*) to God (*Theos*) and not to a mere man. The Third Ecumenical Council concerned itself especially with this point. The Panagia was a Virgin before the conception, Virgin after the conception and Virgin after the birth. We see this in every icon that represents the Panagia; she is depicted with three stars on

His human nature was pure and holy, nevertheless Christ freely took on what are known as the "blameless passions"; that is to say, passions that do not constitute sin, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and even mortality. The blameless passions did not work forcibly, but the Divinity mastered them. We know, from Moses on Mt. Sinai and others, that the bodily functions of saints who attained theosis were postponed during the experience of theosis. Moses stayed on Sinai for forty days and nights without food or material goods. With this in mind, we can say the same thing and more about Christ. He had a real human body, but He Himself mastered the blameless passions.

Ultimately, the mystery of Christ becoming man becomes somewhat comprehensible from the saints who attain theosis and come to know the transfiguration of their nature from the uncreated energy of God. Reasonably, nobody can grasp it in its fullness. We accept it and proceed to sanctification.

Thirteenth Catechism

The Passion and Resurrection of Christ

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.

And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

"He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate". Christ really did die on the Cross. The death from the Cross was most painful and terrible. The fact that His body was crucified and died on the Cross shows that it was a real body and not an imaginary one. Christ died for us, so that His death would become our life. He was not crucified to appease divine justice; such a view shows God being insulted as though he suffered from passion. God is not passionate, nor

did He need to sacrifice His Son to satisfy His justice. Christ was crucified out of love for man. He died in order to free man from death and freely to give him life. The fact that this took place under Pontius Pilate is stressed to show that this event actually did take place within history.

"And suffered". When Christ suffered His divine nature did not suffer in itself, rather, his human nature did. However, His divine nature did undergo this suffering together with the human nature. We can use two examples to make this more comprehensible. Let us suppose that there is a tree lit by the sun. The sun's rays fall upon this tree. The lumberjack who cuts the wood into pieces cannot cut up the sun's energies. The other example is of burning iron. When we throw water on it, the fire suffers, since it goes out. Yet, the iron does not suffer, since it is not destroyed by water. We can say the same thing, by analogy, about Christ's passion. His human nature suffered, but not His divine nature, which did however undergo the passion together with the human nature.

"And was buried". Christ really did die on the Cross, and He was then buried in a new tomb. Nicodemus and noble Joseph of Arimathea took him down from the Cross. Thus, following His death and burial, Christ's body is found in the grave together with His Divinity, whereas the

soul, together with His Divinity, descended into Hades where the souls of the dead were. That is to say, His Divinity was not separated from His soul and His body. Hence, the body remained unharmed and incorruptible in the grave, while the soul freed all the righteous of the Old Testament, who were in Hades. This means that the body did not undergo any change at all when the soul had departed from it. We can understand this by making an analogy with the relics of saints; they give off sweet fragrances, while many of them remain completely uncorrupted.

"And the third day He rose again". Three days later the soul returned to the body and thus rose again. That is to say, Christ's Divinity resurrected His human nature. The Gospels describe how Christ appeared to the Myrrh-bearing Women and to His Disciples. He gave them peace, joy, blessing and the Holy Spirit to forgive sins. Following the Resurrection the body was incorruptible and spiritual; distances or limitations did not bind it. The bodies of the righteous will be like this following the resurrection of the dead. Christ's resurrection is a prelude to our own resurrection.

"According to the Scriptures". The amazing thing is that Christ revealed all that was going to happen to the Prophets and the righteous of the Old Testament. Thus, many years beforehand, the

Prophets described everything that was going to happen. The Prophet Isaiah is called the loudest of prophets and the fifth Evangelist, because he made the most detailed description of event eight hundred years before.

"And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father". The fact that we say He ascended into heaven does not mean that He also descended, as we mentioned in a previous Catechism. The descent is understood in the sense of taking on human nature - the fact that He became a man, while still remaining God. Christ, as God, was both in Heaven, united with His Father, and on earth, associating with men. The phrase "ascended ... and sits at the right hand of the Father" means that he also raised up human nature and glorified it. It is precisely because Christ deified human nature, and because He is at the right hand of the Father, that we also can be saved.

"And He shall come again with glory". Here the second coming of Christ is mentioned. The first coming occurred when He became man, with his birth from the Virgin Mary; it was poor and unknown to most people. The second coming will occur with great glory, since He will come with His angels and everyone will see Him on a throne of glory. The time of this Second Coming is completely unknown to us. (See Matthew 24:36 and Acts 1:7).

"To judge the living and the dead". At the time of Christ's Second Coming the judgement of men will occur. Everybody who is alive will be judged, as well as everybody who has died, since they will be resurrected. Christ mentioned everything that would happen in the future judgement (see Matthew 25: 31-46). This passage clearly shows that everybody will see God, but for some people God will become Paradise and for others Hell. In other words, everybody who has acquired a pure spiritual eye in this life will see God's glory, and this is called Paradise. Whereas, all those who are spiritually blind will experience the fire, which is Hell. For example, we can say that the sun has an energy that gives light and another one that gives heat or burns. Everyone who has eyes sees the energy that gives light; all those that are blind feel the heat-giving energy. This, essentially, is Paradise and Hell, just as they are presented in the iconography of the Second Coming. Here, the righteous are within bright clouds, whereas the sinners are in a river of fire, which flows from the throne of Christ.

"Whose kingdom shall have no end". The Kingdom or Reign of God is Paradise, man's communion with God. We experience this Kingdom now as a betrothal, but then we will experience it as a marriage. The Kingdom of God has no end. It will be eternal and endless, just as Hell will be eternal.

Fourteenth Catechism

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

The Second Ecumenical Council mainly concerned itself with the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, because it was at this time that the fact that the Holy Spirit is God was questioned.

"And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life". The three titles - "Holy, Lord, Giver of Life"- demonstrate the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, these three titles are also given to the other Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit created and give life to the whole of creation.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in third place, just as the Son is in second place. However, this does not suggest that the Son is lower than the Father, nor that the Holy Spirit is lower than the Son and the Father. The Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one essence, one honour and one

glory, equal between themselves. One example is the sides of an equilateral triangle. There is no side that is higher or lower than the other. The Father is given first place because He is the cause of the Son's birth and the Holy Spirit's procession. The Son is given second place because He was born from the Father and because we feel closer to Him because He became man. Besides, the order of the Persons is often changed to reveal their equality. For example, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:13). Here Christ takes first place, the Father follows and the Holy Spirit is placed after Him.

"Who proceeds from the Father". The Son is born from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. We cannot understand this using our reason. Christ revealed this to us when He said, "But when the Comforter (Paraclete) comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26). Here it is clear that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent by the Son, but ultimately the Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ, and the formation of Christ within us occurs through the Holy Spirit.

The Franks added a phrase known as the *fi-*

lioque to the Creed, between the words "proceeds" and "from the Father". They say, "who proceeds from the Father and from the Son." However, this is mistaken and creates huge problems. First of all, they did not have the right to do it, since the Third Ecumenical Council said that not one syllable should be added to the Creed or taken away from it, by anyone at all. Moreover, as in the case of the Son, who is begotten of the Father alone, the same is true of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father alone. This teaching of the Franks leads to the depreciation of the Holy Spirit or the dissolution of the Holy Trinity. Because, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, it means that it is below them, because It does not participate in the existence of the other Persons Itself. If, however, It must also participate, then the hypostatic particulars would be dissolved, since the Son could be seen as also being born from the Holy Spirit. There could even be another person that comes from the Holy Spirit, whereby the Holy Trinity is dissolved.

Christ clearly revealed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent forth by the Son. The Franks arrived at their heretical teaching because they had lost contact with the Church's theology of experience. They lost the presuppositions for true orthodox theology. They distorted

the way in which we achieve communion with God and formed the impression and the opinion that their own speculative theology was superior to the theology of our Holy Fathers. We base ourselves on everything that Christ revealed to us and everything that was lived out by the saints.

"Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified". This phrase demonstrates the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the Holy Spirit is not lower than the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, since He is worshipped and glorified together with them.

"Who spoke by the prophets". The Holy Spirit spoke to the Prophets and revealed the truths of the faith to them. Of course, we know that the revelations in the Old Testament are revelations of the unincarnate Word. Nevertheless, these revelations occur through the Holy Spirit. In general, we can say that the work of Christ is not different from the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ sends forth the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit forms Christ within our hearts. The heart is purified and we are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit. As long as we are united with Christ, we feel the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Fifteenth Catechism

The Church and Her Attributes

In one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The "Symbol of Faith" is the work of the Church, just as the Holy Scripture is also, naturally, the work of the Church. The Church writes the Holy Scriptures, the Church interprets them, the Church formulates the doctrines, that is to say, she sets the boundaries between truth and deception and the Church composes rules in order for her to function regularly and well, as well as to cure her sick members.

The Orthodox Church is the Body of Christ, which Christ took on from the Virgin Mary and deified. The Church is not a human corporation or organisation; it is the Body of Christ.

There is a close relationship between Orthodoxy, the Church and the Divine Eucharist. Orthodoxy is the true faith of the Church and the Divine Eucharist is the true act of the Church. If there is a Church without Orthodoxy and the Eucharist, it is not a Church. If there is Ortho-

doxy outside the Church and the Divine Eucharist, it is not Orthodoxy. Moreover, if there is Divine Eucharist, without Orthodoxy and the Church, it is not the Divine Eucharist. This is why we maintain that outside the Orthodox Church there is no other Church, only heresies. Thus, the return of the heretics to the only true Church, the Orthodox Church, is needed.

In the "Symbol of Faith" we confess and believe in four basic attributes of the Church.

"**In one**". The Church is one, not many. Despite the wealth of many local Churches, there is only one Church. There are many Orthodox Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches. Inasmuch as they have the same faith and communion amongst themselves they constitute that one Church. We can use an example. There is only one loaf of communion bread upon the Holy Altar Table. Whoever has communion does not commune only a part of Christ, but the whole of Christ, since "broken and distributed is the Lamb of God; broken but not divided." The same thing happens with the Orthodox Churches. They make up the one, unique Body of Christ. This is why all those who have left the Church, through heresy, must return.

"**Holy**". The Church is holy, because her head, Christ, sanctified it. The Church is not made holy by her members; rather, she makes her members

holy. We must remain within the Church in order to become Holy. Outside the Church our salvation is uncertain.

