

# THE DIVINE LITURGY

St. John Chrysostom

# The Heavenly Liturgy

In Heaven, God is worshiped unceasingly...

John the Evangelist was given a vision of this unceasing worship God in Heaven. He describes it in the Book of Revelation:

“I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here...”





“At once I was in the Spirit,  
and there in heaven stood a  
throne, with One seated on  
the throne...

“Around the throne are  
twenty-four thrones, and  
seated on the thrones are  
twenty-four elders, dressed in  
white robes, with golden  
crowns on their heads...

“In front of the throne burn  
seven flaming torches...

“Around the throne and on  
each side of the throne are  
four living creatures...





“Day and night they sing: ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, Who was and is to come.’”

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the One Who is seated on the throne, Who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created.”





Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands...

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, “To the One seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!”



# Divine Liturgy

- The word “Liturgy” comes from the Greek word *leiturgia*, which means “work.”
- Liturgy therefore is our “spiritual work,” our service to God.
- The **Divine Liturgy** is:
  - the unceasing worship of God that takes place in heaven.
  - the celebration of the Eucharist, here on earth, which joins us with the unceasing Divine Liturgy in heaven!

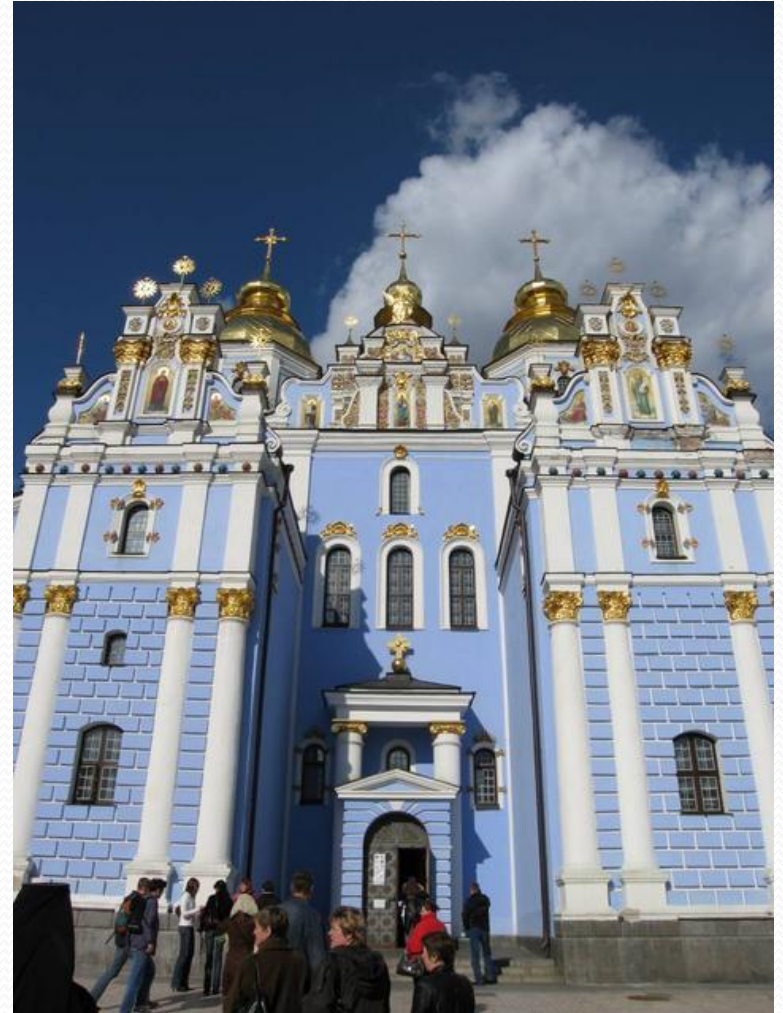




# The House of God

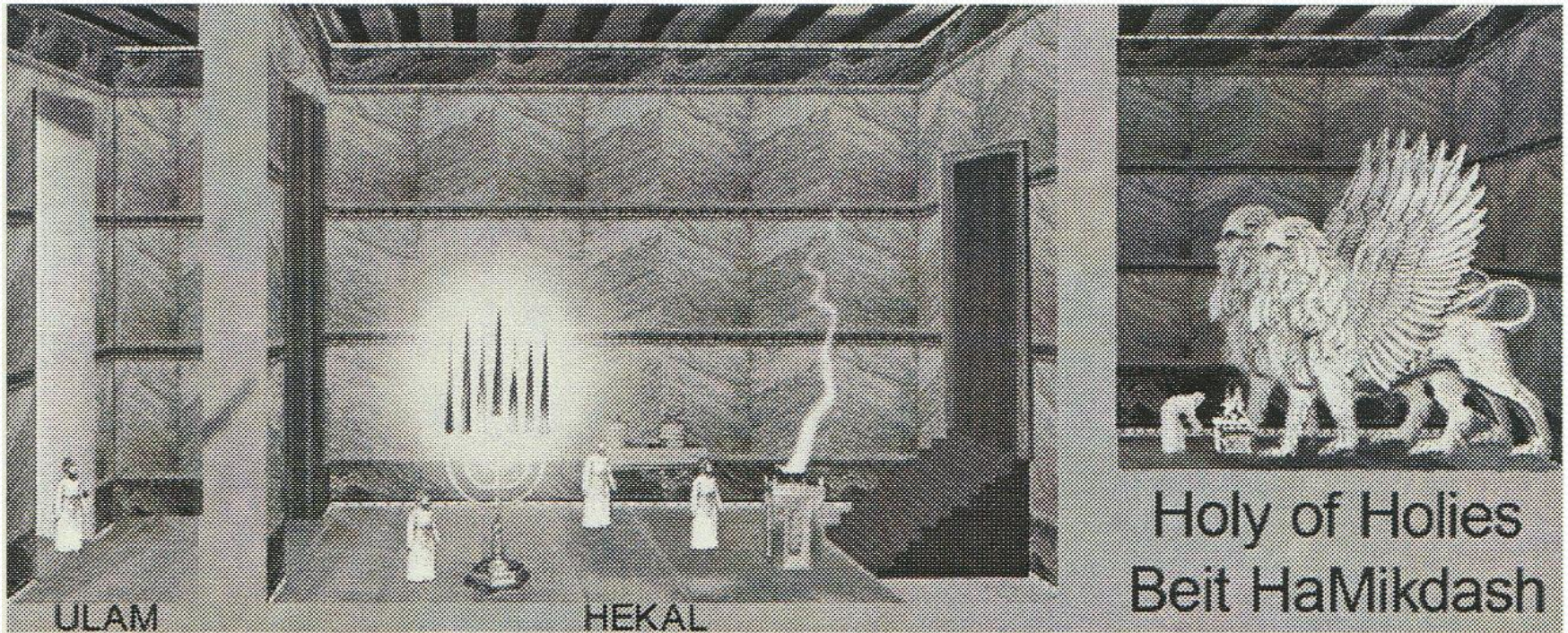
# We Gather to Worship

- Every Sunday, we gather as the People of God to celebrate the Eucharist, the Divine Liturgy
- The place of worship is called the “House of God,” “Holy Temple”, or “Church.”
- Every church is divided into three important parts:
  - the Narthex
  - the Holy Place
  - the Holy of Holies.





# The First Temple in the Old Testament



ULAM – corresponds to the narthex, vestibule or exterior court

HEKAL – Holy Place; where the word of God was heard; the priestly service of God took place.

DEBIR – Holy of Holies; the Ark of the Covenant and the Presence of God.



# The Narthex

- The first part of every church.
- It represents the WORLD.
- You could say, that we live in the “Narthex.”
- This is where the feet of Christ once walked.





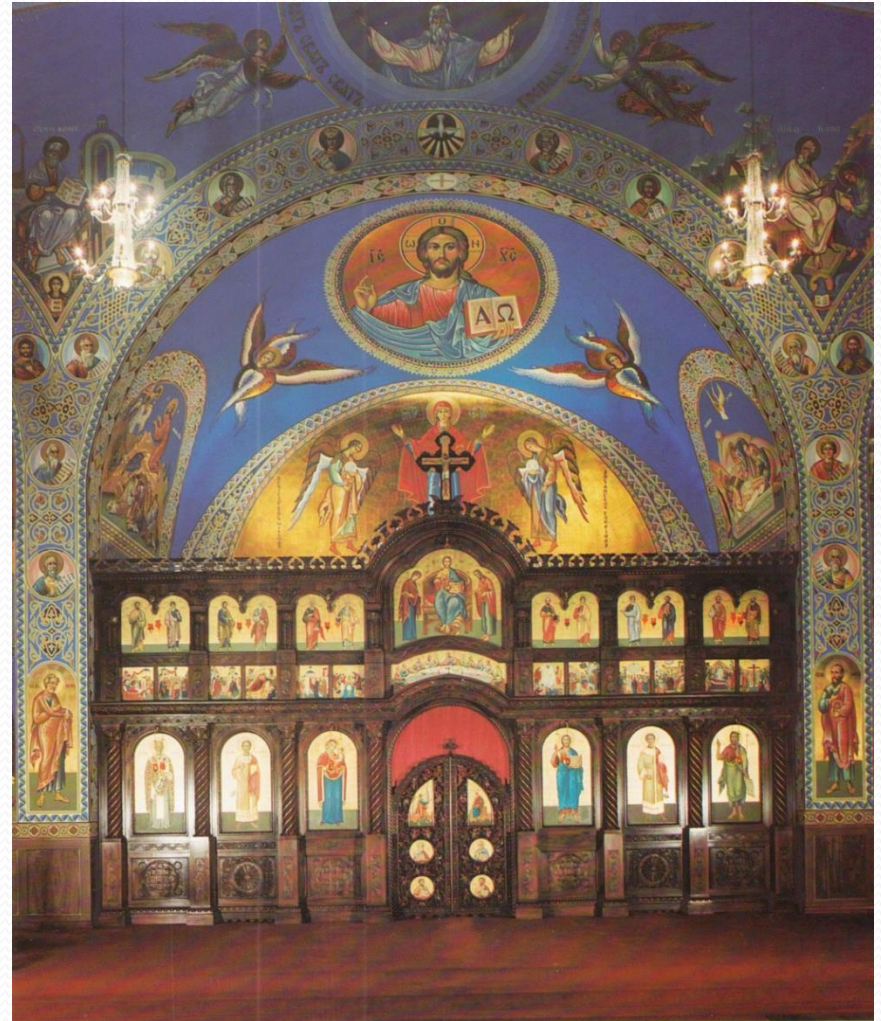
- The Holy Place represents the KINGDOM OF GOD on earth, the CHURCH, or BODY OF CHRIST; it is where the members of Christ assemble.
- Also called the “NAVE”, which means “ark”, “boat” or “ship”. To enter the NAVE is to board a ship (or an ark), which will take us on a journey.
- When we celebrate the Eucharist:
  - we leave the world (narthex),
  - we gather in the ARK of Salvation,
  - we are taken to Heaven itself (Holy of Holies)

# Holy Place



# Holy of Holies

- The third and most important part of the church: the HOLY OF HOLIES.
- It represents HEAVEN itself and the worship of God that takes place there.
- Heaven is the goal of our life.
- Heaven is also the goal of every Divine Liturgy we celebrate on earth.
- The Holy of Holies is separated from the Holy Place by an icon screen.

