

# Christianity in Episcopal Tints

## 4. Spirituality



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*Amazing Love*

# Christianity in Episcopal Tints

## Introduction

- n Where did the Episcopal Church come from?
- n What does it believe?
- n How does it worship and why?
- n How does it understand the Bible and God?
- n How does it reach out to the rest of the world?
- n In this broken world – where the followers of Jesus are fractured into many denominations – what positive role does the Episcopal Church play?

# Christianity in Episcopal Tints

## Introduction

- n **1:** Our History
- n **2:** Our Worship
- n **3:** The Church's Teaching and the Bible
- n **4:** Spirituality
- n **5:** Ministry and Organization. The Church's Mission.

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*For the Parish,*  
Book of Common Prayer, p. 817

# Today: Spirituality

- n What do we mean by Spirituality?
- n Theology and Spirituality
- n The Bible and Spirituality
- n The Rhythms of Faith
  - n Structuring Time
  - n Liturgy and Prayer
- n Community and Spirituality

# What is Spirituality?



# What is Spirituality?

- n What do we mean by “Spirituality”?
- n We can achieve *intellectual* knowledge of:
  - n the creed,
  - n the catechism,
  - n stories of the bible,
  - n works of biblical criticism,
  - n systematic theologies,
  - n the reality of death, the transience of our lives.

# What is Spirituality?

- n We must then ask:
  - n how do we “take to heart” the implications of this knowledge for our lives and the world?
  - n how do we illuminate the “world of our inner lives” with the “light” of this heartfelt knowledge?
  - n how do we change the patterns of our daily lives, our sense of time and space, to reflect this heartfelt knowledge?



# Definition

- n Spirituality can be thought of as
  - n the *quest*
  - n to make our *intellectual* knowledge
  - n truly *heartfelt*.

# Quotes: What is Spirituality?

n “the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving bringing together:

n the fundamental ideas of Christianity,

n the whole experience of living”

- Alister McGrath. *Christian Spirituality*

# Quotes: What is Spirituality?

n “. . .fundamentally, spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense, . . .”

- John Macquarrie, *Spirit and Spirituality*

# Quotes: What is Spirituality?

n “Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience.”

- Richard O’Brien, *Catholicism*, p. 1058

# Quotes: What is Spirituality?

- n “Spirituality is a *lived* experience, the effort to apply relevant elements in the deposit of Christian faith to the:
  - n *guidance* of men and women towards their spiritual growth,
  - n the progressive *development* of their persons which *flowers* into a proportionately increased insight and joy.”
- George Ganss, *Introduction to Ignatius of Loyola*

# Theology and Spirituality



# Theology and Spirituality

- n *Heartfelt* theology can *change* our lives.
- n Many theological doctrines and beliefs can change our attitudes, our view of the world, and our lives if they are *heartfelt*. These include the theological doctrines of:
  - n **Creation**
  - n **Human Nature**
  - n the **Incarnation**
  - n the **Trinity**
  - n **Redemption**
  - n the **Resurrection**
  - n **Consummation of All Things**
  - n the **Sacraments**; a **Sacramental Universe**

# Creation

- n Implications of the Christian theology of the **Creation:**
  - n creation is *good*,
  - n there is no need to “withdraw” from the world,
  - n it is important to *care* for creation,
  - n *something of God* may be *known* through the creation,
  - n the *wonder* evoked by creation is *not* accidental,
  - n the study of creation is *worthy and noble*.



# Human Nature

- n Christian theology of **Human Nature**:
  - n human beings are created “in the image of God.”
  - n human beings are made by God and for God: “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you.” (St. Augustine)
- n It is thus impossible to be *fully* human without acknowledging God as *our creator* and *redeemer*.

# The Incarnation

- n God entered our world and became fully human.
- n **Incarnation** is from the Latin, “being in the flesh”
- n The Christian theology of the **Incarnation** has implications for:
  - n our *knowledge* of God,
  - n the *suffering* of God,
  - n the *goodness* of flesh and blood, the human body,
  - n human *destiny*.

