

# Symbol and Reality in the Divine Liturgy<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Contents

1. Introduction
2. First Period
  - i. The Eucharist as communion
  - ii. The Eucharist as an anticipation of the Last Things
3. Second Period
4. The consequences of historical-representational symbolism in the order of worship
  - i. The preparation of the Precious Gifts and the Prothesis
  - ii. The entry of the Liturgy and the 'Little' Entrance
  - iii. The synthronon
  - iv. The Great Entrance and what follows
  - v. The complementarity and interdependence of clerical ministries
  - vi. Offering
  - vii. The change in the character of the Liturgy as a result of repeated litanies
  - viii. The Communion prayers
  - ix. The order of the communion of the clergy

## Introduction

For reasons of methodology, we shall distinguish two periods in liturgical theology as regards the understanding of symbolism and reality in the Liturgy. The first period goes up to the iconoclast controversy, with St Maximus the Confessor as its supreme representative; the second period is from iconoclasm to the present day.

We need to distinguish these two periods because, as we shall see, after the iconoclast controversy the understanding of the rites performed in the Divine Liturgy changes to a great degree. Up to the time of iconoclasm, what is important in the Liturgy is what the faithful (clergy and laity) are all doing together. Interpretation and understanding of the Liturgy in this period is based on the rites *per se*, and these are rites performed by all, not just by the clergy. The Divine Liturgy is an action: it does not 'symbolise' something, it is something. It is an act of Communion of the Faithful, with each other and with God; a communion which is a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

In the second period, however, there develops a form of allegory or symbolism which basically has to do with what the priest does. In this period, what matters is not what the faithful and clergy do together as a whole, but what the priest does in front of the faithful, and every one of the priest's actions "symbolises" something. In other words, the Liturgy is understood as a kind of drama, in which the faith-

ful watch a representation of the life of Christ performed by the clergy.[2] This change in the understanding of the Liturgy gave rise to a change in the rites as well. Parts of the Liturgy which did not fit in with this representational symbolism fell into disuse or were modified so as to conform to the prevailing system of symbolism.

Let us look in more detail at the characteristics of these two periods.[3]

## First period

In the first period, the Divine Liturgy is understood as an act of communion of the faithful with each other and with God, and this communion is a foretaste and surety of the communion of the faithful with each other and with God in his Kingdom.[4]

In this period, there is really no such thing as symbolism, even though the term 'symbol' is used extensively. The terms 'symbol', or, better, 'type' and 'image', are used solely for the reason that this 'communion' in the Divine Liturgy is not complete, but is a foretaste of the 'communion' in the Kingdom of God. This relationship between the Liturgy and the Kingdom of God is expressed perfectly in the words that St John of Damascus puts into our mouth in the ninth ode of the Easter Kanon:

O Christ, great and most holy Passover; O Wisdom, Word and Power of God, grant us to partake of thee more perfectly [*ektypoteron*] [in the never-ending Day of thy Kingdom].

### i. The Eucharist as communion

In the case where the Eucharist is understood as communion, the rites performed in the Liturgy form stages in achieving this communion, which is accomplished and evolves gradually through particular acts of communion. The Liturgy starts off as a gathering [*synaxis*] which is to end up as communion and union.

More specifically, the liturgy begins with the gathering of the faithful with their shepherd in one place at the same time. The assembly of the faithful 'in one place' (*epi to auto*) is the fundamental precondition for communion, which will gradually be built up among the faithful and between them and God in the course of the Liturgy.

After this initial act of the gathering of the People of God under the bishop and presbyters, there follow the readings. The faithful hear the readings together, and together they express their obedience to the will of God, whereas the catechumens are dismissed since they have not definitively declared their obedience to the divine will through Baptism. In this way, the *Synaxis* is not just any assembly, but the gather-

ing of the People of God. Later on, as the Liturgy is celebrated, the gathering will become Communion and Union.

In order for the Eucharist to be celebrated, the gifts of the faithful are placed on the Holy Table. They will be offered to God in the Anaphora.

An essential precondition for communion with God, however, is love and communion among the faithful themselves. This is why the Anaphora is preceded by the Kiss of Peace, as a confession of the love of the faithful for each other. The gathering, then, has become a communion of love.

After the Kiss of Peace, the communion of love among the faithful advances to the stage of the Anaphora, the offering of the Eucharist. What happens at the Anaphora? Is the Anaphora a form of communion?

At the Anaphora, the faithful acknowledge God as the cause and fount of their being. They acknowledge that all things that 'are' have their being as a gift, a gift of the absolutely free love of God, since he by his will alone brought all things from nonexistence into being.[5] In total gratitude, therefore, they sing the triumphal hymn, thus uniting their voices with the voices of the angels in giving thanks and glory to the Creator. In this eucharistic thanksgiving, besides angels and men the material world also takes part by the hand of man, since it is elements of the material world, bread and wine, which are offered as particular eucharistic gifts. Thus the whole of creation participates in the Eucharist, The material and spiritual worlds glorify God. The Anaphora, then, is an act of communion: The entire creation is united through man in an act of thanksgiving and praise to God: 'with one mouth and one heart' it glorifies God and refers its existence back to him.

But the Anaphora is an act of communion for another reason too: the offering of the Eucharist is not accomplished by creation through its own powers, but through the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as 'empowered by him, every creature endowed with reason and intelligence worships [the Father] and offers up to him the everlasting hymn of praise' (cf. Anaphora of St Basil). This relationship of referring one's being to Another, to the Father, is nothing other than Christ's mode of existence, and only through Christ can it be accomplished. The whole of creation, then, in the Holy Spirit, offers and refers itself through Christ to God the Father. After this, the Lord's Prayer which follows is the natural consummation and seal upon the Holy Anaphora.

The communion of the faithful with one another and with God receives its culmination, its seal and its completion in the reception of Holy Communion.

## ii. The Eucharist as an anticipation of the Last Things

As we have said, all this forms a foretaste of communion with each other and with God in his Kingdom. This truth is formulated with clarity and summary fullness by St Maximus the Confessor. According to St Maximus, the eschatological character of the Liturgy is demonstrated right from the beginning, at the opening of the Liturgy when the bishop and presbyters go up to the *synthronon* [the raised seats behind the altar], an action which images the enthronement of the Lord at the Father's right hand, bringing human nature with him.[6] After that, the Gospel reading 'indicates the end of the world'.[7] The dismissal of the catechumens images the future judgement.[8] The beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful images in advance the entry of those who are worthy into the bridal chamber of Christ.[9] The kiss of peace 'prefigures and portrays the concord and unanimity and identity of mind that all will leave with each other in faith and love at the time when the ineffable good Things are revealed, through which those who are worthy receive intimate familiarity with the Word of God'.[10] The Offering of the Eucharist is performed as an expression of the gratitude of the just for the divine gifts they enjoy in the Kingdom of God.[11] The triumphal hymn 'indicates that union and equality of honour with the bodiless and intelligible powers which will be manifest in the future'.[12] The Lord's Prayer 'is the symbol of the real and living adoption which will be given by the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit'.[13] Finally, the reception of Holy Communion 'indicates the adoption which through the goodness of our God will come about in every way upon all who are worthy, the union and intimacy and divine likeness and deification'.[14]

This dialectical relationship of the Eucharist with the Kingdom of God is expressed very clearly in the following text of St Maximus:

As we believe that we have participated in the gifts of the Holy Spirit here, in the present life, through the grace which is by faith, so we believe that we shall take possession of these gifts in the age to come in truth, really and in actual fact, according to the unfailing hope of our faith and the sure and inviolable promise of him who gave us this promise. Having kept the commandments according to our ability, [we shall receive these gifts,] moving from the grace which is by faith to grace by sight, as our God and Saviour Jesus Christ transforms us to be like himself, by taking away the characteristics of corruption which are in us and bestowing on us the archetypal mysteries which have been shown to us in some measure here through sensible symbols.[15]

