

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Troparia in the Orthodox church are:
 - A. Hymns of praise
 - B. Priests' vestments
 - C. Special kinds of candles
2. Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness because:
 - A. He enlightened those in darkness
 - B. He was baptized by St. John
 - C. He was born on a sunny afternoon
3. To "enlighten" means:
 - A. To lift a heavy load
 - B. To wash a garment
 - C. To bring understanding
4. The 10 Commandments were given by God to:
 - A. Abraham
 - B. Jacob
 - C. Moses
5. Christ taught us to pray to God as:
 - A. Yahweh
 - B. Our Father
 - C. Adonai
6. When we pray for "our daily bread" we are asking for:
 - A. Food for our bodies
 - B. Spiritual nourishment
 - C. Both of the above
7. "Thy will be done" means:
 - A. To obey God
 - B. To ask for what we want
 - C. To inherit something from a relative
8. Things we do that offend other people or God are called:
 - A. Tresspasses
 - B. Sins
 - C. Both of the above
9. The Lord's Prayer is about:
 - A. The whole meaning of life
 - B. Love and forgiveness
 - C. Both of the above

Afterfeast of the Nativity



*Icon of Christ Emmanuel and
the Heavenly Host of Angels*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We learned that the word “nativity” means “birth,” and we celebrated the Nativity of Christ (Christmas). The Nativity of Christ is one of the major Feast Days of the Church. But we do not celebrate His birth on only one day. The Church celebrates the Feast for a week. During **“The Afterfeast of the Nativity,”** the Church reminds us to offer thanks to Christ our God every day, because **Christ is with us always.**

As the winter season moves along, the hours of daylight increase. As the days grow longer, we remember the words of St. John the Baptist, who said about Christ that, **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”** (John 3:30). This means that as we live our lives, Christ wants us to trust Him more and more, to follow His teachings to guide us in doing the right things and less of what we might want for selfish reasons.

In the troparia (hymns) of the Orthodox church, Christ is described in many ways, including the **“Sun of Righteousness.”** He is compared to the Sun because His coming to earth enlightens those who were in darkness. To **“enlighten”** means to teach so that others understand.

Light and darkness are symbols that the Church uses to help people understand the difference between the way the world was before and after Christ came, and the way life is for those with or without Christ.

Before Christ, the people wanted to know God, and they tried to understand. They had the Commandments that God had given to Moses, but it was difficult for them to know how to follow them in their daily lives. It was as if they were walking at night or as a blind person. If a person walks in the **darkness**, it is easy to stumble or even fall down. The Church uses the words **“stumble”** and **“fall”** to describe how a person does wrong things which are called sins.

God knew how difficult it is to keep all of His Commandments. But God loves everyone and would not leave His people without a **Way** to get back up when they stumble and fall. For that reason, Christ came to earth through the Virgin Mary. He grew into a Man and taught the people how to love God and obtain forgiveness.

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Metropolitan Anthony of Sorouzh said that **the Lord's Prayer teaches us the whole meaning of life.** There was no such prayer before Christ taught it.

“Our Father” -- The Old Testament people did not speak to God as Father (Abba). They often referred to God only as “Adonai” (Lord). The name “Father” for God was given to us by Christ, the Son of God. We can pray to God the Father, because Christ taught us how to pray.

When we say that the Father is **“in heaven”** that means that we know that God rules over all things and is everywhere, not in any one place.

“Hallowed be Thy name” means that God's name is holy. Old Testament persons never said the name of God (Yahweh) because they were afraid that they might break the commandment to “not take the name of God in vain.” But God gave Jesus the “name which is above every name,” so when Christ told us to call God “the Father,” we do so as Christians as we call ourselves by the name of Christ, His Son.

St. Gregory of Nyssa says that the prayer **“Thy kingdom come”** calls the Holy Spirit to be with us as the presence of Christ, so that we look forward to Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” is what Jesus prayed and did. When we pray “Thy will be done” we must be ready, like Christ, to follow where it leads: to obey God and not sin.

The prayer for our **“daily bread”** is both for the needs of our body as well as for the nourishment of our souls by Christ who is the “Bread of Life.” It is a prayer for daily spiritual nourishment so that we can have Eternal Life with God.

The prayer **“forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”** is the point of Christ's parable about the unforgiving servant. The only way that God will forgive the sins of His servants is if they themselves forgive others, truly “from their hearts.”

“Lead us not into temptation” means that we ask God not to allow us to be found in situations in which we will be overcome by sin.

“Deliver us from evil” actually says “rescue us from the evil one.” The prayer is for God to protect us from anything the devil tempts us with that would cause us to sin.

Being forgiven our sins, and by our forgiveness of others, we have everything that we need for life - our “daily bread.” When we are nourished by God, we are strengthened to do His will. When we do God's will, we become a child of God and God is truly “Our Father.”