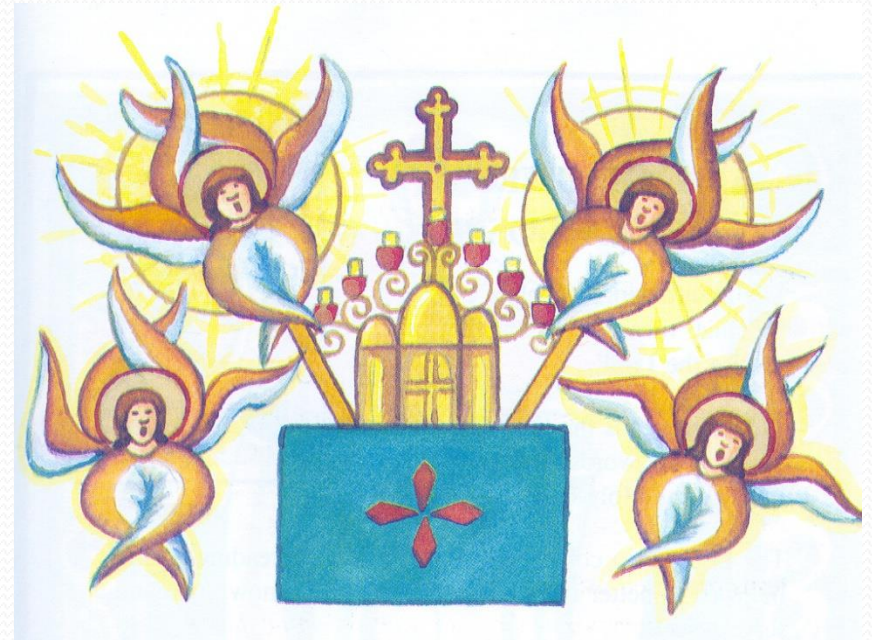




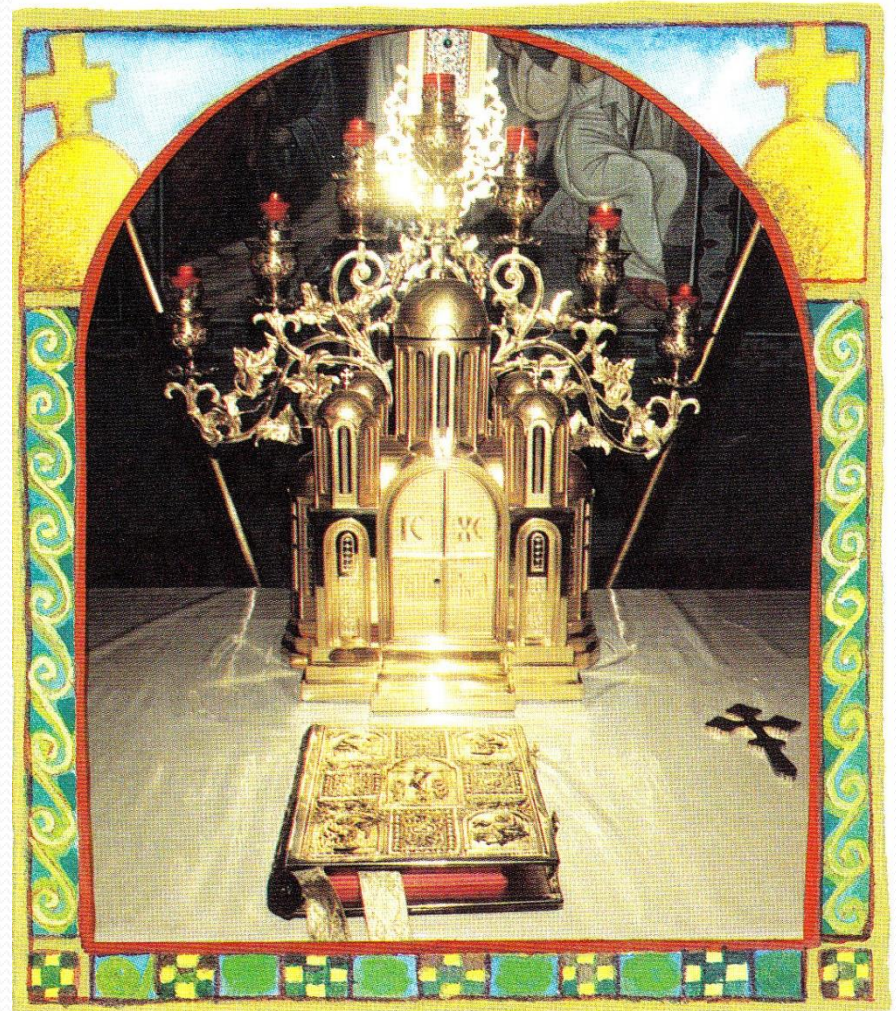
# Holy Throne of God

- The heart of every church, the place of God's special presence on earth.
- This is where the Lord, risen from the dead is present in mysterious way, as He promised:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (*Mt 28:20*)



- **Artophorion** – the “*House of Bread*,” the place where the consecrated Gifts are reserved.
- **Cross** – a reminder of God’s love and infinite sacrifice for us.
- **Repidia** – two fans, behind the altar; each is engraved with the image of a cherubim; a reminder of their silent presence.
- **Seven Golden Lamps** – God is Light; the Lamps represent the entire Universal Church.
- **Holy Gospel** – also the “Bread of Life.”
- **Eternal Lamp** – a reminder of God’s silent presence.





# Preparation

Divine Liturgy – Part I

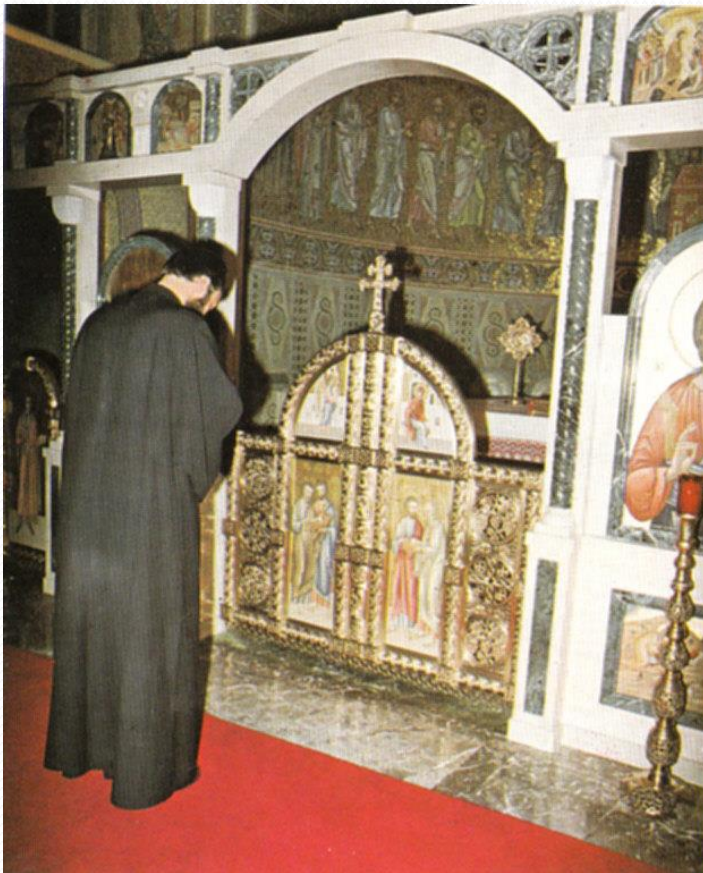
# Personal Preparation

- As we wake in the morning, our thoughts turn to the Divine Liturgy and the spiritual journey we will make that day.
- We wash and dress in our best, because Jesus will be our guest.
- Our preparation should include:
  - Personal Prayer
  - Reading of the Holy Scriptures
  - The Eucharistic Fast
  - Confession (if necessary)





# The Priest's Preparation



- The priest stands before the Royal Doors to say his prayers, asking for God's blessing.
- He enters the Holy of Holies to venerate the Gospel and Altar.
- He then begins to vest for the Divine Liturgy
- Vested, he begins the "Preparation" (Proskomedia).

# The Preparation of Bread and Wine

- At the preparation table, the priest prepares the gifts of bread and wine.
- The “LAMB” is the square piece of bread that is placed upon the diskos. It represents Christ.
- Small pieces of bread are also arranged around the LAMB to represent the entire Church, the Body of Christ.
- Wine is poured with water into the chalice.

