

# Orthodox-Christian Worship

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## History and Development

*Liturgics* refers to those things having to do with a liturgy, and the obvious point of departure in gaining an understanding of liturgics is to understand the word itself. This is particularly relevant in terms of liturgical music, because the terms religious music or sacred music, while describing the type of music, do not do much to explain the origins or practice.

The word liturgy is from the Greek word *leitourgia*, and the most common translation is “the work of the people”. It is that common act of God’s people together offering praise to Him in the manner which He revealed that they should. This is the type of worship which took place in the Jewish temple and synagogue and which came into the early Christian Church.

Note that the emphasis is on “work”, “praise” and “revealed”. The original Greek term includes the term work and conveys something much more vigorous than a congregation being entertained by a performer — rather the people working together. Praise is that what is offered to God in thanksgiving for what He has done for us. Revealed makes clear that it is not a collection of actions of our own choice or convenience but based on direction given to us by God. It is the collective work that assembled believers do together in offering praise and worship to God. Liturgical music is the music developed and either chanted, sung and/or played during this time, while liturgical ritual describes the action that takes place.

For non-Orthodox Christians liturgical worship may be a foreign concept. The question asked is often “why does liturgical worship follow such a set structure or order?” The question reflects an underlying assumption for many Christians that in the New Testament period worship was spontaneous; or reflects lack of knowledge about the origins of liturgical worship within the Judeo-Christian traditions. The fact is, this “order” has its very roots in the Bible, and much of Judaism and Christianity have been worshipping this way — more or less unchanged — for almost over 2000 years.

The core of liturgics is not just beautiful music or awe-inspiring ritual, rather it is a commitment to origins. Two concepts need to be kept in mind, as one considers the “why” of liturgical worship and practice: origin and changelessness. Remember, first and foremost, that the apostles and the first Christian disciples were Jews. That is, they were Jews who recognized and accepted Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. From their heritage with its history of liturgical interaction with God, came the Jew-

ish form of biblical worship, the basic structure, the “origin” of Christian worship. For this reason, we see in Church history a highly developed Christian liturgical order in use even by the end of the first century — that is, within sixty years of Christ’s resurrection.

The second concept is “changelessness”. Perhaps one of the most striking and unique things about much Christian liturgical worship, especially that of the Eastern Orthodox Church in this age of rapid change, and even change for its own sake, is its permanence and changelessness. For example, it has been said that one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Eastern Orthodox Church is its determination to remain loyal to the past, its sense of living continuity with the church of ancient times. This commitment to protecting the Gospel and keeping its message and praise to God the same stems from the conviction that the faith we have is that which our Lord Jesus Christ delivered to us, and to which we will add nothing nor take anything away. If Christians desire to be “apostolic”, then they have to agree to belong to the same Church that Christ had founded. That church began in the first century, and there is a sense in which all Christians must become Christ’s contemporaries. The twentieth century is not an absolute norm, but the apostolic age is.

Over the course of the last millennia there has been change in liturgical worship. However, it is change that has taken place carefully within this context of “changelessness”. Within the traditional liturgical churches, the change has not been a change in the real nature or substance of the faith and practice. Never change for change’s sake, only change in order to remain the same. The underlying commitment has been the exhortation of St. Paul to Timothy to “*guard the deposit of the faith*” (I Timothy 6:20). At the same time, there has been a willingness to enhance the practice of worship in order to make it more heavenly, more spiritual and more edifying.

The early Christian Church came into being as a liturgical church because Jews worshipped liturgically. The New Testament records numerous instances of liturgical worship, which range from pure Jewish practices (such as Peter and John going to the temple because it was the hour of prayer) to Christian liturgical worship (which confirms that the early Christians met and worshipped following Jewish liturgical practices and added to them the rite of the Eucharist).

Many present-day Christians do not understand why the worship Services of the “liturgical churches” are so different and so structured. A common assumption is that in the New Testament worship was spontaneous. However, worship in the early Christian Church, like Judaism, followed a specific order or form (Rite). This “order” has its very roots in the Scriptures. In fact, all of Christianity worshipped this way for 1500 years; the Eastern Orthodox Church has been worshipping this way — more or less unchanged — for nearly 2000 years.

Two words need to be kept in mind when one first experiences liturgical worship: origin and changelessness.

## **Origin**

**Early Christian worship had an origin: Jewish worship form and practice. The early disciples did not create new worship practices any more than Jesus did. They all prayed as Jews and worshipped as Jews. The earliest Christians were Jews who recognized and accepted Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, and the worship that they practiced was liturgical, because Jewish worship was liturgical. For this reason we see in the New Testament that the early Christians continued their Jewish worship practices, even while they added some uniquely Christian components. The most central new content was the sacrament of the Eucharist (or Communion) as instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. However, in the early Church this was celebrated as a separate service for many years.**

**This living continuity of worship from Temple to Synagogue and into the early Christian Church is why there is a highly developed Christian liturgical order in use by the end of the first century, within sixty years of Christ's resurrection.**

## **Changelessness**

**Perhaps one of the most striking and unique things about liturgical Christianity, and especially in this age of rapid change and even change for its own sake, is its permanence and changelessness. This is especially true for the Eastern Orthodox Church to this day. This was also true of the western Roman Church until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the reforms of Vatican II significantly altered the liturgical form of the Roman Mass. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the Orthodox Church is its determination to remain loyal to the past, its sense of living continuity with the church of ancient times. This commitment to protecting the Gospel and keeping its message and praise to God the same stems from the conviction that the faith was delivered to Christians by Jesus Christ. If Christians are going to be "apostolic", then they must belong to the same Church that Christ founded. That Church began in the first century.**

**The musical forms of early Christian worship were initially Jewish, such as the chanting of Psalms. As the Gentile missions began, Christians began incorporating Greek music forms. The language of worship became almost universally Greek, which was the common language of the Roman Empire, and more and more Greek music forms and theory came into use in the Church. Within twenty to forty years, the Christian worship Service was a composite of Jewish and Greek liturgical music forms, following the basic shape of Jewish Synagogue and Temple worship. Within a hundred years, as the Church spread across the Roman Empire and most of its members were Gentiles who spoke Greek and lived in a Greek culture, most of the musical style and theory had become Greek. It still retained some Jewish form and content, such as chanting. After the legalization of Christianity in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, this music form and style developed into Byzantine music, the Church's first formal music form. Byzantine music was very broadly and consistently used throughout the Church for seven to eight centuries.**

Although Greek music was predominant, it was not the only form in use. In Egypt, there was a much different form (Rite), as was the case in other parts of the empire. However, most of the Empire used Greek as its common language, and the Byzantine music became almost universal throughout the Church. The two earliest Christian hymns, "O Gladsome Light" (referred to by St. Justin in about 150 A.D.) and a "Hymn to the Holy Trinity" (from *Oxyrrhyncus*, Egypt, probably mid-4<sup>th</sup> century), are solely Greek in musical form.

The term "early Christianity" generally refers to the time prior to the legalization of the faith by the Emperor Constantine. Theological development occurred during this time as well. As the Christian Church worked through the implications of what had occurred in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and as they grew in their knowledge and understanding under the leadership of the Apostles such as James, John and Paul, their worship began to incorporate these new understandings. For instance, the earliest church had two Sabbath services: a "Synagogue-type" service and a separate communion service. Over time these were combined. Another page in this section describes Worship in the Early Church, documenting the processes and influences by which Christian worship became formalized, and how the various rites in use locally became standardized throughout the Roman and Byzantine Empire. A further page details later developments in Christian worship as theology and doctrine became defined, and external cultural influences were exerted on the Christian Church.

*Credits: Parts of this page are excerpted from: Williams, B. and Anstall, H.; Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church; Light and Life Publishing, Minneapolis, 1990.*

## Development Of Christian Worship

Where did liturgical worship and especially the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church or the Mass of the Roman Church come from? What were its origins? How much change has there been over time from the beginning of Christian worship in the first century Jerusalem church? One should begin by answering the most basic question: what is liturgy? The best translation is "the work of the people". It is the collective work, which assembled believers do together in offering praise and worship to God.

### The Old Testament Basis For Christian Worship

Jews at the time of Jesus Christ had already had a history of worship for almost 1500 years. Their history was full of interaction with God who called them to be His people, and who had revealed to them specific instructions as to the offerings and sacrifices which were part of the way in which He was to be worshiped. The Bible is clear

that God revealed to Israel how to worship – patterned after things in heaven. These specific forms or liturgies of worship were first seen in the Tabernacle of the early Israelites and were consummated in the Temple worship which took place later in Jerusalem. The worship of God in the Temple of Jerusalem was the first and most prominent focus of Jewish worship, which included the form and frequency of prayer and sacrifice.

For Judaism, there had always been a constant cycle of prayers, blessings and meals: daily, weekly, monthly and annually. These constituted the second focus of worship for the Jews. In its most regular form it included practices in the daily hours of prayers and the annual High Feast Days. The High Feast Days included the sacrificial offerings of the Temple and contained Jewish messianic expectation. These meals included the “breaking of bread” and the “blessing of the cup”, and contained parallels with both the temple sacrifice and the messianic feast.

The synagogal worship, already before Christ, had its necessary complement in the ritual of the meals: the family meal, and better still at least at the time of Christ, the meals of those communities of the faithful brought together by a common messianic expectation.

There was a “meal liturgy” for the prayers of the meals. In principle they were required for every meal. However, it took on the greatest importance in family meals and especially the meals of the Holy Days. The entire structure of the Last Supper as recorded by St. Luke mirrors the meal liturgy as practiced within Judaism at the time. These meal prayers and their structure contributed directly in the formation of the early Christian celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The third and later focus of worship was that of the synagogue. For the average Israelite, the Temple was a place of worship only on certain days of the year, and it was most specifically a place of sacrifice. During the Babylonian captivity, worship in the Temple was impossible. A new form of worship came into being, a form patterned on temple worship, but without the sacrificial element which took place only in the Temple, and with a strong didactic element of teaching and remembering. These two elements of Jewish worship — synagogue and temple — together formed the very basic components of the form or Rite of the liturgy for the early Christian Church.

Besides the structure or order of worship that came from Judaism into Christianity, one can also find the cycles of liturgy — the daily, weekly and yearly cycles of worship deriving from the Old Testament as well. Acts 2:46 says that “day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart.” On a daily basis, the apostles continued their Jewish worship practices in the temple, and on a daily basis broke the bread of communion. This regularity of time is further confirmed in Acts 3:1 where Peter and John were going to the temple because it was the hour of prayer. Not only did they continue in Jewish worship practice, but they kept the liturgical cycle of daily prayers at set hours of the day as well as the major feast days.

Consequently, Christian worship was a Christ-centered pattern that continued and preserved the traditional structure of synagogue worship and the meaning of temple worship that God had established in Israel. This basic structure included the Old and New Testament practices of liturgy, baptism and the Paschal feast that became the Eucharist.

### The Shape Of Temple Worship

The continuity of temple and synagogue worship practices characterized the Church in its earliest days, and the synagogue form became the basic order or worship for the Christian Church. This structure was set very early during the New Testament era while the Church was still seen as essentially a Jewish sect, a messianic sect believing in Jesus Christ. The setting of this order or form of worship took place even prior to the admission of Gentiles into the Church and before the spread of the Gospel outside of Judea. Therefore, by the time the Gentile missions began in about 38 A.D. (and later enhanced by Paul's missionary activity), this order was established and accepted as the form of Christian worship. Into the basic synagogue form were blended other elements from the temple as well as some uniquely Christian elements.

Regarding the Temple, it is important to realize two things about its worship. First, the primary type of activity was *sacrifice*. The cadence in the spiritual lives of most Old Testament Jews was the celebration of the Holy Feast days and their corresponding offerings. What determined the manner in which these sacrifices would take place? God had given the instructions in Exodus and Leviticus that describe in detail the manner in which worship is to be offered to God. Secondly, worship in the temple — and in fact all Christian worship — was and is to reflect worship in heaven.

Holy Scriptures provide glimpses of heavenly worship. There are reports of it in Isaiah 6, Daniel 7, and Revelations 4 and 5. It was upon this heavenly worship that the worship of God on earth was patterned. Exodus 25 through 27 provides detailed information about the nature of temple worship, including the physical structure of the temple and its dimensions, instructions for the Ark to be built, the internal decor of the Tabernacle, details of the priests' vestments, the use of incense, the presence of an altar, the daily offerings, the use of anointing oil and that of holy images (such as Icons).

Exodus 25:17 begins the command of God regarding the making of the Ark of the Covenant. It includes the command to make two Cherubim of gold, between which God said that He would "meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubim." The mercy seat, or Ark of the Covenant, was understood as "the empty throne where nothing was to be seen; on this throne God was present — the sole object of worship in Israel... God spoke from be-

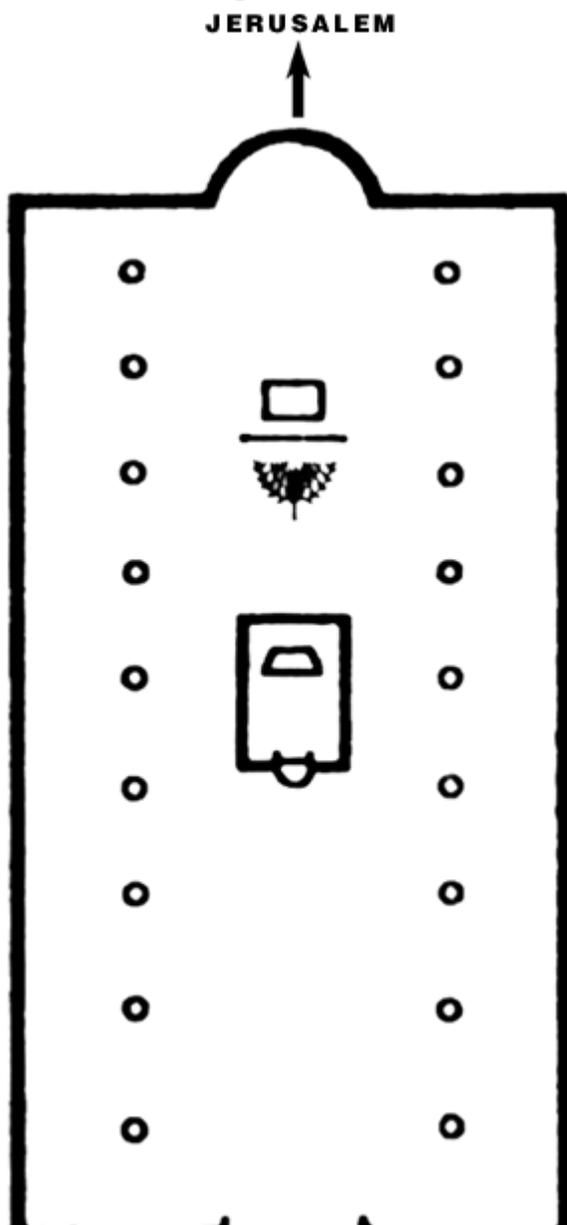
tween the Cherubim — invisibly present on His throne — to Moses, Aaron, Samuel ... to His people. Here the blood of atonement had been sprinkled each year”.

The original Ark, which disappeared in the exile, had held the *Tablets of the Law*. It was understood both as the place of sacrifice and the place from which God spoke — the place of communion. This is one reason why in Eastern Orthodox Churches are representations of two Cherubim behind the altar on which the bread and wine are consecrated to become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ who was sacrificed for humankind. Between and before them is the altar at which the communion takes place in the Eucharist.

### Jewish Components Of Christian Worship

Most scholars agree that the structure of Christian worship came almost directly from the Synagogue form of Jewish worship. The importance of the synagogue to the Jews was due to a historical experience, the Babylonian exile. With no Temple in which to worship and sacrifice, faithful Jews were forced to gather around their elders

to listen to the Word of God, for teaching and worship. This form was retained and matured after the return from the exile and became a normal part of Jewish religious life. It was patterned on Temple worship and held at the same times as Services in the Temple.



A brief description of the architecture of the average synagogue at the time of Christ can help explain these factors. There were several very distinct features. The first was the seat of Moses, which was represented by seats in the synagogue occupied by the rabbis. These seats were located on a raised platform called a bema, which had a central location in the synagogue building. Each synagogue had an Ark, which was protected by a veil and before which burned a seven-branched candlestick — the Menorah. The Ark in the synagogue contained the Scriptures and spiritually pointed to the Ark of the Temple, as the physical alignment of the synagogue pointed toward Jerusalem. The ultimate focus of synagogue worship was the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem, just as the focus of worship in the Temple was like-

wise the Holy of Holies. Note that the synagogue was oriented toward Jerusalem, as can be seen in the diagram.

The six basic components in synagogue worship were:

(1) **The Litany:** The first and opening part of the synagogue Service was a series of prayers, a litany, blessing God for His love toward mankind. In its present form, the Byzantine liturgy begins with the Great Litany. The celebrant says, "In peace let us pray to the Lord", and the people respond, as they do to each following petition: "Lord, have mercy".

(2) **The Confession:** The Litany was immediately followed by a confession of God's faithfulness and of mankind's sin. In the Orthodox Liturgy, these may be found in the prayer between the Great Litany and the Scripture reading.

(3) **Intercessory Prayer:** The third part were the prayers of intercession. Likewise these intercessory prayers complement the preparation for Scripture readings.

(4) **Scripture Readings:** This was followed by the reading from the Law and the Prophets. In today's Byzantine Liturgy, as with any church using lectionary readings, these include Old Testament readings as well as Epistle and Gospel readings.

(5) **Preaching:** The reading was followed by a discourse or sermon that expounded upon the reading and clarified its application to daily life. This is either the homily or sermon in modern Services.

(6) **Benediction.** The Service concluded with a benediction, which means "good word".

On the Sabbath, the assembly gathered around the Ark with the Rabbi to hear his teaching and to meditate on the *Law and the Prophets*, at a time in conjunction with worship in the Temple. Although the synagogue service centered on the reading of the work of God, it was not exclusively so; it was also communion with God in prayer and praise. It was also one of the forms of worship that Jesus practiced. Upon entering the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus was asked by the ruler of the synagogue to be the liturgist; He participated in the antiphonal litanies which blessed God and began the synagogue service. He joined His neighbors in confessing the faithfulness of God. The intercessory prayers were His prayers too. Then, after the reading of the Law, He was asked to read the Prophets. This He did, and then to the amazement of those gathered, He did more — He interpreted them. It is unlike that He heard the benediction, however, given the reaction He received that day.

The most common translation of λειτουργία (leiturgia) is "the work of the people". It is that common act of God's people together offering praise to Him in the manner which He revealed that they should. This was the type of worship which took place in the synagogue and which came into the early Church. The components of Jewish worship that came into Christianity did so in the same order. This is evident in that the basic six-point structure of synagogue worship (previously described) still constitutes the core of Christian worship; and more or less has for two thousand years. This "dependency of order" verifies the historical and theological truth of worship practices in the Christian Church as the fulfillment of that which God began in Israel.

As previously described, early Christian Churches used a design very similar to Jewish synagogues. A natural development occurred as the new Christian Church formulated its own theology and understanding, but the core connection to Judaic form was never lost. This can be seen in the oldest Syrian churches that have been excavated: The chair of Moses has become the Cathedra (bishop's seat) and the semi-circular bench that surrounds it the seat of the Christian priests (presbyters). As in the synagogue they remain in the midst of the congregation. The bema is also there, not far from the Ark of the Scriptures, which is still in its ancient place, not at the far end though, but some distance from the apse. It is still veiled with its curtain and the candlestick is still beside it. The apse, however, is no longer turned toward Jerusalem but to the East, a symbol of the expectation of Christ's coming in His *Parousia*.

### The Passover

Passover is perhaps the ultimate example of how Jesus Christ transformed a Jewish worship practice into something new and different. One of the three major holy days of Israel, Passover celebrated their deliverance by God from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. It included the sacrifice of a lamb in the forecourt of the Temple and the partaking of the Seder (or Passover supper) This lamb called to mind the lambs slain in Egypt; their blood brushed on the doorposts and lintels to fend off the destroying angel. More than just symbolic, this sacrificed lamb accomplished the deliverance of God's people for yet another year, while the Seder established the reality of communion between God and humankind. That is why every Jew made it a point to be in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover at least once in their lifetime. Only in Jerusalem was it possible to celebrate the Passover completely.

Jesus had entered the city of Jerusalem prior to Passover, desirous of sharing this final supper with His disciples. They asked Him what they must do to prepare for the Passover (Jn. 13:1 and Mt. 26:17), and He instructed them about preparing the upper room. The disciples undoubtedly expected to celebrate the actual Passover meal with their Lord, for they were in Jerusalem. What they were not expecting was what took place: Jesus Christ in the context of a supper, offering Himself as the lamb of the world. Jesus undoubtedly gathered them for a supper, as all Gospels record it.

However, the supper Jesus and His disciples celebrated together was not the Seder. It certainly was a supper in the context of Passover, and the types of the Passover festival were present, including the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup, but it was not the actual Passover Seder, because it took place on Thursday evening. The Passover Seder would have had to be celebrated on Friday evening, at the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath and in this case the beginning of the *Days of Unleavened Bread*.

Because the supper took place on Thursday night, the day before Passover, there was no slaughtered lamb from the Temple to partake of; and without the sacrificed lamb from the Temple, the meal would not be a Seder. According to St. John, the death of

Christ took place the next day, Friday, while the lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple (Jn. 18:28). Thus, the Last Supper is an anticipation of the sacrifice of Golgotha, rather than an actual Passover meal. Jesus was crucified on Golgotha the following day, on Friday, in order that the Jewish authorities could complete His death before the Sabbath and the beginning of Passover on Friday evening.

