

# Explanation of the Holy Qurbana

- *Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless you eat of the flesh of the son of man and drink of His blood, you have no life in you*



## ***Luke 22:19***

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

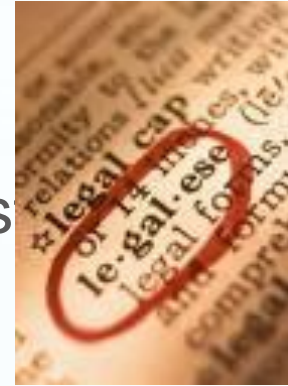


# Topics to be covered

- Introduction to the Holy Qurbana
  - General explanations
  - Use of symbols
  - Main themes
- Explanation of liturgy
  - Morning prayer and preparation
  - The liturgy

# Disclaimer

This presentation seeks to spark your interest and provide a brief overview of the Holy Qurbana rather than be an “end all” explanation of all your questions. Hopefully this will encourage you to go and seek the information yourself.



# Word Meanings

- From Syriac word Qurbono
- = offering, gift, dedication, offering of sacrifice, sacrifice
- Sacrifice: of our Lord for the forgiveness of **our** sins. OT law required sacrifice for atonement of sins. The blood of the passover lamb saved the first born of Israel from physical death, saved Israelites from bondage. His blood saves us from spiritual death and bondage from sin.
- We are to offer ourselves completely to God as a burnt offering where nothing was set aside.
- Holy Qurbana is the “bread of life”, the manna that was provided to the Israelites in the desert. (St Jn 6:48-56)
- Names for the Holf Qurbaba
  - Knusio =gathering together (lives scattered are brought together to God)
  - Koruso= Joining together (near/far, living/departed).
  - Roso= mystery (upper room, conversion of body/blood).
  - Geerus, Geeroso= perfection of perfect ones
  - Debaho= sacrifice



# Old Testament images of the Holy Qurbana

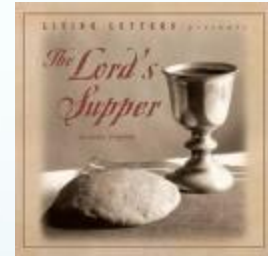
- The tree of life in Eden (Genesis 2:9, 3:22)
- Offering of Abel (Genesis 4:3-4)
- Burned offering of Noah (Genesis 8:20)
- The gift of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18)
- The sacrifice of Abraham on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:12, 22:13)
- The passover lamb in Egypt (Exodus 12:1-11)
- The Manna in the desert (Exodus 16:12-16)
- The brass serpent (Numbers 21:5-9)
- The bread received by Elijah (1 King 19:16)
- Burning coal to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:6)

# Institution of the Holy Qurbana- where it all began

- During the public ministry of our Lord:  
St. Matt: 26:26-29; St. Mk: 14:22-25; St.  
Lk 22:15-20.



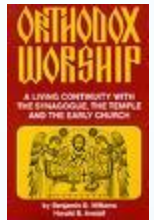
- Also mentioned in 1 Cor 11: 23-26



*It is not something that was designed by the fantasy of men hence we need to follow it the way it was intended to be performed.*

# Holy Qurbana through the ages

- In Apostolic times Holy Qurbana was celebrated regularly “breaking the bread”. This was usually done after the sermon by the apostles or such important persons. (Acts 2: 43-46; 20:7-11).
- There may also have been recitation of prayers, psalms and songs (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19).
- There might also have been public reading of the letters of the Apostles (Col 4:16, 1 Thess 5:27), Kiss of peace (1 Cor 16:20, 2Cor 13:12, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14), and offertory ( 1 Cor 16: 1-2, 2 Cor 8:12, Rom 12:13, Heb 13:16).
- What is seen in 1 Cor 11:23-26 could be a form of prayer said over the bread and wine.
- Different liturgies were formed Eastern vs Western etc
- What we use is mainly the liturgy of St. James brother of Jesus (one of 70 liturgies developed on basis of St. James liturgy).





# Priestly Vestments

- Achen entering the madbaha wearing black signifying our sin. It is a symbolism of the return of the prodigal son.
- He adorns the vestments as a sign of the Father clothing the son in righteousness.
- Ephesians 6:10-18 talks about “The armor of God.”



