

LITURGY OF THE CATECHUMENS	1
<i>THE GREAT EKTENIA</i>	1
<i>THE REFRAINS OF THE FIRST ANTIPHON</i>	3
<i>THE LITTLE EKTENIA</i>	3
<i>THE REFRAINS OF THE SECOND ANTIPHON</i>	4
<i>THE LITTLE EKTENIA</i>	4
<i>THE REFRAINS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON</i>	5
THE LITTLE ENTRANCE	5
<i>THE PRAYER OF THE LITTLE ENTRANCE</i>	5
<i>THE ENTRANCE HYMN</i>	5
<i>THE PRAYER OF THE TRISAGION</i>	6
<i>THE TRISAGION HYMN</i>	6
<i>LITURGY OF THE WORD, THE EPISTLE (APOSTLE)</i>	7
<i>THE PRAYER BEFORE THE GOSPEL</i>	7
THE GOSPEL.....	7
<i>THE PRAYER OF THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION</i>	8
<i>Prayer of the Catechumens</i>	9
<i>Dismissal of the Catechumens</i>	9
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION.....	10

Liturgy of the Catechumens

(The People Stand)

PRIEST: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: *Amen.*

THE GREAT EKTENIA

DEACON: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For the peace of the whole world; for the good estate of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For this holy House, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For our Archbishop (or Bishop, or Metropolitan) N., for the venerable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For the President of the United States and all civil authorities, and for the Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For healthful seasons, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For travelers by sea, by land, and by air; for the sick and suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To thee O Lord.

(The Priest says quietly The Prayer of the First Antiphon:)

O Lord our God, whose might is beyond compare, whose glory is incomprehensible, whose mercy is infinite and whose love toward mankind is ineffable: do thou thyself, O Master, in thy tender compassion look down upon us and this holy house, and grant us and those who pray with us thy rich mercies and compassions.

The Priest ends each Litany with an exclamation that announces the end of the prayer. The exclamation changes at each point during the service.

PRIEST: *(Aloud)* For unto thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: *Amen.*

THE REFRAINS OF THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Antiphons are songs from the psalms that are sung back and forth between two choirs.

CHOIR: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

CHOIR: Both now and ever, and to ages of ages, Amen. Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

THE LITTLE EKTENIA

The deacon then, having made a reverence, goes from his place to stand before the icon of Christ, holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand. At the conclusion of the Antiphon, the deacon comes to stand in his accustomed place, and, having made a reverence, he says:

DEACON: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

DEACON: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

(The Priest says quietly The Prayer of the Second Antiphon.)

PRIEST: O Lord our God, save thy people and bless thine inheritance: preserve the fulness of thy Church; sanctify those who love the beauty of thy house: do thou glorify them in recompense by thy divine power, and forsake us not who put our trust in thee.

PRIEST: *Aboudi* For thine is the majesty, and thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: *Amen.*

THE REFRAINS OF THE SECOND ANTIPHON

This ancient hymn is a small version of the creed and tells what we believe about Christ.

CHOIR: O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto thee: Alleluia.

CHOIR: O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto thee: Alleluia.

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

CHOIR: O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto thee: Alleluia.

CHOIR: Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHOIR: O Only-begotten Son and Word of God, who art immortal, yet didst deign for our salvation to be incarnate of the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; and without change was made man; and was crucified also, O Christ our God, and by thy death didst Death subdue; who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: save us.

THE LITTLE EKTENIA

DEACON: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us; save us; have mercy upon us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Calling to remembrance our all holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves, and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To thee, O Lord.

(The Priest says quietly The Prayer of the Third Antiphon:)

PRIEST: O thou who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be most expedient for them, granting us in this world the knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

PRIEST: *(Aloud)* For thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: *Amen.*

THE REFRAINS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

(The Choir sings the Troparion of the Tone of the Day, which is used as the Refrain of the Third Antiphon.)

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

The Priest makes the Little Entrance with the holy Gospel. Standing before the Holy Doors, facing the Altar, he says:

THE PRAYER OF THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

PRIEST: *(quietly)* O Master, Lord our God, who hast appointed in heaven orders and hosts of Angels and Archangels for the service of thy glory: cause that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy Angels serving with us and gloryifying thy goodness: for unto thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. *Amen.*

When the prayer is finished, the deacon, holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand and pointing therewith to the east, says to the priest:

Then the Priest blesses the Entrance, saying quietly:

PRIEST: *(quietly)* Blessed is the Entrance of thy Saints: Always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. *Amen.*

(When the Choir has finished the Troparion, the Priest kisses the Gospel Book and lifts it up with both hands, saying in a loud voice:)

PRIEST: Wisdom! Attend!

