

Restoring God's Will in Our Life

A Mystery

- Have you heard anyone say, “I don’t get anything out of the Liturgy?”
 - When we are **bored** with the Divine Liturgy and it seems monotonous and tiresome to go every Sunday to church, it is not the liturgical language or something else that is to blame, but rather it is **our ignorance** of the philanthropic **Mystery**.
 - How different it would be if we consciously **participated** in the Divine Liturgy as if it were a personal event in our lives.
- Hieromonk Tikon, Abbot of Stavronikita Monastery
- To understand it we must know what is happening and become active participants.

What is Divine Liturgy?

- A liturgical act or sacred service of Church
- We receive Gifts of the Holy Spirit - grace
Divine mysteries - Mysteria
- More than a text
Experience of God where we are deified by
His grace through the taking of the Blood
and Body of Christ.
- Why is it commonly called communion?
 - Because we commune with the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- Purpose of the Liturgy is to transform the gifts into the
Blood and Body of Christ by action of Holy Spirit so all
gathered can commune with Him and be united with
Christ and live His life.



- ✿ Pope St. Leo the Great ca. 400-461
- ✿ *In what density of ignorance, in what utter sloth must they... not to have learned from hearing, nor understood from reading, that which in God's Church is so constantly in men's mouths, that even the tongues of infants do not keep silence upon the truth of Christ's Body and Blood at the rite of Holy Communion?*
- ✿ *For in that mystic distribution of spiritual nourishment, that which is given and taken is of such a kind that receiving the virtue of the celestial food we pass into the flesh of Him, Who became our flesh. (Letter 59)*



- St. Nicholas Cabasilas (14th century):

The essential act... 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.

- *As a preparation for, and contribution to, this act and for this purpose, we have prayers, psalms, and readings from the Holy Scripture: in short, all the sacred acts and forms which are said and one before and after the consecration of the elements.*



Heavenly Banquet

- Often referred to as Heavenly Banquet. Brings joy greater than wedding feast - a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet described in the Book of Revelation (Rev 19:7)
- Jesus says, *Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.* (Rev 19:9)
- Jesus often described Heaven as a meal.
I assign to you as, as my Father assigned to Me, a Kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My Table in My Kingdom. (Lk 22:29-30)
- We are called to have a wedding garment if we are to be able to taste of the Lord's Supper.
What kind of garment is this?



Heavenly Banquet

- What is it we Orthodox Christians all live in hope of?
- Coming of the Lord in His glory for our **resurrection** and **eternal life**.

He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him. (Heb 9:28)

- *Blessed is he who will eat the bread in the Kingdom of God* (Lk 14:15) -- those who will enjoy heavenly banquet.
- We must meet **frequently** to participate in this “Heavenly Banquet.”
- It is a **celebration** - has always been a joyous event.
- We pray with thanksgiving, we sing and we read Scripture. We chant from beginning to end. **All** participate.



