

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

Rev. Fr. Peter Tomas, Rector

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

JANUARY 14, 2024

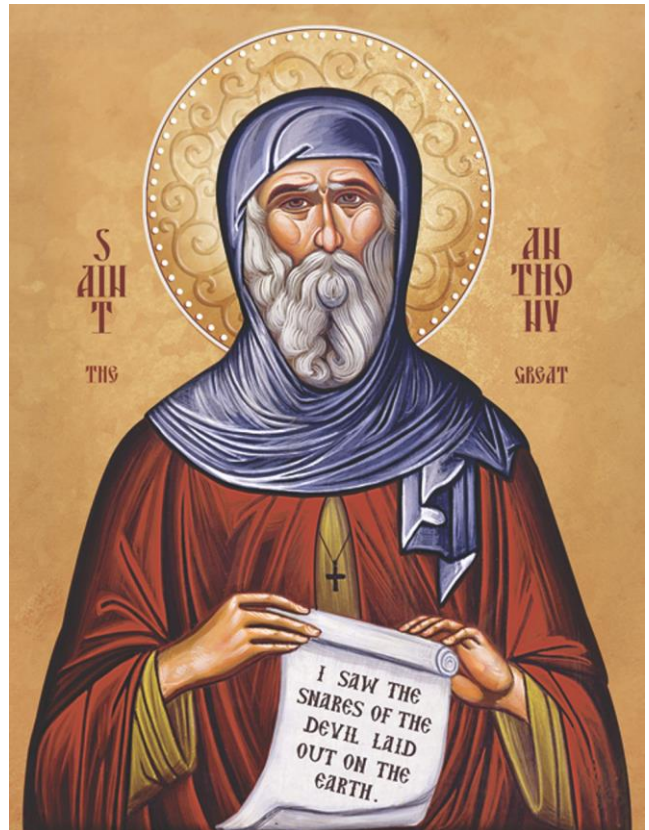
THIRTY SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: Galatians 6:10-17

Brethren: Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

GOSPEL: Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So, they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before



St. Anthony the Great
Feast Day – January 17th

warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” So, Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.” Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

MON. Jan 15	Venerable Paul of Thebes; 2 Timothy 2:20-26, Luke 19:37-44
TUE. Jan 16	Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-Glorious Apostle Peter; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4, Luke 19:45-48
WED. Jan 17	Venerable and Godbearing Father Anthony the Great; 2 Timothy 4:9-22, Luke 20:1-8
THU. Jan 18	Sts. Athanasius the Great and Cyril, Archbishops of Alexandria; Titus 1:5-2:1, Luke 20:9-18
FRI. Jan 19	Venerable Macarius the Great of Egypt; Titus 1:15-2:10, Luke 20:19-26
SAT. Jan 20	Venerable Euthymius the Great; Eph. 1:16-23, Luke 12:32-40
4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. Jan 21	33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 8 <i>Ven. Maximus the Confessor; Martyr Neophytus of Nicaea</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Hour



FOR YOUR PRAYERS



Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; Basil Glovinsky, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; Subdeacon Roger Pinta, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; Diane Tryon, 109 Joslyn Street, Arcadia, OH 44804; Ed & Irene Vangeloff, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870

Please Note: Diane Tryon will stay now for few weeks at Birchaven Village, 15100 Birchaven Ln., Fidlay, OH 45840, Room E12. She was transferred there from Hospital where she was treated for very high blood sugar.

JANUARY CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health and God’s Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, Matushka’s mother (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health and God’s Blessings for Michal Tomáš, Father’s father (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Jim and Sarah (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Sophia Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, & Chloe (**\$20**)



JANUARY REPOSED

Andrew Matway (1906) No date provided; William Gratson (1908) No date provided; Eva Hritsko (1908) No date provided; Sara Rose (2005) No date provided; **3-** Mat. Marilyn Federoff (2019); **3-** Larry Naiser (2019); **3-** Elinor Williams (2021); **4-** Margaret Reavley (1965); **4-** Baby Clyde Madison (2020); **5-** Russell (2019) Heidi's relative; **5-** Donald (2019) Waynes Relative; **5-** Maria Semionow (1981); **11-** Anna Tomko (1960); **15-** Archpriest Pavel Soucek (2009) Former Pastor; **21-** Daniel Kowal (2006); **21-** Philip Kobb (2018); **23-** Helen Beadle (1988); **23-** Deborah Pribanic (2020); **25-** Jane (2019) Ron's Aunt; **25-** William "Bill" Alber (2021); **28-** Michael Tarasavage (2021); **29-** Anna Kravetz (1973); **29-** Marjorie Kowal (2003); **29-** Ernest Gresh (2020); **29-** Rick Schlotterer (2020); **30-** Anna Schofield (2021)



