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TEN CENTURIES OF FAITH AND WORSHIP
National Bulletin on Liturgy
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Editorial commentary in the Bulletin is the responsibility of the editor.

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Ten Centuries of Faith and Worship

This Bulletin celebrates the millennium of the Christian faith in the Ukraine and among Ukrainian people around the world. The rich liturgical heritage of the Ukrainian Church is described and explained for those of other liturgical traditions. Western Christians are helped to participate intelligibly in Ukrainian liturgies.
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Introduction

Ten Centuries of Faith and Worship

The people of Kievan Rus — the present day Ukraine — were baptized into Christ a thousand years ago, in 988. Under their Prince, Saint Vladimir, they adopted the expression of Christianity found at Constantinople or Byzantium, and hence are said to be part of the Byzantine tradition of the Church universal.

The Church of the Ukraine has endowed the Byzantine tradition and the entire universal Church with many rich contributions. It has also suffered greatly over the centuries.

In Canada today, the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches are outstanding witnesses to the Byzantine Christian tradition, and the Ukrainian Catholic Church is the principal Eastern Church within the Catholic Church. Sadly, the richness and legitimacy of the Ukrainian Byzantine tradition has not always been understood, appreciated or valued within Canada's predominantly western Church. In practice, Ukrainian Catholics have not always been seen to be equal members of the Catholic Church with members of the Latin rite, though such is Catholic belief.

This issue of the Bulletin salutes the Ukrainian people and Church on the occasion of the millennium of their conversion to Christianity. It presents an appreciation of the Byzantine liturgy celebrated by the Ukrainian Church in the hope that it will come to be better understood and more highly valued by Latin rite Catholics. One regret is that we can only skim the surface of this subject in the brief space of a single issue. More than a few important topics cannot be considered at all.

This issue is written from within the Byzantine tradition by contributors who are members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church or who have an intimate appreciation of that tradition.

As a consequence, this issue is written in an Eastern style. The pace is a little slower, the writing slightly repetitious, and the flow of thought is circular as well as linear. The English employed is of a more traditional style, and the language of the liturgical texts quoted would be considered old fashioned by many.

Our contributors work from inside the liturgy they live and love, and to a large extent liturgical rites and texts are allowed to speak for themselves. Finally, greater emphasis is placed on what the liturgy means than on what it looks like.

To aid the predominantly western, Latin rite Catholic readership of the Bulletin, this issue begins with a lengthy survey of the environment or climate of the Eastern liturgy — the largely non-verbal dimensions that are so important in establishing the feel or soul or spirit of the Byzantine rite. Only then are the Divine Liturgy (the eucharist) and other specific liturgies of the Ukrainian Church explored.
Liturgical Books and Texts


*The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber 1969)

*The Lenten Triodion*, trans. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber 1978)


Helpful Reading

Nicholas Arseniev, *Revelation of Life Eternal* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1982)


*The Byzantine Ukrainian Rite* (Ottawa: Canadian Catholic Conference 1975)


Stanley S. Harakas, *Living the Liturgy* (Light and Life Publications 1974)
Thomas Hopko, ed., Women and the Priesthood (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1983)

Vladimir Lossky, Orthodox Theology. An Introduction (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1978)

John Meyendorff, The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1982)


Marie Shewchuk, SSMI, and Patricia Lacey SSMI, Journey of Faith (Toronto: Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate 1987)

Alexander Schmemann, For the Life of the World. Sacraments and Orthodoxy (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1973)

Alexander Schmemann, Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1977)


Dumitru Staniloae, Theology and the Church (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1980)

Robert E. Taft, Eastern-Rite Catholicism. Its Heritage and Vocation (Bronx: John XXIII Center 1963)

Lars Thunberg, Man and the Cosmos (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1985)

Archimandrite Vasileios, Hymn of Entry. Liturgy and Life in The Orthodox Church, trans. E. Briere (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1984)

Paul Yuzyk, The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1951 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press 1981)
The Gifts of the East

It is often said that the Eastern Churches have many gifts for the West. That is, the Byzantine Christian tradition, comprising both Churches that are in communion with Rome and those not in communion, has gifts to share with the Catholic Church of the western, Latin tradition.

What are these gifts which Eastern Christianity has to offer to the West? Why are they important?

The fundamental and most important gift of the East is that it is different from the West. The Eastern tradition employs different approaches and makes different emphases in its theology, liturgy, spirituality, religious art, and many other aspects of its life. These traditions, moreover, are as valid as those of the West because they are equally "apostolic" in origin.

Eastern Christianity is important, complementary, and has something to offer, precisely because together with the West, it is the co-inheritor of the original gospel message. It is known historically that the gospel tradition of the apostles was simultaneously given to the Churches of the East as well as of the West. The first Christian Church, in fact, had its birth in the eastern part of the Roman Empire: Jerusalem. Soon after, the apostles spread the gospel in both eastern and western parts of the Empire.

"The East did not receive the faith as daughter 'Churches of Rome,' but directly from the apostles." Vatican Council II sees the Churches of the East as the bearers of "the tradition which has come from the apostles through the Fathers and which is part of the divinely revealed, undivided heritage of the Universal Church."2

Today western Catholicism is responding to the many changes and problems of modern society, with many new developments in theology, liturgy, canon law, and spirituality. In its response to these rapidly changing times,

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2 Vatican Council II, Orientalium Ecclesiarum (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches), n. 1.
the West needs the East as a point of reference. West and East complement one another in the proclamation of the authentic gospel message to all creation.

The gift of the East to the West is the offering of itself as this point of reference and as an equal party in dialogue with the West. Knowledge of the East and dialogue with the Eastern tradition will provide for the West greater integration, balance and wholeness in facing today's changing world.

The following is a very brief and simplified glimpse at some of these differences of emphasis and approach which are part of the deposit of faith given to the Church by the apostles.

The Trinity

East and West share the same basic belief in the Trinity, but place emphasis on different aspects of this doctrine. The West focuses on the oneness of God, that is, on the Divine Nature. The problem for the West has been in recognizing diversity in God — how to find three persons in the one Divine nature.

The East focuses on the diversity of the persons. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each totally unique persons. The problem in the East has been one of unity — how to unite the three unique persons so that there is only one God. The East sees the unifying principle within the Trinity to lie with the Father.

Christology

East and West agree on Christ's human and divine natures, but again there is a difference in emphasis. The West focuses on the humanity of Jesus, of course presupposing His divinity. The East on the other hand focuses on Christ's divinity, presupposing His humanity.

In the celebration of the Stations of the Cross in the West, the focus on Christ's humanity is evident. Jesus' tremendous suffering in His passion demonstrates how human he really is. In the celebration of Holy Week services in the East, Jesus' sufferings are not denied, but it is not so much Jesus "the man" who suffers, as Jesus "the God" who suffers in his humanity.

He who holds all things in the hollow of his hand consents to be hung upon the Tree, that he may save mankind. 3

A strange wonder it was to behold the creator of heaven and earth hanging upon the Cross. 4

Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate; today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross; and of His own will He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails; His side is pierced, and a sponge with

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3 Matins of Holy and Great Monday, Tone One.
4 Sixth Hour of Holy and Great Friday, Tone Seven.
vineger touches his lips. The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face, and the Creator of all is mocked by His own servants.\textsuperscript{5}

Western Christmas carols likewise focus on the humanity of Christ. Here there is a stress on the infant Jesus, and because Jesus was a baby like all of us his humanity is again emphasized. In the East, the focus in Christmas hymns is not on the baby Jesus but rather on the mystery of God becoming incarnate.

You the Unfathomable One, and the Unobtainable One appeared,
You were born from a woman.\textsuperscript{6}

Oh universe rejoice, God today is being born from a Virgin ....
(The Shepherds) recognized God being born, being incarnated from Mary the spotless Virgin.\textsuperscript{7}

Religious Art

Both East and West use images in their churches, but each takes a distinctive approach to religious art. The West gives its artists great freedom in the creation of sacred art; it only defines what sacred art should not be. The Council of Trent (1563) states “that no image should be placed in the churches which is inspired by a false dogma and which can mislead the simple people; it wills that all impurity be avoided and that the images should not have any provoking attributes.”\textsuperscript{8}

The East does not gives its artists that kind of freedom. Rather the icon painters work according to the tradition of the ancient Church. One example of this tradition in written form can be found in *The Painter's Manual of Dionysius of Fourna*.\textsuperscript{9} This manual gives detailed prescriptions for the painting of many different icons. Because of the close relationship of iconography with the tradition of the ancient Church, icons contain a rich theology. However, one must learn to read them and pray before them in order to fully appreciate them. Icons are the windows to the transcendent and spiritual realities beyond. Just as one looks through a window in order to see something outside, so too one looks through the window of the icon in order to perceive certain truths of the persons represented in them. Therefore in the East one prays “through” the icon. Gazing at the eyes is especially important in prayer.

In the East the iconographer is not just any one with artistic talent. Besides being a member of the Church and having to have some knowledge of its theology, the iconographer must pray and fast, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance as he or she paints. Since in some way each icon is called to radiate Christ, who in turn is the perfect image of the Father, the task of painting an icon is not to be undertaken lightly.

\textsuperscript{5} Vespers of Holy and Great Friday, Tone Six.
\textsuperscript{6} Bohohlasnyk (Pocaijv 1805), song no. 20, verse 2.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., song no. 9, verses 1 and 3.
\textsuperscript{8} Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1978) 11-12.
Liturgy

The Eucharist is very important to both East and West. However there are many differences in approach here as well.

The genius of the western liturgy lies in its simplicity. The eucharistic liturgy is clear, non-repetitive, even austere. Its focus is on recognizing God's presence in community. Much emphasis is placed on gathering around the banquet table of the Lord. The West also uses a quite rational approach to liturgy, with clear and concise verbal statements. The liturgy is not overloaded with metaphors.

The Byzantine Divine Liturgy on the other hand goes beyond the realm of the rational. It is repetitive and replete with metaphors. The Divine Liturgy is full of movement; it is a pilgrimage of God's people to heaven. The whole liturgy strives to touch heaven and enter into the "Holy of Holies." The climax is reached at Holy Communion when one enters into intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This focus on the "heavenly liturgy" is evident in the Chronicles of Nestor, a Kievan monk of the eleventh century. According to Nestor, Prince Vladimir sent his emissaries to Constantinople. Upon returning to their Prince they reported, "the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it."10

Upon entering into the "Holy of Holies" of the Divine Liturgy all of the senses are touched. The sense of hearing is stimulated by the continual singing and by the jingling of the little bells on the censer. The colour and beauty of the icons, vestments, processions, and flickering candles tantalize the eyes. The sense of smell delights in the bittersweet aroma of incense which permeates the air. Taste delights in the consummation of the eucharistic bread and wine. The many bows, the lighting of many candles, and kissing of icons, satisfy the sense of touch. All contribute to the fact that it is the total human being which partakes in this great unfolding mystery of the Divine Liturgy.

In heaven there is no such thing as time, and the Divine Liturgy also is beyond time. Its length, continual singing and movement contribute to the effect of timelessness. Anyone who makes reference to a clock during the liturgy loses this effect. They are no longer in the timelessness of heaven, but rather fall back into this "time preoccupied" earth.

The genius of the East with its repetitive, non-rational approach to liturgy, is its great effect on the subconscious. The many bows, signs of the Cross, and repetitive singing of "Lord, have mercy," have a subliminal effect. This is evident in many elderly persons who worshipped all of their lives but in their later years are incoherent in thought. One may talk to them and obtain no response, but when part of the ektania [litany] is intoned and a sign of the cross is made, some part in them reawakens and they slowly begin to make the sign of the cross.

Tradition

Both East and West value tradition, but there most certainly is a difference in degree of concern for it. In the East the focus on tradition is very strong; one may even say that it is a preoccupation. When the East is confronted with a difficulty or a problem or a question it instinctively turns to tradition, to the Holy Fathers of the Church.

The East still baptizes using the threefold immersion as in the primitive Church. Baptized babies and young children still receive Holy Communion in their mother's arms. During the Divine Liturgy the deacon still cries out: "The doors! The doors!" recalling times when the church's entrance was jealously guarded and when none other than the baptized could remain for the Eucharist. Catechumens and others who were not baptized could not remain in the church for the Eucharist.

In the East with its many autonomous and national Churches and no central administrative authority, it is remarkable how very close they are dogmatically. Writing of the liturgies of the Churches of the Byzantine tradition one authority notes, "incredible as it may seem, this most splendid, complex, highly ceremonialized worship in the whole of Christendom has evolved and maintained itself for the most part in a natural way, without the need of formal law." In the Byzantine East the glue which kept all these different national Churches from drifting far apart liturgically and dogmatically was a spontaneous fidelity to the common tradition.

The glue in the West was not tradition but rather a strong central authority in the Roman Pontiff and in canon law. Without the pope and canon law things can unravel rather quickly. This is evidenced in the Protestant Reformation, where many different Churches with different dogmas and forms of worship developed quite quickly.

Conclusion

The areas discussed here are but a brief glimpse of the East and its gifts, and many other points of difference with the West could be added.

The greatest gift which the East can offer the West is the gift of itself in all of its splendor as well with all of its difficulties. By looking to the East as a reference point, by entering into a complementary relationship (which both challenges and supports) with the East, the West can only benefit by becoming more integrated, balanced and whole — in other words more true to the gospel of Christ.

11 Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church (Penguin Book 1963, revised 1980) 203
David J. Goa is Curator of Folk Life at the Provincial Museum of Alberta. He created the permanent exhibit Spiritual Life — Sacred Ritual, and has published numerous articles. His exhibit, Seasons of Celebration: Ritual in Eastern Christian Culture, currently is touring Canada.

