

THE OFFICE OF PREPARATION FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY

Introduction

This Introduction was originally written at the request of an Anglican priest, but it is published here in the hope that it may be of interest to a wider readership.

The office of preparation for the Divine Liturgy, in Greek *Proskomidi* or *Prothesis*, consists of the preparation and vesting of the ministers and the preparation of the gifts, the bread and wine, for the holy Eucharist. It is the same for both the most commonly used liturgies, those of St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom. Over the centuries it has become increasingly elaborate; its detailed history is obscure; it displays many variations in the various liturgical traditions of the Orthodox Churches, a fact which is reflected in the manuscripts and printed editions of the Liturgy.¹

Originally the bread and wine were prepared quite simply, as they still are in the Liturgy of St James, and brought into the church at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful, after the catechumens had been dismissed.² In the present rite the whole ceremony is performed by the priest and deacon before the Liturgy proper at a special side altar, to the left of the sanctuary, out of the sight and hearing of the faithful. For this reason the official translation of the Liturgy for the use of the faithful, published last year by the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, does not include it. However, the translation which follows is the one prepared by the Archbishop's committee in view of a later and fuller book, though all the annotation is my own and therefore has no official standing. Sub-headings enclosed within square brackets are not found in the official Greek and Slavonic books.

To aid the reader a short glossary of some of the technical terms is follows. This is not meant to be complete, since there are many small local variants in details of vestments and in the preparation and use of prosphoras.

Glossary

Vestments

The vestments of the Orthodox Church are, with a few exceptions, the same in origin as those of the Latin Church, but they have evolved somewhat differently. Most of them are usually called by their Greek names, or their Slavonic equivalents.

Deacon

1. *Sticharion*. A tunic-like vestment, resembling the Western dalmatic when worn by servers, readers, sub-deacons and deacons.
2. *Orarion*. The Deacon's stole. It is worn on the left shoulder and hangs straight down in front and back, or it may be, and among the Greeks always is, taken

¹ There are useful collections of material in F.E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, pp. 539-551 and P.N. Trembelas, *The Three Liturgies*, pp. 222-240 [in Greek].

² In the 8th century the *proskomidi* in the Great Church still took place in the *skeuophylakion*, or treasury, a circular building attached to the north eastern side of the church, after the dismissal of the catechumens. Even today, at a pontifical liturgy, the Bishop cuts commemorative particles and covers the chalice and paten during the singing of the Cherubic Hymn.

across the back, under the right arm and the over the left shoulder. Since the Deacon represents the ministering Angels, his orarion sometimes has the hymn of the Seraphim, 'Holy! Holy! Holy!' embroidered on it. It is also worn crossed on the back by readers and sub-deacons.

3. *Cuffs*. These are worn over the sleeves of the cassock. They are made of the same sort of material as the sticharion and orarion.

Priest

1. *Sticharion*. The Priest's sticharion more nearly resembles the Latin alb, but is not necessarily white. The sleeves are close fitting, unlike those of the Deacon's.
2. *Epitrachelion*. Worn round the neck, which is meaning of the word, it is the equivalent of the Latin stole, but usually much broader. It is always joined down the middle, usually with a line of ornamental studs, and decorated with crosses. It is the characteristic priestly vestment, worn only by bishops and priests. A priest should not celebrate any service unless he is wearing it.
3. *Zone*. The equivalent of the Latin girdle, but made of a broad piece of coloured material like the rest of the vestments.
4. *Cuffs*. These are worn over the sleeves of the sticharion. They are made of the same sort of material as the sticharion and orarion. Russian clergy always wear them when vested in the epitrachelion.
5. *Phelonion*. The equivalent of the Latin chasuble, though it is never cut away up the sides. Rather it is normally made shorter in front. The rubrics direct that the priest is to 'lower the phelonion', that is to let it fall over his hands, at the moment of the Dismissal. This indicates that the work of the service is over, rather like rolling down one's sleeves. Russian phelonia, which usually have a high stiffened 'collar', sometimes have a row of buttons across the chest so that the front of the vestment can be raised or lowered.
6. *Epigonation*. A lozenge shaped piece of stiffened material, sometimes ornamented with an embroidered icon, which hangs by the right knee, which is the meaning of the name. It is worn by Bishops and by senior Priests, such as Archimandrites and Protopresbyters, who have been granted the privilege of wearing it.
7. *Pectoral Cross*. This is also a privilege granted to senior Priests. Such crosses are usually richly ornamented or jewelled. In the Russian Church all Priests are normally granted a simple pectoral crosses as part of their ordinary clerical dress, as well as when fully vested.

