

"On Behalf of All and For All"

A Bible Study for Parishes

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A PASTORAL LETTER FROM METROPOLITAN THEODOSIUS

Remember, O Lord, those who offered Thee these gifts, and those for whom and through whom they offered them and their intentions. Remember, O Lord, those who bring offerings and do good in Thy holy churches, and those who remember the poor; reward them with Thy rich and heavenly gifts....”

—Liturgy of St. Basil

“On Behalf of All and For All”

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

During every Divine Liturgy, we gather *to remember* and *to offer*—to remember all that our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us and to offer our thanksgiving to Him. From the creation of the world and the creation of our very lives, God has reached out to us to share His eternal life. We, however, have not always recognized this gift He has so generously bestowed upon us.

When mankind sinned against God and rejected the fullness of life given to us, our communion with God was broken. Generation after generation of God’s people continued to forget Him, disobeyed His Law, and lived in sin and fear of death. Finally, God sent His only-begotten Son “*to condemn sin in His flesh, so that those who were dead in Adam might be made alive in Thy Christ Himself*” (Eucharistic Prayer of St. Basil). The generosity of this gift—the offering of His own Son—exceeds even our comprehension.

Even so, God has made us His own chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation through baptism and chrismation. He offers us His own Body and Blood and unites us to one another in the communion of the Holy Spirit. God calls us again to Himself and gives us another possibility to know and to share His gift of Life and Communion—in our personal life with Him, and in our personal relationships and life in the Church, in our families, and with the world He created.

I invite you to use this Bible Study as an opportunity to begin exploring the meaning of God’s gift, God’s offering of true Life *to remember* and *to offer ourselves in love* “*on behalf of all and for all*”—to Him, to His people, to His Church and to His world.

With love in Christ



+THEODOSIUS

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This Bible Study introduces the theme for the Twelfth All-American Council: “***On Behalf of All and for All.***” The biblical passages focus on what we personally, and in our families, parishes, and the Church can offer to each other and to the world. The *Reflections on the Text* section presents ideas for discussion, while the section *Relating the Bible to Our Lives* offers questions for personal and group reflection and action.

As the Christian life is experienced in community and is essentially *ecclesial* in nature and not understood individualistically, each section of the Bible Study explores our offerings within the context of our various relationships, those in our family, with our friends, our fellow parishioners, and with our neighbors.

Who Should Use the Study?

The Bible Study should be used as widely as possible in the parish—by those who will be attending the Council as delegates and observers, by parish council members, parish organizations, adult discussion groups and teen groups—to help all members understand how and to what extent they are to offer their gifts and talents to each other, the parish, to the Church, and to the world.

This Bible Study can be also used in conjunction with previous bible studies prepared on the topics of community life and vocations, which are available from the website of the Orthodox Church in America (www.oca.org) or by writing P.O. Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-065.

How and When Should the Study be Used?

The Bible Study could be used before study and discussion of the All-American Council Study Papers. It may be used also at any time as a separate study unity, apart from preparation for the Council. Each participant should have his/her own copy of the study. The study may be photocopied or downloaded from the OCA website (www.oca.org).

Leadership Leadership requires a facilitator to keep the discussion process moving. This could be a priest, teacher or lay leader in the parish. The leader should function primarily as a facilitator rather than as a teacher conducting a lesson.

Time Frame Five weekly sessions are recommended, or several sessions during a weekend retreat (Friday evening and Saturday, ending with Vespers). Each session can be 45–60 min. or 60–90 min. long, depending upon the size of the group (larger groups will require more time for discussion). A person should be appointed to keep track of time for each segment and for the total period. Beginning and ending on time will encourage attendance at successive sessions.

Suggested Format— Small Groups

- (a) Ask a person to read the Bible text while others follow in their own books. (3–5 min.)
- (b) Let group members point out important ideas from the text (have one person list these on a large sheet of paper) — elaboration on these points should be left until the small group discussions. (10 min.)
- (c) Divide into small groups of 3–5 people. (2–3 min.)
- (d) Let everyone read silently the “Reflections on the Text” (5 min.)
- (e) Each group will then turn to the questions under “Relating the Text to Our Lives” and discuss them in the light of what they have read in the biblical text and in the “Reflections.” Groups may choose to focus on one question or several questions or issues. (20–30 min.)

One person in each group should serve as a recorder of the main ideas and questions coming out of the discussion.

- (f) Bring the groups back together to share their ideas and findings in one or more of the following ways:
 - 1. What did we learn from the text or the reflections.
 - 2. What is important for our parish life? (Issues, problems, challenges, possibilities for growth.)
 - 3. What can we do, either personally or together as members or groups of the parish, as a result of what we learned today?

Suggested Format - Large Groups/Parish-Wide Study

- (a) Follow the same format as described above, except divide into groups immediately after the reading of the biblical text. The biblical text could be read separately in each group. (See also Option 2 below)
- (b) Groups may consist of more than 5 persons, but should not exceed 8–10. Let each group list important points on large sheets of paper. Large groups may divide according to functions or organizations in the parish, e.g., parish council, women's group, youth, etc. and focus on what their sub-group in the parish can contribute to the life of the whole parish in the light of the issues discussed.
- (d) Same as above.
- (e) Same as above.

Other Options

- 1. For large groups, a one-day session on a Saturday could be organized, with a meal included to allow more time for discussion or to cover one or more sessions from the Bible Study booklet.
- 2. Each group could focus on a different biblical text, and present their topic and reflections to the whole group at the end.

Suggestion for Discussion Leaders

As the discussion leader, you have an opportunity to help people think through and express their ideas about the theme *On Behalf of All and For All*. Here are some suggestions to help you.

- Before the group meets, become thoroughly familiar with the contents and information found within the Bible Study. Make notes on your own thoughts and insights so that you can share them with the group.
- Establish and adhere to a beginning and ending time for your gathering. If the group wants to continue after the time allotted, you can set a second meeting time or continue your initial meeting after a short break, so that those who must leave may do so without embarrassment.
- Try to meet in a place that is inviting and comfortable (avoid harsh light and uncomfortable folding chairs). Have paper and pencils for group members, and a chalkboard or butcher paper on an easel or wall with markers to write words or information you want the whole group to see. Arrange chairs at a table or in a semicircle, depending on group size and meeting space.
- When the group meets, encourage everyone to take part. But be aware that some people talk more than others, which is fine. Don't be afraid of silence, or be too quick to fill a silence after a question is presented. Also be genuine in welcoming each group member's presence, opinions, and contributions. Here are a few suggestions on how to address the group when one or a few participants seem to monopolize too much of the group conversation.
 - Break in politely, thank the speaker for his or her ideas, and raise a new question.
 - Don't respond to a speaker if she or he goes on too long. A response only encourages more talk.
 - Ask a question and then say, "Could we have some responses from those who have not spoken yet?"
 - Go around the group taking turns responding to a question (but only a few times—not for every question) and end with the talkative person. Try to start with someone who has spoken at least once before, not with someone who has been silent and might be uncomfortable going first.
 - Everyone should feel free to "pass" on responding.
- Try to maintain the delicate balance between flexibility and the need to keep the discussion on track. Always have the original question in mind. Of course, if discussion of the question leads to a topic that everyone seems eager to talk about, you should continue with it. Real irrelevancies, however, should be pulled back into line by your courteous reminder to the group to get back to the original question.
- Remember that these sessions are designed to encourage common exploration and reflection on the theme. The leader should avoid lecturing or dominating the discussion.

Our Personal Offering

Ephesians 4:7,11-13, 15-16

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift....And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ....

Rather, speaking in truth and love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upholds itself in love.

Reflections on the Text

Through His life, death and resurrection, Christ *offered* himself for the salvation of the world. He gave His life not only for his close friends and followers, but for the salvation of all persons and the whole of creation.

We affirm this at each Divine Liturgy: Immediately following the words of institution, the celebrant recalls "*all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming.*" Then the gifts of bread and wine are raised and the celebrant proclaims "***Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all and for all.***"

Our gifts in the form of bread and wine are *offered* to God and become the Body and Blood of Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. In turn, they are *offered* to us for the "purification of souls and the remission of sins."

