

TO SERVE THEE IS FREEDOM

FAITH AND VOCATION IN LIFE



GRADE VIII
Pupil's Manual

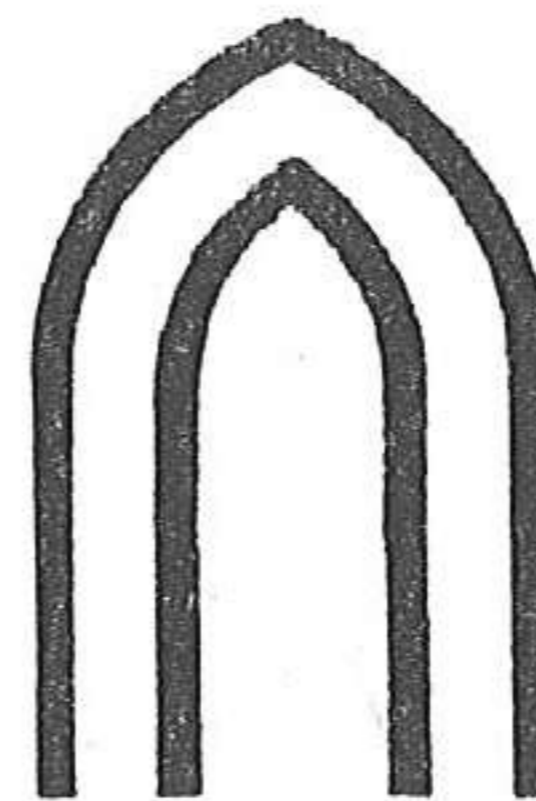
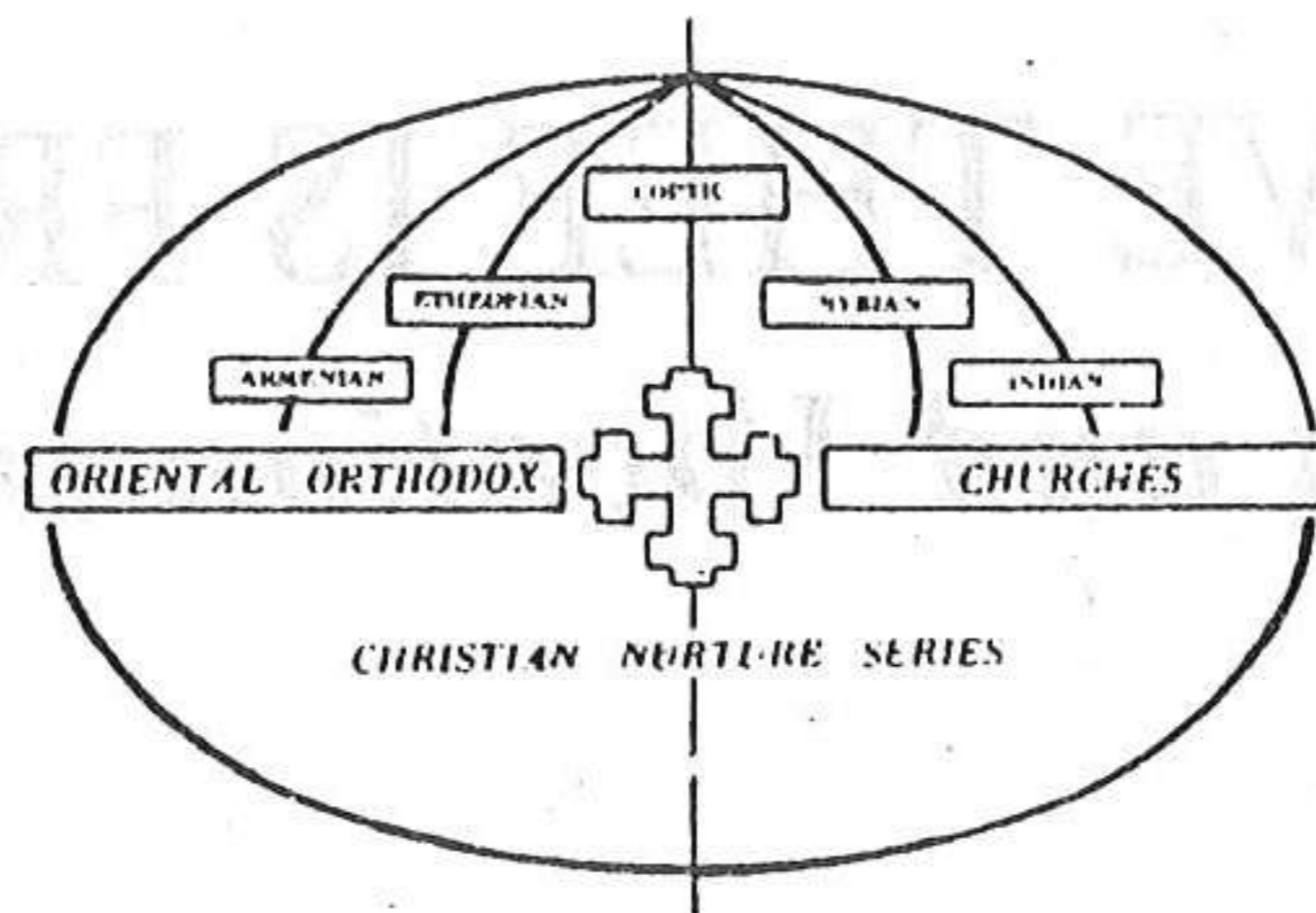
TO SERVE THEE IS FREEDOM

Faith and Vocation in Life



**Early Secondary
Department**

**GRADE VIII
PUPIL'S MANUAL**



Christian Nurture Series
 prepared by the Editorial Committee
 authorized by the Standing Committee
 of the

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Third Edition - 1993, Fourth Edition - 1998, Fifth Edition - 2005
 Seventh Edition - 2011, Eighth Edition - December 2013

Copies 1000

Published by

**ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL
 ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST
 Devalokam, Kottayam – 686 038**

CENTRAL OFFICE

Orthodox Seminary
 Kottayam – Kerala
 India

REGIONAL OFFICES

1. Anba Rueis – Cairo
2. Armenian Seminary
 Antelias – Lebanon

Rs. 40.00

CONTENTS

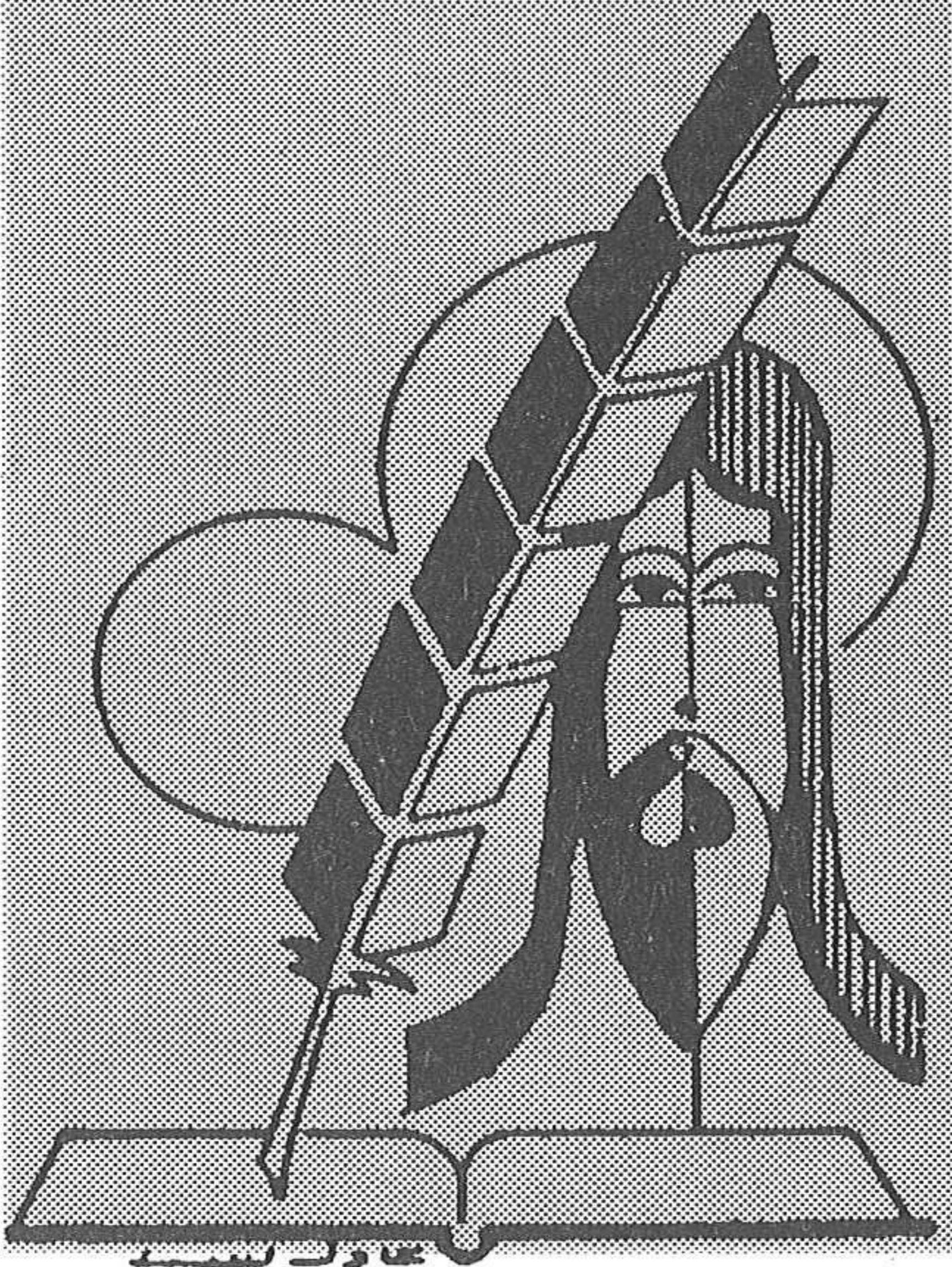
Unit I	Messianic Prophets	5
1.	David, the Prophet King	7
2.	Isaiah, prophet Evangelist	11
3.	Daniel, Prophet Seer	15
4.	Ezekiel, prophet of Renewal and Unity	19
5.	Jonah, The Symbolic Prophet	23
Unit II	The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist	27
1.	The Lord's Command	29
2.	Heavenly Community	33
3.	Praise, Thanksgiving and Communion	37
4.	Eucharist in daily life	41
Unit III	The Ecumenical Councils	45
1.	What is a Council?	47
2.	The Three Great Councils	51
3.	The Church's Faith	57
Unit IV	Great Fathers of the Church	61
1.	Who is a Church Father?	63
2.	Apostolic Fathers	67
3.	The defender of Orthodoxy	73
4.	The great teachers of the Church	77
5.	Oriental Fathers	85
6.	Local Fathers	89
Unit V	The Calling of God	93
1.	The call of God and my work	95
2.	What shall I do with my life	99

Unit VI The Laws of the Kingdom of God	103
1. Division in Corinth	105
2. Confessing Christ	109
3. Many Gifts – one body	113
4. Love the Greatest gift	117
Unit VII The world and the work of the devil	121
1. The poor	123
2. Social Injustice	127
3. Bribery and corruption	131
4. War and Disarmament	135
Unit VIII The role of Monasticism	141
1. The fathers of Monasticism	143
2. The Monk as missionary and teacher of Society	147
3. The Monk's vocation today	151
Unit IX The Sacrament of Holy Orders	155
1. Priest and Shepherd	157

UNIT ONE

MESSIANIC PROPHETS

- **David, The Prophet King**
- **Isaiah, Prophet Evangelist**
- **Daniel, Prophet Seer**
- **Ezekiel, Prophet of Renewal and Unity**
- **Jonah, The Symbolic Prophet**



UNIT 1

LESSON 1

DAVID THE PROPHET & THE KING

THE SHEPHERD KING

Prophet Samuel anointed Saul to become the first king of Israel. But Saul was not faithful to the responsibility which God gave to him. He did not obey God's commandments.

God sent Samuel, his prophet, to fetch a new King. Samuel came to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem and saw his sons, one after the other, but none of the seven he saw pleased God. Then he asked Jesse if he had other sons. There was only the youngest, who was with the sheep in the fields. Samuel asked to see him.

The young shepherd, David; came in and the Lord said to Samuel: "Arise; anoint him, for this is he." Samuel Poured oil on David's head from his horn in the midst of his brothers. God was pleased with David because his heart was pure and he followed the ways of God: "I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will."

DAVID THE HERO

The spirit of God left Saul and came upon David. After some days David stood before Goliath the Champion.

He decided to save the people from that evil man as he saved his sheep from the mouths of lions and bears. He came forward to fight-that evil



man. The man laughed when he saw this young shepherd with his stick in his hand. David said to him: "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts." (1 Sam. 17:45). David killed him with his sling and stone. Goliath's followers fled and the people of God were saved.

All the people were happy because they were saved from the enemy who attacked them. The streets were filled with people. Wherever David went, many people assembled around him. All the women were singing in the streets this song:

"Saul has slain his thousands
and David his ten thousands

Saul heard them and was jealous, and hated David. He knew that David would become King after him. But Jonathan, the son of Saul liked David as his own soul, God was with David and saved him from Saul's hands. On the contrary, it happened that Saul, not knowing it, fell twice in the hands of David. He could have killed Saul, but he did not, honouring him as the Lord's anointed.

THE MESSIANIC KING

David, became king after Saul when he was thirty years old. But he was sad for Saul and his sons who were killed in the fighting, especially for his friend Jonathan.

David was a good king. He got power from God. Unlike Saul who was trying to establish his won kingdom. David always appeared before God in humility, seeking the will of God and the Glory of His name. He continuously chanted his psalms glorifying God.

God chose David to become king in a very special way. He had to become a symbol for a greater king. THE MESSIAH. The kingdom of David symbolized the eternal kingdom of heaven. This has been expressed when the Lord of Hosts said to David: "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep. That you should be prince over my people... your house and your kingdom shall be made for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever." David answered; "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus for? ...Because of thy promise, and according to thy own heart, thou hast wrought all this greatness... and with thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for over." (2 Sam. 7:8-29).

With this spirit, David ruled all his life. He knew that God has given him a special mission, to prepare the way for His coming to earth. David's earthly kingdom symbolized the kingdom of heaven, which our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David, has established: His Church throughout the world forever.

THE LORD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

During his reign, David administered justice and equality to all his people. He cared for them with a straight heart; and loved them as he loved his sheep when he was shepherd.

One day, God sent his prophet Nathan to declare to David the Lord's covenant with him:

“When Your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” (2 Sam. 7:12-14).

This covenant has been realized in the Lord Jesus Christ who has come from David's posterity in the flesh. “Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised.” (Acts 13:23) David chanted with God's promise in his psalms:

“The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which He will not turn back: “One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.” (Ps. 132:11)

This promise was realized when the Angel Gabriel came to the Virgin, and said to her:

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of and he



will reign his father David, over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:30-33).

In many occasions, the people called Jesus the Son of David. Barthimaeus, the blind man, cried at Him, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” (Mark 10:46). Many crowds also shouted on that day when Jesus entered Jerusalem as King: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” (Matt. 21:9).

THE GREAT PROPHET

David was not only a great king, he was also a great prophet. He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his prophecies. His psalms point to the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. His Divinity, His suffering, and His resurrection.

“I will tell of the decree of the Lord
He said to me: ‘You are my son,
today I have begotten you...’” (Ps. 2:7)

“Lift up you heads, gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in... (Ps. 24:7)

These psalms are only examples for David’s prophecies concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul talked about their meaning. (Read Acts 13:33-37).

TEXT FOR MEMORIZATION

“The Lord says to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’ ” (Ps. 110-1).

ACTIVITIES

1. Read the following Psalms and find out verses referring to our Lord Jesus Christ:
2. Compare (Psalms 2 and 16) with (Acts 13: 33-37).
3. What is meant by saying that “Jesus is the Son of David?”
4. Make a wall-magazine, with your colleagues, about the life of David the King and Prophet, using the story of his life in (1 Samuel) and (2 Samuel).



UNIT 1

LESSON 2

ISAIAH, PROPHET EVANGELIST

Isaiah is one of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets living about 800 B. C. He prophesied about Christ the "Awaited Messaiah." His suffering and His kingdom. Isaiah was able through prophecy to give a clear picture of the Messiah to coming generations as though he were a contemporary of His. This is true to the degree that some of his admirers came to call his book "The Gospel of Asaiah."

A ROYAL UPBRINGING

Isaiah came from a royal family. He spent about half a century living in royal courts and participating in running the affairs of the State due to the confidence of kings in him. He called for total reform particularly when he came in close touch with the problems of the poorer classes of the people suffering from social injustice.

Isaiah witnessed the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel before the king of Babylon and the carrying away of its people into captivity.

HOW DID HE SEE CHRIST?

Most Wonderful of all of Isaiah's words were those of his sayings about the coming of the promised Saviour. The following are a number of pictures given by Isaiah in Prophecy:

First: The Messaiah – God Incarnate

Isaiah tells us about the conception of the Messaiah, the virgin and the Birth and considered it to be the highest of all prophecies as in Is. 10-16.

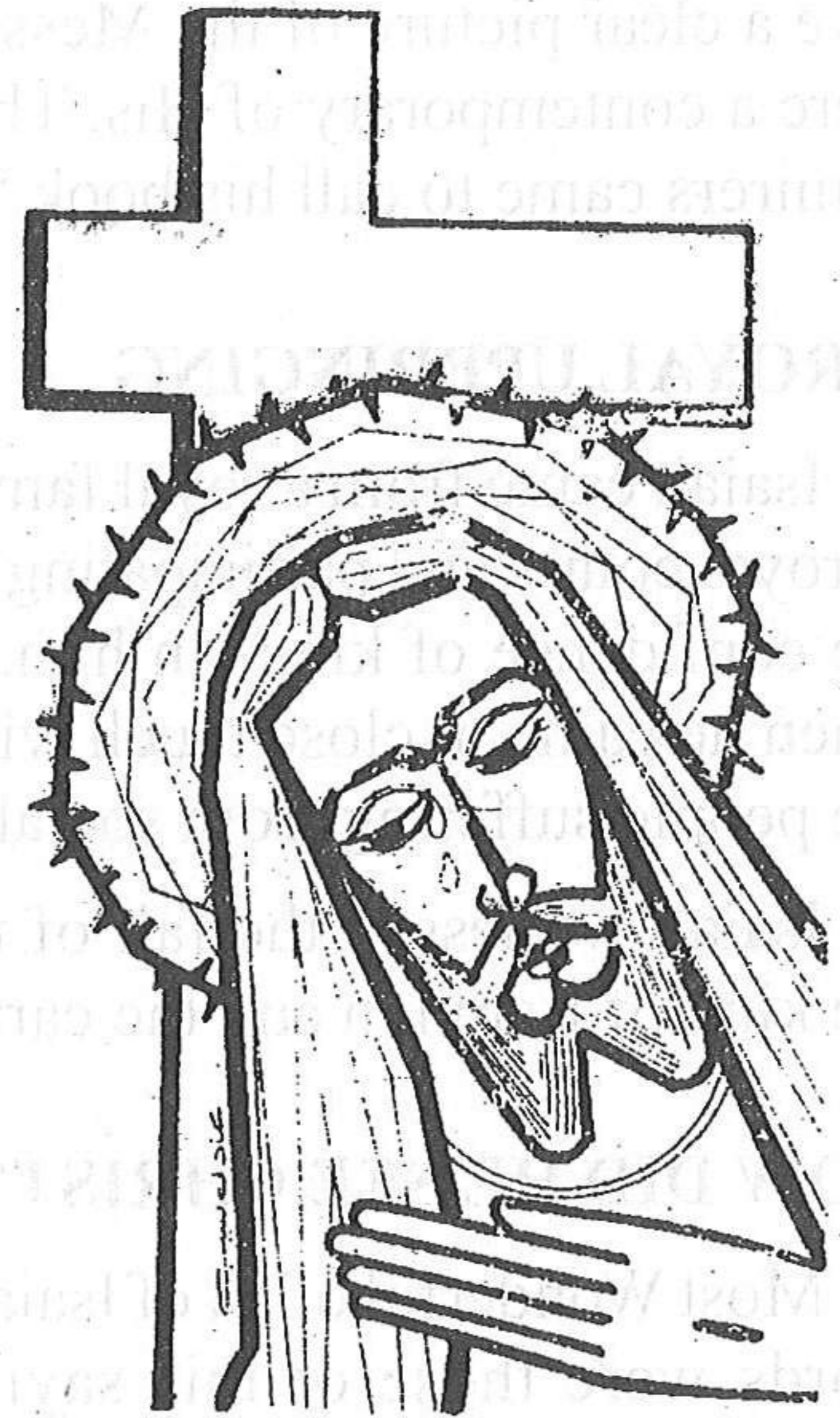


The prophecy was repeated clearly in Chapter 9, showing that He is the true light which shine on the world. (Is. 9: 1-7)

Second: The Messaiah - the Suffering Servant

The true Son of God who comes to redeem the world is pictured by Isaiah as sent by God taking the form of "The suffering Servant" (Is. 53). This was a very new and unusual way of describing God.

- ❖ Picturing Him as bearing the suffering of mankind. "Surely, He has borne our griefs." (Is. 53, 4)
- ❖ Picturing Him wounded on the cross. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." (Is. 53, 5)
- ❖ Picturing Him as the Lamb who bears our sins, "Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its sharers is dumb." (Is. 53, 7)
- ❖ Although He did not sin, yet He was numbered among sinners. "Although He had done no violence and there was not deceit in His mouth, yet He was numbered with the transgressors." (Is. 53, 9 and 12).
- ❖ Lastly, Picturing Him condemned to death in place of sinners. "He poured out His soul to death... He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Is. 53, 12)



Isaiah gives a clear cut picture of the greatness of the act of sacrifice. His (the Messaiah) suffering became the means for the salvation of mankind, a sacrifice made out of love, which converts sorrow into a fellowship of love. Thus suffering is a means to succeed in achieving the blessed goals aspired to.

Our Orthodox Church reads passages from the prophecies of Isaiah about the suffering of our Saviour during the Pascha prayers in the Holy Week, showing how those prophecies were fulfilled.

Third: The messiah – The Everlasting King

- ❖ Picturing the son of Jesse as a wise and mighty king ruling over all nations of the world: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, - and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him – spirit of wisdom and understanding.” (Is. 11, 1).
- ❖ His kingdom will be ruled by justice. “With righteousness, He shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the weak of the earth.” (Is. 11, 4).
- ❖ Peace will reign over His Kingdom.
“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb – the calf and the lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them.” (Is. 11, 6)
- ❖ He saw men’s hearts full of peace and security.
“The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp. and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.” (Is. 11, 8).
- ❖ The knowledge of the Lord will spread holiness while the evils of society will disappear.
“They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy maintain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” (Is. 11, 9).



All these descriptions apply to Christ’s spiritual kingdom which He founded on earth in the hearts of believers.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

- 1 Compare the following passages to show in which manner the prophecies were fulfilled:

PROPHECY

FULFILLMENT

Is. 7, 14

Matt. 1, 23

Is. 42, 1-4

Matt. 12, 18

Is. 53, 4

Matt. 8, 17

Is. 53, 5

1 Pet. 2, 24

Is. 53, 10

2 Cor. 5, 21

Is. 53, 12

Heb. 7, 25

Is. 61, 1

Luke. 4, 18-21

- 2 Isaiah, himself witnessed the riches and luxury enjoyed by the kings, while he saw the poor people suffering. He saw, by the spirit of prophecy, - in the kingdom of Christ – all the suffering, the king endured, for the sake of the people's happiness.

Explain the above statement showing the comparison.

- 3 In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul said about Christ's suffering: "For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted. (Heb. 2, 18).

The Lord Jesus bore a great deal of pain and moral and spiritual suffering in order to share with man his lot of suffering. Show how you can make use in your own life of this fact in order that you that have peace in the midst of suffering.

FOR MEMORIZATION

"We suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him." Rom. 8, 17. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted, He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted." (Is. 61, 1-3).

PRAYER

Read Is. 53, it includes prophecies about the suffering of our Lord. Remember to thank God for those life-giving pains joining the Church in its six O'clock and nine O'Clock prayers.

"O Lord, Thou who on the sixth day and at the sixth hour was nailed on the cross for the sin committed by our father Adam, wipe away our sins O Christ our Lord..." "Dear Lord, by the nails which fixed you to the cross, save our minds from rash actions and render us to remember by holy judgements according to thy grace."



UNIT 1

LESSON 3

DANIEL PROPHET – SEER

- ❖ King David had prophesied of a greater King – the Messiah, who reigns over all creation without end.
- ❖ At a later date, Isaiah had prophesied of the person of the Messiah the suffering Servant and His Kingdom, of peace and joy.
- ❖ Here, we see Daniel for whom the heavens were opened and he saw many mysteries and events concerning the Son of Man, and prophesied of His coming and the Kingdom of the saints which he saw in.

THE SON OF MAN IN DANIEL'S VISION

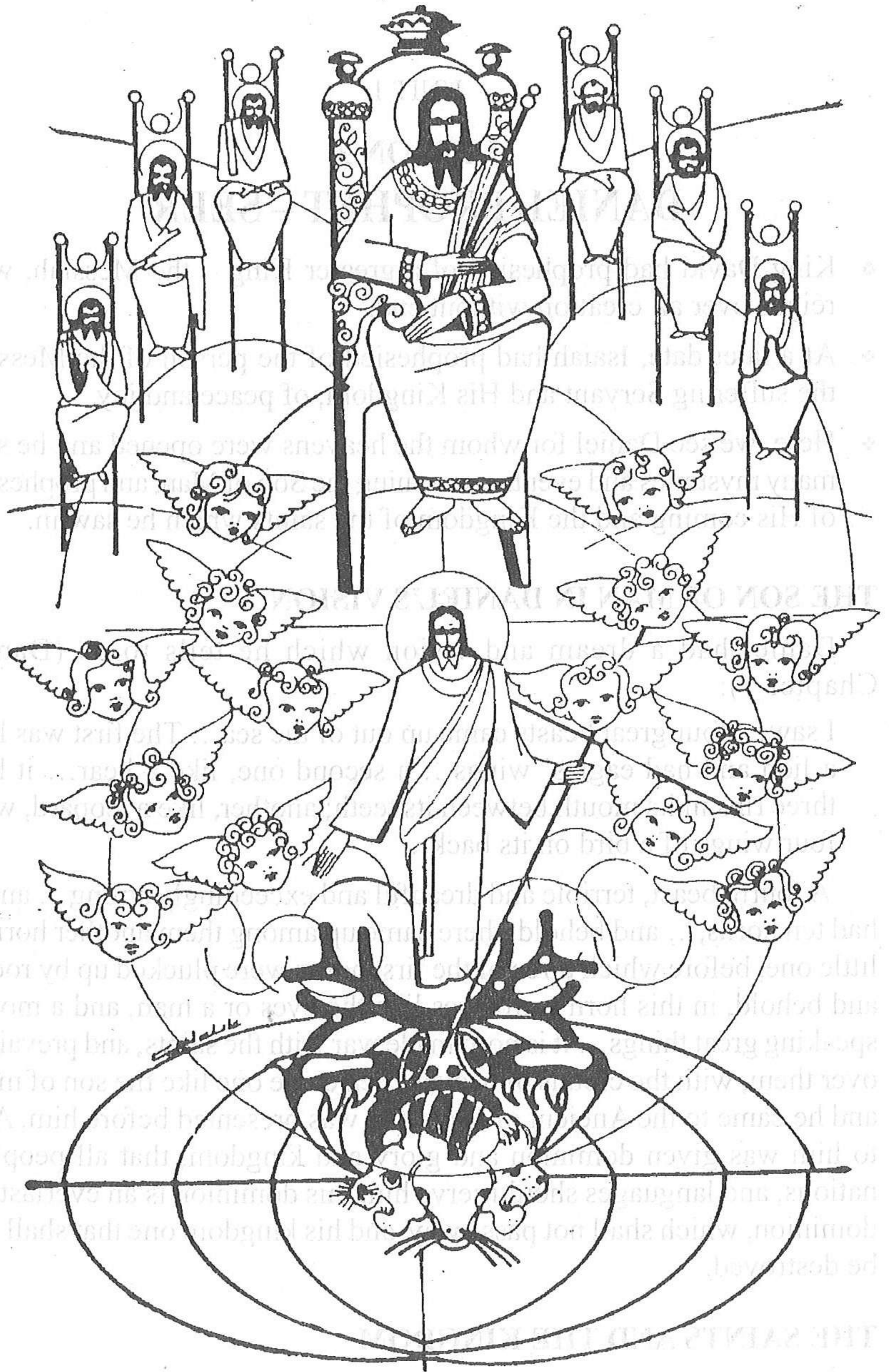
Daniel had a dream and vision which he tells to us (Daniel Chapter 7):

I saw... four great beasts came up out of the sea... The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings... a second one, like a bear... it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back...

A fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong... and it had ten horns,... and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by roots, and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things... it is horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them, with the clouds of heaven then came one like the son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

THE SAINTS AND THE KINGDOM

What is the meaning of this vision? One of the angels standing by said to him: "The four beasts are four kings who will reign over the



DANIEL'S VISION

world. The fourth king will conquer them all. Then he will make war with the saints of the Most High. The kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to them, and the Son of Man shall reign over them. "To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

- ❖ Daniel's vision was a prophesy for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, "the Son of Man."

- ❖ Daniel has showed as the symbols of the Trinity.

The father was called the Ancient of Days.

The Son was called the Son of Man.

The Holy Spirit was called A river of fire.

- ❖ The saints of God whom Daniel saw in his vision are the Christians. They believe in the Son of God and they have become the Sons of God and the sons of the Kingdom. The Christians are the Kingdom of God on earth. They live as saints. Christ reigns over their lives and their hearts. They obey the commandments of the Lord and Glorify God in their hearts all the time.

- ❖ Daniel has shown us that the war is going on between the world and the Sons of God. The Kingdom of the world may reign for some time, but the Kingdom of God, will overcome all the powers of evil, and the sons of God will say: "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us" (Romans 8:37).

THE SEVENTY WEEKS

Angel Gabriel appeared again to Daniel and said to him: "I have now came out to give you wisdom and understanding... for you are greatly beloved."

After seventy weeks the Christ, the anointed one, will come. He is the most holy one. He shall make a new covenant with many.

(Read Daniel 9:20-27).

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Choose one phrase of group B to give the correct meaning group A:

GROUP A

- ❖ The Son of Man which Daniel saw
- ❖ The four beasts are symbols for
- ❖ The beast which fights the sons of God
- ❖ The horn that talks against God is symbol for
- ❖ The saints of the Most High for whom the kingdom is given are

GROUP B

- ❖ four kings reign over the world
- ❖ The governors who made false accusations against Christians.
- ❖ The Christians who believe in the Messiah Christ.
- ❖ The incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ
- ❖ The Roman Empire which persecuted the Christians.

Answer the following questions:

1. How did David, Isaiah and Daniel tell us of the Messiah?
2. It is necessary for all the Christians to become saints? How?
3. Why is Christ called the Son of Man?

For Memorization

Daniel 7: 13 and 14

Remark

The vision of Daniel does not mean that Christ will come at a certain date that we can predict. For Christ will come in a day that we do not know. It also has no reference to any existing political power or government anywhere in the world. It only symbolizes the kingdom of God.



UNIT 1

LESSON 4

EZEKIEL, PROPHET OF RENEWAL AND UNITY

THE DEFEAT OF JERUSALEM BY THE BABYLONIANS

Around 597 B. C., the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar Jehoiachin, who was then King of Judah, was taken captive, along with all the prominent people of the land, and Jerusalem was destroyed. As the Bible says, "He (Nebuchadnezzar) carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, ten thousand captives, and till the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained except the poorest people of the land." (2 Kings 24, 14)

THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

Before the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, Ezekiel, the great Prophet, had already prophesied of the exile. The people, however, had not listened



to him. During the time of the exile, Ezekiel continued to prophesy. He was in Babylon then, and the people asked him about the day of their deliverance. Ezekiel prophesied saying:- “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones... And He said to me, ‘Son of Man, can these bones live?’ And I answered, ‘O Lord God, Thou knowest.’ And again He said to me, Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live’... And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, there were sinews on time, and flesh had come upon them, and skin covered had them; but there was no breath in them. Then He said Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live’. And they lived, and stood upon their feet, and exceedingly great host.” (Ezekiel 37, 1-10).

This prophecy had an immediate historical fulfilment, as well as a later spiritual fulfilment. The historical fulfilment took place about fifty years after the prophecy, when Cyrus, King of Persia permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple. (Ezra. 1, 1-4).

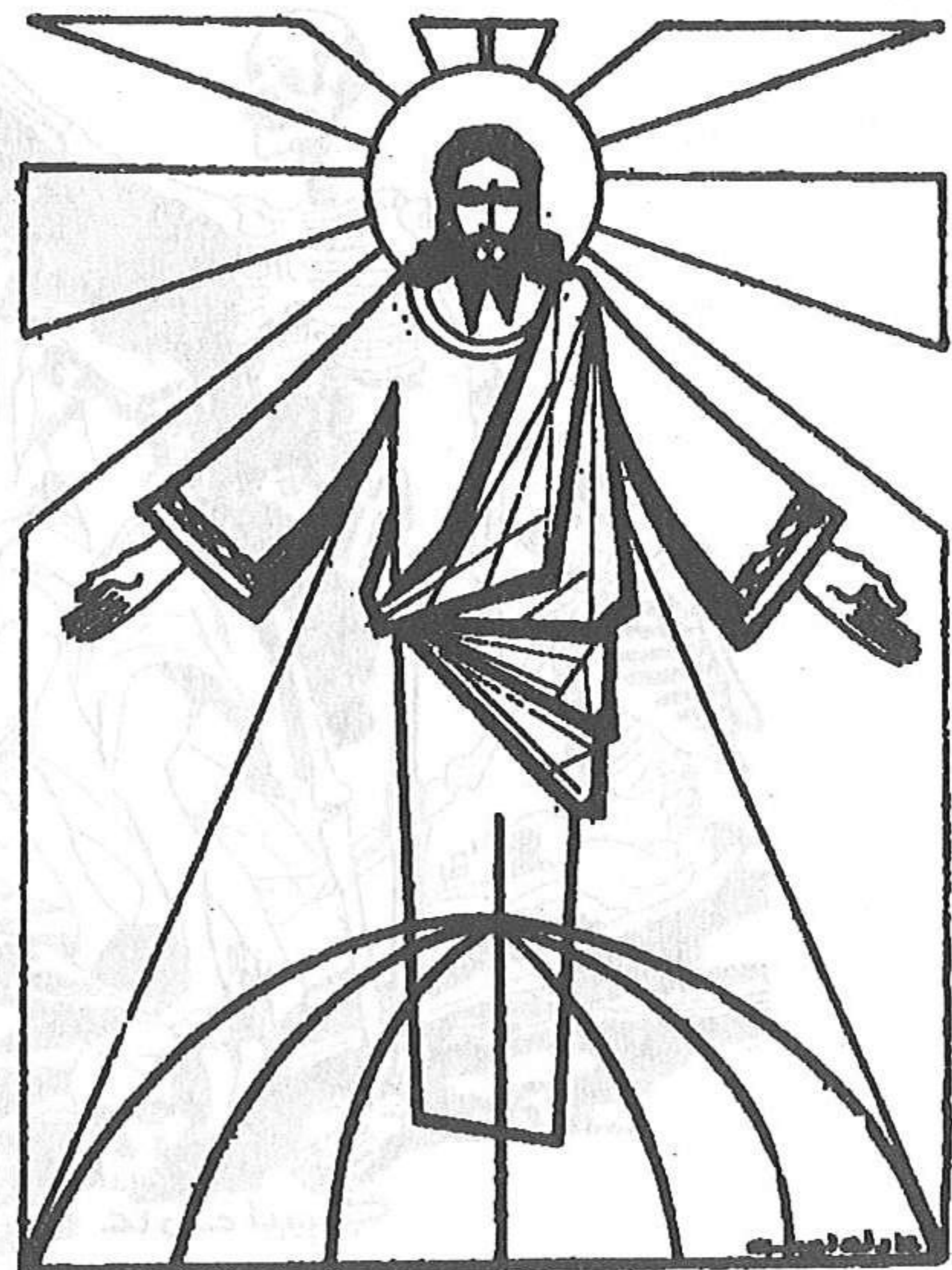
The Spiritual fulfilment took place on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given in order to enable human beings to live the new life in Christ. And now this new life is available to all who are ready to accept it. For “God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with Him.”

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The gift of the new life:

The dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision stand for humanity which was condemned to death because of sin. Then Christ came, and His light shone. Therefore it is written:

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” (Ephesians 5, 14)

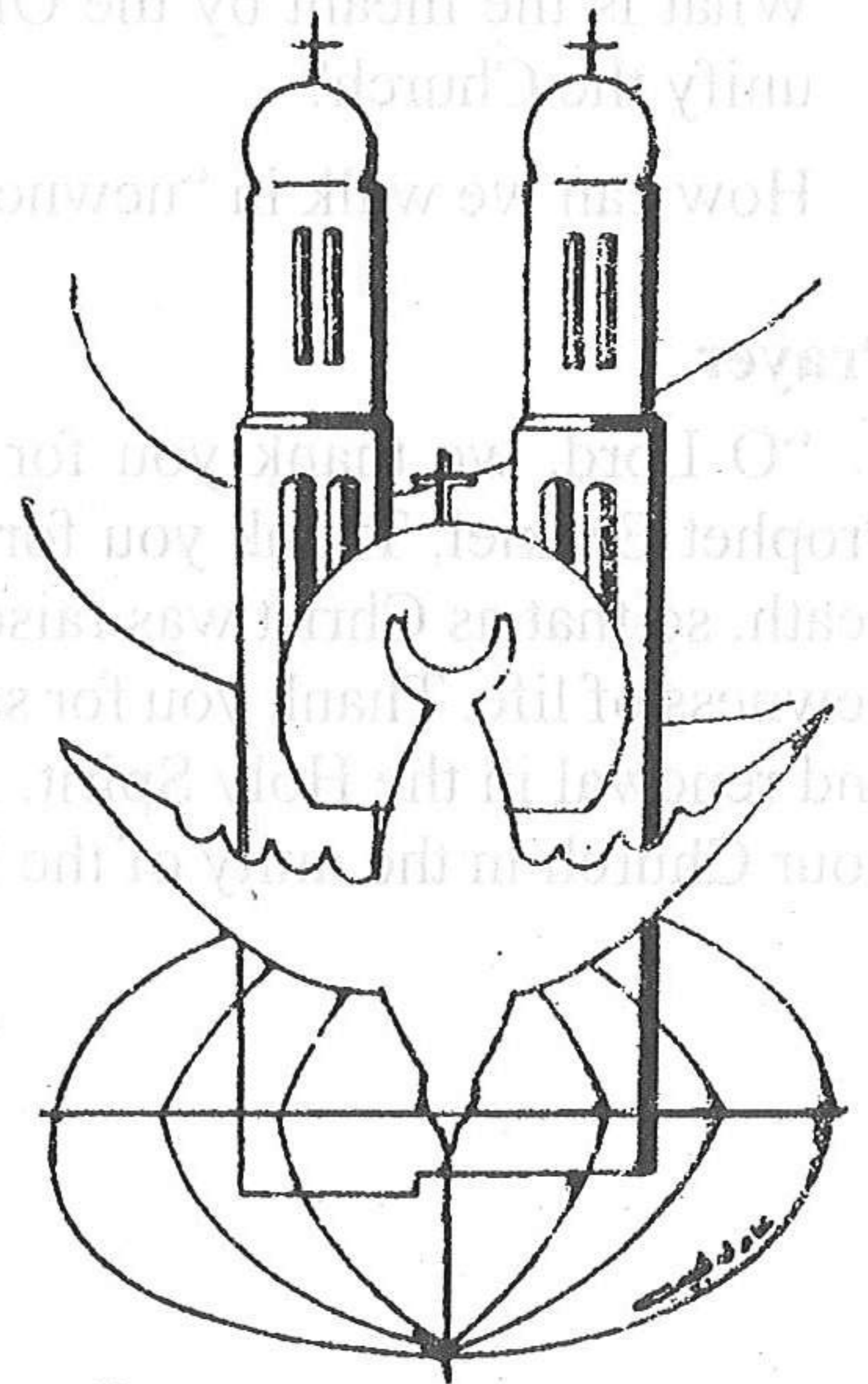


On the day of Pentecost, a sound came from Heaven like the rush of a mighty wind. And the members of the first Church were filled with the Holy Spirit. From that day onwards their life was full of power.

The new man who had risen with Christ, began to live his new life by the power of the Holy Spirit: “We were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6, 4). “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3, 5).

2. The source of Unity:

Ezekiel Prophesied concerning the unity of the Church where the Lord’s Spirit is at work: “come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain that they might live.” The four winds stand for the four regions of the earth. The Holy Spirit is at work in His ONE Church, leading it and guiding it in holy unity. This is what Christ prayed for: “That they may all be one.” (John 17, 21).



A NEW HEART AND AN UPRIGHT SPIRIT

- ❖ Ezekiel the Prophet wrote: “Thus says the Lord, you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh and heart of stone and give you, a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.” (Ezekiel 36, 25-27)
- ❖ St. Augustine wrote: “Come to the cross with your sins; come with a sincere desire to find Christ. The Holy Spirit will then remove the burden of your sin, and will give you a new life. Then you will become a holy temple of the Lord; for His spirit will live in you.”

FOR MEMORIZATION

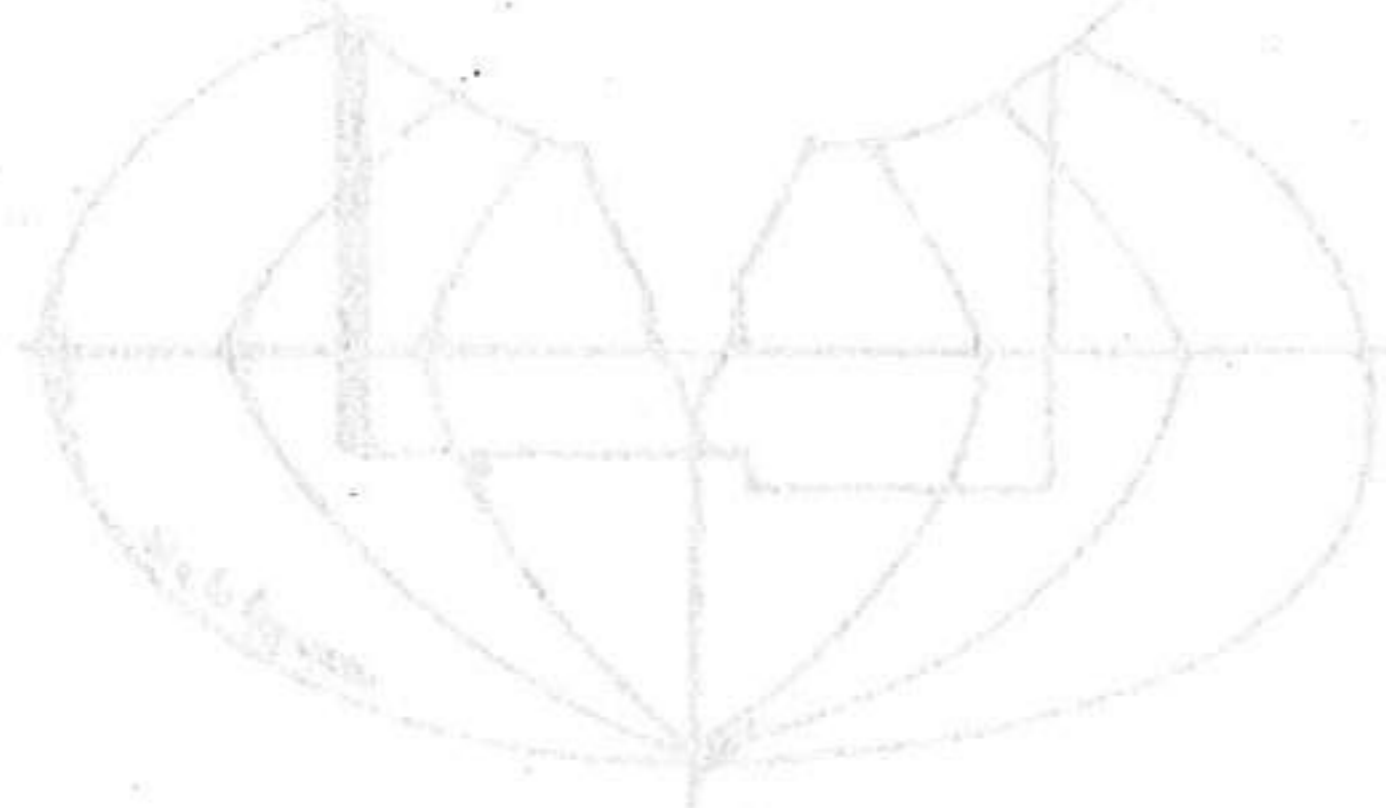
Ezekiel 36, 25-26

Questions

- ❖ Explain how the captivity stands for the sinful life, while the return from exile stands for salvation.
- ❖ What picture did Ezekiel give of the work of the holy Spirit in the Church?
- ❖ What is the meaning of renewal or the new life? When do we obtain it?
- ❖ What is meant by the ONE Church? How does the Holy Spirit unify the Church?
- ❖ How can we walk in “newness of life,” and “uprightness of Spirit?”

Prayer

“O Lord, we thank you for what you have taught us through the Prophet Ezekiel. Thank you for our burial with Christ by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead, we too might walk in newness of life. Thank you for saving us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit. Keep us holy in you; O Lord, and keep your Church in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.”



UNIT 1

LESSON 5

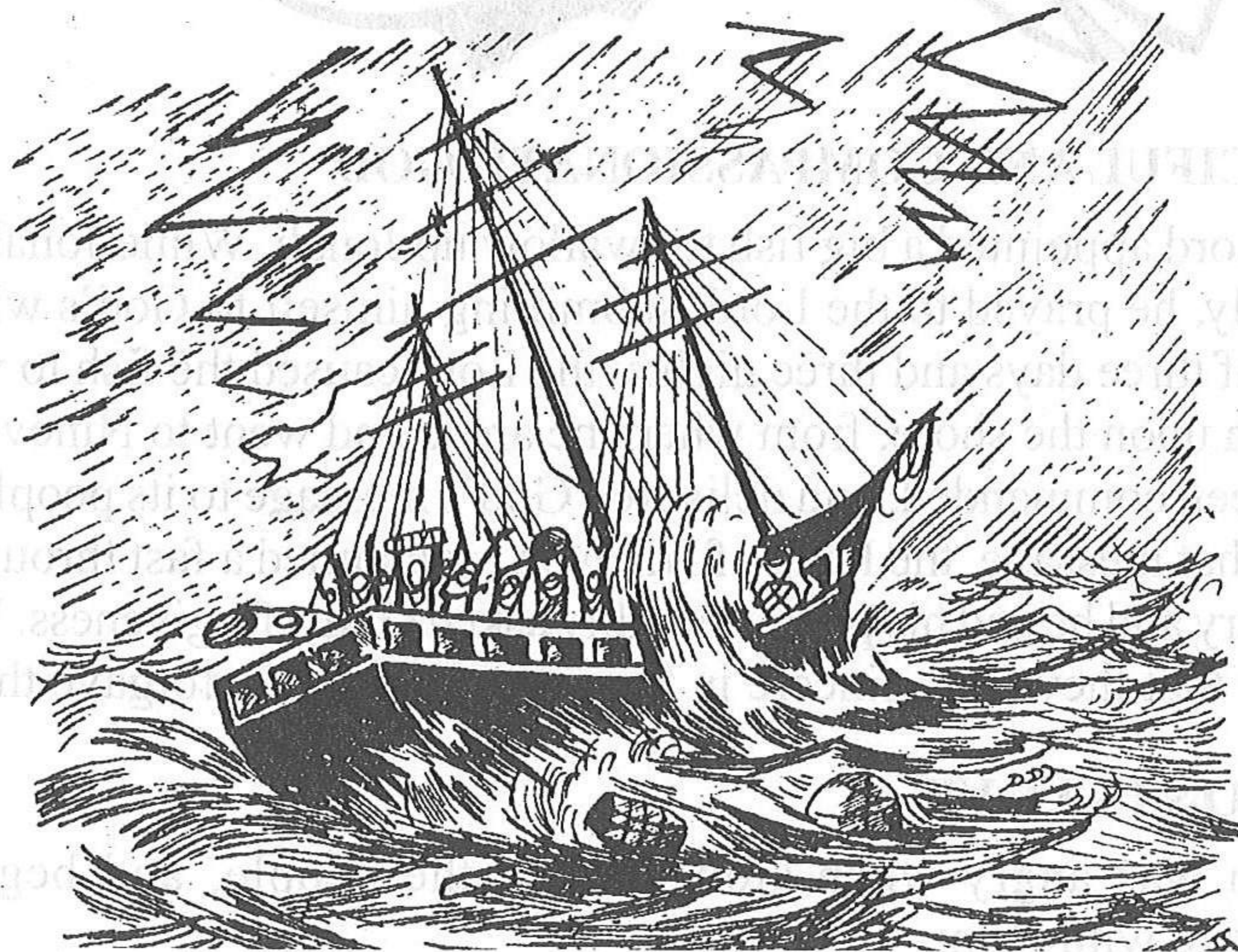
JONAH THE SYMBOLIC PROPHET

WHO IS JONAH?

Jonah is an old Testament Prophet, chosen by God to exemplify in his life the death – and resurrection of Christ. God ordered him to go to Nineveh and ask its people to repent and return to God so that God might not destroy them. Jonah, however, did not want to carry out God’s command, so he “rose to flee from the presence of the Lord” (Jonah 1, 3).

JONAH’S FLIGHT

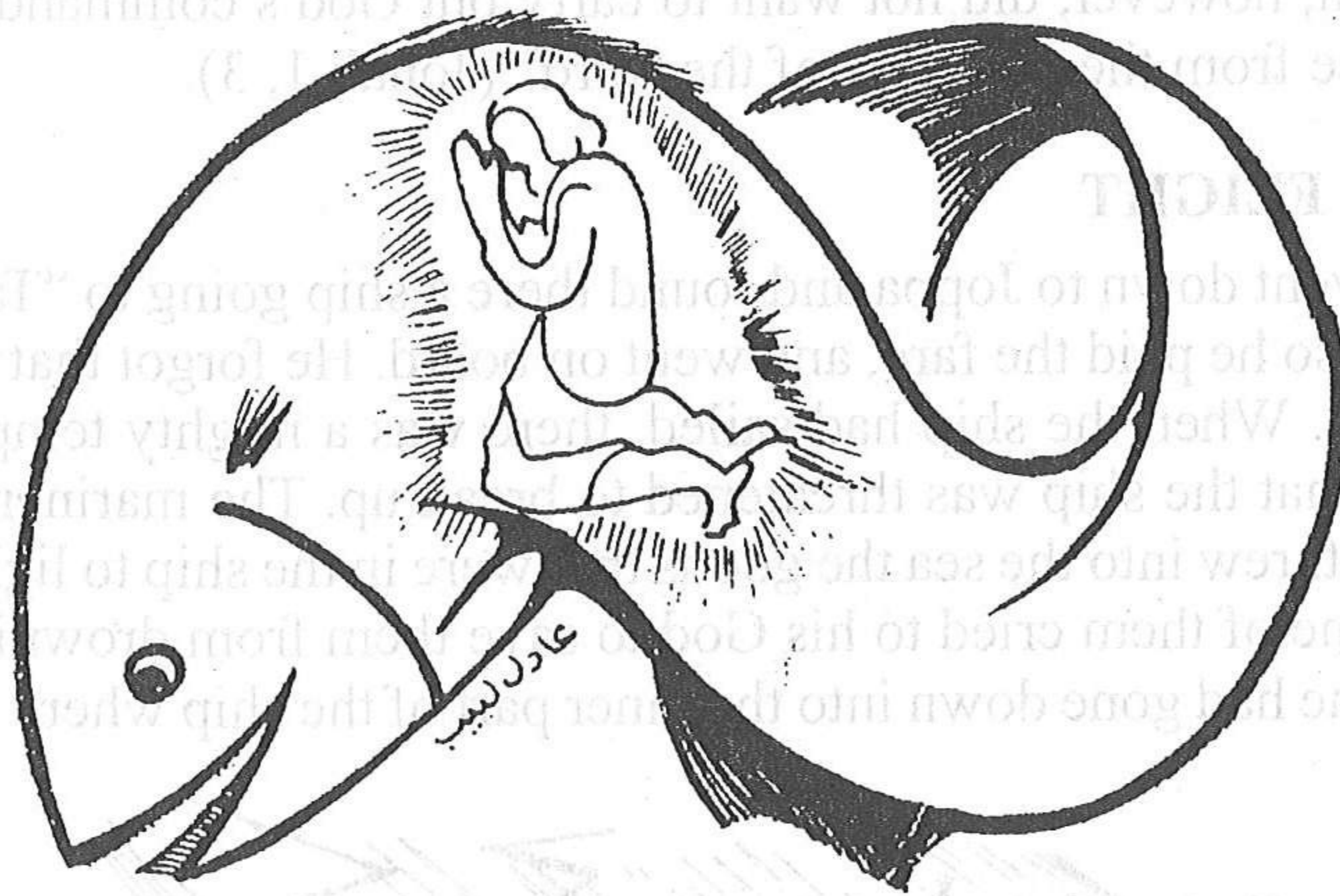
Jonah went down to Joppa and found there a ship going to “Tarshish (in Spain); so he paid the fare, and went on board. He forgot that God is everywhere. When the ship had sailed, there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship was threatened to break up. The mariners were afraid, and threw into the sea the goods that were in the ship to lighten it; and each one of them cried to his God to save them from drowning. As for Jonah, he had gone down into the inner part of the ship where he was



fast asleep. The captain of the ship came and woke him up and asked him to call upon his God as the others were doing, so that they might be saved. Then the mariners cast lots to know on whose account the evil was that had befallen them. The lot fall upon Jonah.

CONFESSION AND SURRENDER

Jonah confessed to the mariners the truth, and they were exceedingly afraid when he told them that he was running away from the God. They tried to steer towards the shore, but the tempest grew worse. In the end, they complied with Jonah's suggestion, and threw him into the sea, and immediately the sea became calm. This made the men fear the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to Him and made vows.



A MERCIFUL AND COMPASSIONATE GOD

The Lord appointed a big fish to swallow up Jonah. While Jonah was in its belly, he prayed to the Lord, submitting himself to God's will. At the end of three days and three nights, the Lord caused the fish to vomit out Jonah upon the shore, from where he arose and went to Nineveh, as he had been commanded, and delivered God's message to its people. On hearing that message, the King of Nineveh proclaimed a fast throughout the country and he and his people humbly asked God's forgiveness. When God saw that they were sincere in their repentance. He forgave them.

A LESSON IN LOVE

Jonah was angry when God forgave the people, and began to remonstrate with Him:

- ❖ Is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ❖ They are my people. You, Jonah, pitied a plant of which you did not labour, and were sad when it died. Should I not, therefore, pity my own sons and daughters? I chose you, Jonah, to be a messenger of salvation to them.
- ❖ Your love, O Lord, is beyond understanding. I felt the depth of that love when I prayed to you in the belly of the fish.
- ❖ And after your deliverance?
- ❖ I felt I had died but had come back to life. I wonder why you left me three days and three nights in the belly of the fish?
- ❖ I wanted you to be a symbol of Christ, and a sign to all generations.
- ❖ I am not worthy, O Lord, of this honour, not worthy to typify Your death and resurrection.

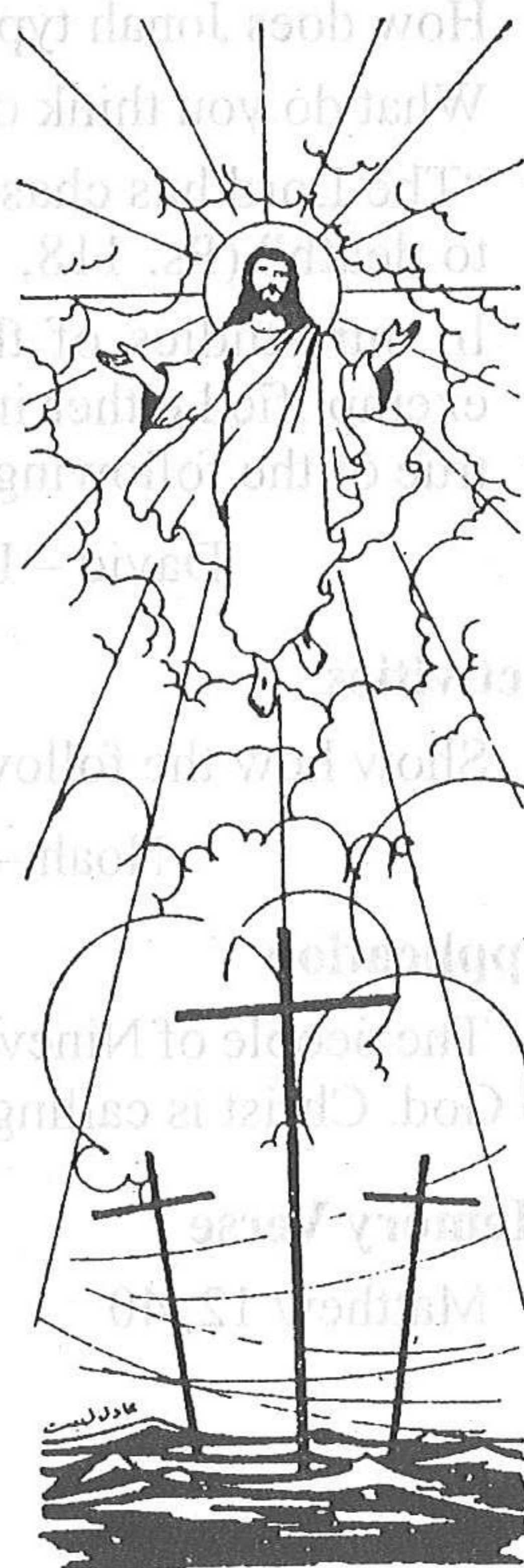
THE SIGN OF JONAH THE PROPHET

Read Matt. 12: 38-42

The Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus one day, asking Him for a sign or miracle; but He answered them, saying: "No sign shall be given except the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh... repented at the preach of Jonah, and behold someone greater than Jonah is here.

JONAH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

- ❖ God sent Jonah to the people of Ninevah that the might repent and be saved. In the same way, God, in His love for humanity, chose to descend to this world, to die for us, and to rise again from the dead. He gives Salvation to all who accept Him and believe in His redemptive work.
- ❖ The casting of Jonah into the sea saved the



mariners in the ship from drowning. The death of Christ on the Cross provides salvation from spiritual death.

- ❖ In Jonah's prayer he expressed clearly how he passed through the experience of death and resurrection:

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever... "Yet thou didst bring up my life from the pit O Lord my God." (Read Jonah 2: 2,6)

Relate this to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

The Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes..., and they will kill him; and after three days he will rise." (Read Mark 10:33, 34)

- ❖ Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Christ was in the grave three days and then rose from the dead.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ❖ How does Jonah typify Christ's death and resurrection?
- ❖ What do you think of the use of lots among Christians?
- ❖ "The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death" (Ps. 118, 18). Show how these words apply to Jonah.
- ❖ In our studies of the Messianic Prophets, we have seen Christ exemplified either in their lives or in their words. Show how this is true of the following?

David – Isaiah – Daniel – Ezekiel – Jonah.

Activities

- ❖ Show how the following Old Testament people are types of Christ:

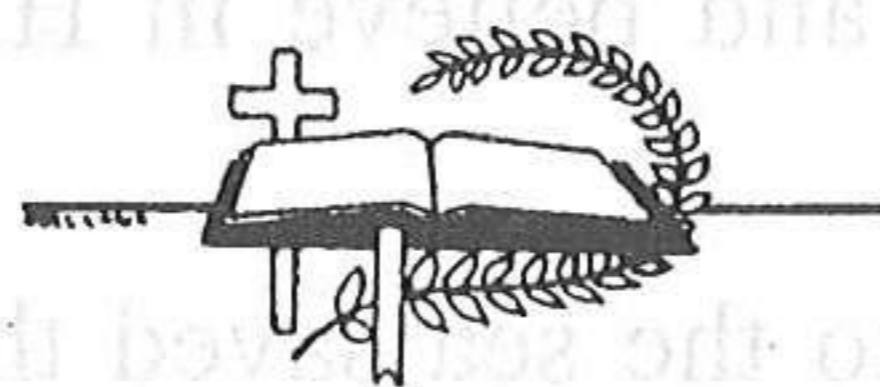
Noah – Issac – Joseph – Moses – Joshua.

Application

The people of Nineveh repented when Jonah called to them to return to God. Christ is calling you now. Listen to His call and repent.

Memory Verse

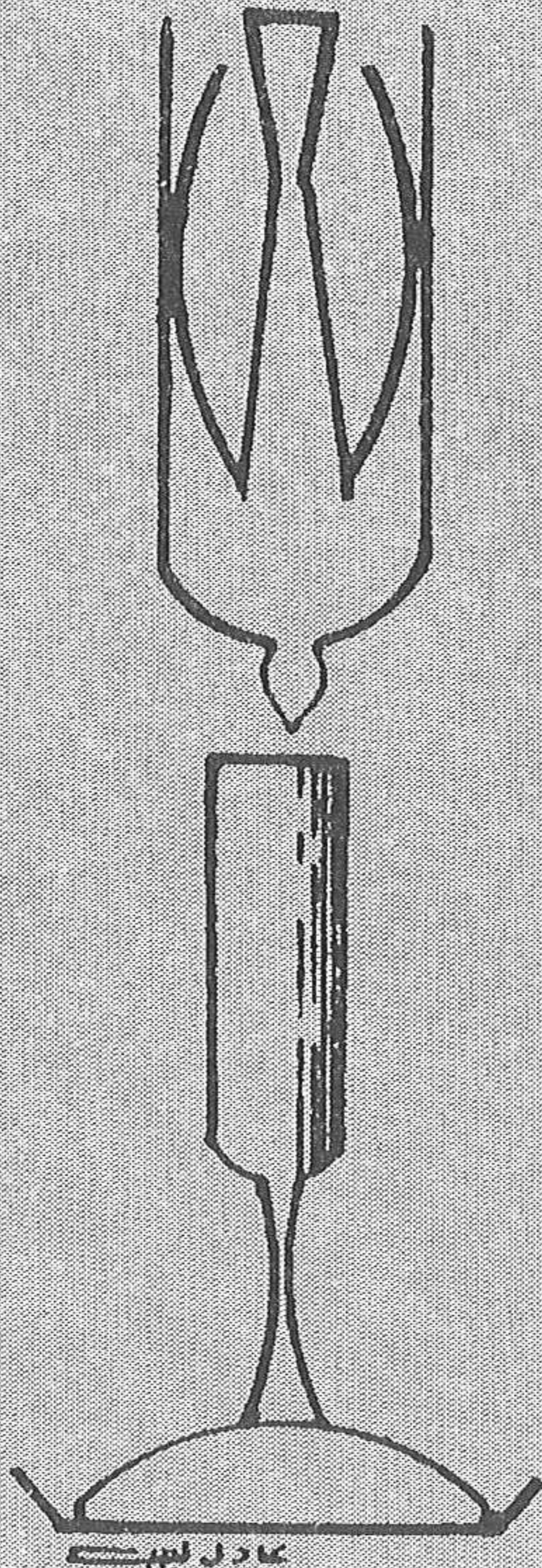
Matthew 12, 40



UNIT TWO

THE SACRAMENT
OF
THE HOLY EUCHARIST

- The Lord's Command
- Heavenly Community
- Praise, Thanksgiving & Communion
- Eucharist in daily life



UNIT 2

LESSON 1

THE LORD'S COMMAND

After the miracle of "Feeding the five thousand on five loaves and two fishes," and after He had astonished the people with this sign, the Lord wanted to draw their attention to the true miracle for which He came, and for which He died and rose. He told them, "Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on Him has God the Father set His seal" (John 6, 27).

The Jews then murmured at Him because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven", saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, "I have come down from heaven?" But Jesus assured them that He is the living bread, if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; "and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh." (John 6:51)

On the night of the Lord's Supper. He gave them the command.

On Thursday, when Jesus had done the feast of the Passover, rose from supper, laid His garments and girded Himself with a towel, then He poured water into a basin and washed the disciple's feet.

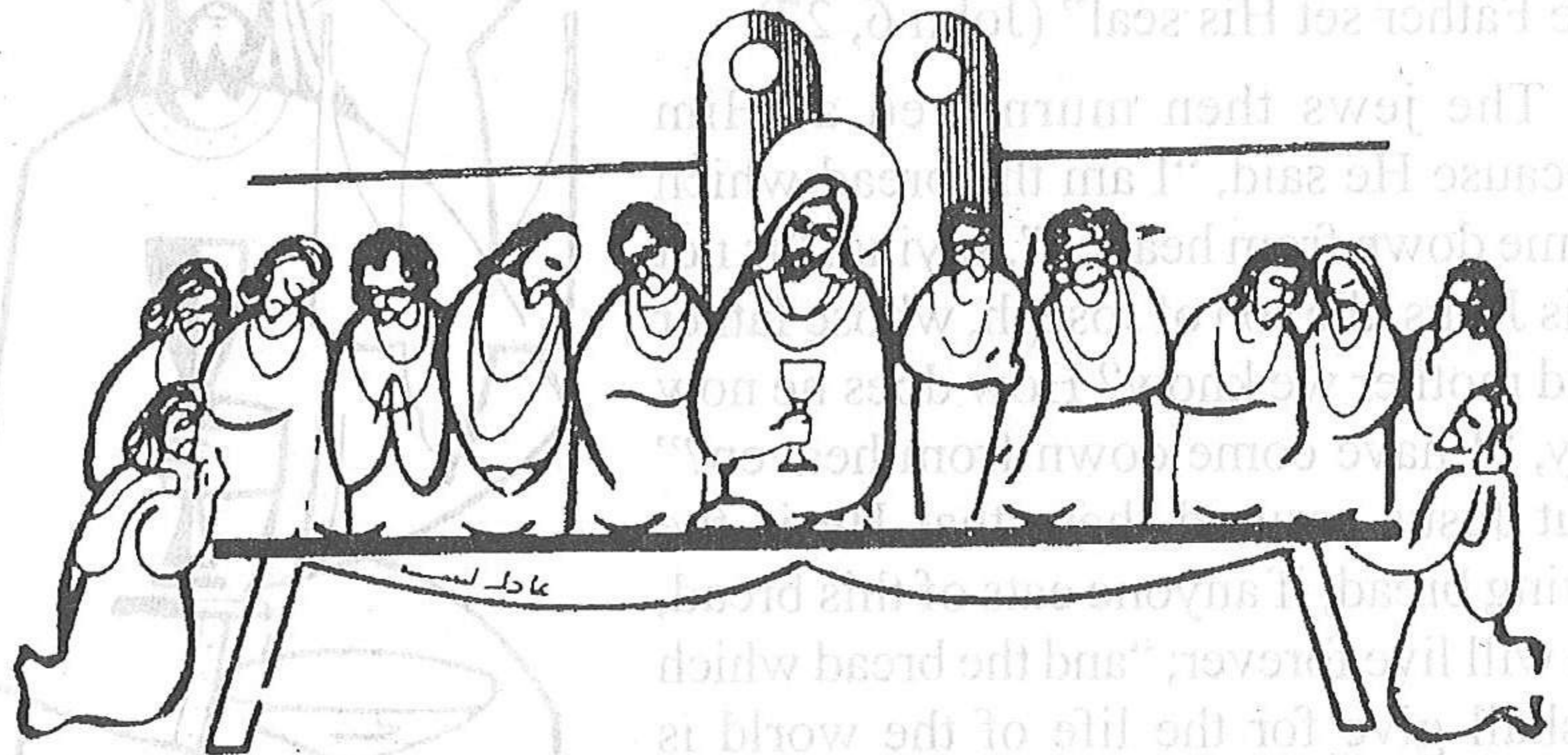
The apostle Paul tells us the command he took from his Lord, "For I received the Lord what I also delivered to you, that



the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying. "this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Cor. 11, 23-26)

This command was given to the apostles to practice with all believers this heavenly sacrament, - so that Christ will be the salvation, the life, and the resurrection of us all.

And he who prevents himself from the sacred communion for a long time becomes a disobeyer to God's command and loses his communication with Christ.



WHY GOD GAVE HIS BODY AND BLOOD?

By the Sacrament of Eucharist our sins are forgiven:

God Himself said: "This is my body which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins," see (Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22 and 1 Cor. 11)

He is the sacrificed Passover lamb on the cross through all ages.

And in the Liturgy, the priest save thus, "Grant us Lord your acceptance to our offering because of my sins and sins of people." And after they bow down for the Holy Spirit, the priest prays "Our Master, give us from holiness physical and spiritual purity if we deserve it.

THE EUCHARIST IS THE PARTICIPATION IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

Christ offered Himself once as a sacrifice on the Cross in the place of man. The Holy Liturgy is a continuity of this sacrifice which we ought to partake of, regularly. Therefore, the Holy Liturgy is the act of sharing in Christ's death on the Cross. His glorious resurrection and finally confirming our expectancy for His Second Coming.

“For every time you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, verily you confess my death and witness to my resurrection, and remember me until I come” (Liturgy of St. Basil).

We eat Him, and thereby dwell in Him, and He in us... as a branch is grafted to the vine from which it receives the juices of life so in likewise do we receive our nourishment from partaking of His flesh and blood in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, which renders us united and steadfast in Him.

By and by the heart burns with a strong light and the Lord clears Himself to the faithful who communed with Him, and through this communion the faithful gains strength of God's death and resurrection.

The apostle Paul says, “When Jesus, I was crucified. So I live, not I but Jesus lives in me.” “So, what I live now in body I live in the faith, faith of the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, “We, by communion, become one body and one blood with Jesus. And so we become carriers of Jesus because his body and blood are in all parts of our body; and also become partakers of the divine nature as the apostle Peter says. (2 Pet. 1, 4)

QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus prepare the disciples' minds to take the Eucharist?
2. What did Jesus say at the night of the last supper?
3. What is the relationship between the sacrament of Eucharist and forgiveness of sins?
4. What does it mean that we, by the Eucharist, unite with God?
5. How do we take the strength of God's death and resurrection?
6. Why are you wrong if you prevent yourself from the sacred communion?

7. A non-Orthodox youth might ask you if it is better to feed on Jesus through the Bible reading and praying only; so what will you say to him after your study of God's command of the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

Suggested Activities

1. Collect some quotations from the Liturgy about the uses of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and try to ponder on each meaning.
2. Attend the Liturgy, with the spiritual meanings you have read, in mind; and write down notes.
3. Try to bring some of your friends to partake of the Holy Eucharist, for this is God's command to us, for otherwise how can we conceive the fact that while the Lord offered His body for us, we turn away from it indifferently?
4. Be sure to be ready for communion by confessing and examining yourself deep in your heart for this important sacrament.

For Memorization

1 Cor. 11: 23-25



- ### QUESTIONS
1. How did Jesus prepare the disciples' minds to take the Eucharist?
 2. What did Jesus say at the night of the last supper?
 3. What is the relationship between the sacrament of Eucharist and forgiveness of sins?
 4. What does it mean that we, by the Eucharist, unite with God?
 5. How do we take the strength of God's death and resurrection?
 6. Why are you wrong if you prevent yourself from the sacred communion?

UNIT 2

LESSON 2

HEAVENLY COMMUNITY

The offering of the Eucharist is divine, and when we partake it, it opens before us heavenly realms which overcome us, and thus we repeat the liturgical prayer, “when we stand in Thine Holy Place, it is like being in Paradise.”

It is here on the altar, Oh Lord where Thou art, that heaven and man find one another, Behold! The place is filled with a host of angels and saints.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HEAVENLY HOSTS

The Eucharist is a fellowship between the seen and unseen Church, and a fellowship between those who struggle and the ones who have completed their struggle in faith.

If we believe that the Lord Christ is Himself present on the altar, then we consequently believe that the angels and archangels stand before Him, as we repeat in the prayers of the liturgy, in a heavenly fellowship. In St. Basil’s liturgy, the priest says addressing the Lord on the altar, “Thou are the one who stand before Thee the many eyed cherubim’s, and the six winged seruphims praising God without censing saying, “Holly, holy, holy, Lord of hosts, the earth and the heaven are full of Thy glory...”

St. John Chrysostom said, “...all the hosts of heaven attend and participate



in the hymn of praise, and the place nearest to the altar is crowded with angels who came to give praise to the offering... the angels make supplication with the priest... and the fire of the Holy Spirit descends and behold the blood gushes from the side of the unblemished Lamb to be collected in the cup for our sanctification... therefore how do you, oh Christian dare to attend the offering without due reverence and awe,... for the church is none other than heaven itself.

FELLOWSHIP IN REMEMBERING THE SAINTS

The prayers of the liturgy reveal the fellowship which exists between the believers alive and the believers departed after completing their course in faith. The Church prays for the forgiveness of their sins, invoking upon them the mercy of the Lord if at any moment of their lives they fell victims of human weakness that the Lord may forgive them what they had forgetfully committed in His sight (1 John 5:16, 17)

In the liturgy of St. Gregory, the priest says, "Render me worthy to stand before Thine Holy altar without exposing myself to Thy damnation. That I may raise the unbloody offering with a clean heart, for the forgiveness of my own sins and the shortcomings and failings of Thine people, that our forefathers and brethren who have died in the Orthodox faith may rest content."

In the prayer of commemoration, in the liturgy of St. Basil, the priest says, "For this, O Lord, is the Thy Son's commandment, that we together remember Thy saints. Remember, O Lord, all the saints who have pleased Thee since the creation. Our holy Fathers and forefathers, the prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs and confessors and the souls of all saints who died in the faith, may their souls find rest in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... all the ones whose names we mentioned failed to mention, we are in the mind of each one of us, and those whom we have forgotten, grant that they should find rest in paradise, in eternal life in the heavenly Jerusalem."

The fellowship in the Eucharist is further clarified by the fact that after the commemoration prayer, the priest raises his voice in the most humble words of prayer of intercession for the deceased saints, mentioning that he and the congregation are not worthy for such a fellowship. He says, "We, our Lord, are not worthy to intercede for them, but they who are present before Thy Holy Son, should Intercede for our weakness, and humility. Forgive our sins, turn Thy eyes from our

transgression for the sake of their prayers for us – This we ask for the sake of Thine great name after which we are called.”

Thus heaven and earth are brought together in an unbreakable harmony and fellowship. The angels in heaven and our fathers who died in the faith, pray for us that our faith may be perfected, and the struggling Church makes intercession for them, The Church, in this holy union and fellowship, gives a prominent place to the Virgin Mary, whose name is mentioned in prayers recited silently or loudly, in addition to the singing to certain hymns in her praise. The priest, burns incense several times during the service, before the Virgin’s icon.

MEDITATION AND DISCUSSION

The struggling Church unites with the victorious Church several times during the holy liturgy through the following:

1. Prayers raised by the believers for them.
2. Prayers about the intercession of saints for the believers.
3. Praises given to glorify the hosts of heaven and saints.
4. Icons placed in prominent places in the Church; incense burnt before them.
5. Burning incense during mention of their intercession as symbolic of their prayers which are like sweet incense seen by John in his apocalypse (revelation) before the Throne of God and the holy altar.
6. Mention of their biographies read from the Sinaxarium (the book of the Chronicles of the Saints), holding liturgies for commemorating them on days they were martyred. Dedicating a day each month for the Virgin Mary and the Archangel Michael.

ACTIVITIES TO BE ENCOURAGED

1. Lighting a candle before the Virgin’s Icon, and before the icon of the patron saint of the Church.
2. Asking for the intercession of saints and angels in liturgical and private prayers.
3. Mention of our deceased relatives during the liturgy.
4. Assisting at celebrations held by the Church for saints.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does the Church mention the names of the deceased during the liturgy?
2. Why does it mention the names of angels, archangels, saints, and particularly the Virgin Mary?
3. Which prayers in the liturgy are particularly for the mention and praise of saints?

TEXT FOR MEMORIZATION

Learn the Prayer for the deceased.



UNIT 2

LESSON 3

PRAISE, THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

OUR PREPARATION TO ACCEPT THE KING

The church on earth exists in order to praise its King, its Saviour and Birdegroom. It is found to remind us of God's favours and gifts, and to praise His Holy name. And since the time of the apostles the Christians used to meet with one accord praising the Lord happily.

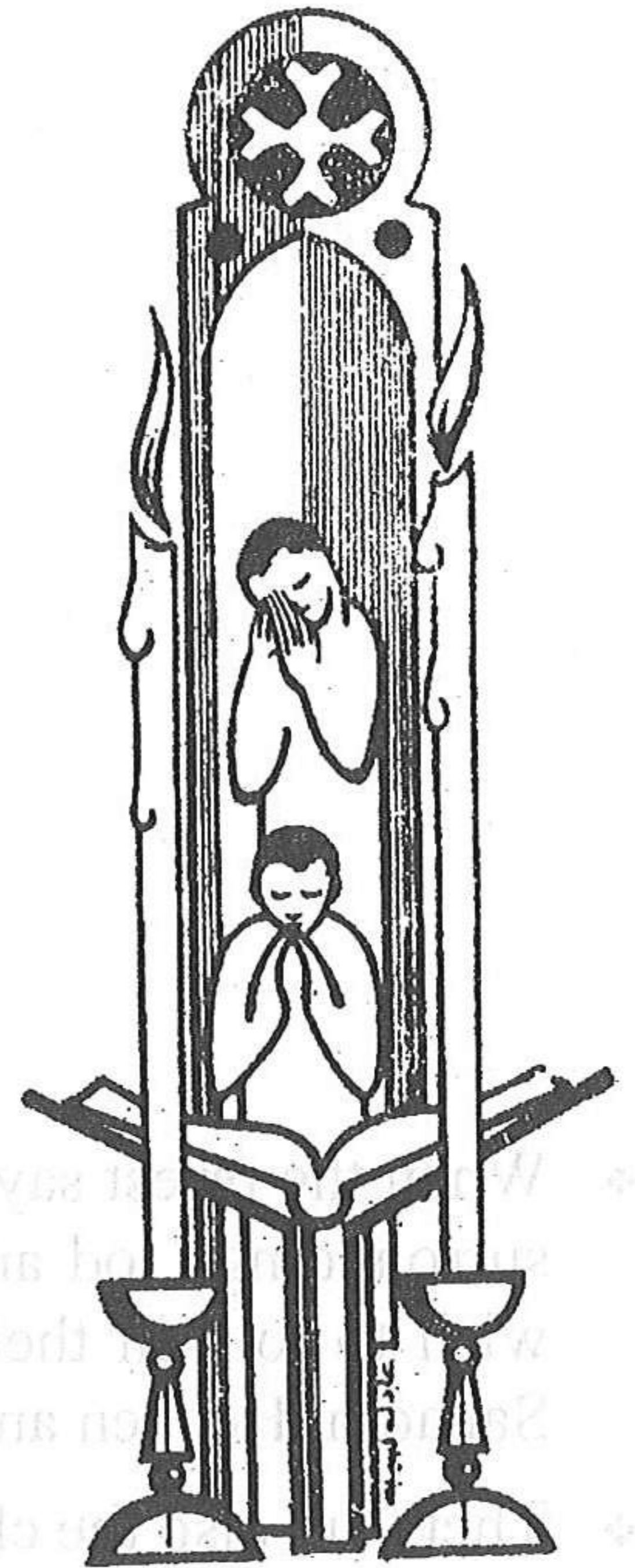
And because of the greatness of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Church made ready for it, the reading and psalms, from the night before. And many a time the holy fathers would spend the whole night praying and praising, until they were ready to participate in the prayers of the holy Eucharist in the morning.

PRAISING IN THE EUCHARIST

- ❖ When John the Beloved was taken away to see the new Church, he saw the praising and the service in heaven:

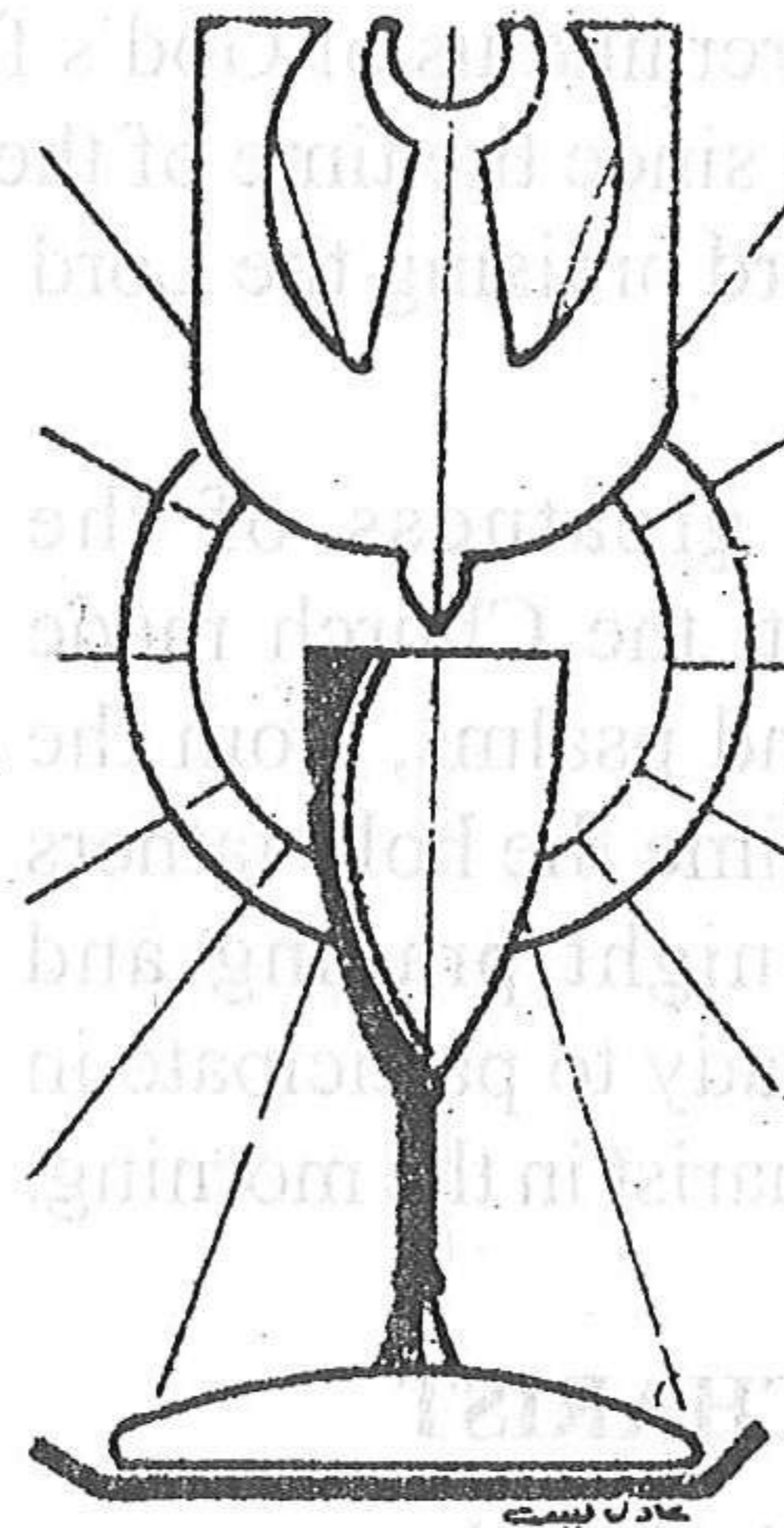
“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne... the voice of many angels, numbering myriads and thousands of thousands,... and I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, To Him who sits upon the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!” (Rev. 5, 11-14)

This lovely truth that John the seer saw is the eternity we are going to live when we reign with God. And because the “Eucharist” is the living



picture of the supper of the lamb and the heavenly banquet, the Church had made the prayers of the holy liturgy full of heavenly and hot praises,

- ❖ So there is the “Vespers” when we sing, in a lovely tune, psalms 148, 149, 150 (Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! From the heavens, praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His host). And there is the hymn in which we praise “Mary, the Theotokos,” and there is the midnight praise that starts; “Get up, children of light, let us praise the God of hosts that He may grant us our Salvation.”



- ❖ When the priest says that the Archangels and the Angels constantly surrounding God and serving Him with songs and praise, we also wish to join in their hymn and sing: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord or Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.”
- ❖ There are also the choir hymns; such as “The Trisagion” (Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal...), Rejoice, O Mary.” “The Seraphim worship Thee,” and the Psalm: “Praise God in His Sanctuary.”

In entering the Church, one sees and hears the choir of singers praising heartedly with one accord and singing the Church hymns that make your heart stop from joy.

THANKSGIVING IN THE EUCHARIST

- ❖ As we consider the sacrament of the Eucharist as the sacrament of praising and love of God, it is also called the sacrament of thanksgiving because when Jesus Christ took bread on his hands, He gave thanks, broke and gave... The faithful Christians, whatever their holiness may be, do not deserve to be slaves to God; but in spite of this, He makes them His children and, more than that, gives them the right to communion in His Holy flesh and blood. This blessing is God's greatest gift to mankind.'

That is why this sacrament is called the sacrament of thanksgiving.

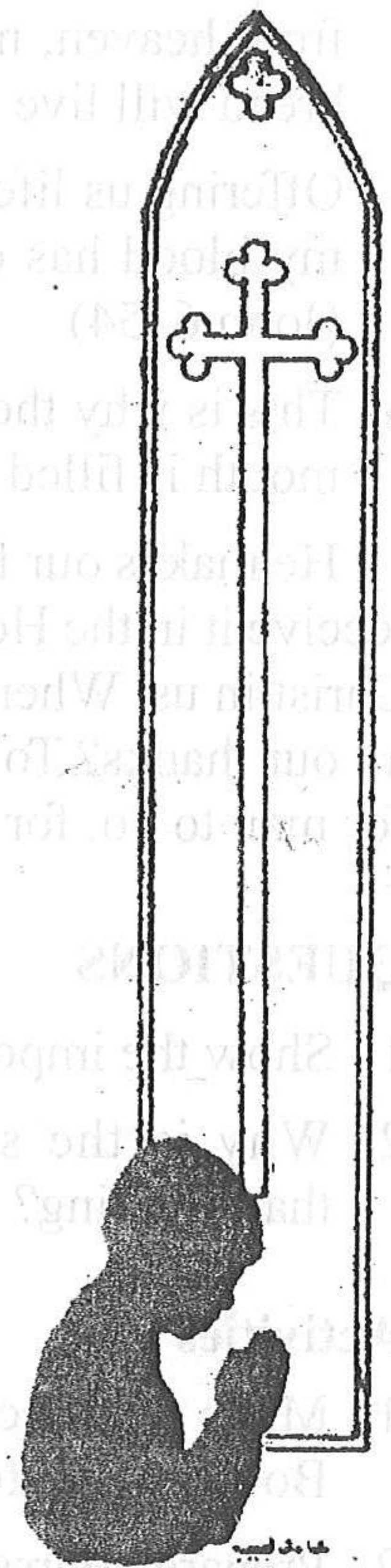
- ❖ There are many prayers in the holy liturgy that has the meaning of thanksgiving: The priest starts the liturgy with a prayer of thanks giving:

“Let us give thanks unto the Beneficent and merciful God...” The 1st part of the canon is a dialogue between the priest and the people:

- The Lord be with you all
- And with thy spirit
- Let us lift up our hearts
- We lift them up unto the Lord
- Let us give thanks (or Evkharistomen = Eucharist) unto the Lord

The whole Church is gathered together around our Lord Jesus. And when we are in the presence of God and remember all that He has done, we bow down and offer Him our thanks. We continue our prayer singing: “We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.”

- ❖ We then must thank God who gave us through the sacrament of the Eucharist:
 1. The abiding in Him, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” (John 6, 56)
 2. The growing in faith and eternal life, “This is bread which came down



from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died, he who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6, 58)

3. Offering us life and resurrection. “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6, 54)

❖ This is why the priest after the communion says in his prayer, “Our mouth is filled with joy, and our tongue with exultation.”

He makes our food the Body and Blood of His Son, so that when we receive it in the Holy Communion, we will receive the new life of Jesus Christ in us. When God has done all this, what can we do but give Him all our thanks? To thank God is the most natural and most perfect thing for man to do, for then we see God as the meaning of all our life.

QUESTIONS

1. Show the importance of praise in the sacrament of Eucharist.
2. Why is the sacrament of Eucharist called the Sacrament of thanksgiving?

Activities

1. Make a collection of prayers and thanksgiving from the “Liturgy Book: meditate on its words and try to memorize some of it.
2. Prepare yourself for the Communion by prayer & praising with the Christian congregation.
3. Beware of literal understanding or scepticism, and praise out of habit. Lift your heart always in praise with real eternal happiness.

UNIT 2

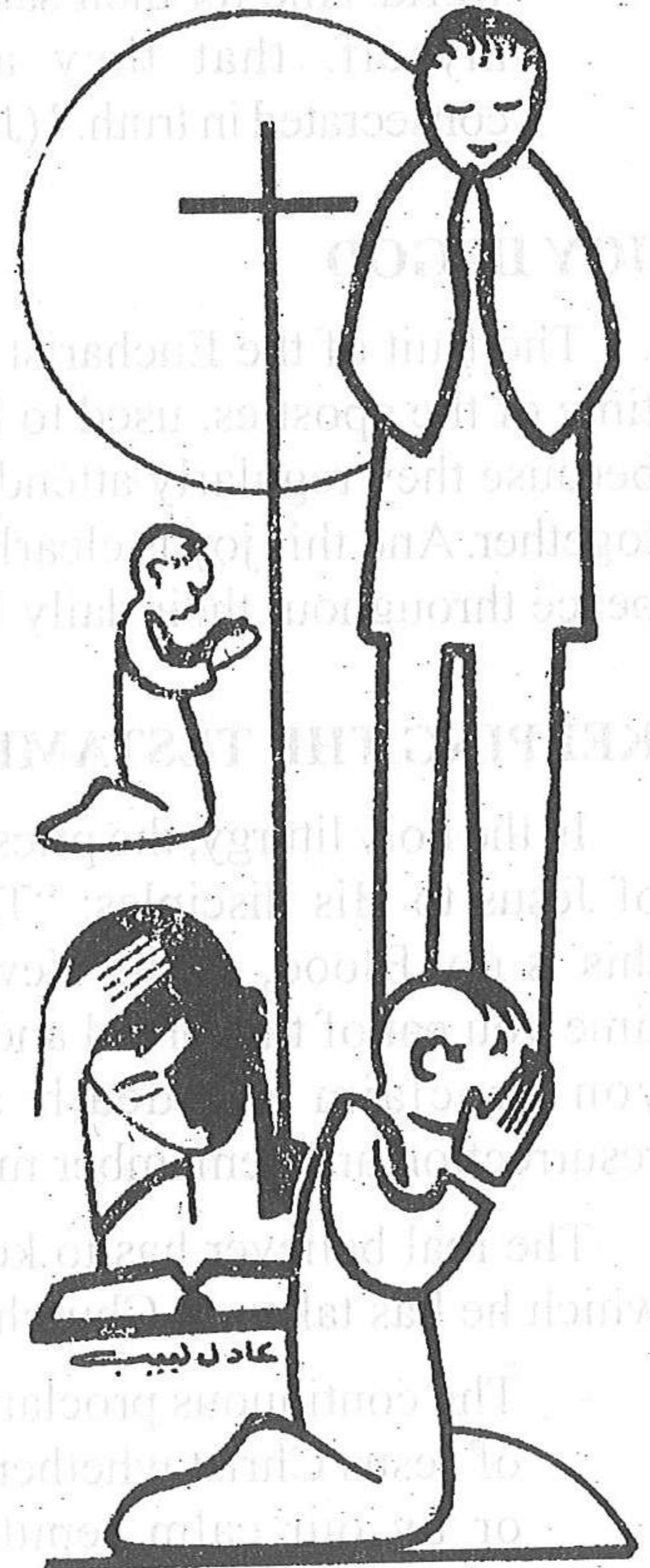
LESSON 4

EUCHARIST IN DAILY LIFE

OUR NEW LIFE IN THE WORLD

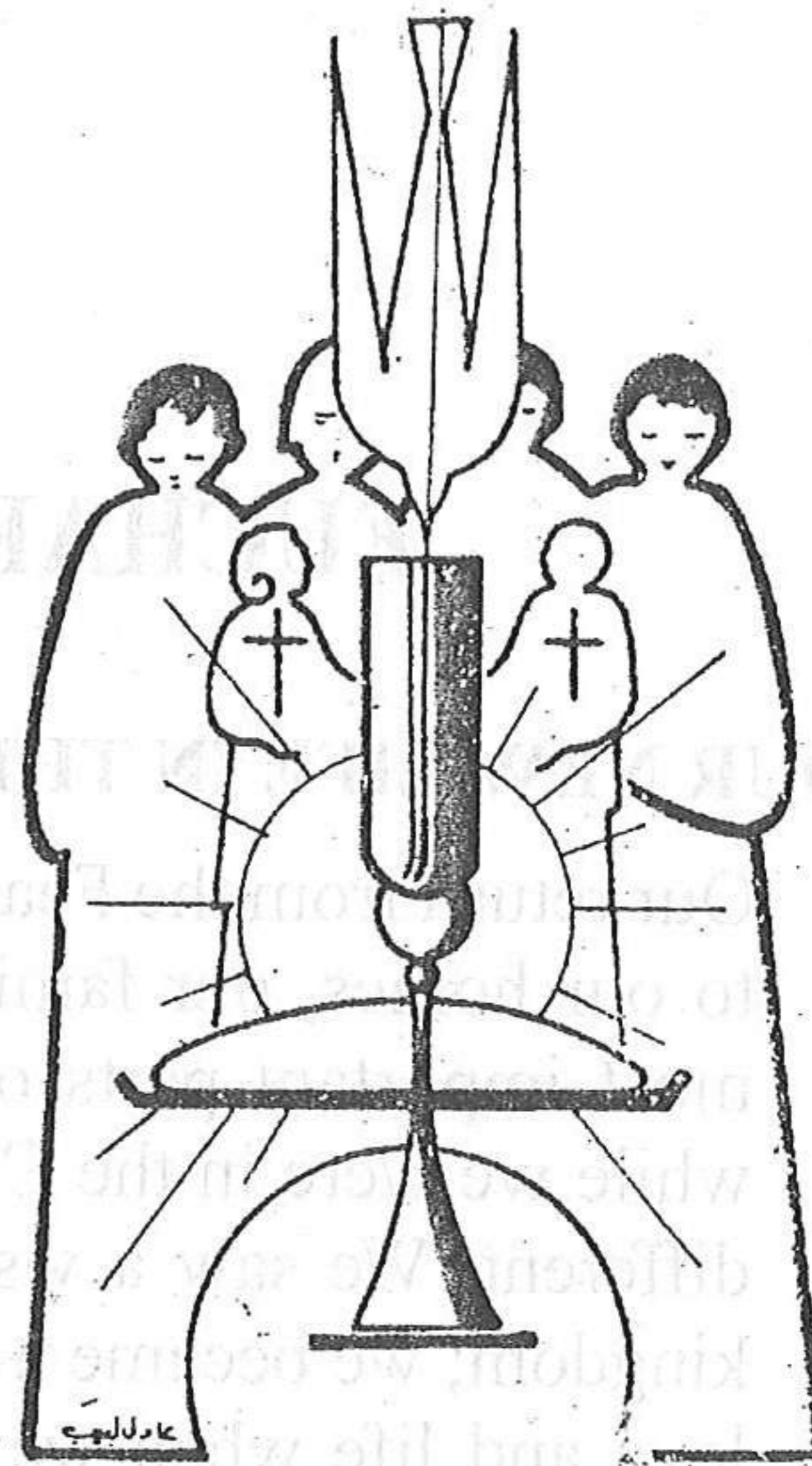
- ❖ Our return from the Feast of the Kingdom into the life of this world – to our homes, our families, friends and neighbours – is one of the most important parts of the Eucharist. Something happened to us while we were in the Church. We saw and tasted and felt something different. We saw a vision of God’s kingdom; we became a part of God’s love and life when we received His foot of new life. Perhaps, we even began to look at our world in a different way. Perhaps we began to see it as a wonderful gift of his love. But now, as we return, we must tell others of our experiences. We must help other people to understand what it means to live a new life in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ This Liturgical prayer makes you feel that participation in the Eucharist means living the life of the risen Christ

“Thou hast purified us, Thou wilt unite us unto Thyself, through our Communion of Thy heavenly Sacraments. Grant us, O Lord, a mind and a power of understanding that we may flee for ever from every evil And give us to do Thy will at all times, proclaiming Thy glory everywhere.”



- ❖ As we leave the Church we carry with us the blessing and peace and strength of Jesus Christ. We go back to our daily lives as witnesses of His glory. The work of our Lord Jesus in the world now continues through us. We are now the Body of Christ. We have the gift of new life. Through us, the world itself can be made new, as long as we live in Jesus Christ. Read carefully the prayer of Jesus to His father:

“As Thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.” (John 17:18, 19)



JOY IN GOD

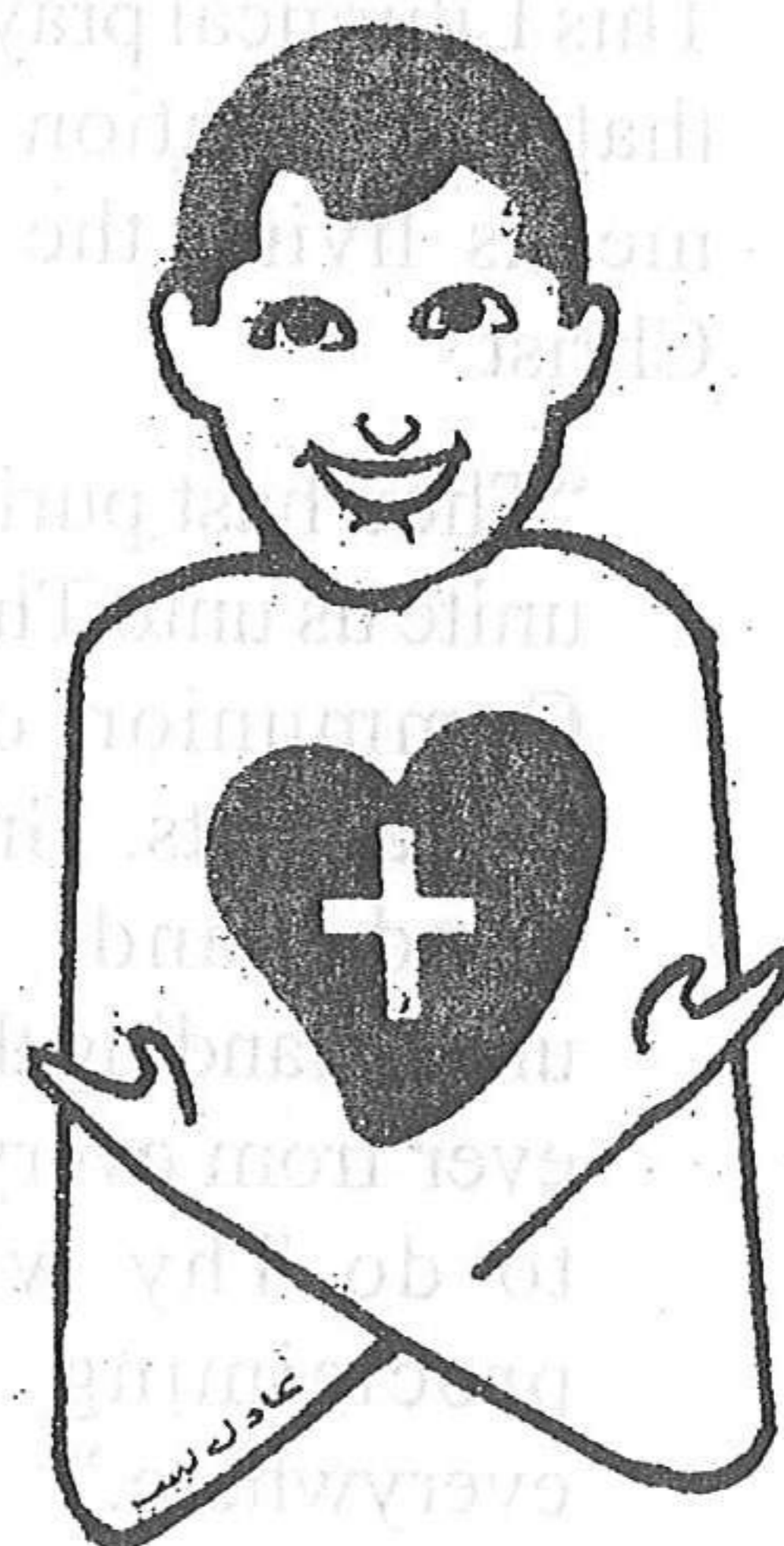
The fruit of the Eucharist is the real eternal joy: the believers in the time of the apostles, used to be filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit because they regularly attend the prayer and communion and teachings together. And this joy is clearly noticed on their faces as a sign of internal peace throughout their daily life.

KEEPING THE TESTAMENT

In the holy liturgy, the priest repeats the words of Jesus to His disciples: “This is my Body... this is my Blood, of the New Testament. Each time you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you proclaim my death and confess my resurrection and remember me until I come.”

The real believer has to keep this Testament which he has taken in Church.

- The continuous proclamation in the name of Jesus Christ whether by serving others or by our calm reputation, makes the sacrament abide in us.



- And our confession of His resurrection gives us strength to overcome every bodily anxiety and desire.
- And the anxious awaiting of Christ, whether in His coming or our going to Him, are all proofs of the effect of the Holy Liturgy on us. And so it is, whenever we partake of the Lord's table.

PRAYER OF THE FINAL BENEDICTION

The priest says this prayers after the communion so that the effect of the sacrament goes on throughout our daily life. "Abide in them, walk among them, raise their hearts from every dirty thought, and help them in every good work. Grant them your love for the eternal life. O Lord save Thy people, lead them forever, by the power of Thy life-giving Cross."

QUESTIONS

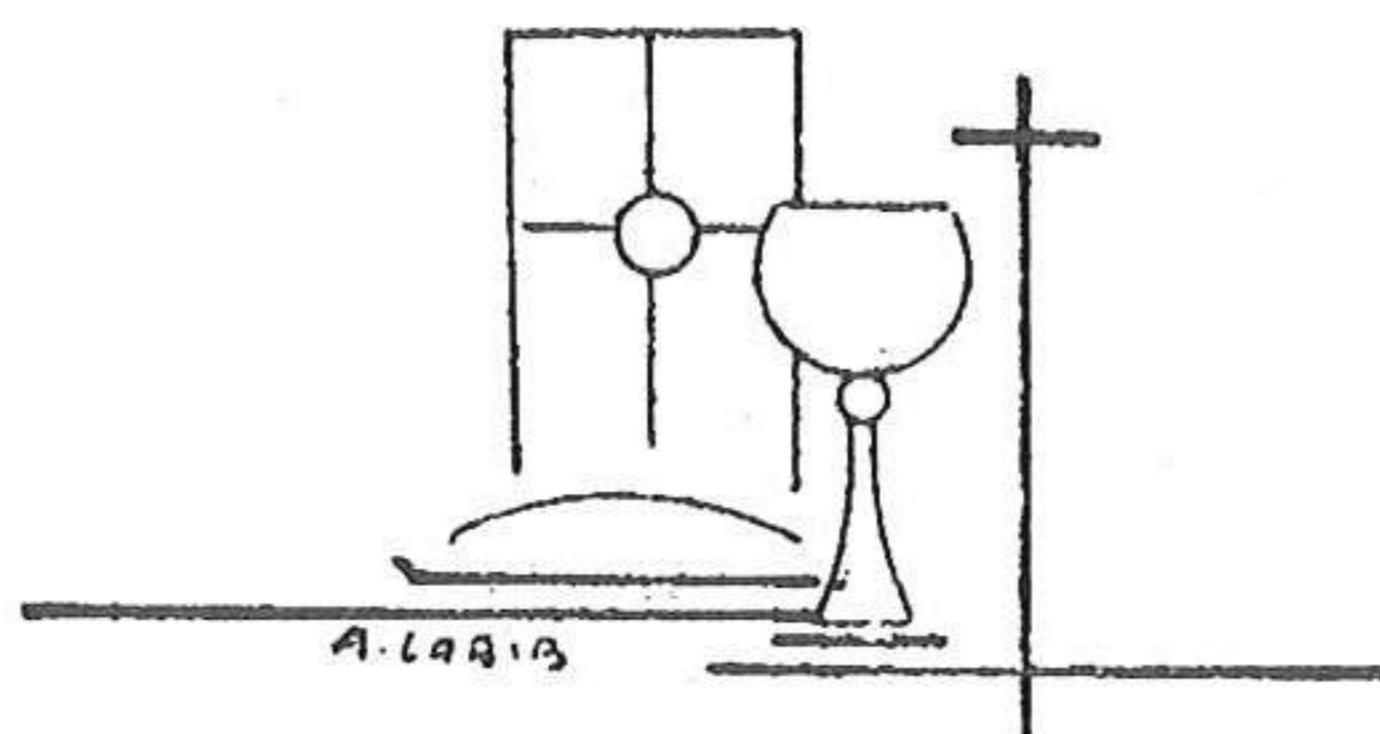
1. How do I prepare myself to attend the Liturgy?
2. How do I keep the grace of the Liturgy in my life?
3. What is the relationship between the Liturgy and my internal daily life?
4. What is the relationship between the Liturgy and my social life?
5. What is the meaning of, "I live not I but Christ in me?" How do I feel this through the Liturgy?

ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Self-examination in the light of the previous teachings.
- ❖ Training of the self to preserve the blessings of the liturgy?
- ❖ Distribution of a pamphlet containing the wonderful conceptions of the liturgy?

Memorize

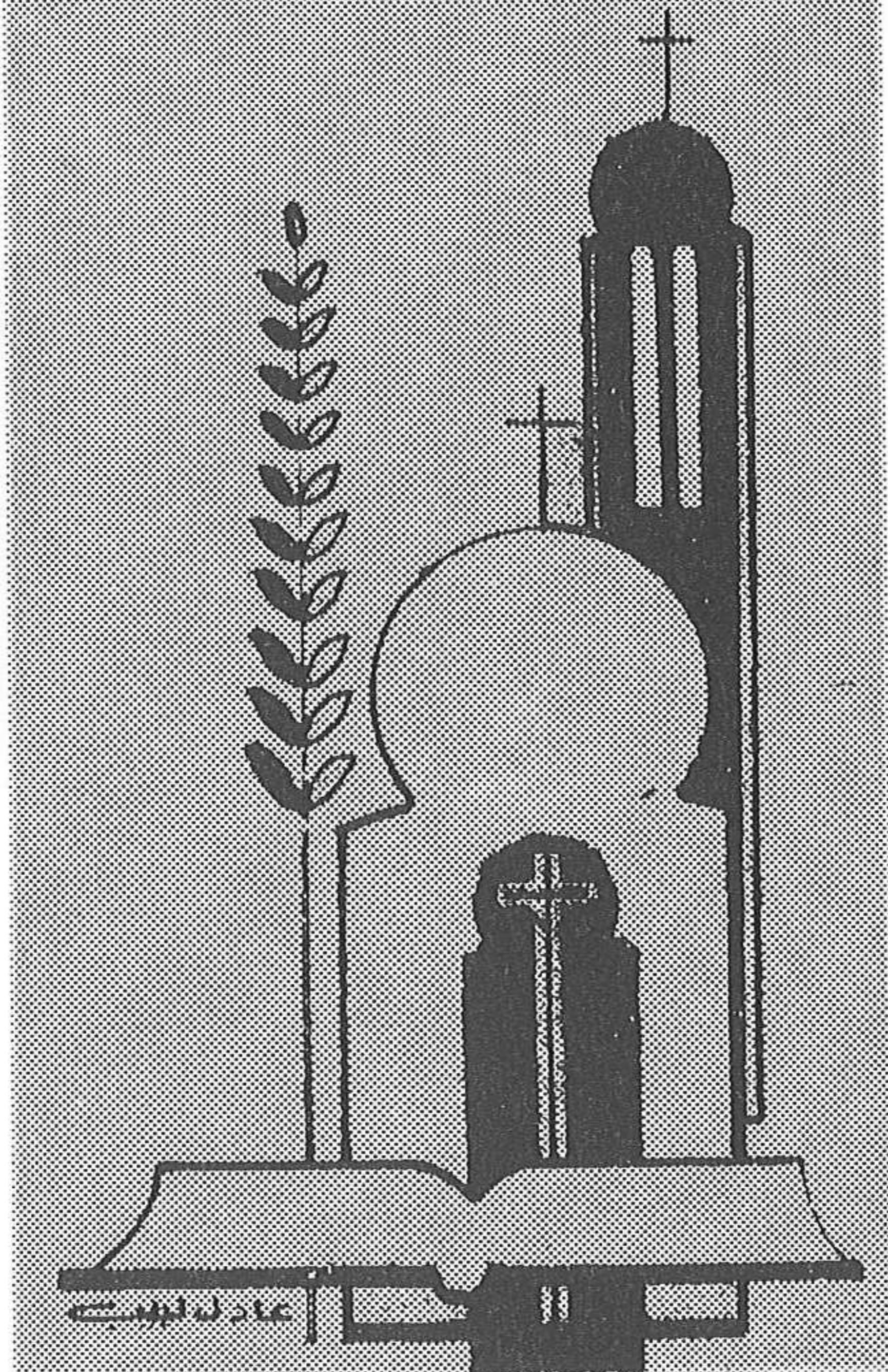
Responses from the liturgy



UNIT THREE

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

- **What is a Council?**
- **The Three Great Councils**
- **The Church's Faith**



UNIT 3

LESSON 1

WHAT IS A COUNCIL?

THE SPIRIT OF UNITY

The Early Church, in the first centuries, spread all-over the world. The Holy Spirit led the Apostles, the Disciples and the bishops of the church in understanding and interpreting the Christian faith. They always prayed for guidance from the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit guided their thinking and preserved their unity. From time to time, some persons who depended on their own minds and knowledge, started teaching in a different way than what the Church has received in the Scripture and from our Lord Himself.

But the Church was always careful to preserve the Spirit of unity among the Christians all over the world, and protect Christian faith from any misunderstanding or wrong interpretation. When any controversy was raised, the leaders of the Church assembled together to examine the different views and declare the Orthodox faith of the Church. The bishops of the Church came from different parts of the world and met together in the form of an ecumenical council.

THE FIRST COUNCIL

The first council in the life of the Christian Church was assembled in Jerusalem at the time of the Apostles of our Lord. We can read about the Council in the Book of Acts, Chapter 15.

After the Assentment of our Lord to heaven, His Disciples and Apostles received the Holy Spirit, and started preaching and teaching of the salvation of Christ to the world.

Paul and Barnabas, two of the Apostles, preached among the Gentiles – the non-Jewish people – in different parts of the world. When they finished their mission, they travelled by boat to Antioch, and met with the Disciples and the Church there, and told them about

all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

THE CONTROVERSY

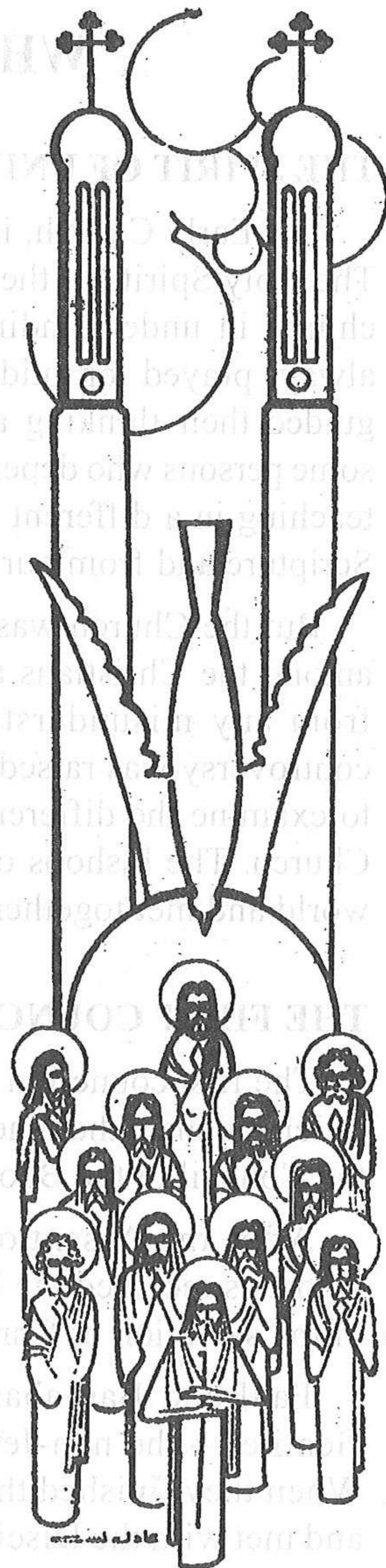
While they were in Antioch, some of the Jews who became Christians, insisted that the Gentiles cannot be saved unless they first follow the law of Moses before becoming Christians. Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them. They had long arguments and debate together.

The church of Antioch appointed the Apostles Paul and Barnabas and some other members of the Church of Antioch to go to Jerusalem. When they reached there, they told Disciples of the dispute that happened in Antioch and asked their guidance.

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM:

The Apostles, the Disciples and the bishops of the Church were assembled together in Jerusalem to consider the matter. Paul and Barnabas told them how the Christian Jews of Judea insisted that the Gentiles must first follow Jewish tradition before becoming Christians. The members of the Council prayed for guidance from the Holy Spirit. They knew that they cannot decide on matters of faith by their own individual minds, but only through the action of the Holy Spirit in them as they come together with the spirit of Unity and love in the Council.

The members of the Council had long discussion about the matter. Then St. Peter rose and said that God has given the Holy



Spirit to all those who believe in Him in the whole world, and purified their hearts by faith. He said, "We believe that all men, Gentiles and Jews, shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now therefore, why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples which neither our Fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

St. James, one of the twelve Disciples, told them that what they had heard from Peter, Paul and Barnabas agreed with the words of the prophets of the Old Testament. Then he offered the following proposal:

"We should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood" (Acts 15: 19-20).

All the members of the Council agreed on the proposal of St. James, and wrote a message to the Churches informing them of the Council's decision.

THE SPIRIT OF COUNCILIARITY IN THE CHURCH

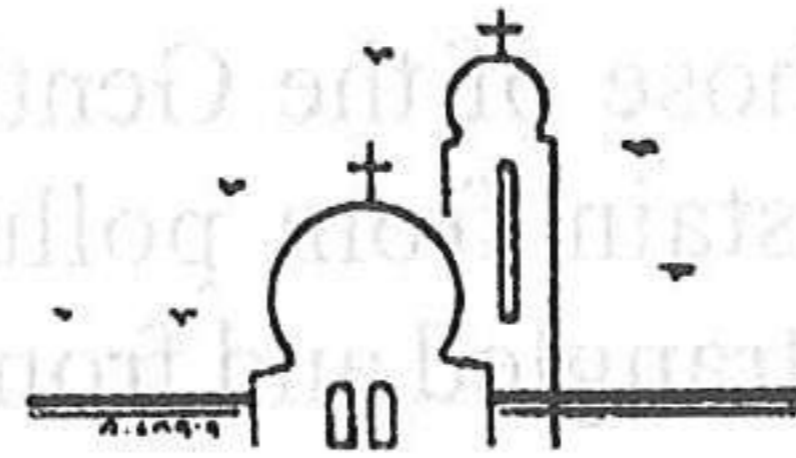
The Council of Jerusalem was a model for the life of the Church, through the centuries. The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continued to build up clear understanding on Christian faith. Individual and heretic interpretations were examined and refuted by ecumenical Councils. The Councils offer testimony to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. In the ecumenical Councils, bishops from all-over the world express true unity and love of the whole Church. Although many ideas were expressed in seeking the truth, but they denied their individual views and accepted the Orthodox understanding of Christian faith.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the first Council of Jerusalem?
2. What was the law of Moses which some men tried to impose on the Christians who were not originally Jews?
3. Was it necessary for the Church to discuss its problem in a Council?
4. What was the decision, of the Council? And how did the members reach this decision?

DISCUSSION

1. Read "Acts 15: 23-29", and find out the content of the letter which the Council sent to the Churches.
2. Compare the ecumenical spirit of the Church Fathers with the individual approach of the heretics.
3. How were the Councils guided by the Holy Spirit?



THE SPIRIT OF COUNCILARITY IN THE CHURCH

The Council of Jerusalem was a model for the life of the Church through the centuries. The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continued to build up clear understanding on Christian faith. Individual and heretic interpretations were examined and refuted by ecumenical Councils. The Councils offer testimony to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. In the ecumenical Councils, bishops from all-over the world express the unity and love of the whole Church. Although many ideas were expressed in seeking the truth, but they denied their individual views and accepted the Orthodox understanding of Christian faith.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the first Council of Jerusalem?
2. What was the law of Moses which some men tried to impose on the Christians who were not originally Jews?
3. Was it necessary for the Church to discuss its problem in a Council?
4. What was the decision of the Council? And how did the members reach this decision?

UNIT 3

LESSON 2

THE THREE GREAT COUNCILS

In the first three centuries, Christians were persecuted and hundreds of thousands were martyred for their faith. During the time of persecution, the Christians defended their faith and died for it. Christian beliefs were simple, pure and strong. In the year 313, Constantine, the Roman Emperor, accepted Christianity and forbade all persecution of Christians.

In few years, Christianity became a state religion of the Roman Empire, Statesmen and officials were Christians.

The Christian Church faced an important task in the following two centuries: TO EXPLAIN the Christian faith, and to answer the challenges of pagan schools and heretic philosophies which continued to influence the minds of many people.

THE DANGER OF ARIANISM

At the beginning of the fourth century, a priest in the city of Alexandria called Arius started a strange teaching. He taught that **Jesus Christ was not God in the same Sense as God the Father, not of the same essence, and not eternal.** Arius was a cunning scholar. He was able to popularize his ideas among simple-minded people, as well as among some highly educated people who were still attached to pagan thinking. He was a good propagandist, cultivating his popularity by visits, speeches, letters, and by writing popular songs in which he formulated his theological arguments.

The teaching of Arius was more dangerous for Christianity than the worst persecutions. If Christ was not God, who had become Man, who had suffered and died for men, and in His death had conquered death, then Christianity would have become some moral ideas, like what pagan philosophers had offered. Arius taught that God was a Supreme Divine Being completely separated from mankind. Christianity professed faith

in God who so loved man that He Himself became Man and suffered and died for the sins of man.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us all” (John 1:1-14).

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

The Church of Alexandria felt the danger of the Arian heresy. Alexandrus, the Patriarch of the Coptic Church at that time, condemned the teachings of Arius and tried to guide him to the Christian faith. Arius complained to the Emperor Constantine. The emperor finally accepted to call a General Ecumenical Council, in order to settle the dispute. Three hundred and eighteen bishops and priests from the churches all-over the world were assembled in Nicaea in Asia Minor in the spring of 325 A. D. Among them, there was Bishop Paul from Syria with his burned hands carrying the signs of the persecution he had suffered, and St. Paphnotius and St. Potamon, both blinded in one eye and lamed from the tortures inflicted on them, Patriarch Alexandrus and his deacon St. Athanasius the Great from Egypt.

The Council studied the teachings of Arius and examined them carefully. Long and heated arguments took place. A lengthy dialogue took place between the young deacon Athanasius and Arius. **Athanasius explained the Orthodox faith showing how THE SON IS OF ONE ESSENCE OF THE FATHER.** The Council finally confirmed that Arius had distorted the Christian faith. The fathers of the Council, led by Athanasius, proclaimed the faith of the Church in clear terms:



We believe in ONE God, the father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the things visible and invisible. And in ONE Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father, before all worlds; Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of One Essence of the Father.

The Council of Nicaea was one of the greatest events in the history of Christianity. It has brought together for the first time the largest number of bishops who formulated the Creed of the Church, and saved it from the Arian heresy.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The Christian faith was again threatened by a new heresy. **Macedonius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, taught that the Holy Spirit was created.** A second ecumenical Council was assembled in Constantinople, in May 381 A. D., by invitation of Emperor Theodosius the Great. One hundred and fifty bishops attended the Council. After lengthy discussions, the Council refuted the heresy of Macedonius and completed the Creed of the Church.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.

...Who spoke by thee Prophets...

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

After fifty years, Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, preached that God was not born from the Virgin Mary, but she had given birth to a human being and God dwelt in him later on. He forced his teachings on the Church. His heresy reached Alexandria. The Patriarch of Alexandria, St. Cyril the Great, wrote to Nestorius advising him to leave his wrong teaching. He also wrote to many bishops around

THE THREE GREAT COUNCILS

Place and date	Famous defenders of the Orthodox faith	Heretics	Work accomplished
1. Nicaea, 325	St. Athanasius the Great	Arius	Condemned the Arian heresy which taught that Christ is not God Proclaimed the first part of the Creed. Established the date on which Easter is to be celebrated.
2. Constantinople 381	St. Gregory the Theologian St. Gregory of Nysse	Macedonius	Defined the teaching of the Church on the Holy Trinity, particularly on the Holy Spirit. Completed the Creed
3. Ephesus, 431	St. Cyril of Alexandria	Nestorius	Defined the Church's teaching on the Holy Virgin (Theotokos). Condemned the heresy of Nestorius who taught that Christ had two separate natures. Declared the text of the Creed to be finally completed and forbade any change of it in the future:

the world warning them of the danger of the new heresy. Finally, a third ecumenical Council was assembled in Ephesus in 431 to settle the matter. Two hundred bishops attended the Council. The Council refuted the teaching of Nestorius and declared the introduction to the Creed:

“We magnify thee, O Mother of the True Light; and we glorify thee O saint Mother of God.

For you had borne to us Saviour of all the world.

He came and saved our Souls.

Glory be to You Christ, Our Master and our King, the honour of the Apostles, the crown of the Martyrs, the joy of the Righteous, the stability of the Churches, the forgiveness of sins.’

We evangelize and preach the Holy Trinity, one God-head.

We worship Him and glorify Him.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord send Your blessing...
Amen.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did Arius teach? Why was Arianism dangerous for Christianity?
2. Find out further information on the struggle of St. Athanasius the Great against Arianism.
3. What was the contribution made by the three great councils to the Christian faith?

ACTIVITIES

Make a large chart showing the work accomplished by the three Councils.

FOR MEMORIZATION

Memorize some decisions of the Councils shown in the previous table.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did Arius teach? Why was Arianism dangerous for Christianity?
2. Find out further information on the struggle of St. Athanasius the Great against Arianism.
3. What was the contribution made by the three great councils to the Christian faith?

UNIT 3

LESSON 3

THE CHURCH'S FAITH

The three great ecumenical councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus stated the Creed of the Church, and preserved the Christian faith according to the Scripture and the teachings of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. The creed has put the Christian faith in short and clear terms, easy to learn for everybody. The Churches all-over the world included the Creed in their liturgies and in their daily prayers. Students in Church classes studied the Creed and teachers explained to them the meaning of every verse of it.

THE CREED

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

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all worlds.

Light of Light;

Very God of Very God;

Begotten, not made;

of One Essence of the Father;

by whom all things were made;

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven;

And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary;

And was made man;

and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;

And suffered and was buried;

And the third day He rose again from the dead, according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into heaven;

And sitteth on the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again in His glory to judge the living and the dead;

Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father;

We worship and glorify Him with the Father and the Son;
Who spoke by the Prophets.

And in One Holy Universal Apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins;

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

In one of the classes, the teacher and two of his students Mark, and Peter, held the following dialogue:

MARK: Why do we call God “The Father?”

TEACHER: In the Old Testament man was alienated from God because of sin. Through the salvation which Christ has offered to us, we have become sons of God and He has become “Our Father,” as we call him in the Lord’s prayer. He is the source of everything, and beyond the comprehension of the human mind. He is invisible, and therefore cannot be comprehended by the physical senses. St. John explains it to us: “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known” (John 1:18).

PETER: What do we mean by saying that our Lord Jesus Christ “being of One Essence of the Father?”

TEACHER: The Council of Nicaea formulated this statement to reply on the heresy of Arius that the Lord Jesus Christ was created and that the Father is higher than the Son.

St. Athanasius answered Arius and showed that God became man in Jesus Christ. The Son is ONE with the Father, and whoever has seen the Son has also seen the Father. And all that belongs to the Father belongs also to the Son. At the beginning of the Gospel of St. John we read:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Son from the Father.” (John 1:1-14)

PETER: I have also read in the first Epistle of St. John the same meaning:

“That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and touched with our hands.

we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John. 1:1-3)

MARK: What does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit is “Giver of life?”

TEACHER: The Council of Constantinople stated this phrase to reply on the heresy of Macedonius who wrongly taught that the Holy Spirit is created. The Council answered him that the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of God, the Life Giver.”

Our Lord said that “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). He promised His Disciples that “When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the spirit of Truth, Who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to Me; and you also are witnesses (John 15:26).

Indeed, through the Holy Spirit, the Disciples were able to witness to Christ and call the world to the Christian faith. Through living in the Spirit, we could also show our Christian witness and become light to the world.

PETER: I notice that the last part of the Creed puts together the Church, Baptism, Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

TEACHER: We believe in ONE



CHURCH because it is the body of the ONE Christ with whom we all unite in Holy Communion. And we acknowledge ONE BAPTISM because it symbolizes the death of Christ and His burial. We are buried with Him once, since He died only once, and that was quite sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. We are then raised with Him unto eternal life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

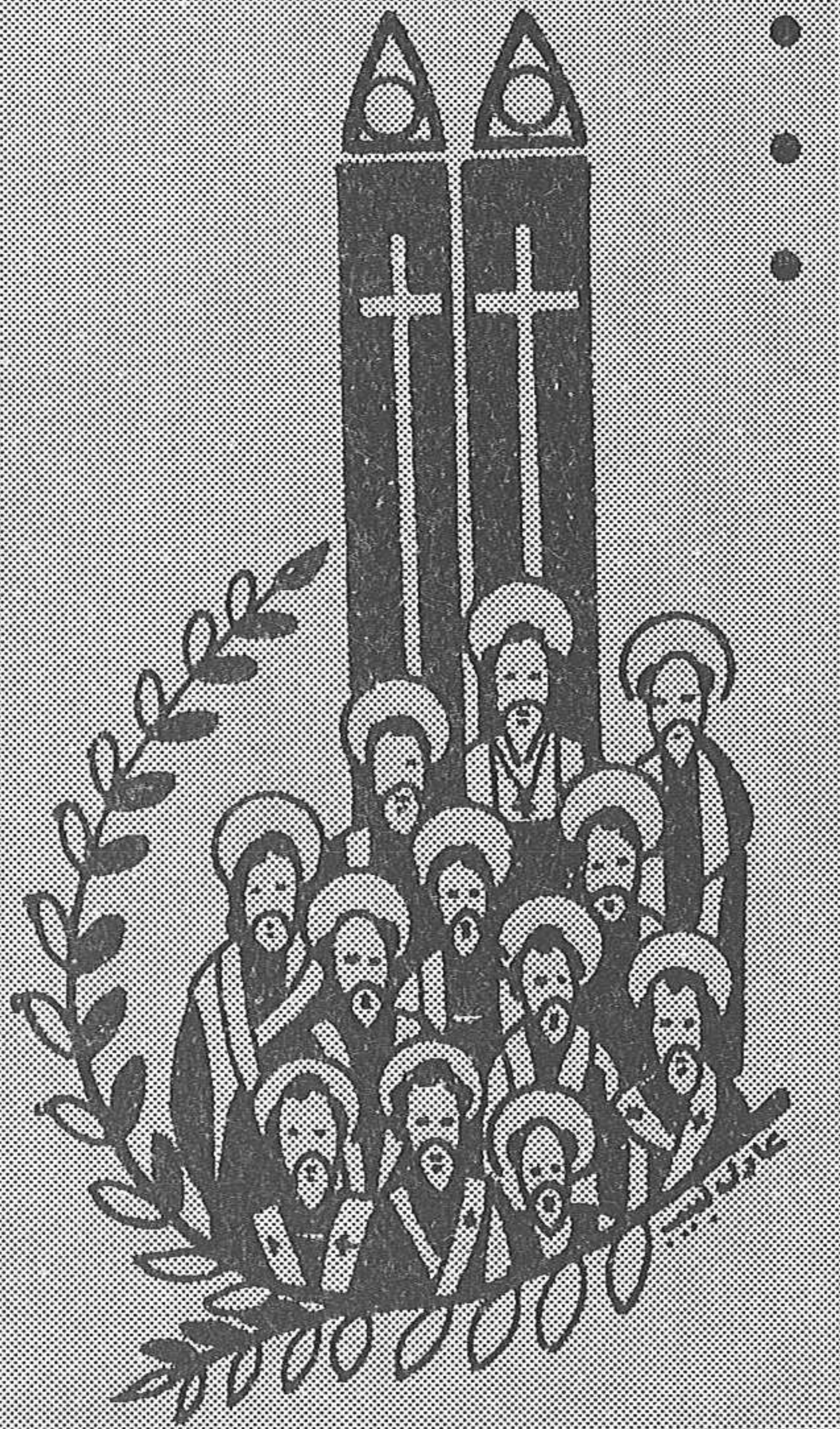
1. What feeling do you develop in your life as you say in the creed: "Father Almighty."
How do you differentiate between the Christian faith in God's care and protection for us, and those who believe in fatalism?
2. What is the meaning of the following statements of the Creed:
 - a. "Born of the Father before all worlds"
 - b. "Of One Essence of the Father"
 - c. "Who proceeds from the Father"
3. Which parts of the Creed answer the heresy of Arius? And the heresy of Macedonius?
4. What is the relationship of the Person of the Son to your personal life?
5. What is the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives as persons and as Church? How is this action expressed in the Creed?
6. The last part of the Creed confirms our belief in "ONE CHURCH", "ONE BAPTISM", and "THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD."
How does this relate to our faith in the Holy Trinity?



UNIT FOUR

**GREAT FATHERS
OF THE CHURCH**

- **Who is a Church Father**
- **Apostolic Fathers**
- **The Defender of Orthodoxy**
- **The Great Teachers of the Church**
- **Oriental Fathers**
- **Local Fathers**



UNIT 4

LESSON 1

WHO IS A CHURCH FATHER?

In the divine liturgy of St. Basil, the Church commemorates the principal church fathers. The priest says;

“Moreover, Lord, it is a commandment of Thine Only Begotten Son, to remember Thy Holy Saints. Remember, O Lord all the saints who have pleased Thee since the beginning: our holy fathers, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the preachers, the martyrs and the confessors... St. Stephen the archdeacon and first martyr, St. Mark, St. Severus the Patriarch, the great teacher Dioscorus, St. Athanasius and St. Peter the saintly martyr...”

The Church remembers the saints in every liturgy, and celebrates their feasts, and asks for their prayers and blessing. “The Church reads the biographies of the saints and rejoices in their saintly examples.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The apostolic fathers were the contemporaries of Christ and the disciples of the Apostles, who received the teaching from the lips of Christ Himself. Among the apostolic fathers, we have **Ignatius the “Thephorus”** (ie. “The Bearer of God”), **bishop of Antioch who was martyred; Polycarp who was ordained bishop of Symerna by the Apostle John and suffered martyrdom in a most fascinating manner; and Clement, bishop of Rome who assisted St. Paul in his mission.**

The apostolic fathers were persecuted. They suffered death with great courage because they were faithful to their Christian belief. Although they were few in number, but they succeeded in spreading the Christian faith in many parts of the world. They established new churches and helped the Christians to preserve the word of God. Some of them wrote letters to various churches urging them to stand firm in their faith and helping them to understand more clearly the meaning of that faith. They were honest to the message they received from the apostles who had actually lived with the Lord and were His disciples.

The Apostolic fathers confronted the pagan philosophers and refuted their arguments. They were able to offer stronger and more convincing arguments supporting the Christian faith, and overcame the false teachings of paganism. But, in the course of their struggle they had to bear a great deal of persecution. Many of them were committed to death, but their firm faith gave new vigour to the young Church.



St. Athanasius

THE FATHERS OF THE COUNCILS

When the age of persecution came to an end at the time of Emperor Constantine, a new age of suffering was awaiting the Church. Heresies spread and caused dissention among the Christians. Church fathers defended the Orthodox faith against the heretics and help the ecumenical councils. Among the great fathers of these councils are **St. Athanasius the “Defender of the Faith”, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Cyril of Alexandria, known as the “Pillar of the Faith.”** They have contributed to the Orthodox formulation of our faith, and helped the councils in defeating the heretics. During the period of the three great councils, ie.

from 325 to 431, the church produced many great teachers, such as **St. Basil**, the writer of the liturgy known after his name, **St. John Chrysostom**, the famous preacher, and **St. Gregory Nazianzen**. These fathers were the chief influence, which led to the final defeat of Arianism and the other heresies.



St. Antony

THE MONASTIC FATHERS

Monasticism was a new expression of the ascetic spirit which existed in the apostolic and early Church. The greatness of the monastic fathers is not in what they said or did, but in what they were. They sought self-understanding through the discovery of their true self, they knew God in their inner life by means of purity of the heart and self-control. They developed their inward spirituality through a long process of practicing asceticism and struggling against evil.

St. Antony is called, “the father of Monks,” and **St. Pachomius** is known as the “founder of the Coenobitic (community) monasticism.” Among other famous monastic fathers are **St. Basil of Cappadocia**

and Mar Ephrem the Syrian. In each Church, the lives of monastic leaders had illuminated the way for others to follow the example of struggling for the faith and growing in spiritual life. The depth of their asceticism had enriched the spirituality of the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

LOCAL FATHERS

Each Church has its own record of great men who appeared all the time in its history. They left their impact on the life of their Church and became examples for others to follow. The Coptic Church remembers **St. Shenouda, the great monastic and national leader, and Abba Pishoi.** In recent history; Patriarch Cyril IV, at mid-nineteenth century, led the revival of the Coptic Church. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Anba Abraam, Bishop of Fayoum, offered a contemporary example of piety and humility. **The Ethiopian Church always remembers Frumentius known as Anba Salama, the first bishop of Axum, and St. Tekla Heimanot, the great monastic leader.**

The Syrian Church always remembers **St. Gregory Bar Hebraeus and St. Jacob Baradaeus.**

The Armenian Church recalls **St. Gregory surnamed the Illuminator** and celebrates feasts commemorating his birth, persecution and the translation of his relics, and also **St. Mesrob, and St. Vartan.**

QUESTIONS

1. Why does the Church mention many saints in the divine liturgy?
2. Who are the apostolic fathers? What was their contribution to the Christian faith?
3. How did the fathers of the great Councils share in building up the Orthodox faith and conquering the heretics?
4. "The Greatness of the monastic fathers lies not in what they said or did, but in what they were. What is the meaning of this statement, and what do we learn from them?"

ACTIVITIES

1. Write down summaries on the lives of some of the local saints of your Church.
2. Identify the icons of saints in your Church, and write their biographies on the wall bulletin of your class.





UNIT 4

LESSON 2

APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The Apostolic Fathers are the early Church Fathers who lived in the age of the Holy Apostles and were their disciples. We shall study the lives of two of the greatest of our Apostolic Fathers.

I SAINT IGNATIUS

It is said that he was the child whom Christ set in the midst of the disciples as an example of humility. As Ignatius grew up, his love for his Lord increased, and his faith grew. His one ambition was to teach people about Christ. So the Apostles made him Bishop of the Church at Antioch.

Ignatius was zealous in his work. He wrote letters which aimed at strengthening the Churches in the Christian faith as he had learnt it from the Apostles themselves. And indeed, through his life and teaching, he was able to win many pagan people to Christ.

• A DARING FAITH:

On his way to fight the Persians, the Emperor Trajan passed through Antioch. There he met Ignatius, and the following conversation took place:

- Are you Ignatius Theophorus?

- Yes.

- What is the meaning of your name?

- Bearer of God.

- And do we not also bear our Gods to the wars in order to be victorious?

- How do you consider these graceless statue Gods?

- Are you blaspheming against our Gods?

- Know, Oh King, that there is no God but one, the Creator of heaven



and earth, and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who became man in order to save us. If you believe in Him, you will be truly happy.

- Let along this senseless talk, and do what will save your life and win you favour in my sight: offer a sacrifice to my Gods, and I shall make you the greatest of my priests.

May God increase your wealth, Oh King. But I cannot do what you ask, for I am the priest of my Lord Jesus Christ, and to Him alone I offer my daily sacrifice.

The emperor was so angry that he condemned him to exposure before the wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre. When his Christian friends knew of his fate, they went to see him off with tears in their eyes. As he passed through Smyrna, its bishop went out to meet him, and delegations from nearby Churches sought his blessing. So he wrote to them a letter.

Extracts from the letters of Ignatius:

“Let your holy way of life chasten hypocrites and evil-doers. Conquer their hatred and unfairness by love and justice; their cruelty, by patience and prayer; and their treachery, by faithfulness. For the sake of Christ, bear injustice, loss, and persecution. Indeed, for His sake I bear all this, preferring my bonds to the treasures of the world. I rejoice in my sufferings for Him. Pray for me that I may find rest in heaven.”

Before leaving for Smyrna, he wrote to the Romans, saying:

“I am bound with chains for the love of Christ. But I fear that your love for me will bring me harm. I do not want you to prevent my death. For if I am depriving of martyrdom now, on account of your love, it may be very difficult to be martyred later. I long for martyrdom in order to prove myself a Christian, not only in word; but also in deed. Let me then be thrown to the beasts. And may the beasts eat up all my body, so that its remains will be burden to no one.”

When Ignatius arrived at Rome, the believers there were happy to see him; but their happiness soon turned to sadness when they learnt of his fate. He stretched out his hands and blessed them. He prayed for the Church. And when he had finished praying, the soldiers took him to the amphitheatre and set upon him two hungry lions which ate him up, leaving only his bones. These were taken to Antioch.

May the blessing his prayer be with us. Amen.

II SAINT CLEMENT

He was born in the city of Rome. As one of the nobles, he received a Greek education. He came to know Christ through St. Paul, and was a contemporary of the Apostles. He wrote the biography of the Disciples, showing how they were injured by kings and rulers. He preached the Gospel in several cities, and many believed through him. Then he became Bishop of Rome, and won many of its people to the knowledge of Christ. He laboured for Christ not only in Rome, but also in all the neighbouring dioceses. He is referred to by St. Paul in Phil 4:3 “...Clement and the



rest of my fellow workers...., who have laboured side by side with me in the Gospel, whose names are in the book of life.”

His Letters:

He wrote many letters, teaching Christians and confirming them in

the Faith which he had received from the Apostles themselves. He once heard of division among the Corinthians, so he wrote to them, saying:

Humility was your distinguishing characteristic. In fact, you used to submit to one another, and to listen carefully to the teachings of Christianity. You used to pray for all the brethren, forgiving one another. But now I notice among you envy, clamour and persecution. Righteousness and peace have left you, for you have abandoned the feat of the Lord, and are now walking in sin.”

Preaching in Exile:

The Emperor Trajan heard of Clement and called for him

- Are you still worshipping the crucified One?
- Yes.
- Forsake Him, and Kneel to our immortal Gods.
- Impossible. Can your so-called “Immortal Gods” save themselves if someone tried to steal them?

The Emperor was furious. He wanted to have him tortured, but he feared the people of the city. So he banished him to a far-off place near the Black Sea and he was forced to work in the mines. He found about 2000 Christians who had been banished like him. They were very happy to see him. He helped them, and confirmed them in the Faith.

Water was not easily accessible to the people in exile. Clement prayed to God, and the Lord guided him to a spring of water. They drank from it and praised the Lord. This incident brought many of the inhabitants of the place to the Lord Jesus. When the Emperor heard this, he wrote to the governor, giving orders for the torture of Clement. He was bound to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea, and so he received the crown of martyrdom.

May the blessing of his prayer be with us, Amen.

SAYINGS FOR MEMORIZATION

- I am bound with chains for the love of Christ, (Ignatius)
- I long for martyrdom in order to prove myself Christian not only in word, but also in deed. (Ignatius).

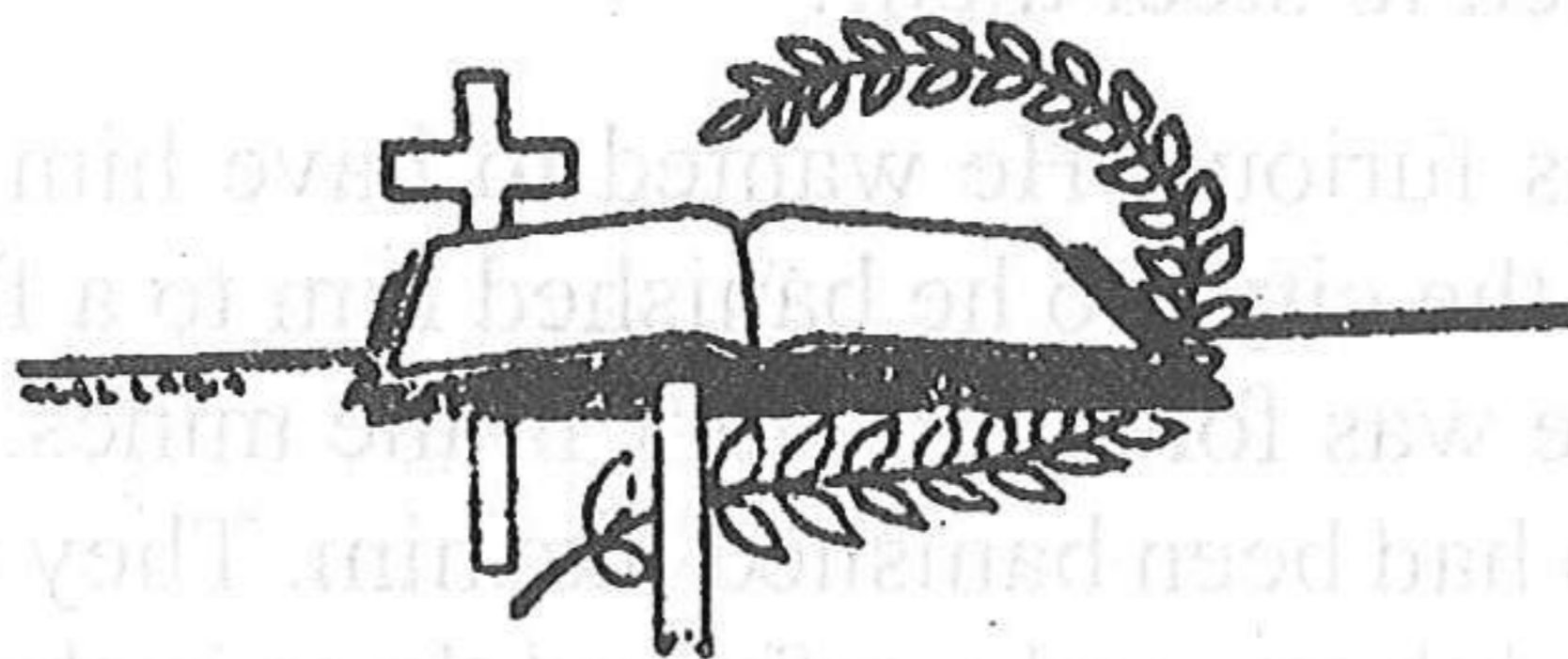
QUESTIONS

1. How do we testify to Christ? Give examples from the letters of St. Ignatius.
2. What virtues do you admire in the life of St. Ignatius?
3. St. Clement was able to glorify God before the Emperor, and later, in exile also. Explain how.

ACTIVITIES

Write a brief note on each of St. Ignatius and St. Clement making clear the following points:

1. The time in which each lived.
2. The place of his ministry and that of his martyrdom.
3. One of his well known sayings.



UNIT 4

LESSON 3

THE DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY

“St. Athanasius the Apostolic Father”

SINGS IN HIS CHILDHOOD

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in 296 A. D. to pagan parents. His father died while he was a child, and he lived with his mother who sent him to one of the Christian schools. One day as the children were playing at the seaside, Pope Alexandrus watched them as they solemnly acted the rite of baptism. He called them and asked them what they were doing.

The children said, “We are performing the rite of baptism, on the suggestion of Athanasius our friend.” The Pope turned to Athanasius and could straight away see his love for Christianity and his eagerness to become a Christian.

When Athanasius was fifteen years old, his mother took him with her to the Pope asking to be baptized. Athanasius studied under famous doctors of the Church, and was ordained by the Pope deacon and then archdeacon. He was of help to the Pope who consulted him on theological matters until the Arian heresy appeared.

ATHANASIUS AND THE ARIANISM

(Read about the Arian Heresy in Unit 3 Lesson 2)

Arius was a priest of Alexandria who started propagating a strange teaching namely that the Son had been created and therefore had no divine nature. The Church felt the danger of the Arian heresy. The great thinkers of the Church, led by St. Athanasius “the deacon of Patriarch Alexandrus put all their efforts together to save the Church’s faith.

Three hundred and eighteen bishops responded to the call of Emperor Constantine the Great and held a Council at Nicaea for the purpose of laying the principles of the Orthodox faith. The council witnessed the debates which took place between Arius and Athansius, the deacon,

ending with the triumph of Athanasius whose arguments proved irrefutable. The Orthodox creed was formulated and Arius was excommunicated and exiled.

However, Arianism continued for the next fifty years. St. Athanasius spent the rest of his life struggling against this heresy denouncing it with his faith and courage. Thus securing for himself an immortal name in the history of the Church.

ATHANASIUS AS POPE

After the death of Pope Alexander, Athanasius ascended to the See of St. Mark and peace reigned in the Church. The peace, however did not last long, as Arius succeeded in convincing the Emperor of his views. The Emperor in his turn sent word to the Pope in this sense that he too may accept him, but the Pope refused this request arguing that: "That which has been rejected by an ecumenical council, cannot be accepted except by the consent of another Council." The Emperor was enraged by the Pope's answer but the latter met him and was able to convince him.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ERROR AND TRUTH

The followers of Arius continued to fight Athanasius, convincing the Emperor to exile him. A council was held at which false accusations were brought forth against Athanasius. His allegiance to the Emperor was doubted and he was accused of murdering a bishop called Arsanius. The Bishop was asked to hide but his conscience was roused and he went to meet the representative of the Emperor unfolding the whole matter to him. At the beginning of the council



meeting, one of the conspirators held up a human arm which he claimed to be the arm of Arsanius and all accused Athanasius of the murder. While reading the charge, Arsanius and all accused Athanasius himself appeared to show their wickedness expose their injustice.

The evil-doers struggled fiercely against Athanasius and the followers of Arius attacked him in several councils bringing many charges against him. He was accused of refusing to export grain to the Emperor. As a result the Emperor exiled him to Treves in France. In his exile Athanasius was well received, and during his Sojourn there he was able to establish spiritual relations with the people. This was a good opportunity for him to write some important books.

Arius returned to Alexandria, but its inhabitants rejected him. The governor fearing the revolt of the people, sent Arius back to the Emperor in Constantinople with the purpose of getting the approval of the Pope on Arius's return. Athanasius prayed to God that He would solve the matter before Arius could kneel in the Church. On the day appointed for Arius to enter the Church, he was suddenly struck by some disease in the stomach and died.

“Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned” (Ps. 34, 21).

This vent greatly moved the Emperor, drawing him towards Athanasius. On his death bed, the Emperor decided that the Pope should return to his See.

The happiness of the Alexandrians, at seeing their father, was beyond description, and they received him with rejoicing.

The followers of Arius, however, did not cease to fight Athanasius, and they persisted in their hatred conspiring against him. Athanasius's life was full of bitter times and when he was once told, “The world is all turned against you, Athanasius,” he answered, “Me too, I am turned against the world,” so he was known as “Athanasius Contra-Mondum.”

After a life of a wonderful and continual struggle for the faith, Athanasius was at the end victorious over the followers of Arius. He lived to see that day, when his struggle was at last rewarded. Thus, souls rested, and the faith started to take strong roots; in the churches due to his tears, his suffering and struggle. he was a chosen vessel to bear

witness, and deserved to be called “The Apostolic” in likeness to the divine apostles. We are left with his sermons, and important works which are in truth a rich heritage for the Church.

QUOTATIONS

We greatly wonder at the Lord’s mercy; therefore we should not only carry His picture with us, but we should copy His divine life as an example, so that in times of suffering we do not complain or swear at our persecutors, but in all matters submit ourselves to God whose Judgement is just.”

(St. Athanasius)

QUESTIONS

1. What would have happened if the Arian teaching had not been suppressed?
2. Relate briefly the conflict between Athanasius and the followers of Arius.

ACTIVITIES

1. Make a wall magazine about the “Defender of the Faith.”
2. Ask for the intercession of this saint in your daily prayers, so that God may grant you the spirit of Athanasius and his faith.’



UNIT 4

LESSON 4

THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE CHURCH

In this lesson, we will study the lives of four great teachers of the Church whose lives and teachings played a vital role in the growth and development of the Church.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

- The people of Antioch, a great city in Syria, were terribly upset. The Roman Emperor had ordered them to pay still more taxes and they refused. "The taxes we pay do not leave us enough money to buy bread for our children" they cried. Then a crowd of hot-tempered fellows ran out into the streets and smashed the statue of the Emperor. Soon general rioting began, stores were broken in to and the soldiers who were sent to make order were beaten up. It had happened before, that the Emperor would order a whole city to be destroyed, when he wanted to punish it.

The old Archbishop did not wait for the Emperor's decision. He set out for Constantinople to plead with the emperor. It was frightening to think of all that might happen. In those days there was just one place where Antiochians could find some comfort. In the city cathedral, a priest called John was preaching there daily. Never had anyone preached like he did. He comforted them and yet he made them see their own faults. He gave them courage and hope. The old Archbishop returned bringing with him the Emperor's forgiveness. The city would not be destroyed. The people would not have to suffer any more.

- Who was that Father John who had kept up the people's courage, while making them see their faults? John was born in a rich family. He lost his father early, but his mother gave him a very good education and finished it by sending him to a famous university to become a lawyer. But John wanted to become a monk, to live in the desert spending all his



time praying to God. He went to the desert and stayed there for eight years, until the Bishop of Antioch told him to come back and become a priest in Antioch.

• The name "Golden Mouthed Chrysostom" was given to him by a simple woman who heard one of his sermons. Oh, Father, she said.

“You are golden-mouthed and your-words are beautiful. But your teaching is like a deep well and my mind is like a short rope, it is difficult for me to dip up the water of your wisdom.” John remembered what the woman said. He gave up the difficult manner of speaking and started teaching in a simple way that went straight to the people’s hearts. When John began to preach everyone was silent. His sermons were preserved because people wrote them down as he spoke.

- John served as a priest in Antioch for eighteen years. Then he was consecrated Bishop of Constantinople. His task was even harder and he had a lot of business to attend to. He supervised all the work of the Church to help the poor and he went himself into prison cells, into the worst city slums; to help, comfort and teach the people.

- The Emperor’s wife was a conceited and arrogant woman. She resented the sermons of Archbishop John because she felt they were reproaching her, so she persuaded the Emperor to have John arrested and exiled to a distant country on the shores of the Black Sea. For three years, John remained in a little town there surrounded by the love and respect of all the people. **“We would rather see the sun hidden, than have your golden-mouth silenced” they said.**

Then the Emperor decided to send John further away and ordered his soldiers to treat him so badly. They hurried him along their journey without mercy. One day, he couldn’t go any further and stopped at the little chappel of a martyred saint. That night the saint appeared to John and told him that his trials were at an end. In the morning, John asked for a priest to bring him Communion. Then he said quietly. “Glory be to God for all things.” And the golden-mouth was still. They buried him in the tomb of the martyr.

John did a great deal to establish the Order of Divine liturgy called **“The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.”**

ST. BASIL THE GREAT AND ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN

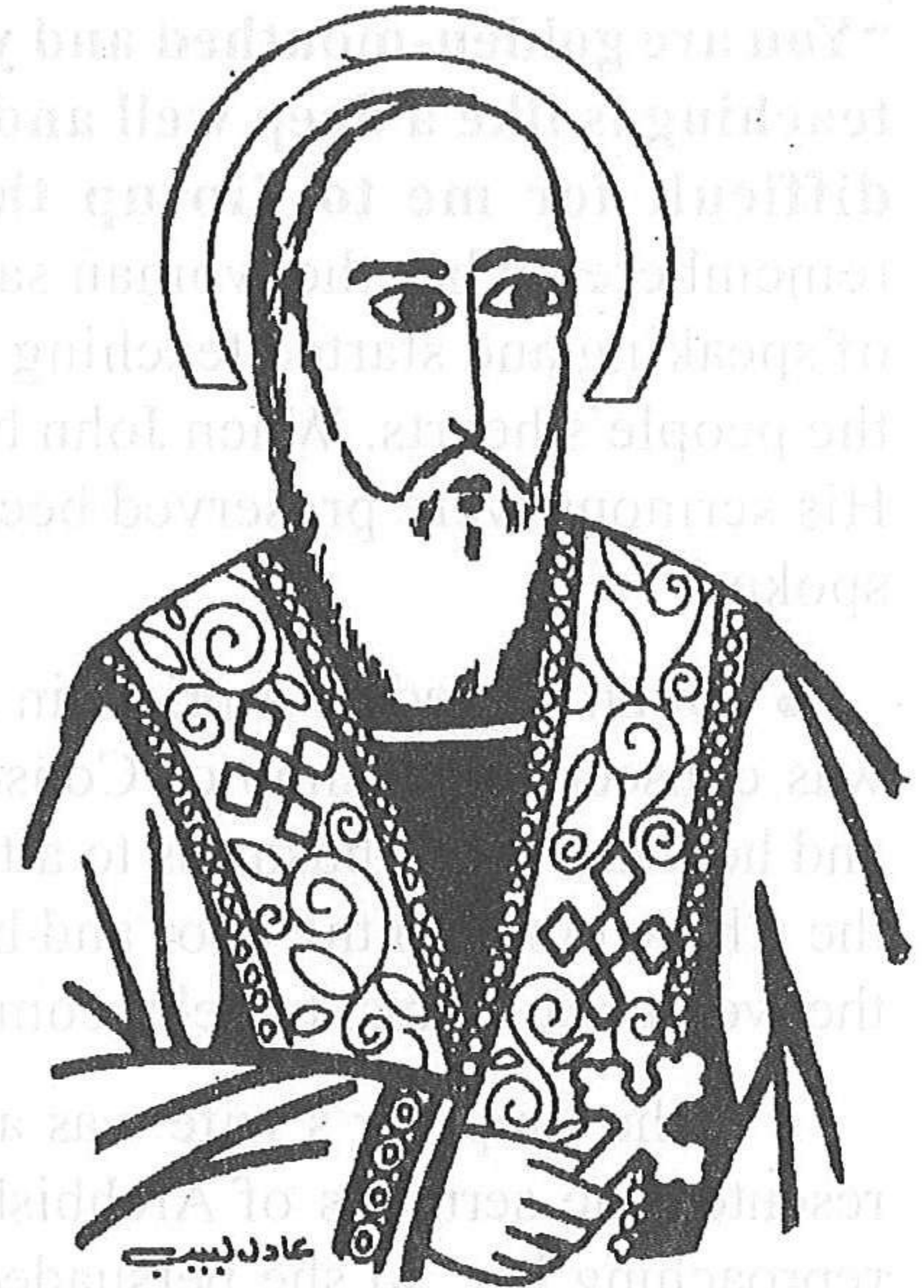
- In the year 357 A. D. a young man called Basil arrived in Athens from the distant city of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He had already distinguished himself in the schools of his own country and the teachers

of the school of Athens quickly recognized the extraordinary qualities of his mind. But though Basil was eager to learn he was somehow different from the other students. He did make one good friend "GREGORY" who also came from Cappadocia and was about three years older than Basil. It was a friendship that was to last all their lives and was to have a great influence on the future of the Church.

- Gregory was a poet and a gentle dreamer. Basil was a natural leader and organizer, and though his health was very poor, he had boundless energy. Both friends had in common the same spiritual yearning for a life of prayer, for deep spiritual communion with God, and for understanding the eternal things. After a few years Basil felt that he had acquired all that the School of Athens could give him. He did not return home but went to Egypt there he visited the hermits, who had begun to settle in the desert devoting their time to prayer and spiritual life. Gregory remained in Athens and became a teacher in the school.

- Basil did not stay in Egypt very long. He had to go back to Caesarea to assist the bishop, then he left again for his beloved desert, to an isolated spot not far from his home country. He did not remain there by himself, for other men joined him and Basil established a monastery. During his stay in Egypt, Basil had seen the monastery founded there and was deeply impressed by them. Basil brought his great spiritual experience and all his talents into practice in building up this kind of monastic life. He composed directions for the use of the monks, known as "The Longer Rule and The Shorter Rule."

- It was great joy for Basil when his friend Gregory came to join him. The two friends did not lead such a peaceful and happy life together



for very long. When his brother died, Gregory had to go back to the city to help his father. Then Gregory and the bishop wrote Basil, begging him to return to Caesarea to serve in the defense of the Church. Basil obeyed the call. He left his beloved monastery, and came back to serve the aged bishop until his death. He then was elected as bishop of Caesarea. A new field of work opened before Basil. No other bishop before him gave so much attention and thought to the Church's work for the poor. Infirmaries, orphanages, and schools were initiated by St. Basil. Help was given to all those who needed it. A tradition was established that the Church was to be responsible for helping in distress.

- St. Basil's name is perhaps best remembered in our Church because of the liturgy which bears his name. Throughout the eight years of his episcopacy, St. Basil defended the teachings of the Church on the Holy Trinity from the attacks of Arianism. Even the Emperor turned to the side of Arianism, but Basil would not compromise on a single point of what he believed to be the holy truth either to please the Emperor or to avoid division. **"You can do nothing to me,"** he told the Emperor, **"Deprive me of wealth? I have none; send me into exile? I am in God's hand everywhere; torture me? I shall rejoice in suffering for Christ; kill me? You will reunite me with my Lord."** In the year 379, he was heard to pray saying "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit." He deputed peacefully and the sound of hymn singing accompanied him to his grave.

- After him, St. Gregory carried on the gallant fight against Arianism for ten



years. His teachings led to the triumph of the doctrine of the Holy trinity in the Second Council in 381. St. Gregory was elected Bishop of Constantinople, but he refused the honour and retired to his native city of Nazianz. The task was accomplished and St. Gregory died peacefully in 389.

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

He was the younger brother of St. Basil, and one of the three Cappadocian fathers. Gregory was attracted towards the monastic life, and joined a monastery in Pontus which had been founded by his brother, and became bishop of Nyssa in 371. He fought Ariansim and was thus exiled by Emperor Valens, and came back after the Emperor's death. Gregory traveled widely to teach, and attended a number of church councils. He was an eminent theologian with a wide scope of knowledge, and a prolific author on the subject of the Divine Trinity, explaining to the teachers of the Church how to explain the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Salvation and the Holy Sacraments. Gregory wrote about chastity, explaining that the spirit of the chaste person unites with Christ. He also left us a record of his wonderful sister Makrina whose life and thinking had greatly influenced him and the rest of his brothers. He also left a number of treasures on the conception of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Spirit. He distinguished himself at the Council of Constantinople where he defended the true faith.



QUESTIONS

1. What is the most outstanding gift of St. John Chrysostom?
2. His opposition of the Queen's evil acts brought him trouble, what was it? And do you agree or disagree with his behaviour? Explain.
3. What was the title given to St. Gregory? Explain.
4. Describe the friendship of Gregory and Basil, and what were its consequences?
5. What was the most outstanding common contribution made by the three Cappadocean fathers?

ACTIVITIES

Write on the bulletin board famous quotations of the great teachers of the Church, and a summary of their biographies.

QUOTATIONS

- Don't get angry at him who offends you, have you not seen that arrows pierce a hard body, but they twist as they pierce through a flexible rubber body thus likewise is the offence. It hits the one who opposes it, but misses him who takes it gently. If you react by anger, you give value to the offence, but if you remain silent you succeed in embarrassing your offender and in showing your own poise. Why are you sad when somebody points at you saying "this poor thing", only remember your own nature, for you brought nothing into the world, and you cannot take anything out of the world, so what poverty can exceed the poverty of man?

St. Basil the Great

- Let us be like Christ, for Christ became like us, Let us become God's through Him, as He became human for our sake. He became poor so that by His poverty you might become rich, taking the form of a slave to grant us freedom.

St. Gregory Nazianzen

- Meditation is wonderful, and so is service, for one of them lifts us from this earth to reach the holy of no lies restoring our souls to what they were created for, the other receives Christ and serves Him, giving an evidence of this love by works.

St. Gregory Nazianzen.

3. What was the title given to St. Gregory? Explain.

4. Describe the friendship of Gregory and Basil, and what were its consequences?

5. What was the most outstanding common contribution made by the three Cappadocian fathers?

ACTIVITIES

Write on the bulletin board famous quotations of the great teachers of the Church, and a summary of their biographies.

QUOTATIONS

- Don't get angry at him who offends you, have you not seen that arrows pierce a hard body, but they twist as they pierce through a flexible rubber body, thus likewise is the offence. It hits the one who opposes it, but misses him who takes it gently. If you react by anger you give value to the offence, but if you remain silent you succeed in embarrassing your offender and in showing your own poise. Why are you sad when somebody points at you saying "this poor thing"? Only remember your own nature, for you brought nothing into the world, and you cannot take anything out of the world, so what poverty can exceed the poverty of man?

St. Basil the Great

- Let us be like Christ, for Christ became like us, for us become God's through Him, as He became human for our sake. He became poor so that by His poverty you might become rich, taking the form of a slave to give us freedom.

St. Gregory Nazianzen

UNIT 4

LESSON 5

ORIENTAL FATHERS

We will discuss in these pages the lives of four famous fathers of the Oriental Churches whose struggle and teachings played an important role in the history of the Church and in confirming the Orthodox faith.

ST. DIOSCORUS

Patriarch of Alexandria and one of the great champions of the faith. The name of this holy man is closely associated with holy zeal for the Orthodox faith, and steadfastness.

In his youth, Dioscorus was the disciple of St. Cyril who was known as 'the Pillar of faith', and whom Dioscorus succeeded to the patriarchal See in the year 444 A. D. at a time of turmoil for the Church which was struggling against the rise of heresies and particularly the Nestorian heresy.

Emperor Theodosius asked Dioscorus to hold the Council of Ephesus in 441 to discuss the case of Eutyches who had appealed for a reopening of his case after his excommunication by the patriarch of Constantinople for his heresy. Dioscorus thus headed the Second Council of Ephesus at which Eutychus went back on his heresy and was accepted by the Council. However, he again returned to his heresies and was once more excommunicated.

Leo, Bishop of Rome sent a



message with his representatives to the bishop of Constantinople, known as "Tome of Leo", which says: "In truth Christ came in both the Divine and the Human forms; the former aroused wonder by the miracles he wrought, and the latter received the insults." But this letter was not read at the Council.

The Bishop of Rome started attacking Dioscorus and the Council for having ignored his message and found no peace till he had succeeded in holding a counter council known as the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 A. D. in the reign of Emperor Mercion.

It was at Chalcedon that the representative of Leo asked to read the Pope's message, the "Tome of Leo", but Dioscorus objected because of the theological defects it implied. The representatives were outraged and asked to expel him, and finally the council was adjourned and a meeting was held at which Dioscorus was expelled from the Council by force and imprisoned in his house, and a verdict was given excommunicating and exiling him.

Dioscorus was exiled by the emperor to one of the islands of the Aegean Sea where he went through a great deal of suffering and persecution so that he sent to his bishops saying: "this is what we have no bear courageously for the sake of our faith." The people held firmly to the Orthodox faith bringing themselves under the oppression of the Emperor who carried out by the help of his soldiers a number of slaughters. Much blood was shed and many were martyred for the Orthodox faith, Dioscorus himself died in exile.

ST. SEVERUS PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH (465-538 A. D.)

He was educated in Alexandria and attracted by the life of asceticism and worship, he became a monk. Severus went to Constantinople in 508 where he successfully secured the support of Emperor Anastasius for the Orthodox monks oppressed on account of their belief in the One United Nature of Christ. In 512, he succeeded Patriarch Flavius (who was deposed) to the See of Antioch. But in 518 when Justin became emperor, he deposed Severus who fled to Alexandria seeking refuge with Patriarch Timotheos. Several attempts were made for reconciliation, but they all failed and finally the emperor excommunicated him.

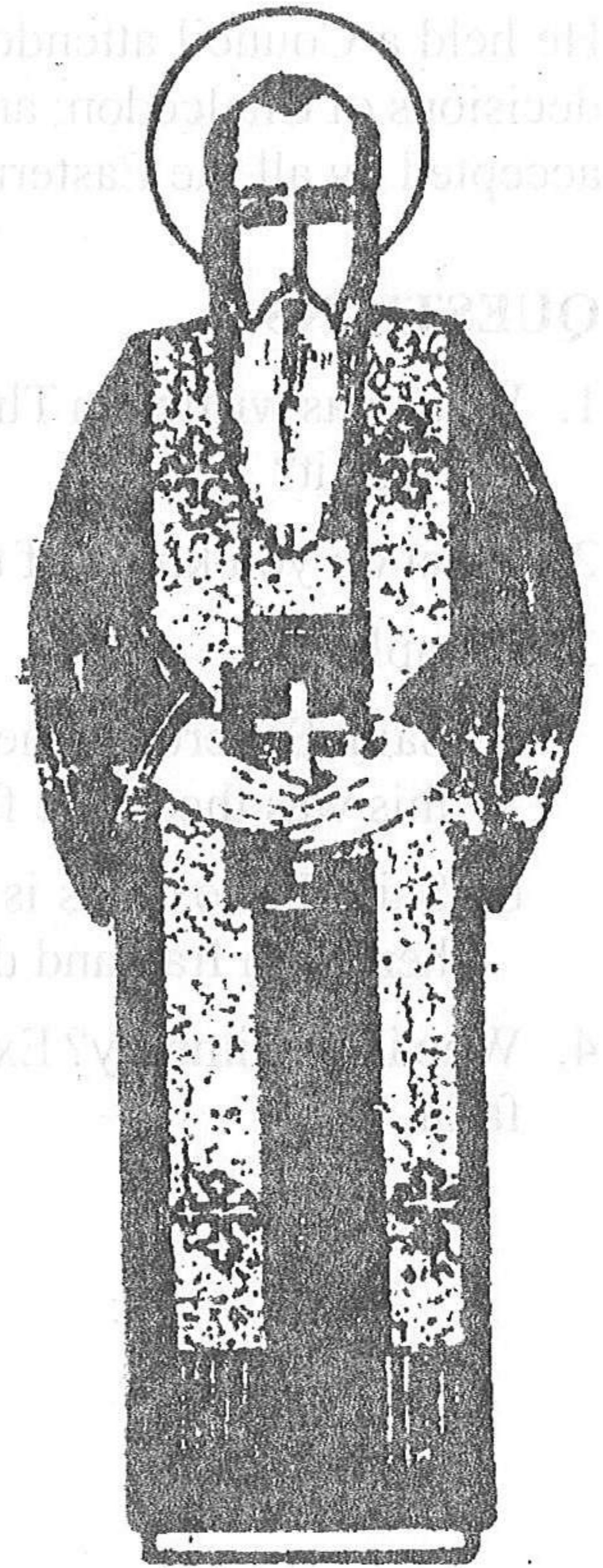
Severus is considered a great theological teacher who was particularly endorsed with the ability to expound and defend the belief of the One

Nature which he elaborated and explained in over 125 treatises and 400 epistles.

ST. PHILOXENOS OF MABBUG (440-524 A. D.)

St. Philoxenos is one of the prominent saints of the Syrian Church. Born in Tahl in Mesopotamia the land "between the Two Rivers", he joined the monastery at Qurtamin where he was instructed in Syriac and Greek studies; then he joined the ecclesiastical school at Edessa, where he perfected his knowledge by the theological studies he received.

He attacked the Nestorian teachings which were being spread in Edessa. Philoxenos was ordained bishop of Mabbug, in the Euphrates Valley in 485, he was later exiled to Trachia, and imprisoned in a house with all its outlets shut and the house was set on fire. Thus the holy father was suffocated in his room and died for the faith.



ST. TIMOTHY (AELURUS)

Patriarch of Alexandria was given the epithet of "Aelurus" (weasel or cat) by his enemies because of his small stature. Timothy joined the monastery at Alqalamun and became patriarch in 457 A. D. When Dioscorus had died in exile and the congregation and the clergy in Egypt had refused to recognize Proterius who had been appointed by the emperor as successor of Dioscorus. Upon his accession, Timothy held a council with the purpose of denouncing the decisions passed by the council of Chalcedon, an act which greatly infuriated Emperor Leo who exiled him. In his exile, Timothy wrote a large number of epistles in defense of Christ, repudiating Eutyches' heresy, and confirming that Christ took a human form similar to other men.

Timothy was recalled to Alexandria by Emperor Basiliscus in 475.

He held a Council attended by 500 bishops refuting and canceling the decisions of Chalcedon; and issued a statement which was unanimously accepted by all the Eastern churches. He died in peace in 477.

QUESTIONS

1. What was written in The Tome of Leo? What was Dioscorus' attitude towards it?
2. What do you know of the ill-famous council of Chalcedon?
3. Complete:
 - a. Saint Severus is the Patriarch of... who defended the... faith and this was the cause for his...
 - b. Saint Philoxenos is one of the famous... saints; he fought the... heresy in Iraq and died of... in a house to which... had been set.
4. Who is St. Timothy? Explain his struggle for confirming the Orthodox faith.

UNIT 4

LESSON 6

THE LOCAL FATHERS

Saint Menas (of Egypt)

285-309 A. D.

A VOICE FROM AN ICON

During the reign of the atheist Emperor Diocletian, there lived a man in Egypt called Audiksios. He was the governor of Mariot, which lies to the west of Alexandria. His wife, Aufimia, was barren. They were both righteous. They loved God and preserved in prayer, fasting and the giving of alms. One day, Aufimia went to Church. It was the feast of the Holy Virgin, and the Church was full of rejoicing people. Aufimia stood before the icon of the Virgin, and prayed fervently to God, asking for a son. She heard a voice say "Amen". She told her husband of what had happened and both of them rejoiced in the Lord.

In the year 285 A. D. Aufimia gave birth to a child whom she called Menas. His father taught him the holy precepts of the Church and the child increased in wisdom with God and man. When he was eleven, his parents died, leaving him a rich inheritance. He gave it all to the poor. He entered the army, and soon became famous among his companions for his diligence and noble spirit. When the worship of pagan Gods was made compulsory by the Emperor persecution broke out as a result. Menas left the army and went to the desert.

A SOLDIER OF CHRIST

While Menas was praying one night, he saw the angels crowning the martyrs, and wished to attain their crown of victory. In the morning, he returned to the capital. It was a pagan feast, so he seized the opportunity and proclaimed his faith publicly to the assembled

multitude. The Governor was furious, and ordered his arrest. At his trial, the following conversation took place:

- Come forward, flippant man, who are you?
- I am the soldier Menas, servant of the Lord Jesus.
- Why did you leave the army, and where have you been?
- When I received your command to worship idols, I went to the desert to worship the living God. I didn't want my soul to perish with the wicked, but wanted to be saved, as it is written: "Let not my soul be destroyed with the wicked, nor my life with the men of blood."
- We have been informed of your father's position and of the prestige of your family. Repent of this evil and you will be given an elevated position and great power.
- Such offers do not entice me. Therefore do not waste your time trying to allure me.

The Government gave orders for his torture. Menas bore the pain bravely, and God strengthened him. Finally he was put to death, the decree being that: "Since Menas the Christian soldier has refused to obey the Emperor's command to sacrifice to our Gods, his head shall be cut with the sword, and his body burnt with fire."

In the place where he was martyred, Menas knelt and raised his eyes to Heaven in prayer. The sword separated his head from his body and he won the crown of martyrdom in 309 A. D.

body; but to the surprise of His friends wrapped the body and carried it away glorifying God.



MIRACLES OF THE SAINT

Orders were given to a Christian officer to lead his troops to a battle in the desert of Mariot. He took with him the body of St. Menas for blessing. When the battle was over, the camel which carried the body of the Saint stopped and would not go any further. This was taken as a sign from God, and a small grave was built there for the Saint.

None of the people of the neighbourhood knew that the Saint was buried there till one day, a boy who was lame from his birth crept to it. When he was found sleeping there, a man raised a cane to strike him in punishment. To the astonishment of everyone, the lame boy was seen to jump up and to run into the village. The people of the neighbourhood glorified God, and brought all their sick to that spot. The sick who lay where the body was buried, were healed. So the people dug the ground and discovered the remains of St. Menas.

The fame of these cures reached the Emperor who had a sick daughter. She was taken to the site and was miraculously cured. When her father realized that she had been healed through the intercession of St. Menas he built a cathedral on the site of the Saint's tomb. From that time onwards the locality became famous. Sick people from all over the world visited it in order to regain their health through the intercession of St. Menas.

QUESTIONS

1. Point out incidents in the life of St. Menas which reveal the following traits in his character:
 - a. his bravery
 - b. his attitude to money
 - c. his holding on to eternal life.
2. Show how St. Menas glorified God in his life, in his martyrdom and after his death.
3. Can a Saint perform miracles after his death? If so, how?

ACTIVITY

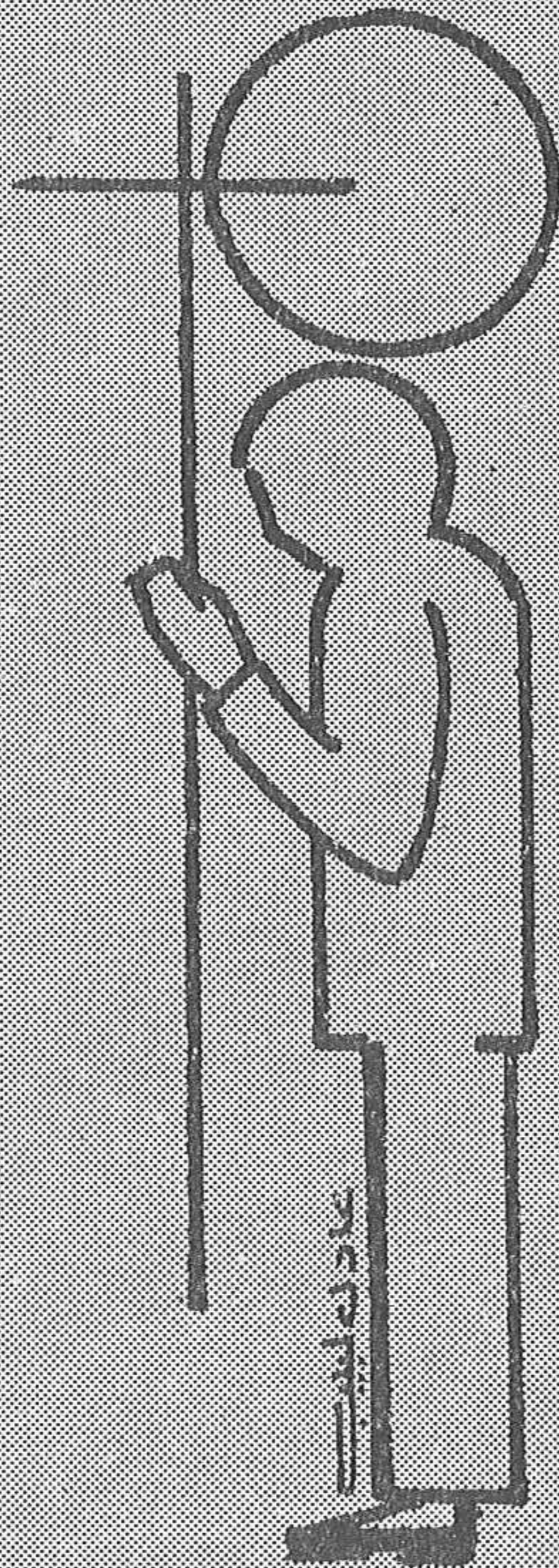
Visit a church or a Monastery which is named after St. Menas, then record your impressions of this visit.



UNIT FIVE

THE CALLING OF GOD

- The call of God and my work
- What shall I do with my life?



UNIT 5

LESSON 1

THE CALL OF GOD AND MY WORK

My father, the priest said:

The story I am going to tell you, my son, had happened a short time ago...

One evening I was celebrating the engagement of John my old colleague in the Church-School, to his fiance Phebe, who also was with us in the same Church-School fifteen years ago. We were colleagues in the university and graduated in the same year. John continued his work as teacher while I was called by our Lord to be consecrated for his service, and I received the Sacrament of Priesthood.

I met there three of my old colleagues. Luke, Paul and Mark, and we sat gladly together and drank the juice and rejoiced for the happy occasion which brought us together again I asked my friends:

- What do you do now, Luke? And you Paul? And you Mark?

Paul answered:

- I am now a lawyer, Father, Luke is an engineer and Mark is a merchant.

Then Mark curiously asked:

- Could you tell me, Father, why did you consecrate yourself for the difficult service of priesthood?

- It is God's invitation to me my friend... After finishing my studies, I felt a very strong tendency inside myself urging me to offer myself for the service of God. I felt that God is calling me to the service of priesthood. After my marriage, I was ordained priest in a nearby town and I have been there since three years.

Luke was astonished, and said:

- Father Joseph, we appreciate very much your sacrifice that you have left everything to become a priest.

Then Paul added:

- Whatever we may offer to God, what would be its measure beside the services of the priest?

I answered them:

- Don't say that, my friends. Do you think that any person can serve God only if he is a priest? I am sorry that this wrong idea is spread among many people. For sure, God does not want all the people to become priests. Or else, who is going to cultivate the land? Who is going to cure the sick? Or, who will care for the great projects for developing our country?

Paul said:

- This means then that I can serve God in my work itself?

I answered:

- Certainly... everyone can serve God through his work. In fact this is our first responsibility?

In one voice, the three of them said:

- How could this be, Father?!

At this point, John and his fiancé Phebe joined us and they were anxious to hear the discussion. We told them what we were saying. They also cried: "How, Father?"

- Every person can serve God in his work in many ways. Honestly in work is service to God. The consecration of God's day in worship and serving others is also service to God. When one offers of himself a good example before other colleagues in his work it is also serving the Lord. There are also special ways of serving our Lord connected with the particular profession or job of each one us.

John asked:

- But, Father, I think that there are jobs through which one cannot serve God:

Then Paul added:

- Yes, Father, suppose a person come to me and asks me to defend

him in the court, and I know that he is not innocent I shall go to the court and defend him as if he is innocent while he has committed a crime! Does this action serve the Lord?

- Through your job, you should always defend truth against falsehood. You should defend those who are wronged and oppressed and those who fall under false accusation. If you do that, you will resemble our Lord Jesus Christ in caring for the people who are in need for help, till he brings justice to victory. Your profession gives you a chance to do peace among conflicting parties. You will become a maker of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5:9)

And you, Mark, you can offer the glory to God by your honesty with your customers, by not becoming a lover of money, and by being "not greedy" (1 Timothy 3:8)

Then Phebe asked:

- Father, you have said much concerning the professions of men. But how could I serve the Lord, after I shall get married.
- You are right Phebe, but don't you know that you will serve God when you fulfill your responsibilities in your own home, with your husband: You shall be the source of happiness to your husband: You shall be the source of happiness to your husband and children. You will serve God also by bringing up your children into the knowledge of our Saviour. Saint Paul has said that the woman will be saved through bearing children, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with modesty" (1 Timothy 2:15).

Father Joseph looked at all of them and said:

- I think that I have said enough for the moment. I hope that we shall meet in my home soon and we shall talk together more about what each of you has done to glorify our Lord in his work and in his life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "...that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15).

What is the meaning of this verse with reference to the discussion between Father Joseph and his friends?

2. Explain and discuss the kinds of services that could be offered in the following types of work:

the farmer, the doctor, the telephonist, the engineer, the nurse, the carpenter, the taxi driver and the teacher.

ACTIVITIES

1. Write an article on the profession which you would like to choose when you will grow up, and show how will you serve God and men through your work. Bring you article next week.

2. Invite a few professionals to the class... a doctor, a lawyer, a factory worker, and make them discuss with the class how they can serve God through their work.



Father Joseph looked at all of them and said:
I think that I have said enough for the moment. I hope that we
shall meet in my home soon and we shall talk together more
about what each of you has done to glorify our Lord in his work
and in his life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "... that they which live should not henceforth live into themselves,
but unto Him which died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:15)

UNIT 5

LESSON 2

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY LIFE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF A STUDENT

- 5th May I have started thinking about my future. What specialization should I choose for my vocation? I must choose a type of study suitable to that choice.
- 7th May Shall I choose a job from which I could get a big income? I know some of my relatives who gain much in their work. My uncle who is a merchant lives in luxury because he has great income. I am tempted to follow his pattern.
- 10th May My uncle has become concerned only about his wealth. He spends his money on his own pleasures and has forgotten his responsibilities towards God and his fellow men. **For sure, money is not the most important thing in life. I do not want to be enslaved by the love of money.**
- 14th May I am tempted to do a humanistic job, a job in which I can serve other people and bring them happiness. When I was sick, the doctor who treated me was very kind to me. The medical profession offers great service to humanity. I wish to become a doctor and serve the sick and help them overcome their sickness. **I would not like my goal to be altered from humanly purpose to collecting money and seeking reputation.**
- 23rd May What my teacher said today caught my attention, especially when he said: "Some of us dream about their future without caring for serving God through their work or profession. He reminded as of what St. Paul said: **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."** (Eph. 2:10)

- 25th May During supper tonight we discussed this matter. My brother John asked me: “Does every job enable me to serve God?” And my sister asked me: “should everybody serve God?” isn’t it enough to have priests specialized for that and the rest serve humanity, science and nation?” My sister prefers to concern himself with family. She dreams of the future, to have a happy home with husband and children whom she would serve.
- 30th May My teacher visited us at home today. We had a long discussion with him. The following is the summary of what he said:

ALL ARE INVITED

We have seen there are different kinds of gifts and talents that God has given to the members of his Church. He has given these gifts to build up His Church and to bring everyone to full life in Jesus Christ.

Each one of us is given special gifts and we must use our talents. Everyone is called to use his talents in the role he has to perform in life, perhaps as a teacher, a bishop, a priest, a monk or a nun, or as a good Christian father or mother. If we put our trust in God and pray “Thy will be done” we may be able to discover what our particular gift is, and how God wants us to fulfill it.

Do you remember the story of Mordecai whom God called to work as a guard in the King’s palace? He was able by his faith and courage to serve God and overcome the evil acts which were planned against the King and against God’s people. And Esther, the orphan girl, became queen and was able to perform a great role in saving the people. She was ready to sacrifice herself and her throne for serving God.

Some of us will use their gifts as special services in the world. If we have talents as artists, musicians, doctors, teachers, merchants, or nurses, we will try to develop and use them as well as we can, to the glory of God.

Others may be called by God to special services in the Church, to serve His Church as bishops, priests or deacons.

But, one service, God had given to all members of His Church. He

has made us all members of His **royal priesthood**. He has made us the **people of God**. His laity or laymen and laywomen. Everyone is first ordained in Chrismation to be a layman of God, one of God's own people. As laymen, we are called to offer our service of praise and glory to God forever. **We are called to live in Communion with God; as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We are called to use God's gifts of the Holy Spirit in all our lives.**

MODELS AND IMAGES

St. Paul mentioned in his letters to his disciple Timothy the following ways of serving God through one's vocation in life.

- The father who cares for his family:
"If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).
- The rich man who uses his wealth in good works:
"As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, not to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
- The Young man and women who preserve themselves pure:
"If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work" (2 Tim. 2:21).
- The Bishop who is a good shepherd:
"Now a bishop must be above reproach temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher" (1 Tim. 3:2).
- The person who seeks the righteous life:
"But as for you, man of God, shun all this, aim at righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11).

QUESTIONS

1. What work would you like to do in your future?

2. How will you serve God in that job you have chosen?
3. If your job would require you to give it all your time, how then will you serve God?
4. If your job would occupy six days of the week completely, what would you prefer to do in the seventh day?
5. If you work among persons who do not know Christ, how will you serve among them?
6. How will you serve God in your family after getting married and having children?



ACTIVITIES

1. Read the following verses from the Bible and find out what each one of them indicates?
 Is. 49: 1-3; Jer. 1:4-10; John. 12: 23-26
 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Pet. 4:10
2. Write an article in ten lines about your hopes and goals for your future.



UNIT SIX

THE LAWS OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD

- Division in Corinth
- Confessing Christ
- Many Gifts – one body
- Love the greatest gift



UNIT 6

LESSON 1

DIVISION IN CORINTH

ST. PAUL IN CORINTH

St. Paul, the Great Apostle, taught and preached in many parts of the world. He made several journeys and visited many churches. During his second journey, he visited Athens and Corinth. He stayed in Corinth eighteen months. St. Paul had a vision from God telling him: "Do not be afraid, for I have many people in this city." Many people in Corinth became Christians through his words. The people of the city loved him and they liked to hear his teaching and preaching.

After a while Paul left them, and another apostle named Appolos came to Corinth. He also preached and taught. Appolos was eloquent and many people in Corinth liked his teaching and preaching. Very soon, The Church of Corinth was divided into two groups. One group called itself "The followers of Paul the Apostle" and the other group was known as "The Group of Appolos."

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

Some members of the Church of Corinth were very sad of the split in their Church. The family of Chole, a good Christian lady, reported the dissensions in the Church of Corinth to St. Paul. He was very sad and immediately wrote his first letter to them. This letter is a part of the New Testament. In the first Chapter, he says to them, "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement" (1 Cor. 1:10).

St. Paul explains to them that their divisions are caused by pride, jealousy and lack of love. He said that they are not behaving as true Christians but like ordinary men. For the true Christians should love one another in humility and open heart. But when each one thinks of his own group or of his own work as if it belongs to him alone, then the quarrel

begins. He will be proud of his own work, and will be jealous of the work which the others are doing. He will envy the others and criticizes their work. He will end by becoming a fanatic person who accepts only the things that are in accordance with his own desires. "For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not still of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?" (1 Cor. 3:3).

When we become spiritual persons, then we shall be able to give the Glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in any good work done in His name, for the building of the Church His temple. Even when we differ from one another in our views, each of us will express his opinion with full respect to the views of the others.

GOD'S FIELD, GOD'S BUILDING

The Church is God's field. It does not belong to any human person. The Church leaders and teachers are workers in this field. God has given each of them a special mission in this field. One has to plant the seeds, another puts the water to the plants, a third takes care of the plants everyday and others collect the harvest, and so on. The same thing in the Church, there are Patriarchs, bishops, priests, deacons, preachers, lay leaders and administrators and so on. The Church needs all of them. Each of them has a special service to do in the field of God. Each of them is doing his work, and each one will receive his wages from God according to the work he had done in the Church and for others (1 Cor. 3:3-9).

We are God's building. This building is not built of bricks and cement, but of the spirit. The Christians are the bricks in the building. They are cemented to one another and unified in one building by the Word of God. The solid foundation for the building is Our Lord Jesus Christ. The workers in the Church are building on this foundation. The building is not their own. They are only the builders whom God has commissioned to work in His temple, and gave each of them a special mission to do in His Church.

THE CHURCH FOUNDED BY JESUS

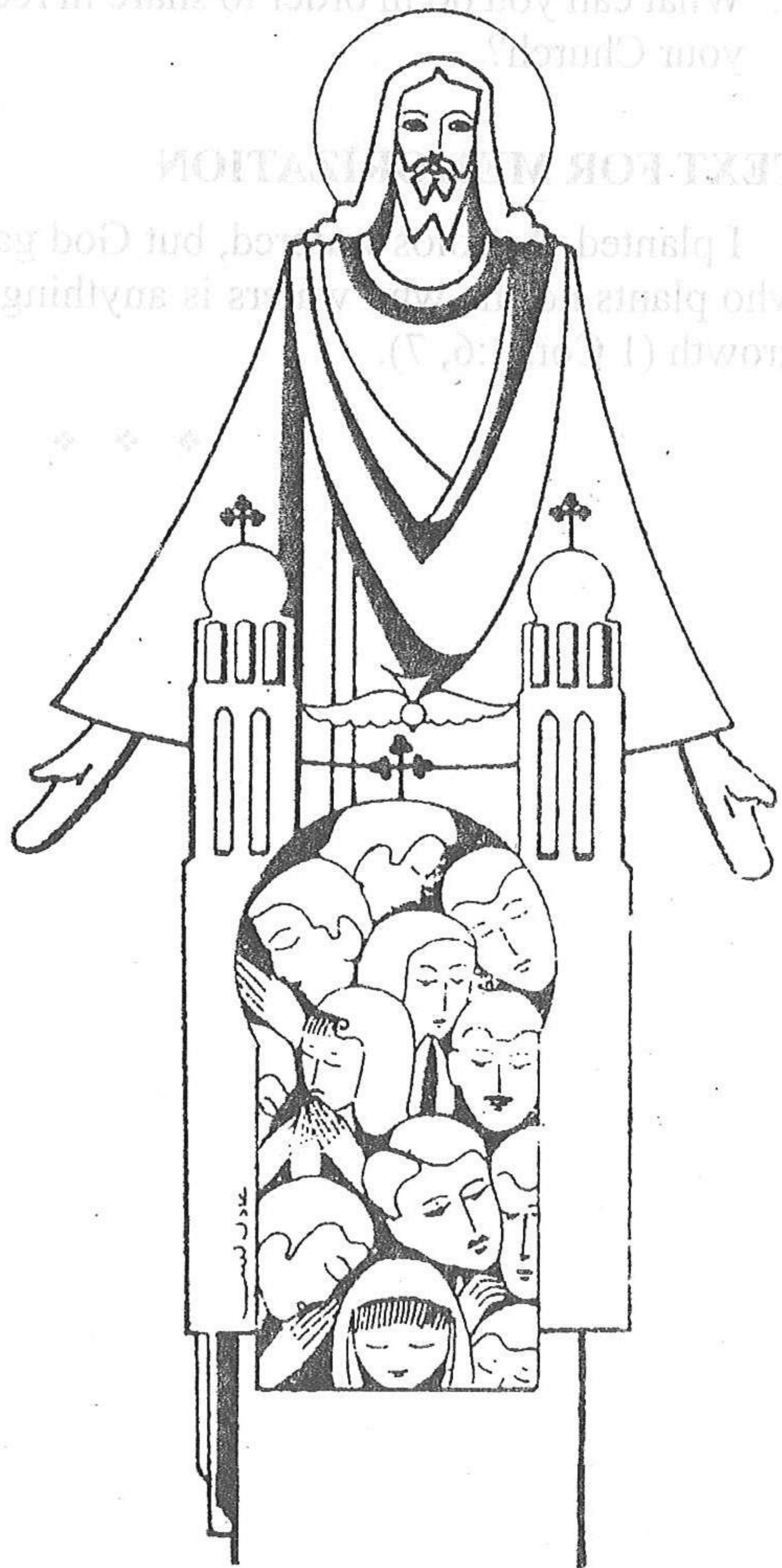
When the Lord Jesus came to our world, he meant to reform what sin has done to man. Some of the effects of sin were individualism, disputes and pride. The picture of humanity at the tower of Babel was a clear

model for the effect of sin on man. Man in his pride wanted to build a tower with its top in the heavens, and God came down to confuse the tongues that no one could understand his brother.

On the Pentecost – the birthday of the Church – as the apostles were gathered with one accord praying, the Holy Spirit filled all of them. They started speaking tongues. Each one heard them speaking in his own language. Contrary to Babel, these tongues gave a model for unity. The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul. Jesus gave them His sacred body and blood, to live on this new covenant, the covenant of union, friendship and love.

LET US PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Every Christian has an important task to do with others to reconcile the conflicts between different Churches and inside each church. We must grow the spirit of self-denial, knowing that the church belongs to God and not to us. Everyone of us is given his little share to do in the Church. We can reach unity only through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. We need to share in the prayers with humility before God. Then we shall know that it is good to work. We should also join in the annual prayers for Christian Unity which takes place all-over the world during the month of January each year.

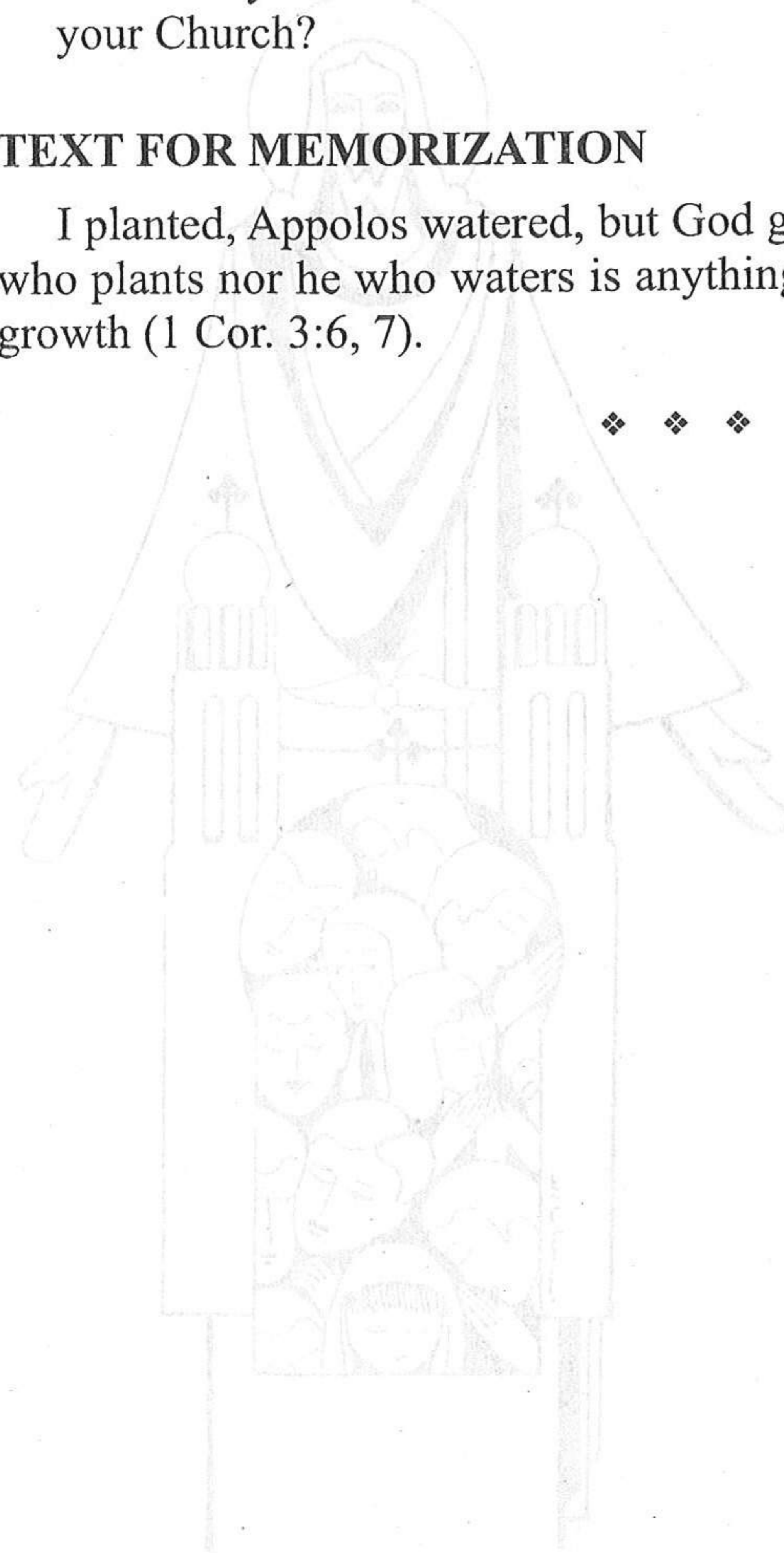


QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the causes of the split in the Church of Corinth?
2. How did St. Paul deal with this split and what are the principles he laid for Christian Unity?
3. How is the apostolic Church considered a blessed model for unity with no divisions?
4. What are some of the signs of conflict and division in our Churches today? How could we overcome them?
5. What can you do in order to share in reconciling any conflicts inside your Church?

TEXT FOR MEMORIZATION

I planted, Appolos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:6, 7).



UNIT 6

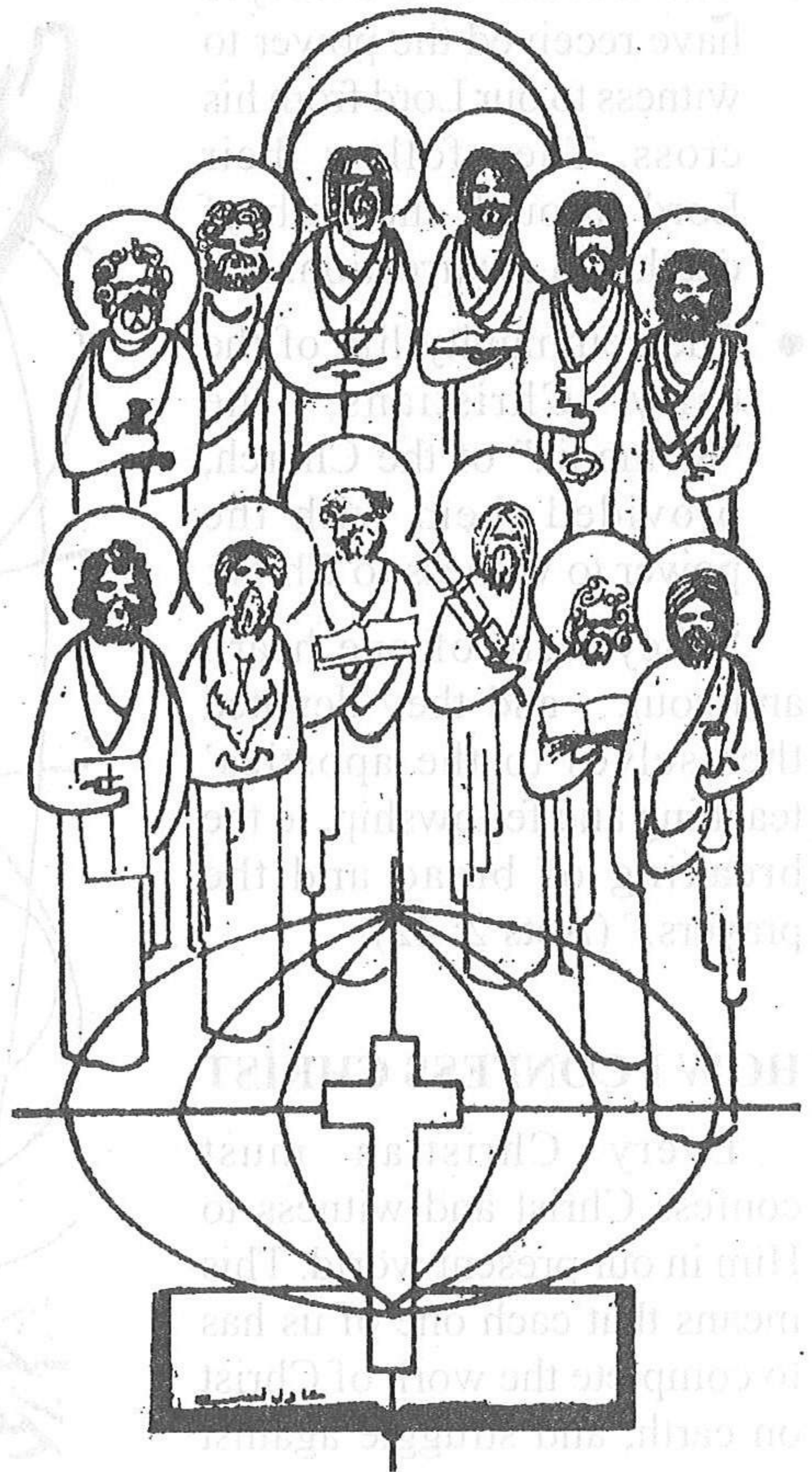
LESSON 2

CONFESSING CHRIST

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

Jesus chose His disciples to become witnesses for His death and resurrection and to proclaim the Gospel to the world. He said to them: "But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

After the Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit came upon them. St. Peter addressed the Jews and spoke to them of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Three thousand persons believed in Christ on that day. Stephen, the first deacon in the Church, was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and confessed that Jesus Christ is the Lord. His face was shining as the face of an angel.



THE BOLD CONFSSION AND THE MARTYRDOM

- St. Paul said that when a Christian proclaims Jesus Christ Lord and God, he does not say his own words, but the Holy Spirit enlightens his heart and gives him power and courage. He never denies his faith as long as the Holy Spirit acts in him: "I want you to understand that no one can say Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3)
- The Christians did not proclaim Christ in secret, but they confessed him in public as the Lord said:

Everyone who acknowledges me before men. I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny..." Mt. 10:32

- The Saints and Martyrs have received the power to witness to our Lord from his cross. They follow their Lord through the path of death and resurrection.
- The community life of the early Christians, the "Koinonia" of the Church, provided them with the power to witness to Christ:

"They were of one heart, and soul... and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2: 42).

HOW I CONFESS CHRIST

Every Christian must confess Christ and witness to Him in our present world. This means that each one of us has to complete the work of Christ on earth, and struggle against



the work of the devil in our world, and thus we become witnesses to the victory of Christ.

This witness must not be limited to verbal expression, but should be performed in the saintly life of service, sacrifice and self-giving.

- I witness to Christ by my own behaviour when I offer myself as a good example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12).
- I witness to Christ when I am honest in my internal life, in purity of the mind and the senses.
- I confess Christ when I offer service to others and lead them to repentance and living the Christ.
- I confess Christ when I offer with thanks giving of all what I have to the needy, sharing my bread with the hungry, covering the naked, caring for the stranger and the poor, and visiting the sick and the imprisoned.
- I witness to Christ when I sacrifice for his name and accept with gladness any persecution: "I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body that is, the Church" (Col. 1:24).
- I complete my witness to Christ when I am ready to offer myself even to death: "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

HOW TO ATTAIN THE POWER OF PROCLAIMING CHRIST

St. Cyprian said that the Christians in the first century drank the cup of the Blood of Christ every day in order to give them the power to offer their own blood for His name.

When we raise our eyes and hearts towards the highest, we receive this power to say with St. Paul: "I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worth comparing with the Glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18). In the Liturgy of St. Basil, the people raise their voices and sing: "Amen, amen, amen. We proclaim your death, and we confess your resurrection and assention...we glorify you, we thank you, and supplicate you our Lord and God."

OBSTACLES OF CONFESSING THE LORD

- Fear of People: Sometimes we care for other people's opinions more than God. Confidence in God throws all fears away.
- Lack of honesty in our inner life: A person who lives only for personal and selfish motives is deceitful and cannot witness to Christ.
- Alienation from the Church community: A person who lives away from the Church, neglecting prayer, fasting and partaking of the Holy Communion becomes more and more alienated from spiritual life.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Church called the Witnessing Church?
2. Why were the Apostles and the saints bold in confessing their faith?
3. How did the martyrs confess their faith in Christ?
4. How could you confess Christ to the present world?
5. How could we achieve the power to witness for Christ, and what are the obstacles?
6. What should we do when a non-Christian asks us about our faith in Christ?

FOR MEMORIZATION

“No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit”
(1 Cor. 12:3).



UNIT 6

LESSON 3

MANY GIFTS – ONE BODY

THE PARABLE OF THE BODY AND ITS PARTS

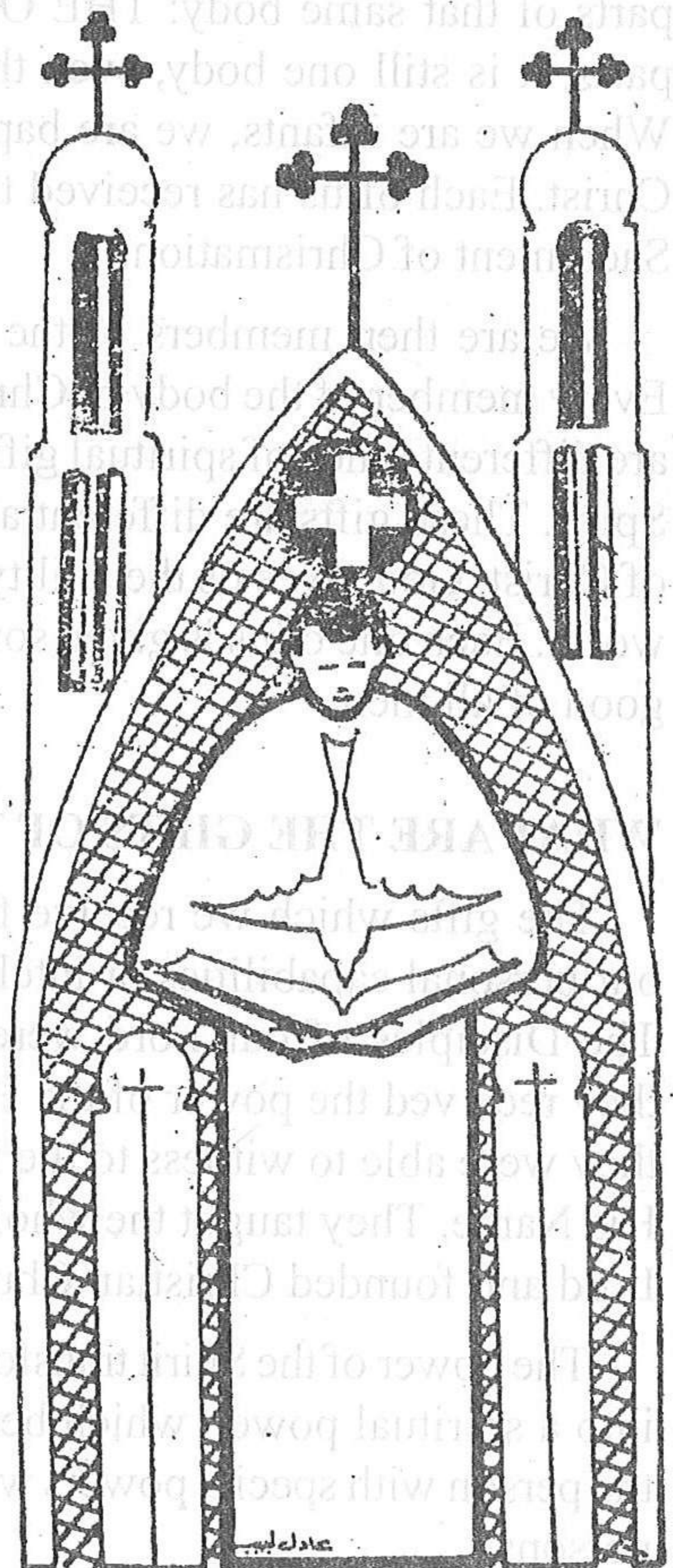
One day, the different parts of the body felt discontented with their jobs. Everyday, they did the same thing. The legs and feet walked, the eyes looked around, the ears heard, the arms and hands caught things... and every other part of the body had a special work to do. They decided not to continue their work and wanted to find out something else to do.

The foot said, "I want to be a hand. I want to have a higher position. I have been down to the ground all my life, doing the walking all the time."

The hand said, "I am also fed up with what I have been doing. I catch things. I put food to the mouth. I write the homework and letters. I work all the time and I need some rest."

The ear said; "why am I not an eye I prefer to see than to hear. I don't hear any longer."

All the part of the body started talking like this. Each of them wanted to change its work and to do the work of some other part of the body.



But the hand could not walk, and the leg could not write. The ear tried to see and the eye tried to smell flowers and breathe the fresh air. No one of them was able to do the work of any other part. Each of them realized that it has an important job to perform, and that It cannot live without the work of the other parts. They all returned to their original work, and every part was happy with its own work. All of them praised God because he gave each of them a special work to do in the body (Read 1 Cor. 12:12-26).

THE BODY OF CHRIST

St. Paul calls us the parts of the single body of Christ. We are many parts of that same body: **THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST**. It has many parts, it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. When we are infants, we are baptized and became parts of he body of Christ. Each of us has received the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Chrismation.

We are then members of the Church, which is the body of Christ. Every member of the body of Christ receives special gifts, because there are different kinds of spiritual gifts. We receive these gifts from the Holy Spirit. These gifts are different abilities to perform service in the name of Christ. God gives us the ability to serve Him in the Church and in the world. Each one of us is given some proof of the spirit's presence for the good of all men.

WHAT ARE THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT?

The gifts which we receive from the Holy Spirit do not depend on our personal capabilities or intelligence. They are powers of the Spirit. The Disciples of our Lord were ordinary and simple men. But when they received the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of the Penticost, they were able to witness to the Risen Lord in many ways and glorified His Name. They taught the whole world and spread the teaching of our Lord and founded Christian Churches around the world.

The power of the Spirit transforms the ordinary capacities of the person into a spiritual power, which bears witness to the Lord. It also endows the person with special powers which would not be accessible to ordinary persons.

Each one has received the gifts of the spirit. But the difference between one person and another lies in that one has recognized his gifts and tried to use them for the Glory of the Name of God, while the other has neglected the gifts, like the servant who hid the money on which his master entrusted, instead of using it and making it flourish.

(Read the parable of the three servants, Mr. 25:14-30).

WHAT ARE MY GIFTS?

When I look into myself, and think about the things I can do, I shall discover that there are many things I can do.

I can also learn new things. But sometimes I might be lazy to use what I know. I might be satisfied with enjoying myself.

I know a boy who is trying to use his gifts. He is talented in painting. He decided to draw pictures of Christ and of the saints. When you look at some of his paintings, you will feel a sense of reverence to the meaning of saintly life. Another friend cannot draw, but he likes to write. He asked his colleagues in the class that they should do something for other boys and girls of this age who do not go to Church or to Church School. They published a little magazine every three months. Some of them wrote articles, other went to the printer and arranged all the details of getting the magazine published and distributed to their colleagues and friends. A girl was not able to participate with the colleagues, because she could not write or paint, but she was good at playing with her musical instrument. She decided to use this gift in her Church-School. Every week, she brought her instrument with her and played music for the hymns and church songs. She started also to teach some other girls and boys. Very soon, they formed a small band and offered musical celebrations to their Church.

HOW COULD I DISCOVER AND GROW MY GIFTS?

A young friend read St. Paul's words about spiritual gifts and asked me; "Now, I know that each one of us had spiritual gifts. But I am not sure that I have any gifts. I go to Church-School, but I cannot share with other boys and girls in what they are doing. I cannot paint, I am not good at writing, and I know nothing about music. Sometimes, I hate myself because I feel that I am not useful to anybody."

I answered; "Well, my friend, do you really think that you can do nothing; If you look into yourself, you will discover that perhaps you are doing more than what all your colleagues are doing. You love your friends and they love you. Your nice relationship with them helps solve the problems and arise among them. You offer to them a good example of Christian life. They are trying to follow your good example. Do you know that humility and love are the greatest of all spiritual gifts!

Through love, we can win the whole world to Christ?

When you read the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans (12: 6-10), you can see that using one's gifts for the benefit of all is the true expression of love.

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... he who contributes, in the liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; love one another with brotherly affection."

QUESTIONS

1. Why do we call the Church "the body of Christ?"
2. What are the kinds of gifts in the Church? Write down examples of each kind today?
3. Try to discover your own gifts and write down how do you plan to use them in serving your Church?
4. Explain how "using one's gifts for the benefit of all is the true expression of love."



UNIT 6

LESSON 4

LOVE, THE GREATEST GIFT

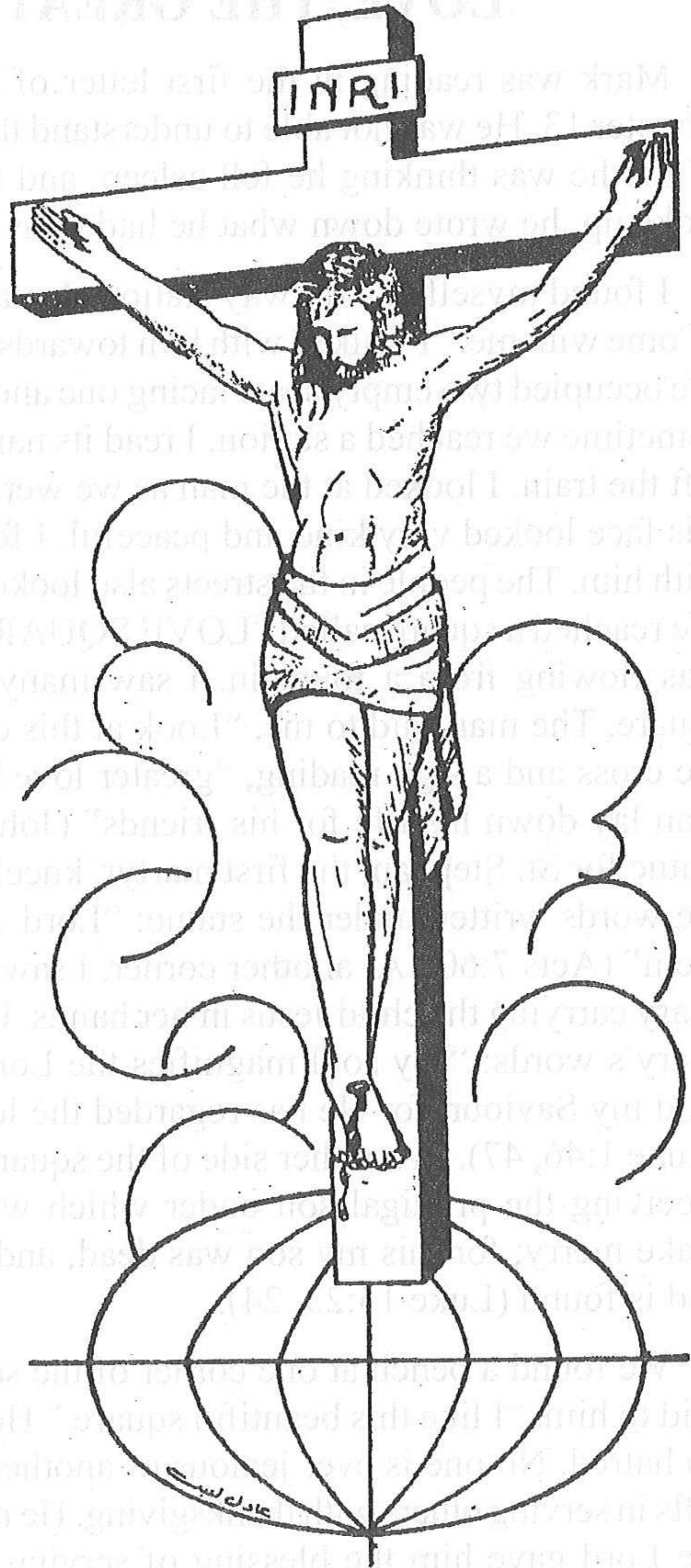
Mark was reading in the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 13. He was not able to understand the practical meaning of love. While he was thinking he fell asleep, and saw a nice dream. When he woke up, he wrote down what he had seen in his dream:

I found myself at a railway station. A man stood beside me and said: "Come with me." I walked with him towards a train waiting at the station. We occupied two empty seats facing one another. The train moved. After sometime we reached a station. I read its name: "NEW CORINTH." We left the train. I looked at the man as we were walking. He smiled at me. His face looked very kind and peaceful. I felt very comfortable to walk with him. The people in the streets also looked very peaceful, and loving. We reached a square called "LOVE SQUARE." In the middle, the water was flowing from a fountain. I saw many statues on all sides of the square. The man said to me, "Look at this crucifixion?" I saw Jesus on the cross and a sign reading, "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). In another side, a statue for St. Stephan, the first martyr, kneeling on his knees and saying the words written under the statue: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). At another corner, I saw a big painting of the Virgin Mary carrying the child Jesus in her hands. Under the painting I read, St. Mary's words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaid" (Luke 1:46, 47). In another side of the square a statue showed the father receiving the prodigal son under which was written: "Let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found (Luke 15:23, 24).

We found a bench at one corner of the square and sat side by side. I said to him, "I like this beautiful square." He said: "In this place there is no hatred. No one is ever jealous of another person. Everyone uses his gifts in serving others with thanksgiving. He never boasts on them because the Lord gave him the blessing of serving others with these gifts. He

also never shouts in arrogance or in rude manners, but rather listens to everyone in patience and humility. When a body like yourself sits with his colleagues or in his class, he is always sensitive to what the others want to do or to say, and never tries to impose himself or his views on them. He never resents anyone or look down at him. Even if someone says something to him that he does not like, he does not answer back. He is not easily irritated. He rather says a nice word and immediately the situation changes, and people start talking to one another as good friends. They open their hearts to one another and solve the problems between them peacefully. Everyone bears everyone else, believes what the other says to him, and endures everything that comes to him and always hopes for all the good things for himself and for others as well.

I answered the man, "I wish I can stay in his place and enjoy this loving atmosphere." He said, "But you can enjoy this love in your ordinary life. Everything depends on you. When your heart is full of love towards everyone, you



will see everything differently. You will find that the little problems are easily solved. You will..."