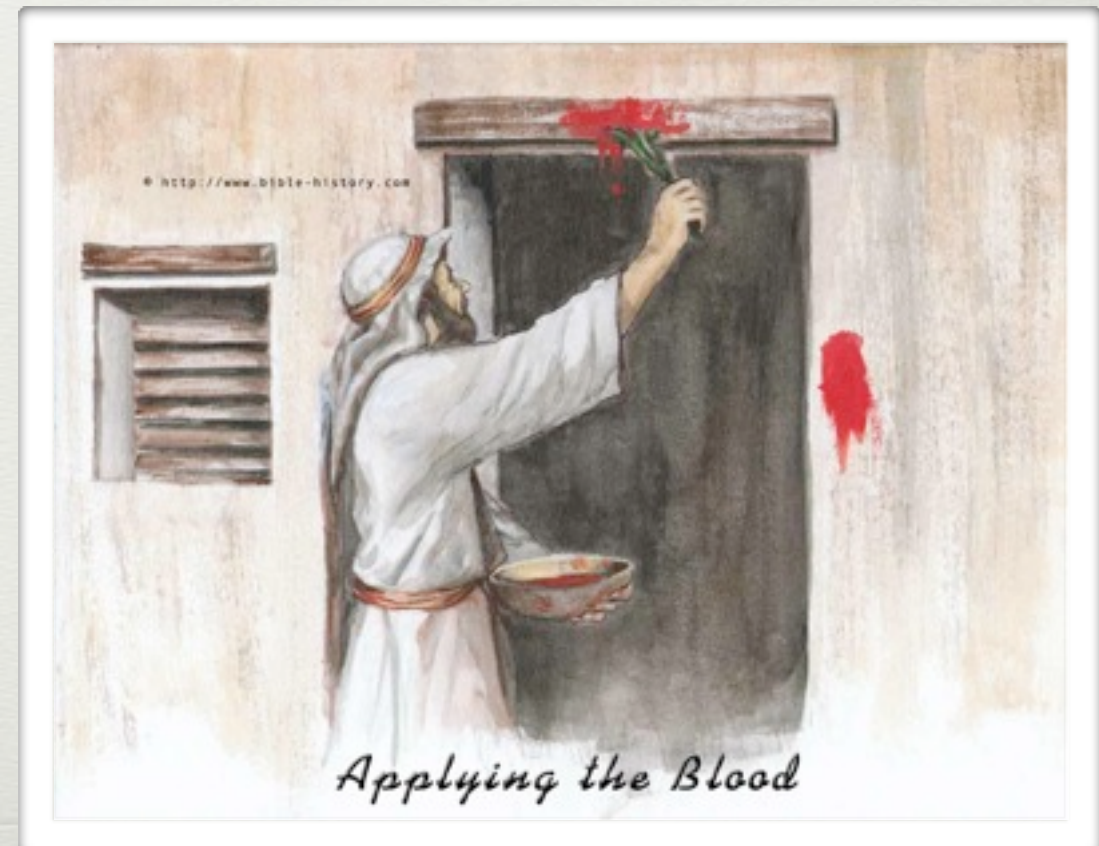
Origins

- Liturgy began with Eucharistic meal Lord had with disciples in upper room before His betrayal.
- Described in all three synoptic Evangelists and St. Paul.

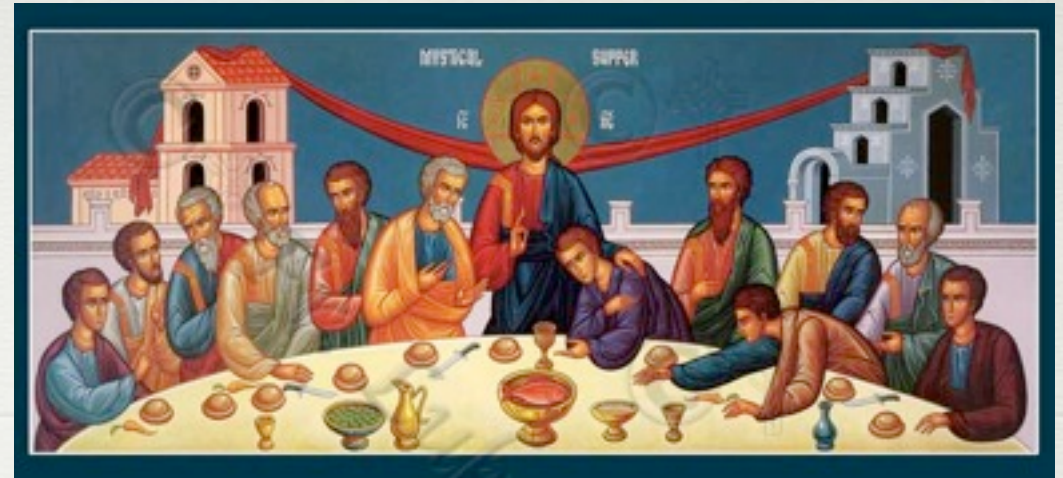


Passover

- Eucharist prefigured by Jewish Passover meal
 - What happened in Jewish Passover?
- God instructs Moses to prepare his people to protect from the day when He will kill all the first born.
- Slaughter a lamb (“Your lamb shall be a male without blemish.... none of its bones broken”) putting blood on door posts to save them from death.
- In Passover meal they sacrifice lamb and then eat it.
- A family meal
 - Head of family takes the cup and bread and gives a blessing recounting how God saved the Jewish people.

