

# THE CHURCH PRAYS WITHOUT CEASING

## Special People Pray for Us



### Session Six

**Objective:** To give the participants an understanding of:

1. Church Militant and Church Triumphant
2. Who are the Saints
3. Intercession of the Saints on our behalf
4. Orthodox Monastic Life

**Items Needed:** Copies of worksheets, pencils, bibles, lined paper

Items in [\(blue\)](#) are notes for the Session Leader.

The symbol “→” indicates a question for the students.

Begin the Session with prayer to the Theotokos, *O Hail Mary, Full of Grace* (available on next page).

When you were Baptized and Chrismated, you became a member of the Holy Orthodox Church, the living Body of Jesus Christ. We here on earth are called the Church Militant because we are still striving each day to live according to God’s teachings and commandments. In

addition to those of us living in the Church today, this Body also includes all the righteous people who lived before us and are now living in the Kingdom of God, the Saints. Those in heaven are called the Church Triumphant because they have already fought the good fight and continue to pray for us. Together we make the Holy Orthodox Church. The Saints of the Church help us in two ways. When we learn about their lives of great faith and love of God, they become our role models...people we want to be like. But the Saints help us in another wonderful way: they pray to God for us. [\(Briefly discuss worldly role models compared to the saints. Ask them to list some of their role models or who society sees as a role model – maybe use the word hero. Do these role models help us to become better Christians – the Church Militant?\)](#)

The first of these people is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Mary is greater than all of the Saints; the Orthodox Church calls her “Theotokos” or “Birth-



giver of God.” She is the greatest “role model” that we Orthodox Christians have in our lives because she happily accepted God’s plan for Her life. She is the Mother to all Orthodox Christians and the greatest helper we have in bringing our prayers to God.

From Holy Scripture, we know that the first miracle that Jesus performed in public happened because Mary asked Him to help her friends. ([Read John 2:1-11](#)).

→ Mary, Jesus and His disciples were invited to ([a wedding](#)) in the town of ([Cana](#)). Mary told Jesus that the hosts ran out of ([wine](#)). She told the servants to ([do what Jesus said](#)). Jesus turned ([water](#)) into wine.

Of course, seeing a miracle performed is a marvelous thing that helped people believe that Jesus truly is the Son of God. But there is another wonderful thing we learn here: when Mary sees that people are in need, She asks Her Son to help them. She prays to God for all of us, and through her prayers we are saved! Because of His great love for His Mother, Jesus hears her and answers those prayers according to the will of His Father. Here is the most simple and fervent prayer to the Theotokos: “O Holy Birth-giver of God, Save Us!” ([Have the participants say the prayer together. Explain that we can say this prayer at any time of need.](#))

Every service in the Orthodox Church includes at least one prayer to the Theotokos, and we should remember her in our own private prayer. We thank her for giving herself to be a part of God’s plan for our salvation, we recognize her life as one to follow, and we ask her to pray for us. It’s very important that we understand and remember that Orthodox Christians don’t *worship* the Theotokos; worship is only for God in the Holy Trinity.

[Read Luke 1:28 and 1:42.](#)

→ Who said these verses? ([Archangel Gabriel](#)) and ([Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist](#)).

→ What does this tell us about Mary? ([both heaven and earth realize she is special](#))

Hail, Mary, full of grace  
the Lord is with you!  
Blessed are you among women  
and blessed is the fruit of your women  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

(You can learn to sing this prayer. There is a beautiful version in the Hymns of the Eastern Orthodox Church by the Ukrainian Orthodox League and may be found here [https://www.uocofusa.org/service\\_books](https://www.uocofusa.org/service_books) )

A little further in the same chapter Mary says a beautiful prayer thanking God. (Luke 1:46-55)

→ What does she predict about herself? ([“from henceforth all generations will call me blessed”](#))

Of course, this has come true!

The Theotokos is not the only one in God’s Kingdom who is praying for us. We also ask our guardian angel and all the saints to remember us in their prayers.

We can, and do, pray to *all* of the saints. There are also many saints to whom we pray in special times of need. ([See supplemental Resource: Take the time to go to the \*Praying with the Saints\* page and review some of the Saints that are prayed to for special reasons](#)). But each one of us should come to know and pray to our *patron saint*. You may have been born on the day when the Church remembers that saint, or you may be named after him or her. You may have been

given that saint's name at your Baptism and use that name when you receive Communion or participate in other Mysteries in the Church. [\(At this time see if there are any participants who converted at a later age and remember choosing their Patron Saint. Allow them some time to discuss how their Saint was chosen\).](#) If you don't know who your patron saint is, you can talk to your spiritual father and ask him to help you find one. As you learn about your patron saint's life, you will have a hero to follow and a very special friend praying to God for you. The simplest way to pray to your Patron Saint or any Saint is: *O Holy Saint (insert name), pray unto God for me a sinner.*

Explain that as they grow older, they may come to be close to several saints. They can talk to their parents about choosing a sainted family to whom the family prays together.