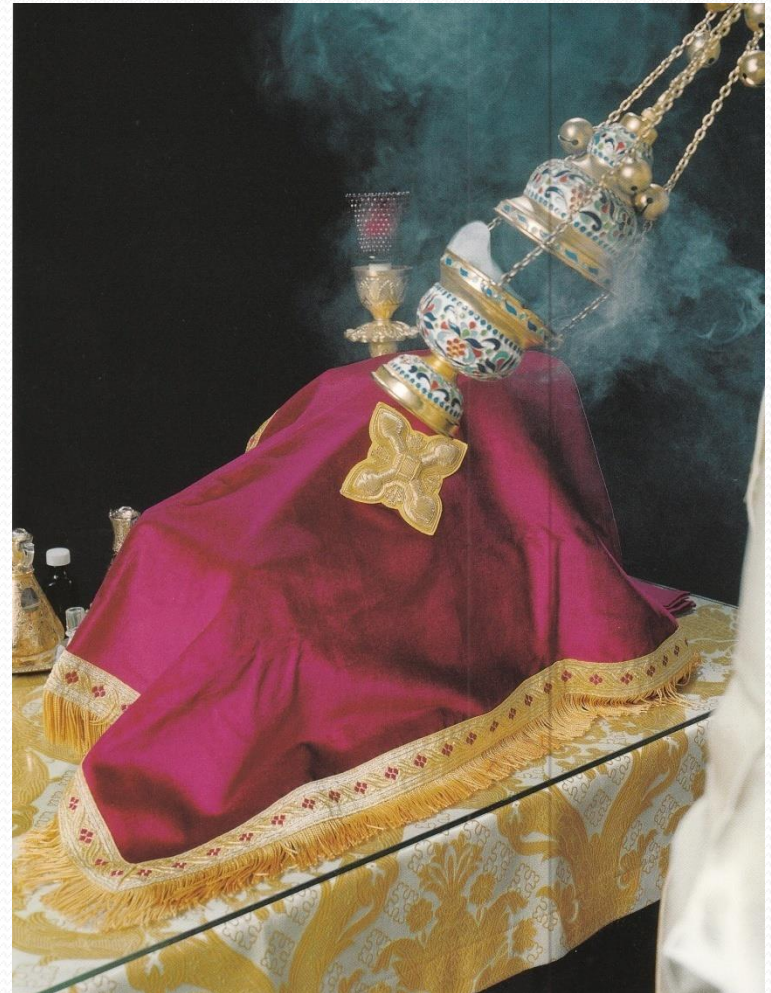






- **THE LAMB** - IC XC NI KA;  
Jesus Christ Conquers All.
- **The Mother of God.**
- **The Saints in Heaven**  
(*Church Triumphant*)  
Angels, Prophets, Hierarchs,  
Martyrs, Confessors, Monks, Nuns,  
Selfless Physicians, Joachim and  
Anna, all holy marriages , the saint  
of the day, and all the Saints.
- **The Living** (*Church  
Militant*)
- **The *Departed*** (*Church  
Suffering*)

# The Church is a Mystery...





# Liturgy of the Word

Divine Liturgy – Part II

# Blessed be the Kingdom...

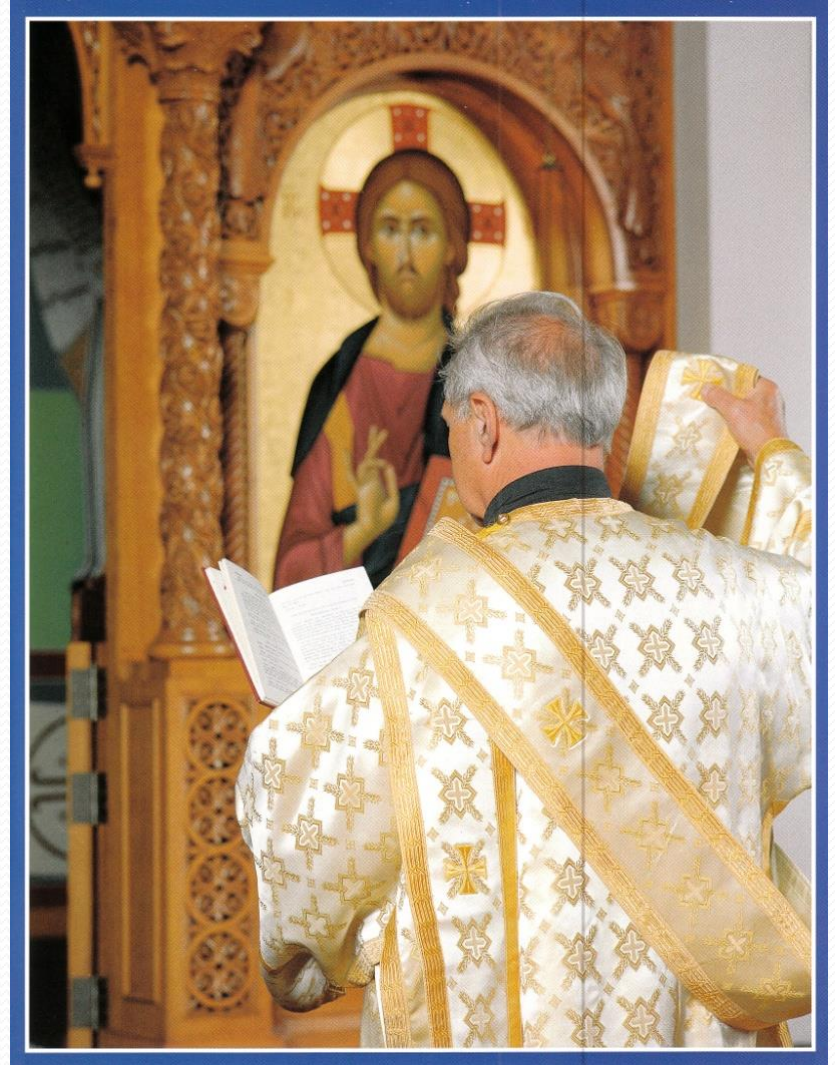
- The Liturgy of the Word begins when the priest lifts up the Gospel, blesses the altar and proclaims: **“Blessed be the kingdom...”**
- He blesses the ***Kingdom of God*** (*the Body of Christ*), which has assembled and is present in the Holy Place.
- He blesses the ***Kingdom of Heaven***, for that is our destination. We will leave this world and ascend to Heaven, to the very Throne of God.





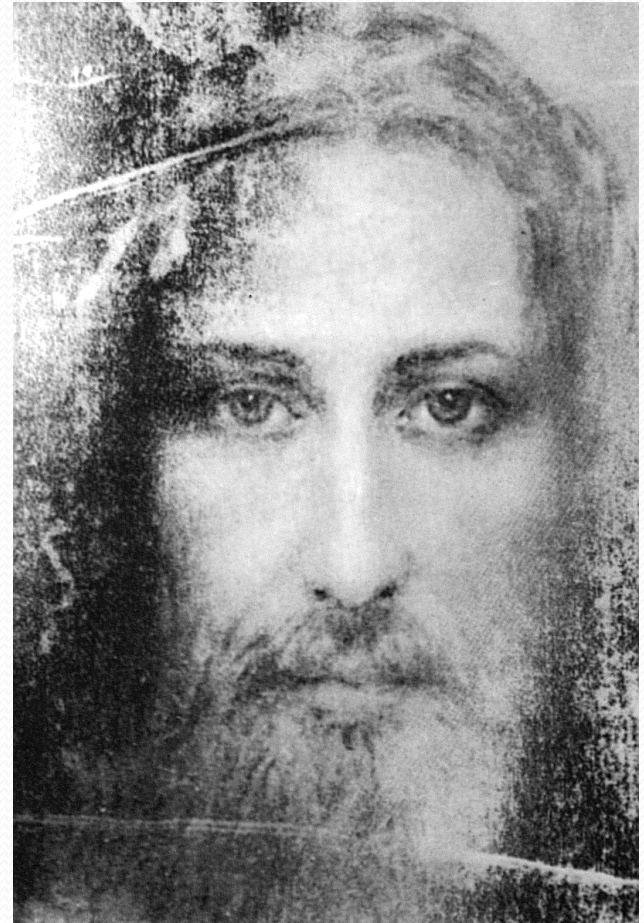
# Great Litany

- We leave the world behind, but we do not forget the needs of the world.
- With petitions and the prayer “***Lord, have mercy,***” we gather the needs and concerns of the world and bring them before God.
- At the end of each Litany, the deacons reminds us to bring ourselves, our lives and one another as a gift to God.
- “*Let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.*”



# Antiphons and the Hymn to Christ

- **Antiphons** – are psalm verses with refrains, which relate to the mystery celebrated.
- **The Hymn to Christ** - a short Creed, or Profession of Faith:
  - The Only-Begotten Son, the Word of God, is immortal
  - He become a man, born of the Virgin Mary
  - He trampled death by His death
  - He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit.





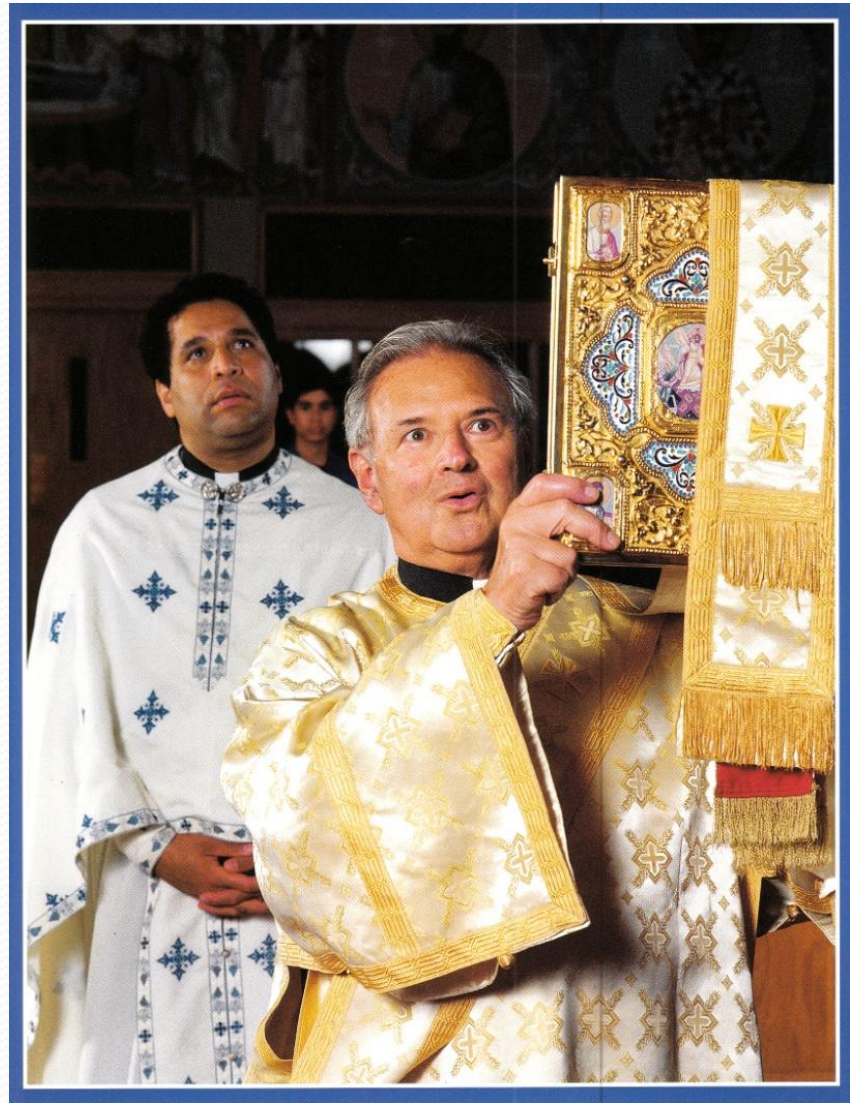
- The Hymn of Christ repeated again - not in word, but in action.
- The Procession symbolizes the descent of the Word of God from Heaven; His death and resurrection; and His ascension to the Father in Heaven, as High Priest forever.
- The Procession also reminds us that Christ is among us. *“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.”* (Mt. 18:20)

## The Procession with the Holy Gospel



# Small Entrance

- The Entrance of the priest and the gospel into the Holy of Holies symbolizes **the Entrance of Christ Himself**, together with all His angels.
- It is Christ Himself who comes to the altar, as the High Priest and the main celebrant of every Divine Liturgy.

