

Holy Qurbana Notes

(By Rembachen Lazarus – Notes on Holy Qurbana shared with the St. Mary's Orthodox congregation, Calgary.)

Holy Qurbana

We call it as the “*Queen of Sacraments*” and the completion of all the prophecies, because it is the central action of our worship and it is the central action of our worship and it is the dynamic centre for Christian life. In this service we call to memory and participate in the redemptive dispensation of our Lord who lived on earth. As we do this we receive His strength to serve Him in a life of commitment. So we should know the full implications in this worship.

Let us pray “Open our eyes, O Lord!, that we may behold the wondrous things out of your sacrament.” (As Elijah, the prophet prayed). Let our participation in the Holy Qurbana, make our lives a living sacrifice (Rom 12: 1-2)

Qurbana: - This Syriac word derived from the verb “Kareb” means gifts, offerings, present. We also call it the Divine Liturgy. The Catholics use the word ‘Mass’; Protestants say ‘Service or Fellowship’,

All emphasis each aspect of the divine service of the Lords Supper. Lord’s supper (1Cor 11:20) Lords Table (1Cor 11:21) breaking of the Bread (Acts 2: 42; 20:7) Communion (1Cor 10:16) Mystery (Orthodox Teaching)

Liturgy: means service. It is the service rendered by the servants to their masters. In all that we say and do in our worship, we are honouring and pleasing God. And this leads us to a practical life of service. (Ref: 1Cor 10:31)

Some words which we often hear in Qurbana

Amen = So be it

Barek mor = Bless me Lord; (‘morth’ = female gender, mor = saint, Lord)

Kurielaison (Gk) = Lord have mercy

Subho labolabra valrooho kadiso = Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Men olam vadamo la olam olmin = now and always and for ever and ever

Hoso vabkoolsuban olmin = now and always and forever and ever

Morio Rahemelain adarain = Lord have mercy upon us and help us

Halelujaih = Praise God, Praise to God

Hoosoyo = Absolution

Symbols used in H.Q – Thing used in the sanctuary (Introduction of the things in Holy of Holies)

1. **Thronos** – Table used in the sanctuary for celebrating Holy Qurbana
Thronos = Throne- seat of incarnate word

It is the throne of God. In English we call it Altar as the Body & Blood of our Lord are offered as a sacrifice upon it.

2. **Chithola** -It is the covering sheet, The white linen represents the sheet in which the body of our Lord was wrapped – it covers the front of the
3. **Wooden Cross**: adorned by Oorara (Red stole)

We use the wooden cross, without crucifix or any writing in it, represents the resurrected and ascended Lord. (The Orthodox Churches never use a crucifix because we give emphasis on resurrection according to Bible). It is the symbol of Eternal life, which the Resurrection gave. (Now, many people replace wooden cross with silver or gold, which is meaningless). Cross is the symbol of salvation, the top of the cross stands for love, the bottom for humility, the right side for obedience and the left for patience – it is the weapon to fight against evil.

4. **Candles**: shows the presence of God and His Saints. He says, “I am the Light of the World” (Jn 1:9). Candlelight is a call to us to enlighten the world through our love and self-sacrifice. How the candles got a place in our worship? During the period of persecution in the 1st century the Qurbana and other acts of worships were conducted during nighttime, in undergrounds and catacombs where their beloved departed were buried. The candles, which they used on their way for light, were kept on the tombs of their departed ones. While the Holy Worship were going on the candles also burnt on the tombs. The Church continued this practice even after the days of the persecution when they changed into daytime.

When we see the candles, we remember those forefathers and the persecution they faced. 12 candles represent the twelve apostles. The candle wax when it melts is changed into another shape. This is like a person when he accepts Christianity by Rebirth in Christ, becoming a new creation in Jesus, the Lord.

5. **Tabalaitha**: It is a small rectangular wooden tablet or board (15”x8”x1/2”) consecrated by a bishop, (during consecration of the church) with Holy Mooron and placed upon the thronos. The paten and chalice are placed upon thabalaitha. On one side, it is consecrated with Mooron and on the other side the name of the Bishop and the date of

the consecration is written crosswise. The holy vessels are placed only on the side where Holy Mooron is anointed. Tableetha can be used as a portable altar where the consecrated Churches are not available. The portable altar is the sacred cross when we celebrate. Without this, Qurbana cannot be celebrated.

6. **Virikootam** or the coverings of the portable altar: It is the cloth, which is spread over the Tableetha. 3 pieces of cloths with different colours are stitched together to make this spread. The bottom part is of red colour, which symbolises fiery Universe, and the centre part with green that indicates the verdant earth and the top portion, which is white in colour, symbolises the Holy Church. Our Lord gave His Body and Blood to the Church and so the Holy vessels containing the Body & Blood of Christ is placed on the white part of the sheet.
7. **Dergo**: The step, ½” broad ½” high in front of the throne is known as Dergo (the step), which symbolizes the Seraphim (angels) who carry the heavenly throne. Only the Bishops, priests and the Full Deacon are allowed to climb over this Dergo. No one is allowed to sit on it. (Above it stood “the Seraphim each one had 6 wings – one cried unto one another and said Holy, Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts) (Is 6:2).
8. **Kasa** and **Peelasa**: Paten and Chalice are the Holy vessels, which carry the Bread and wine; in early days this was made by wood only. Now, the metals like gold, silver are used to make the Holy vessels.
9. **Kablono**: two pieces of decorated cloths, which covers the Paten and chalice
10. **Kaukubo**: means Star. It symbolises the star, which appeared and stopped over the manger of Infant Jesus on the first Christmas day. It is kept on the chalice so that the Blessed Body is not touched by the Kablonos.
11. **Tharvodo**: It is the spoon, which carries the live coal – the Holy Qurbana. This symbolises the tongs, which took the live coal by the seraphims as we read in Is 6:6. “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from the Altar. And he laid it upon my mouth.”
12. **G’murtho**: Tongs. This is the small cushion, which is used for cleaning hands after touching the Holy Bread.
13. **Espoogo**: Sponge, a piece of clothe or towel is used to clean the Holy vessels, Tharvodo (spoon) and the Kaukubo (Star).
14. **Msamsoneeso**: is the pet name given to the small vessel that carries water in the altar.

15. **Sosappa**: is the white cloth, covering the paten and chalice together (3" sq) decorated one. This symbolizes:

- a. The fire stone which produce 12 rivers for the 12 tribes of Israelites
- b. The stone which covered the tomb of Jesus Christ

16. **Thaksa**: The liturgical books. We have 80 liturgical versions written by different Holy Fathers, out of which, only 20 are used by us and that too, very few are translated into Malayalam. The earliest liturgical version is codified by St. James himself not in an elaborate present form or written only by 3rd century. The oral form of St. James version was taken a written form. During 4th century almost the present form was accepted.

17. **Bread**: We make the leavened wheat bread daily, the tradition which only the Eastern and Oriental Churches follow now, Leaven which we use is considered to be the continuation of the same bread which our Lord had given to St. John during the "Last Supper". This is a tradition taken from the Church of Persia. We prepare the bread with wheat flour, leaven, salt and water mixed proportionately (wheat stands for dust, leaven stands for air, water, and salt for fire). Our Lord had taken the materials wheat and wine from the nature as well as from our daily livelihood and it is very meaningful.

Why leavened bread only? Our Lord used the regular leavened bread i.e, Lahemo or Artos (Greek) and not Pathiro or 'Azeme' at the last supper on the eve of Passover. All the churches followed the practice for the first 10 centuries. Our church still follows the same tradition also to assure that the Lord is the life giving leaven of the Universe.

18. **Wine**: We use the grape wine mix the water in the cup. This reminds us that the divinity and humanity are united in the person our Lord Jesus Christ, that our Lord mixed wine with 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.

People's offering: In the Old Testament times, lambs, calves, doves and pigeons were offered for sacrifice. In the New Testament, instead, only wheat flour and grape wine have been used. People used to bring the bread and wine to offer. For practical purposes, this custom has been changed by making bread at the Church and arranging wine, therefore which certain amount is being paid to the priest for offering the sacrifice.

19. **Censor**: is the vessel suspended on chains giving sweet smelling smoke as frankincense is out in the glowing coal set in it. In O T times, perfume was made out of sweet spices (EX 30: 34-48) sweet incense was burnt every morning at that time (Ex 30:7, Num 16:6) Incense was an inevitable item in the temple (Heb 9:4). The general assumption is that as the smoke goes up, prayer also goes up with it to heaven (Psalm

141:2). It reminds us of our Lord's sacrifice, which is a "fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2). The bottom part of the censor is interpreted as the world, and the upper part as heaven. The first chain stands for Father, second and third for the divine-human son and the fourth for the Holy Spirit. The 4 chains together form the Trinitarian Unity. The 72 links, 18 on each chain show the 72 evangelists, and the 12 bells stand for the 12 Apostles. The charcoal stands for the sinful people and the fire stands for God. By the presence of God, the sinner is changed into fire. Another interpretation is that the censor is the Blessed Virgin Mother and the fire inside is the blessed divine child. The censor, with the incense placed there in, is also symbolical of the gifts offered by the wise men to the infant Jesus – gold, frankincense and myrrh. We have the record of using the incense in the churches during the 4th Century. Read Eph 5:2, Ps. 141:2, Rev 8:4

20. **Lectern: Pulpit:** The book of the Gospels is placed upon a small lectern and the gospel represents the spoken word of our Lord. We honour the Altar, first where the incarnate word dwells and the second place of honour is given to the pulpit, which carries the spoken word. We give the incense according to this order of honour.
- 21 **Veil:** Veil separating the Holy Place, indicates the hidden ness of Heaven. As the heaven is hidden from the earth, the sanctuary is divided from the main body of the Church by this veil. The congregation outside the sanctuary, and the representatives of our Lord, and the heavenly angels inside the sanctuary stand and worship. As Christ ascended into heaven and intercedes the priest stands inside the sanctuary, on the other side of the veil, and intercedes for the congregation. This curtain is drawn when the priest and the congregation worship God together, thus 'Heaven and Earth' are joined together in worshipping and praying.
- 22 **Bells:** Bells are rung before the service begins. Bells were used in the past for solemn and joyous feast days and also for calling attention to emergency situations or for special announcements for all to hear. Bells are rung in the church to summon the faithful to worship. They are also rung at certain occasions in the service, in order that the faithful who are not paying careful attention to the service, when present, or for any reason, are not in the Church, may unite their prayers with those worshippers at the most solemn occasions. Ancient times, wooden pieces, were used instead of bells. Bell sounds recall the faithful, the death of our Lord on the wooden cross and remind us to sign the cross. The bell calls Christians to assemble for receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord, the most valuable gift.