VIGILS FOR JANUARY 7

Susan Guzy 1 Special intentions

Laura Kovach 3 Birthday blessings to Sue, Matushka Melania, Luke, and anniversary blessings to Roger and Debby.

Safe travel for family and friends.

For health and/or healing of Diane T., James W., Patti O., Tony M., Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline O., Margi H., Betty K., Ben F., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., Carol & Greg, and Carol & Jim

Sandy Martin 2 In loving memory of my Mom and Aunt Peg, special intentions

Darlene & Gabe Mazurik 1 Special intentions

Ron & Bobbie Royhab 1 For the health of Ron

Natalie Twarek 6 Birthday blessing to Sue 1/7, and to Matushka Melania 1/8, Health and recovery of Diane, Health and recovery of Ron, For the health of Ruth, For health and recovery of, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health of Rita Mumea(Gigi), Basil, Tony, Jim & Rick, Bev, Roger, Ed, Irene, Father David, Marilyn, Pauline, Judy, Mimi, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Kurt, Leslie, Amber, Zach, Dottie, Jamie, Helen Lis and Tina's dad, Earl, Tom, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Diane Tryon / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Helen Lis / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, her unborn baby & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora. **Other Requests:** Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest David Lis / Bishop Matthias / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Kurt Franck / Ben Franklin / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chuck Wiedenhoft / Chris. **Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



ATTENDANCE

01/05 Vespers, 13 attending; 01/06 Divine Liturgy, 15 attending; 01/06 Vespers, 8 attending; 01/07 Divine Liturgy 26 attending (5 Guests)



READERS LIST

Sunday Jan 14 – Jake
Sunday Jan 21 – Tim
Sunday Jan 28 – Ron
Sunday Feb 4 – Natalie



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Tithe	\$ 935.00
Candles	\$ 31.00
Vigils	\$ 40.00
Donations	\$ 40.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 450.00
Liturgical Item Donation	\$ 450.00
Support a Priest (OCMC Jan.)	\$ 100.00
Bookstore	\$ 41.00
Total:	\$2,087.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!

CHURCH MONTHLY INCOME AND EXPENSES

Month of **NOVEMBER 2023**

Church Donation income was \$12,690.00
Church Operating Expenses totaled \$ 9,810.85
net gain of **\$ 2,879.15**

Month of **DECEMBER 2023**

Church Donation income was \$ 9,824.69
Church Operating Expenses totaled \$16,166.34
net loss of **-\$ 6,341.65**



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

13 – Mary Blackford; **13** – Roger & Debby Pinta Anniversary; **16** – Matushka Michelle Tomas



PLEASE HELP US TO TAKE DOWN THE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

We would like to kindly ask everyone to come tomorrow, **Monday, January 15th at 10:00 AM** and help us to remove and store all the decorations in the church. *We thank you in advance for your consideration and your help!*



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“OCMC Support a Priest” is the charity we donate to for the month of January.

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Jan. 28th Potluck followed by Annual Parish Meeting



- Feb. 2nd** MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE (*Friday*)
- Mar. 10th** Meetfare Sunday – Potluck after the Divine Liturgy
- Mar. 17th** Cheesefare Sunday (*Maslenitsa*) – Potluck after the Divine Liturgy
- Mar. 18th** Beginning of the Great Fast (*Monday*)
- Consider sponsoring a Sunday coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting of our parish will be held on **Sunday, January 28th**, following the Divine Liturgy. All voting members in good standing are encouraged not only to attend this vitally important meeting, but also to constructively participate. Please mark this on your calendars, and prepare for the meeting by prayer, fasting, and receiving Holy Confession and Holy Communion. This is the **third** announcement.

