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PART 2
THE DIVINE LITURGY

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INTRODUCTION

“Thou shalt make two cherubim of hammered gold, at the two ends of the mercy seat...Moreover, thou shalt form the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely woven linen, blue and purple and scarlet: thou shalt weave them with cherubim of fine craftsmanship” (Ex.25:18; 26:1)

When God caused Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, He commanded that the walls of the temple be covered with inwoven ikons of cherubim, and that hammered metal ikons of the cherubim be placed on either end of the Ark of the Covenant, overshadowing the “mercy seat” on the ark. Why was this done? Precisely to reveal to the Hebrews that, in the tabernacle, heaven had truly come down to earth, that God Himself would commune and fellowship with His people in the tabernacle (Ex.25:22). The ikons of the heavenly beings proclaimed that heaven was, in a manner, revealed by the tabernacle, and that the rule and reign of God was manifested in the holy place.

It is for just this reason that the walls of Orthodox Christian churches are covered with ikons of those who have been fully glorified and become partakers of the rule and reign of God (the “kingdom” of heaven). When we enter an Orthodox church and see the ikons of the saints and angels on the walls, we receive exactly the same message the priests received when they entered the tabernacle in the wilderness: here, God has manifested Himself. Here, heaven has truly come down to earth, for God, Who is always with us, Who is “everywhere present,” has uniquely manifested Himself in His Church. He has thus revealed to us that that “heaven” which we hope on and for which we strive is not some geographical location beyond the horizon of our universe; rather it is to be found whenever the rule and reign of God is freely accepted
and fully manifested. In the church, in the Divine Liturgy, the
reign and rule of God are manifested, and He especially
communes and fellowships with us in the mutual worship and
Mystery of Holy Communion. It is important for us to have
this understanding of the ikons which God commanded for His
tabernacle when He gave the law of His “Old Testament,” and
which the Holy Spirit has revealed to His “New Testament”
Church, if we are to fully understand the Cycle of Divine
Services and the Liturgy.
PART 1
THE CYCLE OF DIVINE SERVICES

I.
INTRODUCTION:

"I prefer five words spoken with understanding, that I might instruct others, rather than ten thousand words in another language" (1Cor.14:19).

The divine services have been translated into every major language on earth, and many of the minor ones. There are many translations of them into both common and classical English. Having the divine services in a language one can read fluently does not, however, mean that one will automatically understand them. Simply understanding the words does not mean that one understands the meaning. The divine services are (especially the Liturgy) God's word. When they are celebrated by the faithful, the Holy Spirit is in the midst of the congregation; the heavenly powers join the faithful on earth and altogether, they come before the throne of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to glorify Him and receive the grace and great holy mysteries which He has promised us. Comprehension of this, and participating in it, requires more than merely understanding the words.

The study of the structure of Orthodox divine services is not a mere technical course teaching seminarians how to organize given services. It is a spiritual examination
of the inner flow, the pulse and heartbeat of the Church —
the Body of Christ on earth. It should bring us to an un-
derstanding of the very essence of the Gospel, for the
rhythm and content of the cycles of divine services is that of
the Gospel itself; it is the rhythm of the Heavenly Kingdom
itself, the expression of the harmony and unity which come
with the manifestation of the reign and rule of God.¹

Our lives flow in rhythms and cycles. Indeed, all of
nature is set to rhythms and cycles, from the life cycle of
individuals to the circle of the seasons, the rotations and
revolutions of solar systems. The whole universe is alive
with rhythm and motion, from the largest star to the
smallest quark and lepton. There are no inanimate objects in
our universe. Every stone, every block of wood, every shard
of pottery is alive with motion and interaction. From the
very beginning, the vitality of what we call "lifeless
elements" has been profoundly creative. Within everything
that exists, deep within beyond human eyes, no matter how
inanimate the object appears, there is a microcosm of the
universe. Within the atoms of every material object, sub-
atomic particles race in orbits which, though stochastic, are
kept bound together by the forces of nature. There are
cycles, rhythms and, at it were, pulse in the energy waves of
which fill a bar of iron, a stone along a garden path and even
the bench in the garden.

Man himself is not separate from this pattern of the
universe. Heartbeat, pulse, brainwaves; the individual is a
living system of rhythms and cycles.

The Orthodox Church is a living organism, and also

¹ The Greek expression rendered into English as "kingdom of God," is misunderstood. The
correct rendering would be "rule and reign of God," and it must be understood spiritually.
The reason many rulers of the Jews rejected Christ is because they misunderstood the
"kingdom" to be a worldly dominion and physical kingdom. The rule and reign of God is a
manifestation of Divine Love and not a manifestation of worldly power with geographical
boundaries, or even with a "spiritual geography" as is sometimes imagined. This is why the
"kingdom of God" can be within you if you allow the will of God to reign in your heart.
has its own rhythm of life. Since the Church is the Body of Christ, its rhythms and cycles are geared to the life of Christ and designed to bring spiritual harmony to all creation, for the whole universe is being redeemed together with man, as Apostle Paul says (Rm.8:18-24).

The "worldly system" around us also has its special rhythms of life and these, in turn, affect the rhythms and cycles of our own individual bodies and lives. The hierarchical and divinely inspired rhythms and cycles of the Church are quite different than those of the materialistic, passionate, often chaotic and disjointed flow of "worldly" systems and popular music.

If we are to be one with Christ, participants in Him and in the redemption which He has offered us — truly united with His Body, the Orthodox Church — then our lives must be in tune with His. The orderly procession and rhythm of the cycle of Orthodox divine services is designed to bring us into such a condition. It is designed to re-orient our lives, to root out and replace the worldly, passionate rhythms which penetrate us and lead our minds, souls, and bodies captive to their concepts and cycles of life. The rhythms and cycles of Orthodox Church life are designed to transform us so that our lives move like the ticking of a clock which is geared to the life of Christ, synchronized with the life of the heavenly kingdom.

It is clear that the "world" has its own system, which is quite different from the teachings of Christ. The things of this world; the passions, ideals, desires, and goals of this world, all work together to enslave mankind, and man has truly become enslaved. Satan accomplishes this both individually and collectively by creating a spiritual void in the life of mankind, and then convincing him that this void can be filled by material possessions, shallow, often emotionally destructive entertainments, foods and discordant, pulsating
rhythms which negatively effect the rhythms of body, mind, and soul, instilling carnal agitations, chaos and a selfish and irrational expectation of instant gratification. This is the worship of the "prince of this world" (Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and its liturgical cycle is served daily on television, its litanies are chanted on radio, on records, from stages and podiums. The ikonography of this worship of "the prince of this world" is portrayed on billboards and in a constant flow of commercials and advertisements. This is the cycle of life which breeds avarice, malice, crime, violence, war and stunning inhumanities.

The liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church is diametrically opposite to this. It is filled with a spirit of love, peace, inner joy, and universal harmony. It flows with a spirit of transfiguration, resurrection, new life, and blessed eternity. It is a path of liberation from the bondage of passions and death. Yet even within our Orthodox parishes today, this wondrous, divinely inspired cycle is not merely misunderstood, but often completely unknown. As a consequence, by ignoring the Orthodox cycle of divine services, or even worse, treating it with contempt, many are simply yielding in the face of battle, surrendering our people to false and destructive concepts of life and to fraudulent spiritualities. Whole heretical concepts are being introduced (often because of ignorance) and replacing Orthodox Christian worship.

We hope, in this course, to make you aware of the richness, beauty, and total necessity of the liturgical cycle, and of the reasonableness, usefulness, and spiritual vitality of the structure of the Orthodox divine services, their rhythms and cycles.
II.
THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE DIVINE SERVICES

The life of the Church, and of each of its members, is set in logical cycles, each one an expansion of the preceding one. These cycles seek to pull us away from the fallen world and toward Christ, to bring the rhythms of our life into harmony with the Gospel and the life of Christ.

The cycles are ordered into:

1. the daily cycle,
2. the weekly cycle,
3. the monthly cycle (or "menaeon"),
4. the yearly cycle (or "paschalion").

There are two parts to each divine service within these cycles: (1) the fixed order of the service, and (2) a series of special hymns which follow a set sequence in the regular services.

The fixed order of these services is designed to lead us in our prayer life and give us spiritual guidance, while the rotating series of special hymns, constitutes a beautiful and rich system of sermons and "Bible study" which provide the faithful with an understanding of the Gospel and lead them to spiritual growth and development.

If we look at the basic structure of the daily divine services first, we will be able to understand the discussion of the liturgical cycle better. The daily cycle contains all the

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2. These special hymns have complex sounding names such as "Troparion," "Kondakion," "Sedalion," etc. It is not in the scope of this present booklet to discuss the meanings these names and their specific place in the services. However, we will cover this in a work specifically on the Typikon, and attempt to make the structure and variations in the divine services simple and easy to follow.
basic order of services. All the other cycles are built up on this daily cycle.

The first part of each service is the fixed order of the Service, which establishes the special meaning and significance of that particular service. Each service has a specific place and meaning in the cycle, which is designed to bring us into the life of Christ, and give us a fuller understanding of His gospel.

The second part of each service, the changeable portion, which is made up of those special hymns we spoke of earlier, which follow a special sequence throughout the year. As we chant and read a service, vespers for example, we come to certain places in the service where there are instructions telling us to insert various special hymns, psalms, or readings. These special inserted hymns and readings are actually "sermons" and teachings which instruct us in the Orthodox faith, provide "Bible study" for us and preach the message of Christ and our redemption. These sermon-hymns are mostly in the form of poetic odes written about the feast or event being celebrated on that day, preferably sung by the whole congregation. The chanting of such sermons and spiritual instruction in a rotating series helps to deeply penetrate the souls of the faithful with a clear understanding of the Gospel message and the doctrines of the Holy Church. Even the most lofty theological concepts will penetrate a person's soul and help form his consciousness if they are chanted regularly in a logical, rotating cycle. The Church has, therefore, used great wisdom, foresight and a profound understanding of human nature and the human mind in constructing its cycles of services. As we study these "sequences" in this course, we will come to understand their

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3. This method is quite effective, and the same principles are applied by television and radio commercials to penetrate their message into the sub-conscious of listeners, and Satan uses certain forms of popular music to great effect for the same goal.
spiritual richness and great importance to us.

Now, let us look at the cycles of services. From the daily cycle we discover the meaning and spiritual significance of each service as revealed in the fixed "order of the service".

III.
THE CYCLES OF DIVINE SERVICES

1. Daily Cycle:
   (The "foundation" of the typikon)

   The "daily cycle" of services is the basic organization of the whole liturgical year. It contains all the basic divine services that we use in church. The order of these services is arranged so that we follow the life of Christ and His work with mankind through each day, each week and each year.

   "And it was evening and it was morning, one day" (Gn.1:5).

   The Church day begins at sunset rather than at midnight because in the creation narrative in Genesis, for each day of creation it is said, "and it was evening and it was morning." From one sunset to the next, an orderly procession of divine services flows. This is called the "daily cycle," and it consists of vespers, compline, the midnight hour, matins, the first, third, sixth and ninth hours, the typika and/or Liturgy.

   Our Saviour commanded us to "keep watch and pray lest you fall into temptation" (Mt.26:41), and because we do not know at what hour the Son of man will return. In keeping with this commandment, the Holy Church has divided the Orthodox Christian day into a cycle of
"watches" and "hours". In early times, a watchman was set on the city walls to keep vigil and at given hours, he would call out the time and the phrase, "all is well," or if there was trouble, sound the alarm. In the same way, the Church has set each of us as a watch or guard over our own hearts and minds and our salvation, and over the welfare of our brethren. Our Saviour said: "Keep watch, therefore, for you do not know when the Master will come: at evening or at midnight, or at dawn or in the midday...And what I say to you, I say to all: `Watch!'" (Mk.13:35-37). In obedience, the Orthodox Christian Church day is divided into "watches," set at evening, night, dawn and midday. This is the basis of the Orthodox cycle of services we have been speaking about. The Church has provided us with special prayers and services for each of these "watches."

During the time of our Saviour's ministry on earth, the Romans had divided the day into two twelve hour parts. They divided the day into four "watches," and the night into four "watches." These "watches" are all mentioned in the Scripture, and the Holy Church follows them in her daily cycle of prayer and divine services.

The "watches" of the daily cycle are divided as follows:

4. Our own Canadian Forces still use this system of "watches," as does the British and American military, for setting guards and security watches on ships and military bases.
NIGHT WATCHES

"My soul shall be satisfied...when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. Thou has been my help; in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Ps.62:5-6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name given to the watch in Scripture</th>
<th>Name given in the Church cycle:</th>
<th>Hour of the night in Christ's time</th>
<th>Hour of the night in modern time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evening watch (Mk.11:19)</td>
<td>Vespers</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>6-9 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight (Mt.25:6)</td>
<td>Compline</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>9-12 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockcrow* (Mt.26:34)</td>
<td>Midnight hour (Nocturns)</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>12-3 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Watch (Mt.14:25)</td>
<td>Matins</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>3-6 A.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, before cockcrow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' There is a seeming conflict in Scripture as to whether Jesus told Peter he would deny Him three times before the cock crows and the version that Peter would deny him before the cock crows three times. It is most likely that Jesus said, "Thou shalt deny me thrice before cockcrow," referring to the third watch of the night, which was called cockcrow, because it ended at the time roosters began to crow in the morning.
DAY WATCHES

"From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name given to the watch in scripture</th>
<th>Name given in the Church cycle:</th>
<th>Hour of the day in Christ's time</th>
<th>Hour of the day in modern time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Watch (Ps.129:5)</td>
<td>1st Hour; Typika Liturgy</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>6-9 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Hour (Mt.20:3; Mk.15:25)</td>
<td>The Third Hour</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>9-12 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Hour (Lk.23:44-45)</td>
<td>The Sixth Hour</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>12-3 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth Hour (Mk.15:33-39)</td>
<td>The Ninth Hour</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>3-6 P.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the basic order of the Orthodox Christian prayer day and liturgical cycle. As we will learn, it can vary on certain feast days in lenten periods when there are exceptionally long services and additional "sequence" material such as the lengthy lamentations on Great Holy Friday or an all-night vigil, or when the "Royal Hours" are read.  

Each of these services has a specific meaning and purpose in drawing us into a constant remembrance of Christ and His saving acts, of the movement of God in history, the present and the future.

The numbered hours of the cycle follow the hours of the trial and crucifixion of our Saviour. Let us now look at the spiritual and theological meaning of the hours of the Daily Cycle.

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5. These variations do not impede the concept of the normal cycle, rather they intensify the spiritual concentration at times when we need to be more focused on the events.
THE FIRST HOUR (7:00AM TO 9:00AM)

"When the morning had come, the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel and decided to put Jesus to death." "It was early morning, and they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment." (Mt.27:1; Jn.19:28).

In the morning watch, the first watch of the day, Jesus was arrested and brought before the priests and rulers of the Jews.

God so loved the world that He sent His Only-begotten Son as a light and salvation to the world. Though God gave them miracles and called on their faith in the prophecies which were entrusted to them, they rendered him malice instead of faith, hatred in place of love, lies and false accusations in place of the prophecies.

The Holy Church instituted the **First Hour** prayer watch in order to remind Her children what our Saviour Jesus Christ endured for our sake: slander, humiliation, the hatred and malice of those whom He loved and called sons and brethren. Finally, He endured the heartbreaking rejection by His own chosen people. All this took place in the first watch of the day. This betrayal took place precisely because the Jews had entered fully into the worldly cycle and rhythm of life and could no longer perceive or be governed by those of God.

Through the service of the First Hour, the Holy Church seeks to call Her children to turn from the worldly cycle of life and seek the heavenly, asking for grace and help from God to fulfil their daily work in faith and free of spiritual corruption. As the psalm says, "Man goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening, O Lord, how
manifold are Thy works, Thou hast made them all in wisdom” (Ps.103:23-24).

This service has been in the cycle at least since the 4th century.

**THE THIRD HOUR (10:00AM - 12:00AM)**

"It was the third hour when they crucified Him" (Mark 15:25).

In the watch of the third hour, our Saviour was brought before the idolatrous representatives of worldly power and corruption and subjected to the judgments of that "world" which He would overcome. He was subject to cruel mockery, scourging, the crown of thorns and condemnation by that fallen world which stands in opposition to the world as God created it. The Prince of Peace is condemned by the lovers of war and slaughter. He who came to liberate mankind from eternal bondage is condemned and bound by those who love conquest and slavery. The meek and gentle One is cursed and mocked by the proud and haughty.

At the Third Hour, Pilate pronounces sentence upon his own Creator, and the Son of God is led away bearing our reproach and sinfulness — His heart is enlarged by love to encompass all humanity, past and future unto all generations, and to bestow righteousness upon us through faith.

The service of the Third Hour is very ancient in the Orthodox Church. It was kept in apostolic times also because the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples at the third hour of the day.
THE SIXTH HOUR (1:00PM - 3:00PM)

"At the Sixth Hour, there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was torn in two" (Lk.23:44-45).

In the Sixth Hour, we commemorate the life-giving sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross. We pray for strength and grace from God so that our souls will not fall into darkness by turning away from our Saviour, but rather that the veil of sin over our hearts will be parted so that we may receive the light of His Resurrection.

At the Sixth Hour, the thief turned to Christ and repented, crying out, "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Let us also, at this watch of the day, remember our Saviour's suffering for our sakes and turn from our daily sins to Christ, crying out, "Lord, as Thou didst hear the cry of the wise thief on the Cross, so also hear the voice of me, Thine unworthy servant and accept me, too, into Thy kingdom."

THE NINTH HOUR (4:00PM - 6:00PM)

"And at about the Ninth Hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the spirit...and when the centurion who was near Him heard Him cry out and give up the spirit, he said, "This man truly was the Son of God" (Mk.15:34-38).

The closing prayer of the service of the Ninth Hour explains its meaning and significance:

"O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who is longsuffering in the face of our transgressions, and Who has

15
brought us to this present hour in which Thou didst hang upon the life-giving tree, and by death destroyed death: be gracious toward us sinners, Thine unworthy servants. For, we have sinned and committed iniquity and are not worthy to lift up our eyes and behold the height of heaven since we have turned from the way of Thy righteousness and followed the lusts of our hearts..." (Ninth Hour Prayer of St. Basil the Great).

VESPERS.

The Evening Watch (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM)

"And it was evening and it was morning one day" (Gn.1:5)

For the Orthodox Church, vespers is not the end of the day, but the beginning of the liturgical day, as it was in the creation of the world for, "It was evening and it was morning one day" (Gn.1:5).

Thus, the vespers service is a daily commemoration of the loving creation of the world by the Word Himself, Who, with that same boundless love would come in the latter times to redeem and save His creation. It is for just this reason the vespers service begins with the "Creation Psalm" (Psalm 103) which glorifies the wisdom of God in the creation itself.

It is said that creation took place in six aeons, called "days" in Scripture. Yet, there are eight days of creation. Creation began, as Scripture says on "one day," but the end of the creation cycle is not the sixth day, but Holy Pascha. In Scripture we are told that God finished His creation on the sixth day, and on the seventh day, He "rested from creating." Thus from the sixth day until the coming of Christ was the

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6. Some translators wanted to correct Scripture by translating "the first day" but this is not correct.
"seventh day", and when it says that God rested on the "seventh day" this is a prophecy which foretells the repose of Christ in the tomb on "the Sabbath", bringing to a close the seventh creational day, that in His resurrection we might see the dawn of the eighth, eternal day. The repose of Christ in the tomb was the vespers (eve) of this eighth day of Creation – this "day of redemption."

The day of redemption is the eighth and final day of the creation cycle. The seventh day was a type of the Sabbath, on which, because of the fall, all mankind must rest in the grave at the end of the days of their labours on earth. But we live already in the light of the eighth, everlasting day, which we shall inherit fully in our resurrection. The dawn of this new, eternal day shone upon those in Hades on the day of Christ’s bodily Sabbath, when He Who is the Eternal light Himself enlightened them. And it dawned upon the world when Christ came forth from the tomb in the radiance of His divine glory. When it is fully dawned, it will be seen that Christ Himself is the Sun which gives light to this eighth, eternal day.

This is the core of the meaning of the vespers service: God created all things in love. He poured forth the grace of His Holy Spirit on His creation, and established paradise as a home and church for His children. Since, however, His children fell away from Him and departed, falling into bondage and slavery, He prepared them for the redemption and restoration to His paradise. In the fulness of time, He

7. There is a seeming contradiction in Scripture as to whether Christ was to remain in the tomb for three days, or to be placed in the tomb until the third day. Was He to rise on the third day, or after the third day? This question misses the entire point: that Christ was to fulfil the Sabbath in the tomb, because mankind must "Sabbath" in the tomb as a result of the power of death though sin. What was necessary was for Christ to be in the tomb for a complete Sabbath day. Christ brought the Sabbath - the seventh day - to an end, and His rising from the tomb dawned forth the eighth day of Creation - that is, the day of Redemption. In six days He created. On the seventh day, he prepared mankind and on the eighth day, He redeems.
came to earth to co-suffer with mankind and redeem him.

In order to understand the divine services and the liturgical cycle, it is important to realize that the sanctuary of the Church is a revelation of Paradise. The royal gates are a type of the gates of paradise.

At the beginning of great vespers, the royal gates are opened and the priest begins to cense the sanctuary and the entire church, and the people. During this censing, the Creation Psalm is chanted. "In wisdom hast Thou made them all...". The incense, coming forth as it were from paradise, proclaims that in the beginning, God created all things and sent forth, as a sweet fragrance, the grace of His Holy Spirit upon all things, filling the earth with beauty and the richness of His love.

As soon as the censing is complete, the royal gates are closed, for mankind, through pride separated himself from God and lost paradise, carrying his corruption out into the whole world. Thus, the Royal gates are closed, just as the gates of paradise were closed against Adam and Eve. Now, the priest comes out of the sanctuary and stands bareheaded before the closed gates, reading the "lamp lighting prayers". He is a type of all mankind, fallen and standing outside of the gates of Paradise, "in the outer darkness", seeking reconciliation and re-entry.

After the Litany, the psalms of the kathisma speak of man's condition and of his hope on the promised redemption.

In the singing of the "Lord I have cried unto Thee," we make a cry from the heart of all humanity, seeking forgiveness, reconciliation, comfort and hope. "Let my prayer rise before Thee as incense, and the lifting of my

8. The prayers are called "lamp lighting prayers" because they are read in the evening at a time when lamps are lit because of the evening darkness. The symbolism of this is obvious enough.
hands as an evening sacrifice", since, according to Prophet Ezra, sincere prayer from a pure heart is the "true evening sacrifice" (9:5).

During the singing of the "Lord I have cried", beginning with the words "Let my prayer rise as incense before Thee...", the priest begins to cense the church again, but this time, the royal gates remain closed. The incense proclaims the sweetness of God’s promise and fills the air with that sure hope which is in Christ Jesus our Lord – that hope of redemption and of our return to paradise. The beautiful and touching stichera inserted in the verses of the "Lord I have cried", particularly those of the eight resurrection tones, reveal to us the path of salvation in Jesus Christ. They fill our hearts with joy and hope and send us toward matins, in which His Resurrection is proclaimed, and the Divine Liturgy, in which we both celebrate and receive the glorious Resurrection of Christ and all that it bestows upon us.

At the end of the "Lord I have cried", the royal gates are opened, and the priest enters the sanctuary through them, bearing the censer, as we chant the "Joyous Light". In this, he proclaims that God truly does receive our prayers; that they do rise before Him as incense. Our prayers are our own forerunners into Paradise; our repentance and contrition of heart go before us. Prayer is not merely a formula, not an incantation. It is a lifeline between us and our Saviour, by means of which we draw ourselves ever closer to Him. The royal gates are opened for this entrance to proclaim that He receives these prayers, and that the gates of paradise are to be opened to us once more, opened by Christ, the glorious Light of the World. Therefore, at this entrance we chant the anthem:

\[19\]
O joyous light of the holy glory, of the immortal, heavenly, holy blessed Father; O Jesus Christ, we who come to the setting of the sun, when we behold the evening light praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with gladsome voices. O Son of God, Giver of life. Wherefore the world doth glorify Thee.

Thus we go forth toward the end of vespers filled with joy and anticipation, comforted in the love which God had poured upon us.

In vespers, we have recalled the creation, which was a great outpouring of God’s love. We have called to mind the fall from paradise and encouraged our souls toward repentance. And we have filled our hearts with joy and hope at the second great outpouring of God’s love, when He sent His Son into the world to restore that which He had created and redeem that which had fallen away from Him.

COMPLINE
(The Night Watch: 10:00PM - 12:00PM)

"Stand in awe and sin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be at peace. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord...Thou hast put joy in my heart...I will lie down in peace and sleep: for Thou, O Lord, makest me to dwell in safety" (Ps.4).

The Compline service, together with the prayers before going to bed, is read after supper, and in Slavonic it is called "povecheria," literally, "aftersupper." In it, we recall that sleep is an image of death. Compline has three parts: in

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the first, we thank God for His help during the day, we lament our sinful falls and ask God’s help to face our inevitable repose from this life in peace and repentance. Second, we pray for help to pass through the sleep of this present night free of sin and passions. Finally, we pray for our neighbours and those who are in authority in the Church, those who are travelling, those who are in prisons or grievous circumstances, and for all Orthodox Christians everywhere.

"Let not the sun go down on your wrath," but rather, "Let all bitterness, wrath and anger be put away from you" (Eph.4:26,31).

In the monastery, compline is a time of forgiveness, and seeking forgiveness. During the service, we diligently search our hearts to discern what sins we have committed against one another during the previous day, to ferret out any malice, grudges or wrath that may be lurking in us, waiting for Satan to take occasion by them to injure our souls. Having thus weighed our own souls, we are able with sincerity of heart to ask one another's forgiveness at the end of the service, and to give our forgiveness to each other. To the best of our ability, we strive to extend this repentance and forgiveness to those not present. Since sleep is an image of death, we do not wish to fall asleep, burdened with the passions of wrath and malice, just as we do not wish to die with such sins on our souls. Thus, compline should be for all believers a time of repentance of sins against neighbours, and a time to seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

Compline, which is often followed immediately by the reading of the "prayers before going to bed", is a reminder of our own mortality and calls us to our senses,
teaching us to repent and correct our lives so that we can face death and the judgment in peaceful hope. This is clearly seen in the "prayer before sleep" which is read in the bedtime prayers at the end of Compline:

"O man-befriending Lord, is this bed to be my coffin, or wilt Thou enlighten my soul with another day. Here, the coffin lies before me and death confronts me..." and finally, just as we lie down to sleep, "Into Thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ my God, I commit my soul and body; bless me, save me and grant me eternal life."

This is a reality which faces all mankind: the end of our lives on earth. The foolish attempt to hide from it, and neglect to call it to mind and prepare for it. In so doing, they place their hope mainly in this life and material things. The wise person calls it to mind and prepares for it in love and faith, full of hope in the mercy of God who receives our repentance and the love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has conquered death for those who follow Him in faith; "For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him there is plenteous redemption" (Ps.129:7).

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR
(Nocturns: 12 Midnight - 3:00AM)

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching; but unworthy is he whom He shall find heedless..." (Troparion, Tone 8).

The services of the Midnight Hour comes to us directly from the holy apostles, who carefully and fearfully remembered how they slept in the garden and could not "watch and pray" with the Saviour for even one hour.
Harkening to the Saviour's warnings, they passed His injunctions on to all:

"Be ready, for the Son of Man will come in an hour which you do not expect", "Watch, therefore, for you do not know either the day or the hour in which the Son of Man will come", "Watch, therefore, and pray constantly, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things...and to stand before the Son of Man", for, "Behold, I shall come as a thief in the night. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments about him" (Mt.24:42; Lk.21:36; Rev.16:15).

The Midnight Hour, therefore, is a constant anticipation of the Second Coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ and the dread judgment which, according to the Gospel, will take place suddenly in the night when the careless and unfaithful least expect it. This service calls us to an awareness and preparation for this inescapable event so that we "may not be given over to death and shut out of the kingdom", but "meditating on that awesome day, watch, keeping your vigil lamp lighted and filled with oil..." (Prayer of the hour).

**MATINS**
(The Dawn Watch: 4:00AM - 6:00AM)

"O God, my God, I rise unto Thee early at dawn. My soul has thirsted for Thee....So in the sanctuary I have come before Thee to see Thy power and Thy glory...." (Ps.62).

At vespers, we anticipated with holy expectation, the fulfilment of the prophecies and the coming of our redemption. We heard it foretold in psalms and proclaimed in the verses for the "Lord I have cried" and the "aposticha."
Through the night, our souls kept vigil, filling our lamps of faith with the oil of prayer. Now, we have come to the morning watch. Twilight has not yet broken the velvet blackness of the sky as our souls follow the cautious figures of a group of women moving toward the garden. It is night and we have slept in the image of death, as our Saviour’s Body also slept in the tomb. As we spiritually move toward the tomb in the pre-dawn darkness, the lights in the church are off; only a candle burns in the centre, and a few on the sides, as the reader begins to intone the six-psalms with compunction.

As we come half of the way — halfway to the tomb and halfway through the six psalms, the priest comes out of the sanctuary, bareheaded and stands before the closed royal doors, praying; the tomb is still closed, for Christ rose leaving the tomb sealed. As we approach, the angels suddenly cast away the stone in a burst of light and the soldiers fall to the ground in shock. The tomb has been opened so that we may perceive the awesome mystery.

The six psalms lead us step by step to the tomb, our souls trembling in the face of death, hoping in the promise and finally, rejoicing in the discovery:

"O Lord, why are those who afflict me increased? Many rise up against me. Many say to my soul, ‘there is no salvation for him in his God’.

"O Lord, do not rebuke me in anger or chasten me in wrath."

"O God, my God, I rise early at dawn. My soul has thirsted for Thee."

"O Lord God of my salvation, by day and night I have cried before Thee."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name."
"O Lord, hear my prayer, give ear to my supplication."

We will come to the tomb and like the myrrh-bearing women, we will find it opened. The priest, like the angel in the garden, will proclaim, "In peace, let us pray to the Lord..." and then, "God is the Lord and has appeared unto us. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...This is the stone which the builders rejected. It has become the head cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Matins is the end of the night watch, the waking from sleep. As sleep is a type of death, so waking is a type of resurrection, as St Ephraim the Syrian says, "How like is death to sleep and the Resurrection to the morning!" Matins is a resurrection service. In the Sunday matins, we read the "Resurrection Gospel", and near the end of the service, we chant the Great Doxology, "Glory to Thee Who has shown us the light...." Having come to the tomb and beheld the Resurrection of Christ proclaimed in the Gospel reading, we chant, "Let us who have beheld the Resurrection of Christ, worship our holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and we hymn and glorify Thy holy Resurrection...."

Matins celebrates the victory of Christ over death and sends us on toward the feast of the Divine Liturgy with joy, so that there, we may receive the fruits of that victory, that we may participate fully in the risen Christ and the new life He has bestowed upon us.

2. THE "SEQUENCE" PLAN

The daily cycle as described above is used for all occasions throughout the year and all the other cycles are built upon it largely by the insertion of the "sequence"
material appropriate to each larger cycle. These basic daily services are divided into two parts, which we have already discussed: the regular Order of Service, used every day, and a special sequence of hymns which are inserted into these regular services. These hymns differ on each day of the week, on each Sunday and on the various feastdays. These hymns follow a set plan, corresponding to the liturgical cycle of the day, week, and year. We discussed the "Order of Service" and the "sequences" in Part II above, but it will be well to refresh our memories about them at this point.

The special sequence of hymns consists in a series of chanted or sung "poetic sermonettes" which follow the life of Christ and His Church through each week and each year. They provide us with a beautiful Bible study programme, worked into the vespers, matins and other services, and lead us into a greater understanding of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His life and work among mankind. If you will look at the vespers and matins services, you will notice those places where the special hymns are to be added. For example, there is a space marked for such hymns to be inserted between the last several verses of the psalm, "Lord I have Cried," in vespers.

The Sequence hymns are inserted into the appropriate places in the daily services in order to lead the faithful in a regular procession through the whole New Testament: the Gospel, the apostles, and the life and work of Christ in His Church and with His people from the creation to His Incarnation, to the present and into the future. These hymns also teach us much about the history of the Church and its greatest leaders, up to our present day. The plan of the Sequence material is (basically) divided into three parts. There are special hymns for (a) the Paschal Cycle, (b) the Menaion or "Cycle of Months" and, (c) the Weekly Cycle.
(a) THE PASCHAL CYCLE

The theme of this cycle is the direct message of the redemption of the fallen human nature and the salvation of mankind.

The Paschal cycle includes all the movable feasts and fasts of the year. It counts its days, not by the dates of the calendar, but by the Sundays from one Pascha to the next. Its purpose is to help centre our lives on Pascha, on the Resurrection of Christ and the redemption of mankind. The "sequence" material in the Paschal cycle provides verses, readings and hymns (the special sung "sermons and Bible study verses") for each movable feast and fast period. The cycle of Gospel and Apostle readings is set by the Paschal cycle, beginning on the first Sunday after the end of the Pentecost season. The Sundays of the year are numbered in order beginning with this Sunday and the rotation of the eight tones also begins on this day. Since every Sunday is a "small Pascha," a celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, the Sunday sequence material is governed by the date of Pascha itself.

(b) THE MENAION (CYCLE OF MONTHS)

The theme of this cycle is (1) the life of Christ, not only during His earthly sojourn, but His continued presence in the unfolding life of His Church and (2) the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination and sanctification of the faithful, epitomised in the saints.

The menaion comprises the sequence material for the fixed feasts and days of commemoration for the saints and major events in the history of the Church. It counts its days by the Church calendar, beginning with the Church New
The menaion contains the commemoration of saints, major spiritual events in the life of the Church on earth and the non-movable great feast days of our Lord, the Theotokos and the Cross. The menaion cycle takes us through the whole history of the Church and unites us with it as part of a living stream of great sacred events, miracles, martyrs and wonderworkers. The life of the Church in ancient times with its holy martyrs and confessors, and the apostles themselves, is made vivid and vital to us in this cycle, and we keep alive the awareness of our personal unity as Orthodox Christians with the Holy Church of all ages, circumstances and places. We celebrate the true birthdays of the holy martyrs and saints, not as remote personages, but as beloved elder brothers and sisters who are still living in the heavenly Church and with whom we exchange love and care.

(c) THE WEEKLY CYCLE

The Weekly Cycle compresses both the Paschal and Menaion cycles and brings the life of Christ and His redemption of mankind, and the history of the Church and our forebears in the faith, into our lives each week. Every week, this cycle makes Holy Week a part of our lives. Wednesday always commemorates the betrayal of Christ, reminding us not only how He allowed Himself to be betrayed and judged for our sakes, but how we ourselves betray Him daily with our own sins. Friday always commemorates the crucifixion and the suffering which our Lord endured to free us from the bondage of sin and death. Saturday, being the day on which Christ liberated the souls of the departed from the dark condition which we call

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9. 14 September on the secular calendar.
"hades" is a day for the commemoration of the faithful departed, who already experience the light of the eternal life. Saturday is never classed "lenten" in the Typikon even in Great Lent, because it is the celebration of the victory of Christ over the power of Satan and hades. It is a celebration of the freedom of the souls of the faithful departed, which is why the Memorial (parastas; pannikhida) is required to be celebrated on Saturday, but never on Sundays. Sunday is always the day of Resurrection. Each day of the week also commemorates certain orders of angels and saints and certain of the great wonderworkers, thus compressing the menaion cycle and bringing to mind how our Saviour has poured forth His grace on mankind, sending down the Holy Spirit from the Father to work among the faithful. The commemoration of the saints reveals to us what is possible for each of us, indeed, what the real "mark" or "goal" is which God intends for each of us, if we will but open our hearts and give our full cooperation to the Divine Grace offered us in the Holy Spirit.

The weekly cycle divides the week as follows:

**Monday:** Commemoration of the immaterial, bodiless Angels.

**Tuesday:** Commemoration of St. John the Forerunner and all the holy prophets.

**Wednesday:** Commemoration of the betrayal of Christ and the Life-bearing Cross.

**Thursday:** Commemoration of the holy apostles and their successors, the holy hierarchs, especially Saint Nicholas.
Friday: Commemoration of the crucifixion of Christ and the Life-bearing Cross.

Saturday: Commemoration of the holy martyrs and all the saints; commemoration of the faithful departed (memorial service).

Sunday: The feast of the Resurrection.

Thus we see how the divinely ordered plan and cycle of worship services can actually serve to restructure our lives and bring us into the true spirit of repentance, by helping to change our perspective, our priorities and the direction of our lives. This is all the more true when we understand that Orthodox divine worship is not accomplished egoistically, but in a bond of growing love and union with our brothers and sisters in Christ, drawn together by the power of Christ's love into one household and family of God: that "household of God" which is in the world but not of the world. In such an experience of growing love, godly love, the power of Satan is progressively defeated and destroyed and the "kingdom of God" is truly made manifest.

THE DIVINE SERVICE BOOKS

In addition to the four books of Holy Scriptures used in Orthodox divine services (Gospel, Apostle, Psalter and Old Testament Prophecies), there are three types of service books.

The first contains the Order of Service for all the daily cycle. It is appropriately called "The Book of Hours"

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10. The Old Testament readings are often printed in the menaion, however, a copy of the Old Testament is also kept for the reader in most churches for the purpose of the Old Testament prophecies which are read at vespers for many feasts.
or "Horologion".

The second type is a set of books which contains all the Sequence material — the "sermon and Bible Study" hymns and readings which are inserted in the services on different days.

The third type is the clergy service books which contain only those parts of the services done by the bishop, priest or deacon.

These service books are catalogued below. Every priest and parish should have a complete set of these books.

1. **THE HOROLOGION OR "BOOK OF HOURS"

This book contains all the basic Order of Service for each of the daily services. Instructions in the appropriate place indicate where "sequence" material is to be inserted, and special instructions are given for those prayers read only during Great Lent. All these instructions are given in the proper place and are easy to follow. Depending on which edition you have, there may be additional useful information in your copy. It is best to have the "Great Horologion" for this reason.

2. **THE "SEQUENCE" SERVICE BOOKS

(1). **The Octoechos (Eight Tones):** The general yearly cycle is divided into an inner cycle of eight tones. If you will read the Synaxarion on vespers in chapter III above, you will understand why. There are eight sets of the special "instructional and Bible study" hymns provided for the Sunday divine services. All this material has reference to the Resurrection of Christ and the redemption of mankind because Sunday is always celebrated as the day of Resurrection, a "little Pascha". Moreover, the rotation of the eight tones is part of the Paschal Cycle and this is important to note. The purpose of the Octoechos is to carry the
Paschal message of Resurrection, redemption and the co-suffering love of God for man, through the whole year, constantly bringing it to our minds and transforming our hearts with it. This is why the rotation of the eight tones is suspended at the beginning of Great Lent and resumed again at the end of Pentecost, as a continuation of Pascha.

Each of the eight sets has its own special melody or "tone". The tone is designed to match and amplify the meaning of the words and their mood. This helps the words penetrate our souls more deeply. This beautiful, majestic hymnology is found in the volume called "The Octoechos" or "Eight Tones".

