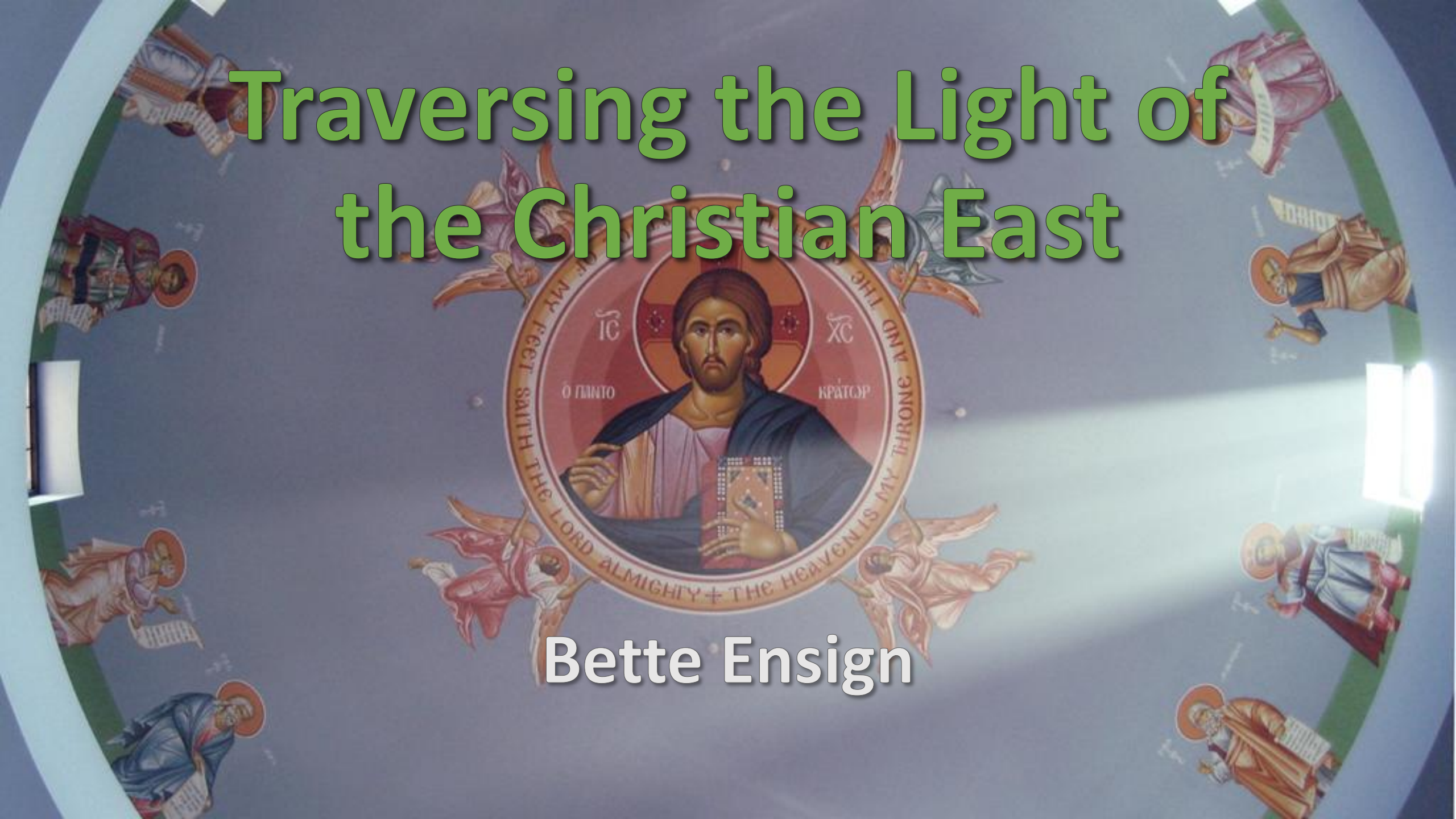


Traversing the Light of the Christian East

Bette Ensign



Traversing the Light of the Christian East

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- John 13:34-35

Traversing the Light of the Christian East

*"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless
those who curse you, do good to those who
hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use
you and persecute you."*

- Matthew 5:44



My Personal Journey

- Born in Burlington, NC
- Raised in a Presbyterian church
- So how did I become Eastern Orthodox?