# Preparation of the Qurbana



## So what is Achen doing during morning prayer?

- Prepares the bread and wine.
- Why leavened bread? Our Lord used the regular leavened bread, i.e. “Lahamo” or “Artos”, and not “Pathiro” or “Azyme” at the last supper on the eve of Passover ( John 13:1, 29, 18:28, 19:14,31).
- After the bread is placed in the paten, the priest **mixes water with wine in the cup** pours the same in the chalice. This reminds us that the divinity and the humanity are mixed in our Lord Jesus Christ ; That our Lord mixed wine and water at the last supper; and also that blood and water came out, when pierced at His side on the cross to wash away the sins of all creation.
- Bread is a sign of Life. When we offer bread, we offer our life our own lives to God.

# Articles used in the Qurbana

- **The Veil (Altar curtain)** Ex. 36:16 signifies the sky between heaven and earth
- **Small bell, big bells:** Draw attention to important events during the Qurbana, sometimes calls believers to church for worship.
- **Marvahso:** Representing angles fluttering their wings.
- **The Altar step:** The step is the ladder to heaven. Also signifies the upper room.
- **Gospel stand (lectern):** Depicts sermon on the mount.



# Articles used continued..

- **The Altar:** The table of sacrifice, Throne of God in Heaven, Tomb of our Lord, Table of life, Manger, Israel, Mt Calvary. The altar holds the “**Tablitha**” which is a temporary altar signifies the cross.
- **The Cross:** Shows the presence of our saviour
- **The Coverings:** The white linen represents the winding sheet in which the body of Jesus was wrapped.  
The upper altar-cloth (Virikootu), of rich and brilliant material represents the glory of Gods throne (heavens, earth and the vegetations as in red/gold/green). It covers the front of the altar to the ground usually with three divisions (denotes Trinity) with cross in the centre representing the Lord.
- **Canopy:**  
In some sanctuaries, a canopy is suspended over the altar, to represent the heavens outspread over the earth, upon which sacrifice is offered for the sins of the world.

# More articles...

- **Shooshepo: (Shushafo):**  
**(The Air)** Generally white in color, with embroidered cross and sometimes angels, etc signifies the swaddling clothes of baby Jesus in the manger, in the sepulcher, and the stone that rolled against the tomb. It is also considered as the bright cloud overshadowed at the time of transfiguration on Mount Tabore. (Mt 17:5).
- **The Candles:** Signifies the 12 disciples. Jesus is the light.

# Articles found on Altar

- **Paten and Chalice, spoon**
- **Astoric (Star):** This supports the veil above the paten so that it may not touch the Holy body . It is also the symbol of the star seen over the manger at the birth of our Lord.
- **Tongs (Gmourto):** This small cushion is compared to the tongs with which the Seraphins placed the live coal on Isaiah's lips (Isaiah 6:1 ff). This is used as the sacramental spoon rest, and also to wipe the lips of children after communion.
- **The Veils:** Two richly stitched veils are used to cover the paten and the chalice. The covering period is compared to the time of our Lord with the father in the Old Testament.



# The Censor

- Bible references to incense: Incense offered every morning( Ex. 30:34-48, Ex. 30:7, Num 16:6)  
Incense offered in heaven (Heb 9:4; Rev. 8:3-5).  
Prayers going up to heaven like sweet smelling incense (Ps 141:2)
- Top (heaven) bottom (earth). Also bottom could be considered as Mary that held the live fire (Jesus) in her womb.
- 4 chains: for the trinity; 72 links for the evangelists
- The coal is our sin that is burnt/purged by the fire (Holy Spirit)

# Church Architecture

## Jerusalem Temple

- Holy of Holies: Western end, only High priest entered once a year. Had Ark of covenant. Had a veil separating this part which was rent in two with Jesus crucifixion.
- Holy Place (lamp with 7 branches, altar of incense, altar of the shew bread)
- Separate courts for men and women (Only Jews)
- Court of Gentiles (trade)

## Christian Church

- Holy Sanctuary (Madbaha): at eastern end. Signifies heaven. Has a curtain. Services conducted here
- Part inside the rails (Azhikakam) - Holy Place. Holy Baptism, Holy Mooron and Holy Marriage, prayers, and special services conducted here.
- Haikla (place of worship): Main hall for congregation.
- Porch: Catechumens stood in the early Church
- Cry Room: (Just kidding)