"Catholic". She is called catholic for many reasons. First, because she is found throughout the world. Second, because she preserves the whole truth. Third, because her life is common to all. The adjective catholic is identified with the adjective orthodox. A true Catholic is an Orthodox believer, because he possesses the whole truth and is completely transfigured by it.

"Apostolic". The Church is called Apostolic because her head is Christ, who is an Apostle and High-Priest. It was founded on the foundation stone of the Apostles and is patristic. Besides, the Fathers are the successors of the Holy Apostles, both in terms of priesthood and in terms of teaching. They have the same faith, and the same life as them.

We remain continually within the Church; we accept the teachings of the saints; we are obedient to the commandments and the teaching of the Church; we are sanctified by the sacraments and in this way we hope in salvation. We never feel that we should save the Church. Rather, that we remain within her in order to be saved. Every member of the Church who separates himself from her body destroys himself; he dies spiritually, just as every member of the human

body dies when it is separated from the whole of the human body. Such separated members are heretics, schismatics and atheists.

Sixteenth Catechism

The Sacramental Life of the Church

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

The Church "is declared in mysteries". Through the sacraments of the Church the Christian proves that he is a member of the Body of Christ, because he is united to the Theanthropic Body of Christ and tastes of divine grace, through the sacraments.

"I acknowledge one baptism". Holy Baptism is called and actually is an introductory sacrament, because it introduces us into the Church and makes us members of the Body of Christ. Baptism grafts us onto the new life. In the ancient Church, the sacrament of Baptism was preceded by Catechism, which prepared the person and gave him the ability to become a real member of the Body of Christ. A study of the prayers of the sacrament of Baptism shows what its aim is and the great value that it has.

Christ called upon His Disciples saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Hence, they are called to establish men as Disciples of Christ by baptising them and teaching them to keep His commandments. Consequently, Baptism is required, but so is ascetic practice, which is nothing more than the attempt to keep Christ's commandments within our life. Sacraments without ascetic practice do not help, and ascetic practice without sacraments does not constitute communion with Christ.

Christ said to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). According to the interpretation of St. Symeon the New Theologian, the baptism of water must be joined with the baptism of the Spirit, which is the advent of divine grace within the heart. A characteristic example is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. The Christians of Samaria had been baptised in the "name of the Lord Jesus", but they did not have the Holy Spirit. So, Peter and John went to Samaria and "laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8: 14-17). The laying on of hands is today associated with Holy Chrism.

"For the remission of sins". Holy Baptism grants the "remission of sins". This should not be

considered in legalistic terms, as something like the deliverance from the guilt of original sin; it should be considered in terms of therapy. That is to say, the image in man is purified, the nous is illumined and he returns to natural life. It is in this context that we talk of remission of sins. Besides, sin is the darkening of the nous and the obscuring of the image.

Holy Baptism is an introductory sacrament, because it introduces the person into the Church. The aim of Baptism is to lead man into the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, the Divine Eucharist is the centre of all the sacraments and of man's ecclesial and spiritual life. No-one can live without Holy Communion. However, participation in Holy Communion is according to the degree of a person's purification, illumination and deification (theosis).

Seventeenth Catechism

The Resurrection of the Dead and the Life to Come

*I look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the age to come.
Amen.*

"I look for the resurrection of the dead". In the Creed we confess that we expect the resurrection of the dead. Of course, when we say the resurrection of the dead, we mean the resurrection of bodies. Bodies, which are separated from the soul at death, will be resurrected, i.e. the souls will return to their bodies and will give them life. The entire man should live eternally.

All bodies will be resurrected, those of the righteous and the unrighteous, saints and sinners alike. Thus, we can talk of the "restoration of nature", not, however, of the restoration of will. The gift of resurrection will be given to all men, the righteous and unrighteous alike. Hence, everyone will be resurrected, but it is only the righteous who will be caught up "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Christ's resurrection is a prelude to our own resurrection. The saints already enjoy the resurrection of the body, the abolition of death and the fact that the departure of the soul from the body is really a sleep. We can also enjoy this great truth. The relics of saints are proof that the saints are sleeping and that death has been abolished. Their incorruptible bodies, which give of sweet smelling fragrances and work miracles, are a foretaste of the coming resurrection. Thus, Church's task is to make man's body a "relic".

The resurrection of the dead will certainly happen. We have Christ's absolute confirmation of this. However, we do not know when it will happen. The time of Christ's Second Coming is unknown; even the angels do not know when it will happen. Only God the Father knows.

The resurrected bodies will be spiritual. St. Paul writes concerning the subject "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

This will take place for those who have fallen asleep. However, regarding those people who will still be alive at the moment of the Second Coming of Christ, St. Paul says that they will immediately

change, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15: 51-52).

"And the life of the age to come". At the end of the Creed we confess that we believe in eternal life. Truly, man's life is not used up in this earthly life, nor does the soul disappear after it leaves the body. Man's soul is immortal by grace. This means that every created thing, by nature, has a beginning and an end. However, God willed that man's soul would be immortal. Certainly, this is said while bearing in mind that the body and the soul do not make up the whole man on their own, but both of them do so together. Thus, the whole man will live eternally.

There are two ways of experiencing eternity. The first is to be "forever well" and the other is "adversity forever". The first is associated with man's communion with God, the participation in God as light. The second is associated with estrangement from God, or the experience of God as darkness. Everybody will see God, but for the righteous He will be vision and participation, whereas for sinners, there will be no participation, but it will be hell.

"Amen". The term "Amen" has two meanings. The first is a prayer and the second is a confirmation. In reciting the Creed, we both confirm what is confessed, and pray that all this is realised within our own personal life.

May this confession of faith become a living experience for us, may it enter into our personal life and become our blood and our nourishment.

4

Questions and Answers

At the end of the period of Catechism, questions can be put to the Catechumen, during a spoken encounter, that will refer to the contents of the Catechism lessons.

Certainly, these questions are not an examination, although that is often necessary even just for his intellectual edification on matters of the faith. Their real purpose is a summarised presentation of the truths that he has been taught. Besides, as we said elsewhere, introductory faith is faith from hearing; it is known as intellectual faith.

Mainly, however, the questions and answers refer to two realities:

First, the revision of all that the Catechumen has been taught. Through the questions and answers, the Catechumen will be given the opportunity to remember the central points of the Catechism lessons and to retain them in memory. This intellectual knowledge, combined with experience of Church life, will help him learn the

changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

6. *What does eternal life mean?*

It is man's life after death but, first and foremost, it is the participation in the glory of God by the righteous.

7. *What will be the difference between the righteous and sinners (after death)?*

The righteous will live "forever well", whereas sinners will experience "adversity forever".

8. *What does the word "Amen" mean?*

It has two meanings. The first is a confirmation, that is, we admit that it is all true. The second is a prayer, that is we pray for Christ's Second Coming to happen soon, to come quickly, so that we can enjoy His glory.

These questions and answers refer to the truths that the Catechumens have been taught. If the Catechist-Priest mentions other matters, like the difference between the Orthodox Church and other confessions ('Roman Catholicism' - Protestantism), relevant questions must again be put.

The fact is that, in this way, the knowledge that the Catechumens acquired during the Catechism lessons will be consolidated.

5

The Rite of the Sacrament of Baptism

Everything we have looked at so far has shown that the Catechism of Catechumens is a serious matter and should not be taken lightly, because doing things in haste and superficially is a secular practice. Instead of contributing to the increase of the Church, it contributes to the increase of a secular Church.

The same applies to the rite of the sacrament of Baptism. This should also be placed within a traditional and an Orthodox framework. Otherwise, it will not help the baptismal candidate appreciate its great value and importance for the rest of his life. Besides, the sacramental rite is not sufficient in itself; it is also necessary to lead a life in Christ. In order to make things somewhat easier we will make a few practical suggestions about the Baptismal service for adults.

First. As we pointed out earlier, it is preferable that Catechism is associated with the great and

reverential seasons of our Church. Of course, Catechism can take place throughout the year, but the final stage, as we see in the "Catechisms" of St. Cyril of Jerusalem and in the teaching of the Holy Fathers, must be connected with Holy and Great Lent. This season is appropriate for this task for the following reasons:

First of all, it is a reverential period, with prayer and fasting, established by the Church. The Church services increase, the fast is strict, the hymns and all the themes throughout the Lenten Sundays help. The hymns refer to repentance and return, the passages from the Gospel and the Epistles, both in the Triodion period before Lent, and throughout Lent itself, refer to the basic points of the Orthodox Faith. The grand stature of the saints who are celebrated and the various events aid Orthodox Catechism a great deal. The Catechumen will be given the opportunity to hear the parables of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son. He will be able to understand what the exile from Paradise is through worship in Church. He will celebrate the grandeur of Orthodoxy and understand what the Orthodox Faith consists of. He will find out about the great importance of the teaching of St. Gregory Palamas. He will see the strength of the Venerable Cross. He will find out about the very essence of Orthodox ascetic practice, as it appears

in "The Ladder", the book by St. John of Sinai. He will be encouraged by the great repentance of St. Mary of Egypt. Finally, he will personally experience the Passion, Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

Furthermore, he will experience all the various Liturgies that the Church has, i.e. the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. In the last service, in particular, he will hear the petitions of the faithful, the members of the Church, on behalf of the Catechumens, that are still intoned even today. This will make the work of the Priest-Catechist easier.

Moreover, the Baptism of the Catechumens that will take place on Great Saturday will help them appreciate their own resurrection in Christ and their entrance into the resurrected Body of Christ. The paschal season that follows will be their first joyful experience of the new life that they received with Baptism. They will be given the opportunity to take communion every day throughout Bright Week, as they did in ancient times. The Pentecost season will be an effective aid. Besides, the subject matter of most of the Sundays leading up to Pentecost has been chosen to help the Catechumens become consciously aware of what life in Christ is, in practice. We know that most Gospel passages of this season

mention water, the font, the advent of the Holy Spirit, who quenches man's thirst, about the healing of the eye, and so on. The Church never does anything aimlessly.

Second. The Baptism of Catechumens should be associated with great feasts. As we mentioned earlier, the most fundamental feast is Easter. Thus, the Baptism will take place on Great Saturday, because the whole service is suited to this aim. According to the readings for Vespers of Great Saturday, the Baptism takes place in an adjoining baptistery or in a chapel. Immediately following this, the newly baptised Catechumens enter the main church and everybody chants in the place of the thrice-holy hymn: "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia." The whole community rejoices over the event. If there is no baptistery or chapel, the Baptism takes place somewhere in the narthex of the church building.