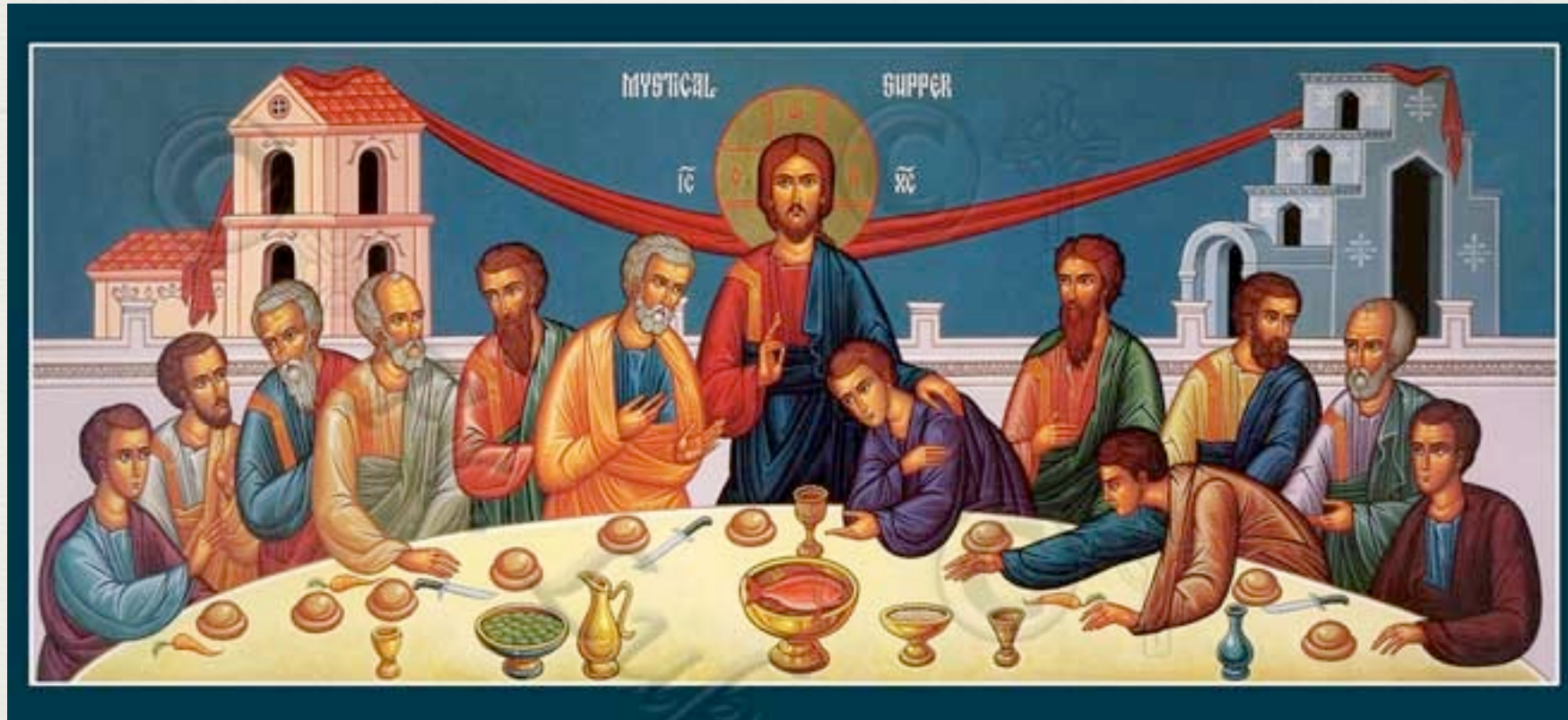


Last Supper



- Gathered in the upper Room the evening before His Passion
- He presided like head of household.
When time for blessing of bread Scripture says,
 - *Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.* (Mat 26:26-28)
- Lord told us, “*Do this in remembrance of Me.*” Since this time from “*on the first day of the week*”, the Church has been gathering together to “*break bread*”. (Acts 20:7)

