

# Holy Communion

## The Litany Before the Lord's Prayer

**DEACON:** Having remembered all the saints (*Ephesians 1:15; Revelation 8:3*), again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord (*Acts 8:24*).

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**DEACON:** For the Precious Gifts now offered and sanctified (consecrated), let us pray to the Lord..

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**DEACON:** That our God Who loves mankind, having received them upon His holy, and noetic altar above the heavens as a sweet spiritual fragrance (*Leviticus 1:13; Ephesians 5:2*), will send down upon us in return His Divine Grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:38; 10:45*), let us pray.

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**DEACON:** That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord. (*cf. Acts 8:24*)

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**DEACON:** Help us, save us (*Psalms 109:26*), have mercy upon us (*Psalms 51:1*), and us us (*Psalms 32:7; 40:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:3*), O God, by Thy grace.

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**DEACON:** That the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord. (*1 John 5:14-15*)

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

**DEACON:** An Angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies (*cf. Exodus 23:20; Psalm 91:11*), let us ask of the Lord (*cf. 1 John 5:14-15*).

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

**DEACON:** Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

**DEACON:** All things that are good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord (*cf. 1 John 5:14-15*).

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

**DEACON:** That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

**DEACON:** A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:10*), let us ask (*cf. 1 John 5:14-15*).

**PEOPLE:** Grant this, O Lord.

### *Commentary – The Gift and Fruit of the Holy Spirit*

To have received “divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit” and be in communion with God means that no matter who we are or what we look like, whatever language we speak or country we are from, whether we are rich or poor, white, black, red or yellow, God has touched our lives and filled us with the inexpressible joy of His love.

God has called us to Himself so that we can become, by His grace, like Him in every possible way. God is good, holy, righteous, merciful, true, forgiving, loving and compassionate – and we, as baptized Christians, are given the gift of the Holy Spirit so that these qualities can blossom in us.

Saint Paul writes, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (*Galatians 5:22*). Does this describe us? Are we generous and gentle, kind and loving, patient and joyful? Have we allowed the Holy Spirit to be active in our lives so that we can become the living icons of His glory that we are called to be?

**DEACON:** Having asked for the unity of the faith (*Ephesians 4:13*) and the communion of the Holy Spirit (*2 Corinthians 13:14*), let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

**PEOPLE:** To Thee, O Lord (*Psalms 25:1*).

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Unto Thee we commend our whole life and our hope, O Master Who lovest mankind, and we ask Thee and pray Thee and supplicate Thee: Make us worthy to partake of the heavenly and dread Mysteries of this sacred and spiritual table with a pure conscience (*1 Timothy 3:9*), for remission of sins (*Hebrews 10:18*), for forgiveness of transgressions, for the communion with the Holy Spirit (*2 Corinthians 13:14*), for the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven (*Matthew 4:17; 7:21*), for boldness toward Thee, but not for judgment or condemnation.

**PRIEST:** And make us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call on Thee, the heavenly God, as Father, and to say:

#### **The Lord’s Prayer**

**PEOPLE:** Our Father, Who art *in heaven* (in the heavens): Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

...and forgive us our *trespasses* (debts), as we forgive *those who trespass against us* (our debtors);

...and *lead us not into temptation* (do not let us fall into temptation),

but deliver us *from evil* (from the evil one) (*Matthew 6: 9-13*).

**PRIEST:** For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:29*), now and ever and unto the ages of ages (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

**PEOPLE:** Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

Отче наш, Иже еси на небесех! • Да святится имя Твое, да приидет Царствие Твое. • Да будет воля Твоя, • яко на небеси и на земли. • Хлеб наш насущный даждь нам днесь. • И остави нам долги наша, • якоже и мы оставляем должником нашим. • И не введи нас во искушение, • но избави нас от лукаваго.

Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, • ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου, • ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, • γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου • ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. • Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον • καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, • ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, • καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, • ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

### *Commentary – The Lord’s Prayer*

The Lord’s Prayer is prayed not only during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, but at every sacrament and service of prayer in the life of the Church. It should also be part of our personal discipline of prayer on a daily basis.

