

Teaching the Intercession of Saints and the Prayers for the Dead

1. Some Common Questions

- a. Why *should* we pray for the intercession of saints?
- b. Where are the dead?
- c. Where does it say in the Bible that we should pray for the dead?
- d. Why are some called “Saints” and others not?
- e. How does one become a “Saint?”
- f. The Bible says that Christ is the One Mediator, how can there be others then?
- g. Why can't I just pray to God directly?

As teachers, it is our job to ensure that our students acquire *the mind of the Church*

2. What else prevents us from clearly communicating this?

- a. Preconceived/incorrect notions about what IS and PD are
- b. Confusion “worship” and “veneration”
- c. A “Protestantized” understanding of Scripture (*Sola Scriptura*)

3. What is death?

- a. In Genesis, death is the separation of man from God; Sheol
 - i. Paradox of Eden; Man brings death upon himself (Gen. 2:17)
 - ii. Parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19–3)
 - iii. “The Spirits in Prison” (I Peter 4: 5-6)
- b. Christ's Death on the Cross makes petitioning the Saints possible; He has trampled down death by Death
 - i. He is the “firstfruits” of those who have fallen asleep (I Cor. 15: 20-26)
- c. We can only speculate on what has been revealed to us

4. What is the “status” of the departed?

- a. Since Christ destroyed death, and became the first Resurrected, the dead are with Christ
 - i. St. Stephen is received by Christ (Acts 7: 54-60)
- b. The dead, along with all of us anticipate the Resurrection in the Last Days
- c. What is the alternative?

5. What is a Saint?

- a. Christ is the One Mediator because He is God Incarnate; The One Mediator establishes the Church and its order (I Timothy 2: 1-7)
- b. Those who share in the holiness of God- Fr. Hopko (Rom. 1: 7)
 - i. The vision in the Book of Revelation: (Rev. 8: 2-5)
- c. Those who the Church has decided should be *publicly* venerated in the Liturgies
- d. Those who *anonymously* lived Holy lives and gave their lives for Christ

6. Are the Intercession of Saints and Prayers for the Departed *necessary*?

- a. We never stop praying for those we love
- b. Remembering the Saints orients our minds to submit to Christ as *they did*
- c. Where do we draw the line between “necessary” and “unnecessary”
- d. The Church is One Body of Christ, participating in the One Sacrifice offered for all time, therefore when we partake in the Eucharist, we partake with all of the members of Church who are, were, or ever will be.

7. What do we need to fix?

- a. Do we believe this ourselves?
- b. Are we critical of what we read or listen to?
- c. Do we remember our departed ones in our personal prayers?
- d. We must remember *all* the Saints for the reasons they are Saints.
- e. We must continue to pray for one another.