A WORD FROM THE FATHERS

“Following the Holy Fathers”

Fr. Georges Florovsky
Published by Eighth Day Institute, *A Word from the Fathers* is inspired by the desert tradition of disciples asking their spiritual masters, “Father, give me a word of salvation.” It’s mission is to curate living words of salvation from the Fathers and Mothers of the Church for the renewal of soul and city.

Most issues will introduce the common Tradition of the early Church by offering brief words of salvation from the undivided Church through patristic homilies, treatises, hymns, letters, poems, and biblical commentaries. Occasionally, post-schism authors will be included whom we consider worthy of the title “Father.” Intentionally catechetical, each issue will include introductory material, annotations, study questions, and ancient prayers. Issued on a monthly basis, out of the twelve issues per year four will be a special quarterly scholar’s edition. Eighth Day Members at the Friend level and above will automatically receive them.

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“The Age of the Fathers” still continues in “the Worshipping Church.”

~Fr. Georges Florovsky
INTRODUCTION

Erin Doom

METROPOLITAN Kallistos Ware has described Fr. Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) as “the greatest Russian, and indeed Orthodox, theologian during the twentieth century.” Similarly, Rowan Williams suggests that Florovsky’s “name deserves to stand with those of the major theologians of the century.” Fr. Andrew Louth claims that when Florovsky “died on 11 Aug. 1979, he was probably the most famous Orthodox theologian in the world.” The sheer volume of Florovsky’s output and the number of secondary studies on Florovsky provide ample evidence of Florovsky’s greatness: in addition to his four patristic monographs, Florovsky published over 300 works (essays, articles, reviews, compilations, sermons, encyclopedia entries, and forwards and introductions) and was a prolific letter writer; and a recent bibliography of secondary literature lists 391 contributions in 15 different languages. And yet despite such high praise and respect, as of the 2019 Florovsky-Newman Week there is only one essay by Florovsky available in print (there is a collection of about ten es-
says due out from T&T Clark, but this still fails to begin to do justice to Florovsky’s output and influence).

As a humble attempt to begin making Florovsky’s writings available to the public, at the 2018 inaugural Florovsky Week I created an Eighth Day blog titled the “Florovsky Archives” where we have begun publishing his works online. Continuing that effort to make Florovsky’s work more widely known to the public, we offer a Florovsky text here in the inaugural “Scholars Edition” of *A Word from the Fathers*. It is the first half of a lecture Florovsky delivered in Greek, on the Feast day of St. Gregory Palamas (Nov. 14) in the year of our Lord 1959, at a symposium in Thessaloniki, Greece honoring the 600th anniversary of the Dormition of St. Gregory Palamas (A.D. 1296-1359): “Saint Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers.”

While at the symposium Florovsky was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Salonika. He also delivered two other papers: “Unity in the Orthodox Church: Achievements and Problems” and “The Meaning of Monasticism in the Orthodox Church.”

This issue of *A Word from the Fathers* is a bit unique, given the range of persons and themes Florovsky covers over the course of his lecture. Consequently, the annotations are more extensive than would normally be the case. Indeed, for those not familiar with the early Church, this issue could very well serve as an introductory survey of early Christianity, that is, if one is diligent enough to read all of the annotations.

Before inviting you to dig in, however, let me make two brief notes. First, Florovsky believed divided Christians need to re-
turn to the common tradition of the Church as a way forward to reintegrate divided Christendom. Despite differences in language and customs, he believed East and West were offsprings of the same root, sister civilizations. He even dared to suggest that they were Siamese twins and that the major tragedy of Christendom was their separation. According to Florovsky, neither East nor West “is self-explanatory, neither is intelligible, when taken separately. Both Societies are but fragments of a disrupted world, and they belong together despite the Schism.” According to Florovsky, then, the most imposing ecumenical task is to recognize this common heritage.

Florovsky personally exemplified a recognition of that common heritage by his deep knowledge of both the Greek and Latin Fathers. And as demonstrated in this issue, he cites the Latin Fathers (in Latin) just as frequently as the Greek Fathers (in Greek). This is not an isolated case. It pervades all of his writings. He dearly loved both the Greek and Latin Fathers.

Second, I chose this Florovsky text for a particular reason. Typically, when one speaks of the Church Fathers, it is the early Fathers of the first millennium who come to mind. This is not incorrect, but it is inadequate. As Florovsky will make amply clear in this lecture, the age of the Fathers did not end in the eighth century, as frequently assumed. The Fathers have been with us since the beginning of time and they will be among us to the end of time. They include Old Testament Prophets, New Testament Apostles, second-century Apologists, fourth-century Trinitarian Theologians, and eighth-century Iconophiles. But they also include twelfth-century Scholastics, fourteenth-century
Hesychasts, nineteenth-century Athonites, and twentieth-century Theologians of the Body.

To the twentieth century Fathers I would add Neopatristic Theologians. This is precisely why Father Florovsky is offered as the Father in this inaugural “Scholar’s Edition.” It’s also why the Patristic Notes in this edition are by other Neopatristic Theologians: Metropolitan Hierotheos, Fr. Andrew Louth, and Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. In my books, they are living Fathers.

But what about Fathers in the twenty-first century? Florovsky scholar Paul Gavrilyuk answers that question best with a spiritual summons, a challenge to Christians today:

In the spirit of Florovsky’s motto “forward, to the Fathers” we need a new Origen in the Orthodox biblical scholarship. We need a new John Chrysostom to tackle moral and prophetic theology. We need a new Augustine to pursue anthropology, gender problems, and sexuality. We need a new pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to address postmodern theories of religious language. We need new Cappadocians, a new Athanasius and Maximus the Confessor, to help us navigate the metaphysical and epistemological options on offer in our time. We need a new Symeon the New Theologian to recover the charismatic dimension of our faith. We need a new Palamas to continue translating the experience of deification into the categories of modern church life.

Read Father Florovsky. Heed his word of salvation. And become a living Holy Father!

Erin Doom
Feast of St. Plato the Studite
Anno Domini 2019, April 4
Following the Holy Fathers

Fr. Georges Florovsky

FOLLOWING THE Holy Fathers” . . . It was usual in the Ancient Church to introduce doctrinal statements by phrases like this. The Decree of Chalcedon opens precisely with these very words. The Seventh Ecumenical Council introduces its decision concerning the Holy Icons in a more elaborate way: “Following the Divinely inspired teaching of the Holy Fathers and the Tradition of the Catholic Church.” The didaskalia of the Fathers is the formal and normative term of reference.