(2) Weekly Cycle Book (Paraklitiki): Similar to the Octoechos, this book contains the "sequence" material for each day of the week except Sunday. Like the Octoechos, it provides hymns and readings relative to the meaning of the given day.

(3) The Menaions: The "menaion" is a whole set of books covering the "Menaion Cycle" or "Cycle of Months". It contains all the "sequence" material for each calendar day of the year. For convenience, and to keep the volumes from being unwieldy, the menaion is divided into parts:

a) The Festal Menaion contains the "sequence" material for the great feast-days which are fixed, that is, the ones which always fall on the same calendar day each year.

b) The Monthly Menaion consists of twelve volumes, one for each month of the year. It contains all the "sequence" material which has been composed for the various saints, the "lesser" feast days, and great events in the history of the Church. It covers the services for each calendar day of the year.
c) The General Menaion contains special material for each "order" of saint. If we wish to celebrate the memory of a saint for whom no special service has been composed, we use the "general service" and simply supply the name of the saint we are commemorating. The general service for martyrs, for example, provides sequence material which explains the meaning of martyrdom and why we celebrate those who were martyred for Christ.

(4). The Triodion: During Great Lent and Holy Week, we do not use the Octoechos or Paraklitiki because the material in them reflects a continuation of the Paschal season and is inappropriate for the spirit and meaning of this time of special preparation for the coming of Pascha. Instead, we use a volume called "The Triodion" or, "The Lenten Triodion". All the special sequence material designed to lead us into repentance and spiritual preparation for Holy Week and Pascha is contained in this book.

In order to keep this hymnal from being too bulky, some editions have a separate volume for Holy Week, and in English, there are separate small hymnals for each day of Holy Week. These are especially useful for the congregation. They are all part of the "Triodion".

(5). The Pentecostarion: The sequence material for the joyous season from Pascha through the Pentecost (that is, from Bright Week to the Sunday of All-Saints), is found in this volume. During this time, the Octoechos is not used because, essentially, it is the third part of the "Paschal Cycle" and begins following the Pentecostarion. As with the season of the triodion, the Menaion continues to be used.

(6). The Anthology (izbornik; sbornik): For the convenience of missionaries, circuit priests, small isolated communities, etc., there is a collection of the most
important "sequence" material from all the other books, in a single volume. It is far from complete, but it does contain the Eight Tones, sequence material for the major feasts and major dates from the Menaion, as well as highlights from the Triodion and Pentecostarion. The English edition contains all the Resurrection Gospels and special hymns that go with them, all the Sunday Liturgy Gospels and Apostles and even the Old Testament prophecies for festal vespers, as well as a wealth of other material.

(7). The Liturgical Psalter: We listed this volume earlier with the books of Scripture used in the services, but it should have special mention in this section. The Liturgical Psalter is simply the book of psalms subdivided into sections called "kathismas". Different kathismas or sets of psalms are prescribed to be read in various services. One will find these kathismas (sets of psalms) conveniently marked off in order in the Liturgical Psalter. There is also an appendix in this volume which tells one when and how to read which kathisma.

(8). Irmologion: This volume provides the text for all the irmoses (irmosi) which are chanted at the beginning of the various canticles of the canons. The larger service books such as the Menaions and the Triodion, often give only the opening words of the irmos; the chanter who does not know the irmoses by heart will need the irmologion. Fortunately, this serious weakness in the larger service books is being corrected in modern English language editions. The Irmologion is valuable as a collection of these short hymns, which can be chanted on their own or read as poetic spiritual literature.

(9). Typikon: The rules and rubrics governing every aspect of the divine services and their celebration are set forth in this book, which covers the entire liturgical year.
3. THE CLERGY SERVICE BOOKS:

The Horologion and various "sequence" books contain the portion of the divine services sung or read by the congregation, chanters or reader. Obviously, the priest cannot carry such large volumes around with him as he serves his part of the services. Small books containing only the clergy parts and instructions are provided for the bishop, priest and deacon. There are three types of clergy service books:

(1). Liturgikon: Often "Pocket-sized", these books contain priest’s and deacon’s parts for the three Liturgies, vespers, matins and the smaller services connected with the vigil or great vespers on feastdays.

(2). Hierarchical Liturgikon: Used by a bishop when he serves. This book is similar to the regular Liturgikon, but contains the special prayers and instructions which a bishop uses during the services. It usually contains the order of service for those Holy Mysteries which only a bishop can serve (such as ordinations).

(3). Mysterikon (Gk., Euchologion; Slav, Trebnik) This service book does not fall into the same category as the others. It has no place in the cycles of services, but we mention it here because we are cataloguing all the standard service books. The Mysterikon contains all the services for Holy Mysteries and special prayers which are served "as needed" (hence the Slavic name, "Trebnik" or "Book of Needs."

(4). Special Service Books: There are some special collections of service material which are not always available, but very useful, particularly since some of the service books can be quite bulky. A book containing the matins canons in all
eight tones is sometimes available, as is a complete collection of Dismissal Troparions and Kondakions from the menaion. Other useful books may be found from time to time in various editions.

[While the above is not complete, we now have the basic concepts, outline and vocabulary necessary to continue into a study of the structure and plan of the divine services and the rubrics for serving them.]
PART 2
THE DIVINE LITURGY

“To enlighten all men and make plain to them what is the mystery kept hidden and concealed until now in God Who created all things by Christ Jesus. That through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known” (Eph. 3:9-10).

Nowhere is the mystery of salvation made so profoundly and concisely clear as in the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is a truly wondrous mystery and revelation. In it, the whole message and mystery of salvation is presented in such a way that the faithful spiritually participate in the whole life and saving work of Christ. Indeed, the inner purpose of the Orthodox Liturgy is to make the worshippers on earth participants in the eternal worship in heaven. This in itself provides one with the basic means to understand the Scripture. For, the Sacred Tradition which has shaped the litanies, hymns and rubrics of the Liturgy has in this way preserved and explicated that original apostolic revelation, that original Christian life and understanding which underlies and precedes the New Testament Scripture itself. In truth, the Liturgy was the first recorded form of the Gospel.

The Divine Liturgy was instituted by Christ Himself at His Mystic Supper before His arrest and crucifixion. The core prayers and basic actions of the Liturgy were handed down to us by the Apostles, especially by James, Mark and Matthew. Thus, in its essence, the Liturgy concisely expresses the Gospel as the Apostles and first Christians received it directly from Christ, and understood it themselves. When the Evangelists later wrote the four Gospels for the sake of those who had not known Christ personally, they provided a more complete historical record of Christ's teachings, deeds and life,
and of the apostolic doctrine. Nevertheless, the Liturgy, as the living expression of worship which binds the earthly and the heavenly Church together, remains the repository of that essential understanding and revelation which gives firm support to, and explanation of, the Gospels. Part of the mystery of the Liturgy is this quality of penetrating directly to the heart of the Gospel and drawing forth its essence and meaning in clear, concise, visible and spiritually elevating terms. When the Liturgy and Scripture are compared together, we begin to grasp this mystery.

The Divine Liturgy, like the Holy Scripture, is received on different levels by different people. Orthodox Christians are expected to be constantly struggling to grow spiritually into an ever greater and more rich understanding and experience of both the Liturgy and the Scripture. To the spiritually immature, the Scripture and Liturgy are seen, first as historical documents, and secondly as inspirational literature and poetry and, at a higher level, as a record of divine truths. At this level, one can draw much moral and philosophical edification from them. But as one rises beyond this level, one becomes truly a participant in divine mysteries, a participant in the grace of God and a recipient of the Holy Spirit. The Divine Liturgy has the power, by God's grace, to truly unite one with the life and saving work of Christ, and with the worship of the Trinity being celebrated in the Heavenly Kingdom, before the very throne of God.

We are not dealing, in this work, with a “science of liturgical theology,” in the scholastic sense. This work is written only to demonstrate the spiritual content of the Liturgy and its amplification of the Holy Scripture. Ultimately, the minute points discussed in Tubingen-like textual and historical analyses of the Liturgy only serve to confuse the faithful, not to edify them. The whole point of our approach to the understanding of the Liturgy is to come to a realization and experience of the majesty and transforming power of the Holy Spirit working through the Divine Liturgy. “Liturgical theolo-
“Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim, and chant the Thrice-Holy Hymn to the life-creating Trinity, lay aside all earthly cares that we may receive the King of all Who comes invisibly escorted by the angelic hosts. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” This hymn, this anthem, proclaims so clearly the power of the grace-filled Divine Liturgy to bind and unite the people of God on earth with the angelic hosts, to bring those of us who are still earth-bound before the very throne of the living God, and unite us in spiritual and physical worship of the Creator and Redeemer.

Each celebration of the Divine Liturgy is an episode of divine grace, a union of God and man, of heaven and earth, the uniting of each communicant with the one Body of Jesus Christ, in which the power of death has been conquered, truly and eternally. This is the sum total of real liturgical theology. What we desire to do here is to open before the faithful a real awareness of the spiritual content and power of the Divine Liturgy as a concelebration of the priest, the people of God and the heavenly hosts, of the effectual power of the Holy Spirit working in, and bestowing grace through, the Divine Liturgy. We wish also to demonstrate the absolute bond between the Orthodox Liturgy and the Holy Scripture. If the faithful can come to a vital understanding of the Divine Liturgy in this manner, then their own lives can be changed and transformed by the living experience of true worship — worship “in spirit and in truth” — and they, in turn, being transformed by divine grace, can serve to change and transform the world around them.
THE PREPARATION

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord’...’ (Is.40:3).

“In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, saying, repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This was he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord.’” (Mt.3:1-3).

The Divine Liturgy begins with the Preparation (Proskomedia; Prothesis). From ancient times, the faithful, imitating the three Wise Men, have brought offerings to the church. These offerings consist of bread, wine, wheat, oil, candles and incense for use in the divine services. The bread loaves are called *prosphora* (“offerings”). From these prosphorases, the Priest selects one large loaf (in Serbian and Greek practice, or five small loaves in Russian practice). The large prosphora is divided into five parts by a prosphora seal. The five parts (or five small loaves) commemorate the feeding of the multitude in the wilderness with the five loaves. The prosphorases are laid out on the Proskomedia (Preparation) table. Each one bears the symbol in the middle of the prosphora seal, IC XC NI KA arranged around a cross. The letters stand for “Jesus Christ Conquers.” The prosphorases are baked in two layers, a small one on top of a larger one, confessing the two perfect natures of Christ — both divine and human. One of these loaves will be selected for the Holy Eucharist.

The Preparation (Proskomedia) service in itself provides an excellent study of Scripture in the Liturgy, for the entire service is a presentation of Old Testament prophecies with their New Testament fulfilment. In serving the Preparation (Proskomedia), the Priest recites certain passages from the Old Testament prophesies about Christ's sacrifice for us and, by his
actions, affirms how these prophecies were fulfilled by Christ. It is sometimes suggested that the Preparation (Proskomedia) pays little attention to the chronology of the events of Christ's life, since the service begins with the commemoration of His sufferings and sacrifice, and ends with the commemoration of His Incarnation. This suggestion is not accurate, however, for the first part of the Proskomedia is concerned with the preparation for the mystery of salvation, which is exactly what the Old Testament is concerned with. Thus, in the first part of the Proskomedia, we are presented with the Old Testament prophecies, and shown in a symbolic, “shadowy” way that they were actually fulfilled by Christ. All this is but a preparation for the fulfilment of the actual work of Christ, which will be seen in the Liturgy itself. The prophets saw not only the prophecies about the Messiah, but they also saw in a symbolic, “shadowy” way their actual fulfilment. This preparation and revelation being completed, the Nativity (or, Incarnation) of Christ is commemorated, as the beginning of the actual fulfilment of this revelation and the bringing to fruit of its preparation.

After the commemoration of Christ's Nativity (Incarnation), the holy Gifts are covered, because the life of Christ from the time of His Incarnation until He began His ministry, is covered and unknown. Aside from his teaching in the temple at age twelve, we know nothing of His life until He Himself begins to reveal it to us at the time of John's preaching in the wilderness. In the rubrics of the covering of the Gifts, the Second Glorious Coming of our Saviour and the transfiguration of the universe are prefigured. Thus, in the Proskomedia, we see Christ as the One Who prepared us, through the law and the prophets, for His work of redemption, the One Who actually redeemed us, and the One Who will come again to receive the faithful to Himself and transfigure the whole universe. It is in the nature of the Divine Liturgy following the Preparation (Proskomedia) that the actual work of our redemption is clearly revealed to us in detail.
Let us look now at the order of the service for the Preparation (Proskomedia) and see how it presents the Scripture to us and reveals to us the mystery of the Holy Church.

**PROSKOMEDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Priest, having vested, washes his hands saying: I will wash my hands among the innocent and I will compass Thy sanctuary, O Lord; so that I may hear the sound of Thy praise and tell of all Thy wondrous works. O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwells. Do not destroy my soul with the ungodly, nor my life with the men of blood, in whose hands there is iniquity, and whose right hand is full of bribes. But I have walked in my innocence; deliver me and have mercy on me. My foot is set upon the straight path; I will bless Thee, O Lord, in the temple.</td>
<td>This entire text is from Psalm 25:6-12 (in the Septuagint version used by the Orthodox Church).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then, going to the Preparation Table, the Priest reverences it three times, saying each time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*42*
O God, cleanse me, a sinner, and have mercy on me.

He then recites the prayer:
By Thine own precious Blood, Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law. Being nailed to the Cross and pierced with a spear, Thou hast poured forth immortality upon mankind, as from a fountain. O our Saviour, glory to Thee.

The Priest takes up the prosphora load, which will be used in the consecration of the Holy Mystery. In the centre of the prosphora is a square seal, with a large cross in it. In the four corners of the seal is the monogram: IC XC NI KA, which stands for, “Jesus Christ Conquers.

The Priest, elevating the prosphora, exclaims: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

And then, taking up the selected prosphora, he blesses it with the sign of the Cross three times,

Lk.18:13. See Psalm 18:12; Psalm 51; 1Jn. 1:9; James 4:8

See Gal.3:13; Rev.5:9; Col.2:14; 2Tm. 1:10.

See Is.25:8; 1Cor.15:54; compare Rm. 8:37).

See Gen.14:18-20; Ps. 65:20; 67:35; 2Cor.11:31.
saying each time:
In remembrance of Our
Lord and God and Saviour
Jesus Christ.

The Priest will cut the cube
of bread under this seal
free from the prosphora.
To do this, he makes a cut
on each side of the seal,
reciting verses from the
prophecies of Isaiah
concerning Christ's trial
and sufferings, with each
incision:

With the first cut, he says:
As a lamb, He was led to
the slaughter.

The second incision is
made with the words:
As an innocent sheep before
its shearsers is dumb, so He
does not open His mouth.

With the third:
In His humiliation, justice
was denied Him.

and finally:
Who shall declare His
generation?

As he lifts the cube out of

See Lk.22:19; 1Cor.11:25
See Is.25:8; 1Cor.15:54;
compare Rm. 8:37

The verses being quoted by
the priest (in the left
column) are all from the
prophecy of Isaiah about
the trial and crucifixion of
Christ (Is.53:7-8). The
verse in which the prophecy
is found is shown in
brackets [ ]. The New
Testament verse at which
the fulfillment of the
prophecy is found is shown
without brackets:


[Is.53:7] Mt.26:62-63;
27:12-14.


the prosphora, the Priest continues:
For His life is removed from the earth.

Then, the cube, called The Lamb, is placed in the centre of the diskos.

\[\text{Is.53:8} \quad \text{Dan.} \quad \text{Mt.27:33-50.} \]

Rev.5:6f

The diskos, in the order of the service, represents Golgotha, the manger and the Eternal Throne of the King of Glory. For the purpose of this work, we will use the term the “three enthronements,” symbolically, rather than theologically. In order to help readers more fully understand the meaning of the Liturgy, we will speak of “three enthronements” of Christ in His work of our redemption. This usage is not intended to be understood in a doctrinal or theological sense. The diskos also serves as a dramatic revelation of the mystery of the Holy Church. Moreover, it must be remembered at all times that the Liturgy occurs in the context of the Book of Revelation, and the actions and theology of the Liturgy are intimately tied to St John’s “Apocalypse.” The Liturgy sheds light on the meaning of the Book Of Revelation (Apocalypse). Indeed, it is doubtful that the Book of Revelation can be understood outside the framework of the Liturgy.
4

THE SACRIFICE
(The First Enthronement)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The cube which has been cut from the phosphora is called the “Lamb.”</em></td>
<td>See Is.53:7; Jn.1:29,36; etc. Refer especially to Revelations, in which Christ is referred to as the “Lamb” approximately 27 times. The “sacrifice of Isaak” by Abraham was a fore-image of Christ as the sacrificial lamb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>This portion is now placed in the centre of the diskos, which is said to represent Golgotha at this point. The Priest cuts the “Lamb” crosswise, saying:</em></td>
<td>See Jn.1:29, 36; 6:51; 1Cor.5:7; 1Pt.1: 19; 1Jn. 2:2; Jn.3:17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sacrificed is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world for its life and salvation.</em></td>
<td>Jn.19:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Piercing the side of the “Lamb” with the lance, the Priest says:</em></td>
<td>“Wisdom...has mingled her wine [with water]; she has furnished her table.” (Prov.9:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>At these words, the Priest pours wine and water into the chalice.</em></td>
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“Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled” (Prov.9:2,5).

5
THE COMMEMORATIONS
(The Mystery of the Church; The Meaning of Catholicity)

The fulness of the Church of Christ is there where the people of God have come together with love to worship and glorify Him, and to receive the Mystery and miracle of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist from the hands of their bishop or his priest. The Liturgy is a concelebration of the priest or bishop and the assembly (synaxis) of the people of God. Since we are gathered in the love of Christ, it is not possible for even death to have separated us: those of the congregation still in this earthly life and those who have departed this life to their repose before us, for “neither death nor life, not angels nor demons, not things present not things to come, nor any powers...can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rm.8:39). Our mutual love and intercessions for one another do not know any boundaries, and in them, in our co-suffering love and prayers for one another, both the living and the departed, we do manifest the fulness of the household of God.

ORDER OF SERVICE: | SCRIPTURE/LESSON:
---|---
The Priest next removes particles from other prosphoras and places them on the diskos. As he does, he commemorates faithful servants of God, the Theo- | “…I admonish that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be offered on behalf of all people ....” (1Tm.2:1-2).
tokos, the host of the angels and saints, and he makes intercession and petitions for our hierarchs, and for the faithful, both the living and those who have reposed in the faith.

The order of this part of the service also serves as a revelation about the mystery of the Holy Church. The diskos, being round, symbolizes endlessness and universality. It is a type of the Holy Church. The placing of the “Lamb” in the centre of it, symbolizes Christ enthroned in the midst of His Church. A large particle of prosphora commemorating the Theotokos is placed at the right of the “Lamb.” The Theotokos is herself a type of the Church, of the transformation and renewal of the Church by the indwelling of Christ bodily. She is, as it were, the seal of the Old Testament and the door of the New Testament. To the left of the “Lamb,” particles of prosphora are placed on the diskos in commemoration of the orders of the saints: those Old Testament prophets and righteous ones and those of the New Testament, holy men and women who, through faith and struggle, became truly participants in divine grace and fit temples for the Holy Spirit. These particles also call to mind the ranks of heavenly angels who always stand before the throne of God glorifying Him in the Eternal Liturgy.

In front of the “Lamb” are placed particles of prosphora with prayers for our hierarchs, the shepherds of the Church. Finally, taking small particles from several prosphoras, the Priest commemorates and prays for Orthodox Christians, both the living and those who have fallen asleep.

When the diskos is thus prepared and we gaze upon it, a feeling of awe and wonder fills our souls and we find ourselves marvelling at the wisdom of this order. We sense that we are witnessing nothing less than the work of the in-

Seeing the “Lamb” thus enthroned in the midst of His Church, the Scripture at once comes to mind: “He has put all things under His feet and has appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him Who fills all in all... for that Body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere” (Eph.1:22-23).