Last Supper



- In Last Supper what kind of gathering was it?
 - Gathering of His friends with Him presiding. Not a family gathering.
- Meaning of this?
 - Must be prepared to transcend all family ties (Mt 10:30-37; 19:29; Lk 22:30)
“Commit our whole lives to Christ our God”

Sacrificial Lamb

- Christ takes place of the sacrificial lamb of the Passover.
- *"Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed"* (1 Cor 5:7)
- Like the lamb at passover saved the Jews, Christ death save us. How?
- We experience this sacrifice when we participate in the Liturgy.



Early Celebrations



- Initially Christians continued to worship in the Temple and then that evening (next day) met for the eucharist meal.
- This day became known as the “Lord’s Day” - Κυριακή

Early Celebrations



- Celebration of Lord's supper was held at end of meal
- After persecutions began met in secret and added Eucharist to some of practices of synagogue.
- A bishop presided surrounded by presbyters.
 - Chanted hymns and psalms.
 - Lessons from prophets read.
 - Deacons carried eucharistic gifts and placed on Supper table .
 - Anaphora Prayer of Thanksgiving read and elements consecrated.
 - Ended with a distribution of these Gifts to the faithful.

Early Celebrations



- Elements and prayers described in Didache (Ad 90-110), St. Clement's letter to Corinthians (Ad 95-98), St. Justin Martyr (Ad 165), and St. Hippolytus of Rome (AD 215) has complete description.

Eucharist as Food

- John records Christ's foretelling of Eucharist.
- After they had fed the five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish they sought Him in the synagogue at Capernaum. What did He say to them?
- *You seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you...* (Jn 6:26-27)
- *Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.* (Jn 6:32-33)



Eucharist as Food

- They ask Him for this bread and what does He say?
 - *"I am the bread of life."* (Jn 6:35)
- What did this do?
 - This created a controversy among the Jews.
- He again says, *"I am the living bread which comes down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."* (Jn 6:51)
- Jews argued among themselves.



Eucharist as Food

- He tells them again,
"Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."
- *For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks my blood abides in Me, and I in him..., This is the bread which came down from heaven.*



Eucharist as Food

- What did many of His disciples do at this point?
 - They said, "*this is a hard thing saying; who can understand it?*" (Jn 6:60)
- Jesus says, "*what then if you see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit that gives you life; the flesh profits nothing. The words I speak to you are spirit and they give life.*" (Jn 6:62-63)
- At this point many left Him.
- Do you see the kind of faith we must have?

The Church

Church

- As we participate in Divine Liturgy, we become one body with Christ.

We are participants in Mystical Supper.