It is important to say that this is the Lord’s Prayer: it is prayer of the Son of God Himself given to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. All too often we say the Lord’s Prayer by rote, without thinking about what the words we are saying really mean. But according to the ancient North African Christian writer Tertullian (AD 160-220), it is a “summary of the whole Gospel.”

In the words of this prayer are contained the height, breadth and depth of the Gospel and the purpose and meaning of our lives: that we are called to be the beloved children of the one, true and living God, the Creator of the universe Who has loved everything – from hummingbirds to galaxies – into existence.

### *Our Father Who art in the heavens*

By the word, “Our,” the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray not merely as individuals but as members of His community, the Church. When we pray, we must not think only of ourselves. Living as we do in a consumer society plagued by individualism and self-centeredness, it is important to notice that in the Lord’s Prayer the words I, me, my and mine are nowhere to be found. There is no room for selfishness in the heart of someone who prays the Lord’s Prayer.

Saint Paul writes: “because we have received adoption as God’s children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying *Abba, Father!*” (*Galatians 4:5-6*).

Through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, Christians joyfully address the God Who created the universe with stunning intimacy, as our Father. The God Who has created 100 thousand million stars in our galaxy alone loves us and wants us to address Him as our Father. The God Whom Jesus has taught us to address as our Father is the all-powerful ruler of the cosmos.

In the original Greek, it is not the word “Heaven” but the plural form “Heavens” that is used here. This is an ancient way of saying that the God Whom we worship and Who loves us as His children is greater than the universe He has created and transcends it.

### *Hallowed be thy name*

“Hallowed” is the old English word meaning “to make holy” or “to sanctify.” How do we sanctify God’s holy name? On this all the saints of the Church are clear: we sanctify God’s name by how we live our lives as believers.

We cannot make God's name holy by our prayers; God's name is already holy in ways we can scarcely even imagine. Rather, we are begging God that His name may be "hallowed" in us, that we will become holy, that we will become His saints by the depth and sincerity of our convictions and the loving quality and character of our lives: anything less than this would blaspheme God's name.

### *Thy Kingdom come*

The Lord's Prayer is an eschatological prayer and these words should make us tremble because here we pray for the end of the world and the coming of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (*Revelation 6:1-8*).

We pray for the Last Judgment (*Matthew 25:30-46*), that final day when every man, woman and child will stand before what Saint Paul calls – the dread judgment seat of Christ – (*2 Corinthians 5:10*) to be judged by how compassionately we have lived, either entering into the kingdom of our Father "prepared before the beginning of the world" or "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and all of his angels" (*Matthew 25: 34,41*).

### *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*

We can ultimately find meaning for our lives only by doing God's will and not our own, by serving the Kingdom of God and not the kingdom of me. The purpose of life cannot be found in what I want. It can be found only in what God wants. All of the Christian life is the bending of our will towards God's will and living accordingly – no matter what the cost.

What does it mean to live according to God's will and so inherit the Kingdom of the Father? To give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to care for the sick, to visit those in prison, to welcome strangers (*Matthew 25:30-41*); to be a peacemaker, to be willing to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness, to be meek, merciful, and pure of heart (*Matthew 5:3-11*); to love one's enemies (*Matthew 5:44*); to pray, fast and give alms to the poor without ostentation or showiness (*Matthew 6:1-18*); never judging others (*Matthew 7:1*). Is this how we live?

### *Give us this day our daily bread*

The saints of the Church have interpreted this petition in two ways: first, that we are declaring our total dependence on God for our day-to-day existence and that whatever we have to sustain our life is a gift from Him; and second, that this is a prayer for the Bread of Life, the Eucharistic Bread, the Bread that is His Body that we will receive in the mystery of Holy Communion, the Bread of eternal life (*John 6:53-58*).

### *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*

The heart of the Gospel is forgiveness. To be forgiving is the most basic element of a truly Christian lifestyle. Forgiveness puts an end to the all too human cycle of vengeance and retribution. But to offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged us is often difficult to do. The practice of forgiveness requires humility, courage and strength of character.

Nonetheless, here and elsewhere in the Gospels (*Mark 11:25; Matthew 6:14*), Christ makes it perfectly clear that we cannot ask God for forgiveness unless we are prepared to forgive others.

What is the source of our ability to forgive others? Forgiveness of others is a response to our being forgiven. Christians can forgive because we know that we've already been redeemed and forgiven by God in the blood of His Son and the riches of His grace (*Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14*).

And, Christ tells us in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, the debt of sin that God has forgiven us is far greater than any debt owed us by another human being (*Matthew 18:23-35*).

*And do not let us fall into temptation but deliver us from the evil one*

This petition, when incorrectly translated “*lead us not into temptation,*” wrongly implies that God Himself tempts us. Nothing could be further from the truth.

On this, the Scriptures are absolutely clear: – No one, when tempted, should say, “*I am being tempted by God,*” for God tempts no one. Rather, one is tempted by one’s own desire” (*James 1:13-14*).

We are tempted by our own desires: our egotistical arrogance and selfishness, hatred, cruelty, lust for power, greed, anger and a host of other vices that pull us away from God’s loving Presence, forcing us to sink back into ourselves and making us children of evil instead of children of the God Who is love (*1 John 4:8*).

We are also tempted by Satan who has afflicted mankind from the very beginning. We are not asking God to deliver us from generic evil, but from the evil one who is Satan.

*For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory...*

This closing doxology that is today said by the priest is first found in an ancient Christian document from the early 2nd century called The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache) which recommends that the Lord’s Prayer should be prayed by Christians at least three times every day as part of one’s discipline of personal prayer.

**PRIEST:** Peace be unto all (*John 20:26; 1 Peter 5:14; 3 John 15*).

**PEOPLE:** And with thy spirit (*cf. Philipians 4:23; 2 Timothy 4:22*).

**PRIEST:** Bow your heads unto the Lord (*Nehemiah 8:6*).

**PEOPLE:** To Thee, O Lord (*Psalms 25:1*).

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** We give thanks (*Psalms 107:1*) unto Thee, O King invisible (*1 Timothy 1:17*), Who by Thy measureless power didst make all things, and in the greatness of Thy mercy didst bring all things from non-existence into being (*2 Maccabees 7:28*). Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads unto Thee, for they have not bowed down unto flesh and blood (*Matthew 16:17*), but unto Thee, the fearful God. (*Nehemiah 9:2; Deuteronomy 7:21; Psalms 111:9*). Do Thou Thyself, O Master, make smooth what lies before us all unto good, according to the individual need of each; sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel by land and by air; heal the sick, O Thou Who art the Physician of our souls and bodies.

**PRIEST:** Through the grace and compassion and love toward mankind of Thine only-begotten (*John 1:18*) Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit

Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit (*Psalms 143:10; John 6:63*), now and ever and unto ages of ages (*Ephesians 3:21*).

**PEOPLE:** Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalms 106:48*).

### *Commentary – Repentance: re-orienting our lives toward Christ*

Repentance is a word found numerous times throughout the Divine Liturgy. What does it mean to repent? What is repentance?

The Lord Jesus began His ministry by saying, – Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near – (*Matthew 4:17*). Repentance is thus the beginning of the Gospel, the starting point of our lives as Christians, the foundation upon which everything else must be built.

The Greek term *metanoia* that is used in the Gospels and normally translated as – repentance, primarily means a change of *nous*.

Repentance means to change the way we think about God, ourselves, and the world around us, seeing everything in a new way.

Repentance is *not* negative, and it is not regret over past actions: it is absolutely positive. It is a turning toward God and godliness.

It is *not* to wallow in guilt, self-pity, and despair because of our sins: it is a transformation of outlook, a change of direction, a re-orientation of our lives, a re-centering of our minds and hearts on Christ and His commandments.

The life of a Christian, as a disciple of the Lord Jesus, is therefore one of continual repentance. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware has written: *“In this sense, repentance is not just a single act, an initial step, but a continuing state, an attitude of heart and will that needs to be ceaselessly renewed up to the end of our life.”*

Repentance is therefore to – take every thought captive to obey Christ – (*2 Corinthians 10:5*) and so acquire – the mind of Christ – (*1 Corinthians 2:16*). As Saint Isaac of Ninevah (ca. AD 700) said: *“This life has been given to you for repentance. Do not waste it on other things.”* Or, as Saint Basil the Great (AD 330-379) put it even more succinctly: *“Repentance is salvation.”*

### **The Elevation**

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Attend, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, out of Thy holy dwelling place (*Isaiah 57:15*), from the throne of glory of Thy Kingdom, and come to sanctify us, O Thou Who sittest on high with the Father (*cf. Hebrews 8:1*) and art here invisibly present with us, and by Thy mighty hand deign to impart unto us Thy most-pure Body and precious Blood (*1 Peter 1:19*), and through us to all the people..



**PRIEST:** Let us be attend.

**PRIEST:** The holy Things are for the *holy* (saints).

**PEOPLE:** One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father (*Philippians 2:11*). Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

### *Commentary – Eucharistic Living: A Life of Gratitude*

The Tradition of the Church describes the Eucharist in many ways. It is “*the Lord’s Supper*” (1 *Corinthians 11:20*). It is “*the marriage supper of the Lamb*” (*Revelation 19:9*).

It is about communion with God, that we may become sons and daughters of God the Father; that in eating bread and drinking wine set apart and consecrated by the Holy Spirit we are participating in the crucified, risen and glorified Body and Blood of Jesus.

It is about fulfilling Old Testament sacrifices: as the Paschal lamb was sacrificed, its blood put on the doorways of faithful Jews hoping for the shadow of death to pass over their household as described in the Book of Exodus, so we put the Body and Blood of Christ, our Paschal lamb, on the doorway of our heart.

It is about partaking in what Saint Ignatius of Antioch (ca. AD 115) called “*the medicine of immortality*,” which we, who are sick and dying, need for eternal life.

It is about receiving a purifying and divine fire, which burns away our sins.

Ultimately, the Liturgy summarizes the life we are called to live in communion with God and is, among other things, a school for Christian living. Within the liturgy we come to know God, the world, and ourselves, because the liturgy communicates the meaning and purpose of life and helps us to understand and internalize both the tragedy of the human condition as well as the limitless expanse and potential of the new life in Christ offered freely to everyone.

It is only when we recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our daily life can our lives be truly Eucharistic and lived with a grateful heart. Living in a Eucharistic way has everything to do with seeing life as a gift, a gift for which we are forever grateful.

What would it be like to live every moment of our lives as a gift – even those moments that are difficult and painful? It is in seeing our life as a gift – “*from the Giver of all good things*” as we say in the Liturgy – that we acknowledge the Giver of our life, discover the meaning and purpose of our life and then can live accordingly.

There should never be a Liturgy that we attend in which we do not come away with this insight for living. There should never be a time in Liturgy when there is not a movement of our heart: from a hardened heart to a grateful heart, from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, from a heart often filled with resentment or anger or self-righteousness to a heart filled with gratitude, compassion, faith, hope, and love.

It is in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that the Lord Jesus gives us everything, giving Himself completely to us. By the power of the Holy Spirit – and, in this sense, the Liturgy is a truly charismatic event, worship in Spirit and in Truth – the bread is His Body broken for us on the Cross and the wine is His Blood poured out for us.

The Word of God not only became flesh for us centuries ago in a far-away country; the Word of God becomes food and drink for us now at every Eucharistic celebration. God holds nothing of Himself back!

The word that best expresses this mystery of God’s total self-giving love is communion. This is the word that best contains the truth that, in and through Jesus, God wants not only to teach us,

instruct us and inspire us, but He wants to become one with us. God desires to be fully and completely united with us so that we will be bound together with Him in a love that will stretch into eternity.

This is what Saint Paul means when he speaks of life “*in Christ.*” He is so completely and totally united with Jesus that in his Letter to the Galatians he can say, “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me*” (*Galatians 2:20*).

This experience of loving union with Christ is the goal of every Liturgy, the experience you should have every time you receive the Body and Blood of the Savior. And such communion with Jesus means becoming like Him. In this sense, it is not just the Eucharist but the Eucharistic life – the liturgy after the Liturgy - that makes the difference.

When, after services, we leave the Church we must live the Eucharist as long and as fully as we can. Because Christ is holy, just, merciful, and loving, Christians are called to participate in His holiness, love, mercy, and justice.

The Lord Jesus gave us the Eucharist to enable us to choose gratitude as the basic stance of our lives. It is from this sense of gratitude that all genuine worship of God and compassion for others flows. Without this deep sense of gratitude, we remain little people with little concerns who live little lives full of anger, bitterness and resentment.

This is a choice we ourselves have to make – on a daily, hour by hour and even moment by moment basis. Nobody can make this decision for us. It is in making this choice for gratitude that we can let the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit touch every part of our being and transform us from within.

Real change – from the inside out! As often as we make this choice for Eucharistic living, everything – even the most trivial things – becomes different. Our “small” lives are caught up in the mysterious work of redemption and salvation. Once that happens, nothing is accidental, trivial or futile anymore and life opens its meaning to us from every side. The Eucharist summarizes the life we are called to live in the Name of God.

### The Communion Verse

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia (*Psalm 148:1*) (3x).

The Communion Verse changes according to the Feast day or Festal season.

### The Fraction

The Priest breaks the “lamb,” the sacred Body, saying in a low voice”



**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Broken and distributed is the Lamb of God (*John 1:29*): broken, yet not divided; ever eaten, yet never consumed, but sanctifying those who partake thereof.

The priest places the portion of the sacred Lamb marked “ΙΣ” in the Cup saying:



**PRIEST:** The fullness of the Holy Spirit. Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

The priest blesses the “zeon” (boiling water) saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Blessed is the energy of Thy Holy things, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).



The Priest pours the boiling water into the Cup crosswise, saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** The energy (fervor) of faith, full of the Holy Spirit. Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

### Communion of the Priest and of the Faithful

Different traditions are followed concerning the pre-Communion Prayers.

From the earlier tradition, we have received four Prayers and one, “Of Thy Mystical Supper...,” is repeated twice. In some later traditions only two prayers are recited.

According to the ancient practice, the clergy recite these Prayers and then Commune quietly. In more recent practice, the clergy and faithful together recite the Prayers out loud.

The full set of Pre-Communion Prayers is as follows:

I believe, O Lord, and I confess, that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the living God (*Matthew 16:16*), Who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first (*1 Timothy 1:15*). I believe also that this is truly Thine own most-pure Body, and that this is truly Thine own precious Blood (*1 Peter 1:19*). Therefore, I pray Thee: Have mercy upon me and forgive me my transgressions (*Psalm 50:1*) both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, committed in knowledge or in ignorance. And make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thy most-pure Mysteries, for the remission of my sins (*Ephesians 1:7*) and unto life everlasting (*John 3:15; 17:3*). Amen (*Psalm 106:48*).

Behold, I approach for divine Communion;  
Creator, burn me not as I partake;  
For Thou art Fire burning the unworthy.  
But rather cleanse me from every impurity.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant, for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies; neither like Judas (*cf. Luke 22:47-48; Mark 14:43-45; Matthew 26:47-49*) will I give Thee a kiss; but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom (*Luke 23:42*).

Beholding the deifying Blood, man, be awe-stricken;  
For it is a fiery Coal burning the unworthy.  
The Body of God deifies and nourishes me;  
It deifies the spirit, and wondrously nourishes the mind.

Thou hast smitten me with yearning, Christ, and by Thy divine love Thou hast changed me; but burn away my sins with immaterial Fire, and make me worthy to be filled with delight in Thee; that, rejoicing, good One, I may magnify Thy two comings.

How shall I the unworthy enter into the radiance of Thy saints? If I dare to enter into the bridal chamber, my garment disgraces me, because it is not for the wedding feast, and being bound I shall be cast out by the Angels (*cf. Matthew 2:1-12*); O Lord, cleanse the filth of my soul, and save me, for Thou lovest mankind.

Master Who lovest mankind, Lord Jesus Christ my God, do not let these Holy Gifts be for judgment because of my unworthiness (*cf. 1 Corinthians 11:29-30*), but for the cleansing and sanctification of both soul and body, and for a pledge of the future life and Kingdom. For it is good for me to cleave to God, to put the hope of my salvation in the Lord.

**REPEAT:** Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant, for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies; neither like Judas (*cf. Luke 22:47-48; Mark 14:43-45; Matthew 26:47-49*) will I give Thee a kiss; but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom (*Luke 23:42*). Remember me Master, in Your Kingdom. Remember me Holy One, in Your Kingdom.

Some traditions Simply read two of these Prayers:

I believe, O Lord, and I confess...

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God...

And they may add:

May the communion of Thy holy Mysteries be neither to my judgment nor to my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body. Amen.

These pre-Communion Prayers are recited by those *who have prepared themselves* by:

(a) daily prayer,

(b) reading the Prayers of Preparation on both the evening before as well as on morning of receiving Holy Communion,

(c) observing the fasting days and seasons, and

(d) by regular Confession and the blessing of their spiritual father.

*Commentary: Why do Orthodox Christians believe that receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in Communion is to be taken so seriously?*

*The Gospel of John, chapter 6:30-60*

Therefore they (“the people”) said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”

Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”

*1 Corinthians 11:27-31*

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

The Clergy receive Holy Communion:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Behold, I dare to approach Christ, our immortal King and God.

The Priest partakes of the immaculate Body of Christ, saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** The precious and most-holy Body of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ is given unto me, the unworthy Priest N., for the remission of my sins (*Ephesians 1:7*) and unto life everlasting (*John 3:15; 17:3*). Amen.

The Priest partakes of the precious Blood of Christ:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** The precious and most-holy Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ is given unto me, the unworthy Priest N., for the remission of my sins (*Ephesians 1:7*) and unto life everlasting (*John 3:15; 17:3*). Amen.

The Priest wipes his lips, venerates the Chalice, and wipes the cup, saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Lo, this has touched my lips, and shall take away my iniquities and cleanse my sins (*Isaiah 6:7*). Amen. Amen. Amen.

The Deacon (or Priest if there is no Deacon) then transfers the remaining portions of the Body of Christ into the Chalice, saying:



**DEACON (IN A LOW VOICE):** Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection, for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name. Come, all ye faithful, let us venerate Christ’s holy Resurrection. For, behold, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Let us ever bless the Lord, praising His Resurrection, for by enduring the Cross for us, he has destroyed death (*2 Timothy 1:10*) by death.

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem: the glory of the Lord has shone on Thee. Exult now and be glad, O Sion. Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of thy Son.

O Christ, great and most-holy Pascha, O Wisdom, Word, and Power of God: grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy Kingdom.

Wash away, O Lord, the sins of all those remembered here, by Thy precious Blood, through the prayers of Thy saints.

*Commentary: Who May Receive Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church?*

Orthodox Christians fully participate in the celebration of the Liturgy when they receive the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion, as the Lord Himself commands (*John 6:53-54*).

Because of Christ's promise of eternal life for those who eat and drink at the Lord's Supper (*1 Corinthians 11:20*), frequent reception of the Body and Blood of Christ – at every Liturgy, if possible – is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians.

To receive communion in the Orthodox Church, one must be a practicing Orthodox Christian. This means to be Baptized and Chrismated in the Orthodox Church and that one's beliefs and lifestyle are in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

To be properly prepared for this encounter with Christ, those seeking to receive communion should not be conscious of grave sin, having opened their hearts with prayer, fasted appropriately, and lived with charity and love towards their neighbors.

Because, as the Apostle Paul teaches, it is possible to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord in an unworthy, undiscerning manner – *and thus to be in fact sinning against the Body and Blood of the Lord!* (*1 Corinthians 11:27-30*) – those who are aware of grave sin in their lives should first participate in the sacrament of confession, confess their sins, and thereby being reconciled to Christ and his Church, before approaching the chalice to receive communion.

