



LITURGY & *Eucharist*

*“We knew not whether we were
in heaven or on earth”*

Adult Catechism Class



THE LITURGY

HEAVENLY SPLENDOR

“We knew not whether we were in **heaven or on earth**, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you: only this we know, that God dwells there among humans, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places. For we cannot forget that **beauty.**”

(Russian Primary Chronicle on Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, receiving word about the Liturgy at Agia Sophia in Constantinople)





INTRODUCTION

The Divine Liturgy is the most important worship service of the Church, celebrating the Eucharist and the unity of the church.



PRAYERS & HYMNS

The hymns and prayers of the Divine Liturgy express the theology and beliefs of the Orthodox Church.



SYMBOLISM

The Divine Liturgy symbolizes the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



ORIGIN

The Divine Liturgy originates in the Mystical Supper Christ had with His disciples on the night before His capture and execution.

BASIC LITURGICAL TERMS

Anaphora (ἀναφορά) = lifting up (the offering)

Catechumen = one being instructed in the Faith

Eucharist (εὐχαριστία) = thanksgiving (Communion)

Lamb = the piece of bread representing Christ

Liturgy (λειτουργία) = work of the people (service)

Paten or Diskos = plate elevated by a stand

Proskomide (Προσκομιδή) = preparing the offering

Prosphoron (πρόσφορον) = offering (bread)

Prothesis (Πρόθεσις) = setting forth (of the offering)

Spear = liturgical knife used to cut the prosphoron

Star (asterisk) = used to shield the gifts before consecration



THE STRUCTURE OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

- 1** Proskomide (Preparation)
- 2** Liturgy of the Word
- 3** Liturgy of the Eucharist



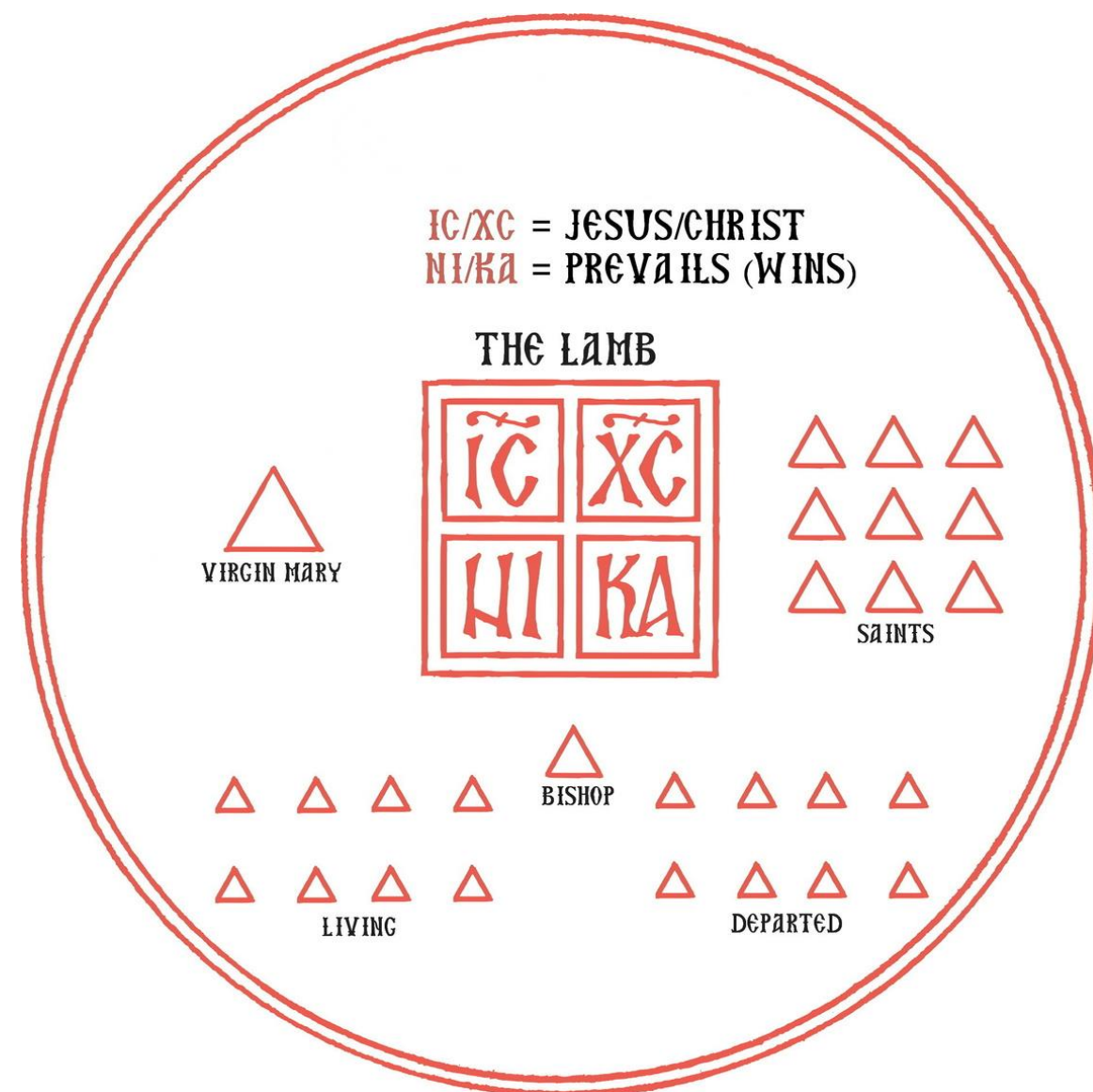
PROSKOMIDE

The Proskomide is the service where the Priest prepares the bread and wine that will be offered to God and become Holy Communion in the Divine Liturgy. It takes place inside the altar before the Liturgy begins. There are two symbolic themes used in the service: the **birth** of Christ and His sacrificial **death**.

The purpose of Proskomide is to manifest that **the whole Church is represented on the paten** (diskos) with Christ, the Lamb of God, as its center.

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM

- blessing of the bread;
- removal of the Lamb (a cube inscribed with Christ's initials: IS, HS, NI, KA);
