

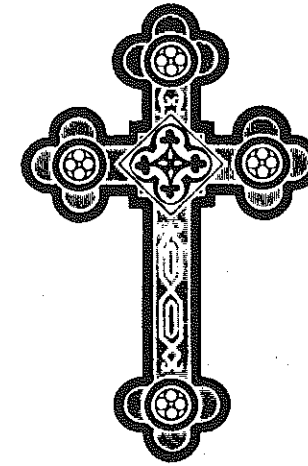


THE ALTAR BOY'S GUIDEBOOK

A Workshop Manual
for
Greek Orthodox Altar Boys

by

Fr. Michael T. Kontogiorgis



THE ALTAR BOY'S GUIDEBOOK

A Workshop Manual
for
Greek Orthodox Altar Boys

by

Fr. Michael T. Kontogiorgis

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with appreciation and gratitude to:

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS, who as the Dean of the Annunciation Cathedral in Boston, celebrated the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation for me and later as Archbishop tonsured me as a Reader and Sub-Deacon and then ordained me into the Diaconate and Priesthood;

THEODORE AND PANAGIOTA KONTOGIORGIS, my parents, whose example made clearer the road before me;

GEORGE, a friend, who was led by the Lord to invite me to serve Him as an Altar Boy; and

FR. JOHN ZANETOS, who as the Dean of the Annunciation Cathedral in Boston, trained me in serving the Lord as an Altar Boy and later as a Deacon and Priest.

This guidebook would not have been possible without their efforts and concern. May God bless and keep them always.

THE ALTAR BOY'S GUIDEBOOK

First Published 1981

Revised 1984

COPYRIGHT 1981 by

Fr. Michael T. Kontogiorgis

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PORTION OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED, STORED IN A RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, TRANSMITTED, OR UTILIZED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, MECHANICAL, ELECTRONIC, PHOTOCOPY, RECORDING OR OTHERWISE, WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	p. 4
Foreword	p. 5
I. Introduction	p. 6
II. What Is an Altar Boy?	p. 7
III. Preparation at Home	p. 9
IV. Arrival and Preparation at Church	p. 11
V. The Clergy's Vestments and the Altar Boy's Robe	p. 13
VI. Entering the Kingdom of Heaven - The Church Building ..	p. 18
VII. Highlights of Some Services	p. 25
VIII. Behavior in the Altar	p. 29
IX. Processions	p. 32
X. Other Duties of an Altar Boy	p. 42
XI. The Tonsure of an Altar Boy as a Reader	p. 45
XII. Epilogue	p. 47
Glossary	p. 48
Appendix	p. 56

PREFACE

A number of years ago, Bishop John of Atlanta expressed to Fr. John Liadis, the Diocesan Youth Director, his desire to sponsor an 'Altar Boys Workshop,' where Altar Boys from the Diocese of Atlanta could come together to learn more about their faith, their Church, the Altar they serve, their role as Altar Boys and their life-style as Orthodox Christians.

As a result of Bishop John's desire for such a program, Olympic Village, located in Brooksville, Florida, introduced a pilot program called 'Altar Boys Workshop' during July of 1981. The Director of Olympic Village, Fr. John Liadis, asked me to prepare a guidebook for that program, as well as serve as the program's Director. The Altar Boy's Guidebook is a result of that effort.

The first work, published in 1981, was field-tested during these last three Summers. Based on that experience and on the comments and suggestions made by Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop John, Ernest Villas (Director of the Department of Religious Education) and Fr. John Liadis, this revised edition is now being published with the cooperation and support of Fr. Angelo Gavallas, Director of the Department of Youth Ministry. All funds that will be realized from the distribution of this guidebook will serve to benefit Olympic Village.

While this material is geared for use in a workshop setting, it can, and has been easily adapted for other settings. The leader is urged to demonstrate the use and symbolism of the various items mentioned. The Appendix contains the daily schedule of the Workshop held at Olympic Village, which began on a Sunday evening and ended Friday noon.

Some of the diagrams/illustrations that are used in this work have come from the Acolyte Instruction Manual by Fr. Nicholas Soteropoulos, printed when he served as the Director of the Department of Youth Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. The material was issued in 1974.

I would like to thank Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop John of Atlanta and Ernest Villas for their time and efforts in making suggestions and comments on the first edition. Special thanks go to Fr. John Liadis for his suggestions, ideas and comments concerning the content of an Altar Boy's guidebook, and for his confidence, support and encouragement not only on this project, but on many others as well.

Monday, March 5, 1984
The Beginning of Great Lent

Fr. Michael T. Kontogiorgis
Orlando, Florida



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΒΟΡΕΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΟΤΙΩΝ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

10 EAST 79th STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • TEL (212) 570-3500 • CABLE: ARCHGREEK, NEW YORK

36-10 BROADWAY
ASTORIA, N.Y. 11106
(212) 626-5111

March 14, 1984

Beloved faithful:

The Altar Boy's Guidebook, written by Fr. Michael Kontogiorgis, is deserving and merits implementation throughout the Archdiocese. In reading its contents, one readily perceives the sacredness and privilege in serving the Holy Altar. As he points out, "God chose you to become an Altar Boy and serve Him."

Truly, this valuable Guidebook shall serve as an inspiration to both the Altar Boys and those who will be directing them in learning its contents. Its intent to be used in a workshop setting is a novel idea that can produce much fruitful work. Such a workshop will not only give the Altar Boys much needed guidance and direction in order to carry out their duties; it will change what could be a perfunctory task into an actual experience of sharing the liturgical life of our Church.

I commend Father Michael Kontogiorgis for his worthy endeavor and I thank Bishop John for his support of such a fine project. I heartily recommend the Altar Boy's Guidebook to all our clergy and communities and propose its immediate use.

With paternal affection,

I A K O V O S
Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox
Church of North and South America

AI:ym

I. INTRODUCTION

So, you're an Altar Boy?

Perhaps you've been an Altar Boy only a short time; or perhaps for many years. You may know quite a bit about being an Altar Boy; or you may not. You may have lots of questions that you never got around to asking; or you may not.

Whatever the case, this book has been prepared with you in mind.

The Altar Boy's Guidebook will not answer all your questions - it's not meant to. Nor is it meant to teach you the best and only way to do things as an Altar Boy. The Altar Boy's Guidebook was written with the assumption that you already are an Altar Boy and know some of the things about being an Altar Boy.

In case you haven't noticed, you will find that the way processions and other things are done will sometimes be different, in different churches. The Altar Boy's Guidebook will tell you some of the ways of doing things. It will help answer some of your questions. It is not so much a manual, as it is a workbook, a guidebook. It is meant to be used as part of a workshop. You should feel free to ask questions of your workshop leader. The Altar Boy's Guidebook is a tool to help you learn. By working with the workshop leader and this book, you can really learn a lot.

So now, let's begin.

II. WHAT IS AN ALTAR BOY?

Did you ever wonder why you're called an 'Altar Boy'? Why don't we have any 'Altar Girls'? Let's see if we can find out.

During the early years of the Church, the Disciples of Christ found that they were not spending enough time doing the job Christ chose them to do. They were so busy tending to the needs of the early Christians that they didn't always have enough time to go out and tell other people about Christ and the wonderful things He came to offer us. So they decided to choose some of the people to help them. They chose seven able men and ordained them to be deacons. These deacons helped the Disciples so that the Disciples could have more time to preach the good news of Salvation to others.

As the years went by, it was also found that it would be extremely helpful to have some additional people (besides the deacons) helping during the various services, especially during the Divine Liturgy. There were so many things that had to be done and prepared. And so, special people were chosen to do just that. They were called 'acolytes'. The word 'acolyte' is defined by the dictionary as an altar attendant, coming from the Greek word 'akolouthos' meaning attendant or follower. In a very real sense, acolytes were the attendants to the bishops and priests. They helped them during the various services, much as you, as an Altar Boy, help the priest today. The word 'acolyte' can also be traced to the Greek word 'akolytos' meaning free (from stain or sin) to enter the Holy of Holies. It is proper and fitting for one to serve the Lord in the Holy of Holies to be 'akolytos' - free from stain.

As you know, the Divine Liturgy is a dramatic re-enactment of the life of Christ. The priest takes on the role of Christ. The Altar Boys, who are the priest's attendants, are really Christ's attendants. We know that the attendants of Christ are the angels. So you, as an Altar Boy, are symbolically, an angel. As an 'angel' you help minister to Jesus in the re-enactment of the life of Christ during the Divine Liturgy.

Now, we all know that Jesus was a man and not a woman. That might sound rather silly to say. Now, remember that the priest plays the part of Christ during the Liturgy. If Jesus was a man, then the priest must also be a man to really play the part of Christ.

The Altar, which is more properly speaking called the Holy of Holies, is the most sacred area of the Church. That is where the bread and wine are offered to God as a sacrifice - a bloodless sacrifice. And God, accepting our sacrifice, sends down the Holy Spirit to change the bread and the wine in a miraculous way into the Body and Blood of Christ. Only bishops, priests and deacons are allowed in the Altar. Because Altar Boys are specially chosen and tonsured as 'Readers' (see Chapter XI), they too are allowed into the Altar. No one else, whether a man or a woman, boy or girl, is permitted to go into the Altar.

When an Altar Boy is tonsured by the Bishop as a Reader, he becomes a member of the order of the clergy. To become a priest, a man first must be tonsured a Reader, then a Sub-Deacon, then ordained a Deacon and then a Priest. So a Reader is really the first step in the holy Priesthood. And, as we saw, only men are permitted to become priests.

To be an Altar Boy is a special honor. Before the Bishop tonsures Altar Boys as Readers (and only a Bishop can do this), they go through a 'trial period' to make sure that they understand what it means to be an Altar Boy and to make sure that they are qualified and deserve to be Altar Boys. Not everyone deserves this great honor.

What made you want to become an Altar Boy?

Did you know that God chose you to become an Altar Boy and serve Him? Maybe one day you thought to yourself that you'd like to become an Altar Boy. Maybe your parents suggested that you become an Altar Boy. Maybe your friends who are Altar Boys suggested it --- whatever it was, it really was God who called you. You see, God works through you and through other people. In His own way, He called you to serve Him.

You should be very happy that the Lord God chose you. He loves you very much. He wants you to love Him more and more each day. He has given you a great honor by choosing you to be one of His Altar Boys.

III. PREPARATION AT HOME

When it's your turn to serve in the Altar, do you do anything different at home to get ready to go to Church? If not, you really should. Remember, the Altar is a holy place. You will be touching things that are holy.

When you're invited to a special party, you probably spend a lot of time getting ready --- making sure everything is just right. Well, you should also make sure everything is just right when you go to Church, and even more so when you know you will be serving in the Altar.

Here are some things to watch for and ask yourself -----

- Is your hair combed?
- Is your hair too long - when was the last time you had a haircut?
- Did you brush your teeth?
- Have you taken your bath or shower?
- Did you wash your hands with plenty of soap and water just before you left your home? Remember you will be touching and holding things that are holy.
- Is your shirt clean? Is it buttoned to the collar button? (A tie would make an ideal addition for your shirt.)
- What about your pants, are they ironed and clean? (They should preferably be dark in color.)
- What about your shoes (preferably black) - are they shined?
- Remember that tennis shoes, sneakers, jeans, unbuttoned shirts, and other similar clothes are not proper for serving in the Altar.
- Look in the mirror just before leaving home to make sure everything is just right.

In short, you, as an Altar Boy, should be generally clean and presentable from the inside out.

Because you are an Altar Boy, you should not only be especially careful when preparing to go to Church, but also during the rest of the week as well. You symbolize an angel and you should therefore be careful how you dress, how you act, how you speak, at all times.

Remember, God has chosen you to serve Him in His Holy Altar. He wants to be proud of you not just in the Altar, but all the time.

IV. ARRIVAL AND PREPARATION AT CHURCH

What happens when you get to Church?

Well, first of all, when you walk into the Narthex, you should -----

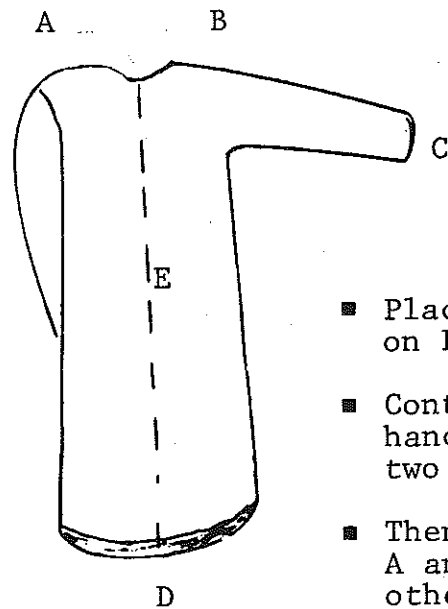
- Place your offering into the tray;
- Take a candle;
- Light your candle;
- Make the sign of the Cross;
- Offer a silent prayer for your parents, your relatives, your friends, your enemies and yourself;
- Kiss the icons in the Narthex.

Why do all that? Because you are getting ready to leave the world behind you and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Narthex is your preparation area. When you enter the Church proper (the Nave), you are transported away from the world into God's Kingdom.

If you enter the Altar area through one of the side gates that has an icon upon it, you should make the sign of the Cross, kiss the icon and then enter.

Upon entering the area of the Altar used for Altar Boys, quietly find your robe, fold it and proceed to the priest for the blessing. While the priest is offering the blessing, you should offer a silent prayer asking God to bless your service to Him that day so that it might be proper and acceptable. When the priest finishes the blessing, kiss his hand (which offers us God's blessing, Holy Communion and so much more) and proceed to put your robe on. Then take your designated position in the Altar. Please note that if the bishop happens to be visiting, then you would go to him to receive the blessing.

There are a number of ways that the robe can be folded in preparation for receiving the blessing. Here's one way for you to consider -----



- Place one hand on Point A, the other hand on Point B. Then join A and B together.
- Continue to hold onto the shoulders with one hand, while with the other hand join the two sleeves at Point C.
- Then, still holding onto the shoulders (where A and B were joined), reach down with the other hand and grasp the robe at Point D. Then bring the two hands together, joining Point D with Points A and B at the shoulders. Leave the sleeves hanging toward the floor.
- Repeat this again, using Point E and the shoulders.
- Carefully fold over the sleeves and place the strap ('orarion') over the robe.

Why do you need to receive a blessing? There are a number of reasons.

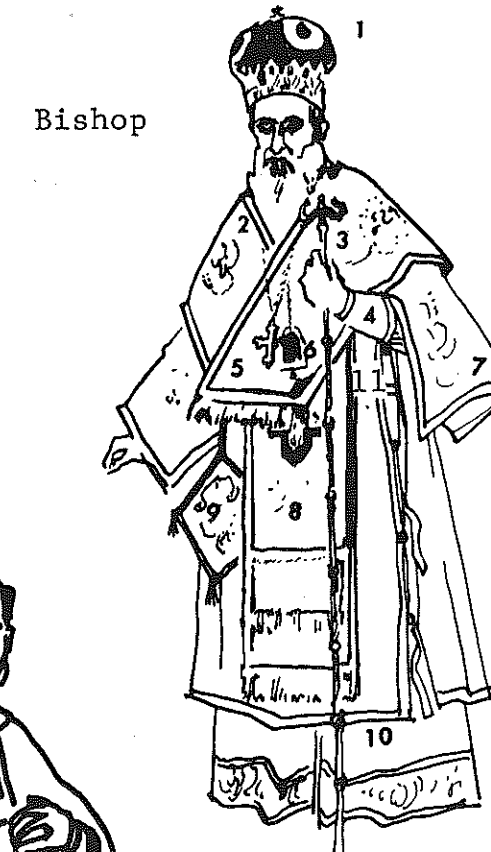
First, by bestowing a blessing the priest gives you permission to serve in the Altar. No one enters to serve in the Altar without the priest's permission - that includes Altar Boys and deacons (and even the chanters must receive the priest's permission to chant). When the bishop is present, then even the priests, as well as, the Altar Boys and deacons and chanters, etc., must receive permission from him to serve. This blessing occurs every time a service is to be celebrated.

Aside from granting you permission to serve, the priest, through this special blessing, imparts the grace of God upon you. That special blessing stays with you and not just for the service.

Remember --- it's an honor and privilege to serve as an Altar Boy, one filled with many blessings.

V. THE CLERGY'S VESTMENTS AND THE ALTAR BOY'S ROBE

Did you know that the vestments deacons, priests and bishops wear symbolize different things? Well, they do. Use this diagram to follow along as we find out what vestments are all about.



Bishop

1. Mitre
2. Omophorion
3. Pateritsa
4. Epimanikia
5. Pectoral Cross
6. Engolpion
7. Saccos
8. Epitrachelion
9. Epigonation
10. Sticharion
11. Zoni



Priest

1. Felonion
2. Epimanikia
3. Zoni
4. Epitrachelion
5. Epigonation
6. Sticharion



Deacon

1. Epimanikia
2. Orarion
3. Sticharion

THE DEACON'S VESTMENTS

The Sticharion - This is the long, straight robe with wide sleeves and is called "the robe of salvation and the garment of joy." It symbolizes a pure and peaceful conscience and spiritual joy.

The Orarion - The wide and long band of material that is worn over the left shoulder and at times crossed (as with the Altar Boy's). It symbolizes the wings of angels.

The Epimanikia - The cuffs worn around the wrists. Symbols of the bonds used to tie the hands of Christ when He was scourged. Also serve to remind the deacon that God created everything with His hands and that the deacon's trust should be in God.

THE PRIEST'S VESTMENTS

The Sticharion - This is the long inner robe the priest wears. It is the first thing he puts on. It is called the "robe of salvation and the garment of joy." It is symbolic of purity, of a spotless life and spiritual joy.

The Epitrachelion - The next thing the priest puts on is the Epitrachelion. It is worn over the Sticharion and is symbolic of the power, grace and authority the priest received through his ordination. The priest (as the deacon must wear the Orarion) must always wear the Epitrachelion whenever he celebrates any service. It also symbolizes the cross Christ carried and was crucified on. The little tassels at the bottom of the Epitrachelion symbolize the souls that are entrusted to the priest for his care and supervision.

The Zoni - The belt that is put on over the Sticharion and the Epitrachelion. It is worn around the waist. It symbolizes strength - a reminder that God grants the priest the gift of strength in carrying out his difficult and holy task. It also symbolizes the cord used by the soldiers to tie the hands of Christ.

The Epimanikia - The cuffs worn around the wrists. They are symbols of the bonds that were used to tie the hands of Christ when he was scourged. They also serve to remind the priest that God created everything with His hands and the priest's trust should be in God.

The Epigonation - The Epigonation symbolizes the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. It also symbolizes the towel that Christ used and placed around Himself when He washed the feet of the disciples. It is worn by those priests who have received a special honor and title from the bishop.

The Felonion - The Felonion looks like a cape and is worn last, above the other vestments, over the shoulders. It symbolizes the seamless robe worn by Christ during His trial and just before His Crucifixion. It is a reminder of righteousness.

THE BISHOP'S VESTMENTS

The Sticharion - This is the long inner robe and is called "the robe of salvation and the garment of joy." It is symbolic of purity, of a spotless life and of spiritual joy.

The Epitrachelion - The long vestment worn around the neck and down over the chest going down to almost touch the floor. It symbolizes the grace, power and authority of the priesthood. It also symbolizes the cross Christ carried and was crucified on. The little tassels at the bottom of the Epitrachelion symbolize the souls entrusted to the bishop's care and supervision.

The Zoni - The belt worn around the waist, over the Sticharion and the Epitrachelion. It symbolizes strength - a reminder that God is the One who grants the bishop strength in carrying out his difficult and holy task. It also symbolizes the cord used by the soldiers to tie the hands of Christ.

The Epimanikia - The cuffs worn around the wrists. They are symbols of the bonds used to tie the hands of Christ when he was scourged. They also serve to remind the bishop that God created everything with His hands and the bishop's trust should therefore be in God.

The Epigonation - The Epigonation symbolizes the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. It also symbolizes the towel that Christ used and placed around Himself when He washed the feet of the disciples.

The Saccos - Similar to the deacon's Sticharion, with wide sleeves. It is symbolic of the seamless robe worn by Christ during His trial and just before His Crucifixion.

The Omophorion - This vestment is very wide and hangs down both in front and in back. It is symbolic of the wandering sheep. The bishop wears this on his shoulders as a symbol of the Good Shepherd who, when he finds the lost sheep, places it on his shoulders and carries it back to the flock.

The Mitre - The crown worn on the head. It is symbolic of the authority of the bishop.

The Pectoral Cross and the Engolpion - The Pectoral Cross and the Engolpion (which has the icon of the Virgin Mary holding Christ as a child) are worn over the heart as a vivid reminder that the bishop's heart must always be kept pure. Christ, His sacrifice for us and the Virgin Mary should always be present within the heart and soul of the bishop.

The Pateritsa - The Pastoral Staff. This is a symbol of the bishop's responsibility to guard, protect and lead the flock which has been entrusted to him. The snakes on the top of the staff are symbolic of the time when Moses erected a golden snake on a pole to help save the Jewish people when they were being bitten by poisonous snakes. He told the people to look upon the golden snake when bitten and if they did they would not be harmed.

When deacons, priests and bishops are vesting, (putting on their vestments) they offer a prayer each time they put on one of their vestments. When they finish, they wash their hands, again offering another prayer, as they prepare to begin the Divine Liturgy.

THE ALTAR BOY'S ROBE

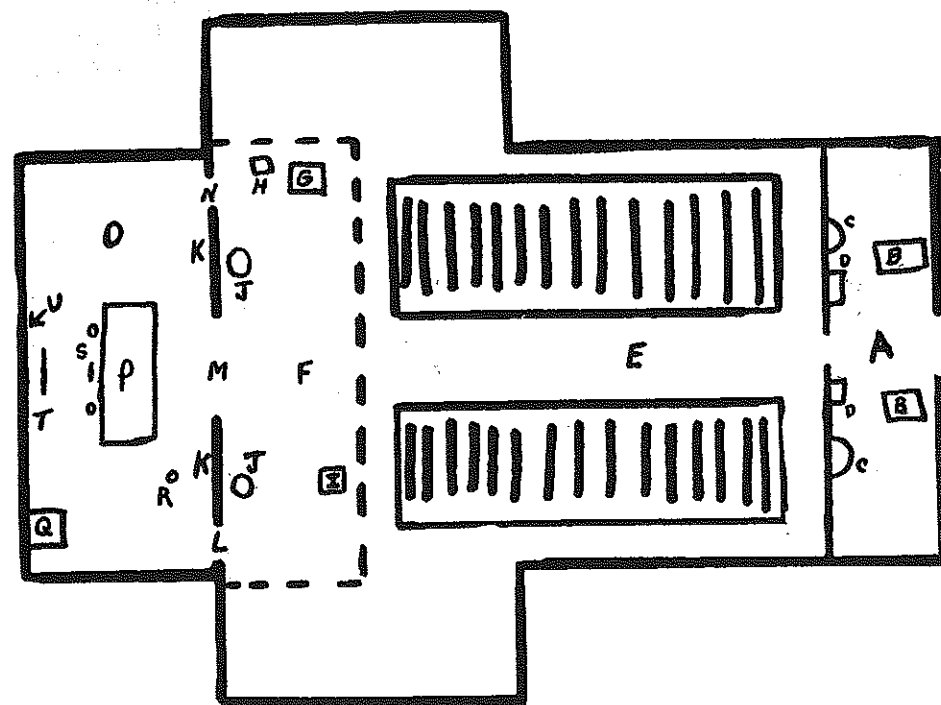
The Sticharion - This is similar to the deacon's Sticharion. It is a long robe with wide sleeves and is called the "robe of salvation and the garment of joy." It is symbolic of purity and of a spotless life.

The Orarion - Similar to the deacon's Orarion, it resembles a long and wide belt or strap. It is worn in the form of a cross, over the Sticharion. It is symbolic of the wings of angels.

An Altar Boy is a symbol of an angel. Your robe is a symbol of purity and the wings of an angel. Your robe is really a symbol of the great honor you have from the Lord God.

VI. ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - THE CHURCH BUILDING

Remember that when you enter into the Church building you're actually entering God's Temple, His Kingdom of Heaven. Let's look at the various parts of the Church building. Use this diagram to help identify the various areas.



- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A - Narthex | L - North Gate |
| B - Pangari | M - Royal Gate (Oraia Pele) |
| C - Manoualia | N - South Gate |
| D - Proskenitarion | O - Altar |
| E - Nave | P - Altar Table |
| F - Solea | Q - Prothesis Table |
| G - Bishop's Throne | R - Censer |
| H - Analogion | S - Exapteryga & Processional Cross |
| I - Pulpit | T - Crucifix |
| J - Manoualia | U - Platytera |
| K - Iconostasion | |

The Narthex - This is the area you first enter, where you light your candle and kiss the icons. In the Narthex are found ---

The Pangari - Name of the stand where the candles are located.

The Manoualia - The large candle holders (or stands)

The Proskenitarion - Name of the stand where icons are placed for veneration (see diagram below).

PROSKENITARION

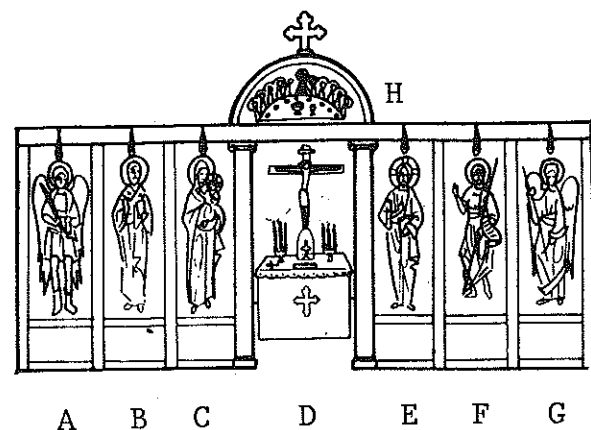


The Nave - The main part of the church, where the people stand and participate in the services (where the pews are located).

The Solea - The area between the Nave and the Altar, usually raised a step or two. Found on the Solea are ---

- The Bishop's Throne
- The Analogion (Chanter's Stand)
- The Pulpit (Amvon)
- The Manoualia (Candlestands)

The Iconostasion - The icon screen separating the Solea from the Altar. Icons are windows of Heaven - as the port holes on a ship. The Altar is Heaven and the Royal Gate reveals glimpses of Heaven. There are a number of icons that are standard on the Iconostasion. See the diagram below for the position of these icons.

