

Introduction	2
Joy in the Lord.....	2
Spiritual practices to express the joy of being in God’s presence ...	3
The Fifty Holy Days have the following weeks.....	5
Week 1 - Confirming Resurrection (Thomas Sunday).....	6
Week 2 - The Bread of Life.....	8
Week 3 - The Living Water (Samaritan Woman)	10
Week 4 - The Light of the World.....	12
Week 5 - The Way, the Truth, and Life	14
Week 6 - The Source of our Peace	16
Week 7 - The Feast of Pentecost	18

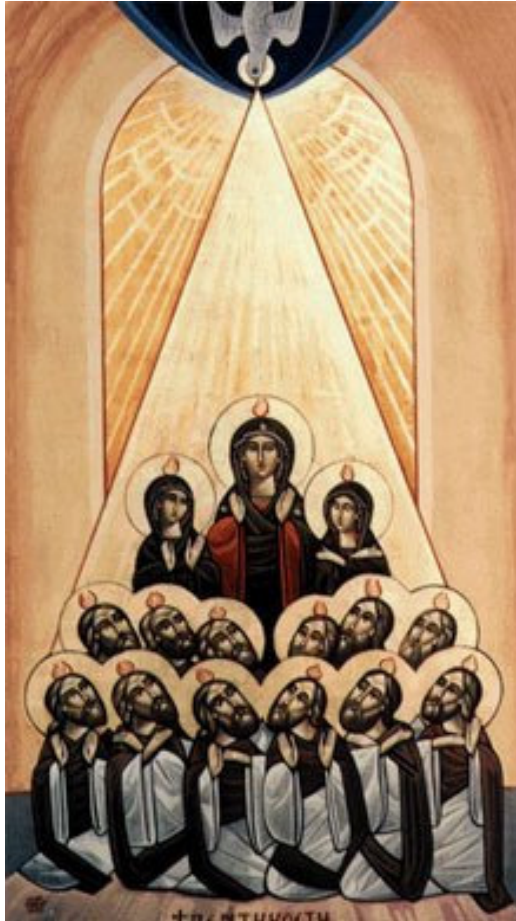
Introduction

Joy in the Lord

The period of the Fifty Holy Days is a special period in the ecclesiastical cycle. The prominent feature of this period is joy. The Church prays with a festal tune in all Her liturgies and prayers, including the funerals. During this period, the Church lives the life of happiness, which was experienced by the holy disciples after Christ's resurrection and His appearance to them. The Divine inspiration describes this joy as such, "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20) The Lord's presence with the disciples led them to experience joy, which lasted with them for the rest of their lives. In the beginning, they saw the Lord with their eyes and touched Him, and they were happy. He continued to appear to them for forty days speaking to them about things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3), until the time came for Him to leave them and ascend to heaven. However, after the forty days when Christ ceased to appear to them, the disciples' happiness did not end. In fact, this joy stayed with them because they continued to see Christ, but in a different way. At first, they saw Him with their physical eyes. Afterwards, they saw Him with the eyes of faith, which don't need the physical evidence of His presence.



Week 7 - The Feast of Pentecost



Seventh Sunday is the Feast of Pentecost (**John 15:26-16:15**). Christ sends us the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

Spiritual practices to express the joy of being in God’s presence

We should train ourselves during the Fifty Holy Days to rejoice in the Lord. The following are some spiritual exercises to help us in that:

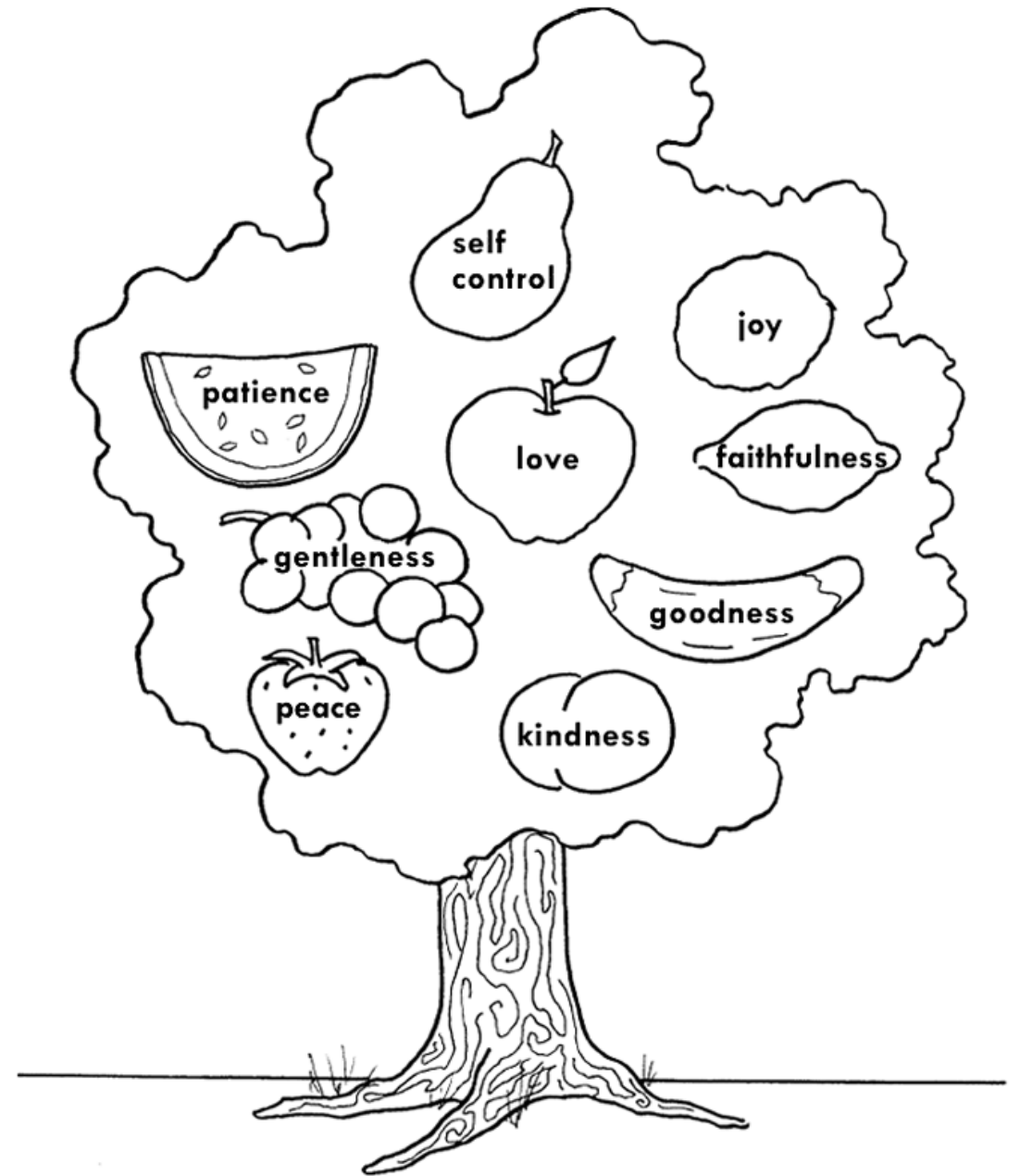
When we partake of the Eucharist, we are receiving Christ within us. Thus Christ is with us and we are with Him. Our Lord said, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him." (John 6:56). Partaking the Body and Blood of Christ allows us to receive Christ inside us, thus leading us to rejoice in the Lord; no one can take away our happiness. Therefore, during communion, we praise the Lord by chanting Psalm 150. The Divine Liturgy is the celebration of our Lord’s death and resurrection. We meet the Lord like the disciples who met Him after the Resurrection, and we rejoice in Christ, Who is within us.

