

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION

Studies in the Faith

The Divine Liturgy (part 2)



**GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH
OF THE
ASSUMPTION**

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Presented by
**Fr. Dean
Kouldukis**



DIVINE LITURGY (part 2)

***“The Lamb of God is broken and shared, broken but not divided;
forever eaten yet never consumed, but sanctifying those who
partake of Him.”***

(Prayer from the Holy Anaphora)

VIDEO

The Divine Liturgy, Part 2

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist itself was instituted by Christ at the supper on Holy Thursday to perpetuate the remembrance of His redemptive work and to establish a continuous intimate communion between Himself and those who believe in Him. The actions and words of the Lord concerning the bread and wine formed the basis for the Eucharist, the chief recurrent liturgical rite of the Church. The nucleus of every eucharistic rite consists of three actions:

- (1) The offering and the placing of bread and wine on the holy Table
- (2) The anaphora or great eucharistic prayer, which includes the words of institution and the invocation of the Holy Spirit to change the gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ
- (3) The communion of the consecrated elements by the people of God

THE PLACING OF BREAD AND WINE ON THE HOLY TABLE

The Great Entrance is the first important liturgical act of the Eucharist. Originally, it was a much less dramatic transfer of the gifts of bread and wine from a side table in the Church to the Holy Table in the altar by the deacons in order to be consecrated. This was and still remains the practical purpose of the procession which was gradually highly dramatized in comparison with the Small Entrance featuring the procession of the Gospel. The two entrances should, however, not be seen as one being greater than the other in spiritual meaning. In both we receive the same Christ, as Teacher in the first and as High Priest in the second. Nor is it proper to kneel during the Great Entrance because, unlike in the case of the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, the precious gifts are not yet consecrated but only dedicated to Christ (during the Service of the Preparation of the Gifts). It may also be noted that the Great Entrance is preceded by a Great Litany, as well as prayers for the catechumens and the faithful, no longer usually recited in parishes, but acting as a transition between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist.

The spiritual meaning of the Great Entrance is beautifully expressed by the Cherubic Hymn:

"We Who mystically represent the Cherubim sing the thrice holy hymn to the life giving Trinity. Let us set aside all the cares of life that we may receive the King of all invisibly escorted by the angelic hosts. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia."

THE HOLY ANAPHORA (THE OFFERING)

The heart of the Eucharist is the offering and consecration of the Eucharist gifts. It is the oldest part of the Eucharist. As the rite of the Eucharist developed, other preparatory elements were added to it: (a) Petitions known as Plerotika, (b) the kiss of peace and (c) the Nicene Creed.

The offering of the gifts takes place through the great Eucharist Prayer. This great prayer begins with the words, *"It is proper and right to sing to You, bless You, praise You and thank You..."* and ends with another blessing of the priest *"The mercy of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all."* The great Eucharist prayer includes a number of liturgical acts and appears to be interrupted by several hymns. However, it is one continuous prayer, a single magnificent liturgical unit within the Eucharist. Its component parts may briefly be outlined as follows:

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- e) Epiclesis and Consecration - The celebrant priest invokes God for the coming of the Holy Spirit: *"Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,"* that the bread and wine may become the body and blood of Christ by the power of the Spirit.
- f) The Commemoration - In the long ending of the Eucharist Prayer we commemorate the communion of glorified saints, especially the Theotokos to whom a special hymn of praise is chanted; we commemorate as well the living members of the Church, especially the hierarchs, the civil authorities, those who are suffering or in need, and those who do good works or serve in God's vineyard, and also the entire Church and whole world on behalf of which the Liturgy is universally offered.

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THE EUCHARIST

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