



**"Circle: Providence"<sup>1</sup>**

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everthing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phillipians 4:6-7 New King James*

**Experiencing God Through a Spiritual Prayer Vigil**

CUGN New Testament 508

Submitted by:Carolyn Rock

February 11, 2012

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<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 31 "Circle: Providence."

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## Experiencing God through a spiritual prayer vigil

Do church history research grounded in the New Testament texts and devotional helps from Eastern Orthodox traditions to design a program connecting activities of the prayer vigil with New Testament Bible references, showing how they relate to Christ's teachings and/or apostolic admonition, implementing **a month long prayer vigil** and one day silent retreat with an aim of experiencing communion with God and purity of heart.

My goal is to find 6 participants for a pilot group to test my research during the next 4 weeks and hopefully benefit from this experience in time to report on the results by the fifth week of the course. Each participant will grant permission to include their first name and will provide a short bio, their expectations and the life change they experience from the **prayer vigil**.

Elements of the prayer vigil will include directed and self-directed activities including:

Encountering God with hidden, simple, confessional prayer in silent communion

Reading scripture, articles, quotes and resources on prayer

Reflecting in a journal on how prayer and activity inform each other

Fasting one day per week on January 11, 18, 25 and February 1

Experiencing a silent retreat day of prayer on February 4



### "Trefoil and Triquetra"<sup>1</sup>

The idea for "Experiencing God through a prayer vigil" as a creative research project for my NT508 class with CUGN this semester, came to me on Friday, January 6, 2012. Please bear with me as I provide a little serendipitous information. I didn't know the significance of that day until Sunday, January 8, while visiting St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church when I heard a message on the meaning of that particular Feast Day. Throughout the Eastern Orthodox Church, January 6, the Day of Theophany, defined according to Merriam-Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* as "a physical presentation or manifestation of a Deity," is the day Jesus' baptism is celebrated. "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven

which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22 This event is one of two events mentioned in scripture where the Triune God is manifest. God, the Father was Present in the audible Voice that was heard saying "This is My beloved Son, hear Him" and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove.

The other Trinitarian God manifestation was when Jesus had taken three of His disciples on a retreat into the mountains and He was transfigured before them. In Matthew 17:5 "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" I learned about these two events as teaching the Trinitarian God concept at our retreat on Saturday, February 4, 2012, from a book featuring the photography of the Iconography installed at St. Nicholas.<sup>2</sup> I brought this book to the retreat to peruse during the day not realizing the Iconography portrayed therein would have visual power to imbed in me a new awareness of the Trinitarian God. There is a Sunday school class being taught on the Trinitarian God next Sunday that has piqued my interest. But I have digressed way beyond my original intention of an opening paragraph, of giving you just the definition of what a prayer vigil is, to how visits to new places, reading a book on Iconography and praying this past month have changed my perspective. What I have been describing could be referred to as an "echo effect." There is an event scheduled from September 2011 to June 2012 at the Art Institute in Chicago examining the "echo effect" showing how works of art are adapted, reproduced, interpreted, and transformed over the centuries through conversation, dance, music, and words. As a result of the prayer vigil, new ways have been adapted to pray the Lord's Prayer, reasons to pray have been considered, Beauty in Nature has been interpreted through eyes of faith, we practiced a new art form of drawing tangles inspired by "doodling", and we read ancient Epistles written by early church Fathers to find new ways of praying today. Individually and collectively the 6 participants' prayer lives were changed through directed activities by email and individually meeting in silence and meditation, reading, fasting and experiencing God though a joint spiritual prayer vigil. Merriam-Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* provides several definitions of the word "vigil." Our month long prayer vigil was a time of spiritual preparation, a steady gaze, an act or action of wakeful watching or a protracted and usually lonely stay or sojourn. Except for the retreat on Saturday when we met together for 6 hours of prayer, the participants worked individually through the weekly directed Why Pray? email PDFs, writing in their personal journals, and fasting on the Wednesday fast days. In the following pages you will see how I organized the elements of the prayer vigil with directed and self-directed activities.

In order to find at least 6 people to join me in this vigil, I sent out an introductory letter to seventeen people. Only 6 agreed to do it. Each participant emailed me their spiritual biography, their expectations for the prayer vigil, permission to use their first name and their evaluation feedback forms. Keeping the weekly fasts and journal writing were self-directed activities.

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from *Visuals for Worship*, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 61 "Trefoil and Triquetra: Trinity Sunday."

<sup>2</sup> Khorey, Katherine. *Beyond the Image: The History of the Church Through Iconography*, Canada: Friesens, 2011, 102, 77

Jamey

Here is my short spiritual biography. I was brought up in a household with parents who fervently love God. I had a number of Sunday school teachers, peers, and family members who nurtured me in the Christian faith as I grew. I remember making a very serious intentional decision to follow Christ at age 11, and that was the year I was baptized. When I went away to college, I wandered into a period of questioning of my beliefs, and one in which I doubted the goodness of God. A close friend of mine had had a really rough upbringing, in which she was emotionally abused... and I could not understand that a good God would allow the pain of that suffering in a small child. My brother gave me a CD for my birthday, that had a song with the lyrics "take my world apart". I realized that I had shut myself away from God, and that I wanted God to take down all of those walls. I recommitted my life to Christ at that time, and He transformed me from the creature I had become. Through various trials and difficulties we weathered together as a couple (financial struggles, bedrest with my pregnancies, my husband's diagnosis of MS, my husband's difficulty finding a job), we saw God's hand at work in our lives. He provided for all of our needs. There was a growing unrest in my spirit, with the protestant church we had been attending. When our family found the Orthodox Christian faith, I was awed by the reverence they have for things of God. I was drawn to the seriousness of the commitment, with fasting and prayer and confession. I was also drawn to their appreciation of the spiritual experience of unity with God, in a way that seeks humility, not fanfare and attention. This is a very brief synopsis of my spiritual journey.

I am excited to begin this project. My expectations are that I will learn something new spiritually after having spent dedicated time, devoted to unity with God. I am excited to involve not only my spirit, but also my body, with the fasting element. May God help us all, as we journey through this together. All glory be to Him.

Becky

I am honored to be a part of this study. Prayer is, and has always been a very interesting topic for me as I don't always understand prayer, but do believe in the awesome power of prayer. Below is a synopsis of my beginning. If it is not what you need, please let me know, and I will change it. I give you permission to use my first name. I apologize that this is late.

I was "born and raised" in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church". I became saved at the age of five and knew the difference between right and wrong. I was raised to believe one could "lose your salvation". As a teen in high school, I was shocked to find out that not everyone believed that Jesus is The Son of God and our pathway to salvation and Heaven. It was devastating to me as I knew some of my friends were not believers. I continued to believe in "saved and lost" until I met my husband, Sam in 1973, who explained the doctrine of eternal salvation of the believer. At this time I knew all my good works and behavior were not going to be my key to eternity in Heaven, but the key to an unexpected eternity in hell. Baptized as a child by immersion, I was baptized once again when I was in my late 20's as I had learned so much more about salvation. I went through a very long and bitter period of time in my 40's to early 50's when I thought God did not hear my prayers or even love me. I did not believe my prayers were heard. As my seasons of life have changed, and through experience of The Lord's Grace and Mercy, I now understand the meaning Grace and Mercy, and know where I will be spending eternity. I pray at least twice daily, praying for my family. I labor in prayer for my children and their salvation, my family's health and safety, for my beloved friends, our Military, and thank The Lord each time for his Mercy, Grace and Love, and for each breath I take. I thank Him for each day--the weather, His protection. I capitalize these words because I believe so strongly in them. I hope to grow in depth in my prayer life, and become more of a friend to my Lord through these readings and prayer. I hope to learn more about how to pray, and the meaning of fasting which will be very difficult for me.

Ed

I was raised in a Christian family and made a profession of faith in Christ when I was 8 years old. My first year in college, under the influence of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, I came to understand the Lordship of Christ and turned my life over to the Lord. Believing that complete devotion to Christ meant full time Christian service, I entered seminary after college to train for the ministry. I completed almost a year in seminary before leaving because I felt that I had not actually been called into the ministry and could be a “full time Christian” even in a secular field. Since then, I have continued to grow in my faith by my own reading and study and sitting under many Godly teachers in the churches I have attended. I now work for a Christian ministry in publishing. I hope to keep growing and learning as I follow the Lord.