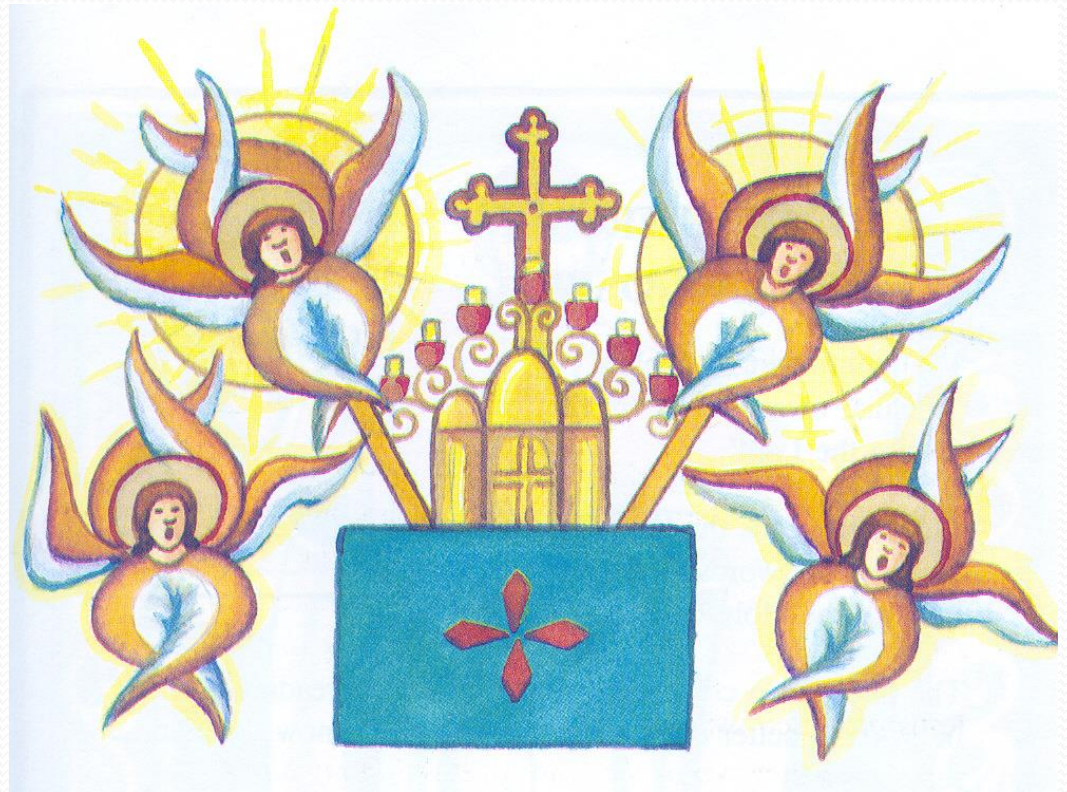




- With the entrance of Christ, the High Priest, the Holy of Holies is filled with the presence of angels and archangels who praise God, singing “Holy, holy, holy!”
- By singing the *Trisagion*, (“*Thrice-Holy*”) we join the angels in their praise of God:

**Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and immortal,  
have mercy on us...**

## The Trisagion



# The High Priest

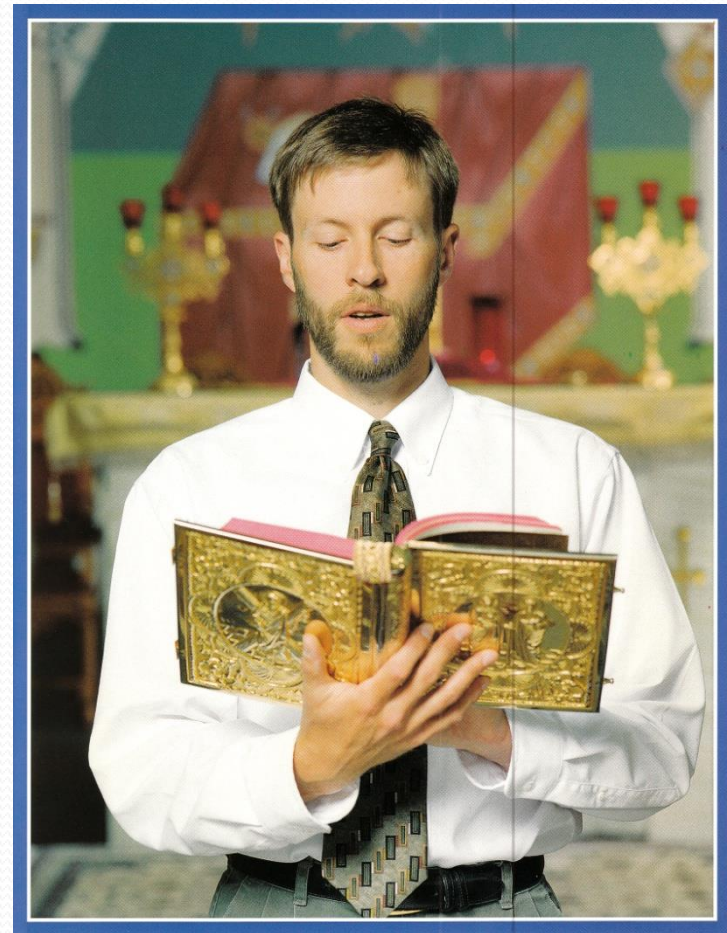
- Jesus is the High Priest and the main celebrant of every Divine Liturgy (Eucharist).
- Actually, there is really only one Divine Liturgy, one High Priest, and one perfect and eternal Sacrifice.
- The “High Place” is reserved for Jesus, the High Priest.
- The bishop sits in the High Place only because he is an icon of Christ, as Priest and Shepherd.





# God the Father Speaks to Us

- God the Father speaks to us through His **Spirit** and His **Beloved Son**.
- First, we listen attentively as the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul, James, Jude, Peter or John.
- We prepare to hear Jesus, the Son of God, speak to us by singing “Alleluia.”



# The Word of God

- **Jesus Himself speaks to us** - in the proclamation of the Holy Gospel.
- Our minds and hearts are fed by the Word, the “Bread of Life.”
- By listening attentively, the Word of God enters our minds and hearts; and by faith, we are united to Him.
- This is our first Communion with God, which prepares us for the even greater Communion that is still yet to come.





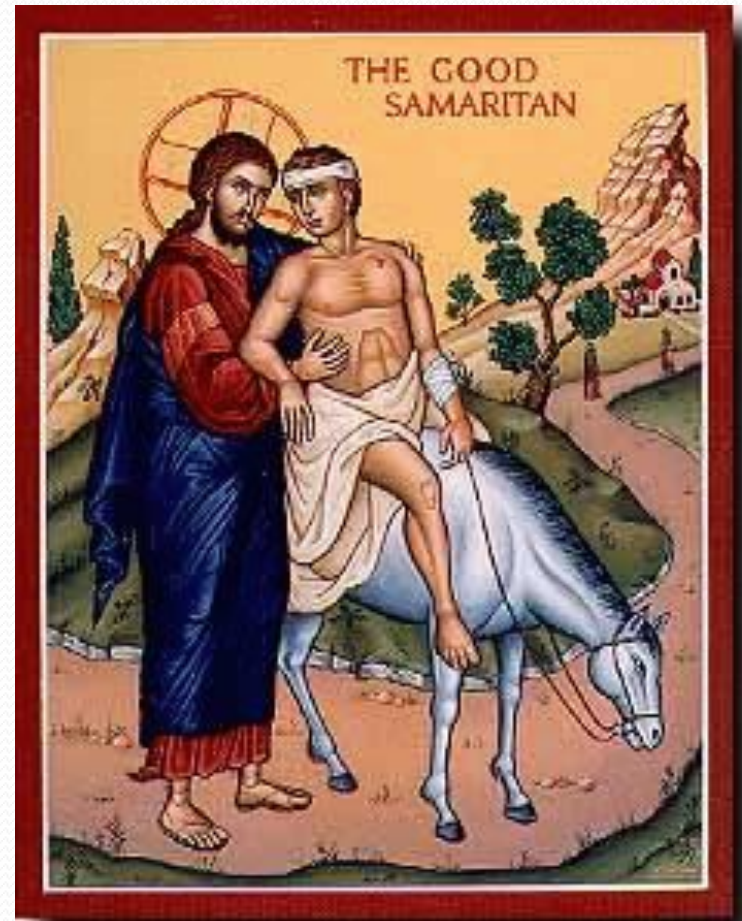
# The Homily

- Jesus would often explain His teachings and parables to His disciples.
- He continues to do this through His priests during the homily, after the proclamation of the gospel.
- A **homily** is a further explanation of the Scriptures, which is meant to help us better understand the word, to accept it and to apply it to our daily life.



# Insistent Litany

- The Liturgy of the Word ends with insistent prayer for the needs of the living and the dead.
- After each petition, we pray: **Lord, have mercy. (3)**
- “Mercy” is a translation of the Greek word *Eleison* (*elei* means oil). God’s mercy is like olive oil, which brings healing, comfort and peace.
- We are asking God to pour out his loving-kindness: to grant healing, comfort, peace and forgiveness.