Some pay a great deal of attention to partaking of the Eucharist during Lent, and then see the Fifty Holy Days as a time to lax spiritually. Therefore, they don’t pay much attention to attending the Divine Liturgy and receiving communion. However, this is a beautiful period to experience the joy of receiving the Lord in Holy Communion. Partaking of the Divine Mysteries transforms for us the joy, which the disciples experienced after Christ’s resurrection, from a historical event to an actual event, which we can experience along with them.

When we are happy, it is appropriate to praise God by chanting. Saint James the Apostle said, "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." (James 5:13) We should take great interest in praising God and chanting during the Fifty Days by participating in the praises of the Church. Also, we should add to our personal prayers parts of the psalmody, e.g. the Doxology of the Resurrection, and memorize some of the hymns. This way we teach ourselves to express our joy in the Lord by praises and hymns.

We rejoice in the Lord and our joy increases as we know Him more and experience Him with more depth. Therefore, one of the beneficial exercises during the Fifty Days is to concentrate our readings on the Person of Christ. We should read books, which address His divinity, His qualities, and His love for us. Thus we come out of this period with deeper knowledge about the Person of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our joy in the Lord should not be limited to us only. One of the beneficial exercises also is to let others know about the Risen Christ, so they can share with us our joy in the Lord. May the Lord help us, by His presence amongst us, to experience the life of joy and always live happily with our living Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself up for us.



Week 6 - The Source of our Peace

I have said this to you, that in me you may have **peace.**

In the world you have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,

I have overcome the world.
John 16:33



Sixth Sunday (**John 16:23-33**) presents Christ as the source of our peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our peace and the source of our victory in conquering the world and its troubles. In the Gospel of the sixth Sunday, our Heavenly Bridegroom forewarns of tribulations, “Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone...These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:32-33)

The Fifty Holy Days have the following weeks

The Church’s readings during the Fifty Holy Days revolve around the theme of our Heavenly Bridegroom, Who is present in our midst. Thus the readings of the Sundays of the Fifty Days present to us different aspects of our Heavenly Bridegroom.

Week 0: The Feast of Resurrection

Week 1: Confirming Resurrection (Thomas Sunday)

Week 2: The Bread of Life

Week 3: The Living Water Samaritan Woman)

