GUIDE TO THE
DIVINE LITURGY

ROBERT KRANTZ
For Chris, Nicholas, and George –

No thought could I share with you, no lesson could I teach to you, no gift could I give to you greater than taking your hands and guiding them to Christ's hands. For in His hands you will be guided safely through your journey in life.

For Tricia, so happy am I that God called us to dance the Dance of Isaiah together.

And for Mom... words can't express my gratitude and love.
Acknowledgments:

Thank you to all the priests who have guided me and counseled me in the making of this book. In particular, Father Steven Tsichlis and his son, Chris, whose passion and knowledge for the Divine Liturgy are unmatched.
Introduction

I was born into and raised in the Orthodox Faith (the name Krantz was shortened from Karountzos by my grandparents). Growing up, I attended our Greek Orthodox Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Back then, nearly everything during the Liturgy was spoken in Greek (including the sermon!). I remember always pestering my mother, asking her what the priest was saying. As the years went by, I grew to love the feeling that attending the Liturgy gave me. I knew all the songs the choir sang in Greek; I loved the incense, icons, and candles. I always felt a great sense of community and family when I was at church.

But, as I learned later in life, there was one slight problem: I didn't understand very much at all about the Divine Liturgy.

It was almost like the Divine Liturgy was a wonderful foreign film that I watched over and over again. The images I saw, the music I heard, and the emotion I felt led me to love it, but I really didn't understand it. The booklets in the pews allowed me to “follow along,” but they never explained what was really happening during the Divine Liturgy.

I went along like this for a long time. That was until an event occurred in my life that changed all of that: my wife and I had children. I knew that I was
responsible for their spiritual life, and I wasn’t about to mess that up. However, as they grew up, I’d watch them as they sat next to us in church, and I could see it was hard for them to stay focused on the liturgy because they had no idea what was going on. I knew I had to teach them. But how could I teach them about something that I knew so little about? So, eleven years ago, my wife and I began attending our church’s “Orthodoxy #101” class. I realized very quickly that I knew virtually nothing about our faith and in particular The Divine Liturgy.

Since then, I have learned as much as I could about the Divine Liturgy, not only for myself and my family, but also in hope that it may help others out there who are “liturgically challenged.”

My biggest fear when I started out in learning about the Divine Liturgy was that it would be outdated and not relevant for our times. What I found to be true was the exact opposite; it is a masterpiece. The Divine Liturgy is brilliantly thought out and divinely composed.

What the Orthodox faith has done is answer one central question of faith brilliantly. The question is: how shall we worship God? The Orthodox answer is simple: we will worship Him on earth just as he is worshipped in Heaven. Simple, but brilliant, isn’t it?

To support that central theme, the Orthodox faith has composed the liturgy by weaving together a religious mosaic of biblical verses (yes, there is a lot of the Bible in the Liturgy), firsthand accounts (yes, eyewitnesses have seen how God is worshipped in Heaven!), and tradition (tradition meaning, for example, that our faith is practiced the way the Apostles worshiped Christ and we’ve never broken from that tradition), and much more, including a heavy dose of common sense (i.e., at the Last Supper, when Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me...,” it’s a pretty good bet that He meant we should “Do this” [celebrate the Liturgy and take communion]!)

As I hope you will see, it is so brilliantly thought out, so divinely inspired that you can’t help but feel that when you are in the Orthodox faith, you are right where God wants you to be.

May I also say that this is by no means a theological dissertation or scholarly essay on The Divine Liturgy. There are authors far smarter than myself who have written books for that. What I’ve attempted to do in these pages is make the Divine Liturgy understandable to the mother and father who want not only their faith renewed but also assurance that their child’s faith is never lost. It’s written for the grandparents who want to understand the service for themselves, their children, and grandchildren. It is for those wonderful, inspiring people who are thinking of converting or who have converted to the Orthodox faith. It’s for those who’ve always been in the faith, for those new to the faith, and for those thinking to join the faith.

Lastly, I see this not as a definitive work but, rather, as an ongoing work – Guide to The Divine Liturgy 1.0, if you will. I hope that you will e-mail me your notes, complaints, corrections, insights, likes, and dislikes to sales@ellinasmultimedia.com so that, as time goes on, together we can make this book better and better for generations to enjoy so they can get the most possible out of the Divine Liturgy and the wonderful faith of Orthodoxy.

In His name,
Robert Krantz
Ellinas Multimedia
GUIDE TO THE DIVINE LITURGY
**Vesting of Clergy**

In the Orthodox faith, the priest does not simply show up and toss on his robe and other garments. First, he prepares by reciting special prayers outside the Iconostasion (Altar Screen) before the Royal Doors. He kisses the Holy Icons of the Iconostasion, and then enters the Sanctuary through the North Door saying:

"I shall enter into Your dwelling place; before Your holy temple I will bow in fear of You."

As with so much of the Divine Liturgy, the priest’s use of vestments has Biblical underpinnings. Having entered the Sanctuary, the priest wears his vestments. The purpose of vestments were “for glory and for beauty” (Ex 28:2 & 40), to enable the leaders for “ministering in the holy place” (Ex 35:19, 39:1, 41), “that they may serve Me as priests” (Ex 28:4, 41).

The way in which the vestments are decorated comes from the Old Testament, where the garments were decorated and made of beautifully colored “fine linen skillfully worked” and embroidered with needlework (Ex 28:6, 36, 39), with bells of gold (Ex 28:33), and with a plate of gold engraved “Holy is the Lord” (Ex 28:36).

There are five vestments that the priest recites a special prayer for:

**1. EPIMANIKA (cuffs):**

The Epimanika are cuffs worn by the deacon and higher ranks of clergy. The deacon wears them under the Sticharion. They represent strength, patience, and goodwill. The cords which tie them represent the rope with which the hands of our Lord were bound.

(Wearing first Epimanika – right cuff)

"Your right hand, Lord, is made glorious in might; Your right hand, Lord, has crushed the enemies; and in the fullness of Your glory, You have routed the adversary." (Exodus Chapter 15, Verses 6-7)

(Wearing second Epimanika – left cuff)

"Your hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding and I shall learn Your commandments." (Psalm 119, Verse 73)

**2. STICHARION:**

This is a long, full-sleeved tunic that reaches the ankles. This is the original baptismal robe of the newly baptized. It is symbolic of a pure and tranquil conscience, a spotless life, and spiritual joy in the Lord. It states Christ’s purity and illumination as well as the purity and brightness of the Holy Angels. It is also worn as the outer garment by acolytes. It usually has a cross embroidered or applied to the center of the back, between the shoulder blades.

"My soul rejoices in the Lord, for He has clothed me with a robe of salvation and covered me with a garment of happiness; as a bridegroom He has crowned me, and as a bride He has adorned me with gems.";
3. EPITRACHELION:
The Epitrachelion (stole: meaning “on the neck”) is a long narrow band of vestment material that fits around the priest’s neck at the center, is joined at the neck by hooks, and hangs down below the priest’s knees. It is symbolic of priestly dignity and power and must be worn by the priest at all liturgical services. It also symbolizes the Cross carried by our Lord upon His shoulders. A church service cannot be celebrated without it. The tassels that hang at the lower part of the stole represent the souls of the parishioners that hang on the Spiritual Father’s neck.

_Blessed is God who pours out grace upon His priests: as oil upon the head, which ran down unto the beard, the beard of Aaron, even to the hem of his garment, at all times, now and always and forever and ever. Amen._ (Psalm 133, Verse 2)

4. ZONI (belt):
The Zoni is worn over the Sticharion and Epitrachelion and is used to hold up the Sticharion that represents wisdom and strength.

_“Blessed is God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless and strengthens my feet like the hart’s, at all times, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.”_ (Psalm 133, Verse 2)

5. PHELONION:
The Phelonion is a cape-like outer vestment, long in back and short in front, with an opening for the head to pass through. It signifies the crimson Robe, with which the soldier clothed our Lord Jesus to mock Him while he was in the Praetorium.

_“Your priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves with righteousness, and Your saints shall rejoice in joy, at all times, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.”_ (Psalm 132, Verse 9)

The priest blesses each garment with the sign of the cross and kisses them. He then washes his hands to signify his purity, reciting:

_“I will wash my hands in innocence, and go around Your altar, O Lord.”_ (Psalm 26, Verse 6)

**PREPARATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC GIFTS**

Over an hour before the parishioners arrive and begin the Divine Liturgy Service, the priest arrives at the church and begins preparing for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The service of preparation (in Greek called the proskomidi or prothesis) is the liturgical celebration that surrounds the preparation of the bread and wine for its use in the Divine Liturgy.

Originating in the eighth century, the service in its present form probably dates from the fourteenth century. Originally performed by deacons, today the service is normally done by a priest who may be assisted by a deacon during the _Orthros_ or Service of
Morning Prayer that precedes the Liturgy. In addition to the preparation of the bread and wine for use at the Eucharist, the Proskomede is also a service of remembrance and intercession: many of the saints are commemorated, ranging from the prophets of the Old Testament to the apostles, from bishops to martyrs, from monks and nuns to miracle-workers; and prayers of intercession are offered for those members of the local congregation and others who are sick and suffering, as well as for those Christians who “have died in hope of resurrection to eternal life,” as the prayer says.

After vesting and washing his hands, the priest proceeds to the table of oblation, which stands to the left of the Holy Altar. While preparing the necessary vessels – the paten (diskos), the chalice (poterion), the star (asterisk), the lance (longhi), the spoon (lavis), the veils (kalimmata) and the flasks of wine and water – the priest says:

BETHLEHEM, be prepared! Eden is open to all! Ephratha be radiant! For in the cave, the wood of life has blossomed forth from the Virgin, whose womb has symbolically appeared as paradise. And we who eat of this divine seedling shall live and not die as did Adam. For Christ shall live and not die as did Adam. For Christ is born to resurrect the icon, which has fallen.

You have redeemed us from the curse of the law (GAL 3:13) by Your precious blood. Being nailed on the cross and pierced by a lance, You have bestowed immortality upon humanity. Our Savior, glory to You!

Blessed is our God now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then the priest takes the bread of offering (profora) in his left hand and the lance in his right; and raising the loaf, he makes the sign of the cross over it three times with the lance and says:

In remembrance of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

He then thrusts the lance into the center of the loaf on the right side of that part of the seal that bears the letters IC XC NIKA, saying:

Like a sheep, he was led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7)

Then he cuts the left side and says:

As a spotless lamb silent before its shearers, he did not open his mouth (Isaiah 53:7)

And cutting into the upper side:

In his humiliation, justice was denied him (Acts 8:33)

Finally, cutting along the lower side:

Who shall declare his generation? (Isaiah 53:8)

Removing the square particle known as the Lamb from the loaf, he says:

For his life was taken away from the earth (Acts 8:33)

Laying the bread on the paten with the seal facing downward, the priest cuts the sign of the cross into the bread, saying:

The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is sacrificed for the life and salvation of the world (John 1:29)

By your crucifixion, O Christ, the tyranny of the Adversary was brought to an end. The power of the enemy was crushed. Neither an angel nor a man has saved us, but, rather, the Lord Himself. Glory to You!
And he turns the Lamb over, with the seal facing up and pierces the upper right side with the lance, saying:

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance. And at once came forth blood and water: and he who saw it bore witness and his witness is true (John 19:34-35)

Emptying the flasks of wine and water into the chalice, the priest says:

Blessed is the union of Your Holy things now And always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then, cutting out the triangular particle bearing the letters ΜΘ (Mother of God), the priest says:

In honor and memory of our most blessed lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, through whose prayers, O Lord, accept this sacrifice upon Your altar in Heaven.

Placing the particle on the paten, to the right of the Lamb, he says:

At Your right stood the Queen, clothed in an embroidered mantle of gold and many colors (Psalm 44:10)

Cutting smaller triangular-shaped particles for the nine orders of angels and saints and placing them on the paten to the left of the Lamb, he begins the commemorations:

1. In honor and memory of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and all the heavenly bodiless powers.

2. Of the honorable, glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist: of the holy and glorious prophets Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Elisha, David, and Jesse: of the holy three children, Daniel the prophet, and of all the holy prophets.

3. Of the holy, glorious and all-praised apostles Peter and Paul, of the Twelve and the Seventy and of all the holy apostles.

4. Of the holy fathers and great ecumenical teachers and bishops Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; Athanasios and Cyril, John the Merciful, patriarchs of Alexandria; Nicholas of Myra and Spyridon, the wonderworkers, and of all holy bishops.

5. Of the holy first martyr and archdeacon Stephen; of the holy and great martyrs Demetrios, George, Theodore the Recruit and Theodore of Tyre; of the holy martyrs Thecla, Barbara, Kyriake, Euphemia, Paraskeve, Katherine, and all of the holy martyrs.

6. Of our holy and God bearing (monastic) fathers Anthony the Great, Euthymios, Savvas, Onuphrios, Peter and Athansios of Athos, Christodoulos of Patmos, and Sergios of Radonetz; of our venerable (monastic) mothers in God Pelagia, Theodosia, Anastasia, Eupraxia, Theodulia, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt, and of all holy ascetics.

7. Of the holy and glorious wonderworkers and healers who worked without payment Kosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Pateleimon and Hermolaos, and of all the holy healers who labored without accepting payment.

8. Of the Holy and righteous ancestors of God Joachim and Anna, Joseph the betrothed: of Saints(s) ________________ whose memory we celebrate today and of all Your Saints.

Then the priest cuts small pieces for the living and then for the departed and places them on the paten in front of the Lamb:

Remember, O Loving Master, all Orthodox Bishops: our Patriarch ______, our Archbishop ______, our Bishop ______ the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ, and those in holy monastic orders.

Remember, O Lord, our co-celebrants, presbyters, deacons, and all our brothers, whom in the depths of your compassion have been called to communion with You, our all-good Master.

Then he commemorates by name those of the living whom he will, beginning with the bishop who ordained him, if still alive:

Remember Your servants ______ and forgive them their sins and transgressions.

Then he commemorates by name those of the dead whom he will, beginning with the bishop who ordained him if no longer alive:

Remember Your servants who have fallen asleep and grant them forgiveness of sins.

Remember the founders of this holy Church and all of our departed Orthodox fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters, who in the hope of resurrection to life eternal may have communion with You,... and forgive them all their sins and transgressions.

And finally he prays for himself:

Remember, Lord, my unworthiness and forgive my voluntary and involuntary transgressions.

Then, blessing the censer, the priest recites the prayer for the offering of incense:

We offer You incense, Christ our God, as a sweet smell of spiritual fragrance: receive it on Your altar in heaven and send down upon us in return the grace of Your all-holy Spirit.

And having censed the star, and placing it over the paten, the priest says:

And the star came and stood over the place where the Child was (Matthew 2:9)

The Priest censes the small veil for the paten while reciting verses from Psalm 92:

The Lord is king: He is robed with splendor: the Lord is clothed with power; He wearst it like a belt. For He has established the world so that it cannot be moved. (Psalm 92: 1-2)

The priest censes the second of the small veils, this one for the chalice, in the same way as the first. He places it over the chalice, saying:

Your glory has covered the heavens, O Christ, and the earth is filled with Your praises. (Habakkuk 3:3)

Having censed the final veil, (called “aer”), the priest places it over the paten and chalice, saying:

Cover us over with the cover of Your wings; drive away from us every alien and enemy; make our lives peaceful. Lord, have mercy on us and upon Your world and save our souls, O Good One who loves mankind.
Then the priest censes the offering, saying:

Blessed is our God, who is thus well-pleased. 
Glory to you at all times, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

For these precious gifts that are offered, let us pray to the Lord. O God, our God, who has sent the heavenly bread, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, as the food of the whole world and as our redeemer and benefactor, to bless and sanctify us. Bless this offering and accept it on Your altar in heaven. In Your goodness and compassion, remember both those who have offered it and those for whom it has been offered; preserve us so that we might celebrate Your holy mysteries uncondemned. For holy and glorious is Your honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The priest bows, kisses the offering, and says:

Holy is God, the Father without beginning; 
holy and strong the Son, who is also without beginning; holy and immortal, the all-Holy Spirit; Holy Trinity, glory to You. Glory to You, Christ and God and our hope, glory to You. May Christ, our true God who, born in a cave and laid in a manger for our salvation, through the prayers of his most holy Mother; of the glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist; of Saint(s) ___whose memory we celebrate today; of our fathers among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (or: Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea) and of all Your saints, have mercy upon us and save us, for He is good and loves humility. Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

The Priest censes the offering and altar, saying:

Being God, You were present in the tomb by Your body and yet in Hades by Your soul, in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne O Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, filling all things but encompassed by none.

Then Psalm 50 (51)

After having incensed the sanctuary, the icons, the choir, and the people, the priest returns to the sanctuary, and again incenses the holy table. He then places the censer in its proper place, and goes to join the other priest Standing together before the holy altar, they make three bows, each praying silently and saying:

Heavenly king, comforter, spirit of truth, Who are everywhere present and fill all things, treasury of blessings and giver of life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men. (Twice.) (Luke 2:14)

O Lord, You will open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise. (Psalm 51:15)

The priest then kisses the holy gospel book, the deacon the holy table.

After which the deacon bows his head to the priest, and holding the orarion with three fingers of his right hand, he says:

It is time for the Lord to act.(Psalm 119:126)
Master, give the blessing.

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is about to begin!
“Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.”

This first sentence of the Divine Liturgy is a bold statement of faith. Everything we say after this is prayers we ask of God, but this opening statement is a proclamation of faith in God. We are stating to God that we believe in the beauty of Heaven, we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we believe they are for eternity. We as a congregation are at the front door of Heaven, seeking entrance. God, hearing us, opens the door and the connection between Heaven and earth begins.

Another way to look at this is how, oftentimes when a plane is about to take off, the pilot will announce the destination of the plane so that everyone on board is reminded of where he or she is headed. The opening statement of the Divine Liturgy is somewhat similar. The middle part of the church is called the Nave. In Latin the translation of that word is Ship. So, in essence, the parishioners are seated in the “ship.” But, where are they headed? The priest lets all the “passengers” know; to the Kingdom of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is Heaven. In fact, all sacraments begin with the words “Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.” With these words, our communion with Heaven has begun.