# Implications of The Incarnation for Our Knowledge of God

- n What is God like?
- n Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15):
  - n To encounter *Jesus* is to encounter *God*.
  - n In the Eastern church: justifies use of *icons* to help visualize the *divine*.

# Implications of the Incarnation for the Suffering of God

- n Can God Suffer?
- n In becoming human, God has experienced *human pain and suffering*.
- n We can thus turn to God knowing that God has experienced *first hand* human suffering.

# Implications of the Incarnation for Human Destiny

- n For Eastern Christianity, *God* became *human* so *we* can someday become *divine*.
- n Maximus the Confessor (580-662):
  - n Each human being is an image of the divine *logos*.
  - n Purpose of human nature is to acquire *similitude with God*. That is: the movement of human kind is towards communion with God, towards **deification**.

# The Trinity

- n The Christian theology of the **Trinity** tells us:
  - n The Godhead is a *community* of being,
  - n All is shared, united, mutually exchanged,
  - n Father, Son, Spirit are differentiations within the Godhead, evident in the human experience of grace and redemption.

# The Trinity

- n The **Trinity** has implications for:
  - n 1. the way we comprehend God,
  - n 2. the way we view prayer.

# Trinity and The Nature of God

n “if you can comprehend it, it is not God.”

- St. Augustine

n St. Augustine here summarizes our complex understanding and wonder of God. The theology of **Trinity:**

n preserves the mystery, majesty and glory of God.

n Leonardo Boff, Brazilian liberation theologian: Its “mystery is like a cliff: we may not be able to scale it, but we can stand at the foot of it, touch it, praise its beauty. So it is with the mystery of the Trinity.”



# Trinity and The Nature of Prayer

- n Our prayer and worship often involves a **trinitarian** framework:
  - n “through the Son,”
  - n “in the Spirit.”
- n This framework expresses that prayer:
  - n is *not* a purely human activity, but
  - n involves the **Holy Spirit** moving, prompting the believer to turn to God.

# Redemption

- n There are four central themes/facets of the Christian theology of the redemption:
  - n the cross as *sacrifice*,
  - n the cross as *victory*,
  - n the *forgiveness of sins* through the cross,
  - n the *love* expressed by Jesus dying for us on the cross.
- n Redemption stresses for us:
  - n the *costliness* of human salvation,
  - n the reality of human sin and the love of God for sinners.

# Resurrection

- n The Christian theology of the **Resurrection**:
  - n means Jesus is *risen* Savior and Lord;
  - n affirms belief we will be raised from the dead, that death *has been conquered*.
- n The Troparion of Easter in the Byzantine liturgy expresses this eloquently:
  - n “Christ is risen from the dead!
  - n Dying, he conquered death!
  - n To the dead, he has given life!”

# Consummation of All Things

- n The Christian theology of the **Consummation of All Things** in a heavenly Jerusalem reminds us of:
  - n the destination of our earthly pilgrimage,
  - n the promised land.
- n We can look forward to the “beatific vision” of God:
  - n to see God face to face,
  - n impossible now, just as it is impossible to look directly at the sun.

# A Sacramental Universe

- n There is a duality of our experience in this world:
  - n we are *embodied* beings existing in a very *material*, very *concrete* world,
  - n we can feel intimations of beauty, mystery, meaning *through* this material world (a bush, a flower, a sunset. . .).
- n A “**sacramental**” **view of the universe** links the two pieces of this duality:
  - n the material world is *good*, and
  - n the material world can also be a “*door to the sacred*.”

# A Sacramental Universe

- n The fundamental basis of a **Sacramental View of the Universe** is that:
  - n 1. the material world is *good* because:
    - n It was created by God, and
    - n in the **Incarnation**, God *freely* took on embodied existence, God lived in the material, concrete world of space and time.
  - n 2. the material world can be a *door to the sacred* because God is both:
    - n *transcendent* reality *beyond* the world he has made,
    - n *immanent* reality who *dwells in* this world and *is active in it*.

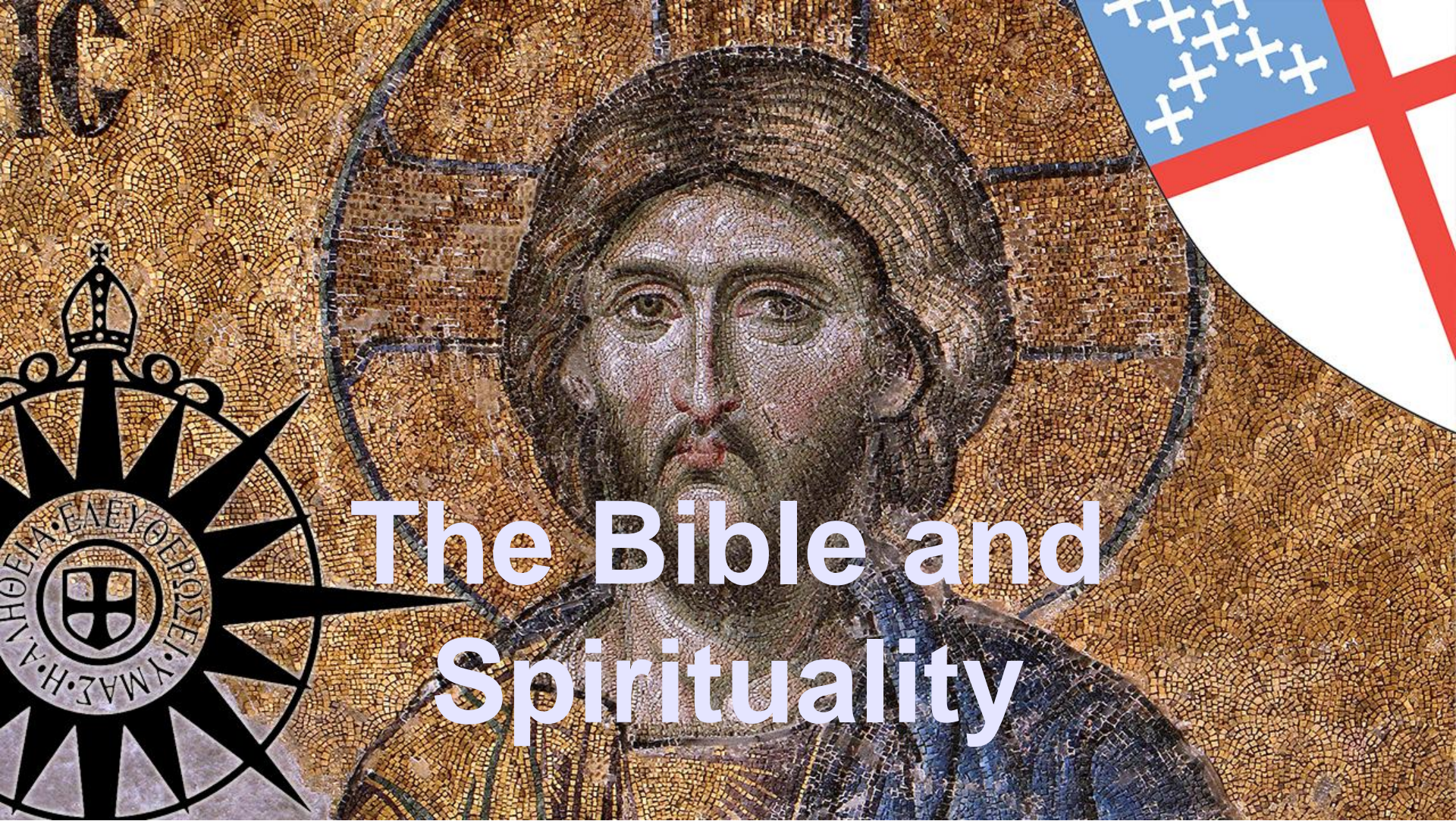
# Themes of Anglican Spirituality

- n **Anglican Spirituality** has in particular emphasized the spirituality arising from the theologies of:
  - n the **Creation**,
  - n the **Incarnation**,
  - n the **Sacramental View of the Universe**.

# Themes of Anglican Spirituality

- n These emphases reflect the Anglican conviction that:
  - n nature has an *inherent goodness* (creation; sacramental universe),
  - n sin is often the *misuse* of good things,
  - n Christian faith is concerned for the *whole of life* (“body” and “soul”) (Incarnation),
  - n our purpose is to *seek God’s glory*, not just avoid sin.





# The Bible and Spirituality



# Reading the Bible

- n We should consider *four stages* in reading the bible (as described by Guigo II, prior of the Grand Chartreuse, d. 1188):
  - n 1. **reading** (*lectio*). Begin an encounter with God.
  - n 2. **meditation** (*meditatio*). Focus, concentrate upon meaning, imagery.
  - n 3. **prayer** (*oratio*). The appropriate response to our encounter.
  - n 4. **contemplation** (*contemplatio*). Our entrance into the presence of God.

# Mental Images and Themes for Spirituality

- n The scriptures give us many mental images and themes to contemplate:
  - n the **Feast**,
  - n the **Journey**,
  - n the **Exile**,
  - n the **Struggle**,
  - n **Purification**,
  - n the **Desert**,
  - n **Ascent**,
  - n **Darkness and Light**,
  - n **Silence**.

# The Feast

- n The kingdom of God is like a **Feast**:
  - n a great banquet thrown in celebration of a marriage (Luke 14:15-24),
  - n the return of a prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).
- n It suggests:
  - n an abundance satisfying human hunger,
  - n Invitation,
  - n celebration and rejoicing.

# The Journey

- n The theme of **Journey** is seen in:
  - n the *wandering* of the Israelites in the desert before entering the Promised land,
  - n the *return* to Jerusalem after years of exile in Babylon.
- n Early Christians were called “followers of the way” (Acts 9:2, 24:14).
  - n We too are “followers of the way,” and our lives are *journeys* to the heavenly kingdom.

# Exile

- n In the Old Testament, the Jews were **exiled** in Babylon after the capture of Jerusalem 586 BC.
- n In the New Testament, Paul reminds us that Christians are “citizens of heaven” (our true home).
- n Life on this earth therefore is a period of **exile** from the heavenly Jerusalem.

# The Struggle

- n The struggle of being a Christian can involve *external struggles* against foes of Christianity, our own *internal struggle* with temptation, as well as our own “**wrestling**” *with God*. We find all of these in the Scripture:
- n “putting on the full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10-18); Christians are like soldiers (2 Timothy 2:3) in an:
  - n 1. *external struggle* against those hostile to Christianity,
  - n 2. *internal struggle* against temptation.
- n Jacob’s wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32:22-32):
  - n 3. we too **struggle** at times *with God*.

# Spiritual Purification

- n Images in Scripture of the need for **purification** include:
  - n Day of Atonement ritual (Leviticus 16). Preparation is needed before entering into the *presence of God*.
  - n the need for *cleansing from sin* (Psalm 51:2, 7),
  - n Revelations 7:14: “being *washed* in the blood of the Lamb,”
  - n *immersion in water* (real or symbolic) in the sacrament of baptism.



# The Desert or Wilderness

- n Images of **desert** or **wilderness** in the Scripture include:
  - n the wandering of Israel in the **desert wilderness**,
  - n John the Baptist in the **wilderness**,
  - n Jesus' withdrawal to the **wilderness** for 40 days.
- n The **wilderness** or **desert** can move us to:
  - n seek retreat from the world's distraction and temptation; placing our true focus on God and the spiritual life,
  - n contemplate life as a wandering through a desert or wilderness.

# Ascent

- n Biblical images of **ascent** include:
  - n Moses **ascending** Sinai to receive the law,
  - n Jesus **ascending** the mountain for the Transfiguration,
  - n Jacob's dream of a *ladder* between heaven and earth.
- n **Ascent** as a symbol of *transcendence* has been the theme of great works of Christian spirituality:
  - n St. John of the Cross (1542-91): *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*;
  - n Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*.

# Darkness and Light

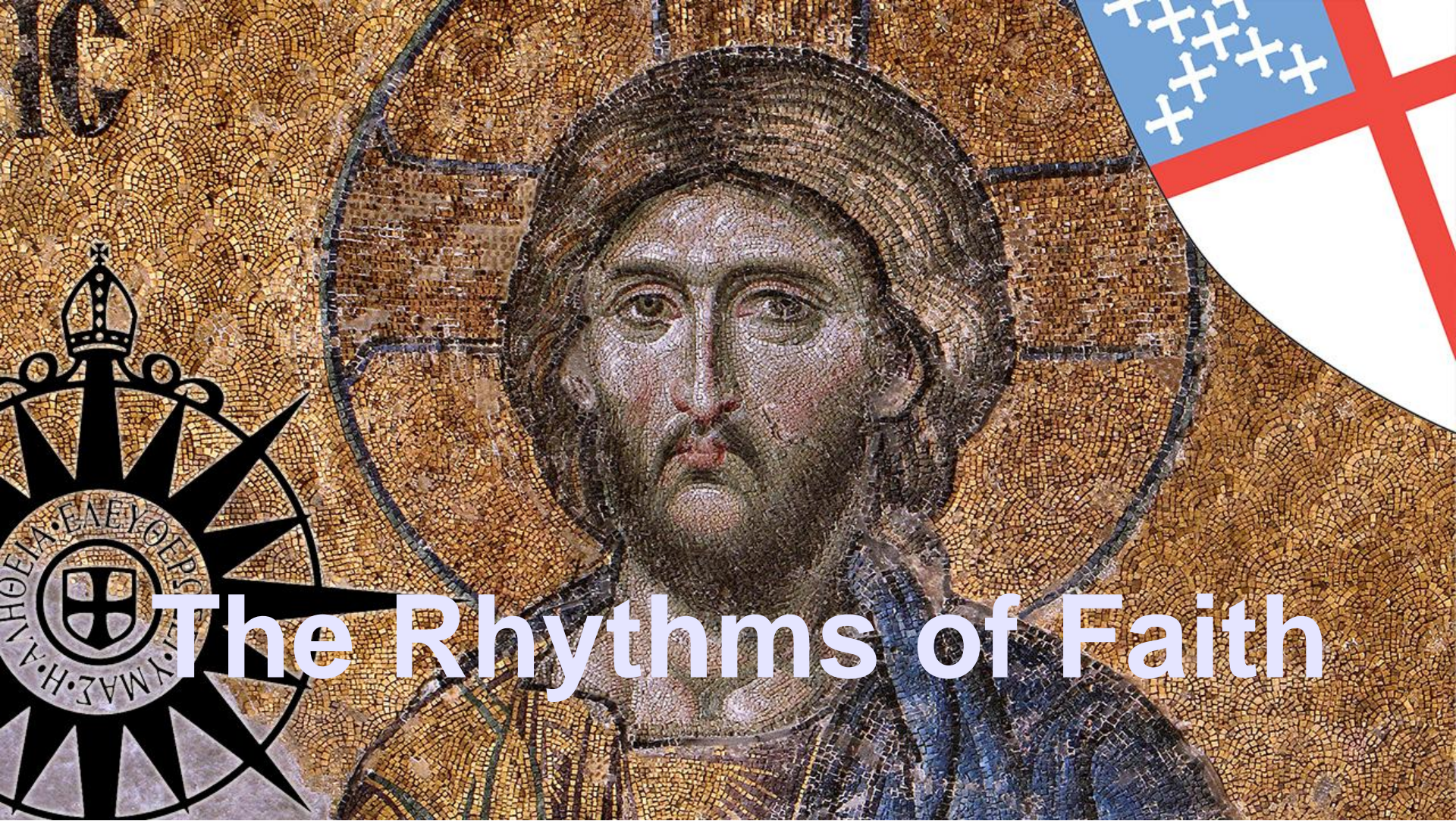
- n Images of **darkness and light** in the scripture include:
  - n At creation: **darkness** = chaos and confusion,
  - n God's presence and power as *illumination*,
  - n Isaiah 9:2 "people who walked in **darkness** see a great **light**,"
  - n John 8:12: Jesus is the **light** of the world,
  - n Moses *approaches God* through **darkness** and cloud,
  - n Paul: we are "seeing through a glass **darkly**." Suggests **darkness**:
    - n as an image of *doubt*,
    - n as a symbol of *sin*,
    - n as a symbol of *divine unknowability*.