# Liturgy of the Eucharist

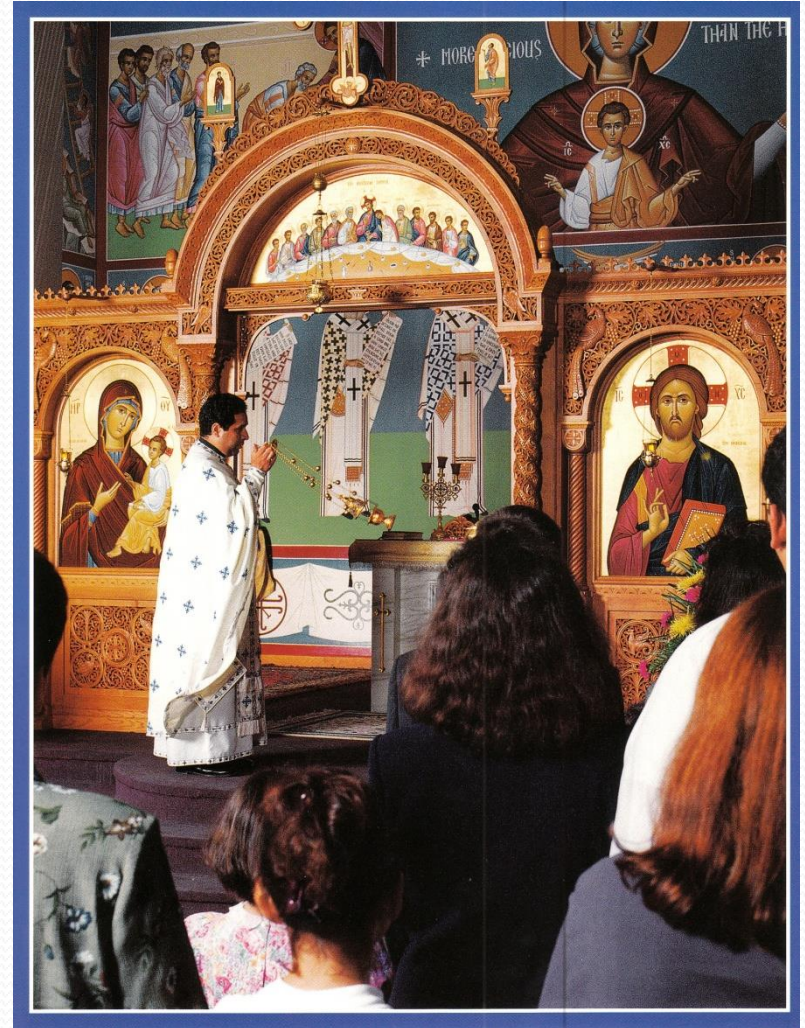
Divine Liturgy – Part III

# Cherubic Hymn

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the singing of the *Cherubic Hymn*.

It summarizes everything:

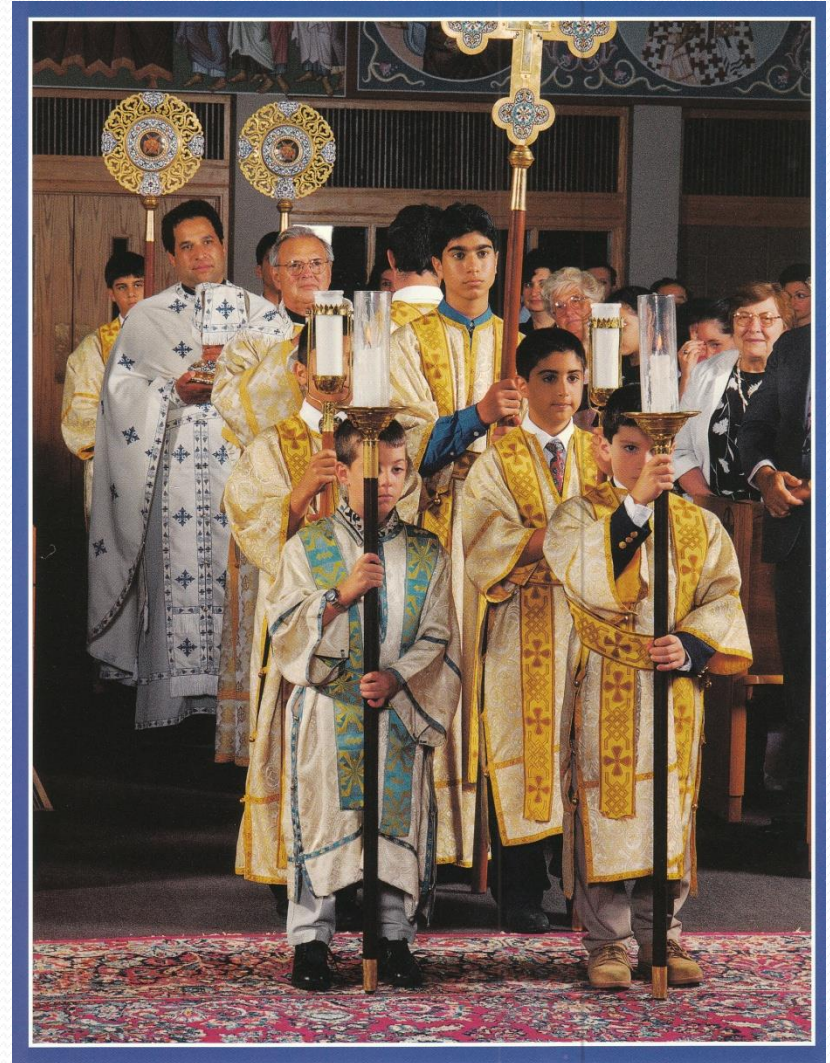
- We leave behind the world and all the cares of life;
- Like the Cherubim, we come to worship before the very Throne of God;
- We shall receive the King of all, who shall come to us invisibly in Holy Communion, escorted by all His angels.
- We shall offer God a perfect sacrifice of praise!





# Great Entrance

- The priest and deacon carry the gifts of bread and wine in procession, bringing them out among the people in the Holy Place.
- Then, on behalf of all, they enter the Holy of Holies and place the gifts before Christ, upon the altar.
- What is offered is not only bread and wine, but the whole Church... our very life... everything...
- The procession reminds us that everything is a gift from God; and all is offered to God as gift.



# Profession of Love and Faith

To participate in the Eucharist, two things are required:

- **LOVE** - we love one another, as Christ has loved us; we have forgiven those who have offended us;
- **FAITH** - we believe; we have respond to God with faith.
- We profess our love for one another with the KISS OF PEACE; we profess our faith in God by reciting the CREED.

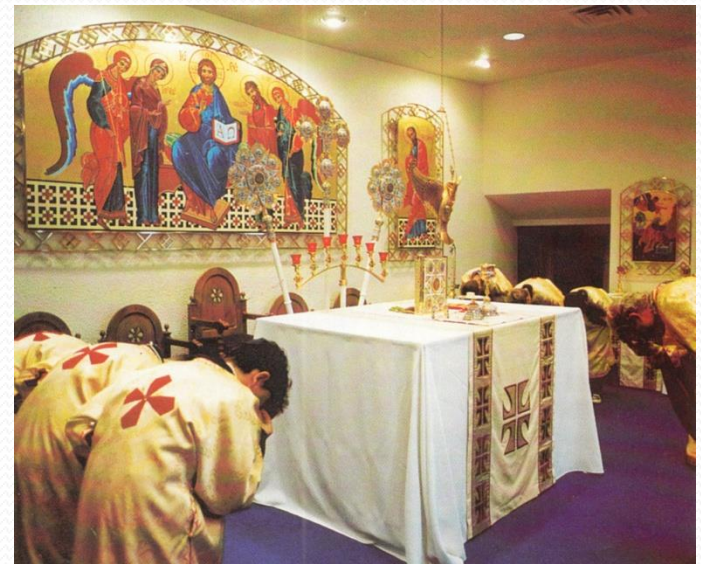




# THE ANAPHORA (Eucharistic Prayer)

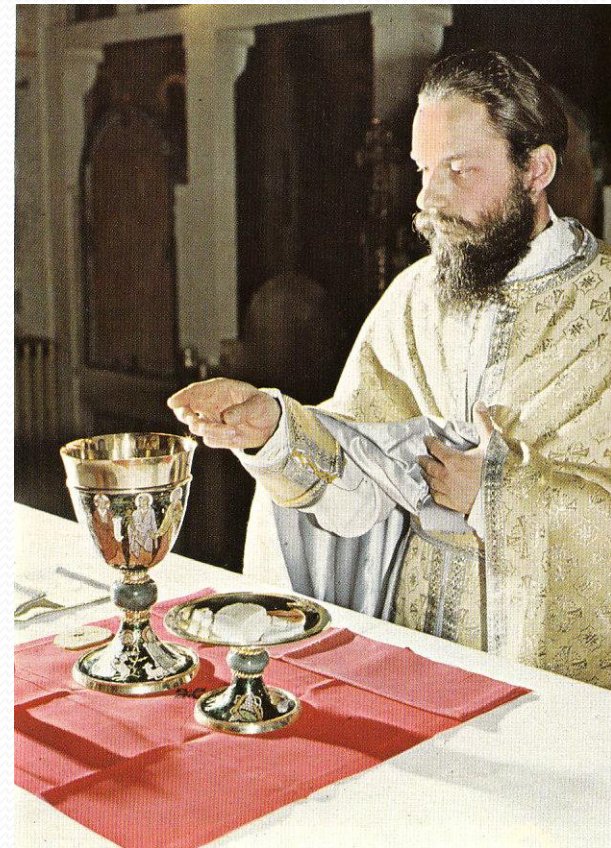
- The word *Anaphora* in Greek means “the lifting up.” It is the most important part of the Divine Liturgy, when everything is lifted up and offered to God the Father, through His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.
- It begins with **praise** and **thanksgiving** to God the Father, for the gift of life and salvation, for all that He has done for us, known and unknown.
- We especially thank Him for this Liturgy which unites us with the unceasing Heavenly Liturgy...