To Be a Voting Member in Good Standing

The Parish Bylaws of the Diocese of the Midwest, Orthodox Church in America, defines a "voting member in good standing:"

- a) is a Baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christian;
- b) is at least 18 years of age;
- c) partakes of the Sacraments of Private Confession and Communion in one's home parish at least once a year;
- d) has been a member of the Parish for a prior consecutive six (6) month period; and
- e) regularly fulfills such financial obligation as established by the All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, and the Parish, which obligations may be adjusted or waived by the Rector in consultation with the Parish Council. (*Article II, Section 2*)

If there is any question regarding your status as a "voting member in good standing," please contact Ron Royhab and Fr. Peter at your earliest convenience.

We kindly ask that the following reports be prepared and submitted to Fr. Peter about two weeks before the meeting so they can be copied and distributed:

- President's Report (Ron)
- All Financial Reports including Fundraising (Joe)
- Cemetery and Envelopes Reports (Natalie)
- Baking Report (Tina)
- 125th Anniversary Report (Laura or Ron)

CLEANING SCHEDULE



Jan 8, Susan
 Jan 15, Jean
 Jan 22, Stephanie
 Jan 29, Sandy



THEOPHANY – THE ANNUAL BLESSING OF HOMES

Between the Feast of Theophany and the beginning of the Great Fast (Lent), it is customary in our Holy Church to have our homes blessed by the parish priest with the Holy Water sanctified on this glorious Feast Day. This is an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church and through it we extend the “Blessing of Jordan” into our homes and private places.

Parishioners who wish to have their house blessed are asked to fill out the form, which can be found in the vestibule. Each household that requests this blessing will be contacted by phone to schedule the mutual convenient time.



HOLY WATER

You may take some Holy Water home for your private use at any time. Just bring your own container and help yourself. The Holy Water Font is in the church and easily accessible.

CANDLES SPONSORING

We would like to offer you an opportunity to sponsor candles which are burning continually or during the Divine Liturgy. You may make your monthly sponsoring for the memory of your loved ones deceased or for the health of your living relatives and friends. The following is the list of the candles that may be sponsored:

- Altar candles Monthly offering **\$50.00**
- Eternal Light and the candles at the iconostas – Monthly offering **\$25.00**
- candelabra at the cross – Monthly offering **\$20.00**
- candelabra at the icon of St. Sophia/ St. Tikhon – Monthly offering **\$20.00**
- candles at the tetrapod (at the icon of the Dormition and the icon(s) of the feast day(s) throughout the year – Monthly offering **\$40.00**, or **\$20.00** per one candle
- chandelier – Monthly offering **\$50.00**

Thank you in advance for your sponsorship and your generosity!



NEW VESTMENTS SPONSORS – THANK YOU!

We wish to express our sincere thanks to **Tina Rindfleisch** for sponsoring the new set of vestments for priest and Altar Servers in the amount of **\$450.00**, **“For Good Health and Spiritual well-being of the Rindfleisch and Monastra Families”**. The set was made in Ukraine and is being blessed and worn for the first time today. *May Our Lord and God bless Tina for her generosity and grant her good health, peace, and happiness for Many Happy and Blessed Years!*



NEW CHRISTMAS GOSPEL BOOKMARK – SPONSORS NEEDED

We would like to ask you if you would like to sponsor a new Gospel Bookmark for the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas), which is used to mark Gospel readings during the Christmas and Theophany Season. The Bookmark was made and embroidered in Ukraine for the price of \$60.00. If you have a loved ones whom you would like to

commemorate during the Christmas and Theophany season, or have some special intention for that season and would like to sponsor this Gospel bookmark, please see Fr. Peter. *We thank you in advance for your consideration and your generosity!*



KITCHEN UPGRADE COMMITTEE

The committee to work on upgrades to the church kitchen will meet sometime before the January 28 annual meeting; date and time will be determined. As it is set up now, the kitchen is very functional. The committee will go over each of the basic areas of the kitchen and determine what needs to be upgraded and/or improved. Council member Bobbie Royhab has agreed to head this committee; please let her know at 419-340-4560 if you can help.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS

We invite you all to take the poinsettia plants home after the Divine Liturgy. *Sincere Thank You to all who sponsored Christmas flowers this Nativity and Theophany Season!*



