

What is the Divine Liturgy?

Theme

At the heart of the Divine Liturgy is the sacrifice of the Eucharist, a meal shared with our God. Our participation is in the very life of Christ, and therefore our whole lives should be an offering to him.

Outline

Why we meet each week
Scripture and Preparation
Sacrifice

Scripture References¹

Isaiah 6.1–8

Hebrews 12.18–24 & 29

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1 Corinthians 5.7–8

Hebrews 10.3–4, 12–13

Quotes

“[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

Scriptures

Isaiah 6.1–8 NETS (modified)

And it happened in the year that King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and raised up, and the house was full of his glory. And seraphim stood around him; each one had six wings, and with two they covered their face, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And they cried out one to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

And the lintel was raised at the voice with which they cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “O wretched that I am! I am stunned; for being a man and having unclean lips, I live among a people having unclean lips, and I have seen the King, the Lord Sabaoth, with my eyes!”

Then one of the seraphim was sent to me, and he had in his hand a live coal that he had taken from the altar with the tongs. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips, and it will take away your lawlessness and purify your sins.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom should I send, and who will go to this people?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

1 Corinthians 5.7–8 ESV

Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Hebrews 10.3–4 ESV

But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Hebrews 10.12–13 ESV

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

Hebrews 12.12–29 (referencing Exodus 19-20) ESV

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually

immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.