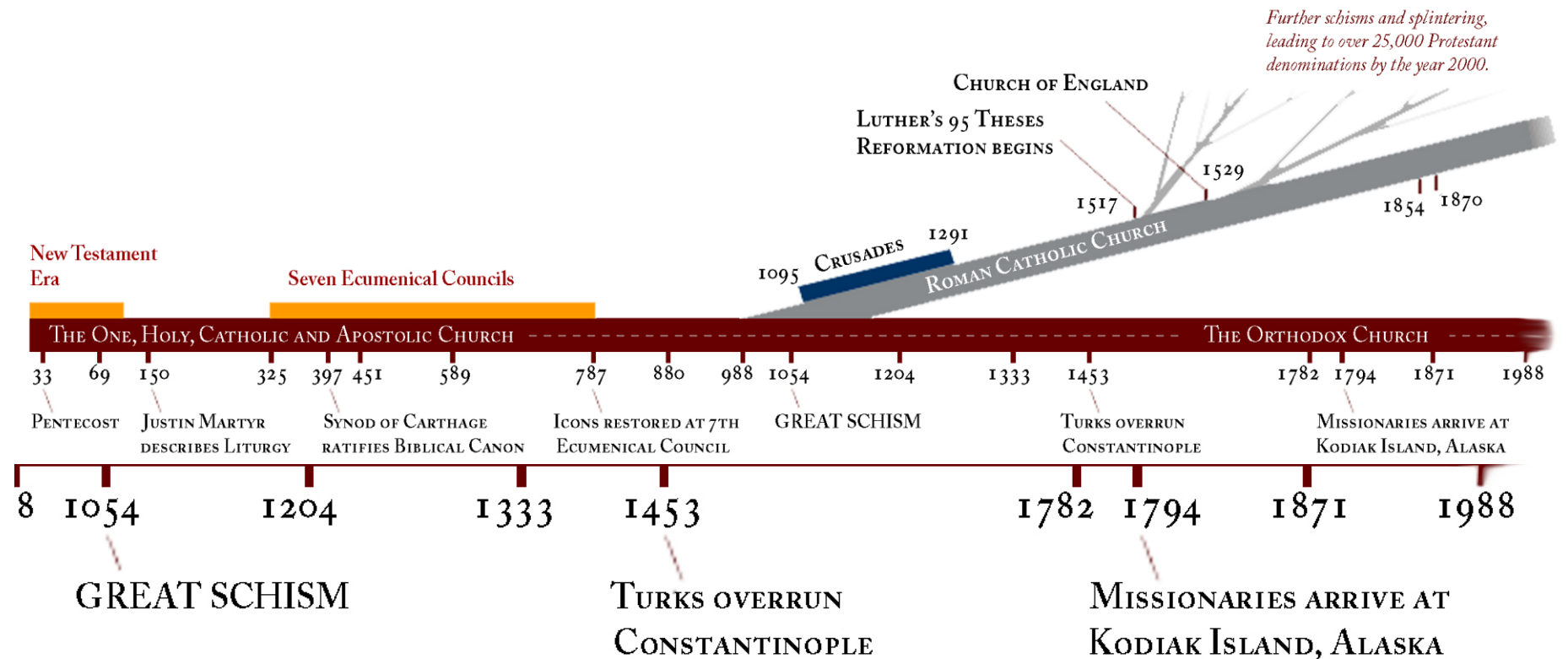
Virtues of Christian Mysticism

- Love & Compassion
- Wisdom & Understanding
- Humility & Honor
- Strength & Courage
- Clarity & Truth
- Power & Healing
- Light & Goodness