I interrupted. "But how could I listen to someone insulting me, and do not answer back? How could I love this persons?" He answered, "That is why love is the greatest gift. It is the action of the Holy Spirit within the "New Man in Christ." You need to train yourself and practise love in your life, if your really want to live in NEW CORINTH; you can be there in your heart and mind. Don't you know that love is the crown of all gifts and the Queen of all virtues!"

After these words I found myself awake. I was not sure where I am. I looked around, and found myself alone sitting at my desk. I was very sorry when I discovered that it was a dream. My Bible was still opened on the same chapter I was reading. I immediately took a paper and a pen and wrote down this nice dream.

LET US GO TOGETHER TO NEW CORINTH

Mark read his dream to his class on the following Sunday. After he finished, a boy in the class said, "I envied the boy sitting beside me in school because he got better marks than myself in the last examination." The teacher said to him: "You must not be jealous of him, because this might end to hatred. You must be pleased for him, and at the same time you have to study harder to get better marks in the next examination." Then Mark said, "I love my younger brother, but I am always mad at him because he takes my things and uses them. Perhaps I should be kind to my brother and share my things with him. I'll tell him when he needs something from me, he must tell me before taking it, so that I would not look for it."

THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS

The class read together the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Another boy stood and asked, "I don't understand how could love be greater than even faith or hope!" The teacher answered, "Our faith in God is based on God's love to us and our love to him. Without love, we would not have faith or hope. St. John has explained this meaning to us very clearly:

"Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does

not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.”

(1 John 4:7-9).

Before the class was over, the students decided to think and write down examples of the expression of love from their own lives.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the characteristics of Christian love?
2. What are the responsibilities of Christian love?
3. Find out practical examples showing the importance of love for becoming a true Christian.
4. Examine the meaning of the following verse:

“So faith, hope, and abide, these three; but greatest of these is love”
(1 Cor. 13:13).

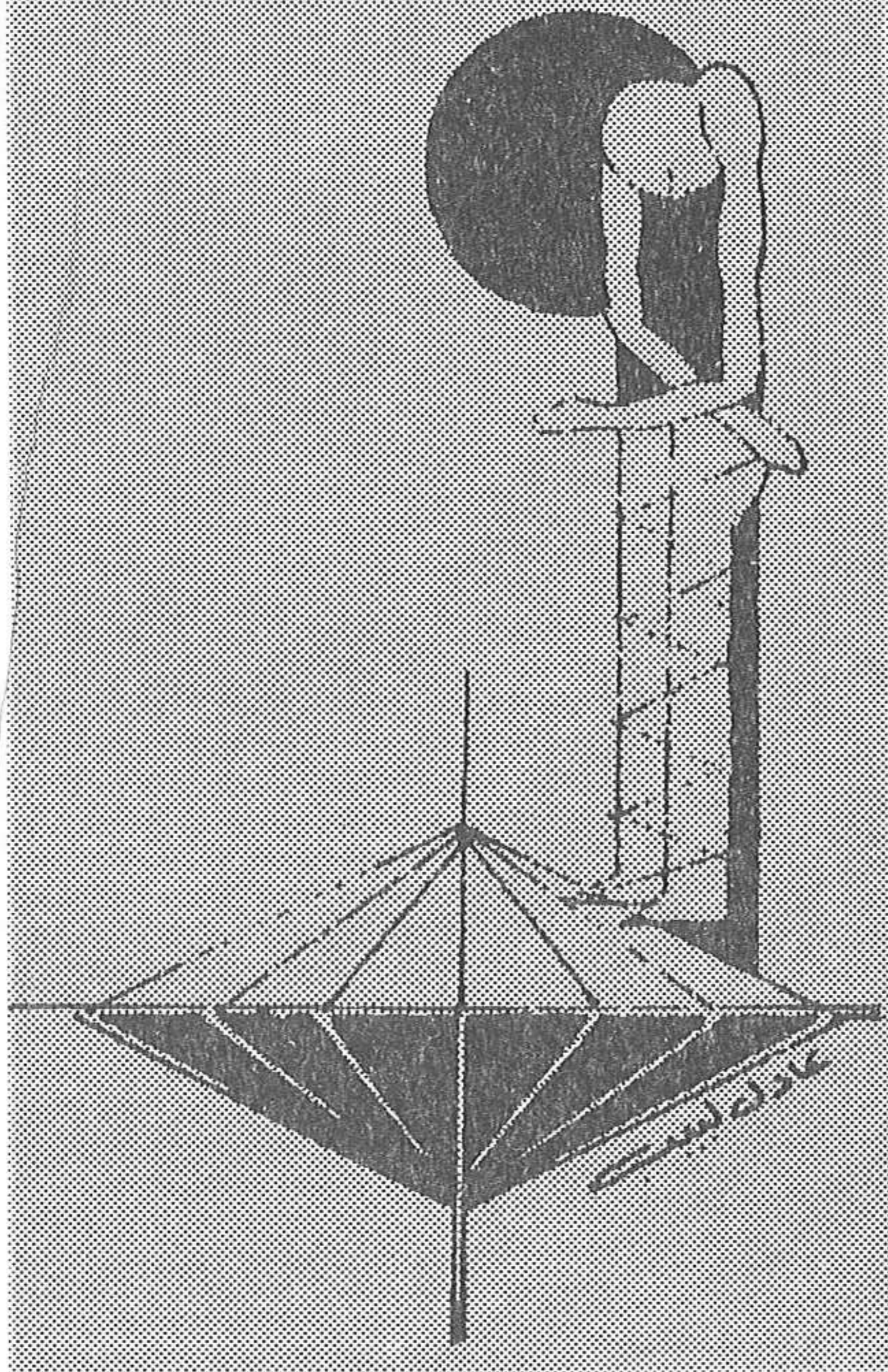
FOR MEMORIZATION

Try to know, as much as possible, of chapter 13 of St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians.

UNIT SEVEN

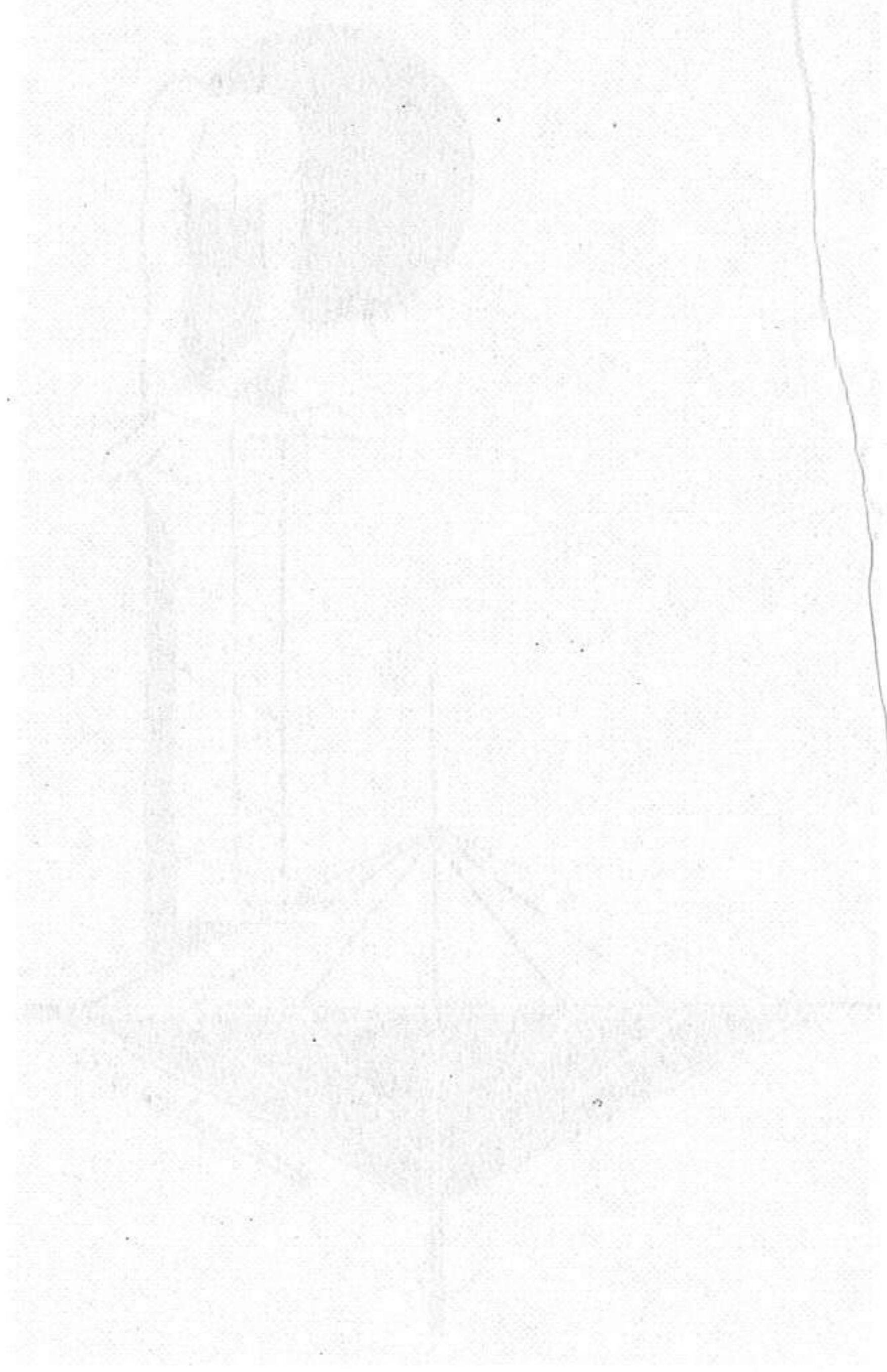
THE WORLD AND
THE WORK OF DEVIL

- The poor
- Social injustice
- Bribery and corruption
- War and Disarmament



THE WORK OF DEVIL THE WORLD-AND

- The poor
- Social injustice
- Bribery and corruption
- War and Disarmament



UNIT 7

LESSON 1 THE POOR

HOW GREAT ARE THE POOR?

One day, a good Christian saw a vision. The Lord Jesus appeared to him and talked with him. During this conversation, a poor man knocked at the door. The man excused himself from Jesus in order to go and see to the poor man's needs. When he returned after he had helped the poor he started to apologize to his Lord.

"The Lord replied: "You are blessed, beloved, because if you would not have left me to help the poor, I would have left you for his sake.

Thus no one knows the value of the poor and the needy except he who has the Lord Jesus Christ's heart. Glory be to Him who emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant for our sake to free us from sin's slavery. He appeared as a poor and needy man to enrich our souls with His righteousness and the gifts of His Holy Spirit. Thus the poor and the needy free us from the material slavery and the selfishness of our old nature.

AMOS AND JAMES TEACH ON HELPING THE NEEDY

In the Old Testament, we find Amos shouting at the people rebuking injustice and the eating up of the money of the poor and weak. "Hear



this, O Ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying,... we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes” (Amos. 8:4-6).

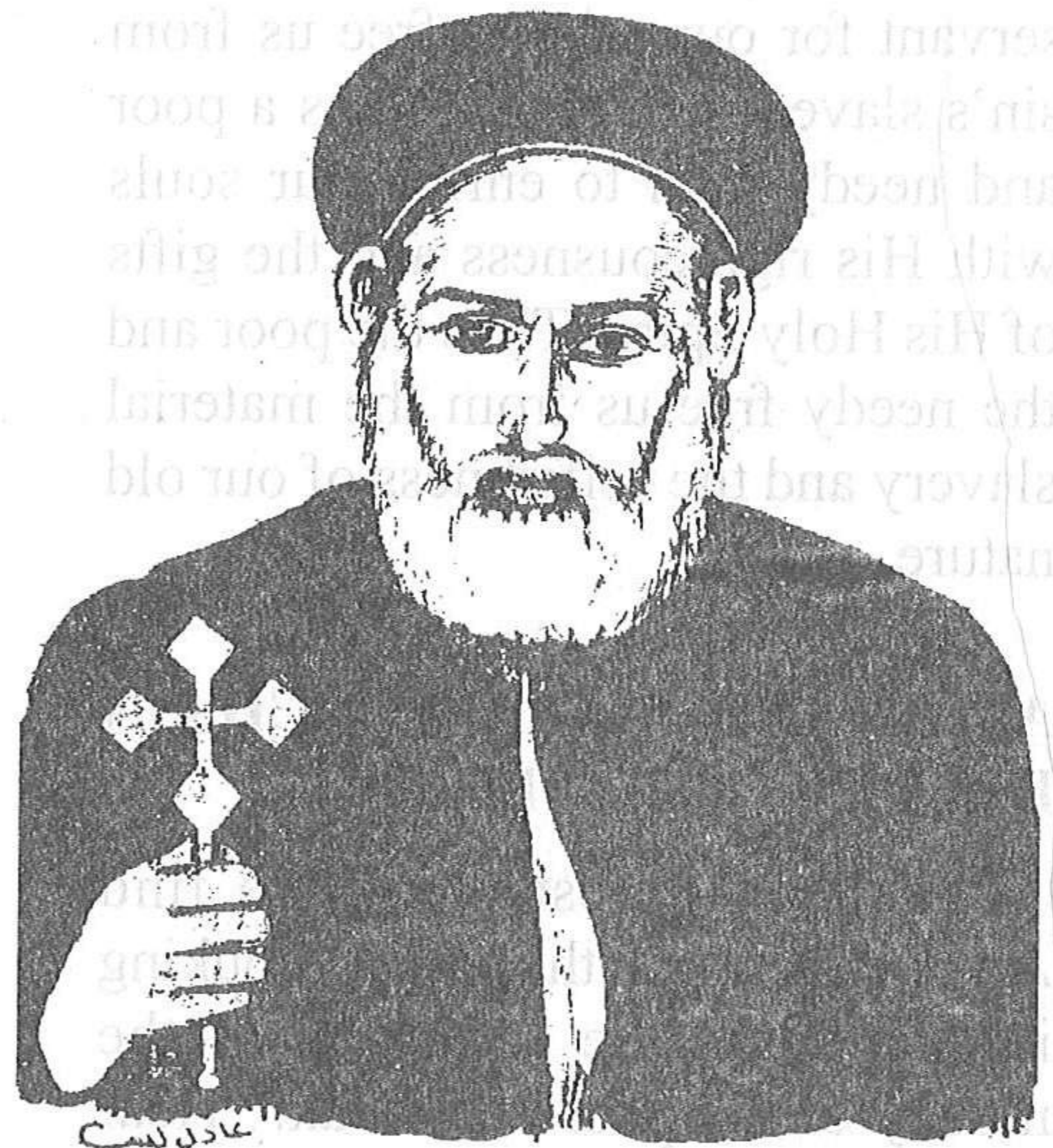
And in the New Testament, we read in the Epistle of James: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1: 27).

“What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled’, without giving them the things needed for the body; what does it profit? So faith itself, if it has no works, is dead” (James 2:15-17).

BISHOPS SERVE THE POOR

The Church history relates to Anba Sarabion, the bishop of Menoufia, Egypt in the 19th century, that he used to walk disguised at night carrying a heavy bag containing provisions for the poor. One day, a man saw him and thought that he was a thief. The man followed him until he saw him standing at a door and knocking. When the door was opened, he gave the bag without uttering one word and then returned from where he had come. The man came forward and caught him and knew who he was. He used to carry flour and wheat by himself to the families that were ashamed to ask for charity.

It was said about Anba Sarabion, the monk, that he went to Alexandria where he found a poor man naked in the market. He stood thinking within himself, “How is it that I



am wearing a robe while this poor man is naked; truly this is Christ and the cold hurts him” then he sprang up with a courageous heart and gave it to that poor man, then he sat naked, holding the Bible in his hand. A rich man passed by him and asked: “Anba Sarabion, who stripped you from your clothes?” So he pointed at the Bible and said: “This made me naked.” After the rich man had dressed him up, Anba Sarabion left the place and found a man who was in debt and who had been arrested by the creditor. As he did not have anything to pay off the debt for the poor man, he sold his Bible and paid its price to the creditor. His disciple asked him: “Father, where is your Bible with which we were comforted?” So he told him: I sold it my... for it used to tell me every day “sell all that is yours and give it to the poor.”

WHY WE CARE FOR THE POOR?

- The Lord Jesus recommended the poor to us when He said: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” He also said about the day of judgement: “For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him: “Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed Thee? ...and the king will answer them...” Truly, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”
- Giving is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it is a proof that we have acquired brotherly love. The Apostle says: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”
- It is a proof of our living membership in the body of Christ. “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together” (1 Cor. 12:26). And the Apostle requested three things from us; unity in general, that there may be no discord, and to have the same care for one another.

St. Augustine spoke about the spiritual and social Co-operation between the believers. He said that when the deer wander in the pastures and when they rise up to reach another part of the earth, they support the weight of their heads on each other so that the first deer leads and the rest follow her, and every one leans its head upon the one in front of it, and the next leans its head upon the one before it, and so on to the end of the herd. And when the leading deer that bears the weight of all the

heads tires out, it goes to the back and rests by leaning its head on the one in front of it just as the others are doing, and so on, each one in its turn... For such partnership the Apostle addresses us saying: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

1. Collect some articles from newspapers and magazines about the problem of poverty.
2. Visit some poor families and take to them some of the things which you think that they need.
3. Pray for poor people in order that the Lord may provide their needs.
4. Encourage the rich to secure work for the unemployed, and to provide their needs that they might be able to do their job.
5. Purpose some social plans for fighting poverty.

QUESTIONS

1. The Lord Gives the poor a great position in the Church. What is it?
2. Mention some stories from the Church history showing the Church's care for the poor.
3. What are the reasons for the Church's care for the poor?
4. How can we serve the poor?

FOR MEMORIZATION

"If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace be warmed and filled' without giving them the things needed for the body: what does it profit? So faith itself if it has no work, is dead."

(James 2:15-17)



UNIT 7

LESSON 2

SOCIAL INJUSTICE

SOCIETIES SEEKING JUSTICE

When you look in the world around you, you will see that sometimes people are unfair to one another. Since persons or classes of society may try to dominate over the rest of society. They abuse the authority given to them. They try to use power for their own benefit on the expense of other persons, groups and classes of society. The rich becomes richer and the poor becomes poorer. In some societies, some members or groups of society are not treated equally to the rest of society, because of their race, religion, origin, or class. Discrimination against persons for any such reasons is unjust.

Contrary to these situations, social justice can be fulfilled when all the members of society are treated equally. The law must guarantee this equality. Political and social parties should also become instruments for giving each person a place in society suitable for his capabilities and effort. Each person should be able to contribute to the development of his society by sharing in political and social institutions. He must find suitable employment and improvement.

RELIGION CALLS FOR JUSTICE

Religion calls all persons to act for justice. It liberates the religious person from fear and helps him to see injustice and to work against it. The Old Testament gives us examples of the prophets who stood against kings because they used their powers and took by force what belonged to poor persons. A king called Ahab and his wife Jezebel seized the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, who was a poor farmer. The Prophet Alijah went to the king and shouted to him, "Have you killed, and also taken possession" (Read the story in your Bible 1 Kings 21).

The prophet Amos also called the people to be fair to one another. He warned them that God will punish those who take what belongs to others

and do not care for the poor. Amos said to them, "Thus says the Lord... I will not turn away the punishment, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes" (Amos 2:6-7).

And John the Baptist was described as a voice crying in the wilderness. He reminded the people of their evils: "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees, every tree therefore that does not bear good fruits is cut down, and thrown into the fire. O, ye publicans, collect no more than is appointed You. O, ye soldiers, do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:9-13).

JESUS TEACHES ON JUSTICE

The Lord Jesus associated Himself with the poor and the needy. His family was poor. He learned to work with his hands as a carpenter. His disciples were from the poorest classes of society. Jesus condemned the scribes and the Pharisees because they neglected the poor and the widows. He rebuked them because they were exploiters and unjust. He once said to them, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore you shall receive the greater damnation... You blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a Camel."

Following the teaching of our Lord, the disciples and the apostles stood against injustice. The apostle James writes in his letter severe words condemning the injustice done by the rich people against the poor:

"Come now you rich, weep and bowl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have -- heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the wages of the labourers who have raped down your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts" (James 5:1-4).

THE CHURCH WORKS FOR JUSTICE

In Church history, we find many examples for the Church's work for justice. St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, defended the poor and the needy. He blamed the rich in his sermons because they

neglected the poor people he reminded them that when they neglected their brothers, they destroy the body of Christ. He asked them to feed the hungry persons first, and afterwards decorate the altar of Christ with drifts and golden vessels.

St. Basil the Great also called the rich to care for the poor. He said to them, "The bread which you are hiding is the property of the hungry, and the property of the naked is that coat hanging in your stores, and to the needy belongs the money which you save."

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN

The good Christian does not accept injustice done to others in any form. He may bear any injustice against him personally.

But when the Christian sees injustice done to the poor, to the needy, or to the weak, he stands in the name of Christ against the unjust authority and declares what is right. He fights against the oppressors and calls them to the way of justice. He will be sensitive to social situations and examines them carefully in order to see the injustice done by persons, groups or organizations against others. He will discover social injustice in the daily life in situations like the following:

- The low wages and salaries given by owners of businesses to their workers, incompatible with the gain they receive from the effort of their employees.
- The very wide gap between rich nations and poor nations.
- The exploitation of natural resources of the developing countries by the wealthy and developed countries.
- The unequal opportunity in education or employment in some societies.
- The unjust situation of the student who gets high grades in the examination by cheating.

What should the Christian do to fight social injustice?

1. He could help those who bear injustice by supporting their struggle against the oppressors.
2. He could approach the oppressing authority asking for justice to everybody.

3. He could participate and support progressive movements and organizations in the struggle against social injustice.
4. He could share in helping others see situations of injustice in their own lives and in the life of the community.
5. They together will use the means of communication available to them to uncover injustice and to invite everybody to work for justice.
6. They will pray to God asking guidance towards social justice.

ACTIVITIES

1. Study the situations of social injustice in the life of your community and try to act against it using some of the proposed methods above.
2. Examine cheating in the examinations and find out how cheating leads to corruption and injustice.
3. Find out new examples of social injustice mentioned in the Bible, and write down what was said about them.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of social injustice? And why should we fight against it?
2. Why does God hate social injustice? And how did God guide His prophets against it?
3. How does the Church fight social injustice in the world today?
4. What is your role in fighting against social injustice?

FOR MEMORIZATION

“But let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos. 5:24).





UNIT 7

LESSON 3

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

THE FALLEN NATURE OF MAN

Man was created after the image of God, and God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” And God saw everything that He had made was very good. Adam enjoyed happiness, freedom and love when he was in paradise. God gave him great authority for he has in him the breath of life which he received from God. After the fall, man was separated from God, and God’s image in man was marred and destroyed. And man’s unity with himself and with others was broken, and he suffered disintegration. Corruption, division, and selfishness leaked to man’s nature because of sin.

Saint Paul says in his epistle to the Romans: “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:12). He clarifies the corruption which has entered man’s nature, saying: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whispers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-brakers, without natural affection implacable, unmerciful...” (Rom. 1:29-31).

In spite of this corruption, man has remained carrying the divine image which has been marred by sin without himself. And thus he has kept his conscience and his inner longing for a sublime life. And inner struggle happened to him: between good and evil; between the luminous image of God within himself and the temptations of sin which estranged him from God. The Apostle Paul explains this struggle:

“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:23-24).



BRIBERY AS ONE OF THE ASPECTS OF CORRUPTION

- Bribery is one of the aspects of corruption which has penetrated man's nature. In the Old Testament, God gave man an important commandment in the laws of Moses: "And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Ex. 23:8). And in Deuteronomy, the Lord says: "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person" (Deu. 27:25).
- The sons of the high priest Eli were refused by the Lord because they accepted bribes. The curse of God fell upon the whole household of Eli because he was negligence of their upbringing, and because of the bad conduct of his sons. The Scriptures say about them, "And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after gain and took bribes, and perverted judgement" (1 Sam. 8:3). The prophet David

describes the wicked in the Psalms saying: "In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes." (Ps. 26:10). And he praises the righteous person saying: "He that putteth not out his money to usury, not taketh reward against the innocent" (Ps. 15:5).

- King Solomon the Wise also blesses the refuser of bribery: "He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days" (Prov. 28:16). He describes him as being chaste and pure: "He will not regard any ransom; neither will the rest content, though thou givest many gifts" (Prov. 6:35).
- The prophet Micah described the corruption of the heads of Ancient Israel: "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money" (Mic. 3:11). "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men, they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net, that they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire, as they wrap it up" (Mic. 7:2-4).

SIMONISM AS A DANGEROUS DISEASE

In the New Testament, Simon wished to give St. Peter money in order that the apostle might offer him the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But St. Peter said to him; "Thy money perish with thee... for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:20-21). And thus Simonism is considered a very sinful sin. The Dedache warns every bishop against taking bribery or any money in order to offer what is freely given, the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

FORMS OF BRIBERY IN OUR PRESENT SOCIETY

- Offering money to employees or officials in order to get any unjustified privileges in different aspects of life.
- Offering money or gifts in order to get certain unjust civil or ecclesiastical decisions or judgements.
- Bribery might take an indirect form such as
 - ❖ The student who pays unnecessarily extra money for private lessons expecting generous estimates in examinations.
 - ❖ The employee who pays the physician a special visit so that he might be able to get a sick leave or to overlook him in the medical examination for a job.

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF BRIBERY

- It is a feature of social injustice
- It is a source of corruption in society and an impediment to just judgements.
- It is against Christian principles and spoils the spiritual life of the briber and the bribed.

HOW TO OVERCOME BRIBERY

- To be mindful not to encourage whoever claims it, whatever the conditions might be.
- To be mindful to take disciplinary actions against those who practice it, especially if we have authority on them or act as their supervisors.
- To propagate social awareness for its refusal.
- To help persons develop a righteous conscience that would not accept bribery.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the following statement: “Bribery is considered as a spiritual and social disease.”
2. What are the main causes of bribery and corruption in the world?
3. What are from your personal – experience, the dangers of bribery?
4. How could we overcome the disease of bribery?

ACTIVITIES

1. Write a leaflet to be published for overcoming bribery
2. Collect newspaper clippings about bribery and its evil doings
3. Arrange for a panel discussion about bribery
4. Study the evil laws and legislations concerning bribery, and publish them for the local community.

FOR MEMORIZATION

“Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand, is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me and be merciful unto me” (Psalm 26:9-11).



UNIT 7

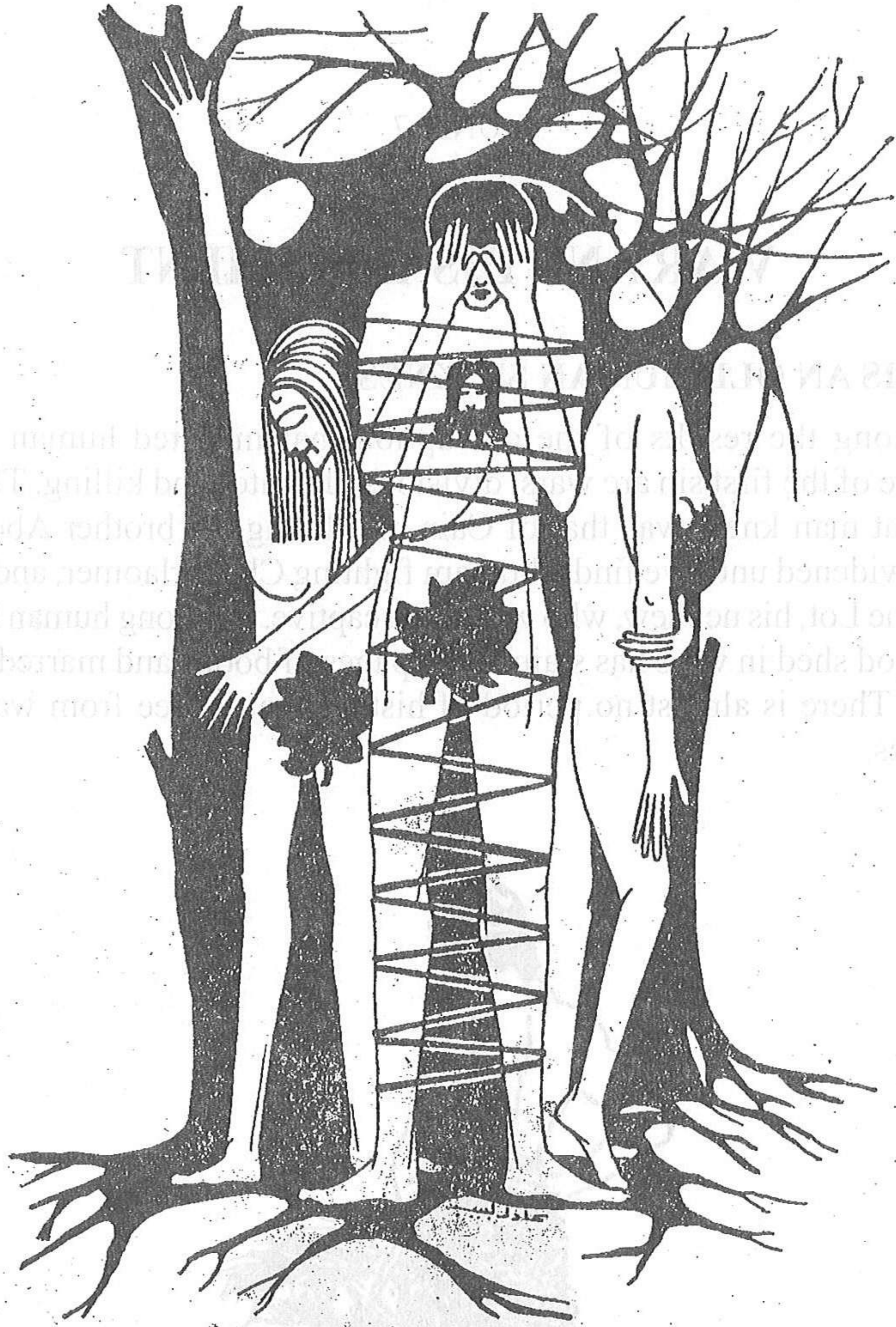
LESSON 4

WAR AND DISARMAMENT

WAR IS AN OLD HUMAN SICKNESS

Among the results of the corruption that inflicted human nature because of the first sin are wars, divisions, disputes and killing. The first war that man knew was that of Cain murdering his brother Abel. The circle widened until we find Abraham fighting Chedorlaomer, and going to rescue Lot, his nephew, who was taken captive. All along human history the blood shed in wars has stained the pages of books and marred man's deeds. There is almost no period of history that is free from wars and disputes.





THE REASONS OF WAR

The first basic reason for wars is the corruption of human nature, and the desire for dominion, greediness and pride (Read James 4:1-3). Fighting is not only an individual attitude, it is also a national and social predicamen. Just as individuals dispute over inheritance and trading, likewise countries dispute over boundaries, commercial centers, strategic sites, influential zones and sources of riches. Man's exploitation of his

fellow brother and exploitation of great countries to the smaller ones have taken many forms, such as the following:

1. **Military Oppression**, in which one country occupies another country or strategic position with the purpose of bringing it under its military authority.
2. **Political Oppression**, in which a great country takes advantage of the political conditions of a small one and dominates over it through alliances, pacts or citizens alligned with the oppressors.
3. **Cultural Oppression**, in which a great country monopolizes the means of communication of another country in order to spread its own civilization, culture and language, ignoring the national civilization, culture and language of the smaller country.
4. **Economical Oppressions**, in which a great country monopolizes the sources of riches, and controls over the revenues and economy of the small countries and absorbs their abundance and leaves their people in misery and poverty.

EVILS OF WARS

1. Wars result in the destruction and ruining of cities, the killing of young people, and the breaking down of civilization in many countries. The atomic war threatens the future of mankind all-over the world.
2. During the wars, the members of the fighting countries are shaken with anxiety and tension. In fact, the nerves of the people in the whole world are also injured by wars.
3. The wars result in the spread of moral corruption because of disputes, decrease of men, the large number of vagabond, breaking down of homes and families.

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT THE WARS?

- God does not want man to fight his fellow brother because He has created men in unity, so that they may all be one like the Holy Trinity that exists in the fellowship of love.
- But sin has torn the unity between man and God, and between man and his fellow-man. The Apostle James examines the causes for wars: "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not

have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions” (James 4:1-3).

- When the Lord Jesus came down to earth, He came to make peace and reconciliation. He asked the believers to love one another, and to forgive everyone his brothers' transgressions and not to get angry with one's brother and not to tell him “fool” that he might not be worthy of judgement. But the Lord Jesus knows that the spiritual believers alone obey his teachings while the world is unable to accept what He says. And because of this, the wars and disputes will continue since man lives under the law of sin. And the mystery of iniquity is working in the world now, and in this respect the Lord said: “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass” (Matt. 24:6).

THE CHURCH, MAKER OF PEACE

- First, it is not possible for the Church to make a fight in the name of a holy war. The idea of the crusades is alien to the Church's spirit and conscience, because the Church calls for peace, and her head is the Prince of Peace. How could she make divisions while she is the vessel of faith and the domain of peace and rejoicing?
- It is not for the Church to mingle with political parties and politics, but must face the aggression and the oppression because of which wars and revolutions occur. The Church should always be the harbour of peace for every person, and the voice of truth and the anchor of hope for all humanity. The Church struggles to prevent wars by prayers, intercessions and supplications. She tries to influence the governments by calling for peace.
- The Church does not prevent her children from laying down their lives for the sake of their country because she is existing on the earth and in history. One of her responsibilities is to develop the spirit of patriotism in her children that they might defend their countries from the danger of every attack.
- War is the sin of countries and authorities, and not the sin of the fighting soldiers, and the one who has caused it is the only to bear its

consequences and whatever results from it, as the Lord says: "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

Therefore every Christian's heart should feel secure when drafted in the army; he is not responsible for the killing and destruction that takes place in the war. The believer is a citizen who has to obey the authorities and the rulers according to the Apostle's command.

- The Church does not consider those who die in the war martyrs of faith, but martyrs for their country; history glorifies them but heaven rewards them according to their own faith and deeds.

THE CHURCH'S DUTY DURING WAR

- To care for the orphans and widows, for the refugees and for the homeless who have become helpless because of the war and to provide for their spiritual and material needs.
- To care for the wounded and visit them in the hospitals and pray for them.
- To encourage the sad hearts and to preach patience, thankfulness and forbearance.
- To pray God that peace may reign over the world and the nations, and to remove wars and their afflictions.

DISARMAMENT

Great efforts are being exerted in making plans for disarmament, in order that humanity may avoid the afflictions and distresses of wars, and here is the prophetic voice calling: "They shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruninghooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Is. 2:4) and (Mic. 4:3-4). This will lead us into the kingdom of God, and finally into the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace and the site from which sadness and sighing have fled, and where God wipes away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:4-5).

QUESTIONS

1. What are the reasons for wars?
2. What are the evils caused by wars?
3. Why does God permit wars to take place?
4. What is the Church's responsibility towards wars?
5. What is your duty concerning compulsory military service?
6. What should the Church do during war times?
7. What is your opinion as regards disarmament?

ACTIVITIES

1. Analyse some newspaper accounts of war relating them to the scriptures
2. Patronize some families who have lost someone in the war.
3. Arrange special prayers for peace in your country.

FOR MEMORIZATION

“And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

(Isaiah 2:4)



UNIT EIGHT

THE ROLE OF
MONASTICISM

- The Fathers of Monasticism
- The Monk as missionary and teacher of society
- The Monk's vocation today





UNIT 8

LESSON 1

THE FATHERS OF MONASTICISM

MONASTICISM AS A WAY OF LIFE

Since the beginning of Christianity, some Christians wanted to consecrate their lives fully to the life of worship. They left the ordinary life with all its occupations and lived in the deserts so that they set themselves free with the Saviour in continuous prayer, fasting, meditation, reading the Bible and helping others. The ideal of their life is purity of the heart. They were humble and silent men. The simplicity of their life shows the depth of their faith. When someone asked them a question, they replied in few words and to the point. They always preferred to give concrete examples. Their method of teaching was by telling simple stories.

This type of life is called Monasticism. The monk is a person who dedicates his entire life to the Saviour. He is dead to the world, in body and in mind. He cares no more for money or position or house or family. He chooses to live in poverty and obedience to his elders. Humility and celibacy are fundamental rules for this type of life.

