

PERSONAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

1. Is fervent and deep prayer a part of my life as a member of the community and in my personal life with the Lord?
2. Do I participate in the liturgical services of the Church, following the prayers with feeling and attention?
3. Do I go to confession regularly, and do I make an effort to improve myself?
4. Do I conduct my life as a person who is dedicated to be a “temple of the Holy Spirit”?

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR THE PARISH COMMUNITY

1. Does our parish do everything possible to conduct the services reverently, solemnly, and in a pious spirit?
2. Does our parish devote sufficient time to prepare for the liturgical services, especially on feast days?
3. Do our parishioners have enough prayer books for the congregation so that everyone can follow the services with reverent attention and understanding?
4. Are other services regularly celebrated in our parish in addition the Divine Liturgy, such as Vespers on Saturday, and before solemn holy days?
5. How do children and youth participate in the liturgical life of our parish? Can their role in Church be more active one so they feel that the prayer life of the Church is their prayer as well?
6. Does our parish observe the traditions of our Eastern Christian heritage – consciously fostering the spiritual treasure of the Byzantine-Kievan tradition: in respect to liturgics, theology, spirituality, and church discipline?

Themes for Homilies (Sermon Notes)

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER?

- We believe in God, Who desires to be in a relationship with us, and continually invites us to communion with Him. He does not only speak to us, but also encourages us to talk to Him. His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ gave us the example of how we are to relate to Him. While Jesus lived on this earth, He often went off to a deserted place, (Mk. 1: 25) and there by himself, he would abide with His Father. He taught us to pray with faith in God (see: Mt. 6: 25-33) and called upon God with the words: “Abba-Father!” (see: Mt. 6: 9, Lk. 11: 2).
- Jesus prays for us, his spiritual flock, that we may know God’s love and would be sanctified for God (see: Jn. 17: 1-26). This was something which Jesus did, and continues to do, as the One High Priest, he is able to intercede in prayer for us before God’s majesty, being true God and true man (see: Heb. 2: 17-18).
- In remembrance of His passion, he left the Church, His Bride, the Mystical Supper, so that we His community may “eat of His body, and drink His blood”. Every time we gather around the Eucharistic altar, the one High Priest, the one sacrifice becomes present “here and now, for us”! This is the Lord will, that we Christians gather for the “breaking of the bread” This work of the Church is both is culmination of its life, and the source of its spiritual blessings.
- This is why His Beatitude Sviatoslav pays particular attention to the Divine Liturgy, and our liturgical participation. During the period of persecution, the celebration of the Divine Liturgy kept our Church alive. Today, when we have much greater resources at our disposal, and can do so much more, His

Beatitude encourages us to keep Sunday Holy, the Day of our Lord's Resurrection, and to treasure it as the most valuable thing in the world.

- We must never neglect our personal prayer, because the Lord calls us personally to a filial relationship with Himself. Let us frequently take advantage to receive the sacrament of Holy Confession, in order to cleanse us of anything that may separate us from God.
- If our parish community is called to be a vibrant parish, then we need to give more attention to everything that is related to the liturgical and prayer life of the parish. Let us reflect both individually, and as a community what it means to “be holy”, consecrated to God, and how we can accomplish this, as the Divine Liturgy invites us: “let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.”