



ST REBEKAH COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOXY



THE SANCTUARY (ELEMENTARY)

Every Sunday we come to the Liturgy to partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is the Sacrament of the Eucharist or Holy Communion. Does anyone use any room or table in the church to prepare the Holy Communion? No... This can only be done in the Sanctuary of the church and in the middle of the Sanctuary is the altar.

"There will be an altar to the Lord" (Isaiah 19:19)

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is in the East of the Church behind the curtains. Inside the Sanctuary is an icon (picture) of our Lord Jesus Christ sitting on His throne in Heaven. Before you enter the Sanctuary you must take off your shoes and talking is not allowed, the Sanctuary is holy ground. During the Liturgy the true Body and true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is on the Altar and the Angels are standing all around. This is why when you are in the Sanctuary it is just like being in Heaven with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Altar

The Altar is a table in the middle of the Sanctuary. The Altar is the shape of a square and it is a symbol of the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Altar is consecrated by a Bishop or the Pope. Consecrated means that Holy Myron (or Holy oil) is poured on the table by the Bishop or Pope to make it Holy. Once consecrated, the Altar can now be used to prepare the Holy Communion.

"You shall consecrate them that they may be most Holy, whatever touches them will become Holy." (Exodus 30:29)

The Altar is covered with a white cloth. The cloth is a symbol of the cloth that was wrapped around our Lord Jesus Christ when He was in the tomb. Only what is needed to prepare the Holy Communion can be placed on the Altar.

The Throne

It is a box made of wood. It has the Last Supper pictures in the front. It has an opening on the top. It's made to put the Chalice (Cup) that has the Blood of Our Lord Christ in it. The Throne is placed in the center on top of the Altar.

"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne."
(Revelation 4:2)



What are the Utensils of the Altar?

1. **The Paten:** made of silver or gold. To put the bread (Qurbana) that will be changed to the Body of Christ.
2. **The Chalice (Cup):** made of silver or gold. To put the juice of the vine (the wine) in it that will be changed to the Blood of Christ.
3. **The Dome:** made of silver or gold. To cover the Paten.
4. **The Mystir (Spoon):** made of silver or gold. To give the Blood of Christ to the congregation.

The Altar's utensils are arranged and wrapped in big piece of cloth and kept on the Altar. While praying the liturgy, the Priest (Abouna) unties the wrapping and arranges the utensils on the Altar in a special arrangement to prepare for the liturgy.