My expectations are to explore new areas of prayer and fasting as I seek to understand communion with the Lord better. As Oswald Chambers said, “Prayer doesn’t change things, prayer changes me and I change things.” I hope to be changed by this season of prayer.

Jeanette

I grew up catholic in The Netherlands. When I moved to the USA I was far away from God and was re-introduced to Him at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. My curiosity brought me back at church and went from a small bible church to a church plant from Calvary in Grand Rapids. Crossroads Bible Church has been my home for many years. I slowly am feeling drawn back to my Catholic faith.

Expectations

I learned to have no expectations as God tends to work plans better than I could ever do. :)))  
I am very bad at fasting which will be a big challenge for me.

Susan

I grew up in the Methodist church, a consistent attender and participant in all the 'stuff' - youth group, choirs, work camps, etc. etc....BUT...it was a very shallow existence. Although I went through all the confirmation classes, etc., I never delved 'deep' in my spiritual walk, never really 'desired' to know God intimately. In my family, faith was about 'doing' more than anything else. Not such a bad thing, but what was our motivation for 'doing?' I think it was more for our own glory, rather than His.

My husband, Phil and I attended a church in Chicago, one that allowed us to continue in our shallowness. It wasn't until 2003, when Phil quit his job to go to medical school far away from home, with two small kids in tow, that we both realized our need for a relationship with the Lord. Since then, I'll admit, it hasn't been a smooth path. Periods of peace, many periods of doubt...it just feels like a roller coaster sometimes. My prayer life has been scant to say the least. I've used every excuse..."I'm too tired," "I'm so distracted," etc. I believe this is the reason for all of my difficulties fully surrendering to Christ. With prayer, I believe I can open my heart up to Him, more fully recognize my sin, and more fully desire to repent.

I have high expectations for this month's prayer vigil. I do NOT want to disappointment Him with my lameness, excuses, and confusion. I'd like to completely clear out my wicked heart and make room for Him, and I know prayer is the answer. Coincidentally, (well, not really), within three days, three things happened to help me realize how badly I need prayer. First, I re-joined a small group I had been absent from for 1-1/2 years. Guess what they're studying? Prayer! Then, Jamey called and invited me to participate in, guess what? A prayer vigil! And finally, the kids started going to AWANA at a friend's church. While they were at it, I had nothing better to do than attend the adult service that was going on at the same time. Guess what? It's a prayer service, wholly dedicated to prayer. We'll, God, you've got my attention!

Amy

I was born and raised in a Christian home. When I was 7 years old, I had gone to bed one night and as I was lying in bed I remember having an overwhelming sense of remorse and desperation. The thought had come to me “What if I died tonight - would I go to Hell?” I don’t know why I was worrying about that. I was always a dutiful kid, and didn’t break the rules too often. I got up out of bed and padded into the kitchen where my mom was looking through recipes. “Mom” I said, “If I were to die tonight how do I know I won’t go to hell?” My mom looked up from her cookbook and said “Well, have you given your heart to Jesus? He is the only one who saves us from Hell.” I declared that I had given my heart to Jesus, which I had the year before, and Mom took me back to bed, said my prayers again, and tucked me in. It is the first time in my memory that I worried about going to Hell, and it is the last time I have ever worried about it.

In the years since my simple 7 year old conversation with my mom, I have struggled with many things. I have struggled with legalism, with how we believers treat one another, with how God can love that “dirt bag” who double crossed me and stabbed me in the back, and with what my reaction to that person needs to be. I still don’t have many answers, but in my 38 years I have learned some spiritual lessons. I have learned that this life is a journey and we are each accountable before God for how we walk on that journey. When we claim the cross of Christ we also are accountable to our spiritual brothers and sisters. I have learned that the Holy Spirit definitely moves among God’s people and does so in miraculous ways. I have learned that in many cases I don’t know what I don’t know and I need to receive grace for each day.

In this month of prayer I will be praying over several specific areas that I feel God is leading me to. I am excited to see what He teaches me through this practice and discipline.

Acts 13:1-2 mentions that in the church of Antioch as the disciples were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

"NESTEUO" is the Greek word<sup>1</sup> used in Acts 13: 2 and it means to fast, to voluntarily abstain from eating. This reference is an example that shows the importance of pure and simple motive in fasting and shows that Jesus had taught His disciples the practice of fasting.<sup>2</sup>

There is something about combining prayer and fasting that brought specific guidance to the disciples and preparation of them from the Holy Spirit. Let's see how the Holy Spirit speaks to us this week and especially on our fast day Wednesday! Writing down scripture verses, prayers, impressions, struggles and desires in your journal may help you identify threads of truth that will form the celestial design of your spiritual growth.

The Wednesday Fast Days can be fasting of your choosing. You may choose to eliminate food for all three meals, you can just drink juice, or not eat dessert all day Wednesday or you can eliminate watching TV on Wednesdays, or not read novels or other types of books and choose rather to read the Bible during your free times. The idea is to spend some intentional time praying on those Wednesdays. When you start missing a meal, or a favorite TV show, or whatever you decide to fast from it is then that you start focusing rather on your relationship with God rather than time spent on eating or relaxing or shopping.

"Without perseverance no discipline, whether prayer, fasting or vigil, ever bears fruit. The end of your labor will be just the same as its beginning."  
(St. Isaac the Syrian, in "The Four Books," 1.3, Arabic version)<sup>3</sup>

"And when you fast, do not look dismal." (Matthew 6:16)

"That your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret." (Matthew 6:18)

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life." (John 6:27)

"My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34)

—Fasting is not a deprivation from certain kinds of food, but a voluntary abstinence from them.<sup>4</sup>

337. There can be no knowledge of the mysteries of God on a full stomach.  
(St Isaac the Syrian, Homilies 4, in *Ascetical Homilies*, p 33)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goodrick, Edward W. and John R. Kohlenberger III. *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990, 381

<sup>2</sup> Vine, W. E. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words Four Volumes in One*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981, 81

<sup>3</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 174

<sup>4</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 229)

<sup>5</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 230)



**"Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison"—"Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy"**

Our help is in the Name of the Lord from Whom this mercy comes.<sup>1</sup>

WHY PRAY? We are commanded to.

Do you not know where to begin? Relax. Romans 8:26 tells us the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us.

Don't worry. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;" Philippians 4:6

Just begin where you are and "Since prayer is a divine commandment, it must be accompanied by obedience to the spirit of that commandment." <sup>2</sup> "Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

<sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 5:17-18

"The Lord is very compassionate and merciful." James 5:11b

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 17 "Kyrie eleison: Prayers of the People."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259



**"Hands Offering"<sup>1</sup>**

WHY PRAY? Pray to enter into God's Presence. "Apart from prayer, we can never contact God."<sup>2</sup>

### **ACTS**

**Four types of basic prayers can be remembered using the ACTS acronym.**

**Adoration** - Enter with praise.

"... let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:15

**Confession** - Admit your sins.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9

**Thanksgiving** - Give Him thanks.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, ... "

Philippians 4:6a

**Supplication** - Express your requests.

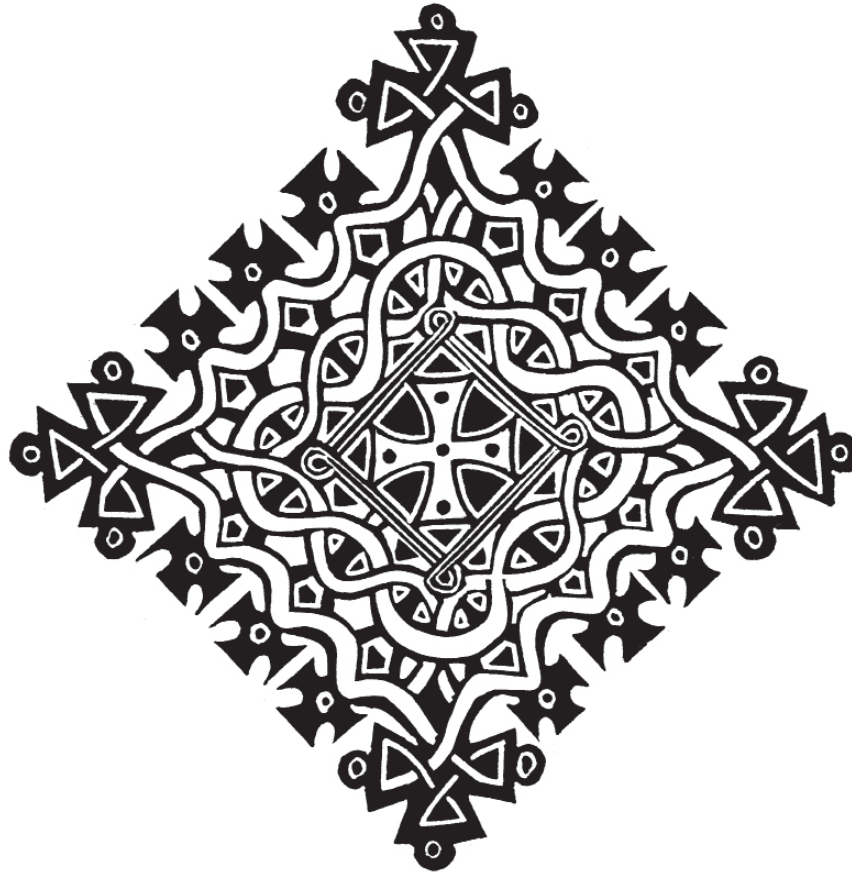
" ... let your requests be made known to God; ... " Philippians 4:6b

