

# The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

An English translation from the Greek, with commentary, of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

The annotations in this edition are extracted from two books by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, of blessed memory: 1) *The Eucharist* published in 1987, and, 2) *For The Life of The World*, 1963, 1973, both published by Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press. Fr. Schmemmann died in 1983 at the age of 62 having been Dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary for the 20 years previously.

Any illumination for the reader of the meaning of the Liturgy is directly from Fr. Schmemmann's work; any errors are directly the fault of the extractor. In this edition the quiet prayers of the priest are indicated by being in *blue italics*, Scripture references are in **red**, the Liturgical text is in **blue**, and the commentary is in black.

(Traditionally, the service of Orthros is celebrated right before each Liturgy. The traditional end of the Orthros is the Great Doxology. In our church, the end of the Orthros is separated from the Great Doxology by the Studies in the Faith and the Memorials. Thus, it appears that the Great Doxology is the start of The Eucharist, but that is not the case. [ed.]

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is best understood as a journey or procession. It is a journey of the Church into the dimension of the kingdom, the manner of our entrance into the risen life of Christ. It is not an escape from the world, but rather an arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply into the reality of the world. The liturgy is served on earth, and this means in the time and space of "this world." But if it is served on earth, *it is accomplished in heaven, in the time of the new creation*, in the time of the Holy Spirit. The multifaceted nature of the liturgy is rooted in the Eucharist as the sacrament of *remembrance* – "...do this in remembrance of me." **Luke 22:19**. "Western scholasticism denies this multifaceted nature of the liturgy, the interdependence of all its elements, of all its rites...right up to its 'western captivity' the Orthodox East never isolated the sacraments as a separate 'object' of study and definition." For the early Fathers the word *Eucharist* was the key word giving unity and meaning to all the "elements" of the liturgy. The Fathers called "Eucharist" the Word, the bread and wine and their offering, and their consecration, and finally, communion. All this was Eucharist and all this could be only understood within the Eucharist.

The error and harmfulness of scholastic interpretations is that they relate the word *this* exclusively and only to the changing of the Eucharistic gifts into the body and blood of Christ and thereby isolate this from the body of the liturgy as a whole. This integral remembrance is impossible other than in the succession of the parts that comprise the liturgy. (For a fuller explanation of the Scholasticism, or School Theology,

and its historical context, see *The Church in History, Volume IV, 2. Changes in theological method: the West, page 167 and following*. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and onward, theology in the West was the purview of the universities which arose from the Cathedrals. Byzantine intellectuals were by no means immune to the attractions of critical theological analysis. Most fundamentally, theology was no longer liturgical, contemplative, or traditional.)

In the Liturgy, which we have been commanded to celebrate “until he comes” - we do not *repeat* and we do not *represent* – we *ascend* into the mystery of salvation and new life which has been accomplished once but has been granted to us “always, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.” And in this heavenly, eternal and otherworldly Eucharist, Christ does not come down to us, we *ascend* to him.

Fr. Schmemmann labels the elements of the liturgical journey as *sacraments*: the sacrament of Assembly, of the Kingdom, of the Entrance, of the Word, of the Offering, of Unity, of the Anaphora, of Thanksgiving, of Remembrance, of the Holy Spirit, and of Communion; as found in the liturgy of the Catechumen/Word, and the Faithful, this constitutes The Eucharist.

The journey begins when Christians leave their beds and homes. Whether they have to drive fifteen miles or walk a few blocks, a sacramental act is already taking place, an act which is the very condition of everything else that is to happen; for they are not on their way to *constitute the church* but to be transformed into the Church of God. The purpose is to *fulfill the Church*, and that means to make present the One in whom all things are at their *end*, and in whom, at the same time, all things are at their *beginning*. The Liturgy begins then as a real separation from the world. All early evidence attests to the fact that the *gathering* or *assembly* was always considered as the first and basic act of the Eucharist, its foundation and beginning. In contrast to current practice, the gathering *preceded* the entrance of the celebrant. “The Church,” writes St. John Chrysostom, “is a house common to us all, and you are waiting us when we enter...That is why, immediately afterward, we greet you by giving the peace.”

One part follows the next and cannot stand alone. It begins with the *assembly as the church*. After the gathering there follows the *entrance* and the proclamation of the word of God; after that the *offering* of the Gifts, and the Great Entrance which culminates with the placing of the Eucharistic gifts on the altar. After the *kiss of peace* and confession of faith, we begin the anaphora: the lifting up of the gifts in the prayer of thanksgiving and remembrance. The anaphora concludes with the *Epikelsis*, i.e. the prayer that God will manifest the Holy Spirit, will show the bread and wine of our offering to be the body and blood of Christ and make us worthy to partake of it.

## **The Assembly as the Church**

In the “Antenicene Christian Liturgy” is found the following: “Now when thou teachest, command and warn the people to be constant in assembling in the Church, and not withdraw themselves, but always to assemble, lest any man diminish the Church by not assembling;” “gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” John 11:52 We come to the Temple not for individual prayer but to assemble together as the Church which is the first liturgical act, the foundation of the liturgy. When you say that you are going to church, it means that you are going into the assembly of the faithful in order to be transformed into the Church of God, in order to become what you were on the day of your baptism, a member of the body of Christ; “You are the body of Christ and individual members of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27; “where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20 Christianity consists not in bestowing on each the possibility of “personal perfection” but first of all in calling and commanding Christians to be the Church. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” 1 Peter 2: 9-10 And the holiness of the Church is not our holiness but Christ’s, Who loved the Church and gave Himself for her, “that He might sanctify her...that she might be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:25-27 This is why in early times all Christians were called *saints*; this is why “assembling as the Church” is our task, our chief trust and duty.

If the Assembly as the Church is the image of Christ, then the image of the head of the body is the *priest*. He manifests the power of the priesthood of Christ, “and he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.” Hebrews 7:24 The vesting of the priest is an image, an *icon*, of the unity of Christ and the Church, the prefiguration of the kingdom of God and the King who forever “reigns; he is robed in majesty.” Psalms 93:1 The Eucharist is for those whose sins have been forgiven, who have abandoned lawlessness, who have been reconciled with God. It is the service of the new humanity, “who once had not received mercy but now have received mercy.” 1 Peter 2:10

The Temple (church building) is viewed as the gathering together of heaven and earth and all creation in Christ—which constitutes the essence and purpose of the Church. The Temple is that heaven on earth that realizes the assembly as the church. All icons are in essence evidence of the Incarnation and so the Iconostasis was evidence that the Kingdom of Heaven had drawn near. Thus, the Iconostasis was to unite the people, not be, as it appears today in so many Orthodox Churches, a wall of separation between the people and the altar. (How appropriate, therefore, that at St. Sophia in Los Angeles the three doors – north, south, and Royal – are left open, which transforms the iconostasis from a symbol of separation to a symbol of the Kingdom. This also allows the faithful to see the angelic iconography which reminds us of the angels who participate with us in the liturgy. We are told this latter in the prayer of the Little Entrance, “O Master, Lord our God, Who hast established in heaven orders and hosts of angels and archangels for

*the service of Thy glory; grant that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy angels, serving with us and glorifying Thy goodness..”)*

The Sanctuary was the entire church, but the word sanctuary now is limited to a description of the space behind the Iconostasis. The Tradition knows only of a consecration of a temple and an altar table and does not know of any consecration of a sanctuary apart from the nave. The “Royal Doors” originally were the front doors of the temple, not the entrance doors to the sanctuary containing the altar.

The liturgy is, before everything else, the joyous gathering of those who are to meet the risen Lord and to enter with Him into the bridal chamber. And it is this joyful expectation, and this expectation of joy, that are expressed in singing and ritual, in vestments and in censing, in that whole “beauty” of the liturgy which has so often been denounced as unnecessary and even sinful. And the celebrant of the sacrament of joy will appear in a beautiful chasuble, because he is vested in the glory of the Kingdom, because even in the form of man, God appears in His glory. In The Eucharist we are standing in the glory of Christ, and like Moses before God, we are to be covered with His glory.

## **SACRAMENT OF ASSEMBLY**

### **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

(formerly “The Liturgy of the Catechumens”)

Deacon: Master, give the blessing. [Only if a deacon is present.]

People/Choir: **Amen**

## **THE SACRAMENT OF THE KINGDOM**

“...as my Father appointed a kingdom for Me, so do I appoint one for you that you may eat and drink at My table in the Kingdom.” Luke 22:29-30 “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.” Mark 1:14-15 “And this is eternal life, that they know Thee, ...little flock, to whom it was the Father’s good pleasure to give the Kingdom.” Luke 12:32, John 17:3

Priest: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

[What does it mean to bless the kingdom? It means that we acknowledge it to be our highest and ultimate value, the object of our desire, our love, and our hope. It means that we proclaim it to be the goal of the

sacrament-of-pilgrimage, ascension, and entrance that now begins; the end of the Eucharistic celebration is the entry of the Church into Heaven, and is above all the sacrament of the Kingdom of God.

In the language of the bible, which is *the* language of the Church, to bless the Kingdom is not to simply acclaim it. It is to declare it to be the goal. And to accept this as our goal, the solemn affirmation is, *Amen*. Upon the *Amen* the fate of the human race is decided. It reveals that the movement toward the goal of God has begun. For standing in the temple, we stand in heaven insofar as that this assembly is undoubtedly conceived of as heavenly.]

[The Faithful who were standing for the Memorials and the Great Doxology, now sit.]

### THE GREAT LITANY

[Traditionally, the Great Litany, three antiphons (antiphonally sung Psalms), and three prayers appeared after the entrance (see below). These were found in the opening position in all other church services: matrimony, vespers, funeral rite, blessing of the waters, et al. Of Antiochian origin, the Great Litany appeared as the opening prayer of the assembled Church but not to begin the Liturgy. Up to the twelfth-thirteenth centuries this was sung not at the beginning of the liturgy but after the Entrance (now called the Little Entrance). The Great Litany was transferred to the beginning of the Liturgy, before the Little Entrance, at the time when the antiphons were added to the beginning of the service, accretions from the procession to the church which in antiquity went from the Cathedral to the local parish; this transposition is analogous to the Great Doxology, which was traditionally the end of the Vespers, and later postponed to the beginning of the liturgy.

Deacon: In peace let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

[After the confession and glorification of the kingdom we offer “*common supplications*” made “*with one accord*.” Do we not understand that this is not “*simply*” the prayer of a man or a group people, but the prayer of Christ himself to His Father, which has been granted to us, and that this gift of Christ’s prayer, of His mediation, of His intercession, is the first and greatest gift of the Church. *Ga 4:6 “And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, ‘Abba! Father’”*. *1 Tim 2:1,5 “First of all...that supplications, prayers, intercession, and thanksgivings be made for all men...For there is one God who is mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.”* And that is why the prayer of the Church is a divine-human prayer, for the Church is Christ’s humanity with Him standing at its head: “*I in them and*

Thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.”  
John 17:23,]

Deacon: For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us beseech the Lord.  
Matt 16:26 “What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

[In the Church we are given the peace of Christ, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And, as noted below, the word “peace” stands for Christ’s benediction on the Church. “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord, Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’...The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, ‘Peace be with you.’” Gospel of John 20:19-21, 26. This Scripture is from the Epistle reading for the Sunday of Thomas, which is always on the Sunday after Easter.]

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

[That this peace of Christ may spread over the whole world, that everyone far and near may become participants in the kingdom. Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” The prayer for welfare is a prayer for the fidelity and steadfastness of Christians. The unity of all in God constitutes the ultimate aim of creation and salvation. Christ came in order to “gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad...that they may become perfectly one.” John 11:52, John 17:23]

Deacon: For this holy house, and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us beseech the Lord.

[Here we find the condition for our genuine participation in the prayer and the sacrament.]

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy**

Deacon: For our Archbishop (episcopate...), for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us beseech the Lord.

[The Church, to which we all belong, manifests and fulfills herself, here and now, as the body of Christ.]

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For this country, the President, and all those in public service, and for the armed forces everywhere, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For this parish and city, for every city and country, and for the faithful who live in them, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For travelers by land, sea, and air, for the sick, the suffering, the captives and for their salvation, let us beseech the Lord.

[The Church is given power and authority to lift up this universal prayer, interceding before God for His entire creation.]

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and distress, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us O God by Thy grace.

People/Choir: **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 commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

[The whole Church, with the Mother of God at her head, is commemorated. We return our life to Christ because He *is* our life, because in the baptismal font we died to the simple “natural life,” and our true life is hid in the mysterious heights of the kingdom of God.]

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

(During the Litany the priest quietly recites the prayer of the First Antiphon:)

[Almost all of the prayers in the current liturgy offered by the celebrant are read *silently*, so that the Assembly hears only the concluding doxology. This practice is relatively recent. Originally, the prayers of the liturgy were all read aloud, for in their direct meaning and content they are prayers for the entire Assembly – of the Church herself. But once fixed in the services this practice led to the multiplication of the so-called *little litanies* which consist of the first and last two petitions of the Great Litany. And now these *little litanies* are chanted by the deacon while the prayers are read silently by the celebrant. Without a deacon the celebrant is forced to reading both the public and private prayers and, to preserve the “unity of all,” the prayers are read silently.]

Priest: *O Lord our God, Whose power is beyond compare and Whose glory is beyond understanding, Whose mercy is boundless, and love for man ineffable; look upon us and upon this holy house, and show us and those who pray with us the richness of Thy mercy and Thy compassion.*

Exclamation

Priest: For to Thee belong all glory, honor, and worship to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages,

People/Choir: **Amen.**

### **FIRST ANTIPHON**

(on Feast Days, special Antiphons are sung)

(The designated verses from the Psalms are sung with the hymn)

[In the “prayer of the first antiphon” the celebrant confesses the Church’s faith that God’s power is *incomparable*, that God’s glory is *incomprehensible*, that His mercy is *immeasurable*, and that His love for man is *inexpressible*.]

People/Choir: **By the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us (3).**

Deacon: Again and again in peace let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

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

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

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

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

Priest: *O Lord our God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; protect the whole body of Thy Church; sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house; glorify them in return by Thy divine power; and forsake us not who put our hope in Thee.*

[This belonging of the Church to God is confessed here, for in the Church is revealed His power, His kingdom, His strength and glory.]