The Sanctuary (Madbaha)

The Holy Eucharist or the sacrifice, of our Lord on the Calvary, is conducted on the Altar in the sanctuary – Here the entire life of our

Lord is actually presented in a dramatic fashion. The sanctuary is then heaven with the presence of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit along with the angels (Eph: 2:1-16). This is like the Holy of Holies of Jerusalem temple (Heb: 9:4-5). This is Gogultha (Gen 14:18) where Melchizedek worshipped which was close to Adam's sepulchre where the cross of our Lord for crucifixion was erected. As the mother and the disciples watched the crucifixion and shedding of blood from our Lord's body here in the sanctuary, the worshippers watch His presence in the bread and wine on the Altar.

The sanctuary symbolizes Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:16-25) as well as Paradise (Rev2:7)

Vestments:

The vestments are "for glory and for beauty" Ex 28:2. They are 7 pieces for the priest and 12 for the bishop.

1. The black robe: This denotes the sinful nature. It reminds us the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden, and the sinful nature of the people whom the priest represents. Black is a mark of sorrow and penitence.

2. Surplice (Shrushusha Kuppayam)

The white robe of incorruption through the purification of the Holy Spirit. It symbolizes purity and holiness.

Mt 17:2 "His clothes were dazzling like the sun." (At the time of transfiguration)

Mt 28:3 At the resurrection, "His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow."

Act 1:10 Two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them.

3. Stole: This is a gird with strength in defeating the enemies. (Ps: 18:39-40) It is also the breast plate of righteousness Ex 28:4

4. Girdle: This is the sword of triumphant (Ps 45:3) and the belt signifying the truth. Eph 6:14;

Jn 13:4 Jesus Christ wiped them with the towel where with he was girded.

Job 38:3 Gird up thy loins now like a man.

2 King1:8 Elijah was a hairy man girded with a girdle of leather

Mt 3:4 John the Baptist, camels hair and a leather girdle about his loins

Ex 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded

5. Sleeves: Two sleeves to make the hands instruments of righteousness and good works (Ps: 18:34-35)

6. Chasuble: This is the robe of glory and righteousness (Ps 132:9-10); 1Pet 2:9
7. Shoes: They symbolize the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15) are to underfoot serpents, scorpions, all the powers of enemy and to cast down under the foot all false pride that is against God (2 Cor 10:5)

Read Ex 3:5. And He said, “Draw not nigh hither. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where on thou standest is holy ground. Is it allowed to use the shoes in the Holy place?”

The context above mentioned is the time of the God’s call to Moses for the first time. This order is to make him realise that he is standing in the presence of God. After this incident we see Moses going to God many a time where this order is not given.

Why the priest uses the shoe in the Holies? The answer is given in the prayer itself

- Here the priest dedicates himself for the service of God after stamping all the powers of Satan and the passions of the flesh under his feet.
- As his body do not touch the earth, his thoughts also should be above the earth.
- This reminds the seraphim who covered his feet with two wings while he worshipped Is 6:2

Bishop’s Special Vestments

1. Head Cover: This embroidered large hood signifies the crown of thorns worn by our Lord. There are 13 crosses on this representing Jesus and the disciples. This tells that the bishop is properly a monk.
2. Seela mudi: Tells the glorious presence of God.
3. Pallium: indicated the protection in the shadow of the tabernacle. (Ps: 27:5)
4. Cross: The prayer when the cross is being put around the neck reflects Ps; 34:5 & 44:5
5. Pastoral Staff: (Crosiee) is the sceptre of God’s power out of Zion. (Ps 110:2) which is designed from the shepherd’s crook significant of his office as one who cares for and protects his flocks.

Main Parts

The Holy Eucharist is divided into 3 main parts:

1. Pre-Communion Service
2. Communion Service (Public Celebration)
3. Post-Communion Service

1. Pre-Communion Service:

This part symbolizes the 30 years of our Lord's hidden life. So this part of the service is done inside the veil only. The word "Thuyobo" means preparation. Preparation is needed for both celebrant and the recipient, for the priest and the laity.

How the laity should prepare for the Holy Qurbana? Before coming to the church

- (1) Take bath in the morning and dress neatly
- (2) Complete the prayers
- (3) Observe fasting till Qurbana ends
- (4) Avoid unnecessary talks and worldly thoughts

How the priest should prepare?

- (1) He should fast from Suthara prayer till the end of Qurbana
- (2) Complete all the canonical prayers
- (3) Bible reading and meditation should be done
- (4) Keep outward and inward purity

After coming in the church

Washing of the feet John 13:3; As Jesus poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples feet before the institution of the 1st Qurbana, here the priest washes his feet and put the shoes on.

Entrance into the Church Ps: 66:12-13

Psalmist says, "I will bring burnt offerings to your house, I will offer you what I promised. Enter with awe and bring offerings.

Prayer of Penitence: Ps 51

The priest here recites the prayer for forgiveness, quoting the penitent David who wrote Ps 51 starting "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness."

Subukmo: According to Mt 5:23, "So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you leave your gift there in front of the altar and go at once and make peace with your brother and then come back and offer your gift to God."

Here the priest stands before the altar and turns (to the priests) and to the people and says, "My brethren and my beloved ones pray for me that the Lord may accept my offering."

According to 1 Cor 11:27-30

It follows that if anyone eats the Lord's bread and drinks from his cup in a way that dishonors him he is guilty of sin against the Lord's body and blood. So then everyone should examine himself first and eat the bread and drink from the cup. So the priest and the people must forgive each other. It indicates that the celebration of Holy Qurbana is not an act of worship done by the priest alone, but it is done by whole Church.

He enters into the sanctuary, quoting Ps 43:4

I will go unto the altar of God, to God who makes me joyful with the joy of my youth. Then he bows his head before the "Table of Life" and says "Into Thine House, O God, have I entered and before Thy sanctuary have I worshipped, O Heavenly King, forgive me all where in I have sinned against me. He goes around kissing the horns of the altar saying "O Lord our God enlighten us, bind our festival processions as an unbroken chain, even to the horns of the altar. (Ps 118: 27,28)

The Offering - The Great Entrance

There was a good tradition of bringing the bread and wine to the holies in a procession by the celebrant, which was known as Great Entrance. However we lost that good tradition, while some of the western and other Eastern Orthodox Churches still keep it.

Placing the Host (bread)

The celebrant places the newly made leavened bread in the paten. As St. Joseph and St. Mary took the child Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (LK 2:22) the priest presents the bread and wine to the Lord reciting Ps 93.

This reminds us the history of Melchizedek, the king of Salem and also a priest of the most High God, brought bread and wine to Abraham.

Wine: He mixes water with wine in the cup. This reminds us that the divinity and humanity are mixed in our Lord, that our Lord also 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. The priest prays, "O Lord God, as Thy divinity was united with Thy humanity, so unite this water with this wine." As he pours the wine into the chalice he says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the Cross between two thieves in Jerusalem and was pierced in His side, with the spear, and there flowed out from Him blood and water to wash away the sins of all creation." When we offer bread and wine we offer our own lives to God.

This first service symbolizes the sacrifices of bread and wine which the High priest Melchizedek, offered under the old covenant and the law (Gen 14; Ps 110; Heb 5:6)

Part II of Thuyobo (Second Service)

The order of Aaron

The second service symbolizes offering of Aaron and his sons as mentioned in the written law in Lev 8:18. "Moses brought the ram for burnt-offering and Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head....."

The priest takes the paten in his right hand and the chalice in the left and stretches forth his hands crosswise his right hand over his left hand and lifts them up above the Tabalitha and follows the intercession. The names of the living and dead to be remembered must be submitted to the priest before this preparing service of intercession. There are 7 prayers of intercession.

1. General Prayer: Here we remember all the saving sojourn of our Lord Jesus Christ from the annunciation of St. Mary to His ascension to the heaven. And we commemorate our First parents Adam and Eve, Mary, Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Holy Fathers, and doctors of the Orthodox Faith. Again we commemorate our parents, brethren, our teachers, faithful departed and those that had part and are still taking part in the support of their church and for those whose behalf this Qurbana is offered.
2. Offering for St. Mary: We pray for Holy Mary and pray for her intercession
3. Offering for the Patron Saint: We pray for the patron saint of that particular church and intercede in his name.
4. Offering for the sick people: We pray for all the sick, for the healing of their body and soul
5. Offering for the penitent: We pray for the repentance of the people and for the forgiveness of their sins.
6. For the departed: We pray for the forgiveness of the sins and transgressions of the departed souls.
7. For those who are related to the priest: Pray for the father, mother, brothers, sisters, members of the family, teachers and those who ask for remembering in his Qurbana. As the sepulchre of our Lord is covered with a big stone, in order to indicate the God's mysteries and hidden ness in the Holy Qurbana the priest places the mysteries on the altar, and covers it with the spread sosappa. The heavens are covered with the splendour of the Glorious One. His glory has filled all the earth.

The Censing: Then follows the incense intercession. In this common intercession the priest prays for remission of our sins and offences and on behalf of Holy Mary, the prophets and apostles, the righteous and the just, martyrs and confessors, the Orthodox doctors and fathers, the hermits and monks, the orphans and the widows, the distressed and the afflicted, the sick and the oppressed and all those who have entreated us to remember them in prayers, and on behalf of the living and the departed.

The priest offers incense after the manner of Aaron who offered Holy incense unto God in the Tabernacle, and withheld the plague from the people of Israel. He swings it to all four sides. He swings the censor in a circle two times anticlockwise and one time clockwise. This indicates the flight of St. Joseph and Holy Mary along with the infant Jesus to Egypt and their return to Nazareth.

Censor swings over the mysteries

- (a) East side: With the sweet fragrance of incense may there be remembrance of Virgin Mary
- (b) West side: Remembrance of the prophets, apostles, and the martyrs
- (c) North side: Remembrance of all the religious doctors, priests, just and righteous
- (d) South side: Remembrance of the Holy Church and her children

Censing in the name of the Trinity:

- (1) The priest then comes down from the altar step; he holds the middle edge of the Sosappa and censes the centre of the Altar tree times, which symbolizes the Father - saying "Adoration to the compassionate Father".
- (2) Then he holds the edge of the Sosappa and censes the northern corner 3 times and folds it back, which symbolizes the Son saying "Adoration to the merciful Son".

Why he folds the left corner? In Mt 27:66 we read "They left and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone."

- (3) Then the priest holds the southern edge of the Sosappa and censes the southern corner 3 times which symbolizes the Holy Spirit saying "Adoration to the Living Spirit who giveth life to all." After saying the concluding prayer (Huthomma) Quamo, Nicene Creed, he concludes this inaudible service of Thooyobo. By this time the laity completes their canonical prayers up to noon.

Readings from Old Testament

Here the deacon announces as we see in Ps 118: 15, "listen to the glad shouts of victory in the tents of God's people. The song of glory and salvation in the tabernacle of the Righteous, the Holy Spirit, through David did sing.

Laity: Glory be to the Lord of the righteous and His Mercy be upon us forever.

In Deutro 31: 11 we see "Read it to the people of Israel when they come to worship the Lord, your God at the one place of worship."

The deacon reads the lessons for that day from the books of Old Testament. In Neh 8:1 we read "Ezra, the priest brought the book of Law to the place where the people had gathered – men, women, and children, who were old enough to understand. There in the square, by the gate he read the law to them from down until noon and they all listened attentively."

Songs: In the following song, we remember the worship of Fathers, from the 1st generation to the fathers of the News Testament age and upto the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

1. Generation: God who didst receive the blameless lamb Abel brought, who took the gift of Noah and Aaron's sacrifice
2. Prophets: As Thou didst answer Jona, answer us who call on Thee.
3. Two priests: The 1st priest and the last priest of the Old Testament period. May our incense favour thee as was Aaron's sweet as was Zachariah's set in the sacred shrine. Like the plea of Phenahas staying the people from death.

Annunciation: From the flaming glory bright, flew the angel swift, unto Mary, Nazareth's maid saying unto her, " With Thee is the Lord, from Thee comes the saviour of the world.

Birth of Jesus: As the fire enflamed the bush, yet did not burn it, so did God come down and dwell in the Virgin's womb.

Call of Jesus: Come ye sinner, and implore, seek forgiveness here

Martyrs: Martyrs shunned this passing world, left their parents, brethren, kith and kin that they loved and died for Jesus.

Departed: Lord grant good remembrance to all the faithful dead

Advent: May they stand on Thy right side on that day, Thy grace shall dawn.

Part II Communion Service (Public Celebration)

We commemorate the 3 ½ years of Jesus' public ministry

Unveiling of the curtain at the beginning of the public celebration signifies the revelation of our Lord through Incarnation. At this time sanctuary is the manger, altar is the lap of Mary, servers are shepherds and the congregation represents the whole world.

Mary who brought thee forth and John who baptized thee shall be the suppliants unto Thee. We remember the birth and baptism of our Lord at the beginning of public service along with the intercession of two greatest saints of the Church, St. Mary and John the Baptist.

The Marthoma Church twisted the wording of the Liturgy and removed the intercession of the Saints from this prayer.

The Procession: The priest burns the incense. The veil is drawn and the bells are rung. The altar assistants representing angels hold the sacramental fans. The priest then goes around the Throne, kissing its corners and waving the censor.

The main deacon (server) who goes in front of the priest with a lighted candle represents John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord. The forerunner prepares the way of the Lord, with a small light and makes the path straight for the Great Light of the world. The altar assistant puts off his candle just after the reading of the Holy Gospel by the priest. This symbolizes the death of St. John the Baptist who was

beheaded and killed by Herod, at the beginning of our Lord's public life. At the second coming of our Lord, John the Baptist will resurrect along with all other saints. When we remember the second coming of the Lord, the deacon lights his candle again. The song " Nin Mathavu Vishudhanmar....." which is written by Mar Severius, who was born in Alexandria in A.D 460 and later became the Patriarch of Antioch in 512 was added to the Liturgy in the 6th century.

Trisagion (Thrithva Sthuthi)

While chanting the Trisagion the priest puts 3 fingers of his left hand on the left corner of the folded Sospa, and with 3 fingers of the right hand, he touches the first time to Tabalitha , the second time he touches the paten and the third time the chalice, the paten and the Tabalitha. Each time, he concludes by making the sign of the Cross.

Tradition about Trisagion:

The tradition is that at the time of the burial of our Lord, angels and arch angels descended from heaven and held the body of Christ, one group after another, praising the Lord saying Holy Art Thou Oh God, Holy Art Thou Almighty, Holy Art Thou Immortal. Then Nichodemus, Joseph of Aromatic and all other followers witnessing the solemn scene praised along with the angels saying crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Kuriyelaison: Greek word, which means "Have Mercy upon us". This may be the shortest prayer we can recite always. The Orthodox Church always encourages the faithful to practice the ejaculatory prayers like Kuriyelaison.

Vachana Shrushusha: Reading the Epistle and Gospel:

The Church followed the Jewish custom of reading from the word of God from Bible during the worship. Luke 4 :16; Acts 13: 14-15

We remember the preaching and healing ministry of our Lord as the readers read the epistles and the priest reads the gospel. The hymn "Bhoovilashesham....." God had sent the chosen Apostles to all the world to spread the tidings of the Son of God to the ends of the earth and preached the Kingdom of heaven. The contents of this song is taken from the gospels of St. Mathew 28:20 and St Mk 16:15 compiled together. Here we remember the historical fact of the spreading of the gospel by the Apostles who told the world "Blessed are those believe this gospel."

Epistle on the north side: Here the deacon standing on the step of the sanctuary on the North side, reads from the Acts of the Apostles (or from Epistles).

Habibai – My beloved

Barekmor – Bless Me O Lord

The Hymn " Poulos Sleeha.....": St. Paul is considered to be the 13th Apostle, the architect and builder of the Church. The contents of the song is compiled from his own epistle to Galatians Ch 1: 8

If any one comes to you preaching contrary to what I have preached, even though it were an angel from heaven, he shall be excommunicated by the Church. Deacon standing on the south step reads the portions from any one of 13 epistles of St. Paul.

Ahai – My brethren

Qn: Why we read from the Acts of the Apostles first and at the north side and next from the epistle of Paul at the south side always?

Ans: In the Church generally the seniority is given to the left side (North), you might have noticed that the Bishops and priests stand from left to right according to the seniority. The bridegroom always stands on the left side of the bride. So the seniority is given to the 12 Apostles who lived with Jesus and who preached the gospel first to the Jews. But Paul, the 13th disciple who is called by Jesus to be the Apostle of gentiles, is given only a second place after the 12 disciples. So we read the epistles also according to the seniority.

Qn: Why the epistles are read standing, one step below the sanctuary?

Ans: The epistles are the words of the human beings, but the gospel is the real word of God. So we read the word of God from the sanctuary and the epistles one step below the holies.

Qn: Is it right to read the Gospel, the real word of God, after the epistles?

Ans: We read the epistles first because the epistles were written before the gospels were written

The reading of Gospel:

Gospel = Good news

Little Entrance: In early days the Evangelion was brought to the centre in procession. While the bringing of the Holy Elements (the bread and wine) was called “Great Entrance” the bringing of the spoken word of God is known as “Little Entrance”. Any way the practice of the Little Entrance no longer is done.

The word of God is read from the Sanctuary. Here the song and praised and the exhortation calls attention of the people like a clarion to hear the Word of God, the spiritual food of the faithful with reverence and calmness. We praise the Lord with Hallelujah.

Let us listen to the Holy Gospel – How?

With calmness and reverence and with sober minds. Why? Because it is the Word of God, the living Word of God. The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and the marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. So Deacon utters: With calm and awe and modesty, let us give heed and listen to the

good tidings of the living words of the Holy Gospel of our Lord, which being read to us. We bring the Word of God accompanied by the candles, bells, Marvahas (sacramental fans). The main server with burning censor stands before the priest outside the sanctuary.

Why the priest puts incense, and why the gospel is read in the midst of the incense?

Ex 19:9 – The Lord said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud – and the people will hear me speaking with you”

Ex 19: 16 – “On the morning of the 3rd day there was thunder and lightning, a thick cloud appeared on the cloud and a very loud trumpet blast was heard”.

1 King 8:10 – As the priests were leaving the temple, it was suddenly filled with a cloud shining with the dazzling light of the Lord’s presence.

Mt 17: 5 – “While Jesus was talking a shining cloud came over them and a voice from the cloud said, “ Listen to him”. Always the people experienced God’s presence, and His word was heard in the clouds.”

Here the incense makes a cloud and in the cloud we hear the word of God and feel His presence.

Peace be to all of you – The same words of our Lord which we read in Lk 24: 36 is pronounced here by his representative, the priest. He is reading the good tidings of the same peace. If it is from Mt & John the priest says Life giving preaching from Mathew the Apostle or John the Apostle. If the reading is from Mark or Luke he says from Mark the evangelist. There were 72 evangelists in the first infant church.

Qn: Who were these 72 evangelists?

Ans: In Luke 10:1 we read “After his the Lord chose another seventy two men (including Mark and Luke) and sent them out 2 by 2, to go ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was about to go”.

People say : “We believe and confess.....”

This sentence shows our Church’s deep faith in the Word of God. The priest then reads the gospel and concludes with giving peace again. He blesses the faithful by signing the cross and returns to the sanctuary.

Yajamanan Varumanneram....: This is compiled from Mt 24: 42 and Mk 13:34. This hymn emphasizes the urgency for doing valiant work in the vineyard of the Lord as a result of listening to the Gospel (Lk 12:37).

The Sermon: Is also a part of the worship. The sermon is the exhortation of the Gospel reading of the day. So the apt time of the sermon is, just after the reading of the Gospel. Now the priest delivers the sermon at a later stage of the service or at the end of the service for the sake of convenience. The priest might have changed the time as the people come late.

The greeting: The greeting of the sermon is also a quotation from St. Paul's epistle of II Cor 13:14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all"/

An old custom

The early church used to send away the gentiles and catechumens from the Church, thus preparing the rest of the service entirely for the actual members of the Church. Our Lord only selected the first 12 apostles to the upper chamber for 1st Qurbana. Thus the whole congregation is being prepared for the sacrificial feast. The unfaithful and the catechumen go out of the Church under the stretched arms of the priests.