# Morning Prayers



- The monastic services of the early church fathers exhorted people to pray **seven** times a day based on Psalm 119:164 “Seven times a day and all day long do I praise You because of Your righteous decrees.”
- (These are based on 6am-6 pm)
  - 7 am: 1<sup>st</sup> hr after sunrise : Light coming to this world
  - 9 am: 3<sup>rd</sup> hr after sunrise: Holy Spirit (Pentecost) Acts 2:15
  - 12 pm: 6<sup>th</sup> hr after sunrise: Jesus crucified St. Matt 27: 45,  
St. Lk 23:44, St. Jn 19:14
  - 3 pm : 9<sup>th</sup> hr after sunrise: Jesus gives up his spirit St. Matt 27:50
  - 6 pm : 12<sup>th</sup> hr after sunrise: The coming of darkness
  - 9 pm: Prayers before going to sleep.
  - 12 pm: Midnight (1. Jewish people led out of Egypt in midnight Exo 12:29. 2. Jesus resurrected early morning St. Matt 28:1 3. Thief in the night St. Mk 13:35)
- For convenience we have grouped into three groups morning, afternoon and evening prayers.
- Ends with Old Testament readings on the Northern side. (Readings are related to gospel reading for the day and are assigned by the church).

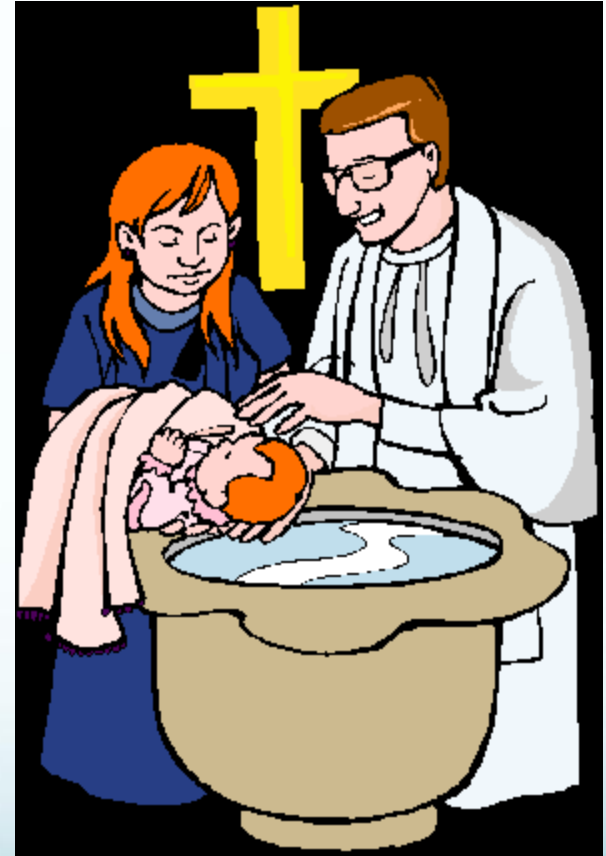


# Qurbana: General outline

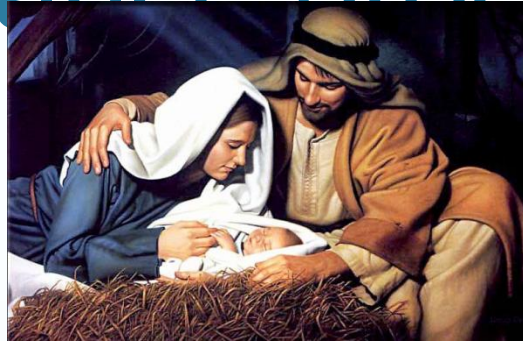
- Service of Catecumens:  
Had long prayers and sermons. These were prayers and teaching for those who were preparing for Holy baptism. The deacon would then send them off. Includes morning prayer and Part 1 : Unveiling of curtain (Nin Mathavu to end of Yachikendum).
- Service of the Faithful:  
Part 2: 5 Chapters
  - Chapter 1: Kiss of Peace to celebration of the Sosaffa
  - Chapter 2: Celebration of the Sosaffa to Diptchys
  - Chapter 3: Diptchys to Our Father
  - Chapter 4: Our Father to Thanksgiving
  - Part 5: Thansgiving

# Part 1: Service of the Catechumens

- Entrance procession: Birth of Christ
- Adoration of Christ: Trisagion
- Readings
- Gospel reading and sermon
- Offering of incense
- Blessing the censor
- Nicene creed and intercessions.



# Entrance procession



## Events

- Curtain drawn aside
- Song
- Altar
- Kissing 4 corners of altar
- Deacon with lighted candle
- Marvahasas fluttering

## Symbolism

- Opening of heaven
- Song by angelic hosts
- Manger
- Worship by shepherds
- John the Baptist
- Angels fluttering wings



# Adoration of Christ-Trisagion

- Vision of Ignatious Noorono (copy of St. Paul)
  - During the burial of our Lord angels were singing “Holy art thou O Lord” Ps 99:5
  - Another group sang “Holy art Thou Almighty”
  - Third group sang “ Holy art Thou immortal” Rev 1:18
  - Then Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus sang “Thou who was crucified for us have mercy on us” (Mark 15:43)



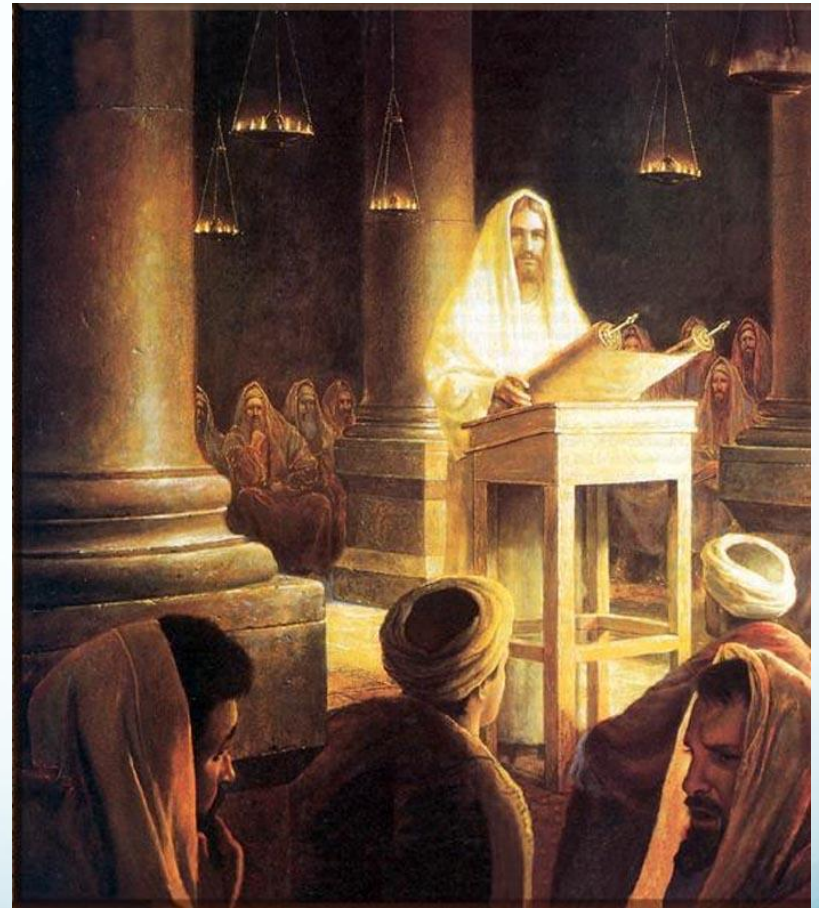
# Readings



- Northern side – Acts of the apostles or non Pauline epistles (no revelation either). Total possible books (9) – 8 general epistles and Acts. *Gospel was first preached to the Jews (Habibai, Barekmor)*
- Southern side- Pauline epistles (13) since Paul preached mostly to the gentiles. Also Paul was only called later to ministry.
- Reading both sides shows that the gospel spreads all over the world.

# Gospel Reading

- Commemorates the public ministry of our Lord.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> procession, shows the importance of the Bible in the Church
- Only the 4 gospels are enthroned as we believe Christ is the center of the Bible. Also just like Jesus explained the good news to the disciples on road to Emmaus, he speaks to us through the Church's interpretation of the gospel readings.



# Preparation for entering the Anaphora

- Offering of incense.
- Prumeon: Prayer of absolution for forgiveness of the sins of the priest and his flock.
- Sedra: Talks about remembering important incidents in Jesus life, talks about the glory of Holy Qurbana and our unworthiness to participate in it, prayers to send the Holy Spirit and make us worthy to receive the Qurbana.
- Blessing of censor: 4 chains for the trinity (Jesus is represented by 2 chains for his divine and human nature).
- Nicene Creed and intercessions. Deacon censing shows that Christ came from heaven and traveled all throughout the world and ascended into heaven. Also to exhort the catechumens to leave the church. What follows is the Service of the Faithful.
- The Creed is a fundamental statement of Faith without which a service or prayer is incomplete.
- **What is the difference b/w creed of the Catholics and Our Church?**

They believe that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the son and we believe it is only sent by the Father.-Filioque controversy. Added as early as 447 AD by Pope Leo I to the Niceo-Constantinople Creed to overcome Arian controversy, it was (1012-1024) Pope Benedict VIII that officially added it.

## **1. What does the washing of achen's hands mean?**

Symbolic act of inner purification, washing the disciples feet, removal of sin

## **2. When else does he wash his hands?**

Right after absolution and before starting the Holy Qurbana (in private)

# Part 2: Chapter 1

## Kiss of peace to the Diptychs

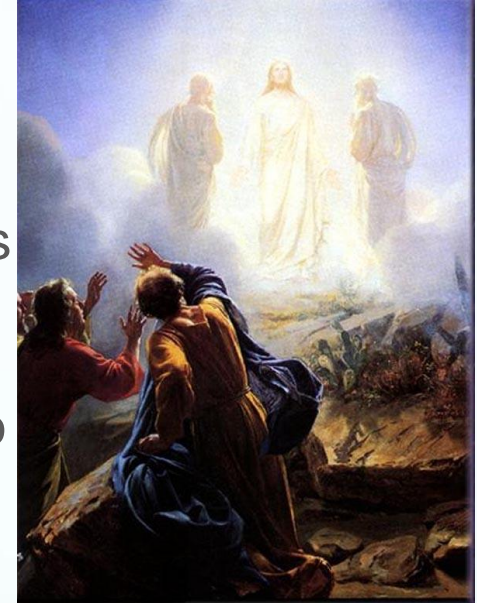
- Achen gets on to the step (darga) representing Jesus in the upper room
- The peace is from the throne of God that we are supposed to reconcile with our neighbors.  
St. Matt 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”  
2 Cor 13:12 “Greet one another with a holy kiss”  
1 Cor 16:20 “All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss” )
- **What are the two days when the kiss of peace is not given?**

Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday (days of mourning)



# Celebration of the Sosaffa

- Shows the (second) opening of heaven during transfiguration (veil of Old Testament is completely removed)
- Isaiah 25:7 “On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations”
- Celebration of Sosaffa 3 times shows the vision of St. Peter in Acts 10:9-16. Shows that Christ came to save both Jews and Gentiles.
- Next is the First Benediction.
- **How many times is benediction given during the Holy Qurbana?**  
**Ans: Three (now, before Anputayone, at elevation of the Holy Mysteries)**



# Part 2: Chapter 2: Institution of the Holy Qurbana

- Preparation by lifting up of our hearts. (Can you declare this with truthfulness?)
- Only if we lift up our hearts and our minds can we hear and join the angles when they sing Thrice Holy (bible references in living sacrifice)-This is the vision of Isaiah
- “Blessed is he who has come and is coming in the name of the Lord- Glory be to him in the Highest.”- song of the Children during Palm Sunday. (St. Matt 21:9)



# The Last Supper

- The upper room: Lk 22:19. Prayers also seen in 1 Cor 11:24
- Without partaking in this body and blood we cannot have eternal life. St. Jn 6:48-56 “Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless you eat of the flesh of the son of man and drink of His blood, you have no life in you”
- The body and blood lying on the altar is also our body and blood (our whole being) which we have to offer to God. God blesses this and uses it to extend His kingdom.
- Jesus has asked us to “Do this in remembrance of me.”
- Lifting of the spoon and sponge shows that His second coming will be like a flash of lightning.

# Invocation of the Holy Spirit

- Priest waving his hands symbolizes the Holy Spirit descending on the Eucharist.
- Like the prophet Elijah praying to God thrice for accepting the sacrifice on Mt \_\_\_\_\_, the ~~Priest~~ <sup>Camel</sup> asks God to answer his prayers and prays to change ordinary bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. (We believe it does!!)
- St Jn 6: 49-51” Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

# DIPTYCHS: THE GREAT INTERCESSION

- First three prayers for the living the last 3 for the dead.
- 1
- 2 Living Spiritual Fathers (Heb 13: 18-19)
- 3 Living Faithful Brethren (Eph 6:18)
- 4 Living Secular Rulers (Ezra 6:9, 2 Tim 2:2)
- 5 Mother of God/Saints (Heb 11)
- 6 Departed Spiritual Fathers (23) AD 600  
Faithful Departed (Ex 28:11-12, 28)

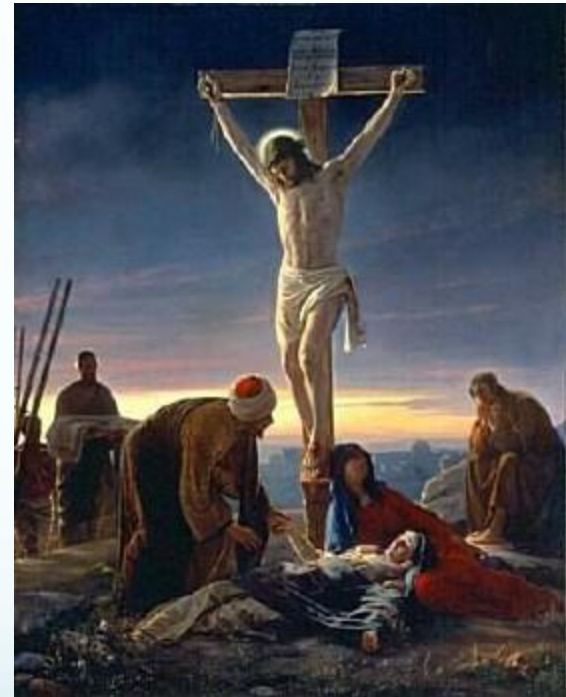
This is followed by prayers, and **Second Benediction**



# The Crucifixion- “Anpudayone”

Why is the sanctuary closed during this time?

- The veil is pulled over the sanctuary as a reminder of the time of His redemptive passion, death, burial, and resurrection, when the earth was engulfed in darkness (Luke 23:44, 24:1; Mat 28:1; John 20:1)
- The Seraphic Hymn (While sanctuary is hidden) – “Anpudayone (Hearken gracious)”: Hymn is based on Isaiah’s vision (Isaiah Ch. 6). It describes the worship of the seraphim and our desire to draw near to our Lord. Anpudayone means Gracious Lord . Through this song we are praying for his **mercy** that Christ has offered through his death on the cross



Anputayone is a prayer of **mercy**



# The Crucifixion- “Anpudayone”

- The Fracture and Commixture performed by the priest while the sanctuary is hidden: At the fraction the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ are symbolized with all humanity being turned from evil to salvation as the priest turns the Body from the left to the right in his hands. The priest breaks the bread and anoints it with the precious blood, signifying that the body and blood of Christ, which are separated in death, were reunited at resurrection. Then the host is lifted signifying our Lord's *resurrection*. (The bell is rung at this time)
- The veil is opened symbolizing the appearance of our Lord to His disciples after his resurrection several times, before Pentecost. Also reminds us the rending of the veil of the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem temple at the time of crucifixion