Seeing the diskos as a likeness of the Church, we understand the meaning of the term “catholic.” For, there is Christ, present among both the dwellers of heaven, those who are alive on earth and those who have fallen asleep. We see, then, how with Him, by means of the Holy Church, all are...
united together in one. The presence together of the particles representing both the Old and New Testament righteous ones testifies to the fact that our Saviour's redemption flows backward to the time of the Fall, to Sts Adam and Eve, and forward to the consummation of the ages and into all eternity, making all times, ages and places one in the Holy Church. Thus, we see that there is no division even between times and places, between days and centuries in the life of the Church. Moreover, the particles which have been placed on the diskos in commemoration of the living and the dead, are all placed in a single mound on the diskos. They are not two separate mounds, for in the Holy Church, there is no real separation between the living and dead, since all are one in Christ, and all alike still share in the mutual life of love and prayer and the unceasing spiritual development of the members of the Holy Church.

6
THE NATIVITY
(The Second Enthronement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Priest now blesses the incense with the sign of the Cross, saying: We offer Thee incense, O Christ our God, for an odour of spiritual fragrance. Accept it upon Thy heavenly altar, and send down upon us, in return, the divine grace and the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Having completed the preparation of the Gifts, the Priest begins to cover them. First, he takes up the asterisk (star) and, placing it</td>
<td>See Psalm 140:2 (Orthodox Bible) (Psalm 141:2 in the King James Version). Is.60:6 (where the prophecy is precisely about the birth of Christ). The prophecy is fulfilled at Mt.2:11.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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50---
**over the Gifts, he says:**

And the star came and stood over the place where the Young Child lay.  

Mt. 2:9-11. [See Num. 24:17]

Thus, we commemorate the actual beginning of the work of our redemption, as the King of Glory is enthroned in the humble manger. The time of the Preparation is ended, and the final drama of mankind's redemption by Christ is beginning, just as the main body of the Divine Liturgy is also about to begin.

### 7

**THE COVERING**

(The Third Enthronement)

The shape of the asterisk forms an arched vault, or dome, over the diskos. The Priest now covers the diskos and chalice each with a veil, and over these he places a larger cloth called an *aer*, which literally means “air,” and has symbolical reference to the endless expanse of the universe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Priest censes the first veil and then, while covering the diskos with it, says:</td>
<td>Psalm 92.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lord is King, He is robed in majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and He has girt Himself. He has made the world firm and it shall not be shaken. Thy throne is prepared from eternity.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Psalm 92.
Censing the second veil, the Priest covers the chalice, saying:
Thy glory, O Christ, has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of Thy praise.

Censing the aer, the Priest covers both holy things, saying:
Shelter us under the shelter of Thy wings. Drive away from us every enemy and adversary, keep our lives in peace, O Lord. Have mercy on us and on Thy world, and save our souls: for Thou art a good and man-befriending God.

“His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise” (Hab.3:3). See Ps.16:8; Nm.6:26, etc.

“Shelter me under the shadow of Thy wings from the adversaries that oppress me and my enemies that compass me... the Lord God of Israel, under Whose wings thou hast come to trust” (Ruth 2:12). “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil.4:7).

The dome of the asterisk is an image of the infinite vault of the limitless universe, covered with the vestment of the Glory of God. Thus, it anticipates the transfigured universe at the end of the ages when the Holy Church will be glorified as the Bride of Christ. Our Saviour Who, by His own will was enthroned in the manger, enthroned on the Cross, enthroned in the tomb, enthroned in the midst of His Church, is also enthroned upon His Everlasting Throne. Here, in the symbolism of our meditation on the diskos, we see how, in the Holy Church, the manger, Golgotha (and the tomb) and the eternal heavenly throne are all combined into one (as the diskos suggests). For the whole of our salvation, from its eternal plan in God’s will, through its manifestation in the Incarnation, the perfect life, the tears in Gethsemane, the death on the Cross, the glorious
Resurrection and Ascension to the Eternal Throne, and the reigning to all eternity, are all fulfilled in the Holy Church and, in Her, they are all drawn together into one great, ineffable expression of divine Love—the Church. She is the essence of all the hope, all the faith, all the righteousness and all the love of all eternity.

8

THE DISMISSAL PRAYERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The priest then censes the covered Holy Gifts three times (in honour of the Holy Trinity), saying:</td>
<td>Is.42:21; Ps.50:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed art Thou, O our God, Who has been well pleased, glory to Thee.</td>
<td>“This is the Bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall have everlasting life: and the Bread which I give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn.6: 50-51).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then, raising his hands above the Holy Gifts, he prays:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O God, our God, Who sent forth the Heavenly Bread, the Food of the whole world, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Redeemer and Benefactor, bless and sanctify us. Bless this offering and receive it upon Thine altar above the heavens. As our good Lord, Who loves mankind, remember those for whom it was offered, and keep us uncondemned in the celebration of Thy Divine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mysteries. For hallowed and glorified is Thine all-honoured and majestic name, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

然后他高呼：
　　“主啊，你是我所仰望的”（诗38:15）。

9

THE CENSING FOR THE LITURGY

As the Priest censes the sanctuary and then the whole church and congregation, he recites the two troparia shown below, and then Psalm 50. We take seriously the confession that the Orthodox Church is the Kingdom of God on earth. As the Priest censes the church, he censes the ikons of the saints on the walls and the faithful alternating from one to the other. By this, he proclaims that the faithful in heaven and those on earth are worshipping together as one, with one heart and one voice. With the incense, like a tailor with needle and thread, he, as it were, sews together the saints and the faithful into one fabric of worship, one resplendent garment of praise and glory before the throne of God, uniting the invisible and the visible facets of Christ's Church. The Holy Scripture clearly teaches us, in the revelation about the life of the New Testament Church, that the prayers of the saints rise up with the smoke of the incense (Rev. 8:4). There are few things in our divine worship services more totally scriptural than the use of incense.
**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

*The Priest censes around the Holy Table, saying part of the troparion on each side, beginning with the front:*

“In the grave bodily; In hades with the soul, though Thou art God; In paradise with the thief; And on the throne with the Father and the Spirit, wast Thou Who fills all things, O Christ the unfathomable.

*Then, censing the Holy Gifts and proskomedia table, he says:*

How life giving, how more beautiful than paradise, how truly more resplendent than any royal palace, proved Thy tomb, the source of our resurrection, O Christ.

As he censes the rest of the sanctuary and the whole church, he recites Psalm 50 (Septuagint), and immediately after the censing, the main portion of the Liturgy begins.

**SCRIPTURE/LESSON:**

“For in Him, the whole fulness of the Deity dwelt bodily” (Col.2:9).

In these prayers, we confess that as God and man both, Jesus Christ was never absent from the Throne of Glory, even when He was physically in the grave. Indeed, just as the womb of the virgin and the manger cave became His throne, so also, the Cross and the tomb, in turn, became His throne. For the fulness of the Glory of God is present at all times in Jesus Christ. To fully understand the Gospel, we must understand that the grave of Jesus Christ became the source of resurrection to mankind, for by fulfilling the “sabbath” in the tomb, Christ has conquered death and bestowed upon us everlasting life. Christ is our God Who is “everywhere present and fillest all things.”
FOREWORD

The Divine Liturgy is an eminent manifestation of the Kingdom of God, which is not “somewhere above,” but “at hand.” Not only is the Kingdom of God within us, as the Saviour said (Lk.17: 21), but those who are united with His Church are also in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God has been manifested on earth, and it is a present reality. It is found in the Divine Liturgy, in which the faithful on earth truly join with those in heaven — both the angels and the departed faithful — in the eternal worship of the Trinity. The very architecture of the Orthodox Church proclaims this. Here, we find no spires or peaks pointing into outer space, as if God’s Kingdom were a remote location above the universe or “out there somewhere.” Rather, the arched ceiling, and the central dome of the church with its ikon of the “All Ruler,” encompass the faithful and the representations of the angels and the departed saints, and bring them together in the profoundly scriptural worship, the Divine Liturgy. When one enters into the Church, one enters the Kingdom of God in a very real sense. When the Liturgy begins, the gates of paradise are opened and the grace of God pours forth; man becomes united with God in Holy Communion, and receives a minute glimpse of the glory and joy which await the faithful for eternity.

The sanctuary is always to the east, for it represents — and indeed, manifests — that Paradise which, as the Scripture records, was “to the east.” Paradise was closed to us by the fall of man, by the disobedience of the first Adam. Now it is

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11. Some of the prayers are different in the Liturgy of Saint Basil, but the basic content and structure are the same in both.
opened to us again by the New Adam, Jesus Christ. At the beginning of the Liturgy, the Royal Gates are opened, proclaiming that the gates of paradise are once more opened to mankind, and that we can once more hope to enter in and dwell there. The priest elevates the Gospel and makes the sign of the Cross with it, showing that the Cross is the key which opened the gates, and that through His Gospel, we may hope to enter into paradise. As he does this, the priest exclaims, “Blessed is the Kingdom of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.” He proclaims the blessedness of that Kingdom which is now manifested to us in the Liturgy, that Kingdom which is present now, and unto all ages. Though it will be fully revealed only in that age to come, it is nevertheless now revealed to us, and we are even now, in the Liturgy, participating in its eternal glory and praise.

The Liturgy is basically divided into three parts: the Preparation, the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful. The segment called “Liturgy of the Catechumens” is so called because those who are learning the faith but not yet baptised are permitted to participate in this portion of the Liturgy. Traditionally, they were dismissed and went to a catechumens class before the Symbol of Faith was chanted. The second segment, called “Liturgy of the Faithful” encompasses the remained of the Divine Service. Other divisions of the Liturgy will be discussed in the following pages when we arrive at them.
1

THE GREAT LITANY OF PEACE

“First of all, then, I admonish that petitions, prayers and intercessions and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority or high responsibility, that we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life, a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way” (1Tm.2:1-2).

ORDER OF SERVICE: | SCRIPTURE/LESSON:
--- | ---
The Royal Door is open, signifying that the mystery of the Kingdom is about to be revealed. | Jesus Christ has opened once more the gates of paradise which were closed against us through sin. As the sanctuary of the church is a type of paradise, the Liturgy begins with the gates being opened.
The priest stands before the Holy Table and prays, raising his hands toward the heavens. | “I desire, therefore, that people everywhere pray lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting” (1Tm.2:8).
| [After each petition of the litany, the priest, deacon and people all together sign themselves with the Cross. In this manner, we all fulfil this command to pray raising holy hands, for we do not consider our own hands to be holy, but we submit them to the holiness of Christ in the sign of the Cross].
The priest raises the Gospel above the Holy Table and, making the sign of the Cross with it, exclaims: | The priest elevates the Holy Gospel and makes the sign of the Cross with it, to proclaim that the Cross was the key
Blessed is the Kingdom of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

“Now is salvation and strength come, and the kingdom of God and the power of Christ” (Rev.12:10). “...Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom” (Ps.144:10-13). See also Dn.4:3; 7:27; Mt.16:28; 2Tm.4:1; Lk.23:42. etc.

Then the priest (or deacon) begins the petitions:
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Forgiving all wrongs done against us and repenting for the wrongs we have done to others, let us “be at peace among yourselves” and “let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (1Ths.5:13; Col.3:15).

After each petition, the faithful, all together, respond:
Lord have mercy.

“Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, in accordance with our hope in Thee” (Ps.33:22).

The priest (or deacon) continues with the petitions of the Litany:
For the peace that is from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

“And God’s peace which transcends all understanding shall guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus;” “Every good and perfect gift is from above;” “O Lord, grant us Thy salvation” (Phl.4:7; Js.1:17; Ps.84:7).

The priest continues:
For the peace of the whole

We know that true peace
world, for the good estate of the holy churches of God and for the unity of all [the faithful], let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and for those who with faith, reverence and in awe of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord.

For all pious and Orthodox Christians, let us pray to the Lord.

For our bishop___, for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, and for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord; For Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and for her civil authorities, and that she may reign in peace and justice, let us pray to the Lord; For our Canadian land and the Canadian people, let us pray to the Lord; For this city and every city and countryside [rural

could come about on earth only by the rebirth of all mankind into the life of Christ, or by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for both to occur. We pray also for the welfare of each local parish of the Orthodox Church, for we are all members of one family and citizens of one commonwealth (Eph.2:12).

“How awesome and reverenced is this place to be! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gateway to heaven” (Gn.28:17).

“Pray also for one another” (Js.5:16).

“First of all, then, I admonish that petitions, prayers and intercessions and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority or high responsibility, that we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life, a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way” (1Tm.2: 1-2).
For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who are travelling, for the sick and the afflicted, for those who are in prisons and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

“And he prayed again, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (Js.5:18); “He did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 15:17).

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him...Pray for one another, that you may be healed” (Js.5:15-16).

“God is our refuge and strength, a helper in afflictions which mightily befall us” (Ps.45:1); etc. “The poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his tribulations” (Ps.33:6); “The Lord renders to every man His righteousness... and let Him deliver me out of all tribulations” (1Ki.26:23-25); “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me: Thou wilt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of my enemies and Thy right hand will save me” (Ps.137).

“Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance and shepherd them and bear them up

61
Finally, this petition which is doctrinally important:
Calling to remembrance our Most Holy, Most Pure, Most Blessed and Glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and each other and all our life to Christ our God.

The term “holy,” when applied to some thing or person other than God, signifies a special consecration to the service of God.

No person has ever been set apart and consecrated for so great a service as was the Virgin Mary, for she was called to be the vessel of His Incarnation. To fail to venerate her as blessed is to deny the Scripture, which says that all generations are to call her “blessed” (Lk.1:48). The title “Theotokos” (Bearer of God) is given to the Virgin Mary in the Holy Gospel (Lk.1:35, 43 and Mt. 1:23) and signifies that Christ is truly God and was God already when the Virgin Mary conceived His human Body in her virgin womb. The title “Ever Virgin” shows us the continued state of grace and perfection of the Virgin Mary, for which she is highly honoured. Her womb was consecrated for God Himself, and remained holy
Faithful all together respond:
To Thee, O Lord.

The priest recites the following prayer. It may be recited aloud for the people to hear:
O Lord, our God, Whose might is ineffable, Whose glory is inconceivable, Whose mercy is infinite, Whose love toward mankind is unutterable: look down, O Master, in Thy tender compassion, upon this holy temple; and deal bountifully with us and with those who pray with us, according to the abundance of Thy mercies, and pure for all eternity, having been the dwelling place, the palace and throne of the Very God Himself.

Moreover, the Virgin Mary is a type of the aspirations of all humanity, a revelation about the nature and process of salvation itself. We commemorate “all the saints” as the word of God teaches us, “The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance” (Ps.111:6; cp Prov.10:7; 4Ki. 2:15; 1 Chr.21:9-18; 1Ki.28:14; Mt.10:39-41; Sir.44:14; Js.5:10-11; 2Ths.1:10-12).

Acknowledging that they commit themselves and their lives to Christ our God.

“O Lord our God, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Who has set Thy glory above the heavens” (Ps.8:1).
“The Lord has said, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore, with compassion have I gathered you’” (Ps. 19:1).
“I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation” (Jer.31:3).
“I will sing unto the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me” (Ps.13:5-6).
The priest ends the prayer with the exclamation:
For unto Thee are due glory, honour and worship, to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

All the faithful chant:
Amen.

“That together you may with one heart and one voice, praise and glorify God…” (Rm.15:6).

“Let all the people say ‘Amen!'” (1Chr. 16:36).

2
THE TYPIKA
(Antiphons)

The “typika” is a set of three psalms, divided into stanzas, which help to prepare us for the Holy Communion. This set of psalms consists of two from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. The Mystical Supper which Christ shared with His apostles before His betrayal and crucifixion was a ritual meal. It would have been preceded by prayers which included an invocation, and three psalms with a benediction between each one. This corresponds exactly to the Orthodox Christian Liturgy, which begins with the invocation litany, and then three psalms with a litany between each. Thus, the order of the Divine Liturgy follows the actual pattern of the Mystical Supper at which Christ instituted the Holy Communion.

The psalms of the typika are often referred to as “antiphons” because they were often chanted “antiphonally” in Byzantine churches. “Antiphonally” means that two sides of the church alternated, each one chanting a verse, one after the other.
There are three stanzas to the typika, Psalm 103, Psalm 146 and the Beatitudes, which we call a New Testament psalm. The “Anthem” is chanted at the end of the second of these stanzas or psalms.

If we pay close attention to the psalms and anthem which are being chanted, we will see that they contain prophecies about the coming of Christ, and the Holy Mystery itself, so they truly help prepare us for Holy Communion.

**THE FIRST STANZA**  
(Psalm 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The faithful chant Psalm 103:</td>
<td>Our souls are utterly dependent upon the Lord for salvation and for everlasting life. We must thank, praise and glorify God, our Creator, Saviour and Sustainer, not only with our lips, but from the depths of our whole being. The Lord is life itself; without Him there is only death and darkness. Christ our God has come to fulfil our desire for union with God. The human race had become old and weary in sin, but Christ came to renew the human race, to “renew its youth as the eagle's.” He restored our human nature to the condition it was in when man was new upon the earth,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
made His ways known unto Moses, unto the sons of Israel the things that He hath will-ed.

Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, long-suffer- ing and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered, neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not accord- ing to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither accord- ing to our sins hath He re- wardsed us.

For according to the height of heaven from the earth, the Lord hath made His mercy to prevail over those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniqui- ties from us.

As a father hath compas- sion upon his sons, so hath the Lord had compassion upon those who fear Him; for He knoweth whereof we are made. He hath remembered that we are dust. As for man, his days are as the grass; as a flower of the field, so he shall blossom forth; And when the wind hath passed over it, then it shall be gone, and no longer will its place be known.

still in paradise.

God has revealed Himself and His mercy to us so that we might know His love for us and long to abide in Him. Even though we have rejec- ted His love and fallen short of the way of life He called us to, He is forgiving and compas- sionate toward us. In the fulness of time, He came down to earth and showed His ineffable love by dying for us, even though we are sinful and rebellious against Him.

Christ alone is able to heal the soul of its illness and save it from sin. It is He Who saves us from death and cor- ruption. He alone can bestow the gift of mercy and compas- sion on our souls. God is fill- ed with love and mercy to such a degree that, in order to fulfil His love, He gave man life in the beginning, and restored man to life after the fall by coming to earth Him- self to die for us and give us everlasting life in place of this temporary life we now have. Therefore, let us praise, bless and glorify His holy name with all our mind, heart and soul.
But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, even unto eternity, upon those who fear Him. And His righteousness is upon sons of sons, upon those who keep His testament and remember His commandments to do them.
The Lord in heaven hath prepared His throne, and His kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, to hear the voice of His words.
Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, His ministers who do his will.

Bless the Lord, all ye His works, in every place of His dominion, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name; blessed art Thou, O Lord.
## THE FIRST LITTLE LITANY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priest or deacon:</strong></td>
<td>“Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice” (Phl.4:4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.</td>
<td>“Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy” (Ps.50:1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The faithful respond:</strong></td>
<td>“Let us then confidently draw near to the throne of grace; that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time for every need” (Hb.4:16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord have mercy.</td>
<td>“Blessed is the God and Father of mercies and of every consolation” (2Cor.1:3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priest or deacon:</strong></td>
<td>Let us consider again the significance of this petition:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help us, save us, have mercy on us and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.</td>
<td>1. It is right and proper to commemorate the Holy Virgin as “Theotokos,” for the Son Whom she bore in her womb is truly God, and was truly God even in her womb. Her state of purity and moral perfection was obtained through grace by her great struggles and complete obedience to God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The faithful respond:
To Thee, O Lord.