Monasticism was first known in the Egyptian deserts where the great monastic leaders taught their disciples from all-over the world. Many of those disciples returned to their own countries and founded new monastic orders in their churches. Among the great founders of monasticism we find St. Antony, St. Pachomins, and St. Basil.

ST. ANTONY, THE FATHER OF MONASTICISM

Antony was born at Keman, in Upper Egypt around 251 A. D. of wealthy Christian parents. His parents died before he was eighteen. He



was left alone with his younger sister. One day, he entered the Church. He listened carefully to the Gospel. The deacon was reading the words which Jesus said to the rich young man: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Matt. 19:21). Antony felt that these words were addressed to him personally. He decided to obey the commandment. He sold his property and distributed all what he possessed to the needy and left a little property to his sister. He left his sister with a Christian family and went to the desert where he lived for twenty years as a hermit. He lived along all that time. He divided his time between prayers and planting palms while reciting the worries of the world in order to spend his life in prayer and meditation. He became famous for his ascetic life and many persons followed him. His disciples built cells around his cell.



He was their abbot and they asked him for advise in spiritual matters. They gathered together on Sundays for the Holy Communion.

St. Antony left his solitude and went into the city twice. Once to encourage the martyrs and stand by them in the law courts. Another time when he was more than ninety years old. He then went to support the Nicean Faith against the Arian heresy. He closely associated himself with St. Athanasius in the struggle against Arianism.

St. Antony gained wide reputation towards the end of his life, the numbers of those who followed his solitary life in the desert increased,

and thousands of monks built their cells around his cell and he was their abbot.

St. Antony is known as “The Father of Monks”

ST. PACHOMIUS AND COMMUNAL MONASTICISM

Pachomius was born of pagan parents in Esna, Upper Egypt, around 290 A. D. When he was youth, he served in the Roman army. One day he was sent with the troops to Ethiopia. On their way, the Christian communities in the villages where they passed came to meet them. They welcomed the soldiers and offered them their hospitality. Pachomius was impressed with the goodness of those Christians who washed the soldiers’ feet and offered them food, inspite of the harsh treatment of the soldiers to the poor villagers. After the war, Pachomius was baptized and became a Christian. He followed the famous hermit Palaemon who trained him on the monastic life.

St. Pachomius became the leader of Communal monasticism (or “coenobitic Monasticism”). He founded many monasteries and gained his reputation because of his monastic rule. When a person wished to join his monastery, he examined him to find out the extent of his sincerity and determination to become a monk. The new monks were continuously tested in their ability of detachment from the world. They were given hard tasks to do. The essential requirements for becoming a good monk were the following:

Obedience

Celibacy

Chastity

Devotion

Poverty



St. Pachomius emphasized the study and the learning by heart of the Scriptures. The monks were also instructed in Christian doctrine. Illiterate monks were taught to read and write.

ST. BASIL THE GREAT

St. Basil was born of a Christian family on 329 A. D. He learned the principles of Christian faith from his sister St. Makrina. He completed his high studies in Athens and visited the famous monks from whom he learned the ascetic life. He loved to meditate in nature. His time was spent in prayer, fasting, hardwork, reading and writing. He wrote doctrinal books and commentaries. He also wrote the liturgy known after his name.

St. Basil was also a great teacher. He warned the Christians against the heretic teachings. He urged the rich to be merciful to the poor and he distributed his own property to the needy. He established some hospitals and hostels for the poor.

(Read more details on St. Basil in lesson 4 unit 4).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the fundamental principles of monastic life?
2. Compare the two types of monasticism founded by St. Antony and St. Pachomius.
3. What are the contribution of St. Basil to the life of the Church?



UNIT 8

LESSON 2

THE MONK AS A MESSENGER AND TEACHER TO SOCIETY...

Since the time of St. Antony and St. Pachomius, monasticism spread in many Churches all-over the world. The monks everywhere followed the rule of the celibacy, purity of the heart, self-chosen poverty and complete obedience to the elders.

The monk trains himself to become a servant of God and his fellow men. He consecrates himself entirely to the life of worship, meditation and labour. In their prayers, the monks remember the church and all people and pray for them. Before printing was known, many monks used to spend a lot of time in copying the Bible and religious books. In this way, they made it possible for many people to read the Bible and religious manuscripts. Some monks also wrote spiritual books and prayers. Other monks were engaged in translating religious and philosophical books to different languages and helped many people to read in their own language the genuine spiritual heritage of the Church.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS

The people always liked the monks' deep writings because they were full of spirituality, and they used to go to the monasteries to ask the monks about religious and spiritual matters. The fathers were humble and silent men. They replied to questions in few words, and to the point. They taught by using practical examples and stories. The following story illustrates their method:



A disciple came, one day, to St. Macarius and said, "What must I do to save my soul?" Macarius answered, "Go and insult the dead." The disciple went to the cemetery; he insulted the dead, and came back to Macarius. "What did they say?" asked Macarius. "They said nothing", replied the disciple. Then Macarius told him to return to the cemetery and bless the dead. The disciple did so and came back to Macarius. "What did they say?" asked Macarius. "They said nothing," replied the disciple. "Go and do likewise," said Macarius, "Judge nobody and learn to keep silent."

THE MONASTERIES BECOME CENTERS FOR EDUCATION

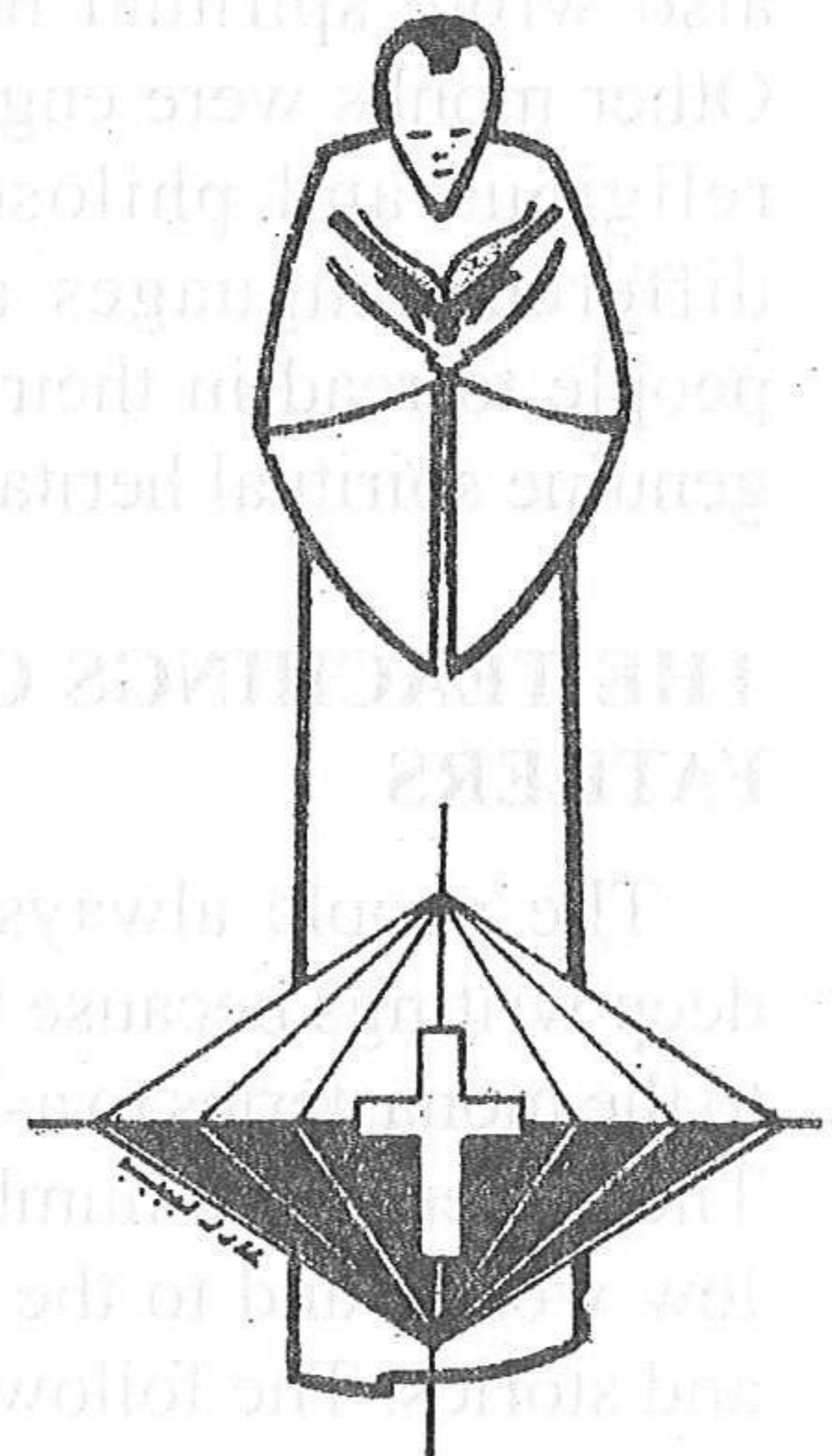
Some monasteries became schools for higher learning. The first universities which the world has known grew out of the monasteries. The monasteries established many schools and taught children and youth. The libraries of the monasteries became centers for research, providing the researches with the greatest books and references in various fields of knowledge.

MONKS GOING OUT TO SERVE THE WORLD

The monks served as missionaries to many parts of the world. They carried the Gospel to people who did not hear about Christ and made them Christians.

Near the end of the third century, the Egyptian monks taught Christianity in Switzerland. They reached the lake of Zurich and baptized the converts. They were seized by the Roman governor who ordered them to bow to the idols. They refused to sacrifice to the Roman Gods and were martyred. The figures of the three Egyptian monks appear on the official stamp of the city of Zurich until today.

Another seven Egyptian monks were able to reach Ireland in the sixth century and taught Christianity to the Irish people. They left their monasteries in the Egyptian deserts and travelled for months until they reached

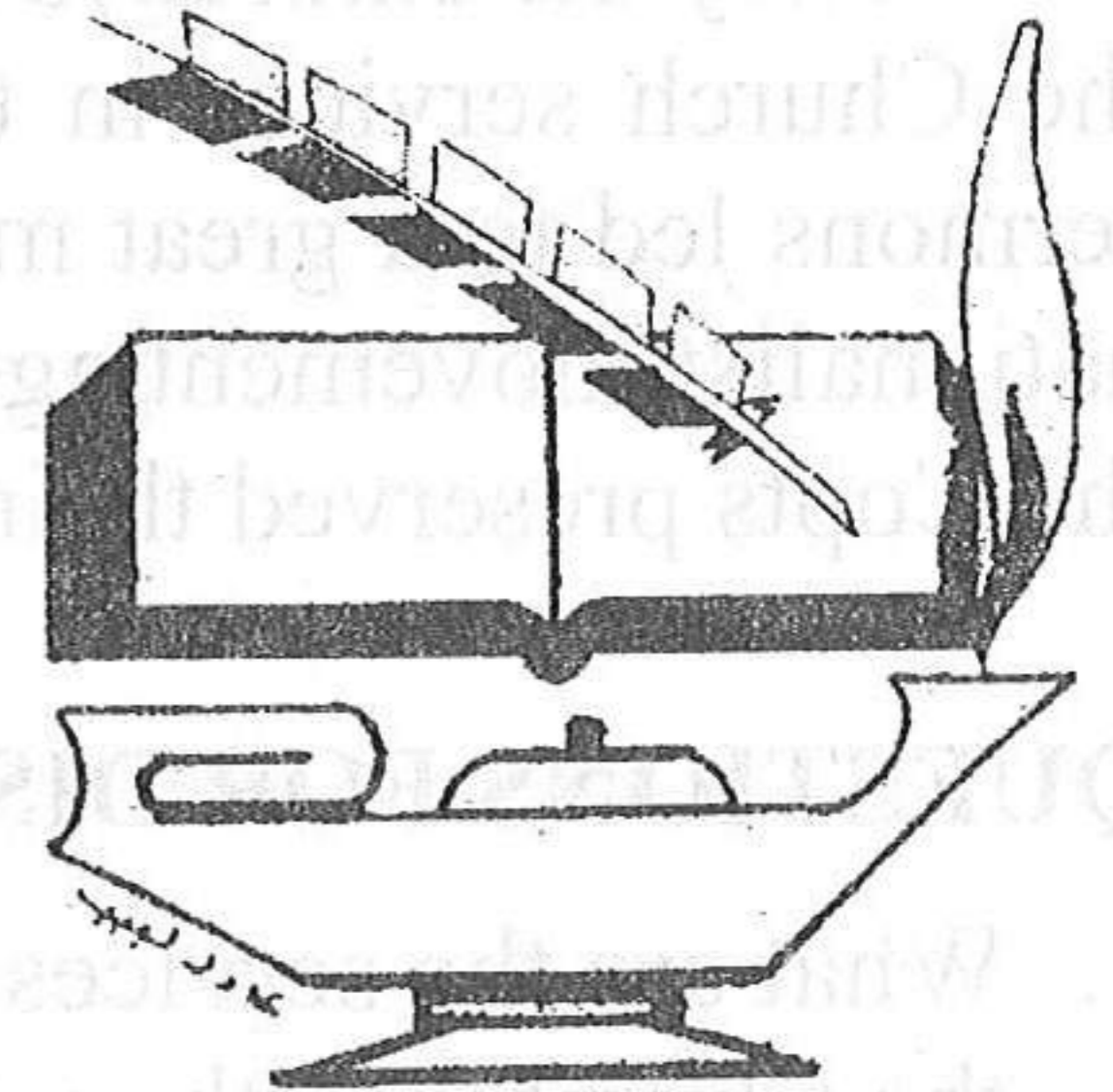


Northern Ireland. They left great influence on Irish art and worship. There has been great similarity between Coptic art and liturgies and the art work and liturgies of the Irish Church. The seven monks were buried in Desert Olida in Ireland. In the Irish liturgy, there is a special supplication for them: "Remember, O Lord, the Egyptian monks who carried the faith to us."

THE MONK IN SERVICE FOR HIS CULTURE

Some monks have contributed to the formation of their cultural heritage. St. Mesrop Mashtotz offers a good example for cultural leadership. Mesrop was secretary for the Armenian King Varashaboh in the 4th century. At that time, the Armenians were divided in two parts; one under the rule of the Persians in the East, and the other under the Byzantine emperor in the West. The two parts were in continuous wars.

Mesrop was very pious. He entered the monastery and became monk, lived in continuing worship and led a truly ascetic life. He wanted to serve his Church and his country. Until then, the Armenians could not read the Bible in their own language. They had to read it in Greek, because their language was not written until then. Mesrop went to their Catholicos St. Issac Bertriev, the Head of the Armenian Church, and they agreed on making a special alphabet for their language in order to be able to use it in writing, and to translate the Bible to Armenian. Their king was delighted with this idea and encouraged Mesrop to carry on this task.



Mesrop went to Asseyria, and from there he brought twenty four letters which were used by the Prophet Daniel.

One day, Mesrop saw a vision. He immediately rose up and wrote down the letters. He asked an artist to draw the letters for him, and returned to Armenia with 34 letters. The King and the Catholicos received him with warm welcome.

The first thing which he translated and wrote in the Armenian language was Solomon's Proverb: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Mesrop and his disciples worked hard and translated the Holy Bible from the Syrian. He then sent some of his disciples to Greece

where they mastered the Greek language. They returned to Armenia and translated the Holy Bible from Greek to the Armenian between the years 404 and 412. The new translation was excellent. Mesrop and his disciples opened many schools and taught the Armenian language and writing to all the people. The Armenians began to read the Bible, in their own language.

When Catholicos Issac died, Mesrop became Acting Catholicos in charge of the Church for about nine months, then he died. The Armenians considered Mesrop a great saint and a prominent national leader.

THE MONK AS A NATIONAL LEADER

The monasteries provided leadership to their countries at times of foreign domination. In Egypt, St. Shenoute of Atribis was a great national leader in the fifth century. He was Abbot of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt. He opened his monastery for the refugees who fled from the invaders. He led his monks in fighting against paganism, and destroyed pagan monuments and temples. He opened the doors of his monastery on Saturdays and Sundays to the lay congregation to attend the Church services in the monastery and listen to his sermons. His sermons led to a great moral and spiritual revival. Shenoute also led a nationalist movement against Greek domination. Under his leadership, the Copts preserved their own forms of liturgies and cultural heritage.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the services which the monks and the monasteries offer to the Church and the world today?
2. Find out some examples of important leaders of monasticism in the Oriental Orthodox Churches. What was the contribution of each one of them to the Church?
3. What are the characteristics of monastic life, and how did the monks live?

ACTIVITIES

Try to arrange a trip to one of the monasteries and discuss with the monks how they live and the services they offer to the Church and to the world.



UNIT 8

LESSON 3

THE MONK'S VOCATION TODAY

MONASTICISM IS LOVE

Monasticism is an expression of love:

- Love for God that leads the monk to consecrate himself to the life of worship and prayer.
- And love to all men who have been created after the image of God.

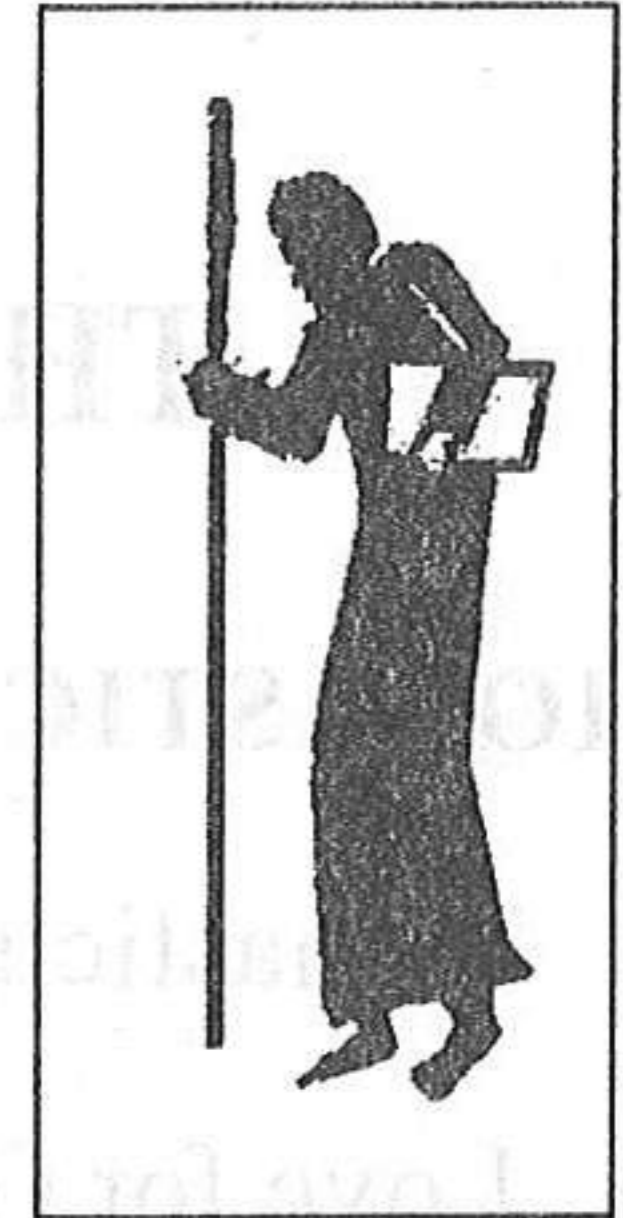
THE LIFE OF WORSHIP AND SERVICE

- For the sake of the love of God, the monk goes into seclusion, devoting his mind and heart to the life of prayer and meditation, ceasing to have worldly occupations and finding his full satisfaction and happiness in the Creator alone.
- Motivated by love to his fellow-men, he offers himself for their service in self-denial. He gives the world of what he possesses. He has no material possessions. But he uses his spiritual gifts in the service of humanity; "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have" (Acts 3:6).
- St. Augustine said: "There are two truths before the eyes of all men, the first is to act and the second to meditate. The first truth is for us to work and struggle to purify our souls, while by the second we receive peace to see God."
- St. Gregory said that the Lord Jesus Christ has shown two kinds of life: the life of service, and the quiet life of meditation. **Both the monk and the lay person need both types of life: the life of service and the life of prayer.**

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

1. Virginity or purity:

God wishes that every Christian be a saint, keeping his senses, body and soul pure. The monk vows to surrender his life to the ascetic life and to free himself from the attractions of the world. He lives in communion with God alone. Married people can also practise the saintly life if they live with pure heart and undefiled senses, because marriage is a holy sacrament. The monk, on the other hand, who dedicates his life to God has preferred asceticism to give all his heart to Christ. **St. John Chrysostom urged married people also to follow the vows of the monk in consecrating themselves to the purity of the mind, heart and senses.**



2. Prayer:

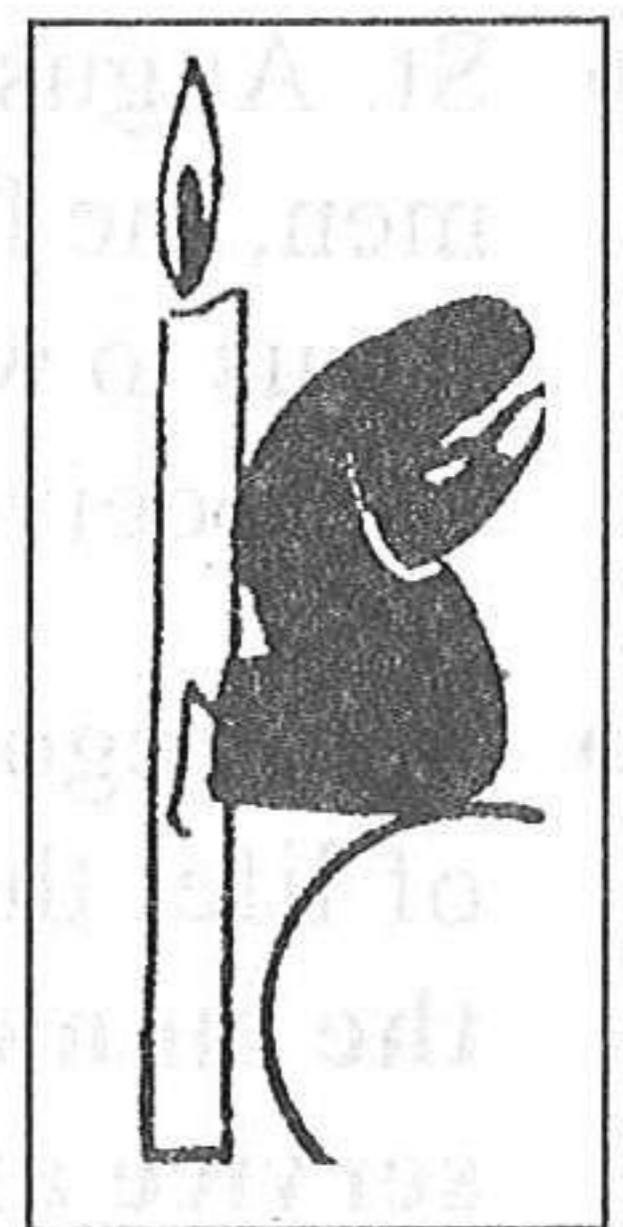
We all need the life of worship and continuing prayers. The monk offers his prayers not only for himself, but for all the world. The monks prayers are like pillars of light, rising up in the darkness when all men are asleep. Monks pray to God that He may end wars, famine, pestilence, evil, sin, doubts and the works of the devil.



The lay person, might be busy in his daily concerns, but he also needs the life of communion with God. He needs God's help and assistance in his life and he prays for that. **Both the saintly monk and lay person experience the life of prayer and enjoy personal relationship, with God.**

3. Ministry

Ministry is a consequence of great love for Christ. One of the saints once said, "No one serves Christ except he who loves Him." This was the same test which Jesus applied on Peter after His resurrection. "Simon, son of John do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love you." The Lord said, "tend my sheep." **In this sense, the monk as well as the lay person, live the life of service in love for the Lord Jesus Christ.**



The monk's ministry can be seen in the following:

a. As an Example

The world needs such high ideals of spiritual standards. The monks struggle to achieve Christian perfection. For who reads the biographies of the saints and would not long for the life of virtue and holiness? Mar Ishac said: "Scorn the evil-doers not with words, but with the example of your own life." St. Augustine himself was an evil man in Italy, but when he read the biography of St. Antony, the Egyptian monk, he repented and became one of the greatest saints of the Church.

b. To encourage believers to be virtuous:

The monastic life is the embodiment of Christian virtue showing us that we can live up to the moral standards set for us by Christ. A man with an unclean spirit slapped a monk on his cheek, so he turned his other cheek to him, and immediately the evil spirit went out of the man crying, "Woe to us from you. O monks, you terrify us by your obedience to the words of Christ."

c. Teaching, writing and letters:

The Church treasures the writings of the Church fathers, because they express their practical experience of their continuous relationship with God, and knowledge of Him, and their communion with the Holy Spirit. The teachings of the fathers are very effective in their simplicity. They are considered a great source for Christian teaching.

d. Discipleship

The teaching of the fathers was not only found on the pages of books and letters, but they propagated this valuable spiritual teaching to the coming generations through discipleship. Whenever the fame of one of the pious fathers came to the ears of men. Many disciples flocked to his feet and sometimes their numbers reached hundreds and thousands. This was in fact the origin of the idea of the university, as one historian said: "The first literary and intellectual renaissance which took place in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, and which was associated with the start of human sciences and first appearance of universities in the middle ages was only a consequence of the monastic communities which owe

their origin to the genius of St. Pachomius who was the founder of coenobitic monasticism.”

4. Obedience and discipline

Monasticism is characterized as the life of obedience, discipline and prayer. The monk subjects himself to the will of God, the Bible and the Church. His obedience to God is a good example for the present generation, showing the true meaning of obedience which promotes harmony in family, social and church relationships. Discipline is a basic element for the success of the life of individuals and communities.

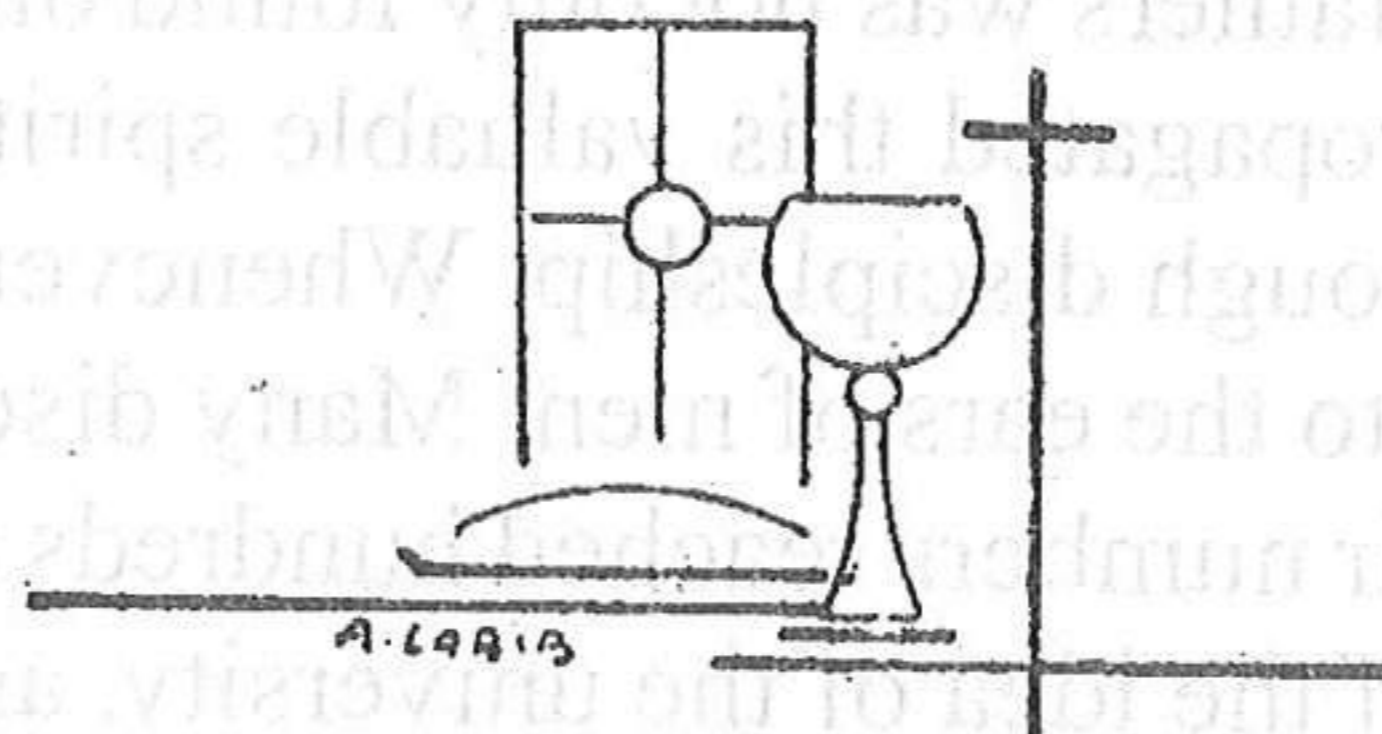


QUESTIONS

1. What are the main elements in monastic life?
2. John Chrysostom says, that the vows of the monk should also be observed by married people. How is that possible.
3. How could the lay Christian and the monk combine both the life of service and the life of meditation?
4. What aspects of monasticism are relevant to the life of the laity?

ACTIVITIES

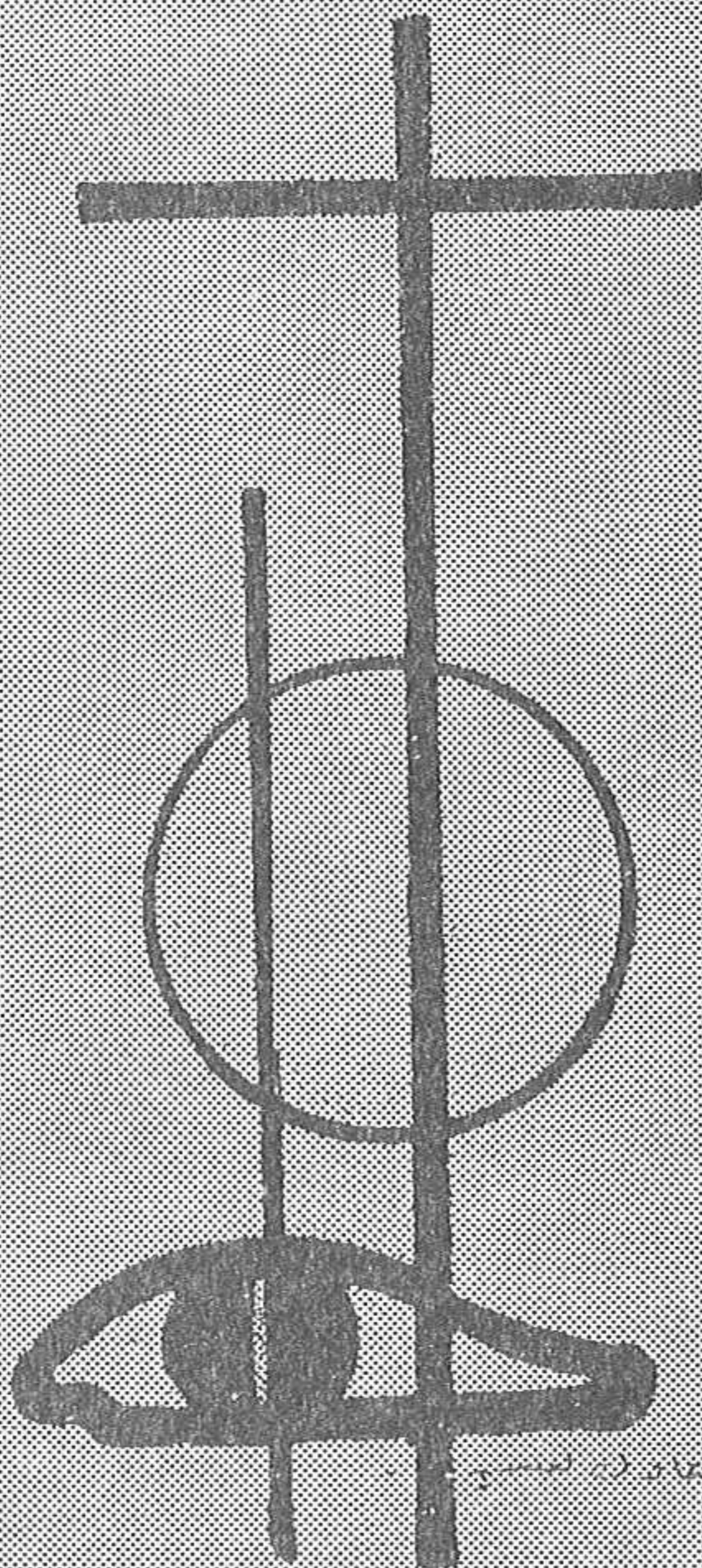
1. Make a trip to a monastery, and try with the help of the monks to discover the contribution of monasticism to society.
2. Study the biographies of monks who rendered great services to the Church.



UNIT NINE

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

- Priest and Shepherd



UNIT 9

LESSON 1

PRIEST AND SHEPHERD

HOLY ORDERS

In the early days of Christianity, the apostles went to preach the Gospel to all nations. In every town, they appointed man as bishops, and gave them these words:

“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the Church of the Lord which He obtained with His blood” (Acts 20:28). “Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly... not as domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-4).

The bishops ordained priests and deacons, to serve and teach (See Tit: 1:5). This was done by laying hands upon them to grant them the authority and the gift of the priesthood through the Holy Spirit.

THE BISHOP AS GOOD SHEPHERD

The bishop is the Head of the Church, he is our representative to God and is also the representative of Christ to us. As St. Ignatius says: “Where the bishop is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Universal Church.” The bishop is chosen by the congregation and then presented



to the other bishops who lay their hands on him and pray to God to grant him the gifts and authority of the Holy Spirit, Saying:

“Grant him, O Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of power and consolation, the spirit of knowledge and piety. That in pure prayer, and illuminated heart in love he may raise the offering for the ignorance and sins of the people, and bring them back to Thy holy fold, that they may be one flock belonging to one shepherd.”

The bishop is a shepherd of his diocese. He preaches, teaches, and administers all the sacraments. He cares for his people in every way and guards them against wrong ideas or doctrines. This is mentioned during the prayer of ordination:

“Be an imitator of Christ, the True Shepherd, who did lay down His life for His sheep. Be a leader of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a teacher of the young, a lamp to the world.”

THE VOCATION OF THE PRIEST

The priest is ordained by the bishop to watch over his parish as an honest steward watching over the mysteries of God. He is a pastor and shepherd who loves and cares for his people. He can administer all the sacraments of the Church except the Sacrament of Holy Orders. St. Ignatius describes the priests as: **“the council of the Apostles.”** As the Apostles were gathered around Jesus Christ and carried out His work, so the priests are gathered around the bishop and help carry out his work.

The prayer for ordination of a priest tells us what his duties are:

- “Our Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted you with His life-giving sacraments. Know that you carry upon your hand Emmanuel who was carried by Simon the priest. Guard these sacraments as the Cherubim guard the Tree of Life.”
- “O Lord, fill him with Thy Holy Spirit, that he may be worthy to stand before Thine Altar;
to proclaim the Gospel of Thy Kingdom;
to minister to the word of truth
to offer unto thee spiritual gifts and sacrifices.”

- The priest should be called and chosen by God. “One does not take the honour upon himself but he is called by God, just as Aaron was” (Heb. 5:4). He dedicates himself completely to God, sacrificing himself for the ministry he has received from God.”
- The priest should follow the example of Christ: “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). He is ready to sacrifice his life unto death, to search for the lost sheep, to mend the broken homes, to strengthen the weak. **In his struggle during his ministry the priest offers himself as a sacrifice in the alter of witness.**

THE DEACON

The deacon should be a good servant of the Church. He bears the task of social service for widows, orphans, poor people and different activities of his Church. St. Ignatius says that the deacons have the ministry of Jesus Christ who was the greatest servant. He gives himself completely to God and to man.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the three categories of the Holy Orders? What is the function of each?
2. Explain the meaning of “sacrifice on the alter of witness.”
3. Read (1 Tim. 3), and find the necessary qualities of a bishop and a deacon.
4. From (1 Tim. 4:11-14) find how did St. Paul explain the vocation of priesthood

ACTIVITIES

Attend the ordination of a bishop, a priest or a deacon.