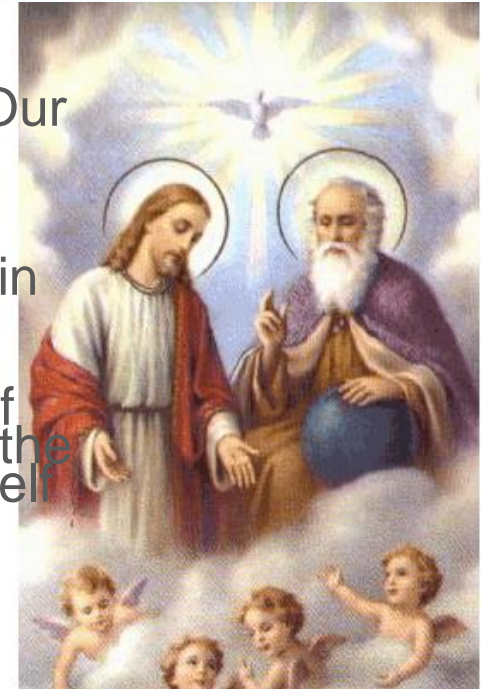
# Part 2- Chapter 4 Starts with 'Our Father' until 'Thanksgiving'



**Christ has risen**

# Our Father

- The Lord's Prayer that follows reminds us that we are born again, through the sacrifice of our Lord, and the consequent sending down of the Holy Spirit, as children of God worthy to call God, "Our Father" (Jn. 3: 3-5, Gal. 4:6; 1Pt. 1:3-5)
- We have been offered the privilege of calling God 'Our Father' through the death of Jesus on the cross.
- The chasm that separated man from God was removed as evidenced by the tearing of the curtain in the temple.
- This is followed by a set of prayers that remind us of our unworthiness, while expressing the Holiness of the Holy Trinity. We should praise God for offering himself for us while we were still sinners.





# Third Benediction



- Benediction = invocation of divine blessing/ a blessing
- Peace is given twice before the benediction at this time remembering that Christ appeared several times after his resurrection strengthening them with his peace

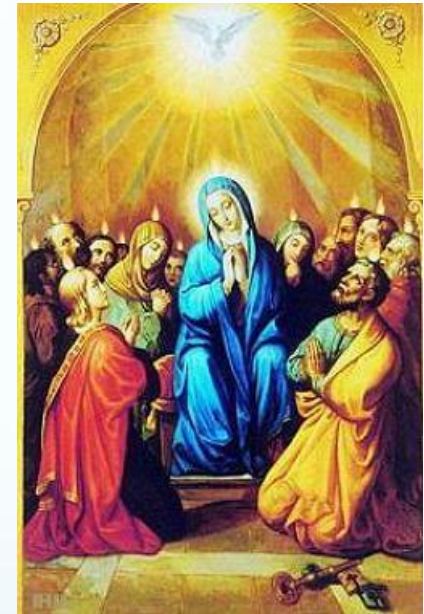
# Elevation of the Holy Mysteries

- The elevation and adoration of the Paten and Chalice makes us commemorate the **ascension** of our Lord who went inside the veil, to offer intercession for us (Heb 9:7).
- **Two deacons stand with lighted candles**, one to the left and the other to the right of the altar, as the Mysteries are elevated before the congregation, signifying the two angels who appeared at the resurrection and who were present at Christ's ascension when they proclaimed (Acts 1:11): "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."



# Elevation of the Holy Mysteries

- The Pentecost is remembered, assuring us of the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- “With us is the Holy Father”
- “ With us is the Holy Son”
- “With us is the Holy Spirit”





# Kukiliyon- Hymns of Eucharistic devotion

Shows great and divine fellowship with all the departed souls. At this time we remember

- 1) The Mother of God
- 2) Saints
- 3) Priests
- 4) Departed Souls





# Kukiliyon

- All these prayers are offered with incense. This means that the prayers of the Mother of God, all the saints, the clergy and the faithful are rising up to heaven as sweet fragrance as described in the Book of Revelation (8:3-4).