[CLICK HERE TO REVIEW OTHER PRAYER GUIDES<sup>3</sup>](#)

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 19 "Hands: Offering."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259

<sup>3</sup> Renewal Ministries, Christian. [http://crmin.org/prayerguide/prayer\\_guides.htm](http://crmin.org/prayerguide/prayer_guides.htm) (accessed January 19, 2012).



### "Cross (Ethiopian) Lent"<sup>1</sup>

WHY PRAY? It is the means prescribed by God for enjoying His protection. "In this way, we are saved from the peril of falling into temptations of Satan. However, if we do fall, we may nonetheless hold out and conquer. Such temptation could then be transformed from a means of condemnation into a means of vindication."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus taught His disciples to pray "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Matthew 26:41

Keep alert, be on your guard constantly. Pray so you are shielded against temptation and pray so you receive power to overcome temptation.

"For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places ... Stand therefore ... Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." Ephesians 6:12, 14, 18

Submit to God resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

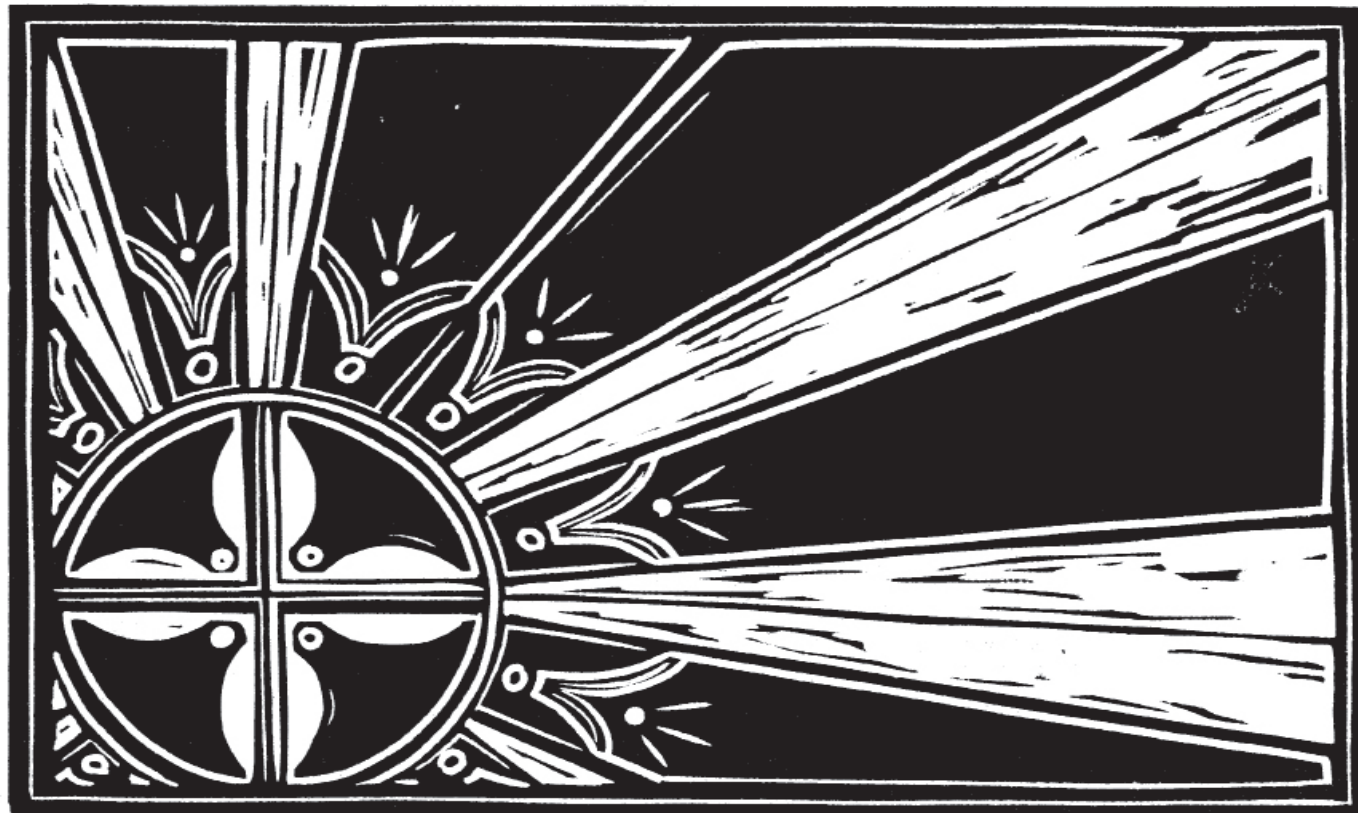
Recognize God is not tempting you. James 1:13-14

Click here to read *Richard Exley's One Minute Devotion* on failures.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 47 "Cross (Ethiopian): Lent."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259

<sup>3</sup> Exley's, Richard One Minute Devotion. [http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=kwiquldab&v=00103CKqe2sPwxKqHZ\\_2IrEr3HwXCbZptZgTKcdkCRItq1Hwff\\_gM\\_J4goPXsF5b8pDCLsHrgiSMLE9NjSqeT2Z85oRV7SfePeD5uUbPOA5I2Y%3D](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=kwiquldab&v=00103CKqe2sPwxKqHZ_2IrEr3HwXCbZptZgTKcdkCRItq1Hwff_gM_J4goPXsF5b8pDCLsHrgiSMLE9NjSqeT2Z85oRV7SfePeD5uUbPOA5I2Y%3D) (accessed January 20, 2012)



### **"Cross and Sun Rays: Epiphany"<sup>1</sup>**

WHY PRAY? Because prayer is the hidden way for providing spiritual help to others who are under stress, in danger, or those who are suffering illness or delusion: "Pray for one another that you may be healed" James 5:16.<sup>2</sup> Since prayer is a means of helping others, it must be characterized by compassion and self-sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

When Saul asked "Who are you, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, ... I have appeared to you for this purpose ... to make you a witness ... to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:18

"... If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing." 2 Corinthians 4:3

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

**CLICK HERE TO PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BELIEVERS**

**Persecuted Voice of the Martyrs<sup>4</sup>**

It is our duty to pray for our enemies who oppose us and seek to do us harm.<sup>5</sup> "Since prayer is a means for disarming hostility, it must include a spirit of forgiveness from a sincere heart and a clear conscience."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from *Visuals for Worship*, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 39 "Cross and Sun Rays: Epiphany."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259

<sup>3</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 260)

<sup>4</sup> Voice of the Martyrs, The. <http://www.persecution.com/public/pray.aspx?clickfrom=bWFpbI9tZW51> (accessed January 20, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 259)

<sup>6</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 260)



### **"River: Baptism of Our Lord"<sup>1</sup>**

WHY PRAY? Because prayer is the ministry of thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup>

"Joining Christ, through the cleansing of our sins and the movement from death into life, we are anointed with the gift of the Spirit to boldly live in unity ... As God's grace flows to us so we should reflect this flow of grace to one another."<sup>3</sup>

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

"Such are the saints, my beloved, in all generations. When they found this Spirit dwelling in them, they offered to God many thanks. For the Holy Spirit does not dwell except in the souls of such blessed people. He reveals to them great mysteries and grants them joy and comfort for their hearts in this world, and makes their night like day." (St Anthony the Great, Letters 19.3, in "The Letters," Arabic version)<sup>4</sup>

Prayer is the only channel through which God will listen to our requests and look at them in the light of his mercy: "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" Phillipians 4:6.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from *Visuals for Worship*, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 41 "River: Baptism of Our Lord."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259

<sup>3</sup> Steele Halstead, Elizabeth. *Visuals for Worship* Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2006, 40

<sup>4</sup> (El-Meskeen 2003, 284)

<sup>5</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 259



### "Seven Doves: Pentecost"<sup>1</sup>

WHY PRAY? "The ultimate purpose of the life of prayer and worship are the same, that is, a life of communion with God, or union with him in eternal life."<sup>2</sup>

After a long spell of prayer. do not say that nothing has been gained, for you have already achieved something. For after all, what higher good is there than to cling to the Lord, to persevere in unceasing union with Him? (St John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 28.32, p 278)<sup>3</sup>

"Abiding" is a practice of faith Godet defines it as 'that continuous act whereby we lay aside all that which we might derive from our own strength to draw all from Christ by faith'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from *Visuals for Worship*, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 59 "Seven Doves: Pentecost."

<sup>2</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 262

<sup>3</sup> El-Meskeen, Father Matta (Matthew the Poor). *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 173

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence, Brother. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1981, 14



**"Cross (Ionic/Celtic): Proclaiming The Word"<sup>1</sup>**

Prayer Vigil  
St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church  
2250 East Paris, Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
February 4, 2012  
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

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<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 15 "Cross (Ionic/Celtic): Proclaiming the Word."

**"Lord teach us to pray."**

Luke 11: 2-4

**10:15 am**

Our Father, Who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy Name.



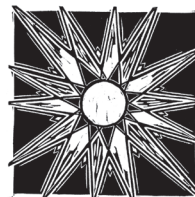
Alpha and Omega

Opening of Worship

Revelation 1:8

**11:15 am**

Thy kingdom come;



Sun of Righteousness

Christmas

John 8:12

**12:15 pm**

Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in Heaven.



Columns with Capstone

Communion of the Saints

Ephesians 2:19-20

**1:15 pm**

Give us this day our daily bread;



Harvest Wheat

Thanksgiving

2 Corinthians 9:10-12

**2:15 pm**

and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us,



Cross of Wood

Ash Wednesday

1 Peter 2:24

**3:15 pm**

and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.



Cross

Lent

1 Corinthians 10:13

**4:00 pm**

Sharing fellowship and food



Vine and Branches

Unity of the Church

John 15:1-2

**5:00 pm**

Vespers

**6:00 pm**

Prayer Vigil Concludes



Seven Doves

Pentecost

Galatians 5:22-25



PRAYER VIGIL How to pray for 1 hour per day<sup>1</sup>  
The Ascension <sup>2</sup>

**FIRST 10 MINUTES** "Our Father which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name"

Honour and Glory and praise His name  
Jehovah Nissi - Our banner  
Jehovah Tsidkenu - Our Righteousness  
Jehovah Jireh - Our provider  
Jehovah Shalom - Our peace  
Jehovah Rapha - Our healer  
Jehovah Shammah - Is there (present)  
Jehovah R'oi - Our shepherd

**NEXT 10 MINUTES** "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be Done"

In my own life  
In my family  
In my church  
In my City-State-Nation

**NEXT 10 MINUTES** "Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread"

Thank God for His provision.  
Your needs are met - Needs of family/church/nation.  
Know it is God's will for you to prosper. Psalm 1 Joshua 1 Phill 4:19

**NEXT 10 MINUTES** "And Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors"

Ask God to forgive you. 1 John 1:19  
Pray for and forgive those who sin against you. Matt 5:44

**NEXT 10 MINUTES** "And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From Evil."

Put on the whole armour of God. Eph 6:13-18  
Submit to God -resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7  
Recognise God is not tempting you. James 1:13-14

**LAST 10 MINUTES** "For Thine Is The Kingdom And The Power And The Glory Forever."

Praise God for his love - His goodness to you.  
Praise Him for His mercy, praise Him for His grace.  
Bless Him and worship Him

(1 John 5:14 NRSV) And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

(1 John 5:15 NRSV) And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.

<sup>1</sup> How to pray for 1 hour per day. <http://crmin.org/prayerguide/onehour.htm> (accessed February 2).

<sup>2</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 57 "The Ascension."



PRAYER VIGIL Practical ways to pray the Lord's Prayer<sup>1</sup>  
The Ascension <sup>2</sup>

**Use the phrase of the day to enter your own private retreat**

**Sunday** "Our Father which art in heaven"

**Monday** "Hallowed be thy name"

**Tuesday** "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done"

**Wednesday** "Give us this day our daily bread"

**Thursday** "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"

**Friday** "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

**Saturday** "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

**Pray the Lord's Prayer each day.**

Repeat it slowly, again and again the next time you are in a line at the grocery store, or in your car at a traffic light, or waiting for an appointment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wright, N.T. *The Lord and His Prayer*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1996, 7-9

<sup>2</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 57 "The Ascension."



### "Tree of Life"<sup>1</sup>

"... on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:2b

A sacramental principle I've recently learned about in the Orthodox tradition is that this world and the environment is not just a conglomeration of objects and life-forms and processes without meaning but is a vast revelation of God, called by the Fathers of the Church the "Book of Nature" composed of numberless "words of God." "The sacred, sacramental, and symbolic dimensions of creation in the Orthodox worldview may be summed up in the saying of St. John of Damascus that "the whole world is a single icon of God."<sup>2</sup>

"Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that all people are without excuse" Romans 1:20

"Some people in order to discover God read books. Well, there's a great book—The Appearance of Created Things. Look above you, look below you, note it, read it. God whom you want to discover never wrote that book with ink. Instead, He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?" - St. Augustine

"By looking to what is inherent in the Beauty of creation, then modelling that first into our attitudes and words, and finally bringing that out into every aspect of our behavior, we have a trinitarian relationship that brings a dimension of God's Spirit through us into personal manifestation."<sup>3</sup>

This exercise begins with the assumption that the Holy Trinity extends into creation.

(1) Seek for and discern the Beauty of God in the world - Define beauty. What qualities derive from beauty?

(2) Reflect upon how you are made in the image of God and that the beauty you see exteriorly is also an interior quality - a quality rooted in your own nature - How does appreciation of beauty lead to respect?

(3) Manifest that beauty in your every thought, word, action and every part of your being. How does it bring change to the individual? Why does it bring change? What happens when I make my actions beautiful?

PRAYER - God, help me discern Beauty and the mark of Your presence around me. Show me Beauty in every leaf, every spider, every bird and every person. May "Going in beauty" provide the vision for the structure of my life so that my words and actions become a reflection of Your Beauty.

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 29 "Tree of Life." (detail)

<sup>2</sup> Beyond the Shattered Image. <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=12-01-066-b#ixzz1kkxNe8cz> (accessed January 29, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Opening the Book of Nature. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/OBN/beauty.html> (accessed January 30, 2012).



PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup>  
Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>

1 Nature as a Great Book. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html> (accessed February 1, 2012).

2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources, pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

St. Hilary of Poitiers (315 - 367)

The sky and the air are beautiful, the earth and the sea are beautiful. By divine grace, the universe was called by the Greeks "cosmos," meaning "ornament." ... Surely the author of all created beauty must himself be the Beauty of all beauty?

St. Francis of Assisi (from his biographer)

When he considered the glory of the flowers, how happy he was to gaze at the beauty of their forms and enjoy their marvelous fragrance! How easily his spirit would take wing and rise to meditation on the beauty of that unique flower that blossomed fair as the approaching spring, from the "root of Jesse," and by this fragrance brought new life to countless men who were dead in their souls!

John Calvin (1509 - 1564)

You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe in all its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

The pilgrim goes into the woods, but he carries with him the beauty which he visits. God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the Creator of the universe.

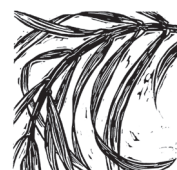
Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful; for beauty is God's handwriting -- a wayside sacrament. Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every fair flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1861)

Glorious indeed is the world of God around us, but more glorious the world of God within us. There lies the land of song; there lies the poet's native land.

John Ruskin

Nature is painting for us, day after day, pictures of infinite beauty -- if only we have eyes to see them.



# PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup> Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>

1 Nature as a Great Book. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html> (accessed February 1, 2012).

2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

The perception of beauty is a moral test.