Head-dress

This is not strictly part of the vestments for the Liturgy, but since it is often, especially in monasteries, worn for the earlier part of the service, it is listed here.

1. *Kalymafchion*. Also called in monastic language a *skoupho*, or 'bonnet'. The familiar 'stove pot' hat of Orthodox bishops, priests and deacons. In Greek use those of the secular clergy have a brim on top. Monks, whether priests or not, wear a cowl (Greek *koukoulli*, from Latin *cucullus*) over their *skoupho*. When worn by secular Archimandrites and Bishops it is called an *Epanokalymafchion* or 'over kalymafchion'. The Russian cowl is permanently attached to the

skoupho, and the whole is called a *klobuk*, but the Greek cowl can be removed separately, and the rules for when to wear what are quite complicated.

Vessels

1. *Chalice*. It is usually somewhat larger than the Latin chalice and is often richly decorated.
2. *Diskos*. The equivalent of the Latin paten. It is circular and nearly always provided with a base, some three or four inches high, and has a broad raised rim.
3. *Asterisk*. Or 'Star'. Two bands of metal, curved, or bent at right angles, and joined at the centre, which when opened form a cross-shaped support for the veil over the paten, to prevent the latter from touching the Lamb and the other particles arranged there.
4. *Veils*. There are three. The two smaller ones are used to cover the Chalice and the Paten, while the third, known as the *Aer*, covers both. At a pontifical Liturgy, the Chalice and Paten are not covered at the Proskomidi, but by the Bishop himself, just before the Great Entrance. The aer is waved over the gifts during the proclamation of the Creed.
5. *Lance*. Used for cutting up the eucharistic bread at the Proskomidi and for the Communion.³
6. 'Spoon'. Used to give Communion to the faithful. In inverted commas, because the Greek word, *lavís*, does not mean 'spoon', but 'tongs', a reference to the burning coal, brought to the prophet's mouth by one of the Seraphim in a pair of tongs in Isaias 6.

The Elements

1. The bread for the Liturgy is always leavened⁴ and baked, with special prayers, from the finest wheat flour available. One prayer that is used is a hymn from the days before Christmas, *Bethlehem prepare; Eden is opened for all. Make ready Ephratha, because the tree of life has flowered in the Cave from the Virgin. For her womb has been revealed as the spiritual Paradise in which is the plant of life; eating from it we shall live; we shall not die as Adam. Christ is born to raise up his image which had fallen.*

Salt may be added, but nothing else, such as oil or fat. Traditionally the raising agent is a sour dough, prepared by mixing flour and water and letting it ferment. In the Greek villages the women start the dough on the feast of the Precious Cross, 14 September, adding to the water the leaves of the blessed basil that they have received at the veneration of the Cross. In the Slav tradition five small round loaves are used.⁵ They are made in two sections, rather like small cottage loaves, the two sections symbolizing the two natures of Christ. They are stamped before baking with wooden seals. Three have the letters IC.XC and NI.KA in the arms of a cross, as in the diagram in the accompanying translation. This stands for JESUS CHRIST CONQUERS. The other two

³ The lance is already mentioned by St Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople from 715-730, in his explanation of the Liturgy..

⁴ As St Symeon of Thessaloniki explains, leavened bread is 'as it were alive'. He also explains the symbolism of the water, salt and fire used in preparing the bread.

⁵ The number has varied in the course of time. In the 17th century in Russia the usual number was seven. The two additional ones being for the Hierarchy and the Imperial family.

have seals for the Mother of God and the Nine Ranks. In Greek parochial practice the Eucharistic loaf, in Greek *prosphora*, is a large circular one, stamped on top with a wooden seal. This seal is in five sections, corresponding to the five small loaves used in the Slav tradition. On the Holy Mountain it is common, especially on weekdays, to use two *prosporas*. One for the Lamb and a second with the four remaining seals. It is customary for the faithful to offer other *prosporas* themselves, accompanied with lists of names of those they wish to commemorate at the Liturgy. These are handed to the priest, who cuts particles from them for the living and dead as he reads the names. Traditionally the lists are headed 'For Health' and 'For Repose'. In Russian churches these small loaves are sold at the entrance to the church and collected by the those who have offered them after Communion. Where there are very large numbers of names to be commemorated, all the particles may not be placed on the *diskos* itself during the *proskomidi*, but added to the Chalice after Communion, with the prayer, 'Wash away, Lord, by your holy Blood the sins of your servants here remembered, through the prayers of the Mother of God and all your Saints. Amen'. In Greece and Cyprus large *prosporas* are commonly either baked by the people themselves or bought from bakeries. After the Liturgy the central 'seal' may be given back, while the loaves themselves may be given to visitors, the clergy or to the poor. What is left from the one large, or five small, *prosporas* is cut up and distributed as *antidoron*. *Antidoron* is also taken immediately after Communion by those who have received, as 'purification. In some places, and regularly in Russian use, this is accompanied by the drinking of wine mixed with hot water.

2. The wine should be the unadulterated fermented juice of the grape. It may be fortified with grape spirit. It is normally red and sweet. This last is because small children are, of course, full communicant members of the Church. Water is added during the preparation and hot water just before Communion. The latter rite is probably purely symbolic, indeed St Nicolas Cabasilas says so specifically. It is taken to symbolize the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This is in line with the medieval desire to see the various events of the life of Christ in each part of the Liturgy. On the other hand, may the idea not be to symbolize life. It is the risen Christ that we receive, and the blood of a living person is warm. This does not, of course, exclude the idea of the Holy Spirit, who is the 'Giver of life'.

ORDER OF THE DIVINE AND SACRED LITURGY

As it is performed in the Great Church and on the Holy
Mountain of Athos⁶

[SERVICE OF PREPARATION BEFORE
THE DIVINE LITURGY]⁷

[THE PREPARATION OF THE MINISTERS]

The Priest who is going to celebrate the divine Mystery must be reconciled beforehand with everyone, and have nothing against anyone; he must guard his heart, as far he can, from wicked thoughts; from the evening before he should remain abstinent, and be vigilant until the moment of the divine service.

When it is time, he enters the Church and, together with the Deacon, makes a bow⁸ to the Bishop's stall and then three bows towards the east, in front of the closed Holy Doors, saying at each one:

God, cleanse me a sinner.⁹

Then the Deacon says: Master, give the blessing.

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen. Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Paraclete, Spirit of truth,¹⁰ present everywhere, filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us from every stain, and, O Good One, save our souls.¹¹

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (three times).¹²

⁶ The 'Great Church' is the church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, which, with the Holy Mountain of Athos, is the standard for the liturgical practice of the Orthodox Churches.

⁷ The sub-headings in square brackets are not in the official texts, but have been included to clarify the structure of the rite.

⁸ That is a small metania.

⁹ The Bishop is the celebrant of the Liturgy; the Presbyter only celebrates as his representative; therefore before celebrating the Liturgy he symbolically asks the Bishop's leave to do so. For the same reason the Deacon addresses the Presbyter as 'Master', the traditional form of address to the Bishop. The Bishop's throne, properly so called, is immediately behind the altar in the eastern apse of the church, but in most Greek churches there is an elaborately carved stall, often referred to as a throne, near the choir. This is in fact the stall of the superior of a monastic community, which, in both east and west, is the stall furthest from the altar on the right, or south, side of the choir. In the Athonite churches this became increasingly magnificent and today it is only used by the Abbot or by a Bishop at the great vigils of major feasts. In a monastery the celebrant asks the blessing of the Superior, or, in his absence, makes a small metania to his stall.

The opening series of prayers, to the end of the doxology after the 'Our Father', form the standard opening of every series of offices in the Orthodox Church. Without the prayer to the Holy Spirit, they also occur in many other contexts, notably towards the end of each of the Hours of the daily office .

¹⁰ John 15,26.

¹¹ This prayer, one of the hymns for the office of Pentecost, and is omitted from Easter until the day of Pentecost.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins.¹³ Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

Our Father, in heaven, may your name be hallowed, your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

Then the Priest says:

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us; for we sinners, lacking all defence, offer you, as our Master, this supplication: have mercy on us.

Deacon: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy on us, for in you we have put our trust. Do not be very angry with us, nor remember our iniquities. But look on us now, as you are compassionate, and rescue us from our enemies. For you are our God, and we are your people; we are all the work of your hands, and we have called on your name.¹⁴

Priest: Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Open the gate of compassion to us, blessed Mother of God; hoping in you, may we not fail. Through you may we be delivered from adversities, for you are the salvation of the Christian race.

Then they go and venerate the Icons. As they kiss the icon of Christ they say:

We venerate your most pure icon, loving Lord, as we ask pardon for our offences, Christ God. For by your own choice you were well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver from the slavery of the enemy those whom you had fashioned. Therefore with thanksgiving we cry to you: you have filled all things with joy, our Saviour, by coming to save the world.¹⁵

¹² From Easter to Ascension the *Trisagion*, as this prayer is called, is replaced by the Easter hymn, 'Christ has risen from the dead, by death he has trampled on death, and to those in the graves given life', three times.

¹³ Psalm 78,9. All Old Testament references are to the Greek Septuagint, the text used by the Church since the days of the Apostles.

¹⁴ 2 Chronicles 14,10; Isaias 64,8.7; Psalm 135,24.

¹⁵ This troparion is used as the apolytikion for the first Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Any hymn may be called a troparion, but the word is commonly used for the *Apolytikion* of the day, or one of the stanzas of a Canon. Plural Troparia. The Apolytikion is the hymn that precedes the Dismissal (Greek Apolysis) at the end of Vespers. It is the characteristic hymn of the day or the

As they kiss that of the Mother of God:

As you are source of compassion, grant us pity, Mother of God. Look on a people who have sinned, and show your power as always; for hoping in you we cry, 'Hail', as once Gabriel did, the chief Captain of the Bodiless Powers.¹⁶

They may also venerate the icons of the Forerunner, the Patron of the Church and the current feast, saying the appropriate troparia.

Then, standing again in front of the holy Doors, they bow their heads, uncovered, and the Deacon says:

Let us pray to the Lord.

The Priest, bowing his head, says:

Stretch forth your hand, Lord, from your dwelling on high,¹⁷ and strengthen me for your service which now awaits me, so that, standing uncondemned before your dread altar, I may offer the sacrifice without shedding of blood. For yours is the power and the glory to the ages of ages. Amen.¹⁸

They bow their heads to the people, and so go into the Altar, the Priest through the south door and the Deacon through the north, saying:

I will enter your holy house; I will bow down before your holy temple in fear of you.¹⁹

They make three bows before the holy Table, the Priest kisses the holy Gospel and the holy Table, the Deacon the holy Table.

[THE VESTING OF THE CLERGY]

The Priest and Deacon each takes his sticharion, faces east and makes three bows, saying each time:

God, cleanse me, a sinner.²⁰

The Deacon then approaches the Priest, holding his sticharion, cuffs and orarion, and says:

Master, bless the sticharion and orarion.

The Priest blesses them with the words:

Blessed is our God, always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Deacon kisses the Priest's right hand and goes to vest.

Then the Priest blesses the cross on the back of his sticharion, kisses it and says:

Blessed is our God, always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

He blesses each vestment in turn and puts it on, saying:

feast, and is often referred to simply as 'the Troparion of the Day'. It is used at the offices and at the Liturgy.

¹⁶ Luke 1,28.

¹⁷ Psalm 143,7.

¹⁸ The books include here a Dismissal, but this seems to originate in monastic practice, where this part of the preparation is often performed during the reading of the Psalter at Matins, which, especially at a full Vigil, may take place some hours before the Liturgy proper.

¹⁹ Psalm 5,8. Some texts add the rest of the Psalm.

²⁰ Luke 18,13.

(for the sticharion — Priest and Deacon)

My soul will rejoice in the Lord, for he has clothed me with a garment of salvation and wrapped me in a robe of gladness; he has placed a crown on my head as on a bridegroom, and adorned me with beauty as a bride.²¹

(for the epitachelion)

Blessed is God, who pours his grace upon his priests, as myrrh upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard, and ran down to the collar of his robe.²²

(for the girdle)

Blessed is God, who girds me with power and has made my way blameless. He strengthens my feet like hind's feet and sets me on high places.²³

(for the right cuff — Priest and Deacon)

Your right hand, Lord, has been glorified in strength; your right hand, Lord, has shattered enemies, and by the greatness of your glory you have crushed the adversaries.²⁴

(for the left cuff — Priest and Deacon)

Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding and I will learn your commandments.²⁵

When the Deacon has vested he goes to the Prothesis and prepares the sacred Vessels, placing the Paten on the left and the Chalice on the right. He also arranges the Veils, Lance, Star and Prospora.

