

THE PROSKOMEDE

The priest who desires to celebrate the Divine Mysteries must first be at peace with all, have nothing against anyone, and insofar as is within his power, keep his heart from evil thoughts, be continent from the evening before, and be vigilant until the time of divine service. When the time is come, he goes into the temple, in company with the deacon, and together they make three reverences toward the east before the holy doors.

Deacon: Bless, Master.

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.
Thrice.

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name.

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Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

***Priest:* For 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 the ages of ages.**

***Deacon:* Amen.**

Then they say:

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; for, at a loss for any defense, this prayer do we sinners offer unto Thee as Master, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy on us; for we have hoped in Thee, be not angry with us greatly, neither remember our iniquities; but look upon us now as thou art compassionate, and deliver us from our enemies; for Thou art our God, and we, Thy people; all are the works of Thy hands, and we call upon Thy name.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The door of compassion open unto us, O blessed Theotokos, for hoping in thee, let us not perish; through thee may we be delivered from adversities; for thou art the salvation of the Christian race.

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Then they approach the icon of Christ and kiss it, saying:

We worship Thine immaculate Icon, O Good One, asking the forgiveness of our failings, O Christ God; for of Thine Own will Thou wast well-pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, that thou mightest deliver from slavery to the enemy those whom Thou hadst fashioned. Wherefore, we cry to Thee thankfully: Thou didst fill all things with joy, O our Savior, when Thou camest to save the world.

Then they kiss the icon of the Theotokos, saying the Troparion:

As thou art a well-spring of compassion, vouchsafe mercy unto us, O Theotokos. Look upon a sinful people; show forth, as always thy power. For hoping in thee we cry "Rejoice!" to thee, as once did Gabriel, the Supreme Commander of the Bodiless Hosts.

Then with bowed head the priest says:

***Priest:* O Lord, stretch forth Thy hand from Thy holy place on high, and strengthen me for this, Thine appointed service; that standing uncondemned before Thy dread altar, I may celebrate the bloodless ministry. For Thine is the power and the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.**

Then they make a bow to each choir, and go into the prothesis, saying:

I shall go into Thy house; I shall worship toward Thy holy temple in fear of Thee. O Lord, guide me in the way of Thy righteousness; because of mine enemies, make straight my way before Thee. For in their mouth there is no truth; their heart is vain. Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their

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tongues have they spoken deceitfully; judge them, O God. Let them fall down on account of their own devising; according to the multitude of their ungodliness, cast them out, for they have embittered Thee, O Lord. And let all them be glad that hope in Thee; they shall ever rejoice, and Thou shalt dwell among them. And all shall glory in Thee that love Thy name, for Thou shalt bless the righteous. O Lord, as with a shield of Thy good pleasure hast Thou crowned us.

Having come into the sanctuary, they make three bows before the Holy Table and kiss the Holy Gospel and the Holy Table. Then each one takes his sticharion in his hands, and they make three reverences toward the east, while saying to themselves with each:

O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me.

Then the deacon comes to the priest, holding in his right hand the sticharion with the orarion, and bowing his head before the priest, says:

***Deacon:* Bless, Master, the sticharion with the orarion.**

***Priest:* Blessed is our God always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Then the deacon goes to one side of the sanctuary, puts on the sticharion, praying thus:**

***Deacon:* My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He hath clothed me in the garment of salvation, and with the vesture of gladness hath He covered me; He hath placed a crown upon me as on a bridegroom, and He hath adorned me as a bride with comeliness.**

And then kissing the orarion, he places it on the left shoulder. Then putting the epimanikia on the hands, with the right cuff he says:

***Deacon:* Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength; Thy**

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right hand, O Lord, hath shattered enemies, and in the multitude of Thy glory hast Thou ground down the adversaries.

And with the left, he says:

Deacon: Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.

Then, going to the prothesis, he prepares the holy things. The holy diskos he places on the left side; the chalice, that is, the holy cup, on the right ; and the rest (the spoon and the spear, etc.) with them.

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Then the priest vests himself thus: taking the sticharion in the left hand, and bowing thrice toward the east, as mentioned before, he signs it with the sign of the Cross, saying:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He hath clothed me in the garment of salvation, and with the vesture of gladness hath He covered me; He hath placed a crown upon me as on a bridegroom, and He hath adorned me as a bride with comeliness.

Then taking the epitrachelion and signing it, he puts it on, saying:

Priest: Blessed is God Who poureth out His grace upon His priests, like unto the oil of myrrh upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment.

Then taking the zone and girding himself he says:

Priest: Blessed is God, Who girded me with power, and hath made my path blameless, Who maketh my feet like the feet of a hart, and setteth me upon high places.

Then the cuffs, in the manner described. Then taking the epigonation, if he have it, and having blessed and kissed it, he says:

Priest: Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty one, in Thy comeliness and Thy beauty, and bend Thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and Thy right hand shall guide Thee wondrously, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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Then taking the phelonion, and having blessed and kissed it, he says thus:

Priest: Thy priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy saints with rejoicing shall rejoice, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then having gone to the prothesis, they wash their hands, saying:

I will wash my hands in innocency and I will compass Thine altar, O Lord, that I may hear the voice of Thy praise and tell of all Thy wondrous works. O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth. Destroy not my soul with the ungodly, nor my life with men of blood, in whose hands are iniquities; their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, in mine innocence have I walked; redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy on me. My foot hath stood in uprightness; in the congregations will I bless Thee, O Lord.

Then making three reverences before the table of oblation, each says:

O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me. *Thrice.*

Priest: Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law by Thy precious Blood. Having been nailed to the Cross and pierced with a spear, Thou hast gushed forth immortality upon mankind. O our Savior, glory to Thee.

Deacon: Bless, Master.

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

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Deacon: Amen.

Then the priest takes a prosphoron in his left hand, and in his right hand the holy spear, and making therewith the sign of the Cross thrice over the seal of the prosphoron, he says:

Priest: In remembrance of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thrice.

And immediately he thrusts the spear into the right side of the seal, and cutting he says:

Priest: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

And into the left side:

Priest: And as a blameless lamb before his shearer is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.

And into the upper side of the seal:

Priest: In His lowliness His judgment was taken away.

And into the lower side:

Priest: And who shall declare His generation?

And the deacon, gazing reverently at this Mystery, holding his orarion in his hand, says at each of these incisions:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

After the prosphoron has been cut on all four sides he says:

Deacon: Take away, Master.

The priest having thrust the holy spear obliquely into the right side of the prosphoron, takes away the holy bread, saying:

Priest: For His life is taken away from the earth.

And the priest having laid it inverted on the holy diskos, the deacon says:

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Deacon: Sacrifice, Master.

And the priest sacrifices it cruciformly, while saying:

Priest: Sacrificed is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, for the life and salvation of the world.

And the priest turns upward the other side which has the sign of the Cross. and the deacon says:

Deacon: Pierce, Master.

And the priest, piercing also in the right side with the spear, says:

Priest: One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.

The deacon, taking wine and water, says to the Priest:

Deacon: Bless, Master, the holy union.

And receiving the blessing upon them, he pours wine together with water into the holy chalice.

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The priest takes a second *proskoron* in his hand and says:

Priest: In honor and remembrance of our most blessed Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, through whose intercession do Thou, O Lord, receive this sacrifice upon Thy most heavenly altar.

The priest takes out a particle and places it on the right side of the holy bread, near its center, saying:

Priest: At Thy right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colors.

Then taking the third *proskoron*, he says:

Priest: Of the honorable glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.

And taking out the first particle, he places it on the left side of the holy bread, making the beginning of the first row, and then he says:

Priest: Of the holy glorious prophets: Moses and Aaron, Elias and Elisseus, David and Jesse; of the holy Three Children, of Daniel the Prophet, and of all the holy prophets.