The Church Building as Revelation

The style of church architecture that has developed in Eastern Christian tradition reveals the fundamental insight that the divine is present in all of creation. God is with all people in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This is based on Ephesians 2: 19-22, where St. Paul says that we are the temple of God.
So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in which the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The dome, characteristic of Eastern Christian churches, suggests that you enter a transfigured world when you enter the church. It does not point, like the spires of the West, to a transcendent reality outside the church. Rather, the church is a dwelling place in which all that is real is shown forth. The church is the presence of the Kingdom of God. In it all things are united and all things are revealed in their fullness.

The church building is patterned after the image of the Kingdom of God that is described in the Book of Revelation. This pattern in turn is taken from the Hebrew Bible and builds on the image of tabernacle and temple in the life of the Israelites. With the advent of Christ this revelation is transformed.

Entering the Church

The church has a vestibule where people enter, a nave where the assembly gathers as the people of God, and an altar area. This is called the sanctuary or holy place, and it stands for the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

In the Old Testament we read that the people were not allowed to enter into the courtyard of the tabernacle and of the temple. Only certain ranks of priest could enter there, and the high priest, once a year, could enter the holy of holies.

With the coming of Christ, the sacred character of all creation and the priesthood of all believers was revealed in a new way. So in the Eastern Church the people enter into the main part of the church, the transfigured “courtyard of the tabernacle.” It is called the nave, the ship of salvation, the world transfigured. The laity share in the priesthood of Christ so it is their proper place to serve the liturgy with the priest in this part of the church.

Vestments and the Priest

The priest is not above the laity. Rather, he has a specific role to play in the common worship of the people of God. He consecrates the holy gifts and serves the holy mysteries. We begin to appreciate the meaning of vestments and the priestly office when we examine the prayers for vesting. They teach the priest his unworthiness. Whatever is good in what he does is good because it is done in Christ. The priest hears in the prayers, time and time again, that it is not his actions, virtue or office that is at work. Rather it is our common priesthood, totally dependent on God, which informs in a specific way the work of the ordained clergy.

The priest concelebrates the liturgy with the people. That is why they all gather together in the nave of the church. And here we have the primary reason Eastern Christian churches traditionally have not had pews for
congregations to sit on. Since worship is a concelebration, it is imperative that the people participate in the movement, the rhythm and the harmony of the liturgical drama. This is impossible sitting in rows. Pews have the potential to reduce the congregation to observers or at best passive participants (a condition unknown in the Kingdom of God). They can also foster the notion that the priest is doing something for or on behalf of the people of God. This notion is completely false to Eastern Christian tradition. All are priests. All preside and serve the divine mysteries. All are part of the harmony of the Kingdom of God. All are to enter into communion having confessed their sin.

The Iconostasis or Icon Screen

People immediately notice the iconostasis or icon screen when they enter Eastern churches. Its primary function is as a stand for the icons, and it contains two sets of doors, the royal doors (or royal gates) at the center, and the deacon's doors at the two sides.

Even among the faithful we commonly hear the icon screen referred to as a "divider" between the peoples' portion of the church and that of the clergy. The tradition, however, refers to it as a "bridge of unity" in which the Kingdom of God present among us (nave) and the fullness of that Kingdom (sanctuary) are joined. It reveals and structures the movement of the Divine Liturgy, the movement of the people of God. This is a movement from the fragile presence of the kingdom in our lives toward the fullness of God's presence in the life of the world.

The iconostasis is a necessary part of the church for it shows the unity of Christ, the holy Theotokos [that is, Mary], and the saints and angels, with creation. The royal gates bear icons of the four evangelists and of the Annunciation. These gates are situated between an icon of the Theotokos and child, a witness to the incarnation of God in the world, and an icon of the glorified Christ in the fullness of the second coming.

An icon of the mystical supper, with Christ and the disciples eating together, is placed over the gates. This calls all creation to the "marriage supper of the lamb," (Revelation 19:9) to eat and drink at the banquet table of the Kingdom of God (Luke 14:15).

Also in the vicinity of the royal gates are icons of the saints. The deacon's doors bear icons of deacons, saints in the life of the Church, or angels, all servants of God. Often accompanying these are icons of Gospel writers. At the two ends of the screen a person or event from sacred history associated with the name of the particular church is depicted.

Some icon screens have a row of small icons across the top depicting the apostles, the major feast days of the church, Old Testament prophets and various people blessed by the presence of God in their life. A cross, usually rather small, crowns the top of the screen.

The Holy Table and Its Furnishings

The holy table or altar table is the center around which the church is structured. It, however, is not to remind us of the Last Supper. Many theologians
are fond of pointing out that for the East, there is no "Last Supper." There is only the continual mystical supper, the presence of the heavenly throne and banquet table which is the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel book is enthroned on the holy table at all times. Commonly a hand cross sits to its right. Both lie on top of the antimension. The table is usually of wood, and it is put together in a rather elaborate ritual which includes washing with rose water, anointing with chrism, and finally vesting it. It is cube shaped and free standing so that ministers can process around it in the course of the liturgical action.

The antimension is necessary for the serving of the Divine Liturgy. It is a cloth depicting Christ in the tomb, and bears the signature of the bishop of the church, since he is the proper pastor. It usually contains a relic, reminding the faithful that the true substance of the people of God includes the blood and body of the martyrs along with the offering of ourselves.

A tabernacle stands on the holy table as well. This often is shaped like a church and may bear the architectural features of the homeland of the community. Behind it stands a seven-branched candle stand drawn from the temple tradition of ancient Israel. The church is a "prototype" of the Kingdom of God, an extension of the tabernacle and temple.

The Holy Table, or Table of God's Kingdom.
On it are the antimension (cloth depicting Christ in the tomb with the relic of a saint attached to it), Gospel Book, hand cross, tabernacle, and seven branched candle stand.

The Oblation Table
The table of oblation or of preparation stands to the left of the holy table in the sanctuary. Except during the Divine Liturgy it holds the chalice and discos [paten], the spear for preparing the eucharistic bread and the spoon for serving it, neatly arranged together with a candle.

One of two icons is commonly placed over this table. The icon of the nativity or incarnation of Christ focuses the faithful's attention on the "coming" of Christ into our life through the eucharist. The icon "of the extreme humility" marks the redemption from death that is found through the death of Christ. Whichever icon is used in a particular church, one can readily see that for
Eastern Christians, the incarnation and death of Christ are constantly at play in the liturgical setting.

The Table of Oblation or of Preparation. Here the bread and wine are prepared for the Divine Liturgy using the chalice, discos (paten), spear and spoon. The icon of the Nativity speaks to the faithful of the incarnation of Christ, an incarnation to which they are called in communion.

Other Art

Frescoes commonly cover the walls of Eastern Christian churches. One enters the whole world of the redeemed, all the saints and angels, the feasts and theophanies of sacred history, the church victorious. One enters the world transfigured. At the very center of the building, in the dome, is an icon of Christ the Almighty. The icon of the Theotokos with Christ appearing within her is found over the altar area. This is the "image of the Church," because for both East and the West Mary is the central image of Church. An image of Christ in glory is usually placed directly behind the holy table. St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. James and many of the other saints who composed liturgies and wrote the great hymns of the Church are gathered around the area of the holy table.

Liturgy and The Kingdom of God

All the great liturgies of the Church are about the Kingdom of God, showing it forth and promising its presence in fullness. This is imaged in the Eastern Christian church or temple.

Facing East: The church faces east. It faces paradise. The royal gates and sanctuary represent paradise and are in paradise. This is the fullness of the Kingdom, the presence of the lamb, the banquet table. When the royal gates are opened the priest proclaims that paradise has been opened again by Christ, by the power of his cross, through his holy gospel. "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . unto ages of ages." With this opening movement of the liturgy the priest makes the sign of the cross with the Gospel.

The royal gates: There is a sense that the whole liturgy, the whole of life, takes place in the midst of the open royal gates. The path to the fullness of
life is shaped by the iconostasis. Flanking the gates are two icons which reveal the central eschatological mystery at the heart of the liturgy. They are often referred to as the icon of Christ and the icon of the Holy Virgin and child. Although this suggests the images in an appropriate way it does not speak of the living nature of them in the life of the faithful. They are in fact, the icons of the first coming of Christ (Theotokos with Christ) and of the second coming of Christ (Christ Glorified). The drama of the liturgy is in the midst of these two cardinal realities. They note what is revealed in the incarnation of Christ and our longing for perfection, a longing for the fullness of Christ, for the second coming and the perfection of the Kingdom.

The eighth day: The ancient Church understood the incarnation of Christ as placing a seal on the seventh day of creation. Christ’s resurrection ushered in the eighth day of creation, the Kingdom of God, which extends through time into all eternity. We live in that Kingdom, in the dawn of the eighth and holy day, the day of redemption which continues into eternity through Christ who returns again, the Pantocrator [Ruler of All] to judge and transfigure the total cosmos. In the midst of the royal gates we are in the midst of the eighth day of creation. Our communion in Christ with creation and all the saints and angels is given from the time of the resurrection. This is not an eschatology that illuminates the pattern of world history as it unfolds. Rather, it is an eschatology of being, marking the end of the Old Adam, the putting on of the body of Christ, the existential union with the Creator.

The Book of Revelation says, “Behold I looked and I beheld a door opened in the heavens.” The royal gates are open. John “was in the spirit on the Lord’s day” in the prison camp at Patmos. They celebrated the liturgy and John describes it. He saw the revelation about the revelation. The liturgy itself is it. Eastern Christian thinkers have suggested that this is the reason the Book of Revelation is not read in the liturgical cycle in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. It is the liturgical book of the church building and the Church herself. Many images suggest themselves: the incense before the throne of God, the heavenly Kingdom beyond the gates, etc.

The lamb: One of the most poignant images is that of the throne and “one like a lamb upon it.” When the discos [paten], prepared at the table of oblation, is brought to the holy table, the lamb is seen as laid out as on a throne before the priest waiting to consecrate the gifts. Similarly the Holy Gospel is set upright with its jewels and golden cover, as it was in Revelation, “(as) one enthroned covered with previous stones.” Here is Christ the Word of life enthroned. The four beasts of the Apocalypse are depicted on the antimension and on the Gospel. On both we see the lamb surrounded by the beasts. The great and final battle of Armageddon, the whole struggle of good and evil, of human beings with the evil one, is carried out in the Divine Liturgy. Again, this is not a comment on the future incidents of history. It is now in our lives. It is fulfilled in the Divine Liturgy.

The fullness of the Kingdom: For the faithful the movement from the vestibule, the porch of the temple, into the nave is all in service to the journey toward the fullness of life depicted in the sanctuary. We get a graphic image of this when the parish gathers to bury one of its faithful. They are laid out facing the sanctuary. They are projected into it. This suggests that the Church is sending her faithful toward the sanctuary of the universe, into the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

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It is the hope expressed and claimed in this setting of the presence of the Kingdom and the coming fullness of the Kingdom "which will have no end." In this hope Eastern Christians gather and celebrate the resurrection on the third day of the repose of their loved ones; on the ninth day for the nine orders of angelic hosts; and on the fortieth day, marking the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father.

**Union with God:** To gather as the people of God is to gather with the whole Church, all the redeemed of God's creation, from Adam and Eve to the present. This is unmistakable in the Eastern Church. They are all present, all giving us a glimpse of the transfigured life. Present in the church they bear witness along with the sacred space of the temple to the world which, in Christ, is moving through the Divine Liturgy, its public work of offering, confessing, blessing and receiving, to that new day in which all will be one. Transfiguration is being alive completely as the Lord of all creation intended. The shape of the liturgical space, the icons and the action of the liturgy all unveil the mystery of life and call us to the banquet table where the union with God and his world is complete.

**Helpful Reading**


The Transfiguration of Creation

The principal form of liturgical art in the East is the icon, and icon painting in Eastern Christian tradition exemplifies the transfiguration of the human condition, indeed, of the whole cosmos through the redemptive action of Christ. Icon painting has to do with the change and transformation that takes place in human experience when it is touched by God's grace. It is about the ultimate transfiguration of all suffering in the Kingdom of God. For this reason icons are not depictions of scenes in sacred history or reminders of biblical revelation. They are primarily a living presence, "a vector of divine grace" as the ancient Church was fond of saying.

Icon painting is not concerned with imaging what the world sees but in transfiguring the common vision, renewing it so that the share all creation has in the Eternal is glimpsed. It images the divine grace that has transfigured the person, landscape, indeed, the whole cosmos and reaches out to the viewer with its offering.

When the faithful venerate the icon it is the "prototype" — the person shown in the icon — that is the subject of attention and regard. The saints, the holy Theotokos [Mary], Christ, are venerated in a manner worthy to them because the discipline and co-suffering love they embody has shed God's grace in the life of the world.

Humanity as Icon of God

All men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, hence every human being is an icon of God. So the ultimate lesson of the icon is contained in the words of the Gospel, "as you have done it unto the least of these my brothers and sisters, you have done it unto me." It is impossible to love God and not love all human beings. If you hold malice, enmity or hatred toward any human being, you hold it unto God. "What is done to the least of these . . . is done to me." This is the moral teaching of the icon. In this way it calls the faithful, when they first enter the church, to repent of all acts which diminish the person, and in so doing are passed on to the prototype, God. The love of God and God's creation are one, an unbroken unity.

The Origin of Icons

Icons did not begin with the Christian Church. Rather the Christian tradition builds on the ancient and widespread practice of tomb art. It is not at all surprising that the early Church should adopt this practice. Since the revelation of Christ is precisely about the resurrected life, about the ultimate triumph of life over death, about breaking the bonds of darkness and death, it is appropriate that Christian iconography draw on the deep roots of tomb art.
The other tap root of the practice is in the artistic injunctions laid out in Exodus for the building of the tabernacle. The Christian understanding, in both cases, was to "write" the images from the perspective of God's grace, rooted in God's power to transfigure the order of creation and restore it to itself. It differs from "image making" because the figures, landscape and cosmos are clearly depicted as having their source and power in God. And that power, of course, is simply the power of self-giving love, the healing power of the life of the cross.

The Structure of Icons

Icons often strike the Western eye as primitive and naive. They challenge our way of seeing the world about us, our personal "images" of sacred scenes and personages. This is intentional, part and parcel of the canons governing the writing of icons.

Reverse Perspective

In Western easel painting well into this century it was customary to paint as the eye sees. The trees in a landscape diminish in size as the landscape fades from the viewer into the distance hinted at by the artist. The world is seen from the human perspective in the very structure of this artistic tradition. Something quite similar can be said of sacred statuary common to Roman Catholic churches in recent history. They are of the human condition, filled with joy or sorrow — or merely sentimental.

In the icon the viewer is a participant. The lines of perspective in the icon come to a point behind the viewer suggesting that the viewer is in what is depicted. Indeed, that is precisely the teaching of the Church. All human beings participate in the realities depicted in icons. This can be graphically illustrated with a look at any properly painted icon. All creation is invited to the moment of transfiguration shown in the icon. The Holy Spirit invites us to the transfiguration of our life, our being, in God's grace, to participate in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of Christ now.

There is one icon in which this reverse perspective is not used. In the icon of the mystical supper the table opens broadly out at the front. Everybody is invited to come and participate. Room has been left for the viewer to come and participate in the eternal banquet of the lamb. The intent here is the same as in all icons. The viewer is invited into the fullness of the transfigured life.

The Human Form Divine

The transfigured life is not bound by time. By definition it is free of the decay which characterizes historical existence. This is the reality of the Christ and the saints; they live in the eternal presence. How is this depicted?

The image of the saint in an icon is not a portrait. Rather, it depicts the spiritual reality, the presence of the eternal incarnate in the body and soul of the person. This occurs in time, in history, in the individual. For this reason icon
painting does not permit the use of signs and symbols in the place of the person. The person is essential, the image and likeness of God. Saints are not painted in the midst of the “distortions”, the vagaries of life, in the grip of some transient state or condition. It is the eternal incarnate in their person that ultimately is their reality. That is what the icon claims. Human emotion is redeemed in the constancy of divine love.

In the West we are accustomed to seeing saints depicted with halos, a badge of their sacrality. This is quite unnecessary in icons since the transfigured form of the individual, the luminous character of their body and soul, is what makes the icon. When a nimbus (halo) is used it is a globe of light that circles outward. It is the radiating light of the Holy Spirit. A saint has a tangible unity with God, is filled with the Holy Spirit and radiates divine light.

For this reason the figures in icons are shown in a stylized manner, not lifeless, but deathless, having been transfigured by divine love and freed of the vagaries of history. The soul is not transfigured without the body. The total person is filled with the light of Christ. Theosis, the process of deification, becoming as Christ is, refines the whole being of men, women and children.

The Source of Light

There is no single source of light in icons. The divine light illumines all creation. The light of Christ comes forth from the saints. Indeed, since all creation seeks its end in Christ, it bears witness to the light from its deepest reality. Rather than causing the creation to fade, the light of Christ brought creation into existence. His resurrection brought creation to its full perfection. Transfigured creation shimmers luminously because it has come to itself. It is perfected. “Perfection” in this religious sense means that what is given in nature is unimaginable any other way. At the same time it is a complete mystery, a wonder and delight.

Buildings depicted in icons are shown without roofs. A circular movement is generated in the icon which reaches out and calls us into its midst. There is no distinction between the Kingdom of heaven and earth. In Christ the Kingdom of heaven and the share all the cosmos has in it are one. There is only one Kingdom, God’s, and it is everywhere and in all things. The icon reveals that there is no distinction between the earthly and heavenly Kingdom. What is real in life is in communion with the Creator. There is one communion. Heaven has come to earth.

There are no shadows in icons. Eastern Christian tradition reminds us that “Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Light in whose deeds and turnings there are no shadows.” The icon is filled with light. There is no darkness or shadows in life transfigured by the Holy Spirit.

Landscape

Eastern Christian tradition is liturgical in nature and concerned with the whole cosmos. This is vividly portrayed in the shape and movement of landscape in icons. The whole creation is waiting for transfiguration, is groaning for the glorious freedom God calls it to in His redemptive love. The whole of
creation is yearning for the Kingdom of love and peace. It is yearning for itself. Each person, all creatures, the earth and stars, the total cosmos reaches out for its perfection in Christ. The fire of the apocalypse is not that which destroys God’s creation. Rather, as the East has so well understood, it is the light of the transfigured cosmos vivid because it has come to itself.

*The Nativity of Christ. A contemporary Greek icon.*
The Icon of the Incarnation

The icon of the incarnation shows the rejoicing of creation at the birth of the Saviour. The hills and mountains are cast up in the dance of welcome and delight. It is a visual depiction of a favourite psalm of the Eastern Church:

O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He has done marvelous things . . . . Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth . . . . Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he comes to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. (Ps 97/98)

Icons of the incarnation are often referred to as nativity icons. They depict Mary, the holy Theotokos, with Christ. Joseph is to the side and a shepherd leans toward him tempting him to deny the reality that is unfolding. This is not a celebration of the holy family, a sensibility completely foreign to Eastern Christianity. This is the incarnation of God.

Christ is always shown as an adult in icons. Even in the nativity icons he is a miniature adult, not a helpless infant. While fully human he is fully divine and, in the midst of his incarnation, the divine glory and majesty remain. In the nimbus surrounding his head are the words: "the existence." The East does not use the familiar phrase, "I am that I am," but, suggesting the profound existential character of the incarnation, carefully renders it "the existence." All that really is, is in Christ. The creation only comes to itself when it recognizes the Creator. In this recognition it accepts its creaturehood and can simply be what it is.

There are many theophanies of God in the Old Testament. In the iconographic tradition manifestations of God depict Christ, "who was from before the foundations of the world." The icon called the Hospitality of Abraham, for example, is often misnamed the icon of the Holy Trinity. Rather than being a manifestation of the three persons of the divine unity, it is Christ seated at Abraham and Sarah's table with two angels. The wings of the angels simply suggest the bodiless character of angels. The Holy Trinity in this depiction is present in Christ, as well as in in Abraham's act of hospitality. The three persons of the Trinity are not depicted. They are, by definition, a unity and "imaged" in Christ as the canons of icon painting require.

Cosmic Redemption

So much of the icon tradition speaks of the cosmic nature of Christ's redemptive act. In icons of the Resurrection, for example, we see the locks and chains that bind in darkness, the gates of Hades, all shattered. Christ reaches forth to claim Adam and Eve and the Prophets from the grasp of death. In Christ's passion, death and resurrection the whole of humanity from Adam to the end of time are called to redemption. All creation and everyone who has lived, is living, and will be born, are held in the Redeemer's light. The East tells us that Adam, Eve and the Prophets were baptized in light along with all who faithfully serve the God of love and light. The icon vividly depicts this.
Icon painting is about the mystery of God's relationship with us. God is the lover of human beings. God is the God of life. In each case where we see the Creator (in Christ, the holy Theotokos and the saints) deal with his world, he is wooing the creation to the fullness of life. Many Eastern Christian thinkers, ancient and modern, have pointed out that if it was solely up to God human beings would be redeemed despite their sin. But the Creator respects the human will and takes men and women on their own terms. It is human nature that invented death, human nature that withdrew from the God who is life abundant. So death is a human invention, a willful removal of oneself from life.

God always comes to men and women to save them. So it is that in the icons of Christ, in the various motifs, he is always as the God-man. His divinity is not diminished. Our humanity is perfected in Christ. The human form is united with the divine, "the image and likeness of God."

Saints are wonderworkers and bearers of divine grace. Through veneration the faithful are invited to this common potential. All is to be transfigured and in communion with God. Icons differ from the pictures and painting of sacred narrative precisely because the saints are depicted as completely reliant on the power and love of God.

Helpful Reading

Constantine Cavarnos, *Orthodox Iconography* (Belmont: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 1977)


Constantine Kalokyris, *Orthodox Iconography* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press 1965)

Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1978)


Liturgical Languages

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Language, because it is one of our means of communicating with God and one another, is an important tool of worship. The rule of Eastern Churches has always been to use the language of the people, the vernacular. Never has one universal language for worship been accepted, as for centuries it was with Latin in the West. Today, because many Eastern Christians are scattered outside their homelands (where there was no question of which language to use), they are experiencing a language struggle within their Church communities. The Ukrainians in diaspora are one such example.

Very soon after Kievan-Rus (today's Ukraine) accepted Christianity from Constantinople, it changed its Church services from the original Greek to the language of the people: Slavonic. Today, in North America as elsewhere, the question is asked, "What is our language?" For many, of course, English is the most commonly, if not exclusively, used language. It is the vernacular. Besides, since liturgy is an expression of oneself, as well as a communication with God and one's brothers and sisters, English is the language usually used to express who one really is. It is also the language used to communicate intelligibly with others.

However, for many other Ukrainian Canadians, Ukrainian is also a living language. It is the language used at home, used with dearest friends, the language of the heart. It is the language used, not for practical business purposes, but the language reserved for those near and dear — among whom God is first. Ukrainian/Church Slavonic is the language for expressing their relationship with God. This is especially, but not exclusively, true of the older generation.

Language for many Easterners, and certainly for Ukrainians, is connected to another important issue. Eastern Churches are ethnic churches (with all the inherent weaknesses and strengths of such a connection). The Church is rooted in, intricately bound up with, and expressive of this particular people in their unique life situation. It is part of their daily lives. Because Ukrainians have been in bondage to foreign powers for the past seven hundred and fifty years (except for a very short interval), they have had to find an inner freedom to counteract this external domination. The Church has been their strength — a Church belonging to them, not to the invaders. Their own language as part of their liturgy has been an important source of strength in being their true Ukrainian selves.

Many of Ukrainian descent, who have always lived in freedom, have no concept of what a precious gift freedom really is. Many are not interested in the battle over human rights, freedom, nationalism in the Ukraine. They are concerned about the Church over here, a Canadian/American Church where conditions, concerns, problems, ways of living are quite different. They want the Church to be theirs, a North American Ukrainian Church.
Others, however, are still very much in touch with the persecuted Church of the land of their origin. They want to ensure that the Church of Martyrs is not forgotten; they are one Church with those in the Ukrainian homeland.

Ukrainian churches here try to live with both these concerns and tensions. In most Ukrainian Catholic churches there normally is at least one Divine Liturgy in each of the languages, Ukrainian and English, on Sundays. In smaller parishes with only one Liturgy, the prayers may alternate, using both languages.

Unity in the Church consists not in uniformity of vision, but in loving acceptance of people with complementary views. Both are very concerned for the Church, and for God's vision and will amongst us.

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**Seasons of Celebration**

**Ritual in Eastern Christian Culture**

This superb exhibit, prepared by Mr. David J. Goa of the Provincial Museum of Alberta, currently is being shown across Canada.

Seasons of Celebration provides a glimpse into the world of Eastern Christian culture through the eyes of liturgical celebration. The Divine Liturgy, rites of initiation, feasts and festivals and especially Pascha (Easter) are illustrated and explained.

This exhibit will be shown in Toronto from July to October, 1988; and in Hamilton from November, 1988 through January, 1989. Later in 1989 it will appear in St. Albert and Calgary, Alberta, and finally in the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.
B. David Kennedy is a protodeacon of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto. He currently serves the parish of St. Elias the Prophet in Brampton, Ontario. He also teaches in the Department of Religious Education at Loyola Catholic Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario.

Time Glorifies God

Christianity cannot be reduced to a series of philosophical proposals, or a convenient set of moral dictums. Instead, it demands of its adherents a commitment to a way of life which immerses them into a reality that through its unfolding transfigures the cosmos and establishes the Kingdom of God. Such matters cannot be approached casually. They demand our awe and reverence. This is none other than God becoming flesh so that we might become like God.

Although this metamorphosis is not limited to the liturgy, it is primarily manifested there. It is at worship that the assembled Church enters into intimacy with God — a communion spoken of in language which refers to wedding feasts and bridal chambers. There is no part of life that is not embraced.

The Church assembled in prayer for the purpose of orthodoxy — the right glorification of God — lives its tradition of transfiguration throughout an unfolding cycle. This cycle takes each individual believer from birth to death to life eternal through the manifestation of salvation history. This is a history which must be lived before it is studied. The Church which lives in time and has its mission there, has taken the days, the months, and the year, and imbuded them with the reality of redemption. Time itself glorifies God.

Living the Liturgical Calendar

The Church's liturgical calendar can only be understood if it is lived. Throughout the year the faith of the Church is proclaimed, it is celebrated, and it enlives the hearts, souls, minds and bodies of the faithful. And because it must be lived, it is not something that can be taken off and put on at whim. In the consciousness of the Christian mind which is attuned to the rhythm of the Church's year, there is found anamnesis or the linking of the past with the present. The effects of salvation history, a history which is still unfolding, are therefore experienced in the here and now.

This is no mere remembrance or even a dramatic reenactment of the past. But rather, when the assembly gathered in the Holy Spirit, with Christ as its Head, remembers before the Father the wonderful deeds that He has done for those who have gone before us in the faith, it brings the effects of those deeds into the present.

It is from this view of the world that the Church has developed its liturgical calendar. The purpose of this calendar is not the sanctification of time, for
time was created good in the beginning. Rather time as a part of the created order finds its meaning in the glorification of God. This is expressed in the words sung on September 1, the beginning of the Byzantine liturgical year:

O God of all, verily transcendent in essence, Creator of the ages and their Master, bless the cycle of this year, saving by Thy boundless mercy, O compassionate One, all those who worship only Thee, O Master, and who cry unto Thee in fear, saying: Grant to all, O Saviour, a fertile year.¹

The two pillars of the liturgical calendar are Sunday and the Easter Cycle, and these will be considered in some detail.

Sunday

The week: The Church of the New Jerusalem received from Israel the essential foundations of its liturgical year. The primary building block of this structure is the seven day week. The Octoechos² or Book of the Eight Tones contains the changeable parts of the daily office throughout the week. These are a series of eight offices corresponding to each of the eight musical tones. Tone One is begun on the Sunday of St. Thomas, the first Sunday after Easter, initiating the cycle until all the tones are completed and Tone One is resumed, and so the cycle starts again.

The first day: The axis of the weekly cycle is “the first day of the week” or Sunday. This is the day of the Church assembled. The Body of Christ comes together on this day to greet the risen Lord — Head of the Church. The Church gives thanks in the festal banquet of the Eucharist in which we are fed with the bread of heaven, foretaste of the Kingdom which is to come.

Vespers: In imitation of the Myrrh-Bearing Women who went to the tomb to complete the burial of their beloved Jesus and were the first to be greeted with the news of the resurrection, so the Church today likewise keeps vigil. Just as the biblical day began in the evening at the setting of the sun, so does it begin today for Christians. In the Ukrainian rite every Sunday starts not with the Eucharist but with Vespers the preceding evening.

Day of resurrection: Sunday as the day of resurrection has not lost its primary place of importance among the followers of the Byzantine rite. In the evening light, the Church sings from the Octoechos what she believes.

Accept our evening prayers, O Holy Lord, and grant us remission of our sins, for only Thou hast shown forth unto the world the Resurrection.

Walk about Zion, ye people, and encompass her. Give glory therein to Him Who is risen from the dead. For He is our God Who hath delivered us from our iniquities.

¹ Seraphim Nassar, Divine Prayers and Services (Brooklyn: Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and All North America 1961) 281
² The Octoechos, Saturday and Sunday Offices, Tones 1-8, trans. Mother Mary (Bussy-en-Othe: Orthodox Monastery of the Veil of Our Lady 1972) 1-2
Come ye people, praise and worship Christ, glorifying His Resurrection from the dead: for He is our God, Who hath delivered the world from the beguiling of the enemy.

Ye heavens be glad, sound the trumpets, ye foundations of the earth. Shout for joy, ye hills, for lo! Emmanuel hath nailed our sins to the cross, and He, the Giver of life, hath put death to death by raising Adam up, because He loveth mankind.

Let us praise Him Who of His own will was crucified for us in the flesh; and suffered, was buried, and rose from the dead, and let us say: 'Keep Thy Church in the true faith and bring peace to our lives, O Christ, for Thou art good and loveth mankind.'

As we, unworthy, stand before Thy sepulchre that held life, we raise, O Christ our God, a hymn of praise to Thine ineffable compassion, for Thou Who art without sin, hast accepted the Cross and death in order to grant the world resurrection, because Thou lovest mankind.

Let us praise the Word, Who is without beginning and co-eternal with the Father, Who came forth ineffably from the Virgin's womb and for our sakes accepted of His own will the Cross and death, and rose in glory, and let us say: 'Glory be unto Thee, O Lord, Giver of life and Saviour of our souls.'

**Experiencing the Church:** If an observer were to ask, "What do these people believe?", it would not be sufficient to respond with words alone. Rather that person should be brought into the midst of the liturgical assembly. There, where the Church is gathered, it would be possible to hear, to see, to touch, to smell, to taste and to imbibe within the liturgical setting what the community believes and professes — because the visitor could experience there what the Church prays.

**The Kingdom of Heaven:** The services of the Ukrainian rite do not take place within a sterile vacuum but within an environment which manifests and reflects the Kingdom of Heaven. The iconography which portrays salvation history also reminds the gathered assembly that the Church is confined neither by space or time. The assembly of the angels and saints gather with the earthly community. During the singing of the hymns of Vespers given above the entire temple is filled with incense. Finally, with the singing of the evening hymn "Glad Light of the Holy Glory", the temple becomes ablaze with light as the oil lamps and candles are lit.

**Sunday Matins:** At dawn the Church gathers again, for the service of Matins which always is to proceed the morning Eucharist. On Sundays only, a hymn known as the *Evlogitaria* of the Resurrection is sung.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The company of angels was amazed, beholding Thee, O Saviour, numbered among the dead, who hast destroyed the power of

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3 "Temple" is a literal translation of the Slavonic *chram* which refers to the place of worship.
death and raised up Adam with Thyself, setting all men free from hell.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

‘Why mingle ye sweet-smelling ointment with tears of pity, O ye women disciples?’ cried the angel who shone as lightning within the tomb to the women bearing myrrh. ‘Behold the tomb and understand: for the Saviour has risen from the grave.’

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The women bearing sweet-smelling ointment hastened early in the morning to Thy tomb, lamenting; but the angel arose before them and he said: ‘The time for lamentation has ceased; weep not: but tell the apostles of the Resurrection.’

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The women bearing sweet-smelling ointment came to Thy tomb, O Saviour. But they heard an angel say to them: ‘Why count ye the Living among the dead? For as God He has risen from the tomb.’

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

We worship the Father together with His Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, One in Essence, and we cry with the seraphim: Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O Lord.

Both now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Virgin, who hast borne the Giver of Life, thou hast delivered Adam from sin, and to Eve thou hast brought joy in place of sorrow. He who took flesh from thee, who is both God and man, has raised up once more those who had fallen from life.4

Gospels of the Resurrection: Following upon the singing of the Evlogitaria, on Sundays, there is always a reading from one of the eleven Gospel pericopes of the resurrection. It is apparent that the meaning of the Sunday services in the Ukrainian rite is a joyous proclamation of the resurrection of Christ. The community of faith is assembled because of His death and resurrection. This victorious event of life over death is celebrated every first day of the week, which is also the eighth day or the day of the eschaton — the age to come.

Divine Liturgy: After Matins, which celebrates Christ who is our glorious light, and following the First, Third and Ninth Hours, the Divine Liturgy or Mass takes place. Believers break the fast which they have kept from the preceding evening as they partake of the heavenly banquet, where they are nourished by God in the flesh, who has given Himself for the life of the world. Thus every Sunday, the assembled Church commemorates and celebrates the death and resurrection of its head, who gives life to the body. Together in the Holy Spirit, the faithful glorify the Father.

4 The Festal Menaion, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber 1977) 89-90.
The Easter Cycle

The Churches of the East have developed a liturgical calendar which is diverse and multidimensional. This is best exemplified by the liturgical services which are celebrated during the Easter or Paschal Cycle. These services are found in liturgical books called the Triodion⁵ and the Pentecostarion.⁶ These cover the period from Great Lent and its preceding Sundays to the Feast of Pentecost and the Sunday of All Saints which follows it. This cycle is based upon the lunar cycle following the tradition of the Jews in dating the Passover.

**The date of Easter:** There are both similarities and differences in the dating of Easter or Pascha between the eastern and the western churches. The West follows the following method: Easter is the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox (March 21).

The Churches of the Byzantine rite also follow this rule, but with one additional criterion. They have remained faithful to the prescription of the Council of Nicaea that the New Pascha or Easter is not to be celebrated before the Jewish Passover in order that there be no confusion between the two; the antitype (Easter) is to follow the type (Passover).

In addition, some Ukrainian Churches use the Julian calendar to date March 21, whereas the western Churches follow the Gregorian calendar. These differ by thirteen days.

**The pre-lenten season** begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. (In the Byzantine rite many of the Sundays are known by the Gospel which is appointed to be proclaimed at the Divine Liturgy. There is a one year cycle of readings.) The Hymn of Light appointed for Matins on this day expresses the theme of the celebration:

> Let us flee from the wicked boasting of the Pharisee and let us learn the noble humility of the Publican, that we may be exalted and cry aloud with him to God: Be merciful unto Thy servants, Christ our Saviour, born of a Virgin, who hast of Thine own will endured the Cross and with Thyself raised up the world by Thy divine power.

Lest the fasting of the Pharisee be emulated by the faithful, there is a general dispensation from fasting for this week.

**The Sunday of the Prodigal Son** follows. Here the believer is presented with the paradigm of repentance. This repentance is met with the tender loving kindness of God who is anxious to forgive sinners and restore persons to their former glory. At Vespers the following verses are sung:

> Brethren, let us learn the meaning of this mystery. For when the Prodigal Son ran back from sin to his Father's house, his loving Father came out to meet him and kissed him. He restored to the

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Prodigal the tokens of his proper glory, and mystically He made glad on high, sacrificing the fatted calf. Let our lives, then, be worthy of the loving Father who has offered sacrifice, and of the glorious Victim who is the Saviour of our souls.

The Sunday of the Last Judgement: The next pre-lenten Sunday is known as the Sunday of the Last Judgement or Meat-Fare Sunday, for meat is not eaten from this day until Pascha. The Gospel appointed to be read at the Divine Liturgy is Matthew 25:31-45, which presents the Last Judgement. At the second coming of Christ we shall be judged according to our actions toward those in need. Have we lived a life of selfless service? Have we responded in love to those whose needs allowed us to serve Christ? During Vespers we sing:

Knowing the commandments of the Lord, let this be our way of life: let us feed the hungry, let us give the thirsty drink, let us clothe the naked, let us welcome strangers, let us visit those in prison and the sick. Then the Judge of all the earth will say even to us: ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.’

The Great Fast or Lent in the Ukrainian rite begins on the Monday following the Sunday of Forgiveness on which we commemorate The Casting out of Adam from Paradise. This day is also known as Cheese-Fare Sunday, for dairy products are not eaten from this day until Easter. In the minds of Eastern Christians paradise plays a role of paramount importance. It is the place before the Fall. It is the time in which harmony and communion existed between God and all creation. At Vespers the following is sung:

O Precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty, tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight, glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints, with the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all: may He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression, and may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life and of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before.

The season of Lent proper begins at Sunday Vespers after the Entrance into the Altar, for at this point the joyous character of the Sunday resurrection services is replaced by the penitential tone. The vestments are changed to dark coloured ones and the penitential lenten melodies are used. These practices characterize only the weekday services, for both Saturday and Sunday maintain their own character which is quite separate.

At the end of Vespers there is the ceremony of mutual forgiveness. The whole assembly asks forgiveness from one another. One person makes a prostration before another saying: “Forgive me, a sinner.” The other responds with a prostration saying: “God forgives. Pray for me a sinner.” If a believer meets another believer outside of the assembly this exchange of mutual forgiveness is to take place as well.

The First Sunday in Lent is known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, for on this day there is the special commemoration of the restoration of icons. In the eighth and ninth centuries the Byzantine rite was embroiled in a controversy over the veneration of icons. The “iconoclasts” taught that icons were not
permitted because they were a form of idolatry. The "iconodules," however taught the orthodox doctrine which states that icons are not worshipped but the veneration given to them is accorded the prototype. Thus it is Christ who is worshipped when His icon is venerated.

Christians of the Ukrainian rite not only venerate and use icons integrally in their liturgical worship but also in the home. Upon entering a dwelling the icons are first venerated and only then is it considered proper to exchange greetings between host and guest. On the Sunday of Orthodoxy in the cathedrals after the Divine Liturgy there is a solemn proclamation of the faith, and the processional icons are then venerated by those present. During Vespers the following is sung:

Thou who art uncircumscribed, O Master, in Thy divine nature, wast pleased in the last times to take flesh and be circumscribed; and in assuming flesh, Thou hast also taken on Thyself all its distinctive properties. Therefore we depict the likeness of Thine outward form, venerating it with an honour that is relative. So we are exalted to the love of Thee, and following the holy traditions handed down by the apostles, from Thine icon receive the grace of healing.

The Second Sunday in Lent in the Byzantine rite celebrates the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica. This is a rather recent commemoration dating back no further than the fourteenth century. It might be asked why there is a tendency during Lent to bring to mind and dedicate the theme of the Sunday assembly to a saint. It seems that for this Sunday, and likewise the Fourth, when St. John of the Ladder is remembered, and the Fifth when our Holy Mother Mary of Egypt is commemorated, great examples of the spiritual life are set before the faithful to emulate.

While the season of Lent was originally a time of preparation for initiation into the Church through the sacraments of baptism, chrismation and eucharist, with the decline of the catechumenate it became more and more a time of spiritual ascesis. The focus has moved away from the assembly preparing to receive new members into its midst to one in which the individual believer undertakes a personal journey to deepen faith. The liturgical texts reflect this new emphasis, presenting to the faithful great spiritual teachers to be followed. At Vespers the following is sung in honour of St. Mary of Egypt:

Having gone to dwell in the wilderness, thou hast blotted out from thy soul the images of the sensual passions, and hast marked upon it the God-given imprint of holiness. Thou hast attained such glory, blessed Mother, as to walk upon the surface of the waters, and in thy prayers to God thou wast raised up from the earth. And now, all-glorious Mary, standing before Christ with boldness, entreat Him for our souls.

