



GREEK ORTHODOX DIOCESE ^{OF} DENVER

February 28, 2001

Teleturgical Encyclical 6

The Priests and Deacons of
the Holy Diocese of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

Katevthynthito i prosevchi mou, os thymiama enopion sou: Eparsis ton cheiron mou thysia esperini.

The Presanctified Liturgy attributed to Saint Gregory the Great, the Dialogist and Pope of Rome, is customarily celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays during the six weeks of the Great Fast (of Great and Holy Lent). It is also celebrated on Thursday of the fifth week, as well as on the first three days of Holy Week (Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, and Holy Wednesday). In addition, it is celebrated on the following Feasts if they occur on a weekday (Monday through Friday): First and Second Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist, February 24; Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, March 9.

In the parishes of this Diocese, however, it is not required that the Presanctified Liturgy be celebrated on Friday if it is celebrated on Wednesday and if the parishioners will be attending the Salutations to the Blessed Virgin Mary on Friday evening.

In regard to the order for celebrating the Presanctified Liturgy, please take note of the following points.

First, I ask that you always celebrate the Ninth Hour immediately before beginning the Presanctified Liturgy. It is not appropriate simply to enter the church and begin the Presanctified Liturgy with "Blessed is the Kingdom..." I sent each of you copies of a booklet last year containing the Ninth Hour in both English and Greek so there should be no problem celebrating it. Be sure to inform your chanter that the Ninth Hour is read (not chanted or sung), with ekphoneses and prayers by the priest where appropriate. It should not take you much longer than 15 minutes if it is read properly and piously.

Second, the Presanctified Liturgy is normally served only by a single priest. It is not normally concelebrated, nor does a deacon usually assist the priest.

The priest takes kairo, and vests during the Ninth Hour. Instead of the usual Entrance Prayers, the celebrant merely makes three reverences (saying, "Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner") and then "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us and save us." He then approaches the icons on the iconostasion as customary, and again merely says "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." When finished, he concludes standing before the Beautiful Gate and saying a final time, "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..."

Similarly, the usual vesting prayers are omitted; when putting on each item, the celebrant simply says "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." Dark vestments should be worn, usually of a purple color. The epigonation and pectoral cross, emblems of ecclesiastical offikia, are not normally worn, in deference to the very solemn and compunctionate nature of the Presanctified Liturgy.

Third, before the beginning of the Presanctified Liturgy, the Holy Gifts, which were prepared the previous Sunday at the Divine Liturgy, are placed on the Holy Altar. At the Sunday Proskomide,

two lambs are prepared and placed on the diskos. After the elevation, before the fractioning of the Lamb that will be used for Holy Communion, the Lamb to be reserved is taken reverently by the priest, and some of the Lord's most precious Blood is placed on it using the labida. This Lamb is immediately placed on a separate diskos, covered with the asterisk and veil, and censed. Then, after making three reverences, the celebrant carries the covered diskos containing the reserved Lamb to the prothesis, proceeding counter-clockwise around the Altar, preceded by the Deacon (or an acolyte) who is censuring and holding a lighted candle.

After vesting in preparation for the Presanctified Liturgy, the celebrant should reverently take the covered diskos containing the reserved Lamb from the Prothesis and place it on the Holy Altar; as he does, he should be preceded by the Deacon (or an acolyte) who is censuring and holding a lighted candle.

Fourth, the Presanctified Liturgy begins with the celebrant standing before the Holy Altar as customary. After Psalm 103 and the Litany of Peace, the Beautiful Gate is closed, and the reader begins reading the first Stasis of the 18th Kathisma. As he does, the deacon (or acolyte) brings the censer with incense in it to the celebrant and the priest blesses it. The celebrant then unfolds the Antiminsion on the Holy Altar, and goes to the oblation table where he takes the Diskos, Asterisk, and veil, and brings them to the Holy Altar, setting the Diskos upon the Antiminsion.

The celebrant then takes the Presanctified Lamb from the Prothesis and takes it reverently to the Altar Table. He carefully places the Lamb upon the Diskos with reverence, saying in a low voice: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." He thereafter covers the Diskos with the Asterisk and veil, again saying in a low voice: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." Following this, the celebrant takes the censer, censes the Holy Gifts thrice, returns the censer to the deacon (or acolyte), and makes three reverences.

The celebrant then lifts up the diskos above his head, and preceded by the candle-bearers and censer proceeds around the Holy Altar to the Prothesis. After placing the Diskos on the Prothesis, he pours wine and water into the Chalice saying: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." He covers the chalice with its veils, and then covers both the diskos and chalice with the aera. After this, he takes the censer to cense the Holy Gifts thrice saying: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." The celebrant then returns to the Holy Altar and censes it and the Holy of Holies. Finally, returning to the Holy Altar, the celebrant folds up the Antiminsion.

Fifth, after the reading of the third Stasis of the 18th Kathisma, the Liturgy continues with the chanting of "Kyrie, ekekraxa..." At this point the Beautiful Gate is opened, and the customary censuring, and the entrance with the intoning of "Fos ilaron..." are as at Vespers.

After the Fos ilaron, the celebrant says "Esperas" ("Evening!"), and the chanter says "Prokeimenon, Ichos ____" ("Prokeimenon, Tone ____") and the verses. The priest then says "Sofia!" ("Wisdom!"), and the chanter says "____ to Anagnosma." ("The reading from ____"). Following this, the priest says "Proschomen!" ("Let us be attentive!"), and the chanter reads the Old Testament pericope.

