

Adult Catechism Class for Monday January 19, 2015

Part 1: Scripture Readings:

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all.

Psalms 95:2-6 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

Part 2: What is the Divine Liturgy?:

The essential elements of the public worship of the Catholic Church, in the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and the administration of the sacraments, are the same in all Catholic rites. What is called the "Mass" in the West is called "Divine Liturgy" in the Eastern Churches. It is an English translation of the Greek, "Thia Liturgia". Liturgy was the most important public act in the Ancient Greek world. We call the Liturgy Divine (or God's) because, through it, we partake of the Divine Nature; it is God's supreme act for humanity. In the Latin Rite, the Eucharistic Sacrifice became popularly known as Missa (Mass); a word spoken by the priest at the end of the Liturgy, "Ite, missa est" Go, you are sent forth (the Mass is finished). In the Divine Liturgy, the Sacrifice of Jesus' Body and Blood is re-enacted and re-presented to the Church by the Lord Himself, Who is our Eternal High Priest. He uses the ordained priesthood as his instrument, as he uses bread and wine, to enable us to approach Him. The Sacrifice of Calvary is the act that redeemed the world from the slavery of sin. The rite celebrated in the Ukrainian Catholic Church is the Byzantine rite, which originated in the ancient Church at Constantinople. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is most often used within the Byzantine rite, but is not the only Liturgy available. Worship in the Ukrainian Catholic Church is characterized by a great sense of God's holiness, a reverence for the sacred, a humble dependence on the power and mercy of God and faith in the intercessory power of the Mother of God and all the Saints. There is a strong tradition of congregational singing without instrumentation, with traditional melodies adopted to our liturgical texts. In Canada, the majority of the Divine Liturgy is said in English, with some Churches still saying the Liturgy in Ukrainian.

The Liturgy consists of three main parts:

- 1. The Preparation, during which the priest prepares the bread and chalice for Communion.*
- 2. The Liturgy of the Word, which includes particular readings, prayers and a homily.*
- 3. The Liturgy of Sacrifice, the main part of Divine Liturgy when the Creed is recited, the Holy Gifts are Consecrated and Communion is received.*

Divine Liturgy: The Preparation

Prior to Divine Liturgy the priest prepares the bread and wine which will be consecrated during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Reciting Scripture passages from the Prophets and the Gospels which speak of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, he cuts small loaves of leavened bread into smaller pieces which will be distributed as Holy Communion. He remembers and prays for the needs of the living and the deceased.

Divine Liturgy: The Word

During the Liturgy of the Word the focus is on the proclamation of the Gospel -the Good News of Jesus Christ -as recorded in the Scriptures. The major portions are as follows:

1. Opening Doxology: "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Our worship, which is a participation in the Kingdom of God, is always focused on the One God who is Three Persons.
2. Great Litany: Here we pray for our various needs, asking the Lord to have mercy on us.
3. The Antiphons: These Psalm verses are joyful expressions of praise in which we thank God for His gracious works of love, mercy, and salvation.
4. Hymn to Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God: We proclaim that Jesus, the Incarnate Second Person of the Trinity, is true God and true man.
5. The Little Entrance: All are solemnly invited to worship the risen Christ as we pay homage to his presence in the Holy Gospel.
6. The Troparia and Kontakia: In which we hear the theme of the day's Liturgy.
7. The Trisagion: We glorify the Holy Trinity with these words: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, holy and Immortal, have mercy on us." Following these introductory hymns, the Scriptures for the day are read in this order:
8. The Prokimenon: A responsorial Psalm.
9. The Epistle: Taken from the New Testament, this usually addresses a particular aspect of the Christian life.
10. The Alleluia: Two Psalm verses separated by the singing of "Alleluia," which means "Praise the Lord."
11. The Gospel: The public proclamation of the Word of God, taken from one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. We always stand during the reading of the Gospel.
12. The Homily: The sermon in which the priest proclaims the Good News of Christ while applying it to our daily lives.

Divine Liturgy: The Sacrifice

"In the Liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present." [CCC 1085]

Having been fed by the Word of God, we now turn to the central mystery of our faith - participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the celebration of the Eucharist. "Eucharist" refers to the Body and Blood of Christ; it literally means "thanksgiving," and it expresses our gratitude for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life we receive in Holy Communion. "Primarily in the Eucharist . . . the Liturgy is the memorial of the mystery of salvation." [CCC 1099]

The Liturgy of the Sacrifice is as follows:

- The Great Entrance: While the Cherubic Hymn is sung, the bread and wine are brought to the altar. We are invited to unite ourselves with the angels in worship and to "lay aside all earthly cares so that we may receive the King of All."
- The Creed: A declaration of our common faith in the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and other tenets of the Catholic Church.
- The Eucharistic Prayer: Recalls the institution of the Eucharist by Christ at the Last Supper and proclaims the holiness and love of God through the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour.
- The Consecration: The gifts of bread and wine are changed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- The Commemorations: These help us to recall all those for whom our sacrifice is offered.
- The Lord's Prayer: Our acknowledgement that God is our Heavenly Father.
- Prayer Before Communion: We profess our faith in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, and ask Him to make us worthy to receive Him in the sacrament.
- Reception of Holy Communion: The climax of the Liturgy, when we partake of the Eucharist, "the source and summit of the Christian life." [CCC 1324] By partaking of Holy Communion we fulfill the purpose of our worship by uniting ourselves with Christ "for the forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting." All Catholics are welcome & encouraged to receive Holy Communion provided they have fasted and go to Confession regularly. All Orthodox are encouraged to follow the Canons of their Church and are welcome to Holy Communion as well in the spirit of Oeconomia.

