

THE DIVINE LITURGY

THE RITE OF PREPARATION

Prior to the beginning of the Divine Liturgy proper, the priest **prepares our gifts of bread and wine.**

- The bread is cut into a number of pieces, commemorating Christ, the Theotokos, the saints, the living and the dead.
- Wine mixed with water is then poured into the chalice.

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, our gifts are solemnly taken to the altar table where they will become Christ's Body and Blood.



The Divine Liturgy is *not* simply a "memorial meal" or a "re-enactment" of the Last Supper. It is, rather, **the continuation of the Mystical Supper** shared by Jesus and His apostles as well as **the collective action of God's People** — clergy, laity, choir and servers alike — who come together to

- **praise and worship God** while **thanking Him** for His many blessings;
- publicly **proclaim the good news** of Christ's victorious death and resurrection while **awaiting** His Second Coming;
- **partake of the Eucharist** — the very *Body and Blood of Jesus Christ* - which is offered to us for the forgiveness of our sins and unto life everlasting; and
- **manifest God's Kingdom** in this world.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

- **The Opening Doxology**, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," reminds us that we are entering into *God's Kingdom* through worship.
- During **the Great Litany**, we pray for the various needs which confront us in our daily lives.
- **The Antiphons and the Hymn to Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God**, express our belief in Jesus Christ as true God, true man and the Saviour of all;
- All are called to worship the risen Christ during **the Little Entrance**.
- The **Troparia and Kontakia** are changeable hymns which reflect upon the theme of the day's Liturgy.
- **The Trisagion** — "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us" — is sung in honor of the Holy Trinity.

Following these introductory hymns, the **Holy Scriptures** are read.

- **The Prokeimenon** is a responsorial psalm chanted alternately by the reader and the people.
- **The Epistle Lesson**, taken from the New Testament epistles, generally explores a particular theme in Christian life.
- **The Alleluarion** consists of psalm verses separated by the singing of *Alleluia*, which means "Praise the Lord."
- **The Gospel Lesson**, selected from the gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, is the public proclamation of the Word of God. After the Gospel Lesson we listen to
- **the Sermon**, during which the priest continues to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ while applying it to our daily lives.

COMING TO TERMS

The word **LITURGY** is derived from the Greek work *leitourgia* which means *common or collective action*. Liturgy refers to *any* and *all* worship services.

Worship, then, is our **common action** as Orthodox Christians.