**THE GREAT LITANY**

**Deacon:** In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Η ΘΕΙΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΥ**

**Ιερεύς:** Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

**Λαός:** Αμήν.

**Διάκονος:** Ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
The Great Litany

"Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28:30)

When we read the verse from the Bible above, it reminds us that this is the beautiful God who awaits us and listens to us as we begin our “litany” of prayers.

Whatever your burden, whatever your sin, whatever your problem, whatever your troubles, here stands our God ready to listen and help us. So many parishioners feel they have “labored;” they feel “heavy laden” and are looking for “rest for their souls.” Our loving and compassionate God is happy to see us and right from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy He is in essence saying to us, “take all your problems and put them on Me and I will give you rest.” In fact, when you read the prayers of the Great Litany, you’ll notice a word that keeps reoccurring; peace. “In peace, let us pray…,” “For heavenly peace…,” “For peace in the whole world…,” “…for peaceful times.” In fact the words peace or peaceful appear dozens of times in the Divine Liturgy. That is not a coincidence! It seems like the Lord and the church fathers were trying to tell us something. They are aware that when people come to church, more often than not they have many problems on their minds. They know parishioners are worried about their children, their finances, someone who may be ill, someone who may be traveling, their career, and so on. The church fathers must have understood this because so many of the prayers we are making to God involve the word peace. One of the beauties of God

People: Lord, have mercy.
Priest: For the peace of God (Philippians 4:7) and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For peace in the whole world (cf. Zechariah 1:11), for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὑπὲρ τῆς ἄνωθεν εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου, εὐσταθείας τῶν ἁγίων τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων ἑνώσεως, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
is that He doesn’t respond to our requests for peace by saying, “Okay, I’ll think about it.” Or “Let me mull that over.” As we are making this litany of requests, He is immediately granting it to us.

How do we know this? He told us in Matthew 18:19-20, which says: “I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, I am there in their midst.” And we, the “People” confirm back to God that we know He is granting our requests by saying, “Lord, have mercy.” Many think that the words Lord have mercy are being used like words from an old movie where a prisoner who has been locked up for weeks has a light shone upon him by the warden, and the prisoner yells out, “Have mercy on me!” only to have the warden slam the door shut again. That is not how the Orthodox faithful understand the words Lord have mercy. In fact, the Orthodox understanding, as we will describe shortly, is a more comforting and soothing understanding of those words.

Also, did you ever notice that, when you walk into church with all your problems on your mind, more often than not when you leave Church things seem better… more peaceful? This Great Litany is where that transformation begins. In fact, The Great Litany is sometimes referred to as “The Litany of Peace.” As the Great Litany comes to an end, there is one other interesting point to notice; in many of the Great Litany prayers, we are praying for someone other than ourselves. We are praying for our President, our churches, our country, our Archbishop, for those who

People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our Archbishop (Name), the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ, for all the clergy and laity, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.

Διάκονος: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.

Diákonos: Ύπερ τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἡμῶν (Ονομα), τοῦ τιμίου πρεσβυτερίου, τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ διακονίας, παντός τοῦ κλήρου καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Διάκονος: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
are traveling, etc… but not our self. Why is that? If you were ever having a bad day or going through a rough time and visited someone who was sick or talked to someone who had just lost a loved one or talked with someone going through a painful divorce… more often than not it puts your problems into perspective. The terminology of the day is it “gets you out of your head.” When we think about someone else’s problems, when we are concerned about someone else’s problems, and when we pray about someone else’s problems, more often than not our problems seem to get lighter.

Also, as Christians, many times someone will tell us that they are going through a rough time or have certain problems and we often respond, “I’ll pray for you.” This moment in the Divine Liturgy is a great moment to do just that: pray for those in need.

In many Church bulletins, priests put a list of those who are suffering and need our prayers. You will often see fellow parishioners who are suffering from cancer, heart problems, or other debilitating medical conditions. When you pray for those people going through those most difficult moments, when you pray for the sick and suffering, when you pray for the captives, etc… it tends to change your perspective and your heart.

Also, if you believe in the power of prayer, this is a powerful moment. It may seem to you as you look around your church that only a few dozen or a few hundred people are praying. But remember, there are 300,000,000 Orthodox Christians around the world. Can you imagine the cumulative prayer power as millions and millions of prayers are sent to God asking that He

Deacon: For our country, the President, and all those in public service, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For this parish and city, for every city and country, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons, let us pray to the Lord.

Διάκονος: Ὑπὲρ τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς ἡμῶν ἔθνους, πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας ἐν αὐτῷ, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὑπὲρ τῆς κοινότητος καὶ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης, πάσης πόλεως, χώρας καὶ τῶν πίστει οἰκούντων ἐν αὐταῖς, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὑπὲρ εὐκρασίας ἀέρων, εὐφορίας τῶν καρπῶν τῆς γῆς καὶ καιρῶν εἰρηνικῶν, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
watch over all those people who are mentioned in the Great Litany? What an awesome event this must be in Heaven. Lastly, does the Bible give us any insight in this area of the Great Litany? It does. Look at what St. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:1-3:

“I urge, then, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone first of all,— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior…”

This is beautifully put, and it illuminates further how wonderful and thoughtful the Divine Liturgy is as we move to the next step.

People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For travelers by land, sea, and air, for the sick, the suffering, the captives, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and distress, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.

The Words Mercy and Amen

Throughout the Divine Liturgy you will see the words Mercy and Amen. The word Mercy comes from the Greek word eleos. Eleos has the same root as the old word for oil. In ancient times, olive oil was used as a substance that would soothe minor wounds. The Hebrew word also is translated as eleos and implies a “steadfast love.” Therefore, when you see the words Kyrie eleison (meaning “Lord have mercy”), it means “Lord soothe me, comfort me, take away my pain, and give me your steadfast love.” As mentioned earlier, when we say these words, we are calling upon God’s

Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Υπὲρ πλεόντων, ὁδοιπορούντων, νοσούντων, καμιόντων, αἰχμαλώτων καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Υπὲρ τοῦ ρυθῆναι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης θλίψεως, ὀργῆς, κινδύνου καὶ ἀνάγκης, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
loving compassion for us, and the Lord answers us with his lovingkindness.

The word Amen is a Hebrew word that is variously understood to mean “Truly,” “So say we all,” “So be it,” or “Let it be so.” Most simply, it means “Yes!” Amen is our “Yes” to God. The Hebrew root means “to be firm, confirmed, be reliable, have faith, believe.”

We find the word amen as the last word of the Bible, closing it like a seal: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!” (Revelation 22:21). Thus, when we say amen, we are expressing our assent and confirming that which is said in the Scriptures and the Liturgy as being true and the foundation on which we build our lives.

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is today the primary worship service of over 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world, from Greece to Finland, Russia to Tanzania, Japan to Kenya, Bulgaria to Australia. It is celebrated in dozens of languages, from the original Greek it was written in to English and French, Slavonic and Swahili, Korean and Arabic.

**Deacon:** Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

**People:** Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

**People:** To You, O Lord.

**Διάκονος:** Ἀντιλαβοῦ, σῶσον, ἐλέησον καὶ διαφύλαξον ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεός τῇ σῇ χάριτι.

**Λαός:** Κύριε ἐλέησον.

**Διάκονος:** Τῆς Παναγίας, ἀχράντου, ὑπερευλογημένης, ἐνδόξου, δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἄγιων μνημονεύσαντες, ἐαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.

**Λαός:** Σοὶ Κύριε.
The priest has completed the Preparation of the Gifts (prior to the beginning of the liturgy), we have prayed to God, (the Great Litany), and now we are going to sing three hymns. They are called the Three Antiphons. The reason they call it the Three Antiphons instead of the Three Hymns is because the word Antiphon describes the manner in which the hymns will be sung. The word Antiphon means “opposite voice” (in Greek the word anti means opposite and the word phono means voice). In this case, the word stands for the Orthodox practice of having two choirs responding to each other.

How did this begin? There was a Bishop (St. Ignatius) in the city of Antioch who had a vision of Heaven one day. He saw the angels formed into two opposing choirs singing songs antiphonally, glorifying the Holy Trinity. They were taking turns: one choir of angels would sing, and then the other choir of angels would sing. After this vision, the Bishop decided to separate his choir into two sections and have them sing the songs antiphonally. Over time, more and more priests began doing this, until it became the norm for Orthodoxy.

In our Divine Liturgy, it means that the Chanter will be reciting passages from Psalm verses while the people/choir will be the “antiphon” (other voice) signing as he recites the passages.

The first antiphon/song is sung to Christ, and we also ask the Virgin Mary to pray or intercede on our behalf. The second antiphon is also sung to Christ. The third one alternates.

What Is an Antiphon?

Prayer of the First Antiphon

Priest (in a low voice): Lord, our God, whose power is beyond compare, and glory is beyond understanding; whose mercy is boundless, and love for us is ineffable: Master, look upon us and upon this holy house in Your compassion. Grant to us and to those who pray with us the riches of Your mercy and compassion. (cf. Ps. 103:4; Eph 2:4). For to You belongs all glory, honor, and worship (Ps 96:7,9) to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, οὗ τὸ κράτος ἀνείκαστον καὶ ἡ δόξα ἀκατάληπτος· οὗ τὸ ἔλεος ἀμέτρητον καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἄφατος· ἀυτὸς, Δέσποτα, κατὰ τὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν σου, ἐπίβλεψον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἄγιον οἶκον τούτον, καὶ ποιήσον μεθ’ ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν συνευχομένων ἡμῖν, πλοῦσια τὰ ἐλέη σου καὶ τοὺς οἰκτιρμούς σου.: Ὅτι πρέπει σοι πᾶσα δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Ἅγιῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.
This is one of the great misconceptions that people make when inquiring about the Orthodox faith. No, we don’t worship the Virgin Mary; we honor her, because she is the mother of Jesus, and we ask her to pray on our behalf to her son.

The title for the Virgin Mary is found in ancient Christian writings dating back to the second and third centuries and is used for the first time in surviving documents by an early Christian scholar named Origen (185-254AD). Theos is the Greek word for God and tokos indicates giving birth. Put together they mean “The one who gave birth to God.” “The Virgin Mary” was officially proclaimed as a title to be used by Christians to describe the Virgin Mary at the Third Ecumenical Council held in the city of Ephesus in 431AD.

As we will discuss later, God is a God of order. Accordingly, there is a structure in Heaven with the Seraphim and the Cherubim being closest to God. As close to God as the Seraphim and the Cherubim are, we believe that the Virgin Mary is “more honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.” That’s how highly the Virgin Mary is regarded in the Orthodox faith.

Because of her closeness to her son, Jesus, we ask the Virgin Mary to intercede on our behalf and pray for us. That is the meaning of the First Antiphon when we sing, “Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.” She prays on our behalf, but it is still God who saves us.

**People:** Amen.

**THE FIRST ANTIPHON**

*(Sung to Christ, and asking the Virgin Mary to intercede for us)*

(On most, though not all, Sundays of the year, there are three designated verses from the Book of Psalms that are sung with the hymn “By the intercessions of the Theotokos…”)

**Chanter:** Bless the Lord, O my soul! May all that is within me bless His holy Name. *(Psalm 103:1)*

**People:** By the intercession of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

**Λαός:** Ἀμήν.

**ΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ**

*(Καὶ ψάλλεται τὸ Α’ Αντίφωνον, συνοδευόμενον ἀπὸ τὸ ἐφύμνιον:)*

Ψαλτής: Εὐλογεῖ ὁ ψυχή μου τὸν Κύριον καὶ παύτα τα εὔτος μου τὸ ὄνομα τὸ αὖγον αὐτοῦ.

**Λαός:** Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σώσον ἡμᾶς.
The Divine Liturgy is Structurally Divided Into Two Parts.

The first part of the Divine Liturgy is called the Liturgy of the Word or The Liturgy of the Catechumens. This part of the service culminates shortly in the reading of Scriptures and the sermon and is primarily instructional (that’s why it is called the Liturgy of the Word). Its focus is the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the coming of His Kingdom. However, this first part of the Liturgy is not merely instructional in an intellectual sense. This is why hymns are sung, requests are prayed for, and the glory of God is praised.

A catechumen is an individual who is in the process of converting to Christianity and is under instruction before baptism. It comes from the Greek word katechein, meaning “to instruct orally.” In the ancient Church, catechumens as well as those not prepared to receive the Holy Communion were required to leave the building when the priest finished his sermon.

The second part of the Liturgy is called The Liturgy of the Faithful (because, in the past, only those who were part of the faith could stay and partake). It was reserved only for baptized Christians of good standing and, as such, is often called the Liturgy of the Faithful.

It culminates in the reception of Holy Communion, called Eucharistia or Thanksgiving. That’s why it is also called the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Chanter: Bless the Lord, O my soul and do not forget all the gifts that come from Him. (Psalm 103:2)

People: By the intercession of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

Chanter: The LORD has established his throne in Heaven; over all things His kingship is supreme. (Psalm 103:19)

People: By the intercession of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

Ψαλτής: Εὔλογει ἡ ψυχή μου τοῦ Κύριον, καὶ μη λησμονής πάσας τὰς ευεργεσίας αυτοῦ,

Λαός: Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σώσον ἡμᾶς .

Ψαλτής: Ο Κύριος ητοίμασε τον θρόνον αυτοῦ εὗ τῳ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ δεσπόζει τὰ πάντα.

Λαός: Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σώσον ἡμᾶς .
In between the First Antiphon and the Second Antiphon, you will see what is called a “Small Litany.” It is similar to the Great Litany in that it is a prayerful sequence, however, it is much shorter than the Great Litany; hence, the name it has been given.

Also, you will notice that all litanies in the Divine Liturgy end in a similar way, with the passage:

Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

It is a cue, so to speak, that we are ending one section (in this case, the First Antiphon) and about to start another one (in this case, the Second Antiphon)

The paragraph is a call for us to remember the Virgin Mary and all the Saints, as we commit ourselves and those around us to give our lives to Christ.

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.
People: To You, O Lord.

Διάκονος: Ἐτι καὶ ἔτι ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ἀντιλαβοῦ, σῶσον, ἐλέησον καὶ διαφύλαξον ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεός τῇ σῇ χάριτι.
Λαός: Ἄμην.
Διάκονος: Τῆς Παναγίας, ἀχράντου, ύπερευλογημένης, ἐνδόξου, δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες, έαυτούς καὶ ἄλληλους καὶ πάσαν τὴν ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.
Λαός: Σοι Κύριε.
Has the Divine Liturgy Ever Changed?

Yes, there have been changes throughout the centuries in the service. Most of these changes came in the early years as the service developed. One of the changes was that in ancient times the Liturgy began with what we now call the “Little or Small Entrance” (that is coming up in a few pages). In seventh century Constantinople, the people came in long processions through the city, singing psalms, and assembled in the forecourt of the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom to await the arrival of the Patriarch and the Emperor. On some occasions they might wait just inside the church singing psalms and praying. The Great Litany or Litany of Peace, with the Antiphons and the short Litanies and prayers that follow it, eventually became part of the Divine Liturgy and have continued to be part of the service to this day.

Protect the Whole Body of Your Church...

When we use the word “church,” we often think of it as the building in which we worship; however, the Greek term *ekklesia* is principally a reference to the people and not the edifice. Frequently translated as “assembly,” its root means, “to be called.” As such, the Church is not so much a building as it is the assembly of those who are called by God.

Prayer of the Second Antiphon

**Priest** (in a low voice): Lord our God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance *(Psalm 28:9)*; protect the whole body of Your Church; sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house *(cf. Psalm 26:8)*; glorify them in return by Your divine power; and do not forsake us who hope in You *(cf. Psalm 27:9)*.

**Priest:** For Yours is the dominion, and Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, σῶσον τὸν λαόν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου· τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας σου φύλαξον· ἁγίασον τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας τὴν εὐπρέπειαν τοῦ οἴκου σου· Σὺ αὐτοὺς ἀντιδόξασον τῇ θεϊκῇ σου δυνάμει καὶ μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπὶ σέ.

Ἱερεύς: Ὅτι σὸν τὸ κράτος καὶ σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα, τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Άγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.
As we sing the antiophons, you’ll notice the mixing of the hymns with the verses from the psalms. This shows that the Christian liturgy has Jewish roots. The Jewish services also used psalms along with hymns. The Christians used Psalms, but interspersed them with Christian hymns. There are certain parts of the Divine Liturgy that change according to the Church calendar. The Second Antiphon is the first section where that occurs. Every Sunday we sing that Christ arose from the dead. During weekday liturgies that celebrate the saints, we call Him “wondrous in His saints.” At Christmas we sing, “Who was born of the Virgin” and on January 6th (Theophany), there is also a different hymn. This hymn also changes for the Annunciation, Palm Sunday, the Transfiguration, Elevation of the Cross, and Pentecost.

There are three basic Divine Liturgies that are in use in the Orthodox Church and Byzantine Catholic churches: The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, used on most days of the year; The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, used on the five Sundays of Great Lent and on Saint Basil’s feast day (January 1); and The Divine Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem, celebrated once a year on the feast day of St. James, brother of the Lord.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON
(sung to Christ)

On most, though not all, Sundays of the year, the three designated verses from the Book of Psalms that are sung with the hymn “Save us, O Son of God...” as the second antiphon are:

**Chanter:** Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord all my Life! I will sing to the Lord as long as I live (Psalm 146:1)

**People:** Save us, O Son of God, (who rose from the dead), [1] to You we sing: Alleluia

**Chanter:** Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God (Ps 146:5)

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**ΤΟ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ**
(Kai ψάλλεται το Β’ Αντίφωνον, συνοδευόμενον από το ἐφύμιον:)

Psiλης: Αἶνει ἡ ψυχή μου τὸν Κύριον αἱ νεσώ Κύριον ἐν τῇ ζωῇ μου ψαλῶ τῷ θεῶ μου ἑως ὑπάρχων.

Λαός: Σῶσον ἡμᾶς, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν (ὁ ἐν Ἁγίοις θαυμαστός), ψάλλοντάς Σοι· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Psiλῆς: Μακάπριος, οὐ ὁ Θεός Ἰακώβ βοηθὸς αὐτοῦ, ἢ ἐλπὶς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Κύριον τὸν θεόν αὐτοῦ.
What Does the Word Liturgy Mean?