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of your glory...**



# We remember...

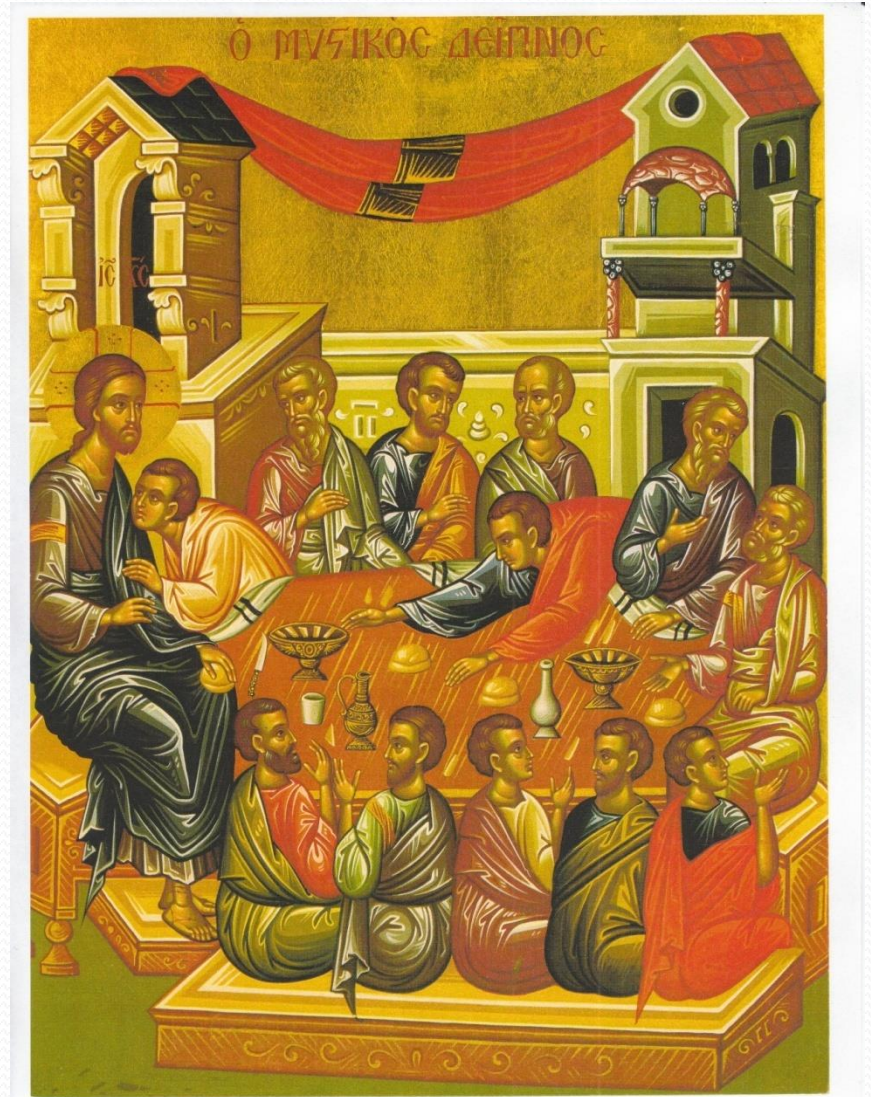
- We remember the Mystical Supper, the words of Jesus and His saving commands:
- “**Take, eat:** This is my Body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins.”
- **Drink of it**, all of you. This is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”
- “**Do this** in memory of Me.”  
(*Luke 22:19*)



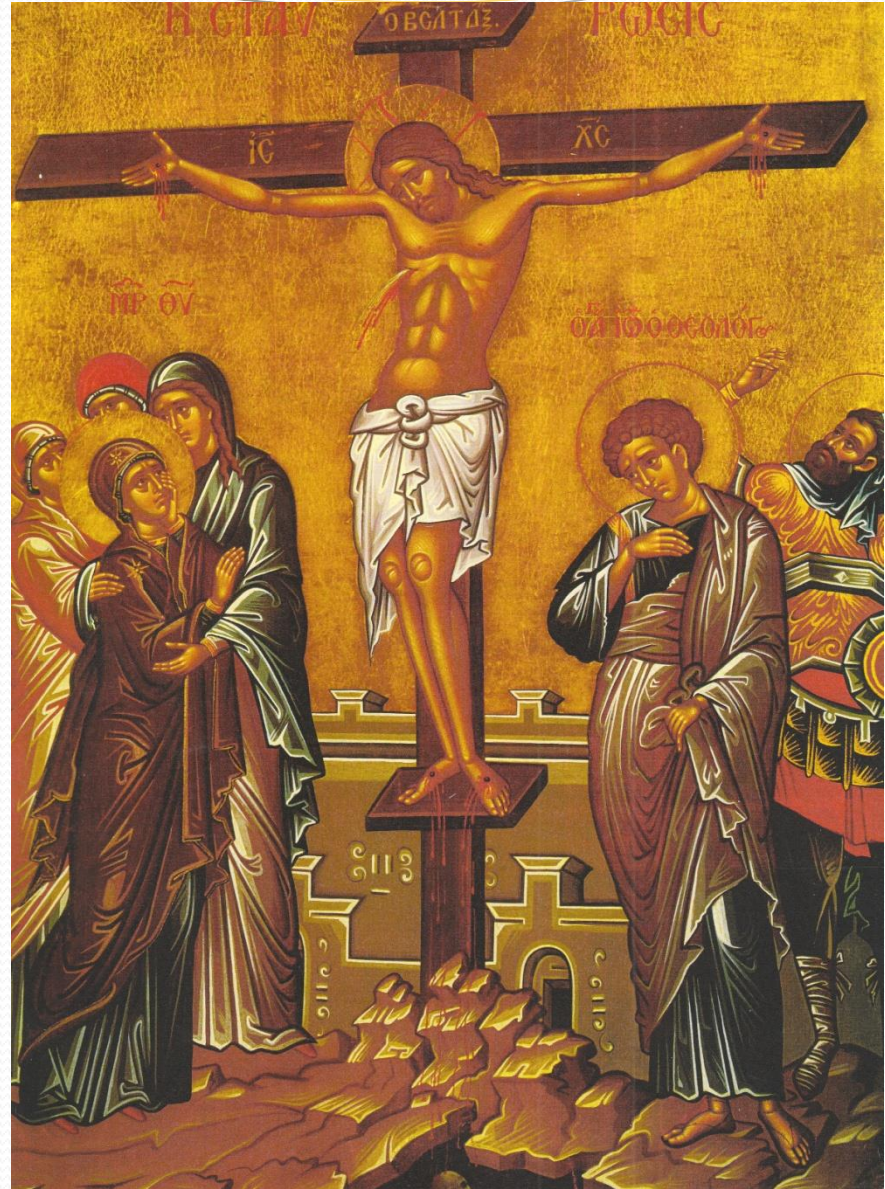


As we remember,  
everything that Jesus  
has done for us, all the  
moments of salvation  
become present to us...

## The Mystical Supper



# The Cross





# The Descent into Hades



# The Resurrection on the Third Day





**The Ascension  
into Heaven**  
*and*  
**The Second  
and Glorious  
Coming...**



# The Holy Offering

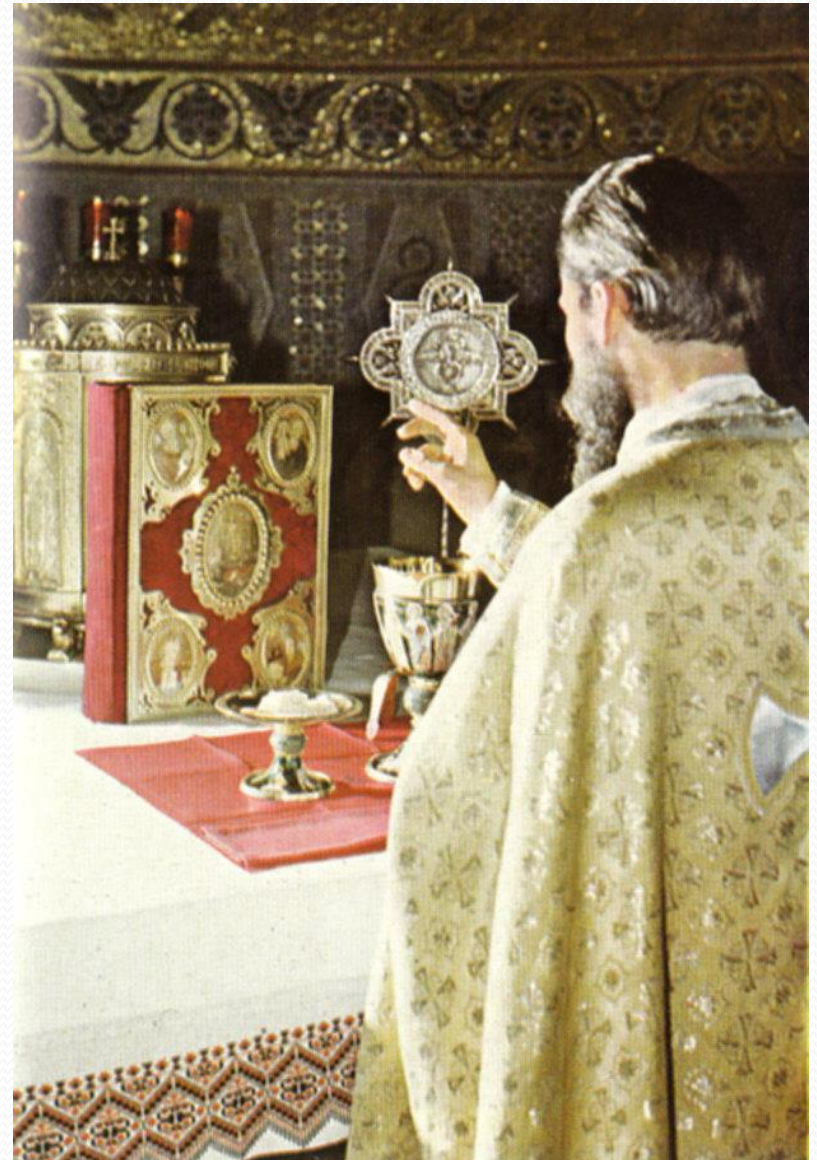
- The holy gifts are lifted up as the priest exclaims: “We offer to You, Yours of Your own, in behalf of all and for all.”
- We are already there, **at the end of this age**, when everything has been subjected to Christ and Christ lifts up everything to His Father in perfect offering, so that “God may be all in all.” (1 Cor 15:28)





# The Epiclesis

- A miracle takes place: the “dead” and lifeless bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of a living Person.
- The priest calls down “fire from heaven” and by the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of the **Risen Christ**.
- The consecrated Holy Gifts become for us the precious and most holy Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Risen Christ.



We prepare ourselves  
to receive God in  
Holy Communion  
with further prayer  
and finally, with the  
prayer the Lord  
Himself has taught  
us:

**Our Father, Who  
art in heaven...**

Our preparation  
concludes with a  
final act of surrender,  
the bowing of our  
heads before the  
Lord.

