

When is the Divine Liturgy?

Theme

The Divine Liturgy takes place in God's Time. In celebrating it, we are taken up into the Never-Ending Eighth Day, and feast with Christ in his Kingdom.

Outline

Opening Dialogue

Psalm 118.126

The Funeral Service

The Eighth Day

Scripture References¹

Psalm 118.12 & 126

Hebrews 12.18–24 & 29

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1 Corinthians 5.7–8

Hebrews 10.3–4, 12–13

Quotes

Christ's own work has turned death inside-out, showing himself to be stronger than death, and proving himself to be the one who is ultimately and totally in control from the beginning: All things are in his hands and providence—even our apostasy. Turned inside-out, death now becomes the means whereby the creature returns to God, and, in fact, is fashioned by God as a living being... [Christ in his death] has opened up a way of seeing a deeper mystery in death and has transformed death throughout all time: for what was once the end now becomes the beginning of a deeper mystery.

— Fr John Behr *Becoming Human*

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

The Opening Dialogue of the Divine Liturgy

The priest and deacon, being fully vested, stand together before the holy table. The priest in the center and the deacon at his place at the southwest corner. The priest with hands uplifted says the following prayer while the deacon lifts his orarion [stole].

Priest: O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

The priest and deacon make three metanias [low bows] while the priest says:

Priest: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. (twice)
O Lord, thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise. (once)

The priest then kisses the gospel book and the holy table, while the deacon kisses only the southwest corner of the holy table. The deacon then bows his head to the priest and holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand hand says:

Deacon: It is time for the Lord to act.

Bless, master.

The priest makes the sign of the cross over the deacon's head, saying:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen. Pray for me, master.

Priest: The Lord direct thy steps unto every good work.

Deacon: Remember me, holy master.

Blessing the deacon, the priest says:

Priest: The Lord God remember thee in his kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

Having kissed the priest's hand, the deacon exits the sanctuary, passing the high place, through the north door. Standing at his place in the center of the solea [raised platform in front of the icon stand], the deacon makes three metanias before the holy doors, saying each time:

Deacon: O Lord, thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

Scriptures

Esther 4.14 NETS

Because even if you keep silent at this time, from elsewhere help and protection will come to the Judeans, but you and your father's household will perish. And who knows if for this time you were made queen?

Psalms 118.12 (119.12) NETS

Blessed are you O Lord, teach me your statutes.

Psalms 118.126 (119.126) NETS

It is time for the Lord to act; [for] they scattered your law.

Sirach 20.7 NETS

A wise person will be silent until a proper time,
but the swaggerer and fool overstep a proper time.

Mark 1.14–15 ESV

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

John 10.16 ESV

"And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

John 12.24 ESV

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Romans 5.6–8 ESV

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Corinthians 6.1–2 ESV

Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” [Isaiah 49.8]

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Revelation 1.3 ESV

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Quotes

Further, He says to them [the Hebrews], "Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure." [Isaiah 1.13] Ye perceive how He speaks: Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me, but that is which I have made, when, giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world [or age]. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead.

— *Epistle of Barnabas* Chapter 15

The command of circumcision, again, bidding them always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first [or 'being the first'] of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and yet remains the first.

— St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 41