

Adult Catechism April 3 , 2017

Christ Our Pascha: Prayer in the Ukrainian Catholic Tradition: Church Items; Family Prayer at Home, Our Father, Jesus Prayer, Rosary

Part 1: Liturgical Items Used in Church

Aër or Aer is the largest and outermost of the veils covering the chalice and diskos (paten). It is rectangular in shape and corresponds to the veil used to cover the chalice and paten in the Latin Rite, but is larger. It is often made of the same material and color as the vestments of the officiating priest, and often has a fringe going all the way around its edge. Tassels may also be sewn at each of the corners. It takes its name either from the lightness of the material of which it is made, or from the fact that during the Nicene Creed in the Divine Liturgy, the priest holds it high in the air and waves it slowly over the chalice and diskos. Its original use was to cover the Chalice and prevent anything from falling into it before the consecration. It symbolizes the swaddling clothes with which Christ was wrapped at his Nativity, and also the grave clothes in which he was wrapped at his burial (both themes are found in the text of the Liturgy of Preparation).

The **altar** is the area at the east end of a church, usually behind an iconostasis (altar screen). The word means "a place of sacrifice" in Hebrew. The altar often is also referred to as the sanctuary. An Altar Table is located in the center of the altar as one enters through the Royal Doors in the iconostasis. This table is often referred to as the Holy Table.

The **antimension**, is among the most important furnishings of the altar in Eastern Christian liturgical traditions. It is a rectangular piece of cloth, of either linen or silk, typically decorated with representations of the entombment of Christ, the four Evangelists, and scriptural passages related to the Eucharist. A small relic of a martyr is sewn into it. The Eucharist cannot be celebrated without an antimension. The antimension is placed in the center of the altar table and is unfolded only during the Divine Liturgy, before the Anaphora. At the end of the Liturgy, the antimension is folded in thirds, and then in thirds again, so that when it is unfolded the creases form a cross. When folded, the antimension sits in the center of another slightly larger cloth, the eileton (Slavonic: Ilitón) which is then folded around it in the same manner (3 x 3), encasing it completely. A flattened natural sponge is also kept inside the antimension, which is used to collect any crumbs which might fall onto the Holy Table. When the antimension and eileton are folded, the Gospel Book is laid on top of them. The antimension must be consecrated and signed by a bishop. The antimension and the chrism are the means by which a bishop indicates his permission for priests under his omophorion to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and Holy Mysteries in his absence, being in effect the church's license to conduct divine services. If a bishop were to withdraw his permission to serve the Mysteries, he would do so by taking back the antimension and chrism from the priest. Only a bishop, priest, or deacon is allowed to touch an antimension. Since the antimension is a consecrated object, they must be vested when they do so—the deacon should be fully vested, and the priest vested in at least stole (epitrachelion) and cuffs (epimanikia).

The **Hand Cross**, also Blessing Cross, is used in the Eastern Church by a priest or bishop to give a blessing or benediction. The hand cross is kept on the Holy Table in the Altar and used at certain moments during the liturgy, most noticeably when he holds it in his right hand as he gives the final blessing at the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy. In many traditions, usually Slavic, after the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy all of the faithful come forward to kiss the cross. The hand cross is usually made of precious metal and may be adorned with enamel and precious or semi-precious gemstones. It may also have enamel or embossed icons on it, such as the Theotokos, John the Forerunner, the Four Evangelists or Prophets. The blessing cross often has an icon of the Crucifixion of Jesus on it, together with the letters IC XC NIKA (meaning, "Jesus Christ Conquers"). Blessing crosses may also be two-sided, having an icon of the Crucifixion on one side and an icon of the Resurrection on the other. The side with the Resurrection would be held out towards the people on Sundays and throughout the afterfeast of Pascha. The blessing cross is also used in the blessing of holy water, when the priest dips the cross in the water, making the sign of the cross with it three times.

A **censer** is a small metal or stone dish used for burning incense. A common design is a metal container, about the size and shape of a small coffee-pot, suspended on chains and often with the addition of small bells. The bowl contains hot coals, and the incense is placed on top of these. Censers used in the church, known as a thurible in the Western Rite, are used during offices or services, such as Vespers, Orthros, and the Divine Liturgy. Censing is the practice of swinging a censer suspended from chains towards something or someone, typically an icon or person, so that smoke from the burning incense travels in that direction. If a deacon is present, he typically does much of the censing, otherwise the duty is undertaken by the priest. Unordained servers or acolytes are permitted to prepare and carry the censer, but may not swing it during prayers. There are two types of censing: a Greater Censing (which encompasses the entire temple and all of the people therein), and a Lesser Censing (which, depending upon the liturgical context, consists of censing only a portion of the temple and the people).

The **Chalice** is a form of a stemmed cup or goblet used to offer Communion during the Divine Liturgy. The chalice is usually made of a precious metal, gold or silver, and maybe plain, engraved, bejeweled, or decorated with a combination of adornment. During the entry to the eucharistic service the wine is brought in the chalice and a plate called the Paten or **Diskos** is used to carry the prosphora, which is a leavened bread or artos. These combined are the Holy Gifts.

The **eileton**, in Slavonic iliton, is a silk cloth slightly larger than the antimimension that is folded around it at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and which is left on the altar table. Different commentators have said that it represents the burial cloth around Jesus' head, the Resurrection, or the infant Jesus' swaddling clothes.

The **endyton** is the second of the three wrappings of cloth that covers the altar table during its vesting. The first is a white linen covering. Over it is laid the endyton which is a brilliant and embroidered material. The final cloth is the eileton of silk in which the antimimension is contained when it is not in use.

The Exapteriga (Slavonic: **rapidia**) is a fan made with a representation of a six-winged Seraphim, the highest order of angel, mounted on a pole or staff for hand carrying. The seraphim, according to Isaiah's vision of God, surround the throne of God in Heaven. The image of the seraphim is often engraved on a circular, usually metal, disk on the end of the staff. Two fans are found in most Eastern churches placed on either side of the tabernacle when not in the hands of servers. The fans are reminders that these same angels surround the throne of God on earth — the Holy Altar.

The **spear** is a cutting implement in a shape of a lance which represents the lance used to pierce Jesus's side at the Crucifixion. It is used in the Proskomide (Sl. Proskomidia), the service of preparation for the Divine Liturgy, where it is used to cut the portions of the prosphora that are placed on the paten. The cutting of the prosphora in preparation for Eucharist reminds us of the Lord's saving Passion.

The **spoon** is one of the number of liturgical vessels and implements used during services of the Eastern Church, especially during Holy Communion. The spoon used in the transmission of both elements of Holy Communion to the faithful. In early liturgical practice it was used only when administering the Eucharist to the sick and infants.

A **tabernacle**, also known as an artophorion, is a container on the altar table of an Eastern Christian Church specifically used to reserve the Eucharist, the presence of Jesus Christ. In the Eastern Church, the reserve sacrament is kept in the tabernacle on the altar table at all times. The tabernacle is usually elaborately decorated, normally wrought with gold, silver, or wood and precious adornments. The tabernacle is often shaped like a miniature church building. The presence of Christ in the tabernacle is always indicated by a vigil lamp, burning perpetually.

The Table of oblation, (Table of preparation, or **Prothesis**) is a table in the altar area of the church building which is used for the preparation of the bread and wine used at the liturgy. It is to the left of the altar table, usually in the northeast corner, and illuminated by a single candle. It is usually similar the altar table in style, and decorated with the same color cloths. On this table the chalice, diskos, a liturgical knife, and spoon are kept. A sponge and cloths for drying the chalice after the liturgy are also kept here also. There are also special covers for the chalice and diskos and the star which holds the cover over the bread on the diskos. Lists of names used at the proskomedia, and sometimes icons are on the table, or on the wall behind the table.

The ringing of **bells** is one of the most essential elements of an Eastern church. Church bells are rung to: a) Summon the faithful to services; b) Express the triumphal joy of the Christian Church c) Announce important moments during the services both to those in church and to those who are not able to be physically present in the church, so that all may be united in prayer; d) Strengthen Christians in piety and faith by its sound, which Eastern Christians believe is "alloyed with divine grace to disperse and destroy the forces of cruelty and of demonic suggestion"; e) Proclaim important events, such as the death of a member of the church; the arrival of an important person, such as the bishop or civil ruler; an emergency such as fire or flood; or victory in battle (as dramatically recreated in the triumphant conclusion of the 1812 Overture). The use of bells is not only practical, but is also considered to be spiritual. Bells are sometimes

referred to as "singing icons", because they establish the acoustic space of an Eastern temple just as painted icons and hymnography define its visual and noetic space, respectively.

Part 2: Family Prayer: Sometimes prayer can flow very easily and other times it is a challenge. Our prayer lives, like our relationship with God, should grow and deepen with time. Sometimes as adults we find ourselves wanting to pray and not really knowing how. Or, we realize that we don't really have a prayer life beyond the prayers we learned as children. According to Orthodox theologian Fr. Georges Florovsky: "The true aim of prayer is to enter into conversation with God. It is not restricted to certain hours of the day. A Christian has to feel himself personally in the presence of God. The goal of prayer is precisely to be with God always." The prayers we learned as children are good places to start—The "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and the Rosary and Jesus Prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Living God, Have Mercy on me a sinner" (can be prayed using a Prayer Rope or chotke for repeated meditative prayer) are great places to start in developing our prayer lives. God want's us to pray honestly and from our heart—to hear our concerns and to have us listen to what He wants to tell us. Praying with scripture can be of great assistance in this (Lectio Divina style). The main thing about prayer, like with most good things, is to "Just do it!" (Thanks NIKE!) There is no time like the present to start. Taking small steps to create a "rule of prayer" in your life and taking time daily to remember God will make a huge difference. As parents one of our greatest motivators is to pray for our children but we must not forget to pray with our children to truly teach them the importance of prayer in our lives. Taken from <http://skeparchy.org/flo/family-life/prayers/>

Our Father: "The Lord's Prayer "is truly the summary of the whole gospel." "Since the Lord...after handling over the practice of prayer, said elsewhere, 'Ask and you will receive,' and since everyone has petitions which are peculiar to his circumstances, the regular and appropriate prayer (the Lord's Prayer) is said first, as the foundation of further desires." - Tertullian, De orat.from the Catechism of the Catholic Church; 2761.

The Jesus Prayer: The Jesus Prayer is a short, simple prayer that can put you in the right frame of mind to get closer to God. And, at one sentence long, it's quite easy to memorize! "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." "We find a similar version of this prayer in Luke's Gospel in our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, illustrated above. Both of them are praying in the temple in Jesus' account, yet the contrite tax collector is justified before God rather than the smug Pharisee, who's boasting about his religious achievements (Lk 18:9-14). What does the tax collector ask of God here? "Be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13). Outside of this Gospel account, the Jesus Prayer can be traced back to the Eastern Orthodox Church from the 4th century. St. John Climacus recommended it in his work The Ladder of Divine Ascent from ca. 600AD. The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes that the sentiment expressed in the Jesus Prayer opens our hearts both to humanity's misery and Christ's mercy (CCC 2667). Indeed, it has been called fittingly a "prayer of the heart". It is wonderfully versatile as well! It can be prayed repeatedly as an aid to meditation by religious, or just as a simple way for anyone to "check in" with our Lord during a busy day, to be aware of His presence and avail themselves of His comfort and strength! Don't let your sins harden your heart! As the Psalm goes "If today you hear his [God's] voice, harden not your hearts (Ps 95:8). Or, as our Lord said

to St. Faustina “Let them [sinners] not fear to approach Me; they are in most need of My mercy.” Taken from: <http://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/jesus-prayer.html>

The Rosary: Since the Rosary is composed, principally and in substance, of the prayer of Christ and the Angelic Salutation, that is, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, it was without doubt the first prayer and the principal devotion of the faithful and has been in use all through the centuries, from the time of the apostles and disciples down to the present. It was only in the year 1214, however, that the Church received the Rosary in its present form and according to the method we use today. It was given to the Church by St. Dominic, who had received it from the Blessed Virgin as a means of converting the Albigensians and other sinners. Our Lady has approved and confirmed this name of the Rosary; she has revealed to several people that each time they say a Hail Mary they are giving her a beautiful rose, and that each complete Rosary makes her a crown of roses. So the complete Rosary is a large crown of roses and each chaplet of five decades is a little wreath of flowers or a little crown of heavenly roses which we place on the heads of Jesus and Mary. The rose is the queen of flowers, and so the Rosary is the rose of devotions and the most important one. Taken from <http://www.theholyrosey.org/rosaryhistory>.