However, Baptism can also be linked with every feast of the Lord. Besides, during all the Feasts of the Lord, Christmas, Theophany, Easter and so on, the thrice-holy hymn, "Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal" is not sung and the hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." is sung instead. It is the entire community's joy over the new members joining it.

Third. The sacrament of Baptism, in this case, must be combined with the Divine Eucharist. In modern times, the association of the sacrament of Marriage with the Divine Eucharist has been introduced into the *typikon*. However, this should primarily occur with Holy Baptism, since this is its inherent position. In ancient times, as we saw above, Baptism was always combined with the Divine Liturgy. Besides, this is evident in practice, since we are baptised in order to commune the Body and Blood of Christ, as members of the Church.

Of course, the best thing is for Baptism to be combined with the Liturgy on Great Saturday, where it is much more suitable, since this liturgy also occurs together with Vespers. Since, immediately following the Baptism, the replacement thrice-holy hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ" is chanted and the Divine Liturgy follows. In this case, a baptistery is required or a small chapel next to the main church.

The sacrament of Baptism can also take place between Matins and the Divine Liturgy in the central church or the chapel, as St. Nikodemos the Athonite recommends. The sacrament can even take place in a chapel next to the main church until the actual Baptism, while Matins is being chanted in the main church. Then the Di-

vine Liturgy continues. The "dance" takes place during the chanting of the thrice-holy hymn and the Liturgy continues.

However, I would like to go on to present a *typikon* for combining the sacrament of Baptism with that of the Divine Eucharist.

The service of the Catechumens is celebrated the day before the Baptism, following Vespers.

The sacrament of Baptism takes place during the Liturgy.

First of all, the service of Matins is celebrated in the usual manner. Following the doxology, the dismissal takes place, either aloud or in secret. Immediately following this the sacrament of Baptism is celebrated. It must be noted that on this day the Liturgy of the Catechumens is omitted, i.e. from the "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father..." until the small entrance, because the Baptism will take place during this section. Consequently, the whole arrangement of the combination of Baptism and the Divine Liturgy is as follows:

Following the doxology and the *apolytikion* or *theotokion* we intone the phrase "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father..." and we say the baptismal petition for peace. Then the whole service of Baptism as laid out in the service book of the Church takes place until the dressing of the baptismal candidate in the robe. That is to say, we

read the prayer of the blessing of the waters and the prayer for the anointing with oil. We anoint the person being baptised with exorcising oil. We baptise him in the sanctified water of the font. We say Psalm 31 (32 *Septuagint*), "Blessed are they whose transgression is redeemed". We read the relevant prayer and anoint the person being baptised with Holy Myrrh. We dress him in the robe and we immediately sing the *troparion*, "Give me a bright robe."

At this point, the priests enter the Holy Altar, following the chanting of the *apolytikion* for the day, the entrance of the Holy Gospel takes place. On this day the entrance hymn is replaced with chanting of "Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Save us, O Son of God..."

The *apolytikia* of the day are chanted, as well as the *kontakion* and the hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." While the *apolytikia* are being chanted we read the prayer of the thrice-holy hymn. "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." is chanted in the middle of the Church, around the font. Immediately after this the Epistle and Gospel are read.

Following the Gospel and the petition, "Have mercy upon us, O God..." the prayers of the faithful are read and the Cherubic hymn is chanted. That is to say, the Divine Liturgy con-

tinues in the usual manner. With the words, "In fear of God, with faith and love draw near." The newly baptised person approaches to commune the Divine Mysteries first, together with his sponsor. In this way, the words of St. Nicholas Cabasilas are put into practice. He says that following the Baptism we proceed to Holy Communion. This also establishes the credibility of the God-parent, because if he cannot take communion (because he is outside the Church, or because he has had a civil wedding rather than a Church one) he cannot baptise.

Following the prayer of the ambo, we read the rest of the baptismal service in full. That is to say, we read the prayers of ablution, of cutting of the hair, the priest's blessing, "O Lord our God, from the fullness of the font..." the tonsure takes place and the relevant petitions are made on behalf of the newly illumined person and his sponsor. The dismissal takes place immediately after the prayer "The blessing of the Lord..." The newly-baptised person and the God-parent receive the *antidoron* first, and the rest of the congregation follows.

Following the Divine Liturgy, if possible, we chant the first *Eothinon* or the *Theotokion* of vespers in the first mode. Then, with the priest preceding, together with the sponsor and the baptised person we go either to the house of the

baptised person (if it is nearby) or to church hall (if there is one). There, wishes are exchanged and a modest reception can be held.

This association of Baptism with the Divine Liturgy will help the Catechumens and the faithful a great deal, and will contribute to the revival of our liturgical life. I believe that it will be the culmination of Orthodox Catechism and will show that the Church carries out this task seriously and responsibly. It will also be the start of a new life after Baptism.

Guidance after Baptism

Outline

1. *Entering a Church Community*
2. *Continuing Catechism*
3. *Time is Needed for Personal Experience of the Truth*
4. *Avoiding the Trap of Fanaticism*
5. *Confrontation of possible sense of scandal.*
6. *Guidance during the period of the withdrawal of divine grace.*

The pastoral ministry of Christians and especially of Catechumens demands a journey of the cross, a responsible mission and a life of witness. The priest is not satisfied with a formal presentation of the truths of the faith. He does not expend himself on social work. Rather, he is crucified and he sacrifices himself every day, so that Christians will be reborn. The model of a true pastor should be Christ's words, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep" (John 10:11). Also, the words of St. Paul,

which express the life of sacrifice, "My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you!" (Galatians 4:19). The Priest-Catechist is primarily interested in forming Christ in the heart of the Catechumen and the newly illumined person. This means that his catechetical efforts do not end with Baptism. They are extended beyond it, and continue throughout the baptised person's life.

I would like to go on to underline some basic points that the Catechist-Priest must bear in mind after the Baptism of the Catechumens. I believe that they are essential for the correct treatment of newly baptised Christians.

First. They must become an organic member of a parish community. Of course, this presupposes that the parish is organised correctly, that it has a life of worship, charitable and social action and so on. The new Christian must feel that through Baptism he has joined a family. He must feel that he has become a member of the body of Christ and of the particular parish. He must experience the reality of the fact that he has a spiritual father and spiritual brothers and sisters. Faith is church faith and not an individual event. He was not catechised and baptised in order to continue living as an individual and to feel that with Baptism he simply acquired a better doctrinal formulation about God, the creation of the

world and man's salvation. He must experience all this personally in his life within the parish.

For this reason, today, experienced spiritual fathers advise against the baptism, if we cannot guarantee this parish community, this spiritual family, because we create split personalities. For example, if a Protestant becomes Orthodox on Mount Athos, unless his membership of a parish community in his own country is guaranteed for him, he will find himself in tragic situation. He will be neither a Protestant nor an Orthodox Christian, since he will be unable to participate in Protestant gatherings, and he will not even belong to an Orthodox community. This means that in these cases we must do all we can to find a way for him to join an Orthodox community.

Second. We continue to catechise and guide the newly illumined Christians spiritually. They must learn many things and mainly they should live the life in Christ. Just as Catechism is required for the faithful the same applies to the newly baptised. When the apostles created a Church they maintained continual contact with it. St. Paul was personally interested in the Churches that he founded. He faced all the problems that cropped up in a pastoral manner. He catechised the newly baptised in the life according to Christ and solved the differences that arose.

The Clergy advise the baptised to keep God's

commandments in their everyday life. In this way, they will achieve perfection and sanctification. When we talk of an ascetic life, we mean, first and foremost, the keeping of Christ's commandments. They urge the baptised to commune of the Immaculate Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. This is a very basic point, because without Christ there is no virtue in life. Naturally, in the case of some grave sin, repentance and confession is required.

Third. The Catechist-Priest must be aware of the fact that although the newly baptised Christian has learnt many of the truths of the faith in theory, nevertheless, it will take quite a while until these become a part of his personal life experience. That is to say, the newly baptised Christian comes from a different religion and is influenced by a different religious and cultural tradition. He understands the truths of Orthodoxy intellectually, but it will take time for them to be established and to become a way of life. He tries to understand them rationally, but many years will pass before they become a true personal conviction and before they change all his former religious and cultural tradition. This is why continuous guidance and repentance is necessary. Thus, we understand the difference between those who were "born" into the Orthodox Church and find that many things are given and entrenched within

themselves, and those who were baptised at an older age. Certainly, their great enthusiasm can overcome many problems.

Fourth. Serious and responsible guidance is needed for the way in which the newly baptised should react. The experienced Catechist is clearly aware that the person who has converted to Orthodoxy can easily fall into fanaticism, which is expressed in two ways. One way, is that of accusing his former religion, the other, is setting himself up as a "teacher" of other Orthodox Christians. He may consider himself to be in a better position than they are. Therefore, the priest-catechist should be very careful. Without disappointing him, he should help him.

Primarily, this means that when he hears the baptised person mock his former religion, he should not take part in what he says. It is probable that the newly baptised Christian will regret what he said during his first bout of enthusiasm. However, if he remembers that other Orthodox Christians or the priest took part, or worse, if he remembers that others urged him to do this, he will then be angry with them. He will think that they had made him fanatical or that they proselytised him. The result is that he will return to his former religion with hatred against Orthodoxy. Many such spiritual mistakes have occurred.

Moreover, he will not let the newly baptised

Christian play the teacher to other Orthodox Christians. It is possible that the newly baptised Christian belongs to a higher social class, has many experiences, has exceptional intellectual qualities, is a great writer and so on. This arouses the interest of other Orthodox Christians. They consider it an honour that this person is a member of their Church. Consequently, they praise him and invite him to speak to the people. This increases the fanaticism and zeal of the newly baptised Christian. It causes conceit and egotism with destructive consequences for his future development. It is not right for a "neophyte" to be a teacher of other believers. This is the reason why St. Paul advises his disciple, Timothy, not to ordain as a bishop "a recent convert, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6).

The case of St. Paul the Apostle is most characteristic. Following Christ's revelation to him, he did not journey towards his relatives according to the flesh and according to the spirit. He did not even go to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles; instead, he went to Arabia (Galatians 1:16-18). The divine apostle stayed in the Arabian Desert for three years, weeping over his former fall, the persecution of the Church of Christ. Throughout his whole life he remembered that horrific condition where he persecuted the Church

and this increased his humility, despite the many and great revelations that he had.