Altar Server's Ministry: Antiquity, Modernity and Existing Controversies by Reader John Malov

The ministry of the altar server has gone through several stages of development. The word *ponomar*, used in reference to altar servers in the Russian Orthodox Church, traces its roots to the Greek *paramonarios*, literally meaning “a doorkeeper” and combining two meanings, *para* – near and *meno* – to wait. This word perfectly describes the essence of the altar server’s ministry in its original form of a warden, guarding the safety of an entire church community or relic. In its modern form, however, the altar server’s ministry mostly consists in assisting the clergy during divine services and in daily activities. These significant changes resulted in a number of issues related to the canonical status of the altar server’s ministry in the Orthodox Church.

Ancient Service

The first written source mentioning altar servers was the second canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451), according to which a bishop paying someone for fulfilling certain church responsibilities (including those of an altar server) was subject to defrocking.

The origins of the altar server’s ministry, however, go back to a much earlier period, namely, to the times of persecution (before 313). In the early Christian Church, the main duty of an altar server was the unceasing guard of a church or a particular relic.

Standing at the entrance gates of churches, often located in catacombs, ancient altar servers kept watch to make sure that no excommunicated, heretics, gentiles or other outsiders would enter. This was extremely important in the times of persecution, when Christians were forced to hide their faith from the spies of the Roman Empire trying to sneak into Christian services, memorize the faces and names of Christians and deliver them up to the authorities.

Altar servers’ duties also required their constant presence in sacred places (for example, at the Bethlehem cave) in order to protect them from sacrilege and to help the pilgrims.

With the end of the persecution against Christians, the main duties of altar servers shifted towards maintaining order in the church and preparing it for worship.

Modern Ministry

Modern altar servers are responsible for the timely lighting of lamps and candles in the altar and on the



solea; preparing vestments, censers and materials for worship; carrying candles during services; wiping the lips of the laity during Communion; helping the priest during the sacraments and occasional offices; if possible and if necessary, performing duties of a reader, singer and bell ringer.

During the divine service, an altar server wears a **sticharion**, a liturgical garment reminiscent of the Old Testament tunic. Sometimes, with a bishop's blessing, an altar server may also wear a cassock, the everyday vestment of the Orthodox monastics and clergy. A bishop can also reward an altar server for

special merits or years of dedicated work, with the right to wear an orarion in the same way as a subdeacon.

In the ancient Church, altar servers were ordained, but in modern practice a priestly blessing is sufficient for a layman to begin serving in the altar. This generally means that altar servers remain laymen, which explains the rare exceptions when the traditions of certain Local Churches allow women to serve in the altar.

In the persecuted Russian Church of the 20th century, the altar servers' duties were assigned to elderly nuns (more often schema nuns) due to the absence of other candidates. In the modern Alexandrian Church, young girls (of primary school age) can be seen serving in the altar.

Canonical and Practical Issues of Contemporary Altar Server's Ministry

There are several issues related to the correct name and the canonical status of the modern altar server's ministry that appear controversial at first glance.

For example, in the Russian Empire before the 19th century, the term "altar server" was applied exclusively to clergy.

However, the concept of the altar server was extended with time, due to the fact that many clerical functions, both statutory (for example, a candle bearer, reader, canonarch) and non-statutory (bell ringer, prosphora-baker, candle maker, etc.) are currently performed by modern altar servers, whose original duties have become things of the distant past. This leaves some questions unanswered regarding the canonical status of the seemingly archaic office of the ancient "door keeper".

As mentioned above, altar servers are not ordained by the bishop and remain laymen. Rule 69 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council reads, "Let it not be permitted to anyone among all the laity to enter within the sacred altar..." It turns out that a modern altar server cannot enter the altar. Even more so, this applies to women, "*It is inappropriate for a woman to enter the altar*" (Canon 44 of the Laodicean Council).

Logically speaking, laymen are also not allowed to put on sacred robes, since the vesting happens in the altar, and besides they are prescribed for specific members of clergy, and not for laymen. This makes the rare usage of **oraria** by altar servers discussed in the beginning of the article even less canonical,



since it is not permitted be worn even by the minor clergy, “The subdeacons, readers or singers have no right to wear an orarium...” (rule 22-23 of the Laodicean Council).