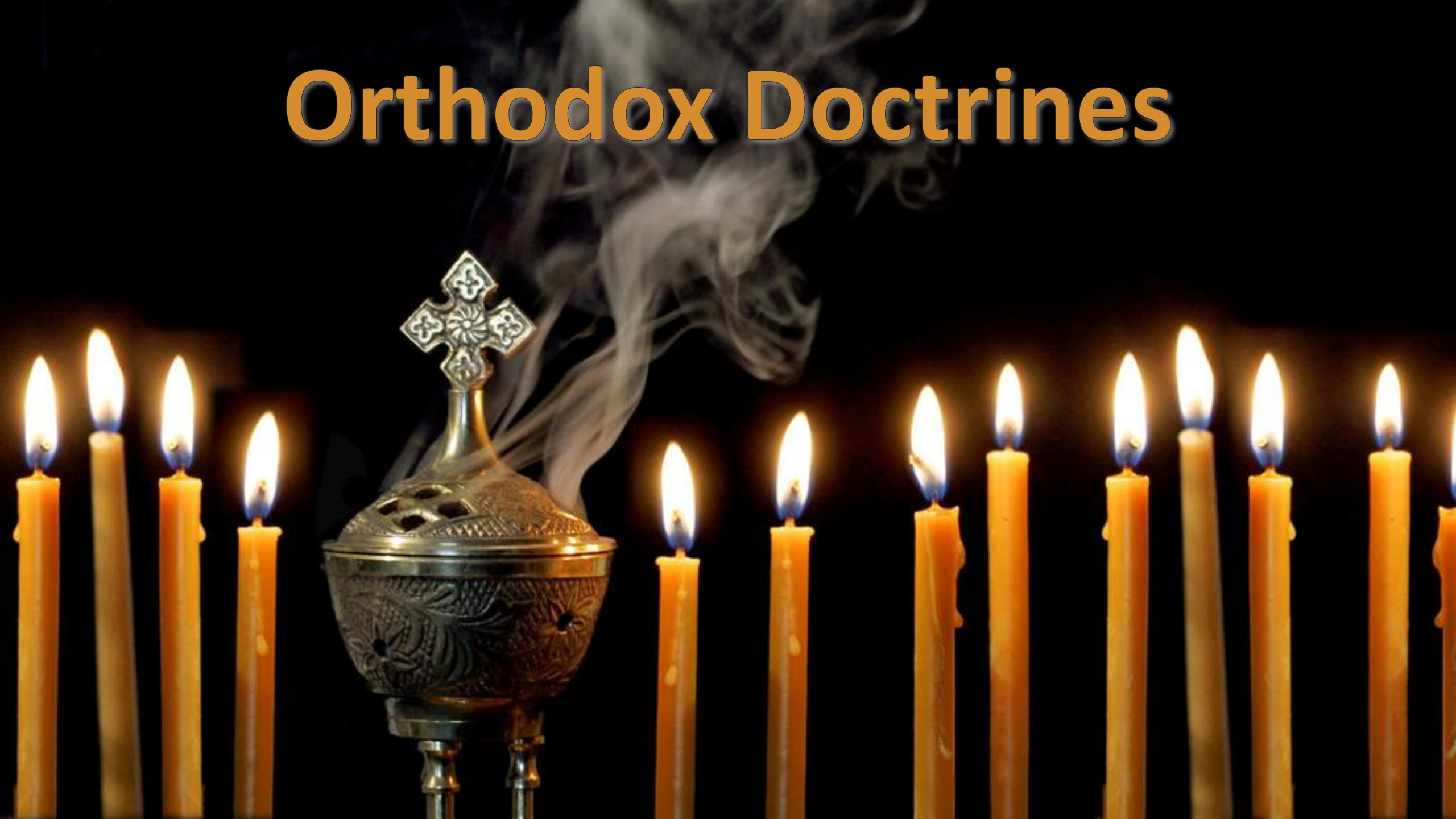
A Timeline of Church History

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*Further schisms and splintering,
leading to over 25,000 Protestant
denominations by the year 2000.*



Orthodox Doctrines



Orthodoxy

- Orthos - upright or proper
- Doxa - opinion or glory
- Consistent throughout the Church
- Western theology is academic
- The East emphasizes mystery



God

- One triune God
 - The Father
 - The Son
 - The Holy Spirit
- God is incomprehensible, incomparable and ineffable



Essence & Energies

- God exists in Essence
- God's Essence can never be known
- Divine Energies are the Actions of God
- God's Energies can be known & experienced

*"He who does not love, does not know God,
for God is love."*

- I John 4:8



Creation

- God created all things
- Logos is the Greek term for Word
- The Logos created the Creation by the Divine Energies



The Fall

- Broke God's harmony with Creation
- Adam chose to follow creation
- Adam's choice brought corruption & death to man
- Creation was created good and is redeemed by Christ



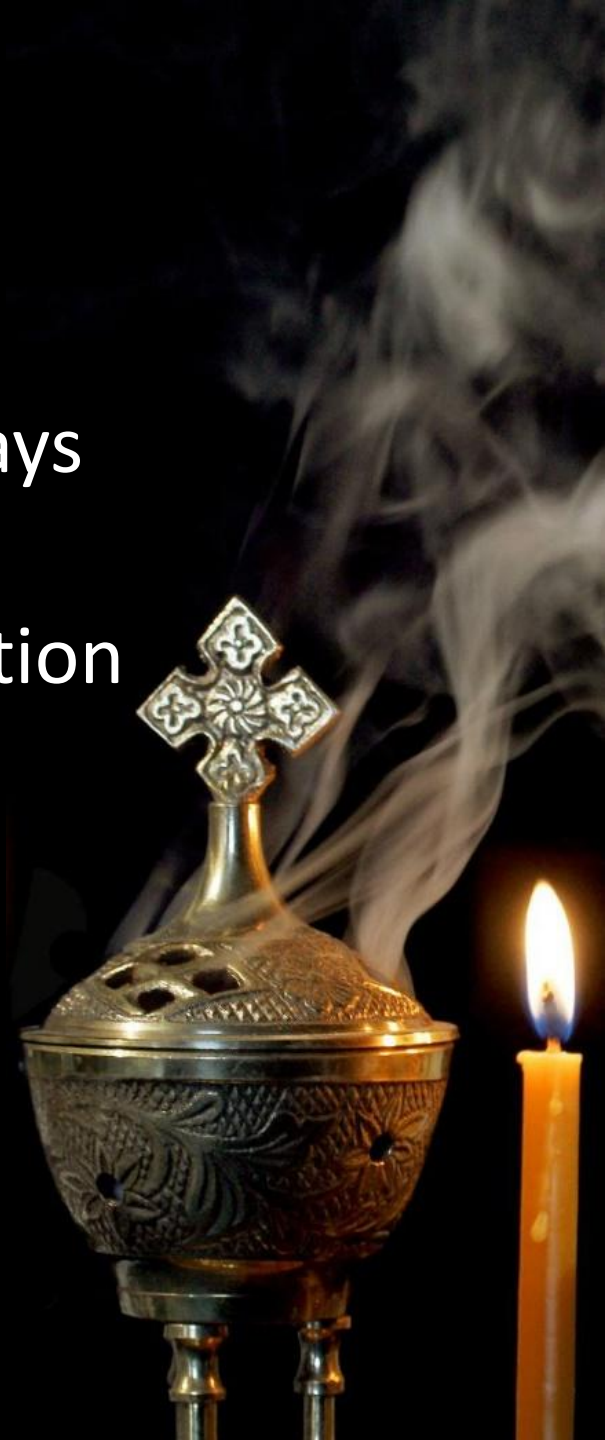
Human Beings

- Created both spiritual & material
- Human beings are:
 - Mediators
 - Personal beings
 - Endowed with freedom and responsibility
 - Created in the Image of God
- Death was the consequence of turning away from God



Salvation

- Synergy - Our participation moving toward God always being met by the Grace of God
- Focus is on God's healing rather than a legal transaction
- Salvation seen through many paradigms



Theosis

- Becoming a likeness of God
- Dynamic movement toward God
- A mystery of living in God & God living in us



Grace

- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Presence of the Divine Energies within us



The Orthodox Church





The Orthodox Church

- A communing & community Church
- Not individualistic
- These are some of the ways & practices of the Church...