We must bear all this in mind so that we can succeed in this great mission of catechising new members. Complete repentance is required, on the part of the baptised, throughout their whole life. If this great, all-encompassing repentance does not exist then the former life will leave some ugly marks, resulting in their return to their former faith. In general, we should not encourage the newly illumined Christians to be teachers and to teach the other Orthodox.

Fifth. There is a great danger that the newly illumined Christians will be shocked by the bad behaviour of other Orthodox Christians. Although they received Catechism as therapeutic treatment, it is possible, that upon entering the Church, they will come across various passions and will be scandalised spiritually. Therefore, the Catechist-Priest should prepare the Catechumen to face this situation. He must consciously realise that within the Church there are living and dead members, those who are healthy and those who are sick. If someone is not careful in his life, he may lose the grace of Christ, which he received at Holy Baptism, and he may become worse than unbelievers. This is because Baptism and the advent of divine grace do not abolish man's freedom.

Indeed, the chance existence of spiritual im-

propriety in members of the Church should become an opportunity to teach the newly baptised Christian, because it could possibly happen to him, if he is not careful in his life. Ultimately, the newly baptised Christian should learn that the Church is a body with various members, who are struggling to achieve perfection and sanctification. They should learn that Holy Baptism is only the start of the journey and not the end of it. They should realise that personal effort and struggle is also needed. The same thing that happened with the Hebrews who were journeying to the Promised Land happens here. Many left the land of Egypt; however, they did not all arrive in the Promised Land. The Church is "militant" in that it battles, fights, is victorious, but it also has wounded soldiers. The Church is a Hospital - a place of healing. Its members are divided into three categories: those, whose souls have been healed (saints), those that are being healed, and those that are still sick in soul, who may someday start being healed (therapy).

In this spirit, the person being baptised will be brought back down to earth. He will apprehend the reality. He will not be flying up in the clouds and he will become spiritually mature. He will realise that the life in Christ is a personal matter. Despite the various scandals, there are saints; there are fighters and "violent" Christians (*see*

Matt. 11:12). Besides, those that sin today may repent and be saved tomorrow. The final verdict, the separation of what is good from what is rotten will be given at Christ's Second Coming (*Matthew 13: 24-30*).

Six. There is a fine detail that we must underline so that we are aware of the way in which we should edify the baptised.

From Orthodox teaching, we know that there are three spiritual stages related to God's grace. The first is the advent of uncreated grace within man's heart. The second is the withdrawal of grace, for reasons known to God. Finally, the third is the return of grace into the heart. All people, at a certain moment, feel the advent of divine grace within the heart. They all lose it, because God wants their personal freedom to be activated; hence the spiritual struggle starts: pain and ascetic practice. Naturally, only a few people manage to acquire divine grace gain and have it remain in their hearts permanently. Very discreet and wise guidance is needed during the withdrawal of divine grace.

This happens, mainly, to those who are catechised and baptised. If a traditional Catechism has taken place beforehand, then they feel the divine grace within themselves during the baptism. The prayer of the heart and nous grows within them and they have all the results of this

condition, i.e. tears of repentance and joy, prayer, love for the whole world, zeal and inebriation for God and so on. The clergy must be aware of this course of divine grace, so that when the time comes, a few months or a few years later, and the newly baptised lose this divine grace, they will not be disappointed. Indeed, the clergy should guide them telling them that this is a natural condition, and in this way, their freedom is activated all the more. God withdraws the grace out of love; so that we can both learn of His love for man, and go on to make our own personal effort.

If the Catechumen does not learn about this delicate spiritual task, he may well become disappointed, give up, and wither, falling into immediate spiritual danger. Experience has shown that this is the greatest temptation that the newly baptised undergo. Following the Baptism they feel like they are "drunk"; they are existentially glad, everything is pleasing and joyful. However, in the period of the withdrawal of divine grace they find themselves in a tragic condition. It is then possible for them to believe that their former condition was simply enthusiasm, a psychological feeling of well-being, or they may think that their current condition is proof that they have become psychologically ill. Sensible guidance and paternal care will help them understand that this is the road

towards sanctification. All the saints passed through this stage in their spiritual lives. In this way, God's gifts will become their permanent spiritual condition.

Bearing all this in mind, we can say that the Catechism of those already baptised is much more difficult and painstaking than the Catechism of Catechumens before Baptism.

Ninth Catechism

Reading and Clarification of the Symbol of Faith

We will read over and learn the "Symbol of Faith" used by the Church today. It is the Creed established by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, which took place in Nicaea of Bithynia in 325 and in Constantinople in 381, respectively. Some italicised comments are provided in brackets, in order to explain some of the more difficult concepts. The Priest-Catechist will aim to have the Catechumen learn the Creed by heart.

The Symbol of Faith

1. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty [*Master of the Universe*], Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

2. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light [*because Christ was born of the Light, i.e. the Father*]; true God

[*Christ*] of true God [*i.e. the Father*]; begotten, [*was born*] not made [*not created*]; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

3. Who for us men [*human beings*] and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate [*made flesh*] of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man.

4. And He was crucified for us under [*during the time of*] Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.

5. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

6. And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.

7. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom [*Reign*] shall have no end.

8. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

9. In one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

10. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

11. I look for [*I expect, anticipate*] the resurrection of the dead,

12. And the life of the age to come.
Amen.

Central Points

There are five central points to the Creed. (i) The first refers to the Father, who created the whole world through the Son. (ii) The second, mentions the Divinity of the Word (Logos), the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and refers to Him becoming man, for the salvation of human beings. The incarnation includes all the events of Divine Economy, i.e. the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Second Coming of Christ to judge men. (iii) The third is the confession of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person of the All-Holy Trinity. Accordingly, God is One and He has three Persons. In the Divine Liturgy we sing: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one in essence and undivided." (iv) The fourth refers to the Church and the sacramental life, which starts with Holy Baptism. (v) Finally, the fifth point mentions the resurrection of the dead and the future life.

The whole faith of our Church is found within these five central points of the Creed. They are most basic and necessary, because without this faith, our salvation is uncertain. If we do not

believe in the God's Trinity; if we do not believe that God took on human nature in order to save man; if we do not believe in the uniqueness of the Church and if we do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, we then shake the foundations of our entire faith. By rejecting any one of these beliefs we show, in practice, that we are not real Christians.

In the Catechism lessons that follow we will study the "Symbol of Faith" further.

Tenth Catechism

God the Creator and Creation

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

"I believe". The term 'believe' is written in the first person singular because it wishes to denote the personal faith that we should have in the revealed truths preserved by the Church. However, the Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils wrote it in the plural - "we believe". This is because it presupposes the confession of faith of the members of the Church, since they read it during the Divine Liturgy, and during various other services, where many members can be found. Also, people were baptised in groups.

Faith is a revelation. We do not reveal the truth. Rather, Christ revealed it. In the Old Testament to the Prophets, and in the New Testament to the Apostles and Saints, in that he was incarnate and became a man. At first, we accept this

revelatory experience. Then, if we strive to purify our hearts of the passions, we can confirm this revelation. Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Here, the same thing occurs as with human science. University students are taught about the discoveries of preceding scientists. Later, however, if they themselves make personal experiments, they can also be led to confirm the discoveries, as well as to the discovery of new things. In any case, scientist is the term given not only to those who accept the science of others, but also, and more so, to those who advance science. Thus, we have two kinds of faith. Faith from hearing, when we listen to the experience of saints and accept it and faith from vision (theoria), when we attain the revelation ourselves.

"In one God". God is one. In the Church we do not believe in the existence of many deities independent of one another. Certainly, we talk of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but these are not three separate gods. All three have the same essence (one God), but they are three particular Persons. This cannot be comprehended by human reason. Rather, it is a case of revelation from God. All those who have achieved the experience of deification (theosis) and have seen God know this truth personally. We can use an example,

with great care, because an exact equivalence does not exist. All men have a common nature, a common essence, i.e. body, soul, noetic and rational energy, imagination and so on, yet they are different persons. The same is true with God, with the appropriate analogies, of course. The Three Persons have a common nature and essence, but particular attributes.

"Father". Here we make particular mention of the First Person of the Holy Trinity, who is called Father, because He gave birth to the Son. This occurred before the creation of the world. Since time was created concurrently with the creation of the world, the Son was born outside of time, before all ages. Moreover, the Father never existed without the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"Almighty". God is the Almighty, the *Pantocrator*, which means that He upholds the Universe. This concept is related to God's governing energy. That is to say, following the Creation of the world God preserves the world. God is not like a watchmaker, who makes a watch, winds it up and abandons it, letting it work of its own accord. Rather, He continues to govern the world Himself personally. The world was created from nothing, i.e. there was no matter at all beforehand. It cannot return to nothingness, because God upholds it with His energy.

"Maker of heaven and earth, and of all

things visible and invisible". God created the heaven and the earth, that is, the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon; as well as the entire earth, with all that exists upon it, that is, the plants, the animals, the birds and man. Moreover, he created what is visible and what is invisible. All that is visible includes the things we see. All that is invisible includes all that we cannot see with our eyes.

The angels belong to the invisible. They are liturgical spirits and minister for man's salvation. There are saints who purified their hearts of the passions, and became worthy of seeing angels. For example, St. Spyridon, who saw the angels celebrating the liturgy together with him. Likewise, the shepherds, at Christ's birth, saw angels and heard their songs of praise. Many Prophets of the Old Testament, such as Isaiah, saw angels and the works that they do. The angels are divided into nine orders namely: the Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Rulers, Archangels, and Angels.

Demons also belong to the invisible world. In the beginning, they were good angels. However, they fell because they became proud and wanted to acquire even greater glory from God. Thus, from being good spirits, they became evil ones. From angels of glory, they became demons. The demons hate man excessively and want to destroy

him. Through thoughts and other means, they attempt to lead him away from God. The saints have often seen demons and apprehended their destructive madness. Certainly, before Christ became man, the demons had great authority, but they lost it following the Incarnation, and now man can overcome them with the power of Christ.

Man, who is the pinnacle of creation, belongs to the visible realm. Indeed, God first created the noetic spirits, i.e. the angels, then the sensible realm and finally, on the sixth day, he created man. Man consists of soul and body, and is, therefore, a microcosm of the world, the recapitulation of creation and the choicest thing that exists in the world. Man is God's most perfect creation.