## Second period

Later, as we have said, we see the introduction of a form of theatrical symbolism which regards the Liturgy as a representation of the life of Christ, i.e. a repetition of events in the historical past.[16] According to this allegorical interpretation, the parts of the Liturgy are understood as follows: The Prothesis symbolises the birth of Christ. The Little Entrance and the readings symbolise the Lord's public preaching ministry. The Great Entrance symbolises the burial of Christ; [but] according to St Nicholas Cabasilas, however, it symbolises Christ's last journey to Jerusalem.[17] For the remaining parts of the Liturgy, things are not so clear: the Anaphora, because of the exclamation, "Take, eat...", can symbolise either the Last Supper (according to most commentators) or the Crucifixion (according to Cabasilas).[16] (Though how can this be, since the funeral procession has already happened?) The Epiklesis of the Holy Spirit symbolises Pentecost. When the altar doors are opened and the priest comes out with the Precious Gifts at 'In the fear of God ...', this symbolises the Resurrection of Christ. Again there is a disjunction in the historical sequence, since Pentecost has already happened.

In order to deal with the problem of irregularities in historical sequence in the symbolism, various solutions are put forward. The fact that in the end no solution manages to iron out these irregularities effectively, just goes to show that this form of symbolism is something that has been imposed on the Liturgy after the event, and that when the Early Church originally established the order of the Liturgy, it had no intent on providing a dramatic representation of the life of Christ.

The fact that the Early Church had in mind no such idea is demonstrated above all by the discrepancy between the rites themselves and their allegorical interpretation. Here are two examples:

1. As we mentioned earlier, according to the dramatic-representational interpretation the Prothesis symbolises the birth of Christ, and indeed it has become customary to have the icon of the Nativity above the table of preparation. The words of the Prothesis, however, refer exclusively to the Crucifixion. As the priest cuts the prosphora, he says: 'As a sheep he was led to the slaughter and as a spotless lamb before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' 'One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and straightway there came forth blood and water.' Everything speaks of the Crucifixion, without a single reference to the Nativity. It is only one much later addition that (finally) refers to the Nativity: 'And the star came and stood over the place where the young Child was'.[19]
2. We have said that according to the dramatic-representational interpretation, the Great Entrance symbolises the bur-

ial of the Lord or his entry into Jerusalem. But if we look at the text of the prayers accompanying this rite, nowhere is anything said about the Lord's burial or the entry into Jerusalem. In the prayers which accompany the Great Entrance, we ask God to make us worthy to offer the unbloody sacrifice.

We could give many other such examples of a discrepancy between the symbolism and the rite. But we will limit ourselves to these, in order to go on to something more important: the consequences this kind of symbolism has had in the action of the Liturgy.

### **The consequences of historical-representational symbolism in the order of worship**

As we have said above, the historical-representational interpretation imposed *post factum* gave rise to modifications, additions or losses in the order of the Liturgy in order to make the rites conform to what they were supposed to symbolise. And this system of representational symbolism of past events gradually brought about the weakening not only of the eschatological character of the Liturgy, but also of its communal character. Once the Liturgy is theatre and something to listen to, the relationship among the faithful can have only a secondary role. The fact that they are there together at the Liturgy is something almost coincidental, because basically each is being sanctified individually, the only requirement being that they follow the rite properly, i.e. with the requisite reverence and devotion. But neither the presence of each believer there, nor the presence of the others beside him, is an actual component in the celebration of the Mystery. In consequence, the faithful have ceased to participate actively and together in the singing, the prayers or the dialogue with the clergy. The participation of the faithful has rather taken this form of passive meditation, something individual and introverted. The believer is called to follow the performance passively, as a listener or spectator, and be moved to pious thoughts. This basically is the benefit that each of the faithful garners from participation in the Eucharist.

So the dominance of allegorical symbolism in which the rites in themselves lose their meaning, the loss of eschatology in favour of turning towards the past and history and the weakening of the horizontal dimension of the communion of the faithful due to the ascendancy of representational symbolism and individual communication with God— all this has influenced the order of the Liturgy from beginning to end.

In the remainder of this article, we will look at various instances of this.

#### **i. The preparation of the Precious Gifts and the Prothesis**

Let us begin with the Prothesis, which has come to attract commentators' attention more than the entire Liturgy.