Exclamation

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

People/Choir: **Amen.**

## **SECOND ANTIPHON**

(The designated verses from the Psalms are sung with the hymn.

On feast days, special antiphons are sung.)

People/Choir: **Save us, O Son of God, (Who didst arise from the dead), to Thee we sing: Alleluia (3).**

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

**O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, who are immortal, and Who vouchsafed for our salvation to take flesh from the Holy Mother of God, and Ever-Virgin Mary, becoming man thyself without change, and who were crucified, O Christ the God, by death trampling upon death, being one of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit save us.**

## LITTLE LITANY

Deacon: Again and again in peace let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Help us, save us, and have mercy on us, and protect us O God, by Thy grace.

People/Choir: **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 commend ourselves, and one another, and our whole life unto Christ our God.

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

[Here, the Faithful stand.]

Priest: *O Thou Who hast given us grace to make these common prayers with one heart. Thou hast promised that when two or three are gathered together in Thy Name Thou wouldst grant their requests; Fulfill now, O Lord, the petitions of Thy servants as may be expedient for them; granting us in this world the knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting.*

[The witness of this prayer is that the new humanity is given this unity with God.]

Exclamation:

Priest: For Thou art a good God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee do we give glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages,

People/Choir: **Amen.**

## THIRD ANTIPHON

(The designated verses of the Psalms are sung with the Apolytikion.)

## SACRAMENT OF ENTRANCE

### THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

(While the Apolytikion is sung, the priest carrying the holy Gospel Book comes in procession before the Royal Doors offering in a low voice the following prayer:)

[This was the beginning of the Liturgy, the entrance of the people and the clergy into the church – either at the end of the procession or without any procession – the coming of the celebrant to the altar. In early times the first act of the Liturgy after the Assembly of the Faithful was the entrance of the celebrant. The entrance, the drawing near to the altar, was always an *ascent* (always, in every Temple, it is up stairs!) All our worship services are an ascent to the altar and a return back to this world for a witness to “*what no eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.*” 1 Corinthians 2:9. “When the president of the assembly enters,” writes St. John Chrysostom, “he says *peace be with all of you.*” It is precisely with and through the entrance that the solemn ceremony begins – as is evident to this very day in our order of the pontifical (hierarchical) service. (The hierarch does not take part until after the Little Entrance.) In antiquity, after the entrance of the celebrant and the concelebrating, they assumed “their places” to listen to the Scriptures. We meet this expression Little Entrance (as distinct from the Great Entrance at the beginning of the liturgy of the faithful) in manuscripts of the fourteenth century. This was the time of the final and definitive consolidation of the Eucharistic order into its contemporary state. In contemporary practice this is the “entrance of the Gospels.” The Gospels are carried out the north door and then back to the altar through the Royal Doors. (The restriction of the Sanctuary from the entire Temple weakened the perception and experience of the “assembly as the Church” itself as the entrance and ascent of the Church, the people of God, to the heavenly sanctuary.) The eschatological meaning of the entrance, as drawing near to the altar and ascent to the kingdom, is best expressed in the prayer and singing of the *Trisagion*, with which the entrance is concluded.

Thou hath vouchsafed to us, Thy humble and unworthy servants, even in this hour to stand before the glory of Thy holy altar, and to offer worship and praise which are due unto Thee...accept even from the mouths of us sinners the thrice-holy hymn, and visit us in thy goodness. Forgive us every transgression...Sanctify our souls and bodies...: “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” Thus *we have entered* and stand now before the Holy. And the trembling and the sweet feeling of the presence of God, the joy and peace, which has no equal on earth, is all expressed in the three-fold, slow singing of the *Trisagion*. Holy is the real name of God, of the God not of “Scholars and philosophers,” but of the living God of faith. “Holy” is the word, the song, the “reaction” of the Church as it enters into heaven, as it stands before the heavenly glory of God. With this singing the celebrant ascends still higher,

to the holy of holies. And after ascending to the “high place” and from there, for the first time turns back and faces the people, as one of the gathered but also as the image of the Lord. Vested in His power and authority, the celebrant grants us *peace* for listening to the word of God. And so, the entrance at the Eucharist, this approach of the celebrant – and in him the whole Church – to the altar is not a symbol. It is the crucial and decisive act in which the true dimensions of the sacrament are revealed and established.]

Priest: *O Master, Lord our God, Who hast established in heaven orders and hosts of angels and archangels for the service of Thy glory; grant that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy angels, serving with us and glorifying Thy goodness. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*  
Blessed is the entrance of Thy saints always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.  
*Amen*

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

People/choir: **Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God who didst arise from the dead, to Thee we sing: Alleluia!**

(The priest enters the sanctuary. The Choir repeats the Apolytikion and sings the appointed Troparion of the church and the Kontakion of the day.)

[This is known as the prokeimenon, or the “psalm that precedes,” and introduces us to the sacrament of the Word. In antiquity, the prokeimenon was an entire psalm. We must first recall the special place the psalms had in the early Church. It is no exaggeration that the psalms were a prophetic and liturgical high point in the Old Testament, and a kind of prophetic revelation “within.” The exceptional significance in the psalms lies in the fact that in them Christ is revealed from “within.” These are His words, these are His prayers. And because these are His words, they are the prayer and words of His Body, the Church.

### THE TRISAGION HYMN

Deacon: Let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: *Holy God, Thou dwell among Thy saints. Thou art praised by the Seraphim with the Thrice-Holy hymn, and glorified by the Cherubim, and worshipped by the heavenly powers. Thou hast brought all things of nothing into being. Thou has created man and woman in Thy image and likeness and adorned them with all the gifts of Thy grace. Thou*

*givest wisdom and understanding to the supplicant and do not overlook the sinner but have established repentance as the way of salvation. Thou hast enabled us, Thy humble and unworthy servants, to stand at this hour before the glory of Thy holy altar, and to offer to Thee due worship and praise. Master, accept even from the mouths of us sinners the Thrice-Holy hymn and visit us in Thy goodness. Forgive our voluntary and involuntary transgressions, sanctify our souls and bodies, and enable us to serve Thee in holiness all the days of our life, by the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have pleased Thee throughout all the ages.*

Exclamation:

Priest: For Thou art Holy our God, and to Thee we give glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever...

Deacon: And unto the ages of ages, amen.

People/Choir: **Amen. Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal!**

**Have mercy on us. (3)**

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

**Holy and Immortal One, Have mercy on us!**

Deacon: Again, fervently.

Priest (The priest, turning toward the Prothesis, says in a low voice:) *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed are Thee on the throne of glory of Thy kingdom, seated upon the Cherubim always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen*

People/Choir: **Holy God, Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!**

[The Faithful sit.]

## SACRAMENT OF THE WORD

Luke 24:45, "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

[This is the point in the liturgy when we listen to the word of the Scriptures, the Word of the Lord.]