Having been "baptized into Christ" and "put on Christ," we are called to become imitators of Him—to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:1-2). To imitate Christ—*the Servant who offers*—to answer His call and to "follow Him" *means we must offer ourselves for others*. We make this offering through our love, our gifts and our talents. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit (by anointing with the Holy Chrism), Christ's gifts are distributed to all "*to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the Body of Christ*" (Eph. 4:12).

What are these gifts that we offer to God and to others? Having a gift does not mean that we are the best at something, but rather that we offer our best to God in whatever we do. The widow who offered her mite, the woman who anointed Jesus, the thief who repented—all these are examples of offering the best of your gifts, no matter how small or insignificant. These gifts were great in the eyes of God simply because they were the greatest things that could be offered.

Relating the Bible to Our Lives

1. Privately ask yourself, “what are the gifts and talents God has given me?” Keep in mind the difference between the two. Take a couple of minutes and write down your answers.
2. In what ways have I offered and could I offer these gifts for the building up of the body of Christ?
3. Compare the accounts of the widow’s mite (Luke 21:1-4), the woman anointing Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:36-50), and the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43) with Christ’s discussion with the rich young man (Luke 18: 18-27). What could we say to someone who says that Christ demands too much of us?

What attitudes should we try to avoid when offering our gifts?

4. What issues arise that inhibit or hinder us from offering our gifts?
5. What results should we expect from our offering? How should we expect God to react? How should we expect others to react?
6. How should we react if people do not appreciate or accept our offering?

What is the relationship between offering ourselves and our gifts for the *building up of the body of Christ* versus *on behalf of all and for all*? Is there a conflict? Why or why not?

7. How do our relationships with others relate to *any offering* we might make?
8. How does this relate to St. Seraphim of Sarov’s teaching “*save yourself and thousands of others will be saved*?”
9. In what ways could we misinterpret St. Seraphim’s teaching?

Our Offerings to Our Families

Colossians 3:12-15; I Timothy 5:1-4,8

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity. Honor widows who are real widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents, for this is acceptable in the sight of God...If any one does not provide for his relatives and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

Reflections on the Text

The goal of our life in Christ is to be what God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do. He wants us to be in communion with Him—"to escape from the corruption that is in the world...and become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Our relationship with God is achieved by obeying the will of God—offering and committing our whole lives to "doing the truth." Through relationships with others our union with God is realized.

Our relationship with God and in turn all our relations with others are rooted in love and are expressed in love. "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.*" (1 John 4:7-8). Genuine love for the other, even those who are our enemies, is self-emptying, it manifests the love of God and that of His Son, Jesus—who for *our* salvation "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant...humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." The antithesis of this genuine love has been expressed as self-love—"the mother of all evils and the "original sin." Self-love is that which is directed not towards God but towards self-preservation.

The first circle of relationships a we usually experience is within the family: child-parent, parent-child, mother-father, brother-sister. Therefore, within the family the spiritual life of love should be sought and lived as fully as possible. Throughout scripture there are numerous passages concerning relations within the family (Ex. 20:12, Dt. 6:4-7; Pr. 22:6; 23:15-16,22-26; Eph. 5:21-6:4; Pr. 31:10-31), each of which is based upon genuine love. Every member of the family should live for the good of the other in all circumstances—"servants of one another" through love bearing one another's burdens. It is in and through these familial relationships that we must discern the will of God for ourselves and for those to whom we are responsible.

Relating the Bible to Our Lives

In what ways do we offer our self and our gifts in our family? Try and be specific.

1. How do we and can we nurture an atmosphere of giving and offering in our family?
2. Recalling our discussion in the last session, what are some of the examples of times we gave/offered something in the wrong spirit? What were the results?

Jesus had two hard sayings in regard to how our relationship to our family compares to our relationship with Him.

“For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes will be his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:35-37).

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26).

3. How can we handle times when there seems to be a conflict between offering ourselves to God and to our family? Offer examples.
4. How can our desire to give to our family hinder our offering ourselves and our gifts in the way God calls us?
5. Is Christ and His Church asking us to neglect our family?
6. How does this compare to Saint John Chrysostom’s description of the family as a “little church?”

Our Offerings in the Parish

Romans 14:1-4,12-13,19; 15:1-6

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

So each of us shall give account of himself to God. Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother...Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him...For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflections on the Text

Each person offers to the extent he or she is capable, which is known “*only in the secret heart.*” If the gift or offering is true and sincere it is known by its fruit, which is *love* (I Cor. 13:1–10).

For many of us the parish is the first community beyond our family wherein we experience the Christian faith. The parish is where we are nourished in the faith through participation in the sacraments and through relationships with those who confess the same faith. Yet it is also in these relationships that we encounter ways of living the Christian life that differ from our own. These encounters often challenge our faith and our understanding of the Christian experience. Our response to these encounters can become opportunities for us to grow closer to Christ, and to search for harmony with one another. Conversely, our response can also lead to division, judgment or conceit.

The first portion of the selected passage is read on *Forgiveness Sunday* to help prepare us for our relations with our fellow Christians during the Great Fast. St. Paul provides us with an example of such occasions when our offerings, like fasting, may appear to conflict with the offerings of others. Yet the Apostle cautions us against casting judgment upon the other. Christ is the Lord “both of the living and the dead,” “if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord: so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” If our gifts are truly “of the Spirit,” they glorify God and “please his neighbor for his good, to edify him.” In offer-

ing our gifts we must build up and not tear down. “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

In a real sense our participation in the sacraments in our parish become opportunities for us to share our gifts, to make our offerings “*on behalf of all and for all.*” The sacraments are opportunities for us to relate to others. The rite of confession, for example, is more than simply a disclosure of wrong doings. It is an opportunity to rectify and clarify relationships. “*So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*” (Matthew 5:23-24).

Relating the Bible to Our Lives

1. What are the ways we can offer ourselves and our gifts in our parish? (e.g., Parish ministries: administration, liturgical singing, visiting the sick, Christian education, youth work, humanitarian aid, maintaining the church, etc.)
2. How does our parish community encourage us to offer ourselves? Other than general announcements made by the priest, how do we approach people about using their gifts?
3. How do we help others to know about and understand that there are places and people who could use help? What in our community might deter someone from offering their help? What can we do to change that?
4. How do our attitudes about financially supporting the Church reflect the idea of offering our self and our gifts? As a parish, what changes can we make to better reflect this orientation?
5. Are there times when one person’s offering might conflict with another’s? When? Are there times when it would be better to suppress our offering? When?
6. What criteria should we consider when we want to offer our self and our gifts to our parish community?
7. What attitudes should we look for in our self? What attitudes should cause us to rethink what we are planning to do? Reflecting on these attitudes, take a few minutes to think about and write down some specific ways you think you could better offer yourself and your gifts in your community.

Our Offering in the Church

I Corinthians 12:4–11. Philipians 2:1–4

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, to another...knowledge...to another faith...to another gifts of healing...to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy... All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, and affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Reflections on the Text

To illustrate the fundamental mystery of relationships within the Church, St. Paul uses the image of the body.

“For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:4; see also I Cor. 12:12).

Regardless of which relationship we are concerned with, it is always a relationship within the same body. “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (I Cor. 12:27). We manifest this in our parishes through our participation in the Eucharist. The community’s gifts in the form of bread and wine are offered through the celebrant, who is called and appointed in the Church, the body of Christ, to be the image of Christ, the head of the Body. The local eucharistic assembly or parish, however, is not self-contained. Through the bishop, who affirms the local celebration of the Eucharist, the parish is itself a member of the catholic and apostolic Church, existing not in isolation but rather as a member of the entire Body.

This “liturgical” relationship to other parishes is in itself a culmination. From their very origin, Christian communities were concerned not only with their own welfare, but recognized also their dependence upon the well-being of their fellow Christian communities. In his epistles Paul stresses the importance of interdependence among the Christian communities for their spiritual and material well-being (see Rom. 16:24-29; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-1; 9:1-15).

If parishes are members of the one Body—the Church—then each parish must be concerned about the welfare of the other. Being of one mind and faith, and having the same love means looking not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2: 2-4).

Relating the Bible to our Lives

How do we understand that our parish is dependent upon and responsible for its relationship with the Church as a whole?

1. How do we actively relate to the other parishes in our deanery? Our diocese? Across the Church?
2. Counting others as “better than ourselves,” what could we learn from other parishes in our area? Our diocese? Across the Church?
3. What opportunities do we have to gather in fellowship and support with other Orthodox parishes? To what extent do we take advantage of these opportunities or make them more accessible?

Looking at the scripture reading, how do we as a parish look to the interests of others, and not just to our own interests?

4. How do we share our blessings and gifts with other parishes?
5. How do we as a parish offer our self and our gifts to the Church as a whole?

What can we do to help people in our parish understand their relationship to and dependence upon other parishes and the Church as a whole?

6. What can we do to avoid an attitude of self-centeredness in our parish?
7. What can we do in the next year to enhance our parish’s relationship with other parishes and the Church as a whole?

Our Offering to the World

Exodus 19:1–9. I Peter 2:4–13

After the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt...they came into the wilderness of Sinai... and there Israel encamped before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the children of Israel...So Moses called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture; "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a corner-stone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame" ... "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." ... But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

Reflections on the Text

By virtue of our faith, through our baptism and participation in the sacraments, we are sons and daughters of the *new Israel*—the Church—*God's people called to "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light."* We are participants of the new covenant that fulfills the promises made to Abraham and the covenant mediated by Moses.

As members of a royal priesthood, each person is called by God through grace, to personally and corporately manifest our original calling to become *priests of creation*—mediators between God and His world (see Genesis 1:26-30). Power and dominion over creation is fulfilled by sanctifying it—by seeing it as God's gift, using it as He intended—and *offering* it back to God its creator.

As a holy nation we fulfill the destiny of the people of God that was announced through the prophets. Israel was set apart as a holy nation, consecrated to the special task of being a light, a witness of God's promise of mercy and justice, to the other nations. As the "new" Israel the

Church is called to proclaim to all the fulfillment of God's promise, the salvation of all through the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Christ.

As the Body of Christ the Church is the embodiment of the new creation (Rev. 21:1-5). Through the communion of the Holy Spirit the Church offers to those who are willing to believe the opportunity to participate in the new creation. As members of the Body we are living temples (I Corinthians 6:19) and sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Through the gift of the Holy Spirit we offer our lives, our joys and sufferings to God. In so doing, we are able to experience a foretaste of the new and eternal life of God's Kingdom.

The consequences of participating in this new life mean we are at all times and everywhere bearers of Christ's sacrificial love and witnesses of His truth. Our divine calling compels us to be stewards of God's creation and His gifts. We offer to Him that which He first offered to us (see I Peter 4:9-11). As members of His Body, the Church, we are to make the Kingdom of God present in the world. In a world of sin and suffering our life's "work" is to restore all of creation (including the relationship among human beings) to its original purpose.

Relating the Bible to our Lives

In both scripture readings we are told that we are a *holy nation, God's own people*, called to declare to the world how God has reached out to the world to save it.

1. How can we and do we share our story with others who have not heard it? Share experiences.
2. What fears and attitudes hinder our ability to "declare the wondrous deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light?"
3. Recognizing the many unproductive ways that people sometimes share their faith, what are some more productive ways we can share our faith with others?

An aspect of our role as a holy nation is our calling to imitate Christ, offering ourselves without thought of receiving anything in return.

4. In what ways do we give of ourselves and use our talents to help others in need who probably can do nothing for us in return?
5. How can we reach out to people who are in real spiritual and physical need? Personally? As a parish? As the Church?
6. List a variety of ways we can help fulfill our responsibility for God's creation
7. We spoke of offering ourselves personally to our family, our parish, our church, and the entire world. What advice could we offer someone who may be overwhelmed by hearing this?