St. Luke tells us that Jesus said to his disciples at the table that he “desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; but I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:15-16). Therefore, what was eaten by Him and the disciples must not have been a Passover meal. Our Lord gathered His disciples for a ritual meal, which was the same as the prayer of sacrificial representation in the Temple. Jesus did not intend to eat Passover with His disciples in Jerusalem, for He knew that He was the lamb to be sacrificed on Friday.

The lambs being slaughtered in the Temple are of the Old Covenant; the Lamb being sacrificed on the cross is the *New Covenant* is Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets. Jesus Christ, in the offering of His Body and His Blood, is the sacrificial lamb. Rather than sharing lamb from the Temple to accomplish their deliverance for yet another year, Jesus was offering Himself in whom they and the entire world would be delivered from sin and death. Our Lord himself took a specific Jewish worship practice, one that had been revealed by God, filled it with the new meaning of the New Covenant and transformed it into Christian communion. He had become *The Passover Lamb*, ready to be sacrificed for the deliverance of God’s creation. While the Eucharist was instituted for the Twelve within the context of the Passover Feast, it was not instituted at a Passover meal. In this Jesus actualized the Church and brought it into being. It is no wonder that the early Christians thought of the Eucharist as delivering them from death (bestowing life) and establishing communion with God (unity in Christ). Deliverance and communion were the focus of the Passover, which had now been refocused in Christ Himself.

The problem with understanding the Last Supper as the Passover Seder and by extension of understanding the Eucharist as a re-presentation of the Last Supper is that it results in the observance becoming a dramatic memorial. The Last Supper was a historical event that occurred once. In contrast, the Holy Eucharist is the actual experience of the Lamb who was eternally offered on the cross. The crucifixion occurred once in time and need not to occur again, as the New Testament clearly states. However, the crucifixion of Christ is an event with eternal consequences. Through this event all humankind before and after the cross, in fact all creation, may be saved; and in this sense it is an eternal sacrifice. Not that Christ is eternally re-sacrificed, but that the scope of the crucifixion is eternal — reaching out to each communicant in the Eucharist.

That is why in the Orthodox prayer before Holy Communion the priest says: “remembering... the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand and the second and glorious coming...” – What do Christians remember? Those actions of Jesus Christ which are eternal (past,

present and future) which transcend time and space and in which Christians are saved to eternal life. The Holy Eucharist is the actualization of the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection and the Second Coming.

### The Jewish Berakoth

Some scholars make a connection to the Jewish tradition of *berakoth* prayers. This Jewish word has been translated into Greek and English as thanksgiving, but is best translated in its Jewish rendering as “blessings”. Unlike the contemporary English usage of thanksgiving as meaning gratitude, *berakoth*, like the Greek word *eucharistia* (*eucharistia*) is primarily a proclamation of the miraculous work of God. It is not limited to the gift received or the human response that it may prompt.

There are two principal types of *berakoth* in the Jewish tradition: One type is a brief formula that became very soon stereotyped and is composed merely of a praise-thanksgiving, a ‘blessing’ in the narrowest sense. The other is a more developed formula, in which the prayer of supplication has its place, although always in a ‘blessing’ context. The first is destined to accompany every action of the pious Jew from his awakening in the morning to the moment that sleep overtakes him in the evening. The second has its place either in the Synagogue Service (in the morning, at noon and at night) or in the meal prayers, particularly those accompanying the final cup shared by all the participants.

Of specific interest for understanding the development of the Eucharistic component of early Christian worship is the meal *berakoth*. In principle, it was required for every Jewish meal, and included the expectation of the messianic banquet by the remnant of Israel and so became a unique sacrifice of its own. The meal was preceded by an obligatory hand-washing, followed by the drinking of a first cup of wine by each person who repeated the blessing. Then the father or presiding member chanted a series of *berakoth* (typically three), the first of which went back to Moses and was a blessing for nourishment. The second went back to Joshua and was a blessing for the promised land. The third went back to David and Solomon and was a supplication that the creative and redemptive action of God in olden times be continued and renewed today and find its ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The Passover meal followed this pattern, but was “distinguished by special foods, bitter herbs and the lamb, which were used together with the special corresponding prayers and the dialogued recitation of the *haggadah* (a kind of traditional homily on the origin and the ever fresh sense of the feast). However, the *Last Supper* was not a Passover meal, because it preceded Passover, and Jesus did not connect the Eucharistic institution to any of the details that are proper to the Passover meal. In every case, however, the essential ritual act came at the end of the meal. A lamp was brought in and blessed by the father or presiding member of the community with a blessing that recalled the creation of the luminaries to light up the night. After this,

incense was burned with a proper blessing, and then a second general hand-washing took place. The one who presided received the water from a servant or the youngest person at the table.

If we consider the elements of the *berakoth* and compare them to the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, we see a very high degree of similarity. The first cup that followed the first hand-washing is mentioned by St. Luke as the fruit of the vine which he would no longer drink with his disciples before they met again in the kingdom. The breaking of the bread correlates directly with the bread that Jesus blessed and broke. The second ritual of hand-washing was changed by Jesus, in that rather than washing hands, He took the water brought by St. John, the youngest disciple, and washed the feet of his disciples, beginning with Peter.

The origins of the form of Christian worship come from and combine the praise and teaching elements of the Synagogue Service with the sacrificial elements of Temple worship. At the very core of Christian worship is the Eucharist. Its form and structure is also Jewish, given new content and meaning by Jesus Christ.

The words of Christ, which were to give rise to the Christian Eucharist, originate from a whole structure underlying the Gospels and the Jewish liturgy, in which they were inserted. If we separate them from it, we misunderstand the whole movement that inspired them. Reciprocally, their exact meaning risks being lost, once we no longer perceive all that they accomplish and complete. Early Christianity was preserved from ever committing such an error by the fact that Christian prayer continued to develop within the forms of the Jewish *berakoth* and the *tefillah*, i.e. the prayer of petition which evolves without ever becoming actually detached from it. The first formulas of the Christian Eucharist, in imitation of what Christ himself had done, are but Jewish formulas applied by means of a few added words to a new context which however had already been prepared for them.

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## **Worship In The Early Church**

The early believers in Christ continued in the traditions of their Jewish forefathers, worshipping as they had in both the Temple and the Synagogue. To this worship practice they added the distinctly Christian components which were, in fact, transformed Jewish worship practices. These included Baptism, the Eucharist, the Agape meal and others. Baptism was also present in Jewish religious practice as a personal repentance for sin. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, was transformed in both meaning and content by Christ. Baptism became not only a repentance for one's sins, but being

baptized in the name of the Trinity now also assured forgiveness and incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church. Baptism was the once and for all initiatory rite whereby one received the Holy Spirit and came into the Church.

The early Christians with their transformed understanding of the central elements of Judaism had a practical problem: how to conduct worship. They wanted to carry on their old Jewish worship practices while at the same time incorporating this new meaning and content. They accepted the necessity for continuity with the old and for the celebration of the new, but could not do both together. The result was doing both in a parallel fashion. The Temple hours of prayer and the Synagogue worship were kept, but were not centered in Christ. Each day of the week, those Christian believers in Jerusalem would attend the Temple for prayers during the daily cycle, and on Saturday — the Jewish Sabbath — they would attend either Temple or Synagogue.

### Sacrifice In Christian Worship

These elements constituted the revealed manner, in which the worship and sacrifice of Israel were to be made to God. Again, the primary function here was that of sacrifice: the offering of an animal to propitiate and atone (make amends or reparation) for the sin of God's people. The belief of the early Church was that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His subsequent resurrection supplanted all temple sacrifice as a means of propitiation and atonement. In the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus Christ becomes the propitiation for all of mankind's sins; He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Thereafter, for Christians, there was no need for an additional sacrifice. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that sins are forgiven in Him, and in Him Christians are reconciled to the Father.

The continuation of any temple practices included communion as well as sacrifice. Because they constituted revealed worship, they were part of God's intent from the beginning. Because temple worship was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the worship, which Christians offer to God, goes on forever. It continues both here on earth and in Heaven before the throne of God. To be specific, heavenly worship is the worship, the liturgy; i.e. heaven is a dynamic condition of praise and worship — of liturgy — to the Father. Earthly worship partakes now of the eternal, heavenly worship.

For example, Hebrews Chapter 8 describes the role of Jesus Christ as the heavenly High Priest in contrast with the Old Testament priesthood. The word used to describe what the High Priest is doing is called *liturgy*. The passage properly reads from the first verse of the chapter: "We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, a liturgist (*leitourgos*) in the sanctuary and true tabernacle which is set up not by man but by the Lord" (8:1-2). The worship of heaven, the liturgy, has been established forever by God himself. Hebrews then goes on to demonstrate that what is done on earth should be patterned after that in heaven — both in the Old and New Covenants. Literally, "now Jesus has

been given a liturgical work (liturgy), which is superior to theirs; just as the covenant, which He arranged between God and His people, is a better one..." (8:6).

It is easy to understand why the early Christians continued in their synagogue and temple practices. Worship had been revealed to them by God. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all that God had promised in the Old Testament; in Him all the hopes of Israel were fulfilled. It was only natural that in worshiping God through Jesus Christ, believers would continue to do so as they had been told, in the manner God revealed to them.

This was natural, almost automatic for the Jews who accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah. There was, however, one major change for these Jews which had been completed in Jesus Christ. The animal sacrifices of Old Testament practice had been fulfilled in the person of Christ. All that had been anticipated was now completed. All that had been prophesied was now reality. The Messiah had come. So for these early Christians, the Jewish worship practices were continued with a brand new understanding of the centrality of the victorious Christ and newly found joy. Christians did not view their Jewish liturgical practices as past, nor did they simply continue in some kind of mindless habit of outmoded ritual. They maintained this liturgy as their own, as described in the inspired Scriptures of the Old Covenant carried over into the New. In fact, Jewish liturgy made the work of God in Jesus Christ comprehensible. The Old Testament worship practices, now fulfilled and given new meaning in Christ, became the core of Christian worship within this New Covenant.

### Early Worship In Antioch

If one realizes that Jewish worship was liturgical and provided the worship structure for the early Church, and then one reads the New Testament thoroughly, a whole new side to the question becomes clear. The earliest and clearest reference to liturgy is recorded in Acts, the book which chronicles the inception and growth of the early Church. The church at Antioch was the first Gentile church outside of Jerusalem, established approximately 38 A.D., when Barnabas was sent to teach there (Acts 11:25 ff.). Acts 13 describes the selection of Barnabas and St. Paul for the first missionary journey. This would have taken place approximately 46 A.D., in what by then was a well-established and structured community of believers.

Luke records that the calling of Paul and Barnabas was the work of the Holy Spirit and that it took place during the "liturgy". The text reads, "As they were *liturgizing* (leitourgounton) before the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2). Luke was a physician and well educated. He must have understood what he meant to say about worship: namely, that the community was together in formal and ritual worship, accompanied by fasting, when the Holy Spirit spoke. So in 46 A.D. this early church was worshiping in a liturgical manner using a Christian form carried over from the syna-

gogue. This occurred within sixteen years of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The continuity of worship between the Old and New Covenants is very evident.

### The Eucharist And The Resurrection

The Holy Eucharist could not be added to a Synagogue service, yet it was to be celebrated as the Lord had commanded. The answer was tied to the resurrection. Jesus had been crucified on Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath, and had risen on Sunday, the third day. Thus, the day after the Sabbath was seen as the day of the Lord's resurrection, the Lord's Day. At the Lord's Supper, the *parousia* or presence of Jesus Christ was experienced in the consecrated gifts; here people encountered Christ's new life in His resurrection. It was only natural that the Eucharist should be celebrated on each *Resurrection Day* (i.e. Sunday). Thus, the typical pattern for early believers became Synagogue worship on the Sabbath, followed by gathering for the Holy Eucharist on the next day. For the Jews, the day ended at sundown and the next day began. Sunday began at nightfall on Saturday. As Luke records in Acts 10:7, "*On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship (communion) meal*". The pattern typically became one of worshiping in the Synagogue on Sabbath morning and then gathering together again in the evening (the next day — Sunday) for the celebration of the Eucharist.

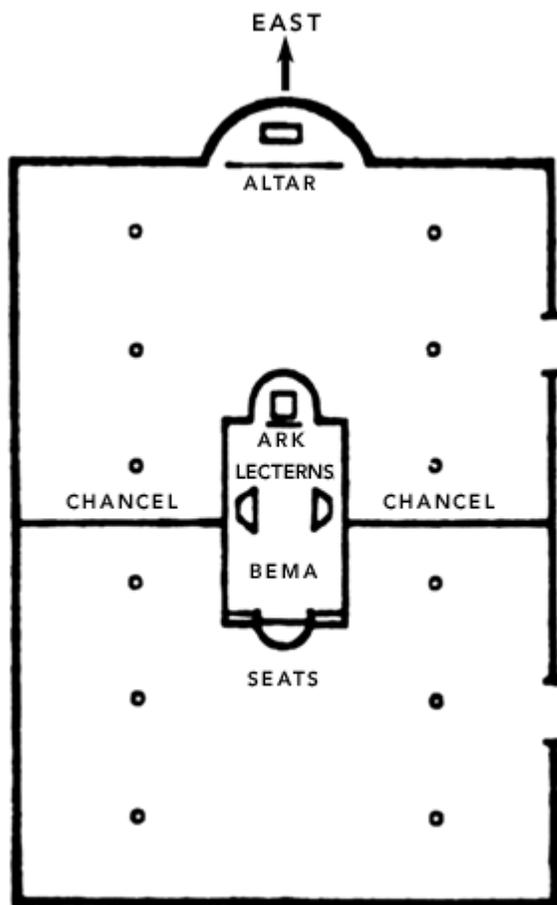
In the early Church, the Eucharist was celebrated at the end of the Agape (love) or fellowship meal. This was an extension of the Passover supper tradition and was a means for believers to show each other the love and unity they shared together in Christ. All gathered, each bringing what they were able to. At the conclusion of the meal the Eucharist was held, the *thanks-giving* (eucaristia) for the grace of Jesus Christ. This sacrament conveyed the understanding and symbolism of the Passover Supper, now consummated in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. It is highly probable that it was the absence of this Jewish understanding that accounted for the disintegration and abuse of the Agape meal in the Gentile churches. Paul berates the Corinthians for being selfish, causing some to go hungry, and for drunkenness at the meal which became so pervasive that it even prevented the Eucharist from being celebrated (I Cor. 11:20-21).

What can be seen, however, especially during the early years prior to the Gentile missions, was a link between these old and new worship practices. A Jewish male who became a follower of Christ would have been circumcised as a child, and with his wife and family would continue in the normal Jewish worship pattern with a new Christian understanding. The early Church proceeded in this manner until two things occurred: the Gentile missions brought into the Church people without a Jewish tradition, raising the sort of problems just noted.

## The Impact Of Persecutions On Worship

The persecutions shook this co-existence and steered the Jewish Christian worship transition into a more distinctly Christian form of worship. The first persecution was recorded in Acts 6 and 7 and involved the martyrdom of St. Stephen. The early persecutions were perpetrated by the Jews and aimed at this new sect that was winning converts from Judaism and was seen as heretical. With the persecutions, the life of the Church was changed, because the result was exclusion from Judaism. This meant exclusion from Jewish worship. Christians did no longer gather in the Synagogues and were unwelcome in the Temple as described in Acts 21, when St. Paul is mobbed within the Temple grounds. These active Jewish persecutions ultimately resulted in Christians being excluded from the Temple and forced toward new worship practices.

## The Core Of Christian Worship



What was this resulting Christian order? The Synagogue worship structure, consisting of a litany of prayers, a confession, eulogies, readings from the Scriptures, an address or homily and a benediction. This form constituted the core of what was to become specifically Christian worship.

Evidence for this can be found in archaeological evidence from the earliest Syrian churches, as well as in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Didaché* and in the continuous practices of the Nestorian Churches. The old Syrian church appears as a christianized version of a Jewish Synagogue. There is a bema in the center, an ark with veil and candle to hold the Word of God, and a seat for the bishop (that is) representative of the seat of Moses. To these Synagogue elements was added an altar, and now the Church had an orientation. The architectural arrangement can be seen in the adjacent illustration.

Christian churches were oriented facing the East for a very specific reason. Christians look to the heavenly Jerusalem, from which the Messiah will come, and know

themselves to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. However, the East is the place of the rising sun, and for early Christians this was the only fitting symbol of the last appearance of Christ in His *parousia*, as Sun of Justice in Zecharia. Tertullian speaks of public and private prayer to the East as being an apostolic tradition, and it expressed the eschatological expectation that Christ will appear as the *Rising Sun* that will never set.

To the core Synagogue structure (commonly referred to as the *Synaxis* or the Liturgy of the Word) was added the fulfilled Temple worship, the Eucharist, which was inserted prior to the benediction. This included the use of sung or chanted Psalms which were part of Jewish worship, and to which St. Paul refers in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, when he encourages the use of “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”. Again, St. Paul’s missionary approach demonstrates this connection, for his approach in any new city was to worship first in the Synagogue using that base for proclaiming the Gospel. The Jerusalem church was the *Mother Church* for early Christianity, to which the Church at large looked for guidance in all things theological and liturgical. The missionary churches naturally followed the form of the Jerusalem Church. Thus, the Gentile churches which came into being as a result of St. Paul’s preaching and teaching had this same Jewish rule of prayer or order of worship. The similarity to the Synagogue ritual within the first century church demonstrates an early universal acceptance of Jewish worship origins.

In his book *The History of The Church* Eusebius, a fourth century historian and bishop, quotes Philo, a Jewish historian writing in the first century. Philo describes the Christian “all-night vigils of the great festival, the spiritual discipline in which they are spent, the hymns that we always recite, and how, while one man sings in regular rhythm, the others listen silently and join in the refrains of the hymn”. This is antiphonal singing of litanies and certainly reflects Jewish worship practice, which Philo recognizes. By the end of the first century, the Christian Church was present throughout much of the empire. There were established churches in most of the major cities and many smaller ones. These churches continued following the order of Jewish worship, essentially the Synagogue form with the inclusion of the Eucharist. However, the typical worship of the first and second centuries was by necessity simple. The Church was generally under persecution, so it tended to hold its worship services in secret and usually in the homes of members: The liturgical form was commonly the bishop, surrounded by presbyters (elders) facing the assembly, the Altar Table, on which the deacons placed the gifts (bread and wine) which were being offered, preaching, prayer, the anaphora (prayer before Communion) and the distribution of the Holy Gifts.

The freedom of the first years of church life, during which she could be liturgically Jewish in Synagogue and Temple as well as celebrate the Eucharist, were over. What is evident is a liturgical contraction under the duress of persecution. By now the “unnecessary” material of the Synagogue service had been eliminated. What was left was a simpler service focused on the Eucharist, but one that still reflects the Synagogue form and contains its major elements. But this liturgical contraction does not

imply that the Early Church was primitive, had no ceremony and subscribed to simple beliefs. In his introduction to *The History of The Church*. G .A. Williamson says of Eusebius that in his own statements and those of the earliest authorities, on which he draws, we see a church which we would recognize as our own. "We shall find the same line drawn between clergy and laity, the same division of the clergy into the three orders of bishops, presbyters and deacons; the same practice of episcopal ordination and consecration, the same insistence on Apostolic Succession and on the establishment by Christ of *One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church*. We shall find Christendom partitioned up into dioceses and archdioceses, presided over and ruled by bishops who are held in the highest esteem."

### Focus On The Eucharist

By the second century, the Holy Eucharist began to be separated from the Agape meal. Differing opinions exist as to whether this was due to problems, such as those in Corinth, or the growing Gentile expansion in the Church with a lack of Jewish perspective. The result was the celebration of the Eucharist without the Agape meal.

The word *Eucharist* means thanksgiving or the giving of thanks (see Luke 22:16). At the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist, Christ's intent was not on the perpetuation of a mere meal or Passover supper. Instead, that meal was fulfilled in the partaking of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is after the resurrection, ascension and pentecost that the incredible significance of the Eucharist comes to light. For the Lord who gave the Church this sacrament became alive again and ascended. He is the living Christ, who reigns at the right hand of God the Father. He said not only, "This is my Body and Blood" but also told His followers, "Unless you eat of my Body and of my Blood, you have no life within you" (John 6:53). One cannot get around this point in Scripture.

The early Christians took their Lord at His word, believing that in a mystery, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and that it was life-giving; that is, through the work of the Holy Spirit each believer was nurtured by grace (sacramentally) and received spiritual sustenance. Behind this understanding of the nature of the Eucharist was the understanding of worship held by the entire early Church. The worship of the church has at its real center the constant renewal and repetition in time of the one unchanging sacrament: unchanging that is in its meaning, content and purpose; but the whole significance of this repetition lies in the fact that something unrepeatable is being recalled and actualized. The Eucharist is the actualization of one, single, unrepeatable event. This is readily apparent in the portion of the Liturgy before communion; the memorial which remembers, which represents every Sunday the saving death of Christ in the expectation of the resurrection. The Eucharistic meal has taken the place of the former sacrifices. No other sacrifice can have any meaning but the cross of Christ, celebrated in the Christian meal. Through it, while taking part in His passion, we are being given a foretaste of His resurrection."

These liturgical actions and the faith of the early Christians were on the Body and Blood of Christ. More specifically, it was the biblical promise of the reality of His sacrifice made available in these gifts as well as the reality of spiritual nurture they bring. Ultimately, it is a question of Life. Jesus said He came that believers could have life and have it more abundantly. He also said He would send His Spirit, the *Spirit of Life*, in order to transform believers and all creation, to set believers apart.

The belief of the early Church has been that the Eucharist was this transforming life — this spiritual life. It was not a memorial experience of the Lord. It was a miraculous experience of the *Grace of God* in the Holy Spirit. For St. Ignatius this transformation centered around the altar, the place of sacrifice, from which the believer receives the bread of life. On this altar the elements were consecrated that became the life-giving mysteries.

This was certainly the belief of Justin Martyr (circa 150 A.D.), who said: “For we do not receive these things as though they were ordinary food and drink ... the food over which the thanksgiving has been spoken becomes the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus in order to nourish and transform our flesh and blood.” St. Justin called this food Eucharist, thanksgiving or blessing, just as he called baptismal washing “enlightenment”. For him this was a real and powerful act of God.

Thus, for Christians now as for the apostles then, the biblical promise is that by believing on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and being baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, believers receive new life in that sacrament through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As believers partake of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, they continue to receive new life in Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit. This indeed is something for which to give thanks. Hence the name Eucharist: the *Thanksgiving*. This was the uniform view of the early Church. For St. Ignatius, who died in 107 A.D., thought of the Church as a Eucharistic society which only realized its true nature when it celebrated the Supper of the Lord, receiving His Body and Blood in the Sacrament.

In the earliest accounts of the Holy Eucharist, the Church places the words of institution central in the *Eucharistic Prayer*; formulas which were in keeping with those of John’s Gospel, “that bread which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world, he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever”. The Holy Eucharist therefore becomes a remedy bestowing immortality, an antidote preventing death and giving life in Jesus Christ.

### **Worship And Belief**

The belief of the early Church can also be seen en par with their worship. For the majority of the Service, the Bishop would be seated on the bema or stand thereon. The Ark had become in the Syrian Church the place where the Gospel Book was *enthroned*; and this was probably so throughout the early Church. The Word was taken

from the Ark and proclaimed from the bema. By it the believer was led to the altar and beyond it to the Kingdom. This happened literally as well as spiritually. There were no pews in the early Church. This was the case almost universally until the seventeenth century in the west, and is still true in most Orthodox Churches today. Upon the completion of the prayers and Scripture readings, the clergy would take the bread and wine and proceed to the east — to the altar for the Eucharistic meal. The vital nature of the early Christian worship is expressed in this procession toward the East (that is, the Kingdom). Therefore, the whole assembly, far from being a static mass of spectators, remains an organic gathering of worshipers, first centered on the Ark for hearing and meditating upon the Scriptures, and finally going toward the East all together for the Eucharistic prayer and the Holy Communion.

### The Great Entrance

This movement toward the altar with the gifts is the origin of what is now called the *Great Entrance* in the Byzantine liturgy, when the clergy bring the bread and wine from the *Preparation Table* to the altar. The only major change over time in the structure of this portion of the Liturgy was the movement of the Gospel into the sanctuary before the altar, in advance of its reading to the assembled congregation. In part, once again, this was due to the circumstances the Church experienced. In the early Church, the Gospel Book was of inexpressible value, for it was the *Word of Life*. One of the common goals of the persecuting Romans was to confiscate and destroy the Gospel Book. Thus, along with the sacred vessels, it was kept in a safe place during the week, and only brought out for the Service of the Divine Liturgy. This circumstance would have existed through the early part of the fourth century changing only with the end of the persecution of Diocletian.

What transpired then was the assembling of believers before the Liturgy began, typically singing Psalms of praise in anticipation of the impending communion with God. The clergy would arrive bearing the Gospel Book and the sacred vessels and enter the Church, carrying the Gospel Book to the center of the nave (to the bema in the very earliest churches). Then, after the reading of the Gospel lesson to the assembly, the Gospel Book would be carried to the Altar. From this real experience two portions of the liturgy have arisen: the *Antiphons* and the *Little Entrance*.

### The Antiphons

The Antiphons (two or three commonly) are composed of Psalms that are antiphonally sung by cantor, choir or congregation. These go back to the Psalms sung by the assembled congregation while awaiting the arrival of the clergy. The *Little Entrance* is the carrying of the *Gospel Book* into the sanctuary, and it likewise can be traced to the carrying of the *Gospel Book* into the church. With the end of persecution it could be kept in the church. Until recent times, the practice was for the Gospel to be in the middle of the church at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, and from there to be carried into the sanctuary during the *Little Entrance* to be read before the altar.

Having been brought into the midst of the assembly, the Book of Life is then carried into the sanctuary, where, through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all faithful enter into the Kingdom to partake of the Eucharist.

St. Ignatius of Antioch referred to the Church as a *Eucharistic community* who realizes her true nature when celebrating the Eucharist. His view of the Church was the local community gathered around its Bishop, celebrating the Eucharist. It is important to note that St. Ignatius became Bishop of Antioch in 67 A.D. — in the midst of the New Testament era while most of the apostles were still alive and active. St. Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch succeeding St. Peter. Thus we can safely trust that this understanding of the nature of the Church and the Eucharist was representative of that held by the apostles and the Church at large.

By the end of the first century, the basic form or order of the Liturgy was established and universally celebrated throughout the Christian Church, though with regional and cultural differences in expression. The Liturgy had as its center the worship of Jesus Christ and the partaking of His Holy Gifts. In the process it remained true to its origin in Jewish worship, which the Lord Himself had practiced and which had been revealed by God. The blood of bulls or goats shed was no longer at the core. This sacrifice was fulfilled for all times in the *Body and Blood of Jesus Christ*, which is central still to the life of the Church in the Holy Eucharist. Thus, after the apostles passed on and as the responsibility for the Church was being handed on to the next generation, her divine worship was established. The basic form of the liturgy more and more settled and became refined and enhanced over the coming years, but never altered in its basic form and meaning.

The major structural change in the development of the *Christian Rite* took place by the latter part of the third century. Until this time it was not uncommon for Christian worship to still have two separate components, the *Synaxis* (directly derived from the Synagogue) and the Eucharist. The Eucharist was for believers only. While all were expected to attend, this portion of the Service was closed to non-believers. With the removal of persecution and the development of public worship, the need for separate Services disappeared. By the end of the sixth century, holding one Rite without the other had become very uncommon. The two Rites had some similar and overlapping components, which were easily incorporated into each other. Prior to this synthesis, the Synaxis and the Eucharist Services had the following components:

Synaxis or “Meeting”	Eucharist
Greeting and Response	Greeting and Response
Lections interspersed with Psalmody	Kiss of Peace
Psalmody	Offertory
Sermon	Eucharistic Prayer
Dismissal of Catechumens	Fraction
Intercessory Prayers	Communion
Benediction	Benediction

It is very easy to see how these two Services could be fused together in order to form two parts of one celebration. In the eastern and western churches this synthesis occurred and included liturgical enrichments, including the addition of hymns, expanded use of litanies, and the inclusion of the Nicene Creed. As shown, this synthesis was true to the original worship of the *Early Church*. The Synaxis is very similar to the Synagogue Service. The Eucharist is almost identical to the Eucharist, which Justin Martyr describes in his *First Apology* as taking place at Rome in 150 A.D.

*Credits: Parts of this page are excerpted from: Williams, B. and Anstall, H.; Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church; Light and Life Publishing, Minneapolis, 1990.*

## Heavenly Worship

Worship begins in heaven. Holy Scriptures record numerous instances of the drama of heavenly adoration taking place before the very throne of God. It may be that for the person familiar with Holy Scripture, some of these are so apparent that they are often overlooked. The concept of heavenly worship begins with God’s revelation to the children of Israel about the building of the *Tabernacle* and the manner of worship to take place therein. This revelation formed the basis for the Jewish Old Testament worship.

### Worship On Earth — As It Is in Heaven

The summary New Testament passage on heavenly worship is found in Hebrews 8:1-6. Here, Jesus Christ is described as the *High Priest*, seated at the right hand of God, who has accomplished salvation and reconciliation through His mediation. Verse 2 points out that this *High Priest* has also another role. He is the *Liturgist* (the word is leitourgoV) of the sanctuary. Jesus Christ Himself is the liturgist, and this liturgy

takes place in the *sanctuary of the true tabernacle* which is in Heaven before the throne of God. Verses 4 and 5 say that worship on earth is patterned after that in heaven. This is described in verse 6 as the *more excellent liturgy*, which He has obtained because He is the mediator of a *better covenant*. The teaching is quite clear: Liturgical worship is not optional. Rather, it is normative for Christians.

Worship on earth, then, is to be an extension, a reflection, of that in the *Kingdom*. It is to be a window to heaven. Christian believers cannot decide whether this or that is unnecessary and disposable, because it is deemed not contemporary or not in vogue. The obligation is to follow and to serve God, to accept His Word of revelation. This is the guardianship of *Holy Tradition* radiating in the life of the Church; to remain true to the faith as revealed, as it was in the beginning.

We recall in the book of Acts when the followers of *The Way* were first called Christians, meaning those who followed Christ in word and deed. The implication is clear. The believers were living lives which appeared like the very life that Christ lived. So are all believers to live: conformed to the will of God, loving and caring for all brothers and sisters. So are believers to worship: in a heavenly pattern that shows forth the Kingdom of God in which Jesus Christ reigns. The *Kingdom of God* is the critical element of worship for good reasons: It was the reality and advent of this kingdom that constituted the core of the preaching and teaching of Jesus, especially in His parables.

From the New Testament one can make three summary observations about the nature of the *Kingdom of God*. First, it is a present spiritual reality (Rom. 14:17) as well as the realm or dimension, into which followers of Jesus have entered (Col. 1:13). Secondly, it is the reign or rule of God that has been established in Jesus Christ and will be consummated when He returns (Matt. 8:11, 11:27). Thirdly, it is the inheritance which will be bestowed upon God's people when Christ comes in glory (Matt. 25:34).

Christ came to bring followers into the kingdom of His Father. This is where the focus must be. The two advents of Christ are held together in Christian thought, action and prayer at all times. They cannot be separated. When they are, it is the end of the Christian faith, life and worship. The first advent without the second is a meaningless tragedy. The second one without the first is an absurd impossibility. Jesus is born to bring God's kingdom. He dies to prove His kingship. He rises to establish His reign. He comes again in glory to share it with His people. In the kingdom of God there are no subjects. All rule with the risen Messiah. He came and is coming for this purpose alone.

Believers in Jesus Christ live both in this world *and* in the kingdom of God (the Church). They experience this kingdom in their midst through the work of the Holy Spirit. Based on their faith, they know it is the eternal life they have begun to experience. They recognize that it is not yet fully manifested in this world, but will be so at

the return of Christ. It is in the Church that Christians have the fullness of the foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

Thus Jesus said, *I will build My church* (Matt. 16:18). His Kingdom is life, and it is what life on earth is about. Belief in Jesus Christ brings believers into the *Kingdom of God*, i.e. the Church, through holy baptism and makes them its citizens of that divine kingdom. At the same time, they are made members of the Church to be a holy nation unto Him. The Divine Liturgy focused on the Eucharist as the mystery and sacrament of that kingdom is indeed a living continuity with the beliefs and practices of early Christianity.

### The Ascent To Heaven

Both, that of worship as *heaven on earth* and of the Church as the presence of the kingdom of God, are crucial to understand early Christian liturgical worship in its fullness. Worship is an entrance into the dimension of the divine kingdom. The Eucharist, which is the focus of the liturgy, is a sacramental element, i.e. an element of grace and that of the kingdom involving the idea of transformation that refers to the ultimate event of Christ's death and resurrection, thus always a sacrament of the kingdom. For the Christian, the Eucharist is not a mere remembrance, a symbolic acting out of an historical event in the life of Jesus Christ. Christians take their lord and savior at His word when He said, *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you; he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life...* (John 5:53-54). In Holy Communion, believers receive bread and wine that has become the body and blood of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God.

Like that of the early Church, in Orthodox Holy Tradition there is no difference between the body of the risen Christ and His Eucharistic body, i.e. the Church in its twofold nature, spiritual and sacramental. The Holy Eucharist manifests the Church more surely, more essentially than any of its sociological aspects. In and through the Eucharist, the Church becomes a chalice from which flows the power of resurrection *for the life of the world*. The Holy Eucharist is not of this world, it is of the Kingdom. It is the body and blood of Him Who rules in the *Kingdom of God*. Thus, how can Christians expect to receive the things of the Kingdom on this earth? For them, Christians must go to the kingdom. That ultimately is the *purpose* of the Divine Liturgy. It is an ascent to heaven, to the Kingdom of God. It is the liturgical and sacramental dynamic that carries Christians from this world into the dimension of the divine kingdom, where they may partake of spiritual things, and participate in spiritual worship before the throne of God.

On a common sense level, this is simply applying to the Eucharist what Christ expected believers to apply to their lives. As St. Paul enjoins as *our citizenship is in heaven* (Phil. 3:20). Believers are to live in a manner that demonstrates that their

citizenship is in heaven. Applied to worship, this is likely what Jesus meant when He told the Samaritan woman that *the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father*. He went on to point out to her, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshipers* (John 4:21-24). Worshiping God is not property of this world, it is that of the Holy Spirit. If the Kingdom is the place of God, then the Kingdom is where the Christian had better be *worshiping in spirit and in truth*.

The destination of the Liturgy is known from the onset: The first words said by the priest are *Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages*. The believer's destination is the Kingdom of God, to worship Him in spirit and in truth; to join the saints and the host of heaven in worship.

We experience the Divine Liturgy is an act of divine beauty. To witness and to participate in it and become aware of its aesthetic value is to become aware of God's love for us. The point of any writing or analysis of the Liturgy is to encourage the reader to experience and appreciate it for its true worth. Its value, of course, is in the lasting spiritual sustenance it provides. Here is the element that sets the early Christian liturgical worship apart: It is an other-worldly experience. Christians ascend to heaven, of which they are now citizens and to which they are ultimately destined, to commune with the God who loves humankind and has shown forth this love. There Christians worship this God and receive His gifts. Is truly what worship was meant to be: the ascent to heaven in the company of the saints in order to worship and to know God.

*Credits: Parts of this page are excerpted from: Williams, B. and Anstall, H.; Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church; Light and Life Publishing, Minneapolis, 1990.*

## The Royal Priesthood

In saying that the communion of saints is at the heart of Eastern Orthodox worship, it must also be understood that worship or liturgy is celebrated. More so, it is co-celebrated by the clergy and the people gathered to praise the one true God. It is also co-celebrated with the saints and the *Heavenly Hosts*, for all worshipers in the Church are saints together, equally children of God brought into the Kingdom by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is communion that forms the basis of worship: believers join with those in Heaven before the throne of God and offer Him praise and blessing. Those who have been reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ in holy baptism become members of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

A priest is one who stands before God and offers to Him in thanksgiving that which He has given to us: life. Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, humanity turned away from the worship of God and became self-centered. St. Paul identifies the key mark of sin: *un-thankfulness* (Romans 1:21). Man refuses to say thank you to God, to love Him back. However, reconciled believers are *an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation* (1 Peter 2:9-10), the people of God. Having been restored to the priesthood, believers return to worship.

## Priesthood And Vocation

Believers were created to bless and praise God, to worship Him. This is the primary human vocation, because it is precisely what human beings were created to do: to be in communion with God as His priests, and in that role to worship Him. Believers are called to this vocation because human beings are created for it. In accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by entering into the Church, believers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to carry out for which they were created. Liturgy literally means the work of the people. It is not just what worshipers are to do during the Divine Liturgy, but what they are to be doing throughout all of their lives.

There is a personal issue to be considered which has to do with the fulfillment of this fundamental attribute for which all human beings were created. The inherent ability to be a priest may be exercised to varying degrees or not at all. Those who are outside the New Covenant of faith in Jesus Christ and are not members of His Body are not fulfilling this created purpose. They possess the capacity by having been created in the image of God, but they are not able to actualize it until they are reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. Those within the New Covenant have been restored to this priesthood. Then the question of fulfillment becomes the issue.

The understanding of humans as priests is but one part of the created role. In Christian theology Christ is understood to have manifested Himself in three offices, to have worked in three ways: as king (ruler), priest and prophet. Jesus Christ is King, He is High Priest and He is Prophet. Christ is King because He is the anointed Messiah; He is Priest because He offered Himself for the life of the world; He is Prophet because He fulfilled all the prophecies in coming in human form.

Notice that all three key off of the human nature which Jesus Christ took upon Himself in the incarnation. It was through taking on and fulfilling His calling, in human form, that He became king, priest and prophet. As divine, being part of the Godhead, there is no need to refer to Him in these ways; it is self-evident. The point is that these three offices or characteristics of Christ are also the created offices or characteristics of human beings. Human beings were created to be priestly, prophetic and kingly; and, though fallen, it is what they can become in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul observed that *“God works all things together for the good, for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose”* (Rom. 8:28), indicating a fundamen-

**tal inter-relationship of all that believers are and do in Jesus Christ. This is equally true of the Church. The liturgical and the sacramental character of the Church is linked together and is the way the Church is to exist and worship. This was so from the beginning of the New Testament Church. The ability to fulfill this vocation or calling is directly tied to the liturgical and the sacramental and cannot be fulfilled outside the Church.**

**It is this priesthood that undergirds Christian worship, most particularly the Divine Liturgy. Worship of the One True God can and must take place in the only place of true worship, the Kingdom of God. The Divine Liturgy is a celebration of our salvation. It is a feast of the joy that is accessible in the Holy Trinity, which Christ came to give. It is expressing gratitude for the grace of God which is continuously available through the Holy Spirit in the sacraments. It is a festival with all the accompanying joy and gladness that characterizes heaven itself. Jesus described the Kingdom of God in terms of a royal feast, *“And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down (lie at table) in the Kingdom of God”* (Luke 13:29). St. John says in Revelation that the saints at the heavenly wedding feast cry out, *“Allelulia! For the Lord our God the almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lord has come, and the bride has made herself ready”* (Rev. 19:6-7).**

### **The Priesthood In Action: Worship**

**In worship, celebration takes two forms: con-celebration and co-celebration. Con-celebration is a term to describe what the priest(s) and deacon(s) do together: they con-celebrate together their part of the liturgy. Co-celebration describes the role the clergy take in the liturgy with the congregation. All worshipers in the Church celebrate together, or co-celebrate, this worship is offered up to the Holy Trinity and called the Divine Liturgy. The sacramental role that the priest performs is performed on behalf of the gathered believers; the priest and the assembly of believers offer their worship to God as a corporate whole. The priest leads the assembly in their corporate worship, while Christ (as the head) leads the mystical Body. The royal priesthood of all believers — both clergy and laity — assures the access of each person to God as His people, and makes this worship possible.**

**The priest has a specific sacramental role; he is “called” to the priesthood as the father of the faithful and ordained by the bishop. That role includes leading the worship, preaching and administering the sacraments. The priest is first and foremost an Icon of Christ to his people, and the designation “Father” connotes the pastoral role he is to have. He is presider of the Holy Assembly, “the man who stands in front”, representing the bishop and bringing the entire priesthood to the throne of God. Just as in the early Church, the bishop was the central figure around whom the congregation gathered to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. The bishop as direct successor to the apostles was the representative, the Icon of Christ. So is the priest as the representative of the bishop, is the Icon of Christ to His people.**

The key role of the bishop in maintaining the integrity and continuity of what Christ began was not a late political or medieval development, designed to further the power of the Church within the State. For the fourth-century historian Eusebius, the *Apostolic Succession* was a crucial and critical issue. It is not only apparent doctrinally, but if one considers the structure of his treatise *The History of The Church*, one can see that it is linked together like a chain. The Bishops of Church constitute this link. The entire history from the time of Christ through the ascension of Constantine is traced from bishop to bishop.

For Eusebius, the *Apostolic Succession* is critical, because *that succession includes the whole intellectual, spiritual and institutional life of the Church, and is the guarantee of the preservation of one unchanging God-given doctrine.*

### The Presence Of The Lord In Worship

What makes the Church the Church is the presence of the Lord. As the Icon of Christ, the Lord is sacramentally present in the Church through the priest. In Hebrew the word *qahal* means to congregate, to be gathered together in the presence of the Lord, or the gathering where the Lord is present. The important element is that the Lord is present, that He is doing the gathering, and that believers have assembled in response to and in anticipation of His action in their midst. All share the royal priesthood, but sacramentally the Church needs the priest to be the Church. This understanding of the assembly gathered together by the Lord, where He is present to act, can be seen in Exodus 35:1, Deuteronomy 4:10 and 5:22, II Chronicles 20:14 and numerous other Old Testament references. It carries into the New Testament.

While acknowledging that the priest in his sacramental role as the Icon of Christ is necessary for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, it must be realized that more than the priest is necessary. For the early Christian church (and this practice continued in the Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Churches to this century), it has always been understood that three elements must be present together: people, priest and Holy Spirit. The liturgy is the work of the people; hence people and priest are required. A priest cannot celebrate the Eucharist without the people present. The mystical work whereby the elements become the Body and Blood require the prayers and presence of the priest and people and the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ is present and works through His Icon, the priest; the people of God are exercising their royal priesthood; the Holy Spirit mystically works in their midst making the gifts the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

This has been the conviction of the Church from the beginning. This expectation of the presence and action of the Lord within His Body in the proclamation of the deacon before the Eastern Orthodox Divine Liturgy begins. The deacon declares to the priest that *it is time for the Lord to act*. This is a clear anticipation that the Lord through the Holy Spirit will be present and will be so sacramentally through the priest, His Icon. This sacramental role of the priest does not reduce the value of each

believer, for all are faithful are Icons of Christ, because all are made in His image (Genesis Chapters 1 and 5). Rather, it is just this royal priesthood, which allows and enables believers to come together, to be present when and where the Lord acts and to work with Him in this responsibility, called worship.

Some may think, does not liturgical worship by its very design and structure create a distinction between clergy and laity? Yes, in an outward or organizational sense, but not in terms of being in the presence of God. No more so than liturgical worship with male priests creates a distinction between men and women. Two observations may expand the understanding of these so-called distinctions. One of these practices is standing upright during worship. It is still practiced in Orthodox Churches, and was practiced in Western Christianity through the seventeenth century. This was indeed the practice in Jewish synagogues and in the earliest Christian churches, where the assembly gathered around the bema and then moved to the altar. The historic worship practice has been that of standing most of the time, kneeling for short periods on the ground, but never sitting.

