

# Liturgy of the Word



# The Liturgy of the Word in the Holy Scripture

## - Ezra - Nehemiah 8

“And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, ‘This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.’ For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.”

## St. Paul - Colossians 4:16

“After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.”

# The Censer

“The censer, which the deacon takes about the whole nave, signifies the care of God for all, and the condescension and sweet savour of Christ. The return again of the censer to the sanctuary signifies the fixedness and unwaveringness of the divine care, which remains as it is, without diminution: even as a lamp, which is not diminished by the taking from it of many (lights).”

- St. George, Bishop of the Arabs (Exposition on the Mysteries of the Church)

# Liturgy of the Word is Apostolic

-The two earliest full scripts of the Divine Liturgy that we still have are from the fourth century, being the Liturgy of St. Mark and the Liturgy of St. James

- Both contain the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Liturgy of the faithful.

“Enlighten the eyes of our minds, that we may understand Your divine oracles. Fit us to become hearers, and not only hearers, but doers of Your word, that we, becoming fruitful, and yielding good fruit from thirty to an hundred fold, may be deemed worthy of the kingdom of heaven.”

-Liturgy of St. Mark

## Liturgy of the Word in early texts- St. John Chrysostom

“They think that when they enter in here [the church], that they enter into our presence [the clergy], they think that they hear from us. They do not lay to heart, they do not consider that they are entering the presence of God, that it is He who addresses them. For when the Reader standing up says "Thus says the Lord", and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader but to honor Him who speaks to all through him [the Reader]. **If they knew that it was God who through His prophet speaks these things, they would cast away all their pride.** For if rulers are addressing them, they do not allow their minds to wander, much else would they when God is speaking. We are ministers, beloved. We speak not our own things, but the things of God. Letters coming from heaven are read every day.... These letters are sent from God; therefore let us enter with becoming reverence into the churches and let us hearken with fear to the things here said.”

# Liturgy of the Word



# Tai Shori -Ti Shori

Priest puts 5 spoonfuls of incense in the censer, symbolising the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Aaron, and Zacharias

He censes around the altar 3 times, silently praying for the peace of the holy church, the Orthodox Patriarchs, and the assemblies gathered

Around the whole Church, symbolizing the preaching of St. Paul



# Exodus 30



“And Aaron shall burn upon it fine compound incense every morning; whensoever he trims the lamps he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lights the lamps in the evening, he shall burn incense upon it; a constant incense-offering always before the Lord for their generations. And thou shalt not offer strange incense upon it, *nor* an offering made by fire, *nor* a sacrifice; and thou shalt not pour a drink-offering upon it. And once in the year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns, he shall purge it with the blood of purification for their generations: it is most holy to the Lord.”



## Incense as an offering of forgiveness

“It is an integral part of the raising of incense that the priest go round the congregation, offering the censer in front of every believer present in church. He should have to pause for a moment, taking his time before each one that he or she may confess in secret. The priest then goes to the door of the sanctuary and stands to offer incense upwards praying with eyes raised to God: “... accept the confessions of Thy people... etc.” He then advances to raise incense before the altar and on top of it over the chalice to carry his people’s sins to the blood of Christ to be expiated — that is, forgiven.”

- Fr. Matthew the Poor, Titles of Christ, pg. 105

# Catholic and Acts



# Praxis- Shere Ne Maria- A Penchois

Priest censes again around the altar three times around - Why?

- He censes only around the front of the church, symbolizing the first preaching of Christ by the apostles at Jerusalem

Then, the Synaxarium is read, as the apostolic work has never ended, but is rather succeeded by the constant witness of the church until this day.



# Trisagion

- We read in Isaiah 6

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy *is* the Lord of hosts;

The whole earth *is* full of His glory!”

# Trisagion

“But others say that at the time of the crucifixion, after Christ had given up His Spirit into the hands of His Father, the holy seraphim came together round about the body of Christ, and sang this hymn as far as “Who was crucified for us”; and they left out this clause, and very rightly, since it was not for them that He was crucified, but for the whole race of men. At that time, they say, Joseph the Councillor was present, he who begged the body of Christ from Pilate the judge and embalmed it, and they say that when he heard them say: “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal”, his own mind was enlightened and he added “Who was crucified for us, have mercy upon is”

- St. Moses Bar Kepha, Commentary on the Eucharist

# Litany of the Gospel



“Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which you hear, and have not heard them”

“Remember also, O our Master, all those who have bidden us to remember them in our supplications and prayers which we offer up unto You, O Lord our God.”

## Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord

- This phrase from Psalm 118 is used by the crowds at Jerusalem to announce Christ, when they cried out saying “Hossana”
- Thus, it is fulfilled as an announcement of Christ
- When the deacon chants this in proclamation of the Gospel reading he is announcing Christ, and when the priest censes him, he is censuring Christ
- The same phrase is used at the announcement of the descent of the Holy Eucharist