Sacraments

- The Eucharist
- Baptism
- Chrismation
- Confession
- Marriage
- Holy Orders
- Anointing the Sick (Unction)



Liturgy

- From *leitourgia* - people in service to God
- The same in all Orthodox Churches
- The Eucharist is the heart of the Liturgy
- 12 Major Feasts - Celebrate all year!

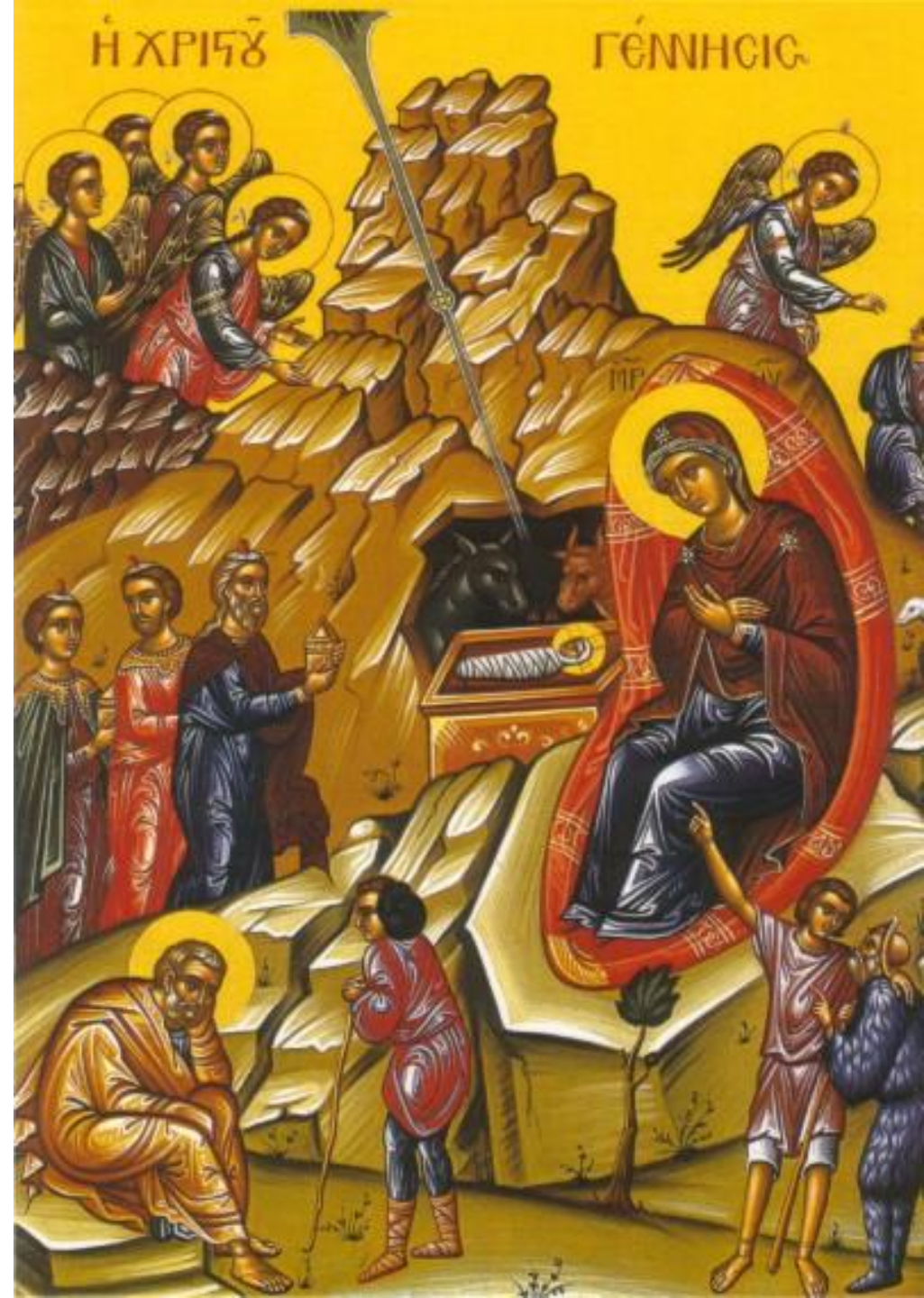
Major Feasts

- September 8th
 - The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos
- September 14th
 - The Universal Exaltation (Elevation) of the Life-Creating Cross
- November 21st
 - The Entrance (Presentation) of the Theotokos into the Temple