Now, this was much more than just an “appeal to antiquity.” Indeed, the Church always stresses the permanence of her faith through the ages, from the very beginning. This identity, since the Apostolic times, is the most conspicuous sign and token of right faith—always the same. In

Ecumenical Council: a gathering of bishops, which decides upon dogmatic formulations and issues rules for Church administration.

Decree of Chalcedon: the fourth Ecumenical Council in A.D. 451, which states that Christ is one in two natures.

Seventh Ecumenical Council: convened in A.D. 787, this council affirmed the veneration of icons in churches and homes and insisted that they are necessary as an affirmation of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Didascalia: Greek for teaching, frequently seen in the phrase Didascalia Apostolorum, which means the Teaching of the Apostles; it is also the title of a third century Christian treatise.
the famous phrase of Vincent of Lerins, in ipsa item catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est (Commonitorium 2.3; Eng. trans.: The Church holds fast to what has been always believed, everywhere, and by all). Yet, “antiquity” by itself is not an adequate proof of the true faith. Moreover, the Christian message was obviously a striking “novelty” for the “ancient world,” and, indeed, a call to radical “renovation.” The “Old” has passed away, and everything has been “made New.” On the other hand, heresies could also appeal to the past and invoke the authority of certain “traditions.” In fact, heresies were often lingering in the past. Archaic formulas can often be dangerously misleading. Vincent of Lerins himself was fully aware of this danger. It would suffice to quote this pathetic passage of his: “And now, what an amazing reversal of the situation! The authors of the same opinion are adjudged to be catholics, but the followers—heretics; the masters are absolved, the disciples are condemned; the writers of the books will be children of the Kingdom, their followers will go to Gehenna”—Et o mira rerum conversio! Auctores ejusdem opinionis catholici, consectatores, vero haeretici judicantur; absolvuntur magistri, condemnantur disici; conscriptores li-

St. Vincent of Lerins: a Gallic monk who died c. A.D. 445, most known for his work the Commonitorium, which was written to distinguish Christian truth from heresy. Commemorated in the East and the West on May 24.

Tradition: That which is handed down, passed on, or delivered by word of mouth or in writing.

Heresy: From the Greek word hairesis, Fr. Alexander Schmemann defines it as a “distortion, the exaggeration, and therefore the mutilation of something true, the affirmation of one ‘choice’, one element at the expense of others, the breaking up of the catholicity of Truth.”
brorum filii regni erunt, adsertores vero gehenna suscipiet (Commonitorium 6). Vincent had in mind, of course, St. Cyprian and the Donatists. St. Cyprian himself was facing the same situation. “Antiquity” as such may happen to be just an inveterate prejudice: nam antiquitas sine veritate vetustas erroris est (Epistle 74; Eng. trans.: For ancient custom without truth is an age-old error). And again: Dominus, Ego sum, inquit, veritas. Non dixit, Ego sum consuetudo (Epistle 87; Eng. trans.: The Lord says, “I am the truth.” He did not say, “I

St. Cyprian of Carthage: born in North Africa at the beginning of the third century he became bishop of Carthage in A.D. 249, a year before the Roman Emperor Decius issued an edict to persecute Christians. St. Cyprian was beheaded for his faith on Sep. 14, 258. Commemorated in the East on Aug. 31; in the West on Sep. 16.

Donatists: The Donatist controversy erupted in North Africa when clergymen who had denied the faith during Emperor Diocletian’s persecution of Christians (303-305) were fully restored to ministry after Emperor Constantine’s Edict of Milan legalized Christianity in A.D. 313. Named after Donatus Magnus, the Bishop of Carthage (r. A.D. 315-355), Donatists were purists who refused to restore lapsed clergy and denied the validity of sacraments performed by them. Traditional Christians, on the other hand, affirmed the full forgiveness of all by welcoming lapsed clergy back into full sacramental service.
am custom.”). It is to say—“old customs” as such do not guarantee the truth. “Truth” is not just a “habit.”

The true tradition is only the tradition of truth, traditio veritatis. This tradition, according to St. Irenaeus, is grounded in, and secured by, that charisma veritatis certum (Eng. trans.: sure charism of truth), which has been “deposited” in the Church from the very beginning and has been preserved by the uninterrupted succession of episcopal ministry: qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum acceperunt (Against the Heresies IV, 40.2; Eng. trans.: those who have received the sure charism of truth by episcopal succession). “Tradition” in the Church is not a continuity of human memory, or a permanence of rites and habits. It is a living tradition—depositum juvenescens (Eng. trans.: a growing deposit), in the phrase of St. Irenaeus. Accordingly, it cannot be counted inter mortuas regulas (Eng. trans.: among dead rules).

St. Irenaeus of Lyons: as a boy he listened to the preaching of St. Polycarp (A.D. 69-155) who was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. Born a Greek in Smyrna, Irenaeus later served as a priest in Lyons during the persecution of Marcus Aurelius (r. A.D. 161-180) and became its second Bishop. He is most known for two works: 1) Against the Heresies, a defense of Christianity against the early Christian heresy of Gnosticism; and 2) Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, a manual of instruction for new converts to Christianity. Commemorated in the East on Aug. 23; in the West on June 28.

Gnosticism: based on the Greek word gnosìs, which means knowledge, this a complex heresy that views the material world as a deterioration of the spiritual and believes salvation is achieved by spiritual knowledge (gnosis). In sharp contrast to Christianity, which affirms the goodness of the created order, gnostics believe all matter is evil.

Charism: derived from the Greek word charis, which means grace, a charism is a spiritual gift.
Ultimately, tradition is a continuity of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, a continuity of Divine guidance and illumination. The Church is not bound by the “letter.” Rather, she is constantly moved forth by the “spirit.” The same Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, which “spake through the Prophets,” which guided the Apostles, is still continuously guiding the Church into the fuller comprehension and understanding of the Divine truth, from glory to glory.

“Following the Holy Fathers” . . . This is not a reference to some abstract tradition, in formulas and propositions. It is primarily an appeal to holy witnesses. Indeed, we appeal to the Apostles, and not just to an abstract “Apostolicity.” In the similar manner do we refer to the Fathers. The witness of the Fathers belongs, intrinsically and integrally, to the very structure of Orthodox belief. The Church is equally committed to the kerygma of the Apostles and to the dogma of the Fathers. We may quote at this point an admirable ancient

Kerygma: Greek word for public proclamation.