In an article to be published in the journal *Theologia* [Athens], we have shown that the term *proskomide* [lit. 'oblation'— Translator] is wholly inappropriate to describe the preparation of the Precious Gifts before the Liturgy. But as we have said, the high-flown symbolism which was applied in the teeth of the actual rites has deprived the rites of their meaning, and it is only natural for confusions to follow one after another. *Proskomide* means the same as *prosphora*, 'offering', and is used in the liturgical tradition to designate the offering of the Precious Gifts to God to be sanctified. In the manuscript tradition, therefore, and in patristic writing, it is used as a synonym for *anaphora* [[lit. 'offering up'— Translator] and is regularly interchanged with that term. *Proskomide* refers to the Anaphora, and has nothing to do with the preparation of the Precious Gifts before the Liturgy.

Equally inappropriate for the preparation of the Precious Gifts before the Liturgy is the term *prothesis* [lit. 'setting forth'— Translator]. Our research has convinced us that prothesis is nothing other than (1) the placing of the Precious Gifts on the altar table before the Anaphora, and (2) the state of the Gifts up to the consecration. From the moment when the Precious Gifts are placed on the Holy Table up until the consecration, they are referred to as *protethenta*, '[things] set forth'.

*Proskomide* is the name given to the offering of the Precious Gifts to God (also called Anaphora and Eucharist); and once the Precious Gifts have been offered to God and consecrated, they are called *proskomisthenta* ('oblated') or 'sanctified' or even, in earlier sources, 'eucharisted!' [i.e. 'having had thanks given for them'— Translator].

The question that arises, of course, is this: this being the case, how should we designate what we have hitherto wrongly called 'Prothesis' or 'Proskomide'? We must say that we have not researched this aspect of the matter exhaustively. We consider, however, that the simplest solution is also the best: 'Preparation' is the term which precisely covers the essence and meaning of the rite of preparing the Precious Gifts.

A second symptom is the use of just one loaf in the preparation of the Precious Gifts. Celebrants have got into the bad habit of taking all the particles from one or a just few loaves. We should say here that according to the manuscript tradition of the Liturgy, the 'chicken' which comes before the 'egg' appears to be the practice of using several loaves. This means that the practice of cutting out particles came into the rite of preparation in order for all the loaves to be used, so that none of them should be wasted but something from each one, even just a crumb, should be consecrated and be-

come what it was made for. The symbolism of particles representing the Mother of God or the Saints came in 'after the event', so to speak, in order to justify the multitude of particles and give them some identity. But once the emphasis fell exclusively on the symbolism of the rites and not on the significance of everyone's participation in the offering of the Gifts, it was natural for the significance of taking particles from all the loaves to be overlooked.

## ii. The Entry of the Liturgy and the 'Little' Entrance

As we have said, the entry of the clergy and laity into the church to perform the Liturgy has been turned into a procession within the church (or, in the worst case, in front of the iconostasis), i.e. what today we wrongly call the 'Little Entrance'. The idea of the gathering of the faithful 'in one place' as the fundamental action of the opening of the Liturgy has disappeared. Certainly, other factors also contributed to this change, such as the connection of Matins to the Liturgy, the careless mixing of elements from the monastic and the parish typikon, the disappearance of the narthex, etc.

The confusion surrounding the meaning of the Entrance is also shown by the practice among many clergy of reading the Prayer of the Entrance before the Entrance, or to be exact before the exit— i.e. as the priest comes out of the altar and not as he enters into it. But the emphasis in the action of the Entrance is precisely on the entry, not on the exit. 'Grant that with our entrance, holy angels may enter...', we say in the prayer of the Entrance. Hence, if we wish to preserve even a rudimentary understanding of the original significance of the Entrance, this prayer should be said in front of the Holy Doors, as the priest is about to enter the altar.

Equally infelicitous, it seems, is the distinction between the Little and Great Entrances, which we try to bring out by varying the route of the two processions so that the Great Entrance is longer than the Little Entrance!

According to the manuscript tradition and patristic sources, the Little Entrance is simply 'the Entrance' or 'the first Entrance', while the Great Entrance is the 'Entrance of the Holy Mysteries'.