Week 4: The Light of the World

Week 5: The Way, the Truth, and Life

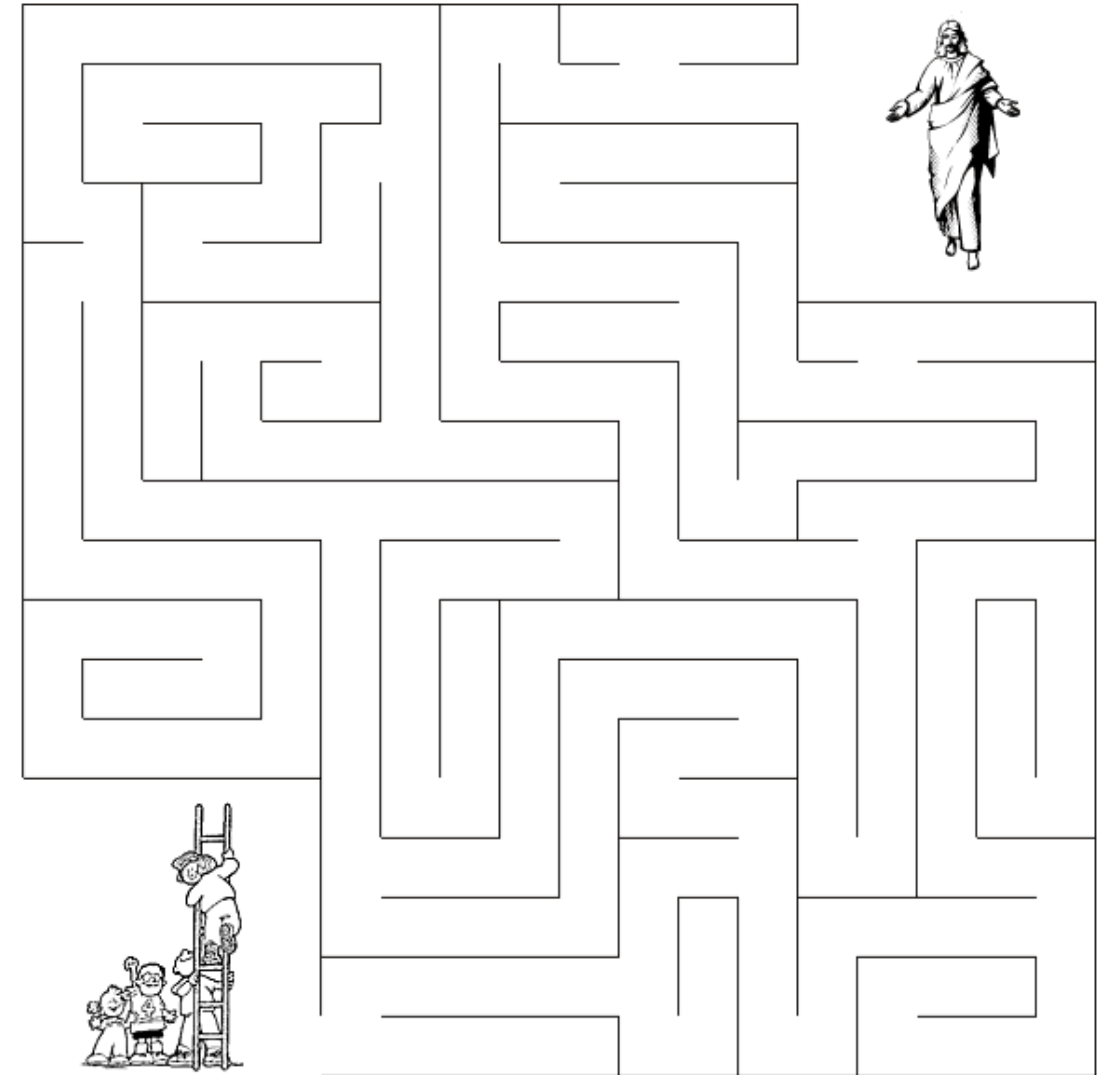
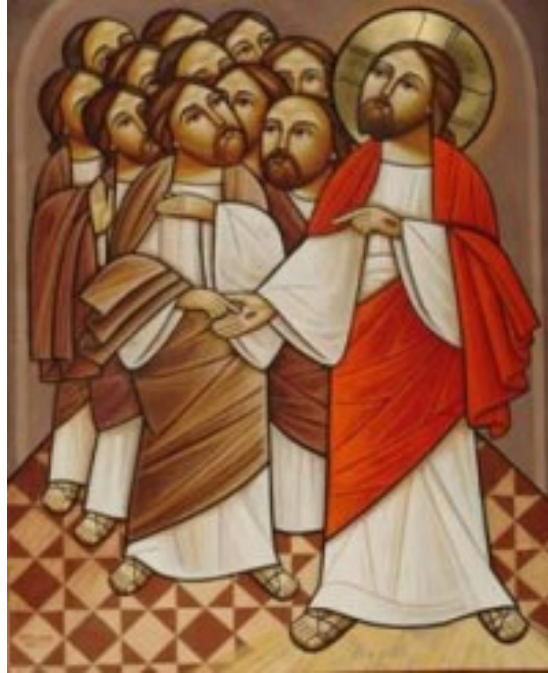
Week 6: The Source of our Peace

Week 7: The Feast of Pentecost

This joyful journey has certain landmarks and it is through our liturgical worship during this period that our Holy Church presents to us these landmarks. Together, we shall see how this journey allows us to experience joy, using the gospel reading of the Sunday Divine Liturgies as a guide for the important landmarks of this journey. As we hear and live through the prayers, hymns, and readings of the Holy Church, may our Lord help us to enjoy the journey of the Fifty Holy Days!