Then, having made a reverence, the deacon enters the sanctuary, followed by the priest, and he lays the Book of the Holy Gospels on the holy table. During the procession the altar boys represent John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus. The Book of Gospels represent the teachings of Jesus. The procession represents Christ coming to the people with His teachings. It dates back to the time when Christians were persecuted so much that there were no Churches. The Christians had to bring their articles out of hiding, using a procession to bring them to the altar.

THE ENTRANCE HYMN

CHOIR: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto thee: Alleluia.

(Then the Choir sings the Troparia and the Kontakion of the day.)

A Kontakion is a liturgical hymn that gives an abbreviated form of the meaning or history of the feast of a given day.

(While the Choir sings the *Troparia*, the Priest prays the Prayer of the *Trisagion* that is one of the oldest hymns of the Orthodox Church, used in every prayer or service.

THE PRAYER OF THE TRISAGION

PRIEST: O holy God, who rests in thy Holy Place; who art hymned by the Seraphim with thrice-holy cry, and glorified by the Cherubim, and worshipped by every heavenly Power; Who out of nothing hast brought all things into being; who hast created man after thine own image and likeness and has adorned him with thine every gift; who gives to him that asks wisdom and understanding; who despises not the sinner, but hast appointed repentance unto salvation; who hast vouchsafed unto us, thy humble and unworthy servants, even in this hour to stand before the glory of thy holy Altar and to offer the worship and praise which are due unto thee: Thyself, O Master, accept even from the mouth of us sinners the Hymn of the Trisagion, and visit us in thy goodness. Forgive us every transgression both voluntary and involuntary; sanctify our souls and bodies; and grant us to serve thee in holiness all the days of our life: through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the Saints who from the beginning of the world have been well-pleasing unto thee.

DEACON: Let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For holy art thou, O our God, and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: *Amen.*

THE TRISAGION HYMN

CHOIR: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us (*Three times*)

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. *Amen.*

DEACON: With strength.

CHOIR: Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

CHOIR: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

(The Priest also says the Trisagion; then he bows toward the Prothesis and quietly says the following prayer.)

PRIEST: (*quietly*) Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

(Then facing the High Place he says, quietly.)

PRIEST: Blessed are thou on the throne of the glory of thy kingdom, who sits upon the Cherubim: always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. *Amen.*

(The People Sit)

LITURGY OF THE WORD, THE EPISTLE (APOSTLE)

DEACON: Let us attend!

(The Reader recites the Prokeimenon of the Epistle)

DEACON: *Wisdom!*

(The Reader announces the title of the Epistle)

PRIEST: Let us attend!

(The Reader sings the Epistle for the day. When he has finished the Priest says to the Reader.)

PRIEST: Peace to you the reader.

CHOIR: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

(During the reading of the Epistle, the Priest censes the Gospel Book, and reads quietly the prayer before the Gospel.)

THE PRAYER BEFORE THE GOSPEL

PRIEST: Illumine our hearts, O Master who lovest mankind, with the pure light of thy divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of thy Gospel teachings; implant in us also the fear of thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living both thinking and doing such things as are well pleasing unto thee: for thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto thee we ascribe glory, together with thy Father who is from everlasting, and thine all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(The People Stand)

THE GOSPEL

PRIEST: Wisdom! Attend! Let us hear the holy Gospel. Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit

PRIEST: The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint N.

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord, glory to thee.

(The Priest sings the appointed passage from the holy *Gospel*, when he has finished, the Choir sings:)

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord, glory to thee.

(The people sit)

(The Priest preaches the sermon.)

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Antimins with the Gospel Book, and places it before the Altar tabernacle; he unfolds the Antimins, makes the sign of the Cross above it with the sponge, and says the following prayer.)