And taking a particle, he places it below the first , in the proper order, then he says:

Priest: Of the holy glorious and all-praised Apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the other holy apostles.

Priest: Of our fathers among the saints, the holy hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria; Nicholas of Myra in Lycia; Michael of Kiev; Peter, Alexius, Jonah, Philip and Hermogenes of Moscow; Nicetas of Novgorod;

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Leontius of Rostov; and of all the holy hierarchs.

And taking a fourth particle, he places it near the first particle, making the beginning of the second row. He then says:

***Priest:* Of the holy Apostle, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen; the holy Great-Martyrs Demetrius, George, Theodore the Tyro, Theodore Stratelates, and of all holy martyrs; and the martyred women: Thecla, Barbara, Cyriaca, Euphemia and Parasceve, Catherine, and of all the holy martyred women.**

Taking a fifth particle, he places it below the first which is at the beginning of the second row. Then he says:

***Priest:* Of our holy and God-bearing fathers: Anthony, Euthymius, Sabbas, Onuphrius, Athanasius of Athos, Anthony and Theodosius of the Caves, Sergius of Radonezh, Barlaam of Hutyn, and of all the holy fathers; and of the holy mothers: Pelagia, Theodosia, Anastasia, Eupraxia, Febronia, Theodula, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt, and of all the holy mothers.**

Taking out a sixth particle, he places it below the second particle, in completion of the second row. Then he says:

***Priest:* Of the saints and wonderworkers, the Unmercenaries: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaus, and of all the holy unmercenaries.**

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Taking out a seventh Particle he places it at the top, making the beginning of the third row, then says:

Priest: Of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of Saint(s) *N. (N.)* whose temple it is and whose day it is; of the holy Equals-of-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, and of all the saints, through whose intercession do Thou visit us, O God.

And he places the eight particle below the first, in the proper order. Then he says:

Priest: Of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople.

If his liturgy is chanted; but if that of St. Basil the Great be chanted, he is commemorated. Then taking out a ninth particle, he places it at the end of the third row, completing it. Then taking a fourth proskoron, he says:

Priest: Remember, O Master, Lover of mankind, the Orthodox episcopate of the Russian Church; our lord the Very Most Reverend Metropolitan *N.*, First hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad; Archbishop or Bishop *N.*, *(whose diocese it is);* the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ and all the priestly order *(if in a monastery: Archimandrite or Abbot N.)* and all our brethren whom, in Thy compassion, Thou hast called into Thy communion, O All-good Master.

And taking out a particle, he places it below the holy bread. Then he commemorates those that are in authority saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, those who are in authority, and in the armed forces.

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Then he commemorates those that are living, by name, and at each name he takes out a particle saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, *N*. Then taking out a particle, he places it below the holy bread.

Then taking a fifth prosphoron, he says:

Priest: In commemoration and for the remission of sins of the most holy patriarchs; of Orthodox and pious kings and pious queens; and of the blessed founders of this holy temple *(if it be a monastery: this holy monastery)*.

Then he commemorates the departed, by name: the bishop that ordained him (if he be among the departed), and others, whomsoever he will. At each name he takes out a particle, saying:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, *N*.

Finally he says:

Priest: And of all our Orthodox fathers and brethren who have departed in the hope of resurrection, life eternal, and communion with Thee, O Lord, Lover of mankind.

And he takes out a particle. Thereafter he says:

Priest: Remember, O Lord, also mine unworthiness, and pardon me every transgression, both voluntary and involuntary.

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And he takes out a particle, And taking the sponge, he gathers the particles together on the diskos below the holy bread, so that they be secure, and none of them fall off. Then the deacon, taking the censer and having placed incense therein, says to the Priest:

Deacon: Bless the censer, Master. Let us pray to the Lord.