The Third Sunday of Lent is the occasion on which the Church celebrates The Adoration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross. This is the second major commemoration of the Cross in the year, the first being The Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. At Matins on this feast the Cross is brought in solemn procession into the nave of the temple to be venerated. The great delight that the faithful take in the Cross and the joy of the feast are expressed when all sing:
Come, Adam and Eve, our first father and mother, who fell from the choir on high through the envy of the murderer of man, when of old with bitter pleasure ye tasted from the tree in Paradise. See, the Tree of the Cross, revered by all, draws near! Run with haste and embrace it joyfully, and cry to it with faith: O precious Cross, thou art our succour; partaking of thy fruit, we have gained incorruption; we are restored once more to Eden, and we have received great mercy.

The consciousness of Christians of the Ukrainian rite embraces the past. The past becomes transfigured as does the future in light of the gift of salvation which Christ gives by His Cross.

The Great Fast comes to an end on the Friday of the sixth week. This is followed by The Saturday of The Holy and Righteous Lazarus. Here the raising of Lazarus at Bethany before the entry into Jerusalem is commemorated. Holy Week begins with the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. At Vespers the assembly sings:

Today the Word and coeternal Son of God the Father, whose throne is the heaven and whose footstool is the earth, humbles Himself and comes to Bethany, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. Then the children of the Hebrews, holding branches in their hands, praise Him saying: 'Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that comes, the King of Israel.'

Let us also come today, all the new Israel, the Church of the Gentiles, and let us cry with the Prophet Zechariah: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; for behold, thy King comes unto thee: He is meek and brings salvation, and He rides upon the colt of an ass, the foal of a beast of burden. Keep the feast with the children, and holding branches in your hands sing His praises: Hosanna to the highest; blessed is He that comes, the King of Israel.

Among the Ukrainians pussy willow branches are blessed at Matins in place of palms. These are held throughout the Divine Liturgy and are then brought home where they are placed above the icons.

Holy and Great Week: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy and Great Week put a special stress on preparing to meet Christ. The image that is used here is the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. We never know at what hour Christ may call us. Therefore we are to be ready, living the gospel at all times. At Matins the following is sung:

Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night; and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, but unworthy is he whom He shall find in slothfulness. Beware, then, O my soul, and be not overcome by sleep, lest thou be given over to death and shut out from the Kingdom. But return to soberness and cry aloud: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God: through the Theotokos have mercy upon us.

Holy and Great Friday: On the evening of Holy Thursday, following Vespers, which is concluded this night by the Divine Liturgy where the Last Supper is commemorated, there follows Matins of Holy and Great Friday. This service,
which originated in the Church in Jerusalem, is quite unique. During it, twelve different Gospel pericopes on the Passion of Christ are read. Through them the stations of the Cross are enacted. All hold candles during the reading of each Gospel. The following verse is sung:

Lord, when Thou hast ascended on the Cross, fear and trembling seized all the creation. Thou hast not suffered the earth to swallow those that crucified Thee; but Thou hast commanded hell to render up its prisoners, for the regeneration of mortal men. Judge of the living and the dead, Thou hast come to bring, not death, but life, O Thou who lovest mankind, glory to Thee.

Here we can see the emphasis on the crucifixion as a cosmic event. In this event, life comes forth from death, out of God's love for us.

On Great and Holy Friday at Vespers the assembled Church relives the death and burial of Christ. Central to this rite is the *Epitaphion* or *Plaschanysia* which is an iconographic depiction of the burial of Christ, usually painted on a large cloth at least five feet by three feet in size. Around the border of this cloth there is written the following verse:

Noble Joseph, taking down Thy most pure body from the Tree, wrapped it in clean linen with sweet spices, and he laid it in a new tomb.

The *Epitaphion* is placed in the centre of the temple near the end of the Vespers service and it is then venerated by the faithful.

**Great and Holy Saturday** has a unique flavour. The believer moves from the death and burial of Christ and all the sorrow that this brings forth to a journey with Christ into the tomb. This day is the Great Sabbath. The work of Jesus is brought to an end. He can rest from the labour of salvation. At Matins the assembly sings the following verse:

Moses the great mystically prefigured this present day, saying: 'And God blessed the seventh day.' For this is the blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works. Suffering death in accordance with the plan of salvation, He kept the Sabbath in the flesh; and returning once again to what He was, through His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life, for He alone is good and loves mankind.

**The ancient Paschal Vigil** begins at Vespers on Holy Saturday. As the evening light wanes the assembly sings:

Today hell groans and cries aloud: 'It had been better for me, had I not accepted Mary's Son, for He has come to me and destroyed my power; He had shattered the gates of brass, and as God He had raised up the souls that once I held.' Glory to Thy Cross, O Lord, and to Thy Resurrection.

Today hell groans and cries aloud: 'My power has been destroyed. I accepted a mortal man as one of the dead; yet I cannot keep Him prisoner, and with Him I shall lose all those over whom I ruled. I held in my power the dead from all ages; but see, He is raising them all.' Glory to Thy Cross, O Lord, and to Thy Resurrection.
During this service there are fifteen readings from the Old Testament. They portray the history of salvation with a special emphasis on baptism. This night was the original time when the Church initiated its new members who through the waters of baptism entered mystically into the death and resurrection of Christ. This was seen to be the most propitious and appropriate time of the entire year to cast off the old Adam. Having descended into the waters of the font as did Christ into Hades, one arises from these waters as one born from a womb. One is then robed in the white garment, clothed as the bride to behold the Bridegroom who has come forth from the tomb. This "mother of all vigils" is broken with the celebration of the Liturgy of St. Basil, where the assembly enters into communion with its risen Lord.

**Easter Sunday or Pascha:** The Paschal Feast continues with Matins on The Holy and Great Sunday of the Resurrection. There is probably no service that brings with it so much exaltation and joy as this one. Its pace is fast. It is filled with light and glorious song. Again and again one hears the acclamation, "Christ is risen" and the response, "Truly He is risen." The hearts of the faithful are filled with joy and their faces are bright. They entered into the Great Fast asking one another for forgiveness. Now on this bright day of the resurrection they come forth to greet each other with the Paschal Kiss and as they do the following is sung:

Today the sacred Pasch is revealed to us, holy and new Pasch, the mystical Passover, the venerable Passover, the Pasch which is Christ the Redeemer, spotless Pasch, great Pasch, the Pasch of the faithful, the Pasch which is the key to the gates of Paradise, the Pasch which sanctifies all the faithful.

O Women, be the heralds of good news and tell what you saw; tell of the vision and say to Zion: Accept the good news of joy from us, the news that Christ has risen. Exalt and celebrate and rejoice, O Jerusalem, seeing Christ the King coming from the tomb like a bridegroom . . . .

This is the Resurrection day. Let us be enlightened by this Feast, and let us embrace one another. Let us call Brethren even those who hate us, and in the Resurrection forgive everything; and let us sing:

Christ is risen from the dead! By death He conquered Death, and to those in the graves He granted life.

The fasting has now ended. After the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the foods for the Paschal Meal are blessed. The liturgy overflows into a repast where the assembly gathered in the joy of the resurrection partake of all those foods which were not eaten during the fast.

**The Sundays following Easter** continue with the theme of the resurrection: the appearances of Jesus to the disciples in the Upper Room on Thomas Sunday, and on the Third Sunday the commemoration of The Myrrh-Bearing Women who were the first to proclaim the good news to the apostles. The Sundays of the Paralytic, the Samaritan Woman, and the Man Born Blind are all connected to the sacrament of baptism with their emphasis on water and healing. This must be seen in the context of Pascha as the foremost time for initiation into the Church. The last day of the Paschal
Feast is the Wednesday before the Ascension when the Easter services are repeated.

Ascension: The meaning of the Ascension is expressed in the hymn:

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God; You delighted the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through this blessing they were assured that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

It is a joyous hope that fills the assembly, for the Ascension of Christ points to the descent of the Holy Spirit. And it is the Spirit which empowers the Church to live the Gospel.

Pentecost: Fifty days after the Pasch, the Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost. In the Byzantine rite this day commemorates both the descent of the Holy Spirit and the Feast of the Holy Trinity. At Vespers the following is sung:

Come, all you nations of the world, let us adore God in three holy persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit — three in one. From all eternity, the Father begets the Son, equal to Him in eternity and majesty, equal also to the Spirit, glorified with the Son in the Father, three persons, and yet a single power and essence and Godhead. In deep adoration, let us cry out to God: Holy is God who made all things through the Son with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Holy the Mighty One through whom the Father was revealed to us, and through whom the Holy Spirit came to this world. Holy the Immortal One, the Spirit and Comforter who proceeds from the Father and reposes in the Son. All-holy Trinity, glory to You.

Green Holidays: At this feast it is the custom of the Ukrainians to decorate the entire church with greenery. Large branches of trees are brought into the church. This tradition, which dates back to pre-Christian times, gives the Feast of Pentecost its peculiar name among the Ukrainians, that is Zeleni Sviate or “Green Holidays.”

*The Descent of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost icon shows the Twelve Apostles. At the base of the icon is a figure called cosmos emerging from darkness. The tongue of fire, the Holy Spirit, gives light to the cosmos, calls it into being, and redeems it from darkness. This icon was painted by Heiko C. Schlieper and is in the Folk Life collection of the Provincial Museum of Alberta.*
At the Sunday evening Vespers there is found another tradition unique to this feast. The “Kneeling Prayers” are interspersed into this service. These prayers, which have a structure in some ways not unlike the eucharistic prayers, both glorify and supplicate God. Note that the posture of kneeling has not been used in any of the services since Pascha. The joy which is characteristic of the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost requires of the believer a bodily posture which reflects the inner attitude. Now, with the passing of these days, the assembled Church enters into a new liturgical time.

**Holy Spirit Day**: While Pentecost emphasizes both the Holy Trinity and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Monday of this week is known as “Holy Spirit Day” as it places a special importance on the working of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

**The Sunday of All Saints**: The *Pentecostarion* comes to an end on the Sunday of All Saints or the First Sunday after Pentecost. This feast, which originally was dedicated to the martyrs, seems to date from at least the end of the fourth century in the East. It expresses a unique vision of the Church where heaven and earth are joined together in the love of God.

**Helpful Reading**

Gabriel Bertoniere, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium 1972)

Thomas Hopko, *The Winter Pascha* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1984)


Veselin Kesich, *The First Day of the New Creation* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1982)

Alexander Schmemann, *Great Lent* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1974)


Nicholas Uspensky, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1985)

*The Year of Grace of the Lord*, a Scriptural and Liturgical Commentary on the Calendar of the Orthodox Church, by a Monk of the Eastern Church (London: Mowbray 1980)
The Divine Liturgy

Angelica Hodowansky

Eastern Christians generally refer to the eucharistic liturgy as the Divine Liturgy. Three forms of the Divine Liturgy are used, of which the most common is that of St. John Chrysostom; this is the one that is considered here.

The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great has the same structure as that of St. John Chrysostom, but differs in certain of its prayers. It is used about ten times a year, mainly in Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, in which Holy Gifts that have previously been consecrated are used for Holy Communion, is used on certain days during Lent and on other fast days.

The Shape of the Liturgy

To give glory to God

We come to the Divine Liturgy to give glory to God, and we come to give Him glory with our lives. The Eastern Fathers of the Church always stressed that God's greatest glory was man/woman fully alive. Therefore we come to Liturgy to give God glory first of all by bringing ourselves: who we are, as we are, who we hope to become. We bring ourselves with our past experiences, our present reality, our future hopes.

To give God glory, therefore, is not to forget ourselves, put ourselves aside at the church door, or hold in abeyance our cares, our sorrows, our hopes, while we communicate with God. To give God glory is to bring ourselves as we are, and standing before Him to open ourselves to His touch, His healing, His power, that He may transform us into our truer selves and renew us so that we may grow into our potential. Created in God's image, we are called to grow into His likeness, to put on Christ so that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.

Introductory Rites

Blessing: The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom begins with a blessing:

Blessed be the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now, and for ever and ever.¹

¹ Liturgical texts quoted are taken from The Sacred and Divine Liturgy of Our Holy Father John Chrysostom, (Philadelphia: Synod of the Hierarchy of the Ukrainian Church, 1987). Used with permission.
These opening words remind us that the Kingdom of God is in our midst, but not yet in all its fullness. We are all pilgrims on a journey to the fullness of that Kingdom. The priest as our leader in that journey stands before us and like all of us faces the altar. That is, he faces East, the East where Christ was born, lived, died and was raised up, the East from which according to tradition, Christ will come again. The East, whence the sun rises daily to shed light and life upon the world, is symbolic of the comings of Christ, the Lord. Christ our life and light gives us the new day and the new age, the new life. He calls us to take our life as the new creation from Him who is our East. The East is symbolic of life, creation, newness to which we are ever called.

**Litany:** With this reminder of our pilgrimage of life, we are immediately plunged into the first of a number of litanies.

In peace let us pray to the Lord  
Lord, have mercy.  
For the peace from on high . . .  
Lord, have mercy.  
For peace throughout the world . . .  
Lord, have mercy.

The presence of the litany here says that this journey, like every journey, is much more easily made the less luggage one carries with oneself. Coming as we are, we bring our concerns, our hopes, our cares, but these can weigh us down, close our ears to God’s presence in Word and Mystery/Sacrament as He comes to us. So our first act of worship is to show our complete trust in God. We give Him our concerns, our hopes, our fears, our petitions as we pray for the world. Knowing that God is lover of us all, we trust He will act according to His nature of love and so we give ourselves with the plea that God will fill us with His peace. We pray for peace for our universe, for peace that comes not only from the absence of war, but also for peace in the hearts of men/women from whence comes all wars, all violence.