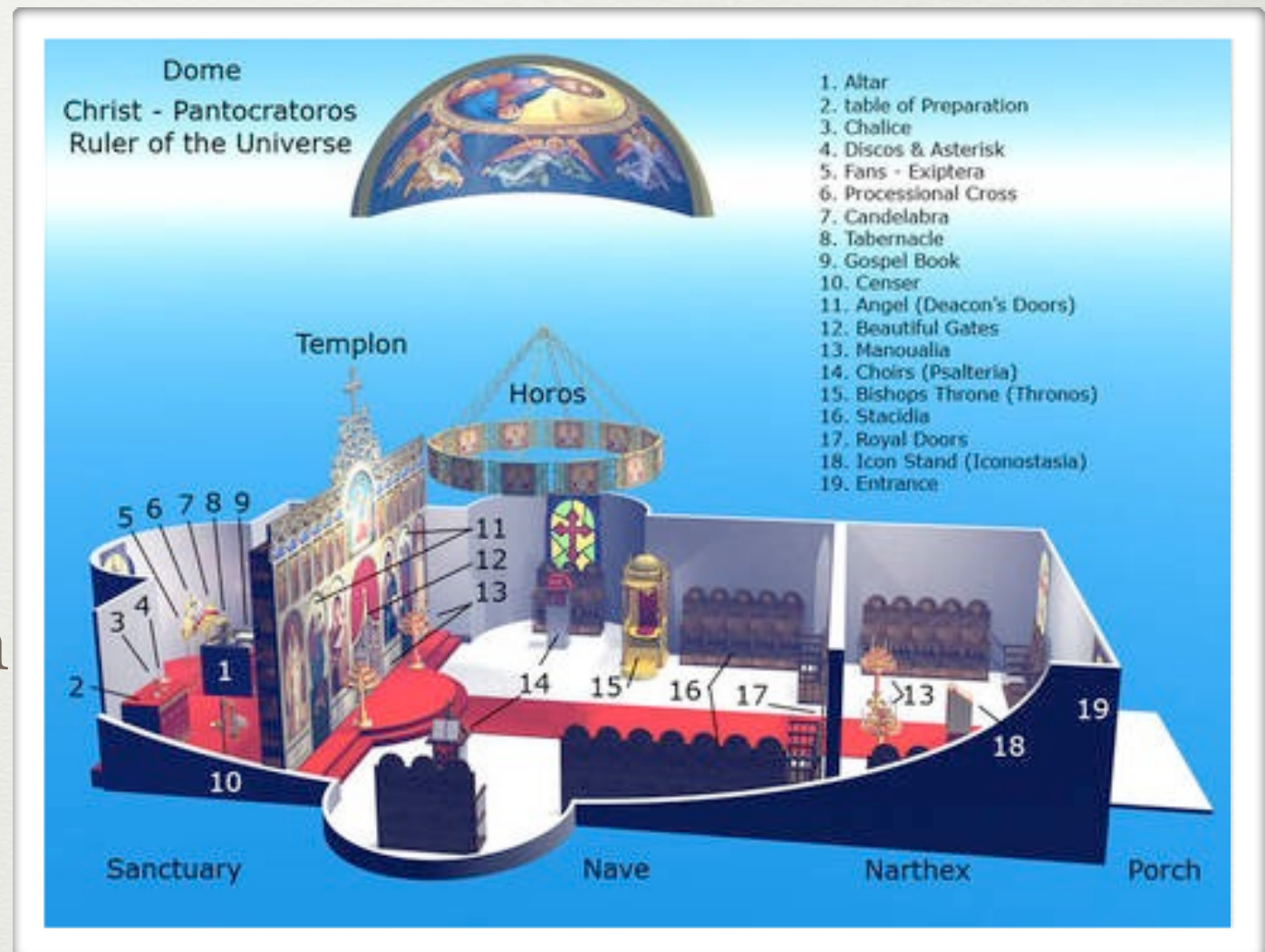
With faith it is a true union with Him.

"we are members of His body, of His flesh & bones" (Eph 5:30)

- We form the Church.
 - *"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread"* (1Cor 10:17)

Church

- Building is Significant: organizes space
- Nave directs us toward the altar.
- Iconostasis testifies that Temple is heaven on earth
- Whole building is sanctified
 - a holy place