Liturgy is a Greek word that in classical times referred to the performance of a public duty; in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it referred to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem; and for Orthodox Christians, it has come to mean the public worship of the Church. Because Liturgy is always a communal action, it is often translated as “the work of the people,” and because it is prefaced by the word “Divine,” it is specifically the work of God’s people and an experience of God’s coming Kingdom here and now by those who gather to worship Him. This means that the Liturgy is not something that the clergy “performs” for the laity. The Liturgy was never meant to be a performance merely to be witnessed by onlookers. All who are present for worship must be active participants and not merely passive spectators.

Koine Greek vs. Modern Greek

The Greek language that is used in the Divine Liturgy is not modern Greek as we know it. Rather, it is “Koine” (meaning “common”) Greek. Koine Greek was the popular form of the Greek language that emerged in post-Classical antiquity (c. 300 BC - AD 300). It was the “common” dialect spoken within the armies of Alexander the Great, who had colonized the world. It is considered the original language of the New Testament of the Bible.

People: Save us, O Son of God, (who rose from the dead), [1] to You we sing: Alleluia.

Chanter: The Lord is King forever; your God, O Zion, rules from generation to generation. (Psalm 146:10)

People: Save us, O Son of God, (who rose from the dead), [1] to You we sing: Alleluia

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Λαός: Σῶσον ἡμᾶς, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν (ἡ ὁ ἐν Ἁγίοις θαυμαστός), ψάλλοντάς Σοι· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Ψαλτής: Βασιλεύσει Κύριος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ὁ θεός σου, Σῶν, εἰς γενεάν καὶ γενεάν.

Λαός: Σῶσον ἡμᾶς, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν (ἡ ὁ ἐν Ἁγίοις θαυμαστός), ψάλλοντάς Σοι· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.
The Hymn of Justinian

The boxed hymn to the right is believed to be written by Emperor Justinian (482-565 AD) and is sometimes referred to as The Hymn of Justinian. Emperor Justinian is also responsible for the construction of the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople. The Hymn of Justinian is sung by the choir and is quite significant. If you look at the words, you will see that it bears a similarity to The Creed (which will come up later) and is often called a “mini-Creed.” As we will show later, defining who Christ was caused a great turmoil in the Church in the early centuries of Christianity. So, Emperor Justinian wanted to fortify the true belief about who Christ was against the horrible false statements that were being made about Christ at that time. He commanded that the hymn be sung in all the churches. This hymn was originally the Entrance Hymn or, in Greek, the Eisodikon, of the Liturgy, as it still is today in the Liturgy of St. James: this was the beginning of the Liturgy when the clergy came, not from within the Altar, but from the narthex, or vestibule, through the main doors of the church.

People: Only begotten Son (John 1:18) and Word of God (John 1:1), although immortal You humbled Yourself for our salvation, taking flesh from the holy Theotokos and ever virgin Mary and, without change, becoming man. Christ, our God, You were crucified but conquered death by death. You are one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit – save us.

THE SECOND SMALL LITANY

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, let us again pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Διάκονος: Ὅς Μονογενὴς Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀθάνατος ὑπάρχων καὶ καταδεξάμενος διά τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν σαρκωθῆναι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, ἀτρέπτως ἐνανθρωπήσας, σταυρωθείς τε Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, θανάτω θάνατον πατήσας, εἰς ὅν τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, συνδοξαζόμενος τῷ Πατρί καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, σῶσον ἡμᾶς.

Διάκονος: Ἐτι καὶ ἔτι ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Διάκονος: Κύριε ἐλέησον.

Διάκονος: Ἀντιλαβοῦ, σῶσον, ἐλέησον καὶ διαφύλαξον ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεός τῇ σῇ χάριτι.
Deacon: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Prayer of the Third Antiphon

Priest (in a low voice): Lord, You have given us grace to offer these common prayers with one heart. You have promised to grant the requests of two or three gathered in Your name. Fulfill now the petitions of Your servants for our benefit, giving us the knowledge of Your truth in this world, and granting us eternal life in the world to come.

Διάκονος: Τῆς Παναγίας, ἀχράντου, ύπερευλογημένης, ἐνδόξου, δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες, ἐαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ᾿ζωὴν ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.

Λαός: Σοὶ Κύριε.

Ἅριεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Ο τὰς κοινὰς ταύτας καὶ συμφώνους ἡμῖν χαρισάμενος προσευχὰς, ὁ καὶ δυοὶ καὶ τρισὶ, συμφωνοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματὶ σου, τὰς αἰτήσεις παρέχειν ἐπαγγειλάμενος· Αὐτὸς καὶ νῦν τῶν δούλων σου τὰ αἰτήματα πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον πλήρωσον, χορηγῶν ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι ζωῆς αἰώνιον χαρισάμενος.
Why Do Orthodox Churches Always Face East?

This was one of Christianity’s earliest traditions, and it has a rich symbolism to it. In the story of creation we read: “The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man (Gen. 2:8). This garden was our home. Disobedience by our spiritual parents, Adam and Eve, led to our expulsion westward. In praying eastward, we reveal our homesickness, our spiritual longing for the days when we walked with God.

Science has demonstrated the importance of the sun for giving light and sustaining life. This was not ignored in the Bible. The prophet Malachi preached that for those who revere the name of God, “the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.” That Sun of Righteousness is Jesus Christ who, according to the Gospel of John, is “the true light that enlightens every human being” (John 1:9). In looking to the east, we see the rising sun as a symbolic image of Christ’s light; Christ has come and enlightened those who reverence Him on Sunday mornings: “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high has broken upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Lk 1:78-79). Lastly, facing east is a spiritual sign of our wakefulness to receive Christ and his Kingdom. Why? Christians believed that Christ would return from the east because of a passage in Matthew that states: “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Mt 24:27).

Priest: For You are a good and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

The designated verses of the Psalms are sung with the Apolytikion, which on Sundays is a special hymn honoring the Resurrection of Christ. While the Apolytikion is sung, the priest carrying the holy Gospel Book comes in procession before the Beautiful Gate of the ikonostasis offering in a low voice the following prayer:

Ἱερεύς: Ὅτι ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος Θεὸς ὑπάρχεις καὶ σοὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.

ΤΟ ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ

(Καὶ ψάλλεται τὸ Γ’ Ἀντίφωνον, συνοδευόμενον ἀπὸ τὸ ἐφύμινον:)
The Small Entrance

At this point in the service, the altar boys come out of the north door, usually holding candles. Then, the priest(s) and deacon follow, carrying the Gospel. What is not visible to our eyes is that, when we are watching this, there are angels surrounding them as they guide God’s entrance into the world. This is called The Small Entrance. It symbolizes God coming into the world and His baptism.

Why do we consider the Gospel to represent God actually coming into the world? The beginning of the Gospel of John explains it perfectly: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the word was God” (John 1:1; this is the gospel reading you will hear at the Anastasi service at Easter!)

Also, you’ll notice the priest holds the Gospel in front of his face. Why does he do this? The reason this is done is because in the Orthodox faith the focus is on Christ, not the priest. So, when the Gospel (Christ) comes out, the priest hides his face. When the priest is at the altar, his back is often turned to us so that we focus on the Altar (where the body and blood and Gospel of Christ are). This one concept (having the focus on Christ, not on the priest) is a significant difference between Orthodoxy and other faiths. Oftentimes we see certain churches that will have a “superstar” pastor who leads congregations so large they take up stadiums to get all the parishioners in. It begs the question: are they coming to see him or Him? What happens to those churches when their “superstar” pastor passes away? Oftentimes the attendance at those churches will diminish and, over time, dissolve. One of the reasons the Orthodox faith has been in existence for over two thousand years is because the Orthodox faith has continued to have its focus on God, not the priest.

Master and Lord our God, You have established in Heaven the orders and hosts of angels and archangels to minister to Your glory. Grant that the holy angels may enter with us that together we may serve and glorify Your goodness. For to You belongs all glory, honor, and worship to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

THE SMALL ENTRANCE
(entrance of the Holy Gospel)

(The priest blesses the entrance saying in a low voice :) Blessed is the entrance of Your saints always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. (He then raises the Holy Gospel Book and says:)

Deacon: Wisdom. Let us be attentive.

Δέσποτα Κύριε, ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, ὁ καταστήσας ἐν οὐρανοῖς τάγματα καὶ στρατιὰς ἀγγέλων καὶ ἀρχαγγέλων, εἰς λειτουργίαν τῆς σῆς δόξης, ποίησον σὺν τῇ εἰσόδῳ ἡμῶν, εἰσόδον ἁγίων ἀγγέλων γενέσθαι, συλλειτουργοῦντων ἡμῖν καὶ συνδοξολογοῦντων τὴν σὴν ἀγαθότητα. Οὕτω πρέπει σοι πάσα δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Αγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ διὰ όλος τοῦ σιγοῦ ἁγίου. Αμήν. (Ὁ Ἱερεὺς εὐλογῶν τὴν Εἴσοδον λέγει χαμηλοφώνως:) Εὐλογημένη ἡ εἴσοδος τῶν ἁγίων σου, Κύριε. Σοφία Ὀρθοί. 

H ΜΙΚΡΑ ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ
(Ὁ Ἱερεὺς εὐλογῶν τὴν Εἴσοδον λέγει χαμηλοφώνως:) Εὐλογημένη ἡ εἴσοδος τῶν ἁγίων σου, Κύριε. Σοφία Ὀρθοί.
Do the Orthodox Faithful Believe in Angels?

On the previous page, you saw the word angel. Do the Orthodox faithful believe in angels? Yes! At every Liturgy we pray for an angel to guard us and guide us.

“He commands His angels regarding you to guard you in all your paths ... The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.”
(Psalm 91:11, 34:7)

The word angel is a Greek word that means “messenger.” Angels are spiritual beings, and we believe if we listen carefully to the message they bring, we can hear the voice of God in our lives.

St. Basil the Great says: “The angel will not retreat from us, unless we drive him away by our evil deeds. As the smoke drives bees away, and stench the doves, even so our stinking sin drives away from us the angel who protects our life.”

And here is one of the beauties of the Orthodox faith: we believe God is a God of order. In Heaven there is complete order. We even believe that God has an order to the angels that surround him. The closest to Him is the Seraphim. The Seraphim is a group of angels that are forever in God’s presence and praising Him constantly: “Day and night without ceasing they sing: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.’” (Book of Revelation 4:4-8)

People: Come, let us worship and bow before Christ. Save us, O Son of God (who rose from the dead), [2] to You we sing: Alleluia.
(The priest enters the sanctuary. The Apolytikion is repeated and the Troparion of the church and the Kontakion of the day are sung.)

THE THRIÇE-HOLY HYMN

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.

Διάκονος: Τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
The Trisagion Hymn

The word **Trisagion** comes from the Greek words **Tria** (meaning “Three”) and **Agios** (meaning “Holy”). So, in this hymn you will see the word **Holy** three times!

The Trisagion Hymn represents a perfect example of the Orthodox faithful on earth worshiping God just as He is worshiped in Heaven. How do we know this is how God is worshipped in Heaven?

In the Bible, the Prophet Isaiah wrote that he saw this hymn being sung by the angels in Heaven: “I saw the Lord setting on a throne...Above Him were seraphs...And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts[sabaoth]; the whole earth is full of His glory!” (Isaiah 6:1-5)

Also, in the Book of Revelation, John in his vision of Heaven wrote: “Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.” (Rev 4:8).

Why do you think in both of these visions the word **Holy** is repeated three times? Why didn’t the angels simply sing “Holy is the Lord...” The answer is because they were saying Holy is God, Holy is Christ, and Holy is the Holy Spirit. As you will see when we get to the

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**Priest** (in a low voice): Holy God, You dwell among Your saints. You are praised by the Seraphim with the thrice holy hymn (**Isaiah 6:2-3**) and glorified by the Cherubim and worshipped by all the heavenly powers. You have brought all things out of nothing into being (**cf 2 Macc 7:28**). You have created man and woman in Your image and likeness (**Genesis 1:27**) and adorned them with all the gifts of Your grace. You give wisdom and understanding (**2 Chronicles 1:10**) to the suppliant and do not overlook the sinner but have established repentance as the way of salvation. You have enabled us, Your lowly and unworthy servants, to stand at this hour before the glory of Your holy altar and to offer to You due worship and praise.

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**Ἱερεύς** (χαμηλοφώνως): Ο Θεὸς ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἐν άγιοις ἀναπαυόμενος, ὁ τρισαγίῳ φωνῆ ὑπὸ τῶν Σεραφεὶμ ἀνυμνούμενος καὶ υπὸ τῶν Χερουβεὶμ δοξολογούμενος καὶ ὑπὸ πάσης ἐπουρανίου δυνάμεως ροσκυνούμενος, ὁ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγαγὼν τὰ σύμπαντα· ὁ κτίσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα σὴν καὶ ὁμοίωσιν καὶ παντὶ σου χαρίσματι κατακοσμήσας· ὁ διδοὺς αἰτοῦντι σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν καὶ μὴ παρορῶν ἁμαρτάνοντα, ἀλλὰ θέμενος ἐπὶ σωτηρία μετάνοιαν· ὁ καταξιώσας ἡμᾶς τὸν ταπεινοῦς καὶ ἀναξίους δούλους σου καὶ ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ταύτῃ στήναι κατανέφωσιν τῆς δόξης τοῦ ἁγίου σου. θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τὴν ὀφειλομένην σοι προσκύνησιν καὶ δοξολογίαν προσάγειν.
Creed shortly, understanding and worshiping the Holy Trinity (The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit) was one of the major battles of the Orthodox faith. Also, did you notice that at the end of the Revelation passage it said, “…and the house was filled with smoke.” What does that remind you of? God’s house (church) being filled with smoke (incense)? It’s another example of how the Orthodox faithful on earth worship God just as He is worshipped in Heaven.

Lastly, in 433 AD, in the city of Constantinople, the city was being destroyed by a fierce series of earthquakes. The citizens retreated to outside of the city and set up makeshift camps and were praying for God to help them. During one prayer service, a young boy from one of the groups was taken in the air by an unseen force and carried straight up to the point where no one could see him anymore. After a short time, the boy came back to earth. Everyone rushed over to him and asked him what had happened. He said that he saw the angels glorifying God singing: “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal.” Upon hearing this, the people began singing the Trisagion, and added the words “Have mercy on us” (which has stuck ever since). The devastating earthquakes stopped. To this day the Orthodox faithful sing this prayer at every Divine Liturgy.

Master, accept the thrice-holy hymn also from the lips of us sinners and visit us in Your goodness. Forgive our voluntary and involuntary transgressions, sanctify our souls and bodies, and grant that we may worship and serve You in holiness all the days of our lives, by the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have pleased You throughout the ages.

Priest: For You are holy, our God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever . . .

Deacon: And to the ages of ages.

People: Amen. *Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us* (3).

Αὐτός, Δέσποτα, πρόσδεξαι καὶ ἐκ στόματος ἡμῶν τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν τὸν τρισάγιον ὑμὸν καὶ ἐπίσκεψαι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ χρηστότητι σου. Συγχώρησον ἡμῖν πάν πλημμέλημα ἐκούσιον τε καὶ ἀκούσιον· ἁγίασον ἡμῶν τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰ σώματα· καὶ δός ἡμῖν ἐν ὀσιότητι λατρεύειν σοι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἑωθῆς ἡμῶν· πρεσβείας τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, τῶν ἄπ’ αἰῶνός σοι εὐφρεστησάντων.

Ἱερεύς: Ὡτὶ ἁγίος ἐι ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ σοὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ.

Διάκονος: Καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἁμήν. Ἁγίος ὁ Θεός, Ἁγίου ἰσχυρός, Ἁγίου άθανατος, ἑλέησον ἡμᾶς (3).
Who Decides Which Passages Will Be Read for the Epistle Reading?

Based on a lectionary – an order of readings – that was established by the seventh century, during the course of the year, the Church reads the writings of the Apostles in the order in which they are found in the New Testament.

Are We an Evangelical Church?

Yes! The word evangelical derives from the Greek word evangelistes, which means “one who delivers the good news.” The whole life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is Good News! The Gospel of Christ is primarily an announcement of what God has done – and does – in the Person of Jesus. The word evangelistes was first used in 490 BC, following the battle of Marathon when the Persians had moved their great army against Athens. The outnumbered Athenians met them 25 miles outside of Athens, fought a bitter battle, and finally won. The people of Athens were locked in their city, trembling, not knowing the outcome of that crucial battle. A messenger, named Pheidippides, brought the good news to Athens. Pheidippides ran 25 miles, and when he arrived, his message was this: "Hairete! Nenikamen!" – "Rejoice! We have conquered!" This is the message of the Gospel of Christ:

"Rejoice! We've Won!"

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Deacon: Again, fervently.

(The priest, turning toward the prothesis, says in a low voice:) Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord (Psalm 118:26). Blessed are You, seated on the throne of glory in Your kingdom, seated upon the Cherubim (Daniel 3:54-55; Psalm 98:1) always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων Ἀμὴν. Ἐργος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

Διάκονος: Δύναμις.

(Ὁ Ἱερεύς στρέφων πρός τὴν Πρόθεσιν, λέγει χαμηλοφώνως): Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου. Εὐλογημένος εἶ, ὁ ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης τῆς βασιλείας σου, ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν Χερουβείων, πάντοτε· νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων Ἀμὴν.

Λαός: Ἀγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἀγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἀγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.
The word *Epistle* comes from the Greek word meaning “to send news,” and is simply a synonym for the word *letter*. The New Testament epistles were mostly written by the Apostle Paul to communities and were intended to be read in public. The epistles were meant to help communities understand Christ and grow in the Christian faith. The beauty and the power of these readings is that, nearly two thousand years later, these letters continue to be read to the “communities” and continue to help us understand Christ and grow in our Christian faith.