- the Lamb is placed in the middle of the Paten by reciting prayers inspired by the Old Testament prophecies about Christ's sacrifice (Isaiah 53);
- the bottom of the Lamb is cut crosswise to facilitate the fraction during the Liturgy;
- the piercing of the side of Christ (IS);
- wine and water are poured in the chalice and blessed;
- a triangular piece is cut out in memory of the Virgin Mary and is placed to the right of the Lamb (Christ) on the paten (the highest place of honor);
- smaller triangles are cut out in commemoration of the nine ranks (orders) of saints and placed to the left of the Lamb (Christ);



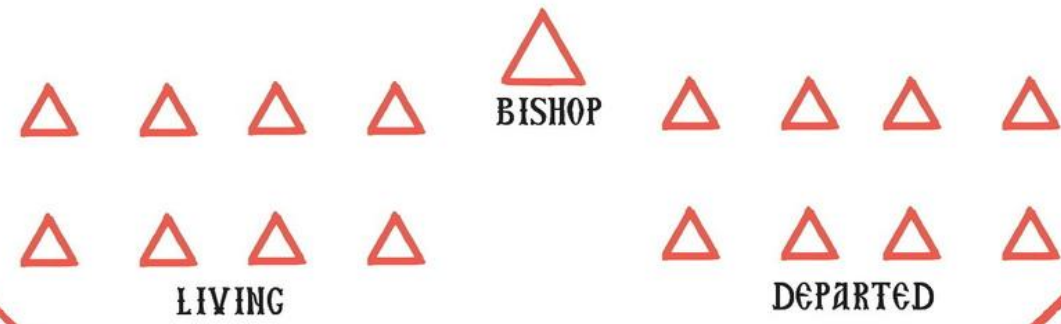
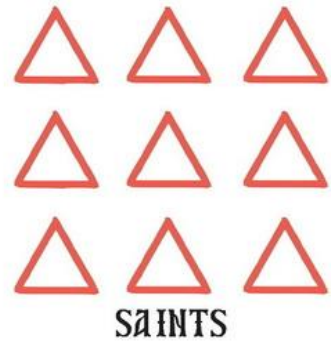
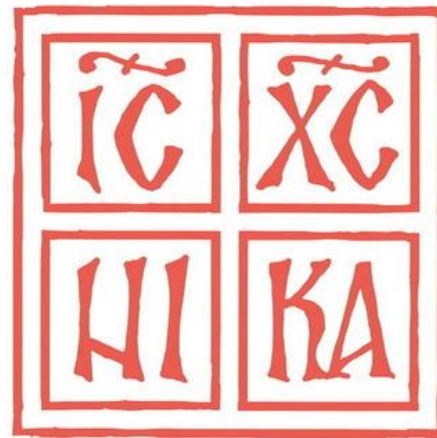
STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM



- underneath are placed pieces commemorating the Church hierarchy and the laity, both the living and the dead;
- the gifts are covered by a star (asterisk) to protect them - a symbolic reminder of the star of Bethlehem;
- covers are placed over the paten and the chalice symbolizing the swaddling cloths of Christ as an infant but also the shroud used at His burial;
- the Aer is the final covering placed above both the paten the chalice representing the power of Christ that was veiled up to the time of His miracles and God's witness from Heaven;
- gifts are censed with burning incense representing the prayers of the faithful rising towards Heaven as a sweet-smelling spiritual fragrance.

IC/XC = JESUS/CHRIST
NI/KA = PREVAILS (WINS)

THE LAMB





LITURGY OF THE WORD

Also known as the Liturgy of the Catechumens

Our communion with the Word of God precedes our communion with the Body and Blood of Christ. This is why the first part of the Liturgy begins with the reading of the Holy Scriptures (Epistle and Gospel) and their explanation in the Sermon.

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM



- the "**Blessed is the Kingdom**" sets the theme of ascending to the glory of God during the Divine Liturgy;
- the **Litany of Peace** calls the faithful to pray for the general needs of the community;
- our active participation in the service is marked by responding with Amen (Let it be so);
- the **Three Antiphons** and three (silent) Prayers - these are psalms or hymns sung alternately by two choirs, or by two parts of the congregation; their theme is joyful praise;
- the **Small Entrance** - symbolizes our move forward and upwards towards the throne of God;
- the **raising of the book of the Gospels** symbolizes Christ's preaching to the multitudes;

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM



- the **Trisagion Hymn** - the (silent) Prayer of the Entrance indicates that we are not alone, but the angels accompany us as we approach God's holy altar by singing together this hymn;
- the **Liturgy of the Word** begins with the **Epistle** and the **Gospel** readings and the **Sermon** given by the priest;
- in the early Church, the Catechumens were dismissed after the Scripture readings.



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Also known as the Liturgy of the Faithful

It is the most intimate portion of the Liturgy because its purpose is to commune the faithful with the Body and Blood of Christ. It is also called Eucharist due to its celebratory nature. As Christ gave thanks, we also give thanks to God for this tremendous privilege of allowing us to partake and preview the Heavenly Banquet here on earth.

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM



- the Liturgy of the Eucharist is preceded by a Second (silent) **Prayer for the Faithful** to be deemed worthy to receive Holy Communion;
- The **Great Entrance** is the first movement of the Eucharistic celebration when the Gifts of bread and wine are brought to the Altar for consecration;
- this entrance is marked by the **Cherubic Hymn** and the great procession around the congregation approaching the altar through the middle isle;
- The **Great Entrance symbolizes the journey of Christ to Jerusalem** where He was to be sacrificed.
- after the priest places the Gifts on the Altar, he reads the (silent) **Prayer of the Proskomide** (Oblation), asking God to accept this sacrifice;
- **Litany of Completion**;
- **The Creed** is a statement of faith imported in the Liturgy from the service of Baptism in order to remind us that unity of faith is a criterion for receiving Holy Communion;