(for the epigonation, if the Priest has the right to wear it)

Gird your sword on your thigh, O Powerful One, in your beauty and splendour; and bend the bow, prosper and reign, for the sake of truth and meekness and justice, and your right hand will guide you wondrously.²⁶

(for the phelonion)

Your priests, Lord, will clothe themselves with righteousness, and your holy ones will rejoice with gladness.²⁷

(for the pectoral cross, if the Priest has the right to wear one)

Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.²⁸

²¹ Isaias 61,10, though the LXX has a subjunctive, 'Let my soul rejoice'. The Hebrew could be translated by either subjunctive or future. The word translated 'crown' is strictly a 'mitre', that is a 'headband' or 'turban'. In the LXX it normally refers to the head-dress of the High Priest.

²² Psalm 132,2. The word translated 'collar, is used elsewhere of the collar of the High Priest's vestment, but it may here refer to the bottom hem. The comments of the Fathers are divided.

²³ Psalm 17,33. Some texts give only the first sentence.

²⁴ Exodus 15,6-7.

²⁵ Psalm 118,73.

²⁶ Psalm 44,4-5.

²⁷ Psalm 131,9.

Then they both wash their hands, saying:

I will wash my hands among the innocent, and I will go around your altar, Lord; to hear the voice of your praise and tell of all your wonderful works. Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the place of the dwelling of your glory. Do not destroy my soul with the ungodly, nor my life with men of blood. In their hands are iniquities; their right hand is filled with bribes. But I have walked in my innocence; rescue me, Lord, and have mercy on me. My foot has stood in uprightness; in the churches I will bless you, O Lord.²⁹

[THE PREPARATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC GIFTS]

After washing his hands the Priest, wearing all his priestly vestments, proceeds with the Deacon to the Table of Offering (Prothesis), which is to the left of the Holy Table. Then they make three bows before the Prothesis, saying each time:

God, cleanse me, a sinner, and have mercy on me.

Then the Priest, raising the Prospora and the Lance, says:

You have redeemed us from the curse of the law by your precious blood;³⁰ nailed to the Cross and pierced by the lance, you have become a source of immortality for all. Our Saviour, glory to you.³¹

Deacon: Master, give the blessing.

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Then the Priest, taking a prospora (the Eucharistic loaf) in his left hand and the Lance in his right, makes the sign of the Cross three times over the seal with the Lance, saying each time:

In remembrance of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.³²

Then the Priest thrusts the Lance into the right-hand side of the seal³³, beside the letters IC.NI, and says:

Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter.³⁴

As he cuts along the left side, that is beside the letters XC.KA:

And as an unblemished lamb before the shearer is dumb, so he does not open his mouth.

As he cuts along the upper side:

In his humiliation judgement was denied him.

²⁸ Matthew 16,24.

²⁹ Psalm 25,6-12. The rubric, somewhat illogically, instructs the Deacon to wash his hands after he has prepared the sacred vessels.

³⁰ Galatians 3,13.

³¹ The Apolytikion for Good Friday, which is also used as at Matins in Tone 4 on Wednesdays and Fridays..

³² Cf. 1 Corinthians 11,25.

³³ *Right* and *left* as seen from behind the Holy Table, or from the point of view of the Cross which stands behind it. This is the traditional language of the liturgical books, which sees things from God's point of view rather than from our own.

³⁴ Isaias 53,7-8, as are the next four quotations.

As he cuts along the lower side:
Who will declare his generation?³⁵

The Deacon, watching this ceremony devoutly and holding his orarion in his hand, says at each incision:
Let us pray to the Lord.

After this he says:
Master, take away.³⁶

Then the Priest, thrusting the lance into the right hand side of the prosphora, takes out the Lamb, saying:
For his life is taken away from the earth.

He lays the Lamb inverted (with the seal downward) on the paten, and, as the Deacon says:
Sacrifice,³⁷ Master,

cuts it crosswise on the underside, but taking care to leave the seal intact, and says:

The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, is sacrificed for the life and salvation of the world.³⁸

Having turned the Lamb over so that the seal is uppermost, as the Deacon says:
Pierce Master,

the Priest pierces the seal with the Lance on the right side, immediately below the letters IC, and says:

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and at once there came out blood and water; and he who saw it has borne witness, and his witness is true.³⁹

The Deacon pours sufficient wine and water into the Chalice, saying first to the Priest:

Bless, Master, the holy union.

The Priest blesses them saying:

Blessed is the union of your holy things, always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Cutting a triangular particle from the seal for the Mother of God, he says:

In honour and memory of our most blessed and glorious Lady, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary; at whose prayers, Lord, accept this sacrifice at your altar above the heavens.

³⁵ This sentence from Isaias is taken by the Fathers as a reference to the eternal generation of the Word.

³⁶ The Deacon prompts the Priest for the various actions and the verb in each case is the one from the scriptural citation, or other words, that the priest is to say.

³⁷ This word is sometimes translated, 'slay', but in Biblical and liturgical Greek the meaning 'sacrifice' predominates. 'Slay' hardly suits the opening of Psalm 140, 'The lifting up of my hands be an evening slaughter'.

³⁸ John 1,29; 6,51. This cutting of the Lamb facilitates the Fraction before Communion.

³⁹ John 19,34-35.

Taking the particle of the Mother of God with the Lance, he places it to the right of the Lamb, near the middle, saying:

The Queen stood at your right hand, clothed in a garment of gold, of many colours.⁴⁰

Cutting smaller triangular particles for the nine Ranks of the Saints, he places them on the paten, to the left of the Lamb, as in Figure 1 below, saying:

1. In honour and memory of the great Captains, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and of all the Bodiless Powers of heaven.

[Or, according to some ancient Orders:

1. In honour and memory of the honoured and glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John.]⁴¹

And he starts the first rank.

2. Of the honoured and glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John; of the holy, glorious Prophets Moses and Aaron, Elias, Elissaios, David, son of Jesse, the Three Holy Youths, the prophet Daniel and all the holy Prophets.

[Or:

2. Of the holy, glorious Prophets Moses and Aaron, Elias, Elissaios, David, son of Jesse, the Three Holy Youths, the prophet Daniel and all the holy Prophets.]

And he places it below the first particle.

3. Of the holy, glorious and all-praised Apostles Peter and Paul, the Twelve, the Seventy and all the holy Apostles.

And he places it below the second particle.

4. Of our Fathers among the Saints, great Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, Athanasios and Cyril, Nicolas of Myra, and all the holy Hierarchs.

And he places it beside the first particle.

5. Of the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen; of the holy glorious Great Martyrs, George, patron of England, Demetrios, Theodore the Recruit and Theodore the General; of the holy, glorious Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles, Thekla, of Barbara, Katherine, Marina and Paraskevi; and of all the Holy Martyrs.

And he places it below the fourth particle.

6. Of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers, Antony the Great, Efthymios, Savvas, Onouphrios, Peter and Athanasios of Athos; of our Venerable and God-

⁴⁰ Psalm 44,10. The accompanying diagram illustrates the placing of the Lamb and the commemorative particles on the paten. See below Figure 1.

⁴¹ This is almost certainly the more ancient order and is the one still found in the Slavonic text. It is, I think, likely that the Angels were not originally represented by a portion of material bread, since they are the 'Bodiless Powers', though St Symeon of Thessaloniki defends the inclusion of the Angels. There is an Athonite tradition that couples the Angels with the Forerunner as the first of the Nine Ranks, which looks like a survival of the older use. The explanatory note in the *Large Euchologion* says that the nine particles in three ranks symbolize the Nine Choirs of Angels. On the other hand some manuscripts list many more than nine particles for the various categories of Saint, while a number even include the Cross in their lists. The names of the Saints commemorated vary widely in the various manuscripts and printed editions, and in the many different churches and monasteries of the Orthodox world.

bearing Mothers, Pelagia, Theodosia, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt; and of all holy ascetics.

And he places it below the fifth particle.

7. Of the holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenary Physicians, Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaos, and all the holy Unmercenary Saints.

And he places it beside the fourth particle.

8. Of the holy and righteous Forebears of God, Joachim and Anne, of N., whose memory we celebrate, and of all the Saints, at whose intercessions visit us, O God.

And he places it below the seventh particle.

9. Of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople.

And he places it below the eighth particle, thus completing the nine ranks.