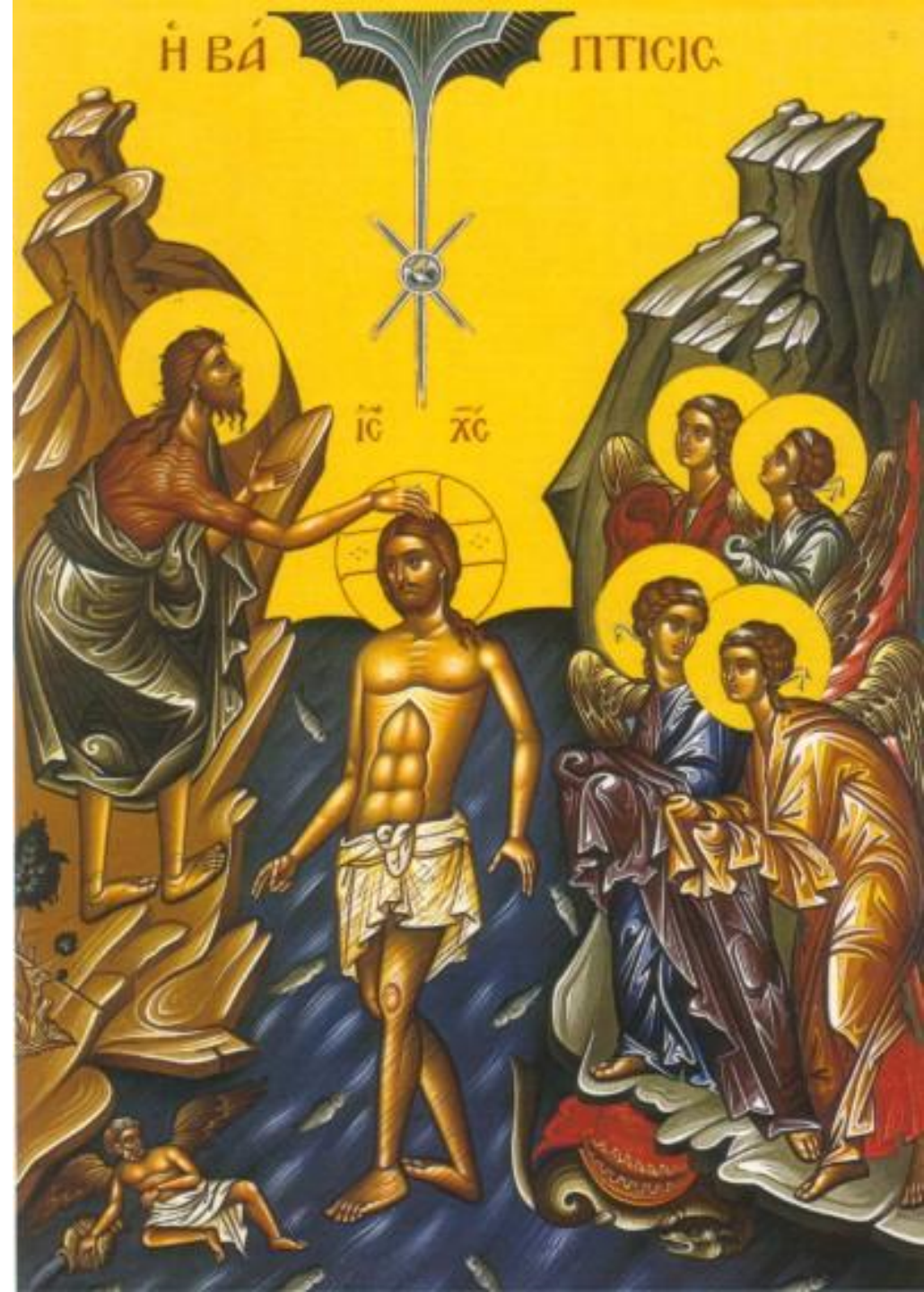
Major Feasts

- December 25th – The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Christmas)



Major Feasts

- January 6th – The Theophany (Epiphany) of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ



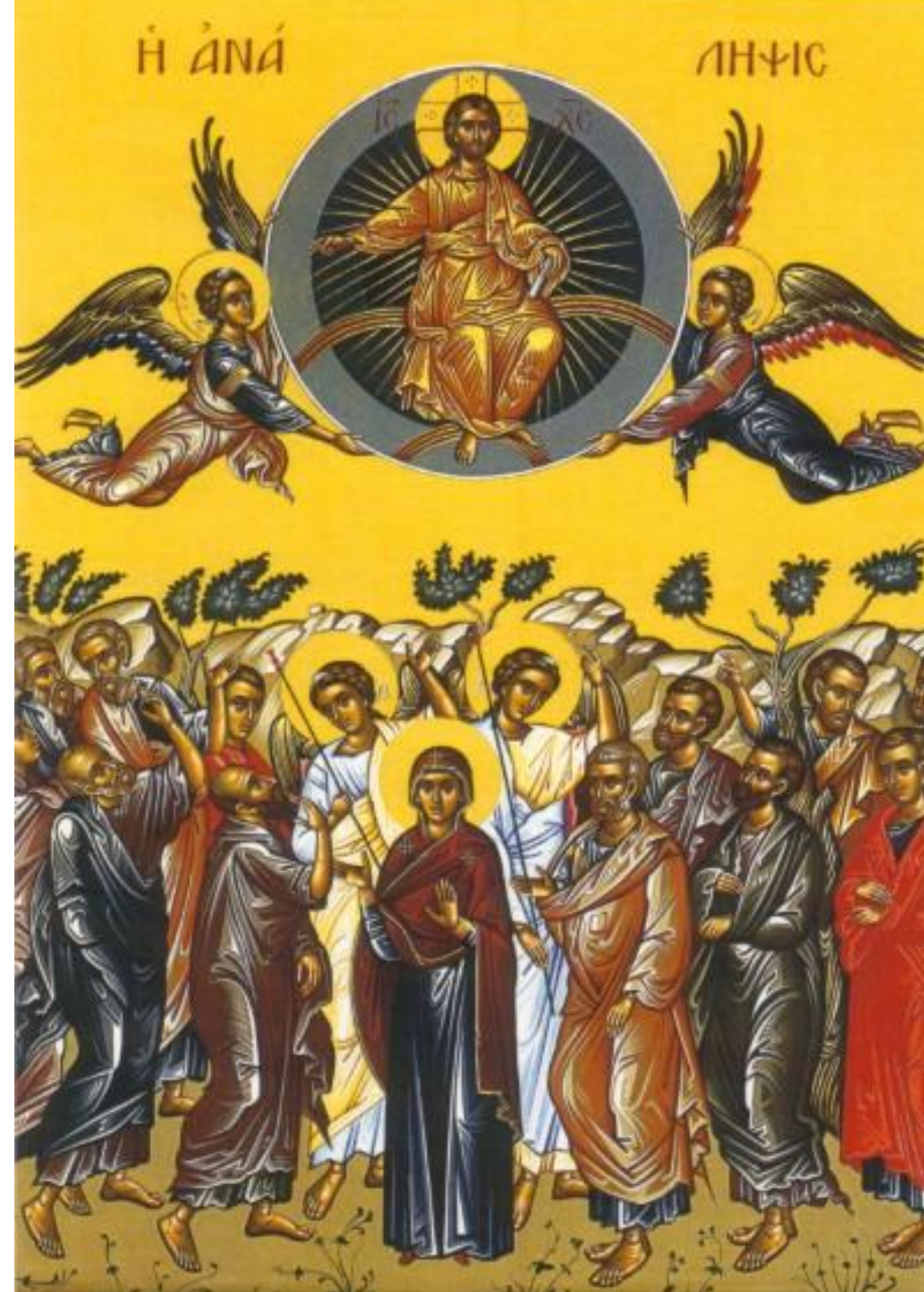
Major Feasts

- February 2nd
 - The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple
- March 25th
 - The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos
- Sunday before Pascha
 - The Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem



Major Feasts

- 40 Days after Pascha – The Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



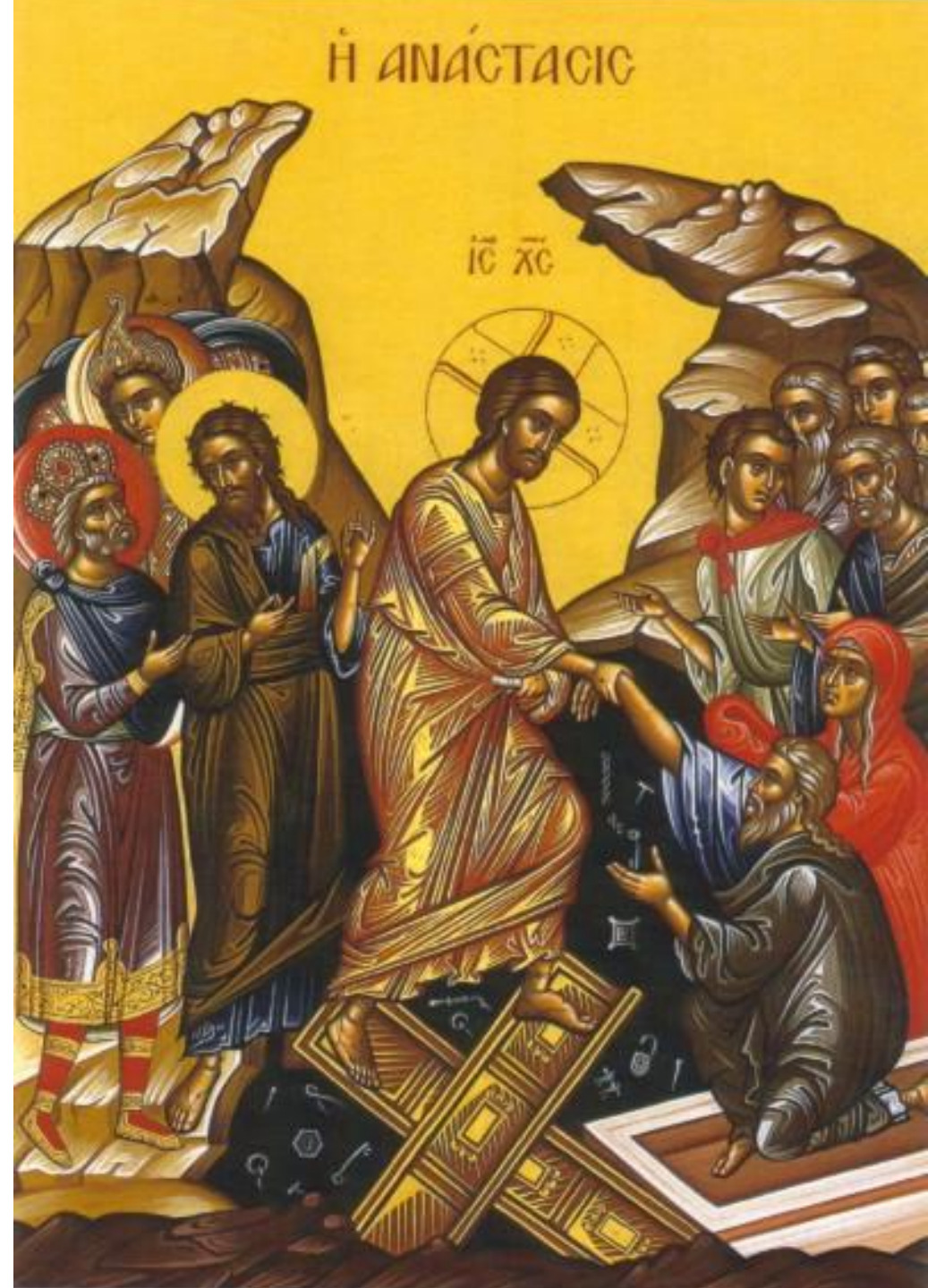
Major Feasts

- Fifty Days After Pascha
 - Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- August 6th
 - The Transfiguration of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ
- August 15th
 - The Falling-asleep (Dormition or Assumption) of the Most-Holy Theotokos