After receiving the Eucharist, we express our thanks by worshipping the Trinity who saves us:

- We pray to depart in peace, in the name of the Lord, in order to bear witness to Christ, our Saviour and Lord.
- We pray for salvation and guidance during the closing prayer recited by the priest in the center of the Church.
- We receive the Lord's blessing, proclaimed by the priest through the veneration of the Cross, and take

a piece of the Antidor (blessed bread). Pieces of this bread, which is not the Eucharist, are especially for those who could not receive Communion and for those who could not come to Liturgy.

"In the earthly Liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory." [CCC 1090]

Part 3: Comparison of Different Liturgies Used in the Ukrainian Catholic Church

In the Byzantine Church, we use the Anafora of Saint John Chrysostom and of Saint Basil the Great. Over centuries, Saint John Chrysostom's shorter anafora became the ordinary Eucharistic prayer and Saint Basil's longer anafora was reserved for ten special days during the year. Since the 1960s, the Latin Rite has also restored several different Eucharistic Prayers.

Some historians believe that the Liturgy of St. Basil was, until the twelfth century, the principle liturgy of the Byzantine Churches. Full of biblical imagery and theological depth, its Eucharistic Prayer is very beautiful. The Eucharistic prayer of St. John Chrysostom is shorter and not as rhetorical. It originated perhaps as a weekday anafora, and gradually replaced the Anafora of St. Basil.

Our Church prescribes that the Liturgy (Eucharistic Prayer) of Saint Basil be celebrated on the five Sundays of Great Lent, on the vigils of Easter, Christmas and Theophany, on Holy Thursday and on the Feast of St. Basil.

Until recent times, the Eucharistic Prayer was prayed inaudibly. Before the introduction of Liturgy Books, the faithful would not have been very aware of the difference between the two Liturgies. In recent years, the public celebration of the Liturgy of Saint Basil has been somewhat neglected, because of lack of available translations.

The Presanctified Liturgy was used on fast-days, when the Eucharistic Liturgy was considered too festive to celebrate. This service is basically a Liturgy of the Word (its first half is a Vespers), at which pre-consecrated Eucharist is distributed. Today our Church celebrates the Presanctified Liturgy in Lent; in the Latin Church it is celebrated only on Good Friday.

Deacons in the Eastern Churches do not celebrate the Sacraments, but assist at the Liturgical services. During the Divine Liturgy, they proclaim the Gospel of the Lord. In recent years, where no priest was available, deacons have been authorized to celebrate a kind of presanctified liturgy. Due to lack of available texts, the faithful used the ordinary text of the Divine Liturgy, with the deacon omitting the Eucharistic Prayers of consecration.

Early Christian churches were built with the altar at the east end. The priest, together with the congregation, faced east, towards the Lord. The priest leads his flock towards the rising sun, symbol of

the coming of the Lord. Pope Benedict XVI has written about the importance of the priest and congregation facing the same direction.

Can the priest alter the text and ceremonies of the Liturgy? No, as they do not belong to him. The priest is the servant of the Liturgy and not vice-versa. Altering the Liturgy is similar to the violation of copyright, the misuse of someone else's words. In the Ukrainian Catholic Church, liturgical changes are the competency of the Major-Archbishop together with the Synod of Bishops, with the approval of the Apostolic See.

Part 4: Spirituality within the Divine Liturgy:

The "theology" of the Divine Liturgy is one of spiritual ascent. Many have described the atmosphere at a Liturgy as "Heaven on earth"; however, this is not quite correct. Heaven came down to earth when the Son of God became man. Now, because of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, the Kingdom of God does not come down to earth; instead, earth has the potential of being raised up to Heaven. For the person who is willing to open his heart and soul to the spiritual dynamics of the Divine Liturgy, this mystical ascension is a very real event. Like the steps of a stairway, or rungs of a ladder, every litany, every hymn, every prayer and Scripture passage of the service takes us one step closer to the Heavenly Kingdom. We begin our spiritual ascent by singing the earthly hymns found in the Old Testament Psalms, and soon we join the choirs of Angels and Saints in their heavenly "Thrice Holy Hymn" of praise to the Lord. Eventually, we will ask that God, our Lord and Creator, accept us as His children and allow us to call upon Him as "Our Father." We then conclude our spiritual journey to God's Holy Domain in the Liturgy by approaching Christ Himself, the King of Kings, and partaking of His Precious Body and Blood. In this way, we unite ourselves with Him, and become heirs to His Kingdom. Worshippers must understand that they are not simply an audience. As we read the prayers and hymns of the service, we will find two words repeatedly appearing, "WE" and "US": "Let us pray to the Lord", "We praise Thee. We bless Thee." The prayers of the Divine Liturgy are our prayers; unless we actively participate in them, the mystical gifts, which the Liturgy offers, are ineffective for us subjectively. "Active participation" means being aware of what is taking place during the service while we sing, read, serve with the priest, or simply stand and pray the Liturgy in the silence of our hearts. Active participation means praying to God when we hear the call "Let us pray to the Lord," paying attention upon hearing, "Let us be attentive," and making the effort sincerely to "lay aside all cares of life" as we sing the Cherubic Hymn. Most of all, active participation means being prepared to complete the Liturgical journey; that is, it means being ready to come forth and receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when we hear the call, "With the fear of God and with faith approach."

Part 5: Homework for Next Class:

1. *Read Philippians 4: 4-7; 1 Thessalonians 5: 15-22; Luke 11: 1-4*
2. *Try to attend a weekday church service other than a Divine Liturgy*
3. *Remember do to a prayer at home with your family every day of the week!*