The significance of parishioners hearing the epistles and learning from them is stated beautifully by St. John Chrysostom when he wrote:

Listen, those of you living in the world who have a wife and children how St. Paul commends particularly to you the reading of scripture. . . For as the rich, with money can bear fines and damages, so he that is rich in the doctrines of philosophy [Scripture] will be able to bear not only poverty but all calamities. . . . get yourself at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befalls you, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take comfort from your trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly into yourself; keep them in your mind. For not knowing the scripture is the cause of all evils. In doing so we go into battle without arms, and then how are we to come off safe?

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**Deacon**: Let us be attentive.
*(The Reader reads the verses from the Psalms.)*

**Deacon**: Wisdom.

**Reader**: The reading is from *(the name of the book of the New Testament from which the Apostolic reading is taken).*

**Deacon**: Let us be attentive.
*(The Reader reads the designated Apostolic pericope.)*

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**ΤΑ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΑ Ο ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ**

**Διάκονος**: Πρόσχωμεν.
*(Ὁ Ἀναγνώστης ἐκφωνεῖ τοὺς στίχους τῶν Ψαλμῶν.)*

**Διάκονος**: Σοφία.

**Ἀναγνώστης**: Πράξεων τῶν Ἀποστόλων (ἢ Πρός... Ἐπιστολῆς Παύλου ἢ Καθολικῆς Ἐπιστολῆς...) τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα.

**Διάκονος**: Πρόσχωμεν.
*(Ὁ Ἀναγνώστης ἀναγινώσκει τὴν τετραγμένην ἀποστολικὴν περικοπὴν.)*
At every Liturgy, we read from one of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all of which convey the life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. The word Gospel derives from the Old English God-spel, literally meaning “glad tidings” or, in more modern English, “Good News.”

1. The Gospel **Mark**, according to modern scholars, was the first written gospel, circa AD 65 or 70. It was used in composing the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. According to some church traditions, Mark was a companion of Peter, who dictated the Good News to him.

2. The Gospel of **Luke** attempts “to write an orderly account” of the events surrounding Jesus’ life. It was written AD 80-90. According to his prologue, he is a second generation Christian who knows eyewitnesses, and is traditionally regarded as a physician and follower of Paul. He not only gives us a Gospel surrounding the events of Christ’s life but also the first story of the early Church in the Book of Acts.

3. The Gospel of **Matthew**, written AD 60-85 is traditionally linked with the apostle Matthew, who was a tax collector. Some church Fathers also believed that his Gospel was originally written in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, though scholars judge our version was originally written in Greek. Because of the similarities between these gospels,

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**Priest**: Peace be with you, the reader.

**People**: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

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**Prayer of the Gospel**

**Priest** (in a low voice): Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds (cf. Ephesians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6) that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered all sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You,
modern scholars have named them the Synoptic Gospels, from the Greek syn- “together” + opsis “seeing.”

4. The Gospel of John, written AD 80-95, is of a different style and considered to be the most theologically oriented.

Tradition relates that St. John knew the other Gospels and decided to write a different kind of text. Although we contain the four Gospels in a single book, they all derive from different Christian communities of the early Church.

Over time, they became recognized as the most authoritative books concerning the life of Christ and his message. While there were other gospels and writings concerning Jesus, many were not found to be suitable for public reading. The four Gospels are considered to be the oldest and most trustworthy books concerning Christ that we have today.

In addition, the Scriptures often speak of the Gospel, and we sometimes forget that the Gospel itself is a message and not merely a collection of books: in fact, it is the most important message in history.

Also, you’ll notice that the congregation stands as the Priest reads the Gospel from the Royal doors. We stand because Christ is present and speaking to us.

Christ our God, You are the light of our souls and bodies, and to You we give glory together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

**THE HOLY GOSPEL**

**Priest:** Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the holy Gospel. Peace be with all.

**People:** And with your spirit.

**Deacon:** The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to (Name). Let us be attentive.

**People:** Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ Σοὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν, σὺν τῷ ἀνάρχῳ Σου Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ παναγίῳ καὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ζωοποιῷ Σου Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Αμήν.

**TO ΘΕΙΟΝ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ**

**Ιερεύς:** Σοφία. Ὀρθοί, ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ Ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου. Εἰρήνη πᾶσι.

**Λαός:** Καὶ τῷ πνεύματί σου.

**Διάκονος:** Εκ τοῦ κατὰ (Ὅνομα) Ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα. Πρόσχωμεν.

**Λαός:** Δόξα Σοι, Κύριε, δόξα Σοι.
As mentioned earlier, at this point the Liturgy of the Faithful begins. In early Christianity, only those able to receive communion could participate; catechumens and any one else who was not a baptized Christian were not to be present for such rites. For such a Holy Offering, only the faithful were to remain. Today, while no one removes themselves from the nave, there remains a decisive shift in the content of this second part of the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy of the Faithful tends to focus more on the preparation and taking of Communion (the Eucharist). The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word efcharisto meaning “to thank.” As we’ll discuss shortly, the word Eucharist is where the designation “Liturgy of the Eucharist” (Liturgy of the Thankful) is derived from.

In the past and even sometimes today, the homily/sermon would be given at this point in the Divine Liturgy. However, more often than not, these days, the sermon is given at the end of the Divine Liturgy. The reason is that many years ago, the catechumens (this was the name given to those who were still learning about the faith but had not become Orthodox yet) would have to leave the service at this point. That is why, from this point onward in the service, it is called the “Liturgy of the Faithful,” as only those who were already part of the Orthodox faith were allowed to participate. So, before the catechumens would leave, the priest would speak to them (and the rest of the congregation) about the Epistle and Gospel readings they had just heard.

As for such a Holy Offering, only the faithful were to remain. Today, while no one removes themselves from the nave, there remains a decisive shift in the content of this second part of the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy of the Faithful tends to focus more on the preparation and taking of Communion (the Eucharist). The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word efcharisto meaning “to thank.” As we’ll discuss shortly, the word Eucharist is where the designation “Liturgy of the Eucharist” (Liturgy of the Thankful) is derived from.

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

The Prayer of the Faithful

Priest (in a low voice): Again, we bow before You and pray to You, O good and loving God. Hear our supplication: cleanse our souls and bodies from every defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1), and grant that we may stand before Your holy altar without blame or condemnation.

Λαός: Δόξα Σοι, Κύριε, δόξα Σοι.
The Great Entrance

The Great Entrance is when the gifts (bread and wine) are carried from the Chapel of the Prothesis (a table on the north side of the sanctuary), and placed on the Altar. At this point, the gifts are still wine and bread and not the body and blood of Christ. The Great Entrance symbolizes the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

The Divine Liturgy is Also Called the Eucharist.

The Christian Eucharist is a meal specifically connected with the Passover meal of the Old Testament commemorating the liberation of the ancient Israelites from slavery in Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus. At the Last Supper with His disciples, Christ transformed this ancient Passover ritual into an act done in remembrance of Him: His life, teaching, death, and resurrection as the new and eternal Passover lamb whose sacrificial death and resurrection frees all of humanity from slavery to sin, evil, and death and opens the path to forgiveness, liberation from sin, freedom from death, eternal life, and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Eucharistia is the ancient Greek word for Thanksgiving. The Eucharist is an expression of gratitude to God for the gifts of His Son and Spirit, our redemption and freedom.

Grant also, O God, progress in life, faith, and spiritual discernment to the faithful who pray with us, so that they may always worship You with reverence and love, partake of Your Holy Mysteries without blame or condemnation, and become worthy of Your heavenly kingdom.

Priest: And grant that always guarded by Your power we may give glory to You, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages without alteration or change.

People: Amen.

Χάρισαι δέ, Ο Θεός, καὶ τοῖς συνευχομένοις ἡμῖν προκοπὴν βίου καὶ πίστεως καὶ συνέσεως πνευματικῆς· δὸς αὐτοῖς πάντοτε μετὰ φόβου καὶ ἀγάπης λατρεύειν Σοί, ἀνενόχως καὶ ἀκατακρίτως μετέχειν τῶν ἁγίων Σου Μυστηρίων, καὶ τῆς ἐπουρανίου Σου βασιλείας ἀξιωθῆναι.

Ἱερεὺς: Ὄπως, ὑπὸ τοῦ Κράτους Σου πάντοτε φυλαττόμενοι, Σοὶ δόξα νἀναπέμπωμεν, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν και ἑκατάει καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.
Let Us Set Aside All the Cares of Life…

The priest has prepared the gifts, we have sung hymns, we have prayed, we have heard the word of God, and the highlighted passage tells us exactly what to do next… set aside all the cares of life so that we may receive God. The feeling in the church during the Great Entrance conveys that message. It is a quiet and subdued moment, and the focus is on the procession.

The solemn procession is a holdover from earlier times. At that time, the faithful would bring their offerings of bread and wine to the Narthex, and the deacons would receive them and bring them into the altar to be consecrated. Today, the prosphoro is usually baked by a parishioner and brought to the church ahead of time while others will donate wine for Holy Communion. “Prosphora” means “the offering.”

Once again, as with the Small Entrance, you will see that the priest tells us that “the King of all” is invisibly escorted by the angelic orders.

THE GREAT ENTRANCE

People: We who mystically represent the Cherubim sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity. Let us set aside all the cares of life that we may receive the King of all escorted invisibly by the angelic orders. Alleluia.

(While the Cherubic Hymn is being sung, the Priest prays in a low voice:) No one bound by worldly desires and pleasures (Tit 3:3, cf. 1 Pet 2:11) is worthy to approach, draw near or minister to You, the King of glory (Psalm 24:7-8). To serve You is great and awesome even for the heavenly powers. On account of Your ineffable and immeasurable love for us, You became man

Η ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ

Δαός: Οι τὰ Χερουβείμ μυστικῶς εἰκονίζοντες, καὶ τῇ ζωοποιῷ Τριάδι τὸν τρισάγιον ύμνον προσάδοντες, πάσαν τὴν βιοτικὴν ἀποθώμεθα μέριμναν, ὡς τὸν Βασιλέα τῶν ὅλων ύποδεξόμενοι…

(Ψαλλομένου τοῦ Χερουβικοῦ ὁ Ἰερεύς λέγει χαμηλοφώνως): Οúdeis ἄξιος τῶν συνδεδεμένων ταῖς σαρκαίς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς προσέρχεσθαι ἢ προσεγγίζειν ἢ λειτουργεῖν Σοι, Βασιλεύ τῆς δόξης· τὸ γάρ διακονεῖν Σοι μέγα καὶ φοβερὸν καὶ αὐτάς ταῖς ἑποριανίοις Δυνάμεσιν. Ἀλλ”όμως, διὰ τὴν ἄφατον καὶ ἀμέτρητον Σου φιλανθρωπίαν, ἀτρέπτως καὶ ἀναλλοιώτως γέγονας ἀνθρωπος,
The Sign of the Cross

The Sign of the Cross is one of Christianity’s most ancient customs. It is a sign of blessing and commitment to the Crucified Lord. Tertullian (c.160-240), an ancient Christian writer in North Africa, first mentions the Sign of the Cross: “We Christians wear out our foreheads with the Sign of the Cross.” A simple custom, it is a statement of Christian faith that incorporates the entire body.

Like many ancient customs, it has been performed in a diversity of ways over the centuries. Eastern Orthodox practice, used by all since the seventeenth century, involves combining the thumb, pointer, and middle finger while placing the ring finger and the pinky against the palm. The unity of the three fingers represents the unity of the undivided Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three persons but one God. The two fingers pressed against the palm represent the two natures of Christ: human and divine. It indicates our belief in Jesus, who is fully God and fully human. Our motion, of course, recalls the cross: forehead, stomach, right shoulder and left shoulder, but also the God who is Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As one moves through the sign, one recites, at the forehead, “In the name of the Father;” at the navel, “and of the Son;” and across the shoulders, “and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.” It is as if to say “I love you, Lord, with all my mind (forehead), with all my soul (navel), with all my strength (right shoulder) and with all my heart (left shoulder).” Done at various times as a sign of

without alteration or change. You have served as our High Priest, (cf. Heb 5:4-6) and as Lord of All (Job 5:8), have entrusted to use the celebration of this liturgical sacrifice without the shedding of blood. For You alone, Lord our God, rule over all things in Heaven and on earth. (1 Chron. 29:11) You are seated on the throne of the Cherubim (Psalm 98:1), the Lord of the Seraphim and the king of Israel (Zp 3:15; John 1:49). You alone are holy and dwell among your saints (Is 57:15; Ps 24:6). You alone are good and ready to hear. Therefore, I implore you, look upon me, Your sinful and unworthy servant (Mt 25:30; Lk17:10), and cleanse my soul and heart from evil consciousness (cf Heb 10:22).
Enable me by the power of Your Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14, Rom 15:13) so that, vested with the grace of the priesthood, I may stand before Your holy Table and celebrate the mystery of Your holy and pure Body and Your precious Blood. To you I come with bowed head and pray: do not turn Your face away from me (Psalm 143:7) nor reject me from among Your children (Wis 9:4), but make me, Your sinful and unworthy servant, worthy to offer to You these gifts. For You, Christ our God, are the Offerer and the Offered, the One who receives and is distributed, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your holy, good, and life-giving Spirit,

καὶ ἱκάνωσόν με τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Ἁγίου Σου Πνεύματος, ἐνδεδυμένον τὴν τῆς Ἱερατείας χάριν, παραστήναι τῇ ἁγίᾳ Σου ταύτῃ τραπέζῃ καὶ ἱερουργῆσαι τὸ ἅγιον καὶ ἄχραντόν Σου Σῶμα καὶ τὸ τίμιον Αἷμα. Σοὶ γὰρ προσέρχομαι, κλίνας τὸν ἑμαυτοῦ αὐχένα, καὶ δέομαι Σοῦ. Μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν Σου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, μηδὲ ἀποδοκιμάσῃς με ἐκ παίδων Σου· ἀλλ’ ἀξίωσον προσενεχθῆναι Σοὶ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ καὶ ἀναξίου δούλου Σου τὰ δῶρα ταῦτα. Σὺ γὰρ εἶ ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφέρόμενος καὶ προσδεχόμενος καὶ διαδιδόμενος, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, καὶ Σοῦ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπωμεν, σὺν τῷ ἁγάθῳ καὶ ἐναράχῳ Σου Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ παναγίῳ καὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ἑωσφόρῳ Σου Πνεύματι,
Remembering Death

The Liturgy confronts us with the fact that death is something that awaits all of us. Yet, we often wish to avoid thinking about it. As Orthodox Christians, we understand earthly death to be an encounter with the Risen Christ and the door to what Jesus calls “eternal life” (John 3:16). For believers, death is not the end but a new beginning. Because, as St. Paul wrote, “to die is gain” (Philippians 1:22) and “do not grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Indeed, “here we have no lasting city but are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14). Christians are to live their lives with what monastic writers called the “remembrance of death.” Metropolitan Anthony Bloom (1914-2003) wrote: “Death is the touchstone of our attitude to life. People who are afraid of death are afraid of life. It is impossible not to be afraid of life with all its complexity and dangers if one is afraid of death. This means that to solve the problem of death is not a luxury. If we are afraid of death we will never be prepared to take ultimate risks; we will spend our life in a cowardly, careful, and timid manner. It is only if we can face death, make sense of it, and determine its place and our place in regard to it that we will be able to live in a fearless way and to the fullness of our ability. Too often we wait until the end of our life to face death, whereas we would have lived quite differently if only we had faced death at the outset.”

now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(The Priest censes and recites in a low voice the “Cherubic Hymn,” “Having Beheld Christ’s Resurrection” (on Sundays), and the 50th Psalm. Then the Great Entrance takes place.)

Deacon: May the Lord God remember all of you in His kingdom, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

(The priest enters the sanctuary, while the people sing the end of the Cherubic Hymn.)

νῦν καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

(Ὁ Ἰερεύς θυμιᾶ καὶ λέγει χαμηλοφώνως τὸν Χερουβικὸν Ὑμνὸν, τὸ Ἀνάστασιν Χριστοῦ θεασάμενοι (εἰς τὰς Κυριακὰς), καὶ τὸν Ν’ Ψαλμὸν. Μετὰ γίνεται ἡ Μεγάλη Εἴσοδος.)

Διάκονος: Πάντων ύμων, μνησθείη Κύριος ὁ Θεός ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ· πάντοτε· νῦν καὶ ἀεί καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.

(Ὁ Ἰερεύς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὸ Ἱερὸν Βῆμα, ὁ δὲ λαὸς ψάλλει τὸ τέλος, τοῦ Χερουβικοῦ.)
The Petitions

At first glance, the petitions seem similar to the Great Litany that we prayed at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, and some may feel as though it is redundant. However, if you look closely at them, one of the things you will notice is that there is a slight shift in their focus. Whereas the prayers of the Great Litany mainly focused on others (the Archbishop, the priests, our country, the president, people traveling, the sick and suffering, etc.), these prayers tend to focus more on “us” (For our deliverance from affliction…,” “Help us, have mercy upon us, and protect us…,” “For an angel of peace, a faithful guardian of our souls…,” “For a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame…”).

Also, the prayers are not for material things, but, rather, for deep, personal, human needs and protections; deliverance from affliction, wrath, danger, and distress; for a perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless day; for an angel of peace (how beautiful that alone is!), a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies; for a completion of our lives in peace and repentance; for a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame and suffering and with a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ.

The depth and scope of these prayers make this a great moment to pray to God for help in your own personal life and also a great vehicle for preparing our bodies and minds properly for communion.
Orthodox Christians are not merely to read the Bible; we are also to pray the Bible. This takes place most clearly and completely in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom on a Sunday-to-Sunday basis. Yes, there are two readings from the New Testament during the Liturgy – an Epistle reading from one of the Letters of the apostles Paul, Peter, James, and John, or other apostolic writings; and a Gospel reading from one of the four evangelists – but we pray the Lord’s Prayer and also sing verses from the Book of Psalms. In the priest’s blessing, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” we hear St. Paul’s final farewell to the Church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 13:13); and in the choir’s singing of “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and Earth are full of Your glory,” we hear the song of the angelic Cherubim first heard by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah in the Temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 6:1-5). The prayers of the Liturgy are full of biblical imagery and shot through with hundreds of biblical quotes. In fact, the late French Orthodox theologian, Paul Evdokimov (1902-1970), once calculated that there are 98 quotations from the Old Testament and 114 quotations from the New Testament.
Testament woven into the prayers of the Liturgy. The language of the Liturgy is the language of the Bible! To come to the Liturgy attentively is to learn to pray the Bible!