Dogma: Greek word for doctrine, decree, or ordinance. The Church Fathers used this word for doctrines and moral precepts taught by Christ and the holy Apostles. The dogmas of the Orthodox Church are found in the creeds and canons of the seven Ecumenical Councils.
hymn (probably, from the pen of St. Romanos the Melodist). “Preserving the kerygma of the Apostles and the dogmas of the Fathers, the Church has sealed the one faith and wearing the tunic of truth she shapes rightly the brocade of heavenly theology and praises the great mystery of piety.”

St. Romanos the Melodist: Born at the end of the fifth century, Romanos is the patron saint of church singers. He is most famous for the creation of the kontakion (from Greek word kontax for a rod or stick around which a scroll is wound, indicating the way words on a scroll unfurl as it is read). Kontakia are beautiful, poetic Orthodox hymns that usually have a biblical theme and often feature a dialogue between biblical characters. Romanos composed more than 1,000 kontakia, of which the most famous is his original one for the Nativity of Christ and two others that are still sung each year during Lent: “Akathist Hymn” and “My soul, my soul, why sleepest thou?” Commemorated in the East and West on Oct. 1.

Patristic Note: Dimensions of the notion of ecclesiastical tradition come out in the remarks St. Basil makes in the course of his work On the Holy Spirit. Here he makes a distinction between kerygma and dogma: “We have both dogmas (dogmata) and proclamations (keryg mata) preserved in the Church, proclamations in the written teaching, and dogmas which we have received from the tradition of the apostles and given to us in secret.” But Basil is not appealing to some secret, “whispered” tradition that has come down from the apostles: the sort of thing which Irenaeus denied the very existence a couple of centuries earlier. The examples Basil gives of such unwritten traditions are all liturgical practices: the sign of the cross, prayer towards the East, the epiclesis at the Eucharist, and indeed most of the rest of the Eucharistic prayer, the blessing of water in baptism, of oil, and so on. The secret tradition is not a message, but a practice, and the significance of such practice. Christianity is not a body of doctrine that can be specified in advance, but a way of life and all that this implies. Tradition is, as it were, the tacit dimension of the life of the Christian: what is proclaimed (for Basil, the keryg mata) is only part of it, and not really the most important part. ~Fr. Andrew Louth, Discerning the Mystery
The Church is “Apostolic” indeed. But the Church is also “Patristic.” She is intrinsically “the Church of the Fathers.” These two “notes” cannot be separated. Only by being “Patristic” is the Church truly “Apostolic.” The witness of the Fathers is much more than simply a historic feature, a voice from the past. Let us quote another hymn—from the office of the Three Hierarchs. “By the word of knowledge you have composed the dogmas which the fishermen have established first in simple words, in knowledge by the power of the Spirit, for thus our simple piety had to acquire composition.”

τῶ λόγω τῆς γνώσεως συνιστᾶται τὰ δόγματα, ἀ τὸ πρὶν ἐν λόγοις κατεβάλλοντο ἀλείπτο έν γνώσει δυνάμει τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἐδεί γάρ καὶ οὕτω τὸ ἀτλούν ἡμῶν σέβας τὴν σύστασιν κτήσασται. There are, as it were, two basic stages in the proclamation of the Christian faith. “Our simple faith had to acquire composition.” There was an inner urge, an inner logic, an internal necessity, in this transition—from kerygma to dogma. Indeed, the teaching of the Fathers, and the dogma of the Church, are still the same “simple mes-

Eleventh century icon of the Twelve Apostles at the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

**Patristic**: related to the Church Fathers. Derived from the Latin and Greek words for father: *pater*.

sage" which has been once delivered and deposited, once for ever, by the Apostles (cf. Jude 1.3). But now it is, as it were, properly and fully articulated. The Apostolic preaching is kept alive in the Church, not only merely preserved. In this sense, the teaching of the Fathers is a permanent category of Christian existence, a constant and ultimate measure and criterion of right faith. Fathers are not only witnesses of the old faith, testes antiquitatis. They are rather witnesses of the true faith, testes veritatis. “The mind of the Fathers” is an intrinsic term of reference in Orthodox theology, no less than the word of the Holy Writ, and indeed never separated from it. As it has been well said recently by Fr. Louis Bouyer, “the Catholic Church of all ages is not merely a daughter of the Church of the Fathers—she is and remains the Church of the Fathers.”

St. Gregory Nazianzus: One of the three Cappadocian Fathers and one of the Three Hierarchs, Gregory is also one of only three saints to be given the title theologian: the Gospel writer St. John the Theologian, St. Gregory the Theologian (c. A.D. 329-390), and St. Symeon the New Theologian (A.D. 949-1022). He was Archbishop of Constantinople and is remembered as the “Trinitarian Theologian,” particularly for the brilliance of his exposition of the Holy Trinity in his famous Five Theological Orations. Commemorated in the East on Jan. 25; in the West on Jan. 2.

The main distinctive mark of Patristic theology was its “existential” character, if we may use this current neologism. The Fathers theologized, as St. Gregory of Nazianzus put it, “in the manner of the Apostles, not in that of Aristotle”—ἀλευτικῶς, οὐχ ἀριστοτελικῶς (Homily 23.12). Their theology was still a “message,” a kerygma. Their theology was still “kerygmatic theology,” even if it was often logically arranged and supplied with intellectual arguments. The ultimate reference was there still to
the vision of faith, to spiritual knowledge and experience. Apart from life in Christ theology carries no conviction and, if separated from the life of faith, theology may degenerate into empty dialectics, a vain *polylogia*, (Greek word for verbosity or talkativeness) without any spiritual consequence. Patristic theology was existentially rooted in the decisive commitment of faith. It was not a self-explanatory “discipline” which could be presented argumentatively, that is ἀριστοτελικῶς, without any prior spiritual engagement. In the age of theological strife and incessant debates, the great Cappadocian Fathers formally protested against the use of dialectics, of “Aristotelian syllogisms,” and endeavored to refer theology back to the vision of faith. Patristic theology could be only preached or proclaimed—preached from the pulpit, proclaimed also in the words of prayer and in the sacred rites, and indeed manifested in the total structure of Christian

Cappadocian Fathers: St. Basil the Great (A.D. 330-379), bishop of Caesarea; St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-c. 395), younger brother of St. Basil and bishop of Nyssa; St. Gregory the Theologian (329-389), close friend of St. Basil and Archbishop of Constantinople. The Cappadocians are most famous for their development of Trinitarian theology. Due to the huge influence she had on her brothers St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa, we think St. Macrina should also be included; the icon above validates our opinion.

Aristotelian syllogism: The Greek word *syllogismos* means deduction. Aristotle defines it as “a discourse in which certain things having been supposed, something different from the things supposed results of necessity because these things are so” (*Prior Anaylitics*, 24b18-20), i.e., a pair of propositions that combine to produce a necessary conclusion. As such, for Aristotle, they are vehicles for identifying the immutable nature that makes a thing what it is.
life. Theology of this kind can never be separated from the life of prayer and from the exercise of virtue. “The climax of purity is the beginning of theology,” as St. John Klimakos puts it: Τέλος δὲ ἁγνείας ὑπόθεσις θεολογίας (The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 30).

On the other hand, theology of this type is always, as it were, “propaedeutic” (from Greek propaidēsīs for preparatory education, hence an introduction to a subject or field of study) since

**St. John Klimakos**: Klimacos is the Greek word for ladder, so he is also known as St. John of the Ladder (c. A.D. 525-606). St. John was a monk, and later abbot, at the monastery on Mount Sinai, now known as St. Catherine’s Monastery. He is most known for his work *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, which is read by Orthodox monks every year during Lent. He is the patron saint of Eighth Day Institute’s headquarters, hence its name The Ladder. The Orthodox Church celebrates him annually on the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. Commemorated in the East and West on March 30.

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its ultimate aim and purpose is to ascertain and to acknowledge the Mystery of the Living God, and indeed to bear witness to it, in word and deed. “Theology” is not an end in itself. It is always but a way. Theology, and even the “dogmas,” present no more than an “intellectual contour” of the revealed truth, and a “noetic” testimony to it. Only in the act of faith is this “contour” filled with content. Christological formulas are fully meaningful only for those who have encountered the Living Christ, and have received and acknowledged Him as God and Savior, and are dwelling by faith in Him, in His Body, the Church. In this sense, theology is never a self-explanatory discipline. It is constantly appealing to the vision of faith. “What we have seen and have heard we announce to you.” Apart from this “announcement” theological formulas are empty and of no consequence. For the same reason these formulas can never be taken “abstractly,” that is, out of total context of belief. It is misleading to single out particular statements of the Fathers and to detach them from the total perspective in which they have been actually uttered, just as it is misleading to manipulate with detached quotations from the Scripture. It is a dangerous habit “to quote” the Fathers, that is, their isolated sayings and phrases, outside of that concrete setting in which only they have their full and proper meaning and are truly alive. “To follow” the Fathers does not
mean just “to quote” them. “To follow” the Fathers means to acquire their “mind,” their \textit{phronema}.

Now, we have reached, the crucial point. The name of “Church Fathers” is usually restricted to the teachers of the Ancient Church. And it is currently assumed that their authority depends upon their “antiquity,” upon their comparative nearness to the “Primitive Church,” to the initial “Age” of the Church. Already St. Jerome had to contest this idea. Indeed, there was no decrease of “authority,” and no decrease in the immediacy of spiritual competence and knowledge, in the course of Christian history. In fact, however, this idea of “decrease” has strongly affected our modern theological thinking. In fact, it is too often assumed, consciously or unconsciously, that the Early Church was, as it were, closer to the spring of truth. As an admission of our own failure and inadequacy, as an act of humble self-criticism, such

\textbf{Phronema}: Greek word for mind, spirit, thought, purpose, or will. Difficult to capture in a single word, Orthodox theology employs it to indicate a way of being in or looking at the world.

\textbf{Patristic Note}: In the biblio-patristic Tradition \textit{phronema} is the whole turn of mind which prevails in a man from the way in which he lives, and from the relationship which he has with God. And literally, if the nous is darkened, then the whole mind is carnal. But if the nous is illuminated, which means that it has the Holy Spirit within it, then the whole mind is a mind of spirit and, of course, a mind of the Church. ~Metropolitan Hierotheos, \textit{The Mind of the Orthodox Church}

\textbf{St. Jerome}: A priest, theologian, and translator, Jerome (A.D. c. 347-420) is most famous for translating the Bible into Latin, now called the Vulgate from the Latin phrase \textit{versio vulgata}, which means commonly used version. Commemorated in the East on June 15; in the West on Sep. 30.
an assumption is sound and helpful. But it is dangerous to make of it the starting point or basis of our “theology of Church history,” or even of our theology of the Church. Indeed, the Age of the Apostles should retain its unique position. Yet, it was just a beginning. It is widely assumed that the “Age of the Fathers” has also ended, and accordingly it is regarded just as an ancient formation, “antiquated” in a sense and “archaic.” The limit of the “Patristic Age” is variously defined. It is usual to regard St. John of Damascus as the “last Father” in the East, and St. John of Damascus: Born in Damascus where he later served as Chief Administrator to the Muslim caliph before departing for monastic life near Jerusalem, St. John (c. A.D. 675-749) was called Chrysorhoas (Greek for “streaming with gold”) for the beauty of his writings. His poetic eloquence is on display each year at Orthodox Easter services or at any Orthodox funeral service where his hymns continue to be sung. His most important works include his Three Treatises in Defense of Icons and his Fountain of Knowledge (Philosophical Chapters, On Heresies, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith). He is patron saint of Eighth Day Institute. Commemorated in the East on Dec. 4; in the West on March 27.
St. Gregory the Dialogist or Isidore of Seville as “the last” in the West. This periodization has been justly contested in recent times. Should not, for instance, St. Theodore the Studite, at

St. Gregory the Dialogist: Called St. Gregory the Great (c. A.D. 540-604) in the West, he served as Bishop of Rome from A.D. 590 until his death on March 12, 604. Famous for his Gregorian Mission to convert the Anglo-Saxons in England, his most important writings include: Morals on Job; Book of Pastoral Rule, a guide for pastoral care influenced by earlier works of St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom; Homilies on Ezekiel, the Gospels, and the Song of Songs; and the Dialogues, which include the life of St. Benedict of Nursia (c. A.D. 480-547), the founder of Benedictine monasticism. Based on these Dialogues, the Orthodox Church calls him the Dialogist; they also attribute to him a more penitential Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts that is used each year during Great Lent. Commemorated in East and West on Mar. 12.

St. Isidore of Seville: Described as “the last scholar of the ancient world,” St. Isidore (c. A.D. 560-636) helped convert the Visigothic kings. He is famous for his Etymologiae, an etymological encyclopedia that preserved extracts from many classic works. Commemorated in East and West on April 4.

St. Theodore the Studite: St. Theodore (A.D. 759-826) was born in Constantinople to a wealthy family who controlled most of the imperial administration’s finances. Remarkably, in 781 his entire family resigned and sailed to their family estate in Bithynia to transform it into a monastery, following the model of St. Basil the Great. Eventually Arab raids forced Theodore and his monastic community to return to Constantinople where in 797 the Empress Irene offered him the leadership of the ancient Stoudios Monastery. He accepted and initiated a great revival of monasticism: he built a library, a scriptorium, and various workshops for financial support; he established order by composing poems on monastic duties and he wrote a rule for life in the community; and he beautified the monastery with icons, becoming a great defender of icons during the second phase of iconoclasm. He is credited with making the first recorded public opposition to slavery. Commemorated in the East on Nov. 11; in the West on Nov. 12.

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least, be included among “the Fathers”? The French Benedictine monk and scholar Dom Jean Mabillon has suggested that Bernard of Clairvaux, the Mellifluous Doctor, was “the last of the Fathers, and surely not unequal to the earlier ones.” Actually, it is more than a question of periodization. From the Western point of view “the Age of the Fathers” has been succeeded, and indeed superseded, by “the Age of the Schoolmen,” which was an essential step forward. Since the rise of Scholasticism “Patristic theology” has been antiquated, has become actually a “past age,” a kind of archaic prelude. This point of view, legitimate for the West, has been, most unfortunately, accepted also by many in the East, blindly and uncritically. Accordingly, one has to face the alternative. Either one has to regret the “backwardness” of the East which never developed any “Scholasticism” of its own. Or one should retire into the “Ancient Age,” in

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: The first Abbot of Clairvaux and reformer of 12th-century Benedictine monasticism, which created the Cistercian order, St. Bernard (A.D. 1090-1153) helped reestablish lectio divina (Latin for divine reading), an ancient form of meditatively reading Scripture. His writings include The Steps of Humility and Pride, On Grace and Free Choice, On Loving God, The Life and Death of St. Malachy, Bishop of Ireland, many letters, and sermons (e.g., On the Song of Songs and On the Liturgical Year). He is Dante’s last guide in the Divine Comedy. Pope Pius VIII called him the “Mellifluous Doctor” for his eloquence (mellifluous: sweet or musical; pleasant to hear; from Latin words: 1) mel: honey; and 2) fluere: to flow). Commemorated in the West on Aug. 20.
a more or less archeological manner, and practice what has been wittily described recently as a “theology of repetition.” The latter, in fact, is just a peculiar form of imitative “scholasticism.”

Scholasticism: Derived from the Latin word *scholasticus* (borrowed from the same word in Greek), which signifies a scholar or one who studies. Scholasticism was a system of theology and philosophy taught in medieval universities from the 12th to the 16th centuries. Based on Aristotelian logic and the writings of the early Christian Fathers, it emphasized dialectical reasoning to resolve contradictions. After critically reading a given work and any related documents and commentaries, all disagreements or contradictions would be noted as *sententiae* (sentences). Then, through philological and logical analysis, a synthesis would be sought. All of this would be compiled into *questionae* (questions) with all the pros and cons listed, and a *summae* (summary) as a complete summary of all the questions. Scholasticism can be characterized in at least six ways: 1) it accepted Christian orthodoxy; 2) it preferred Aristotle over Plato; 3) it recognized disagreement about universals between Aristotle and Plato and sought to resolve it; 4) it extolled dialectical thinking and syllogistic reasoning; 5) it accepted the distinction between natural and revealed theology; and 6) it disputed everything in minute detail.

Patristic Note (continued on pg. 25): At some risk of oversimplification, it might be said that in the West from the 12th century the theologian has appealed primarily to reason and argument, to logical proofs. Needless to say, Eastern theologians also employ deductive reasoning, but for most of them the main emphasis lies elsewhere—in an appeal to Tradition: Tradition as embodied in the Fathers and conciliar canons; Tradition as expressed also in the experience of the saints and holy men living in our own time. The Latin scholastics also revered the authority of the Fathers, and there may well be a higher proportion of citations from Dionysius the Areopagite in the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas than in the *Triads* of Palamas. But the Latins analyzed Patristic texts, arguing, questioning and distinguishing, in a way that most Greeks did not. Theology became a “science” for the medieval Latins, in a way that it never was for the early Greek Fathers and their Byzantine successors. ~Kallistos Ware, “Scholasticism and Orthodoxy”
Now, it is not seldom suggested that, probably, “the Age of the Fathers” has ended much earlier than St. John of Damascus. Very often one does not proceed further than the Age of Justinian, or even already the Council of Chalcedon. Was not Leontius of Byzantium already “the first of the Scholastics”? Psychologically, 

**Age of Justinian**: During this first golden age of the Byzantine Empire (A.D. 518-602), the reign of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565) was particularly significant. Under his military leadership the empire expanded and regained lost western territories. The arts thrived: he rebuilt the capital’s famous cathedral *Hagia Sophia* (Holy Wisdom); the production of icons burgeoned (some of the earliest surviving icons on wood panels were produced during his reign; now mostly located at the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, they are some of the only examples of portable icon panels to have survived the 8th and 9th cent. Iconoclastic Controversy). He is responsible for the uniform rewriting of Roman law in the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Body of Civil Law), which is foundational for the Western legal tradition. Finally, the Orthodox Church recognizes him as St. Justinian the Great for his role in upholding the Christological doctrines of Chalcedon. Commemorated on Nov. 14.

**Council of Chalcedon**: This 4th Ecumenical Council (A.D. 451) continued clarifying the nature and personhood of Jesus Christ and addressed the visible organization of the Church. Against the monophysite heresy (from Greek words *monos*: only or single; and *physis*: nature), which insisted on a single nature in Christ, the Council proclaimed: “while Christ is a single, undivided person, He is not only from two natures but in two natures.” The Council also established the Church of Constantinople (New Rome) as equal in honor with “Old” Rome and gave Jerusalem fifth place in honor, thereby creating a Pentarchy, or “Rule of Five” churches: 1-2) Rome & Constantinople; 3) Alexandria; 4) Antioch; 5) Jerusalem.

**Leontius of Byzantium**: A Christian monk during the reign of Emperor Justinian I, Leontius (A.D. 485-543) has been called the first scholastic for introducing Aristotelian definitions into his theology, hence earning the epithet “Scholasticus.” He defended Chalcedonian dyophysitism (from Greek words *dyo*: two; and *physis*: nature), which affirmed the two natures of Christ: divine and human.
this attitude is quite comprehensible, although it cannot be theo-
logically justified. Indeed, the Fathers of the Fourth century are
much more impressive, and their unique greatness cannot be
denied. Yet, the Church remained fully alive also after Nicaea and
Chalcedon. The current overemphasis on the “first five centuries”
dangerously distorts theological vision, and prevents the right
understanding of the Chalcedonian dogma itself. The decree of
the Sixth Ecumenical Council is often regarded as a kind of
“appendix” to Chalcedon, interesting only for theological spe-

Nicaea: An ancient city where the First and Seventh Ecumenical Councils
convened. Florovsky is here referring to the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea
in A.D. 325. Led by St. Athanasius, this council affirmed the full divinity of
Christ against the Arian heresy, which the priest Arius was promulgating
through his popular jingle: “There was a time when the Son was not.”

Sixth Ecumenical Council: Also referred to as the Third Council of Con-
stantinople (A.D. 680-681), this council continued the work of clarifying the
personhood of Christ. Building on the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which af-
firmed the two natures of Christ against monophysitism, this council af-
firmed both the two energies and the two wills of Christ against monener-
gism (from Greek words monos: one and energeia: energy) and monothelitism
(from monos: one; and theletes: one that wills).
cialists, and the great figure of St. Maximus the Confessor is almost completely ignored. Accordingly, the theological significance of the Seventh Ecumenical Council is dangerously obscured, and one is left to wonder, why the Feast of Orthodoxy should be related to the commemoration of the Church’s victory over the Iconoclasts. Was it not just a “ritualistic controversy”? We often forget that the famous formula of the Consensus quinquiesecularis (consensus of five centuries), that is, actually, up to Chalcedon, was a Protestant formula, and reflected a peculiar

St. Maximus the Confessor: A brilliant monk-theologian, Maximus (c. A.D. 580-662) is one of the greatest of all the Church Fathers. His most important achievement was his theological correction of Origen and Evagrius Ponticus (both condemned in A.D. 553 at the Fifth Ecumenical Council). He was also deeply involved in the Christological controversies leading up to the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Just thirty-one years before that council, he played a key role in the Lateran Council (A.D. 649), which Pope Martin had called to defeat monothelitism. Maximus was persecuted for his Christological positions: his tongue and right hand, the instruments of articulating his theology (orally and textually), were mutilated, earning him the title Confessor (conferred upon those saints who have suffered for their witness to the faith, but not unto death as a martyr). He died in exile on Aug. 13, 662. Commemorated in East and West on both January 21 and August 13.

Feast of Orthodoxy: Although the Seventh Ecumenical Council had already affirmed the use of icons after the first round of iconoclasm (A.D. 726-787), a second wave broke out in 814, lasting until its ultimate defeat in 843 at the Synod of Constantinople. At the conclusion of that council’s first session, on March 11, a triumphal procession was made from its meeting quarters at the Church of Blachernae to Hagia Sophia. The Synod decreed an annual feast for the anniversary of that day. It has been celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent every year since then as a celebration of icons and their affirmation of the incarnation and as a triumph over heresies.
Protestant “theology of history.” It was a restrictive formula, as much as it seemed to be too inclusive to those who wanted to be secluded in the Apostolic Age. The point is, however, that the current Eastern formula of “the Seven Ecumenical Councils” is hardly much better, if it tends, as it usually does, to restrict or to limit the Church’s spiritual authority to the first eight centuries, as if “the Golden Age” of Christianity has already passed and we are now, probably, already in an Iron Age, much lower on the scale of spiritual vigor and authority. Our theological thinking has been dangerously affected by the pattern of decay, adopted for the interpretation of Christian history in the West since the Reformation. The fullness of the Church was then interpreted in a static manner, and the attitude to Antiquity has been accordingly distorted and misconstrued. After all, it does not make much difference, whether we restrict the normative authority of the Church to one century, or to five, or to eight. There should be no restriction at all. Consequently, there is no room for any “theology of repetition.” The Church is still fully authoritative as she has been in the ages past, since the Spirit of Truth quickens her now no less effectively as in the ancient times.

**Byzantine theology:** Florovsky says it “is organically related to the original deposit of the truth of the faith; it is a Biblical theology and not a fabrication of sophistry; it was dealing with burning issues of the Christian faith and of Christian life. The beginning of Byzantinism is not the beginning of a new Christianity. Rather it is the legitimate heir of the legacy of the New Testament, of early Christianity, of the Apostolic Fathers, of the Fathers of the Church.” According to Fr. John Meyendorff, it “comes into being during the post-Chalcedonian period. It would receive official sanction under Justinian and expression in the balanced synthesis of Maximus the Confessor.”

One of the immediate results of our careless periodization is that we simply ignore the legacy of Byzantine theology. We are pre-
pared, now more than only a few decades ago, to admit the perennial authority of “the Fathers,” especially since the revival of Patristic studies in the West. But we still tend to limit the scope of admission, and obviously “Byzantine theologians” are not readily counted among the “Fathers.” We are inclined to discriminate rather rigidly between “Patristics”—in a more or less narrow sense—and “Byzantinism.” We are still inclined to regard “Byzantinism” as an inferior sequel to the Patristic Age. We have still doubts about its normative relevance for theological thinking. Now, Byzantine theology was much more than just a “repetition” of Patristic theology, nor was that which was new in it of an inferior quality in comparison with “Christian Antiquity.” Indeed, Byzantine theology was an organic continuation of the Patristic Age. Was there any break? Has the ethos of the Eastern Orthodox Church been ever changed, at a certain historic point or date, which, however, has never been unanimously identified, so that the “later” development was of lesser authority and importance, if of any? This admission seems to be silently implied in the restrictive commitment to the Seven Ecumenical Councils. Then, St. Symeon the New Theologian

St. Symeon the New Theologian:
One of three saints given the title “Theologian” (the other two are St. John the Apostle and St. Gregory Nazianzus), Symeon (A.D. 949-1022) was a Byzantine poet and monk. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, a life of obedience, and submission to a spiritual father, Symeon insisted that everyone can and should have a direct experience of God, or “mystical union,” as he frequently describes it. He often speaks of his own experience of God as divine light. Commemorated March 12.
and **St. Gregory Palamas** are simply left out, and the great **Hesychast Councils** of the fourteenth century are ignored and forgotten. What is their position and authority in the Church?

**St. Gregory Palamas**: A monk on Mt. Athos and later Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Gregory (c. A.D. 1296-1357) practiced and taught an ancient form of prayer called hesychasm (from the Greek word *hesychia*: stillness, rest, silence). A controversy over this form of prayer erupted in the 1330s between St. Gregory and Barlaam of Calabria, an Italian Orthodox scholar and monk. Through the use of the body (breathing and posture) in conjunction with the repetition of the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”), Palamas believed one can achieve union with God, experiencing Him as the “uncreated light” that was manifested to the disciples at the Lord’s Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. Gregory responded to Barlaam’s attack on hesychasm by writing three sets of three treatises: *Triads for the Defense of Those Who Practice Holy Hesychia*. Gregory’s teaching was accepted by an Athonite synod (1340-1341), and then affirmed once and for all at the **Hesychast Councils**. Commemorated in the East on Nov. 14 and on the Second Sunday of Great Lent (as a continuation of the Triumph of Orthodoxy celebrated on the First Sunday as a victory over heresy).

**Mount Athos**: A peninsula in northeastern Greece, Mt. Athos is called the “Holy Mountain.” Monks have inhabited it since at least the fourth century. We know Athonite monks participated in the Seventh Ecumenical Council (A.D. 787) and in the ninth century Emperor Basil I proclaimed it a place exclusively for monks. Today there are twenty Orthodox Christian monasteries with over 2,000 Orthodox monks carrying on the hesychastic tradition.

**Hesychast Councils**: The hesychastic controversy between Barlaam and Palamas required a church council to settle the dispute. Over the course of a decade (A.D. 1341-1351), six councils were held in Constantinople. St. Gregory’s teaching was affirmed and Barlaam’s was condemned (Barlaam went on to convert to Roman Catholicism). Collectively, these councils are known by various names: Hesychast Councils, Palamite Councils, Fifth Council of Constantinople, and the Ninth Ecumenical Council (the Orthodox Church accords them the authority of an ecumenical council).
Now, in fact, St. Symeon and St. Gregory are still authoritative masters and inspirers of all those who, in the Orthodox Church, are striving after perfection, and are living the life of prayer and contemplation, whether in the surviving monastic communities, or in the solitude of the desert, and even in the world. These faithful people are not aware of any alleged “break” between “Patristics” and “Byzantinism.” The *Philokalia*, this great encyclopedia of Eastern piety, which includes writings of many centuries, is, in our own days, increasingly becoming the manual of guidance and instruction for all those who are eager to practice *Orthodoxy* in our contemporary situation. The authority of its

*Philokalia*: From the Greek words: *philía*: love; and *kallos*: beauty. The word *philokalia* first appears in Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150 - c. 215) and simply meant a love for what is beautiful. In the fourth century St. Gregory the Theologian and St. Basil the Great compiled their own *Philokalia* with passages from Origen, mainly focused on the principles of scriptural exegesis. So there is a long tradition of compiling collections of biblical texts, sayings and deeds from the Desert Fathers, and other patristic passages. As Fr. Andrew Louth suggests, they “were made by individual monks as an aid to their life of prayer and contemplation: they were texts to meditate upon.” The three most common versions of the *Philokalia* today include: 1) an English translation based on the Greek version assembled in 1782 by St. Makarios of Corinth and St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain; 2) a Russian edition, published in 1877 by St. Theophane the Recluse, based on the original Slavonic version compiled by St. Paisy Velichovsky in 1793; and 3) a twentieth-century Romanian edition published by Fr. Dumitru Staniloae from 1946-1990, which doubled in size with the addition of patristic writings not contained in either the Greek or Russian editions and extensive commentary by Staniloae.
compiler, St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, has been recently recognized and enhanced by his formal canonization in the Church. In this sense, we are bound to say, “the Age of the Fathers” still continues in “the Worshipping Church.” Should it not continue also in our theological pursuit and study, research and instruction? Should we not recover “the mind of the Fathers” also in our theological thinking and teaching? To recover it, indeed, not as an archaic manner or pose, and not just as a venerable relic, but as an existential attitude, as a spiritual orientation. Only in this way can our theology be reintegrated into the fullness of our Christian existence. It is not enough to keep a “Byzantine Liturgy,” as we do, to restore Byzantine iconography and Byzantine music, as we are still reluctant to do consistently, and to practice certain Byzantine modes of devotion. One has to go to the very roots of this traditional “piety,” and to recover the “Patristic mind.” Otherwise we may be in danger of being inwardly split—as many in our midst actually are—between the “traditional” forms of “piety” and a very untraditional habit of theological thinking. It is a real danger. As “worshippers” we are still in “the tradition of the Fathers.” Should we not stand, conscientiously and avowedly, in the same tradition also as “theologians,” as witnesses and teachers of Orthodoxy? Can we retain our integrity in any other way?

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Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain: Nicholas Kallivourtzis (A.D. 1749-1809) abandoned the world in 1775 to become a monk on Mt. Athos. He received the new name Nicodemos upon being tonsured a monk (from Latin word tonsura: clipping, shearing; the sacramental practice of clipping hair is part of the baptismal and monastic initiation rites). He helped restore traditional Orthodox practices and led a revival of patristics by compiling the Philokalia and the works of St. Symeon the New Theologian and St. Gregory Palamas. Commemorated in the East on July 14.
“A faith without miracles is no more than a philosophical system.” Bishop Nikolai’s words express the reaction of many Byzantines when confronted with medieval Scholasticism. They felt that the appeal to the saints, to the miraculous action of God as experienced by holy men, had been forgotten, and that Latin theology had become altogether too philosophical and rationalistic, too dependent on merely human modes of thought and methods of argument, had grown altogether too self-confident, and was insufficiently sensitive to the necessary limitations of all human language and conceptual thinking. In the Latin West, so it seemed to many Greeks, everything is cut down to size and classified according to man-made categories; the mystical and apophatic aspect of theology is too little appreciated. This is the complaint of Patriarch Nektarios of Jerusalem in the mid-17th century: “You have expelled, so it seems to us, the mystical element from theology…. In your theology there is nothing that lies outside speech or beyond the scope of inquiry, nothing wrapped round with silence and guarded by piety; everything is discussed…. There is no cleft in the rock to confine you when you confront the spectacle on which none may gaze; there is no hand of the Lord to cover you when you contemplate His glory (Ex. 33.22-23).”