In the beginning man lived in Paradise, in a special place where he had communion with God. The Old Testament presents the blessed life that he led there. However, at the devil's instigation and through his own consent he was disobedient towards God and lost His grace and communion with Him. So, he left Paradise, and corruption and death entered his life. Christ delivered him from this death and this power of the devil with His Incarnation.

Eleventh Catechism

The Divinity of the Word

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God". The word "Lord" means "ruler" or "master", because Christ is also Lord of the world, like His Father. The Father created the world through the Son, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. All Three Persons uphold and rule the world, since they are equal in both honour and power. The Son is not lower than the Father; He is God. In the Creed we see that the Father is called the Almighty, the Son, Lord and the Holy Spirit also, Lord. "Jesus" means "saviour" (Matthew 1:21) and refers to the human nature that was deified by the Divine Nature. "Christ" means the "anointed one", the "Messiah". Thus, "Lord" denotes the divine nature, "Jesus" the human nature of Christ, whereas

"Christ" denotes the union of human and divine nature in the Person of the Word.

"The Son of God". Christ is the Son of God, who was born of the Father before all ages. The Father Himself revealed this truth at the Jordan River and on Mount Tabor, when His voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son. Listen to him" (Mark 9:7).

"The Only-Begotten". The Father has no other Son according to nature. He is the only one. We, human beings, can also become sons of God, but according to grace. We can use an example. A father begets a child, while at the same time he adopts another. Both children live in the same home, but there is a vast difference. The first child is natural offspring, whereas the other child is adopted. This is just one image to show the difference between Christ and man.

"Begotten of the Father before all ages". We cannot understand what the birth of the Son is, or what the procession of the Holy Spirit is, by using our reason. This was revealed to us by the Son in human images. The fact of the matter is that the word "begotten" denotes the Divinity of the Word, His relationship with the Father, that He has the same essence as Him. The terms "begotten" and "proceeded" show the particular way in which the Persons of the Holy Trinity have their existence. It shows that while they have

the same essence, nevertheless, they have particular attributes. The saints understand this when they become worthy of seeing God. The same thing that we maintained in another Catechism also holds true here. We accept the revelation of Christ and the saints and later, when we attain a personal revelation, we can come to know the relationship of the Persons of the Holy Trinity by experience.

"Light of Light". When the saints attain the experience of the revelation, they then see that God is light. In Church, we chant, "God is Light, the Word is Light, the Holy Spirit is Light". This was clearly manifest at Christ's Transfiguration. The face of Christ shone from His Divinity, the Holy Spirit was present with the "bright cloud", and the Father was heard through the voice, which shed light. In liturgical texts God is hymned as light much more often than He is as love.

This light is Divinity. It is not created light. That is to say, it is not the light of the sun, which is created; rather, it is the light of divinity, which has not been created; it is uncreated. Of course, we must say that we are made worthy to partake of God's energies and not of His essence. An example from sensible light: the sun lies beyond the earth's atmosphere, yet we partake of its energy. The same thing also happens comparatively

with God. The Persons of the Holy Trinity partake of God's essence, whereas we partake of His energies; we partake of divine grace.

"True God of true God". The term "true God" is used in contrast to false gods. This is the faith of the Church. Many things presented and present themselves as gods, but they are not true gods, since they are fabrications of human imagination. We believe in the true God solely within the Church, because Christ revealed him to us. For this reason, we entrust our salvation to Christ alone.

"Begotten, not made". We mentioned some things about the term "begotten" above. Here it is contrasted with the term "made", because the Arian heresy was current at the time. According to this heresy, Christ is a creature, made by God. This, however, shakes the very foundations of the faith. Being begotten is one thing, and being made is quite another. A blacksmith begets children, but he also produces iron. There is a vast difference between the two. Thus, the word "begotten" denotes the Divinity of the Son.

"Of one essence with the Father". This term was also added to combat Arianism. The Son has the same essence as the Father. In the example of the blacksmith, mentioned above, it is obvious that the children he begets are of one essence and the iron objects he produces are quite another.

"By whom all things were made". In a previous Catechism we said that God created the world. The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council said this, because, at the time, there were certain heretics who maintained that a lower god, which they identified with the Word, made the world. In this way, they explained the evil that exists in the world. However, the Fathers teach that the world was created by the Father, through the Son with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. With this, they wanted to show that the Son was God. The evil that exists in the world is a result of man's fall; it is an interloper and parasite and not the creation of a lower god. Just as a parasite can sprout upon a tree, without bearing any relation to the nature of the tree the same thing can be said about the evil that exists in the world. God made the world so that it was very good ("And God saw that it was good" Genesis 1), but the disorder found its origin in man's Fall.

Twelfth Catechism

The Incarnation of the Word

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.

Man is God's most perfect creation. However, through his Fall he was enslaved to the devil, sin and death. God could not bear to see his creation suffering and tormented. Therefore, out of love, He sent His Son, to become a man and to save man. This work is called the work of Divine Economy, because it shows how God accommodated things in order to save man.

"Who for us men". The Word (Logos) of God did not need to become man for His own sake; He became man solely for man alone. This shows God's great love, in taking on human nature and uniting it with divine nature.

"And for our salvation". The salvation spoken of here is not the deliverance of the soul from the body, which the ancient philosophers taught, and which many oriental religions also teach

today. Rather, it is man's deliverance from sin, death and the devil, and his union with God.

"Came down from heaven". This phrase does not mean that the Word stopped being God, when He became man. Nor does it mean that he abandoned the heavens and the throne of God. In the Akathist Hymn we say, "This was a divine condescension, not a change of place." By the expression "came down" we mean that the Son and Word of God took on human nature in order to save man.

"And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary". Christ's Incarnation is a great mystery. Christ was not conceived in the way that men are conceived. The conception took place from the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Consequently, a man did not participate. We can see this if we study the event of the Annunciation of the All-Holy Theotokos (see Luke 1:26-38). The Virgin Mary is called the Theotokos, which is a Greek word, used by the Fathers. It means Birthgiver of God. This is because she gave birth (*tokos*) to God (*Theos*) and not to a mere man. The Third Ecumenical Council concerned itself especially with this point. The Panagia was a Virgin before the conception, Virgin after the conception and Virgin after the birth. We see this in every icon that represents the Panagia; she is depicted with three stars on

His human nature was pure and holy, nevertheless Christ freely took on what are known as the "blameless passions"; that is to say, passions that do not constitute sin, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and even mortality. The blameless passions did not work forcibly, but the Divinity mastered them. We know, from Moses on Mt. Sinai and others, that the bodily functions of saints who attained theosis were postponed during the experience of theosis. Moses stayed on Sinai for forty days and nights without food or material goods. With this in mind, we can say the same thing and more about Christ. He had a real human body, but He Himself mastered the blameless passions.

Ultimately, the mystery of Christ becoming man becomes somewhat comprehensible from the saints who attain theosis and come to know the transfiguration of their nature from the uncreated energy of God. Reasonably, nobody can grasp it in its fullness. We accept it and proceed to sanctification.

Thirteenth Catechism

The Passion and Resurrection of Christ

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.

And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

"He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate". Christ really did die on the Cross. The death from the Cross was most painful and terrible. The fact that His body was crucified and died on the Cross shows that it was a real body and not an imaginary one. Christ died for us, so that His death would become our life. He was not crucified to appease divine justice; such a view shows God being insulted as though he suffered from passion. God is not passionate, nor

did He need to sacrifice His Son to satisfy His justice. Christ was crucified out of love for man. He died in order to free man from death and freely to give him life. The fact that this took place under Pontius Pilate is stressed to show that this event actually did take place within history.

"And suffered". When Christ suffered His divine nature did not suffer in itself, rather, his human nature did. However, His divine nature did undergo this suffering together with the human nature. We can use two examples to make this more comprehensible. Let us suppose that there is a tree lit by the sun. The sun's rays fall upon this tree. The lumberjack who cuts the wood into pieces cannot cut up the sun's energies. The other example is of burning iron. When we throw water on it, the fire suffers, since it goes out. Yet, the iron does not suffer, since it is not destroyed by water. We can say the same thing, by analogy, about Christ's passion. His human nature suffered, but not His divine nature, which did however undergo the passion together with the human nature.

"And was buried". Christ really did die on the Cross, and He was then buried in a new tomb. Nicodemus and noble Joseph of Arimathea took him down from the Cross. Thus, following His death and burial, Christ's body is found in the grave together with His Divinity, whereas the

soul, together with His Divinity, descended into Hades where the souls of the dead were. That is to say, His Divinity was not separated from His soul and His body. Hence, the body remained unharmed and incorruptible in the grave, while the soul freed all the righteous of the Old Testament, who were in Hades. This means that the body did not undergo any change at all when the soul had departed from it. We can understand this by making an analogy with the relics of saints; they give off sweet fragrances, while many of them remain completely uncorrupted.

"And the third day He rose again". Three days later the soul returned to the body and thus rose again. That is to say, Christ's Divinity resurrected His human nature. The Gospels describe how Christ appeared to the Myrrh-bearing Women and to His Disciples. He gave them peace, joy, blessing and the Holy Spirit to forgive sins. Following the Resurrection the body was incorruptible and spiritual; distances or limitations did not bind it. The bodies of the righteous will be like this following the resurrection of the dead. Christ's resurrection is a prelude to our own resurrection.

"According to the Scriptures". The amazing thing is that Christ revealed all that was going to happen to the Prophets and the righteous of the Old Testament. Thus, many years beforehand, the

Prophets described everything that was going to happen. The Prophet Isaiah is called the loudest of prophets and the fifth Evangelist, because he made the most detailed description of event eight hundred years before.

"And He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father". The fact that we say He ascended into heaven does not mean that He also descended, as we mentioned in a previous Catechism. The descent is understood in the sense of taking on human nature - the fact that He became a man, while still remaining God. Christ, as God, was both in Heaven, united with His Father, and on earth, associating with men. The phrase "ascended ... and sits at the right hand of the Father" means that he also raised up human nature and glorified it. It is precisely because Christ deified human nature, and because He is at the right hand of the Father, that we also can be saved.

"And He shall come again with glory". Here the second coming of Christ is mentioned. The first coming occurred when He became man, with his birth from the Virgin Mary; it was poor and unknown to most people. The second coming will occur with great glory, since He will come with His angels and everyone will see Him on a throne of glory. The time of this Second Coming is completely unknown to us. (See Matthew 24:36 and Acts 1:7).