The main deacon comes with the incense upto the western entry of the Church and checks whether any unfaithful still remains inside the Church, during the recitation of the creed and announces for their departure.

Staumankalos: Greek Word 'Stand in attention' make the people alert of the next part of the liturgy. People respond to it by saying "Kuriyelaison", "Lord Have Mercy"

Prumyon and Sedaro

Prumyon means introduction – introduction to a prayer

Sedaro – lines, serial, - prayers step by step

Unfolding the corner of Sosappa

At the end of the prumyon the priest unfolds the corner of the Sosappa saying "resurrected from the tomb". If the Bishop is present he has to do this.

Incense: The altar, lectern (Evangelii Mesa) the Bishop or his throne, the priests, the departed, men and women all are honoured with the incense. The congregation accepts this by signing the cross and bowing the heads. We believe that as the incense from the censor is going upward, our petitions shall be well pleasing to God like fragrant incense.

Absolution Prayer: (Hoosoyo Prarthana): This is a prayer of absolution for everybody in common, the living and the departed along with offering of the incense. This reminds the prayer of Solomon the king at the dedication ceremony of the Jerusalem temple. 1 kings 8:22 – 54.

Sedaro: These prayers are all for the remission and absolution of the priest's own sins, and the sins of his people.

In the Hoosoyo prayer the priest asks three things: (1) to give purity to himself and his people. (2) to shed mercy upon the living and the dead (3) to give all a good and holy end. The people also say "Amen"

Common Hoosoyo: Priest gives the common absolution for all together. From God, may we receive pardon of offences and remission of sins in both the worlds for ever.”

Blessing the censor: A very beautiful part of the service, which we see only in the Eastern Churches. This is really the adoration of the Holy Trinity. We declare that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is Holy.

Qn: Why the priest grasps two chains of the censor together when he says, the Son is holy?

Ans: Jesus Christ is the God in whom the humanity and Godhead are together. The two chains symbolize the Godhead and Humanity of Christ. The frankincense, put in the glowing coal produces sweet smelling smoke, and it reminds us of our Lord’s sacrifice, which is a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The Creed: The name? The Nicene Creed: This Article Of Faith is codified and approved by 318 universal fathers who attended the 1st ecumenical fathers of Nicea, convened by Emperor Constantine in AD 325 to find a solution against the Arian heresy. Though this creed is finalised and approved by the second Ecumenical synod held at Constantinople, convened by Emperor Theodosius, still it is known under the name of Nicea.

Intro: Attend we to the divine Wisdom: The Deacon appeals us. In the creed we recite the divine wisdom. After making a final shape to the creed in the second Ecumenical Synod, Emperor Theodosius introduced the Creed to the Holy Fathers with the same words, “Attend we to divine wisdom” we use the same introductory words. Let us all stand well and respond to the prayer of the reverend priest. The church added creed to the prayer from the 4th century. Everybody can recite the creed together, or when one man recites the creed others say “Amen”, or “we believe”.

Those who do not believe in these articles of faith do not get the right to participate in the rest of the Qurbana.

What is the faith of our church?

If somebody asks what is the faith of the Orthodox Church, immediately we can recite the creed. It is the cream of our faith. The most important Christian dogmas are arranged in a beautiful way in this short article of faith.

We do not consider them as a Christian who does not believe in the creed. We recite the creed from the day of our birth till the moment of the death.

What we believe:

- (1) Faith in God the Father, maker of Universe
- (2) Faith in God the Son, who became man to redeem us
- (3) Faith in Holy Spirit, who guide us (Thus faith in Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
- (4) Faith in One Holy , Catholic, Apostolic Church
- (5) Faith in Baptism and all other sacraments

- (6) Resurrection of the dead
- (7) Eternal life of the coming world

These 7 are the fundamental dogmas of the Christian faith. As a matter of principle a service or a prayer is incomplete without the recitation of the creed. The deacon coming all the way down to the other side of the church censuring the congregation at the time of the recital of the creed is to point out the end of the service for the catechumens, there by announcing for their departure.

Last preparations of the sacrifice, Washing of the hands: As a symbol of the washing of the feet of the disciples of Jesus Christ in the upper room, the priest washes his hands as a 'final touch of cleansing before the day's Holy Eucharist.

Subukono – After this, the priest turns towards the congregation and asks the people to pray for him to accept his oblation.

The song, "Come , the time of prayer is here , come for pardon, have no fear." This is our intercession for the whole world.

Preconditions for Qurbana is Reconciliation: Let us now be reconciled, To each, Heavenly father's child." Only those who reconcile with his enemy has to attend in this sacrifice. Vengeance and enmity should be avoided while you attend this sacrament.

Participation: See the holy priest ascend, mounting stairs, which heaven ward tend, These the pure Qurbana to raise for who ever communicates."

Now a days the number of people who satisfy themselves in simply seeing the Qurbana is more than those who receive them. Jesus said that those who do not eat my body and drink my blood have no life. So the Church consider the reception of the Holy Qurbana is the most, the utmost important thing for a true Christian life. We feel the presence of Our Lord always with us through the participation of Holy Qurbana. We receive His divine presence with us till the end of the world.

Annaphora of the Faithful

Annaphora – Greek: To carry up
Anna = up; phora = to carry

The priest ascends the altar step. Why?

This symbolizes Christ, who ascended to the upper room , to institute the first Qurbana.

This reminds the priest and the people that they should also lift up their thoughts to the heavenly bliss, from the earthly thoughts.

To who we offer the sacrament

We offer the Holy Qurbana to God the Father. Except 3 prayers, all prayers in the Qurbana addresses to the Father. Such prayers end with

To Thee (Father) we will lift up praise and thanksgiving to Thee, and Thine only Begotten Son and thy Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Which are the three prayers addressed to the Son?

(1) The prayer after the institution and blessings of the Holy elements ending in “Damodoseno”. This is the commemoration of the acts of Salvation, during our Lord’s earthly life. “As often as ye partake of this sacrament commemorating my death and my resurrection until I come”

(2) This second prayer starts addressing the son, but ends with addressing the Father. E.g: The prayer starts: - Remembering therefore O lord, Thy death and Thy resurrection, on the third day, thy ascension into heaven and thy second coming.

The prayers ends thus: “ For Thy people and Thy inheritance pray to Thee, and through Thee to Thy Father saying “Bidayik Labook” People say: “Have mercy upon us O God – Father almighty”

(3) The last prayer before Hoothomo: This is the thanksgiving prayer to our Lord.

The prayer of the kiss of peace (Mt 5:23) : “if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God.” The prayer of peace, and the kiss of peace corresponds to the sum and substance of the theme explained in the above verses.

Hoso Vab Koolsuban – now and forever

At the end of the prayer – The method of lifting the priest’s arms: The right hand on the plate and the left on the cup covered and take up both the arms from the plate and then from the cup as we draw water in both the arms and fold them together.

Kiss of Peace: Dasthur: (A Persian Word)

Bound to be pardoned: The method of begging pardon through the hand.

Originally there was the actual kiss before the institution of the Lord’s supper. Later on it was replaced in the Church, by the symbolic action of both hands exchanged between persons.

Bishop Pekenham Walsh of Thadagom wrote,

Deacon utters – Let us in the love of our Lord and our God, give peace to one another, everyone to his neighbour, by the holy and divine kiss.

Who is your enemy? Your neighbour only. Who are we most angry with or having hatred for? To him we must give the kiss of peace.

How do we give the kiss of peace?

Ans: One inserts his hand into the two hands of his neighbour, and in that unity of the body both forget the enmity.

From where does the peace come from?

The priest receives it from the Holy elements and makes the deacon kiss the hand of the priest. Then the deacon passes on the kiss to the people and the people in turn pass it on until the last person receives it with the action of both hands. So the peace that comes from God, through the priest, is distributed. The kiss of peace reminds us that the whole community has to be reconciled with each other by the peace of Christ and filled with love before offering the Holy Qurbana.

An old custom which is stopped now: Till the kiss of peace is over the deacon used to read the names of the departed whom they remembered on that day from “Spurhaye” or pristha in loud voice. This helped that generation to remember the holy lives of their fore fathers and follow their faith. However this custom was stopped by the 12th century.

Prayer of laying on hands: Prayer of Inclination: Before the prayers starts the deacon says” Let us bow our heads before the merciful Lord.” The people answer: “We bow our heads before Thee, Our Lord and our God.” The blessings of the prayer come upon those who bow their heads. All are supposed to bow their heads till the prayer is over. In early days the priest stretched his hand and blessed the people at this point.

The prayer of the Sosappa: Annaphora veil.: This prayer reveals the longing of the people to come to the Lord with all humbleness.

Celebration of the Sosappa: How we should stand?

The deacon announces:

- (1) Let us stand well
- (2) Let us stand in awe with sober minds
- (3) Let us stand in comeliness
- (4) Let us stand in holiness
- (5) Let us stand in love and true faith
- (6) Let us stand in fear of God

Why? For the Reverend Priest offers the living sacrifice to God, the Father,

People in response says:

This annaphora is mercy

This annaphora is peace

This annaphora is sacrifice

This annaphora is Thanksgiving

It is sacrifice: Our Lord offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross, and is now continuing His intercession for us. In the Holy Qurbana which is centred on the sacrifice of our Lord, we offer ourselves to the Holy Trinity, in response to the sacrifice on the cross. “God loved the world so much that HE gave His Son that everyone who has faith in Him, may not die, but have eternal life.” Jn 3:16.

“I am laying my life down of my own freewill” Jn 10:18, says our Lord referring to His death. It was the Holy Spirit who helped the Son in His sacrifice. In Heb 9:14, St Paul says “Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for God’s Glory.

This we do in the Holy Qurbana by offering ourselves saying, “May we offer up praise and thanks to Thee.”

Praise: The words of praise: If they are sincere will lead to a life of imitation. The people who see us must praise the Heavenly Father noting the change, taking place in us. This is the true way of praising God Mt 5:16. To have such a virtuous life, “now and always and for ever and ever means complete dedication.

Thanks: It also implies a virtuous life. Because to give thanks means to please that person. The most pleasing thing for God is our virtuous life. This life must be an uninterrupted one. Hence we say “Now and always and forever and ever. Thus in Holy Qurbana we offer ourselves completely.

Celebration of Sosappa: It signifies the revelation of the Lord as the Son of God at the time of His public ministry. As the Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord, the same Holy Spirit comes down on the Holy mysteries at this time when the priest lifts and waves the Sosappa over the Holy mysteries.