## iii. The Synthronon

Under the influence of historical-representational symbolism, the *synthronon* [i.e. a raised seat in the apse behind the altar for the bishop and presbyters— Translator] was abolished. Since the Little Entrance and the readings symbolise the Lord's preaching ministry and not the Second Coming, the *synthronon* is rendered useless. Only an eschatological understanding of the Liturgy can justify its use.

According to the order which unfortunately prevails today and in the absence of the *synthronon*, this is what happens: while the people sing the Trisagion (or rather the chanters, not the people, since 'the people' as a category has vanished from our Church's liturgical practice), the presbyters repeat it silently (which makes no sense— they should rather be singing it with the people). Then, after the exclamation 'Dynamis!', the chief celebrant turns to the Prothesis (i.e. to the place where the Precious Gifts are prepared, which has wrongly come to be called 'Prothesis') and says:

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Blessed art thou on the throne of glory of thy Kingdom, who art seated upon the cherubim, always now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

First of all, one might observe here— or rather, ask— who is it that comes from the Prothesis? Whatever pietistic answer might be given to this question, the important thing is that at this point one of the worst distortions in the action of the Liturgy has crept in. These words of the celebrant have nothing to do with the Prothesis. They are words which the celebrant [is to speak] as he turns to the *synthronon* behind the Holy Table!

According to the liturgical tradition, the bishop, accompanied by the presbytery, turns towards the *synthronon* and says: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' And before he sits down on the throne, he says: 'Blessed art thou on the throne of glory of thy Kingdom, who art seated upon the cherubim, always now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.' The *synthronon*, however, does not express only the eschatological character of the Liturgy, but also the other dimension, that of its communal character, which has to do with the distinction and complementarity of the various degrees of ministry. The bishop does not go up to the *synthronon* alone; he goes up with the presbyters. And as Metropolitan John of Pergamon has put it very characteristically, these two ministries are interdependent and inter-penetrate. The bishop and the presbyters together form the head of the assembly and express the mystery of presiding as unity and diversity at the same time, as a mystery of identity and polyphony, unity and communion, diversity as a constituent of unity and unity as a fount of diversity. In this way the bishop and the presbyters image the trinitarian mode of existence, 'becoming examples to the faithful in all things'.<sup>[20]</sup>

## iv. The Great Entrance and what follows

Going on now to the subsequent parts of the Liturgy, we notice that under the influence of historical-representational symbolism certain troparia have been introduced after the Great Entrance. These are pronounced in a low voice by the priest and refer to the burial of the Lord; but, as we have

said, they have no place there because the Entrance is not an image of the burial.

The place where the distortion of the Liturgy resulting from the loss of its original character is particularly evident, however, is in the distortion of the dialogue following the Great Entrance between the bishop and presbyters (or between the presiding presbyter and his concelebrant presbyters, or the presbyter and the deacons).

According to the current order of the Liturgy, after the Entrance of the Precious Gifts and their deposition on the Holy Table, the presbyters kiss the bishop's hand and say 'Pray for us, holy Master'; and the bishop replies: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.'

When a priest is celebrating with a deacon, the deacon says: 'Pray for me holy Master'; and the priest replies: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee...'

What is the meaning of such an impressive-sounding blessing upon the deacon at this moment? The problem is solved if one examines the manuscripts.

In the manuscripts, this dialogue is completely reversed. After the Precious Gifts have been placed on the Holy Table, the bishop says to the presbyters: 'Pray for me, brethren', and they reply to him: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee...'

When a priest is celebrating with a deacon, according to the manuscripts, the deacon says to the presbyter: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee...', since the presbyter has asked the deacon: 'Pray for me, brother'.<sup>[21]</sup>

Generally speaking, we have forgotten the idea of interdependence and complementarity between the orders of clergy, or between the clergy and people. This loss has resulted in a kind of perversion of the relations between the orders. The role of each order degenerates into either a matter of protecting self-sufficiency, or else a contest for power and authority, a matter of who is higher and who is lower. (Someone did once say, of course, 'Let the leader be as one who serves.') In the manuscript tradition of the *Euchologion* [i.e., the service book for the Liturgy], however, we find a way of thinking totally opposite to that of power and authority, one that can be understood only on the principle of communion: even though the bishop occupies the highest rank of priesthood, he asks the blessing and spiritual support of the presbyters when he is about to perform the highest of the ministries entrusted to him by the Church. Thus he recalls that the Church makes him bishop and president of the Eucharistic Assembly. He is the bishop and president of the Eucharistic Assembly in the Holy Spirit, which means that his episcopacy is a matter of communion and not a right secured for him as an individual. The bishop of each local Church is one, but he is not alone!<sup>[22]</sup>