The priest prays the “prayer of the second antiphon”:
O Lord our God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; preserve the fulness of Thy Church and sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house. Glorify them with Thy divine power and do not forsake us who place our hope in Thee.

The priest completes the prayer and litany with the exclamation:

In this, we affirm our total commitment to God, consciously commending and entrusting our lives to Him and to His Providence.

2. Let us dedicate our whole being to Christ our God and live solely for the Kingdom of Heaven, striving and praying to help each other along the difficult road to salvation.

“O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; feed them also and lift them up forever” (Ps.28:9; cp Ex. 34: 9; Jn. ch.7). “I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt.16:18). “O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house;” “In His temple everyone speaks of His glory” (Ps.- 26: 8; 29: 9). “O Lord my God, in Thee do I place my hope; save me...” (Ps.7:1).
For Thine are the majesty, kingdom, power and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

**The faithful respond:**

Amen!

“For Thine are the Kingdom, Power and Glory unto ages of ages. Amen” (Mt. 6:13).

“Amen” means “truly spoken” and signifies a full agreement with the confession of faith stated in the litany and in the exclamation.

SECOND STANZA OF THE TYPICA

(2ND ANTIPHON)

(Psalm 145)

The Second Antiphon consists of Psalm 145, followed by an anthem in honour of the Incarnate Son of God. This anthem was composed in the sixth century by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian.

**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

**The faithful, with one heart and one voice, chant Psalm 145:**

Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

Praise the Lord, O my soul, I will praise the Lord in my life, I will chant unto my God for as long as I have my being.

Trust ye not in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation.

**SCRIPTURE/LESSON:**

This beautiful hymn of praise foretells the coming of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ into the world to heal man spiritually. Those who hunger for righteousness will be fed; to those who are imprisoned by the passions, freedom will be offered; to the spiritually blind, enlight-
His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return unto his earth. In that day all his thoughts shall perish.

Blessed is he of whom the God of Jacob is his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,

Who hath made heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is therein,

Who keepeth truth unto eternity, Who executeth judgment for the wronged, Who giveth food unto the hungry.

The Lord looseth the fettered; the Lord maketh wise the blind; the Lord setteth aright the fallen; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the proselytes. He shall adopt for His own the orphan and widow, and the way of sinners shall He destroy.

The Lord shall be king unto eternity; thy God, O Zion, unto generation and generation. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

This hymn, which was written by Emperor Justinian, is
for our salvation willed to be incarnate of the holy Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, Who without change became man and was crucified, Who is one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit: O Christ, our God, trampling down death by death, save us.

rich and full in its content. In a remarkably concise manner, it presents a summary of our confession of faith about the nature of Jesus Christ. Everything which is taught in this hymn is absolutely necessary for our salvation. Let us look briefly at this wonderful hymn and confession of faith and see what it teaches us:

[1]. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He is the incarnate word of God. If He is begotten, then he cannot possibly be a created being. As Son and Word of God, He is, in fact, God Himself.

[2]. Jesus Christ is immortal. Therefore, it was necessary for Him to accept death of His own free choice and will. This means that, in freely dying for us, out of love for us, Christ conquered all the laws of the fallen human nature, including the strongest one of all, the “law of self-preservation.” The “law of self-preservation” is a wall which separates mankind and keeps us from attaining to the virtue of selfless love. Christ destroyed this wall and made it possible for us to struggle
and overcome this barrier which Satan has turned into a weapon against us and against our salvation.

[3]. Though He chose to become truly man, He still remained truly God. By this, He brought God and man together.

[4]. In order to become truly man, the Son was incarnate by means of that channel established by God — the womb of a woman, the manner in which all men enter this world. Thus, the Holy Virgin became the bridge from heaven to earth, the tabernacle which bore our salvation. For this reason, she is called “Theotokos,” and venerated by all true Christians.

[5]. Christ was crucified for our sins and passions in order that we might be saved from them, and freed from the bondage of the fear of death.

[6]. By His death and Resurrection, He finally conquered death and the fear of death, making eternal life the hope of the faithful, through His Holy Church.

[7]. Jesus Christ is one of the Holy Trinity, one God glori-
THE SECOND LITTLE LITANY

The priest or deacon intones the Little Litany again, and ends it with the Prayer of the Third Antiphon:

ORDER OF SERVICE:  

The priest says the “prayer of the third antiphon”:

Ó Thou Who hast given us grace at this time to make our supplication to Thee with one accord; Who hast promised that when two or three [members of the Church] are gathered together in Thy name, Thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now, O Lord, the petitions of Thy servants as may be most expedient for them; granting them in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come, everlasting life.

The priest completes the Lit-

SCRIPTURE/LESSON:  

“For wherever two or three [members of the Church] are gathered together in My name; there am I in the midst of them” (Mt.18:20); “I assure you that My Father will grant you whatever you ask in My name” (Jn.16:23); “Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt” (Mt.26:39); “God our Saviour, Who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth...” (1Tm. 2:3-4); “and this is the record that God has given us everlasting life” (1Jn.5:11).
any with:
For Thou art a good and man-
befriending God, and unto
Thee do we send up glory: to
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and ever, and unto ages
of ages.

“Greater love has no man
than this, that he lays down
his life for his friends; I no
longer call you servants...but
I call you friends...” (Jn.15:-
13-14).

THE THIRD STANZA OF THE TYPIKA
(3RD ANTIPHON)
The Beatitudes

The final stanza (stasis) of the typika consists of the “Beatitudes” of Christ. The “Beatitudes” have become the favourite
“psalm” of the New Testament, and they present us with a pro-
found and sure guide for a peaceful and godly life.

ORDER OF SERVICE:         SCRIPTURE/LESSON:

The faithful chant:
In Thy Kingdom, remember
us O Lord, when Thou com-
est into Thy Kingdom.

Let us rise to the spiritual
level of the dying thief who,
seeing Jesus there on the
cross as a common transgres-
sor, nevertheless recognized
Him as God and cried out,
“Lord, remember me when
Thou comest into Thy King-
dom” (Lk.23:42).

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of
Heaven.

True humility is the goal of
all Orthodox Christians, the
aim for which we must strug-

12. The Greeks abolished the sincing of the Beatitudes in the 1870s, but the Slavic and
Romanian Churches continue the proper tradition of chanting the beatitudes.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Those who mourn because of their sins, because of their condition as exiles in this world and because of the state of the world around them; those who mourn because of the general rejection of Our Lord and His Holy Church by mankind; who mourn over lost souls and who wait for the Kingdom, will be comforted with an ineffable joy on the day of the Lord (see Is.61:2).

Those who are mild-mannered, patient and long-suffering will receive an inward peace and joy, regardless of their external condition. In the end, they will be the rulers in God's Kingdom: “For yet a little while and the wicked shall cease to be...but the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Ps.37:10-11).

Those who desire to live a life of righteousness and to understand the meaning of true righteousness will be...
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

given the grace both to understand it and to live it, if they earnestly seek it from God, for, “Everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters; he who has no money, come and buy and eat; come and buy wine and milk without cost. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Why do you labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in plenty” (Is.55:1-2).

Mercifulness is a supreme virtue, for in it are combined love, righteousness, compassion, meekness and hope. Moreover, mercy is the foundation and purpose of the old law and the New Testament. God, explaining the old law to the Jews says, “For I have desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos.6:6; see Mt.9:13; 12:7).

Childlike purity of heart comes only to those who strive for it. It is a gift of grace from God to those who
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of the Heavens.

When he was being greatly persecuted for his righteousness, Blessed Theophil of the Kiev Caves Monastery was asked how he could endure it. He replied, “It is better to endure injustice than to commit it oneself. We are exiles on earth. Exiles are not surprised at insult and injury.”

Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.

In a world guided by Satan and his followers, it is to be expected that those who seek to understand and live in righteousness will be persecuted and often reviled. It is not so much to ask that we bear these persecutions, considering what Christ has done for us. To be persecuted for the sake of our dedication to pray with faith, humility and obedience and worship with sincerity, for; “Who shall ascend the mount of the Lord? Who shall stand in His Holy Place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not given his soul over to vanity nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Ps.24:3-5).
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in the heavens.

Christ Our Saviour and His Holy Church is a great joy to the true believer. The prophets themselves were turned upon, persecuted and even killed in the same manner (Mt.5: 12; cp 2Chr.36:16).

To those who endure much, much will be given. All our sufferings on earth, all the persecutions which we face and all the trials and tribulations which we endure on account of our love for God, will be counted to our joy in heaven as a great treasure of blessings which will be waiting for us when we at last arrive home.

3

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

The Little Entrance with the Book of the Gospels recalls the commencement of Christ's healing ministry on earth, which is recorded in the Gospels. The preaching of the Gospel was preceded by the light of revelation which was shown through the prophets, and in the Little Entrance, the Gospel is preceded by a lighted candle to bring this to mind. The lighted candles preceding the Gospel remind us that Christ Jesus is the Light of the World and that without the light of His grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, confirmed in faith and love, the teachings of Christ are unintelligible to
It is also important to remember the origin of the Little Entrance. Like so many aspects of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, there is a reflection of God's revelation to the Chosen People in the Old Testament. The books of the law were kept in a sacred and special place in the Old Testament Temple and also in the synagogues. The scroll containing these books was even specially vested, and was carried out with reverence and awe to be read in the congregation. This was done because the Scripture was always considered to be the “word of God,” and therefore it was a type of the Messiah. This is why, in John's Gospel, it is said of Christ the Messiah “The Word became flesh” (Jn.1:14). The same is true of that Scripture which we call “The Gospels.” The New Testament Scripture did not exist intact during the first centuries of Christianity and the Old Testament prophets were read in the Orthodox churches of the first period of New Testament history. When the books we call “The Gospels” were compiled and collected into a single scroll or book, this book was treated with the same reverence as had been the Old Testament Scripture, and for much the same reason.

We must also remember that in the first centuries, when the first great persecutions were raging, the sacred vessels and whatever sacred writings the parish might have (in those days, the Old Testament books, later letters from the apostles and, still later, the Gospels) were kept hidden in a safe place, and only carried out at the time they were needed in the Divine Liturgy. This was done because soldiers might break in and arrest or kill the faithful at any time, and the Christians did not want the holy vessels or writings to be desecrated or destroyed. Here again we see how beautiful and wondrous the Holy Liturgy is, with the lives and memory of the first century martyrs woven into its fabric by the Holy Spirit.

This same practice of hiding the sacred things was often used by the Holy New Martyrs of the Ottoman era and during the reign of the Communist power in Eastern Europe, when
many copies of the Scripture were preserved from destruction in this same manner during the persecution.

Behold the beauty of Holy Orthodoxy, how it keeps faith and unity with all the holy martyrs, both ancient and contemporary, and with all the faithful who have gone before; how she realizes the bond of unity and love with all her members throughout the earth and in heaven, not only the faithful after the coming of Christ, but those faithful who awaited Him with hope and faith in Old Testament times. As we remember our brothers and sisters, the ancient martyrs, during the Little Entrance, let us also remember the holy martyrs and confessors who have suffered in Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the former Soviet Union and those who are confessing today against the evil of Ecumenism, pantheism and neo-Gnosticism in every nation of the earth, where a cloud of darkness has fallen over the hearts and minds of mankind, for, “...the Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never overpowered it” (Jn.1:5).
ORDER OF SERVICE:

The priest recites the prayer of the Little Entrance:

O Master, Lord our God, Who hast appointed in Heaven ranks and hosts of angels and archangels for the ministry of Thy glory; cause that, with our entrance, holy angels may enter also, serving Thee with us, and glorifying Thy goodness with us. For unto Thee are due all glory, honour and worship, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The priest reverences the Gospel, lifts it into the air, and proceeds to circle the Holy Table, preceded by a server bearing a candle. He leaves the sanctuary through the north door and stands before the opened Royal Door, facing the Holy Table (which is the throne of Christ), and

SCRIPTURE/LESSON:

When we pray and worship God in the Divine Liturgy, and in all the services, we do so in full unity with all True Orthodox Christians throughout the world. Moreover, we know that those who have gone before us, together with the hosts of angels, join us, surround us and stand and pray with us. The angels serve together with the priest and faithful; for we in the Holy Church are all one in Christ. Neither rank, nor distance, nor even death (which Christ has already conquered), breaks this unity and this oneness (see Rm.8:38-39). Thus, when the priest makes the Little Entrance, the holy angels enter with him.

The Royal Doors stand open, recalling how the heavens opened and the Spirit descended upon Christ at His baptism, which began the visible part of His earthly ministry. The entry with the Gospel recalls Christ's entry into His ministry after His baptism. Moreover, the entry
Blessed is the entry of Thy holy ones always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

The priest or deacon elevates the Gospel and, making the sign of the Cross with it, proclaims:
Wisdom! Upright!

back into the sanctuary with the Gospel symbolically summons the people to follow the Gospel into the Kingdom of God, reminding us that Christ is the “Door,” and no one can enter except by Him. It is the healing ministry of Christ on earth which made our entry into the Heavenly Kingdom possible, and this ministry is expressed in the Gospels.

“Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord” (Ps. 118:26).

“It is from Him that you have your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our Wisdom from God” (1Cor.1:30).

Since the Little Entrance is introducing us to the Gospel ministry of Christ, we are reminded that He is our Wisdom from God and we are receiving the divine wisdom of His teaching. For this reason, we receive the command, “stand aright,” meaning, stand with great attentiveness to receive what is being revealed.
As the priest and deacon enter the sanctuary, the faithful sing:
O come let us worship and bow down before Christ. O Son of God Who didst rise from the dead, save us who chant to Thee, Alleluia.

See Rev.15:1-4; Jn.9:38; Mk. 16:6, etc.

The Holy Table is both the throne and, symbolically, the tomb of Christ, and Christ is represented visibly upon it by the Gospel first, and by the presence of the Holy Gifts later. This draws our mind to the fact that Christ is invisibly present before us as both King and perfect Sacrifice. Having risen from the dead, He ascended to the eternal throne of glory, making it possible for us to stand before His throne, here invisibly, but in the age to come, clearly and visibly, and chant the eternal “alleluia.”

4
THE THRICE-HOLY HYMN

The Thrice-Holy Hymn (Trisagion) is one of the most simple and beautiful in the Liturgy. It is also one of the most ancient hymns of the Church. The dogmatic importance of the hymn cannot be overestimated, for it is connected with the Old Testament revelation of the Person of the Word (Christ), and it is also a confession of the All-Holy Trinity. We know from Scripture that the Thrice-Holy Hymn is chanted by the heavenly hosts before the very throne of Our Saviour, and so we especially feel our bond of unity with the heavenly Church — with the angels, saints, and those who have fallen asleep in the faith — when we chant this hymn.

The Thrice-Holy Hymn was introduced in the vision of the
Lord of Hosts which was revealed to the prophet Isaiah (6:1-8). In the vision, Isaiah saw God the Word (Jn.12:41) in the Glory of the Godhead (the Trinity). Before Him, the Seraphim were chanting the Thrice-Holy Hymn. According to the Great Council of Moscow of 1667, the title, “Lord of Hosts” refers to the Godhead, and not to only one Person of the Trinity. Of course, the human-like form seen in the vision was The Word (Christ), as is clear from both Jn.12: 41, and especially Col.2:9 (“In Him [Christ] dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily”). From the vision of Isaiah, we receive another indication of the All-Holy Trinity, that there is One God, manifested in Three Persons. For, at Is.6:8, we hear God saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” This same revelation, with the Thrice-Holy Hymn is repeated in the fourth chapter of Revelations.

It is notable that this hymn follows immediately after the Little Entrance, for the Word, Jesus Christ, (represented by the Gospel) has just been enthroned upon the Holy Table. We said that the Little Entrance typifies the entry of Christ upon His teaching of the Kingdom after His baptism. At baptism, the Holy Trinity was made manifest, giving meaning to the vision of the Lord of Hosts, and to all the plural self-references of God in the Old Testament. When we chant the Thrice-Holy Hymn, we consciously stand before the throne of the Trinity, confessing the Trinity, and glorifying Him.

The actual wording of the Thrice-Holy Hymn as we chant it in the Liturgy, was given to us by the Apostles. The wording of the hymn was confirmed against a certain heresy, by a great miracle. Because of the distortions of the Arians and certain other groups, the following miracle occurred.

At the time of the great earthquakes in Constantinople in 434, the people began a great procession in repentance and prayer to God for deliverance from the series of tremors. During the great outdoor gathering, in the presence of Emperor Theodosios the Younger and Patriarch Proklos, a young boy, Akakios, was caught up to the heavens. When he returned to
the people, he chanted the hymn he had heard of the angels: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." When this hymn had thus been chanted, the threat ceased and the city was delivered. The hymn was certified by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (in the acts of the first meeting), and again against the heresy of Peter the Fuller, at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (c.81, Ecu.6). We commemorate this event, and the revelation about the Thrice-Holy Hymn on 25 September/8 October (see Act 1, Ec.5; c.81, Ec.6; St John Damascene, *Concise Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Bk.3, Ch.10).

**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

*The faithful chant the troparions of the day while the priest says the following “Prayer of the Thrice-Holy”:*  
O Holy God, Who dwellest amongst Thy saints and art glorified by the Cherubim and praised by the Seraphim with thrice holy voice, and worshipped by all the hosts of heaven; Thou Who hast brought all things out of nothingness into being; Thou Who hast created man in Thine image and likeness, and hast adorned him with all Thy favours; Thou Who givest to the supplicant wisdom and understanding and Who dost not neglect the sinner,

**SCRIPTURE/LESSON:**

“The Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up... and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim...and one cried unto the other, `Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory’” (Is.6:1-3). “Look upon the heavens and the earth, and consider that God made them of things that were not; and so was man made likewise (2Mac.7:28; see Col.1:16); “...and so God created man in His own image and likeness...and God..."
but hast set forth the way of repentance unto salvation; Thou Who hast accounted us, Thy humble and unworthy servants, worthy to stand at this time before the glory of Thy Holy sanctuary and to bring to Thee that adoration and praise which are due Thee: Do Thou, O Master, accept even from the mouths of us sinners, the Thrice-Holy Hymn and visit us in Thy righteousness; forgive us all our transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, sanctify our souls and bodies and grant that we may worship Thee in holiness all the days of our lives; through the intercessions of Thy Holy Mother and all the saints who have pleased Thee from the beginning of time: for Thou, O our God, art Holy and to Thee do we ascribe glory, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

\textit{Having completed the prayer, the priest exclaims:}

For Holy art Thou, O our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and blessed them” (Gn.1:26-28); “Thou hast made him a little less than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Ps.8:5; Hb.2:7,9). “We do not cease to intercede for you...that you might be made full of the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1:9). “I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk.5:32). “O Lord, truly I am Thy servant...I will pay my vows unto the Lord... in the courts of the Lord's house...praise ye the Lord” (Ps.116:16-19). “You are forgiven, made righteous and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1Cor.6: 11). “And the prayers of the saints ascended up before God...” (Rev. 8: 4); “...I desire that... supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men” (2Tm.2:1-2). “The prayers of the righteous avail much” (Js.5:16).

When we say that God is “holy,” we mean that He is absolutely perfect in His entire Being. The glory of God is the glory of pure, total per-
ever, and unto ages of ages. The faithful respond: Amen!

While the faithful chant the Thrice Holy, the priest recites this prayer:
Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed art Thou on the throne of glory in Thy kingdom, Thou Who art enthroned upon the Cherubim; always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The faithful, with one mouth and one heart, chant the Thrice-Holy Hymn:
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Have mercy on us; Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Have mercy on us; Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Have mercy on us; Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we say that a person or thing is “holy,” we mean that it is consecrated to God, not that the person or thing has any holiness of its own.