To sum up:

- (1) By lifting the veil (cover) the Holy mysteries are going to reveal.
- (2) Heaven is opened and the heavenly bodies, and the souls of the saints are coming down to see the Holy mysteries and honour them.
- (3) The heaven and the earth, the angels, saints and we are meeting together
- (4) All the symbolic Old Testament sacrifices are stopped by this real sacrifice
- (5) Jesus Christ, the real sacrifice is resurrected from the death.

Why the priest waves the veil up and down?

In Acts 10: we read a story of St. Peter who saw a vision, in which he saw something like a large sheet coming down, with all kinds of animals, reptiles and wild birds, which were considered by Jews as unclean. A voice he heard , “Get up Peter, kill and eat”. Peter refused to do that because he never ate anything, ritually unclean or defiled.

The voice again corrected him not to consider anything unclean that God has declared clean. This is to teach St. Peter to consider every person without discrimination of colour or faith.

This vision happened 3 times and then the thing was taken back up into heaven. The first Church includes Jews and Gentiles alike. Here this sacrifice is offered for the whole world and invites each and every person to be the partakers of this holy mystery.

Priest here lifts up the great veil and waves it 3 times over the mysteries, praying in a low voice:

He calls the sosappa:

(1) As the rock of flint which sent forth 12 streams of water for the 12 tribes of Israel. (All the tribes of the world is included)

(2) As the hard rock which was set against the tomb of our Redeemer.

Benedictions:

Apostolic Benedictions (blessing):

There are three benedictions in the Qurbana and this first is known as the apostolic blessings. This benediction is given in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This is another version of the benediction that we see in Corinthians 3:14. Where we read “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

It reminds the voice from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration and also at the river Jordan (Mt 3:16-17).

Lifting up of prayers: When the priest lifts up his hands for prayers, he is offering the needs of the congregation and requesting for God’s Grace to be handed down. Here he is also identifying himself with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on the cross, where His hands were out-stretched.

These prayers are arranged in a conversational style. The priest talks with his people and the people reply to it. Priest – Let our minds, sit at the right of God the Father.

People – They are with the Lord God.

Priest – Let us give thanks to Lord in awe

People – It is right to give thanks.

The Church, the body of Christ offers the Holy Eucharist always united along with her Head Jesus Christ. In order to unite with Jesus Christ who is sitting at the Right Hand of his Father, the body, the church, all of us have to raise themselves to open heavens. That is why the priests asks the people “Let our minds, our understanding, our heart, be above where our Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right of God the Father. At that moment we are uniting with our Lord in Heaven.

Now the heaven is opened and is about the time of Our Lord to come down upon the Holy Mysteries, when the priest asks the congregation to lift up their hearts to heaven.

As in Acts 7:55, 56 – We see our Lord on the right hand of the Father when we raise up our eyes to heaven.

Eucharistic Prayer – Here we unite with the praises of the heavenly bodies. Even when the priest and the altar boy are alone in the church for Holy Qurbana, the vast multitudes of angels and the souls of the faithful departed are also participating in the Qurbana at that time.

Holy Holy. As a reply the people say, “Holy Holy Holy Lord Almighty, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that came and is to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest”

This prayer is compiled from Is 6:3, the praises of angels when Isaiah saw in his vision and Mt 21:9, the Hosannas of Jerusalem boys on the Palm Sunday – These two praises are combined together in this prayer.

Waving of Hands: Over the bread and wine signifies the coming down of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove (Lk 3:22). Thus the priest and the congregation along with the angels praise and worship the Lord at the same time.

The Most Important Parts of the Holy Qurbana

The Institution, the words of institution, invocation of the Holy Spirit, Blessing the bread and wine which turn into Body and Blood are the most important parts of the Holy Qurbana.

Words of Institution: The history of the institution is given in the synoptic gospels and in the epistle of 2nd Corinthian only

Ref: - Mt 26:20 ; Mk 14:22; Lk 22: 19; 1 Cor 11:23-24

4 words – In all these place we see, 4 words in the same way. Took , Blessed or consecrated, Broke, Gave

We use the same words which Jesus Christ uttered at the time of the Institution, in all the different versions of our Liturgy.

Take: When the priest says “ He took bread” the priest takes the bread in his hands. It symbolizes, Christ took his earthly body from the Holy Virgin Mary.

Consecrated: Where the priest says, “He blessed and sanctified” the priest blesses it by making the sign of the Cross 3 times upon the bread. Jesus Christ sanctified us from the sins.

Broke: When the priest says “HE broke” the priest breaks the bread. This reminds us the passion, agony, crucifixion and the piercing by the side of our Lord.

Gave: He gave it to His disciples and they ate that body without any doubt.

In Lk 24: 30 we read thus – He took the bread and said the blessing then He broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.

In Acts 2:42 we read about the early Church. They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrines and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Here breaking of bread is referred to Holy Qurbana. When the priest completes the narration of what our Lord did and said, the people respond saying, 'Amen' (so be it).

Similarly the priest narrates what our Lord did and said, when He blessed the wine. The priest takes the cup in his hand and blesses it. Here also at the end of the narration of what our Lord did and said, the people respond by saying Amen.

Following the word of institution said by the priest, the people say Amen. This means that the people participate in the blessing of the bread and wine also. At the time of the blessing of the bread and wine, our Lord is blessing us also. Just as 5 loaves and the 2 fish were blessed and multiplied and given to a big gathering, God is blessing us and our humble capacities to satisfy the various needs of mankind. If we dedicate ourselves whole-heartedly God can use us wonderfully.

Do this in remembrance, until I come.

Is it simply the intellectual memory?

Answer is given by St. Paul, the great theologian. 1 Cor 10: 16

The Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Khroytho dheRuho):

The blessing of the bread and the wine does not stop with the words of the institution – We have in our service, what is called the invocation of the Holy Spirit. It is the prayer of the coming down of the Holy Spirit up on the bread and the wine.

Preparing the minds of the people: The deacon cautions the congregation about the Holy Spirit's coming. He says, "How solemn is this occasion, how awful (awesome) this time...."

Why? "The living Holy Spirit comes down fluttering from the most elevated heights of heaven, and broods upon this Eucharist, that is set hallowing it."

So.....? Stand ye still in reverence and pray."

To this the people respond saying "Peace be with us and good will be to us all."

Waving of the hands: As the deacon proclaims the coming down of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the priest waves his hands over bread and wine – Thus the Holy Spirit is invoked on the congregation also. As the Holy Spirit fills us with divine selfless love, we will have peace and good will. St. Paul says that the Holy Spirit fills us with divine love. (Roman 5:5)

Personal note of Rembachen:

For our Bhava Thirumeny, when he was Punoose Remban, he had a very strong doubt that the waving of hands is an old ritual, which is not needed. To have the truth revealed, he fasted and prayed for three days in secret. On Sunday, the third day he celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Vattasheril Remban was also at the altar with him. While Punoose Remban was saying the words and waving the hands, a bolt of lightning occurred and in fear he finished the rest of the service.

During coffee time after the service, this was the conversation that took place:

Vattasheril Remban: “ Punoose Remban, did you notice that when you were celebrating the Holy Qurbana a devil fled?”

Punoose Remban: “No, all I heard was something falling”

Vattasheril Remban: “Well, during the time of invocation of the Holy Spirit at Khroytho dheRuho, a mad girl fell down and the people rushed and took her away. However, she was healed when she got up”

Bhava told,” When the Holy Spirit came, only two of us saw it, one me the unbelieving me in the form of the lightning and the other that devil who fled”

Then he looked and me and told “ Son, Waving of hands and other acts in the sacraments, you must do with faith, piety and fear of the Lord and then it will be meaningful and of use”

This was the advice that Bhava Thirumeny gave me when I was ordained a priest on May 16th 1958.

“God’s love has flooded our in most hearts through the Holy Spirit, He has given us” This means that there will be no selfishness or envy. Such a person will seek only the good of others. What a change it will produce in our families and societies. We can think of the nine fold fruit of the Spirit bestowed upon us in the Holy Qurbana. (Gal 5:22). Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Do we pray for such transformation in the Holy Qurbana.

Thus the priest and the congregation along with the angels praise and worship the Lord at the same time.

Answer me O Lord: Now the calling upon the Holy Spirit is continued as the priest says, “Answer me O lord (3 times)

1 Kg 18:37 The prayer of the prophet Elijah when he offered the sacrifice to Jehovah against the worshippers of Baal.

Kurielaison: To this the people join saying Kurielaison. Lord have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy. This prayer for mercy reminds us of the prayer of the publican. Our approach also must be humble and contrite, if we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. On the other hand if we take pride in our virtues, we will have to go home empty handed like the Pharisee. At the time of the invocation of the Holy Spirit comes down not only upon the bread and wine but also upon our hearts. Therefore that is a time for emptying ourselves so that we may be filled by the Holy Spirit and transformed and perfected in the image of our Lord.

Bread and wine turn into the Body and Blood of Jesus

The priest waves his right hand upon the bread and makes the sign of the cross 3 times saying “May He perfect this bread, the Body of Jesus Christ. Then the people respond saying “Amen”. Similarly the priest waves his right hand upon the wine and makes the sign of the cross 3 times saying, “May He perfect the wine in the chalice into the Blood of Jesus Christ. To this also the congregation responds saying, “Amen”

Thus we see that the whole congregation has full participation in the invocation of the Holy Spirit also.

This is the greatest wonder of the world that the bread and wine became Body and Blood of Christ through the action of the feeble and weak human being – After this we call the Holy Elements no more bread and wine, but only Body and Blood.

Blessing of the Bread and wine transform them as the Body and Blood

Why do we say that the bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of our Lord?

When the bread and wine are blessed by the priest they become the Body and Blood of our Lord. Because, our Lord Himself blessed the bread and said, “This is my body which is broken for you.” So also He blessed the wine and said “This cup is the new covenant in my Blood.” Our Lord has given the command to do the same. “Do this in remembrance of me” St. Paul says (1 Cor 11:26)

This means, that every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lords death until he comes.

Is it simply and intellectual memory?

St Paul answers: If anyone eats the Lord’s bread or drinks from his cup in a way that dishonors Him, He is guilty of sin against the Lord’s Body and Blood. So then, everyone should examine himself first and then eat the bread and drink from the Cup.