## v. The complementarity and interdependence of clerical ministries

This complementarity and interdependence—and also the distinction between the various clerical ministries—have been lost or forgotten, and their loss has resulted in a variety of distortions at other points of the Liturgy as well. The relationship between the various degrees of priesthood has come to be restricted to how much the lower order can do relative to the higher—the fact that the lower cleric does less than the higher, while the highest of the clergy can do everything. In the understanding of the Early Church, the relationship between the various degrees of priesthood is not purely a matter of how many rights or powers the clergy of each degree have. There is rather a distinction of gifts, not a hierarchy. The responsibility of each 'order of clergy'<sup>[23]</sup> is irreplaceable, and each ministry needs the other.

In consequence, according to the manuscript tradition of the Liturgy:

The preparation of the Precious Gifts is performed by the deacons.

The involvement of the presbyters or the bishop is superfluous.<sup>[24]</sup>

The Great Entrance, again, is performed by the deacons alone. The presbyters remain in the altar surrounding the bishop; they say the preparatory prayers with him, and then join the bishop in receiving the Precious Gifts on the altar table.<sup>[25]</sup>

Again, the prayer of the Anaphora is read 'by all together'.<sup>[26]</sup> With the bishop, the presbyters too bless the Precious Gifts.

## vi. 'Offering...'

Another point at which this distortion of the Liturgy can be observed is the construction of the exclamation 'Thine own of thine own...'. According to the manuscripts, the wording is not 'we offer thee thine own of thine own' but 'offering thee...', and the main verb of the sentence is 'we praise thee', which is pronounced by people and clergy together. Here we should note: 'We praise thee' is not sung by the people alone, but by clergy and people together. The words, 'We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee...', etc. form an organic continuation of the prayer of the Anaphora, the text of which does not make sense without this passage.

Here we should remark on the words 'Also we offer thee this spiritual worship...', which have slipped in as an introduction to the Epiclesis. This added phrase is superfluous if the whole text of the prayer is read properly:

Remembering therefore this our Saviour's command and all that has been done for us..., offering thee

thine own of thine own— on behalf of all and for all— we praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee, O Lord, and we pray thee, our God: send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here set forth, and make this Bread... [etc.][27]

It is striking here that the 'Amen' at the consecration of the Precious Gifts, which according to the Liturgy booklets current today is said by the deacon or concelebrant presbyters, according to the manuscripts is said by the people.

This shows two things:

- i. the active participation of the people in the consecration.
- ii. that the Epiclesis was said out loud, as was the whole prayer of the Anaphora, and not inaudibly as has unfortunately become customary.[28]

### **vii. The change in the character of the Liturgy as a result of repeated litanies**

The shift of the Liturgy towards individual needs has given rise to yet other distortions in the order of the Liturgy. Repeated series of petitions interrupt the order of the Liturgy every so often. In the beginning we have the Litany of Peace, after the Gospel the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the Litany 'Let us complete our prayer unto the Lord' after the Great Entrance, and again the same Litany after the Anaphora!

A careful study of the text shows us that the content of most of these petitions has nothing to do with the text of the prayers accompanying them, or with the point of the Liturgy at which they have been placed. A careful study of the manuscripts and comparative study of other early Liturgies tells us that most of these petitions are added in and are borrowings from the services of Matins and Vespers.

We shall mention here two more points at which we see this shift from the personal-communal to the individual, or from the eschatological to the here-and-now.

### **viii. The Communion prayers**

One point is the introduction into the Liturgy of prayers of individual preparation for receiving Holy Communion, purely pietistic in character— as if the entire celebration of the Mystery were not a preparation for receiving Holy Communion. We shall not spend time on this subject because, fortunately, it has been remarked upon by many theologians and non-theologians, and enough has been said. We will simply say that we hope some day an *Ieratikon* [Priest's Service Book] without these prayers will be produced. The prayers themselves are all very fine, but they are to be read privately at home; they are not liturgical prayers. The sixteen prayers of the Divine Liturgy which have already been read, and in

particular the Anaphora, are more than enough preparation for the reception of Holy Communion for both clergy and laity.