The faithful respond, “Amen,” meaning, “truly,” or “in truth,” signifying that they ascribe all holiness and glory to God.

“And lo, a throne stood in heaven, and One seated on the throne” (Rev.4:2). “He is enthroned upon the Cherubim” (Ps.99:1). “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Hb.1:8).

“And day and night they never cease chanting, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty’” (Rev.4:8).

The “Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” is inserted here to remind us that we are glorifying the Holy Trinity as one God, and each Person of the Trinity as equal in power and immortality. God alone
Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen! Holy Immortal, have mercy on us; Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.¹

The Thrice-Holy Hymn, revealing and glorifying the Trinity was chanted before the throne of The Word (Christ) both in the Old Testament (Is.6:1-3; see Jn.12:41) and in the new (Rev.4:8).

5

APOSTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

When the Gospel was brought forth at the Little Entrance, it was closed. For, at that time, we experienced the mystery and revelation of our Saviour's entry into His ministry, and the Gospel itself had not yet been opened to us. The Word had appeared in the world and John had announced Him. In Christ's baptism — His entry upon His ministry — the Holy Trinity was made manifest and we chanted the Thrice-Holy Hymn. Now, logically, the Word is opened to us, and the Gospel of our Saviour — His ministry — is proclaimed.

However, the Apostle is read before the Gospel. This too, is logical, since the Gospel was taught directly to the Apostles, and we received it through them and are taught it by them and their successors, the bishops. We are led to the Gospel, therefore, by the Apostles.

The Apostle is read from the centre of the church, for the Apostles went forth among all peoples to teach them and to unite them to Christ's Church through their teaching. The Gospel is read from the ambo because it contains the words of Christ Himself, and typifies His own preaching on earth. Moreover, the faithful, having been brought to Christ by the witness of the Apostles and, united together in His Holy Church, are gathered together before Christ.

The Apostle amplifies the Gospel reading for the day, just
as the Apostles themselves explained the Gospel, and both readings mutually clarify each other. Moreover, the priest usually preaches his sermon now, further explaining the Gospel and Apostle readings of the day. The cycle of readings is set by the Holy Church and leads the faithful through the yearly liturgical cycle. As with all aspects of Church life, it is not subject to self-will or “convenience,” but flows in the harmonious stream of evangelical-liturgical unity which characterizes the life of the Holy Orthodox Church of Christ.

THE SERMON

The entire Liturgy preaches the Gospel. The ikons, the ikonostas, the order of the service and everything which is done in the Liturgy provide a vital sermon in which, by grace, the faithful actually participate in the Gospel.

Following the reading of the “Apostle” (in which one of the apostles preaches the Gospel) and the “Evangelia” (in which the Gospel of Christ is set forth) the priest preaches his sermon. The sermon is a matter of great care, for Orthodox Christian clergy are not permitted to preach histrionically or with excessive emotion, lest they agitate the faithful to sensual emotionalism rather than bring them to sound reason (in the acts of the First Ecumenical Council, priests are enjoined not to preach in a histrionic manner). Sermons ought to explain the interpretation of the day's readings, not according to personal understandings of the preacher, but from the explanation set forth in the Church by the Holy Spirit. In addition to this, the priest (or one whom he has blessed to preach) instructs the faithful concerning what is useful and necessary to salvation, and what is edifying to the soul, explaining the meaning of fasting, the feasts and the divine services. In every case, the preacher appeals not to irrational emotions, but to faith and sound reason. Preachers may not teach according to self-will, nor deliver sermons contrived beforehand to bring honour to themselves for their speaking or intellectual abilities. Sermons
ought not to be some sort of lengthy, emotional harangue, or some saccharine philosophical meandering, but a sound, clear and direct word of enlightenment and edification on the Gospel of God's Kingdom (see, e.g., c.19 of 5-6 Ecumenical Council).

6

LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

The Gospel has now been proclaimed, and we have moved nearer to the moment when we receive the Holy Mysteries of Christ. At this point, we intensify our prayers and, in even more fervent preparation for the Mystery of Holy Communion, we offer these petitions. In order to emphasize this, and even more awaken the soul and spiritual senses, the Litany of Fervent Supplication is offered. In this litany, we especially show the unity of love and mutual intercession which unite the faithful of the whole world, both the living and the reposed, together in one Body of Christ.

ORDER OF SERVICE:  

The priest (or deacon) proclaims the petitions of the litany:

Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind, let us say:

The faithful respond: Lord have mercy.

Priest (or deacon):

SCRIEPTURE/LESSON:

“I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved... unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Ths.5:23).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...” (Titus 3:5).

“O Lord God of our fathers...
O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy. [And we continue with petitions similar to those of the Great Litany of Peace and with the Litany of Preparation, but with special emphasis on intercession for both the living and the reposed. This Litany is followed, on week days, by a Litany for the reposed which is not permitted to be served on the Lord's Day].

...we stand in Thy presence and cry unto Thee... hearken to us and help us” (2Chr.20:6-9; see Dn.3:26; Acts 3:13; 5:30).

7

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

A catechumen is one who has been made a Christian, but has not yet been reborn into the Body of Christ, that is, he has not yet become a member of the Body of Christ, the Holy Church. For, from ancient times, one who desires to unite himself to Christ, comes to the Church and professes his belief in Christ. After this, the priest or bishop reads over him the prayer for making one a Christian, and afterwards, the prayers for making one a catechumen. The two prayers are now usually read, one after the other or combined. In the early days of the Church, there was no hurry to baptize catechumens, and they would often be taught for as long as two or three years before being brought to holy baptism (usually on Great, Holy Saturday).

As Christians and catechumens, these people have become
“hearers of the word” and learners. Thus, they remain present in the Liturgy as observers and listeners through the reading of the Gospel and the Litany which follows it (including, on weekdays, the Litany for the Reposed). They have not yet been born again in holy baptism and united to the Body of Christ, and so they are not participants in the Liturgy, not partakers of the Holy Mysteries, thus, they cannot logically be present for the great anthem of the people of God, the Cherubimic Hymn, and the Great Entrance. At this point, therefore, they are dismissed from the congregation and go to a place apart to read, study and pray for enlightenment, during the rest of the Divine Liturgy.

One might wonder why the Catechumens' Litany and Dismissal is served aloud even when there are no catechumens present in a given parish church. The reason is self-evident if one studies the Litany and remembers that the Church is one Body of Christ, single, undivided, and experiences its unity most profoundly in the Eucharistic Liturgy. There is, therefore, no liturgical disharmony between parishes. All members of the Body pray together and in unison for those who desire to be united to that body, “That He may unite them to His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.” We do not close our hearts and withhold our prayers for someone just because they are not present before us, because we do not have some sort of “vested and selfish interest in them.” We pray in unison for all catechumens everywhere in the world, and this is just another example of the powerful bond of unity and love which identifies one as a true member of the Holy Church.

Moreover, when we pray for the enlightenment of catechumens, it must also be remembered that all Christians who actually do believe in Christ, are potentially catechumens of His Holy Church, (for, being a Christian is the first step toward being reborn into the Holy Church and united with Christ), and thus we pray that these heterodox Christians might be further enlightened and “catechized by the word of truth” so that they may become catechumens and be united to the Body of
Christ, the Holy Orthodox Church.

Immediately following the Resurrection of Christ, many of the new converts were people who had personally seen and heard Christ and many of them had even followed Him as a teacher and prophet before. Such people were baptized more quickly. The core of the Divine Liturgy is older than the New Testament Scripture, and so we have few liturgical details mentioned in the Scripture. They were already common knowledge and well understood before the Gospels were written. It is clear, however, that the manner of instructing catechumens and dismissing them from the Liturgy was settled by the Apostles very soon after parishes began to develop outside Jerusalem. The rule of dismissing the catechumens appeared already in the Liturgy written by the Apostle James, the first bishop of Jerusalem. Indeed, the young man clothed in a white garment who fled at the time of our Saviour's arrest was likely a newly illumined member of the Church who had either just recently been baptized or was prepared for baptism.

8

THE CHERUBIC HYMN
(The Great Anthem of the “People of God”)

Immediately after the dismissal of the catechumens, the priest (or deacon) continues with the Litany of the Faithful: “As many as are of the faithful, again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord!” and the rest, which is almost the same as the Great Litany of Peace, with which the Liturgy began.

It must be remembered that the inner purpose of the Orthodox Liturgy is to make the worshippers on earth participants in the perpetual worship in Heaven. This in itself provides one with the basic key to understanding the Gospel. For the Sacred Tradition which has shaped the Litanies and the hymns of the Liturgy has thus preserved and explicated that “primitive” Christian life and tradition which underlies and
precedes the Gospels themselves. The Liturgy was, as we have said before, the first written form of the Gospel. Nowhere in the Divine Liturgy is this made more profoundly clear than in the Cherubimic Hymn, the great anthem of the people of God.

In truth, the faithful confess and proclaim the inner meaning of the Gospel, the Liturgy, the Church and the whole Christian life, when they reverently and compunctiously together chant the Cherubimic Hymn. It is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit Who gave us this hymn that the faithful, gathered in a unison of love, faith and hope, do truly stand before the very throne of the Trinity and, just as the invisible bodiless powers of heaven, we chant the eternal hymn of praise and glory. For, Christ, the King of all, comes into our midst that we may truly receive Him and partake of His all-precious Body and Blood, as He has commanded us, and unite ourselves with Him, and thus obtain by grace that same immortality enjoyed by the angelic hosts, that immortality which is the gift of participation in “Him Who alone has immortality” (1Tm. 6:16).

It is clear, then, why the catechumens have been dismissed before this point in the Liturgy. For, as yet, not having been reborn into the Body of Christ through Holy Baptism, they are not partakers of this great and holy mystery.

The Great Entrance takes place during this wondrous hymn.

**ORDER OF SERVICE**

*The faithful chant together, with great compunction and reverence:*

Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim and chant the thrice-holy hymn to the Life-Creating Trinity, now

**SCRIPTURE/LESSON:**

..I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the skirt of his robe filled the temple. About him were attendant Seraphim, and each had six wings; one pair covered his face, and one pair his
lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of all, Who now comes invisibly escorted by the angelic host. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

feet, and one pair was spread in flight. They were calling ceaselessly to one another, `Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.' And as each one called, the threshold shook to its foundations, while the house was filled with smoke. Then I cried, `Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; yet with these eyes I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.' Then one of the Seraphim flew to me carrying in his hand a glowing coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, `See, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is removed, and your sin is wiped away.' Then I heard the Lord saying, `Whom shall I send? Who will go for me?' and I answered, `Here am I; send me"' (Is.6:1-8. See Rev. 4: 8).
THE LITANY OF THE GIFTS

The Great Entrance has brought us to the final days of our Saviour's earthly work of our salvation. We have entered with Him into “Jerusalem,” confessing Him to be the “King of All.” Now we again, more compunctiously and fervently, offer our united “communal prayer,” which is called a litany. The Holy Gifts have been set forth on the Holy Table and we are preparing ourselves more intensely for the great miracle which is about to take place. By the action of the Holy Spirit, by God’s grace, the bread and wine of the gifts are about to be changed into the very Body and Blood of Christ, for our salvation. This litany of “oblation,” which is followed by the Symbol of Faith, the universal confession of our Orthodox Faith, helps prepare us and bring us toward this wondrous moment. We are preparing ourselves to receive the Holy Mystery of Communion, to truly receive the “King of All,” not as those who one day glorified Him, crying “Hosannah,” and the next day cried out, “Crucify Him,” or were simply indifferent to Him. Once more we confess Jesus Christ to be our God and Saviour, as we, in unity of heart and faith, and with one voice, beseech Him for those spiritual things which are necessary for us.

ORDER OF SERVICE:

Priest or Deacon:
Let us complete our prayer unto the Lord.

SCRIPTURE/LESSON:

“Let us complete,” it says, because we are drawing near to the moment of the Holy Mystery, and we must complete our prayerful preparation for it. This is the final litany before the consecration of the Holy Gifts. All the faithful, led by the priest, will
For the precious gifts set forth, let us pray to the Lord.

call upon God to send down His Holy Spirit to accomplish the miracle and each one must be prepared for this moment.

“Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (Jas. 1:17). This prayer is referring specifically to the Gift of the precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and with it all that He accomplished for us.

Let us reflect further on this petition, that we may be taught yet more by it: “Many will entreat the favour of the king; and every man is a friend of him who gives gifts. All the brethren of the poor man detest him; how much more do his friends go far off from him” (Pr. 19:6-7).

When our Saviour was delivered up before Pilate, His “brethren” saw Him as poor and detestable, and His friends fled far from Him in fear. We, however, understand that, even in His bondage and suffering, even on the Cross, He is the King of Glory, the giver of “every good and every perfect gift”
For this holy house, and those who with faith, reverence and the fear of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord.

For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

(Js.1:17), and thus we confess in this petition that Christ is both the Gift and the Giver of the Gift (read Jn.6: 53-58f).

“Lord I have loved the habitation of Thy house, where Thine honour dwelleth” (Ps.25: 8; see Gn.28:17; Ps.5:7; 23:6; 26:8; 27:4; Ps.2: 11; 5:7. Prov.1:7). In all the above verses, the word translated as “fear” is the Hebrew “yirah.” It signifies a reverent awe, not terror. It is important to maintain this context, for Apostle Paul tells us, “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of strength and love, and sound mind” (2Tm.1:7).

“Rejoicing in hope, being patient in tribulation and continuing diligently in prayer” (Rm.12: 12); “Blessed be God...Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those who are in troubles, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2Cor.1:3-4. See Hb. 4:16).

“Grace and peace...from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He
That the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

To the rest of the petitions, the faithful respond:
Grant this, O Lord.

An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Pardon and remission of our sins and offences, let us ask of the Lord.

Things good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

might deliver us from this present evil world..." (Gal.1:3-4).

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to You. Let your heart not be troubled or afraid” (Jn.14:27).

“The desire of the righteous shall be granted” (Prov.10:24); see Rev. 3:21.

“And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me with good and comforting words” (Zach.1:13); “…in heaven, their angels constantly behold the glory of My Father” (Mt.18:10); see Tobit 12:12f.

“I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me” (Jer. 33: 8); “Whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10: 43; see Rm.3:23-24).

“This is a faithful saying, and I will that you constantly affirm that they who have be-
That we may complete the remaining time of our lives in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defence before the dread judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

The Litany ends with the priest's exclamation:
By the compassions of Thine
Only-Begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine All-Holy, Good and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

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

The faithful complete this exclamation:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided.

The Priest or Deacon proclaims:
The doors, the doors! In wisdom, let us attend.

(See Jn.3:16, etc.)

“Having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil.2:2); “Be of one mind, having compassion one for another, love each other as brethren” (1Pt.3:8); That you may with one mouth glorify God…” (Rm.15:6).

See Mt.28:19; Jn.1:18; 14:6-7, etc.

Properly, at this point all those who are not communicants should be excluded from the church. In earlier times, no one who was not of the faithful was permitted to enter the church after this point or be present for the rest of the Liturgy. Since the faithful present are fully participants in the consecration of the Holy Gifts, it is hardly
fitting that those who cannot participate be present. Those who cannot with their whole hearts proclaim the symbol of faith, those who are not eligible to partake of the Holy Mysteries, to be present for the Symbol of faith and the Eucharistic portion of the Liturgy, are now excluded from this central portion of the Liturgy. At this point in the Liturgy, we recall the command of God to make fast the doors of the ark of Noah (Gn.7:16), and thus, those appointed to it in the early Church now made fast the doors of the church, which is our ark, so that no one could enter after this point. Thus, this exclamation is a reaffirmation and declaration of the unity and uniqueness of the Holy Orthodox Church, the true ark of salvation.

10
THE SYMBOL OF FAITH

At this point, the Symbol of Faith is chanted in unison by the faithful. No one who is not of the faithful ought to be in the church at this point. In the chanting of the Symbol, there is a confession of oneness in the faith, and it
signifies that all those chanting it together are in communion with each other in the Holy Church, and accounted worthy — by grace — to partake of the Holy Mystery. The Symbol is a summary of the Gospel of Salvation and, therefore, logically, of the basic dogmas of the Orthodox Faith. The chanting of the confession of faith is the final step in our preparation for the great miracle of the change of the Holy Gifts. It is manifest, then, that none who are not prepared to communicate the Mystery ought to be present.

**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

| I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. |
| And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten, Begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light; True God of True God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by 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. |
| See Mt.6:9; Gn.1:1; Gn.17:1; etc. |
| Jn.3:16; Ps.2:7; Acts 13:33; Hb.1:5, 5:5; Jn.1:14, 18; 3:17-18, etc. |
| Jn.3:19; 1Jn.1:5; Rv. 21:23, etc. |
| Jn.1:1; Jn.10:30; Col.2:9, etc. |
| Jn.1:1-3; Col.1:15-17, etc. |
| Mt. Ch.1 & 2; Lk. Ch.1 & 2; Jn.1:1-18. |
And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; Jn. 18:28-19:19, etc.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; Jn. Ch.20 & 21.

And ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; Mk.16:19-20; Lk.24:51, etc.

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end. Acts 17:31; Rm.2:16; 2Cor.5:10.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets; Ps.50:11; Is.63:10-11; Lk.11:13; Eph.1:13; 1Ths.4:8; Mt.-28:19.

In One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Mt.16:18; 1Tm.3:15f; Col.1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23-32, esp. v.27-29; Jn.10:16; 1Cor.12:12-13; Eph. 4:4-6; Eph.3:10-11.

I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. Eph.4:5; Jn.3:5; Acts 2:38, etc.

I look for the Resurrection of the dead. And the life of the age to come. Amen. Jn. 11:25; Mt. 22:31; Lk.20:36-38; Hb.11:35, etc.
The “Anaphora,” literally, the “offering up” of the gifts, is the moment of the consecration, when the Holy Spirit descends on the gifts that have been offered and changes them to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. In this portion of the Liturgy, we recall the night before Christ's betrayal, when he bestowed the mystical supper upon us as the continuous memorial of His teachings and sacrifice for us, and the continuous participation in His Body and Blood, that we may be one with Him and participate in His victory and ascension. At this point, the utmost compunction and reverence ought to overtake the whole congregation, as they await with expectation and awe the moment of the consecration, the great miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit in response to the prayers of faith of the “people of God,” led by their priest or bishop.

**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

**Priest or deacon:**
Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear! Let us attend that we may offer the holy oblation in peace.

**People respond:**
A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.

**SCRIPTURE/LESSON:**

“Stand fast, in one spirit, with one mind” (Phil.1:27); “Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye who fear Him” (Rev.19:5); “Attend in order to receive understanding, for I give you a wondrous gift” (Prov.4:1-2); “That you may be of His peace, without spot and blameless” (2Pt.3:14).

“Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied” (Jude 1:2); “Bring the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord” (Jer.
Priest, while blessing the people, exclaims:
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People respond, blessing the priest in return:
And with thy spirit.

Priest:
Let us lift up our hearts.

People respond:
We lift them up unto the Lord.

Priest:
Let us give thanks unto the Lord!

People respond:
It is meet and right.

33: 11); “Offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God” (1Pt. 2:5)

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2Cor. 13: 14).

“Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts” (1Pt.3:15). “I leave peace with you, I give my peace to you...Let your heart not be troubled nor afraid” (Jn.14: 27).

This prayerful exchange between the priest and the faithful is of great importance, for it clearly speaks of the role of the people as a “royal priesthood.” In the Divine Liturgy, the priest invokes Christ's promise, saying, “...Thou hast given us these supplications [to have] in common agreement, and hast promised to grant petitions even unto two and three who agree and are gathered in Thy name...” (Prayer of the 3rd Antiphon). This agreement in faith and purpose is
the expression of the unity of
the congregation — those
who gather in His name —
and the cornerstone of the
Liturgy (the Liturgy being
“the work of the people of
God”). This is especially true
of the Anaphora (Gr.; the
“offering up” of that which
sanctifies), which is some-
times also called the mystical
liturgy in patristic writings.