What is grave sin, a sin unto death (*1 John 5:16*), that would bar us from approaching the chalice? Saint Paul writes that those who commit the following sins will not inherit the Kingdom of God: drunkenness, idolatry, sorcery, theft, sexual immorality, adultery and homosexuality (*1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21*). The Book of Revelation adds murderers to this list (*Revelation 21:7-8; 22:14-15*). The presence of such serious sin in one's life is an indication that one neither truly believes in God nor truly accepts the Gospel of Christ with all of its consequences for how we are to live.

*Saint Basil the Great (AD 329-379) on Receiving Communion Frequently*

Daily communion and participation in the holy Body and Blood of Christ is a good and helpful practice. The Lord clearly says: "The man who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life." Who then can doubt that to partake of this Life continually is really to have life in abundance? For myself, I receive communion four times a week: on the Lord's Day (Sunday), Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and on other days if there is the commemoration of a martyr. (*Letter 93*)

### *Receiving Communion*

Frederica Mathewes-Green has written about her experience of receiving Communion in her book *At the Corner of East and Now*: “I drive carpool, write e-mail, read the paper, go to the mall, pop in a DVD. None of this matters; all of it could blow away overnight.

“What does matter is this slim golden thread: the Liturgy that begins each Sunday morning in my Church and reaches its fulfillment in the moment I receive communion. Prayer spills backward and forward from that moment, wrapping me into union with God. It is the work of a lifetime that stretches on beyond my earthly life. This perspective is backward from the usual.

“What happens in church is the most important thing; what happens in the rest of my life seems transient and contingent. The Liturgy is whole and beautiful; the rest of my life seems random and bumpy. When death strips away from me all the shreds of foolishness, self-indulgence, gossip and greed, this will remain, one of the few things to remain. In the moment after communion, I press my lips against the chalice, a kiss of surrender, veneration and gratitude.

“It is the one true centering moment of my oblivious cycling days and weeks. On the chalice I see the face of Christ painted in enamel. I look at Him and He looks at me.”

The Faithful receive Holy Communion:

The Priest takes the holy Cup, comes to the Beautiful Gate, raises it and says:

**PRIEST:** In the fear of God, with faith and love, draw near.

*As noted above, customs for reciting the Pre-Communion Prayers vary. In some parishes, the Faithful recite the following at this time:*

*I believe, O Lord, and I confess..., Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God..., May the communion of Thy holy Mysteries.*

Those prepared come forth with reverence to receive Holy Communion while the an appropriate Communion Hymn is chanted.

*When administering Holy Communion, the priest says:*

**PRIEST:** The **servant / handmaid** of God (**Name**), partakes of the precious and holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins (*Ephesians 1:7*) and unto life everlasting (*John 3:15; 17:3*).

After all have received Holy Communion, the Priest returns the chalice to Holy Altar. Note:

1. In some traditions, the Priest raises the chalice and proclaims, “O God, save Thy people...,” before returning the Chalice to the Altar.
2. In other traditions, the Priest returns the chalice to Holy Altar, then turns and blesses the faithful with his hand, saying, “O God, save Thy people...”
3. In some places the practice is to place only the remaining portions of the Lamb into the Chalice after the Clergy Commune, and at this time to place the remaining portions on the Diskos into the Chalice saying, “Wash away, O Lord, the sins of all those remembered...”

In any case, the proclamation of the Priest to the people at this point is:

**PRIEST:** O God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance (*Psalm 28:9*).

**PEOPLE:** We have seen the true light (*John 1:9*); we have received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the true faith (*1 Timothy 2:7*), worshiping the undivided Trinity, Who has saved us.

Having returned the Cup to the holy Table, the priest places the particles of the Theotokos and the saints on the paten into the Chalice, and then those of the living and the dead saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Wash away, Lord, by Your holy Blood, the sins of all those commemorated here through the intercessions of the Theotokos and all Your saints. Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

The Priest covers the vessels and censes them saying:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let Your glory be over all the earth (*Psalm 108:5*).