The Feast of Feast

- Pascha/The Resurrection
 - The Greatest Feast – time out of time





Icons

- From the Greek *eikon* meaning image
- Icons are not worshiped but venerated
- Icons teach theology & reverence
- Icons are scriptural



Icons

“We do not adore the icons, but rather we glorify the persons depicted and, at that, not as gods but as true servants and friends of God. Moreover, we make icons of God, I mean our Lord Jesus Christ, as He was seen on earth. Because the Father's Only-Begotten Son, God the Word, was incarnate of the spotless Virgin and Theotokos Mary, we paint Him according to His humanity and not His bodiless divinity.”

- From the 7th ecumenical council [787 AD]



Icons

“Among the saints we find a variety of personalities and ways of life: married and unmarried, martyrs and ascetics, kings and bishops, rich and poor, intellectuals and simpletons. Some were chaste all their lives, others committed many sexual sins; some committed more terrible sins than many of us ever have, yet they became far holier than the most virtuous of us. For every person there is a saint to give us hope, a reminder that sainthood is a real possibility for us too.”

- Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou



Scripture

- Compiled by the Ecumenical Councils
- A record of revelation
- Not to be interpreted individualistically



Scripture

“Knowing this first; that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

- 2 Peter 1:20-21



Scripture & Tradition

- Tradition - the life of the Holy Spirit in the church
- Scripture under the umbrella of tradition
- Scripture & tradition are not dualistic

Church Type	Theological Method
Orthodoxy	Scripture <i>in</i> Tradition
Catholicism	Tradition <i>over</i> Scripture
Protestant Reformation	Scripture <i>over</i> Tradition
Protestant Evangelicalism	Scripture <i>without</i> Tradition

A photograph of a church interior. In the foreground, a large, lit red candle is visible. To its left, a golden candelabra holds several other lit candles. In the background, there is a religious painting or icon on the wall, and a small arched window letting in light.

Scripture & Tradition

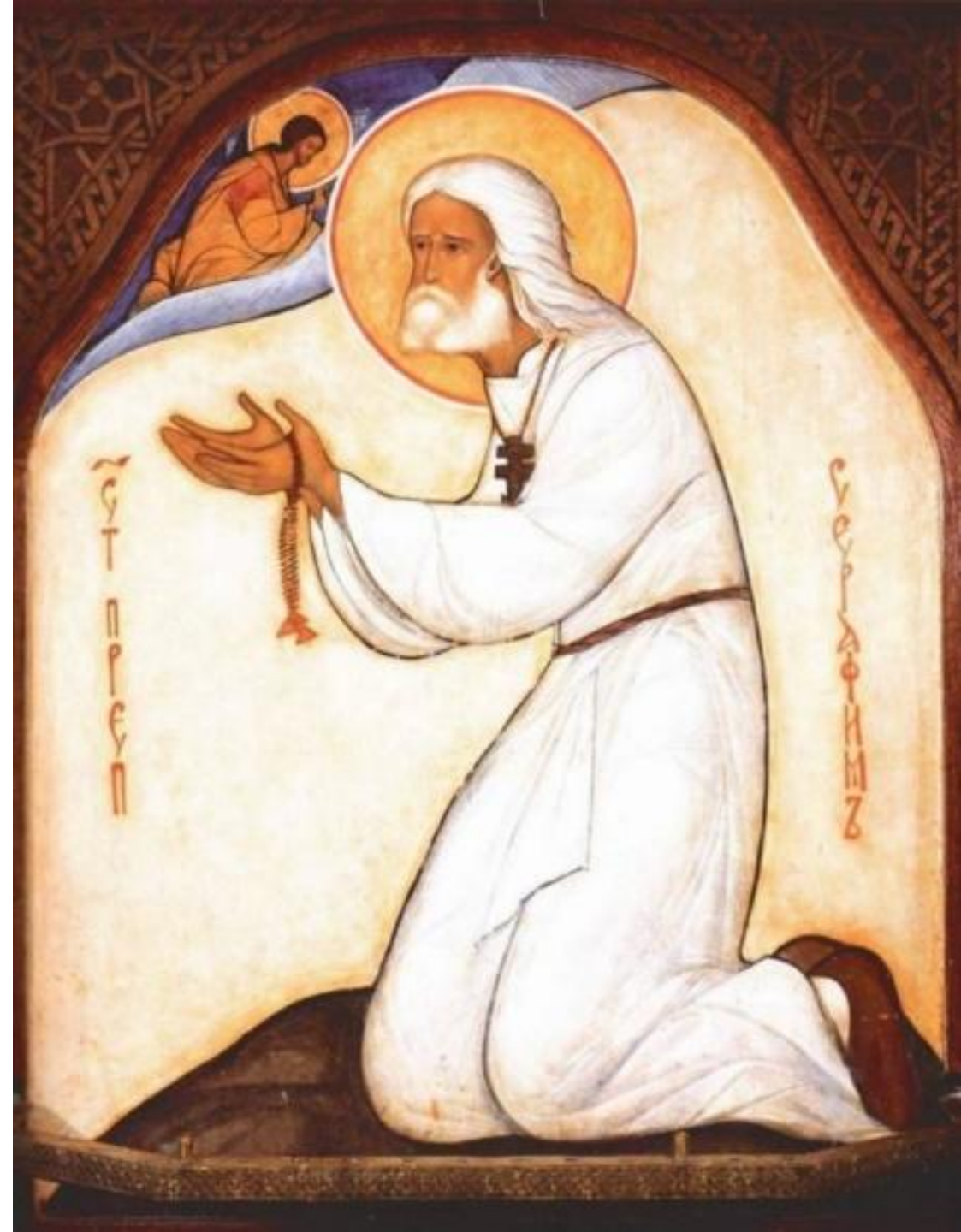
“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Prayer