**Antiphons.** We pray for God’s peace for ourselves now, for it is only in that peace that we will be ready to praise Him in the joyful Antiphons that follow; these are psalm excerpts with refrains referring to Christ and to the Theotokos.

Bless the Lord, O my soul . . .  
Praise the Lord, O my soul . . .  
In Your Kingdom remember us, O Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom . . .  
Remembering our most holy and immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary together with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

**Little entrance.** The priest encircles the altar as he lifts high the decorated Gospel book and brings it to us, the congregation. Servers carrying lighted candles accompany him. This procession is known as the small or little entrance.

Lord God our Master . . . grant that as we make our entrance, the holy angels may enter too, serving with us and joining in the praise of Your goodness . . .
Trisagion or Thrice-Holy: This is followed by the solemn and majestic hymn to the holiness of God, together with poetic hymns (troparia) to the resurrection and feasts of the liturgical year.

O Holy God,
Holy Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
have mercy on us.

Word of God

We are ready now to listen to God's word as it comes to us in the Epistle and Gospel readings and the homily. These prepare us to unite ourselves most intimately with Christ Jesus in his offering of Himself to our one Father in the Anaphora, the heart of the Liturgy which soon follows.

Litany: Before the Anaphora begins, however, we remember the needs of the world with another litany and its three-fold "Lord, have mercy."

Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind let us say.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Almighty Lord, God of our fathers, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Have mercy on us, O God, in the greatness of Your compassion, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Preparation for the Eucharist

The Great Entrance: This is followed by the Great Entrance: the transfer of the gifts of bread and wine to be consecrated, offered and received in communion. This transfer is carried out by an elegant procession of priest(s) carrying the gifts, together with servers. From the table of oblation or preparation (in the sanctuary at the left side of the altar) through the north door of the iconostasis facing the congregation, on through the royal doors of the iconostasis, the gifts are brought and placed on the altar.

In this procession we are reminded again to be unconcerned by our earthly cares, for we have put them in God's hands. We are united here with the invisible cherubim and heavenly hosts surrounding the one eternal altar of praise, to welcome the Lord of all, soon to be eucharistically present amongst us in His eternal offering, and as He comes to us in communion.

Creed: Yet, before plunging into this great mystery of offering which is for the faithful only, we recite the ancient Nicene Creed wherein we profess our faith in this God of mystery. This is the one God in three persons who created us out of love, has not stopped doing everything for us, and who leads us on to share in the eternal love relationship of the Trinity. This is the great dignity of our call.
The Peace: However, before we can profess our faith in God, or our love for God whom we do not see, we first must show our love for one another as brothers and sisters.

Peace be with you all.
Let us love one another so that we may be of one mind in confessing:
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in Being and undivided.

Anaphora

Then, once we have shown our love for one another with a visible sign, and professed our faith in God, we are ready to begin the Anaphora, the Liturgy of offering wherein it is Christ our Head, united with all of us, His Mystical Body, and with all of creation, who offers Himself to the Father. [Western Christians generally refer to the Anaphora as the eucharistic prayer.]

Dialogue: The Anaphora begins with the priest entoning, "Let us lift up our hearts," to which we respond, "We have lifted them to the Lord." He then continues, "Let us give thanks to the Lord;" we respond, "It is right and just to worship . . . ."

Giving thanks and praise: For this mystery, we join the Cherubim and Seraphim, who are constantly praising God in their unending, eternal hymn of "Holy, Holy, Holy . . . ." The heavens are open and we become one with the Church of all times, all nations, all generations — the Church beyond time and space.

It is right and just to sing of You, to bless You, to praise You, to thank You, to worship You everywhere in Your domain; for You are God — ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, always existing and ever the same — You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit.

The legacy of Christ: We remember Christ as He asked to be remembered the night before He died: "Do this in remembrance of me." Taking bread and wine as He did, we too bless the Father for all of creation.

After He had come and fulfilled the whole divine plan for our sake, on the night He was given over — or, rather, gave Himself over for the life of the world — He took bread into His holy, most pure, and immaculate hands . . .

Anamnesis or Memorial: We bless the bread and wine and in doing so remember Him:

Remembering, therefore, this salutary commandment, and all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming . . .

Epiclesis or Invocation: We call upon the Holy Spirit to come upon this bread and wine and upon us, that all may become the body of Christ.
Deacon: Bless, Master, the Holy Bread.
Priest: And make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ.
Deacon: Amen. Bless, Master, the holy chalice.
Priest: And that which is in this chalice the precious Blood of Your Christ.
Deacon: Master, bless both.
Priest: Changing them by thy Holy Spirit.

Holy Communion

Holy things for the Holy: As His Body and in His presence, we then dare to call upon God as Father, and to approach the table to receive the gift of life: Christ Himself whom we then bring to the world.

The holy Things for the Holy!
One only is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Approach with the fear of God and with faith.

The servant of God, N., partakes of the precious, most holy and most pure Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of his/her sins and life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving and Dismissal

Giving thanks: Having received the Bread of Life, as His Body we communally render thanks, sing God’s glory for making us partakers of His holy, immortal, life-giving mysteries, and bless His name, now, always, and forever.

... Having received the divine, holy, immaculate, immortal, heavenly, and life-giving awesome Mysteries of Christ, let us rightly give thanks to the Lord.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you through His grace and love for mankind, always, now and for ever and ever.

Living the Divine Liturgy

Becoming beautiful gifts: In the Divine Liturgy we bring to a climax the offering of our lives to God. We ask that we become a fragrant aroma, a beautiful gift to be given for the world, that the world may have life through us. We come to celebrate the gift we are. Gifts are always meant to be given away, given for others. We come to Liturgy to be strengthened with Christ's presence in one another and in His body and blood so that one with Him, we too may be broken and distributed.
Life in the New Jerusalem: To be broken and distributed for others in our daily lives as we live twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week is a painful call, but we celebrate it with joy. Only through the Cross can we come to resurrection. Our Divine Liturgy, the climax of our celebration of life, that is, of life lived fully, rooted in the Last Supper — His death and resurrection — is focused on His second coming, the Wedding Banquet. It looks forward to life in the New Jerusalem, where the streets are paved in gold, where there is no need for light, for the lamb will be the light, where beauty and mystery, awe, splendor, and holiness will eternally unfold to those who have ears to hear, hearts to understand, eyes to see: to those who have the capacity to receive such love.

Giving life to others: Aware of our dignity, our call to be New People, to participate eternally in the life of the Trinity, we Eastern Christians are enabled to live with joy and hope. The sorrows, struggles, pain so intimately bound to every human life can be accepted with inner peace for we possess a deep conviction as to the meaning of our life in Christ. "We who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," according to the Liturgy. To live in the midst of pain, as He did, and yet be healers, builders, unifiers, is to give life to the world. The strength of the Spirit, the healing power of Christ, the inner vision of life generated by the Divine Liturgy, radiates to each person open to receive, to each person in the universe who stretches out her/his arms to neighbour, country, world — who stretches out a hand of justice, peace, self-giving.

To give life is to share this life of Christ received at Liturgy — the life of forgiveness, of caring, of responsibility, of beauty and giftedness. To be life-givers is to be actively involved with God in creating this world, co-operating with Christ in making this universe theophorus: fully penetrated and ablaze with God's glory.

Divine Liturgy is Christ risen, alive, present with man/woman offering humanity with all creation as it is being transformed to the Father. Liturgy is a hymn of praise and thanks to God at work in the New Jerusalem bringing it to its eternal glorious fulfillment.

Hymn to Mary

Hail, O Space of the spaceless God;
hail, O Gate of the sublime Mystery.
Hail, O Message unsure to men without faith;
hail, O Glory most certain to those who believe.

Accathist Hymn
Worship for the Whole Person

Liturgy and Beauty

Because the focus of liturgical celebration in the East is always on our being the New People in the New Jerusalem, one of the first prerequisites of the celebration is beauty.

When Vladimir (or Volodymyr) decided it was time for his people to give up paganism and accept one of the prevailing world religions, the chroniclers told us that he first listened to representatives expound the doctrines and creeds of each religion: Judaism, Islam, Western Christianity, and Greek Christianity. Volodymyr then sent legates to each centre to see, listen, observe how each worshipped their God. Upon their return the legates recommended the religion of Constantinople for many reasons, but mainly, as the chronicles tell us, because "We cannot forget that beauty. We did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth, so beautiful was that liturgy." And so the descendents of Kievan-Rus cannot forget their inheritance from Constantinople, the beauty of Liturgy.

Beauty speaks to the whole person: Beauty, according to the dictionary, is the quality attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies in certain ways, as by line, color, form, texture, rhythmic motion. That is, beauty is a quality expressed by any of the five senses. Above all, it is a quality that embraces the physical, but goes beyond to touch the heart, soul and spirit of man and woman. Beauty speaks to the whole person and yet, like a precious piece of artwork or music, it has no practical purpose nor use.

Anointing Christ: Scripture also refers to that kind of beauty. One of its most memorable stories is that of the woman who comes to Simon's home with an alabaster jar. She breaks the jar and pours the most expensive ointment over the head and feet of Christ. What a wasteful gesture. This perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor, as the disciples immediately point out. But the perfume fills the house, and Christ praises the woman and her deed and promises that wherever this Gospel is preached, she will be remembered for this useless gesture of beauty. This deed is a preparation for Christ's burial. Liturgy is a preparation of our not so remote burial also, for Liturgy is a celebration of Christ's second coming, a preparation for the eternal banquet. So much in our Eastern churches could also be sold and the money used for the poor, yet we strongly believe that beauty with all its uselessness is essential in our worship of God.

Celebrating with the Senses

Because we celebrate who we are, we celebrate in a truly human fashion. Christ in becoming human took on our flesh and blood, reminding us how holy all creation is. Our worship thus involves all creation symbolically; it involves us as total persons: body, soul and spirit. The physical is needed to grasp and express the spirit; the visible to reflect the deep invisible reality. Our liturgical celebrations use the five senses: sight, touch, taste, sound, smell, to reveal and reflect the mystery, holiness and beauty of God.
For our sense of sight: The church building with its architecture and icons has a functional purpose in which beauty plays an important role. Visible beauty is represented by much gold in the icons and icon screen, but also in the sacred vessels used, for the chalices, spoon, discos, etc. are usually golden. Vestments worn by the priest and those around the altar have golden threads running through them, icons and even precious stones to enhance them. All the gold is a reminder of the New Jerusalem to which this journey leads. As the Book of Revelation describes it: We are the New People heading, journeying to the New Jerusalem. Let us keep our eyes attuned to it.

For our sense of smell: Incense is the fragrant aroma of our prayer rising to God. It is used to purify our hearts, to remind us of our call to holiness, our unity with the dead, with all those gone before us but who are still one with us in God. Incense fills our temples, our churches and our bodies just as the Holy Spirit fills all places and is in everything with his holiness.

For the ear: There is the Word and there is music. Whether it be a trained choir, or the entire congregation singing the Divine Liturgy, the melodic renditions speak to the soul. From simple monastic chanting, through antiphonal singing, through complicated eight-tonal renditions of troparia, etc., to symphonic arrangements, singing plays an important role in Eastern worship.

For taste and touch: Bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ, the real food and drink of life have the texture and taste of our daily bread and wine. We kiss the icons, the crucifix, the bible. We bow, prostrate ourselves, sign ourselves with the sign of the cross (the sign of His great love for us). Praying with many external gestures proclaims that our whole being prays. Our body is used for prayer: we bless ourselves, as well as blessing the goods of the earth.

All creation is good and is blessed; we bring flowers to church to be blessed (Feast of Dormition/Assumption); fruit to be blessed (Feast of Transfiguration); water (Theophany/Epiphany); and of course the food for the Feast of Feasts: Easter — Resurrection/Pascha. God blesses everything He has made and we sign ourselves often with His blessing. We bless ourselves, a reminder of our great call to be a blessing. We see, we taste, we smell, we hear, we touch and are touched. We are body, soul and spirit people.

Living for the life of the world

We come to Divine Liturgy grateful, but also wounded, sinful, hungry. We come to be healed, fed and loved. We come to receive Christ's greatest gift to us: His own Body and Blood, so that eating and drinking, we may become so intimately one with Him that we too give our lives for the world and to the world. We go out of the Church assembly to be Christ for our brothers and sisters. We come to receive life so as to bring it to all creation.

We come to Divine Liturgy to worship our God, to celebrate His gift of life to us, eternal life, already begun here and now, only to be fulfilled in eternity. We come to share our lives with one another as brothers and sisters and to share life with the Father, Son and Spirit in a community of love. Divine
Liturgy is our recognition of and our acceptance of this gift of life unto eternity. It is our “Yes” to our great destiny to be sons and daughters of God and partakers of His Divine Life.

Helpful Reading


St. Germanus of Constantinople, On the Divine Liturgy (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1984)


Juan Mateos, Le Celebration de la Parole dans la Liturgie Byzantine (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium 1971)


Hymn to Mary

Hail, O Beam of the Mystical Sun;
hail, O Radiance of the Light without setting.
Hail, Lightning-Flash that brightens the souls;
hail, Thunder-Clap that strikes down the foes.

Akathist Hymn
Sanctification of Persons

David J. Goa

In the Eastern Christian tradition both the ordinary round of daily life and life's special moments, such as baptism, marriage, burial and others, are enriched and celebrated liturgically. Of these liturgies, only a few examples can be considered here.¹

The Mystery of Holy Baptism

Since the beginning of time, human beings have used water for washing, refreshment, and recreation. Christian Baptism gives form to this human desire. In Eastern Christian ritual it is a form of "re-creation." The new-born child or adult is re-created in the image of God.