### THE READINGS

#### EPISTLE READING

[According to the unanimous testimony of all early evidence, the reading of holy scripture from the very beginning constituted an inseparable part of the "assembly as the Church" and, specifically, the Eucharist gathering. According to the earliest evidence, the link between the Gospel and the Homily, and the offering of the Eucharistic gifts, is obvious. We have every reason to believe that scriptural readings included the Old Testament. The current Lectionary excludes the greater part of the Old Testament from the liturgical readings. As for the New Testament, the readings were constructed on a daily basis, and since the current practice is only weekly liturgies, only a small portion of the New Testament is heard by the faithful, hence the ignorance of Scripture by the faithful. Lack of interest in Scripture stems from this ignorance.]

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Reads the appointed Psalm.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: Reads the designation of the Scripture.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Reads the appointed Epistle Lection.

Priest: Peace unto you the reader, and to all people.

People/Choir: **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

[In the liturgy, the proclamation of the Gospel is preceded by the "Alleluia," which is the joyful proclamation of those who see the coming Lord, who *know* His presence, and who express their joy at His *parousia*. This is why the reading and preaching of the Gospel in the Orthodox Church is a *liturgical act*, and an integral and essential part of the sacrament. Only in this unbreakable unity of word and sacrament can we truly understand the meaning of the affirmation that the Church alone preserves the true meaning of Scripture. That is why the necessary *beginning* of the Eucharistic ceremony is the first

part of the liturgy – the *sacrament of the word* - which finds its fulfillment and completion in the offering, consecration, and distribution to the faithful of the Eucharistic gifts.

In antiquity, the singing of the Alleluia verses comprised an important part of the liturgy. (This was inherited from the Hebrews, and belongs to *melismatic* as opposed to *psalmic* singing, i.e. where the melody takes precedence over the text.)]

[The Faithful stand.]

[Prayer before the Gospel:]

Priest: *Shine within our hearts, O Lord, lover of mankind, the pure light of Thy divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our minds that we may understand the message of Thy Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Thy 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 Thee. For Thou, O Christ our God, are the light of our souls and bodies, and to Thee we give glory together with Thy Father who is without beginning and Thy all holy, good and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.*

[This *prayer before the gospel* occupies the same place in the sacrament of the word, as the epiklesis occupies to the Eucharistic prayer. Our understanding and acceptance of the word depends not on us and our desire, but above all on the sacramental transformation of the “eyes of our minds,” on the coming to us of the Holy Spirit.]

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

Priest: Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel. Peace be to all.

People/Choir: **And with Thy spirit.**

[This greeting with which the celebrant, as the representative of Christ as the head of His Body, addresses the Church before each part of the Eucharistic ceremony, is each time a reminder that Christ “is in our midst,” that He Himself heads our Eucharist.]

Deacon: The reading is from the Holy Gospel. Let us be attentive.

People/Choir: **Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.**

Deacon: Reads the Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to thee who hast announced the Holy Gospel.

People/Choir: **Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.**

## HOMILY

[The Homily is a witness to the hearing of the Word of God, its reception and understanding. Therefore it is organically connected to the reading of Scripture, and in the early Church, constituted a necessary “synaxis,” and essential liturgical act of the Church. This act is the eternal self-witness who lives in the Church and guides her into all truth. The crisis in preaching in the modern church lies in an oblivion to what preaching in the Church Assembly is supposed to be. In general it is not a sermon *about* the Gospel (on a Gospel theme) but the preaching of the Gospel itself. Genuine proclamation of the good news of the Gospel does not exist without faith that the “assembly as the Church” is really the assembly of the Holy Spirit, where the same Spirit opens the preacher’s lips to proclamation and the hearers’ minds to acceptance of what is proclaimed. Any “private reading” of Scripture must be rooted in the Church: outside the mind of the Church, outside the divine-human life of the Church it can neither be heard nor truly interpreted. In the sacrament of the Word is revealed the collaboration of the hierarch and the laity in the preservation of truth, which, in accordance with the famous Epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs (1869), is “entrusted to the whole people of the Church.” (This encyclical was a response by the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and the synods of Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem to Pius IX’s encyclical of January 6, 1848, to the Christians of the East.) In antiquity the assembly responded to the celebrant’s sermon with a triumphal, “Amen,” testifying to their acceptance of the Word, and to their unity in the Word with the celebrant.

In antiquity, the Sacrament of the Word was concluded by the “Litany of Fervent Supplication” or “Augmented Litany.” This was a special collection of petitions and prayers to dismiss the catechumens from the Sacrament of the Word. Like The Great Litany, the “Augmented Litany” is an inalienable part of the Eucharistic liturgy of every church service. The Fervent Supplication is preserved in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts which is celebrated during Lent. While the Great Litany appeared at the beginning of each service, the Augmented Litany appeared at the conclusion of the Sacrament of the Word. The petition and prayers were the same and in the same order as those of the Great Litany, and so the distinction between the two has almost vanished. In Greek practice it is simply omitted as being redundant and they proceed directly to the Sacrament of the Faithful. However, these Litanies served opposite purposes: the Great Litany revealed the Church as prayer, the faithful laying aside everything that is his own, while in the Augmented Litany the Church focuses on the private, personal needs of men.

When people talk about this or that obsolete custom or tradition, we must be very careful not to put the question in terms of relevance or irrelevance to what is contemporary, but rather in terms of whether it

expresses something eternal and essential in Christianity, even if it seems outwardly obsolete. The prayers for the Catechumens and the Augmented Litany are essentially and above all the fundamental calling of the Church – the Church as mission – **Mark 16:15, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.”** – and cannot, without betraying her nature, cease to be mission. It has been stated that since there are no catechumens, the Greek Orthodox Church long ago dispensed with this dismissal and proceeded directly to the Cherubic Hymn.]

## THE LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL

[Only the “faithful,” i.e. the baptized members of the Church, are left in the Church assembly and are called to a general prayer to prepare themselves for the Eucharistic offering which the Cherubic Hymn announces.

The final act which signals the end of the Sacrament of the Word and the beginning of the Sacrament of the Faithful is the unfolding of the antimimension on the altar. This word in Greek means “in place of a table.” This usually has a picture of the Lord being placed in the tomb, a relic sewn into the cloth, and the signature of the Bishop who consecrated this particular antimimension on the bottom. The latter gives the priest the authority to perform the liturgy and this practice arose as the Church membership enlarged to such a degree that the Bishop could not personally perform all the liturgies. St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote, “You should regard that Eucharist as valid which is celebrated either by the bishop or someone he authorizes,” and, “Where the Bishop is, there is the Church.” The fundamental significance of the antimimension is that when the priest unfolds it and kisses the bishop’s signature, this altar is fulfilled, not only for the local community, but as the one altar of the Church of God. This fullness is precisely preserved and fulfilled in the bond between the bishop, Eucharist, and the Church. The interdiction of the Orthodox Church against one priest serving more than one liturgy per day on the same altar bears witness to the ancient understanding of the Eucharist as the sacrament of the Church and unity par excellence.]