THE PRAYER OF THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

(The people stand)

DEACON: Let us say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say:

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (once)*

DEACON: O Lord Almighty, the God of our Fathers, we beseech Thee, hear us and have mercy.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (once)*

DEACON: Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we beseech Thee, hear us and have mercy.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

DEACON: Again we pray for this country, its ruler, *(title and name of the ruler)*, its people, civil authorities and armed forces.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

DEACON: Again we pray for our Most Reverend Bishop *(name of the diocesan bishop, or, if he be an archbishop or metropolitan, mention his rank and name)*, and for all the Orthodox bishops.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

DEACON: Again we pray for our brethren: priests, deacons, monks and all other clergy, and for all our brethren in Christ.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

DEACON: Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, the hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

DEACON: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness and remission of the sins of the servants of God: benefactors, trustees, members and supporters of this holy church.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

(Here special petitions for the recovery of the sick, or any special needs for individual parishioners are offered.)

DEACON: Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable church; for those who labor in its service, for the singers and for the people here present, who await from Thee great and abundant mercy.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy. (three times)*

PRIEST: *(in a low voice):* O Lord our God, accept this fervent supplication from Thy servants, and have mercy upon us according to the multitude of Thy mercies; and send

forth Thy compassion upon us and upon all Thy people, who await the rich mercy that cometh from Thee.

Priest: For Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Priest: (*aloud*) Help us; Save us, have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

Some Churches will now do a "Litany of the Catechumens", while others will skip to the Second Litany of the Faithful.

Prayer of the Catechumens

(During the litany of the catechumens, the priest unfolds on the altar table the corporal [antimins], a cloth with a depiction of the burial of Christ.)

DEACON: Pray unto the Lord, ye catechumens.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: Ye faithful, pray ye for the catechumens, that the Lord may have mercy upon them.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: That He may teach them the word of truth;

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: That He may reveal to them the Gospel of righteousness.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: That He may unite them unto His Holy, Universal, and Apostolic Church;

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: Save them, have mercy upon them, preserve them, and protect them, O God, by Thy grace.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

DEACON: Bow your heads unto the Lord, ye catechumens.

CHOIR: *To Thee, O Lord.*

PRIEST: (*in a low voice*): O Lord, our God, Who dwells on high and regards the humble of heart; Who has sent forth as the salvation of mankind Thy Only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ; look down upon Thy servants, the catechumens, who have bowed their heads before Thee; make them worthy in due season of the laver of regeneration. Unite them to thy Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church, and number them with Thy chosen flock.

Priest: That they also with us may glorify Thy most honorable and majestic Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: *Lord, have mercy.*

Dismissal of the Catechumens

DEACON: All ye catechumens, depart! Depart, ye catechumens! All ye that are catechumens, depart! Let no catechumens remain! But let us who are of the faithful, again and again, in peace pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: *Lord, have mercy.*

Questions & Discussion

- Does a person have to attend the Divine Liturgy every Sunday to really know Christ?
 - General guideline to discussion: Everyone was created with the unwritten law of Christ in his or her heart. Yet we are instructed by one of the 10 commandments to “keep the Sabbath day holy”, and how else can we do this other than at the Liturgy? Jesus Himself tells us in Matthew 18:20 “where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” If we are to truly know Jesus, then the only true way to do that is through His Church. If we think we can stay home and say a few prayers, then we have only separated ourselves from Him.
- What does making the Sign of the Cross, lighting a candle and venerating a holy icon have to do with making me a better Orthodox Christian?
 - General guideline to discussion: What does Cross mean to us as Christians? Whether we are talking about a Cross someplace in the Church, or when we Cross ourselves the message is the same; Christ died for us to bring us to eternal life and in doing so saved all generations of people. The Cross was **HIS** chosen vehicle to do that. Jesus also instructed us to pray in private, but that isn’t a replacement for keeping the Sabbath day holy by going to Liturgy.
 - When we go and light a candle, several things are happening. We describe Jesus as being light, and that is one of the things the candle stands for. Jesus is the light of the world. Our candles tend to be bee’s wax which smells very nice when burning, almost like incense. Prayers and incense are closely connected in the Bible especially in Psalm 141:1 “Let my **prayer** be set before You as **incense**, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”
 - The veneration of Saints took place in almost the earliest days of the Church. Christians were persecuted and killed in large numbers, and others would hold early Liturgies on their graves. Icons are used, not as simple pictures but as “windows into Heaven.” Icons bear witness to us of the holy lives that others have lead.
- When I attend Divine Liturgy, do I feel at home, spiritually comfortable, or awkward and out of place? Why?
- Does going to Divine Liturgy give me a sense of spiritual contentment? Is there something about it that makes me feel good?