Fyodor Dostoyevski (1821 - 1881)

"Truly all is beautiful and a source of wonder, for all is truth, and Christ is with His creatures. How can it be otherwise, for the Word is truly for all things, the whole creation and every creature, every leaflet yearns toward the Word, praises God, and achieves this unconsciously through the mystery of its blameless life...."

John Muir (1838 - 1914)

All of God's universe is glass to the soul of light. Infinitude mirrors reflecting all, receiving all. The stars whirl and eddy and boil in the currents of the ocean called space.... Trees in camplight and grasses and weeds impressive beyond thought so palpably Godful in form and in wind motion.... The pines spiring to the star-flowered sky are plainly full of God.... Oh, the infinite abundance and universality of beauty. Beauty is God. What shall we say of God that we may not say of Beauty.

Francis Schaeffer (1912 - 1984)

The Church has not spoken out as it should have done against the abuse of nature. But when the Church puts belief into practice, in man and in nature, there is substantial healing. One of the first fruits of that healing is a new sense of beauty. The aesthetic values are not to be despised. God made man with a sense of beauty, in a way no animal has. Man, made in the image of God, has aesthetic quality, and as soon as he begins to deal with nature as he should -- as having dominion but not exploiting nature as though it had no value in itself -- beauty is preserved in nature.

Minot Savage (1841 - 1918)

"Earth's Common Things"

Seek not afar for beauty. Lo! it glows  
In dew-wet grasses all about thy feet;  
In birds, in sunshine, childish faces sweet,  
In stars and mountain summits topped with snows.  
Go not afar for happiness. For see,  
It is a flower that blooms at thy door.  
Bring love and justice home, and then no more  
Thou'lt wonder in what dwelling joy may be.

Joaquin Miller

"Dawn at San Diego"

Behold! the Holy Grail is found,  
Found in each poppy's cup of gold;  
And God walks with us as of old,  
  
Behold! The burning bush still burns  
For man, whichever way he turns;  
And all God's earth is holy ground



PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup>  
Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>

- 1 Nature as a Great Book. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html> (accessed February 1, 2012).
- 2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (129 - 203)

Creation Reveals Him Who formed It

That God is the Creator of the world is accepted even by those who in many ways speak against Him....  
For creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it.  
The universal Church, moreover, throughout the whole world, has received this tradition from the apostles themselves.

"Against Heresies," Book II, ch. 9:1

Origen (185 - 254)

The parallel between nature and Scripture is so complete,  
We must necessarily believe that the person Who is asking questions of nature and The person who is asking questions of Scripture Are bound to arrive at the same conclusions.

St. Anthony the Great (251 - 356)

Once when a visiting philosopher asked how such a learned man as he got along in the desert without books, Anthony replied, "My book is the nature of created things, and as often as I have a mind to read the words of God, it is at my hand."  
St. Anthony is known for his affection for the animals which surrounded his desert abode.

St. Athanasius (297 - 373)

About the "Book of Creation," he says, "the creatures are like letters proclaiming in loud voices to their Divine Master and Creator the harmony and order of things."

Creation declares its Creator

For creation, as if written in characters and by means of its order and harmony, declares in a loud voice its own Master and Creator...  
For this reason, God, by his own Word, gave creation such order as is found therein, so that while He is by nature invisible, men might yet be able to know Him through His works.

Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1327)

Sermons in Creatures

Anyone who truly knows creatures may be excused from listening to sermons for every creature is full of God, and is a book.

Sermons

# PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup> Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>



1 Nature as a Great Book. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html> (accessed February 1, 2012).

2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources, pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

Saint Ephraim the Syrian (306 - 373)

Nature and Scripture

I considered the Word of the Creator,  
and likened it to the rock that marched  
with the people of Israel in the wilderness....

In his book Moses described the creation of the  
natural world  
so that both Nature and Scripture  
might bear witness to the Creator.  
Nature, through man's use of it,  
Scripture, through his reading of it,  
These are the witnesses which reach everywhere,  
they are to be found at all times, present at

every hour, confuting the unbeliever who  
defames the Creator.

I read the opening of this book and was filled  
with joy,  
for its verses and lines spread out their arms  
to welcome me;  
The first rushed out and kissed me, and led  
me on to its companion;  
And when I reached that verse wherein is  
written the story of Paradise,  
it lifted me up and transported me from the  
bosom of the book  
to the very bosom of Paradise.

Hymns on Paradise, Hymn V:1-3

Saint John Chrysostom (347 - 407)

Nature is Our Best Teacher  
From the creation,  
learn to admire the Lord!  
And if any of the things which you see exceed  
your comprehension,  
and you are not able to find the reason for its  
existence,  
then for this reason,  
glorify the Creator that the wisdom of His works  
surpasses your own understanding.  
Indeed the magnitude and beauty of creation,  
and also the very manner of it,  
display a God Who is the artificer of the universe.  
He has made the mode of this creation to be our  
best teacher, compounding all things in a manner  
that transcends the course of nature.  
On the Statutes 12:7

Tao Ch'ien (365 - 427) China  
Through Hills and Seas to the Universe

The trees put forth luxuriant foliage,  
the spring begins to flow in a trickle.  
I admire the seasonableness of nature  
and am moved to think  
That my life will come to its close.  
So little time are we granted human form in the world.  
My eyes wander  
over the pictures of hills and seas.  
At a single glance  
I survey the whole universe.  
He will never be happy,  
whom such pleasures fail to please!

The Poetry of Tao Ch'ien, trans. James Hightower,  
Oxford Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 50

Saint Maximus the Confessor (580 - 662)

The Cosmos as Scripture: Scripture as a Cosmos

Creation is a bible  
whose letters and syllables  
are the particular aspects of all creatures  
and whose words are the more universal aspects  
of creation.  
Conversely, Scripture is like a cosmos  
constituted of heaven and earth and things  
in between;  
that is, the ethical, the natural,  
and the theological dimension.

Ambiguum 10, PG 91. 1128-1129a

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 - 1153)

Learning from Creation

Believe one who knows:  
You will find something greater  
in woods than in books.  
Trees and stones will teach you  
that which you can never learn  
from masters.

Letter to Heinrich Mordach,  
quoted in The Letters of Bernard 106:107

# PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup> Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>



1 Nature as a Great Book. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html> (accessed February 1, 2012).

2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

## Saint Bonaventure (1217 - 1274)

Bonaventure's contribution to a theology of the environment lies in his emphasis that everything in nature is a sign of God: it exemplifies some aspect or quality of the Divine Nature.

Creation reflects the secrets of the Creator

Throughout the entire creation, the wisdom of God shines forth from Him and in Him, as in a mirror containing the beauty of all forms and lights and as in a book in which all things are written according to the deep secrets of God. ... Truly, whoever reads this book will find life and will draw salvation from the Lord.

## Saint Bonaventure (1217 - 1274)

The Universe as a Book

The universe is like a book reflecting, representing and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as trace, as image and as likeness.

The aspect of trace is found in every creature; the aspect of image, in the intellectual creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those who are God-conformed. Through these three successive levels, comparable to the rungs of a ladder, the human mind is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle who is God.

This should be understood as follows: All creatures are related to their Creator and depend upon Him. All creatures, however little they may partake of being, have God for their Principle. All rational beings, however little they may partake of light, are intended to grasp God through knowledge and love; and all righteous and holy souls possess the Holy Spirit as an infused gift.

"On the Trinity of God," ch. 12, Nrs. 1-2,

## Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1327)

Every Creature is a Book about God

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.

Every creature is full of God and is a book about God.

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature – even a caterpillar –

I would never have to prepare a sermon, so full of God is every creature.

Sermons

## Perceiving the Divine in Creation

He, therefore, who is not illumined by such great splendor of created things, is blind; he who is not awakened by such great clamor is deaf;

he who does not praise God because of all these effects is dumb;

he who does not note the first principle from such great signs is foolish.

Open your eyes, therefore,

prick up your spiritual ears,

open your lips and apply your heart,

that you may see, hear, praise, love and worship, glorify and honor your God.

## Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)

Two Sacred Texts

Sacred writings are bound into two volumes: that of creation and that of Holy Scripture.

Quoted in Carla Berkdahl, Earth Letter, "Dreaming of Green Parishes," Sept., 1998, p. 1



PRAYER VIGIL Beauty Quotes<sup>1</sup>  
Palm Branch <sup>2</sup>

1 Book of Creation, The. <http://www.musicanet.org/robokopp/english/thebooko.htm> (accessed January 30, 2012).

2 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 49 "Palm Branch."