## SACRAMENT OF OFFERING

### THE GREAT ENTRANCE

[The Eucharistic offering begins with a solemn rite now usually called The Great Entrance. This is a secondary name, for it is absent from the service books. It was introduced and came into fixed usage when the original meaning of this rite, the bringing of the sacrifice to the sacrificial table became obscured, and the entry into the sanctuary bringing the gifts was overgrown with illustrative symbolism, and began to be interpreted as the entry of the Lord's royal entrance into Jerusalem, or the burial of Christ by Josephus and Nicodemus, etc. The chief source of this symbolic complication was the detachment of the preparation of the sacrificial gifts from the liturgy itself and its disjunction into a separate rite. This separate rite became known as the Proskomide, meaning in the Greek the carrying or conveying of something into a certain place. (See below, The Prayer of the Proskomide.) In the current order of the liturgy, the procession includes the following rites: the priest reads the prayer, "None is worthy..."; the censuring of the altar, the gifts and the people assembled; the hymn of the offering; the solemn transfer of the gifts; the exclamation by the celebrant of the commemorative formula, "May the Lord God remember..."; the placing of the gifts on the altar; their being covered by the aer and the repetition of the censuring; and the reading by the priest of the "Prayer of the Offering." When the liturgy is served by the bishop, the bishop does not participate in carrying the gifts, which is done by the clergy celebrating with him. The Bishop receives the gifts at the Royal Doors. In the priestly liturgy the priest and deacon carry the gifts but only the priest puts the gifts on the altar. The contemporary "priestly" practice, i.e. the participation by the priest himself in the Great Entrance arose when the deacon, or the ministry of the diaconate itself, ceased to be sensed as necessary and self-evident. It is precisely the pontifical (hierarchical) order of the Great Entrance that is closer to the ancient practice and more fully expresses the essence of the Eucharistic offering. The Greek practice of bringing the gifts around the whole church better expresses the meaning of the Great Entrance. Why do the people kneel at the Great Entrance? After all, the gifts are still only bread and wine. They have not yet "become" the Body and Blood of Christ. Since the Epiklesis has not occurred. At the Great Entrance, the Offering itself, not its allegorical representation, is accomplished, and it is accomplished by Christ, for He is "the Offerer and the Offered, the Receiver and the Received." One can say that the liturgy is entirely in Christ; throughout the liturgy Christ is with us and we are in Christ.]

### THE CHERUBIC HYMN

**We who mystically represent the Cherubim sing the thrice holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity. Let us set aside all worldly cares of life that we may receive the king of all...**

Priest: *No one bound by worldly desires and pleasures is worthy to approach, draw near or minister to Thee, the King of glory. To serve Thee is great and awesome even for the heavenly powers. But because of Thy ineffable and immeasurable love for us, Thou became man without alteration or change. Thou have served as our High Priest, and as Lord of all, and have entrusted to us the celebration of this liturgical sacrifice without the shedding of blood. For Thee alone, Lord our God, rule over all things in heaven and on earth. Thou are seated on the throne of the Cherubim, the Lord of the Seraphim and the King of Israel. Thou alone are holy and dwell among Thy saints. Thou alone are good and ready to hear. Therefore, I implore Thee, look upon me, Thy sinful and unworthy servant, and cleanse my soul and heart from evil consciousness. Enable me by the power of Thy Holy Spirit so that, vested with the grace of priesthood, I may stand before Thy holy Table and celebrate the mystery of Thy holy and pure Body and Thy precious Blood. To Thee I come with bowed head and pray: do not turn Thy face away from me or reject me from among Thy children, but make me, Thy sinful and unworthy servant, worthy to offer to Thee these gifts. For Thee, O Christ our God, are the Offerer and the Offered, the One who receives and is distributed, and to Thee do we give glory, together with Thy eternal Father and Thy holy, good and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.*

[He has performed once and for all this Eucharist, and nothing has been left unoffered. It is His Eucharist and He is the Eucharist, as this prayer of offering says.]

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

People/Choir: **Amen.**

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

[This remembrance is of the whole Church, the living and the dead. In including the remembered ones in the life-creating memory of God, the borders between the living and the dead are erased – all are living in God. This is why the serving of a “special liturgy for the departed” would have been incomprehensible and impossible in the early Church.]

People/Choir: [continues the Cherubic Hymn] **That we may receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by the Angelic Orders. Alleluia.**

(After placing the holy gifts on the holy Table, the priest says:)

### LITTLE LITANY

### THE PETITIONS

[The Faithful sit.]

Deacon; [After the Cherubic Hymn is sung:]  
Let us complete our prayers unto the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For the precious gifts here presented, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

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

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and distress, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Thy Grace.

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: For a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless day, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: For forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgression, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

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

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

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

People/Choir: **Grant this, O Lord.**

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 beseech the Lord.

People/Choir; **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: Remembering our all holy, pure, and most blessed Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

[The Faithful stand.]

### THE PRAYER OF THE PROSKOMIDE

[This separate rite became known as the Proskomide, meaning in the Greek the carrying or conveying of something into a certain place. This separation into a rite took place under the influence of Scholastic or School Theology! In the experience and practice of the early Church, the Eucharistic sacrifice was offered not only on behalf of all and for all, but by all. The Eucharistic offering is precisely rooted in this sacrifice of love, and therein lies its origin. It remained and still remains an expression of the reality from which it was born, a witness to the organic link between the essence of the Church and of the Eucharist itself. The reality of the Proskomide is the identification of the bread and wine as the sacrifice of Christ, which encompasses all our sacrifices, our offering of ourselves to God.

Priest: *Lord God Almighty, Who alone art Holy, Thou accepts a sacrifice of praise from those who call upon Thee with their whole heart. Receive also the prayer of us sinners, and let it reach Thy Holy Altar. Enable us to bring before Thee gifts and spiritual sacrifices for our sins and for the transgressions of the people.*  
*Make us worthy to find grace in Thy presence so that our sacrifice may be pleasing to Thee, and that Thy good and gracious Spirit may abide with, with the gifts here presented, and with all Thy people.*

Exclamation:

Priest: Through the mercies of Thine only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

Priest: Peace be to all.

People/Choir: **And with thy spirit.**

Deacon: Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess.

(The priest kisses the holy Gifts saying;) I love Thee, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.

(At this time it is customary for the kiss of peace to be exchanged.)

People/Choir: **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, consubstantial and undivided Trinity.**

[We know from the liturgical evidence of the early Church that a *kiss of peace* was actually performed after this declaration, and the entire Church, the entire gathering, took part in it. It comprises an important and inalienable part of all Christian worship. Thus it was performed after Baptism when the bishop kissed the anointed, and after consecration of a new bishop when the entire assembly, clerics and laity, greeted him with a *holy kiss*. The contemporary exclamation to “[Love one another](#)” calls for a certain condition, while in its ancient form it summoned the gathering to a specific act: “greet one another.” One may suppose that the disappearance of the act was linked with the growth of the Church, the appearance of crowded assemblies in huge churches where no one knew each other, or where this rite was considered a mere formality. What was ignored was the very meaning of “Christian love.” We forget that in the call to “greet one another with a holy kiss” we are not expressing our natural human love but the love of Christ: [“Make love your aim.” 1 Corinthians 14:1,](#)]

[The bread and wine are now on the altar, covered, hidden, as our [“life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3](#). There lies, hidden in God, the totality of life, which Christ has brought back to God. The celebrant says, [“let us love one another...”](#) and there follows the kiss of peace, one of the fundamental acts of Christian liturgy. Love alone creates and transforms. It is, therefore, the very “principle” of the sacrament. The Church must be the revelation of that divine love which God poured out into our hearts. Without this love nothing is “valid” in the Church, because nothing is possible. This is the Sacrament of Offering. [Ephesians 5:2,...“Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”; Genesis 2:2-4, “Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his](#)

flock.” The ultimate and only sin is not wanting God and being separated from Him. But where there is this thirst for God, this consciousness of sin and this yearning for genuine life, there necessarily is sacrifice. For if Christ’s life is offering and sacrifice, then also our life in Him and the life of the whole Church are offering and sacrifice.]

