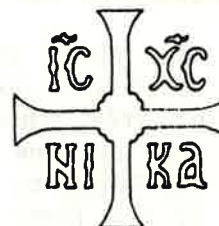




ORTHODOXY CANADA



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Dedicated to the memory of
Righteous Antony of the Dias-
pora and the Righteous Confes-
sor Justin the New of Serbia.

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Editorial:

The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in Diaspora recently courageously and correctly appended the following "Anathema" to the **Synodikon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy**:

"To those who attack Christ's Church by teaching that it is divided into so-called 'branches', which only differ in doctrine and way of life, that the Church does not exist visibly but will be formed when all the 'branches', or sects or denominations become united into one body; to those who do not distinguish the priesthood and Mysteries of the [Orthodox] Church from those of the heretics, but accept the baptism and eucharist of heretics as effectual for salvation; to those who knowingly have communion with these heretics or who advocate, disseminate or defend the new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of 'brotherly love' or the supposed unification of separated Christians: Anathema."

This wise and logical addendum to the Synodikon will be read in all parishes of the Russian Synod Abroad on the Sunday of Orthodoxy in order to inform and warn their faithful. We wholeheartedly endorse this firm statement and can only hope that some of the presbyters of our Serbian Orthodox Church in Diaspora will bring it to the attention of their parishioners.

We have come to a time when truth has been devalued and when many who know the truth lack the manly courage to speak out and defend it. Many, even among the clergy, have lost the will and the courage to resist evil themselves, and lead their people in resisting it. The Serbian people have always been heroic and we hope and trust that they will now stand forth as they have in the past to proclaim the truth of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church, to separate themselves from the falsehood of Ecumenism and resist the evil forces of this world. No document in recent times has so clearly and profoundly expressed the great falsehood and betrayal of Christ as has the book A Time To Choose, one of a handful of Orthodox classics of this century. Prepared under the guidance of Bishop Iriney, it is an official declaration of the clergy and laity of the Free Serbian Orthodox Diocese (Serbian Orthodox Church in Diaspora). This volume is unique and stands out from all the declarations of the other True Orthodox Churches, because it is not merely a theological statement of a small body of educated leaders. It is a statement firmly ratified by the laity as well as the clergy, at an official congress of the diocese.

We urge our people to take careful note of the "Anathema" proclaimed by our sister Russian Orthodox Church in Diaspora, and study A Time To Choose. Our Serbian people have always been leaders, ready to die for the faith of Christ. We should display that courage and leadership now, following the example of our beloved Vladiko Iriney.

Guest Sermon:

MAKE ROOM FOR THE CHRIST CHILD
(A Nativity Sermon by Fr George Matey)

[Fr George Matey is presbyter of the St Sava Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh, Pa. He is one of the more outstanding priests in our Serbian Orthodox Free Diocese and his simple, direct, meaningful sermons have been read to the faithful of our parishes in British Columbia before. We especially admire Fr George for his attempts to restore the awareness of Saturday evening Vespers, proper fasting and Holy Communion among his flock.]

At the time when Emperor Augustus issued an edict for all the citizens of the Roman Empire to register themselves for census, Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem of Judea, where King David was born, because they were descendants of David. The journey along this bleak road was painfully long and tiresome, especially for Mary who was about to become a mother. As the night was fast approaching and their search for a place in an inn appeared futile, the worn-out couple continued to tramp along the streets of Bethlehem desperately knocking on door after door. At that dark hour, the question loomed ominously: where could they find adequate privacy for the coming Son of God, since everywhere they heard the same refrain: "No room in the inn."

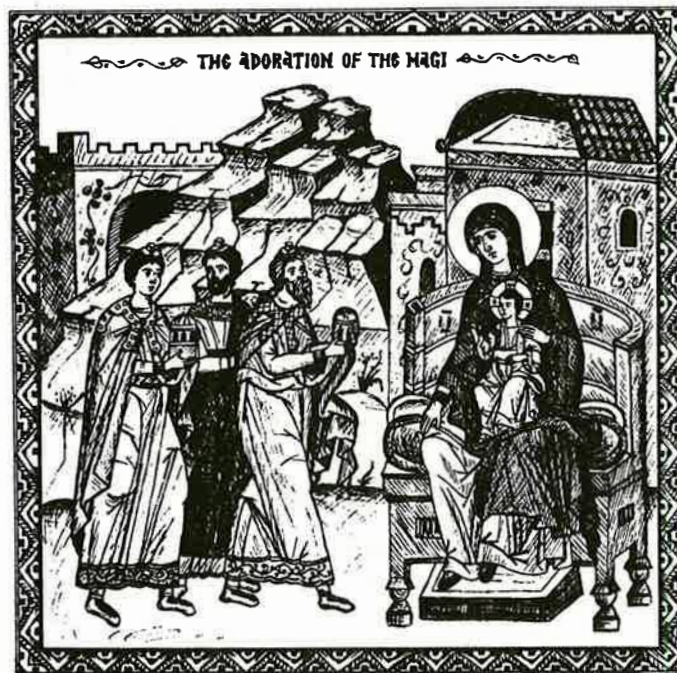
Why was there "no room in the inn" for the Divine Infant? Bethlehem, at that time, was a very small village. It became overcrowded with visitors who came to register and claimed the same exalted ancestry as Joseph did. So the Bethlehem inn became filled to capacity and, in the estimate of the innkeeper, Joseph and Mary, and still less the unborn Child, were in no need of special consideration, since they were individuals of no apparent importance. But if a politically or socially prominent person had appeared at the inn that night, room would have been made for him, somewhere.

Should we censure that Bethlehem innkeeper for refusing shelter to the unborn Christ Child? Before we become too critical of him for his indifference, let us ask ourselves whether we are always open and hospitable in providing room to the Heavenly Guest. Isn't the inn of our heart just as crowded as was the Bethlehem inn? How often do we say to the Babe of Bethlehem, "No room," and, at the same moment, have room for our favorite guests, priorities and preferences? Our life is never so crowded that we have no room or time to do what we want to do!

Why is there "no room" in the inn of our daily lives for Christ? The difficulty with us, is the same as with the people at the time of His birth: namely, He means so little to as many of us today. This is really why there is "no room" for the "Prince of Peace" in our hearts. We are too preoccupied with our daily routine and selfish ambitions, that we fail to see Him. Our minds are filled with boundless thoughts. Our hearts throb with personal wants, loves and desires. Our imaginations revel in ideals, dreams, visions and fancies, with our lives filled with humour and merry-making. Moreover, our sinful habits so deaden our senses that our sensational life mars our spiritual, godly life. And our foolish pleasures, gratifications and light-heartedness keep the Christ Child out of our lives.

How can we find, for this newborn Divine Infant, "room in the inn" in our daily lives? We must be aware that He will come, not in power or popu-

larity not in pomp and pageantry, not in royal purple and fine linens, but in profound humility, simplicity and human weakness as a helpless Infant. We must reevaluate our daily lives and make room for the practice of our Holy Orthodox Faith and Christian virtues; for our regular attendance at the Divine Liturgy, for the worthy reception of the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion and for all those things that have eternal value. And when we open the door and humbly invite Him into our spiritually renewed lives, what a day of rapturous joy that will be for us.



Society's Library

All bibliophiles will understand the joy of browsing through newly-acquired books. Recently, we received several cartons of books donated by Mother Sara, and Father Moses had the pleasant obedience of unpacking the shipment which consisted almost entirely of theological reference material, some titles of which are listed at the conclusion of this article for those who might be interested.

Our greatest problem with the library at present is the lack of space and, consequently, many books are still in storage. When, God willing, we will have adequate space, the books will be properly catalogued, probably using the modified Dewey Decimal System as prepared for religious libraries. Mother Sara is seriously planning the preparation of a computerized index so that one can instantly recall information on a particular subject. Let us take, as an example, the art of Mount Athos; we could see listed not only all the books on this subject, but even other books with only a chapter or section on this subject. Naturally, much time would have to be spent in cataloguing the collection, although some volunteers have already spoken up.

The Vertical File is expanding rapidly and Father Moses has added much material to the "Russian Old Believer" file. Of considerable interest are some monographs of the early 1920's and single copies of newspapers published in Shanghai in that same period. A later publication from Harbin, Kleb Nebesnyi (Heavenly Bread), beginning before the Japanese occupation and continuing into the Second World War is of great interest.

Archival material has been received as well. More photographs on Alaska makes our Alaskiana pictorial collection quite impressive.

Most readers will undoubtedly be interested to know about the recently donated holy things by pious benefactors, although this is out of the realm of the library. Two hand-painted ikons, one of St Hilary of Poitiers and the other of St Columban, both with imbedded relics, greatly add to the spiritual beauty of the chapel. Two Russian, nineteenth century ikons in gold and silver rizas, of the Saviour and the Theotokos, and another of Jesus Christ, of the eighteenth century, also add to the beauty of the crowded chapel. Another donated ikon which has thrilled many visitors is that of St Antony of the Diaspora, a truly great Father of the Orthodox Church. Perhaps in another article, we can mention some of the relics which we have had for a long time and those more recently donated. Most of them are not yet placed in proper reliquaries, although we hope to be able to do that soon.

A few of the library's new acquisitions

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - 10 volumes

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament - 4 volumes

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - 4 volumes

Word Pictures in the New Testament - 6 volumes

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament - 4 volumes

Apostolic Fathers - J.B. Lightfoot - 5 volumes

Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament - 4 volumes

Expositor's Greek Testament - 5 volumes

35

Repose of the Holy Prophet Moses

For forty years, the Hebrews had wandered in the wilderness. God was preparing His people to enter the promised land. First, God taught the people that only He could save them. Then, He taught them that when they fell into sin and disobedience or lost their faith, He still loved them and would receive them back if they repented. God also taught His people how to keep the fasts, how to pray and how they should live. The people were so hard and stubborn that it took forty whole years for them to learn.

After the miracle of the brass serpent, God's people had to fight two more battles before they came to the border of the holy land. By now, St Moses was very old, and he had to choose someone to lead the people after he reposed. Besides, God had told Moses, "You were My chosen one to lead My people, but you disobeyed Me. Therefore, you cannot lead the people into the promised land. Choose Joshua and make him the leader after you. He will lead the people into the holy land."

Moses was very sad, but he understood. Joshua was called and ordained as leader. When the people came to the Jordan River, Moses went up on the top of a mountain called Mt Nebo. He looked out over the Jordan River, into the promised land. For a long time, he stood there gazing into the green, fertile land of Israel, praying for the people and repenting of his own sins. Moses peacefully reposed in the Lord.*

[With this chapter, we end the Five Books of Moses, and volume one of our series "The History of God's People." This series will break while we edit, illustrate and prepare this volume for publication. Later, we continue the series with God's people under the judges, kings and prophets, showing how God continued to prepare the world for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.]

*Saint Moses was a type of Christ. His life and leadership over Israel was a direct revelation and prophecy about Christ. But only Jesus Christ was perfect, and only He can actually lead us into the true, heavenly "promised land." When Moses died outside the holy land because of his sin, this taught us that no matter how great and good a person may be, they still sin, they are still not perfect. Only if God Himself came down to earth and became a man, could there be a man holy and perfect enough to lead people into the Heavenly Kingdom.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR TEENAGERS:

FOUR MYSTERY OF HOLY BAPTISM AND CHRISMATION

[Somehow the Latin idea that Baptism and Chrismation are two completely different things came into some books in Orthodox countries. This is an irrational idea and it shows a lack of understanding of both Baptism and Chrismation. They are two parts of one whole and neither can be served without the other, neither is complete without the other. It is necessary for Orthodox Christians to put the Latin idea of "sacraments" out of their heads and restore the Orthodox concept of The Holy Mysteries in order to understand the true teaching of The Church]

1

QUESTION: What is Baptism, and why do people get Baptised? What does it do for us?

ANSWER: Baptism is a new birth. Jesus Christ said that in order to be saved we "must be born again of "Water and the Holy Spirit." When the Bible talks about being "born again" it is talking about Holy Baptism. When we are baptized, we are born again into the new life of the Holy Orthodox Church, which Jesus Christ created. "We are baptized because it frees us from the bondage of sin and death and unites us to Christ in His Holy Church."

2

QUESTION: Why does the Church insist that infants be baptised?

ANSWER: Because Baptism gives one special Grace from God to grow spiritually as he grows physically. Everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs special Grace from God to help overcome this fallen nature.

3

QUESTION: Why not wait until children are old enough to know what is going on to be baptised?

ANSWER: Because the most important years in the formation of a child's character and nature are from birth to about six or seven. It would be evil to allow children to go through this critical time without special Grace. Since everyone is born with a sinful nature, without baptism this sinfulness can easily become stronger and stronger. But Baptism gives a gift of Grace to help fight this. Baptism makes one part of God's Church so that if they die, they will go from the earthly Church to the heavenly Church and be with God. If someone dies without baptism, they are not united to God and His Church.

QUESTION: Will little children go to heaven if they are not baptized?

ANSWER: No one who is not born again in Holy Baptism will be in the heavenly Church, but we cannot say what happens to small children who die without baptism. God is love and loves everyone, and small children who die before they are old enough to be guilty of their sins are in God's hands. God loves them, and He takes care of them. We do not know or have any idea at all what happens to them, but since they are in God's hands, it could not be something bad and we certainly do not have to worry about them.

QUESTION: Do any adults ever get baptised? If so, how is this done - are they immersed?

ANSWER: Yes. Any adult who is converted to Orthodoxy is baptised into the Holy Church. "Baptism" means immersion. Immersing a person, whether a baby or an adult, three times, is the only thing that is truly baptism. The Orthodox Church condemns such things as "sprinkling" or pouring water over someone's head. These things are not baptisms at all (for example, the Holy Apostles decreed "Any bishop or presbyter who accepts the baptisms of heretics shall be deposed" c46 of the Holy Apostles. Canon 50 of the Holy Apostles deposes any bishop or presbyter who does not baptise a person with three complete immersions under water).

QUESTION: Does our Church recognize the baptism of other churches?

ANSWER: No. There is no baptism outside the Orthodox Church. If anyone from one of the false Christian churches becomes Orthodox, we are supposed to baptize them into the Holy Church. Sometimes, for some special reason, we receive a convert into the Holy Church only by Chrismation (the Gift of the Holy Spirit). This does not mean that we recognize their baptism, for Chrismation is a part of baptism. The act of Chrismating the person in itself means that the former ritual was empty and did not have the Grace of the Holy Spirit. We simply do not repeat the ritual part, but bestow the Grace and the Holy Spirit, since the person had not received these in his former false "baptism". If we accepted the "baptisms" of the false churches, then we could not give a convert Chrismation. But this is only done in an emergency, and it is uncanonical to do it otherwise.

7

QUESTION: What is Holy Chrismation?

ANSWER: It is the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a part of baptism and is sometimes called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," because in it we receive the Holy Spirit.

8

QUESTION: What is Holy Chrism?

ANSWER: Holy Chrism is sanctified myrrh oil which has been specially consecrated by the Holy Spirit through an Orthodox bishop.