### **ix. The order of the communion of the clergy**

In conclusion, we will mention the loss of the early order for the communion of those in the altar. According to the order prevailing today, the communion of the clergy takes place as follows: the priest takes a particle of the Precious Body for himself, and drinks from the Holy Cup. If several priests are concelebrating, the same goes for each of the priests: each one communicates himself. If a bishop is celebrating, the bishop communicates himself on his own, and gives Holy Communion to the clergy concelebrating with him. But this order makes no sense according to the ancient order of the Liturgy. According to the liturgical tradition of the Church, nobody communicates on his own. Holy Communion is always given by someone else. And here, the notion of higher or lower clergy ceases to apply. According to the liturgical tradition of the Church, if a bishop is celebrating without any other bishop concelebrating, a presbyter will approach the Holy Table and offer Holy Communion to the bishop, and the bishop will at once offer Holy Communion to that presbyter. When presbyters are concelebrating, they will offer Holy Communion to each other. When a presbyter is concelebrating with a deacon, the deacon will offer Holy Communion to the presbyter, and will then receive Communion from the presbyter.[29] So what Metropolitan John of Pergamon has said applies here: 'Man's relationship with God is a relationship which passes through other people.'[30]

### **Endnotes**

1. Opinions and statements in this article are the fruit of broader research undertaken by the author in preparation for a (second) doctoral dissertation to be submitted to the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki on 'The eschatological theology of the Mystery of the Divine Liturgy in St Maximus the Confessor'.

2. Sources will be given later, when we look in more detail at the characteristics of the two periods.

3. These developments in liturgical theology are summarized and dealt with in some depth in the following: R. Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au Xve siècle* (=Archives de l'Orient Chretien 9: Paris, 1966); H.-J. Schultz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression*, ed. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York, NY: Pueblo Publishing Co. 1986); A. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975); R. Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of

Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34-35 (1980-1981), pp. 45-75. In addition, articles by Metropolitan John of Pergamon contain frequent references and comments relating to the developments and changes which the theology of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist has undergone in the course of history.

4. This is demonstrated first by the order of the Liturgy during this period, and secondly by various canonical and patristic testimonies: these will be given in detail in our doctoral dissertation, currently in progress (see note 1 above). As an indication, we may say that clear evidence of such an understanding is to be found in Early church texts such as the *Didache* or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and the letters of St Ignatius the Godbearer, as also in the various references to the meaning of the Mystery of the Eucharist in the Cappadocian Fathers and other Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, and, finally, in the Eucharistic theology of St Maximus. The 'communal' character of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist is stressed in the Areopagitic writings as well. The Areopagite's eucharistic theology is deficient, however, when it comes to eschatology!

5. On 'eucharistic ontology', see further Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, 'Christology and Existence. The Dialectic of Created and Uncreated and the Dogma of Chalcedon' [in Greek], *Synaxi* 2 (1982), pp. 9-20; 'Preserving God's Creation', *Sourozh* 39-41 (March-August 1990); N. Loudovikos, *Eucharistic Ontology* [in Greek] (Athens: 1992).

6. Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy* 8, PG 91:688D.

7. *Ibid.*, 13, PG 91:692B.

8. *Ibid.*, 15, PG 91:693C.

9. *Ibid.*, 15, PG 91:693C.

10. *Ibid.*, 17, PG 91:696A

11. *Ibid.*, 18, PG 91:696B. There is, of course, a difficulty at this point in Maximus, since he refers to the Creed but is actually talking about the Anaphora.

12. *Ibid.*, 19, PG 91:696C.

13. *Ibid.*, 20, PG 91:696D.

14. *Ibid.*, 20, PG 91:709C.

15. *Ibid.*, 24, PG 91:704D-705A.