Week 1 - Confirming Resurrection (Thomas Sunday)

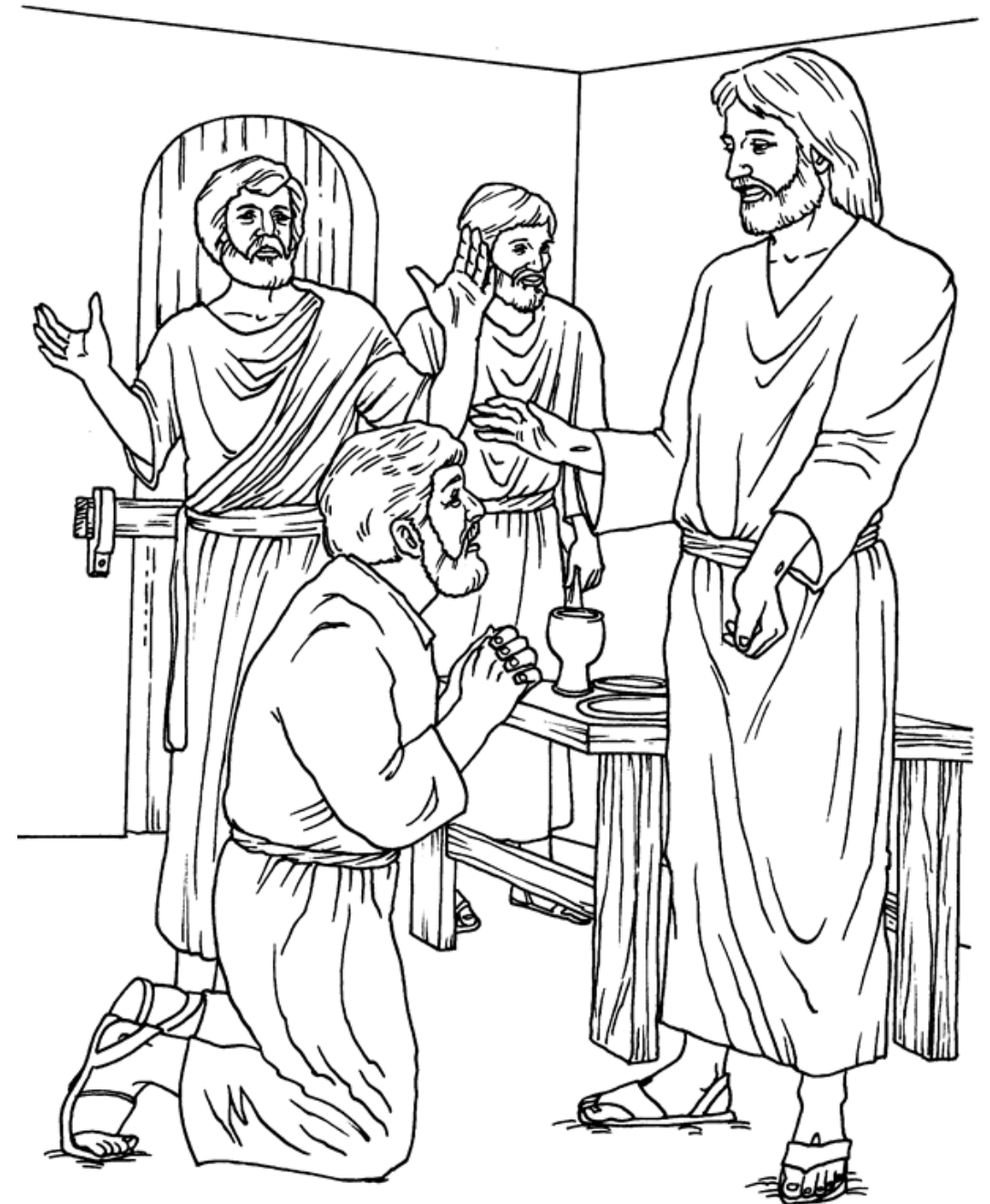
First Sunday, also known as Thomas Sunday (**John 20:19-31**). The Church presents to us the Resurrected Christ as the source of our joy, as it is written, "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20) The gospel confirms the reality of the Resurrection, since it is written that Christ, "showed them His hands and His side." (John 20:20) On the following Sunday after the Resurrection when Christ appeared to them again, He said to Thomas, who wanted a physical proof of the Resurrection, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands, and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." (John 20:27) Then Christ blessed all those who believe without seeing, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29) The reading of the first Sunday confirms the reality of the Resurrection and gives importance to the belief in the Resurrection of Christ, while experiencing continuous joy, because our Christ is a Living Christ.



