

The Purpose and Nature of the Liturgy

Theme

The goal of the Divine Liturgy is the union of our life with Christ. This is accomplished by our partaking of the Holy Eucharist. The sacrifice of the Eucharist, at the heart of the liturgy is a meal with our God. Our participation is in the very life of Christ, and thus our whole lives should be an offering. To fully participate in offering ourselves and receiving the Grace of God, we need to prepare by the means the Lord has given us: Scripture and prayer.

Outline

Why we meet each week
Scripture and Preparation
Sacrifice

Scripture References¹

Isaiah 6.1–9

Hebrews 12.18–24 & 29

Quotes

The essential act in the celebration of the holy mysteries is the transformation of the elements into the Divine Body and Blood; its aim is the sanctification of the faithful, who through these mysteries receive the remission of their sins and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

— St Nicholas Cabasilas *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*

“[Hades] took a body, and face to face met God! It took earth and encountered heaven! It took what it saw but crumbled before what it had not seen! “O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?”

— St John Chrysostom *Paschal Homily*

¹ References from the Greek Bible; differing Hebrew Bible references are noted in parentheses.

Structure of the Divine Liturgy

1. The Liturgy of the Word
 - 1.1. The Opening
 - 1.1.1. Opening Conversation
 - 1.1.2. Exclamation
 - 1.1.3. Litany of Peace
 - 1.2. The Antiphons
 - 1.3. The Little Entrance with the Gospel Book
 - 1.4. Variable Hymns
 - 1.5. Trisagion (The Thrice-Holy Hymn)
 - 1.6. The Readings and Homily
 - 1.6.1. The Epistle
 - 1.6.2. The Gospel
 - 1.6.3. The Homily
 - 1.6.4. [Litany for the Catechumens]
2. The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - 2.1. Preparation
 - 2.1.1. Litanies for the Faithful
 - 2.1.2. The Cherubic Hymn
 - 2.1.3. The Great Entrance with the Gifts
 - 2.1.4. The Litany of Supplication
 - 2.1.5. The Kiss of Peace
 - 2.1.6. The Symbol of Faith (the Nicene Creed)
 - 2.2. The Anaphora
 - 2.3. The Consecration
 - 2.3.1. The Words of Institution
 - 2.3.2. The Epiclesis
 - 2.3.3. The Litany before the Our Father
 - 2.3.4. The Our Father
 - 2.3.5. The Elevation and Fraction
 - 2.4. The Holy Communion
 - 2.4.1. The Clergy in the Altar
 - 2.4.2. The Faithful in the Nave
 - 2.5. The Dismissals