



ST REBEKAH COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOXY



THE HOLY LITURGY (ELEMENTARY)

When we see our best friend, we want to spend a lot of time with them, we want to know more about them, we want to talk to them and sometimes it makes us sad to leave them. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our **true Best Friend**. Every liturgy we attend in our Coptic Orthodox Church gives us another time to worship, know, thank and love our Lord Jesus Christ. We have the chance to know our Best Friend and Father more and more.

The Holy Liturgy is the most sacred part of our worship to God since our Lord Jesus Christ is present physically on the altar by His Body and Blood.

"We will show forth Your praise to all generations" (Psalm 79:13)

We begin to prepare for the Liturgy starting from the evening before and continue with many prayers and praises to our Lord Jesus Christ. During the Liturgy everything we do has a spiritual meaning so we can all feel and experience our Lord Jesus Christ together as one body.

Many prayers we hear and say in the Liturgy are from the Holy Bible.

Before the Divine Liturgy

Once we enter the church we should do the sign of the cross and remember that when we enter the church it is a holy place, it is as if we are entering Heaven.

Vespers: We begin with Vespers; during Vespers we sing beautiful prayers and praises. Vespers is prayed the evening before the Liturgy, to prepare the Altar and ourselves for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Midnight Prayers: Following the Vespers prayer, all of us together pray the prayers of the Midnight Hour from the Agpeya. These prayers remind us to pray and to always be ready for our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes again.

Midnight Praises: Following the Midnight Prayers we sing beautiful Hymns reminding us all what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. We hear about how God through His love saved so many people. We also sing praises for the beloved saints of our Church.

Morning Praises: On the following day, we begin by singing the Morning praises it gives us the chance to begin our day with the Angels and Saints, greeting and saying hello to each one by their name because they are also praying with us.

Matins Prayer: The prayers of the Matins prayers are like the Vespers, giving us another chance to prepare our hearts for the Holy Liturgy.



The 4 Parts of the Divine Liturgy



1- **Offering of the Lamb**: Abouna chooses the Holy Bread that will be transformed (changed into) the Holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ while we sing together saying "Lord Have Mercy"

2- **Liturgy of the Word**: During this part of the Liturgy we hear the readings of the day from the Holy Bible, the Word of God.

The Order of the Readings

1. **The Pauline**: From the 14 epistles written by St Paul.

2. **The Catholic**: From the epistle of the other disciples: St. James (1), St. Peter (2), St. John (3), St. Jude (1).

3. **The Acts**: from the Book of Acts (Praxis).

During the reading of the Pauline, the priest goes around the altar and the whole church representing the preaching of St. Paul to the whole world. During the reading of acts, the priest turns around the altar and the deacons' chorus only remembering that the Lord asked His disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they receive power from above.

Before taking the Holy Communion ask yourself, am I ready?

1. Did I Repent and Confess?
2. Did I upset anyone? Did I say sorry to that person?
3. Did I come to church early?
4. Did I attend the Liturgy of the Word, listening to the Word of God?



4. **The Synaxarium**: Every day in the Coptic calendar has an occasion, either a feast of our Lord or a martyr or a saint. This is considered to be an extension to the Book of Acts.

5. **The Psalm**: Some verses from the Book of Psalms.

6. **The Gospel**: This is the center of all readings. The Holy Gospel is one of the first 4 Books of the New Testament, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke or St. John.

7. **The Sermon**: This explains what is read in the Gospel.

3- **Liturgy of the Faithful**: All of the parts before the Liturgy of the Faithful have prepared us to stand before our Lord Jesus Christ. All of us are standing before the Throne of our Lord Jesus Christ asking him to be with us, to have mercy on us, forgive our sins and we thank Him for all the gifts God has given us. **He wants our full attention and He wants to hear us sing along with the angels.**

4- **Distribution**: Finally, after the Liturgy of the Faithful the Holy Communion begins. We are receiving the True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During Communion we should be singing along with the deacons the beautiful praises of our Church, thanking Him for the blessings He has given us allowing us to stand in his House with the Angels and receive the True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During the Divine Liturgy we follow the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Steps our Lord Jesus Christ performed in the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-30)	Steps of the Divine Liturgy
The disciples prepared the upper room	The raising of incense
Jesus washed the disciples feet	Repentance, confession and absolution
Took Bread	Choose Lamb
Gave thanks	Thanksgiving Prayer
Blessed it	The blessing
Broke it	Fraction
Gave it to His Disciples	Communion
Sang hymns (Matthew 26:30)	Hymns for communion

How to Benefit from the Holy Liturgy

1. Prepare for the liturgy

- Attend vespers the previous night.
- Come clean to church from outside and inside.
 - From outside: by washing and wearing tidy clothes.
 - From inside: by having a pure heart. Have peace with everyone . practice the sacrament of repentance and confession.

2. Come early

- Coming to church too late may prevent you from taking communion.
- Coming early allows the enjoying of the readings, hymns and deep prayers in the liturgy.
- The longer time spent in church will calm down the soul and ease the concentration in the liturgy.

3. Participate in the Liturgical responses

- The congregation is one of main three persons needed for a liturgy: a priest, deacons and the congregation.
- The responses are meant for the congregation not only the deacons.

4. Concentrate on the prayers and responses

- We should pray with the mind not the lips only.
- Using a Liturgy book may help in this situation.

5. Take communion

- Every one should be prepared by repentance and confession and participate in the communion.

"The holy Body and the precious true Blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen"