



## WEEK SEVEN

### SPF: Say Prayers Frequently

In the Great Litany of the Divine Liturgy, we pray "For our country, for the president, and for all in public service." And later, during the Prayer Behind the Ambon, God is supplicated to give His peace to, among others, civic leaders, and the armed forces. As we prepare to celebrate our nation's Independence Day, let's remember to include our government officials—local, state, and national—and the members of our armed forces in our prayers. Regardless of our political affiliations and philosophies, we should ask God to work in the lives of those who govern and serve our country. Happy Fourth of July!

#### PRAYER FOR OUR LAND AND ITS RULERS

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, the God of all mercies and compassions, Whose mercy cannot be measured and Whose love for mankind is an unfathomable deep, as unprofitable servants falling down with fear and trembling before Your majesty, we humbly offer thanksgiving for Your deep compassion revealed in the benefits You bestowed upon our land. We glorify, praise, hymn, and magnify You as Lord and Master and Benefactor. And again bowing down in thanksgiving for Your immeasurable and ineffable loving-kindness, humbly we pray: As now You have counted Your servants worthy by receiving our supplications and mercifully fulfilling them, likewise in the time to come, as we flourish in sincere love for You and in every virtue, grant all Your faithful to receive Your blessings. Deliver our land and its rulers from every evil circumstance. Grant them peace and tranquility. Count them worthy always to offer thanksgiving to You, to tell of Your most gracious blessings, and to sing to You, to Your eternal Father, and to Your most holy, good, and consubstantial Spirit, God worshipped in one essence.

Glory to You, O God, our Benefactor, unto ages of ages. Amen.

—adapted from the *Book of Needs*

# Dive In: FOCUS North America

As a family, watch this short video from FOCUS North America. FOCUS North America is a national movement of Orthodox Christians, united in faith and joined by a desire to provide action-oriented and sustainable solutions to poverty in communities across America. FOCUS has operations and youth volunteer experiences in more than fifty cities in the United States.

## ICONS

<http://bit.ly/icons-all-men>

## FOR DISCUSSION

How can we look at people we come in contact with as living icons?  
This can be difficult!

How can we be more mindful to see the image of God in everyone and treat them as such?

## FOR ACTION

Decide on a charitable project for your family to adopt—close to home or through an organization such as FOCUS North America. Remind everyone in your family that your project honors the living icons it aims to benefit.

## MISSION STATEMENT

As an expression of Christ's love, FOCUS North America serves the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned by providing Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter. You can learn more about FOCUS North America here: <http://focusnorthamerica.org/>.

**Take pictures, and don't forget to share with us!**

**#soakuptheSON**

# Vitamin D: The Image of God

*Every one of us is in the image of God, and every one of us is like a damaged icon. But if we were given an icon damaged by time, damaged by circumstances, or desecrated by human hatred, we would treat it with reverence, with tenderness, with broken-heartedness. We would not pay attention primarily to the fact that it is damaged, but to the tragedy of its being damaged. We would concentrate on what is left of its beauty, and not on what is lost of its beauty. And this is what we must learn to do with regard to each person as an individual, but also—and this is not always as easy—with regard to groups of people, whether it be a parish or a denomination, or a nation. We must learn to look, and look until we have seen the underlying beauty of this group of people. Only then can we even begin to do something to call out all the beauty that is there. Listen to other people, and whenever you discern something which sounds true, which is a revelation of harmony and beauty, emphasize it and help it to flower. Strengthen it and encourage it to live.*

—Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

What role does reading the Bible have in your life?

How can you spend more time reading the Word of God?

