

CHURCH BUILDING AND PRIESTHOOD VESTMENTS

Discipleship Program
November 29, 2020



OBJECTIVES

- Orientation of Prayer
- Structure of the Church
- The Priest's vestments



ORIENTATION OF PRAYER

- God appreciates discipline and order
 - Rules for: church structure, laws, vestments, faith
 - OT (ie Exodus) NT (ie multitudes groups of 50)
 - Rules and order also relate to success in our everyday lives
- Direction of prayer:
 - Pre-Christianity, prayers were offered towards the Temple of Jerusalem
 - Early Christianity, prayers were offered towards the East
 - Mentioned by the early Fathers (St Clement of Alexandria, Origen)

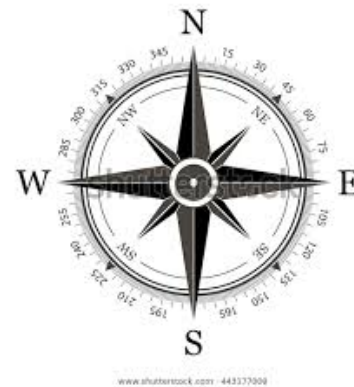
Deacon:

Look towards the East.

ΠΙΔΙΑΚΩΝ:

Ις ἀνατολάς βλέψατε.





THEOLOGY OF ORIENTATION

- **1. Christ is our East:**
 - In Malachi 4:2, Christ was called the “East,” and the Sun of Righteousness and Justice
- **2. A Reminder of the Lost Paradise:**
 - God planted Paradise in the East, so we look towards it
- **3. Waiting for the advent of Christ:**
 - In Acts 1:1, on the Lord’s Ascension, the Angel informed the Disciples that the Son of Man will come gain from the East
- **4. Looking Towards the Cross:**
 - St. Athanasius stated that Christ was facing the West while hanging on the Cross. Thus, looking towards the East in our prayers, we meet the Crucified Lord, face to face.
- **5. The Orientation of the Graves:**
 - In the old Christian graves, most were built with the dead bodies oriented to face the East, waiting for the call of Resurrection. Similarly in our funerals, bodies are positioned, so if they were to ‘sit up’ they would face the East



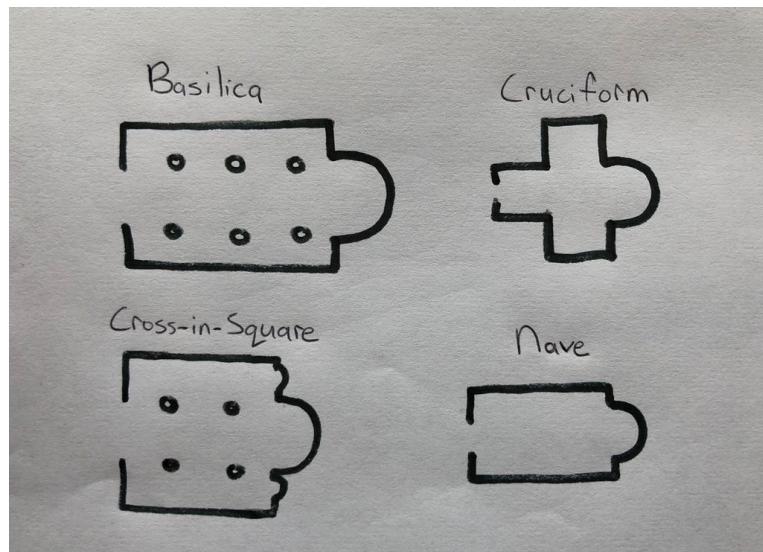
THE EARLY CHURCH BUILDING

- Throughout time we have had to adapt
 - Previous roman structures, pagan temples, catacombs (Christian burials)
 - “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them.” Matthew 18:20
 - The pursuit of faith no matter the cost



THE EARLY CHURCH BUILDING

- The church building is built according to specific shapes, in three designs:
 - (a) The Cruciform, (b) The Circle, (c) The shape of a ship
- **(A) The Cruciform Shape:**
 - This shape gives an idea of the mystical nature of the Church, as being the crucified Body of Christ





THE EARLY CHURCH BUILDING

- **(B) The Circular Shape:**
 - This design refers to the eternal nature of the Church
- **(C) The Shape of a Ship:**
 - Symbol of salvation, ie Noah's Ark



THE CHURCH BUILDING



3 steps higher

- **The Church Building is Divided into Three Main Divisions:**
 - 1. The Sanctuary containing the Altar
 - 2. The Nave, separated from the Sanctuary by the Iconostasis. It contains two divisions:
 - The place for the Deacons (The Chancel)
 - The place for the Believers, (the main Nave)
 - 3. The Narthex for the catechumens
 - In olden times where non-baptised believers went after hearing the Word
- Each division you move Eastward, it is elevated, as a ladder towards heaven
 - Similar to our faith being as a ladder, and us taking a variety of steps



Sanctuary



Nave



Narthex



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **The Sanctuary:**

- The very far East of the Church. It represents heaven itself, the place of God's residence,
- The "Holy of Holies" – contains the Altar
- Deacons move **ANTICLOCKWISE** in the Sanctuary to symbolize, transcending time– as if in heaven

- **Traditions:**

- 1. Lay persons cannot have communion inside the Sanctuary
- 2. The Sanctuary is for the clergymen only. And you step into it with the right foot first
- 3. No talking is allowed in the Sanctuary, except for necessity



THE CHURCH BUILDING

■ The Altar:

- “place upon which sacrifices are slain” (1 Corinthians 10:21)
- Now, no animal sacrifices, but the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross
- We commemorate the sacrifice God gives us and it is important to remember our daily sacrifice of maintaining our faith

The first 4 centuries the altar was made of wood



- The Altar cloths → three coverings:
 - 1. The first covers the Altar completely on top. It is decorated with four crosses, or one big cross in the center
 - 2. A white linen cover is put over the first--about 15cm long on each side
 - 3. The third layer is used during the Eucharist, the “Prophorine” (Oblation). It represents the stone that the Angel rolled away from the tomb of Christ. Little jingles are fixed on it, to give an audible sound when it is raised from the Altar (ie the earthquake).