But more than this: the priesthood, the vestments, the altar, the tabernacle, the oil lamps, the incense, and so much else of the Church’s structures for worship are taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, particularly Exodus, Leviticus, and the Book of Psalms, and are seen as the Christological fulfillment of the worship of the people of ancient Israel in both the synagogue and the Temple as described in the New Testament’s Letter to the Hebrews. Every aspect of the Old Testament Passover/Exodus has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ and this is what we celebrate at each Divine Liturgy.

Deacon: For a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless day, let us ask the Lord.
People: Grant this, O Lord.
Deacon: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask the Lord.
People: Grant this, O Lord.
Deacon: For forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask the Lord.
People: Grant this, O Lord.

Διάκονος: Τὴν ἡμέραν πᾶσαν, τελείαν, ἁγίαν, εἰρηνικὴν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον, παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου αἰτησώμεθα.
Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.
Διάκονος: Ἄγγελον εἰρήνης, πιστὸν ὁδηγόν, φύλακα τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν, παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου αἰτησώμεθα.
Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.
Διάκονος: Συγγνώμην καὶ ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ τῶν πλημμελημάτων ἡμῶν, παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου αἰτησώμεθα.
Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.
Remembering the Saints

Throughout the Liturgy we are asked to “remember all the saints.” Who are the saints that we are asked to remember in these petitions? The saints are those men and women who, throughout the centuries and in every culture, have loved God and borne witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, and remained faithful to Him to the end, often at the cost of their own lives. They are people who have been transformed by their faith and truly are the “real deal” as Christians. They are men and women from every generation who have been canonized (i.e., set up as models of what it means to truly follow Christ). When we speak of Sts. Peter, Paul, and the apostles; Sts. Katherine, Irene, and Barbara, the martyrs; and Sts. Basil, John Chrysostom, and Nektarios, the bishops, we are speaking of people who have been canonized by the Church in an official manner to serve as models of faithfulness and holiness for us to emulate. Canonization does not “make” anybody a saint. Canonization recognizes that someone already was, in his/her own lifetime, a saint.

The word canonization means that a Christian has been found worthy to have his/her name placed in the canon or official list of the saints of the Church. This canon is read during the various liturgical services of the Church, particularly Orthros or Matins. Every day of the year is dedicated to a number of saints whose names are remembered by the people of God. When a

Deacon: For all that is good and beneficial to our souls, and for peace in the world, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: For the completion of our lives in peace and repentance, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Διάκονος: Τὰ καλὰ καὶ συμφέροντα ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν, καὶ εἰρήνην τῷ κόσμῳ, παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου αἰτησώμεθα.

Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.

Διάκονος: Τὸν ὑπόλοιπον χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν, ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ μετανοια ἐκτελέσαι, παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου αἰτησώμεθα.

Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.
Christian’s name has been included in the canon of saints, it is a sign that the Church encourages the faithful to ask that saint for his/her prayers before God. Liturgical services may be specially composed in the saint’s honor and celebrated by the Church – the people of God.

For the first thousand years of the history of the Church, saints were recognized without any formal rite of canonization. Local congregations of the faithful simply began to remember certain well-known Christians in their liturgical gatherings, to ask them for help in prayer, and to visit their relics, which frequently remained vehicles of the Holy Spirit, curing the sick in soul and body, as they had during earthly life. In the tenth century, in the west, the then-Orthodox Church of Rome began to insist that saints be formally and officially “registered” as such with the papal authorities. The first recorded canonization of this type was that of St. Ulrich of Augsburg, canonized in 993 by Pope John XV. For the next 600 years – during which time the Roman Catholic Church split off from the Orthodox community – the west developed a very precise (and even legalistic) method of determining who were to be canonized saints. The Orthodox Church never developed any comparable methods for canonizing saints. As in the early Church, the situation has remained very much determined by local practices and local traditions. Holy men and women continue

Deacon: For a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame and suffering, and for a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Διάκονος: Χριστιανά τὰ τέλη τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν, ἀνώδυνα, ἀνεπαίσχυντα, εἰρηνικά, καὶ καλὴν ἀπολογίαν τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ φοβεροῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, αἰτησώμεθα.

Λαός: Παράσχου Κύριε.

Διάκονος: Τῆς παναγίας, ἀχράντου, ύπερευλογημένης, ἐνδόξου δεσπόινης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, μετὰ πάντων τῶν άγίων μνημονεύσαντες, ἐαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ πάσαν τὴν ζωῆν ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.

Λαός: Σοὶ Κύριε.
to be recognized as such during their own lifetimes; they continue to be venerated (honored) after their death; and Christian people continue to ask for their prayers and to visit their shrines.

Saints may be found in every country and every culture, ranging from Greece, Turkey, and Russia to Serbia, Romania, and America; from Palestine, Libya, and Egypt to France, Ireland, and Italy. Saints have come from all walks of life: men and women, husbands and wives, kings and queens, and soldiers, merchants, slaves, students, peasants, aristocrats, bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. All were ordinary people who chose to live their lives in complete dedication to God, allowing Him to renew and transform them from the inside out. The saints, no matter what country they were from, what language they spoke, or what their station in life, never betrayed their innermost beliefs about Christ and strove to live their lives in complete honesty and integrity, no matter what the cost. They lived with courage and determination, love and humility, grace and joy. The saints reveal human potential at its finest and serve as role models for us today. To know and understand the saints of the Church is to deepen our relationship to their Master and ours, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Priest** (in a low voice): Lord, God Almighty, You alone are holy (Rev 15:4). You accept a sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) from those who call upon You with their whole heart (Psalm 9:1). Receive also the prayer of us sinners and let it reach Your holy altar. Enable us to bring before You gifts and spiritual sacrifices (Heb 5:1) for our sins and for the transgressions of the people (Hebrews 9:7). Make us worthy to find grace in Your presence so that our sacrifice may be pleasing to You and that Your good and gracious Spirit may abide with us, with the gifts here presented, and with all Your people.

**Priest:** Through the mercies of Your only begotten Son with whom You are blessed together with...
In a few moments, when we receive communion, the priest will say, “Approach with the fear of God, faith, and love.” This moment of the service is a proclamation of that faith and love. The faith happens with the priest saying, “I love You, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer” to which the parishioners say, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Trinity one in essence and inseparable.”

The “love” is exemplified with the kiss of peace. During Christ’s time, the kiss was one of the preliminary courtesies to any ceremonial meal: its omission caused our Lord to rebuke Simon the Pharisee at his own banquet (Lk 7:45). Moreover, the Kiss of Peace is one of the oldest liturgical customs of the church, as St. Paul reveals in his letters: “Greet one another with a kiss.” (Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12). It signifies mutual love and friendship. Yet the Fathers and scripture make clear that this ceremonial kiss is not simply an ordinary kiss but a “kiss of love” and a “holy kiss” by which we demonstrate that the source of our brotherly love is the love of God and that Christ is the bond of mutual love among Christians. Historically, particularly up to the sixth century, it was exchanged at a variety of Christian ceremonies; yet, over time, the practice died out among the laity, although it has continued to be exchanged among the clergy to the present time. Today, only a few parishes have all members participating in the Kiss of Peace. The customary greeting: “Christ is in our midst” and response: “He is and will always be.”
What is The Creed?

Most of us remember our grandparents. Some of us even know about our great grandparents. However, when we look back in our family history more than one hundred years, our memory of those who came before us begins to fade. The life of Jesus was just the opposite. The significance of Christ was growing so strong that even 300 years after He died, people were being killed because they believed in Him.

However, on October 28, 312 AD, the seeds of change were sewn when Emperor Constantine defeated Emperor Maxentius at the battle on the Milvian Bridge. The night before the final battle, Emperor Constantine had a vision in which God showed him the sign of the cross in the sky and told him “En tuta Nixa” (by this sign, you shall be victorious). Constantine (who would later become St. Constantine) told his soldiers to put the sign on their shields. They did so and the next day they were victorious. This victory gave Constantine total control of the Roman Empire. Interestingly, Constantine did not become a Christian at that time, but he knew there was something significant about Jesus. So, in 325 AD, he called hundreds of bishops, priests and deacons together for the First Ecumenical Council. He instructed all the bishops to debate in front of him who they believed Christ was. The fate of Christianity was

**People:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Trinity one in essence and inseparable.

**Deacon:** Guard the doors. Wisdom. Let us be attentive.

**THE CREED (SYMBOL OF FAITH)**

**People:** I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

**Λαός:** Πατέρα, Υἱόν καὶ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, Τριάδα ὁμοούσιον καὶ ἀχώριστον.

**Διάκονος:** Τὰς θύρας, τὰς θύρας. Ἐν σοφίᾳ πρόσχωμεν.

**ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ**

**Λαός:** Πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα Θεόν, Πατέρα, Παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὄρατων τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἑνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων.
in the balance. There were two factions: one believed that although Jesus was a good man, he was “less than God” and the other group believed that Jesus was “of one essence,” or equal with God and the Holy Spirit. Arguing for the side that believed Jesus was equal (“consubstantial”) to God and the Holy Spirit was a young deacon named Athanasios (later to become St. Athanasios). The side that believed that Jesus was not “consubstantial” with God and the Holy Spirit was lead by a bishop named Arius. Arius went so far as to sing rhyming songs to emphasize his beliefs. Finally, a bishop named Nicholas (who later St. Nicholas) could no longer take their blasphemy, and he got up and struck Arius in the face. Bishop Nicholas was put in jail and his Bishop’s Epilates were removed. That night, Nicholas was visited by the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and they placed the Bishop Epilates back on him. The next day, Constantine and the others acknowledged that they had a dream and saw the Epilates being put back on Nicholas. When they opened the jail cell, Nicholas stood in front of them with his Epilates on. The momentum had swung the way of the bishops who saw Jesus as consubstantial to God. It took nearly one month of debate, but in the end, those who believed that Jesus was equal to God and the Holy Spirit won the day. The Nicene Creed, which boldly declared the Christian belief, was written. This is one of the reasons why St. Spyridon, St. Nicholas, St. Athanasios, St. Constantine, and many other Saints are held so highly in the Orthodox faith. When the fate of Christianity was in the balance, when defending Christianity could get you killed, they risked their lives and interpreted, defended, and articulated exactly what the faith was.

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father through Whom all things were made.
Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ, διὰ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.
Τὸν δὲ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.
Σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα.
Καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς Γραφὰς.
Καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς.
They are the spiritual giants upon whose shoulders we, in the faith, rest. Also, to give you an idea of the depth of the Orthodox faith; before the doctrine would be codified, the Church would wait until that generation had passed away and then they would have the next generation of church leaders look back and review their work and decide if it was divinely inspired or just a result of the political winds of that time. In the case of the Creed, in 381 AD, (56 years later!) after the first council, the Second Ecumenical Council took place. Among other issues, the leaders also reviewed the Creed. They made some minor adjustments to it, declared it work that was guided by God, and from that point forth, the Creed became solidified as doctrine in our faith. Since then, for over 1,600 years, this proclamation of faith has been stated out loud by millions of Orthodox faithful.

Did you ever wonder why the word “catholic” is in the Orthodox service? It simply means “whole” or “universal” and does not pertain to the Roman Catholic Church.

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26), Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, οὕτως βασιλείας ὃς ἐσται τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τὸ Κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν.

Εἰς μίαν, Ἁγιὰν, Καθολικὴν καὶ Ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

Ὁμολογῶ ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν. Καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν.
Anaphora is a Greek word meaning “carrying up,” or offering. In the Old Testament, the priest, would offer up an animal sacrifice to God. In this case, the offering is bread and wine that we are bringing to God and asking they be consecrated at the altar in Heaven. You’ll note that even before the gifts are consecrated, we thank God (“Let us give thanks to the Lord”). This is similar to the way that Jesus would thank God before he preformed His miracles;

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it, and Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father I thank thee that thou has heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me.” When He had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazurus come out.” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth.” John 11:38-44

You’ll notice that first Jesus thanked the Lord and then the miracle occurred.
What Is worship? Why Is It important?

In English, the words worship and worth have the same root. We worship whatever is of ultimate value to us. Orthodox Christians believe that worship is the ultimate value of our lives. True worship, worship in the Holy Spirit, happens when – as the Lord Jesus commands in the Sermon on the Mount – we put God and the seeking of His Kingdom as our first priority, above anyone or anything else. Worship is to love God with all of our mind, all our heart, all our strength, and all our soul (Mark 12:30). In this sense, worship is more than simply going to church for Liturgy on Sunday mornings. It is a way of life that is nurtured by the Liturgy, a way of life that many Orthodox theologians and spiritual writers have called “the liturgy after the Liturgy.” We go to church to participate in the Liturgy, setting apart a specific time each week to offer ourselves to God in love, gratitude, and joy for what He has done for us; and in return, at each Liturgy we attend, the gift of the Holy Spirit is renewed in us and we receive the gifts of the body and blood of Christ to nurture His life in us, to become more Christ-like: more loving, more compassionate towards others, more patient, more forgiving, more grateful, more peaceful, more faithful, more joyful. In other words, in the Liturgy, we are called to be transformed, to become like the God whom we worship. In our tradition, this process is called theosis, a Greek word that means “becoming like God.” We are to become what we worship.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord (Judith 8:25).

People: It is proper and right.

Priest (in a low voice): It is proper and right to sing to You, bless You, praise You, thank You (cf. 2 Thess 1:3) and worship You in all places of Your dominion (Psalm 102:22); for You are God ineffable, beyond comprehension, invisible, beyond understanding, existing forever and always the same; You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. You brought us into being out of nothing (cf 2 Macc 7:28), and when we fell, You raised us up again. You did not cease doing everything until You led us to heaven and granted us Your kingdom to come.

Λαός: Ἐχομεν πρὸς τὸν Κύριον.

Ἱερεύς: Εὐχαριστήσωμεν τῷ Kuríῳ.

Λαός: Ἀξίον καὶ δίκαιον.

Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Ἀξίον καὶ δίκαιον σὲ ύμνειν, σὲ εὐλογεῖν, σὲ αἰνεῖν, σοὶ εὐχαριστεῖν, σὲ προσκυνεῖν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ τῆς δεσποτείας σου. Σὺ γὰρ ἔστε ἁγίος ἁγίων, ἀγαθονότατος, ἀδιάλειπτος, ἀ αἰτήτατος, ἀεὶ ἀνέγερτος, σὺ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμά σου τὸ Ἅγιον. Σὺ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς παρῆγαγες, καὶ παραπέσωστας ἀνέστης τόλμη, καὶ σὺ οὐκ ἀπέστης πάντα ποιῶν, ἐφες ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνέγερτας καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν σου ἔχαρισω τὴν μέλλουσαν.
Did the Old Testament Foretell About The Divine Liturgy?

Many events that took place in the New Testament (the birth of Jesus, the death of Jesus, etc.) were foretold in the Old Testament. The partaking in communion for the remission of sins is no different. In the Old Testament, Isaiah wrote (approximately 700 years before Christ’s birth):

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” (Isaiah 6:1-7)

The reference of Holy, Holy, Holy (The Trinity), the mentioning of the house filled with smoke (incense) and most importantly, the coal touching Isaiah’s lips and taking away his sin, all are representative of what we experience when we partake in communion during the Divine Liturgy.

For all these things we thank You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit; for all things that we know and do not know, for blessings seen and unseen that have been bestowed upon us. We also thank You for this liturgy that You are pleased to accept from our hands, even though You are surrounded by thousands of Archangels and tens of thousand (cf Dan7:10) of Angels, by the Cherubim and Seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed (cf Ezekiel 10:12), soaring with their wings (Isaiah 6:2)...

Priest:... singing the victory hymn, proclaiming, crying out (Is 6:3), and saying : (cf 1 Pet. 3:22, Col. 1:16, Ezek. 10:8-12, 1 Thess. 4:16.)

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are filled with Your glory (Isaiah 6:3).
Why do Orthodox Christians believe that we truly receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ in communion?

Because Jesus Told Us So!

In The Gospel of John, 6:51-59, Jesus said:

I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from Heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” Jesus said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Could Jesus have been any more succinct and clear on this matter?

People: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord (Ps 118:26). Hosanna to God in the highest (MT 21:9).

Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, merciful Master, we also proclaim and say: You are holy and most holy, You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. You are holy and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). He came and fulfilled the divine plan for us. On the night when He was delivered up, or rather when He gave Himself up for the life of the world (John 6:51),

Lambda: ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις. Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου. Ὡσαννὰ ὁ ἐν τοῖς υψίστοις.

Ierou (χαμηλοφώνως): Μετὰ τούτων καὶ ἡμεῖς τῶν μακαρίων δυνάμεων, Δέσποτα φιλάνθρωπε, βοῶμεν καὶ λέγομεν: Ἄγιος εἶ καὶ πανάγιος Σὺ καὶ ὁ μονογενὴς σου Υἱός καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμά σου τὸ Ἀγιόν. Ἄγιος εἶ καὶ πανάγιος καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὴς ἡ δόξα σου. Ὅς τὸν κόσμον σου οὕτως ἠγάπησας, ὥστε τὸν Υἱόν σου τὸν μονογενῆ δούναι, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ’ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Ὅς ἐλθὼν καὶ πάσαν τὴν ὑπέρ ἡμῶν οἰκονομίαν πληρώσας, τῇ νυκτὶ ἡ παρείδιστο, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐαυτὸν παρείδισεν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς,
“Do This in Remembrance of Me”

The passages where Christ tells the disciples and us to eat and drink of His body for forgiveness of our sins, comes from 1 Corinthians 11:23-25:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant (testament) in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

This was one of the most significant admonitions of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus clearly knew that man was sinful and clearly told his disciples that He wanted them to take His body and blood for the remission of those sins. Yet, for various reasons, many churches today elect to ignore it. Christ could not have been clearer about this. He didn’t say, “Think about this…” or “I hope you do this…” He was crystal clear…

“Do this in remembrance of me.”