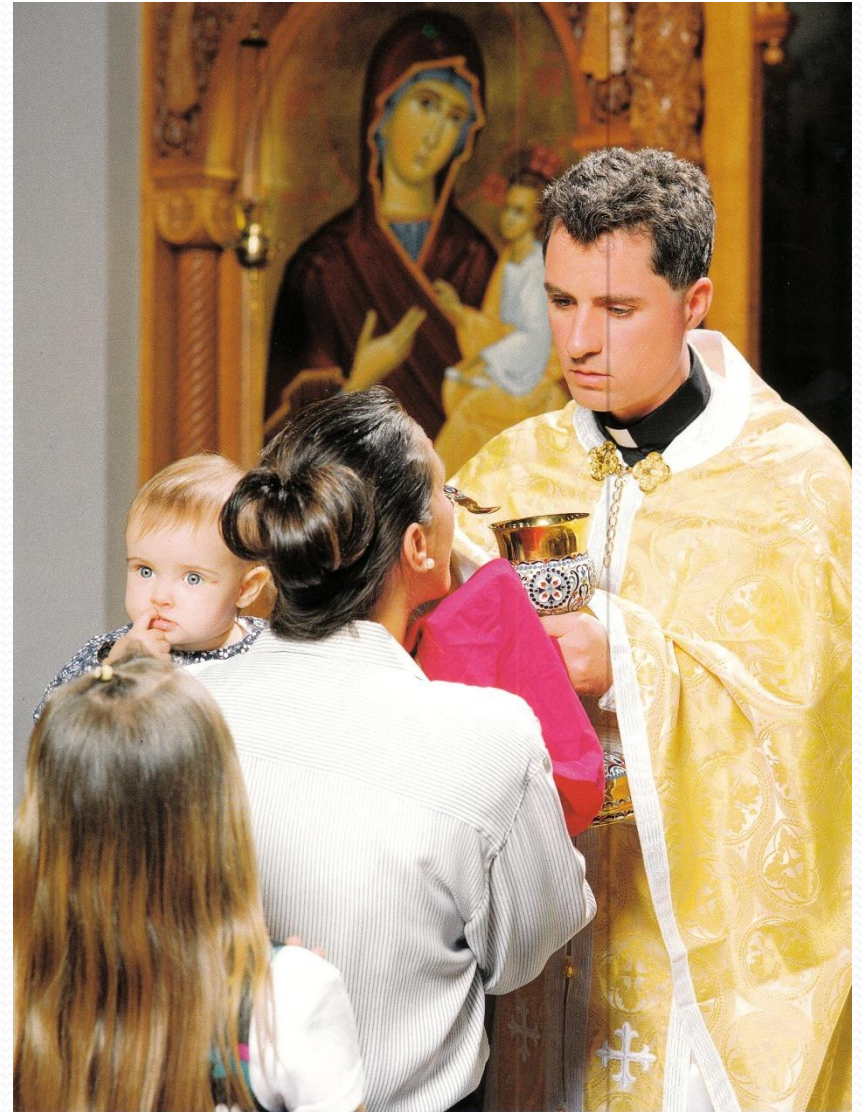
## Final Preparation





# Holy Communion

- Now, God will offer to us His greatest gift: His own Divine Life, to be received in Holy Communion.
- The priest lifts up the Lamb and exclaims: “*The Holy Gifts for the Holy!*” We respond: “*One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.*”
- Christ, the living Bread, risen from the dead, comes forth from Heaven, the Holy of Holies, to be our food that endures for eternal life.



# We have seen the true Light...

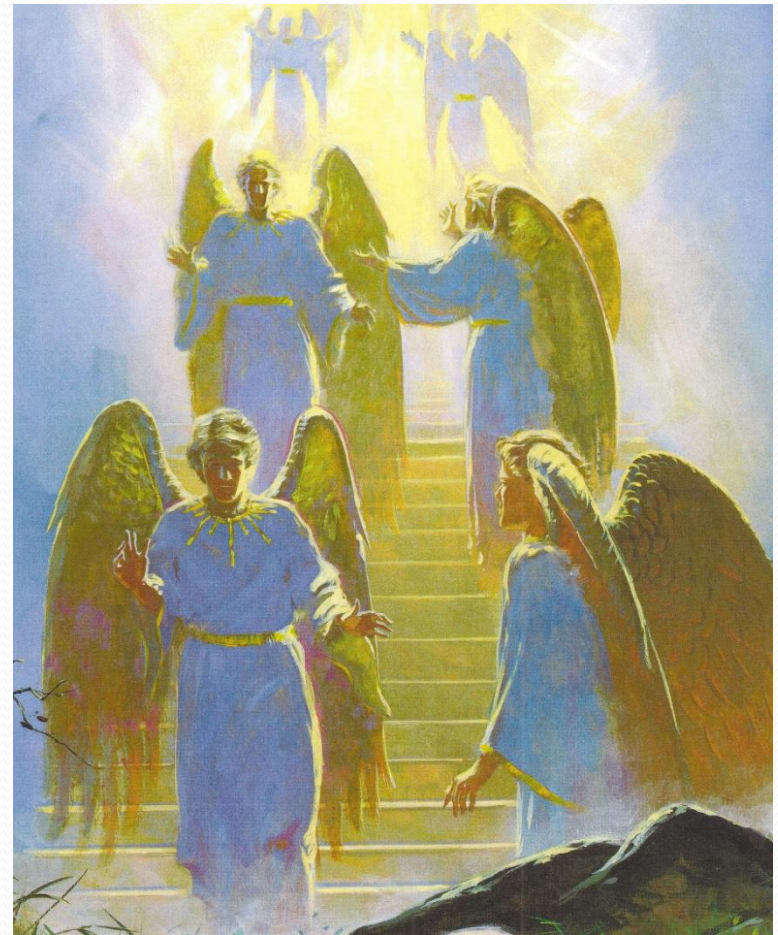
- We left the world behind.
- We ascended into Heaven, to the very Throne of God.
- We participated in the unceasing Worship of God, which takes place in Heaven.
- We beheld the true Light of God.
- We were united to the Divine Life of the Most Holy Trinity.
- We have found the true faith.
- We have worshiped the undivided Trinity, for saving us.





# Return to the World

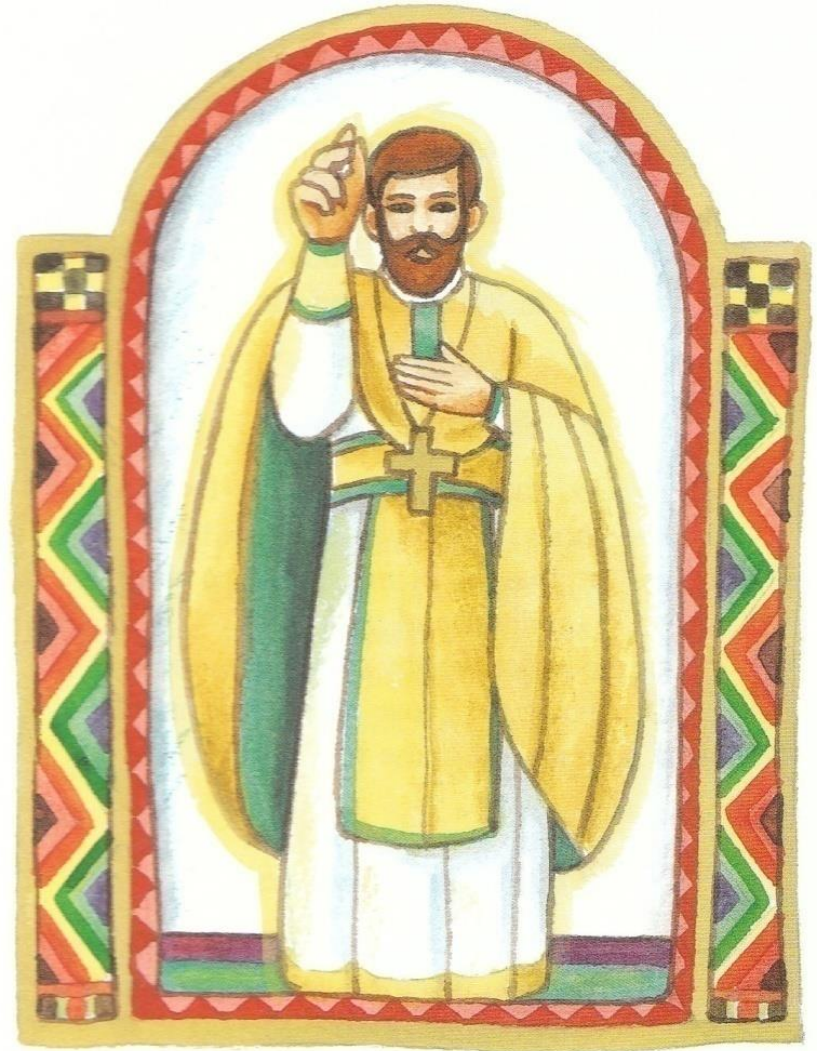
- Now the time has come to return to the world and to share with others what we have heard, what we have seen, what we have experienced.
- The priest exclaims  
**“Let us go forth in peace.”**
- We respond:  
**“In the name of the Lord.”**



# Final Blessing

Before His Ascension into Heaven, Jesus appeared to His disciples on a mountain in Galilee. He said to them:

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)





# Dismissal

- With this final blessing of Christ and commissioning, we depart from the Holy Place and return to our life in the world.
- Through the final blessing and dismissal of the priest, it is Jesus Himself Who blesses us and sends us forth to be His witnesses – **to the very ends of the world.**





# Going Home

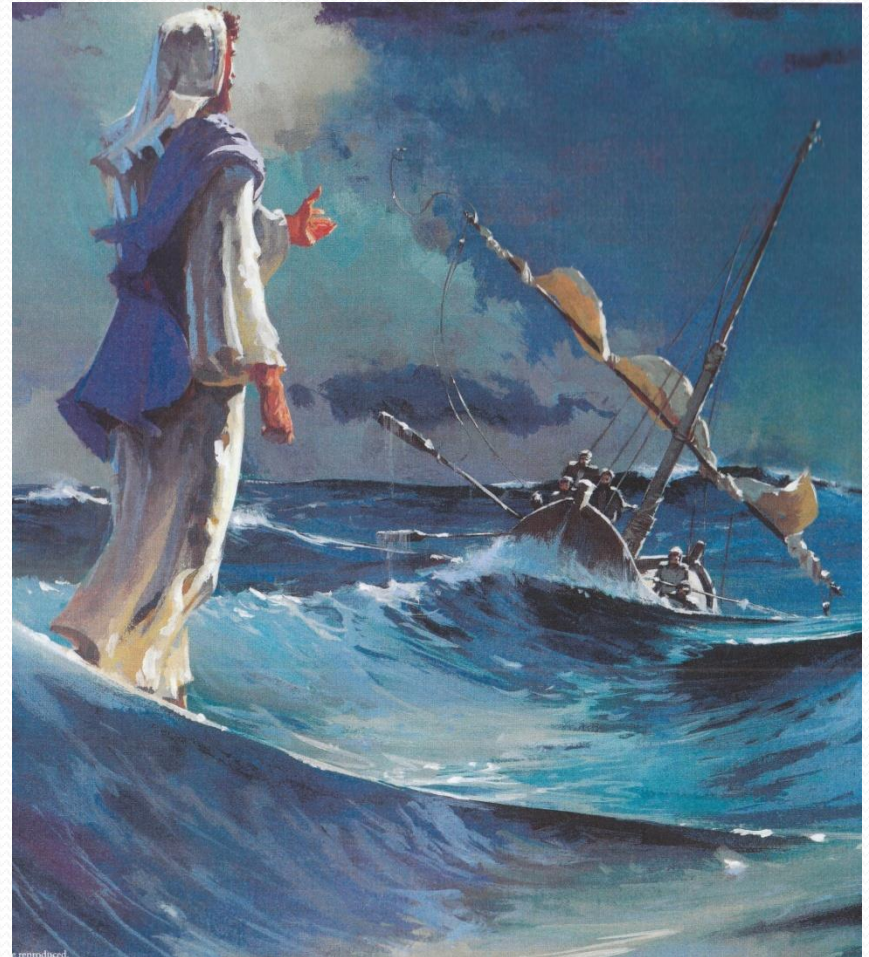


# Jesus Comes to His Disciples

AT THAT TIME when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and started crossing the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