9

QUESTION: Who consecrates Holy Chrism, and when is it done?

ANSWER: The bishop serves the Holy Mystery of consecrating Chrism on Great, Holy Thursday. No one but a bishop can serve this Holy Mystery.

10

QUESTION: What do the different oils and aromatics used in making Holy Chrism mean?

ANSWER: Oil, which represents the mercy and Grace of God, frankincense, symbolizing the kingship of Christ and, myrrh, recalling His suffering for our salvation.

11

QUESTION: How many times do we receive anointing with Holy Chrism?

ANSWER: We are Chrismated only once, to complete our baptism with the seal of the Holy Spirit.

12

QUESTION: What is the difference between the Roman Catholic "confirmation" and the Orthodox confirmation with Holy Chrism?

ANSWER: The difference is that there is no such thing as "confirmation" in the Orthodox Church. "Confirmation" is a legalistic Latin ritual which has no real meaning.

13

QUESTION: What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: We really cannot speak of species of "gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

The Westerns have a sentimental list of supposed legal "gifts of the Holy Spirit." The gift of the Holy Spirit is the guidance of our consciences toward salvation and the Grace of God to help us in all ways in our moral struggles. We should not be learning the legalistic, pietistic Latin lists of species of "gifts of the Holy Spirit."

14

QUESTION: Who administers this Holy Mystery?

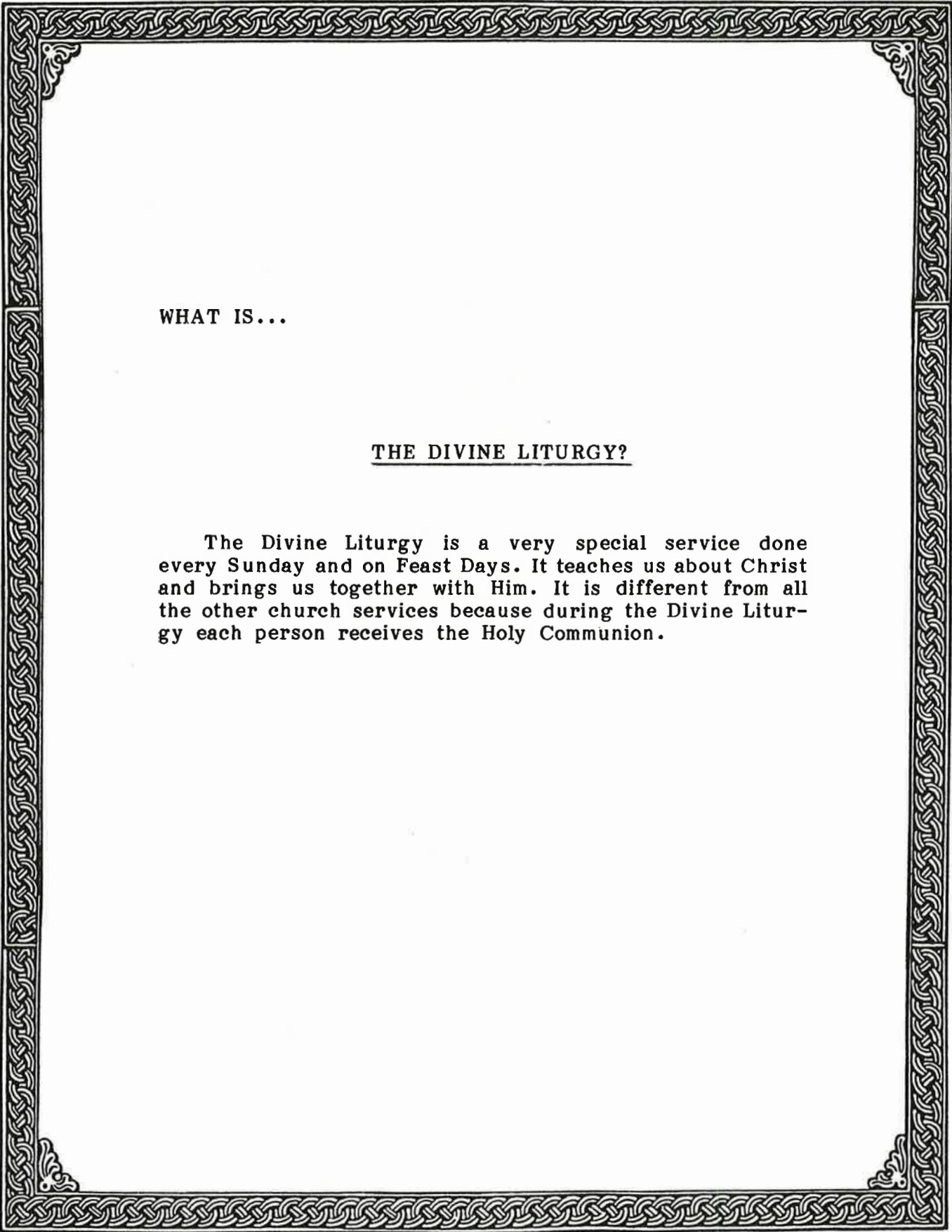
ANSWER: Chrismation, like the rest of baptism, is served by a bishop, or by a presbyter acting in the bishop's name. If a person receives an emergency baptism by someone else, the baptized person is brought to a bishop or priest as soon as possible for the completion of the baptism by chrismation.

WHAT IS...

A PRESBYTER?

A presbyter is a person who is given help by God to teach people about God and to serve the special church services such as the Divine Liturgy. Another name for a presbyter is "priest".

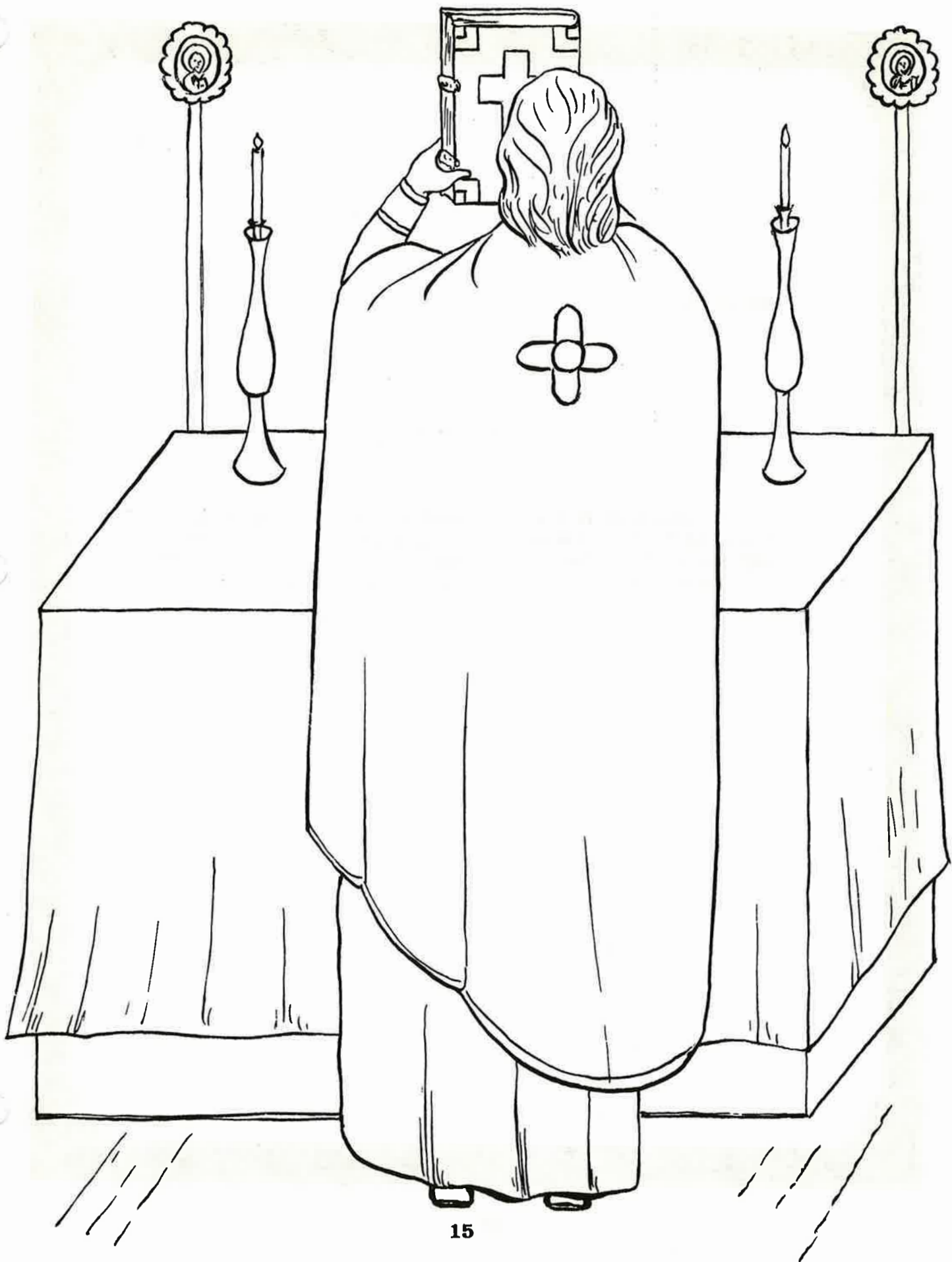


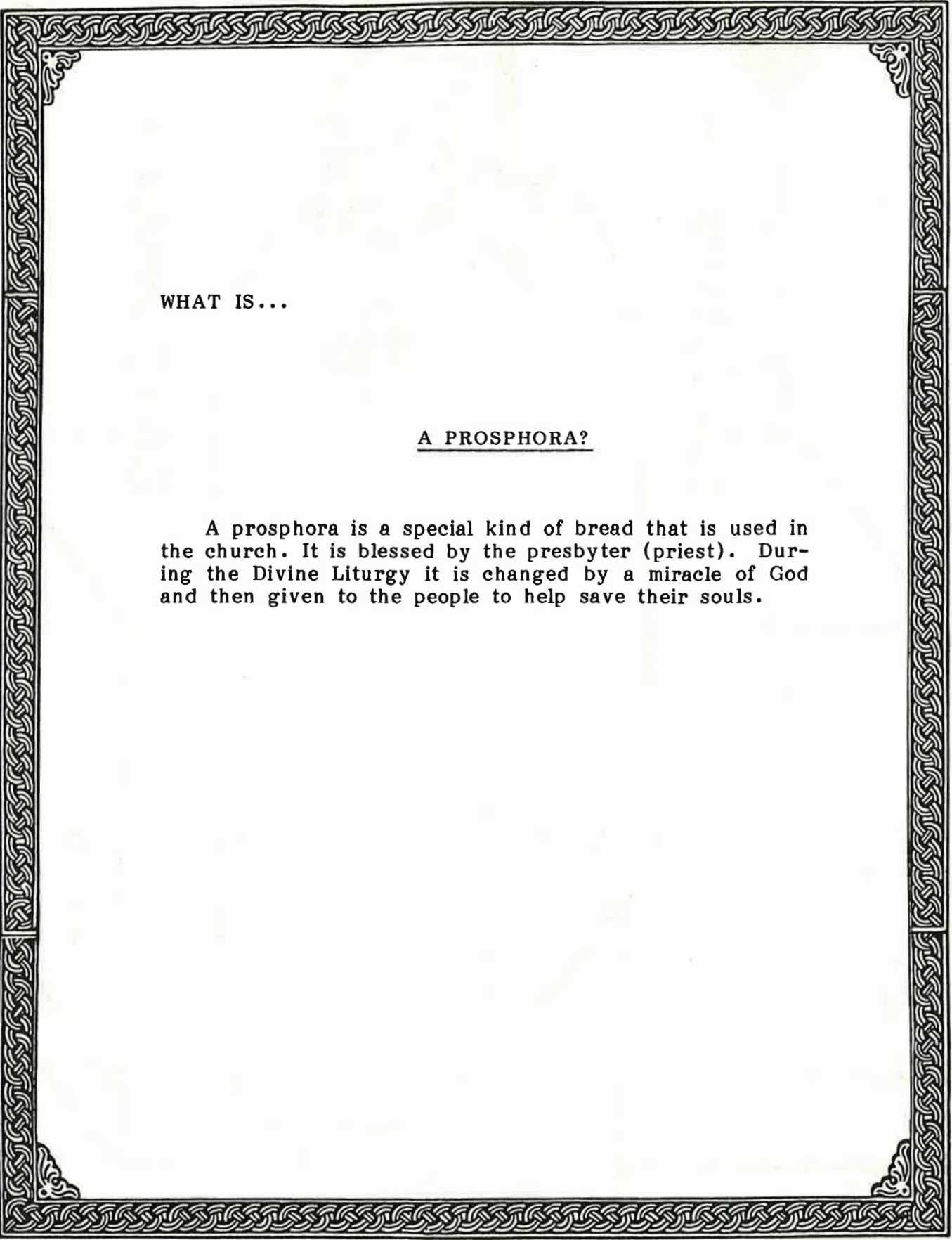


WHAT IS...

THE DIVINE LITURGY?

The Divine Liturgy is a very special service done every Sunday and on Feast Days. It teaches us about Christ and brings us together with Him. It is different from all the other church services because during the Divine Liturgy each person receives the Holy Communion.

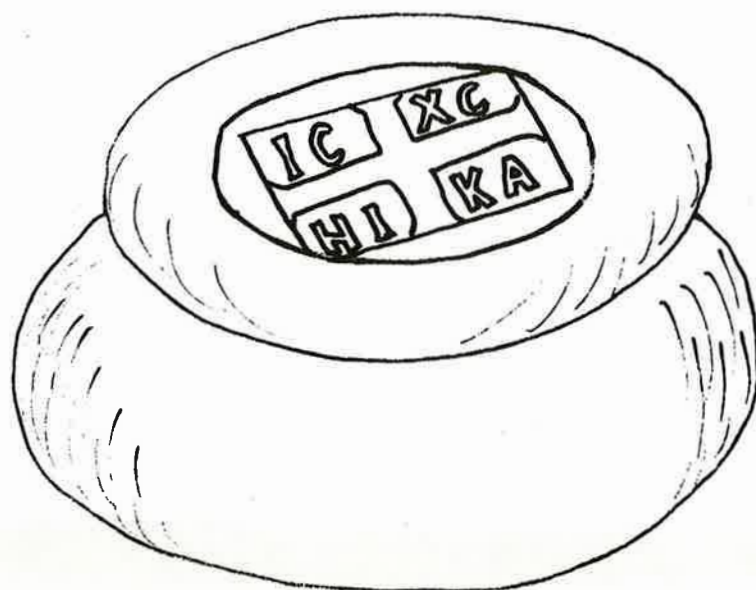
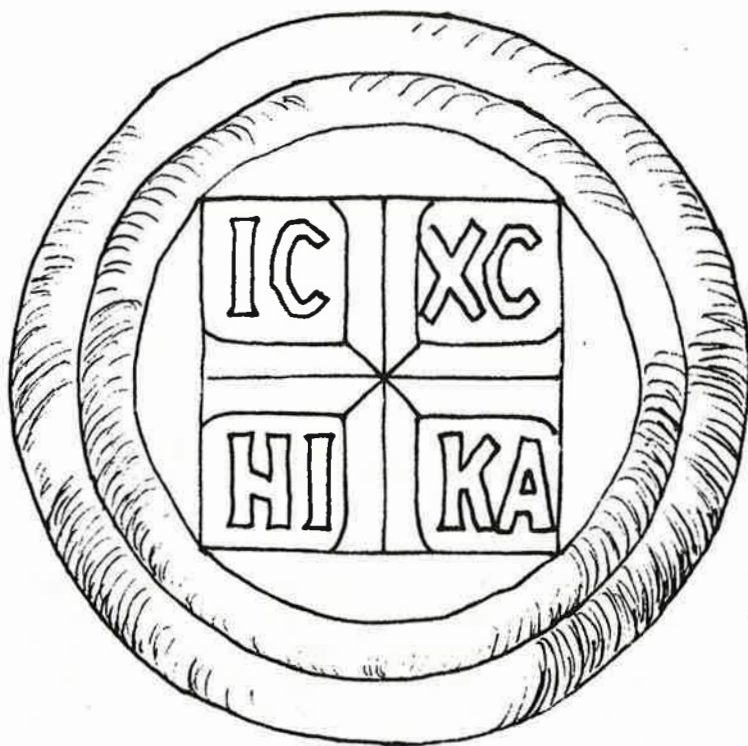


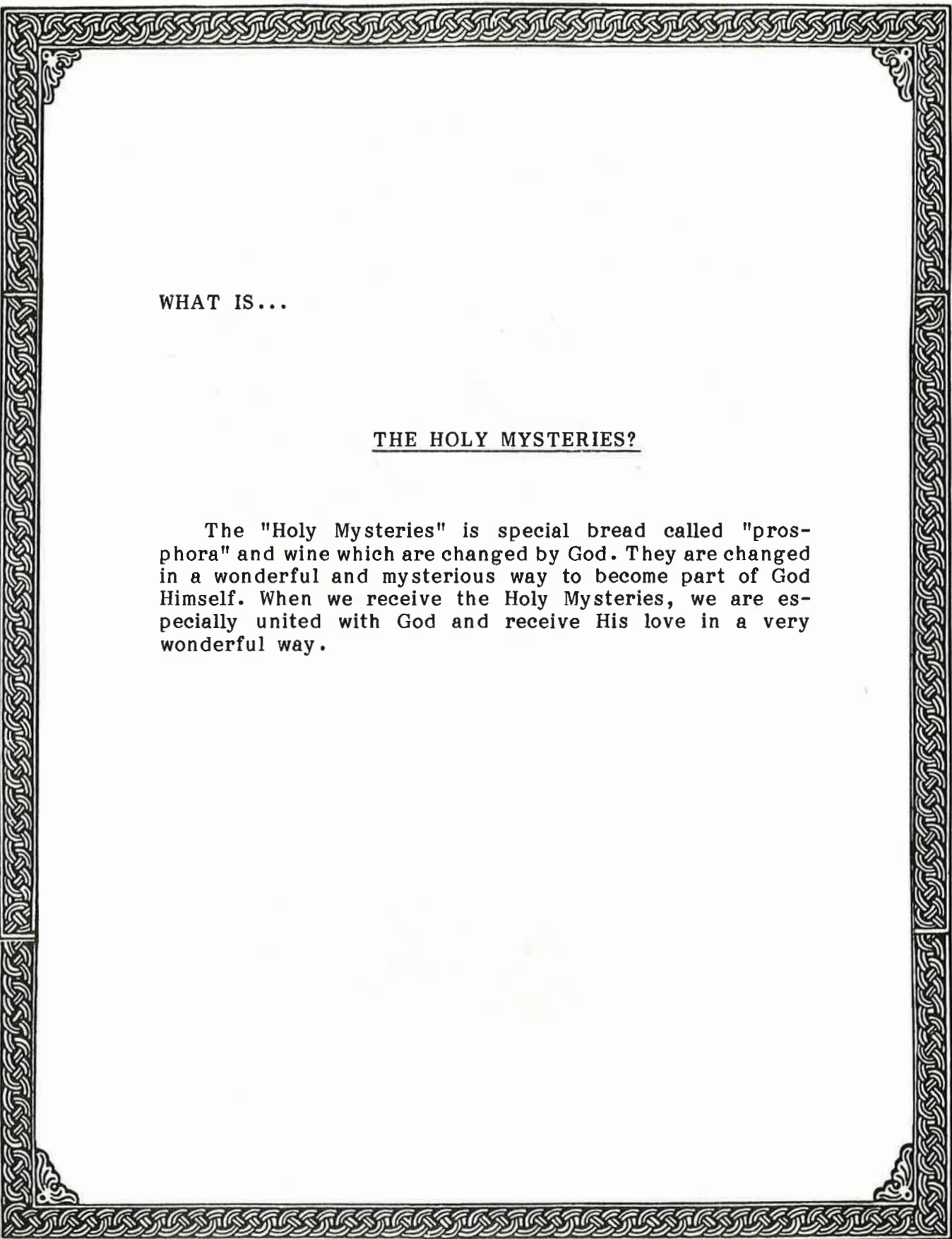


WHAT IS...

A PROSPHORA?

A prosphora is a special kind of bread that is used in the church. It is blessed by the presbyter (priest). During the Divine Liturgy it is changed by a miracle of God and then given to the people to help save their souls.

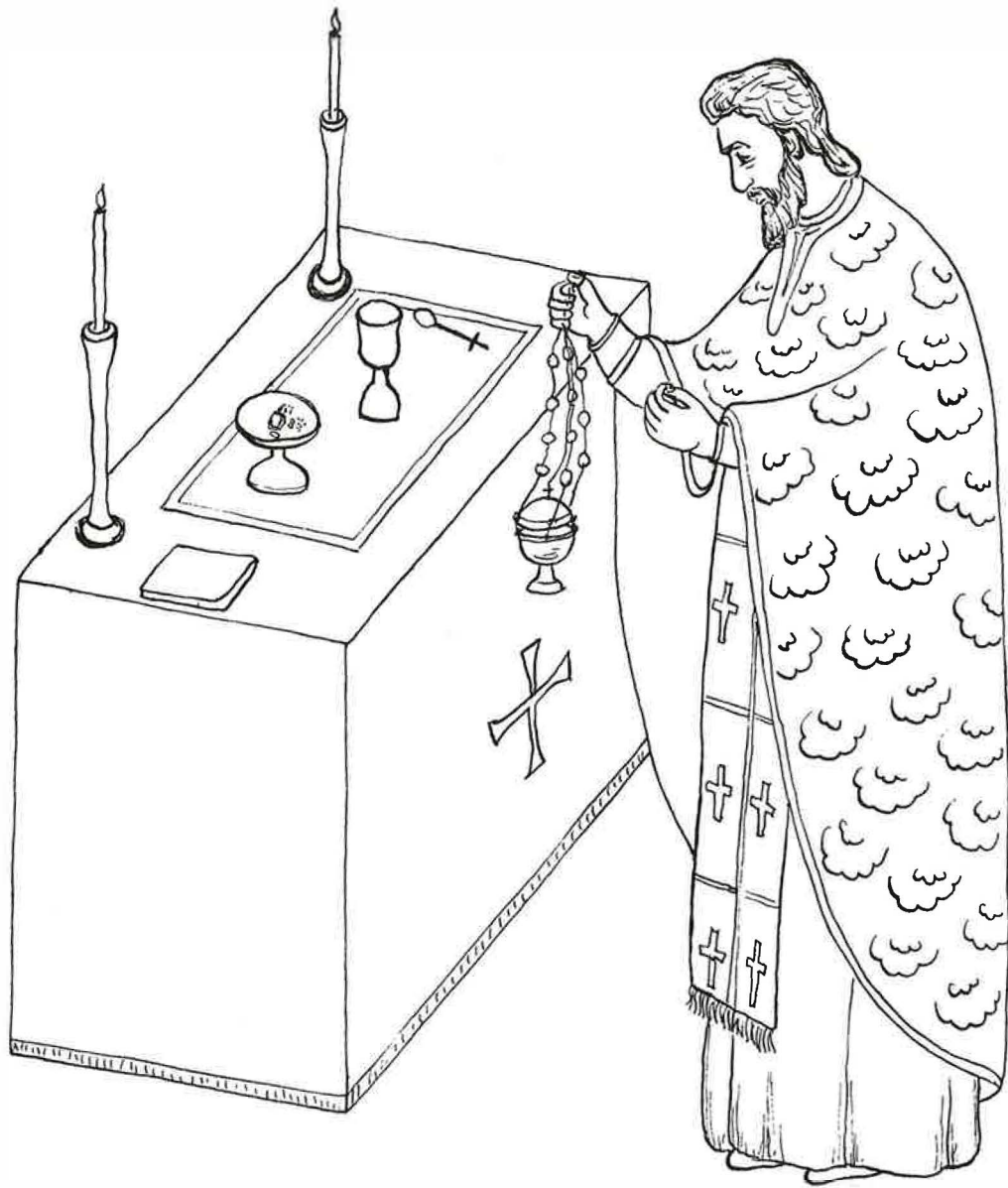


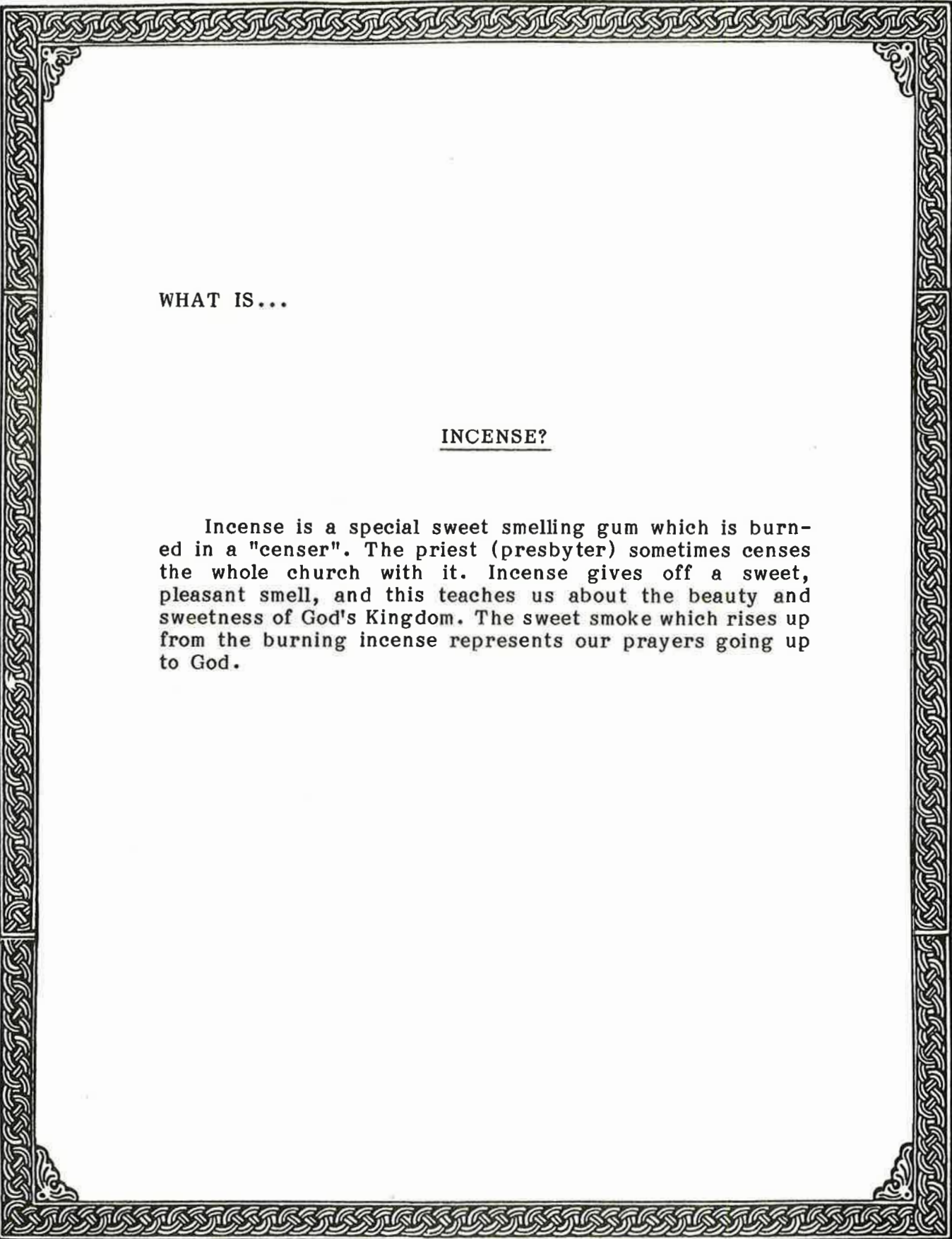


WHAT IS...

THE HOLY MYSTERIES?

The "Holy Mysteries" is special bread called "prosphora" and wine which are changed by God. They are changed in a wonderful and mysterious way to become part of God Himself. When we receive the Holy Mysteries, we are especially united with God and receive His love in a very wonderful way.

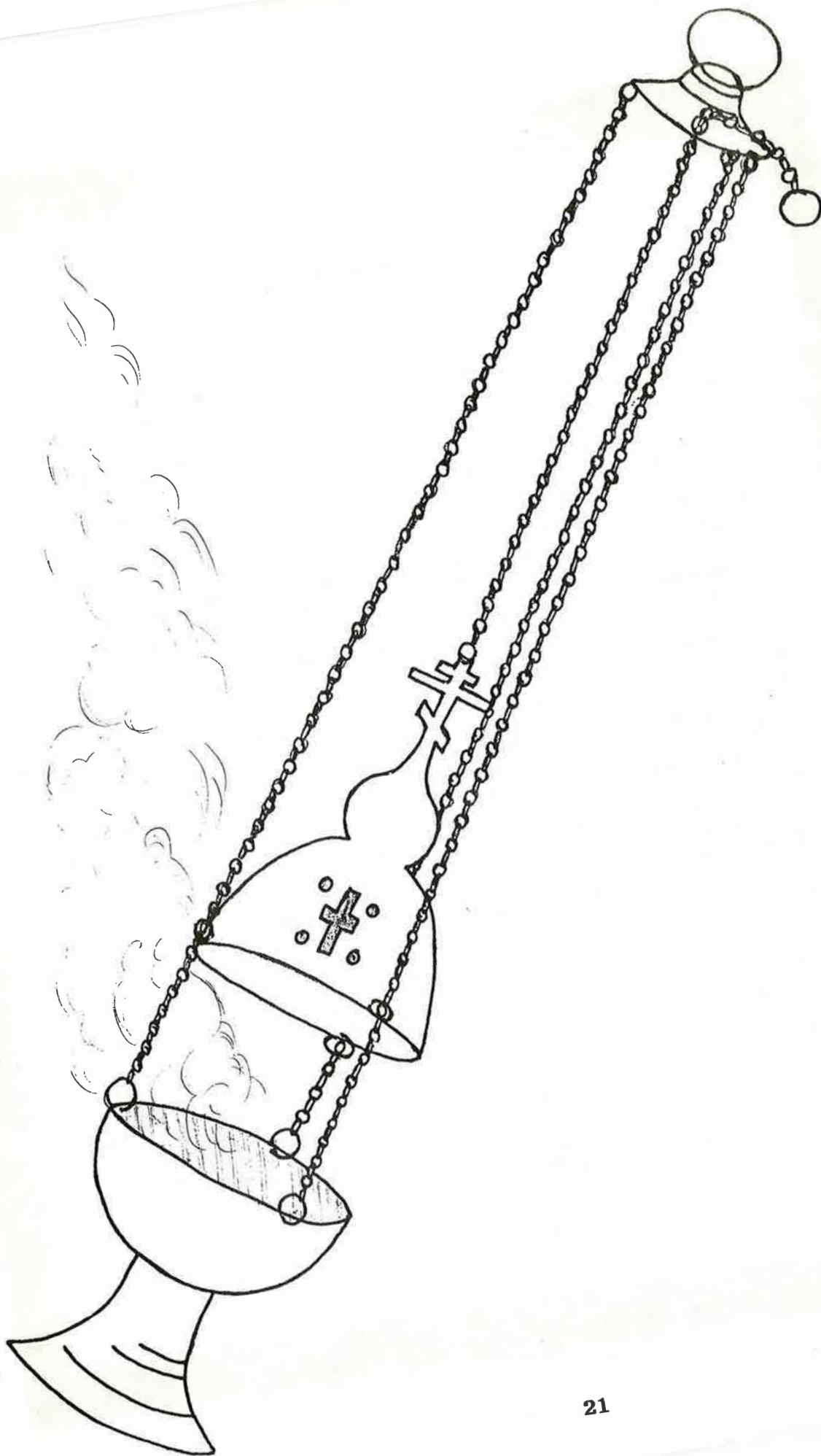




WHAT IS...

INCENSE?

Incense is a special sweet smelling gum which is burned in a "censer". The priest (presbyter) sometimes censes the whole church with it. Incense gives off a sweet, pleasant smell, and this teaches us about the beauty and sweetness of God's Kingdom. The sweet smoke which rises up from the burning incense represents our prayers going up to God.



12 January

HOLY MARTYR TATIANA

(+ca 220)

Our holy mother Tatiana was born in Rome. Her father was a high ranking government official and the family was very wealthy. The parents were Orthodox people and they raised their daughter to love Christ our God with all her heart.

When St Tatiana grew up she decided to become a nun, serving Christ and the poor people. The saint spent her time in prayer and fasting. Every day she visited the sick and people in prison, and gave food and money to poor widows and orphans. St Tatiana brought joy and comfort to those who were poor and suffering.

When St Tatiana was about twenty years old, a cruel and evil man named Ulpian became governor. He hated our Saviour Jesus Christ and became angry whenever he heard of the good things the Christians were doing.

Ulpian ordered that all Christians be arrested and forced to worship the Roman idols. A special secret police force was formed to arrest and kill all Christians who refused to worship the stone idols. St Tatiana was arrested and, since she was a famous and beloved leader of the Church, she was brought before the governor.

"Turn away from Jesus Christ and worship the gods of this world," Ulpian said sternly, "or you will be tortured to death."

The saint was taken to the temple of the idols to be forced to worship them. As she stood before the huge statues, the saint raised her arms in prayer to God. As she made the sign of the cross, the whole temple began to shake and tremble. Suddenly, the idols cracked and began to crumble to dust.

The pagans were furious and began to beat the saint. She was dragged from the temple and tortured unmercifully. No matter how much the evil torturers beat St Tatiana and burned her body with hot branding irons, she remained joyous and loudly glorified God.

Many of the people who watched the martyr being tortured were amazed at her patience and joy in the face of such frightening and terrible suffering, and believed in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Finally, when the governor saw that he could not conquer St Tatiana with pain or fear, he had her head cut off with a sword. The holy martyr gave up her holy soul into the hands of Christ our God.

Through her holy prayers may we face all the trials and sorrows or life with faith, patience and joy.

Amen!

SAINT TATIANA

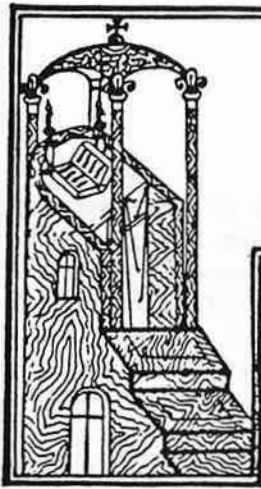


ANTHEM OF THE LITURGY

ORDER OF SERVICE	SCRIPTURE; LESSON
<i>O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, Who art immortal and Who didst deign for our salvation to become Incarnate of the Holy Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin Mary, without change becoming man and wast crucified for us, O Christ our God, vanquishing death by death; Who art one of the Holy Trinity and art glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit; save us.</i>	This hymn presents a summary of the whole message of salvation in the Church. Everything which is taught in this hymn is absolutely necessary for our salvation. Let us look briefly at this wonderful hymn and confession of faith, and see what it teaches us:
1. Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God. He is the Incarnate Word of God. If he is begotten, then he cannot possibly have been created. As Son and Word of God, He is, in fact, God Himself. 2. Jesus Christ is immortal. Therefore, it was necessary for Him to accept death of His own free choice. This means that, in freely dying for us, out of love for us, Christ conquered the "law of self-preservation." The "law of self-preservation" is a wall which separates us from attaining to the virtue of self-less love. Christ destroyed this wall, and made it possible for us to struggle and overcome this barrier of "self-preservation" which Satan has turned into a great passion, and a great source of passions. 3. Though He chose to become truly man, He still remained truly God. By this, He brought God and man together. 4. In order to become truly man, the Son was incarnate by means of that channel established by God: that is, the womb of a woman — the manner in which all men enter this world. Thus, the Holy Virgin became the bridge from heaven to earth, the chalice which bore our Salvation. For this reason, she is called "Theotokos", the Bearer of God. 5. Christ was crucified for our sins and passions in order that we might be saved from them, and freed from the enslavement of the fear of death. 6. By His death and Resurrection, He finally conquered death and the fear of death, making eternal life the hope of the faithful, through His Holy Church. 7. Jesus Christ is one of the Holy Trinity, One God glorified in Three Persons. 8. This great message of Salvation is presented to us through, by and in the Holy Orthodox Church, revealing that she (the Orthodox Church) is the custodian and channel of salvation for mankind.	

[If we pay close attention to the two psalms and anthems we have just chanted, we will see that they contain prophecies about the coming of Christ, and the Holy Mystery itself, so they truly help to prepare us for Holy Communion.

Following the stanzas (antiphons) and anthem the "Little Litany of Peace" is served again. The three "Litanies of Peace" are also served in honour of the Holy Trinity, and if we will study the words of the Great Litany of Peace and the two Little Litanies, we will see that they give emphasis and punctuation to the words and message of the typical antiphon. They also help to prepare our minds and dispositions to be led ever more deeply into the wondrous message and participation of the great mystery of the Divine Liturgy.]



BIBLE STUDY (EXEGETIC) SERMONS

On Matthew, Chapter Five
(by Fr Lazar Puhalo)

"Do not think that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets: I have not come to destroy them but to fulfil them. For I tell you in truth, till the heavens and earth pass away, not one dot or pen stroke shall by any means disappear from the law until all things are fulfilled..."(5:17-20)

It is amazing that, inspite of the Saviour's words, some people assert that the old law was abolished by Christ. The Old Testament law was established by the wisdom of God. It was given to reveal to man the depth and breadth of his separation from God through his own frailty. The harsher ordinances of the law were social codes given because the coarseness and brutality of the people made civilized survival impossible without it. Their main purpose, however, was to reveal to man the depth of his depravity and the need for mercy, as the Lord told the Jews that they would understand the law if they would learn the meaning of His words, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Hos.6:6; Mt.9:13). The ritual or religious part of the law was also a revelation to man about his fallen state. It taught him that he was unable, by himself, to be re-united with God, and it revealed the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ to redeem mankind from it's fall. The Old Testament is filled with revelations about Christ, and indeed Christ was seen in visions by the Old Testament prophets.

If Christ did not abolish the Old Testament laws, why are we no longer subject to it? Actually, we are subject to the basic moral code of the Old Testament, which are condensed in the ten commandments and the "Sermon on the Mount," and summarized by Christ in the Words, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbour above yourself". We are no longer subject to the laws of sacrifices because the Old Testament sacrifices were only prototypes or prophecies about our Salvation by Jesus Christ. Therefore, all these laws have been totally fulfilled for us by Christ. Our Saviour has transformed the Divine services from the temple sacrifices which promised salvation, to the Divine Liturgy which delivers salvation. In the Old Testament sacrifices mankind was being prepared for his redemption, given a promise of re-union with God. In the New Testament Liturgy, all is fulfilled, and through Holy Communion, we are actually united with God.

There is a grave error in the Western idea of how Christ fulfilled the law, and this error has taken root among some of our own people. What did the law require of people? What did it command them to fulfil? Righteousness. It was theoretically possible for someone to completely fulfil the letter of the law, but the law was spiritual and required a spiritual fulfillment: complete purity of heart and total love for God and neighbour. The law in itself was unable to re-unite man with God.

The idea that Christ died as a vicarious sacrifice to fulfil God's justice is a pagan concept based on neither the Old or the New Testaments. Sin is not so much the violation of a law as it is the falling short of

the mark or goal which God intends for us. We fall short of the goal of union with God because our very fallen nature is unrighteous. This is how Christ fulfilled the law for us: by fulfilling all righteousness, restoring for mankind a perfect, truly righteous nature and by uniting God and man in Himself, pouring out His co-suffering love for mankind on the Cross and raising our humanity to immortality in His own saving Resurrection. In His ascension in the flesh, He blazed the path to heaven for all humanity who would follow Him. Thus the law was fulfilled when the righteousness of perfect love for God and perfect, co-suffering love for man was fulfilled when the whole essence of true morality was fulfilled in the Man Jesus, and the nature of man was re-united with God, in Christ.

The law remains. It has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is fulfilled for us when we partake of Christ's fulfilment of it, that is, when we receive Christ Himself. We are no longer judged by the law, according to the law, rather we live or die according to our relationship with Christ, whether we have united ourselves to His body, the Holy Church, and received Him in Holy Communion.

Let us not suppose, therefore, that the law was some bad thing which has been destroyed. It is fulfilled in full by Christ, and by us through faith in Him.

MISSIONARY DIGEST:

Nativity of Christ (Bozhich), St Michael's Parish, Vancouver:

The feast of the Nativity was celebrated with genuine joy and a strong feeling of "zadruga". On the eve of the feast, the vigil and badnjak were celebrated and, in keeping with true Serbian Orthodox tradition, no cooked food was served. Nativity eve is a strict fast day and, at the St Michael's parish, we keep this rule by serving only oranges and walnuts at the badnjak supper. Over 200 people were present for the badnjak.



[2] Blessing of the badnjak. The oak tree being blessed represents the oaks near Bethlehem, beneath which the shepherds were gathered when the angel appeared to them to "announce glad tidings of great joy".

This year, church school teacher Rejka Jahura and Father Lazar decided to have a Nativity play in order to refresh in people's mind the true meaning of the feast. Our children presented the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ from a script especially written by Miss Jahura. She read the Nativity story, simplified from the Bible, and the children portrayed the scenes. Joseph was properly portrayed as an elderly man, and Miss Jahura took care to include the true relationship of Mary and her elderly kinsman, Joseph, in her reading.

[3] Joseph and Mary journey to Bethlehem



[4] The Manger Scene.



SAVANDAN, The Feast of St Sava, St Michael's Parish, Vancouver:

Savandan was very well attended this year, and the Slava was celebrated amidst over 200 faithful.

[5] The children happily participated in the offering of the Slava kolach, symbolically dedicating the Serbian land and people to Christ.



[6] The life of St Sava was read in English by our missionary altar boy, Adam Russell. The "life" was also told in Serbian.



At the end of the Savandan programme, Fr Lazar presented each child who participated with a copy of the life of St Sava and a modern English edition of the Bible. The Bibles were furnished by the Sts Kyril and Methody Orthodox Christian Education Society of Chilliwack, B.C.

[7]



[8] Delivering a "candilo" to Reyka Jahura. During the past several months, the faithful of the St Michael's parish have been either establishing or upgrading their ikon corners. Twenty seven families have purchased new candilos for their homes. The St Tikhon bookstore, South Canaan, Pa. sells an excellent quality gold candilo (ikon lamp) for about \$25.00.



[9] Fr Moses unpacks a new shipment of books for the monastery library. Our library is growing rapidly and we are accumulating an outstanding Orthodox educational resource centre. Unfortunately, due to the small size of our building, the bulk of our material remains stored in packing cases. Eventually, we will have to make an appeal for help to build a new library to house our hundreds of volumes, research files and growing archives (see article in this issue).



[10] Other tasks in the monastery include the restoration of fine old vestments. Fr Varlaam is shown restoring a set of gold brocade vestments for the St Michael's parish in Vancouver. The vestry and sanctuary of the St Michael's parish were in a very sad state of disrepair, and the sanctuary was inadequately equipped for the serving of the Divine Liturgy. Fr Varlaam spent many hours repairing vestments, covers, aers and chalice covers, and both Frs Varlaam and Lazar spent much time in cleaning the altar area. Missing equipment was furnished mostly at the cost of the monastery.



[Saints and Spiritual Strugglers in North America]

THE ALEUT ELDER, SMIRENNIKOV OF AKUN ISLAND

In 1822, while travelling by bidarka through the Aleutian Islands, Fr John (later, Bishop Innocent) Veniaminov encountered one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Orthodoxy in North America. All we know of the Aleut Elder, Smirennikov of Akun Island, is what we read in Fr Veniaminov's brief report.

Smirennikov was a very old man, who had been baptized by Fr Makary of the Valaam mission. He was a great struggler and, since there were no priests in the Aleutians for many years, God had chosen him to teach the people. Two angels appeared to the elder regularly and instructed him. He, in turn, taught the people.

When Fr John arrived on Akun during Great Lent of 1829, the sanctity of old Smirennikov was revealed to him through the elder's gift of prophecy, healing and prayer. A number of very profound miracles occurred through his prayers.

Fr John heard Smirennikov's confession and gave him Holy Communion. Some of the people called Smirennikov "Shaman", and the elder complained that Fr John had not asked him about this in confession. "It would be a sin to be a shaman and, if I were one, I should not have been given communion." Fr John apologized for his carelessness.

Fr John wrote a report on Elder Smirennikov to his bishop, and was instructed to visit him again. By the time Fr John returned to Akun, however, the elder had already reposed. A translation of Fr John's report is found on pp.10-13 of the book Innokenty of Alaska (Synaxis Press, Chilliwack, B.C. 1976).