The Priest lifts the vessels and makes the sign of the Cross over the Antiminsion, saying in a low voice:

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** Blessed is our God.....(*1 Peter 1:3*)

The Priest turns toward the faithful and concludes:

**PRIEST (ALLOUD):** Always, now and forever and to the ages of ages (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

**PEOPLE:** Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

**PEOPLE:** Let our mouths be filled with Your praise (*cf. Psalm 71:8*), O Lord, that we may sing of Your glory. You have made us worthy to partake of Your holy mysteries. Keep us in Your holiness, that all the day long we may meditate upon Your righteousness (*cf. Psalm 35:28*). Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! (*Psalm 150:6*)

### The Litany and Prayer Of Thanksgiving

**PRIEST:** Stand upright. Having partaken of the divine, holy, most-pure, immortal, heavenly, life-giving, and dread Mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks unto the Lord. (*Psalm 107:1*).

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Deuteronomy 4:31; Daniel 9:9; Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**PRIEST:** Help us, save us (*Psalm 109:26*), have mercy upon us (*Psalm 51:1*), and keep us (*Psalm 32:7; 40:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:3*), O God, by Your grace.

**PEOPLE:** Lord, have mercy (*cf. Deuteronomy 4:31; Daniel 9:9; Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

**PRIEST:** Asking that the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us commend ourselves, and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

**PEOPLE:** To You, O Lord (*Psalm 25:1*).

**PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE):** We thank Thee, O Master Who lovest mankind, Benefactor of our souls, that Thou hast made us worthy this day of Thy heavenly and immortal Mysteries. Make straight our path; strengthen us all in Thy fear; guard our life, make firm our steps; through the prayers and intercessions of the glorious, Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and of all Thy saints.

**PRIEST:** For Thou art our sanctification, and unto Thee we offer up glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

PEOPLE: Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

### The Dismissal

PRIEST: Let us depart in peace.

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord (*Acts 8:24*).

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy (*cf. Deuteronomy 4:31; Daniel 9:9; Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

PRIEST: O Lord Who blessest those who bless Thee (*cf. Numbers 24:9; Genesis 12:3*) and sanctifiest those who trust in Thee: Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. (*Psalm 28:9*). Preserve the fullness of Thy Church, sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house (*Psalm 26:8*); glorify them in return by Thy divine power, and forsake us not who put our hope in Thee (*cf. Psalm 39:7; 71:5; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 John 3:3*). Give peace to Thy world, to Thy churches, to Thy priests, and to those in civil authority, to the armed forces, and to all Thy people. For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from Thee, the Father of Lights (*James 1:17*), and unto Thee do we send up glory, thanksgiving, and worship: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:29*), now and ever and unto ages of ages (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

PEOPLE: Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*). Blessed is the name of the Lord, both now and to the ages (*Psalm 113:2*) (3x).

The priest proceeds to the Prothesis and prays in a low voice:

PRIEST (IN A LOW VOICE): O Christ our God, Who art Thyself the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (*cf. Matthew 5:17*), Who didst fulfill all the dispensation of the Father: Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, always; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord (*Acts 8:24*).

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy (*cf. Deuteronomy 4:31; Daniel 9:9; Matthew 15:22; 20:30*).

PRIEST: The blessing of the Lord (*cf. Psalm 129:8; Proverbs 10:22*) be upon you through His grace and love for mankind, always; now and ever and unto ages of ages (*1 Timothy 1:17*).

PEOPLE: Amen (*1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 106:48*).

PRIEST: Glory to You, O God, our hope, glory to you.

PRIEST: May (He Who rose from the dead,) Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most-pure Mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople; of the holy, glorious and victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of (the patron saint); of Saints (the saints of the day) whose memory we keep this day; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

PEOPLE: Amen (*Psalm 106:48*).

PRIEST: \*Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ (*Acts 11:17; 15:26; 16:31*), our God, have mercy on us (*Psalm 51:1*) and save us.

PEOPLE: Amen (*Psalm 106:48*).