*In the view of the modern Western Christian this may seem an intolerable burden, but when one has become accustomed to the practice it is impossible not to realize how much of the feeling of intense participation always felt in an Orthodox liturgy is due to it. A seated assembly is necessarily a passive assembly. And it is not disposed by its position to worship, but at best to accept some instruction, or most of the time just to look more or less curiously at a spectacle in which it takes no part. Even when it kneels to pray it will be for a private prayer and not for a common supplication. Just as a sitting assembly usually sings badly or not at all, it is hopeless to try to bring it together to praise and thanksgiving.*

Liturgical Services, drawing on the historical forms of early Christian worship, are by definition *sung Services*. The clergy and people perform the work of worship, and the text is chanted or sung by either or both. It is this understanding of the communion of the saints participating ultimately in the Holy Eucharist and made possible by the royal priesthood of believers that in turn makes the liturgical Service a dynamic, joyous and beautiful experience. It is the oneness before God as a priesthood restored to its original purpose that allows believers to fulfill this calling and offer up praise and worship to the Lord. It is the *Kingdom of God*, to which believers ascend, for it is there that all true and spiritual worship takes place.

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## Church, Empire and Culture

Beginning in the fourth century, a number of major historical and cultural events impacted the Church, all of which affected the liturgy as well as the practice of the

faith. When considering these events, the basic structure of the liturgy had been established; future changes occurred within the framework of that basic shape. The persecutions, which the Christian Church experienced, began in Palestine with the persecution by the Jews and later continued when Rome herself began to persecute the followers of *The Way*. Persecutions waxed and waned depending upon the current emperor and the need for political scapegoats. Christianity was even accused of atheism in this polytheistic society, for subscribing to the worship of only one God.

These persecutions forced the Church into the underground. There are two references in the text of the liturgy still used today, which go back to those days of persecution and secrecy. During these years the Church lived within a society that opposed its existence formally and informally, actively and passively.

In both, the Eastern and Western Churches, after Constantine released the edict of toleration, which made Christianity a "legal" religion, interactions between Church and State were not only inevitable, but as the Christian Church became one of the most potent forces in the empire. They became necessary. Not all such connections were necessarily adverse. Many of them were theologically positive and enabled Christianity to develop and define the doctrines and practices that became core components of the faith. On the other hand, there were many periods in the first millennium of the Christian Church which were characterized by a struggle with the State.

### The Conversion Of Constantine

Although he was not baptized until just prior to his death in 337 A.D., Constantine [pronounced: Constanteen] embraced Christianity, made it legal and for all practical purposes made it the religion of the State. With the *Edict of Milan* in 313 A.D., he granted free religious worship and recognition by the government. As a result, the persecution of the Church finally came to an end, as did the need for secrecy. This caused the first of the major changes in the form of the Christian liturgy.

As an illegal entity within the State, the Church could not really grow and flower in any large-scale fashion. With the acceptance brought about by Constantine everything changed. Now it became possible to publicly erect churches dedicated to the worship of God and even to do so with State support. Christian worship became a public affair, and these changes not only allowed the reversal of the *liturgical contraction* that had occurred earlier under persecution, but out of necessity resulted in an elaboration of the ceremonial aspect of worship. Christian worship was now being seen by non-believers. Thus, it not only had to become understandable to them, but the necessary sense of reverence and thanksgiving had to be conveyed. It had always been corporate, now it became public.

These enhancements in act and ceremony manifested in a variety of ways. The Church had always worshiped in homes; but during times of toleration, it began taking over secular buildings and converting them for Christian worship. The new public places of worship were larger; and there was amplification of the Service over what had been celebrated in earlier times. Clerical vestments began to appear. The use of chanting and hymnody, having their basis in Jewish worship, became more highly developed in this more public worship and proclamation. There was a heightened sense of drama, such as entrances, processions and censuring, also built upon Old Testament worship. Icons, as a means of calling to mind Christ, His saints and martyrs, spread in their use. These changes occurred in response to the cultural change that the Church was experiencing with the end of persecution and its open acceptance within society.

### Clerical Vestments



*Contrary to common misconception linking bishop's vestments to the Byzantine emperor, Orthodox vestments derive rather from the Jewish priests of the Old Testament.*



Many people think erroneously that there should be no liturgical vestments; that the celebration of worship and in particular of the Eucharist should take place in everyday clothing. To the contrary, Exodus 28 describes clerical vestments to be worn by the priests. This sign of office was present early on. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, refers in 190 A.D. to the apostles John and James who “became sacrificing priests wearing the Miter”. Though St. Gregory of Nazianzus records between 375-400 A.D. that there was “no difference between clerical and lay dress”, this does not refer to liturgical vestments. Again, elements of Old Testament worship were being retained and, in fact, were taking on new meaning in the worship of the New Covenant.

### Beauty In Worship

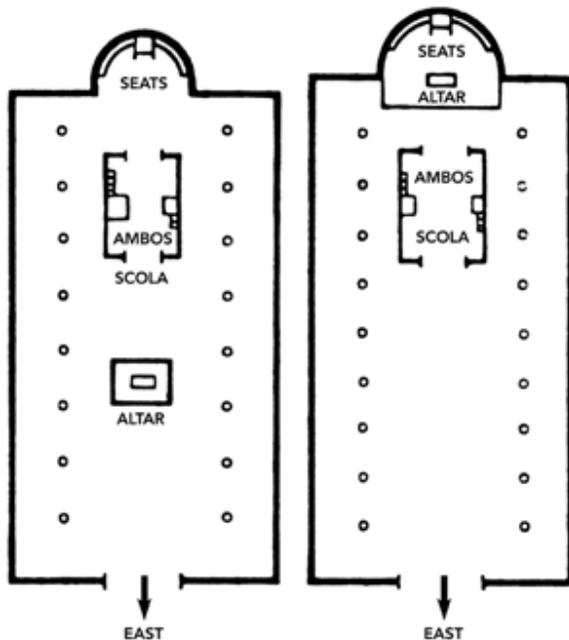
The beauty and aesthetic aspect of worship must not be taken lightly any more than that of any other aspect of life. Anyone who has walked into a large and solemn

church or cathedral, especially one that is old or of a liturgical tradition, knows the intuitive and natural sense of the solemn and reverent. It is natural to want to be beautiful, to live in beautiful homes. What is aesthetically pleasing is preferred to the crass. Should one expect anything less in worship, when one enters into deep communion with God who created all things in beauty? Christian worship is of the *Kingdom of God* and is to show forth the kingdom — spiritually and symbolically, hence the natural desire to make worship and the church itself both beautiful and aesthetically appealing.

The first key element to understanding the liturgy is *Holy Scripture*. It is and must be the basis of all the Christian is and does. The second key element is *unfolding*. Just as theology and doctrine (the understanding of why and what is believed) took many centuries to develop, so did the unfolding of the form of worship require a similar amount of time to develop and blossom. The third key element is *deepening*. As with anything in life for it to become filled with meaning and value, it requires time. The process of Christian worship itself moving beyond the immediate and the obvious to the meaningful and deep (i.e. “the breadth and length and height and depth” of the faith in Eph. 3:18) required time. The process of this natural development also included the desire to make worship beautiful.

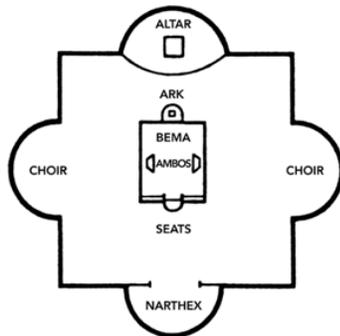
This is important to grasp as one considers the process by which the Liturgy developed. It can be seen how Christian worship made the transition from Jewish forms to Christian worship. Under Constantine, Christian worship and especially the Divine Liturgy continued to change. The result is a form of Christian worship almost two thousand years old, one that naturally developed and matured under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. How can one account for its beauty, for its aesthetic appeal, for its splendor, other than by this process and the desire of the Church that worship be a reflection of heavenly worship? In other words, that it be deep, beautiful, moving compelling and meaningful.

### Architecture and Worship



An architectural illustration may help to explain the significance of what was now occurring within the Christian Church. The most common form for large public buildings in the Roman Empire was the basilica. Essentially a large rectangle, the span of its roof was held up by two rows of pillars running the length of the building. This form constituted most buildings that had been erected for secular purposes and were then taken over for Christian worship, demonstrating that the building in

and of itself was not the most important aspect of the *temple*. It remained the most common form of church architecture in the west through the Renaissance. The illustration shows two common forms.



The basilica had inherent limitations. First, the two rows of columns divide the inner space of the Church into three sections; and so, the assembly is divided into three sections. Only the center portion could house a “united” congregation; this resulted in three congregations. In larger basilicas with subdivisions, the result could be five separate groupings. In addition, the length of the basilica resulted in a further separation due to the distance from the rear to the altar.

For early Byzantine architects, beginning under Constantine, these problems were solved by developing a building where everything had its own purpose. The most significant aspect of this architectural development was replacing the rectangle with a square building without columns but with a dome on top to cover the span. The *Bema* with the ark, the lectern and *Cathedra* (bishop’s seat) could be centrally located with no hindrance to the believers assembling around the bishops and readers for the *Synaxis*. The assembly would then open for the procession of the holy gifts to the altar and rearrange itself so as to be gathered around the altar.

### The Synaxis And The Eucharist

The major structural change in the development of the Christian rite took place by the latter part of the third century. Throughout this time period, it was not uncommon for Christian worship to still have two separate components, the *Synaxis* (directly derived from the synagogue) and the Eucharist. The latter was for believers only; while all were expected to attend, this portion of the Service was closed to non-believers. With the end of persecution and the development of public worship, the need for separate Services disappeared. By the end of the sixth century, holding one Rite without the other had become very uncommon. The two rites had some similar and overlapping components, which were easily incorporated into each other. Prior to this synthesis, the *Synaxis* and the Eucharist Services had the following components:

<b>Synaxis (or <i>Meeting</i>)</b>	<b>Eucharist</b>
<b>Greeting &amp; Response</b>	<b>Greeting &amp; Response</b>
<b>Lections interspersed with Psalmody</b>	<b>Kiss of Peace</b>
<b>Psalmody</b>	<b>Offertory</b>
<b>Sermon</b>	<b>Eucharistic Prayer</b>
<b>Dismissal of Catechumens</b>	<b>Fraction</b>
<b>Intercessory Prayers</b>	<b>Communion</b>
<b>Benediction</b>	<b>Benediction</b>

It is very easy to see how these two Services could be fused together to form two parts of one celebration. In the Eastern and Western Church this synthesis occurred and included liturgical enrichments, including the addition of hymns, expanded use of litanies and the inclusion of the Nicene Creed. Two facts show that this synthesis was true to the original worship of the Early Church. The Synaxis is very similar to the synagogue Service. Further, the Eucharist is almost identical to the Eucharist, which St. Justin Martyr describes in his *First Apology* as taking place at Rome in 150 A.D.

Early Christianity inherited from Judaism an understanding of sacred or liturgical time, weekly and daily, with corresponding liturgical Services. In addition to Sabbath Services, in Judaism there were daily prayer Services. These came into Christianity and were the basis of the original *ordo* (order of prayer). There is not a great deal of textual evidence from these first centuries, but it is fair to say that at a bare minimum the accepted norm was morning and evening prayers, which had developed by the mid to late 3rd century into Orthros (Matins) as the morning Service, and Vespers as the evening Service at sunset.

In the context of liturgical maturation during this period, two points are important to keep in mind. First, liturgical changes of the fourth century were not a radical break with what preceded.

The main form of the Eastern Liturgy had been reached by the end of the fourth century; after this, the process is no more than one of adjustment and development of detail. He goes on to say that the final shape of the liturgy was set by 800 A.D., with only minor variations occurring thereafter.

Worth mentioning for those concerned with this late date is that most of what we take for granted as normative Christian belief and doctrine is equally late. The authoritative formulation of the doctrines of Christ and of the Holy Trinity were also fourth century products, the work of the early Ecumenical Councils in combating heresy. So was the formulation of the New Testament Canon. The major task of the early Ecumenical Councils was defining these doctrines as well as the Creed and the

**Canon of Scripture.** These theological definitions then naturally became part of the liturgical structure of the early Christian Church.

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## **Eastern Orthodox Liturgics**

### **Overview**

The liturgical practices of the Eastern Orthodox Church were founded on the practices of the mother Church in Jerusalem. This is the liturgical form that spread throughout the Mediterranean basin in the first few years of Christianity and throughout the known world in the century that followed. The common tongue and musical forms of the Roman Empire were in Greek. Not only did this form the foundation, but in those countries and cultures that retained both Greek language and culture over time, the Greek language became normative. While the language of Italy changed to Latin, of France to Gallic and of the British Isles to Anglo-Saxon (German and then English), most of the Orthodox countries retained Greek. This provided a living continuity back to the original liturgical form of the early Christian Church.

Among the most striking things about liturgical worship of the Eastern Orthodox Church is the uniformity of its style and the high degree of correspondence to the Rite that was in practice across the Christian Church in the sixth century. The Eastern Orthodox Church has experienced no Reformation that transformed the theological foundation of the faith as well as essentially abandoning liturgical form and music, like most of Protestantism. Neither has Orthodoxy experienced a twentieth century council that modified both the liturgical form and music, as has the Roman Catholic Church. While the liturgical form did undergo change in the fourth and fifth centuries to reflect the theological maturity of the faith, it still retains a high degree of similarity to early Christian practice.

During the period of the fourth to sixth centuries, the shape of the Eastern Divine Liturgy reached its final form under the guidance of liturgists, such as St. John Chrysostom. In this same period the major formative changes occurred, most of which resulted in liturgical components that corresponded to the Church's developing theological understanding. Among them were the hymn *Only-Begotten Son* and the addition of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (in countering heresies) and the *Trishagion* (Thrice-Holy Hymn) reflecting the Trinitarian theology. In this period and on through the ninth century, various hymns were composed and added to the Divine Liturgy, such as the *Cherubic Hymn*, sung while priest (and deacon) carries the *Prepared Gifts* (Proskomidia) from the *Prothesis* through the nave of the church onto the *Thronos* (Altar).

Generally speaking, the worship of the Orthodox Church has always been in the vernacular: that is, the local or indigenous language. The best example is Sts. Cyril and Methodius, two Greek missionaries to Russia in the tenth century. They created an alphabet, now called Cyrillic, and translated the Bible and liturgical texts into the native Slavic language. While worship Services are the same throughout the Orthodox Church (i.e., the theology and liturgical texts are the same), what is different is the language, culture and music. Music is an expression of culture, and two main musical and liturgical traditions have developed over the past 2000 years: Byzantine (Greek) and Slavic styles. There are also unique liturgical music forms in the Armenian, Georgian and Coptic Orthodox Churches, but the majority of Orthodox Christians follow either the Byzantine or Slavic forms.

Byzantine music has pre-Christian origins in Greek music and is based on modes and chords described by Pythagoras. The early Christian Church language was predominantly Greek, hence the common music forms of the Roman Empire were also Greek in style. A liturgical music form developed over the first few centuries of Christianity which relied on Jewish Synagogue chant and psalmody, as well as the addition of new material using Greek music theory to create a musical form that was beautiful and appropriate to praise and worship. The earliest hymn we know of is *O Gladsome Light*, sung during Vespers, which is attributed to St. Justin the Martyr in 150 A.D.

Byzantine music, like its ancient Greek predecessor, is characterized by *Eight Modes* (or Eight Tones) that are subdivided into three genres of feeling: *Enharmonic*, *Chromatic* and *Diatonic*. Each Tone conveys the feeling associated with the prayer being offered or the text being sung: (a) *grave* (as in Holy Week): sad or lamentful (as in Christ's passion); (b) *joyous* (such as the Resurrection or major feasts). – The *Eight Tones* do not correspond directly to the major and minor scales of western music. Instead, they are characterized by many more semitones (or sub-divisions within a scale). This gives Byzantine music its haunting and somewhat foreign sound, but also allows it to convey so accurately different emotions or feelings.

Byzantine music developed over the first millennium a sophisticated form of chant and a very large body of liturgical material for all Services of the Church. It is principally characterized by melody (vs. harmony or polyphony) to convey the meaning or intent of the prayer or text, antiphonal (responsive) singing and the use of Byzantine Tones. During this period, besides the creation of a musical corpus for all Services of the Church year, masterful forms such as the *Kontakion* and *Canon* were created. Additionally, great Church musicians, such as St. Andrew of Crete, St. Romanos the Melodist and St. John of Damascus, lived and worked during that time. Byzantine music uses a unique *analog* notation and has gone through several phases and refinements (ancient, medieval and late). The most recent adjustment was the simplification of the notation in 1881.

Slavic music tradition began with the introduction of Byzantine music brought by Greek missionaries in 988 A.D. The earliest forms of "Russian" liturgical music were

*Znamenny* and Kievan Chant, both of which are quite Byzantine sounding. Bulgarian chant is late-Byzantine in style and quite unique. The type of liturgical music, generally referred to as *Russian*, began its development as simple polyphony in the seventeenth century under the influence of Polish religious vocal music. It was further enhanced under Peter the Great, who brought to Russia many Western European cultural influences — among them musical styles. This is why Russian liturgical music sounds so much more accessible to the Western ear: it uses the same musical theory as Western music.

Most Slavic liturgical music is in the major scale (only some in the minor scale), with the typical tonal intervals. The introduction of German, French and Italian music traditions had a lasting influence on Russian Church music and elevated it to the levels of polyphony and harmony that we know today. Much of the Slavonic-speaking Orthodox Church (Serbian, Bulgarian, Albanian, etc.) follows the Russian music traditions. These music traditions were brought to North America in the late eighteenth century by Russian missionaries to Alaska and the West coast.

The liturgical Rites of all Eastern Orthodox Churches can be traced back to the original Rite in use in Jerusalem prior to the apostolic missionary activities to the gentiles, and the subsequent persecutions that moved the Christian Church out of Judea and across the Mediterranean basin and beyond. The apostles took with them the liturgical Rite as developed at the time. This became the basis of the Eucharistic Service for the Church. The early Christian Church was not characterized by written Rites that were carefully adhered to, but followed a highly regarded oral tradition of Eucharistic prayers.

### Early Hymns

Among the earliest pieces of Eastern Orthodox liturgical music, which attest to this transition, is the hymn *O Gladsome Light*. This hymn is recited or sung every evening at the setting of the sun during Vespers. The text of this hymn was cited by St. Justin the Martyr in about 150 A.D. in his dialogue with Trypho. Although it pre-dated the Byzantium era, it is referred to as *Byzantine*. It is clearly Greek in its musical form and composition, while it possesses a text that is clearly Jewish in origin and conforms to the Jewish calendar, in which the liturgical day ends and begins at sunset.

The very ancient *Hymn to the Holy Trinity* was found in 1918 in Oxyrrynchus, Egypt. It uses an ancient Greek musical notation system that fell into disuse by the last part of the third century. It conveys both an emerging trinitarian theological awareness and a distinctly Greek musical form.

Over time, however, as liturgical forms developed and became standardized, they were generally associated with the cities that were the Apostolic Sees, such as Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. Initially these liturgical Rites were very similar

from city to city and church to church, but began to diverge over time as influenced by local circumstances and culture.

### **The Greek Influence**

After the persecutions and the gentile missions, the Church became primarily composed of Greek-speaking gentiles for whom Greek culture and music were the norm. Thus began the introduction of Greek language and musical style onto the foundation of Jewish worship structure. The earliest Rites in the Eastern Church include the Jerusalem liturgy of St. James, the Alexandrian liturgy of St. Mark, the East Syrian liturgy, the West Syrian liturgy of Antioch, the Armenian liturgy and the Coptic liturgy. Most liturgical scholars accept that in the Eastern Orthodox Church three principal rites emerged over time: the East Syrian, the West Syrian and the Alexandrian. These liturgies are similar.

For the first three hundred years of its existence, the Christian Church was illegal and frequently persecuted. Therefore, very ancient liturgical documents before the fourth century are quite limited, because the early Church was not “producing” liturgies but focusing on celebrating the Eucharist and surviving persecution. It was not until Constantine’s edict of toleration in 313 A.D. that Christianity became a legal and public religion. Following this change in public status, the Church was forced to take on a new role in society and began to modify its liturgical form in order to meet the requirements of ministering in a public forum. A much broader missionary effort now required proclaiming the Gospel to those uneducated about the faith.

### **Combating Heresies**

The appearance of heresies in the fourth century, especially in the East, also necessitated modification of the liturgical Rite. In the century following the legalization of the Church, we can begin to identify the different liturgical forms or Rites. While building upon a very uniform Eucharistic core, which had been established earlier, effort now went into adding beauty in the way of music, the common use of Iconography, the early use of clerical vestments, majesty in ceremony and instruction in theological content. The liturgical form developed slowly over the course of time and was shaped by the new dynamics of becoming a part of society and combating heresy.

If there were many different and legitimate liturgical forms in the first few hundred years of Christianity, why in both East and West are there essentially only one or two today? Ultimately, the survival and ascendance of one liturgy over the other had more to do with non-liturgical factors. For instance, in the Eastern Church the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom became the principal liturgical form, primarily because it was the liturgical form favored in the cathedrals and churches of the capital city of Constantinople. Similarly in the west, the Roman Rite predominated over

time, because it was the Rite of the cathedrals and churches in the capital city of Rome.

### Early Liturgical Documents

The earliest significant liturgical document known to exist is in *The Apostolic Constitutions* (also known as the *Clementine Liturgy*), a late fourth century handbook of church teaching. It claims to be based on earlier works of similar kind, and to convey the teachings of the apostles that were transmitted to the Church by St. Clement of Rome. For the history of Christian worship its character as a specimen Rite has great value; for, unlike those Rites which have been used, it has not been modified to accord with developing practice. In its general form it can be taken as representative of the rite of Antioch in the late fourth century, from which that of Constantinople ultimately derived. Perhaps its greatest significance is the great similarity it bears to the texts that exist for liturgies of the eighth century, i.e. four centuries later. – For instance, the Clementine Liturgy contains scripture readings, sermon, dismissal of catechumens, a comprehensive litany, corporate intercessory prayer, kiss of peace, procession of the gifts to the altar, Anaphora and eucharistic prayers, intercessions and the communing of the faithful.