Baptism is a theophany, a showing forth of God through a showing forth of the nature of being. Our humanity is shown in its pristine form, the form the Creator intended. All the baptized are restored to the image of God, Christ present in the world.

The liturgy begins, even with an infant, by "prayers at the reception of catechumens;" the child is first made a catechumen, a candidate for baptism, even though there is no real catechumenate.

In thy Name, O Lord God of truth . . . I lay my hand upon thy servant, N., who hath been found worthy to flee unto thy holy Name . . . Remove far from her her former delusion, and fill her with the faith, hope and love which are in thee.²

Enable her to walk in all thy commandments . . . Inscribe her in thy Book of Life, and unite her to the flock of thine inheritance. And may thy holy Name be glorified in her.

Exorcism: The ritual continues with exorcism or removal of all desires that parents, society, and history place upon the child which are not part of the Creator's love. The exorcism is precise and embodied. Evil is a presence in human experience.

Renunciation and Profession: The candidate renounces Satan and professes faith in God. In the ritual the Evil One is spat upon and the faithful turn

¹ Portions are drawn from David J. Goa, Seasons of Celebration: Ritual in Eastern Christian Culture (Edmonton: The Provincial Museum of Alberta 1986)

² Liturgical texts quoted are taken from Isabel Florence Hapgood, Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and All North America 1922, reprinted 1965).
their back to him. God wills that the child, as Christ, will live in loving communion with all creation, rejecting self-interest and the power structures of the day. The same is true of an adult who comes for baptism. The Eastern Church uses the Nicene Creed here instead of the Apostles' Creed.

Dost thou renounce Satan, and all his Angels, and all his works, and all his service, and all his pride?

Priest: Breathe and spit upon him (Satan).

Dost thou unite thyself unto Christ?

O Master, Lord our God, call thy servant, N., to thy holy Illumination, and grant unto her that great grace of thy holy Baptism.

The Office of Holy Baptism proper begins with a litany and other long prayers in which God's blessing is called down upon the water of baptism.

That this water may be sanctified with the power, and effectual operation, and descent of the Holy Spirit . . . Lord, have mercy.

O King who lovest mankind, come thou now and sanctify this water, by the indwelling of thy Holy Spirit.

But do thou, O Master of all, show this water to be the water of redemption, the water of sanctification, the purification of flesh and spirit, the loosing of bonds, the remission of sins, the illumination of the soul, the laver of regeneration, the renewal of the Spirit, the gift of adoption to sonship, the garment of incorruption, the fountain of life.

The waters of baptism cleanse, refresh, and recreate the child, who, born again as Christ, is in communion with the Creator and His world. The baptismal font, large enough for the person to be immersed, to descend completely into the water and come forth from it, is the spiritual womb from which the person is reborn. The God-parents preside at the baptism, symbolically noting that it is from this birth that the future life of the candidate is to take its definition, its vocation. God-parents "receive" the person out of the baptismal waters and are charged to care and nurture them in the fullness of Christ. It is from this birth that the gathered community is to understand the life of the candidate, the life of the faithful, indeed, the life of the world.

Holy oil: Oil is also blessed, and used to anoint both the water of the font, and the child to be baptized.

Bless also this holy oil with . . . thy Holy Spirit, that it may be an anointing unto incorruption, and armour of righteousness, to the renewing of soul and body . . .

The servant of God, N., is anointed with the oil of gladness . . .

Nakedness: The clothing of the infant, a sign of the wear and tear of history, is removed. Nakedness signifies birth and re-creation. The person seeking baptism is reborn. Their origin and destiny is now understood to be in God. All the illusions associated with understanding a person in terms of their historical and cultural position, the 'uniform' of their life, is set aside. Naked-
ness points to the simple wonder of the created being and to the person's ultimate reality resting in the Creator, not in the station into which it is born.

**Baptism:** "And when his whole body is anointed, the Priest baptizeth him, holding him upright, and looking toward the east, as he saith:"


**White garment:** The child is dressed in a white garment, signifying the "light of Christ," which illumines the person. Yet, this garment is not a fresh and sweet baptismal robe. Rather, it is the garment which swaddled Jesus at the incarnation, that bound his body in the tomb. It is a type of the linen on the holy table which contains the saint's relic. Christ's incarnation and death, and that of the transfigured life of the saints, is linked to this baptized person and expresses the path of incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection all are called to in baptism.

The servant of God, N., is clothed with the robe of righteousness . . .

**The Office of Holy Chrismation** follows immediately. In the sacrament of chrismation the faithful receive "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is their personal participation in Pentecost. What occurred to the Apostles, occurs now, at this moment, in this person.

**The body is anointed.** All parts of the body are anointed with holy chrism (myrrh) prepared by the bishop on Holy Thursday. The person receives the Holy Spirit, sealed to the passion of Christ and the resurrected life. It is an anointed life; just as Christ was the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, so is the baptized Christian. As the fathers and mothers of the Church dared to claim, the baptized becomes "Christ" together with Jesus, for the life of the world.

Do thou, Master, compassionate King of kings, grant also unto her the seal of the gift of thy holy, and almighty, and adorable Spirit, and participation in the holy Body and the precious Blood of thy Christ.

And after this he anointeth with the holy chrism the person who hath been baptized, making the sign of the cross: On the brow, and on the eyes, and the nostrils, and the lips, and on both ears, and the breast, and the hands, and the feet, saying, each time:


**Procession.** The newly-baptized person is led in procession around the baptismal font, symbolizing the procession into the Kingdom of God. The words of St. Paul are chanted, "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia." The new humanity of Christ, life in the Kingdom, is put on with the shedding of the old Adam.

**Word of God:** The Epistle, Romans 6: 3-11, and the Gospel, Matthew 28: 16-20, are proclaimed, together with accompanying chants.

**Tonsure:** A portion of hair, the seat of strength, is cut off in the sign of the cross signifying that all strength is from the divine: "N., the servant of God, is shorn . . . ."
Communion: Baptism and chrismation together are called by the ancient Church the "holy illumination." The newly baptized, having received this illumination, are brought to Holy Communion either immediately or on the following Sunday. Holy Eucharist is the source and goal of all things in the Church; it is what the world longs for more than itself. The mystical communion of all people with the Creator into which the baptized are initiated culminates in their eating and drinking of the Bread and Life at communion. In Eastern Christian tradition it is always given in both forms, bread and wine, using a spoon and placed in the mouth of the faithful. And it is given to infants and adults alike, for all are initiated into the Kingdom of God, the fullness of communion, in baptism. There is no partial initiation to the Kingdom of God.

Union with God: Baptism, chrismation, eucharist, all speak of life in union with God. The Kingdom is new. The feast is at hand. The faithful become "Christ" living in union with God, the pristine form of Creation, healing, forgiving, and laying down their life for their enemy.

The Mystery of Confession

Alienation from ourselves, those we love, and the world, often characterizes human life. Reconciliation is sought by talking with friends or a counsellor. We examine, we delve, we attempt to understand, and finally, we offer our troubled spirit to whoever will listen.

O all-holy Trinity, have mercy upon us. O Lord, wash away our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for thy Name's sake.

The Mystery of Confession within Eastern Christianity is the formal act of reconciliation with God, the Church and the world. It reestablishes the primary relationship of the individual with the Creator and with all human beings. In the tradition's view, no one is ever free of sin. To "sin" in both the Hebrew and Greek of the bible, implies "missing the target." For the Christian, the target or goal of life is to dwell in harmony with the Creator, and to live in perfect freedom and service to the creation. It is living the love of God in the world.

When alienation prevents this, the faithful person humbly comes to God, confesses the difficulty, receives the counsel of the tradition through the priest, and receives absolution — the blessing of God's grace in the forgiveness of sin — and a reunion with Christ and the world has begun. Repentance calls the faithful to be free of the bondage experienced in sin.

The two thieves: Commonly in the tradition, the penitent is invited to kneel in confession before an icon of the crucifixion of Christ. The crucifixion is, after all, what occurs when the fullness of divine love is not the source of human action. At the base of the icon the skull and bones of Adam buried at the foot of the cross, Golgotha ("the place of the skull") is depicted. Through Adam sin entered the world. Adam's sin, our sin, all alienation is
redeemed by Christ's entry into death. Sometimes the "icon of our Lord Jesus Christ-Not-made-with-Hands" is used instead; this is what western Christians know as the face on Christ on the "veil of Veronica."

The priest may drape a part of his stole over the head of the penitent and give a meditation on the two thieves hanging beside Christ. They typify our choices. Whether to deny the reality of death as it is about to engulf us — the railings of the thief on the left — or to open our life to the King of Glory out of the midst of our brokenness — as the thief on the right — is our choice in the midst of life. We daily miss the mark of life. To chose repentance is to chose life.

Show thy mercy now upon thy servant, N., and grant unto him an image of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance, pardoning his every transgression, whether voluntary or involuntary. Reconcile and unite him unto thy holy Church ....

May our Lord and God Jesus Christ, through the grace and bounties of his love towards mankind, forgive thee, my child, N., all thy transgressions. And I, his unworthy Priest, through the power given unto me by him, do forgive and absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Confession and Communion. Confession culminates in communion. Only the sinner who has offered up the experience of alienation and death can enter again, through God's grace, into union with God and the creation. What is important here is not morality, belief or Church law as juridical issues. The situation is much graver than that. It is the very experience of life that is at stake for the penitent. The person is healed in confession through God's grace. The consciousness of the penitent is informed in the deepest way on the nature of our longing for union with the divine and the fullness of life. Finally the relationship of the penitent to God, the fragile world and one's own being is seen anew in the light of Christ.

The Mystery of Holy Matrimony

Woman and man unite out of desire, affection, and love. In the marriage liturgy, selfishness is set aside, love is perfected, and the couple is initiated into creation, exemplifying that divine perfection called the Kingdom of God.

The ritual gives both man and woman the possibility of becoming "one spirit and flesh," perfecting their nature in a divine love that transcends death.

Betrothal: The rite of Holy Matrimony begins with the betrothal service, with rich biblical prayer and the exchange and blessing of rings.

O eternal God, who hast brought into unity those who were sundered, and hast ordained for them an indissoluble bond of love; who didst bless Isaac and Rebecca, and didst make them heirs of
thy promise: Bless also these thy servants, N. and N., guiding them unto every good work.

_Then taking the rings, the Priest blesseth the bridal pair therewith, making the sign of the cross with the ring of the Bride over the Bridegroom, and with that of the Bridegroom over the Bride, saying:_

The servant of God., N., is betrothed to the handmaid of God, N. . . . .

The handmaid of God, N., is betrothed to the servant of God, N. . . . .

Wherefore, O Lord, do thou now bless this putting-on of rings with thy heavenly benediction . . . .

_The Order of Crowning:_ Having been betrothed with God’s blessing, they are now crowned with His glory, and led around the icon table in the center of the nave of the church in witness to their sharing in the eternal. Marriage is not a vow until “death do us part.” The idea of contract is foreign to the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. At the heart of the Mystery of Holy Matrimony is its creative action and celebration of whole human beings, man and woman, through a life of self-giving love.

Hast thou, N., a good, free and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take unto thyself to wife this woman, N., whom thou seest here before thee?

I have, reverend Father.

Thou hast not promised thyself to any other bride?

I have not promised myself, reverend Father.

_(and similar questions to the bride)_

O God most pure . . . Bless this marriage, and vouchsafe unto these thy servants . . . a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, mutual love in the bond of peace, long-lived seed, gratitude from their posterity, a crown of glory which fadeth not away. Fill their houses with wheat, and wine, and oil, and with every beneficence, that they may bestow in turn upon the needy . . . .

_The Priest taketh the crowns, and crowneth first the Bridegroom, saying:_

The servant of God., N., is crowned unto the handmaid of God, N. . . . . (and the bride similarly)

_Word of God._ The Epistle, Ephesians 5: 20-33, and the Gospel, John 2: 1-12, are proclaimed together with their accompanying chants and dialogues.

_Additional prayers, litanies, and the Lord’s Prayer follow._

_The Common Cup_ is then brought, and the priest blesses it.

_Then . . . the Priest giveth it thrice to them: first to the Man, and then to the woman. Then immediately the Priest taketh them, the groomsmen behind them holding their crowns, and leadeth them in a circle round about the lectern [icon table]._
The crowns are taken off, with prayer, and eventually the final benediction is given:

May the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the all-holy, consubstantial and life-giving Trinity, one Godhead, and one Kingdom, bless you; and grant unto you length of days, fair children, prosperity of life, and faith: and fill you with abundance of all earthly good things, and make you worthy to obtain the blessings of the promise: through the prayers of the holy Birth-giver of God, and of all the Saints. Amen.

The baptismal pattern: The sacrament of marriage is patterned on baptism-chrisimation. The couple confess their faith and love of God. They are blessed and crowned with God's glory. Their union in God is the glory of all creation.

The eucharistic pattern: Marriage is the grace of full communion with each other, the creation, and the divine that is the center of marriage ritual.

To the extent that their union is in divine love they live the eucharist daily. To the extent that they move from confession of their shortcomings to each other into the gift of union, they live the eucharist daily.

Marriage icon: A marriage icon is carried in procession during the liturgy and placed in the icon corner of the new home. This icon is called "The Embracing of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem." Unity, affection and perfect fidelity are depicted here as the invitation to the couple. Just as in the case of the ancient Joachim and Anna, they are called to nurture the gift of openness to the divine in their children and in all who are touched by their life together. Along with the Church, the couple are called to be theotokos, to be Mary, "the birth-giver of God" in the world.