Perhaps most important, Christ had been with His disciples for several years. He had taught them many, many important lessons. Yet, the significance of this admonition was so important, so crucial, that He waited until the night before He died to tell it to them. Think of it this way, if you knew that you were going to die tomorrow, and you gathered your children around you, wouldn’t you tell them the most crucial thoughts you had to help them live their lives to the fullest? Christ knew He was going to die the next day. He purposefully waited until this crucial moment, their last meal together, before delivering this critical admonition; “Do this in remembrance of me.” And the Orthodox faithful have followed that instruction diligently to this day.

He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, gave thanks, blessed, sanctified, broke, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:

Priest: Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:26).

People: Amen.

Priest (in a low voice): Likewise, after supper, He took the cup, saying (1 Corinthians 11:24):

Priest: Drink of it all of you; this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28).

People: Amen.

λαβὼν ἄρτον ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀχράντοις καὶ ἀμωμήτοις χερσί, εὐχαριστήσας καὶ εὐλογήσας, ἁγιάσας, κλάσας, ἔδωκε τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ μαθηταῖς καὶ ἀποστόλοις, εἰπών:

Ἰερεύς: Λάβετε, φάγετε, τούτο μού ἐστι τὸ σῶμα, τὸ ύπερ ἡμῶν κλώμενον, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Λαός: Αμήν.

Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων:

Ἱερεύς: Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες, τούτο ἐστι το αἷμα μου, τὸ τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης, τὸ ύπερ ὑμῶν καὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Λαός: Αμήν.
"Without the Shedding of Blood..."

Prior to the death of Jesus, the remission of sins took place only through the actual sacrifice or “shedding of blood” of animals in the churches. But this changed with Christ’s death. As St. Paul wrote in Hebrews 9:11-14:

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?

So, when Christ (also called the Lamb of God) died for us, He replaced the need for the slaying and sacrificing of any animals at the altar. Instead, it is His body and His blood that was sacrificed for us for redemption of our sins and for eternal life, and allows us to have a spiritual worship “without the shedding of blood.”

Priest (in a low voice): Remembering, therefore, this command of the Savior, and all that came to pass for our sake, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into Heaven, the enthronement at the right hand of the Father, and the second, glorious coming.

Priest: We offer to You these gifts from Your own gifts (1 Chronicles 29:14) in all and for all.

People: We praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You, Lord our God.

Priest (in a low voice): Once again we offer to You this spiritual worship without the shedding of blood, and we ask,

We do not kneel for 50 days following Easter. On the Sunday of Pentecost, following the liturgy, most Greek Orthodox clergy in this country do an abbreviated form of the Vespers of Kneeling. It is at that service, as part of the celebration of Pentecost, that we kneel for the first time since Easter.

Πρεσβύτερος (χαμηλοφώνως): Μεμνημένοι τοίνυν τῆς σωτηρίου ταύτης ἐντολῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γεγενημένων, τοῦ Σταυροῦ, τοῦ Τάφου, τῆς τριπλής Ἀναστάσεως, τῆς εἰς οὐρανούς Ἀναβάσεως, τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν Καθέδρας, τῆς δευτέρας καὶ ἐνδόξου πάλιν Παρουσίας.

Πρεσβύτερος: Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν σοὶ προσφέρομεν κατὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντα.

Λαός: Σὲ ύμνούμεν, σὲ εὐλογούμεν, σοὶ εὐχαριστούμεν, Κύριε, καὶ δεόμεθα σου, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν.

Πρεσβύτερος (χαμηλοφώνως): Ἐτι προσφέρομέν σοι τὴν λογικὴν ταύτην καὶ ἀναίμακτον λατρείαν, καὶ
When Does the Wine and Bread Become the Body and Blood of Christ?

If you ask most parishioners when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, you will get a myriad of interesting answers. The truth is it happens right at this moment. So, why do so many churchgoers miss this significant moment? There are two reasons. Oftentimes the choir will be singing loudly at this point and the priest will be saying the prayers quietly. So, the parishioners never hear the priest say, “Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts here presented… And make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ…. And that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Your Christ…. Changing them by Your Holy Spirit…. ”

The other reason this passage is missed by parishioners is that this is the section of the Divine Liturgy where we kneel down and pray. So, oftentimes parishioners are praying and don’t hear the priest read these passages.

Changing Them by Your Holy Spirit

In Orthodoxy, the epiclesis or invocation, the “calling forth” of the Holy Spirit upon the faithful and the gifts of bread and wine being offered, is an essential element in the Eucharist, affirming that it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church lives and acts. In the Liturgy, all things are accomplished by God through Christ in the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, there is Christ; and where Christ is, there is the Spirit.
The Leadership Structures of the Church

The Orthodox Church is a family of Churches that share the same faith and sacramental life. It is composed primarily of 14 autocephalous (self-governing) Churches: Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow, Georgia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Albania, Poland, the Czech lands and Slovakia. Among these, in accordance with the canons of several Ecumenical Councils, the Patriarch of Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey) is ranked “first among equals.” Theoretically, every bishop is equal; however, some bishops hold a certain preeminence, are the chairmen of their respective synods of bishops, and have special responsibilities.

In the United States, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of New York, who serves under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, holds this primacy of responsibility. Within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, in addition to the Archdiocese of New York, there are eight Metropolises in the U.S. (territories based around a large city; metropolis is a Greek word meaning “mother city”): New Jersey, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, and Denver. Together they form an eparchial (governing) synod of bishops, chaired by the Archbishop of New York, under the auspices of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, Orthodox Christians – while honoring and praying for their spiritual leaders – must always bear in mind that it is Christ Himself who is the true Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23) and the “chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4) of our souls.

Priest: So that they may be to those who partake of them for vigilance of soul, forgiveness of sins, communion of Your Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13), fulfillment of the kingdom of Heaven, confidence before You, and not in judgment or condemnation. Again, we offer this spiritual worship (Romans 12:1) for those who rest in the faith: forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and for every righteous spirit made perfect in faith (Hebrews 12:23).

Priest: Especially for our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary.

Ἱερεύς: Ὡστε γενέσθαι τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσιν εἰς νῆψιν ψυχῆς, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου σου Πνεύματος, εἰς Βασιλείας οὐρανῶν πλήρωμα, εἰς παρρησίαν τὴν πρὸς σέ, μὴ εἰς κρίμα ἢ εἰς κατάκριμα. Ἐτι προσφέρομέν σοι τὴν λογικὴν ταύτην λατρείαν, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν πίστει ἀναπαυσαμένων Προπατόρων, Πατέρων, Πατριαρχῶν, Προφητῶν, Ἀποστόλων, Κηρύκων, Εὐαγγελιστῶν, Μαρτύρων, Ὁμολογητῶν, Ἐγκρατευτῶν καὶ παντὸς πνεύματος δικαίου ἐν πίστει τετελειωμένου.

Ἱερεύς: Ἐξαιρέτως τῆς Παναγίας, ἀχράντου, ύπερευλογημένης, ἐνδόξου, Δεσποίνης ἡμῶν Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας.
“Remember also all who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto eternal life.”

The Divine Liturgy is not only for those attending it. It also involves those who have passed away. In the highlighted section, the priest prays for all the deceased by name, remembering them before God, usually beginning with his own family and friends, then the names submitted for the Proskomide by those who have baked and offered Prosforo, etc. The hope of this prayer is that they are in God’s presence, among the righteous – the phrase “where the light of Your countenance (face) shines” is based on Psalm 67:1 and Psalm 119:135. If there is someone who has passed away, you can let the priest know during the week, and their name will be read during this part of the service.

People: It is truly right to bless you, Theotokos, ever blessed, most pure, and mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.

Priest (in a low voice): For Saint John the prophet, forerunner, and baptist; for the holy glorious and most honorable Apostles, for Saints(s) (Name(s)) whose memory we commemorate today; and for all Your saints, through whose supplications, O God, bless us. Remember also all who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto eternal life. (Here the priest commemorates the names of the deceased.)

Why Do We Have Icons of Saints in the Church?

The icons of the Saints in the church serve as a reminder of God’s love and strength working through human beings. They serve as examples of the lives God calls each of us to live. Just as we have a photo album to remember our family members, these icons serve as pictures to remind us that these saintly men and women are part of our Orthodox family. Also, just as we name our children after our parents and grandparents to honor and remember them, at baptism each Orthodox person is given the name of a saint to honor them and inspire them to live the saintly life as has been exemplified by the Saint they were named after.

Δαός: Ἀξιόν ἐστιν ως ἀληθῶς μακαρίζειν σε τὴν Θεοτόκον, τὴν ἀειμακάριστον καὶ παναμώμητον καὶ μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβεὶμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφεὶμ· τὴν ἀδιαφθόρως Θεὸν Λόγον τεκοῦσαν, τὴν ὄντως Θεοτόκον, σὲ μεγαλύνομεν.

Ἰερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου, Προφήτου, Προδρόμου καὶ Βαπτιστοῦ· τῶν ἁγίων ἐνδόξων καὶ πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων· τοῦ Ἄγιου (Ὀνομα) οὗ καὶ τὴν μνήμην ἐπιτελοῦμεν, καὶ πάντων σοῦ τῶν Ἁγίων, ὃν ταῖς ἱκεσίαις ἐπίσκεψαι ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεός. Καὶ μνήσθητι πάντων τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι ἀναστάσεως ζωῆς αἰωνίου (καὶ μνημονεύει ἐνταῦθα ὑδαμαστὶ ὦν βούλεται τεθνεώτων)
The Church Building or Temple and the People of God

Most Orthodox Churches are divided into three distinct parts, mirroring in some ways the Old Testament Temple in Jerusalem: the narthex, or entryway; the nave, or main body of the Church building; and the altar or sanctuary, located behind the iconostasis or icon “screen.” The altar area corresponds roughly to what was called the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple; the nave to the court of the faithful; and the narthex to the court of the Gentiles. As a consecrated building, specifically set aside for worship, everything we do in Church should be done in a spirit of respect, courtesy, reverence and even awe, because it is here, within these four walls, that the heavenly and earthly realms meet during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and we will experience the presence of God.

St. Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 760 AD), wrote in his Commentary on the Divine Liturgy that “The Church is the temple of God, a holy place, a house of prayer, the assembly of the people, the Body of Christ…an earthly heaven in which the God of heaven dwells and moves.”

But the Church is more than a building! The Church is people – God’s people – who gather together in His Name, thereby calling themselves Christians; who share a common faith and hope based on the Gospel; affirm the truth or orthodoxy of their belief and experience; and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all. The word ekklesia literally means those people who have been called out of the world by the Word of God to be His people. So the Church is a community, an assembly of people, who are baptized into Christ, receive the Holy Spirit and relate to God as their Father.

What do the Scriptures say about the people of God’s Church?

And grant them rest, our God, where the light of Your face shines (Psalm 4:6). Again, we ask You, Lord, remember all Orthodox bishops who rightly teach the word of Your truth (2 Timothy 2:15), all presbyters, all deacons in the service of Christ, and every one in holy orders. We also offer to You this spiritual worship for the whole world, for the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and for those living in purity and holiness. And for all those in public service; permit them, Lord, to serve and govern in peace that through the faithful conduct of their duties we may live peaceful and serene lives in all piety and holiness.
Priest: Above all, remember, Lord, our Archbishop (Name): Grant that he may serve Your holy churches in peace. Keep him safe, honorable, and healthy for many years, rightly teaching the word of Your truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Deacon: Remember also, Lord, those whom each of us calls to mind and all your people.

People: And all Your people.

Priest (in a low voice): Remember, Lord, the city in which we live, every city and country, and the faithful who dwell in them. Remember, Lord, the travelers, the sick, the suffering, and the captives, granting them protection and salvation.

Ἰερεύς: Ἐν πρώτοις μνήσθητι, Κύριε, τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἡμῶν (Ὄνομα), ὃν χάρισαι ταῖς ἁγίαις σου Ἐκκλησίαις ἐν εἰρήνῃ, σῶον, ἐντιμον, ύγιὰς, μακρομερεύοντας καὶ ὀρθοτομοῦντας τὸν λόγον τῆς σῆς ἀληθείας.

Διάκονος: Καὶ ὃν ἐκαστὸς κατὰ διάνοιαν ἔχει, καὶ πάντων καὶ πασῶν.

Λαός: Καὶ πάντων καὶ πασῶν.

Ἰερεύς: (χαμηλοφώνως): Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, τῆς πόλεως, ἐν ἑς παροικοῦμεν, καὶ πάσης πόλεως καὶ χώρας καὶ τῶν πίστει οἰκούντων ἐν αὐταῖς. Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, πλεόντων, ὀδοιποροῦντων, νοσοῦντων, καμινόντων, αἰχμαλώτων καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν.
In the year 863, two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, set out from Constantinople, one of the five centers of the Church, to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Slavic peoples. The Slavic language had not been written down until the two devised an alphabet and translated the Bible and Liturgy. As a result of their work, churches began to spring up in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia.

Approximately a century later (945 AD), the ruler, Vladimir the Prince of Kiev, sent envoys to various religious centers to study their form of worship and report back to him about what they thought of them. When the envoys who had gone to Constantinople and experienced the Orthodox service returned, they reported to Prince Vladimir and said, “We knew not whether we were in Heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere on earth. We cannot describe it to you; we only know that God dwells there among men and that their Service surpasses the worship of all other places…”

In 988 Prince Vladimir led his people down to the Dnieper River to be baptized. Russia embraced the Orthodox Faith and the Russian Orthodox Church was established.

Remember, Lord, those who do charitable work, who serve in Your holy churches, and who care for the poor. And send Your mercy upon us all.

Priest: And grant that with one voice and one heart (Romans 15:15) we may glorify and praise Your most honored and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: The mercy of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13) be with all of you.

People: And with your spirit.
The Gift of the Holy Spirit

To have received “divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit” and be in communion with God means that no matter who we are or what we look like, whatever language we speak or country we’re from, whether we’re rich or poor, white, black, red, or yellow, God has touched our lives and filled us with the inexpressible joy of His love. God has called us to Himself so that we can become, by His grace, like Him in every possible way. God is good, holy, righteous, merciful, true, forgiving, loving, and compassionate — and we, as baptized Christians, are given the gift of the Holy Spirit so that these qualities can blossom in us. St. Paul writes, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22). Does this describe us? Are we generous and gentle, kind and loving, patient and joyful? Have we allowed the Holy Spirit to be active in our lives so that we can become the living icons of His glory that we’re called to be?

What Is the Antimension?

The antimension (means “instead of the table”) is a rectangular cloth, consecrated and signed by the local bishop. It displays an image of the dead Christ laying on a burial shroud as well as the four evangelists. It indicates permission from the local bishop for a particular community to celebrate the liturgy and can serve as a portable altar, hence its title. Without this cloth being signed, a church is not allowed to perform the liturgy.

THE LITANY BEFORE THE LORD’S PRAYER

Deacon: Having remembered all the saints, let us again in peace pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: For the precious gifts offered and consecrated, let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: That our loving God who has received them at His holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar as an offering of spiritual fragrance, may in return send upon us divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us pray.

Διάκονος: Πάντων τῶν ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες, ἐτι καὶ ἐτι ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὡπέρ τῶν προσκομισθέντων καὶ ἁγιασθέντων τιμίων Δώρων, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.
Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Ὅπως ὁφιλάνθρωπος Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ προσδέχομαι αὐτὰ εἰς τὸ ἁγίον καὶ ὑπερουράνιον καὶ νοερόν αὐτοῦ θυσιαστήριον, εἰς ὁμοιόμορφον τιμητικὸν, ἀντικατατέμνῃ ἡμῖν τὴν θείαν χάριν καὶ τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, δεηθῶμεν.
Orthodoxy - True Faith/True Worship

The word “Orthodoxy” means, “true faith” or “true worship.” Why do we believe that? What makes us different from any other faith? To begin with, when you ask people who founded the Orthodox faith, you will get many interesting answers, but there is only one correct answer: Jesus Christ. After Christ died, his disciples were gathered in “an upper room.” Having seen what happened to Christ, they were afraid and uncertain about what would happen next. Suddenly, “there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:1-6.)

The Bible tells us that on that day, the disciples then baptized three thousand people into the faith. This was the beginning of the spread of Christianity. From that moment, until today, Orthodoxy has a direct and unbroken line. The faith the disciples celebrated (the celebration of communion, the reciting of The Lords Prayer, the singing of hymns, the reciting of The Creed, the sermon, etc.) is the faith that we practice today. In addition, the priest who is celebrating the Divine Liturgy at your church today can be linked all the way back to those who were in that “upper room.” The bishop who ordained him was ordained by a previous bishop, and so forth, all the way back to the beginning of Christianity. This is known as “Apostolic Succession.”

People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: Having prayed for the unity of the faith and for the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commit ourselves, and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.
People: To You, O Lord.
Priest (in a low voice): We entrust to You, loving Master, our whole life and hope, and we ask, pray, and entreat: make us worthy to partake of your heavenly and awesome Mysteries from this holy and spiritual Table with a clear conscience; for the remission of sins, forgiveness of transgressions, communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14),

Λαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.
Διάκονος: Τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς πίστεως, καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τοῦ Ἀγίου Πνεύματος αἰτησάμενοι, ἐαυτούς καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ πάσαν τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.
Λαός: Σοὶ, Κύριε.
Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Σοὶ παρακατιθέμεθα τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν ἅπασαν καὶ τὴν ἐλπίδα, Δέσποτα φιλάνθρωπε, καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν σε καὶ δεόμεθα καὶ ἱκετεύομεν· καταξίωσον ἡμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τῶν ἐπουρανίων σου καὶ φρικτῶν μυστηρίων ταύτης τῆς ἱερᾶς και πνευματικῆς Τραπέζης, μετὰ καθαροῦ συνειδότος, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, εἰς συγχώρησιν πλημμελημάτων, εἰς Πνεύματος Ἀγίου κοινωνίαν,
In just 55 (58 in Greek) words, Jesus taught his disciples and everyone who came after them exactly how to pray. The Lord’s Prayer is prayed not only during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, but at every sacrament and service of prayer in the life of the Church.