The *Clementine Liturgy* enables us to form a reasonably accurate picture of late fourth century eucharistic worship in the province of Antioch. It testifies to the consolidation of the liturgical tradition in the East, parallel to that revealed by Ambrose of Milan in the West. The eucharistic prayer, which at least up to the third century had been *ex tempore*, at the discretion of the bishop, now became a fixed text. There was, of course, nothing like the uniformity of text and practice that later came to characterize eucharistic worship throughout the Church. It was still possible for new eucharistic prayers to be composed, of course following traditional lines; still considerable variety existed in the manner of celebrating the Service. The Clementine Liturgy provides us with a reasonable guide to the basic shape of the liturgy of Constantinople at the end of the fourth century. It offers us an adequate starting point for tracing the specific development of Byzantine eucharistic worship.

The principal differences in the various rites began to develop around the introductory parts of the Service, that is, the introduction to what had originally been the *Synaxis*. The very earliest components were probably a preliminary censuring by the bishop or celebrant, followed by the singing of a group of psalms.

Now the clergy could publicly approach and enter the churches, and this provided the opportunity for ceremony. In some Rites the old tradition of keeping the Gospel and other sacred books away from the Church for safekeeping during persecution was now incorporated into a formal procession, by which they were brought to the church while the faithful sang Psalms. This eventually developed into the early part of the Eastern Rite Service, incorporating the entrance of the clergy, the censuring of the church, the antiphonal singing of psalms leading up to the Little Entrance, including the procession of the Gospel book to the altar.

## The Litanies

The Litanies probably developed from the practice of the early church in the singing of Psalms by the faithful, as they assembled and waited outside the church. It goes back to the Jewish liturgical use of chanted Psalms, and incorporates an antiphonal chant from Judaism. Now there was need and opportunity for a *prayer of the people*. Most likely, the deacon or cantor chanted a Psalm verse, and the people responded with the same refrain. The officiant then continued with the second verse, to which the people responded, and so on. This is evident in the Antiphons, where verses of Psalms are alternated with intercessory prayers.

The first litany in the Byzantine Rite is commonly called the *Great Litany*, for it covers every aspect of human need, including prayers for the church, the world and the whole of creation. The celebrating clergyman offers the petition, and the whole congregation prays together when the people respond *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy).

## The Trishagion Hymn

The addition of the *Trishagion* (the trinitarian hymn “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us”, pronounced: trees-hah-ghe-on) to the Liturgy can be traced to the time of Patriarch Proclus (434-446 A.D.), a period when various heresies were beginning to appear. The period of major heresies for the Christian Church was predominately the fourth and fifth centuries. The most notable heresies (Arianism, Monophysitism, etc.) developed in the East. The *Trisagion Hymn* is accepted to have been divinely revealed at Constantinople as the text sung by the angels (perhaps a trinitarian expression of Revelation 4:8). The hymn itself follows the prayer of the *Trisagion* said by the priest; it is one of the most ancient hymns of the Christian Church. It is deeply trinitarian and thus anti-Arian in character; *Holy God* is addressed to the Father Almighty, *Holy Mighty* to the only-begotten Son, and *Holy Immortal* refers to the Holy Spirit.

A parallel development in Eastern liturgical development can be seen in the incorporation of the hymn *Monogenes* or *Only-Begotten*, a response to the Monophysite heresy. It was composed by the Emperor Justinian and incorporated into the Byzantine liturgy following the second Antiphon, approximately 535-536 A.D. It immediately became part of the entrance at Constantinople and Antioch, and soon was incorporated into the Greek Rites of the Eastern Church.

## The Divine Liturgy Of St. Basil

The *Liturgy of St. Basil* has the same structural form as that of St. John Chrysostom and the other West Syrian liturgical rites. It differs only in the prayers of the priest and is characterized by a much more extensive Biblical imagery.

Many of the liturgical modifications of the fourth and fifth centuries were introduced in the East, and then were adopted in the Western Church. The battle against the major heresies was principally fought in the East, so it is not surprising to see the results appear in the Eastern Rites. It is curious, however, that many of them (the *Monogenes* hymn, the Trinitarian structure of the prayers, etc.) were not adopted in the West.

### The Continuity Of The Eucharistic Prayers

Most of the liturgical development in the fourth and fifth century falls into two main categories: those incorporated into the entrance or introduction of the Service (the majority of the additions in East and West), and those incorporated into the conclusions of the Service. Most of this change came about in response to the changing circumstance and needs of the Church that led to a new and fuller understanding of worship. However, the Eucharistic core remained unchanged. It is important to stress that what was changed was not worship itself in its objective content and order, but rather the reception, the experience, the understanding of worship. Thus the historian can easily establish not only continuity in the development of Eucharistic prayers, but also the essential identity of their basic structures. The assembly of the Church, Scripture, Preaching, the Offertory, the Anaphora and finally the Communion — this structure of the Eucharist remains unchanged.

*Credits: Benjamin D. Williams*

## The Byzantine Synthesis

Beyond the cultural and theological changes of the fourth and fifth centuries, the other major cultural event affecting the development of the Divine Liturgy was the fact that the Christian faith had taken root in the Eastern Roman Empire, which was now becoming the Byzantine Empire. After becoming Emperor, Constantine established a new capital for the empire in 330 A.D. at Byzantium. This ancient fishing town was on the Bosphorus in present day Turkey, and is now known as *Istanbul*. This new city became the center of the Byzantine Empire and developed into one of the centers of world art and culture for the next thousand years.

Constantine conceived of a theocracy where the emperor ruled the empire on behalf of and for God, was the protector of the faith and ensured the well-being of the faithful. His conception was the sunlight and water that allowed the Church to flourish in the soil of the Roman Empire in which it had been planted. It was this vision of a theocracy that provided the conceptual basis for the government of what would become the *Byzantine Empire*. Because this empire was the crucible, in which most of the

Eastern Church was formed and flourished, it is important to understand some basic historical influences within it.

### Division of the Roman Empire

The unified empire of Constantine was short-lived. It operated as two halves of an integrated whole, both originally sharing the same worldview. Before the end of the fourth century, the barbarian invasion of the Western part of the Empire was underway, and the West was conquered in pieces. Most of the barbarians were Christianized over time, but the barbarian conquest slowed and often severely limited liturgical development in the West. The next four hundred years would see this struggle go on until the final rise of the empire by Charlemagne. The Ostrogoth Kingdom was founded in Italy in 493, and most of what is now referred to as Europe was under barbarian dominion. This was the beginning of the *Dark Ages* in the West. In the East, the empire was not without difficulties and wars, but culturally it remained essentially intact and operated as a united whole.

### Church And State

In the west, the Church was often called upon to exert itself as the local civil authority. This historical situation directly involved the Church in politics and worldly matters, and the *Western Church*, partly out of necessity and partly out of choice, elected to assert itself in this arena. The theocratic concept of Constantine continued to prevail in the East and reached its pinnacle in Justinian's reign in the seventh century. His politico-religious view was *symphony*, a symbiotic relationship, in which the Church and State were not connected by law or power, but by the Christian faith. The emperor and the empire were bound by declaration of faith to maintain the faith in its entirety.

In the Eastern concept, the Church embraced the whole world and was its inner essence, standard and the source of its gifts of the Spirit within it, but it was not the *authority* in worldly political matters, nor even the source of authority. The latter was granted to emperors and rulers, they should be guided by the truth of the Church, but they did not receive authority from the Church. The result was that the Church operated within the State and parts of it, but was essentially subservient to it. In the West, the Church operated within the State, often at odds with it and appearing to be outside of it but also striving to rule over it. Even with Justinian's concept of *symphony*, there was always the question of the arbitrary authority of the State (because the emperor had ultimate power) and the Church's acceptance of it — often at its own expense and at a cost to the truth of the Kingdom of God.

Both East and West deviated from the original New Testament concept of Church and State relation. However, the unique position of the Church within the Byzantine empire, coupled with the historic circumstances of the next one thousand years, created

an environment which was highly enculturated, had well developed arts and sciences, yet did not fundamentally change.

The theocracy within Byzantium cannot simply be written off as the subjugation of the Church to the State. It certainly was not the subjection of the State to the Church, which was frequently the case in the West. The relationship of Church and State was much more complex. Throughout its life, Byzantium experienced struggles from within, to which the Church responded: correct moral value (as in the Trullan Council); rediscovery of the spiritual realities of the faith (as in monasticism); defining the theology of the faith (like the later Ecumenical Councils and the work of many great theologians); experience of the fullness of Christian worship (like the development of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom).

### The Influence of Byzantium In The West

The development of the Christian Rite must be seen in this setting of relative stability and enculturation. The influence of Byzantium spread across the entire Roman Empire and waxed and waned with political changes. Thus, we see domed churches in Italy, the use of Greek in the Roman Mass through the tenth century, and Byzantine monasteries in southern Italy existing even until today.

This culture with its sense of the aesthetic and beautiful allowed expression of the faith and worship to flower. These religious developments were not limited to forms of worship. Theology in the Eastern Church continued to develop unabated. Most importantly, monasticism and spirituality developed to great heights during this period.

### The Divine Liturgy Of St. John Chrysostom

The two liturgical Rites of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil in the Eastern Church became the norm by the end of the reign of Justinian. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was probably the liturgy used originally by St. John while Bishop of Antioch, which he carried to Constantinople upon becoming patriarch. It can therefore be considered originally as a West Syrian liturgical Rite. In Constantinople, it was refined and beautified under his guidance. Having become the liturgical form of the *Church of Holy Wisdom* (Hagia Sophia), it became over time the normative liturgical form in the churches within the Byzantine Empire. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom reflects both a highly refined aesthetic of beauty and majesty, tradition and mystery as well as a highly developed theology. It reflects the work of the *Capadocian Fathers* to both combat heresy and define trinitarian theology for the Christian Church.

The *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* preserves the continuity with the liturgical traditions of the early Church. Prior to becoming bishop of Constantinople, St. John had been bishop of Antioch, and his liturgical contributions to Orthodox worship in-

cluded the liturgical traditions, which he brought from Antioch to Constantinople, as well as refinements he may have added as patriarch of Constantinople. However, the final form of the Liturgy of St. John most likely reached its compilation in the sixth century and is attributed to the patriarch who greatly contributed to its final form and content.

By the seventh century, the compilation of the Divine Liturgy was essentially complete. Most of the changes thereafter were not changes in substance, but rather minor changes in form and style. Minor stylistic changes took place through the ninth century, but after that only small changes in the wording of the prayers of the liturgy. A beautiful and moving historic verification of this fact can be seen in the *Byzantine Collection at Dumbarton Oaks* in Washington, D.C. The collection includes a chalice from Rhia in Byzantium, which dates from 527 to 565 A.D. Inscribed around the rim are the words from the Anaphora, *Thine own of Thine own we offer to Thee, O Lord*. These very words are used during the Divine Liturgy until today.

By the seventh century, the See of Constantinople had risen to the central position in the entire Orthodox Church; and the liturgical patterns that had been synthesized in the capital began to influence other traditions. This influence took place, both because of the highly developed form the *Rite of Constantinople* had reached, and because in many instances it was enforced as the required Rite within the empire. Within a hundred years, the form used in the capital became the only form used within the whole Eastern Church, other than on special days. Much of the standardization of the Rite of the Eastern Church on the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was caused by the emperor who wanted to standardize liturgical form as a means to overcome dissension within the empire caused by heresy. This dynamic of external political force, standardizing liturgical forms, appeared in the Western Church as well – under the rule of Charlemagne.

From the fifth century on, we clearly perceive the progressive orientalizing of the empire and its culture, psychology, art and court ritual. Although the East had been organically connected to the West from the beginning as part of the one Roman Empire, the barbarian invasions had plunged the West deeper into the chaos of the *Dark Ages*, depriving it of Byzantium's development, which proceeded apart from the West.

### **Changelessness In Orthodox Worship**

While the early Byzantine Empire had provided an environment, in which the Church could naturally develop, the later Empire was characterized by conservatism and absence of change. While this is in stark contrast to the cultural changes that began to occur in the West at the same time, it became an element of great importance for the Eastern Orthodox Church. This lack of change for over eight hundred years has great bearing on our understanding of the unchanging nature of the Eastern liturgical Rite and the Divine Liturgy. The Church strove to be true to St. Paul's challenge to Timo-

thy to guard the deposit of the faith (1 Tim. 6:20). This foundational commitment to the nature of the early Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ formed the basic view, upon which future development would occur.

The need to fully present the faith in the early Church resulted in a type of change that was true to the *Holy Tradition* of the Church, and yet embodied the fullness of the Gospel. This view was further established after the period of the early Fathers, those bishops and theologians who described the doctrines of belief, codified the Scriptures and defined the Church's worship. After the passing of this period, an understanding developed that the major work had been completed, the shape of the faith and practice had been established — it was a reference, against which future developments would be judged.

For the early Church, theology arose from experience. The experience of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit required the development of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The experience of Jewish worship and of the Eucharist forced the development of new worship forms. By the time of the last Ecumenical Council, the majority of this experience had been defined. The great age of Christian theology was over; the work was complete. It was this mindset, coupled to the circumstances and world view of Byzantium, that resulted in the changelessness of the Church.

In spite of this, there was still a very high level of ecclesiastical culture, spiritual and intellectual interests, as well as constant concern for enlightenment, schools and books. Medieval Byzantium was the cultural center of the world. In spite of this apparent contradiction (perhaps because of it), it was here that the pinnacle of Eastern spirituality occurred in the persons of St. Symeon the New Theologian and St. Gregory Palamas. The problem was that the emphasis was upon maintenance and elaboration. While this may seem troublesome in terms of the lack of development, there is something vitally important about this circumstance for the Divine Liturgy. In contrast to the Medieval and Renaissance changes in the West, Byzantium experienced a steady and constant period of development in its first few hundred years and then essentially a millennium of no change thereafter. The result has been an almost unchanged reservoir of liturgical worship practice that is true to the origins of the Christian faith.

#### The Schism Of 1054

Most Christians are aware of the historical event that separated the Eastern and Western Church, the *Great Schism* of 1054. However, this break in communion between the Churches did not happen spontaneously. It was the result of many centuries of growing apart and of developing different worldviews. The schism was the result of theological, cultural and political disputes complicated by the extreme differences between the two halves of the Christian world.

The fate of Byzantium and of the Eastern Church had little to do with the schism of 1054. The two had begun as two halves of an integrated whole. The fate of Byzantium was finally decided in the east; and the emergence of Islam marks the borderline that divided the early (Eastern) empire from later Byzantium. The unity of the Roman world was not destroyed by an internal division between East and West but by an external catastrophe. This external catastrophe was primarily the barbarian invasions and conquests in the West which wrenched it from communion with the East. It was deepened by the historic and cultural process, which resulted in the East being labeled *Greek* and the West *Latin*. It was finally capped by the rise of Islam, when the Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch slipped under the yoke of Islam.

### Orthodox Evangelism To Russia

Religious, cultural and political differences, which finally resulted in schism in 1054, prevented the Eastern Church from looking West. Religious difference and outright hostility prevented it from looking East. Yet it could reach North to the Slavs and to Russia. This it did with missionary efforts that began in the ninth century. The legacy of this missionary effort was evident in 1988 with the celebration of the millennium of Christianity in Russia, the result of this outreach. By the time of the fall of the Byzantine Empire in the fifteenth century, Russia was an Orthodox country. In the view of the Russian Church, the holy mission of Byzantium had passed on to Russia.

This missionary effort to the Slavic countries, to Russia and on to Asia speaks of the spiritual vitality still at work at the turn of the millennium within the Eastern Church in the Byzantine Empire. The result was an Orthodox Church in Russia that undertook another millennium of worship and evangelism. Out of this missionary focus came the evangelism of Northern Asia and North America, the establishment of Orthodox Christianity in Alaska in 1793.

The West, meanwhile, continued to undergo dramatic change during the Medieval period of *Scholasticism*, through the *Renaissance* and on to the *Enlightenment*. These changes were not only political, cultural and philosophical, but involved substantial theological movement and innovation as well. The Byzantine Church survived, because Orthodoxy is a far greater and more Christian element than Byzantium — rich in faith and holiness and above all in martyrs.

*Credits: Parts of this page were excerpted from Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Temple, the Synagogue and the Early Church, by Williams, B. and Anstall, H., Light and Life Publishing Co., Minneapolis, 1988.*

# Iconography and Worship

The Eastern Orthodox understanding of worship begins with the scriptural understanding that there are other heavenly or spiritual beings: angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim. The Scriptures teach that in worship believers are surrounded by and worship within this communion of heavenly hosts – as the *Prayer of the Entrance* says, *O Sovereign Lord, our God, who appointed in heaven the orders and armies of angels and archangels for the service of Your glory, grant that the holy angels may enter with us to serve and glorify Your goodness with us; or as the prayer during the Eucharistia (Thanksgiving) acknowledges God for this liturgy which You are pleased to accept from our hands, though there stand before You thousands of archangels and myriads of angels, cherubim and seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, soaring high on their wings; singing, proclaiming, shouting the Hymn of Victory.*

## Worship In The Kingdom

Consistent with the earliest Christian beliefs, worship involves this heavenly host, because Christian worship takes place in the Kingdom of God before the heavenly throne (for example: Isaiah 6: 1-8). Also gathered around the throne are all the Saints, whom Christians remember and who join in the worship. Christians pray for those who partake of the gifts of the Eucharist and say *Furthermore, we offer to You this spiritual worship for those who in faith have gone on before us to their rest: forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith; especially for our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-virgin Mary.* Christians throughout the ages have affirmed the *great cloud of witnesses* (Heb. 12: 1), those Saints who have gone before. Christians venerate them as they believe and expect the Saints will pray for them.

## Worshipping And Praying With The Saints

When Christians gather to worship, especially to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, they recognize that not only those on earth are present, but those *gathered as the general assembly and church of the first born, enrolled in heaven* (Heb. 12:23) as well. These saints are simply those among all Christians who have led particularly spiritual or exemplary lives in Christ. The Church has recognized this and held up those it knows are especially worthy of honor by all who are striving to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Since Christians do not think it unusual to pray for and ask for prayers of fellow believers, why would it be unusual to ask the saints for their prayers as well, especially during times of trouble or extreme need? After all, the saints really *know* how to pray and do not stop praying when they leave this life in order to be with the Lord. The

saints share the same spiritual communion as Orthodox Christians; they constitute the *communion of the saints*. Thus, it is no different to ask intercession or prayer of them than it is to ask intercession or prayer of believers still on earth.

For the Christian, death is not the end, nor is it an eternal “holding pattern”. Rather, life continues in the Kingdom of God – as St. Paul declares, *to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord* (II Cor. 5:8). Christians who believe that life continues after physical death should have little trouble affirming this understanding of the saints.

### The Mother Of God

The Virgin Mary is, according to the Greek term the *Theotokos*, translated as *God Bearer*, or less literal as *Mother of God*. This is what Mary was, for she bore Jesus Christ who is God Incarnate. In 431 A.D. during the Nestorian controversy, the *Council of Ephesus* decided upon the term *Theotokos* as that which most correctly described Mary and protected the proper Christological understanding of Jesus as the Messiah of God. Two great doctrines came out of this Council: First, the *Incarnation*, which is still affirmed by most who profess to be Christians; secondly, the understanding of Mary as *Theotokos* is only fully retained by Orthodox Christians.

### Affirming The Incarnation

The doctrinal decision of the Council about the Incarnation is dear to the hearts of Christians: that Jesus Christ is fully human *and* fully divine. The term *Theotokos* was introduced to affirm this understanding. The word means *God-bearer* and clearly states that the One Mary bore was God. As the Council determined, the two understandings go hand-in-hand; one cannot take one without the other and still be true to early Christianity.

This role of honor is most clearly seen in the final petition in the litanies in Orthodox Services: *Calling to mind our most holy, most pure, most blessed, most glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other and all our lives unto Christ our God. The emphasis is upon calling to mind Mary... we commit ourselves to Christ. In remembering Mary’s life by calling her blessed, as the New Testament teaches, believers recommit each day to live in conformity to Christ in the image and will of God.*

Because of the lives they lived, saints become models, images or Icons of what humble, loving and spiritual Christian life should be. Most of the early saints were martyrs, i.e. those who willingly died for their belief in Jesus Christ. This was a testimony not only of the faith by the individual who was martyred, but also a testimony to the triumph of Christ over death. That is why so many early churches were built with their altars over the grave of a martyr; the martyr’s death was a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the Eucharist offered on that altar was spiritual food

providing eternal life. The saints may have died physically, but believers know that they have not died in any final sense; they live on with Christ in His Kingdom. If *life after death* is part of Christian belief, then what is affirmed is the reality of the communion of the Saints.

### The Communion of the Saints

This belief in the communion of the Saints goes back to the early church. St. Athanasius in his second pastoral letter regarding the Easter Feast speaks of it in 330 A.D., undoubtedly reflecting a much earlier tradition within the Church. He says, *So then, let us celebrate this heavenly joy, together with the saints of old who kept the same feast. Yes, they keep the feast with us, and they are examples to us of life in Christ.* Notice the change in tenses: the Saints of old *kept* the feast, and now *they keep it with us*. The saints are able to keep the feast, because upon their death they entered into the communion with the Lord, which transcends death and is eternal.