STRUCTURE & SYMBOLISM



- the **Holy Anaphora** begins with a dialogue between the priest and congregation that marks the theme of the Liturgy of the Eucharist: "**Let us be attentive, that we may present the Holy Offering in peace;**" "**Let us lift up our hearts;**" "**Let us give thanks to the Lord**"
- the **Epiklesis** - we are now approaching the climax of the service when the priest invokes on our behalf the Holy Spirit to descend and transform (consecrate) the Gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ.
- the **Commemoration of the entire Church** starts right after the Consecration with the **Hymn to the Virgin Mary** followed by **hierarchs** and all the **people**;
- **The Lord's Prayer**;
- the priest **pours warm water into the chalice, symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit** upon the Church;
- **The Communion** - the clergy receive communion in the altar first, then invite the people;
- **The Dismissal**

CONCLUSION

The Divine Liturgy is the most important worship service of the Church. It commemorates the Mystical Supper and Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross and unites us with Him through the Eucharist with the hope of eternal life.





THE EUCHARIST

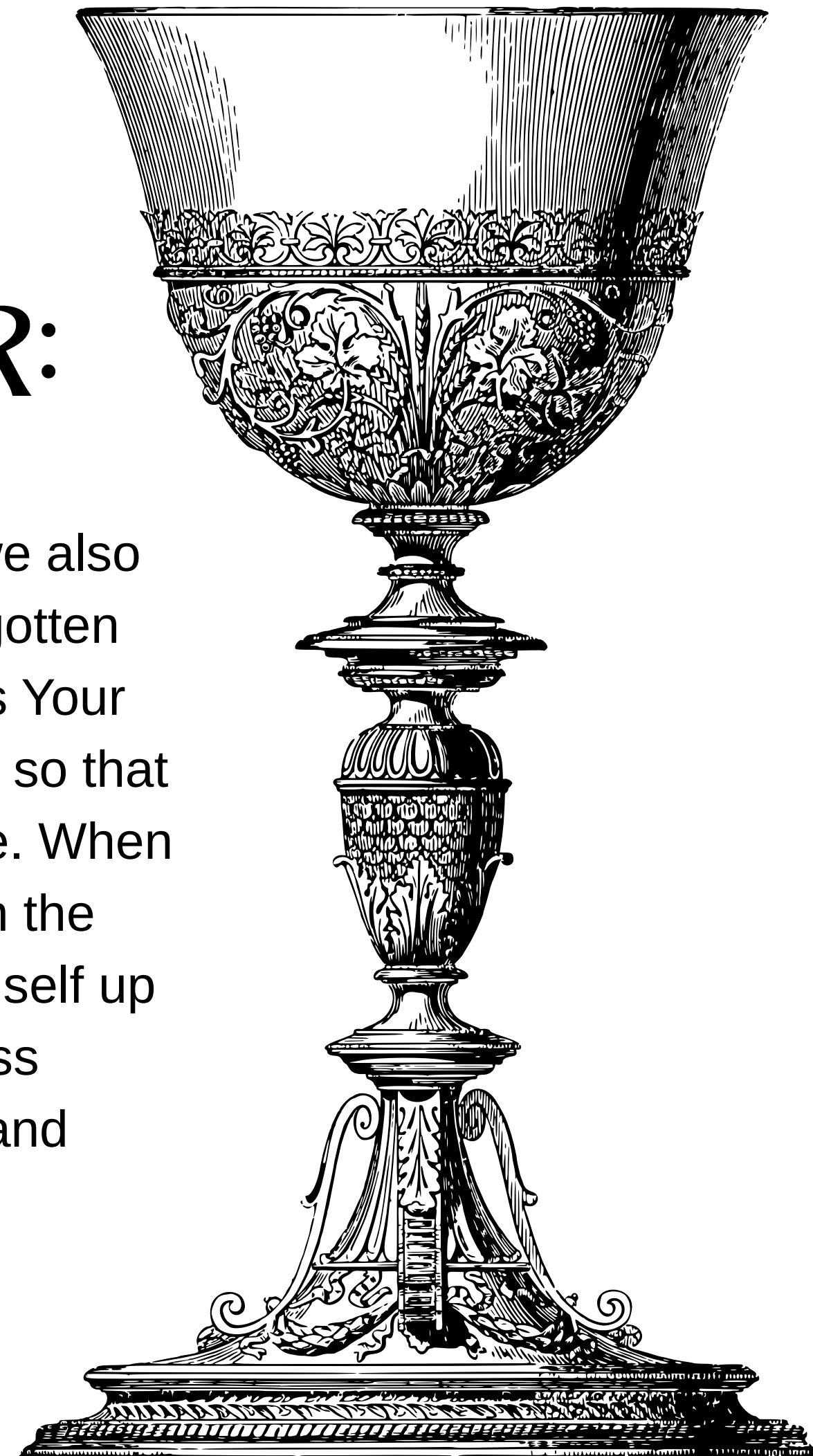
WHAT IS THE EUCHARIST?