John Newton, 1779, from Olney Hymns, vol. 2, hymn 81

The book of nature open lies,  
With much instruction stored;  
But till the Lord anoints our eyes  
We cannot read a word.

Philosophers have pored in vain,  
And guessed, from age to age;  
For reason's eye could ne'er attain  
To understand a page.

Though to each star they give a name,  
Its size and motions teach;  
The truths which all the stars proclaim,  
Their wisdom cannot reach.

With skill to measure earth and sea;  
And weigh the subtle air;  
They cannot, Lord, discover thee  
Though present everywhere.

The knowledge of the saints excels  
The wisdom of the schools;  
To them his secrets God reveals,  
Though men account them fools.

To them the sun and stars on high,  
The flow'rs that paint the field,  
And all the artless birds that fly,  
Divine instruction yield.

The creatures on their senses press,  
As witnesses to prove  
Their Saviour's pow'r, and faithfulness,  
His providence and love.

Thus may we study nature's book  
To make us wise indeed!  
And pity those who only look  
At what they cannot read.



### "Stream"<sup>1</sup>

"... and let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17

"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." John 7:38

I happened upon a new art form this week while reading about the creation of illuminated manuscripts. It is not specifically a spiritual exercise, but we can adapt it to help us focus in prayer. Zentangle® is a fun and relaxing new art form that is an inspired invention and a collaborative effort by Maria Thomas, an artist and Rick Roberts, a monk of 17 years. It is an easy to learn method of creating images from repetitive patterns.<sup>2</sup> Just like the knot work and other images in the ancient scripture were symbolic of eternity and faith, the repetitive patterns we create as we meditate on Christ, the Living Word, can be transformative as we create and pray.

To begin just relax, breathe and smile and follow the 8 steps:

- (1) Practice drawing the sample Zentangles. Create 4 tangles. Draw a 2 pencil string.<sup>3</sup>
- (2) Create a structure to house your "Zendoodle" and draw pencil grid guidelines.
- (3) Make simple deliberate strokes which build on each other as you doodle your patterns adding tangles to the grid.
- (4) Continue to fill in your patterns leaving some space between the tangles. Use the Fibonacci or Golden Ratio proportion of 1/3 dark and 2/3 light or 1/3 light and 2/3 dark.
- (5) Enjoy the mesmerizing and surprising process.
- (6) You're almost done and all tangled out.
- (7) Erase the pencil grid lines. Add some shading.
- (8) Sign your name and date it.

To explore more about this art form go to these listed sites:

<http://www.zentangle.com/>

<http://iamthedivaczt.blogspot.com/2011/03/weekly-challenge-11-monotangle.html>

<http://tanglepatterns.com/tag/zentangle>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Zentangle&hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=N6v&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&prmd=imvnsI&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=QgkoT5u8No3lggfDr-H6BA&ved=0CFcQsAQ&biw=1163&bih=865>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-d2UdXAD7k&context=C3f9122cADOEgsToPDskITMJPK410E6AZbKcWcri4Q>

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs023/1101168872594/archive/1109117545186.html>

<http://ebookbrowse.com/tangling-the-zen-1-pdf-d24722556>

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 21 "Stream." (detail)

<sup>2</sup> Zentangle. <http://www.zentangle.com/> (accessed January 30, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pegasuspapers.com/zentangle/zentangle-weekly-challenge/> (accessed on January 30, 2012).

PRAYER VIGIL Tangles

**"Stream"**<sup>1</sup>

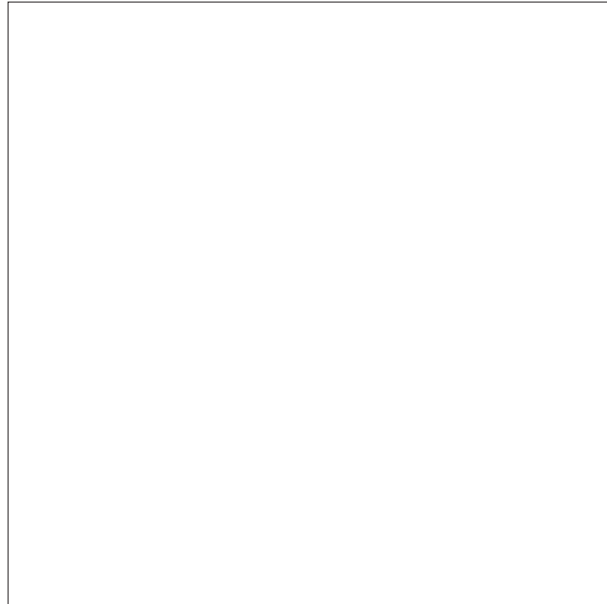
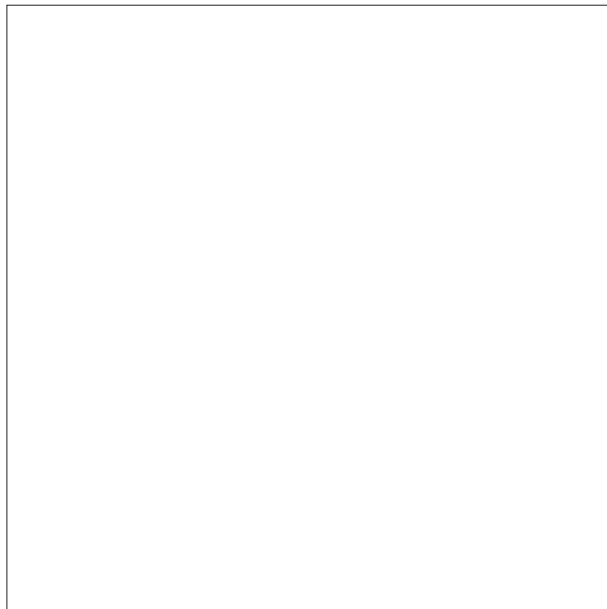
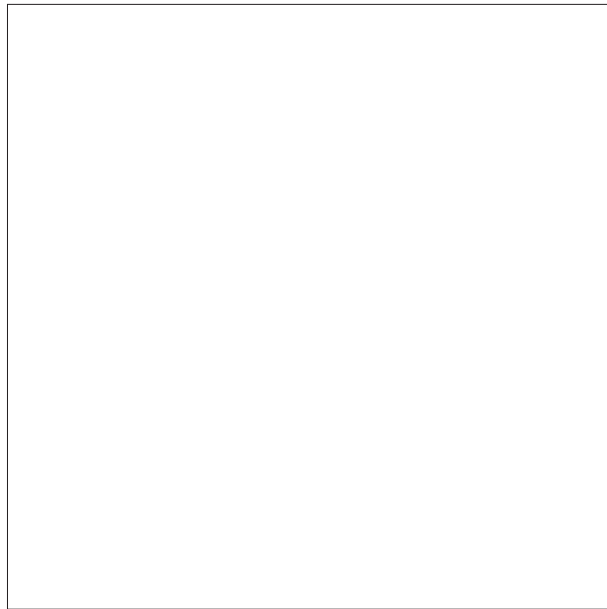
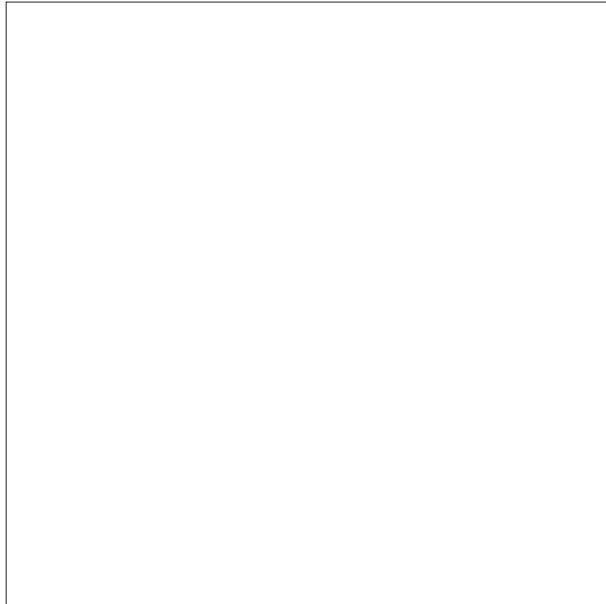
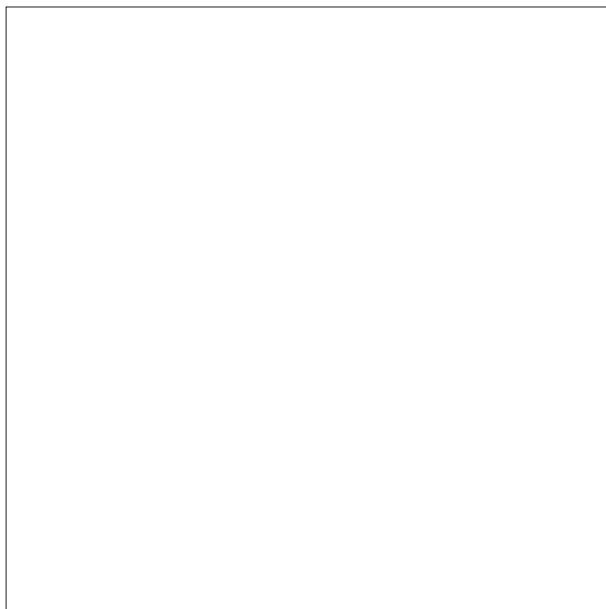
1 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources.  
pg. 21 "Stream." (detail)