# Silence

- n Images of **silence** before God in Scripture:
  - n Habakkuk 2:20: whole earth should be **silent** in the presence of the Lord in the temple,
  - n Job 40:1-3: Job reduced to **silence**, aware of his foolishness in the sight of God,
  - n Revelations 8:1: “**silence** in heaven.”
- n Humanity is reduced to **silence** confronted with the *majesty* and *awe* of God.

# Silence

- n A movement of spirituality in the Eastern Christianity called *hesychasm* arose in the 8th century:
  - n *hesychia* = tranquility and **silence**;
  - n called for an inward **silence** to focus on God,
  - n involved the **Jesus prayer**: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:38).
- n Gregory Palamas (1294-1346) wrote: *hesychasm* allowed a vision of the “divine energies;” divine essence beyond human reach.



# The Rhythms of Faith

# Rhythms of Faith

- n “Rhythms” of the faith that can enhance Christian Spirituality include:
  - n Structuring our time,
  - n Liturgy and Prayer.

# Structuring Time: The Christian Week

## n **Sundays:**

- n day on which the **Resurrection** of Jesus celebrated,
- n the “space” set aside for physical rest and spiritual refreshment.

## n **Wednesdays** and **Fridays:** “fast days” in early Christian communities:

- n **Wednesday:** the day Christ was betrayed,
- n **Friday:** the day Christ was crucified.



# Structuring Time: The Christian Year

- n **Advent**: focuses on the two “advents” or comings of Jesus:
  - n (1) in humility, as an *infant*,
  - n (2) his *Second Coming* in glory at the end of time.
- n **Christmas**: celebration of the birth of Jesus, of the **Incarnation**.

# Structuring Time: The Christian Year

n **Lent**: preparation for Easter:

n period of repentance,

n The 40 days reflects Jesus' time in the wilderness before his public ministry.

n **Easter**: Jesus is Lord.

n Death is conquered: the basis for the Christian hope for a personal resurrection.

# Structuring Time: The Christian Day

- n Monasticism had the goal of *continuous* prayer, of “habitual recollection,” a constant sense of God’s presence in the whole of life.
- n The day was structured into 7 times of prayer (“offices” = duties, obligations) during day and one time at night:
  - n **Matins**,
  - n **Vespers**,
  - n **Terce** (latin for third),
  - n **Sext** (latin for sixth),
  - n **None** (latin for ninth),
  - n **Compline** (final time of prayer before bed),
  - n **Prime** (early morning prayer),
- n The 1979 Book of Common Prayer has “offices” for four times during the day.

# Liturgy and Prayer

- n Theology is linked to worship and prayer:
  - n *lex orandi, lex credendi*: The way you pray shapes what you believe (and visa versa).

# Liturgy and Prayer

- n **Prayer** is “responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.”
- n **Liturgy** is communal worship and prayer.
- n The kinds or types of prayer include:
  - n adoration,
  - n praise,
  - n thanksgiving,
  - n penitence,
  - n oblation,
  - n intercession,
  - n petition,
  - n “centering” prayer.

# Community and Spirituality



# Community and Spirituality

- n **Anglican spirituality** includes a sense of the church as “corporate, liturgical, sacramental,” a community of members who:
  - n find their *center* in common worship,
  - n go out into the world to *serve* according to the gifts and opportunities given them.
- n This sense is based on:
  - n an **Incarnational** faith,
  - n the goodness of **Creation** (creation = a pouring out of the being of God),
  - n a **Sacramental View of the Universe**.



***Next Week:***

**Ministry and Organization.**

**The Church's Mission**