

Theology Thursday | St Mary's Fast

# INTERCESSION OF SAINTS



# INTERCESSION IN ORTHODOXY

1. Orthodox Belief
2. Biblical Witness of Intercession
3. Do the Saints hear us?
4. Greatness of the Saints
5. The Lord's Favour with the Saints



# ORTHODOX BELIEF IN INTERCESSION



# OUR VIEW

"And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world"

(1 John.2: 1,2).

Mark 7: 25-27

Saints prayers on our Behalf

Intercession v Mediation



# BIBLICAL WITNESS

## ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH - GENESIS 20

Genesis 20:3–7 “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “Indeed, you are a dead man because of the woman you have taken, for she is a man's wife.” Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “O Lord, will You destroy an ignorant and just nation? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and did she not say to me, ‘He is my brother’? I did this thing with a clean heart and righteous hands.” Then God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clean heart, and I spared you that you might not sin against Me; therefore, I did not allow you to touch her. Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet; and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, rest assured you shall die, you and all who are yours.”

## JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

So it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “You have sinned, you and your two friends, for you have not spoken before Me what is true, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you. For I will only accept him, but for his sake, I would have destroyed you; because you have not spoken what is true regarding my servant Job.” (Job 42:7–8)



# BIBLICAL WITNESS

## ABRAHAM AND SODOM

Genesis 18:17, 26–32

“Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham, My servant, what I am about to do?... Then the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” So Abraham answered and said, “Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: But suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?” He replied, “If I find there forty– five, I will not destroy it.” Again he spoke to Him and said, “But suppose there should be forty found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of forty.” Then he said, “Let not the Lord be offended, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it if I should find thirty there.” Again he said, “Since I have permission to speak to the Lord, suppose twenty should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of twenty.” Then he said, “Let not the Lord be offended, and I will speak but once more, suppose ten should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of the ten.” So the Lord went His way as soon as He finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.”



# BIBLICAL WITNESS

## MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

God willed to destroy the people because they worshipped the golden calf. And the Lord said to Moses “Now therefore, let Me be, that I may burn in wrath against them and consume them. Then I will make of you a great nation.” (Exodus 32:9-10)

But Moses prayed before the Lord God and said, “Why, O Lord, does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak and say, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath and be merciful to the wickedness of Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself and said to them, ‘I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven for multitude; and all this land I spoke about to give their seed, they shall inherit unto the ages.’ ” So the Lord granted mercy for the harm He said He would do to His people. (Exodus 32: 11-14)



# ARE THE SAINTS AWARE OF US?

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“I SAY TO YOU THAT LIKEWISE THERE WILL BE MORE JOY IN HEAVEN OVER ONE SINNER WHO REPENTS THAN OVER NINETY-NINE JUST PERSONS WHO NEED NO REPENTANCE.”

Luke 15:7

# ARE THE SAINTS AWARE OF US?



THEN ANOTHER ANGEL, HAVING A GOLDEN CENSER, CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR. HE WAS GIVEN MUCH INCENSE, THAT HE SHOULD OFFER IT WITH THE PRAYERS OF ALL THE SAINTS UPON THE GOLDEN ALTAR WHICH WAS BEFORE THE THRONE. AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS, ASCENDED BEFORE GOD FROM THE ANGEL'S HAND.

Revelation 8:3-4



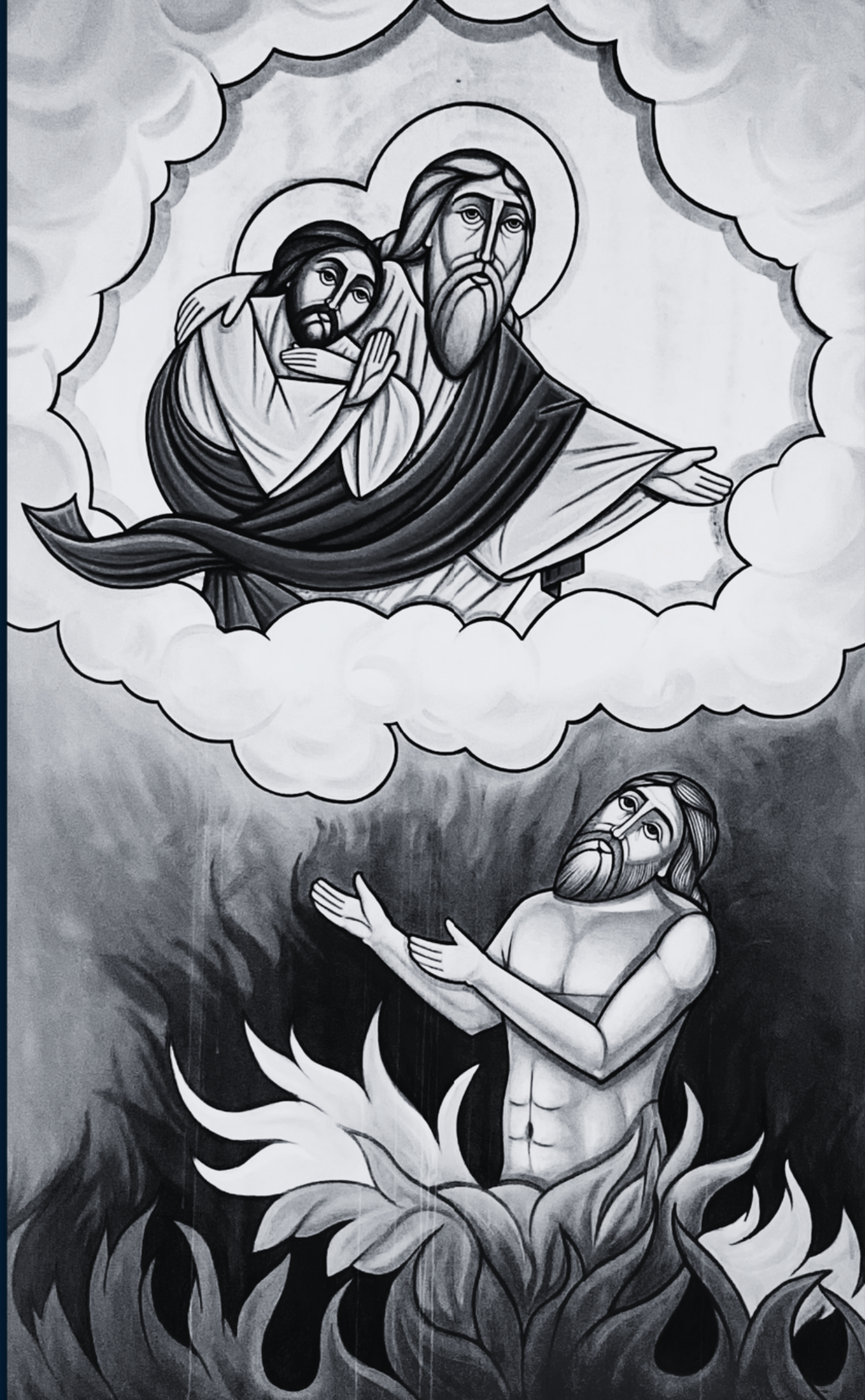
# ARE THE SAINTS AWARE OF US?

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WHEN HE OPENED THE FIFTH SEAL, I SAW UNDER THE ALTAR THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND FOR THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HELD. AND THEY CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, “HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE, UNTIL YOU JUDGE AND AVENGE OUR BLOOD ON THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH?” THEN A WHITE ROBE WAS GIVEN TO EACH OF THEM; AND IT WAS SAID TO THEM THAT THEY SHOULD REST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, UNTIL BOTH THE NUMBER OF THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS AND THEIR BRETHREN, WHO WOULD BE KILLED AS THEY WERE, WAS COMPLETED.

Revelation 6:9–11





There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

(Luke 16:19-26)



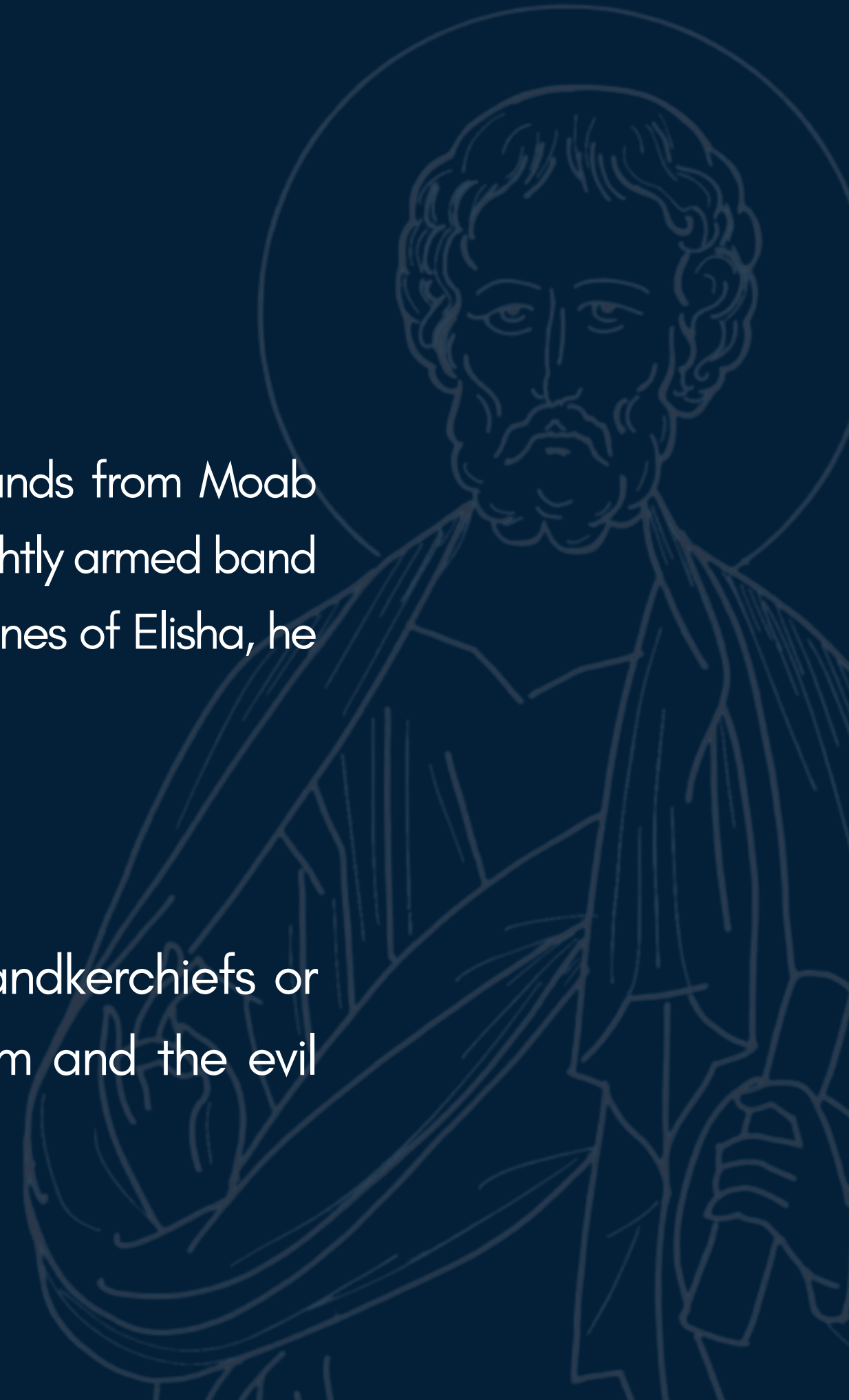
# GREATNESS OF THE SAINTS

“Now Elisha died, and they buried him. Then in the following year, the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, they beheld a lightly armed band of raiders, and cast the man into the tomb of Elisha. When the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet.”

(2 Kings 13)

“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them”

(Acts 19:11-12)



# The Lord's favour with the Saints

While talking about the Saint's favour with the Lord, we mention that God sometimes associated His name with their names. At the Burning Bush, when God appeared to Moses God said *“I am the God of your Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”* (Ex 3:6)





# Old Testament Witness

- 1 The intercession of Abraham for Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:23–32).
- 2 The intercession of Abraham for Abimelech as the Lord ordered him (Gen. 20:1–18).
- 3 The intercession of Moses the prophet for the Israelites (Ex. 17:8–16; 32:7–14; Num. 16:25).
- 4 The intercession of Aaron for the Israelites (Num. 16:41–50).
- 5 The intercession of Samuel for the Israelites (1 Sam. 7:7–14).
- 6 The intercession of Job for his friends as ordered by the Lord (Job. 42:7–9).

# New Testament Witness

- 1 The request by the Virgin to Christ at the wedding of Canaan Galilee (John 2:3-5)
- 2 The Church's prayers for Peter (Acts 12:5).
- 3 Paul asks the faithful to pray for him (Rom. 15:30-32)
- 4 James asks that we pray for each other, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16)
- 5 John asks that we pray for each other, "And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death." (1 John 5:15, 16).
- 6 John has seen the angel offering incense with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar before the throne of God (Rev. 8:3, 4).