



WEEK FOURTEEN

SPF: Say Prayers Frequently

Before and After

The significance of an Orthodox Christian's regular participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion cannot be overstated. Having received the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are mystically united to Him and one another. It is only God Who makes us worthy of such a wondrous gift. In His great mercy, we approach the chalice with fear, faith, and love—fully committed to lead holy, transfigured lives. Therefore, our hearts and minds should be properly focused and conditioned when receiving Holy Communion.

While most of us consider the basic fasting guidelines of the Church in order to prepare for Holy Communion, we should not neglect to offer prayers of preparation prior to the Divine Liturgy as well as ones of thanksgiving at its conclusion. The prayers' timing and length may depend on your ability. If you and your family are not in the habit of praying before and after Holy Communion, resolve to begin! If you're unsure how to best proceed, ask your priest for practical guidance.

Dive In: Hospitality of Abraham Dinner

Welcoming others into our homes should be a profound gesture. As hosts, we have the opportunity to offer a very Christian expression of love—that of hospitality. And whether it is over a cup of coffee or a full meal, it is primarily a time for godly fellowship—an opportunity to grow in relationship.

Try to think of people you might have over—friends that have drifted away, new parishioners in the community, or someone recently widowed—people that might be in need of, and comforted by, such a warm invitation. The opening of our home is symbolic of opening our hearts and sharing the best of ourselves.

Vitamin D: Being Grateful

When the priest comes out and he looks at the congregation, what does he say? He says, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord." What do we sing, "It is proper and right." I think that each of us, when we really look at that place of gratitude, we need to recognize that it is proper and right and that our mom and our dad were correct in trying to really instill in us this idea of giving thanks and saying thank you. But there is a big difference of doing an obligatory thank you and really making gratefulness and appreciation a part of our daily lives, not just around the Thanksgiving table but in our everyday lives.

—Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis

Offering helpful tools to encourage a thankful attitude, this interview explores ways to be thankful all year long and not just on Thanksgiving weekend. Giving thanks is a proper response to receiving everything from help to blessings, which is why an environment of thankfulness needs to be nurtured in our youth and personal behavior. It doesn't come as naturally as you would think.

To listen, visit <http://myocn.net/practicing-grateful-attitude/>.

How can we practice a grateful attitude in our home in our lives?