### Iconography And The Incarnation

This understanding of the saints as models or images of the Christian life and thus of Christ, can help provide an understanding of the Orthodox use of holy Icons. The Icons are images or models, by which believers can visualize these persons who are loved, honored and remembered. Human beings are strongly influenced by the senses. Further, the Orthodox Christian faith is concretely rooted in history and experience; and centered in a historical, flesh and blood savior who is God. It is not an abstract matter. In Hebrews 12, Christians are seen as *looking unto Jesus...* Thus, the use of Icons becomes not only practically important but a profession of belief in Christ's incarnation.

The Ecumenical Councils were held to determine once and for all the nature of Jesus Christ. Because He is not only fully God but also fully man, He can be portrayed in Icons. Iconography and the Incarnation go hand-in-hand.

### The Physical Dimension Of Worship

The Scriptures teach that God created human beings as physical as well as spiritual beings. To deny this physical aspect of being human is to deny the nature of creation. The challenge is to affirm this physical aspect of being human in a manner which is edifying and which builds up and conforms the believer to the image of Christ.

Furthermore, the incarnation of Jesus, the taking on of human flesh and the possession of both human and divine natures, is the ultimate affirmation of the inherent goodness of creation. To deny the physical side of being human, or to affirm the spiritual at the expense of the physical is simply not Christian. In Orthodox worship, all senses are involved, through the smell of incense, the sight of candles and Icons, the hearing of prayers and music and the taste of the Holy Eucharist.

Ernst Benz is a Protestant Theologian who writes to explain Orthodox Christianity. He contends the Orthodox Church cannot be fully understood until and unless one understands its Icons. This begins by seeing the relationship between God and mankind, for human beings were created in the image of God and carry the "icon" of God within themselves. Benz believes *"this image-concept also dominates the Christology and doctrine of the Trinity in the Eastern Church."* *Christ, the divine Word, is the image of the Father. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who is the Icon of the Father, consists in renewing the image of God which was distorted by sin. Redemption is linked to this concept of image; the redemption of mankind "consists in mankind's being renewed in the image of Jesus Christ, incorporated into the new image of Christ and thus through Jesus Christ experiencing the renewal of his status as image of God."*

### Iconography And Jesus Christ

At the heart of all Iconography is Jesus Christ and thus God the Father. The saint portrayed in an Icon is in the image of Jesus Christ. In venerating the saints, Orthodox Christians are venerating Jesus Christ ("if they receive you they will receive me" Matt. 10:40); that is God, in whose image and likeness they were made. Icons serve to challenge and motivate, to encourage and bless, because in them one can see and experience Jesus Christ, the hope of glory.

Older Jewish synagogues frequently contained illustrations of Biblical scenes, symbols or stories. Archaeological excavations have shown great similarity between the frescoes and mosaics used in some synagogues and those used in early Christian iconography. The excavations of both a synagogue and a Christian church in Dura-Europos in Syria testify to this fact. The older Jewish selection of facts and stories are now interpreted in the light of Christ. It was the martyrdom of believers that initiated the painting of Icons of particular saints. Those Icons bear witness to the eternal life, which was theirs in Christ and which their death proclaimed.

### The Gospel In Color

In the first millennium of the Church when the majority of most people were illiterate, the Icons were *the books of the people*. More recently, they have been called *the Gospel in color*. Icons provide images with the associated facts and history of those who had gone before in the faith. In many old world Orthodox hemispheres, especially in Slavic countries, ancient churches can be found with Icons painted on the outside of the building for the purpose of edifying and instructing the faithful.

Icons, by definition, are very stylized and are not meant to be naturalistic as in a portrait or photograph. They are for *spiritual and prayerful purposes*; and the veneration given to them is referred to the person represented and thus ultimately to Christ, i.e. not to the image. Icons of the incarnation or the resurrection, for instance, are filled with images that not only illustrate the occurrence, but also convey the full

meaning of what took place. Icons urge the believer to continually accept, worship and believe in Jesus Christ; and to do so as the Church has taught from the beginning, so that the *theological truth* is conveyed to the observer, rather than a particular visual experience. Icons are the most successful attempt in the entire history of the Christian Church to make the invisible visible in Christian worship.

*Credits: Parts of this page were excerpted from Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Temple, the Synagogue and the Early Church, by Williams, B. and Anstall, H., Light and Life Publishing Co., Minneapolis, 1988.*

## The Byzantine Typikon

The order of Services or prayer in the Eastern Orthodox Churches is set forth in the Typikon, a volume that provides the order of church Rites for all Services, special prayers and church celebrations throughout the year. The two main sources of the Typikon are

- 1) the ancient *Ordo of St. Sabbas* monastery in Palestine (the *Jerusalem Ordo*);  
and
- 2) the later the *Studite Monastery* in Constantinople.

These monastic centers were places where the existing practices were compiled, unified and codified into a more standardized form.

The *St. Sabas Ordo* is associated with many great monastic saints in Palestine and the churches and monasteries associated with holy places in the area around Jerusalem. The Ordo of St. Sabas developed as the Church grew, as monasticism prospered and became a normal part of Church life and as monasticism was an important part in the battle against heresies. It became the rule of prayer for the whole Church reaching its final synthesis in the ninth century.

The *Studite Ordo* is very similar in structure to the *Jerusalem Ordo*, and is a later synthesis that took place in the Byzantine capital. It is particularly notable for its hymnography (especially the development of the Lenten Triodion), harmonizing the more ancient Ordos, and some unique structural elements. The development of these two Ordos represents the compilation and synthesis of the liturgical form and practice of the Eastern Church and its development to a peak during the middle Byzantine period. The development of the Ordo in the Eastern Church since this period has been minimal and possesses no change either in structure or in the expression of the prayer rule.

What is most important to understand is the premise and motivation behind the whole concept of developing a uniform rule of prayer and the principles underlying such an undertaking in the Byzantine tradition.

Tradition for the Church is not the vista of a beautiful past, which can be admired in a mood of aesthetically religious nostalgia, but rather a summons and an inspiration. Only a liturgical theology, that is, a detailed study and elucidation of all the elements which form the liturgical tradition of the Church (her sacraments, cycles, rituals and ceremonies) can provide a true answer to our question. The present work is only a very general introduction to a proposed complete course in liturgical theology. In concluding this introduction we must point to what we are convinced the *Ordo* shows to be the guide in the study of Orthodox worship.

What is absolutely essential for a correct understanding of the general spirit of the Byzantine synthesis is that it was unquestionably formed on the basis of the Church's original rule of prayer, and from this point of view must be accepted as its elaboration and revelation, no matter how well developed are the elements which are alien to this *lex orandi* and which have obscured it. Thus in spite of the strong influence of the mysteriological psychology on the one hand and the ascetical-individualistic psychology on the other, the *Ordo* as such has remained organically connected with the theology of time which contained its original organizing principle. This theology of time was obscured and eclipsed by secondary layers in the *Ordo*, but it remained always as the foundation of its inner logic and the principle of its inner unity.

*Credits: Excerpted with permission of the publisher from Introduction to Liturgical Theology, by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.*

## Chant Development

The development of chant in the Eastern Church was clearly built on the musical norms that came into the Christian Church from the Greek culture. It appears that the earliest example we have of Christian music composed in classical Greek meter is a work of *Clement of Alexandria*, and it seems to imitate common metrical poetry in style. The dependence upon Greek musical theory, meter and form is further illustrated by what is probably the earliest Christian musical document we have, the *Oxyrhynchus Hymn* to the Holy Trinity. This document (Papyrus 1786) contains words and music dating from the end of the third century. The lyrics are in Greek, and the notation used is classical Greek vocal notation.

After Constantine's edict of toleration and the legalization of Christianity which allowed (in fact required) it to develop a more public demeanor, music began to develop in formal ways. These musical types almost certainly were based on classical Greek theory and practice, although they were now coming to be called *Byzantine* after the new capitol of the empire. In the coming centuries, the development of litur-

gical chant blossomed parallel to the theological and worship development of the Church.

The adoption of *the eight Tones* of Greek music allowed Byzantine music to develop and convey specific feeling (such as sorrow or joy) that could correspond with the liturgical cycle. During this same period, some of the greatest composers in the history of the Eastern Church created glorious music and contributed new musical forms to the Church. The Church honored these composers, such as *Ephraim the Syrian, Andrew of Crete, Joseph the Hymnographer, Kosmas the Poet, John Damascene* and *Romanos the Melode* by acclaiming them as saints.

During this same period, other forms of Eastern chant developed, such as *Armenian, Georgian, Maronite*, etc. Most were practiced in the non-Chalcedonian churches (those not subscribing to the Council of Chalcedon and therefore considered non-Orthodox). This allowed their continuation. For the Byzantine Church, liturgical music, like the liturgical Rite itself, became standardized at a fairly early time.

As Eastern or “Greek” Christianity spread through its missionary efforts, so did the use of the vernacular language. When in 862 A.D. Sts. Cyril and Methodius (brothers from Thessaloniki, Greece) undertook missionary efforts in Slavic lands (Moravia), they were chosen and sent by Patriarch Photius, and brought with them Byzantine chant. The period of their ministry was rife with political and ecclesiastical tension in the Slavic countries and at one time resulted in an appeal to Pope Hadrian (of Rome) regarding the question of liturgical language. Cyril and Methodius received the Pope’s blessing to continue the use of Greek. One of the long-term outcomes of their work was the creation of an alphabet to allow the translation of Holy Scripture and liturgical texts into the vernacular language.

As the Slavic lands and last of all Russia adopted Christianity, most also initially adopted Byzantine chant. Over time, however, these new cultures contributed their own musical heritage and cultural elements, thereby developing chant forms uniquely their own. For instance, among the earliest chant forms in the history of Russian Orthodoxy is the *Znamenny Chant*. It is a very Byzantine sounding chant, which used a different notation system and included distinctively Russian musical elements. Kievan chant, another early Russian chant form, likewise developed.

A variety of other minor chant forms developed in the history of the Russian church, but the most notable changes in Russian Orthodox chant development came with the reforms of Peter the Great. Peter imported musicians from Western Europe and undertook a major change in the musical form of Russian liturgical music. The result is the unique ambience and feeling of Russian Orthodox music in contrast to Byzantine chant.

# Byzantine Music History

## Body

What is known today as Byzantine music has been developed and refined for over two millennia. With its earliest roots going back to Pythagoras' philosophy on the division of chords, its latest and final revision took place in 1881 in the city of Istanbul; the city still referred to by the practitioners of this complex art by its more ancient name of Constantinople. For the purposes of this essay, the name Constantinople will refer to the city up to and including the present day.

To provide for a clearer understanding of the theory of Byzantine music, the process of the development of Byzantine music as it is known today will be divided into two eras, that of pre-Byzantine and Byzantine periods of musical development. The pre-Byzantine part covers developments made before the foundation of Constantinople. This period includes everything before 330 B.C. – The Byzantine period will include all of the advancements made after the founding of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire. Every refinement made up to the present day, the most important dates being the simplification of the notation in 1821 by *John Koukouzeles* and the great council of 1881, will be included in this period.

## Pre-Byzantine

The date of 330 A.D. is an important date to end this period because the adoption of a practice of toleration of Christianity by the Roman Empire under Constantine the Great encouraged the growth of Christianity as a religion. Thus, for the first time, Christians could worship as they chose. This ending of repression allowed for a great increase of musical and theological advancement by Christians, although original musical creativity in the Western sense was never practiced. Traditionally, Pythagoras' philosophy on musical chords is thought of as the predecessor of Byzantine music, but academically the roots of the music are ascribed to Hebraic origin.

Because Christianity sprung up from the roots of the Judaic tradition, it is obvious that there will be traces of Jewish tradition in Christian worship. It is less known that early Christians did not think of themselves as Christians at all, but rather as Jews. It is therefore natural that the earliest followers of Jesus, who were primarily Jewish, maintained the rituals and practices of the Synagogue, including the ways of its cantors and readers. It is also inferred that the converts who were cantors and readers in the Synagogue instructed their fellow Jesus-followers in the musical tradition of the Synagogue, as it was taught to them: through oral tradition.

**This tradition included practices that have been followed ever since in Byzantine music, such as certain Jewish rules of cantillation, which allowed for small improvisations in the way a piece was sung but never to the extent where the traditional formula and cadence were altered. There is evidence that exists to this very day that proves the relationship of Byzantine music to Jewish music through the common recitation formulas that exist in both.**

**Certain chants in use even today exhibit characteristics which may throw light on the subject of the evolution of Byzantine music. These include recitation formulas, melody-types and standard phrases that are clearly evident in the folk music and other traditional music of various cultures of the east, including the music of the Jews.**

**So, we see that a basic link exists between the music of the Synagogue and early Christian music. A further relationship exists between the two traditions in the form of similarities of Psalmody and hymns. Briefly, Psalmody is the chanting of the Psalms of David by the Jewish congregation, which carried over to the Christian musical tradition and modeled the way other forms of Byzantine musical pieces were sung (Christian doxologies being the best example of preservation of Jewish Psalmody). Hymns on the other hand are paraphrases of biblical texts, which are written in such a way as to fit to conform to a traditional cantillational formula. This practice was firmly based in Jewish tradition and found in Jewish liturgies. Early Christian attempts at *Hymnography* (creation of hymns) were immediately condemned because they were not exclusively based on the words of the Scripture. However, after only altering passages that were allowable by the Orthodox majority did hymnography take hold within the Christian tradition.**

**We can see that the transfer of Jewish tradition was primarily practical in nature. This means that the origin of what is today Byzantine music was based on the established practices of converted Jews whose liturgy emulated that of the Synagogues from which they came: they simply kept the practices that they learnt from the many years they spent singing and worshipping in their Synagogues and applied these practices to the worship of what was to them as a continuation of their religion.**

**Traditionally, Pythagoras is taught as the founder of what has evolved to become Byzantine music. This is true to a certain extent. Where the Jews contributed tradition and practice, Pythagoras contributed theory. He was the first to connect music to mathematics and pioneered the study of acoustics. Pythagoras was also the first to create modes (Tones) of music and to ascribe ratios to several series of notes. This created scales, which are the basis of the Oktoichos (English: *Eight modes*), which is the center of Byzantine music theory. Pythagoras' notes are still used in Western music as well (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1981, pp. 662-663, 704-705, v.12).**

**Ancient Greek musical modes or tones are simply different arrangements of notes of varying pitch. These arrangements create scales that are related to one another but are characterized by different emotions, much like a major scale compares to a minor scale in Western music. Thus, modes were classified by assigning different**

names to them according to the feeling that they imitated (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1981, p. 740, v.12). The eight modes that are comprised from Byzantine music are separated into three genres of feelings. This is directly descendent of the ancient Greek practice, for in both systems the number and names of the genres are the same.

The three classification of names used both in Byzantine and ancient Greek music are:

- **Enharmonic**: modes that are of this genre are heavy and/or powerful in nature. One may think of an ancient Byzantine army singing a war song when one hears music in this scale.
- **Chromatic**: these modes are sad but harmonious. Funeral and mourning hymns are usually sung in this scale.
- **Diatonic**: this scale is the one closest to the western or European musical scale. Miracle hymns and Christ's spoken words are sung in this usually happy scale. However, this scale is almost universally used in Byzantine music as well, being the scale which possesses most modes (four Diatonic modes compared to two Enharmonic and two Chromatic).

## Byzantine

From the time of Constantine the Great, the Orthodox Church was integrated into the imperial office. With all privileges that it endowed upon the new religion, the Roman Empire found itself unconditionally tied to its Christian subjects. Constantine began a habit of building churches, funding projects to copy bibles and Scripture, adding bishops to the imperial payroll and exempting clergy members from civil duties on town councils. All but a very few emperors from that time supported Christianity at great public expense. This shows that Christianity was now forever a part of the imperial establishment. As a result a unified empire meant also a unified church, and the emperor was the one responsible for both. The first major attempt at conquering every opposition to the emperor's role as the head of both church and empire came 200 years after the reign of Constantine by Justinian I.

From the beginning of his reign, Justinian made every possible effort to strengthen religious life throughout the Empire. One such effort that Justinian made was that he ordered all the monks of the empire to perform three Services a day in their monasteries. These three Services were the Mesonyktikon (Midnight Office), the Orthros (Matins/Lauds) and the Hesperinos (Vespers) - still practiced in Eastern Orthodox monasteries - all of which were sung compulsorily every day in churches and monasteries of the empire. As a result of Justinian's efforts in strengthening the church, a certain degree of splendor was added to every aspect of religious life. It was in Justinian's time, when *Hagia Sophia* was built. It was in Justinian's time, when hymns were being increasingly produced to enrich the liturgical Services of the church. Gradually, music and hymnography took a major part in the liturgy of the church, and the singing and chanting of music became increasingly popular.

The controversy of Iconoclasm was a surprising boost to monastic hymnography. Although the persecution, torture and death of monks was ordered by the Iconoclast Empire for over 100 years until 842, the inhabitants of the monasteries found courage in the persecution, and hymnography increased in activity within the empire's persecuted population. Even after the controversy came to an end, hymnography enjoyed a prosperous period of renewed interest. It was in this period that two great forms of Byzantine hymnography, the *Kontakion* and the *Canon*, emerged. The *Kontakion* and the *Canon* are both examples of hymnography.

In order to understand a little bit about hymnography, certain words that are used in the study of it need to be understood. One such word is *metrics*. When we refer to metrics, it is a way in which a series of words are spoken. For example, when two sentences are metrically identical, they possess the same amount of syllables. When we say that two stanzas are metrically identical, both sentences and syllables of the stanzas pair up with one another, making a melody created for one of them fit the other perfectly.

In Byzantine music, stanzas are units of paraphrased biblical text that are grouped together, by both theme and similar metrical composition, under an *Irmos*. An *Irmos* is a stanza, to which a melody is attached. Usually, the *Irmos* is a well-known hymn that could be used as a template through which to sing all stanzas of similar metrical composition. That is why most *Irmoi* are used in several places throughout the *Canon*.

### The *Kontakion*

The *Kontakion* is a long and elaborate metrical sermon, reputedly of Syriac origin, which finds its acme in the work of St. Romanos the Melodos (sixth century). These, as other hymnographical works, are paraphrases of biblical scripture and were sung during the *Orthros*, known as the service of *Matins & Laudes* in Western English churches.

The way, in which the *Kontakion* was sung, has been in a straight syllabic style (meaning one note per syllable). There are eighteen to twenty-four stanzas contained in the *Kontakion*, all of which follow traditional musical formulas. The first stanza in the set, the *Irmos*, providing the cantillational melody, which every other stanza follows with extremely limited musical liberty; for all stanzas have the same meter as the *Irmos*. Consequently, any but the most conservative musical alteration would result in a notable mispronunciation of a word in the text or in an error of the well-known melody of the *Irmos*.

Most scholars regard this period of hymnographical composition as the highest achievement of Byzantine hymnography. However, the advent of the *Canon*, often thought of as a notable decline in Byzantine musical and poetical quality, presents us

with a shift in the focus of the period's *Hymnographers* to an increasingly harmonious blending of metrical poetry and musical conformity, the apex of which is found in the works of John of Damascus.

### The Canon

In the second half of the seventh century, the Kontakion was suddenly replaced by a new type of hymn, the Canon, which is still used in the Orthodox Church to this very day. It comprises nine Odes that are musically and metrically independent of one another. Like the Kontakion, each Ode is comprised of stanzas, this time numbering six to nine, which are modeled after the first stanza, once again called the *Irmos*. The advent of the Canon was a great step in the advancement of musical composition. Compared to the Kontakion, the Canon was melodically diverse. Instead of one melody repeated twenty-four to thirty times, the Canon included nine melodies (Odes) sung up to nine times each.

It is therefore inferred that the Canon, introduced by St. Andrew of Crete (c.660-c.740) and refined by Saints John of Damascus and Kosmas of Jerusalem, was created primarily for liturgical purposes, not as a form of art. The fusion of words and music in the Canon are complete; so much so that the meaning of the stanzas are never missed by the congregation, although a few words may be omitted. Therefore, the idea that hymnography declined in this period is erroneous. The fact is that more effort was made to join together words and music, rather than creating a poetically superior stanza. This effort cannot be understood by comparing the simple literary art found within the Kontakion to that in the Canon.

### The Oktoichos

The last great achievement that we will discuss in this period is the introduction of the Oktoichos by John of Damascus. Although evidence has been found of the Oktoichos going back to the Jewish tradition, the advancement of the art by John of Damascus was immense. Adding great amounts of stanzas to the Canon, John is also credited with the creation of all of the *Heirmoi* of the Canon.

The Oktoichos is the way that the Byzantine church collected hymns according to the mode in which they were composed. Thus, using one of the eight different Tones in Byzantine music meant that there were eight divisions of hymns in the Oktoichos. Literally meaning "eight modes", the Oktoichos cycles through each one of the divisions every week (Saturday night Hesperinos [Vespers] being the exact office, in which the mode switches), so that by the end of eight weeks every division is read and sung.

The theory that Byzantine music is descendant of ancient Greek music is a viewpoint that has been disputed. The argument is that the music of the Byzantine church was a legacy from the music of the Synagogue, and that Byzantine music theory was treated

by Hellenistic and Byzantine philosophers only in the course of their metaphysical speculations on numbers.

## Early Orthodox Chant and Music

The flowering of Christian worship took place in the first two centuries following Constantine's edict of toleration, which legalized Christianity and put upon it the burden of developing a musical form, of developing the ceremonial and of providing theological education about the faith. Within this period the musical aspect of Eastern Orthodox worship began, and some of the greatest hymns (many still in use) were composed.

It has already been noted that the choirs and semi-choirs correspond to the antiphonal chanting of psalms, from the *idiomela* and *katabasiai* to the monostrophes and parables, from the *antheims* to the responsive verses, etc. – Undoubtedly, we must attribute the terms *kathisma*, *katabasia*, etc., whose mystical etymology is extremely obscure, to the significance of groups either moving or standing still during the singing of sacred songs. It may be that the term *oikos* refers simply to the groups arranged in a circle around the leading chorister or cantor as he recited a poem, which was then continued in a musical form; hence given the name *Kontakion*.