## SACRAMENT OF UNITY

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

### THE CREED

[The Creed was introduced into the Liturgy in the late sixth century. Up to that point it was used in the Baptismal and Chrismation Rite, as it still is today. Its introduction into the Liturgy was occasioned by the doctrinal disputes of the preceding centuries. This usage rapidly became universal in the Church. Its inclusion in the liturgy was nothing more than the confirmation of the originally obvious, organic and inalienable link between the *unity of the faith* and the Church, and her self-fulfillment in the Eucharist. This link constituted the heartbeat of the experience and life of the early Church. This link abides as an immutable law for the Orthodox, protected by the canons and Church discipline. (In our time this link is not sensed as self-evident; and neither is unity.) Everything in the Church, all her forms and structure, and even worship and piety, can be “reinterpreted,” for there is no limit to the guile and cunning of the “prince of this world”; everything in the world - even religion, even “spirituality,” even visible splendor – can become an idol and idolatry. But as long as the Church, and each of us with her and in her, repeats the *confession of faith* and by it judges herself, and again and again is enlightened by the truth, the “gates of hell” shall not prevail against her, shall not dry up the eternally revivifying, the eternally healing power of her life, “illuminated by the Holy Trinity in a mystic unity.”

**I believe in one God, Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages; 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 by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried.**

**On the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father.**

**He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets.**

**And in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.**

**I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.**

**I expect the resurrection of the dead.  
And the life of the world to come.**

## SACRAMENT OF THANKSGIVING

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "Give thanks for all things..."

## SACRAMENT OF THE ANAPHORA

### THE HOLY ANAPHORA

[In antiquity almost every ecclesiastical province had its own anaphora, its own form and text of the prayer of thanksgiving. The Church from the very beginning called not only this prayer but the entire liturgy with one word – thanksgiving, Eucharist. Thus, with the word eucharist, the Church has named and still calls the offering of the gifts, the prayer, their consecration, and the partaking of them by the faithful. The entire anaphora is from beginning to end a prayer of thanksgiving.]

Deacon: Let us stand well. Let us stand in awe. Let us be attentive, that we may present the holy offering in peace.

People/Choir: **Mercy and peace, a sacrifice of praise.**

[When, after the Confession of Faith we hear this summons, something happens in the liturgy – something is completed and something is beginning. We now begin the *Eucharistic canon* during which part of the liturgy the change of the gifts takes place. In the tradition of the Church, such is her living experience, in which the sacrament of the Eucharist is inseparable from the divine liturgy. The Eucharist is the crowning and fulfillment of the liturgy, just as the liturgy is the crowning and fulfillment of the entire Faith.

With the summons, "Let us stand well" we actually do enter the chief part of the divine liturgy. But it is chief in relation to its other parts, not in isolation and separation from them. To begin this sacrament would be impossible without the sacrament of the gathering, of the offering, and of the unity. It is precisely this unity and wholeness of the Eucharistic celebration of which we are reminded with these words, "Let us stand well."]

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

People/Choir: **And with thy spirit.**

[The meaning of this blessing is the triumphant affirmation and confession that the Church is gathered in Christ, and in Him offers the Eucharist.]

Priest: Let us lift up our hearts.

People/Choir: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

[This exclamation is only found in the Divine Liturgy and affirms that the Eucharist is accomplished not on earth but in heaven.]

Priest: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

People/Choir: **It is proper and right.**

[These words are the beginning of the traditional Hebrew prayer of thanksgiving, and the Lord undoubtedly uttered them when He began, with this prayer, His own new thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, being the fullness of knowledge, is also the fulfillment of freedom, that genuine freedom of which Christ said, **“you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” John 8:32.** God did not create us for some kind of abstract freedom, but for Himself, for our communion, having been “brought” out of nonbeing into life and life in abundance, which is only from Him, in Him, is Him. Man seeks and thirsts only for this life. The Church manifests and grants this freedom to each of us each time that we ascend to the very summit of the divine liturgy and hear the call, **“Let us give thanks unto the Lord!”**, and in the fullness of knowledge answer, **“It is meet and right so to do!”**]

Priest: *It is proper and right to hymn Thee, to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to thank Thee, to worship Thee in every part of Thy dominion; for Thou art God unspeakable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, the same from everlasting to everlasting, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son, and Thy Holy Spirit, Thou Who from nothing brought us into being, and when we were fallen, raised us up again, and left nothing undone until Thou brought us up to heaven, and didst bestow on us Thy kingdom which is to come. For all these things we thank Thee and Thy only-begotten Son, and Thy Holy Spirit; for all the benefits that we know, and that we do not know, seen and unseen that are to come upon us.. We thank Thee also for this ministry which Thou hast condescended to receive from our hands, although there stand by Thee, thousand of Archangels, and myriads of Angels, the Cherubim, and the six-winged, many eyed, soaring with their wings Seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, soaring with their wings,*

Exclamation:

Priest: Singing the victory hymn, proclaiming, crying out, and saying:

People/Choir: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Sabaoth, the heaven and the earth is full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to God in the highest.**

## SACRAMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

Priest: *Together with these blessed Powers, O Lord, lover of men, we also proclaim and say: Holy art Thou, and Thine only-begotten Son, and Thy Holy Spirit. Holy art Thou, and all-Holy and sublime is Thy glory. Thou didst so love Thy world, as to give Thine only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Who came and fulfilled the divine plan for us. On the night when He was betrayed, or rather, when He gave Himself up for the life of the world, took bread into His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and giving thanks and blessing, sanctified, broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and Apostles saying:*

[Each time we pronounce these words of the prayer of thanksgiving we “accomplish” the remembrance of Christ, who “took bread” – and this means matter, the world, creation – “in His holy, pure, and blameless hands.” Everything created by God is called to become our partaking of the divine love, of the divine life.]

Exclamation:

Priest: Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

Priest: *Likewise also the cup, after the supper saying:*

*Drink ye all of this; this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.*

People/Choir: **Amen.**

Priest: *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, the second and glorious coming.*

*We offer to Thee these gifts from Thy own gifts in all and for all.*

People/Choir: **We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee, and we pray to Thee, Lord our God.**

[The people kneel and solemnly pray at this holiest moment, in which the consecration of these holy gifts, the bread and wine, is effected, except during Pentacost.]

[This *enumeration* in which the cross is not isolated from or contra posed from other events but constitutes with them an ascending series – is a commemoration of a single victory, gained in Christ by the kingdom of God of “this world.”

In antiquity, this moment in the liturgy was considered very holy and significant. In the sixth century, Emperor Justinian memorialized this phrase. (The two versions that I have read (ed.) state: 1) that this phrase, in Greek, “Thine own from Thine own” was engraved on the wall of Constantinople, and 2) The other version is that “Thine own from Thine own from Justinian and Theodora” was engraved on the Throne in Saint Sophia.) This offering to God of bread and wine, of the food that we must eat in order to live, is our offering to Him of ourselves, of our life, and of the whole world. The whole world has been created as food for man. To offer this food, this life, this world to God, is the initial “Eucharistic” function of man.]

## SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### EPIKLESIS

Priest: *Once again we offer to Thee this reasonable and bloodless worship, and we entreat, pray, and beseech Thee: send down Thy Holy Spirit and upon these gifts set before Thee. [This is the Epiklesis.]*

[One of the major doctrinal and liturgical differences between the East and the West is about the Holy Spirit's investment in the elements. With the Roman Catholics, though the Epiklesis was found until the end of the fifth century, there is now no invocation of the Holy Spirit to empower the elements to be the pure Body and precious Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the Orthodox Liturgy it is a brief prayer by the priest by which the celebrant invokes the Father to send His Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ. All of the ancient liturgies of the East attest to the use of the Epiklesis. For the Latins there is an institution, for the Orthodox there is a consecration. While rejecting the Latin doctrine, Orthodox theology confirms that the transformation is accomplished not through the words of institution but in the words of the Epiklesis as the consecration, the prayer of the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The Eucharist is not explained by that hackneyed but fundamentally blasphemous formula: "it is impossible to understand; it is only necessary to believe." For the Church, for the world, for mankind, there is no more important and urgent question than, "What is accomplished in the Eucharist?" For the Protestants, the identification of the Last Supper with the Eucharist and Golgotha led them to the general repudiation of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist as being incompatible with the doctrine of singularity, unrepeatability and sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, "once and for all." But for the Orthodox, through thanksgiving, the meaning of the Eucharist as the ascent of the Church to the heavenly altar, as the sacrament of the kingdom of God, is fulfilled. For the Orthodox, the Church ascends to the heavenly kingdom to partake of Christ at His table for His supper. The whole liturgy - with the sacraments of assembly, entrance, word, offering, and thanksgiving - is oriented to this ascent. His earthly sacrifice was done once, and only once, but we partake in heaven of Christ. The Latin doctrine of Transubstantiation asserts that the actual blood and body of Christ is in the elements, making this truly a re-creation of the sacrifice, and it is this, among other things, against which the Protestants revolted.]

The Priest and the Deacon, kneeling before the Holy Altar, pray in themselves, saying:

*O God, be appeased to me a sinner, and have mercy upon me.*

Deacon: [Showing the Holy Bread:] *Bless Master, the Holy Bread.*

Priest: [Arising, makes the sign of the cross over the bread, and says,] *Make this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ.*

Deacon: Amen. [Showing the Holy Chalice, says, Bless, Master the Holy Chalice.]

Priest: And that which is in this Chalice. The precious blood of Thy Christ.

Deacon: Amen. [And showing both the holies, says, Bless, master, both.]

Priest: Changing them by Thy Holy Spirit.

Deacon: Amen, Amen, Amen.

[Immediately after the Epiklesis, the priest begins reading the intercessory prayer, the preparation for Communion. This prayer gathers and unites the entire cosmic, ecclesiological, and eschatological content of the Eucharist, and manifests and grants to us the very essence of communion.

It is not from love of repetition, that we are not immediately summoned to approach the chalice, that we delay it by this wonderful prayer. The reason for this delay is not that we once again confess our sins and prepare ourselves for receiving the holy things, but rather that the Church may fulfill herself in all fullness as the sacrament of the kingdom, as the *reality* of the new time and the new life.

Here is the essence of this great, crowning prayer; here is the ultimate supplication of the Eucharist, united around the Lamb of God, in Christ – the entire spiritual world, beginning with the Theotokos and the saints and ending with *all – be all things to all men.*

This is what we are summoned to behold, to recognize, to perceive each time the Eucharist is celebrated. In this we must immerse our whole consciousness, all our love, all our *desire*, before approaching “our immortal King and God.”]

Priest: *So that they may be to those who partake of them for purification of souls, remission of sins, communion of Thy Holy Spirit, fulfillment of the kingdom of heaven, boldness to approach Thee, and not unto judgment nor condemnation. Again we also offer to Thee this spiritual worship for those who have departed in faith: Forefathers, Fathers, Patriarchs, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, Virgins, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith.*

Especially for our all-holy, pure, blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

[The Faithful stand.]

People/Choir: **It is indeed right to bless thee, who didst bear God, the ever-blessed and most pure, and mother of our God, more honorable than the Cherubim, and**

**incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, who without corruption didst bear God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.**

Priest: *For St. John the Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist; for the holy, glorious, and all famous Apostles (Sts...whose memory we also celebrate today), and for all Thy Saints, at whose supplications do Thou, O God, visit us. Remember also all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of a resurrection to eternal life (here the memorialized names are read again) and give them rest, our God, where dwells the light of Thy countenance. Again we pray Thee, Lord, remember all Orthodox Bishops who rightly teach the word of Thy Truth, all the Presbytery, all deacons in the service of Christ, and everyone in holy Orders. We also offer Thee this spiritual worship for the whole world, for the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and for all those that live a pure and holy life. 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.*

Exclamation:

Above all, O Lord, remember our Archbishop (name) and our Bishop (name): Grant that they may serve Thy holy Churches in peace. Keep them safe, honorable, and healthy for many years, rightly teaching the word of Thy Truth.

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

People/Choir: **And all Thy people.**

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

Exclamation:

Priest: And grant us that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and praise Thy most honorable and majestic name, of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages

People/Choir: **Amen.**

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Priest: [and blessing the people] The mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all.

People/Choir: **And with thy spirit.**

Deacon: Having remembered all the saints, again and again in peace, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: For the precious gifts which have been offered and sanctified, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: That our God, lover of men, may receive them on His holy, heavenly and spiritual Altar, as an offering of spiritual fragrance, may in return send down on us the divine grace, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Having prayed for the unity of the Faith and for the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

Priest: *We entrust to Thee, loving Master, our whole life and hope, and we ask, pray, and entreat: make us worthy to partake of Thy 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, inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, confidence before Thee, and not in judgment or condemnation.*

Exclamation:

Priest: And make us worthy, O lord, with confidence and without condemnation, to dare to call upon Thee, the heavenly God, FATHER and to say:

People: [Recite the Lord's Prayer, **Matthew 6:9**]

[This preparation for Communion is concluded in the unity of the common and the private: The *Lord's Prayer*, which was given to us by Christ Himself. For, in the last analysis, everything depends on one thing: can we, do we "earnestly desire," with our whole being and in spite of all our insufficiency, fallenness, betrayal and laziness, to receive the words of this prayer as our own, desire them as *our own*?:]

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father which 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 essential food (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 the evil One (evil);**

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages, amen.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

Priest: Peace be to all.

[*Peace* is the name of Christ himself, and this greeting with which the celebrant addresses the Church before each part of the Eucharistic ceremony, is each time a reminder that Christ “is in our midst,” that He Himself heads our Eucharist.]

Deacon: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

Priest: *We give thanks to Thee, invisible King, By Thy immeasurable power Thou created all things, and by Thy great mercy brought all things out of nothing into being. Master, look down from heaven upon those who have bowed their heads before Thee; for they have bowed not before flesh and blood, but before Thee 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.*

Priest: By the grace, mercies, and love of men of Thine only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages, amen.

## SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

### HOLY COMMUNION

[In our day, preparation for Communion has become a private preparation. Nowhere in the liturgy is found a single reference to the role of two categories of worshipers: communicants of the holy mysteries and the non-communicants. On the contrary, we all celebrate the Eucharist. In accordance with this discipline heterodox are not admitted to participation in the Orthodox Liturgy (the whole liturgy as the "Eucharist," not just Communion, because according to Orthodox doctrine "communion in the sacraments" presupposes unity in faith, on which in turn is founded and which expresses the unity of the Church. Thus, on the strength of this discipline, Orthodox are forbidden to take part in sacraments performed by heterodox. The weakening of this link has been due to the corrosive influence on Orthodox from scholastic theology.]

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

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

People/Choir: **One is Holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.  
Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia (3).**

### THE COMMUNION HYMN

People/Choir: **Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia (3).**

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

Deacon: Break, Master, the Holy Bread.

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

Deacon: Bless, Master, the hot water.

Priest: The fullness of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed is the fervor of Thy Saints, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

The warmth of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

People: [Communion Confession]

**I believe and confess that Thou are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. I also believe that this is Thy pure Body, and that this is Thy precious Blood. I therefore pray to Thee, have mercy on me and forgive my transgression, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown, and make me worthy without condemnation to partake of Thy pure mysteries, for the forgiveness of sins and for life everlasting. Amen**

**How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of Thy 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 Thy 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.**

**Receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker of Thy Mystical Supper. I will not reveal Thy Mystery to Thine adversaries, nor will I give Thee a kiss as did Judas, but as the thief I confess to Thee; Lord, remember me in Thy Kingdom.**

[This identification between what is accomplished *today* with what was accomplished *then* is *real*. For *today* we are gathered in the same kingdom, at the same table, where *then*, on that festal night, Christ was present among those whom **“he loved to the end.” John 13:1**]

(The priest prepares to receive Communion)

Priest: Brother and co-minister, forgive me the unworthy priest.  
O God, have pity on me a sinner.  
Behold, I draw near to Christ, our immortal King and God.

The precious and all-holy Body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is given to me (N) the unworthy priest, for the remission of my sins and for life everlasting. Amen.

Deacon, draw near.

Deacon: Behold, I draw near to Christ, our immortal King and God.  
Give to me, Master, the precious and all-holy Body of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins, and for life everlasting. Amen.

Priest: To thee is given the precious and holy and undefiled Body of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of thy sins and for life everlasting. Amen.

Priest: Again I draw near to Christ our immortal King and God.  
The precious and all-holy Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, is given to me (N) the unworthy priest for the remission of my sins and for life everlasting.

To the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages, Amen.

This has touched my lips and shall take away my transgressions and purge my sins.  
Deacon, again draw near.

Deacon: Again I draw near to Christ, our immortal King and God.  
Give me. O Master, the precious and all-holy Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins and for life everlasting.

Priest: Again, to thee the Deacon (N) is given the precious and all-holy blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ for the remission of thy sins and for life everlasting. Amen.  
This hath touched thy lips and shall take away thy transgression and purge thy sins.

Having seen the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, who alone is without sin. We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection. For Thou art our God. We know no other beside Thee, and we call upon Thy name. Come all ye faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ. For behold, through the Cross great joy hath come to the world.

Ever blessing the Lord, we praise His resurrection. For having suffered on the Cross, by His death He destroyed death.

(Shine, shine of new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. O Sion, exult now and rejoice, and thou O Virgin, Mother of God, rejoice for the resurrection of thy Son.)

(The priest takes the holy Cup, comes to the Royal Doors, raises it and says:)

Deacon: With the fear of God, faith and love, come forth.

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

(When administering Holy Communion, the priest says:)

Priest: The servant of God (Name) receives the Body and Blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

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

Priest: O God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

People/Choir: **We have seen the true light; we have received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the true Faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity hath saved us.**

(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:)

Priest: *Wash away, Lord, by Thy holy Blood, the sins of all those remembered through the intercessions of the Theotokos and all Thy saints. Amen.*

(He covers the vessels and censes them saying:)

*Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let Thy glory be over all the earth (3).*

(He lifts the vessels and says in a low voice:)

*Blessed is our God.*

Priest: Always, now and for ever, and unto the ages of ages,

People/Choir: **Amen.**

People/Choir: **Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise, Lord, that we may sing of Thy glory. Thou have made us worthy to partake of Thine holy mysteries. Keep us in Thy holiness, that all the day long we may meditate upon Thy righteousness. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia**

### THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Deacon: Let us be attentive. Having received the divine, holy, pure, immortal, heavenly, life-giving and awesome mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks unto the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

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

People/Choir: **To Thee, O Lord.**

Priest: *We thank Thee, Master, lover of men. Benefactor of our souls, that on this day Thou hast made us worthy once again of Thy heavenly and immortal Mysteries. Direct our ways in the right path, establish us firmly in Thy 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 Thy Saints.*

Exclamation:

Priest: For Thou are our sanctification, and to Thee do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages,

People/Choir: **Amen.**

### THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Let us depart in peace.

Deacon: Let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: O Lord, bless those who praise Thee, and sanctify those who put their trust in Thee. Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Protect the whole body of Thy Church. Sanctify those that love the beauty of Thy House. Do Thou in return glorify them by Thy

divine power, and do not forsake us who hope in Thee. Grant peace to Thy world, to Thy Churches, to the clergy, to those in public service, to the armed forces, and to all Thy people; for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming from Thee, the Father of lights; and to Thee we ascribe glory, thanksgiving, and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

**Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth and to all ages. (3)**

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

Priest: *Christ our God, Thou art the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophet. Thou hast fulfilled all the dispensation of the Father. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, always, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages, amen.*

Deacon: Let us beseech the Lord.

People/Choir: **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 of men, always, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

Priest: Glory to Thee, Christ our God, our hope, glory to Thee.

May Christ our true God (who rose from the dead), have, as a good, loving and merciful God, mercy upon us, and save us, through the intercession of His pure and holy Mother; the power of the gracious and life-giving Cross; the protections of the honorable, bodiless powers of heaven, the supplications of the honorable, glorious prophet, Forerunner and John the Baptist; holy, glorious, and praiseworthy Apostles, the holy, glorious, and triumphant Martyrs; our venerable and God-bearing Fathers (Name of the church); the holy and righteous ancestors, Joackim and Anna, of Saint (N's) whose memory we commemorate, and of all the Saints, and save us as Thou art good and a lover of men, and a merciful God.

People/Choir: **Amen.**

People/Choir: **Guard, O Lord, and give long life to him who is blessing and sanctifying us.**

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

People/Choir: **Amen.**

(Priest blessing the people)

Priest:            May the holy Trinity protect all of you.

(Distributing the antidoron, the priest says:)

May the blessing and the mercy of the Lord be with you.

[We depart into life, in order to witness and to fulfill our calling. Each has his own, but it is also our common ministry, common liturgy – “in the communion of the Holy Spirit.”

“...<sup>1</sup>Lord, it is good for us to be here...” Matthew 17: 4]

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