In 1 Cor 10:16 the cup we use in the Lord’s supper and for which we give thanks to God, when we drink from it, we are sharing in the blood of Christ, when the bread we break we eat it we are sharing the Body of Christ.

Read 1 Cor 11:29-30

For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord’s body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgement on himself as he eats and drinks.

30 – “that is why many of you are weak and ill, and several have died.”

If this is done in memory would some one become weak and ill, if it is done in memory would some one die. Therefore this is not just an intellectual memory or remembrance. For those who doubted how this comes about, the response is you can go along with the doubtful, but no explanation was given.

Jn 6:56 Also our Lord said, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him.”

For eating His flesh and drinking His blood our Lord has not given us any other means than blessing the bread and wine.

How does the bread become the Body and the wine the Blood of our Lord?

The bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of our Lord, through the working of the Holy Spirit.

The priest is the symbol of our Lord's presence. He represents our Lord and does everything in His behalf. Hence when the priest blesses, our Lord Himself blesses in the inward sphere and the Holy Spirit effects the change

There are theories like:

- (1) Transubstantiation (R.C)
- (2) The Theory of Mystery (Orthodox Christian Group)
- (3) Consubstantiation (Martin Luther)
- (4) Figurative (Swingly)
- (5) Receptionism (Martin Brucer)
- (6) Spiritual Presence (Calvin)
- (7) Virtualism (Cranmer) to explain the real presence of the Lord in the Holy Communion. We believe in the special and personal real presence of the Lord on the altar and in the communion

Thubden: Diptychs

The great intercession: As our Lord did in His High priestly prayer (John 17) here we pray for all the living and the dead.

We have 6 prayers of intercession, first 3 for all the living and the last 3 for the departed souls.

Name: The word Thubden simply means again. In Syriac all these intercessions start with the word Thubden. So the name of these prayers became Thubden.

Some people use this time to go out or take a break during the service. This is because of their ignorance about the importance of these intercessory prayers.

I have felt many time that the Orthodox Holy Qurbana, is just for the priest and the deacon. There is no preparation attending the Holy Qurbana and many just stand as mere observers, rather than participators. For many it has lost any significance.

Why do we go to the Church? Can an Orthodox Christian who goes to Church on a Sunday morning in the best clothes give an answer?

To get salvation, to get forgiveness for sins, to go to heaven – one group says

For a get together, for entertainment – another group says

If so that is not where they should be going but to clubs, theatres, or an exhibition

In the beginning the main goal of attending a Qurbana was to be a participant, not observer. When the believers and the Disciples (Apostles) got together, they blessed the bread and wine and shared it and ate it. Participation in the Holy Qurbana was their main goal. Since then it has become mere observation, listening, and just standing without any feeling of awe. It has stooped as low as to just arrive towards the end of the Qurbana, and stand outside.

The prayer on Thursday morning during the Great Lent:(Ps 87)

Part 1: For the living Spiritual Father

Here we pray specially for the heads of the Syrian Orthodox Church and our Catholicos of the East and the Bishop of Jerusalem, all are equally treated and the diocesan bishop and for all bishops of the Church.

For the living brethren: Here we pray for all the living laymen, women, and children, who are sick, needy and troubled.

For the living faithful secular rulers and administrators: We pray for our nation, political leaders and the authorities of the nations.

Part II Three prayers for the faithful and departed

For the mother of God and all other saints: Here we remember St. Mary, Apostles, martyrs and others like John the Baptist, St Stephen, our Apostle St. Thomas etc

Note: The exalted St. Peter and St. Paul chief among the Apostles

Not Peter, but Peter and Paul, the chief among the Apostles. The early church never thinks of the Supremacy of Peter. They consider Peter and Paul equally important leaders of the church.

For the departed Spiritual Fathers and Doctors of the Church: This is the longest Thubden, so we need an elaborate study of the Thubden.

Here we remember the great ecclesiastical leaders who worked for the establishment of the faith and teaching of the Church, and ask for their intercessions for our day to day Christian life.

In this Thubden we remember and pray for the Holy Fathers who attended the first 3 ecumenical synods, and the Fathers who lived upto the 6th century A.D. The names of 23 Holy Fathers are mentioned in their 5th long intercession. Among these Holy Fathers, there are Bishops, priests, layman, monks, martyrs and poets.

Synod of Nicea: This synod was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the city of Nicea in 325 A.D against the heresy of Arius who preached that Christ is merely a creation. The incarnated Christ is not equal to God, the Father in essence. 318 Church Fathers from all over including one Yoohannon, the representative from India and Persia attended this Synod and established that Christ is equal to God, the Father and 2nd person of the Trinity. This Synod formulated the creed, especially the

2ⁿ paragraph of the creed, for the universal Church. It also fixed the date of Easter and twenty important decisions had been taken for making the Church Canon.

Bishop Alexander of AlexandriaXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

II Synod of Constantinople (381): Istanbul, Turkey

Emperor Theodosius convened this synod in Constantinople, against the teaching of Mecedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople. 150 fathers attended and decided the divinity of Holy Spirit which is the third person of the Trinity and added this formula to the Nicene Creed.XXXXXXXXXX..... This synod also made 7 decisions to the canon of the church.

III The Synod of Ephesus (431) Turkey

This 3rd Council was convened by the Roman Emperor Theodosius II against the heresy of Nestorius who taught that Mary is not the Mother of God. Bishop Cyril of Alexandria presided and 200 Fathers met unanimously decided against the teaching of Nestorius and added to the creed that virgin Mary is Mother of God (Theotokos).

This 3rd Synod gave the final shape of the present creed and Emperor Theodosius introduced the creed to the Holy Fathers with the words “Attend we to divide wisdom.” We use the same wording of the Emperor even now when we introduce the creed in the Holy Qurbana.

Oriental XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The following 23 Holy Fathers who lived through the first 6 centuries have been remembered in this great intercession:

1. St. James: In Mark 6:3 we read, the brother of Jesus – son of Joseph in his first wife – the first Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. He was not one among the 12 – still he is known as ‘Apostle’. He presided over the 1st Synod which is held in Jerusalem. (AD 50). (Acts 15) Even though Peter was present in that Synod it is James who presided the meeting and sent the decisions of the meeting to all the Churches.

He celebrated the First Qurbana in Sehion Malika where our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, on Tuesday the 2nd day after Pentecost. He only codified the first form of our Liturgy. He was a strict vegetarian. He wrote his epistle in AD 61. Jews stoned him to death in AD 63.

2. Ignatius: In Mt 18:2 we read, Jesus calle a child, made him stand in front of them and said, “I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles”.

This boy here mentioned, was later ordained as the third bishop of Antioch by Peter. He was called by the name Noorono (Agnimayan). In one of his visions he saw the heavenly angels praising the God antiphonally in 2 groups and he

only introduced the same way in the churches praying antiphonally one group after another, and organized the orderly conduct of liturgical services. He established the Episcopal administration of the church.

Under the persecution of Emperor Trojan, while he was brought to Rome as a captive, he wrote 7 letters to his people, on his way, to strengthen them in the true faith. These 7 epistles are now, the books of firm Orthodox faith of the Church. He met martyrdom, as prey to the lions under Trojan persecution in AD 110.

3. Clement of Rome: He belonged to the family of the Roman Emperor, but converted by the speeches of St. Peter and Paul and became a Christian. Later he became the 3rd Bishop of Rome. He was persecuted and killed by Emperor Trojan in AD 101.
4. Dionysius (Athene): In Act 17:34, we read about a Dionysius, thus – “some men joined Paul and believed among whom was Dionysius, a member of the Council.

This Dionysius of Athens became a great scholar and later taught at the Alexandrian Theological School for 17 years and became the first bishop of Athens. He met martyrdom in 96 A.D

5. Athanasius of Alexandria (297 – 373)

In 297 he was born and in his early days he became a Christian. He was ordained as a deacon in AD 319 and became the secretary of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. The famous theological treatise namely “De Incarnate” (about Incarnation) is written during that period.

In 325 he attended the 1st ecumenical council, the synod of Nicea as a deacon with Bishop Alexander. But returned as the hero of Nicea, who formulated the 2nd stanza of the Nicene Creed about the Son, the 2nd person in Trinity.

In the next year in 326 he became the Bishop of Alexandria when Bishop Alexander passed away. But his whole life was a period of fight with Arianism. He was exiled 5 times, and persecuted severely by the Roman Emperors. He died in 373.

6. Julius (Rome) 338 – 352: He was the Bishop of Rome. He was friend of Mar Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. He attended the provincial council of Sardica in 347. He wrote a liturgy and 2 Epistles. Died in 352 A.D
7. Capadocian Father (Basil of Gregory). Basil (329 – 379)

The title ‘Basilius’ to the supreme head of our Church is derived from this great Father of the Church, St Basil the Great. This title had been established only in the 14th century.

St. Basil was born as the son of Basil, a wealthy lawyer and Emmalia a devout Christian woman in Cappadocia in Asia Minor. His schooling was in Caesarea, the capital city of Capadocia that was the centre of ecclesiastical studies in Asia Minor. His classical study was under Libanius in Antioch.

He had studied philosophy, astronomy and classics in Constantinople and at the University of Athens. Then he joined the University of Caesarea as a professor.

His sister Macrina persuaded him to become a monk. So he visited Egypt, the home of monasticism. Then he retreated himself to the bank of Riris for solitary spiritual meditations, and self-discipline. He emphasised the importance of Christian love and charity. So he built a 'hospital' and a "home for the disabled and the poor" attached to the monastery outside the old town of Caesarea.

Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea ordained him as a priest in A.D 364. His ambition for quick reform was not accepted enthusiastically by every one and so he retired for seclusion. St. Gregory joined him there. Both compiled the 'Philocalia', an anthology of Origen.

At the instigation of Eusebius he returned from the isolation (28 March 364) at a very critical time when Julian the Emperor died and Valens who was an Arian became the co emperor of Constantinople. At this time he had good correspondence with Athanasius, the great Alexandrian Saint.

In AD 368 snowstorm, earthquake and drought affected Capadocia. Basil helped the poor and encouraged the rich to do so. In 370, he was ordained as bishop to succeed Eusebius. He ordained his own brother Gregory of Nyssa and a friend Gregory of Naziansus. Both became shining stars of the Church.

Emperor Valens sent Modestus and Demosthenes to persuade St. Basil into Arianism, but they failed. So he was arrested and banished. He died on January 1st 379 in exile.