PRAYER VIGIL Tangle Tiles

**"Stream"**<sup>1</sup>

1 Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources.  
pg. 21 "Stream." (detail)





### "Crown of Thorns"<sup>1</sup>

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." 1 Peter 4:12-14a

In this exercise please read at least one of the PDFs on the Epistles written by Ignatius or the Letter on the Martyrdom of Polycarp.

- (1) How does this writing inform you in ways you can pray today for those being persecuted for their faith?
- (2) What phrases could you use from this letter to write your own prayer for someone?
- (3) List warnings, encouraging words or reasons for thanksgiving from these Epistles that inspire you.

To read other Epistles written by Ignatius or the Letter on the Martyrdom of Polycarp go to these listed sites:<sup>2</sup>

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/ephesian.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/magnesia.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/ignpoly.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/roman.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/ignsmyrn.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/trallian.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/polycarp.txt>  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/smyrnaea.txt>

I enjoy all the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes I experience when I visit The Orthodox Church Services. The symbolism incorporated into their worship is rooted in scripture. The incense aroma reminds me of 11 Corinthians 2:14, where it says "God ... leads us ... and diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." I love the imagery in Revelation 5:8 of the "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints", and in Revelation 8:3 "incense is offered with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne."

Maybe it is because of my mother's death on January 9, 2012 but I think more these days about the cloud of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 12:1 and I have been pondering what it means in Hebrews 12:22-24 "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."

The fact that the Orthodox celebrate the saints with honor on their death-days like we celebrate birthdays seems to be a commemoration more about life than death because in fact they believe the saints are alive even now and can intercede face-to-face with Jesus Christ our Mediator.

<sup>1</sup> Linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead. Reprinted by permission from Visuals for Worship, ©2006, Faith Alive Christian Resources. pg. 53 "Crown of Thorns." (detail)

<sup>2</sup> IPBE LIBRARY Early Church Docs. <http://www.iclnet.org> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-07/ignpoly.txt>

## THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO POLYCARP

Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto Polycarp who is bishop of the church of the Smyrnaens or rather who hath for his bishop God the Father and Jesus Christ, abundant greeting.

Welcoming thy godly mind which is grounded as it were on an immovable rock, I give exceeding glory that it hath been vouchsafed me to see thy blameless face, whereof I would fain have joy in God. I exhort thee in the grace wherewith thou art clothed to press forward in thy course and to exhort all men that they may be saved. Vindicate thine office in all diligence of flesh and of spirit. Have a care for union, than which there is nothing better. Bear all men, as the Lord also beareth thee. Suffer all men in love, as also thou doest. Give thyself to unceasing prayers. Ask for larger wisdom than thou hast. Be watchful, and keep thy spirit from slumbering. Speak to each man severally after the manner of God. Bear the maladies of all, as a perfect athlete. where there is more toil, there is much gain.

If thou lovest good scholars, this is not thankworthy in thee. Rather bring the more pestilent to submission by gentleness. All wounds are not healed by the same salve. Allay sharp pains by fomentations. Be thou prudent as the serpent in all things and guileless always as the dove. Therefore art thou made of flesh and spirit, that thou mayest humor the things which appear before thine eyes; and as for the invisible things, pray thou that they may be revealed unto thee; that thou mayest be lacking in nothing, but mayest abound in every spiritual gift. The season requireth thee, as pilots require winds or as a storm-tossed mariner a haven, that it may attain unto God. Be sober, as God's athlete. The prize is incorruption and life eternal, concerning which thou also art persuaded. In all things I am devoted to thee--I and my bonds which thou didst cherish.

Let not those that seem to be plausible and yet teach strange doctrine dismay thee. Stand thou firm, as an anvil when it is smitten. It is the part of a great athlete to receive blows and be victorious. But especially must we for God's sake endure all things, that He also may endure us. Be thou more diligent than thou art. Mark the seasons. Await Him that is above every season, the Eternal, the Invisible, who became visible for our sake, the Impalpable, the Impassible, who suffered for our sake, who endured in all ways for our sake.

Let not widows be neglected. After the Lord be thou their protector. Let nothing be done without thy consent; neither do thou anything without the consent of God, as indeed thou doest not. Be steadfast. Let meetings be held more frequently. Seek out all men by name. Despise not slaves, whether men or women. Yet let not these again be puffed up, but let them serve the more faithfully to the glory of God, that they may

obtain a better freedom from God. Let them not desire to be set free at the public cost, lest they be found slaves of lust.

Flee evil arts, or rather hold thou discourse about these. Tell my sisters to love the Lord and to be content with their husbands in flesh and in spirit. In like manner also charge my brothers in the name of Jesus Christ to love their wives, as the Lord loved the Church. If any one is able to abide in chastity to the honor of the flesh of the Lord, let him so abide without boasting. If he boast, he is lost; and if it be known beyond the bishop, he is polluted. It becometh men and women too, when they marry, to unite themselves with the consent of the bishop, that the marriage may be after the Lord and not after concupiscence. Let all things be done to the honor of God.

Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. I am devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons. May it be granted me to have my portion with them in the presence of God. Toil together one with another, struggle together, run together, suffer together, lie down together, rise up together, as God's stewards and assessors and ministers. Please the Captain in whose army ye serve, from whom also ye will receive your pay. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism abide with you as your shield; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as your body armor. Let your works be your deposits, that ye may receive your assets due to you. Be ye therefore long-suffering one with another in gentleness, as God is with you. May I have joy of you always.

Seeing that the church which is in Antioch of Syria hath peace, as it hath been reported to me, through your prayers, I myself also have been the more comforted since God hath banished my care; if so be I may through suffering attain unto God, that I may be found a disciple through your intercession. It becometh thee, most blessed Polycarp, to call together a godly council and to elect some one among you who is very dear to you and zealous also, who shall be fit to bear the name of God's courier--to appoint him, I say, that he may go to Syria and glorify your zealous love unto the glory of God. A Christian hath no authority over himself, but giveth his time to God. This is God's work, and yours also, when ye shall complete it: for I trust in the Divine grace, that ye are ready for an act of well doing which is meet for God. Knowing the fervor of your sincerity, I have exhorted you in a short letter.

Since I have not been able to write to all the churches, by reason of my sailing suddenly from Troas to Neapolis, as the Divine will enjoineeth, thou shalt write to the churches in front, as one possessing the mind of God, to the intent that they also may do this same thing--let those who are able send messengers, and the rest letters by the persons who are sent by thee, that ye may be glorified by an ever memorable deed--for this is worthy of thee.

I salute all by name, and especially the wife of Epitropus with her whole household and her children's. I salute Attalus my beloved. I salute him that shall be appointed to go to Syria. Grace shall be with him always, and with Polycarp who sendeth him. I bid you farewell always in our God Jesus Christ, in whom abide ye in the unity and supervision of God. I salute Alce, a name very dear to me. Fare ye well in the Lord.

We concluded our month long prayer vigil and day of prayer on Saturday, February 4, 2012 by attending the Vespers service at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Go to <http://www.stnickgr.com/> to see photos of the church where we held our retreat.

Jamey - My expectations are that I will learn something new spiritually after having spent dedicated time, devoted to unity with God. I am excited to involve not only my spirit, but also my body, with the fasting element.

Becky - I hope to grow in depth in my prayer life, and become more of a friend to my Lord through these readings and prayer. I hope to learn more about how to pray, and the meaning of fasting which will be very difficult for me.