And the priest says the Prayer of the Censer:

Priest: Incense do we offer unto Thee, O Christ our God, as an odor of spiritual fragrance; accepting it upon Thy most heavenly altar, do Thou send down upon us the grace of Thy Most Holy Spirit.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

The priest, having censed the asteriskos, places it over the holy bread, saying:

Priest: And the star came and stood over where the young Child was.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

The priest, having censed the first veil, covers the holy bread and the diskos, saying:

Priest: The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself. For He established the world which shall not be shaken. Thy throne is prepared of old; Thou art from everlasting. The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices. The rivers will lift up their waves, at the voices of many waters. Wonderful are the surgings of the sea, wonderful on high is the Lord. Thy testimonies are made very sure. Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

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Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, Master.

And the priest, having censed the second veil, covers the holy chalice, saying:

Priest: Thy virtue hath covered the heavens, O Christ, and the earth is full of Thy praise.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, Master.

Then the priest, having censed the veil, i.e., the aer, covers both the holy diskos and the holy chalice saying:

Priest: Shelter us with the shelter of Thy wings, and drive away from us every enemy and adversary. Make our life peaceful, O Lord, have mercy on us, and on Thy world, and save our souls, for thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then, taking the censer, the priest censes the prothesis, saying thrice:

Priest: Blessed is Our God Who is thus well pleased, glory to Thee.

And the deacon says each time:

Deacon: Always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Both bow reverently Thrice.

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Then taking the censer, the deacon says:

Deacon: For the precious gifts offered, let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: O God, our God, Who didst send forth the Heavenly Bread, the food of the whole world, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer and Benefactor Who blesseth and sanctifieth us: Do Thou Thyself bless this offering, and accept it upon Thy most heavenly altar. As Thou art good and the Lover of mankind, remember those that offer it, and those for whose sake it was offered; and keep us uncondemned in the ministry of Thy Divine Mysteries. For hallowed and glorified is Thy most honorable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

And after this he pronounces the dismissal there, saying:

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ God, our hope, Glory to Thee.

Deacon: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. 9 Bless.

Priest: *(if it be Sunday)* May Christ our true God, Who rose from the dead,. *(if not)* May Christ our true God, . through the intercession of His most pure Mother; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople; *(if the Liturgy of Basil the Great be celebrated, he says: Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappodocia;)* and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the Lover of mankind.

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Deacon: Amen.

After the dismissal, the deacon censes the holy offerings. Then he goes and censes the holy Table round about cruciformly, saying secretly:

Deacon: In the grave bodily, but in Hades with Thy soul, as God; in paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible.

Then the 50th Psalm: Have mercy on me, O God. during which, having censed the sanctuary and the whole temple, he enters again into the holy altar, and having again censed the Holy Table, and the priest, he puts aside the censer in its place, and approaches the priest. And standing together before the Holy Table, they bow down thrice, while praying secretly and saying:

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men. (Twice)

O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

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Then the priest kisses the Holy Gospel and the deacon the corner of the Holy Table. After this , the deacon, bowing his head to the priest, and holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand, says:

Deacon: It is time to act for the Lord. Master, bless.

The priest signing him with the sign of the Cross, says:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Pray for me, master.

Priest: May the Lord direct thy steps.

Deacon: Remember me , holy Master.

Priest: May the Lord God remember thee in His kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

Having bowed, he goes out by the north door, because the royal doors are not opened until the Entry. And standing in the usual place, directly before the holy doors, he bows reverently, thrice, saying secretly:

Deacon: O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

Immediately the deacon begins the Divine Liturgy with "Bless, Master."

Be it known: If a priest serve without a deacon, the words of the deacon in the Proskomede, and during the Liturgy before the Gospel, and his response: Bless, Master, and Pierce Master, and: It is time to act, . are not said, but only the Ecteniae and the Order of the Prothesis. If many priests concelebrate, in the performance of the Proskomede only one priest may serve and say what is set forth; but of the rest of the celebrants, none shall say the proskomede separately.