He is the author of many important publications:

Hexaemeron: (six days of creation): deals with his mystical approach based on the Genesis Creation story

Longer and Shorter rules: Monastic piety is the summary.

Against Eunomius – Answers to Arianism

On the Holy Spirit – Trinitarian formula is the content

The liturgy of St. Basil – widely known among the orthodox group

365 epistles on exile – heresy doctrinal and ethical problems.

Greatest message of St. Basil is perfection in sanctity through ascetic devotion on a monastic formula.

St. Gregory (329 – 399) He was the contemporary and friend of St. Basil. When he was compelled to be a bishop he hid himself in the monastery of St. Basil. But later, when St. Basil became the bishop, was compelled by St. Basil

and ordained by him. He later became the bishop of Lasema in Capadocia in 372 and then Patriarch of Constantinople in 379. He presided over one of the sessions of the 2nd Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople. He was the author of so many hymns and sermons. The premeons of Pentecost day were compiled from his thoughtful sermons about Holy Spirit. He is generally known as Gregory of Naziansus. He died in 389.

Mar Dioscorus of Alexandria: He became the bishop of Alexandria in 444. He presided over the 2nd Ephesus synod in AD 448 in which the heretic Euteyctus (for Monophysitism) was excommunicated. But in the council of Chalcedon convened by Emperor Marcus in AD 451, he was bitterly ill treated by the Western Churches as he gave lead to oppose Diophysites (supporters of the theory of the two natures of Christ). In 454, Emperor Marcion exiled him. He was killed by his own body guard in exile. But later the Alexandrian Church brought his holy relics back to Alexandria. All the Orthodox churches who do not accept the council of Chalcedon honour him as a great saint.

Mar Thimotheos: He succeeded Mar Dioscorus as the Patriarch of Alexandria, from 457-477. He fought against both heresies of Chalcedonians and Eutychians.

Mar Philoxinos: Bishop of Maboog (Iraq) from 485 – 519

He was a great theologian who translated the Holy Bible in Syriac. He was a leader and opponent of Chalcedonian. His lovely meditations and prayers got a place in our prayer books too. The enemies put him in jail and smoked him to death in AD 519.

Anthimos (Constantinople): He started his career as an officer in the palace of Empress Theodora. He resigned the post and became a monk. Later in AD 535 he was ordained as the Patriarch of Constantinople. With the favour of the Empress, he achieved many things for the prosperity of the Church.

When he was compelled to accept the Chalcedon heresy by the Emperor Eustinian he resigned and left the patriarchate. The Emperor arrested him, but Theodora helped him even in the jail and favoured him with privileges. He met martyrdom in the jail.

Ivanious: (Constantinople) 347 – 410. Better known as John Chrysostum. He was born in Antioch. At the age of 13 he embraced monastic life. Chrysostum, the Greek word means “golden tongued” earned from his eloquent preaching.

In 398 he became the Patriarch of Constantinople. He raised his voice against the immorality of the then Empress and was exiled. He was the author of a liturgy, a number of letters, of moral and ascetic treatises, including the work on priesthood. Of about 600 homilies, and commentaries, and occasional festal and panegyric orations. He passed away in AD 416 in exile.

Coorilos (Cyril of Alexandria): In A.D 429 he became the patriarch of Alexandria and adorned the throne of St. Mark till his death in 449. He was a

great theologian and fought against Nestore, the heretic. He was the Holy Father who presided over the 3rd ecumenical synod of Ephesus which excommunicated Nestore.

Severious: (Crown of Syrians)

He was born in 460 in Alexandria and became the Patriarch of Antioch (512-519). He was author and theologian. Being reluctant to accept the Chalcedonian faith, Emperor Eustinian banished him. He wrote a number of epistles in exile. He is the Holy Father who wrote the prayer "O Lord who dost dwell under the protection of the Most High, protect us beneath the shadow of the wings of thy loving kindness" which we use in Soothara and the prayer we use at the opening of the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. By Thy mother's earnest prayers, by the saints entreaties I adore Thee.

Yakob Burdana Bardesseus

Jacob was born in Thella, Alexandria as the son of an Alexandrian priest called Theophilus as the result of his parents' prayer and fasting for a son. His parents offered him for the service of God. As a result Jacob became a monk and after the death of his parents sold all his wealth and properties and gave it to the poor. He always wore a very thick cloth, that too torn and stitched here and there. So he was called by others Bardesseus which means "he who wears torn clothes". During those days the Emperor of Constantinople followed the Chalcedon heresy and the Queen Theodora was a staunch Orthodox believer. The Emperor imprisoned many of the Orthodox bishops and patriarchs including Anthimoss the Patriarch of Constantinople. At the same time Theodora helped those Holy Fathers in prison secretly. The church faced a very crucial period. One night the queen managed to bring Jacob Bardessus in the prison very secretly who was ordained there by three imprisoned Patriarchs as a bishop of Uraha in AD 541. There he toured far and wide in many places for the establishment of the Church. During these long journeys he ordained two Patriarchs, one for Antioch and another for Alexandria, 89 bishops 102027 priests and many deacons and sub deacons. The opponents nicknamed his followers as Jacobites after his name.

The Roman Church, the Chalcedonian heretics persecuted the Holy Father in many ways with the help of the Emperor. He died in AD 578 in the Egyptian monastery of Romanos.

Four poets of the Church
(Aprem, Jacob, Isaac and Balai)

Aprem: He was born in Nizilion. For 38 years he lived in a monastery as a monk and for 10 years he was the Principal of the school of Edessa. He was all the time a deacon and a poet. He was one of the 318 Holy Fathers who attended the Ecumenical Synod of Nicea. His famous Bovoosa are in our prayers. We recite his poem everyday when we go to bed. "Njangalkulla Karthave" or Karthave Krupa Chayyaname".

Mar Yucub: He was born in a village in Euphretes valley. He came out as a great scholar from the Theological school of Edessa. Became the bishop of Dasrag(519). He wrote so many church hymns, and a communion and Baptism service orders. He became the famous Church poet of the 5th century. He died in 526 A.D.

Mar Isaac: 365 – 466 (Omeed): Disciple of Mar Aprem: He was great monk, bishop, poet and author. Unfortunately, we didn't get any collection of his poems in our prayers.

Mar Balai: Arch Priest, Author and poet.

Mar Bar Sauma (Chief among mourners): Great Monk, Bishop and teacher. As a monk he followed strict asceticism with fasting and prayer. He himself founded a community of monks called 'mourners'. As the superior of the order, he is known as the 'Chief of mourners'.

Simon Stylite: (Antioch 397 – 459) Stylite = Pillar Saint

He was a great monk who spent time on the top of a pillar for 18 long years. Esthono = Pillar. Desthuni = Saint on pillar. He died in 459.

Abhai: (Village Ruksan in Mardin)

After the death of his parents, he sold all his properties and joined the monastery. He gave out all his wealth to the poor. He became bishop of Nicea. He revolutionized the monastic order of life in the 5th century.

For all the faithful departed: In the 6th Thubden all the faithful departed are generally remembered with special remembrance of the ones whose names are given for the) 6. day.

Signing of the cross over Holy Vessels, Thabalitha, Thaksa, and the Spurbaye. The priest then signs the cross over the above in the following order:

1. Those names which we remember in the Thubden 1-2 and 3. Sign the cross on the edge of Kaasa (Paten – cup).
2. The names in Thubden 4, 5 and 6 – sign the cross on the eastern edge of the chalice – Peelasa
3. Remember parents sign the cross on the Northern edge of Chalice
4. All the departed – sign the cross on the Southern edge of the chalice
5. For priests own faults – sign on the western edge of the chalice
6. Remember the bishop who consecrated the church –sign the cross on the Thabalitha
7. All the names given for the day – sign the cross on the spurbaye
8. The Holy Father who wrote the liturgy – sign the cross on the liturgy book.

All these 6 intercessory prayers are like ones in the high priestly prayers of our Lord. Prayer for the departed again – The priest elevates his hands and prays for the faults committed in word, deed and thought those that are manifest and those that are

concealed. The people also pray for the offences of both the living and the departed, committed willingly and unwillingly, knowingly and unknowingly.

Prayer for a good death: When we pray for a good end with a humble heart we pray for the lowest position in the kingdom of heaven. In St. Jacob's liturgy we pray like this, "Keep us Oh Lord, without sin until the end of our life and gather us at the feet of Thy elected ones".

Peace: The celebrant taking power from the Mysteries, stretches out his right hand and points out towards the people and say the word of peace.

Hand Benediction: The celebrant turns his right hand around the chalice, crosses himself and then draws the sign of the cross in the name our Lord. We are now going to meditate His passion.

Fraction: The passion, death, burial and the resurrection of our Lord are remembered as we sing the hymn, Anpudayone Nin Vathil....Now the sanctuary is closed. This reminds us Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane in the night praying alone (Mt 26:36). Also there was darkness at the time of His crucifixion. (Lk 23:44)

Fraction: Here the priest breaks the Body into pieces and mixes it with blood and does symbolic acts connected with the death of our Lord. Priest performs fraction and commixture. Then putting the two pieces, the priest lifts them signifying the resurrection of our Lord.

The priest at this time silently says the prayer of Fraction and Commixture by St. Bar Sleebo of 12th century. Thus truly did the word of God suffer in the flesh and was sacrificed and broken on the cross, and His soul was departed from His body, while His Godhead was in no way departed either from His soul or from His body. And He was pierced in His side with a spear and there flowed out blood and water for the atonement of the whole world and His Body was strained where with, for the sins of the whole world, the son died on the cross, and His soul came and was united with His Body. And He turned us from the wrong practice to the right deeds. By His blood HE reconciled and united the heavenly hosts with the earthly beings and the Chosen people from the gentiles, and the soul with the body. The 3rd day He rose again from the tomb, and He is one Immanuel, who can't be divided after the union, there is no division into two natures. Thus we believe, thus we confess, and thus we confirm that this body belongs to this blood and this blood belongs to this body.

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Metrical Homily by Mar Jacob

O Father of truth, behold Thy Son, the well-pleasing sacrifice. Accept Thou Him who died for me, and may I be forgiven through Him. Receive this offering at my hands and reconcile me unto Thee. And remember not the sins I committed before Thy excellence.