The development of hymnody in the early and mid-Byzantine period must not then be thought of as an external influence which caused the Church to create a large body of aesthetically pleasing but theologically irrelevant material. Quite the opposite: In much the same way as the efforts of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and (among others) the Cappadocian Fathers defined the theological and doctrinal foundations of the Church, the work of the hymnographers naturally incorporated this teaching into the liturgical life of the church for the purpose of edifying the faithful and building up the faith.

The hymnographer generally considered to be the greatest in the Eastern Church was *St. Romanos the Melodist*.

## Words and Music

Earthly worship is an imitation of heavenly praise. The earthly church at prayer unites the faithful with the prayer of the angelic praise. This thought is not simply a Byzantine theoretical supposition combined with platonic imagery, but is the vision of the prophet Isaiah and the account of heavenly worship expressed in the fourth chapter of the *Book of Revelation*. That the song of the church on earth is united with the praise in heaven is a theme found in the writings of many Church Fathers. St.

**John Chrysostom writes: *Above, the hosts of angels sing praise; below men form choirs in the churches and imitate them by singing the same doxology. Above, the seraphim cry out in the thrice-holy hymn; below, the human throng sends up the same cry. The inhabitants of heaven and earth are brought together in a common assembly; there is one thanksgiving, one shout of delight, one joyful chorus.*** Byzantine mystical thought developed the idea of the angelic transmission of the chant itself. In the sixth century *Pseudo-Dionysios* articulated the concept of the divinely inspired *prototype*: the idea of an intuitive divine inspiration, in which the hymns and chants are echoes of the heavenly song of angels that the prophets gave to the people through a sense of spiritual hearing. These divinely inspired hymns and chants, which were viewed as models of the heavenly songs, serve as the foundation for all creation. God and beauty are interrelated; in the words of *Pseudo-Dionysios*: *Divine beauty is transmitted to all that exists, and it is the cause of harmony and splendor in all that exists; like light, it emits its penetrating rays onto all objects, and it is as if it called to it everything that exists and assembles everything within it.*

Subsequently, the task of the church artist or musician is not self-expression, not creation that reflects individual, personal feelings, attitudes and principles, but “the comprehension and reproduction of heavenly songs, the re-creation of divine images that were transmitted by means of ancient religious archetypes. These songs are not his, they do not belong to him. They have been revealed to him and he transmits this revelation to the collective body of the church. This explains why the names of the composers during the early Byzantine and Slavic periods remain anonymous; their works are not their own, but the inspired revelation that they transmit to all of humanity. The artist submits his will to the will of God in order to be able to receive and to transmit the divine revelation.

This is the concept that has served as the root for the development of both music and Icon painting in the church. It has much to offer for us today in understanding the function of the artist in the life and work of the church. It strongly emphasizes that the artist, the Iconographer and the composer does not work in a vacuum. There are patterns, models, prototypes that serve as the foundation for the creative process. These models are the collected treasury of the church and the prototypes that serve as the artistic Canon or rule.

For the early church musicians, the compositional process consisted in fitting together, with slight modifications, depending on the text, such transmitted short melodic patterns (called by musicologists music formulae or kernels) which constitute the melodic substance of the hymn. These formulae came into existence as a result of constant oral repetition so that in the course of time, they became crystallized into fixed melodic patterns that were organized and then associated or assigned to a certain church mode, or echoes. In church Iconography, the Icon’s beauty is understood to be a reflection of the holiness of its prototype. When the artist lost this understanding and replaced it with the goal of representing people and objects in their visible, daily condition, that is, what is disclosed to the eye alone, to the emotions,

and to human reason, not only was the spiritual value lost but the aesthetic quality itself deteriorated.

### Byzantine Chant

The music of the Greek Orthodox Church developed in Byzantium from the founding of Constantinople in 330 A.D. until its fall in 1453 A.D. – Although Byzantine musical manuscripts exist from the tenth century on, the earliest notation, which is readable and can be transferred into the modern Western system, dates from only from the last quarter of the twelfth century.

Evidenced by these manuscripts, Byzantine psalmody and hymnody were organized and transmitted in a system of eight Tones (oichos; oichoi, pl.) referred to as the *Octoichos* (lit. eight oichoi or modes/tones). While in the west the modality of the tonal system is predominantly associated with a certain scale, in the Byzantine tradition the *oichoi* (or Tones) are defined on the basis of the types of melodic patterns that are grouped together and make up the material for a complete Tone.

On the basis of these manuscripts, the early Byzantine chant can be defined as a unison chant whose melodies are diatonic. The music is closely related to the words and, with the exception of the final cadence, very seldom, if ever, do any of the words appear improperly accented.

The compositional process for the Byzantine church musician consisted in fitting together, with slight modifications, dependent on the text, short melodic patterns of formulae which constitute the substance of the hymn. These formulae came into existence as a result of constant repetition, so that, in the course of time, they became crystallized into fixed melodic patterns. Basically a pattern is assigned to only one particular Tone. However, there are instances where several modes are employed in the chanting of a particular hymn. Musicologists frequently refer to the chanting tradition of the Greek Church after the fifteenth century as *neo-Byzantine*.

In this tradition, many of the old Byzantine melodies have survived, though often with considerable modifications, including the use of chromatics in the basic melodic patterns and the employment of the *Ison*, one pitch or sound sustained throughout a musical phrase to support the modal identity of the melodic line.

### Znamenny Chant

The development of the early unison Slavic chant (called *Znamenny*, from the Slavic word *znamia* [sign] referring to the *neumes* or musical signs used in notating the chant) reached its apex in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Trained singers associated with singing schools of city cathedrals embellished the simple chants with the creation of new and more elaborate musical patterns — a single Tone may have as many as ninety or more short melodic patterns (called

*popevki*) which could be selected by one singer as he was “creating” the music for a given liturgical text.

The developed melodies of the later *Znamenny* form reveal deep emotional expression. Musical *picture painting*, the highlighting of strong or important words in a text, is accomplished with the *fita* (from the Greek, *theta*), an extensive melismatic passage sung on a single syllable, which not only emphasizes a particular word but draws attention to the exceptional vocal talents of the singer-virtuoso.

### Bulgarian Chant

Although Bulgaria accepted Christianity almost one hundred years prior to the baptism of Rus, no Bulgarian musical manuscripts contemporary with the Christianization of Rus have as yet been discovered. Present-day Bulgarian liturgical singing is late-Byzantine, adopted to the Church Slavonic language with Bulgarian pronunciation. In the seventeenth century hymns with the inscription *Bulgarian Chant* appear in western-Ukrainian singing books. Some musicologists see in this chant melodic kernels with Bulgarian folk song characteristics; others find it to be closer in spirit and character to Russian singing, although the melodies are quite different from the *Znamenny* symmetrical movements. The Bulgarian chants are more melismatic in character than recitative. It is not unusual that a melodic line is repeated precisely in succession throughout several textual lines of the work, as evidenced in the setting of *The Noble Joseph*, sung in so many churches on Holy Friday.

### Carpathian Chant

Similar to the Byzantine and the *Znamenny*, the Carpathian chants, whose origins date at least to the second half of the seventeenth century, are subordinated to a full eight-tone system, called *osmoglasnik* (lit. *eight tones*) and the principle of composition is formulaic, that is, existing musical patterns are used identifying with the particular Tone.

### Polyphony

A new style of polyphonic church music, developed in the Ukraine and Byelorussia under the influence of Polish religious vocal music, was adopted in the Orthodox churches of southwestern Russia in the seventeenth century. This new style of singing was called *partesny* singing (from the Latin *partes*, meaning parts) and was taught in the schools established by Orthodox brotherhoods. Its development in northern Russia was greatly promoted by *Patriarch Nikon* who encouraged its use in churches, cathedrals and monasteries in Novgorod and Moscow. Its spread throughout Russia was greatly facilitated through the publication of Nikolai Diletsky's *Musical Grammar*. Diletsky, a Kievan musician who studied in Poland, first at Warsaw and

then at the Jesuit academy at Vilnius, was recruited from the southwest and taught the art of composing Western-style polyphonic music in Smolensk and Moscow.

The powerful injection of Western influences, culture and traditions begun with Peter the Great, and the move of the Russian capitol from Moscow to St. Petersburg resulted in a vast cultural transformation of the Russian mode of life having immense consequences for the development of Russian church music. A stream of foreign craftsmen came into Russia during the first half of the eighteenth century — French, Italian and German architects, German actors and musicians, Italian painters and composers — in order to teach the Russians the elements and techniques of their skills.

Of the Italian composers, who were brought to serve at the Imperial Court, Galuppi was the first to introduce to the Russian Orthodox Liturgy the singing of a special musical composition (in form of the sacred concerto) during the priest's communion. Although some of these *concerti* were composed on the texts of the prescribed Communion Hymns, many were simply selected freely by the composer and had no relationship whatsoever with the liturgical celebration.

Particular mention must be made of Bortniansky, the most renowned person in eighteenth century Russian music, for his prolific compositional activity — 72 liturgical hymns (26 of them for double chorus), 45 sacred concertos (10 for double chorus), 10 *Te Deums*, the Liturgy for three voices, and eight sacred trios. He also was the first director of the *Imperial Chapel* who was given the right of censorship in the field of church music, a circumstance that greatly affected the direction of church music in the nineteenth century.

### Nationalism and the Return to the Old Russian Chant

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a search for new ways of liberating Russian liturgical singing from foreign influences emerged. The Moscow *Synodal School* was the center for this new movement, at the head of which stood such church music historians, composers and directors as Stepan Smolensky, Alexander Kastalsky and Vasily Orlov. The leaders of the Moscow school attempted to establish a new direction in church music by returning to the indigenous Russian church unison melodies and using those melodies as the basis for the composing of church music, as Palestrina and others would use Gregorian chant melodies as *cantus firmi* for their polyphonic compositions.

Simultaneous with the development of research in the area of the old Russian chant, Russian studies in historical liturgics laid the groundwork for later theological evaluation of Orthodox worship. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian theological schools produced a number of first-rate scholars and studies of Byzantine liturgy, the archeological investigations of Alexander Dmitrievsky standing at the fore-

front. In a very short period, from the 1880s to 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, a vast repertoire of Russian church compositions was created, numbering into the thousands. Well-known composers, such as Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Grechaninov, Chesnokov, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Rachmaninov, as well as a host of other lesser-known musicians wrote church music using the old Russian chants as thematic material. Still others wrote free compositions. But it was Alexander Kastalsky who was generally recognized as the source of inspiration for this movement.

*Credits: Originally presented as a lecture by Professor David Drillock, Provost, St. Valdimir's Theological Seminary.*

## Western Latin Liturgics

Understanding the origin of the liturgical practice and music of the western Roman Church begins with the early Christian developments and follows the local development of the Rite of the Church of Rome. It requires considering such things as the *Old Roman Rite*, the similarities and differences between eastern and western Christianity, the development of Gregorian chant, the reforms of Charlemagne and the use of Latin versus Greek. The liturgical history of the Church of Rome was shaped to a significant extent by the impact and effects of the barbarian invasions, an experience that western Christendom experienced to a much greater and more horrific degree than its eastern brethren.

### The Early Church In Jerusalem

The early Christian Church began in Jerusalem under the leadership of its first bishop, James, the brother of the Lord. A liturgical Rite bearing his name is among the earliest. Thanks to the missionary work of St. Paul, within a few years Christian churches were located all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, the capital of the empire. The liturgical Rite of the Jerusalem Church became the foundation of the worship form and practice of these new churches from Antioch to Rome and beyond. Upon this foundation developed the forms, practices and music that became recognizable as the *Western Rites*.

Of note is the curious contrast between the fact that Greek was the common language of the Roman Empire, yet Latin was the official liturgical language of the Roman Catholic Church until the second Vatican Council in 1962. The Roman Empire developed upon the foundations of the older Greek State and culture that was distributed across the Mediterranean basin; and Greek remained the common language of the region. Even at the peak of its power and reach, most of the Roman Empire spoke

Greek, with Latin reserved as the official language of the State, and the language in common usage only in Rome and parts of Italy.

### Local Variations In The West

The liturgical forms of Western Roman Christianity include many rites that developed in the first few centuries following the apostolic age, as similar liturgical developments were occurring in the Eastern Church. While all of these rites were originally based on the liturgical practice of the “mother church” in Jerusalem, local variations in structure developed over time through the addition of prayers and other elements related to the Eucharist. These structural differences resulted in the various rites, such as the Ambrosian, Gallican, Mozarabic, etc. – Each local church tended to develop its own unique musical form, built on ancient tradition, but expressive of local customs. Yet the liturgical form and musical practice throughout the early Church was surprisingly similar through the eighth century. The Western Church was less centralized than the Eastern Church in the fourth to sixth centuries, and not only tolerated but almost endorsed different liturgical customs, as long as they were not heretical.

The term commonly used for the liturgical rite of the Church of Rome prior to the early ninth century is the *Old Roman Rite* or liturgy. The Old Roman Rite and its related chant form developed from the common liturgical practices of the Church of Rome and were formalized in the revision of the Rite by Pope Gregory the Great in 595. It is representative of the consistency of liturgical form and music in the early Church. It remained so through the eighth or ninth century when Charlemagne reformed both the liturgy and the liturgical music of the Western Roman Church. Using the liturgical rite of St. Gregory the Great and the chant form of the Church of Rome as its basis, Charlemagne undertook to create a liturgical and musical standard for his recently founded Holy Roman Empire. The result of this reform was a uniform liturgical rite for the Roman Catholic Church, and a new form of liturgical music that we now call *Gregorian Chant* – becoming the liturgical music standard of the *Western Church* for centuries to come.

### From Greek To Latin

The language of the early Roman Rite before Gregory the Great was Greek. However, more and more Latin was used over time, although Greek was retained in specific sections such as the *Kyrie* and the *Trisagion*. The local church of Rome had begun as a Greek-speaking body; the majority of its members were Greek-speaking Levantines living in the foreign quarters of the city. But it began to use Latin in its liturgy, probably in the latter half of the second century, as the faith spread among the Latin-speaking inhabitants; though the use of Greek went on, side by side with Latin, to the fourth-perhaps even the fifth century. Elsewhere in the West, for example in Africa, Latin had been used by the church from the second century on.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, when Greek ceased to be spoken in the west, but Latin was still a *lingua franca* in which, for example, all public notices were posted, from Northumberland to Casablanca and from Lisbon to the Danube, it was natural that all Christian rites should be in Latin in the west. In the fifth century, the barbarian settlements brought a variety of Teutonic dialects into the different western provinces, and a cross-division of language everywhere between the new masters and the old populations. Even among the latter the rapid decline of civilization brought an inability to keep up the old cultures by complicated language. Throughout the sixth and seventh centuries the barbarians and provincials were mingling and profoundly affecting each other's speech.

The revival of civilization which begins in the eighth century came about by the recovery of just those traditions of the past which were most favorable to the renewed use of Latin. It culminates in Charlemagne's *restoration of the Roman empire* and his imposition throughout his dominions of the Roman Rite. Neither policy was calculated to elevate the position of the vernacular languages which are just beginning to take a recognizable form in the ninth century. However, the adoption of the *Gregorian Sacramentary* as the core of the universal Western Rite had an important result, quite apart from things ecclesiastical. It placed at the basis of all Western culture the only tradition for the use of Latin, in which the language had evolved without break from the classical tongue of Cicero and Virgil, through the excessive and supple silver Latin of the third and fourth centuries to the *ecclesiastical Latin* of the age of Leo and Gregory, without any serious addition from outside elements.

The culture which sprang from the work of Charlemagne, but which finally made sure of life only in the eleventh century, was not a formal restoration of the classical imperial culture, such as the sixteenth century artificially essayed, but it was its true descendant in many ways. As such, it was emphatically an international culture - or at this stage, when nations were still embryonic, it is truer to say an inter-regional culture, whose natural instrument was a common language. Since religion was at the very heart of this new culture, Latin - by now not so much common to all regions (not particularly limited to any of them either) - was still used in the church.

The development of many elements of the Christian Church were subject to history and culture. Clearly, the *Western Church* experienced this to a significant degree with the barbarian invasions of Europe all the way to Rome, and the centuries of *Dark Ages* that followed. During that period, the Church was one of the very few constant organizations in society; and the five centuries until Charlemagne established his Roman Empire were chaotic. During this period, various other rites emerged and developed in the west, yet the Church of Rome continued to exert singular influence. So great, awesome and mystical was the rite of the Roman Church, that in Charlemagne's youth his father sent emissaries to Rome to establish diplomatic relations with the Papacy; and so great was their amazement that within a few years the Roman liturgy and its chant became in their eyes the most exalted expression of the type of civilization they wished to promote.

The establishment of a standard Roman Rite by Charlemagne was the beginning of the end of the other local western rites, and assured that Latin would continue to be the liturgical language of the Western Church (excepting, of course, Protestant movements that split off during the Reformation and reverted to the vernacular) until recent times. Gregorian chant, the liturgical music that resulted from Charlemagne's efforts, became the standard music of the Western Roman Catholic Church into the late twentieth century.

*Credits: Benjamin D. Williams*

## Early Western Liturgics

### The Dawn Of Western Christianity

Christianity was brought to the city of Rome by the missionary efforts of Sts. Peter and Paul, with Peter being recognized as the city's first bishop. Undoubtedly they brought with them the liturgical practices of the Church of Jerusalem. As with the other early Christian communities, we can be sure that the earliest Roman Christians celebrated the rite of Baptism and Eucharist. The earliest document of the Roman Church, the letter of Pope Clement to the Church in Corinth, contains prayers replete with Jewish imagery.

Some elements of Jewish spirituality were undoubtedly part of the early Christian worship, such as the use of readings from Hebrew Scriptures and even the use of Hebrew words, such as *amen* and *alleluia*. New Testament accounts in Luke 4:16-30 and Acts 13:15-16 indicate early Christians were familiar with Sabbath synagogue gatherings involving proclamation of Scripture and preaching. The Christian *Service of the Word* may also be connected with Jewish use of hymn singing and religious discourse associated with meals. Although the elements of readings, prayers and preaching are found in both fully developed synagogue worship and early Christian liturgy, a direct structural connection between these two traditions is yet to be discovered. A letter of *Plinius the Younger* written in 112 A.D. describes Christians gathering early in the morning for a Service of praise and in the evening for a meal. This dual gathering of early Christians indicates to some liturgical scholars that originally the word and table Services of Christian Eucharist were celebrated independently at different times of the day. However other liturgists surmise the word and table Services were originally celebrated as a unit, and the second gathering Pliny mentions may have been an *agape* — a meal with religious meaning but distinct from the celebration of Eucharist.

Because we possess no liturgical documents from the dawn of Roman liturgy we can say only a few things for certain about its earliest practice. Because of the sporadic

persecutions, the Church was forced to gather in private homes for liturgical celebrations. Some of the churches in the city of Rome today still bear the names of the owners of the homes where the first Christians met, such as Clement. We also know that the language of worship used in Rome was Greek, since it was the common language used throughout the Roman empire at that time. Like churches in other parts of the world, the Roman Church used the Jewish Calendar to determine the date of the feast of Easter and the following 50-day period of celebration leading up to Pentecost. One point of distinction of the Roman Church is that it always began the Easter celebrations on the Sunday closest to 14 Nisan, unlike some other churches who celebrated Easter on this date, no matter what day of the week it occurred.

### Worship In The Second Century

The first descriptions we have of Christian worship in the city of Rome are found in the *Apologia of Justin*, a lay member of the Roman community who was martyred around 160 A.D. – These were written to the pagan civil authorities as explanations of Christian practices; they include an account of the rite of Baptism and two descriptions of the celebration of Eucharist. Concerning the latter Justin writes:

“On the day named after the sun, all who live in the city or in the countryside assemble. The memoirs of the apostles or the writing of the prophets are read as long as time allows. When the lector has finished, the presider addresses us and exhorts us to imitate the splendid things we have heard. Then we all stand and pray. As we said earlier, when we have finished praying, bread, wine and water are brought up. The presider then prays and gives thanks according to his ability, and the people give their assent with an *Amen*. Next, the gifts, over which the thanksgiving has been spoken and distributed, everyone shares in them, while they are also sent via the deacons to the absent brethren.”

From this description, we can see that around the year 150 A.D. the Church of Rome regularly gathered on Sunday, and that the word and table Services were celebrated as a single unit. The liturgy begins directly with scripture readings; and there is already a designated office of reader. At the conclusion of the readings, the presider (from the Greek *proestaminos*, the one who stands in front of the assembly) — presumably the bishop or his designate — preaches a homily. After the gifts of bread and wine have been brought forward, the presider improvises a prayer of thanksgiving or *eucharistia* in which all assembled participate with their acclamation of *Amen*. From the texts of the later Eucharistic prayers we may assume that this presidential prayer was not freely invented, but followed standard structure and are similar to the Jewish *Hodayah* prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Elsewhere in the *Apologia*, Justin makes clear that the “gifts” of bread and wine which all share are not considered ordinary food, but the “flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus”.

In this account, we see the same basic liturgical shape common to all ancient liturgies, Rome does not seem to have any particularly distinctive features. In fact, in 154

A.D. Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna visited Pope Anicetus, who asked him to preside in his place at a celebration of the Eucharist, apparently without any fear of discrepancies in their respective Rites.