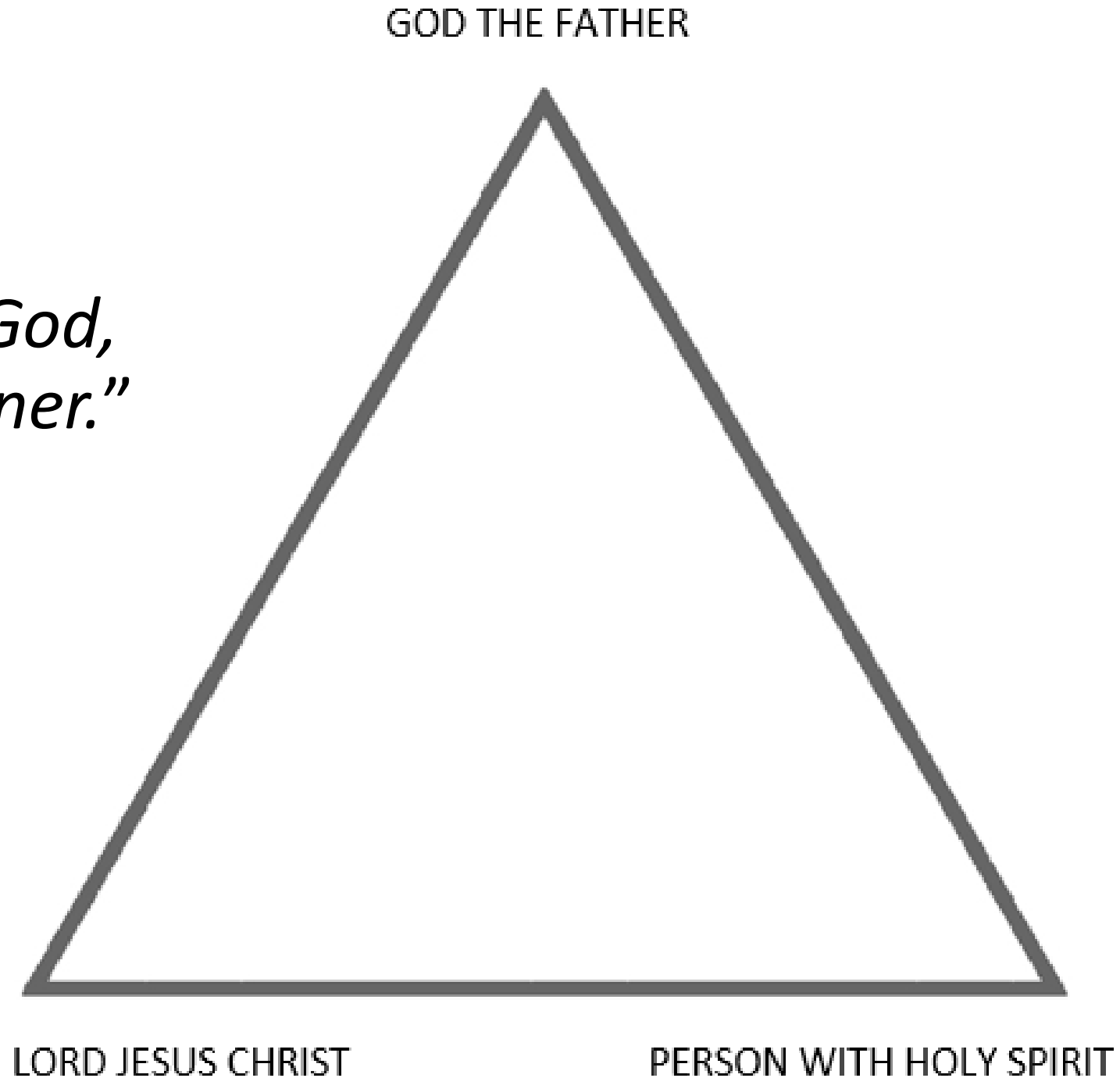
“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing.”

- I Thessalonians 5:16-17



The Jesus Prayer

*“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
Have Mercy on me the sinner.”*



The Eastern Orthodox Church

- We're not Jewish
 - but we are Orthodox
- We're not Roman
 - but we are Catholic
- We're not Protestant
 - but the Bible came from us
- We're not Denominational
 - we're Pre-Denominational



Bibliography

- Bacovcin, H. (1978). The way of a pilgrim and the pilgrim continues his way: A new translation. Garden City, NY: Image Books.
- Kallistos. (1995). The Orthodox way. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Payton, J. R. (2007). Light from the Christian East: An introduction to the Orthodox tradition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- The Philokalia: 1. (1979). London [u.a.: Faber and Faber]
- Arakaki, R. (2011, June 4). Contra Sola Scriptura. Message posted to <http://orthodoxbridge.com/>



Thank you!