Behold the Blood, shed on Golgotha, by the wicked, and plead for me, for its sake receive my petition. How great are my offences! And how great is Thy mercy. If thy

mercies are weighed, they are heavier than the mountains, which Thou weighest. Look upon the sins and look upon the offering for them, for the offering and sacrifice are far greater than the sins. Because of my sins, Thy Beloved One bore the nails and the spear. His sufferings are enough to reconcile Thee and by them may I live.

The priest now signs the body with the blood thrice saying:

1. Thou art the Anointed God who for our sake was pierced on his side with a spear on the heights of Golgotha in Jerusalem
2. Thou art the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
3. Do Thou absolve us of our debts and forgive our sins and make us stand on Thy right hand side. While the priest behind the curtain is completing the fraction and commixture, the people are singing the hymn. After the hymn the deacon leads the people in a litany of intercession.

Why the Orthodox Church do not give bread and wine separately?

1. We are not giving the bread. We are giving the Living Holy Body of Jesus. IN a living body it includes blood.
2. We mix the body and blood together saying this body belongs to the blood, and this blood belongs to the body. After mixing together there is no need of giving them separately. Either Body or Blood is enough for communicant.

Litany: There are a number of litanies which are also intercessory prayers.

Opening the Sanctuary: The veil is drawn aside. This symbolizes the appearance of our Lord to the disciples after His resurrection, and reminds us the rending of the veil of the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem temple at the time of crucifixion.

Lord's Prayer:

Due to the importance of the model prayer which our Lord taught us, it gets the central place in the liturgy. The Church believed that the reciting of this prayer is a right and privilege of the faithful believers of the Church to show that they are his sons. St. Paul says in Gal 4: 6 & God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, the spirit who cries out, "Father, my Father". So then, you are no longer a slave, but a son. And since you are His son, God will give you all that he has for his sons." (Gal 4: 6 & 7). St. Peter says, "Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:3).

Through the incarnation, we became the brothers of Jesus Christ and through him we became the sons of God.

The Lord's prayer 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.

Our dedication comes to a climax when we say the Lord's Prayer. Through the prayer the whole mankind is offered before God, so that we all may become worthy children of God, and that thereby God's name may be hallowed.

Thy Kingdom come: implies our dedication to be obedient.

Thy will be done on earth: implies our readiness to do God's will.

As it is in heaven: Means, as our Lord Jesus Christ and the heavenly angels would be

Give us bread: In order to do so we pray for strength, daily bread, even the living bread.

Lead us not into temptation: Jesus Christ himself; the forgiveness of sins, and redemption from temptation and the evil one.

This prayer used in a broad sense, is a prayer of dedication of the whole mankind, as the term 'We' includes the whole mankind.

When this prayer is used as a preparation for receiving Holy Qurbana the term 'We' includes only the communicant members of the Church.

After the Lord's Prayer is the prayer of the worthy reception of the sacrament, and then the salutation 'Peace be unto you' repeated twice followed by the benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity. This refers to the blessing of our Lord with uplifted hands at the time of the Ascension.

4th Slomo: Bow the heads

Prayer for the blessings upon the partakers of the Holy Qurbana.

5th Slomo: The same slomo which was given in the tower of Zion.

3rd Benediction: In the name of the Holy Trinity.

In this benediction the qualification of the Holy Trinity is revealed clearly

6 qualifications:

Holy, Glorious, Uncreated, Self Existent, Eternal, Adorable and of One Substance.

The priest gives the benediction after touching the Holy Plate , Cup and Tabalitha.

Elevation: Commemoration of the Ascension

The elevation of the Holy Mysteries is the most important time of adoration of the Holy Qurbana. The solemnity of the occasion reveals by ringing bells, lighted candles, the announcement of the deacon to watch with fear and trembling. This elevation commemorates the ascension of our Lord who went inside the veil to offer

2. The Holy Son who redeemed it by the precious passions of his own self, with us
3. One Holy Spirit with us

The Holy Trinity is with us

With us – God and man come together in unity.

We realise and experience the same bliss of Paradise that Adam enjoyed before sin enters. The people say Amen.

General Hymn:

In oblations and in prayers

Mention we our blessed forebears

Taught they us the truth to see

Children of our God to be

St. Paul advises us in Heb 13: 7, thus: - “Remember those who rule over you who have spoken the word of God, to you, whose faith follows, considering the outcome of their conduct.”

It is the prayer of the departed.

Let us remember in the Eucharist and the prayers, our Fathers whom while on earth taught us to be the children of God, O Son of God, grant them rest with the righteous and with the just in the Kingdom that passeth not away.

Period of waiting for the Advent – Communion of the Saints:

These kukkilions are all quotations from Psalms. They are known as the hymns of Eucharistic Devotion. After saying that “we must remember our Father” we remember them with incense

1. With Blessed Virgin Mary: Ps 45:10-11)

Forget Thine own people and Thy fathers house, the King shall desire thy beauty” That is what St. Mary did. This psalm is a prophecy about St. Mary. Each Kukillion is followed by Ekba prayer, Kolo songs Bovooso = supplication.

- II. With the Saints: Ps 92:13,15

The righteous shall prosper....The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and shall grow up like the cedars of Lebanon.

It is an apt statement about all the saints.

- III. Commemoration of the departed Clergy : Ps 132: 10-12

In righteousness Thy priests be clothed. The psalmist says, “Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and let your saints shout for joy. For your servant David’s sake, do not turn away the face of your Anointed.

IV. With the Faithful departed: Ps 103: 13-14,15

As doth a father his children love.....Like a father pities his children, even so God have mercy on them who fear Him. The days of man are as but grass, He blossoms as the flower in the field.

As the 1st church in Jerusalem, continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit, here the Church, the living and the departed, pray together and wait for the second coming of Jesus, depending on His promise, that he will come again.” (Acts 1:11) The Church, the living and the departed come together in Kukulion prayers, and waiting for the Master’s 2nd coming and last day. We the members of the visible Church, Holy Mother, Saints and all departed the members of the invisible Church, get together here.

Communion of the Holy Mysteries

The priest ascends the altar step, takes the Holy Body and prays.

Thee I hold, who upholds the borders of the world, Thee I grasp who orders the depths Thee O God, do I place in my mouth, By Thee I be delivered from the fire, unquenchable and be accounted worthy of the remission of sins like the sinful woman and the thief, O our Lord, and our God forever.

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Then the priest partakes of the Holy Body and says the atoningof the Body and of the blood of Christ our God is given to me a weak and sinful servant for the pardon of offences and for the remission of sins in both the world forever and ever.

In Is 6:6, the angels carrying the burning coal that had taken from the altar symbolizes the Holy Qurbana .

Blood: Then the priest fills the spoon from the chalice and drinks it saying “By the living and life giving Blood which was poured on the cross, may my offences be pardoned and my sins remitted O Jesus, word of God, who came for our resurrection and of our race for ever and ever.

Why the priest partakes of the Holy Qurbana first?

Jesus Christ himself partook first, at the first Qurbana, then only He gave it to the disciples. Here in the Church we do it in the same manner.

After this the priest gives communion to all. The prepared members could receive communion at this time.

What is the importance of Holy Qurbana in the Christian’s life?

Our Lord Himself has said that Holy Qurbana is essential for spiritual life. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in yourselves. He

that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up, at the last day (Jn 6: 53-54).

Again in Jn 15: 4-6 our Lord says "Abide in me and I in him", "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

For the experience of our Lord's indwelling in us and strengthening us, Holy Qurbana is the way given by our Lord. Hence it is of supreme importance in Christian life. Receiving Holy Qurbana is also a time for renewing our baptismal covenant, because in the Holy Qurbana we receive the blood of the new covenant. In the old covenant blood was sprinkled on Israel (Ex 24:8). Here we drink the blood. The implied meaning is that we will be faithful to God in keeping the Covenant, even to the point of shedding our own blood. For this we need strength and this, we receive by receiving our Lord into our hearts. Thus Holy Qurbana is a preparation for a dedicated life. Holy Qurbana is the dynamic centre for Christian life.

Why fasting is a pre-requisite to receiving Holy Qurbana?

The most important reason is that the Lord's meal should be the first meal on the Lord's Day.

Procession of the Holy Mysteries

(Commemoration of the 2nd coming)

Let us cry out and say – "Worshipped and glorified is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Generations give glory to the Holy Trinity. Curtain is withdrawn – open the doors of heaven.

Bells and Marvahasas: The groups of angels escorts our Lord in Advent.

Candles: Symbolizes the presence of the departed souls. The deacon with the lighted candle – John the Baptist, the forerunner rise again in the 2nd coming.

Coming westward: The priest carrying the Paten in his right hand and the Chalice in his left hand turn towards the people and says, "From thy atoning altar, may remission descend to thy servants, O Son of God"

Priest crosses his hands – This shows that in the 2nd coming He separates the good and the evil. The priest prays for the mercy of God upon those who offered the Holy Qurbana, those who received, those who have labored and have shared and share in them. Then the mysteries are taken back to the altar and the priest offers special prayers and thanks.

Priest returns to the altar

The prayer of Thanksgiving – We thank God for the graces, which is bestowed upon us to receive the Communion.

Bow down heads: Phil 2: 10-11

In honour of the name of Jesus, all beings in heaven, on earth and in the world below, will fall on their knees and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Dismissal and Benediction

The priest dismisses the congregation with benediction, signing the cross 3 times. In response, the congregation say Amen and spends little time in silent prayer. Meanwhile the priest kneels down and says special prayers for him, for the congregation and for those whose names are specially given to remember.

Post Communion:

Ps 23 and Ps 29: The Jews also recite the same Psalms during their festival of Pentecost and tabernacle.

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Read Gen 35:22

“While Jacob was living in that land, Reuben had sexual intercourse, with Bilhah, one of his father’s concubines. Jacob heard about it and was furious.”

Jacob cursed him Gen 49:4

“Reuben, my first born, you are my strength, and the first child of my manhood – the proudest and strongest of all my sons – you are like a raging flood, But you will not be most important, for you slept with my concubine and dishonoured your father’s bed.”

Lev 20:11 A man, who has intercourse with one of his father’s wives, disgraces his father and both he and the woman shall be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.”

How did the cursed Reuben then live?

Deutro 33:6

Moses Said about the tribe of Reuben: “May Reuben never die out, although their people are few.”

How could Moses do this?

In repentance of sins, the Jews used to do animal sacrifices. Moses did an animal sacrifice for father of the first Tribe>>>>>>>>>>>