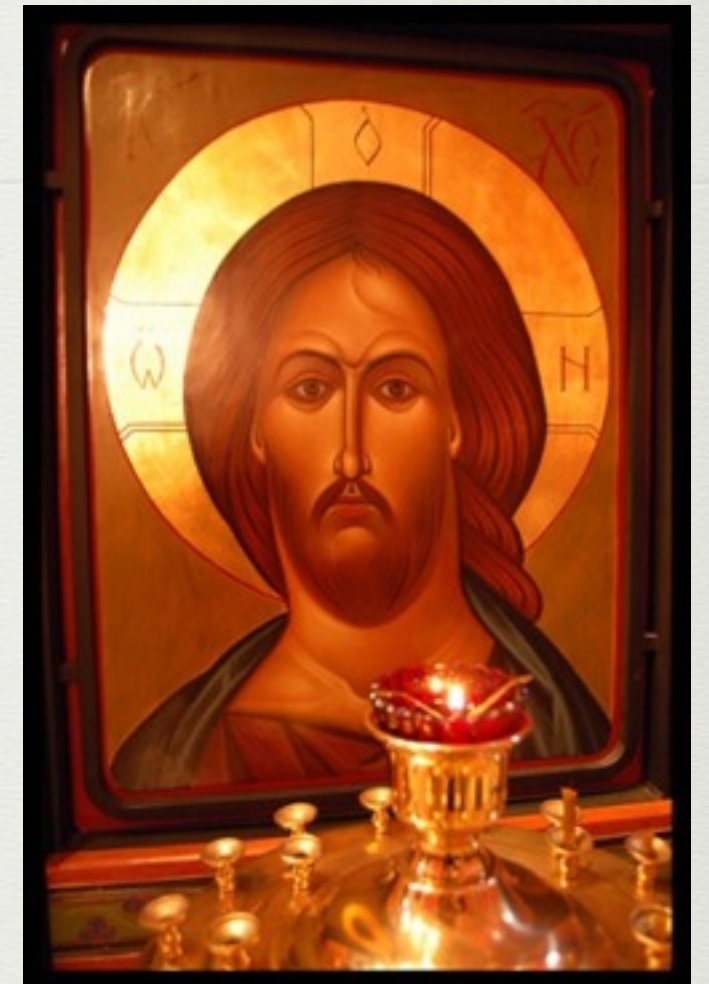
Church

- What does it mean to say, "I am going to church?"
- Joining an assembly of faithful to fulfill membership we gained through Baptism & Chrismation.
- To again be like we were on Baptismal day, joined with the Holy Spirit & united with Christ in Holy Eucharist.
- Bottom Line: We go to participate in God's heavenly kingdom to come.
- Not a social event or form of entertainment.



Church

- Why do we say the Church is holy
 - because of Christ
- Eucharist is fulfillment of the Church not merely one of seven sacraments.
- Only by taking part in the Eucharist can we increase our holiness.
- When we go to church we leave every day life, come to a place where everything is different, where we find meaning in our life.
- Through our membership and participation we have hope of eternal life in heaven.
- We enter God's kingdom, assembling with others who also seek His kingdom, coming to be united with Him.
- What does it mean when we come and do not participate?



Closed Communion

- Eucharist is a closed communion. Why?
 - We partake of the glorified Christ - not a symbol
Must have true faith.
 - Prerequisite is Baptism and Chrismation - to be renewed and joined with Christ
- Must be reconciled with one another before receiving - all those who are members of His body.
- Requires extreme humility - none are worthy.
- Others have quite different view and a different level of faith.



Baptist View

- Baptist's liken Communion to a picture. A picture represents the object and is not the real object
- "Jesus said, "**This is My Body**" and for them these words mean: This bread represents My body. This bread is a picture (symbol) of My body. "
- Baptists have been quite clear that there is no particular significance attached to the "elements", the bread and wine of Communion
- *"Communion is about remembrance, about looking back to Jesus' last supper with the disciples, which in turn reminds us to be thankful for the sacrifice of his body and the shedding of his blood."* Important as this is, there is no special "sacrament" here. Rather, the talk is of "ordinance."