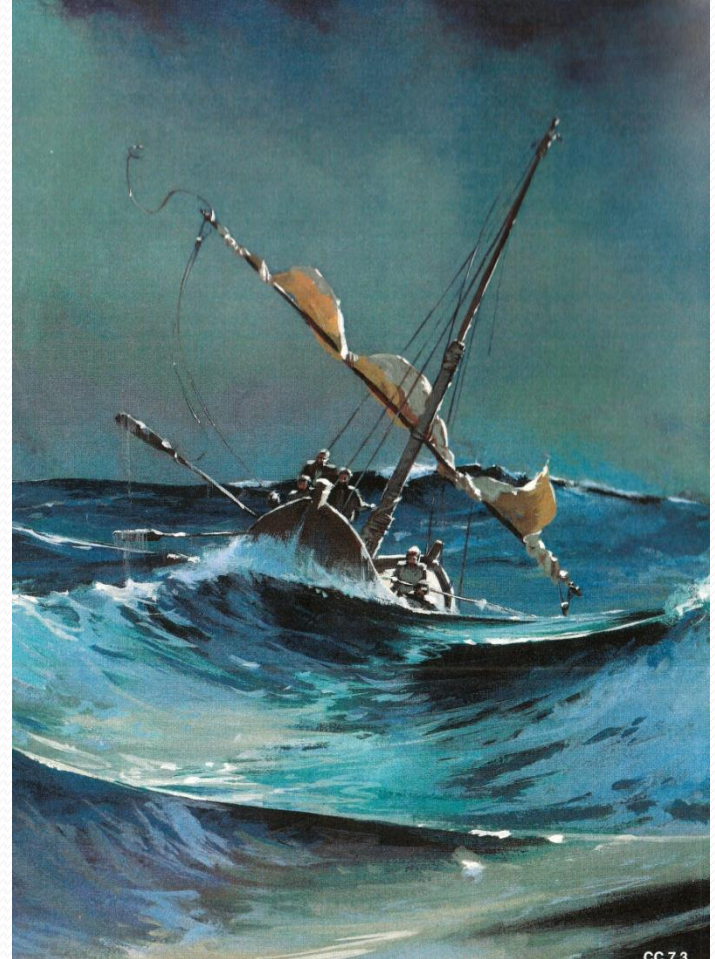
When they had rowed about three or four miles, they say Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But He said to them, “It is I, do not be afraid.”

Then they wanted to take Him into the boat, and **immediately the boat reached the land** toward which they were going.”  
(Jn 6:16-21)



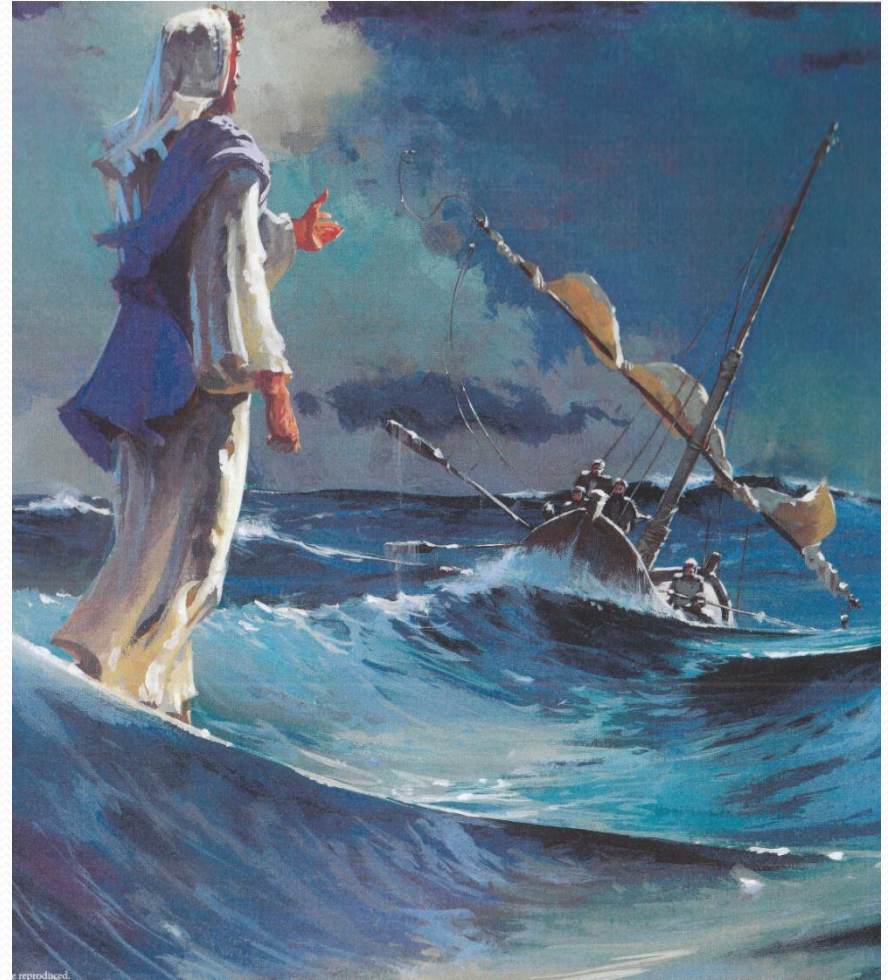
# The Sea and the Boat

- **The Sea** – is our life in the world, with all its difficulties, trials, joys and sorrows.
- **The Boat** – is the Nave, or Holy Place, of every church. It is a place of safety, salvation, protection and rest from the world.
- **The Destination** – is heaven itself. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we leave the world. The “boat” takes us on a journey home, to Heaven itself, crossing both time and space.

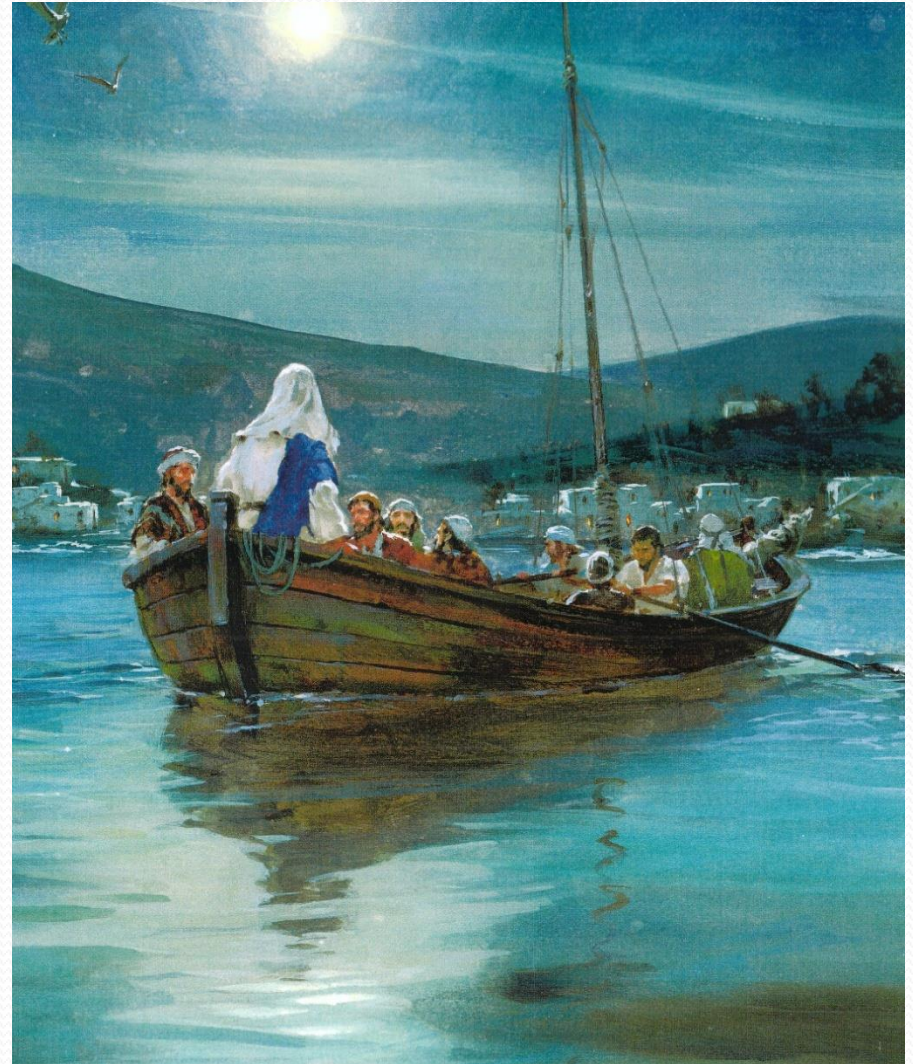




- During the Divine Liturgy, Jesus comes to us. He crosses time and space, as if walking on water.
- He comes to us from heaven as living Bread, to enter the holy place of our soul.
- When Jesus enters our soul, we are immediately at home with God in heaven.



- **Baptism and Chrismation** are the Mysteries that takes us from the world and bring us into the boat: the Holy Place, the Ark of Salvation, the Church, the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God. And so our journey begins.
- **The Eucharist** is the Mystery that takes us from the Holy Place and brings us into the Holy of Holies, to the very Throne of God.
- At the moment of Communion, we are already there, at home with God.





- The celebration of the Eucharist brings us back to the world.
- However, one day will come, when no return will be necessary.

*“And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” (Ps 22:6)*