At the end of the first reading the celebrant stands before the Holy Altar holding the censer and a lighted candle. When he finishes the first reading, the reader will read the second Prokeimenon, and then immediately says "Kelevson! (Command!)" The celebrant then makes the sign of the cross with the candle and censer before the Altar, saying: "Sofia! Orthoi! (Wisdom! Rise!)" Following this, he turns and faces the icon of Christ on the Iconostasion saying, "Fos Christou... (The light of Christ...)," then faces the congregation saying, "...fainei pasi (...illuminates all)."

Sixth, after the reader completes the second reading, the celebrant does the censuring of the "Katevthynthito." The Priest stands before the Holy Altar, and censes the west side of the Holy

Altar, and chants: "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou, os thymiamata enopion sou: Eparsis ton cheiron mou thysia esperini."

The celebrant then censes the south side of the Holy Altar, intoning: "Lord, I have cried unto You, hearken unto me; hearken unto me, O Lord; Lord, I have cried unto You, hearken unto me; attend to the voice of my supplication; when I cry unto You, hearken unto me, O Lord." and the chanter chants "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou..."

The celebrant censes the east side of the Holy Altar, intoning: "Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips." and the chanter chants "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou..."

The celebrant censes the north side of the Holy Altar, intoning: "Incline not my heart to words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins." and the chanter chants "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou..."

The celebrant censes the west (front) side of the Holy Altar, intoning: "Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen." and the chanter chants "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou..."

The celebrant stands in the Beautiful Gate, and censes the Icon of Christ, intoning: "Katevthynthito h prosevchi mou, os thymiamata enopion sou..." and then he censes the faithful and the Temple, while the Reader chants "Eparsis ton cheiron mou thysia esperini."

Seventh, only if it is a feast day of a Saint the Epistle and Gospel are read, or during the first three days of Holy Week the Gospel is read, after the Katevthynthito.

Eighth, the Litany of Fervent Supplication and Litany for the Catechumens are recited after the Katevthynthito, (or after the Gospel).

From the beginning of Great Lent through Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, the exhortation to the Catechumens ("As many as are catechumens depart; catechumens depart; as many as are catechumens, depart; let none of the catechumens remain. As many as are of the faithful, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.") is said after the Litany for the Catechumens, followed by the Petitions for the Faithful.

However, after the Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent through the Wednesday of Holy Week, the Litany for Those Preparing for Illumination, and the Exhortation to Those Preparing for Illumination ("As many as are ready for illumination depart; you who are ready for illumination depart; as many as are catechumens, depart; let none of the catechumens remain. As many as are of the faithful, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.") is said after the Litany for the Catechumens, followed by the Petitions for the Faithful.

Ninth, after the Litany of the Faithful, the Cherubic hymn, "Nyn ai dynameis..." is chanted, followed by the Great Entrance. While the chanter or choir sings the hymn, the celebrant recites the hymn ("Now the powers of heaven are invisibly worshipping with us; for behold the King of glory enters in") three times making a reverence each time. When he finishes, the deacon (or acolyte) takes the censer to him, and after blessing it, the priest censes the Holy Altar, the Prothesis, the Iconostasion and the faithful in the usual manner while reciting Psalm 50.

At the verse "Then You shall be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness...", the celebrant enters the Holy of Holies, stands before the Holy Altar and makes three prostrations, each time saying, "O God, cleanse me a sinner, and have mercy on me." He then goes to the prothesis and venerates the Holy Gifts, saying only: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..."

As the celebrant prepares to exit the Holy of Holies, he places the Aera over his head, and takes the diskos in his right hand, because the Gifts are already sanctified, and carries the chalice in his left hand; when he places them on the Holy Altar, he crosses his hands in the usual manner so that the diskos will be placed to the left of the chalice on the antiminsion.

All chanting then ceases, and in deep silence throughout the church, the celebrant, preceded by the deacon (or acolyte) who carries a candle and the censer, exits the Holy of Holies through the north door and proceeds around the Temple, praying in a low voice: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." and enters the Holy of Holies through the Beautiful Gate. The celebrant places the Diskos and Chalice on the Holy Altar, crossing his hands so that the diskos will be placed to the left of the chalice; removes the veils and lays them to one side on the Holy Altar; takes the Aera, censes it, and covers the Holy Gifts; and then takes the censer and censes the Holy Gifts saying the completion of Psalm 50 in a low voice "Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar."

The celebrant then kisses the Gifts and says "Through the prayers of our holy fathers..." The chanter, or choir, completes the Cherubic Hymn, singing: "Behold the mystical and perfect sacrifice is escorted in. In faith and longing let us come forth that we may become partakers of eternal life. Alleluia."

Tenth, after the completion of the Cherubic Hymn the Beautiful Gate is closed, the Litany of Supplication is intoned, followed by the Lord's Prayer. At the time of the elevation, the celebrant make three reverences, saying "O God, cleanse me a sinner, and have mercy on me," and then with fear and trembling places his hand under the Aera, and touches the Holy Bread, intoning: "Proscomen. Ta proigiasmena Agia tois agiois. (Let us be attentive! The holy Presanctified Things are for the Holy!)"

The preparation of the Gifts and the reading of the Communion Prayers is according to the customary practice, as the chanter, or choir, begins singing the hymn, "One is holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen."

After the celebrant communes, receiving both a portion from the Lamb, and drinking from the chalice, the Liturgy continues in the customary manner with the Beautiful Gate being opened.

Eleventh, after the dismissal ("Christos o alithinos Theos imon...") the celebrant distributes the Antidoron, and consumes the Holy Gifts, while the Reader reads Psalms 33 and 144. After Psalm 144 is concluded, the celebrant intones, "Di evchon ton agion Pateron imon, Kyrie Iisou Christe, o Theos imon, eleison kai soson hmas" and the faithful are dismissed.

With Paternal Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Metropolitan Isaiah
Presiding Hierarch of the Diocese of Denver