### Growth And Latinization

By the year 251 A.D., the Church at Rome began to experience significant changes. It is estimated the Christians in the city numbered from 10,000 to 30,000. People listed in the financial care of the church included the bishop (Pope Cornelius), 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 subdeacons, 52 members of minor orders (readers, exorcists and doorkeepers) and 1500 widows and other people in need. Also, at this time Latin was replacing Greek as the liturgical language in Rome as it had earlier in the Roman provinces of northern Africa. Thus the Roman oratorical style began to make its mark on Roman liturgy — a rhetoric characterized by its simplicity, sobriety, terseness and juridical wording in contrast to the more effusive Greek. The *Apostolic Tradition* of this period, often attributed to the Roman Presbyter Hippolytus, contains much liturgical information, including a complete Eucharistic Prayer (Canon); however, many questions remain unanswered as to its true authorship, which parts may have been later additions and whether it represents Alexandrian or Roman practice.

### Worship After The Legalization Of Christianity

The Edict of Milan of Emperor Constantine in 312 A.D. brought about further changes. Now the church was free to worship openly and to own property. The Roman bishop was granted the status and privileges of imperial judges. Like their secular counterparts, the bishop now had the right to be preceded in procession by torches, incense and singers. These ritual elements began to enter the liturgy, both to solemnize the entrance of the bishop and the Book of Gospels. With the influx of converts as a result of the legalization of Christianity, the Church outgrew its domestic gathering places. The Christian basilicas, similar in design to Roman court buildings, were simple, large rooms flanked by colonnades with a rounded apse at one end. This new space allowed for stately processions and a splendid performance of liturgy. An organized system of catechesis was necessary to accommodate the many people now wanting to join the Church in its new political environment.

The *Sacrament of Penance* in the West was part of its earliest tradition as attested by Origen and Cyprian. It was seen as a remedy for a post-baptismal “shipwreck” — for grave sins causing public scandal: murder, adultery and apostasy. As in the Eastern church, orders of penitents were formed, but treated somewhat differently. In Rome, they were not dismissed along with the catechumens at the conclusion of the liturgy of the word. They were allowed to remain throughout the entire Service, but, of course, did not receive communion. Special blessing prayers for penitents before or after communion are recorded in both North Africa and Rome. The penitential period came to an end with a sacramental celebration, including an imposition of hands; at the beginning of the fifth century this took place on Holy Thursday.

Although the Church of Rome had celebrated the Easter cycle of feasts from great antiquity, it did not formally celebrate the Christmas cycle elaborately until the fifth century. Taking the lead from the Eastern churches, Rome began celebrating the Feast of Epiphany around the year 400 A.D. – After the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., Christmas celebrations were enriched with a nocturnal Mass at the church of *St. Mary Major* in Rome.

Part of the earliest Christian tradition were prayers said at third, sixth and ninth hours of the day, either as private individual prayers or domestic prayer Services. These prayer times had their analogy in the Jewish hours of prayer. By the fourth century, public celebrations of *Morning Prayer* (Lauds) and *Evening Prayer* (Vespers) were held in all the major churches of Rome.

### Worship Outside Rome And North Africa

During the time Christianity was being established in Rome, it also spread in the Western provinces of the Roman Empire. Unlike its eastern counterpart with several important centers of influence such as Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria, Rome was the primary model for Western liturgical practice as indicated by the universal adoption of Latin for all Western Christian Rites. We may assume the western churches outside Rome shared the general uniform liturgical practices of early Christianity with some local variation in ritual detail.

Early on we can see two streams of liturgical tradition in the west: the *North African-Rome* tradition discussed so far, and the *Gallican* tradition encompassing the rest of the Western Roman empire, including northern Italy. The term *Gallican* is somewhat confusing in that it is used both generally to describe the liturgical family of Western Rites outside the North African-Roman tradition and specifically to indicate the liturgy of the region of Gaul. Since extensive Gallican liturgical sources are lacking from this early period, it is impossible to say with certainty whether their original forms shared the simple, sober Roman character; or whether their earliest texts contained the prolix, elaborate characteristics akin to Eastern liturgies as evident by the time Gallican traditions were recorded in written form.

The western tradition most similar to the Roman-North African Rite is commonly called the *Ambrosian* or *Milanese* liturgy. The Eucharistic Prayer quoted by St. Ambrose in 390 A.D. is substantially the same as the Canon found in later Roman documents. Even in the times of St. Ambrose, the Milanese rite had characteristics that it maintained distinct from Roman practice, such as foot washing as part of the Rite of Baptism and the prohibition of fasting on Saturdays, even during Lent. The practice of singing antiphons and hymns is part of the proud heritage of the early Milanese church.

The *Spanish* or *Visigothic* liturgy, usually called the *Mozarabic Rite*, was practiced in the Iberian Peninsula. It is assumed that North African and Roman sources formed the core of its earliest practice, although later forms show Eastern characteristics as well.

The Gallican liturgy practiced in Gaul shows a greater variety of local practice. A Celtic variant was used by the Irish, Scots and Welsh. A characteristic of Gallican liturgy is the use of a series of short, variable prayers where the Roman Rite used a single unified oration. Another distinctive characteristic is the use of cantonized readings, where a single reading is made up of passages from several books of Scripture.

### Gregorian Reforms. Changes Before Gregory The Great

Even before the time of Pope Gregory I (pontificate 590-604 A.D.), we can see a number of trends which will influence the evolution of the Western liturgy for the next few centuries. Although the books of Scripture were used for proclamation in the liturgy from the earliest times, other texts and prayers were delivered from oral tradition or improvised according to generally accepted forms. In this period of history, the texts become fixed and written down in various liturgical books. Another important trend is the spread of Roman liturgy to territories using Gallican liturgy and the mixing of Roman and Gallican elements. Although Roman liturgy during this period remains faithful to the traditional shape seen in the early sources such as the *Apologia of Justin*; the third trend we see is the modification and reordering of a number of secondary elements in the celebration of Eucharist.

The first liturgical book to develop is the *Sacramentary*, a collection of prayers used by the presiding bishop or presbyter for the Eucharist or other sacraments celebrated in the context of the Eucharist. Although such books are mentioned in the late fifth century, the oldest example that comes down to us is the *Verona Sacramentary*, sometimes called the *Leonine Sacramentary*, because it was formerly believed to have been compiled by Pope Leo I. It is apparently a collection of *libelli*, booklets containing formularies for single celebration. It has been argued that the Verona was not a true Sacramentary in the sense of a book used in the course of celebrating liturgy, but a private collection of *libelli* used as a reference.

The formulary for each Mass – as the Roman celebration of the Eucharist came to be called – forms the Latin dismissal at the end of the Service: (Ite) *missa* (est), (go) (it is) *sending, dismissal*. It generally contains an opening prayer said before the readings, an offertory prayer said over the gifts before the Eucharistic Prayer begins, a prayer after communion and sometimes a blessing prayer said over the people at the conclusion of the Service. Note that with the exception of the last, these collect prayers are used at the conclusion of a liturgical action: the entrance procession, the bringing forward of the gifts of bread and wine and the procession of people to the

altar for communion. In addition to these short collect prayers, some of the formularies include *Prefaces* for the Eucharistic Prayer. The Verona formularies are for use in Roman presbyteral liturgies, although the prayers are based on papal models, most of them composed during the fifth and sixth centuries. It is incomplete, lacking formularies for Masses from January through April, including Easter.

The second and more influential of the early Roman Sacramentaries is known as *the Gelasianum Vetus* or *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*. It was compiled near Paris around 750 and contains a mixture of Gallican and Roman elements dating from around 650 A.D. – It is similar to the Verona, but contains formularies for the entire year as well as the text of the Canon, the Roman form of the Eucharistic Prayer. Some formularies in this Sacramentary contain two collects with the same apparent liturgical function, perhaps to provide an option for the celebrant. Although the only surviving copy of the Old Gelasian was written about fifty years after the leadership of Gregory I, most of its contents reflect a practice before his reforms. The Gelasian is divided into three parts according to the liturgical year.

### Reforms Of Gregory I And His Successors

With the appearance of these earliest Sacramentaries, the western liturgy begins to show a characteristic that distinguishes it from eastern liturgical traditions. Aside from Scripture readings and chants, eastern liturgies are generally composed of invariable texts. In contrast, Roman and other Western liturgies have a series of prayers that change depending on the feast and liturgical season; in addition to the variable Prefaces, the Roman Canon has variable phrases that change in order to emphasize the specific characteristics of the feast being celebrated. These reflect a western taste for more variability and the desire to make the liturgy express the particular feast celebrated as compared with the eastern tendency to prefer textual stability. Such differences are distinctions of liturgical style rather than a fundamental divergence in structure.

The Roman Canon reaches its mature form in these early Sacramentaries, although they seem to represent a much older oral tradition. The version quoted by St. Ambrose in 390 A.D. is substantially the same prayer as recorded in the Gelasian Sacramentary. It appears that the Roman Canon was originally composed in Latin rather than being a translation of an older Greek Eucharistic prayer. It lacks the explicit *Epiclesis* (the “calling down” of the Holy Spirit to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ) in the Eastern sense. Without mentioning the Holy Spirit directly, the Roman prayer merely calls upon God to “bless” the gifts of bread and wine so that they may become the Body and Blood of Christ, while the priest extends his hands over them in a gesture of *Epiclesis*.

Toward the end of the prayer, a similar blessing is invoked upon the people who will receive the gifts as communion. This two-fold invocation over the gifts and assembly is known as the Roman “split *Epiclesis*”. In the Roman Canon, the Eucharist is por-

trayed as God's gift to the Church through Christ and the gift of the assembly to the Father in Christ. In contrast to emphasis of the Eastern Eucharistic Prayers on praise, the Roman prayer stresses the celebration of the local assembly and the gifts offered.

### Changes In Secondary Liturgical Elements

In addition to Sacramentaries, other important liturgical books developed during this time. These include lectionaries containing citations of scripture readings for use in particular celebrations, *graduals* containing chants for the celebration of Eucharist and *ordines* containing rubrics — the instructions for ritual action.

Even before Gregory I, secondary elements in the Roman celebration of the Eucharist begin to show some change. As late as 426 A.D., the Roman liturgy began abruptly with the Scripture readings. St. Augustine describes an Easter Sunday Mass where the first Scripture reading is preceded only by a simple greeting. The addition of a prayer before the readings, found in the earliest Sacramentaries, indicates the initial development of introductory rites. By the sixth century the introductory rites were enriched with the Kyrie, a litany where each invocation is answered by the assembly with the Greek phrases for *Lord have mercy* or *Christ have mercy*. This addition is either a direct import from the East or a reworking and shift of position of the intercessory prayers concluding *Service of the Word* mentioned by Justin Martyr. The *Kyrie* found in the Gelasian Sacramentary is certainly intercessory in nature. Note that in the *Kyrie* is used the Greek language, while the Mass is otherwise almost completely in Latin.

The *Gloria*, a hymn of praise originating in the Eastern churches, is also added at this time. It is an example of *psalmi idiotici*, i.e. non-biblical texts composed in the style of psalmody. Earlier the *Gloria* was used in the *Divine Office* (Liturgy of the Hours). At first, it was only used at Mass as a special sign of solemnity when the Pope presided. Its use as the introduction in non-papal liturgies, it was limited to Easter Sunday. In later practice, The *Gloria* was used at every Mass celebrated by a presbyter on Sundays and solemnities, except during penitential seasons (such as Lent, Advent). The *Gloria* is always perceived as a festive addition. It is not replaced by another element when omitted.

The reforms of Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.) and his successors, such as Honorius I (625-638 A.D.) and Gregory II (715-731 A.D.) affected the secondary elements of the Roman Mass that give it a distinctive form. The Kyrie litany was stripped of its invocations, so that only the responses *Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison* remained, perhaps in order to shorten the time required for the introductory rites. The number of readings was fixed at two, and an additional reading from the Old Testament now occurred only on special days. The singing of the *Alleluia* before the Gospel became a standard part of the Mass, except during Lent and on other penitential days. Formerly, it was used only during the fifty days of Easter. The joyful, paschal nature of the *Alleluia* must have seemed out of character with the more somber character of

these penitential times. Although the *Kiss of Peace* had already been transferred to a position after the Eucharistic Prayer in the early fifth century, the preliminary rites of communion were reordered, so that the Lord's Prayer was recited directly after the Canon, followed by the *Kiss of Peace* and fraction rite.

Later, Sergius I (687-701 A.D.) introduced the singing of the *Agnus Dei* to accompany the fraction rite — a litany, possibly of Byzantine origin, giving solemnity to the ritual of the breaking of the consecrated bread before communion. Gregory II added Mass formularies (sets of collects and other variable texts proper to the feast) for the Thursdays of Lent, which had been a-liturgical up to that time.

### Reasons For Liturgical Reforms

The changes discussed so far came about for various reasons. The rise of various heretical groups caused bishops to become scrupulous about the orthodoxy of their prayer texts. Thus, having a codified collection of written formulae assured them that their collects were doctrinally sound. The rearrangement and addition of secondary liturgical elements reflected western comfort ability with limited liturgical change and adaptation, in contrast to the Eastern tendency to hold on to traditional forms. Perhaps the political instability brought about by barbarian invasions provided a sense of need for liturgical codification and careful ordering of worship.

Other changes in society and the Church influenced its liturgical practice. As more and more of the general population became Christian, the *Order of Catechumens* began to decline, so that infant baptism became the norm. The rise of monasticism is also evident during this period with its liturgical influence. Monasteries were built by the popes near Roman basilicas, and these communities took charge of celebrations of the *Divine Office* by bringing their monastic liturgical practices with them. In the city of Rome, two types of liturgical customs became more and more apparent — the city or parish liturgy used in general; and the more elaborate Papal liturgy used whenever the Pope presided.

### Evolution Of Gallican Liturgies

Since many of the Roman Sacramentaries were copied in Gallican areas, we must assume the Roman liturgy has been used as a model in Gallican areas. Some Eastern influence is evident in both Gallican and Old Spanish liturgies, such as the introduction of the Trisagion before the readings in both of these rites. The trinitarian interpretation of this text emphasized orthodox belief in areas beset with heretical groups challenging the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In general, the Gallican liturgy welcomed liturgical innovation from outside sources in contrast to Rome that was much more conservative in adopting foreign elements. The Milanese liturgy developed introductory rites similar to but in a slightly different order than the Roman rite. Milan maintained the older tradition of the *Kiss of Peace* before the preparation

of the gifts and the use of the Old Testament reading during the celebration of Eucharist.

### **Carolingian Reforms. The Franks Adopt The Roman Rite**

Western liturgy in the eighth century was influenced by the rise in power of the Frankish kings north of the Alps. Their ideal, especially under the later leadership of Charlemagne, was to create a Christian society in Western Europe. Stability and unification were brought about by assimilation of old Roman culture of the cities and “barbarian” cultures in the countryside, the official use of the Latin language and the creation of a unified church-state. In order to consolidate their realms, the Franks sought to import the Roman liturgy in an effort to standardize liturgical practice. Their efforts were eventually successful resulting in a uniform worship; but they had the unintended effect of mixing Gallican elements with Roman practice, thus creating a hybrid Roman-Frankish liturgy. Allegorical interpretations of liturgy changed how the rites were perceived and performed. This new hybrid liturgical style dominated the West and severely diminished the importance of other Western rites.

In 754 A.D., King Pepin prescribed the Roman liturgy for use in his realm. Political unity was not the only factor in the promotion of Roman practice. Pilgrims visiting Rome, especially bishops, were impressed with the beauty of the Roman ceremonies. The diversity of Gallican practice and the corruption of its Latin texts were other factors that led to dissatisfaction with local rites. Still, Pepin’s decree met with limited success: Although Roman liturgical manuscripts copied outside Rome had already absorbed some Gallican elements, Roman liturgy was particularly suited to its local community and could not be transplanted easily into Frankish lands with very different liturgical and cultural traditions.

### **Charlemagne’s Program Of Reform**

During the years 785-786 A.D., Charlemagne enacted laws to bring the process of Romanization to completion and to suppress the *Gallican Rite*. He asked Pope Hadrian (772-795 A.D.) to send to Aachen a Gregorian Sacramentary “in pure form”, so that it could be used as a model for liturgical books in the Frankish realm. In 785 A.D., the Pope sent a Sacramentary compiled around 735 A.D., now known as the *Hadrianum*. This book was ill suited for Charlemagne’s needs: It was incomplete, lacking formularies for the Sundays of the year, and it represented the more elaborate papal liturgy rather than parish usage. Perhaps Pope Hadrian misunderstood Charlemagne’s request for a sample and merely sent the most beautiful manuscript he possessed.

In order to develop a usable book as a model, it was necessary to supplement the *Hadrianum* with materials it lacked and adapt it to the needs of the Frankish church. During the years 810-815 A.D., *Benedict of Aniane* filled in the missing sections with

texts from eighth century *Gelesian* material, another unknown Roman source. The contents of this supplement are extensive: They include not only the missing Masses for Sundays of the year, but also diverse texts, such as vigils for Easter and Pentecost, weekday Masses, common Masses for saints, consecration of clerics and women religious, ordinations for Minor Orders, votive Masses for special needs, funeral Masses, episcopal blessings and suggestions for the addition of Gallican feasts to the church calendar. In his supplement, Benedict was careful to clearly distinguish these additional materials from the Hadrianum text as he received it. The resulting hybrid of the *Roman-Frankish Sacramentary* was used as a model for liturgical changes throughout the country; and eventually its hybrid liturgy made its way to Rome itself.

In addition to the spread of proper Roman liturgical books through his empire, Charlemagne wished the chant in his churches to follow the usage of Rome. He sent his best singers to the papal chapel to learn the chant used there, so they could disseminate it to the rest of his empire. This standardized repertoire became known as *Gregorian Chant*.

### Gallican and Allegorical Characteristics

This new form of hybrid liturgy had a different character from the traditional Roman simplicity and sobriety. It exhibited *Gallican* characteristics: the taste for dramatic, colorful ritual and the multiplication and lengthening of prayers. The tone of these texts is often subjective and emotional, especially in the silent dispositional prayers of the presider. An example of this Gallicanization is seen in the presbyteral ordination ritual. In the *Roman Rite*, the laying on of hands clearly stands out as the primary symbolic action. In the new hybrid liturgy, the addition of conferring of vestments, anointing of the priest's hands, and presentation of liturgical books adds to the dramatic character of the ceremony, but the central gesture of laying on of hands appears to be just one of many ritual actions.

Another factor in the development of the new liturgical books and their interpretation is shown in commentaries known as *expositio Missae*. These works interpreted liturgy in colorful, allegorical ways, so that a deeper meaning was seen behind every liturgical detail. For instance, the entrance chant of the Mass was seen as the voice of the prophets foretelling Christ's coming, the *Gloria* as the song of the angels heralding Christ's birth, and the reading of the Epistle as John the Baptizer's proclamation of Christ as the Messiah. Such fanciful interpretations led to changes in liturgical practice, such as the celebrant reciting the canon in a low voice, as he was seen in the role of the *High Priest* alone entering the *Holy of Holies* of the Temple. Two of Charlemagne's advisors, Alcuin and Amalarius of Metz were proponents of this allegorical interpretation.

Like the Mass, other sacramental rites were viewed as a kind of liturgical drama re-enacting scenes from salvation history. The rite for expulsion of penitents from the church was based on texts from the *Book of Genesis*, where the penitents were spoken of as the sinful Adam and Eve banished from the Eden of the church.

### Monastic Influences

While the reforms of Charlemagne spread through Europe, other influences brought about change in western practice that are seen throughout the medieval period. Irish and Scottish monks brought their customs to continental Europe, such as their form of the sacrament of penance. While canonical penance in its traditional Roman form was still in use, private individual celebration of the sacrament of penance became more and more common. Instead of being used for only grave sins causing public scandal, now every person recognizing his sinful nature could receive this sacrament over and over again. The normal minister of this monastic Celtic form of the sacrament was the confessor presbyter rather than the bishop.

Another trend in privatization is seen in the Mass through the following centuries. In its origin, the Eucharist was celebrated only in the context of the gathering of the Christian community. Partly due to monastic influences, the Mass was increasingly celebrated by a presbyter with a single minister, or even by the priest alone. This led to the development of the *Plenary Missal*, a liturgical book that contained the texts of the *Sacramentary*, Scripture readings, chants and rubrics, so that the celebrant alone could take on the roles of all the liturgical ministers.

The celebration of the *Divine Office* began to take on a more monastic form. In place of the repetitive use of psalmody, characteristic of the cathedral office, the monastic practice of reciting the entire Psalter in one week became standard. The recitation of the longer monastic style Services became an obligation of all clerics, who perceived themselves as praying on behalf of the laity. As a result, the office became more and more a clerical preserve, in which lay people seldom participated.

### The Addition Of The Credo (Creed)

Although the Gallican additions and interpretations changed many details of the liturgy and how it was perceived, the overall structure of the Mass remained much the same as it was in the time of Gregory the Great. One addition of Charlemagne was the insertion of the Credo, or Nicene Creed, in Frankish territories at the end of the eighth century. Since the end of the sixth century the Nicene Creed was used in the Spanish liturgy, including a local accretion to the text known as the *filioque clause*. In response to disputes of heretical groups concerning the nature of the Holy Trinity, the phrase concerning the proceeding of the Holy Spirit was altered to read, "I believe in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*." The creed with this addition spread to Frankish churches rather quickly. Pope Leo III wrote to Charlemagne in 808 expressing his wish that the *filioque* clause not be added and had sil-

ver plaques engraved with the original text of the Creed set up in St. Peter's. The creed was not used as part of the Mass in the city of Rome well into the eleventh century, when Pope Benedict VIII bowed to political pressure and included it in Masses on Sundays and major feasts.

### Other Western Rites

With the dissemination of the Carolingian reforms, the suppression of the *Gallican Rite* was complete in western Europe, although its influence remained strong in the detail and flavor of the new hybrid liturgy. The reforms did not affect Spain which maintained its own Mozarabic liturgy until the eleventh century. It is not clear from medieval sources whether Charlemagne made an attempt to suppress the *Ambrosian Rite*, or whether he merely limited it to the area surrounding Milan. Thus, it is the only western liturgy not eventually supplanted by the *Roman-Frankish Rite* and has significant use to this day.