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

With the word Our, the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray not merely as individuals but as members of His community, the Church. It is important to notice that in the Lord’s Prayer the words I, me, my and mine are nowhere to be found.

In the original Greek, it is not the word Heaven but the plural form Heavens that was used. This is an ancient way of saying that the God whom we worship and who loves us as His children is greater than the universe He has created and transcends it. Furthermore, this almighty God wants a personal relationship with each and every one of us.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Hallowed is the old English word meaning “to make holy” or “to sanctify.” How do we sanctify God’s holy name? We sanctify God’s name by how we live our lives as believers.

THY KINGDOM COME

These words should make us tremble because here we pray for the end of world and the coming of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (Revelation 6:1-8). We pray for the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:30-46), that final day when every man, woman, and child will stand

inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, confidence before You, and not in judgment or condemnation.

Priest: And make us worthy, Master, with confidence and without fear of condemnation, to dare call You, the heavenly God, FATHER, and to say: THE LORD’S PRAYER

People:

Our Father, who art in heaven:
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6: 9-13).

εἰς βασιλείας οὐρανῶν κληρονομίαν, εἰς παρρησίαν τὴν πρὸς σέ, μὴ εἰς κρίμα ἢ εἰς κατάκριμα.

Ἱερεύς: Καὶ καταξίωσον ἡμᾶς, Δέσποτα, μετὰ παρρησίας, ἀκατακρίτως τολμᾶν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι Σὲ τὸν ἐπουράνιον Θεὸν Πατέρα καὶ λέγειν:

H KURIAKH PROSEUXH

Λαός: Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου, ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπούσιον δῶς ἡμῖν σήμερον. Καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν. Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.
before what St. Paul calls “the dread judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10) to be judged by how compassionately we have lived, either entering into the kingdom of our Father “prepared before the beginning of the world” or “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and all of his angels” (Matthew 25: 34, 41).

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
We can ultimately find meaning for our lives only by doing God’s will and not our own, by serving the Kingdom of God and not the kingdom of ourselves. True fulfillment in our lives cannot be found in what we as individuals want. It can be found only in doing what God wants. All of the Christian life is the bending of our will towards God’s will.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD
The saints of the Church have interpreted this petition in two ways: first, that we are declaring our total dependence on God for our day-to-day existence and that whatever we have to sustain our life is a gift from Him; and, second, that this is a prayer for the Bread of Life, the Eucharistic Bread, the Bread that is His Body that we will receive in the mystery of Holy Communion, the bread of eternal life (John 6:53-58).

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US The heart of the Gospel is forgiveness. But to offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged us is often difficult to do. In the Gospels (Mark 11:25; Matthew 6:14),

Priest: For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory (Mat 6:13) of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.
People: Amen.
Priest: Peace be with all.
People: And with your spirit.
Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.
People: To You, O Lord.

Ἱερεύς: Ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα, τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.
Λαός: Ἀμήν.
Ἱερεύς: Εἰρήνη πάσι.
Lambda: Καὶ τῷ πνεύματι σου.
Diakonos: Τάς κεφαλάς ἠμῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ κλίνωμεν.
Lambda: Σοί, Κύριε.
Christ states that we cannot ask God for forgiveness unless we are prepared to forgive others. What is the source of our ability to forgive others? Knowing that God has forgiven us. Christians can forgive because we know that we’ve already been forgiven by God. (Ephesians1:7; Colossians 1:14). And, Christ tells us, the debt of sin that God has forgiven us is far greater than any debt owed us by another human being (Matthew 18:23-35).

**AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL**

This petition could be wrongly taken to imply that God Himself tempts us. Nothing could be further from the truth. On this, the Scriptures are clear: “No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil and He tempts no one. Rather, one is tempted by one’s own desire” (James 1:13-14). And it is God whom we call upon to pull us away from the temptations of life.

**Priest (in a low voice):** We give thanks to You, invisible King (1 Timothy 1:17). By Your infinite power You created all things and by Your great mercy You brought everything from nothing into being (cf 2 Macc 7:28). Master, look down from Heaven upon those who have bowed their heads before You; they have bowed not before flesh and blood but before You the awesome God. Therefore, **Master, guide the course of our life for our benefit according to the need of each of us.** Sail with those who sail, travel with those who travel; and heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies.

**Priest:** By the grace, mercy, and love for us of Your only begotten Son...

**Ἱερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως):** Εὐχαριστούμεν σοι, Βασιλεῦ ἀόρατε, ὁ τῇ ἀμετρήτῳ σου δυνάμει τὰ πάντα δημιουργήσας καὶ τῷ πλήθει τοῦ ἐλέους σου ἔχεισαν εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα παραγαγών. Αὐτός, Δέσποτα, οὐρανόθεν ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τοὺς ὑποκεκλικότας σοι τὰς κεφαλὰς· οὐ γὰρ ἔκλιναν σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι, ἀλλὰ σοὶ τῶ φοβερῷ Θεῷ. Σὺ οὖν, Δέσποτα, τὰ προκείμενα πάσιν ἡμῖν εἰς ἀγαθὸν ἐξομάλισον, κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστου ἰδίαν χρείαν· τοῖς πλέουσι σύμπλευσον· τοῖς ὁδοιποροῦσι συνόδευσον· τοὺς νοσοῦντας ἴασαι, ὁ ἰατρὸς τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν.

**Ἱερεύς:** Χάριτι καὶ οἰκτιρμοῖς καὶ φιλανθρωπίᾳ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Υἱοῦ...
Eucharistic Living: A Life of Gratitude

The Tradition of the Church describes the Eucharist in many ways. It is “the Lord’s Supper” (1 Corinthians 11:20). It is “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). It is about communion with God, that we may become sons and daughters of God the Father. That in eating bread and drinking wine set apart and consecrated by the Holy Spirit we are participating in Body and Blood of Jesus. It is about fulfilling Old Testament sacrifices: as the Paschal lamb was sacrificed, its blood put on the doorways of faithful Jews hoping for the shadow of death to pass over their household as described in the Book of Exodus, so we put the Body and Blood of Christ, our Paschal lamb, on the doorway of our heart. It is about partaking in what St. Ignatius of Antioch (+115) called “the medicine of immortality,” which we need for eternal life. It is about receiving a purifying and divine fire, which burns away our sins. Ultimately, however, the Liturgy summarizes the life we are called to live in communion with God. Only when we recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our daily life in the world can our lives be truly Eucharistic and lived with a grateful heart. Living in a Eucharistic way has everything to do with seeing life as a gift, a gift for which we are forever grateful. What would it be like to live every moment of our lives as a gift – even those moments that are difficult and painful?

with whom You are blessed, together with Your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Priest (in a low voice): Lord Jesus Christ, our God, hear us from Your holy dwelling place and from the glorious throne of Your kingdom. You are enthroned on high with the Father and are also invisibly present among us. Come and sanctify us, and let Your pure Body and precious Blood be given to us by Your mighty hand and through us to all Your people.

λαός: Άμην.

Η ΘΕΙΑ ΜΕΤΑΛΗΨΙΣ

'Ιερεύς (χαμηλοφώνως): Πρόσχες Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, εἰς ἅγιον κατοικητήριον σου καὶ ἀπὸ θρόνου δόξης τῆς βασιλείας σου, καὶ ἐλθὲ εἰς τὸ ἁγιάσαι ἡμᾶς, ὁ ἀνω τῷ Πατρὶ συγκαθήμενος καὶ ὅπερ ἡμῖν ἀοράτως συνών, καὶ καταξίωσον τῇ κραταιᾷ σου χειρὶ μεταδοῦναι ἡμῖν τοῦ ἀχράντου Σώματός σου, καὶ τοῦ τιμίου Αἵματος, καὶ δι’ ἡμῶν παντι τῷ λαῷ.
The saints are not simply those men and women whose icons adorn the walls and windows of our Churches. St. Paul writes that we’re “all called to be saints” (Romans 1:7). And the Liturgy refers to us, the congregation gathered for worship, as saints. Shortly before the body and blood of Christ are offered in communion, one of the things that the priest sings in the Liturgy is: “Let us attend! The holy gifts are for the holy people of God.” This is a paraphrase of a much more compact sentence in the original Greek: “Proskomen! Ta ayia tois ayiois,” which may be more literally translated as “Let us attend! The holy (the Eucharistic bread and wine that are now the consecrated body and blood of Christ) for the saints.” In the original Greek of the Liturgy, the word that is translated as both “saint” and “holy” is the same word: ayios. In other words, every Christian is called to be a saint, to be holy as God is holy, to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect (Romans 1:7; 2 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Peter 1:15; Matthew 5:48). To become ever more Christ-like, to be holy, to be a saint: this is God’s will and plan for our life!

Deacon: Let us be attentive.

Priest: *The holy Gifts for the holy people of God.*

People: One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father (*Philippians* 2:11). Amen.

**THE COMMUNION HYMN**

People: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. *Alleluia* (*Psalm 148:1*) (3).

(The Communion Hymn changes according to the Feast Day.)

Διάκονος: Πρόσχωμεν.

Ιερεύς: Τά Άγια τοῖς άγίοις.

Λαός: Εἰς Ἀγιος, εἰς Κύριος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ Πατρός. Ἀμήν.

**Ο ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟΣ ΥΜΝΟΣ**

Λαός: Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς υψίστοις. Ἀλληλούια. (3).

(Τὸ Κοινωνικὸν ἄλλασσει κατὰ τὰς διαφόρους ἑορτὰς.)
At this point the “lamb” is broken into four parts and then into smaller pieces so that everyone can participate in communion. This action is called the **Breaking of the Bread**.

The center of the prosfora that was prepared by the Priest has the following letters on it:

- $ΙΣ$ = contraction for Jesus
- $ΧΣ$ = contraction for Christ
- $ΝΙΚΑ$ = conquers

In total these letters mean:

**“Jesus Christ conquers”**

This center portion is cut and placed on the **Diskarion**

The priest takes the center portion (“Jesus Christ conquers”), which has been cut out in the form of the Cross, but has not been broken.

He then breaks it into four parts, as he says:

**Priest:** The Lamb of God is broken and distributed; broken but not divided. He is forever eaten yet is never consumed, but He sanctifies those who partake of Him.

(Then the priest places the piece that is marked IC into the Holy Chalice saying:)

The fullness of the Cup of Faith, and of the Holy Spirit.

(He then blesses the warm water saying:)

Blessed is the **fervor of Your saints**, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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Ἅρτος (εὐθέως μελίζει τὸν ἄγιον Ἄρτον, λέγων (χαμηλοφώνως): Μελίζεται καὶ διαμερίζεται ὁ Ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ μελιζόμενος καὶ μὴ διαιρούμενος· ὁ πάντοτε ἐσθιόμενος καὶ μηδέποτε δαπανώμενος ἀλλὰ τοὺς μετέχοντας ἁγιάζων.

(Αὐτὴν εἰς τὸ ἄγιον Ποτήριον λέγων:) Πλήρωμα Ποτηρίου πίστεως, Πνεύματος Ἁγίου.

(Εὐλογεῖ τὸ Ζέον λέγων:) Εὐλογημένη ἡ ζέσις τῶν ἁγίων σου πάντοτε, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.
The Fervor of Your Saints…

At this point, the priest is then handed a small container of hot water called “ZEON.” It is blessed, and the hot water is poured into the Holy Chalice. The hot water has been said to represent the hot flame that landed upon the disciples’ heads when they were given the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is also said to represent the blood and water that came from Christ’s side when the soldier pierced his side with the lance as he hung on the cross:

“… but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:34).

Also, as the priest states in his prayer, it is meant to represent the “fervor” of God’s saints.

(Pouring the water into the Cup crosswise, he says:) The warmth of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(The Communion Prayers are recited silently by those prepared to receive the holy Mysteries.)

I believe and confess, Lord, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown. And make me worthy without condemnation to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the forgiveness of sins and for life eternal. Amen.

(Ἐγχέει σταυροειδῶς τὸ Ζέον ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ, λέγων:) Ζέσις πίστεως, Πνεύματος ἁγίου. Ἀμήν.

(Αἱ προσευχαὶ τῆς θείας Κοινωνίας λέγονται χαμηλοφώνως ἀπὸ ὁσούς θὰ μεταλάβουν.) Πιστεύω, Κύριε, καὶ ὁμολογῶ, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ἀληθῶς ὁ Χριστός, ὁ Ὕδις τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζωντος, ὁ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι, ἀν πρῶτος εἰμὶ ἐγὼ. Εἴπα πιστεύω, ὅτι τούτο αὐτὸ ἐστι τὸ ἄχραντον Σῶμα σου καὶ τούτο αὐτὸ ἐστι τὸ τίμιον Αἴμα σου. Δέομαι οὖν σου ἐλέησόν με καὶ συγχώρησόν μοι τὰ παραπτώματά μου, τὰ ἐκούσια καὶ τὰ ἀκούσια, τὰ ἐν λόγῳ, τὰ ἐν ἔργῳ, τὰ ἐν γνώσει καὶ ἀγνοίᾳ καὶ ἀξίωσόν με ἀκατακρίτως μετασχεῖν τῶν ἄχραντων σου μυστηρίων, εἰς ἀφεσιν ἄμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ἡμί αἰώνιον. Ἀμήν.
Why Do Orthodox Christians Take Communion So Seriously?

The Bible gives us the answer to that question. In the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 11, St. Paul wrote:

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep (died). But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of Your saints? If I dare to enter into the bridal chamber, my clothing will accuse me, since it is not a wedding garment; and being bound up, I shall be cast out by the angels. In Your love, Lord, cleanse my soul and save me.

Loving Master, Lord Jesus Christ, my God, let not these holy Gifts be to my condemnation because of my unworthiness, but for the cleansing and sanctification of soul and body and the pledge of the future life and kingdom. It is good for me to cling to God and to place in Him the hope of my salvation.

Ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησι τῶν ἁγίων σου πῶς εἰσελεύσομαι ὁ ἀνάξιος; Ἐὰν γὰρ τολμήσω συνεισελθεῖν εἰς τὸν Νυμφῶνα, ὁ χιτών με ἐλέγχει ὅτι οὔκ ἐστι τοῦ γάμου, καὶ δέσμιος ἐκβαλοῦμαι υπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων. Καθάρισον, Κύριε, τὸν ρύπον τῆς ψυχῆς μου καὶ σώσον με ὡς φιλάνθρωπος.

Δέσποτα φιλάνθρωπος, Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ Θεός μου, μὴ εἰς κρίμα μοι γένοιτο τὰ ἀγία ταῦτα, διὰ τὸ ἀνάξιον εἶναι με, ἀλλ’ εἰς κάθαρσιν καὶ ἁγιασμὸν ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος, καὶ εἰς ἀρραβώνα τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς καὶ βασιλείας. Ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ προσκολλάσθαι τῷ Θεῷ ἀγαθὸν ἔστι, τίθεσθαι ἐν τῷ Κυρίῳ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς σωτηρίας μου.
Why do Orthodox Christians Use Incense in Their Worship?

Like many other answers in our liturgy, the reason is because the Bible guides us to do so.

The Book of Exodus, Chapter 30

"Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding—two on opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the Testimony—before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony—where I will meet with you.

"Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the

Receive me today, Son of God, as a partaker of Your mystical Supper. I will not reveal Your mystery to Your adversaries. Nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas. But as the thief I confess to You: Lord, remember me in Your kingdom.

(The Priest prepares to receive Holy Communion.)

Priest: Behold, I approach Christ, our immortal King and God. The precious and most holy Body of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is given to me (Name) the Priest, for the forgiveness of my sins and eternal life.

Τοῦ δείπνου σου τοῦ μυστικοῦ, σήμερον Υἱὲ Θεοῦ κοινωνόν με παράλαβε· οὐ μὴ γὰρ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου τὸ μυστήριον εἴπω· οὐ φίλημά σοι δώσω, καθάπερ ὁ Ἰούδας· ἀλλ’ ώς ὁ λῃστὴς ὁμολογῶ σοι· Μνήσθητί μου Κύριε ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

(Ὁ Ἱερεὺς ἑτοιμάζεταιἵνα μεταλάβῃ τῶν ἀχράντων Μυστηρίων.)

Ἱερεὺς: Ἰδοὺ προσέρχομαι Χριστῷ τῷ ἀθανάτῳ βασιλεῖ καὶ Θεῷ ἡμῶν.

Μεταδίδοται μοι (Ὁνομα) τῷ ἱερεῖ τὸ τίμιον καὶ πανάγιον Σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἑσυχοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς ἀφεσίν μου ἀμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.
The Book of Revelation, Chapters 5 and 8

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders (presbyters). He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. He opened it and all the elders with him fell down on their faces and worshiped him, saying, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed are those who believe in the name of the Lord!”

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (presbyters) fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand.

(He then partakes of the sacred Bread.)

The precious and most holy Blood of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is given to me (Name) the priest, for the forgiveness of my sins and eternal life.

(He then drinks from the Chalice.)

(Afterwards, he wipes the Chalice, kisses it, and says:) This has touched my lips, taking away my transgressions and cleansing my sins.

(The priest then transfers the remaining portions of the consecrated Bread into the Cup, saying:)

(Καὶ μεταλαμβάνει τοῦ ἁγίου Ἄρτου.)

'Ετι μεταδίδοται μοι (Ονομα) τῷ ἱερεῖ τὸ τίμιον καὶ πανάγιον Λίμα τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς ἄφεσίν μου ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

(Καὶ μεταλαμβάνει ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου Ποτηρίου.)

(Καὶ μεταλαμβάνει τρίτον ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἄσπασάμενος τὸ ἁγίον Ποτηρίου καὶ ψῆν αὐτὸ λέγει:) Τοῦτο ἥψατο τῶν χειλέων μου, καὶ ἀφελεῖ τὰς ἀνομίας μου καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας μου περικαθαριεῖ.

(Εἶτα ὁ Ἱερεὺς τίθησι τὰς λοιπὰς μερίδας τοῦ τιμίου Ἄρτου εἰς τὸ ἁγίον Ποτηρίον λέγων.)
Who May Receive Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church?

Orthodox Christians fully participate in the celebration of the Liturgy when they receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion, as the Lord Himself commands (John 6: 53). To receive communion in the Orthodox Church, one must be a practicing Orthodox Christian. This means that you must be Baptized and/or Chrismated in the Orthodox Church and that your beliefs and lifestyle are in accordance with the teachings of the Church. In order to be properly prepared for this encounter with Christ, those seeking to receive communion should not be conscious of grave sin, having opened their hearts with prayer, fasted appropriately, and lived with charity and love toward their neighbors. Because, as the Apostle Paul teaches, it is possible to receive the body and blood of the Lord “in an unworthy manner” and actually be “sinning against the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:27-30), those who are aware of grave sin in their lives should first participate in the sacrament of confession—confess their sins and be reconciled to Christ and his Church—before approaching the chalice to receive communion. Frequent reception of the Body and Blood of Christ—at every Liturgy, if possible—is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians.

Having beheld the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We venerate Your cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Your holy resurrection. You are our God. We know no other than You, and we call upon Your name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy resurrection of Christ. For behold, through the cross joy has come to all the world. Blessing the Lord always, let us praise His resurrection. For enduring the cross for us, He destroyed death by death.

(He takes the holy Cup to the Royal Doors, raises it and says:)

Deacon: Approach with the fear of God, faith, and love.

Διάκονος: Μετὰ φόβου Θεοῦ, πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης προσέλθετε.
St. John Chrysostom (347-404 AD), the fourth century Patriarch of Constantinople, was one of the most important saints and Fathers of the Church and is revered as a preacher, teacher, and liturgist. He was so well known for his preaching that, after his death, he was given the title Χρυσόστομος, a word that means “the man with the golden mouth.” During his sermons, his congregation would often burst into applause. Eloquent and uncompromising, he spoke out forcefully against political and clerical corruption, the conspicuous consumption of the wealthy, and for the needs of the poor and disenfranchised of his day.

Preaching that “feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead,” he was responsible for initiating ministry to Constantinople’s poor, with the Church providing meals for several thousand people every day. More than 600 of his homilies have survived. He had a deep love for the Scriptures and, as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware once wrote, “he can truly be called an evangelical.” His series of sermons on the Acts of the Apostles are the only surviving commentary on that book of the Bible from the first 1,000 years of Christian history. His treatise On the Priesthood – which discusses the requirements and responsibilities of those who would seek to serve Christ and His Church as bishops, priests, and deacons – is still read in Orthodox seminaries to this day. “When the priest calls

(Those prepared come forth with reverence to receive Holy Communion while the people sing the communion hymn.)

(When administering Holy Communion, the priest says:) The servant of God (Name) receives the Body and Blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Amen.

(When Communion has been given to all, the priest blesses the people with his hand, saying:)

Priest: O God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance (Psalm 28:9).

(Οἱ προητοιμασμένοι πιστοὶ προσέρχονται μετὰ κατανύξεως καὶ μεταλαμβάνουν τῶν ἁχράντων μυστηρίων ἐνῶ ὁ λαὸς συνεχίζει τὸ Κοινωνικόν.)

(Μεταλαμβάνων τοὺς πιστοὺς ὁ ἱερεὺς λέγει:) Μεταλαμβάνει ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ (όνομα) σώμα καὶ αἵμα Χριστοῦ, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Αμήν.

(Μετὰ τὴν μεταλήψιν τῶν πιστῶν, ὁ ἱερεὺς εὐλογεῖ τὸν λαὸν λέγων-) Ἰερέις: Σῶσον ὁ Θεὸς τὸν λαὸν σου, καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου.
People: We have seen the true light; we have received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the true faith, worshiping the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us.

Priest: Having returned the Cup to the holy Table, the priest transfers the particles of the Theotokos and the saints into the Chalice, and then those of the living and the dead saying:

Wash away, Lord, by Your holy Blood, the sins of all those commemorated through the intercessions of the Theotokos and all Your saints. Amen.

Priest: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let Your glory be over all the earth (Psalm 57:5)

Λαός: Εἴδομεν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ἐλάβομεν Πνεῦμα ἐπουράνιον, εὗρομεν πίστιν ἀληθῆ, ἄδιαίρετον Τριάδα προσκυνοῦντες, αὕτη γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔσωσεν.

Πριεστεύς (Ἐπιστρέψων εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν Τράπεζαν εἰσκομίζει ἐν τῷ Ἁγίῳ Ποτηρίῳ τὰς λοιπὰς μερίδας τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ τῶν Ἁγίων. Εἰσκομίζων δὲ τὰς μερίδας τῶν ζώντων καὶ τεθνεώτων, λέγει χαμηλοφώνως): Ἀπόπλυνων, Κύριε, τὰ ἁμαρτήματα τούτων ἐνθέασε, μνημονεύσων δούλων σου τῷ Άιματι σου τῷ Ἁγίῳ· προσβείας τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ πάντων σου τῶν Ἁγίων. Αμήν.

Πριεστεύς: Ὑψώθητι ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανούς, ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἡ δόξα Σου.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! One of several ancient Hebrew words found in the Liturgy, alleluia literally means “Praise God” and in the Scriptures is found primarily in the Old Testament Book of Psalms, where it is used 24 times in Psalms 104, 111-117 and 145-150. It is also found 4 times in chapter 19 of the Book of Revelation where it is the word of praise and worship used by all creation “for the wedding of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:7). A joyful, often spontaneous word of thanksgiving and praise, it is sung throughout the Liturgy: with verses from the Psalms after the Epistle reading, just before the Gospel is read; at the end of the Cherubic Hymn during the Great Entrance; and as part of the normal Sunday Communion hymn taken from Psalm 148:1. In our Church, alleluia is also sung during Lent and Holy Week as well as at funerals and memorial services.

(He lifts the vessels and says in a low voice:) Blessed is our God.

Priest (aloud): Always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

People: Let our mouths be filled with Your praise (Psalm 71:8), Lord, that we may sing of Your glory. You have made us worthy to partake of Your holy mysteries. Keep us in Your holiness, that all the day long (Psalm 35:28) we may meditate upon Your righteousness. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

(Ὑψῶν τὸ ἅγιον Ποτήριον ὁ ἱερεὺς λέγει (χαμηλοφώνως): Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, Ἱερεὺς: Πάντοτε, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.

Λαός: Πληρωθήτω τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν αἰνέσεως Κύριε, ὡς ἀνυμνήσωμεν τὴν δόξαν σου, ὅτι ἐξώσας ἡμᾶς τῶν ἁγίων σου μετασχεῖν μυστηρίων· τήρησον ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ σῷ ἁγιασμῷ, ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν μελετώντας τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου. Ἀλληλούια, ἀλληλούια, ἀλληλούια.

Η ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΡΙΟΣ ΕΥΧΗ
Let Us Be Attentive!

It is inevitable that at times during the Liturgy, our minds will wander. This is to be expected! This is one reason why the priest calls us back to attention by saying, “Wisdom! Let us listen attentively!” at different points in the Liturgy: for example, before the Epistle and Gospel readings, the recitation of the Creed, and here, just before the Prayer of Offering or Anaphora begins. We are human beings and not robots, and the level of concentration we can muster at any given time will be different at each Liturgy we attend. However, there is a general remedy. The Liturgy is built, so to speak, to have many levels. For those who read their Bibles, who pray at home regularly, who take their faith seriously, the Liturgy has been found to be an unending source of spiritual wealth. But to appreciate this takes a lot of work. One can liken it to watching football. Someone who doesn’t know the rules of the game will inevitably dislike watching the sport. Yet the spectator who knows the rules, who has played the game, who knows the game from the inside out, can be endlessly involved in what is going on. Thus, the first and most important way to combat mindless thoughts during Liturgy is to put the hard work of spiritual discipline in on the “off-day,” as difficult as that sounds.

Deacon: *Let us be attentive.* Having partaken of the divine, holy, pure, immortal, heavenly, life-giving, and awesome Mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks to the Lord.

People: Glory to you, Oh Lord, glory to you.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Having prayed for a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, day, let us commit ourselves, and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Διάκονος: Ὀρθοί. Μεταλαβόντες τῶν θείων, ἀγίων, ἀχράντων, ἀθανάτων, ἐπουρανίων καὶ ζωοποιῶν, φρικτῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστηρίων, ἀξίως εὐχαριστήσωμεν τῷ Κυρίῳ.

Λαός: Δόξα Σοι, Κύριε, δόξα Σοι.

Διάκονος: Άντιλαβοῦ, σώσον, ἐλέησον καὶ διαφύλαξον ἡμᾶς, ὁ Θεός, τῇ Σῇ χάριτι.

Λαός: Αμήν.

Διάκονος: Τὴν ἡμέραν πᾶσαν, τελείαν, ἀγίαν, εἰρηνικὴν καὶ ἀναμάρτηταν αἰτησάμενοι, ἐαυτοὺς καὶ ἄλληλους, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν, Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.

Λαός: Σοί Κύριε.
Priest (in a low voice): We thank You, loving Master, benefactor of our souls, that on this day You have made us worthy once again of Your heavenly and immortal Mysteries. Direct our ways in the right path, establish us firmly in Your fear, guard our lives, and make our endeavors safe, through the prayers and supplications of the glorious Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary and of all Your saints.

Priest: For You are our sanctification and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

A sadness some parishioners have experienced is when they learn that a friend, family member, or acquaintance has left the faith or simply is no longer going to church. It is very difficult for a grandparent to learn that his or her grandchild is no longer part of the faith, or for a parent to learn that the child they raised is no longer going to church. There are many factors that can lead to such an occurrence, but a major study showed that one of the greatest factors is whether their fathers went to church with them as they were growing up.

From 1960-1985 as study was conducted in the Mid-west to learn which factors led to the passing on of faith from one generation to the next in the Roman Catholic Church. The study concluded that if the mother and father were connected to the faith (i.e., went to church, took the children to church, prayed, etc.) that 80 percent of those children remained in the faith. If only the mother was committed to the church, then 35 percent of the children remained in the church. If only the father was involved in the church, then there was a 50 percent likelihood that the child would remain in the church. In other words, if the father went to church with his children, it had the greatest impact on the children remaining in the faith when they grew up.

Fathers, go to church with your children.
People: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: Let us go forth in peace.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Lord, bless those who praise You (Genesis 12:3) and sanctify those who trust in You. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance (Psalm 27:9). Protect the whole body of Your Church. Sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house (Psalm 25:8). Glorify them in return by Your divine power, and to not forsake us who hope in You. Grant peace to Your world, to Your churches,

Δαός: Άμην.

ΑΠΟΛΥΣΙΣ

Ἱερεὺς: Ἐν εἰρήνῃ προέλθωμεν.

Διάκονος: Τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Δαός: Κύριε ἐλέησον.

Ἱερεὺς: Ὁ εὐλογῶν τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς Σε, Κύριε, καὶ ἁγιάζων τοὺς ἐπὶ Σοὶ πεποιθότας, σώσον τὸν λαὸν Σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν Σου. Τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Σου φύλαξον, ἁγίασον τοὺς ἀγαπώντας τὴν εὐπρέπειαν τοῦ οἴκου Σου.

Σὺ αὐτοὺς ἀντιδόξασον τῇ θείκῃ Σου δυνάμει, καὶ μὴ ἐγκαταλίπης ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπὶ Σε. Εἰρήνην τῷ κόσμῳ Σου δώρησαι, ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις Σου,
In many ways, we are asking for all of the holy people of God that have gone before us to pray on our behalf. That is a powerful prayer.

During the forty days after Pascha, this formula is replaced by the Paschal troparion and the reciting of “Christ is Risen – Truly He is Risen!”

Who Are Joachim and Anna?

At the end of the service you will hear the names Joachim and Anna mentioned. They are the parents of the Virgin Mary. This makes them the grandparents of Jesus. They were very devout people who longed to have a child but after fifty years of marriage were unable to do so. When they were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, the High Priest, Issachar, made fun of Joachim, “You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands.” Others who had children castigated Joachim. Joachim checked the genealogical records of the tribes of Israel and discovered every righteous man in the nation had been blessed with children, except him. This caused him great grief, and he and his wife left with heavy hearts. Then the two of them prayed to God that He would work in them the wonder that He had worked in Abraham and Sarah, and give them a child to comfort them in their old age. St. Joachim took his flocks and went to a high mountain, refusing to return home in shame. Meanwhile, St. Anna prayed in her garden. One day, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to each of them and told Anna she would be giving birth to

to the clergy, to those in public service, to the armed forces, and to all Your people. For every good and perfect gift is from above, coming from You, the Father of lights (James 1:17). To You we give glory, thanksgiving, and worship, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Blessed is the name of the Lord, both now and to the ages (Psalm 113:2) (3).

(The priest proceeds to the Prothesis and prays in a low voice:)

τοῖς Ἱερεῦσι, τοῖς ἄρχουσι, τῷ στρατῷ καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Σου. Ὅτι πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστι καταβαῖνον, ἐκ Σοῦ τοῦ Πατρὸς τῶν φώτων. Καὶ Σοὶ τὴν δόξαν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν καὶ προσκύνησιν ἀναπέμπομεν, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.

Εἴη τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου εὐλογημένον ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ ἐως τοῦ αἰὼντος. (3)

Ἰερεύς (προχωρών πρὸς τὴν Πρόθεσιν λέγει χαμηλοφώνως):
Christ our God, You are the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. You have fulfilled all the dispensation of the Father. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy (3). Father, give the blessing.

Priest: May the blessing of the Lord and His mercy come upon you through His divine grace and love always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Sharing His Presence with the World

What is the last thing that we do at the Divine Liturgy? It isn’t coming forward to venerate the cross, nor is it to receive the antidoron or to sing a hymn. Then what is it? It’s to leave the Church. We, as God’s people, assemble to enter into His Presence and even eat and drink with Him at the Mystical Supper that He has provided us. Then we disperse – in order to take God’s Presence into the world. In a very practical way, this means that we’re supposed to be missionaries of God’s Presence and Kingdom in the world. This is the heart of being evangelical. We have received His divine gifts – and so we must share them freely with everyone.

The Divine Liturgy sums up our entire Christian life. We are empowered to bring the gift of God’s loving and compassionate Presence – Christ in the Holy Spirit – to a lost and hurting world torn apart by human cruelty, lust, and greed. This is our mission in life: to serve others by sharing with them the gift of communion with the one, true, and living God. Only then will we discover the true meaning and purpose of our lives. The final act of receiving is giving.

“a daughter most blessed, by whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed, and through whom will come the salvation of the world.” St. Anna conceived shortly thereafter, and in the ninth month gave birth to the Virgin Mary. This Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God is celebrated by the Church on December 9 and the Nativity of the Theotokos is celebrated on September 8.
What Is Andidoron?

In the early years of Christianity, the majority of the parishioners took communion. However, as time went by, the number of people partaking dissipated. Our church wanted to keep those not partaking close to the church, so they began to give out a small piece of bread at the end of the service called the “Antidoron,” a composite Greek word meaning “instead of the Gift.” These pieces are cut from the bread when the gifts are being prepared and, accordingly, are not the body of Christ but are considered to be “blessed” bread.

Who would be better than St. John Chrysostom to leave us with a parting thought as we finish up the Divine Liturgy service? Here is what he wrote on “Leaving the Divine Liturgy”:

St. John Chrysostom – On Leaving the Divine Liturgy

Let us leave the Divine Liturgy like lions breathing fire, having become fearsome even to the devil, because we have received the holy Body and Blood of the Lord. By this we have been given great power! This Blood chases demons away and brings the angels near us. This Blood is the salvation of our souls; with this Blood the soul is washed clean and made beautiful. This Blood makes our minds brighter than fire!

Priest: Glory to You, O God, our hope, glory to you.

Priest: May Christ our true God (cf John 17:2) (who rose from the dead), [3] as a good, loving, and merciful God, have mercy upon us and save us, through the intercessions of His most pure and holy Mother; the power of the precious and life giving Cross; the protection of the honorable, bodiless powers of Heaven; the supplications of the honorable, glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist; the holy, glorious, and praiseworthy apostles; the holy, glorious, and triumphant martyrs; our holy and God-bearing Fathers (name of the church); the holy and righteous ancestors.
So, encourage our brothers and sisters who are absent to come to Church! Exhort those who are deceived by demons and stay away (from Church) to return. Teach whoever doesn’t attend Church that you have sung hymns with the Seraphim, that you belong to Heaven even now, and that you met with Christ and spoke with Him. Counsel them not only with words, but also with how you live. However, even if you don’t say anything, but merely come out of the Divine Liturgy showing those who were absent from worship the gain you have received from Church simply by your appearance, by your gaze and your voice, by the way you walk, and with all the spiritual power you have received—this is enough for exhortation and counsel, because the truth is that we should come out of Church as if we were descending from Heaven itself. If we live the Divine Liturgy thus, we will not have to say anything to those who were absent. But seeing how we have benefited, they will learn what they have missed and will quickly run to Church to delight in the grace and philanthropy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, belongs all glory to the ages of ages.

Amen!

Joachim and Anna; Saint (of the day) whose memory we commemorate today, and all the saints, have mercy on us, as a good, loving and merciful God.

People: Amen. Lord, grant long life to him who blesses and sanctifies us.

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us. [4]

People: Amen.

Priest (blessing the people): May the holy Trinity protect all of you.

Ἰωακεὶμ καὶ Ἄννης, τοῦ ἁγίου (τῆς ἡμέρας), οὗ καὶ τὴν μνήμην ἐπιτελοῦμεν, καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων, ἐλεήσαι καὶ σώσαι ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος καὶ ἐλεήμων Θεός.

Λαός: Ἀμήν. Τὸν εὐλογοῦντα καὶ ἁγιάζοντα ἡμᾶς, Κύριε, φύλαττε εἰς πολλὰ ἔτη.

Ἱερεὺς: Δι’ εὐχῶν τῶν Ἁγίων Πατέρων ἡμῶν, Κύριε Ἡσυχός Χριστέ, ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, ἐλέησον καὶ σώσον ἡμᾶς.

Λαός: Ἀμήν.

Ἱερεὺς(εὐλογῶν τὸν λαὸν): Ἡάγια Τριὰς διαφυλάξοι πάντας ὑμᾶς.
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