Eucharist comes from the Greek *εὐχαριστία* which means **thanksgiving** or **giving thanks**. It is a Sacrament celebrated during the Divine Liturgy.



MEANING DEFINED BY THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER:

“Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when He delivered Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, **giving thanks** and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:”





ORIGINATES IN THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

“Take, eat, this is **My Body**, which is broken for you for the **remission of sins**. Likewise, after partaking of the supper, He took the cup, saying, drink of this, all of you; this is **My Blood** of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the **remission of sins**.”

(Matthew 26:26-28)



THE ANAMNESIS (REMEMBERANCE) FOLLOWS:

“**Remembering**, therefore, this saving commandment and all that has been done for our sake: the Cross, the tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the enthronement at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming again...”



THE OFFERING OF THE SACRIFICE:

Priest: Your own of Your own we offer to You, in all and for all.

People: We praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You, Lord our God.

THE CONSECRRATION (EPIKLESIS):

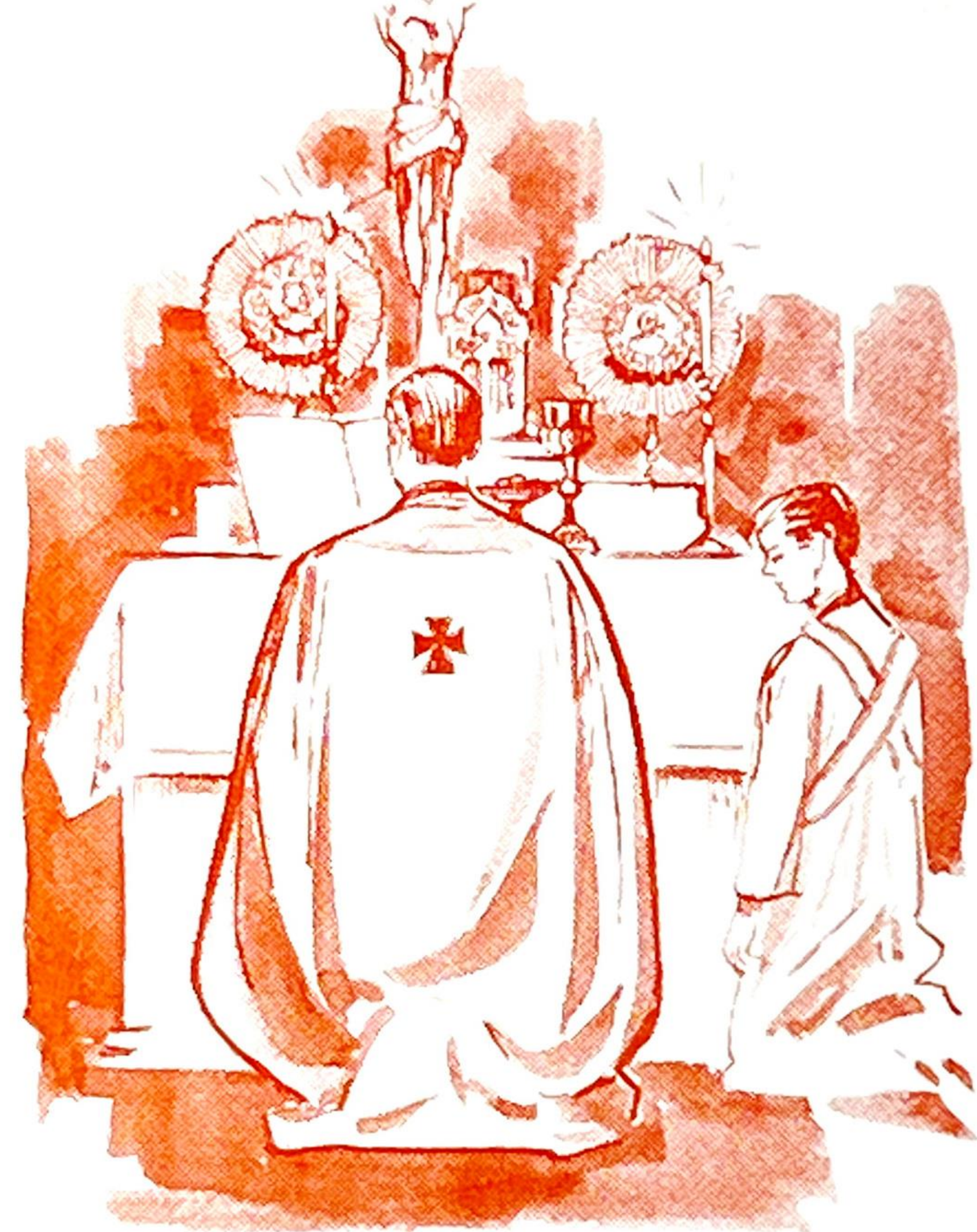
Once again we offer to You this spiritual worship without the shedding of blood, and we beseech and pray and entreat You:

Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon the gifts here presented,...

And make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ....

And that which is in this Cup, the precious Blood of Your Christ...

Changing them by Your Holy Spirit. Amen (3x)





THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

It is **real**.

After consecration, the bread and wine become truly the Body and Blood of Christ: they are not mere symbols, but the **reality**.



HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE???

Orthodoxy has always insisted on the **reality** of the change, but never attempted to explain the **manner** of the change. It is a **mystery**, and we leave it to that.



ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS

“If you enquire **how** this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it is **through the Holy Spirit** ... we know nothing more than this, that the word of God is true, active, and omnipotent, but in its manner of operation unsearchable.”

(On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 13)



THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

“Your own from Your own we offer
You, in all and for all”

Christ is **both**:

- the **Sacrifice** and
- the **One Who offers** it



THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

To Whom is the sacrifice offered?

- to the Holy Trinity

For Whom? “We offer **for all**”

- the Eucharist is offered on behalf of both the living and the dead



NOT JUST A MERE COMMÉMORATION BUT THE TRUE SACRIFICE ITSELF

The events of Christ's sacrifice – the Incarnation, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension – are not repeated in the Eucharist, but they **are made present.**



HOLY COMMUNION

- It is the main purpose of the Liturgy
- Clergy and Laity receive the Sacrament in two ways
- Strict fasting on that day
- We should be prepared to receive Holy Communion at every Liturgy, if possible

ST. PAUL

THE APOSTLE



PREPARATION

St. Paul says: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person **examine himself**, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks **without discerning** the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.”
(1 Cor. 11:27-29)



HOW TO PREPARE?

There are a few basics: go to Confession regularly; Prayer; Fasting (do not eat the morning before Liturgy unless you have a medical condition or pregnant), remove distractions, proper attire (modesty is the goal), cross your hands and say your baptismal name.

THANK YOU