Ed - I hope to keep growing and learning as I follow the Lord. My expectations are to explore new areas of prayer and fasting as I seek to understand communion with the Lord better. I hope to be changed by this season of prayer.

Susan - I have high expectations for this month's prayer vigil. I do NOT want to disappoint Him with my lameness, excuses, and confusion. I'd like to completely clear out my wicked heart and make room for Him, and I know prayer is the answer.

Jeanette - I learned to have no expectations as God tends to work plans better than I could ever do. :)))  
I am very bad at fasting which will be a big challenge for me.

Amy - In this month of prayer I will be praying over several specific areas that I feel God is leading me to. I am excited to see what He teaches me through this practice and discipline.

Please rate your satisfaction with  
the following parts of the Prayer  
Vigil and Retreat.

SPIRITUAL BIO • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

WHY PRAY? PDFs • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FASTS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

PRAYER SCHEDULE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY QUOTES • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

ART PROJECT • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

EPISTLES EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FOOD • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

VESPERS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

DURATION OF EVENT • Much too long • A little long • Just right • A little short • Much too short

Comments:

Were your expectations met?  
Explain.

What were your greatest  
take-aways?

Please provide suggestions for  
improving future Prayer Vigils.

## PRAYER VIGIL EVALUATION

Please rate your satisfaction with the following parts of the Prayer Vigil and Retreat.

SPIRITUAL BIO. Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

WHY PRAY? PDFs • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FASTS Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

PRAYER SCHEDULE Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY EXERCISE Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY QUOTES • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

ART PROJECT Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FISTLES EXERCISE Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FOOD Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

VFSPFRS Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

DURATION OF EVENT • Much too long • A little long • Just right • A little short • Much too short

## Comments:

I loved the time while Joe and I were a temporary each week. Why? Because my heart is here, at home, where the spiritual growth is much more plentiful. I very helpful.

## Were your expectations met? For

Explain: There was just the right amount of time for personal individual prayer and group activities and listening at the retreat.

## What were your greatest take-aways?

- I enjoyed the fact that very much helped to remain distracting thoughts from prayers to empty my mind and dedicate.
  - I loved the "Pledge of Spiritual" and was powerful and held deep thoughts.
- Please provide suggestions for future prayer for certain people who are improving future Prayer Vigils. Improve to a better way of service of all.

There are a lot of reasons to different about meditation, because meditation

St. Rose

## PRAYER VIGIL EVALUATION

Please rate your satisfaction with the following parts of the Prayer Vigil and Retreat.

- SPIRITUAL BIO ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 WHY PRAY? PDFs ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 FASTS ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 PRAYER SCHEDULE ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 BEAUTY EXERCISE ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 BEAUTY QUOTES ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 ART PROJECT ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☒ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 EPISTLES EXERCISE ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 FOOD ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 VESPERS ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied  
 DURATION OF EVENT ☐ Much too long ☐ A little long ☒ Just right ☐ A little short ☐ Much too short

Comments:

Excellent concept that many Christians in the church could benefit & grow from. Well documented - well executed - with planned. Would love to do this again!

Were your expectations met? Explain.

Yes! Taking the time to set something aside each day for God & quiet was wonderful. Hearing the Scriptures as the basis for praying was very helpful. Maybe we want to have prayer retreats more often.

What were your greatest take-aways?

1) Discipline of prayer helped refocus me on key elements of my life that I had begun to let slip. 2) Awakened a desire to continue in daily Scripture. 3) I feel the presence of God more in my daily life.

Please provide suggestions for improving future Prayer Vigils

1) Prayers while moving, like walking.  
2) More time on prayer together

6/20/20

## PRAYER VIGIL EVALUATION

Please rate your satisfaction with the following parts of the Prayer Vigil and Retreat.

SPIRITUAL BED • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

WHY PRAY? PDFs • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FASTS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

PRAYER SCHEDULE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

1. BEAUTY EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

2. BEAUTY QUOTES • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

3. ART PROJECT • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

CELISTES EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FOOD • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

4. VESPERS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

DURATION OF EVENT • Much too long • A little long • Just right • A little short • Much too short

### Comments:

I enjoyed the format of the evening regarding the way which the things were done and the way that

it was conducted. I think the format was very good and the things were done in a very good way.

We did a very good job of the things that we did. I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good. I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

Were your expectations met? Yes, I think so.

Expected: I think I was expecting a lot of things to be done. I think I was expecting a lot of things to be done. I think I was expecting a lot of things to be done. I think I was expecting a lot of things to be done.

What were your greatest take-aways? I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

### What were your greatest

take-aways? I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good. I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good. I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

### Please provide suggestions for

improving future Prayer Vigils. I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

I think the things that we did were very good and the things that we did were very good.

Comments:

Were your expectations met? What were your greatest take-aways?

What this Prayer Vigil taught me is that I really need to have a quiet mind and LISTEN. Perhaps my acronym of "TACOS" (Thankfulness, Adoration, Confession, Others, Self) should include LISTENING ("LACTOSE?" Hmm...E would have to stand for something). I think focusing on prayer for the month really magnified the fact that my day is filled with quickie, ADHD kind of prayers...little quick prayers throughout the day, rather than spending time in deep communion with the Lord. Still, by the end of the month, I found an improvement in the depth of my prayer time. I am envious of people who say, "I spent a sweet hour in prayer last night..." I can't even fathom that!

My greatest take-away is that this has highlighted my need to focus on prayer each and every day. I recently rejoined a small group that is studying prayer, and have started attending a prayer service where the kids go to AWANA. The Lord is definitely telling me that I need to focus on spending time with Him!

Please rate your satisfaction with the following parts of the Prayer Vigil and Retreat.

SPIRITUAL BIO • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

WHY PRAY? PDFs • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FASTS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

PRAYER SCHEDULE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

BEAUTY QUOTES • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

ART PROJECT • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

EPISTLES EXERCISE • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

FOOD • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

VESPERS • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Neutral • Somewhat dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied

DURATION OF EVENT • Much too long • A little long • Just right • A little short • Much too short

Comments:

Were your expectations met?  
Explain.

What were your greatest  
take-aways?

Please provide suggestions for  
improving future Prayer Vigils.

Experiencing God through a spiritual prayer vigil that began on January 9, 2012, the day my mother entered into the Presence of the Lord in eternity, and was concluded on February 4, 2012 provided comfort that sustained me through the beginning stages of grief and loss. Reading books, quotes and writings of the ancient church Fathers touched my hurting heart with beautiful words and meditative thought like a luxurious balm.

Reasons to pray, based on New Testament verses were expounded on and mailed out weekly. Meandering research as a result of serendipitous events ensued, like when time spent watching a microscopic bug on the floor launched me into an internet search for ideas of how to appreciate beauty in nature and I happened upon the traditionally held Orthodox world view that the whole world is an icon and proclaims the existence of God.

Never having experienced a regularly scheduled spiritual fast before, I wanted to incorporate a weekly fast day into the program elements of the prayer vigil. In Eastern Orthodox tradition almost every Wednesday and Friday of the church year are fast days.

Christ taught His disciples how to fast and pray and gave them the Lord's prayer found in Luke 11:2-4. I wanted to include this teaching in our prayer vigil as well so I developed the whole day's retreat schedule around phrases of the Lord's prayer. Writings from the church Fathers informed one of our activities during the retreat as we read the Epistles of Ignatius and selected phrases from them to write our own prayers.

Throughout the month long prayer vigil I sensed a deeper communion with God and more purity in intentions of my heart's desires. I was thankful to find 6 other people willing to go on this journey with me. The individual and self-directed, fasting, reflecting prayer and journal writing elements of this prayer vigil were difficult to measure because they were, by design, private. Because there were not required "check-in" times with the participants I did not know how effective it was until I received their feedback forms on the last day. This is one of the things I'd do differently next time around.

The retreat was held at the St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Due to illness and work schedule requirements only 4 of us participated in the retreat. We met as a group in the library to get the information and agenda for the day. Juice, coffee, hot chocolate and fruit snacks were available for those who chose them to help keep the focus. We dispersed into various classrooms, the chapel and library for alone time. At 4:00 we met together again to break the prayer vigil fast with a vegetarian meal and to discuss the experience. At 5:00 we attended the Vespers service in the chapel and concluded our retreat by 6:00 p.m.

Prayer is a lifelong endeavor that through practice informs and helps me experience God. Fasting focuses attention on Him. Writing records the spiritual journey and retreats separate us from normal, temporal work to do spiritual eternal work. I highly recommend it all!

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