But, it may be objected, is Latin Scholasticism really as unmystical and anti-apophatic as Patriarch Nektarios alleges? Did not Thomas Aquinas affirm, “God is known as unknown,” and does he not quote repeatedly from the Areopagitic writings? True; but that does not automatically make Thomas into an apophatic theologian in the Eastern sense. It is necessary to assess the way in which he understood Dionysius, the theological context in which his Areopagitic citations are placed, and the part which they play in his argument. Is the Dionysius of Thomas the same as that of Maximus or Palamas? As Archpriest George Florovsky has so justly pointed out: “It is misleading to single out certain propositions, dogmatic or doctrinal, and to abstract them from the total perspective in which they are meaningful and valid. It is a
dangerous habit to handle ‘quotations’ from the Fathers and even the Scriptures, outside of the total structure of faith, in which only they are truly alive. ‘To follow the Fathers’ does not mean simply to quote their sentences. It means to acquire their mind, their phronema. The Orthodox Church claims to have preserved this phronema and to have theologized ad mentum Patrum.” Our question, then, is this: How far has Aquinas preserved this phronema? When he appeals to the Mystical Theology of Dionysius and to other apophatic texts, is he truly theologizing ad mentem Patrum?

I recall a conversation which I once overheard between two Anglicans, both ardently pro-Orthodox, the one a Patristic specialist and the other a philosopher. Replying to a point made by the philosopher, the Patristic specialist exclaimed: “We don’t want that kind of Latin logic.” “There’s no such thing as Latin logic,” the philosopher retorted. “There’s good logic and bad logic.”

In vindication of the Scholastics, should it not be said that their use of syllogisms and philosophical categories is no more than an attempt to think clearly and to speak coherently? While there is a place in theological discourse for paradox and poetry, there is no place for mere inarticulateness and mental laziness. The mysterious has a vital role to play, but that is no excuse for muddle and mystification. If God has given man powers of reasoning, must he not use them to the full, and is this not exactly what the Latin Scholastics were aiming to do? When they employed distinctions and technical terms taken from Aristotle or other philosophers, this was as an aid to lucid thinking. What is wrong in that?

Such a line of defense, while in itself legitimate, fails to answer the main concern. The employment of human logic is not deplored as such but the failure to allow for its limitations, and the failure to recognize the unique character of the subject matter of theology. The problem is applying discursive reasoning to fields where it should play only a secondary role, strictly subservient to a “synthetic perception” of reality, to an intuitive and mystical awareness of the Divine. There is no objection to the use of philosophy as a tool; the Greek Fathers employed it in this way. But in the case of Latin Scholasticism, the tool has become a determining standard; the servant has become the master.
A PRAYER TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain

O beginningless Word, who received Thy hypostasis before the ages from the Father, who is without beginning, Thou who art true God from God, strengthen my mind and my tongue that it may exalt Thy saving and fearful name and make me worthy to praise Thee according to God and say:

O Jesus, the only supersubstantial essence, I praise Thee who art higher than every thesis or superior abstraction.

O Jesus, the only inconceivable hypostasis, I praise Thee who art higher than every affirmation or negation.

O Jesus, the one consubstantial with the Father and with the Spirit, I thank Thee, for Thou hast granted me the unsearchable wealth of the knowledge of Thee.

O Jesus, the most-perfect perfection, I thank Thee for all Thy benevolences to me, both right and left.

O Jesus, the limitless Divinity, I confess to Thee, for as a man I have sinned, but Thou as God hast mercy.

O Jesus, the infinite majesty, I, the infinitely small one, confess to Thee, that I have grieved and I do grieve Thy Holy Spirit.

O Jesus, the most-good goodness, I have done no good before Thee; but grant me that I may set up a beginning because of Thy goodness.

O Jesus, the only inaccessible Power, strengthen me, the weak one, that the enemy may be scared of me because of Thy power in me.

O Jesus, the only unsearchable Wisdom, make me wise that I may easily escape the devices of the inventor of evil.

O Jesus, the pre-eternal Righteousness, direct my steps on the middle road of virtue and not in excess or deficiency.

O Jesus, nameless God, teach me how to do Thy good, pleasing, and perfect will.

O Jesus, Word with infinite names, show me what and how I should ask from Thee my requests.

O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me.
Ancient Prayers for Every Occasion

A Morning Prayer: Arising from sleep I thank Thee, O Holy Trinity, because of the abundance of Thy goodness and long-suffering Thou wast not wroth with me, slothful and sinner as I am; neither hast Thou destroyed me in my transgressions; but in Thy compassion raised me up, as I lay in despair; that at dawn I might sing the glories of Thy Majesty. Do Thou now enlighten the eyes of my understanding, open my mouth to receive Thy words, teach me Thy commandments, help me to do Thy will, and confessing Thee from my heart, singing and praising Thine All-holy Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Before Meals: O Christ our God, bless the food and drink of Thy servants, the hands that have prepared it, and those who will partake of it. Multiply it throughout the world for the poor. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

After Meals: We thank Thee, O Christ our God, that Thou hast satisfied us with Thy earthly gifts, deprive us not of Thy Heavenly Kingdom; but as Thou entered into the midst of Thy disciples, O Savior, and gave them peace, enter also among us and save us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

An Evening Prayer: O Christ our God, if during this day I have sinned, whether in word or deed or thought, forgive me all, for Thou art good and lovest mankind. Grant me peaceful and undisturbed sleep and deliver me from all influence and temptation of the evil one. Raise me up again in proper time that I may glorify Thee; for Thou art blessed with Thine Only-begotten Son and Thine All-holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define Tradition and describe the relationship of the Church to Tradition.

2. What does the term “Fathers” mean in reference to Church history?

3. How do “letter” and “Spirit” work together?

4. Define theology and then describe the relationship of theology and prayer: How is that relationship usually understood? How should it be understood?

5. What is the purpose of dogma?

6. How has our view of history been affected by a pattern of decay?

7. How might we learn to “acquire the mind of the Fathers”?

8. Select one saint who appeared in this text that caught your attention, and spend some time getting to know him or her by learning more about their life and/or by reading something they wrote. Then tell a friend or family member about the saint!
Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit for all things. Amen.