

# THE DIVINE LITURGY

The **Divine Liturgy** is the *common work or common action* of God's People - clergy and laity alike - who come together:

- To praise and worship God while thanking Him for His many gifts and blessings;
- To publicly proclaim the Good News of the risen Christ while awaiting His Second Coming;
- To partake of the Eucharist - the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ — which is offered to the faithful for the forgiveness of their sins and unto life everlasting; and
- To manifest God's Kingdom in this world.

The three most commonly celebrated versions of the Divine Liturgy are:

- **The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom**, celebrated on most Sundays and feasts;
- **The Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great**, celebrated on Lenten Sundays, the feast of Saint Basil, and several occasions.
- **The Presanctified Divine Liturgy**, celebrated on Wednesdays, Fridays, and certain other days during Great Lent.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first portion of the Divine Liturgy, the **Liturgy of the Word**, revolves around the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ as re-

vealed in the Holy Scripture

The Opening Doxology — "*Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" — reminds us that, in worship, we are entering the Kingdom of God.

During **The Great Litany**, we pray for the various needs which confront us in our daily lives.



The **Antiphons** joyfully express our praise through the singing of psalms, while the Hymn to Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, is our acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as true God, true man, and the Savior of all.

The **Little Entrance** is our solemn invitation to worship the risen Christ. The **Troparia** and **Kontakia** proclaim the theme of the day's Liturgy. By singing the Trisagion — "*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us*" — we glorify the Holy Trinity.

Following these introductory hymns, the Holy Scriptures are proclaimed.

The **Prokeimenon** is a responsorial psalm

chanted alternately by the reader and the people. It prepares us for the **Epistle** lesson, taken from the New Testament epistles or the Acts of the Apostles, which generally emphasizes a particular aspect of Christian life. Then the **Alleluarian** consists of psalm verses separated by the singing of "*Alleluia*," which means "*Praise the Lord*." The **Gospel** lesson — the public proclamation of the Word of God — is taken from the Gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. After the Gospel we hear the **Sermon**, during which the priest reflects upon the Good News of Jesus Christ as it applies to our daily lives.

## THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Having been nourished by the Word of God, we now turn our attention to the central mystery of our Faith — the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ — by celebrating the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The word *Eucharist* literally means *thanksgiving*; hence, by receiving Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, we offer God the ultimate expression of our thanks.

The **Great Entrance** is performed while the **Cherubic Hymn** is chanted. Our gifts of bread and wine are brought in procession into the altar where they will be offered to God. We "*lay aside all earthly cares, so that we may receive the King of all*."

The **Peace** is our affirmation of Christ's presence and love as we praise the Trinity "*with one mind and one heart*," and we sing the **Creed**, the proclamation of our common faith in the Trinity.

The **Anaphora** (Prayer of the Eucharist) recalls the institution of the Eucharist. We celebrate the love God shared with us through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and we joyfully anticipate His Second Coming.

During the **Consecration**, we call upon the Holy Spirit to change our gifts of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Christ.



The **Commemorations** enable us to prayerfully remember all for whom our gifts are being offered.

In the **Lord's Prayer**, we approach God as our heavenly Father.

The **Elevation**, during which the priest raises the Body of Christ is an expression of our conviction that God alone is holy.

The climax of the Liturgy is the reception of the Eucharist. We enter unto a **COMMON UNION** with Him and with His people as we "*taste the fountain of immortality.*"

Having been nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ, we render thanks to God for bestowing His heavenly Spirit upon us. We are then invited:

To "*depart in peace, in the Name of the Lord,*" in order to publicly proclaim all that we have received and experienced during the **Divine Liturgy**:

To pray for salvation and guidance during the **Closing Prayer** which the priest offers in the midst of the people;

And to receive the Lord's blessing, proclaimed by the priest, by venerating the holy cross.

#### THE LITURGY IN OUR LIVES

The end of every **Divine Liturgy** prepares us for the beginning of the next! If we strive to live and apply all that has been experienced in our public worship, our lives become an inseparable part of the Liturgy and the Liturgy becomes an inseparable part of our lives. Having placed ourselves in the very presence of God, we are no longer children of this world, but inheritors of the Kingdom of God and recipients of everlasting life.

# The Divine Liturgy



## God's Gift of Himself