



In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. Mary and St. Joseph
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Deacons Meeting – Sunday, Nov 06, 2011

+ What's the Divine Liturgy?

The Divine Liturgy is presenting heaven on earth, and everything is presented symbolically, but the presence of God is literally.

+ What's the meaning of the word "Divine Liturgy"?

The word "Liturgy" means the work of people; and "Divine" means heavenly/ Holy - God is involved (Something is related to God) - which means God is involved with group of people working together to make a holy thing.

+ What are the components of the Divine Liturgy?

Many components are involved in the Divine Liturgy in order to call it a Divine Liturgy as follows:

1- God

- + The first thing is God Himself; God is presented during the Divine Liturgy.
- + As a deacon, I come early to the church for it's my turn to serve in the altar; this concept has to be clear in mind. Serving as a deacon is not a matter of a turn in the altar service or the reading for this is a very weak concept, but it's a matter of serving God Himself.
- + Since we serve God in the altar or outside the altar, we should respect this service and benefit from the blessing and joy that we feel after praying the Divine Liturgy.

2- Priest

- + Abouna or a bishop or the pope.

3- Deacon

- + During abouna's ordination, abouna is ordained as a deacon first (full deacon), then he is ordained as a priest. So, if one day there is no deacon and two abounas are there, one of them can pray as a deacon and that shows the importance of having a deacon in the Divine Liturgy service.

4- Congregation

- + The congregation includes anyone else like parents, kids, etc.
- + If there are 3 priests praying, one can do a priest, the second one a deacon and the third one the congregation.

+ How can these work altogether in the Divine Liturgy?

+ Symbolically, we have the presence of God in the Divine Liturgy - where ? **The Holy Board**, which has been consecrated by the pope or the bishop by the holy oil of Myron; and now the Holy Board is **the Altar**.

+ Abouna usually brings the board with crosses on it (for example) and give it to a bishop who consecrates it with the mayron, and then abouna can take it and place it on any table or place it on an altar that's not consecrated yet to be able to pray a Divine Liturgy (same as in our church).

+ The Lord Jesus Christ Himself comes and attends the prayers of the Divine Liturgy when the priest says the prayer of the descent of the Holy Spirit.

+ Therefore, all congregation who come to the church are supposed to take the communion, and of course the deacons as well. Deacons are supposed to be fasting while serving in the altar or outside, but in some emergency cases, the deacon who is serving outside may not be fasting.

+ Who designed the Divine Liturgy?

The Lord Jesus Christ, as mentioned in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke as follows:

Matthew 26: 26-28

²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mark 14:22-24

²² And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²³ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

Luke 22:17-20

¹⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰ Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

+ Jesus took bread: Same as in the offertory of the lamp.

+ Gave thanks / blessed: Same as in the Institution Narrative prayers, even the same words.

+ Broke it: Same as in the fraction.

+ Gave it: Same as in the communion.

+ There are certain parts in the Divine Liturgy that represent the core of the belief, so every church has to pray it, like Offertory, Institution, Descent of Holy Spirit, Fraction, Communion, but there are some parts that may include some additions/changes which don't touch the core of the Divine Liturgy, like the litanies (the litany of waters, fruits and airs combined) or the commemoration of saints (there is a short one and a long one).

+ Conclusion:

+ There are some words/translations in the Divine Liturgy that may change the meaning, for example:

To partake: the Arabic translation (لإصعاد) is wrong, but the right translation is (لننال).

To partake of the holy mystery, it's not about a who (يُصعد الذبيحة), but God through the priest.

Same meaning in any sacrament, for example in matrimony, it's not about a who marry but God who does through about a.

+ God is giving us a taste of heaven in the Divine Liturgy; when we pray a Divine Liturgy, the whole church is like a heaven and deacons in the altar are like angels praising God.

+ The ritual of the Divine Liturgy in the Coptic Orthodox Church is not the same as for example, The Russian, or Armenian. The main components are the same, like offertory, institution narrative, descent of Holy Spirit, but there are some changes, for example:

In Russian church, there are differences in the form of the bread, the cloth, but the idea and the core of the faith are the same. The same in the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil and St. Gregory – Although there are some differences, but the core is the same.

Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen