

without ceasing" (1 Thes 5:17). Through this bond with God, a person is counted worthy of divine grace, and experiences God's love and spiritual joy. In prayer of the heart, a person comes to know God as Father, sees oneself as God's child, and recognizes all others as brothers and sisters, children of one and the same Father.

- 806 In prayer of the heart, a person gradually makes a transition from prayer as a separate action to prayer as an inner state of permanently abiding with God. A person no longer needs many words to pray. An example of such prayer of the heart is the Jesus Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner (us, sinners).
- 807 The fruit of prayer of the heart is healing—the restoration of a person's wholeness of being. Prayer does not separate a person from life; on the contrary, it encompasses one's entire life, bringing into it peace and equilibrium.

#### *d. Contemplative Prayer*

- 808 Contemplative prayer, which cannot be expressed in words, is the highest degree of prayer. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift can be received only by a person who has completely purified one's mind and heart with the help of an experienced spiritual guide. When a person in prayer meets God in the depths of one's heart, one already here on earth directly experiences that which the apostle Paul describes as seeing God "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). The person "sees" the One in whom he or she has believed. The person abides in God's presence. The apostle Paul compares this new state of the person to a "seeing" of God. Contemplative prayer consists in God allowing himself to be seen by a human being; therefore, it is a "seeing" of the Invisible One. Naturally, this is not a matter of physical vision with the eyes of the body. Contemplation begins in silence, which a person achieves through laying aside words, images, and conceptions born in thought.
- 809 In contemplative prayer a person experiences more deeply that divine Archetype (Model) according to which we were created. When one abides with God, one gradually comes to see things the way God sees them. The human intellect is incapable of contemplating God as long as it is disturbed by anxious thoughts. The Holy Fathers compared restless thoughts to waves on the sea. As long as the sea is covered in waves, the water is murky. On the other hand, when the sea is calm, one sees through the water to the very bottom.

## 2. Types of Prayer

### *a. Praise*

810 The prayer of praise is the fruit of our communication with God. It blossoms as we become aware of God's inexpressible greatness, as well as his unspeakable goodness and infinite mercy towards us. Feeling ourselves to be in the light of God's glory, we express our spiritual enthusiasm in a prayer of praise: "For all glory, honour and worship befit you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>506</sup>

811 Saint Irenaeus of Lyons teaches that human beings are called to praise the Lord, since they were created to partake of his glory.

Those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light. Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but he grants to those who follow and serve him life and incorruption and eternal glory ... we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us and prepared us for this, that when we are with him, we may partake of his glory.<sup>507</sup>

"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving ... The one who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!" (Ps 49[50]:14, 23).

812 The fruit of such prayerful praise is that the Lord illumines us and fills us with the light of his unapproachable glory. The person who praises the Lord comes to bear the likeness of the One who is praised. This is explained by the apostle Paul when he writes: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

### *b. Thanksgiving*

813 The prayer of thanksgiving flows from a person's realization that all that one is and all that one has is a gift from God. Only by standing before the face of the Creator in prayer can we understand the words: "You brought us from nothingness into being, and after we fell, You raised us up again. You did not cease doing everything until You led us to heaven

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<sup>506</sup> *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Litany of Peace.

<sup>507</sup> IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 14: PG 7, 1010.