"To judge the living and the dead". At the time of Christ's Second Coming the judgement of men will occur. Everybody who is alive will be judged, as well as everybody who has died, since they will be resurrected. Christ mentioned everything that would happen in the future judgement (see Matthew 25: 31-46). This passage clearly shows that everybody will see God, but for some people God will become Paradise and for others Hell. In other words, everybody who has acquired a pure spiritual eye in this life will see God's glory, and this is called Paradise. Whereas, all those who are spiritually blind will experience the fire, which is Hell. For example, we can say that the sun has an energy that gives light and another one that gives heat or burns. Everyone who has eyes sees the energy that gives light; all those that are blind feel the heat-giving energy. This, essentially, is Paradise and Hell, just as they are presented in the iconography of the Second Coming. Here, the righteous are within bright clouds, whereas the sinners are in a river of fire, which flows from the throne of Christ.

"Whose kingdom shall have no end". The Kingdom or Reign of God is Paradise, man's communion with God. We experience this Kingdom now as a betrothal, but then we will experience it as a marriage. The Kingdom of God has no end. It will be eternal and endless, just as Hell will be eternal.

Fourteenth Catechism

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

The Second Ecumenical Council mainly concerned itself with the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, because it was at this time that the fact that the Holy Spirit is God was questioned.

"And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life". The three titles - "Holy, Lord, Giver of Life"- demonstrate the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, these three titles are also given to the other Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit created and give life to the whole of creation.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in third place, just as the Son is in second place. However, this does not suggest that the Son is lower than the Father, nor that the Holy Spirit is lower than the Son and the Father. The Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one essence, one honour and one

glory, equal between themselves. One example is the sides of a equilateral triangle. There is no side that is higher or lower than the other. The Father is given first place because He is the cause of the Son's birth and the Holy Spirit's procession. The Son is given second place because He was born from the Father and because we feel closer to Him because He became man. Besides, the order of the Persons is often changed to reveal their equality. For example, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:13). Here Christ takes first place, the Father follows and the Holy Spirit is placed after Him.

"Who proceeds from the Father". The Son is born from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. We cannot understand this using our reason. Christ revealed this to us when He said, "But when the Comforter (Paraclete) comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26). Here it is clear that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent by the Son, but ultimately the Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ, and the formation of Christ within us occurs through the Holy Spirit.

The Franks added a phrase known as the *fi-*

lioque to the Creed, between the words "proceeds" and "from the Father". They say, "who proceeds from the Father and from the Son." However, this is mistaken and creates huge problems. First of all, they did not have the right to do it, since the Third Ecumenical Council said that not one syllable should be added to the Creed or taken away from it, by anyone at all. Moreover, as in the case of the Son, who is begotten of the Father alone, the same is true of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father alone. This teaching of the Franks leads to the depreciation of the Holy Spirit or the dissolution of the Holy Trinity. Because, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, it means that it is below them, because It does not participate in the existence of the other Persons Itself. If, however, It must also participate, then the hypostatic particulars would be dissolved, since the Son could be seen as also being born from the Holy Spirit. There could even be another person that comes from the Holy Spirit, whereby the Holy Trinity is dissolved.

Christ clearly revealed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent forth by the Son. The Franks arrived at their heretical teaching because they had lost contact with the Church's theology of experience. They lost the presuppositions for true orthodox theology. They distorted

the way in which we achieve communion with God and formed the impression and the opinion that their own speculative theology was superior to the theology of our Holy Fathers. We base ourselves on everything that Christ revealed to us and everything that was lived out by the saints.

"Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified". This phrase demonstrates the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the Holy Spirit is not lower than the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, since He is worshipped and glorified together with them.

"Who spoke by the prophets". The Holy Spirit spoke to the Prophets and revealed the truths of the faith to them. Of course, we know that the revelations in the Old Testament are revelations of the unincarnate Word. Nevertheless, these revelations occur through the Holy Spirit. In general, we can say that the work of Christ is not different from the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ sends forth the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit forms Christ within our hearts. The heart is purified and we are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit. As long as we are united with Christ, we feel the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Fifteenth Catechism

The Church and Her Attributes

In one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The "Symbol of Faith" is the work of the Church, just as the Holy Scripture is also, naturally, the work of the Church. The Church writes the Holy Scriptures, the Church interprets them, the Church formulates the doctrines, that is to say, she sets the boundaries between truth and deception and the Church composes rules in order for her to function regularly and well, as well as to cure her sick members.

The Orthodox Church is the Body of Christ, which Christ took on from the Virgin Mary and deified. The Church is not a human corporation or organisation; it is the Body of Christ.

There is a close relationship between Orthodoxy, the Church and the Divine Eucharist. Orthodoxy is the true faith of the Church and the Divine Eucharist is the true act of the Church. If there is a Church without Orthodoxy and the Eucharist, it is not a Church. If there is Ortho-

doxy outside the Church and the Divine Eucharist, it is not Orthodoxy. Moreover, if there is Divine Eucharist, without Orthodoxy and the Church, it is not the Divine Eucharist. This is why we maintain that outside the Orthodox Church there is no other Church, only heresies. Thus, the return of the heretics to the only true Church, the Orthodox Church, is needed.

In the "Symbol of Faith" we confess and believe in four basic attributes of the Church.

"**In one**". The Church is one, not many. Despite the wealth of many local Churches, there is only one Church. There are many Orthodox Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches. Inasmuch as they have the same faith and communion amongst themselves they constitute that one Church. We can use an example. There is only one loaf of communion bread upon the Holy Altar Table. Whoever has communion does not commune only a part of Christ, but the whole of Christ, since "broken and distributed is the Lamb of God; broken but not divided." The same thing happens with the Orthodox Churches. They make up the one, unique Body of Christ. This is why all those who have left the Church, through heresy, must return.

"**Holy**". The Church is holy, because her head, Christ, sanctified it. The Church is not made holy by her members; rather, she makes her members

holy. We must remain within the Church in order to become Holy. Outside the Church our salvation is uncertain.

"Catholic". She is called catholic for many reasons. First, because she is found throughout the world. Second, because she preserves the whole truth. Third, because her life is common to all. The adjective catholic is identified with the adjective orthodox. A true Catholic is an Orthodox believer, because he possesses the whole truth and is completely transfigured by it.

"Apostolic". The Church is called Apostolic because her head is Christ, who is an Apostle and High-Priest. It was founded on the foundation stone of the Apostles and is patristic. Besides, the Fathers are the successors of the Holy Apostles, both in terms of priesthood and in terms of teaching. They have the same faith, and the same life as them.

We remain continually within the Church; we accept the teachings of the saints; we are obedient to the commandments and the teaching of the Church; we are sanctified by the sacraments and in this way we hope in salvation. We never feel that we should save the Church. Rather, that we remain within her in order to be saved. Every member of the Church who separates himself from her body destroys himself; he dies spiritually, just as every member of the human

body dies when it is separated from the whole of the human body. Such separated members are heretics, schismatics and atheists.

Sixteenth Catechism

The Sacramental Life of the Church

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

The Church "is declared in mysteries". Through the sacraments of the Church the Christian proves that he is a member of the Body of Christ, because he is united to the Theanthropic Body of Christ and tastes of divine grace, through the sacraments.

"I acknowledge one baptism". Holy Baptism is called and actually is an introductory sacrament, because it introduces us into the Church and makes us members of the Body of Christ. Baptism grafts us onto the new life. In the ancient Church, the sacrament of Baptism was preceded by Catechism, which prepared the person and gave him the ability to become a real member of the Body of Christ. A study of the prayers of the sacrament of Baptism shows what its aim is and the great value that it has.

Christ called upon His Disciples saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Hence, they are called to establish men as Disciples of Christ by baptising them and teaching them to keep His commandments. Consequently, Baptism is required, but so is ascetic practice, which is nothing more than the attempt to keep Christ's commandments within our life. Sacraments without ascetic practice do not help, and ascetic practice without sacraments does not constitute communion with Christ.

Christ said to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). According to the interpretation of St. Symeon the New Theologian, the baptism of water must be joined with the baptism of the Spirit, which is the advent of divine grace within the heart. A characteristic example is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. The Christians of Samaria had been baptised in the "name of the Lord Jesus", but they did not have the Holy Spirit. So, Peter and John went to Samaria and "laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8: 14-17). The laying on of hands is today associated with Holy Chrism.

"For the remission of sins". Holy Baptism grants the "remission of sins". This should not be

considered in legalistic terms, as something like the deliverance from the guilt of original sin; it should be considered in terms of therapy. That is to say, the image in man is purified, the nous is illumined and he returns to natural life. It is in this context that we talk of remission of sins. Besides, sin is the darkening of the nous and the obscuring of the image.

Holy Baptism is an introductory sacrament, because it introduces the person into the Church. The aim of Baptism is to lead man into the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, the Divine Eucharist is the centre of all the sacraments and of man's ecclesial and spiritual life. No-one can live without Holy Communion. However, participation in Holy Communion is according to the degree of a person's purification, illumination and deification (theosis).

Seventeenth Catechism

The Resurrection of the Dead and the Life to Come

*I look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the age to come.
Amen.*

"I look for the resurrection of the dead". In the Creed we confess that we expect the resurrection of the dead. Of course, when we say the resurrection of the dead, we mean the resurrection of bodies. Bodies, which are separated from the soul at death, will be resurrected, i.e. the souls will return to their bodies and will give them life. The entire man should live eternally.

All bodies will be resurrected, those of the righteous and the unrighteous, saints and sinners alike. Thus, we can talk of the "restoration of nature", not, however, of the restoration of will. The gift of resurrection will be given to all men, the righteous and unrighteous alike. Hence, everyone will be resurrected, but it is only the righteous who will be caught up "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Christ's resurrection is a prelude to our own resurrection. The saints already enjoy the resurrection of the body, the abolition of death and the fact that the departure of the soul from the body is really a sleep. We can also enjoy this great truth. The relics of saints are proof that the saints are sleeping and that death has been abolished. Their incorruptible bodies, which give of sweet smelling fragrances and work miracles, are a foretaste of the coming resurrection. Thus, Church's task is to make man's body a "relic".

The resurrection of the dead will certainly happen. We have Christ's absolute confirmation of this. However, we do not know when it will happen. The time of Christ's Second Coming is unknown; even the angels do not know when it will happen. Only God the Father knows.