\*If time permits, you may also explain and discuss the words "glorify," "magnify," "venerate," and "intercede" and again remind the participants that *worship* belongs only to God.\*

Having the Theotokos, all the saints, and our guardian angels praying for us is a wonderful comfort, but the Church doesn't stop there. We've already talked about how we, in our own prayers, remember and *intercede* for many people and how the Church prays for us, as well. There are people who live in the world with us and have responsibilities that might keep them from attending church every day or fully praying all the daily services – that is why we pray FOR them.

There is a group of people within the Holy Orthodox Church who devote their entire lives to praying without ceasing. These men and women live in communities called *monasteries*, so they are called *monastics*. Monastics who are men are called "monks", and women monastics are called "nuns". Monastics give up the worldly life, so that they can dedicate themselves entirely to God through prayer, fasting, obedience, and good works. You may be thinking that we *all* are taught to pray, fast, obey, and do good works, and you're right. But monks and nuns work hard to perform these spiritual tasks constantly and more strongly than we can. They fast more often and

more strictly than we do, they obey the will of God by humbly obeying their spiritual elders. They may teach or care for the sick or needy, and they pray for us, even when we "forget:" or are too tired or are "too busy" or just can't find the words within ourselves.



Prayer is the first and most important job of the monastery. Monks and nuns spend several hours a day in church, praying the services of the Church. They also spend time in personal prayer. They work to master prayer without ceasing by learning to pray in their hearts at all times. Many monastics are able to pray the Jesus Prayer in this way, repeating it hundreds of times.

***O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.***

You may think that giving up worldly responsibilities and living in a religious community makes it easier for monastics to concentrate on prayer. But actually, their task

may often be more difficult. They still have many of the same responsibilities and problems that we all face.

→ Can you think of another problem that would affect the life of a monastery? ([Satan works his hardest to interrupt the lives of a group so dedicated to God.](#))

Many, many great saints of the Church have come from the monastic life. When we pray, we should always remember these men and women of God who keep us in their prayers constantly,

At some point you should explain that even though the children may know some priests who are monks, not all monks are priests and not all monastics live in monasteries for their entire lives.

**Silent Contemplation Time:** Scripture Reading on Self-Control - Wisdom of Sirach 18:29-32.

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**Supplemental Resources (next page)**

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# Saints Called Upon in Particular Needs

## Praying with the Saints

### **For Spiritual Help**

St. Ephraim the Syrian  
St. Alexis  
St. Seraphim of Sarov

### **For a Good End to One's Life**

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary  
St. Barbara  
Archangel Michael

### **For Brides and Happy Marriages**

St. Nicholas of Myra  
St. Joseph

### **For Eye Disorders**

St. Lucy  
Archangel Raphael  
St. Paraskevia

### **For Those Who are Chronically Ill**

St. Erasmus (St Elmo)

### **For Those with Stomach/Abdominal Illness**

St. Erasmus (St. Elmo)

### **For Those with Tuberculosis, Respiratory Illness, Patron of Physicians**

St. Panteleimon

### **For Those with Lethargy, Nervous Disorders (ADHD), Bites of Venomous or Rabid Animals**

St. Vitus

### **For Those Possessed by Evil Spirits**

St. Cyriacus  
St. Dennis of France

### **For Protection against Epilepsy, Panic Attacks and Nocturnal Terrors**

St. Giles

### **For Protection Against Fire**

St. Eustis  
St. Barbara

### **For Those With Pain in Loins and Legs**

St. Marina (Margaret)

### **For Those With Alzheimer's Disease**

St. Catherine of Alexandria

### **For Travelers**

St. Nicholas

### **For Those in Prison and Court Cases**

St. George the Great Martyr  
St. Simeon the God-receiver  
St. Dismas the Good Thief  
St. Barbara

### **For Help in Distress and Poverty**

St. Nicholas of Myra

### **For Finding Lost Objects**

St. Phanourios the Great Martyr  
St. Menas the Great Martyr of Egypt

### **For Deliverance from the Scourge of Anger**

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

### **For Mothers/Grandmothers**

St. Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary  
St. Eleutherius

### **For Fathers/Grandfathers**

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary  
St. Joachim, Father of the Virgin Mary

### **For Finding Employment**

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg

### **For Help in Studies**

St. Basil the Great  
St. John Chrysostom

### **For Good Marriages**

Martyrs Adrian and Natalia

### **For Meeting Difficult Situations/People**

St. David the Psalmist

### **For Teachers**

St. Catherine of Alexandria