Holy Spirit



- Why is Holy Spirit is central to Eucharist ?
- Who Is the Holy Spirit?
 - *"It is the spirit that gives life..."* (Jn 6:63)
 - *"The Lord, the Creator of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets"* - Creed
- Comforter after the departure of Christ until the 2nd Coming.
- Reminds Church of all Christ said and did (Jn 14:26)
- Announces, proclaimed things to come.
- Enables us to *"remember"* Christ as asked in the Last Supper.
- Transforms bread in to *"life giving bread."*
- Eucharist is a *"spiritual food"* & *"spiritual drink"* (1Cor10:3-4), a *"gift of the Father"* (Jn 6:32) -- It's Trinitarian

Preparation

- Evening before prayers of preparation making our heart ready. Reconcile differences and ask forgiveness. We fast.
- On day of Liturgy clergy enter nave in front of Royal Doors and take Kairos symbolizing time of Incarnation - when time (kairos) is fulfilled and kingdom of God is at hand (Mk 1:15)
- Enter Sanctuary, representing heaven, to carry out ministry.
- There, Altar is border between heaven and earth
- We too enter the Narthex with reverence, light a candle with a prayer and venerate the icons, prepare to enter a timeless realm, to join with Christ and His heavenly Church.

Vestments pg 103-105

- Vestments are Holy and wearing them sanctifies. Remind us that although priest is of this world he doesn't belong to this world alone.
- **Sticharion**: shining raiment of angels and purity
- **Epitrachilion**: grace of priesthood used in all rites. Mech symbolizes Christ and fringes at bottom souls entrusted to priest.
- **Zone**: power of God that gives strength
- **Cuffs**: signify that Christ with His own hands carries out the sacrifice. Priest acts as hand of Christ
- **Epigonation**: sign of victory of Christ
- **Philonion**: symbol of divine righteousness and Passion of Christ
- **Fr Tom**



Proskomedie

Preparatory Service

pg 107 -110

Proskomide



- Holy liturgical vessels: cup, paten, star, lance, spoon. Such vessels are sanctified and need to be treated with upmost reverence.
- Prothesis is the place where the preparations are made. Symbolizes Bethlehem and cave where Christ was born.
- Prosphora is made and brought by faithful.

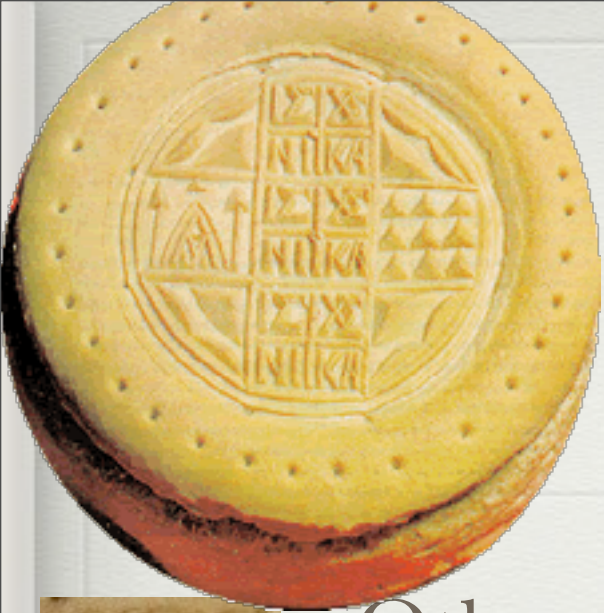


Prosphora



- Christ described himself as bread of life. In Liturgy, offering bread and wine we are offering our entire lives.
- The center of seal is removed and placed on patan while priest says *"for His life is taken away from earth."* Called the lamb.
- We recognize the sacrifice Christ made so we could have eternal life, the paschal lamb.
- Next the "lamb" is pierced with the lance - like the Roman soldier. Priest says, "there came out blood and water." then wine and water are put into the cup.





Proskomedi



- Other pieces are cut: triangular one for Mother of God. Placed to right of lamb, saying, "at your right hand stood the queen, arranged in a garment of I woven gold..."



- Nine small triangles: commemorating, bodiless powers, and the assembly of saints

- A piece for clergy

Small pieces for all names being commemorated, living and dead.

We have assembled on the paten the image of the Church.

Gifts are censer with fragrant smoke signifies fragrance of Holy Spirit.

They are covered.

Now we will see entire service.





Proskomedes