

Unveiling the Holy Mysteries: An Overview



The Life of Christ not just remembered but participated in...

- 1) Birth & Baptism
- 2) Public Ministry
- 3) Institution of the Eucharist
- 4) Passion
- 5) Death/Crucifixion
- 6) Resurrection
- 7) Ascension
- 8) Second Coming

Public Celebration of the Holy Qurbana

Two main parts:

- 1) Service of the Catechumens (Liturgy of the Word)
- 2) Service of the Faithful (Liturgy of the Bread)

Can you identify the start and end point of the two main parts of the service?

Service of the Word (Service of the Catechumens)

a system of teaching, especially for those who were preparing for Baptism

5 main parts to the service

- 1) Beginning (Procession & Trisagion)
- 2) Scripture readings followed by the sermon
- 3) Offering of the incense (Promeon & Sedra)
- 4) Blessing of the censer
- 5) Nicene Creed & Intercessions

Procession Around the Altar *(Participation in the Birth of Christ)*



Mary who bore Thee
John who baptized Thee
May they be to Thee supplicants for us
Have mercy on us

The mystery of the incarnation is described saying that without change, the Son became man, continuing His eternal glory and His position in the Holy Trinity.

By Thy Mother's earnest prayers
By Thy saint's entreaties
I adore Thee, Lord and King
Sole begotten, heavenly one,
Word and Father's son
Though Immortal Thou dost be
In Thy nature true
Thou descendest by Thy grace
Bringing life salvation free
For our fallen human race

Thou incarnate wast of her
Holy virgin blest
Mary, glorious, chaste, and pure
Mother of our God
Man becoming nor with change
Thou wast crucified for us
Christ, who art our Lord and God

Thou didst trample death by death
Ending this our death
Thou art one of person three
Holy Trinity
Worshipped equal praised the same
With the Father and the Holy Ghost
Have Thou mercy on us all

Trisagion

(accepted prayer to be said at the beginning of every prayer)

Holy art Thou, O God
Holy art Thou, Almighty
Holy art Thou, Immortal,
Crucified for us (+), have mercy on us.

Sung by the Seraphims (group of angels)
St. Mark 15:42-47 – sung by Joseph of Arimathea &
Nicodemus

As a continuation we say Kurielaison three times

Scripture Readings



1st reading
(Acts) or a General
Epistle is read by
the deacon from
the north side of
the altar, which
represents
preaching of the
gospel to the Jews.



2nd reading
An epistle of St. Paul is
read from the south side
of the altar, which
represents the
preaching of the gospel
to the Gentiles.

Gospel Reading

(Participation in the Public Ministry of Christ)



3rd reading (Gospel) is read by the priest from the center of the altar.

The Offering of Incense

Promeon (Variable): This prayer is a preface. Incense is put in the censer after this prayer.

The prayer of absolution: Since forgiveness of sins is necessary before the offering of sacrifice, this prayer is placed before the main part of the Holy Qurbana.

Sedra (Variable): This is usually a long prayer. Most of these are addressed to Jesus Christ.

1. Remembrance of the important incidents in the life of our Lord.
2. The meaning and glory of the Holy Qurbana and our unworthiness to participate in it.
3. Prayer to send down the Holy Spirit.
4. Prayers to become worthy to receive Holy Qurbana and the consequent blessings.
5. Prayer of dedication.

General Absolution

Followed by the Sedra, the congregation says:
“May the Lord accept your ministrations and help us
by your prayers.”

The priest then says:
“May we receive pardon of offenses and remission
of sins in both worlds for ever and ever.”

Blessing of the Censer

- It is the time of praising the Holy Trinity.

- The priest holds one chain and says “Holy is the Holy Father.”

- The priest holds two chains together and says “Holy is the Holy Son.”

- Holding two chains together represents the Divinity and humanity of Christ united in the same person.

- The priest holds the last chain and says “Holy is the Living and Holy Spirit.”



Nicene-Constantinople Creed

It is a proclamation or statement of faith. We proclaim the faith of the Church which is none other than our belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

During this time the priest washes his hands.

- 1) signifies the washing of the feet of the disciples
- 2) signifies the removal of sin and malice

Then the priest with open hands says:

“My teachers and brothers please pray for me so that the Holy Qurbana which I celebrate be accepted by God.”

This signifies the full agreement and shows that the holy service is celebrated in full agreement and mutual understanding.

Intercession

The priest kneels before the altar and prays for the remission of sins and further praying for all the living and dead especially the names who were given for remembrance



- The deacon then goes through the center aisle with the censer and returns.
 - shows that Christ came down from heaven and to the world and traveled all throughout
 - purifying the congregation and collecting their prayers.

The rest of the service is only for the true believers of the church as the nonbelievers leave.

Part II – Service of the Faithful (Anaphora)

The Kiss of Peace

St. Matthew 5:23-24

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.”



The Lifting of the Sosappa

What does the sosappa represent?

-represents the presence of the Lord's resurrection and life

-the swaddling clothes in which Christ was wrapped in

-the stone that was rolled away from the tomb of Christ

-rock that was struck by Moses in the desert

-bright cloud at Transfiguration



The First Benediction

Apostolic Benediction
2 Corinthians 13:14

The priest makes the sign of the cross three times and the congregation receives the blessing with their heads bowing down and making the sign of the cross.