If the Liturgy of St Basil is celebrated he says instead:

9. Of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

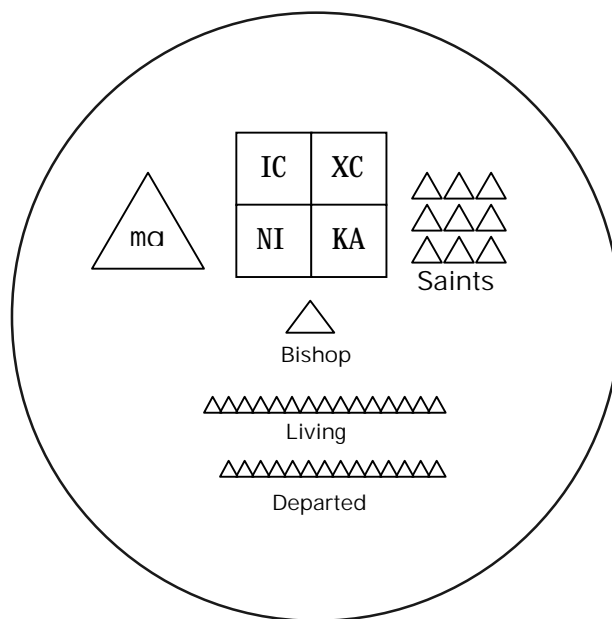


Figure 1. Arrangement of the Lamb and Particles on the Paten

Then he cuts particles for the living, and places them on the paten below the Lamb, saying:

Remember, Master, Lover of mankind, every bishopric of the Orthodox, our Archbishop N., the honoured order of presbyters, the diaconate in Christ and every order of clergy, our brothers and fellow celebrants, priests and deacons, and all our brethren whom, through your compassion, you have called to your fellowship, most loving Master.

Then he commemorates the Rulers, the Bishop who ordained him, if he is still living, and then those of the living whose names he has, taking particles for each and saying:

Remember, Lord, *N*.

Then he cuts particles for the departed, placing them also below the Lamb, saying:

For remembrance and forgiveness of sins of the blessed founders of this holy house.

Then he remembers the Bishop who ordained him, if he is no longer alive, and others of the departed, whom he wishes, by name, saying for each:

Remember, Lord, *N*.

Then he says:

And of all our fellow Orthodox who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection to eternal life, in communion with you, Lord, Lover of mankind.

Likewise the Deacon also remembers those whom he wishes of the living and the dead, the Priest cutting particles for them. Finally the Priest cuts a particle for himself, saying:

Remember me also, Lord, your unworthy servant, and pardon me every offence, both voluntary and involuntary.

Then with the Sponge he collects all the particles below the Lamb on the Paten, so that everything is safe and nothing will fall.

The Deacon takes the censer and puts incense in it, saying to the Priest:

Master, bless the incense. Let us pray to the Lord.

The Priest blesses the incense, saying:

We offer incense to you, Christ our God, as a fragrance of spiritual sweetness. Accept it on your altar above the heavens and send down upon us in return the grace of your all-holy Spirit.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Make firm, Master.⁴²

The Priest censens the Star, by holding it over the censer, and places it on the Paten above the holy bread, saying:

By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, and by the Spirit of his mouth all their power.⁴³

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Glorify, Master.⁴⁴

⁴² The Slavonic simply has, 'Let us pray to the Lord'.

⁴³ Psalm 32,6. This is almost certainly the original text to accompany this action. Since the late middle ages, under the influence of the symbolic interpretations of the Liturgy as a re-enactment of the life of Christ, the text used is Matthew 2,9, a reference to the Star of Bethlehem. St Nicolas Cabasilas gives both texts in his commentary. St Symeon only refers to the Gospel. The text of the Psalm is that suggested by the Deacon's direction and is found in some of the older manuscripts, either by itself or together with the text from the Gospel. The new editions of the Liturgy published by the monastery of Simonos Petra on Mt Athos and the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain give this earlier text. The Psalm text is still to be found in the office for the Dedication of a Church when the relics on the Paten are covered with the Star.

The Priest censes the first veil, in the same way as the Star, and places it over the Paten, saying:

The Lord is King, he has clothed himself with glory; the Lord has clothed and girded himself with power; for he has established the world, which will not be shaken.⁴⁵

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, Master.

The Priest censes the second veil, as before, and places it over the Chalice, saying:

Your virtue, O Christ, has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of your praise.⁴⁶

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Shelter, Master.

The Priest censes the large veil (the Aer), as before, and with it covers both the Chalice and the Paten, saying:

Shelter us in the shelter of your wings; drive away from us every enemy and adversary. Bring peace, O Lord, to our lives, have mercy on us and on your world, and save our souls, for you are good and the lover of mankind.⁴⁷

Then the Priest takes the censer and censes the Offering three times, saying each time:

Blessed is our God, who has been thus well-pleased. Glory to you.

Each time the Deacon concludes:

Always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

And they both bow three times before the Offering.

Then the Deacon takes the censer and says:

For the holy and sacred Offering of the precious gifts, let us pray to the Lord.

And the Priest says the

PRAYER OF THE OFFERING⁴⁸

God, our God, who sent forth the heavenly Bread, the food of the whole world, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, as our Saviour, and Redeemer and Benefactor, to bless and sanctify us; bless this Offering, and receive it on your altar above the heavens. In your goodness and love for mankind be mindful of those who have offered it, and those for whom they have offered it; and as we celebrate your divine mysteries keep us without condemnation. For sanctified and glorified is your all-honoured and majestic name, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

After this he gives the Dismissal, saying:

⁴⁴ The Slavonic simply has, 'Let us pray to the Lord'.

⁴⁵ Psalm 92,1.5. The Slavonic adds the rest of the Psalm.

⁴⁶ Cf. Avvakoum 3,3, which has the third person. St Symeon quotes the biblical text exactly, but explains that 'his' refers to Christ.

⁴⁷ Cf. Psalm 16,8.

⁴⁸ This is the most ancient prayer of the rite of preparation, or *Prothesis*, but seems originally to have belonged only to the Liturgy of St Basil, that in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom being shorter. It is found also in the Greek version of the Liturgy of St James, where it is said by the Priest during the Great Entrance.

Glory to you, Christ God, our hope, glory to you.

Deacon: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (**three times**). Holy Master, bless.

The Priest says:

May (**On Sundays:** he who rose from the dead) Christ, our true God, through the prayers of his most pure Mother, of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (**If it is the Liturgy of St Basil:** Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia), and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, for he is good and loves mankind.

Deacon: Amen.

After the Dismissal the Deacon censens the holy Prothesis. Then he goes and censens the Holy Table all round, crosswise, saying in a low voice:

With your body, O Christ, you were in the tomb, with your soul in Hell as God, in Paradise with the Thief, on the throne with Father and the Spirit, filling all things, yet yourself uncircumscribed.⁴⁹

And the 50th Psalm. Meanwhile he censens the Sanctuary and the whole Church, then re-enters the holy Altar and censens the holy Table once again and then the Priest, and puts the censer in its place.

He then joins the Priest and they stand together before the holy Table. They bow three times, praying to themselves and saying:

Heavenly King, Paraclete, Spirit of truth, present everywhere, filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us from every stain, and O Good One, save our souls.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will among men⁵⁰ (**Twice**).

Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise⁵¹ (**Once**).

Then the Priest kisses the holy Gospel and the Deacon the Holy Table. After which he bows his head to the Priest, and holding his orarion in the first three fingers of his right hand says:

It is time for the Lord to act.⁵² Holy Master, give the blessing.

The Priest blesses him, saying:

⁴⁹ This troparion is taken from the 1st Ode of the Resurrection Canon for Sunday Matins in Tone 4, which is by St John of Damascus [c. 675- c. 749].

⁵⁰ Luke 2,14.

⁵¹ Psalm 50,17.

⁵² Psalm 118,126. This is the meaning of the Greek, and the Hebrew, of the Psalm in the original context. It is a matter of debate whether the original meaning was intended by whoever introduced the sentence into the Liturgy. Most translations of the Liturgy have something like, 'It is time to sacrifice to the Lord', which is, just, a possible translation. As the compilers of the Liturgy would have known the Psalms by heart, the translation proposed above is the more probable and the more theologically appropriate.

Blessed is our God always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Deacon: Pray for me, holy Master.

Priest: The Lord direct your steps into every good work.⁵³

Deacon: Remember me, holy Master.

Priest: May the Lord God remember you in his Kingdom⁵⁴ always, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages.

The Deacon says: Amen

and, having made a bow, goes out by the north door and stands in his usual place in front of the Holy Doors. He bows devoutly three times, saying in a low voice:

Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Then he says in a loud voice:

Master, give the blessing.

And the Liturgy begins.

⁵³ Cf. 2 Thessalonians 3,5; 2 Timothy 2,21.

⁵⁴ Luke 23,42.