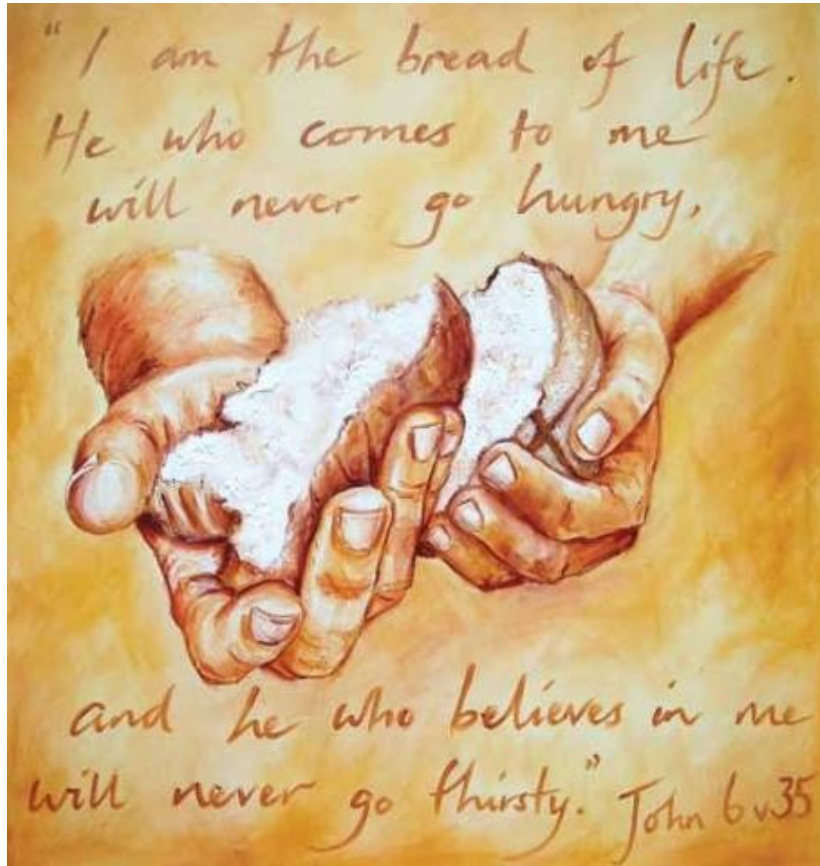
Week 5 - The Way, the Truth, and Life



Fifth Sunday (**John 14:1-11**) presents Christ as the Way, the Truth, and Life. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Through Christ we see the truth and know the way to God and eternal life. In the Gospel of the fifth Sunday, our Heavenly Bridegroom says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Fr. except through Me." (John 14:6)