We know that all the rules of all the Councils must be observed, “We pronounce it just and right that the Canons promulgated by the Holy Fathers, in each and every Council down to the present time, continue in full force and effect.” (Canon 1 of the 4th Ecumenical Council). But, at the same time, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath” (Mark 2: 23-27). Proceeding from the principle of pastoral oeconomy (Greek: οἰκονομία, oikonomia) and for the benefit and welfare of the Church, there may be different traditions that are not canonically formalized. This allows altar servers to fulfill their ministry in the altar and put on ecclesiastical garments.



The Melody of Faith: Singing the Creed in Orthodox Liturgy

by Archpriest Andrey Chizhenko

The Introduction of the Symbol of Faith during the Divine Liturgy and Its Purpose

To unravel the intricacies of why the Symbol of Faith, or Creed, is sung during the Divine Liturgy, a journey through history becomes essential. In the relentless battle against paganism and heresies, the Apostles and Church Fathers strategically repurposed pagan or heretical elements, infusing

them with Orthodox significance. Often, this strategy was driven by the need to articulate Christian concepts to the Hellenic world—individuals steeped in pagan ideologies—using a language familiar to them.

A noteworthy example is the use of the term “logos” (Greek for “word”) by the holy apostle and evangelist John the Theologian in the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The term “logos” had its origins in the teachings of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus. In ancient philosophy, closely intertwined with the pagan beliefs of ancient Greeks, logos represented a cosmic force fostering a harmonious unity in the world. To ancient philosophers, logos symbolized a universal order, a framework within which everything underwent flux and change yet remaining true to its essence. Essentially, the ancient philosophers perceived Logos as a sacred, albeit perhaps impersonal, divine force. The holy apostle and evangelist John the Theologian employed the term “Logos,” reshaping and infusing it with Christian meaning. In the opening verses of his Gospel, he engaged in what seemed like a dialogue with the pagan world, affirming, “Yes, all things came into being through Logos. However, Logos is not impersonal. God is a Person—He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Logos.” In this manner, St John communicated the message of Christ to the entire oikoumene—the universe—in a language intelligible to the ancient world.

A parallel adaptation is seen in the case of Greek names, such as the male name Demetrius and the female name Muse. Originally, the name Demetrius meant “dedicated to the goddess Demeter,” with Demeter being the “goddess” of fertility and the earth in Hellenic pagan religion. The Muses, female deities inspiring artistic talents, were also part of the pagan pantheon. However, in the early fourth century, a man named Demetrius in the Greek city of Thessalonica sacrificed his life for Christ (the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica). Similarly, in fifth-century Rome, a blessed girl named Muse

devoted herself to serving the Saviour and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church embraced these names, transforming them into Christian identities cleansed by the blood and devotion of saints, purging them of their pagan associations and imbuing them with Christian significance.

A comparable evolution unfolded in the case of antiphonal singing. Gnostic heretics employed this style in their worship services for its aesthetic appeal. To counteract the pernicious teachings of the Gnostics, the Church incorporated antiphonal singing into its services, repurposing this musical form with Orthodox content.

The inclusion of the Symbol of Faith (Creed) in the Liturgy, a doctrinal statement formulated by the holy fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils in the fourth century, traces its roots to the catechetical instruction of doctrinal truths for catechumens prior to their Baptism. While the Creed was authored in the fourth century, its formal integration into liturgical practices occurred almost a century later.



Second Ecumenical Council by Vasily Surikov

Two key historical figures are associated with this integration: Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch, and Patriarch Timothy I of Constantinople.

Peter the Fuller, serving as the Patriarch of the Antiochian Church in the latter half of the fifth century, held monophysite beliefs, emphasizing the Divine nature of Christ to the exclusion of His humanity. Despite his heretical stance, Peter introduced the Nicene Creed into the Liturgy, the very Creed recognized by Orthodox tradition without any alteration or distortion. While Peter the Fuller and his teachings were later condemned by the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the tradition of using the unaltered Nicene Creed in Orthodox worship persisted.

Patriarch Timothy I, leading the Church of Constantinople in the early sixth century, is the second figure associated with the Creed's introduction into liturgical practice. Although not an overt heretic, Timothy displayed sympathies towards the Monophysites. In an attempt to align with Monophysite practices, he sought to introduce the singing of the "Trisagion" with the addition "crucified for us" in the Hagia Sophia Cathedral, the primary church of the Constantinople Patriarchate. This triggered significant unrest and nearly led to the overthrow of Byzantine Emperor Anastasius.

To demonstrate his commitment to Orthodox doctrine, Patriarch Timothy opted to incorporate the Nicene Creed into the Liturgy, a move that served as a gesture of adherence to Orthodox beliefs during a time of theological tension.

The liturgical journey of the Church, shaped and refined through the intricate interplay of historical events and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, resembles the meticulous crafting of a precious diamond. Returning to the inquiry "Why is the Creed sung in the Liturgy?" demands a thoughtful examination of its placement in the Divine service. The Creed takes center stage just before the Eucharistic Canon, following the cherubic song that urges the faithful to cast away earthly concerns. It stands as the prelude to the profound mystery where the grace of the Holy Spirit descends, transforming bread, wine, and water into the Body and Blood of Christ. The question arises: why does the Creed occupy this particular position?

The Creed, in this context, serves as a profound testimony. Through its singing, we declare before the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that we are not pagans, heretics, or schismatics. Instead, we affirm our identity as Orthodox Christians, faithfully safeguarding the purity of Orthodox faith and its sacred dogmas. This testimony acts as a key, unlocking the gates of heaven, allowing the grace of God to descend upon our offerings and orchestrate the sacramental transformation within them.



The tradition of singing the Creed during the Liturgy, as opposed to its recitation, underwent a notable shift in the liturgical practices of the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches. While initially recited, particularly in Russia until the mid-nineteenth century, a gradual transformation toward sung recitation emerged.

This evolution was marked by considerable debate, eventually leading to the prevalence of singing the Creed. It's noteworthy that the combined singing of the Creed and the Our Father prayers by the congregation was introduced by His Holiness Patriarch Alexis I—a positive change fostering a

sense of unity among the faithful. This shift aligns with the practices of the early Christians, fostering a communal spirit within the Church.

Beyond its communal nature, singing the Creed has a profound impact on worshippers. It transforms the soul into a musical instrument in the hands of the Lord. Through this melodic expression of faith, individuals sense that they are not alone but are integral parts of the Body of Christ—the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This musical proclamation enhances the conciliarity of the Church, uniting believers with one voice in the profession of the Orthodox faith.

In the intricate tapestry of the Orthodox Liturgy, the singing of the Creed unfolds with symbolic gestures and profound rituals.

The proclamation preceding the Creed, “The doors, the doors; in wisdom let us attend,” carries historical echoes and contemporary symbolism. Originally linked to practical duties, such as safeguarding the service from disruptions and ensuring only baptized Orthodox Christians remained inside the church, it now calls the faithful to guard their minds and hearts against external distractions. During the chanting of the Creed, two significant actions transpire within the altar. Firstly, the veil behind the Holy Doors is opened, symbolizing the rolling away of the stone from the Holy Sepulcher during the Resurrection. Secondly, the priest waves the aer (veil) over the Gifts—Lamb on the paten and Chalice with wine and water. This act symbolizes the unveiling of Divine Wisdom through the correct profession of faith in the dogmas of the Creed.

The swaying of the aer holds additional layers of symbolism. It mirrors the air's movement preceding the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, and it signifies the earthquake at the time of the Resurrection. Together, these actions envelop the congregation in the mystery of faith and Divine Wisdom.

Professing the dogmas of the Orthodox faith during the Creed becomes the gateway to profound mysteries. This heartfelt declaration opens the door to the Holy Spirit, making possible the miraculous transformation of bread, wine, and water into the Body and Blood of Christ. Through the Sacrament of Communion, believers enter a blissful communion with God, experiencing the Resurrection's transformative power.

In this sacred act, sins are laid to rest, and the faithful are resurrected to eternal life. It is a journey into a fragrant paradise, an earthly manifestation of divine grace, facilitated by the Resurrection of Christ.

- *A holy hymn gives birth to piety of soul, creates a good conscience, and is accepted by God in the treasures of the heavens. — St. John Chrysostom*
- *While your tongue sings, let your mind search out the meaning of the words, so that you might sing in spirit and sing also in understanding. — St. Basil the Great*