The resurrected bodies will be spiritual. St. Paul writes concerning the subject "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

This will take place for those who have fallen asleep. However, regarding those people who will still be alive at the moment of the Second Coming of Christ, St. Paul says that they will immediately

change, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15: 51-52).

"And the life of the age to come". At the end of the Creed we confess that we believe in eternal life. Truly, man's life is not used up in this earthly life, nor does the soul disappear after it leaves the body. Man's soul is immortal by grace. This means that every created thing, by nature, has a beginning and an end. However, God willed that man's soul would be immortal. Certainly, this is said while bearing in mind that the body and the soul do not make up the whole man on their own, but both of them do so together. Thus, the whole man will live eternally.

There are two ways of experiencing eternity. The first is to be "forever well" and the other is "adversity forever". The first is associated with man's communion with God, the participation in God as light. The second is associated with estrangement from God, or the experience of God as darkness. Everybody will see God, but for the righteous He will be vision and participation, whereas for sinners, there will be no participation, but it will be hell.

"Amen". The term "Amen" has two meanings. The first is a prayer and the second is a confirmation. In reciting the Creed, we both confirm what is confessed, and pray that all this is realised within our own personal life.

May this confession of faith become a living experience for us, may it enter into our personal life and become our blood and our nourishment.

4

Questions and Answers

At the end of the period of Catechism, questions can be put to the Catechumen, during a spoken encounter, that will refer to the contents of the Catechism lessons.

Certainly, these questions are not an examination, although that is often necessary even just for his intellectual edification on matters of the faith. Their real purpose is a summarised presentation of the truths that he has been taught. Besides, as we said elsewhere, introductory faith is faith from hearing; it is known as intellectual faith.

Mainly, however, the questions and answers refer to two realities:

First, the revision of all that the Catechumen has been taught. Through the questions and answers, the Catechumen will be given the opportunity to remember the central points of the Catechism lessons and to retain them in memory. This intellectual knowledge, combined with experience of Church life, will help him learn the

changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

6. *What does eternal life mean?*

It is man's life after death but, first and foremost, it is the participation in the glory of God by the righteous.

7. *What will be the difference between the righteous and sinners (after death)?*

The righteous will live "forever well", whereas sinners will experience "adversity forever".

8. *What does the word "Amen" mean?*

It has two meanings. The first is a confirmation, that is, we admit that it is all true. The second is a prayer, that is we pray for Christ's Second Coming to happen soon, to come quickly, so that we can enjoy His glory.

These questions and answers refer to the truths that the Catechumens have been taught. If the Catechist-Priest mentions other matters, like the difference between the Orthodox Church and other confessions ('Roman Catholicism' - Protestantism), relevant questions must again be put.

The fact is that, in this way, the knowledge that the Catechumens acquired during the Catechism lessons will be consolidated.

5

The Rite of the Sacrament of Baptism

Everything we have looked at so far has shown that the Catechism of Catechumens is a serious matter and should not be taken lightly, because doing things in haste and superficially is a secular practice. Instead of contributing to the increase of the Church, it contributes to the increase of a secular Church.

The same applies to the rite of the sacrament of Baptism. This should also be placed within a traditional and an Orthodox framework. Otherwise, it will not help the baptismal candidate appreciate its great value and importance for the rest of his life. Besides, the sacramental rite is not sufficient in itself; it is also necessary to lead a life in Christ. In order to make things somewhat easier we will make a few practical suggestions about the Baptismal service for adults.

First. As we pointed out earlier, it is preferable that Catechism is associated with the great and

reverential seasons of our Church. Of course, Catechism can take place throughout the year, but the final stage, as we see in the "Catechisms" of St. Cyril of Jerusalem and in the teaching of the Holy Fathers, must be connected with Holy and Great Lent. This season is appropriate for this task for the following reasons:

First of all, it is a reverential period, with prayer and fasting, established by the Church. The Church services increase, the fast is strict, the hymns and all the themes throughout the Lenten Sundays help. The hymns refer to repentance and return, the passages from the Gospel and the Epistles, both in the Triodion period before Lent, and throughout Lent itself, refer to the basic points of the Orthodox Faith. The grand stature of the saints who are celebrated and the various events aid Orthodox Catechism a great deal. The Catechumen will be given the opportunity to hear the parables of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son. He will be able to understand what the exile from Paradise is through worship in Church. He will celebrate the grandeur of Orthodoxy and understand what the Orthodox Faith consists of. He will find out about the great importance of the teaching of St. Gregory Palamas. He will see the strength of the Venerable Cross. He will find out about the very essence of Orthodox ascetic practice, as it appears

in "The Ladder", the book by St. John of Sinai. He will be encouraged by the great repentance of St. Mary of Egypt. Finally, he will personally experience the Passion, Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

Furthermore, he will experience all the various Liturgies that the Church has, i.e. the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. In the last service, in particular, he will hear the petitions of the faithful, the members of the Church, on behalf of the Catechumens, that are still intoned even today. This will make the work of the Priest-Catechist easier.

Moreover, the Baptism of the Catechumens that will take place on Great Saturday will help them appreciate their own resurrection in Christ and their entrance into the resurrected Body of Christ. The paschal season that follows will be their first joyful experience of the new life that they received with Baptism. They will be given the opportunity to take communion every day throughout Bright Week, as they did in ancient times. The Pentecost season will be an effective aid. Besides, the subject matter of most of the Sundays leading up to Pentecost has been chosen to help the Catechumens become consciously aware of what life in Christ is, in practice. We know that most Gospel passages of this season

mention water, the font, the advent of the Holy Spirit, who quenches man's thirst, about the healing of the eye, and so on. The Church never does anything aimlessly.

Second. The Baptism of Catechumens should be associated with great feasts. As we mentioned earlier, the most fundamental feast is Easter. Thus, the Baptism will take place on Great Saturday, because the whole service is suited to this aim. According to the readings for Vespers of Great Saturday, the Baptism takes place in an adjoining baptistery or in a chapel. Immediately following this, the newly baptised Catechumens enter the main church and everybody chants in the place of the thrice-holy hymn: "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia." The whole community rejoices over the event. If there is no baptistery or chapel, the Baptism takes place somewhere in the narthex of the church building.

However, Baptism can also be linked with every feast of the Lord. Besides, during all the Feasts of the Lord, Christmas, Theophany, Easter and so on, the thrice-holy hymn, "Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal" is not sung and the hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." is sung instead. It is the entire community's joy over the new members joining it.

Third. The sacrament of Baptism, in this case, must be combined with the Divine Eucharist. In modern times, the association of the sacrament of Marriage with the Divine Eucharist has been introduced into the *typikon*. However, this should primarily occur with Holy Baptism, since this is its inherent position. In ancient times, as we saw above, Baptism was always combined with the Divine Liturgy. Besides, this is evident in practice, since we are baptised in order to commune the Body and Blood of Christ, as members of the Church.

Of course, the best thing is for Baptism to be combined with the Liturgy on Great Saturday, where it is much more suitable, since this liturgy also occurs together with Vespers. Since, immediately following the Baptism, the replacement thrice-holy hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ" is chanted and the Divine Liturgy follows. In this case, a baptistery is required or a small chapel next to the main church.

The sacrament of Baptism can also take place between Matins and the Divine Liturgy in the central church or the chapel, as St. Nikodemos the Athonite recommends. The sacrament can even take place in a chapel next to the main church until the actual Baptism, while Matins is being chanted in the main church. Then the Di-

vine Liturgy continues. The "dance" takes place during the chanting of the thrice-holy hymn and the Liturgy continues.

However, I would like to go on to present a *typikon* for combining the sacrament of Baptism with that of the Divine Eucharist.

The service of the Catechumens is celebrated the day before the Baptism, following Vespers.

The sacrament of Baptism takes place during the Liturgy.

First of all, the service of Matins is celebrated in the usual manner. Following the doxology, the dismissal takes place, either aloud or in secret. Immediately following this the sacrament of Baptism is celebrated. It must be noted that on this day the Liturgy of the Catechumens is omitted, i.e. from the "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father..." until the small entrance, because the Baptism will take place during this section. Consequently, the whole arrangement of the combination of Baptism and the Divine Liturgy is as follows:

Following the doxology and the *apolytikion* or *theotokion* we intone the phrase "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father..." and we say the baptismal petition for peace. Then the whole service of Baptism as laid out in the service book of the Church takes place until the dressing of the baptismal candidate in the robe. That is to say, we

read the prayer of the blessing of the waters and the prayer for the anointing with oil. We anoint the person being baptised with exorcising oil. We baptise him in the sanctified water of the font. We say Psalm 31 (32 *Septuagint*), "Blessed are they whose transgression is redeemed". We read the relevant prayer and anoint the person being baptised with Holy Myrrh. We dress him in the robe and we immediately sing the *troparion*, "Give me a bright robe."

At this point, the priests enter the Holy Altar, following the chanting of the *apolytikion* for the day, the entrance of the Holy Gospel takes place. On this day the entrance hymn is replaced with chanting of "Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Save us, O Son of God..."

The *apolytikia* of the day are chanted, as well as the *kontakion* and the hymn "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." While the *apolytikia* are being chanted we read the prayer of the thrice-holy hymn. "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ..." is chanted in the middle of the Church, around the font. Immediately after this the Epistle and Gospel are read.

Following the Gospel and the petition, "Have mercy upon us, O God..." the prayers of the faithful are read and the Cherubic hymn is chanted. That is to say, the Divine Liturgy con-

tinues in the usual manner. With the words, "In fear of God, with faith and love draw near." The newly baptised person approaches to commune the Divine Mysteries first, together with his sponsor. In this way, the words of St. Nicholas Cabasilas are put into practice. He says that following the Baptism we proceed to Holy Communion. This also establishes the credibility of the God-parent, because if he cannot take communion (because he is outside the Church, or because he has had a civil wedding rather than a Church one) he cannot baptise.

Following the prayer of the ambo, we read the rest of the baptismal service in full. That is to say, we read the prayers of ablution, of cutting of the hair, the priest's blessing, "O Lord our God, from the fullness of the font..." the tonsure takes place and the relevant petitions are made on behalf of the newly illumined person and his sponsor. The dismissal takes place immediately after the prayer "The blessing of the Lord..." The newly-baptised person and the God-parent receive the *antidoron* first, and the rest of the congregation follows.