With the words “Let us
give thanks unto the Lord,”
the priest leads the synaxis to
the threshold of the Ana-
phora. The Fathers teach that,
at this point, in order for the
Liturgy to proceed, the
congregation must vocalize
its agreement and assent by
replying, “It is meet and
right.” Then, upon hearing
the affirmation, the priest
goes on to that communal
work par excellence: offering
thanksgiving or Eucharistic
prayer (Gr.; “efkharistia,” —
thanksgiving) and the Holy
Oblation, acting for the
synaxis, symbolically “in the
place and type” of Christ.
Taking up the words begun
by the people, he quietly re-
cites the Eucharistic prayer,
“It is meet and right to hymn
Thee, to bless Thee, to praise
Thee, to give thanks to Thee...” In the early centuries, this prayer and others that are said “secretly” today were usually intoned aloud.

The Orthodox Church regards this prayer as the entry to the Anaphora, the mystical liturgy itself. Its inauguration requires first the declaration of the people’s assent, “It is meet and right.”

“The offering of thanksgiving again is common: for neither doth he give thanks alone, but also all the people. For having first heard their voices, when they assent that it is `meet and right' to do so, then he begins the thanksgiving.” (St John Chrysostom, *Homily 18, on 2nd Corinthians*, 4th century.)

“When all make their profession of the divine faith together, they anticipate the mystical thanksgiving...In making that thanksgiving, the worthy confirm their gratitude for God's kindness, having no other way to reciprocate God's infinite blessings” (St Maximos the Confessor, *The Mystagogia*, 34:31 7th century).

“The priest says: `Let us
Priest prays:
It is meet and right to hymn Thee, to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to give thanks unto Thee, and to worship Thee in every place of Thy dominion, for Thou art God inexpressible, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing, eternally the same, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit. Thou didst bring us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away, didst raise us up again, and didst not cease to do all things until Thou hadst brought us up to Heaven, and hadst bestowed upon us Thy

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The people affirm: `It is meet and right' to send up hymns of thanksgiving” (St Germanos of Constantinople, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, 41. 8th century).

“The celebrant addresses to God this act of thanksgiving: `Let us give thanks unto the Lord.’ The faithful give their consent, saying, `It is meet and right’.” (Nicholas Kavasilas, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, Ch.26. 14th century). 2

“Bless the Lord, all His works, in every place of His dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul” (Ps.102:22, and especially all of Psalm 103).

“I beseech you, my child, look upon the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not; and so was man made likewise” (2Mac.7:28).

“...in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord: giving thanks always and for all things unto
kingdom, which is to come. For all these things we give thanks unto Thee, and to Thine only-begotten Son, and to Thy Holy Spirit, for all things of which we know and of which we know not, for the benefits both manifest and hid, which have been wrought for us. We give thanks unto Thee also for this Liturgy which Thou hast vouchsafed to accept from our hands, though there stand beside Thee thousands of Archangels and ten thousands of Angels, the Cherubim and the Seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, borne aloft and winged: Singing the triumphal hymn, shouting, crying, and saying:

People:
Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Savaoth, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

The Priest Prays:
With these blessed Powers, we also, O man-befriending Master, cry and say: Holy art Thou and all-holy, Thou and

God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.5:19-20). see, for example, Ps.79:1; 98:1, etc.

see Is.6:1-10; Rev. ch.4.
Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit; Holy art Thou and all holy, and magnificent is Thy glory, Who hast so loved Thy world as to give Thine only-begotten Son that all that believe in Him should not perish but have life everlasting, Who, when He had come and fulfilled all the ekonoma for us, in the night in which He was given up, or rather gave Himself up, for the life of the world, took bread in His holy and immaculate and blameless hands, and when He had given thanks, and blessed it, and hallowed it, and broken it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles saying:

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

**People:**
Amen.

**The Priest Prays:**
In like manner also the cup after he had supped, saying: All of you drink of it; this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you.
People:
Amen.

The Priest Prays:
Remembering therefore this saving commandment, and all that came to pass on our behalf, the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into Heaven, the Session at the right hand, the second and glorious Coming again:

Thine own of Thine own, we offer unto Thee, because of all and for all.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come” (1Cor.11:23-26).

“Everything cometh from Thee, and it is only of Thine own gifts that we offer to Thee” (1Chron.29:14).

Having of ourselves nothing worthy to offer to the Lord, we offer up what He has given to us, for what can
we offer to Him when “the earth is His and the fulness thereof.” But since God desires righteousness and we have none to offer, we offer Him the righteousness of His own Son, Who has fulfilled all righteousness for us.

13
THE EPIKLESIS
(The Invocation of the Holy Spirit)

The epiklesis is the actual consecration of the Gifts, during which the miracle is completed and the change of the Gifts from sanctified bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ is fully accomplished. All that has gone before this moment has been an ever deepening preparation for the moment of this awesome Gift of God. In the first portion of the Divine Liturgy, we have been called into a spirit of oneness and unity in the Holy Spirit. Our hearts and minds have been sensitized by the words of the litanies and hymns, and by our growing communion of love with one another. We have been instructed, and we have been led forward in the process of searching our souls to root out all malice and to forgive everyone, desiring also their forgiveness. In all this, we have not only been prepared for the Mystery, but we have fully taken part in the unfolding of the Holy Mystery.

We will not set forth the prayers of the epiklesis here. This moment in the Divine Liturgy is approached with the utmost awe and compunctiousness. It is no less the “work of the people” than is the rest of the Liturgy, and the whole congregation comes to this moment with deepening reverence and thankfulness. Here, truly, in the Holy Spirit, the boundaries of time are
abolished, and every physical, material and human limitation which seems to be a separation in the commonwealth of God, vanishes. For, Christ, our High Priest, “sacrificed for our sins once perpetually when he offered Himself” (Hb.7:27), and we, in all times and places, now become participants in the timeless, perpetual and eternal mystery of redemption. In this moment we stand in Bethlehem — for the pre-eternal God comes to us bodily; we stand in Gethsemane — for the God-man pours Himself out for us; we stand on Golgotha — for the Body and Blood of the Redeemer is offered for us; we stand at the open sepulchre, beholding that “death has been swallowed up in victory” (1Cor.15:24). We stand at the very gates of Paradise, prepared to receive the Fruit of the Tree of Life Which blossomed forth on the Cross. We stand in awe and fear and spiritual rejoicing, understanding that the body of the man Jesus is raised from the dead, has ascended into heaven and sits as God in the right hand of the glory of the Godhead. Therefore, in this one body of the Son of man, all the laws of the fallen nature and the bonds of death have been totally conquered and the power of death and of the evil-one have been utterly set at nought. We understand that we, in partaking of that one triumphant Body partake also in all its victory and life and become united with that very Body, enthroned forever in the glory of the Living God. We become one with Him Who is the life and the resurrection, and we are united with Him Who will come to judge the living and the dead. We receive that sustenance without which no one can have any life in him, as our Saviour said:

"I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he will live forever. The bread that I give him is My flesh, which I give so that the world may live...I tell you in truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink of His blood, you cannot have life in yourselves. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has everlasting life, and I will
raise him to life on 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 live in him. The living Father sent Me, and because of Him I live also. In the same way, whoever eats Me will live because of Me” (Jn.6:51-58).

Let us, therefore, come to this moment in awe, in repentance, in spiritual rejoicing and all expectation, not as without understanding, but as filled with all understanding knowing that “now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed” (Rm.13:11).

Following the consecration, the priest commemorates the living and the reposed, the hierarchy and the faithful and he censes the Gifts and the Holy Table, and the congregation sings the hymn to the Theotokos. By this, we confess the unity of the Holy Church and the fulness of the grace of the Holy Spirit and we peer into the mystery of eternity in which our own perception of Euclidian space and linear time vanishes. Spiritually, in this moment of deep prayer and oneness with the heavenly Church, we may be delivered from the constraints of our finite, three dimensional perception. For we have entered into a frame in which not only is the historical event of our redemption present to us now, but we are ourselves present to the spiritual event. All linear conceptions of time and space collapse in the divine services, and never more profoundly than when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ Who was offered for us “once continuously [or, perpetually]” (Hb.10: 10) two thousand years ago. In the Divine Liturgy, we enter a dimension in which time and space are one, the moment becomes immeasurable and the finite is enveloped by the infinite. The past, the present and the future are all present in this moment and we lose every concept of linearity as we become present to eternity, present to paradise, present to life, present to the Trinity.

In such a moment, in such a dimension, we can apprehend...
the mystical reality that the Liturgy is above and free of the bondage of our own finiteness and mortality, but rather brings us into communion with a dimension of reality in which not only time and space are one, but every boundary of past, present and future vanishes, and every dimension of time, space and existence are encompassed in each other.

When we fail to understand this aspect of our Liturgy and absorb Western concepts and modes of contemplation, we deprive ourselves of this treasure and lose the very meaning of the event and miss the meaning of being itself.

Following the consecration of the Holy Gifts, the priest and faithful continue their preparation:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priest Softly Prays:</strong></td>
<td>“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1Cor.10:17).</td>
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<tr>
<td>And unite all of us to one another who become partakers of the one Bread and Cup in the communion of the Holy Spirit. Grant that none of us may partake of the holy Body and Blood of Thy Christ for judgment or condemnation. Instead, may we find mercy and grace with all the saints who through the ages have been well-pleasing to Thee: ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, teachers, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith:</td>
<td>“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body” (1Cor.11:27;29).</td>
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| | “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith…” (Hb.12:2). “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘The

● 117 ●
**Priest:**
Especially our most holy, most pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos, and Ever Virgin Mary.

**People:**
It is truly meet to call thee blest, the Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honourable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**The Priest Continues:**
The holy prophet and forerunner, John the Baptist; the holy, glorious and all-praised apostles; saints____, whose memory we celebrate today, and all the saints, through whose supplications do Thou visit us, O God. And remember all those who have fallen asleep in hope of the resurrection unto life everlasting, among the first just shall live by faith” *(Rm. 1:17).*

“The righteous shall be kept in everlasting memory” *(Ps. 112: 6).* “The memory of the righteous is blessed” *(Prov. 10: 7).*
Again we beseech Thee: remember, O Lord, the episcopate of the Orthodox who rightly distribute the word of Thy truth, the whole presbytery and diaconate in Christ, and every sacred and monastic order.

Again, we offer this reasonable adoration unto Thee for the whole world; for the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; for those who live a pure and sober life; for all the hierarchs and their synodias. Grant those in authority peaceful times, that in their tranquility, we may lead a calm and peaceful life in all piety and sobriety.

Among the first, remember, O Lord, our Bishop ——, preserving him in Thy holy churches in peace, safety, honour, health, length of days, and rightly dividing the word of Thy truth.

*People:* Each and every pious and Orthodox Christian.

“First of all, then, I admonish that petitions, prayers and intercessions and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority or high responsibility, that we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life, a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way” (1Tm.2:1-2).
Priest Softly Prays:
Remember, O Lord, this city (sacred monastery) in which we dwell, every city and rural area, and the faithful who dwell in them.
Remember, O Lord, those who are travelling, those who are sick and suffering, those who are in prisons and their salvation.
Remember, O Lord, those who bring offerings and do good works in Thy holy churches, and those who remember the needy, and send forth Thy mercy upon us all;

Priest:
And grant unto us that with one mouth and one heart we may glorify and hymn Thine all-honourable and majestic name, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People:
Amen.

Priest:
And the mercies of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ shall be with you all.

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ“ (Rm.15:6).

“Great are Thy tender mercies O Lord: by Thy righteousness, give me life” (Ps. 115:156; Gal.6:16; Eph.2:4; 1Tm.1:2; Ti.1:4; 1Pt.1:3; 2Jn.1:3; etc.).
THE LITANY OF PREPARATION

In this litany, we reaffirm the contents of all the previous litanies and we contemplate these petitions with especial compunction. The purpose of this litany is to intensify our inner preparation to receive the Holy Mysteries. Since the contents of this litany are essentially the same as those in the preceding litany, we will not repeat the entire discussion of the words again. This final Litany of Preparation is served as the faithful enter deeply into prayer, preparing to approach the Holy Gifts, the “medicine of immortality” as St Ignatios the God-bearer refers to it.

ORDER OF SERVICE:

Priest:
Calling to remembrance all the saints, again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Priest:
That our man-befriending God, Who has accepted them upon His holy and noetic altar above the Heavens for an odour of spiritual fragrance, will send down upon us in return the Divine Grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us pray.

SCRIPTURE/LESSON:

“The righteous shall be kept in everlasting memory” (Ps.-112: 6). “The memory of the righteous is blessed” (Prov.-10: 7).

This petition begins, “Οπος ὁ φιλάνθρωπος…. The word “filanthropos” has been variously translated “merciful,” “man-loving,” or “Who loves mankind.” However, other Greek words for “love” are used in the Liturgy and they are quite specific. Filanthropos (φιλάνθρωπος) is properly translated “man-befriending.”
More significantly, the word “noetic” (lit. νοητός in this petition) is often mis-translated in this litany as “invisible,” or “ideal.” We need to pause and reflect on this word for a moment, because it has much to say about our understanding both concerning the Holy Mystery which is being consecrated, the Divine Liturgy and the actual place and spiritual reality of the faithful during the Liturgy.

The word “noetic” is related to “nous,” which refers to “soul,” “mind,” and/or “intellect.” Often in the Greek, no clear distinction is made between the various references because of the unity of the person and the clear understanding that the human mind and soul are not so “invisible” as Western philosophy often surmises. Noetic refers to that which cannot be comprehended by reason, but is apprehended in the intellect with the help of grace. As an experience, it occurs in the intellect/mind/soul, also by the action of grace. In this regard, we may understand that the “altar above the heav-
“ens” (in Greek, lit. “hyperheavenly altar”) is noetic partly because the very sacrifice that takes place on the visible holy table is not comprehended by reason, but rather apprehended by experience in the realm of grace; and partly because the entire mystery of the unity and intercommunion of the heavenly and the earthly in the Divine Liturgy is apprehendable only noetically by grace. In a sense, the entire Divine Liturgy is (to those who pursue it sufficiently) a noetic experience in itself.

Of all the faulty translations of the word “noetic” in this petition, the one which is most unsettling is “ideal.” This rendering of the word is too reminiscent of Platonism — as if the holy table was, in fact, a shadow of an eternal ideal, and not a reality in itself. Such an idea might be compatible with Platonistic mysticism but it is not compatible with Orthodox theology, the meaning of the Liturgy (and especially of the Holy Gifts), nor with the Orthodox Christian concept of “noetic.” The altar and the
Holy Gifts consecrated on it are not “shadows” or “reflections” of a reality existing elsewhere. God has appropriated the material substance of the Gifts for His purpose. All that is present has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit and transcends word and image. The concept of noetic, therefore, captures the sense of the moment, the event and the reality present in a way that no other simplistic or relativistic translation can. Orthodox Christians really do need to master an Orthodox vocabulary in order not to assimilate the errors of the West, and attempts to render such concepts as noetic in “simpler” language only lead to error and deprive Orthodox people of the fulness of meaning.³

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2Cor.13:14).

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**The rest of this litany contains petitions already discussed, and ends with the petition:**

Having asked for the unity of the Faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commit ourselves and one another, and all our life unto Christ our God.
Priest Prays:
We commit all our life and our hope unto Thee, O Man-befriending Master; we entreat and supplicate Thee: grant us to partake of Thine awesome, Heavenly Mysteries of this sacred and spiritual table with a pure conscience, unto the forgiveness of our sins, unto pardon of offences and unto communion of the Holy Spirit, unto inheritance of the kingdom of the Heavens, unto boldness toward Thee, and not unto judgment or condemnation.

“I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause” (Jb.5:8); “Let them...commit the keeping of their souls to Him...as unto a faithful Creator” (1Pt. 4:19).

When we speak of the forgiveness and pardon of sins which we receive when we partake of the Holy Mysteries, or which are mentioned in the Lord’s Prayer which follows this litany, it is useful to consider the meaning of these words. Forgiveness, pardon and remission all have the same essential meaning here, “to send away,” or “do away.” Forgiveness is a precise translation of the Hebrew salach (Ps.86:5) and selichah (Ps.130:4; Dn.9:9) and of the Greek ἑστήκε (e.g. Eph.1:7; Col.1:14), and ἱσημέ (as in the Lord’s Prayer). “Forgiveness” does not mean to “overlook,” or to hold in abeyance and bring it up later. It means to do away with, to remove altogether. A sin which is forgiven no longer even exists. We do not have to answer for it again later, not even in the judgment, for then the Scripture would not say that sins are forgiven, but
Priest:
And account us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call upon Thee, the Heavenly God, as Father, and to say:

that we have received a temporary “stay of execution.”

The only other sense in which the word “forgive” is used in most English translations of the New Testament is to render the Greek χαρίζωμαι (graciousness) as in Lk.7:43; 2Cor. 2:7, 10; 12:1 3; Eph.4:-32; Col.2:13; 3:13, where “be gracious” would be a more exact translation. The use of the word “forgive” to translate the Hebrew kaphar (to cover) occurs in some Psalms (e.g., 32:5 where we ought to read “You covered the iniquity of my sins”). In Leviticus, the meaning of “forgive” is always “to cover.” We do not find this meaning of “forgive” in the New Testament. ἀφέσις is also rendered as “remission” in several places in the New Testament (e.g., Mt.26:28).

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit which calls out `Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir” (Gal.4:6-7).
People:
Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil-one.

“This is how you should pray: ‘Our Father Who art in the heavens, 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. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation [trials and testing], but deliver us from the evil-one’ (Mt.6:9-13).

TWO COMMENTARIES
ON THE LORD’S PRAYER
(From On The Nature of Prayer by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo)

I

Our Father...

When He taught us how to pray, our Saviour first of all wished to establish our true relationship with God in our hearts and minds. Through Christ, God has made us truly His children; He is our Father. Such a relationship instills in us at once a feeling of endearing comfort, and also a reverent and humble submissiveness. A father is head of the household. He is both the source and dispenser of all our genuine necessities. He bestows upon us from His boundless, paternal love. But He is also the ruler and master of the household, the judge and chastiser to Whom we owe our obedience. Yet as a father, we know that His judgment is full of tender compassion, forgiveness and understanding. We know that His chastisement is not
a punishment for our wrongdoing, but the hand of a loving father seeking to turn us from ruin and restore us to the path of salvation.

“...In the Heavens...”

And He adds, “in the heavens,” for no matter how great a love and longing we may feel in this life, we are in this world, and our Father is in the Heavens. Our longing to be truly, wholly with our Father is the impetus to struggle toward the Heavenly Kingdom, to so live our lives in faith and moral struggle that we will indeed spend eternity in the Heavenly Kingdom with our Father. Our Father is in the heavens, and we are in this world. So long as we are not present in the Father's kingdom, we are yet in exile. We are like the prodigal son who has heard the deep longing in his heart and set out to return to the Father's land, to return to the joy and love of the Father's house. In our hearts, we may already return, but there is coming a time when we shall be there indeed, in the fulness of all things.

“Thy Kingdom come,”

Elsewhere, He says, “Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and the rest will be added to you.”