The lifting up of our hearts and the offering of praise and thanks

The priest lifts up his hands and says a prayer

After this the priest is waving his hands over the bread and wine, showing the presence of the angels.

The congregation says:
“Holy Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, by whose glory the heaven and earth are filled…”
Revelation 4:8



The Institution of the Holy Qurbana

St. John 19: 34, St. Luke 22: 19, St. Mark 14: 24.

The priest proclaims the event of the institution of the Holy Qurbana and makes the sign of the cross three times over the bread. When he says broke, the bread is partially broken through the middle.

The priest makes the sign of the cross over the wine three times blessing the wine.



Anamnesis (Memorial of our Lord's work of atonement)

Priest reminds of us Christ's command:

"Do this in remembrance of me"
St. Luke 22 19
1 Corinthians 11: 24-25



When the priest says this, he lifts up the small 'cushion', and spoon. They are placed on the southern side. This is a reminder of the second coming of our Lord.

Thanksgiving

The priest offers thanks for the redeeming work of the Lord saying:

"We also, O Lord, Your weak and sinful servants give thanks unto You and acknowledge your loving-kindness unto all and for all"

The congregation responds:

"We glorify you, we bless you, we worship you, O Lord God, and we beseech you for mercy. Have mercy upon us."

Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Epiclesis)

Invocation of the Holy Spirit after the institution is a special feature of the Orthodox worship.

The deacon proclaims the importance of the occasion and calls the congregation to worship with awe.

As a result of the working of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine is completed to be the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord.

Again the priest blesses the body and blood making the sign of the cross three times and saying prayers.

Intercessory Prayers (Thubdens)

3 for the living, 3 for the departed

- 1) For the living patriarchs and bishops.
- 2) For the sick and suffering.
- 3) For the rulers and priests and Christian communities.
- 4) For St. Mary and all other saints.
- 5) For remembrance of the doctors and Fathers of the Church who worked for strengthening the faith.
- 6) For remembrance of all the departed ones.



Second Benediction



The second benediction is given in the name of our Lord.

Fraction and Commixture

Sanctuary is closed – Why?
– represents the darkness at the time of our Lord's death.

What two major events do we celebrate?
– the death and resurrection of our Lord.

The congregation sings the penitential song as we commemorate the death and resurrection of our Lord.

The body is broken and mixed with blood saying special prayers.

Litany

– Prayers for blessing and intercessory prayers for people in various needs are said by the deacon to which the congregation responds by saying prayers.



The Chancel is Unveiled

* The sanctuary is opened symbolizing the appearance of the resurrected Lord to the disciples.

* The curtain being drawn also symbolizes the opening of heaven through the sacrifice of our Lord and the enabling of us to call God, our Father.

The Lord's Prayer



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.



- The Lord's Prayer is recited to prepare the congregation to receive the Holy Qurbana.
- The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of dedication to mankind, both living and departed.
- Through the Lord's Prayer, we dedicate ourselves to a godly life.

Prayer for Blessing

- In continuation of the Lord's Prayer, the priest says, "Lord our God, enter us not into intolerable temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, making a way of escaping from temptation." (1Cor. 10: 13)

The deacon calls on the congregation to bow their heads before receiving Holy Qurbana and the priest prays for the congregation to make them worthy to receive it.

- This is followed by the third benediction.
 - This reminds us of the benediction given by our Lord when he ascended into heaven. (Luke 24:50)



The Third Benediction

- The only benediction where "Peace be with you" is said twice before.

Why is it said twice?

This represents the several times Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection to give them peace and strengthen their faith.

The Elevation of the Qurbana

The exaltation of the Paten and Chalice:

This represents the ascension of our Lord. (Acts 1:9-11)

- The paten and the chalice are lifted up, bells are ringing and the two lighted candles on either side of the priest represent the two angels who stood on either side of Jesus at the time of the ascension.
- We are preparing to receive the Qurbana at this time, remembering to be reverent and to remember the Holy Trinity.
- The priest prays by saying the three persons in the Trinity and the congregation responds by saying Amen.



The Communion of the Saints

- This implies that the saints are with God and we should remember how they lived their lives for Christ.



The priest steps down from the Durga (altar step) and offers prayers with the censer. This shows the great and divine fellowship with all the departed souls.

- 1) The Mother of God
- 2) Saints
- 3) Priests
- 4) Departed Souls

Procession of the Mysteries

(The Second Coming - What is to come)



“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”
St. Matthew 24:27

Receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ

- The priest receives Holy Qurbana and gives to those in the sanctuary.
- The body and blood are not given separately in our church. After the resurrection, our Lord has a glorified body including His body and blood. Hence we mix them and they are given together.
- We drink water after to make sure no remaining particle is left in our mouth



Thanksgiving

- The priest offers thanks to God for the blessings received through the Holy Qurbana. This is followed by a prayer addressed to Jesus Christ. It may be noted that most of the prayers are addressed to the Father.
- **Hoothomo:** The priest sings a concluding hymn and then congregation also sings a hymn referring to the particular day and seeking God's blessings.

The Fourth & Final Benediction

- In the final benediction of dismissal, the priest speaks of the food for the journey, reminding us of our continued journey to the heavenly home.
- The priest asks the congregation to pray for him.
- After kissing the hands of the priest or the cross, the congregation departs.



And that's all folks...