Following the Divine Liturgy, if possible, we chant the first *Eothinon* or the *Theotokion* of vespers in the first mode. Then, with the priest preceding, together with the sponsor and the baptised person we go either to the house of the

baptised person (if it is nearby) or to church hall (if there is one). There, wishes are exchanged and a modest reception can be held.

This association of Baptism with the Divine Liturgy will help the Catechumens and the faithful a great deal, and will contribute to the revival of our liturgical life. I believe that it will be the culmination of Orthodox Catechism and will show that the Church carries out this task seriously and responsibly. It will also be the start of a new life after Baptism.

Guidance after Baptism

Outline

1. *Entering a Church Community*
2. *Continuing Catechism*
3. *Time is Needed for Personal Experience of the Truth*
4. *Avoiding the Trap of Fanaticism*
5. *Confrontation of possible sense of scandal.*
6. *Guidance during the period of the withdrawal of divine grace.*

The pastoral ministry of Christians and especially of Catechumens demands a journey of the cross, a responsible mission and a life of witness. The priest is not satisfied with a formal presentation of the truths of the faith. He does not expend himself on social work. Rather, he is crucified and he sacrifices himself every day, so that Christians will be reborn. The model of a true pastor should be Christ's words, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep" (John 10:11). Also, the words of St. Paul,

which express the life of sacrifice, "My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you!" (Galatians 4:19). The Priest-Catechist is primarily interested in forming Christ in the heart of the Catechumen and the newly illumined person. This means that his catechetical efforts do not end with Baptism. They are extended beyond it, and continue throughout the baptised person's life.

I would like to go on to underline some basic points that the Catechist-Priest must bear in mind after the Baptism of the Catechumens. I believe that they are essential for the correct treatment of newly baptised Christians.

First. They must become an organic member of a parish community. Of course, this presupposes that the parish is organised correctly, that it has a life of worship, charitable and social action and so on. The new Christian must feel that through Baptism he has joined a family. He must feel that he has become a member of the body of Christ and of the particular parish. He must experience the reality of the fact that he has a spiritual father and spiritual brothers and sisters. Faith is church faith and not an individual event. He was not catechised and baptised in order to continue living as an individual and to feel that with Baptism he simply acquired a better doctrinal formulation about God, the creation of the

world and man's salvation. He must experience all this personally in his life within the parish.

For this reason, today, experienced spiritual fathers advise against the baptism, if we cannot guarantee this parish community, this spiritual family, because we create split personalities. For example, if a Protestant becomes Orthodox on Mount Athos, unless his membership of a parish community in his own country is guaranteed for him, he will find himself in tragic situation. He will be neither a Protestant nor an Orthodox Christian, since he will be unable to participate in Protestant gatherings, and he will not even belong to an Orthodox community. This means that in these cases we must do all we can to find a way for him to join an Orthodox community.

Second. We continue to catechise and guide the newly illumined Christians spiritually. They must learn many things and mainly they should live the life in Christ. Just as Catechism is required for the faithful the same applies to the newly baptised. When the apostles created a Church they maintained continual contact with it. St. Paul was personally interested in the Churches that he founded. He faced all the problems that cropped up in a pastoral manner. He catechised the newly baptised in the life according to Christ and solved the differences that arose.

The Clergy advise the baptised to keep God's

commandments in their everyday life. In this way, they will achieve perfection and sanctification. When we talk of an ascetic life, we mean, first and foremost, the keeping of Christ's commandments. They urge the baptised to commune of the Immaculate Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. This is a very basic point, because without Christ there is no virtue in life. Naturally, in the case of some grave sin, repentance and confession is required.

Third. The Catechist-Priest must be aware of the fact that although the newly baptised Christian has learnt many of the truths of the faith in theory, nevertheless, it will take quite a while until these become a part of his personal life experience. That is to say, the newly baptised Christian comes from a different religion and is influenced by a different religious and cultural tradition. He understands the truths of Orthodoxy intellectually, but it will take time for them to be established and to become a way of life. He tries to understand them rationally, but many years will pass before they become a true personal conviction and before they change all his former religious and cultural tradition. This is why continuous guidance and repentance is necessary. Thus, we understand the difference between those who were "born" into the Orthodox Church and find that many things are given and entrenched within

themselves, and those who were baptised at an older age. Certainly, their great enthusiasm can overcome many problems.

Fourth. Serious and responsible guidance is needed for the way in which the newly baptised should react. The experienced Catechist is clearly aware that the person who has converted to Orthodoxy can easily fall into fanaticism, which is expressed in two ways. One way, is that of accusing his former religion, the other, is setting himself up as a "teacher" of other Orthodox Christians. He may consider himself to be in a better position than they are. Therefore, the priest-catechist should be very careful. Without disappointing him, he should help him.

Primarily, this means that when he hears the baptised person mock his former religion, he should not take part in what he says. It is probable that the newly baptised Christian will regret what he said during his first bout of enthusiasm. However, if he remembers that other Orthodox Christians or the priest took part, or worse, if he remembers that others urged him to do this, he will then be angry with them. He will think that they had made him fanatical or that they proselytised him. The result is that he will return to his former religion with hatred against Orthodoxy. Many such spiritual mistakes have occurred.

Moreover, he will not let the newly baptised

Christian play the teacher to other Orthodox Christians. It is possible that the newly baptised Christian belongs to a higher social class, has many experiences, has exceptional intellectual qualities, is a great writer and so on. This arouses the interest of other Orthodox Christians. They consider it an honour that this person is a member of their Church. Consequently, they praise him and invite him to speak to the people. This increases the fanaticism and zeal of the newly baptised Christian. It causes conceit and egotism with destructive consequences for his future development. It is not right for a "neophyte" to be a teacher of other believers. This is the reason why St. Paul advises his disciple, Timothy, not to ordain as a bishop "a recent convert, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6).

The case of St. Paul the Apostle is most characteristic. Following Christ's revelation to him, he did not journey towards his relatives according to the flesh and according to the spirit. He did not even go to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles; instead, he went to Arabia (Galatians 1:16-18). The divine apostle stayed in the Arabian Desert for three years, weeping over his former fall, the persecution of the Church of Christ. Throughout his whole life he remembered that horrific condition where he persecuted the Church

and this increased his humility, despite the many and great revelations that he had.

We must bear all this in mind so that we can succeed in this great mission of catechising new members. Complete repentance is required, on the part of the baptised, throughout their whole life. If this great, all-encompassing repentance does not exist then the former life will leave some ugly marks, resulting in their return to their former faith. In general, we should not encourage the newly illumined Christians to be teachers and to teach the other Orthodox.

Fifth. There is a great danger that the newly illumined Christians will be shocked by the bad behaviour of other Orthodox Christians. Although they received Catechism as therapeutic treatment, it is possible, that upon entering the Church, they will come across various passions and will be scandalised spiritually. Therefore, the Catechist-Priest should prepare the Catechumen to face this situation. He must consciously realise that within the Church there are living and dead members, those who are healthy and those who are sick. If someone is not careful in his life, he may lose the grace of Christ, which he received at Holy Baptism, and he may become worse than unbelievers. This is because Baptism and the advent of divine grace do not abolish man's freedom.

Indeed, the chance existence of spiritual im-

propriety in members of the Church should become an opportunity to teach the newly baptised Christian, because it could possibly happen to him, if he is not careful in his life. Ultimately, the newly baptised Christian should learn that the Church is a body with various members, who are struggling to achieve perfection and sanctification. They should learn that Holy Baptism is only the start of the journey and not the end of it. They should realise that personal effort and struggle is also needed. The same thing that happened with the Hebrews who were journeying to the Promised Land happens here. Many left the land of Egypt; however, they did not all arrive in the Promised Land. The Church is "militant" in that it battles, fights, is victorious, but it also has wounded soldiers. The Church is a Hospital - a place of healing. Its members are divided into three categories: those, whose souls have been healed (saints), those that are being healed, and those that are still sick in soul, who may someday start being healed (therapy).

In this spirit, the person being baptised will be brought back down to earth. He will apprehend the reality. He will not be flying up in the clouds and he will become spiritually mature. He will realise that the life in Christ is a personal matter. Despite the various scandals, there are saints; there are fighters and "violent" Christians (*see*

Matt. 11:12). Besides, those that sin today may repent and be saved tomorrow. The final verdict, the separation of what is good from what is rotten will be given at Christ's Second Coming (*Matthew 13: 24-30*).

Six. There is a fine detail that we must underline so that we are aware of the way in which we should edify the baptised.

From Orthodox teaching, we know that there are three spiritual stages related to God's grace. The first is the advent of uncreated grace within man's heart. The second is the withdrawal of grace, for reasons known to God. Finally, the third is the return of grace into the heart. All people, at a certain moment, feel the advent of divine grace within the heart. They all lose it, because God wants their personal freedom to be activated; hence the spiritual struggle starts: pain and ascetic practice. Naturally, only a few people manage to acquire divine grace gain and have it remain in their hearts permanently. Very discreet and wise guidance is needed during the withdrawal of divine grace.

This happens, mainly, to those who are catechised and baptised. If a traditional Catechism has taken place beforehand, then they feel the divine grace within themselves during the baptism. The prayer of the heart and nous grows within them and they have all the results of this

condition, i.e. tears of repentance and joy, prayer, love for the whole world, zeal and inebriation for God and so on. The clergy must be aware of this course of divine grace, so that when the time comes, a few months or a few years later, and the newly baptised lose this divine grace, they will not be disappointed. Indeed, the clergy should guide them telling them that this is a natural condition, and in this way, their freedom is activated all the more. God withdraws the grace out of love; so that we can both learn of His love for man, and go on to make our own personal effort.

If the Catechumen does not learn about this delicate spiritual task, he may well become disappointed, give up, and wither, falling into immediate spiritual danger. Experience has shown that this is the greatest temptation that the newly baptised undergo. Following the Baptism they feel like they are "drunk"; they are existentially glad, everything is pleasing and joyful. However, in the period of the withdrawal of divine grace they find themselves in a tragic condition. It is then possible for them to believe that their former condition was simply enthusiasm, a psychological feeling of well-being, or they may think that their current condition is proof that they have become psychologically ill. Sensible guidance and paternal care will help them understand that this is the road

towards sanctification. All the saints passed through this stage in their spiritual lives. In this way, God's gifts will become their permanent spiritual condition.

Bearing all this in mind, we can say that the Catechism of those already baptised is much more difficult and painstaking than the Catechism of Catechumens before Baptism.