16. We will not give detailed reference to patristic texts, which would result in a whole string of footnotes. As examples of this kind of representational symbolism, we may cite the following: St Germanos of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History*, of which the best critical edition to date is P. Meyendorff, *St Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press 1984); St Nicholas Cabasilas, *On the Divine Liturgy*, PG 150:368-492 or *Source Chretiennes* 4 bis (1967), ed. J.M. Hussey and PA McNulty, *Nicholas Cabasilas: A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*

(London: SPCK 1960); St Symeon of Thessaloniki, *On the Divine Liturgy*, PG 155:253-304; *idem*, *Interpretation concerning the Holy Temple, the Sacred Vestments, the Divine Mystagogy; etc*, PG 155:697-750. From the fifteenth century onwards, the interpretation of the Divine Liturgy as a dramatic representation of the life of Christ is steadily repeated in all the Church writers, as also in the textbooks on liturgies.

17. *On the Divine Liturgy*, Chap. 15.

18. *Ibid.*, Chap. 33.

19. This passage is first introduced into the order of preparation of the Precious Gifts in the fourteenth century, in the *Diataxis* of St Philotheos Kokkinos (1379). For the text of the *Diataxis* see P. Trembelas, *The Three Liturgies according to the Codices in Athens* (Athens: 1982), pp. 1-21.

20. A rich theological exposition of this idea— of the mystery of 'presiding' at the Eucharistic assembly as a mystery of 'communion'— may be found in the works of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, and especially the following articles: 'The Meaning of Ordination. A study paper of Faith and Order Commission – Comments', in *Study Encounter* 4 (1968), pp. 191-193; 'Ordination et Communion', in *L'etre eclesial* (Geneva: Labor et Fides 1981), pp. 171-179; 'The Local Church in a Perspective of Communion', in *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 123-142.

21. See R. Taft, 'The Dialogue after the Entrance of the Gifts', in *The Great Entrance* (=Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 200: Rome 1978), pp. 285-307.

22. See above, note 20.

23. Anaphora of St John Chrysostom.

24. The fact that the deacons performed the Prothesis according to the order of the Byzantine liturgical tradition is attested consistently in a variety of patristic sources and manuscript Euchologia or Orders of Service. This order declines after the fourteenth century. Details of sources will appear in our forthcoming article on the Prothesis in *Theologia*.

25. See e.g. the twelfth century Greek codex British Museum Add. 34060, critical edition by R. Taft, 'The Pontifical Liturgy of the Great Church according to a Twelfth-Century Diataxis in Codex British Museum Add 34060', *Orientalia christiana Periodica* 45 (Rome 1979), pp. 279-307; also the Latin translation of the Byzantine liturgy by Leo Tuscus, made between 1173 and 1178, in the critical edition by A. Jacob, 'La traduction de la Liturgie de Saint Jean Chrysostome par Leon Toscan, edition critique', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 32 (Rome 1966), pp. 111-162.

26. See A. Jacob, 'La concelebration de l'Anaphore a Byzance d'apres le temoignage de Leon Toscan', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35 (Rome 1969), pp. 249-256.

27. I owe this observation to a personal conversation with the distinguished liturgical scholar Stefano Parenti, a disciple of R. Taft and M. Arranz.

28. See P. Trempelas, 'L'audition de l'Anaphore eucharistique par le peuple', *L'Eglise et les Eglises 2* (Chevtogne 1955), pp.207-220.

29. See R. Taft, 'Receiving Communion— a Forgotten Symbol', *Worship 57* (1983). pp. 412-418.

30. Metropolitan John of Pergamon, 'The Experience of the Mystery of the Church', in *Kastoria-Attiki*, Volume dedicated to Metropolitan Dorotheos (Yiannaropoulos) of Attika (Athens 1991), pp. 31-40

The Divine Liturgy is the most important divine office. There are countless articles and books describing it. In the same way that the Liturgy is versatile, its history is also multifaceted, so there are quite a few facts that only a handful of people seem to know about the Liturgy. Let's find out what we don't know about the Divine Liturgy. There are a whole lot of books and papers that deal with the symbolism of the Liturgy: The Entrance with the Gospel is said to symbolize the beginning of the Lord's public ministry, while the entrance with the Chalice before the Communion of the Faithful s