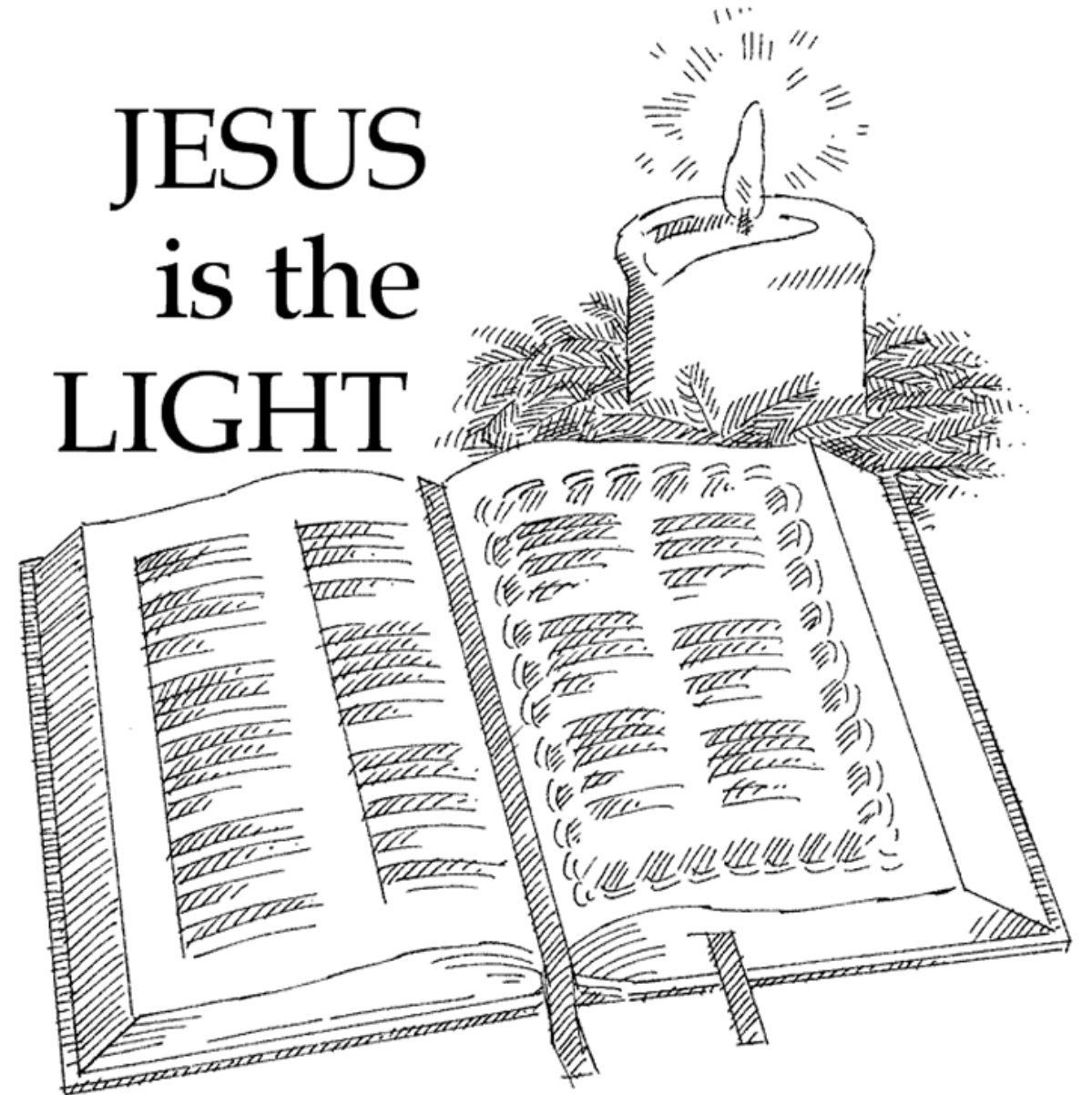


Week 2 - The Bread of Life

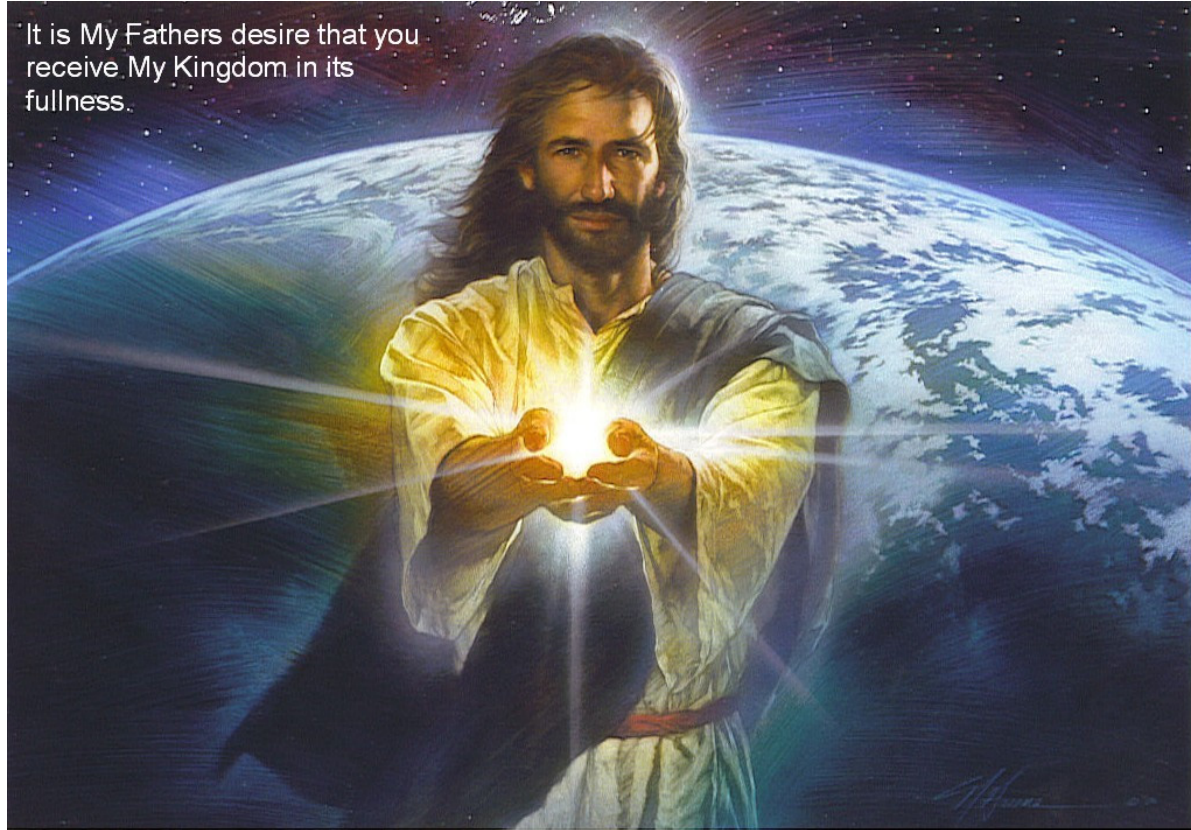


Second Sunday (**John 6:35-45**) presents to us Christ as the Bread of Life, which came down from heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, Who nourishes us. The Heavenly Bridegroom said, "He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

JESUS is the LIGHT



Week 4 - The Light of the World



Fourth Sunday (**John 12:35-50**) talks about Christ as the Light of the World. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, Who lights our lives. In the Gospel reading of the fourth Sunday, our Heavenly Bridegroom says, "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:46)



Week 3 - The Living Water (Samaritan Woman)

Third Sunday (**John 4:1-42**) talks about the meeting of Christ with the Samaritan Woman, and the Church presents Christ to us as the Living Water. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the giver of the living water and whoever drinks of Him will never thirst. During the Gospel reading of the third Sunday, Christ presents to us, along with the Samaritan Woman, the living water. He told her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me to drink', you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."



(John 4:10) When she inquired about the ability of Christ to give her living water, the Lord revealed to her the power of the living water in the person, who drinks of it, by saying, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13-15)