THE CHURCH BUILDING



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **The Tribune**

- Behind the Altar, and is often made of marble/stone, and consists of seven semi-circular steps that represent the orders of Priesthood.



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **Iconostasis ('Icon Stand')**

- A rigid screen of wood or marble, carrying the Icons of the Lord, His Angels, and His Saints. It lies between the Sanctuary and the Nave.

- **The Functions of the Iconostasis:**

- A. To have saints look towards us, inviting us to join
- B. At the same time, and intermediary between our life and heaven, telling us there is a barrier, but we can journey through



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **The Positions and Order of the Icons on the Iconostasis:**
- On the right side of the Royal Door: (*if we look East*)
 - The Icon of the our Lord Jesus Christ holding a page from the Gospel, on which is written, “ I am the Good Shepherd”
 - The Icon of the Forerunner, St. John the Baptist
 - The Icon of the Patron Saint of the Church
 - Selected Icons of Saints and Martyrs
- On the left side of the Royal Door,:
 - The Icon of the Holy Virgin Mary (represents the church, and sits at the right hand of Jesus Christ)
 - The Icon of the Annunciation
 - The Icon of Archangel Michael
 - The Icon of St. Mark the Evangelist
 - A selection of Icons of famous Apostles
- Directly above the Royal Door, the Icon of the Last Supper is mounted. This signifies the office of Christ as a Priest . On both sides of the above Icon, we find the Icons of the twelve Disciples
- On the top of the Iconostasis, a Cross is mounted
 - The Icon of the Virgin Mary stands on one side of the Cross
 - The Icon of St. John the Beloved stands on the other side.



THE CHURCH BUILDING

Job 39:13-18

- ¹³ “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully,
though they cannot compare
with the wings and feathers of the stork.
- ¹⁴ **She lays her eggs on the ground
and lets them warm in the sand,**
- ¹⁵ **unmindful that a foot may crush them,
that some wild animal may trample them.**
- ¹⁶ **She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers;
she cares not that her labor was in vain,**
- ¹⁷ for God did not endow her with wisdom
or give her a share of good sense.
- ¹⁸ Yet when she spreads her feathers to run,
she laughs at horse and rider.

Isaiah 49:15

¹⁵ **“Can a mother forget the baby at her
breast and have no compassion on the
child she has borne? Though she may
forget, I will not forget you!**



Ostrich eggs are suspended
between the icons and iconostasis



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **The Dome (Cupola):**

- It refers to Jesus Christ, as the Head of the Church, seated in the Heavens, and why it is usually painted with Icons of the Lord, or in a bright blue color, decorated with Angels and stars.
- Three Cupolas, represent the Holy Trinity.
- Five Cupolas, the central one, represents the Lord; and the four small ones around it represent the four Evangelists



THE CHURCH BUILDING

- **The Baptistry Site:**

- In the North Western side of the Church, (left hand side of the entrance)
- Because it is considered the womb of the Church, through which we get born again, nobody can cross the area of believers and receive communion, without first entering the Baptistry to go through the Divine Birth



PRIESTHOOD VESTMENTS

- **The Service Vestments should be white:**
 - In Matthew 17:2 “and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.”
 - The white color bears the concept of purity, cleanliness, innocence, sanctification of the heart, and the virtues that God’s Ministers should have



Shows an analogy of how we should live our lives



PRIESTHOOD VESTMENTS

- **The Tunic (Tonia):** (all) white robe, represents the **purity of the servants of God.**
Worn by all ranks
- **The Stole (Badrashil):** (deacons) red wide ribbon that surround the shoulders of the deacon and it takes the shape of the cross from the back. Represents the **blood of Jesus who saved us** and is a symbol of **being ready for service.** The Arch deacon puts his from above his shoulder as a sign of leadership for the deacons
- **The Episcopal Stole (Sadra):** (bishop/priest) the breast plate of Aaron--**protects from attacks of devil**
- **The Taylassan: (priests):** a head cover to the priest represents the **honor and glory** of his divine service





Episcopal Stole
(Sadra)

Stole (Badrashil)

The Taylassan

Tunic (Tonia)

PRIESTHOOD VESTMENTS

- **The crown:** (bishop)
- **The Cope (bornos):** (priest/bishop) a rounded sleeveless loose robe. It represents **the honor of the priesthood—used by kings (spiritual leader)**
- **The Ballin:** (bishop) it means “what is worn on the shoulder.” Like the Badrashil but wider and longer. It represents the **readiness for work**



The Cope (bornos)

The crown



TAKEAWAYS

- God defined rules to follow, maintained in Orthodoxy
 - Our nature needs discipline to prosper
 - Provides instructions – how to pray, where to look, what to meditate on
- The church structural features have symbolic meaning to remind us of our role as Christians and our journey to Christ
 - Come to the church, come to the cross
 - We relate spiritually to what our eyes are seeing
- Be proud of who you are, what you believe, and why you do it
 - Next time you attend liturgy/are in church, view the church, the vestments, the icons, and take pride in knowing why it is there and what it all means



THANK YOU

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03-02-2007

LEPERS ... I HEAL LEPERS