There is nothing in this life which has a lasting or permanent value. All mankind is hastening toward a return to the common origin — to the dust from which we were created. There is no acquisition of this world which can remain ours, no happiness not tempered with sorrow, no rich or powerful or healthy life which will not end in death and decay. Moreover, so long as this present world stands, we are always in danger of losing our souls, always at battle with the power and temptations of the evil-one. Therefore, we are commanded to “seek first the kingdom of heaven,” for even in this life we can acquire eternal goods, treasures which can indeed be ours for all
eternity. There, we can have a life free of all pain and death, an unspeakable joy which is not yoked to sorrow, but which is bound only to greater joy. Even in this life, we can find it a little — to the degree that the kingdom of God is manifested in our hearts. And so we pray “let thy kingdom come...” Let it come even now and be manifested in our hearts that we may already behold the warmth and radiance of its eternal love and peace. And let it come in our whole universe, according to Thy will, so that we and the whole of creation might finally be freed from our sorrowful bondage “into the glorious freedom” of Thine eternal kingdom.

“The Will be done on earth...”

What is the will of God? That we “turn from our sinfulness and live.” It is the will of the Father that none of us should be lost, but that all who follow His only Begotten Son should have eternal life (Jn.6:39-40). “For this is the will of God, even your perfectionment” (1 Ths.4:3).

The will of God is that all His creation should dwell in peace and unity, wholly penetrated with love, every creature filled with the ineffable joy of communion and unity with Him.

When we pray, “Thy will be done,” we ask for the day when all these things will come to pass, knowing that they will be manifested fully only on the day of Christ's glorious second coming. Yet, we also pray that His will be done in our lives each day. We taste of heaven in this life whenever we submit ourselves fully to His will, peacefully and patiently accepting all that He sends our way. We know that His will is our salvation and we pray most earnestly for that.

“...as it is in Heaven.”

On earth, there is a constant rebellion against the will of God, a constant tension between good and evil. The will of
God is often not fulfilled even by those who desire to fulfil it, because of our sinful nature. As a result, we are constantly at war, seldom having complete inner peace, and love is limited and ebbs and flows irregularly. In place of real, abiding joy, we have sporadic happiness and periodic feelings of elation.

In heaven, the primordial struggle has been resolved. There is nothing but peace, harmony, love and joy. Such a condition will exist throughout the universe only after the Second Coming of Christ, and the total manifestation of God's Kingdom. Thus when we pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are really praying for the end of this world and that God's Kingdom come, not only in our hearts, but in reality. We are, in a way, praying for an end to the present world and its order, and for the full, all encompassing presence of the Eternal Kingdom.

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

A little later He says, “...do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be concerned for itself. Each day has sufficient evil.” In other words, let us not be overly concerned with material well-being, but seek what is necessary for life. As St John Chrysostom says, “He would have us be unencumbered in every way, and winged for flight, giving in to our nature only so much as necessity compels us to.” Let us, therefore, ask for only what is sufficient for the day, and with it, strength and will to struggle against the evil of the day. And let us ask for no more, for whatever is beyond our basic needs does not contribute to our salvation, but more often detracts from it. Being free of the bondage and tyranny of material desires and passions, we may hope on God and endure patiently “unto the end.”

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

This petition is both full of hope and also frightening. In
the first place, as Chrysostom says, it gives us promise that we may be forgiven even though we sin. Though we are baptized and struggling to lead a Christian life, we still fall into sin. But here, we are promised that forgiveness is still possible. But a certain fearful condition is placed on this forgiveness: “forgive us, as we forgive others.” Elsewhere in a parable, he makes this more abundantly clear, “So shall the heavenly Father do to you if you do not, from your heart, forgive every brother his offences” (Mt.18:23-35). And again the words, “Do not judge, lest you be judged in the same manner,” and “With whatever standard you judge, you will be judged” (Mt.7:1-2).

It is evident that in all our moral and spiritual struggle, the struggle to truly forgive every offence, every trespass, every sin against ourselves, must be of the highest priority: and to forgive from the heart, not merely as a fiction, not merely formally, but with all sincerity.

“Lead us not into temptation…”

The word “temptation” is often misunderstood, and one is confused, “Why would God lead us into temptation? Why should we have to ask Him not to?” Many people think of temptation as the beguiling treachery of Satan as he seeks to lead us into a moral or spiritual fall.

The primary meaning of “tempt” (peirasmon) is to test or prove. When Christ was “tempted in the wilderness,” Satan was not so much trying to cause Him to fall into sin, as to test Him to see if He was indeed the Messiah; Satan is not all-knowing (omniscient), nor does he have an infallible ability at prophecy and forevision. He knew what had been revealed concerning the coming of the Messiah, and he was able to surmise that the time was appropriate. He could also infer from what had taken place so far that Jesus might indeed be the Holy One of God. Moreover, Satan had no certain knowledge of the extent or limits of Jesus' power. When Jesus went away into the wilderness to fast and pray, therefore, Satan ap-
proached to test and prove Him, to find out Who and What He was.

When we ask God, “Lead us not into temptation,” we are not inferring that He would lead us into beguilement to cause us to fall. We are asking, first, that we not be subjected to testing and proving, and second, that we be led away from the beguilements of Satan. We know that God does sometimes subject us to testing in order to lead us to salvation, but we know also that He does not permit us to be tested beyond our capacity, for, “No temptation comes upon you which is not common to man. But God is faithful and will not allow that you be tempted beyond your ability, but with every temptation, He provides a way to overcome it...” (1Cor.10:13).

“But deliver us from the evil-one”

“Man was all his lifetime held in bondage by him who had the power of death, that is, Satan” (Hb.2:15).

When our Saviour taught us how to pray, He did not say to ask for deliverance from evil, but specifically, “deliver us from the evil-one.” For, in this life we are often subjected to evil, and those who actually struggle to follow Christ and His Holy Orthodox faith must often endure it. Indeed, in the Beatitudes, we are even assured that we must often endure evil. Moreover, in this world, evil often seems to triumph over good. Christ came to earth to redeem us from our bondage to the prince of this world, to deliver us from our bondage to the passions and sensuality. This freedom awaits those who will accept it and struggle for it according to the way God has provided for us.
II

Let us look at these words and gain a deeper, more complete understanding of the “Lord's Prayer.”

1. Heavens/heaven.

Our Father Who art in the heavens, the prayer begins. Why is it that at the first occurrence of the words, heavens is in the plural, while in the second occurrence, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” it is in the singular? In the first we read, in the original Greek:

ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς: in the heavens

In the second reference, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” the word “heaven” is singular, and is written in the Greek: οὐρανῷ

“Our Father Who art in the heavens...” This is said in the plural, because it refers to the entire universe and tells us that God is “everywhere present and fills all things.” God is present everywhere, and has direct knowledge and control of all things throughout the heavens, throughout the entire universe. The earth is, of course, only a part or location in this universe, in the heavens.

In the second instance, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” we have a significant difference. The will of God is done and obeyed fully only in “the heavenly kingdom.” Thus, wherever the kingdom of God, the “kingdom of heaven” is fully manifested, the will of God is carried out joyously and completely.

The will of God is not freely followed elsewhere. On earth, mankind is in rebellion against God's will, and even in the air, the demons are opposed to God's will. Within His kingdom, however, the peace, joy and harmony of His will are present at all times, as the angelic hosts daily and hourly rejoice to do
His will. It is significant that we understand the expression βασιλεία σου as signifying, not kingdom in the worldly sense but rather “the rule and reign of God.” Thus, when the prayer is speaking of the “place” of God Himself, it shows us, by using “heavens” in the plural, that God is not limited in time and space, but is present everywhere at all times. When, however, the prayer wishes to have the will of God fulfilled on earth, it refers specifically to that spiritual heaven, the “kingdom of heaven,” in which His will is truly done, that is, where His rule and reign are freely accepted with joy and obedience, and where peace and love reign through His will. What the prayer is actually asking for is that the kingdom of God, that is, His rule and reign, become fully manifested on earth. Heaven, the “kingdom of God” is not a “place” or “location” such as we might, in our limitedness, conceive. Indeed, it is not a “place” at all. One might say that the “location” of the kingdom of God is “there, where His will is fully and freely obeyed and done.” If our earthly world is to become His kingdom, it is necessary that His will be fully done here, then the earth will also become the “location” of His kingdom. In this sense, the “kingdom of God” is within everyone, in the heart of each person, who seeks His will and allows His will to be done in them, in their hearts; that is, in each person who freely accepts the rule and reign of God in their hearts.

Let us look at two more profound and deeply significant words in the prayer.

2. What kind of “bread?”

In every translation of the “Our Father” that we see in English, we read, "Give us this day our daily bread.” While this rendition is correct, some suggest that there is more to the meaning of the word than this.

The word being translated into English as “daily” is:

ἐπιούσιον
Some commentators indicated something spiritual and divine, rather than to material bread. Indeed, they relate the “epiousion bread” to the Holy Mystery of Communion in which we receive that “heavenly bread,” the Bread of Life in the Holy Communion.

3. Debts or Trespasses?

Since many of the modernist Orthodox jurisdictions have a preference for Protestant, rather than Orthodox Christian translations of Scripture and prayers, a conflict arises over the translation of the Greek words ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις (ofeilemata/ofiletais). Should they be translated correctly as “debts/debtors,” or should we simply accept the Protestant version, “trespasses/trespassers?” In essence, it does not matter which rendition we use. The wording of the prayer differs in the two versions of it given in the Gospels.

In Matthew’s Gospel, the words used in the original Greek are ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις which can mean only debts/debtors (lit. one who owes something to someone). This same word is used in Rm.1:14 (“I am a debtor...”), and in Rm.8: 12; 15:27; Gal.5:3. In each of these instances it is translated as “debtor,” and could not be translated in any other way. There is a completely different word in Greek which could be translated as “trespass.” This word is paraptoma, which literally means “falling aside,” and it has no clear relationship to any word used in the Lord’s Prayer.

In Luke’s Gospel, the literal reading of the prayer is “for-give us our sins (amartias) as we forgive those who owe us (ofeilonti),” literally, our debtors. Thus, there is no logical or realistic way the word “trespasses” could be read into either rendition of the “Lord's Prayer” in the Scripture.

4. Deliver us - why and for what?

Toward the end of the Lord's Prayer, we read: Rescue us from
the Evil One. The first word of this phrase we must examine is the one usually translated “deliver.” Deliver and rescue are both satisfactory translations as far as they go, however, in examining the word in the original Greek, we receive a much deeper and more profound sense of the meaning of the prayer itself. The word in Greek is:

ρῶσαι

This word, pronounced reesai, is a construction called “middle voice imperative.” It occurs in Greek, but not in English. Because of this construction of the word, it has the meaning, “save us `for thy sake’” that is, “for the sake of Thy Kingdom,” “for the sake of Thy love,” “for Thy name’s sake.”

If the word was intended only as “rescue” or “deliver,” then, in Greek it would be reecite, and not reesai. In fact, in some of the prayers we read, we actually come across the phrase “deliver us for Thy sake” or “for Thy name's sake.”

Thus, we are asking God to rescue/deliver/save us from the power of the Evil One, “for the sake of His kingdom and His love.”

This is very important in the context of what follows: “Deliver us from the evil one.” He does not say “deliver us from evil,” but precisely, “from the evil one.”

5. Deliver us from what or whom?

This is the last of our four words, and in the original Greek it is written:

πονηροῦ

This word, “poneroi,” does not mean “evil,” but precisely,
“the evil one.” Christ did not instruct us to pray to be delivered from evil, but rather to pray for our deliverance from the power of Satan’s principality, into the kingdom of God. Apostle Paul expresses the meaning of this prayer clearly when he tells us that *Inasmuch as the children are flesh and blood, He also shared in their humanity so that, by His death, He might destroy him who possesses the power of death — namely, the devil — and free those who were held in bondage by him who has the power of death (Hb.5:14-15).* Paul informs us that it was precisely from this bondage to the evil one that Christ rescued us and brought us into His kingdom, the kingdom of God.

We should occasionally take time to think of the full meaning of the “Lord's Prayer,” so that, when we say it, we will come to a fuller understanding of the nature of our redemption, and the depth and meaning of the words we are saying:

> Our Father Who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom [the rule and reign of Thy love] come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day that superessential bread, the Bread of Heaven, the Communion of the Body and Blood of Thine own Son. Forgive us our debts to the degree that we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into trials, but deliver us, for Thine own sake (for the sake of Thy Kingdom), from bondage to the evil one [Satan].

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<tr>
<th>ORDER OF SERVICE:</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE/LESSON:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priest:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>For Thine are the kingdom, power, and glory, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.</td>
<td>The verse, “For Thine are the kingdom, power and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages,” does not appear in the original Scripture. It is actually a re-</td>
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</tbody>
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People: 
Amen!

Priest: 
Peace be unto all.

People: 
And to thy spirit.

Priest: 
Bow your heads unto the Lord.

People: 
To Thee, O Lord.

Priest Prays: 
We thank Thee, O unseen King, Who by Thine unmeasurable might hast created all things, and in Thy great mercy, hast brought all things from non-existence into being.

O Master, look down from Heaven upon those who have bowed their heads unto Thee, sponse given by the priest in the Orthodox Christian Divine Liturgy, and was added into the Scripture accidentally by a copyist, and passed into subsequent copies. This is why only the priest says this verse and the people do not. The verse is not in the real Bible.

“And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

“And the people bowed their heads and worshipped [the Lord]” (Ex.4: 31; 12:27).

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1Tm. 1: 17).

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in
for they have not bowed down unto flesh and blood, but unto Thee, the awesome God.

Therefore, O Master, do Thou Thyself distribute these Gifts set before us, according to the individual need of each.

Travel with those who journey. Heal the sick, O Thou physician of our souls and bodies.

Priest:
By the grace and compassions and love for man of Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People:
Amen.

Priest Prays:
Hearken unto us, O Lord Jesus Christ, from Thy holy habitation, and from the glorious throne of Thy Kingdom, and come and sanctify us, O Thou Who sittest with the Father on high, but art invisibly present here with us.

earth, visible and invisible ...all things were created by him, and for him” (Col.1:15-16). “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one” (1Cor.7:17). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights...” (Js.1:17).

“The Lord is very compassionate, and of tender mercy” (Js.5:11). “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2Jn. 1: 3). “Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Tm.1: 2).

By Thy mighty right hand, impart to us Thy Most Pure Body and Thy Precious Blood and, through us, bestow Them to all Thy people.

Priest:
Let us attend! The Holy things are for the holy!

People:
One is Holy. One is the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

34, 5:31). “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28: 20). “... and He gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you ... This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you’” (Lk.22:19-20).

The holy things are for the holy, the priest proclaims, and we respond, "One is Holy — the Lord Jesus Christ.” If the holy things are for the holy and we confess that only God is holy, how shall we partake of those holy things? By the grace and mercy of God we may partake, for He has sanctified us and made us holy by grace, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has consecrated and ordained as many as have been baptised in Christ and clothed themselves in Christ, in the righteousness and holiness of Christ. In prophecy, God proclaimed through Moses: Thou shalt be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex.19:6), and Apostle Peter proclaims the fulfilment of this promise saying, But ye
are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1Pet.2:9).

Thus, as only the priests of the old covenant could partake of the things of the altar, so now we also partake of the Holy Things by the grace of that priesthood which is bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ in holy baptism and chrismation and faith (see, eg.,1Cor.9:13). We are covered by the holiness and righteousness of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CONCLUSION

Holy Communion is the culmination of the Liturgy — indeed the purpose of the Liturgy. It is also the perpetual “wedding feast” of the Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and His “pure and spotless bride, the Church” (Eph.5:27).

Holy Communion is the pivot point of the Orthodox Christian life. Our entire week is directed toward preparation to enter into this wondrous union with our Saviour Jesus Christ. On Wednesdays, we fast because our Saviour was betrayed and sold for the sake of our salvation on that day. We fast on Fridays because our Saviour was crucified for us on that day. Thus, our life of prayer and remembrance of our Saviour's
great love and sacrifice for us leads us through the entire week toward that central moment of Holy Communion. Having received this great gift and, by His grace, been made worthy to partake, we do not walk away casually from the moment. With a final litany and the priest's “prayer before the ambo,” we are brought to the “prayers after communion” which are shared by the entire congregation. In this way, we keep ourselves from falling into a casual attitude toward Holy Communion and reinforce in our own minds and souls the awesome wonder and fearsomeness of the great mystery of our Saviour's love and gift to us. By our preparation before communion and our thanksgiving afterward, we keep ourselves in a proper perspective and maintain the reverent fear and awe appropriate to the mystery.

We have seen the wholeness and unity of the Divine Liturgy as the apostles and holy fathers have bequeathed it to us. We have observed the manner in which the Liturgy has been carefully crafted so that it both condenses and amplifies the Holy Scripture, and gives a completeness to our understanding of the message and meaning of the Gospel. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Liturgy has been carefully woven with divine theology and with the revelation of God. Every segment, every action, every word of the Divine Liturgy is carefully fit into place so that it builds up the whole and provides the faithful with a continuous revelation of the mystery of redemption and the presence of the kingdom of God.

The Divine Liturgy is the gift of God through the Holy Spirit and not the work and contrivance of man. As Orthodox Christians, we have the duty to study more carefully and fully the mystery and meaning of the Liturgy, to understand its theology and enter ever more deeply into its transforming spiritual mystery, diligently resisting the efforts of our ill-willed and ill-advised Ecumenists and modernists to distort and undermine the integrity of this revelation in worship of the mystery of God's Kingdom.

We have come prepared and completed our preparation in
that part of the Divine Liturgy which precedes Holy Communion. Having received the “medicine of immortality,” as St Ignatios the Godbearer refers to the Holy Mystery, we are fully united with Christ, we have received the Communion of His Body and Blood “for remission of sins and for life everlasting.” We now depart with that “peace that passes all understanding” (Phil.4:7) filling our hearts, with a true awareness that “the kingdom of God is within,” (Lk.17:21) and that Christ has fulfilled His promise to make His abode in us (Jn.15:4-8). We are made whole and filled with the hope and expectation of that rule and reign — that Kingdom of God — which is to come in the fulness of time and bring us into the endless age of His love and light.

**ENDNOTES:**

1. In Greek, the exclamation, “Dynamis” (lit. “louder”) is proclaimed and responded to here. We have found evidence that at one time, a similar exclamation existed in the Slavonic Liturgy also. I offer this suggestion as to its meaning and origin. It seems likely that this originated in the earliest times, when the Arians, in one of their more strange assertions, insisted that, in the vision of Prophet Isaiah (6:1), the angels who chanted the Thrice-Holy Hymn chanted the first “Holy” loudly, the second “Holy” in a lower voice and the third one in a soft voice. They dogmatized that this showed a difference in the persons of the Trinity. The first “Holy,” they asserted, signified lordship, the second, being in a lower voice, signified subservience and the lowest, a degree yet lower. I submit, solely as a suggestion, that the holy fathers, in order to counter this teaching of the Arians, ordained that at the chanting of the last “Holy God...,” the deacon proclaim “Dynamis” and the people respond to it and chant the last verse of the hymn in a louder voice, testifying against the Arians and their descendants. (See, for example, St Athanasios the Great, *Homily on Luke 10/ Matthew 11*.


3. The word “noetic” is related to νοῦς. In patristic literature, in the matter of Christian anthropology, the νοῦς (nous) is the faculty or ability of the soul, implanted by God, so that humanity can perceive Him. The holy fathers used and understood many nuances with regard to this word.
Roughly speaking, we may say that οὐδεὶς indicates knowledge derived not from discursive reason but rather from intuitive reason. “Noetic,” aside from the definition we have given it above, indicates a different dimension or order. In a sense, we could say that “noetic” relates to the spiritual dimension of reality — not always a “different” reality, but a different dimension of reality. In the context of the Divine Liturgy, it is notable that we refer to the “noetic altar above the heavens,” while in the prayer that accompanies the litany, the priest refers to the πνευματικῆς τραπέζης or “spiritual table,” by which we mean the holy table itself. What is offered on the “spiritual table” by the priest is at the same time sanctified by the “noetic altar” above the heavens. Heaven and earth are united in the mystical sacrifice and bound together by the Holy Spirit and the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Mystery.