Rites for Those Who Have Fallen Asleep

We are born. We grow old. We die. Mortality is a condition of our humanity. Early Christian thinkers suggested that mortality was a part of creation, but death was not. To praise the Creator is the only purpose of life. To be "in death" unable to praise God is the greatest of tragedies.

Human beings are alive because they are held in the memory of the divine. The tradition teaches that this is so even after the mortal body of the faithful has "fallen asleep" in the Lord.

May Christ, our true God, who hath dominion over the living and the dead . . . establish the soul of his servant, N., departed from us, in his holy mansions, and number her among the just; and have mercy upon us: Forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

Contemplation of Death: The cycle of rituals initiating the deceased into the eternal includes the Office at the Parting of the Soul from the Body, several Orders for the Burial of the Dead, an annual Requiem Office for the Dead, and other memorial services. It begins with a vigil or watch. Through song,
hymn and prayer, it structures the faithful's contemplation of death's tragic character. It moves slowly from the contemplation of mortality to a request that God hold the faithful in His memory. This prayer harkens to God's love in the full recognition that we are all sinners far short of the mark of perfection.

**The journey of Holy Week**: The cycle of rituals surrounding death and dying builds directly on the liturgical movement of Holy Week and *Pascha* or Easter. At Matins on Holy Friday, the life of Christ, culminating in His crucifixion, is contemplated in the twelve gospel accounts read before the crucifix. The faithful adore the cross, recall suffering and death in their own lives, and celebrate the redemption of human nature through the death of Christ. This contemplation of Christ's suffering and of all human suffering, from Adam to the present, is seen in the cross.

This is the contemplation that informs the faithful in their vigil for the dying loved one, the Gethsemani of human experience. The Rite for the Parting of the Soul from the Body is deeply informed by Matins on Holy Friday.

**The Vespers of Holy Saturday** (properly celebrated on Holy Friday evening) begins with the erection of a replica of a tomb in the middle of the church. A special icon painted on cloth is taken in procession around the church, suggesting the victory of Christ over all darkness and death. The whole creation is redeemed and restored by the entrance of Christ into death. Christ, the life of the world, lies dead in the tomb, but already, as a concluding hymn proclaims, "Life is asleep but the Hades is trembling, and Adam is freed from bondage."

**Christ's descent into death** on Holy Friday brought life to those dwelling in the grave. Christ transfigures death and restores the sacred character to human mortality, to our creaturehood.

The corpse of the faithful is placed, just as the icon of the dead Saviour, at the center of the nave of the church. The funeral and burial ritual is a type of the Vespers for Holy Saturday.

Come, brethren, let us give the last kiss unto the dead, rendering thanks unto God. For she hath vanished from among her kin, and presseth onward to the grave, and vexeth herself no longer concerning vanities, and concerning the flesh, which suffereth sore distress.

May he who rose again from the dead, Christ our true God; through the prayers of his all-pure Mother ... establish in the mansions of the righteous the soul of his servant, N., who hath been taken from us; give her rest in Abraham's bosom, and number her with the Just; and have mercy upon us, forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

With the souls of the righteous dead, give rest, O Saviour, to the soul of thy servant, preserving it unto the life of blessedness which is with thee, O thou who lovest mankind.

Thou art the God who descended into hell, and loosed the bonds of the captives: Do you give rest, also, to the soul of thy servant. O Virgin alone Pure and Undefiled, who without seed didst bring forth God, pray thou unto him that her soul may be saved.
Pristine beauty: Eastern Christians linger with the body of the deceased. Coffins are open. The corpse is contemplated directly. Within this cycle of services there is no sentimentality, no shrinking from the tragedy of death. As with all created life it is to be apprehended directly, prayed, as it were, into the Body of Christ. The liturgical prayer identifies death with sin. Death is not the intent of creation. In Christ our sin is redeemed, creation restored to its pristine beauty. The deceased is placed in Christ, their mortal life accepted, all the death in their life offered to the grace of God, the lover of humankind.

O thou who of old didst call me into being from nothingness, and didst honour me with thine image divine, but because I had transgressed thy commandments hast returned me again unto the earth from which I was taken: Restore thou me to that image, and to my pristine beauty.

The movement: The funeral vigil (at the vespers hour) contemplates death’s tragic character. The funeral, in the context of the Divine Liturgy, identifies the deceased with Christ and places the deceased in God’s mercy and love. The cycle of memorials following burial and culminating in the annual parastas, falling just after the Feast of Resurrection and prior to Ascension, holds the loved one in that eternal memory which characterizes the Church as the body of Christ.

Eucharistic character: The liturgical movement for the burial of the faithful culminates in eucharist. The memory of those who have “fallen asleep in God,” flows from the eucharist. And dying in death, and in the memory of the dead, all are understood to exist in union with the Creator and Lover of us all.

Helpful Reading

Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1985)


Mary, the Holy Theotokos

Eastern Christianity has a great love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. She is most commonly known as Theotokos, which is variously translated God-Bearer, Bearer of God, and Birth-giver of God. “Mother of God” is a more western rendition.

Liturgically, this devotion is shown especially in icons of Mary and in the rich variety of prayers cherished by Eastern Christians. To savour this love of Mary one icon and a brief selection of liturgical texts are presented here.

The Vladimir Mother of God. This is a favored icon for the Ukrainian people and much of the Slavic world. This icon was painted by Heiko C. Schlieper and is the Folk Life collection of the Provincial Museum of Alberta.

The Birth of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos: September 8

This is the day of the Lord: rejoice, ye people. For lo, the Bridal Chamber of the Light, the Book of the Word of Life, has come forth from the womb, and the East Gate, newly born, awaits the entrance of the Great Priest. She alone brings into the world the one and only Christ, for the salvation of our souls.

The Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple: November 21

After thy birth, O Lady and Bride of God, thou hast gone to dwell in the temple of the Lord, there to be brought up in the Holy of Holies, for thou art thyself holy: and Gabriel then was sent to thee, O Virgin all-undefiled, to bring thee food. All the powers of heaven stood amazed, seeing the Holy Spirit dwell in thee. Therefore, O Mother of God without stain or blemish, glorified in heaven and on earth, save our kind.
The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: March 25

When God so wishes, said the bodiless angel, the order of nature is overcome, and what is beyond man comes to pass. Believe that my sayings are true, O all-holy Lady, utterly without spot. And she cried aloud, Let it be unto me according to thy word: and I shall bear Him that is without flesh, who shall borrow flesh from me, that through this mingling He may lead man up unto his ancient glory, for He alone has power so to do.

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: August 15

Come, O gathering of those who love to keep the feasts, come and let us form a choir. Come, let us crown the Church with songs, as the Ark of God goes to her rest. For today is heaven opened wide as it receives the Mother of Him who cannot be contained. The earth, as it yields up the Source of life, is robed in blessing and majesty. The hosts of angels, present with the fellowship of the apostles, gaze in great fear at her who bore the Cause of life, now that she is translated from life to life. Let us all venerate and implore her: Forget not, O Lady, thy ties of kinship with those who commemorate in faith the feast of thine all-holy Dormition.

Office of Praise of the Theotokos or Acathist Hymn (A kathistos) (excerpts)

Hail, O you through whom joy will shine forth; hail, O you through whom the curse will disappear.
Hail, O Restoration of the fallen Adam; hail, O redemption of the tears of Eve.
Hail, O hidden Sense of the ineffable Plan; hail, O Belief in Silence that must be.
Hail, O Foretaste of the marvels of Christ; hail, O Fountainhead of truths concerning Him.
Hail, O Tendril whose Bud shall not wilt; hail, O Soil whose Fruit shall not perish.
Hail, O Tender of mankind’s loving Tender; hail, O Gardener of the Gardener of Life.
Hail, O Mother of Lamb and Shepherd; hail, O Fold of rational sheep.
Hail, O Protection against unseen foes; hail, O Key to the doors of Paradise.
Hail, O Mother of the Star without setting; hail, O Radiance of the mystical day.
Hail, O you who quenched the flame of error; hail, O Light of those who search the Trinity.
Hymns to Mary

Theotokian, First Tone, Sunday
The universe recognizes in you, O Woman full of grace, the marvel of marvels, and it rejoices. You have borne without human seed the One whom even the highest ranks of angels cannot look upon, and you have given Him birth in a manner beyond understanding. Intercede with Him for the salvation of our souls.

Theotokian, Sixth Tone, Monday
O Virgin, Mother of God, good hope of the world, we seek no other help than your power. Have compassion for your people who have no other protector and intercede with the merciful God that he may save our souls from all dangers, for you are the only blessed one.

Theotokian, Third Tone, Tuesday
O Mother of God, we have obtained your Son's cross as a staff of power wherewith to strike down the enemy's boastings. Wherefore we exalt you without cease.

Theotokian, Fourth Tone, Wednesday
O Virgin Mother of God, we acknowledge that the Word of the Father, Christ our God, was incarnate of you, the only pure one, the only blessed one. Wherefore we sing to you a hymn of praise and we exalt you.

Theotokian, Second Tone, Thursday
O Virgin and all-glorious Mother of God, we sing to you a hymn of praise, for Hades has been destroyed by your Son's cross, death has been put to death, and we the dead have been made to rise and become worthy of life. We have obtained paradise, the original bliss. Wherefore we glorify you by giving thanks to Christ our God, for He alone is almighty and all-merciful.

Theotokian, Fifth Tone, Friday
Hail, gate of the Lord which no one can force. Hail, rampart and shelter of those who come to you. Hail, undisturbed haven that never knew man. O you who gave birth in the flesh to your Maker and God, never cease to intercede for those who sing a hymn of praise to your Son and worship Him.
The Iconostasis or Icon Screen. This proclaims the unity all creation finds in its Creator. Through Christ's incarnation, depicted in the icon of the Holy Theotokos and Child, and the fullness of life depicted in the icon of the Glorified Christ, all creation is offered abundant life.

Greetings of Faith

Ukrainian Christians mark the liturgical seasons and share the graces of the changing liturgical year by exchanging special greetings:

**Christmas Season:**
Greeting: Christos Razhdajetsja
Response: Slaveety Yoho

**Easter Season:**
Greeting: Christos Voskres
Response: Voistynu Voskres

**Pentecost Season:**
Greeting: Slava Isusu Christu
Response: Slava na Veeky

(Christ is born.)
(Glorify him.)
(Christ has risen.)
(Indeed he has risen.)
(Glory to Jesus Christ.)
(Glory for ever.)
RCIA Resources

National Bulletin on Liturgy
Christian initiation of adults and related matters have been considered in previous issues of the Bulletin:
- 51 Christian Initiation. Vol. 8, November-December 1975
- 91 Sharing our Faith. Vol. 16, November-December 1983

The important ecumenical dialogue document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches 1982) has been discussed in the following issues of the Bulletin:
- 98 Sacraments and Ministry. Vol. 18, March-April 1985
- 104 Ecumenism and Liturgy: II. Vol. 19, May-June 1986

Catechumenate. A Journal of Christian Initiation
Titled *Chicago Catechumenate* from 1978 through 1986, this periodical is entirely devoted to the RCIA and related subjects. It is published six times a year by Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage, Chicago IL 60622-1101.

North American Forum for the Catechumenate. This organization provides excellent workshops and a variety of educational materials regarding the RCIA. Its address is 5510 Columbia Pike, Suite 310, Arlington, Virginia 22204.

Whole issues of some periodicals that have been devoted to the RCIA and related subjects include the following:

Biblical Background
Schnackenburg, R. *Baptism in the Thought of St Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder 1964)

Sources and Documents


Whitaker, E.C. Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy (London SPCK 1960)

Historical Studies


Fisher, J.D.C. Confirmation Then and Now (London: SPCK/Alcuin 1978)


Yarnold, E. The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation. Baptismal Homilies of the Fourth Century (Slough: St Paul Publications 1971)

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Barbenitz, P. RCIA: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: What it is, How it Works (Liguori Publications 1983)

Christian Initiation of Adults: A Commentary (Study Text 10) (Washington: Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy 1985)
Christian Initiation Resources Reader (New York: Sadlier 1984)
De Gidio, S. "Welcome is the Word" Today's Parish 16 (1984) 30-32
Duggan, R., ed. Conversion and the Catechumenate (New York: Paulist 1984)
Ellebracht, M.P. The Easter Passage. The RCIA Experience (Minneapolis: Winston 1983)
Friedman, G. "Becoming a Christian: the New Rite of Initiation for Adults" St. Anthony Messenger 90 (1983) 12-17
Hinman, K. M. How to Form a Catechumenate Team (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1986)
Kavanagh, A. The Shape of Baptism. The Rite of Christian Initiation (New York: Pueblo 1978)


Kemp, R.B. "The RCIA: Getting Started" *Pastoral Music* 7 (1983) 52-54


Long, N. "Levels of Meaning in the RCIA" *Living Light* 20 (1983) 45-51


Reiser, W. *Renewing the Baptismal Promises* (New York: Pueblo 1988)


Sheridan, E.F. "RCIA: Better than One-to-One" *Catechist* 16 (1983) 32-33


Wawrzynski, M. "The RCIA and its Implications for Catechesis in the Catholic High School" *Living Light* 20 (1983) 52-69


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**Canadian Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchies & Eparchies**

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**Our Next Issue**

Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours still are neglected in parishes and among lay members of the Church.

The next issue of the Bulletin will describe a variety of ways of celebrating these liturgies, and explain the importance of Morning and Evening Prayer and their place in the total liturgical life of the Church.