"My Lord and My God"  
John 20:28

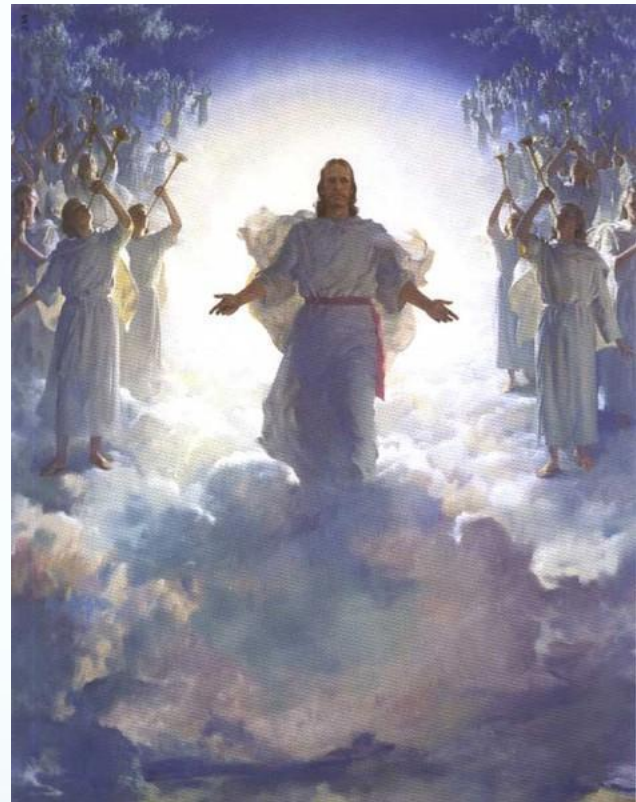


St Gregorios of  
Parumala

# **Why is the sanctuary closed again?**

- It symbolizes that our Lord is now hidden to our bodily eyes and also the age in which the Church awaits the second coming of our Lord.
- Removal of the veil shows the opening of heaven and the second coming of he Christ.

# The Second Coming



The candles, bells and other accompaniments depict the represent the tumultuous second coming of the Lord with trumpets and accompanied by the angels. (Mathew 25: 31 - “And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds...”)

# No dearth in meaning!

- Making of the cross with the paten and chalice = great salvation the cross has given to us
- After the priest returns to the altar, he places the paten and chalice down but not before he makes a round, one over the other = people below and the souls above are united and both heaven and earth submit to the reign of God.

# Thanksgiving

- Also known as the concluding prayers, the priest thanks the Father on behalf of the congregation for having considered us worthy of partaking in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- The Final Blessing: At the Final Blessing, the faithful are dismissed with the reassurance of our salvation in Christ and our commitment to Him through baptism, a reassurance extended not only to those present, but encompassing all who have been baptized into Christ, both near and far, living and departed. Sent forth in peace, the faithful are asked to pray for the priest always.



# End of the Qurbana

- The Qurbana is concluded behind the veil when the priest completes his communion. He concludes by kissing the altar three times saying: “Farewell, O Holy and divine altar of the Lord. Henceforth, I know not whether I shall return to Thee or not...” This reminds that death is always at the door and makes us vigilant in preparing ourselves to meet the Lord whenever the call comes.
- Psalms 23 is read
- **Why do I have to kiss the hands of the priest?**  
Because he took the body and the blood in his hands.  
A Cross or a Bible may also be used

# Did you know?

- **Only one communion Service the Same day on the same altar:** The altar is compared to the tomb of our Lord, and the portable altar to the cross. Jesus died on the cross only once, and was buried also only once. Therefore our church allows only one communion service the same day on the same altar. So also no priest or bishop can officiate the communion service more than once the same day



# Is the purpose of such attendance "to get something out of it" or is it an offering?

- RESPONSE: We attend and participate in the sacraments and services in order to worship God, Who gave us life and all that we possess, and Who offers us through worship a foretaste of His heavenly Kingdom. We offer ourselves, as individuals and as a faith community, to God in worship, rather than expecting to "get something" other than communion with God and His People. Hence, worship is not meant to entertain; rather, it inspires -- and this word means "in the spirit" -- and is conducted in Spirit and Truth, as Scripture commands. While we indeed do bring our cares and concerns, our joys and sorrows to worship, seeking the Lord's help in our day-to-day lives, the only expectation we must have is the encounter with God and our common expression of this encounter as shared and experienced within the context of the worshipping faith community. We pray that "the Lord will act," praying that His will, rather than our own demands and wants, is revealed to us and committing ourselves to discerning and living His will in our lives.

- [www.o.ca.org](http://www.o.ca.org) (Question and Answers)