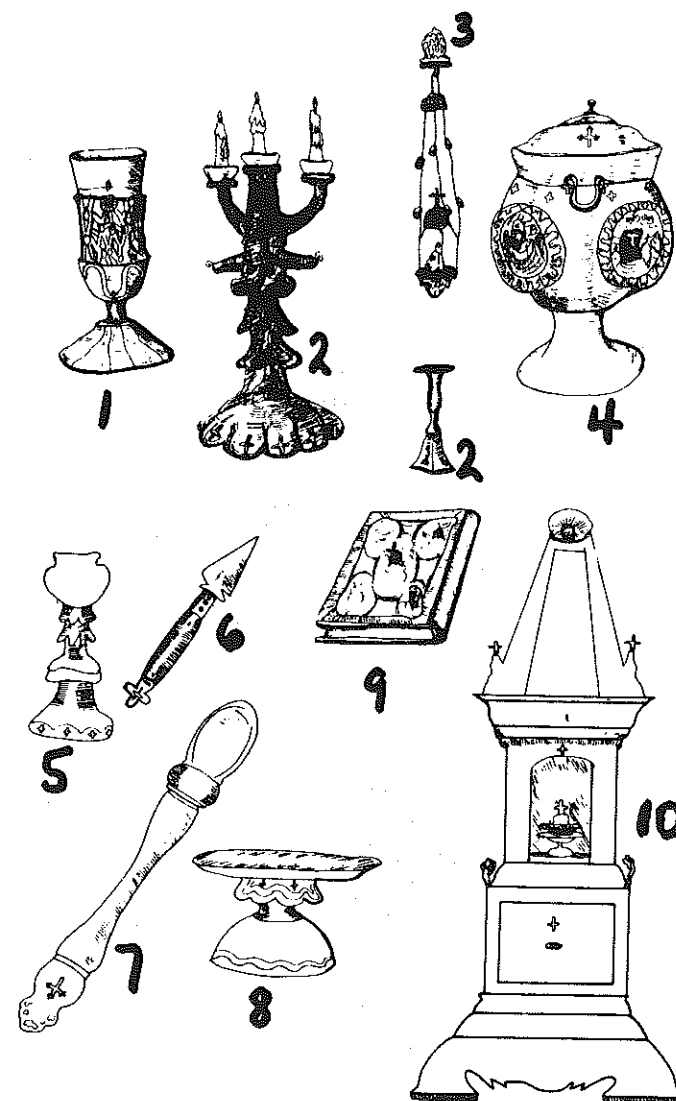


- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A - Archangel Michael | E - Christ |
| The North Gate | F - St. John the Baptist |
| B - Patron Saint of Church | G - Archangel Gabriel |
| C - Virgin Mary | The South Gate |
| D - The Royal Gate (Oraia Pele) | H - The Last Supper |

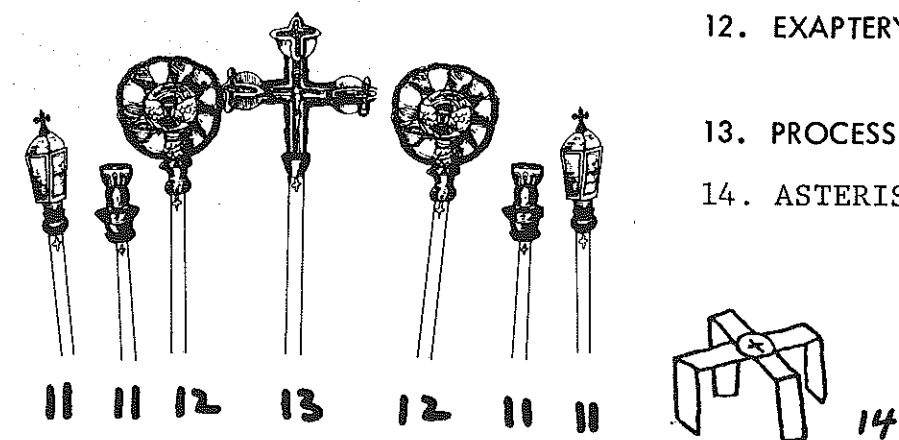
The Altar - The place of sacrifice. Heaven itself. The Altar faces East. In Greek it is called the 'Ieron' meaning 'holy.' Only members of the clergy (bishops, priests, deacons; Altar Boys, readers, etc.) are permitted in the Altar. Within the Altar are found ---

The Altar Table - In Greek called 'Aghia Trapeza' (Holy Table). Upon the Altar Table the bloodless sacrifice is offered - bread and wine are consecrated and miraculously, mysteriously become the Body and Blood of Christ. At the consecration of a church relics of saints (fragments from their bones) are placed within the Altar Table, as a reminder that the Church was built upon the blood of her martyrs and also, to carry on the tradition of the early Church of celebrating the Liturgy over the tombs of the saints and martyrs.

Use these diagrams to assist you as we look at the various items found in the Altar.



1. SANCTUARY LIGHT
2. CANDLE HOLDER
3. CENSER
4. BAPTISMAL FONT
5. CHALICE
6. SPEAR
7. HOLY SPOON
8. PATEN
9. THE HOLY GOSPEL
10. ARK-TABERNACLE
11. PROCESSIONAL CANDLES
12. EXAPTERYGA (ICONS OF CHERUBS)
13. PROCESSIONAL CROSS
14. ASTERISK



The Tabernacle - The Ark or Artoforion (in Greek). Located toward the middle-back of the Altar Table. The Body and Blood of Christ are always kept there, in reserve for the times Holy Communion is needed to be brought to the sick. A vigil light is always kept lit in front of the Tabernacle.

The Candles - Symbols of God's light and truth.

The Holy Gospel Book - Kept on the Altar Table. Contains the readings of the Gospels for all the services.

The Blessing Cross - Kept next to the Gospel Book and used for bestowing God's blessing on His people.

The Antimension - Means 'in place of the table.' A rectangular cloth (see diagram below) that when folded is placed underneath the Gospel Book. On this cloth are icons of Christ being placed in the Tomb, the four Evangelists, angels, etc. Within the cloth are sewn relics of saints. As a result, the Antimension is a portable Altar Table and is used whenever a Liturgy is to be celebrated at a place where a consecrated Altar Table is not available.



ANTIMENSION

The Crucifix - The wooden cross with the image of the body of Christ upon it.

The Thimiato - The Censer, in which incense (thimiama or livani) is placed and burnt as a symbol of our prayer. On the chains are twelve small bells representing the twelve Apostles. The four chains represent the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).

The Prothesis Table - The Table of Oblation. This table is located on the left side of the Altar and is used for the celebration of the 'Proskomide Service.' During this service the bread and the wine are prepared for the Divine Liturgy. At the Prothesis is found an icon of the Birth or Nativity of Christ, since the Proskomide Service is symbolic of the birth of Christ. At the Prothesis Table are found --

The Paten - The small tray or disk used to hold the bread to be offered and consecrated during the Liturgy. Symbolic of the manger in which the Virgin Mary laid the Christ child. During the Liturgy it is also symbolic of the Tomb of Christ.

The Chalice - The cup in which the wine and water are poured that will become the Blood of Christ during the Liturgy.

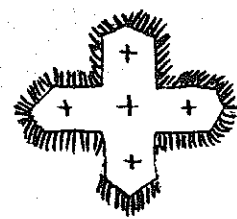
The Spear - The Longhi. Symbolic of the spear used by the soldier to see if Christ truly were dead. Blood and water came out of the wound inflicted by the soldier.

The Spoon - The Lavis. Used to administer Holy Communion to the faithful. Symbolic of the pincers which a Seraphim (angel) used to place a piece of coal in the mouth of the prophet Isaiah to cleanse him of his sins during a vision of the throne of God. In similar fashion the Spoon is used to place Holy Communion in our mouths to unite us with Christ and cleanse us of our sins.

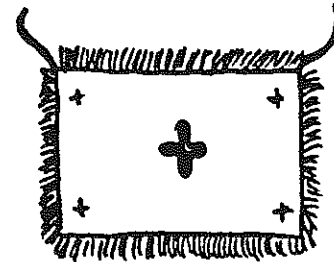
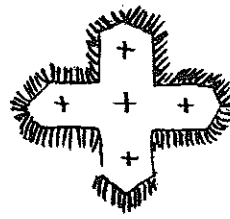
The Asterisk - The Astir or Star. This is two metal pieces formed in the shape of a cross and bent to stand on the Paten. It symbolizes the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem and which appeared over the stable in which Christ was born.

The Kalimata - The two veils cut in the shape of a cross and used to cover the Paten and the Chalice. They symbolize the swaddling clothes that the Virgin Mary used to wrap the infant Jesus.

The Aera - The largest of the three coverings placed over the Paten and Chalice. It symbolizes the sheet used to wrap the body of Christ when it was taken down from the Cross. The priest places this on his shoulders during the Great Entrance. It is also a symbol of the stone that was used to seal the Tomb of Christ. The Aera is shaken over the Paten and the Chalice during the Creed, symbolizing the rolling away of the stone.



The Kalimata



The Aera

The Exapteryga - Two circular banners having depicted on them the six-winged angels. Exapteryga means six-winged. In the early Church, the banners were smaller and used to fan away insects during the Liturgy. The Seraphim guard the Throne of God, much as the Exapteryga guard the Altar Table, the Throne of God upon the Earth.

The Platytera - The icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ as a child, usually found on the back wall of the Altar.

The Pantocrator - The icon of Christ usually found in the dome (ceiling) of the church. The word means 'He who holds everything.'



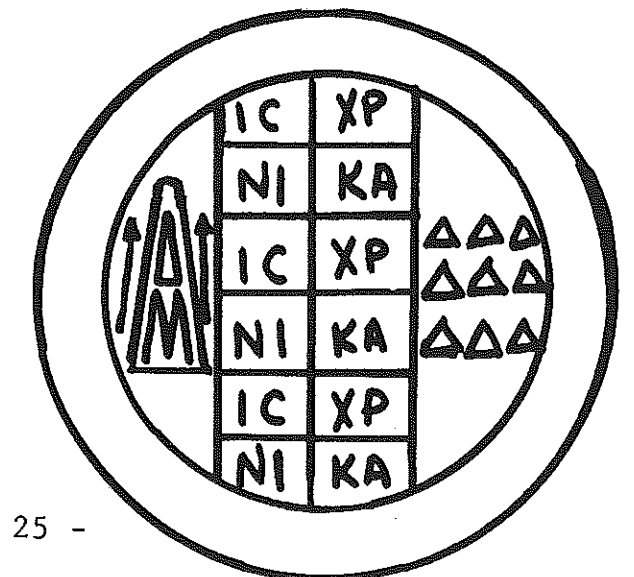
VII. HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME SERVICES

As an Altar Boy, you should be familiar with the names and purposes of some of the various services celebrated in the Church. Here are some of them -----

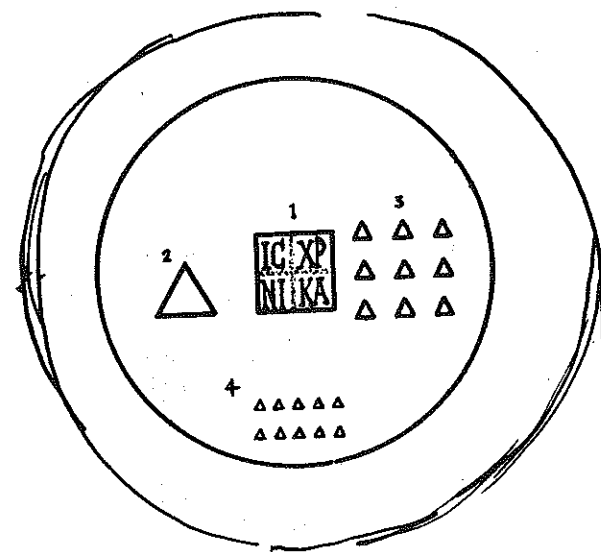
The Orthros - Also called Matins. It is the morning prayer service, usually held before the Divine Liturgy. On Sundays, during the Orthros and following the reading of one of the eleven Resurrection Gospels, the priest brings out the Holy Gospel Book for the people to kiss. Also, during the Orthros, the Proskomide Service is usually celebrated.

The Proskomide Service - This service is celebrated on the Prothesis Table (to the left of the Altar Table) and symbolizes the birth and early years of Christ's life (the icon of the Nativity or Birth of Christ is found at the Prothesis Table). During this service the holy bread and the wine that will be used for the Divine Liturgy are prepared and made ready for the procession that will see them carried to the Altar Table. As part of that preparation, a square piece from the center of the prosforo (holy bread) is cut and is called the Amno or Lamb of God. This piece represents Jesus Christ who came willingly to sacrifice Himself on the Cross for our salvation. The letters IC XP NI KA mean --- IC - Iesus - Jesus, XP - Christos - Christ, NIKA - conquers. In addition, small particles of the prosforo are cut and offered in behalf of the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the saints, the angels, the living and the dead. These particles are positioned on the Paten (see diagram on next page) and placed in the Chalice during the time of Holy Communion.

The Prosforo Seal



Paten Prepared for the Liturgy



1. Square called "Lamb" signifying Jesus Christ the Lamb of God
2. Triangular Portion representing Mother of God
3. Triangles for the Angelic Host and Saints
4. Portions for the Living and the Dead

The Divine Liturgy - Liturgy means the 'work of the people.' The faithful gather together to reenact the life of Christ and share in Holy Communion, in His Body and Blood. The bread and wine, once consecrated, in a mystical and miraculous way actually become the Body and Blood of Christ. There are a number of Liturgies that are celebrated during the year ---

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Written by St. Basil the Great in the fourth century. It is celebrated ten times during the year -

- The five Sundays of Great Lent
- Holy Thursday Morning
- Holy Saturday Morning
- Eve of Christmas

- Eve of Epiphany
- St. Basil's Day - January 1

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom (the Golden-Mouthed) revised and shortened the Liturgy of St. Basil. His Liturgy has been used since the fifth century and is the one usually celebrated throughout the year.

The Divine Liturgy of St. James

Written by St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, it is the earliest Liturgy of the Orthodox Church. It is extremely long and is celebrated on the feastday of St. James - October 23.

The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

Written by St. Gregory in the sixth century, it is celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays of Great Lent and on the first three days of Holy Week. It is called 'Pre-Sanctified' because the bread and wine are consecrated on the previous Sunday. Thus, the Body and Blood of Christ is kept in reserve from the previous Sunday and is distributed to the faithful through this Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Basically it is a Vespers Service with some additions taken from the Liturgy. Liturgies are not permitted to be celebrated during the weekdays of Great Lent in order to retain the solemn, mournful aspect of Lent. Thus the development of the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy.

The Vespers Service - This is the evening prayer service of the Orthodox Church, just as the Orthros is the morning prayer service. The beginning of the new Liturgical day takes place with the celebration of the Vespers Service.

Some points to have in mind concerning the celebration of services and the position of the priest ---

- Whenever the priest is facing the Altar, he is representing the people before God (recall that the Altar Table is the Throne of God).
- Whenever the priest is facing the people, he is representing God to the people - either blessing them (bestowing God's grace upon them) or proclaiming the Word of God (either by reading from the Gospel or preaching the sermon).

VIII. BEHAVIOR IN THE ALTAR

As an Altar Boy, you must be careful about your behavior in the Altar. Remember - the Altar is the holiest area of the Church. Here are some things to keep in mind ---

THINGS THAT ARE NOT PROPER FOR AN ALTAR BOY TO DO

- Chewing gum.
- Talking (this should be done only when absolutely necessary and only for giving instructions for processions, etc.).
- Laughing, pushing, making faces, smiling, winking, combing hair, playing with your robe, incense, candles and candle wax.
- Leaving your position (unless to prepare for a procession or carry out your duties).
- Talking or moving about the Altar when the priest and other Altar Boys are outside the Altar during a procession.
- Walking in front of the Altar Table.
- Walking through the Royal Gate (Oraia Pele).
- Walking too fast while going to designated positions in the Altar or preparing for a procession.
- Standing with your hands clasped behind your back.
- Dripping wax from a candle onto the floor.

THINGS THAT ARE PROPER FOR AN ALTAR BOY TO DO

- Holding your hands by your side when standing.
- Making the sign of the Cross whenever going behind the Altar Table.
- Kissing the priest's hand when he blesses your robe and whenever you hand him anything or take anything from his hand.

- Holding the censer by the top rings and not by the chains when handing it to the priest.
- Making the sign of the Cross at the appropriate times during services (when the name of the Virgin Mary or the Holy Trinity is mentioned, at each singing of the 'Aghios O Theos,' etc.).
- Neatly hanging up your robe following services.
- Quietly helping to clean up following services.
- Quietly reciting the Creed and the Lord's Prayer at the appropriate times during the Liturgy. Altar Boys should have the Creed and the Lord's Prayer memorized either in Greek, English or both. See the Greek and English texts below.

Η ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· Ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου γεννηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον· καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν· καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ρύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

IN ENGLISH PHONETICS

Pater imon o en tis ouranis, aghiasthito to onoma Sou; eltheto i vasilias Sou; ghenithito to thelima Sou os en ourano ke epi tis ghis. Ton arton imon ton epiouision dos imin simeron; ke afes imin ta ofilimata imon os ke imis afiemen tis ofiletes imon; ke mi iseneghis imas is pirasmon, alla rise imas apo tou ponirou.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

ΤΟ ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ

Πιστεύω εἰς ἓνα Θεόν, Πατέρα Παντοκράτορα, Ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων. Φῶς ἐκ Φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινόν, ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.

Τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν, κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν Οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.

Σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα, καὶ ταφέντα.

Καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, κατὰ τὰς Γραφάς.

Καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τὸ Κύριον, τὸ Ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν.

Εἰς Μίαν, Ἁγίαν, Καθολικὴν καὶ Ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

Ὁμολογῶ Ἐν Βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Προσδοκῶ Ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν.

Καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.

Ἄ μ ἦ ν.

IN ENGLISH PHONETICS

1. Pistevo is ena Theon, Patera Pantokratora, Piitin ouranou ke ghis, oraton te panton ke aoraton.

2. Ke is ena Kyrion i-isoun Hriston ton ion tou Theou, ton monogheni, ton ek tou Patros ghenithenta pro panton ton eonon. Fos ek fotos, Theon alithinon ek Theou alithinou, ghenithenta ou piithenta, omoousion to Patri, di ou ta panta egheneto.

3. Ton di imas tous anthropous ke dia tin imeteran soti-rian, katelthonta ek ton ouranon ke sarkothenta ek Pnevma-tos Aghiou ke Marias tis Parthenou ke enanthropisanta.

4. Stavrothenta te iper imon epi Pontiou Pilatou, ke pa-thonta ke tafenta.

5. Ke anastanta ti triti imera kata tas Ghrafas.

6. Ke anelthonta is tous ouranous, ke kathezomenon ek dexion tou Patros.

7. Ke palin erhomenon meta doxis krine zontas ke nekrous; ou tis Vasilias ouk este telos.

8. Ke is to Pnevma to Aghion, to Kyrion, to Zoopion, to ek tou Patros ekporevomenon, to sin Patri ke io sinproski-noumenon ke sindoxazomenon, to lalisan dia ton profiton.

9. Is Mian, Aghian, Katholikin ke Apostolikin Ekklesian.

10. Omologo en Vaptisma is afesin amartion.

11. Prosdoko Anastasin nekron.

12. Ke zoin tou mellontos eonos. Amin.

THE CREED

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of everything visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all Ages. Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not made, co-substantial with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became Man.

Crucified for our salvation under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried.

And arose on the third day according to the Scriptures.

And ascended into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who, together with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke through the Prophets.

I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge One Baptism for the remission of sins.

I await for the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the Ages to come.

A m e n.

IX. PROCESSIONS

You probably know how to go out in procession during the various entrances and readings of the Divine Liturgy. While there are a number of different ways processions can be done, we will look at a few of them for you to consider.

The Small Entrance - The First Procession

Symbolism: The beginning of Christ's ministry/preaching. The priest carries the Holy Gospel Book which contains a record of Christ's ministry and preaching.

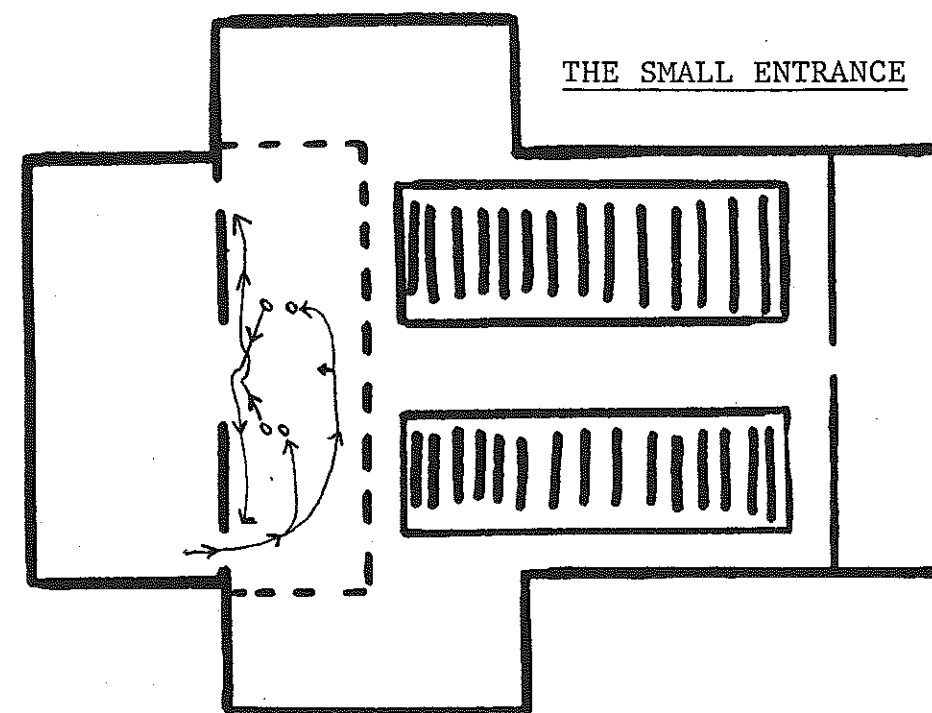
Items to be Carried: Four Candles

Directions: As the priest finishes the second series of petitions and the choir (or chanter) is singing 'O Monogenis Yios,' prepare for this procession. Then when the priest finishes the third series of petitions, kisses the Gospel Book, picks it up and proceeds to walk behind the Altar Table, the North Gate is opened and the procession begins to exit the Altar.

The first two Altar Boys proceed to the middle-back of the Solea and, one at a time, turn, face the Altar and bow and then proceed to their positions. The third and fourth Altar Boys proceed directly to their positions.

After the priest re-enters the Altar, the Altar Boys proceed, in pairs of two, to the middle-front of the Solea, face the Altar, bow and criss-cross (the one on the right goes in front of the one on the left) with the one on the right going into the Altar by way of the North Gate and the one on the left taking a step back and going in by way of the South Gate.

(See the diagram on the next page.)



The Gospel Lesson - The Second Procession

Symbolism: The Word of God is preached to the faithful.

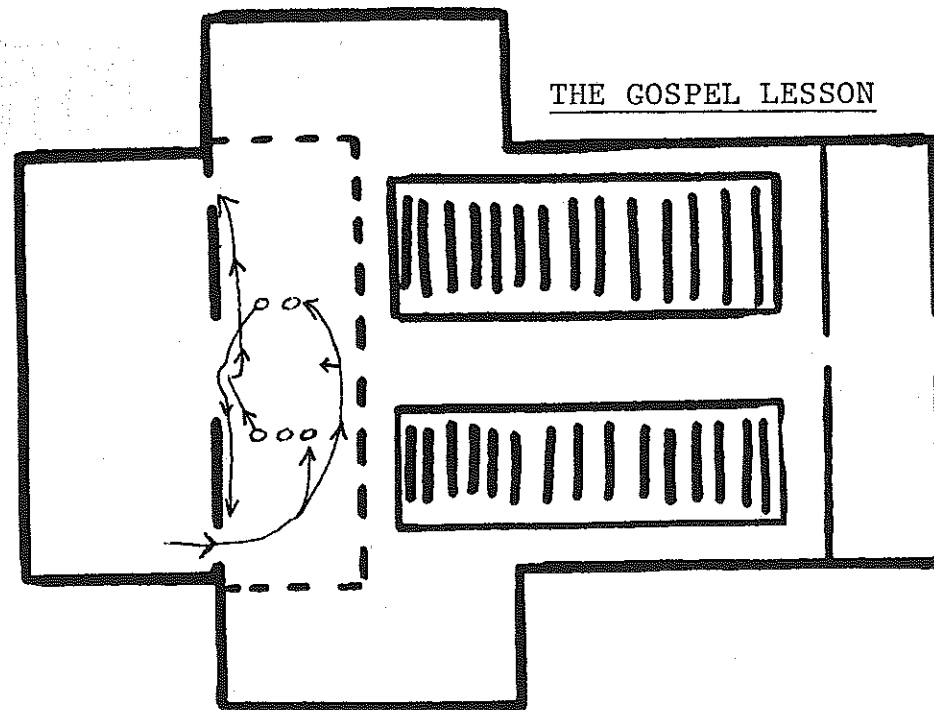
Items to be Carried: Four Candles, Two Exapteryga, Processional Cross.

Directions: Prepare for the procession at the Epistle reading. When the priest says, "Sophia, orthoi, akousomen tou aghiou evangeliou, eirini pasi," then begin the procession. The first two candles and the first banner proceed to the middle-back of the Solea, turn to the Altar, bow and take their positions; the cross, second banner and the last two candles proceed directly to their positions.

Upon completion of the Gospel lesson, the first Altar Boy closest to the Altar on either side then proceeds to the front-middle of the Solea. There the two Altar Boys face the Altar, bow together and criss-cross. The one on the right goes in front of the one on the left into the North Gate. The one on the left takes a step back and goes in back of the one on the right into the South Gate.

The second pair of candle holders follow, then the banners. Finally, the cross proceeds alone, bows and re-enters the Altar through the South Gate.

Please note that this procession will change slightly if a deacon is assisting in celebrating the Divine Liturgy.



The Great Entrance - The Third Procession

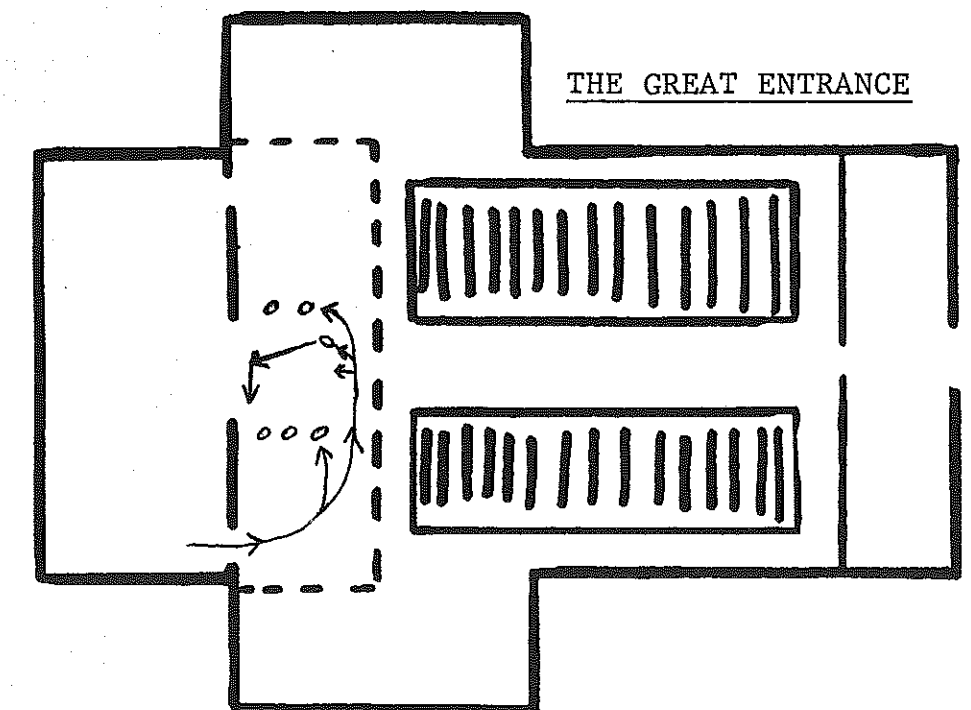
Symbolism: The entry of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Items to be Carried: Four candles, Two Exapteryga, Processional Cross, Thimiato (Censer)

Directions: Upon re-entry from the Gospel lesson, prepare for the Great Entrance. While the priest is reading the prayers in preparation for the Great Entrance, the Altar Boy to take the Censer should prepare the incense to be used. Following the censuring by the priest of the Altar, icons and people and upon his signal, the procession begins.

The first two candles and the banner slowly proceed to the middle-back of the Solea, turn to the Altar, bow and proceed to their positions. The cross, second banner, third and fourth candles proceed to their positions directly. The Altar Boy holding the Thimiato while walking backwards and censuring the priest holding the Holy Gifts, precedes the priest to the middle-back of the Solea, pausing there a moment. Then he precedes the priest to the middle-front of the Solea. Upon the priest's re-entry into the Altar, the Altar Boy, at the middle-front of the Solea, faces the Altar, bows and returns into the Altar through the North Gate and proceeds to the left side of the Altar Table where he censes the 'Aera' - the covering the priest takes off his shoulders. Then he hands the thimiato to the priest (and kisses his hand) and takes it back (kissing his hand again) when he is finished.

The other Altar Boys return as they did following the Gospel lesson.

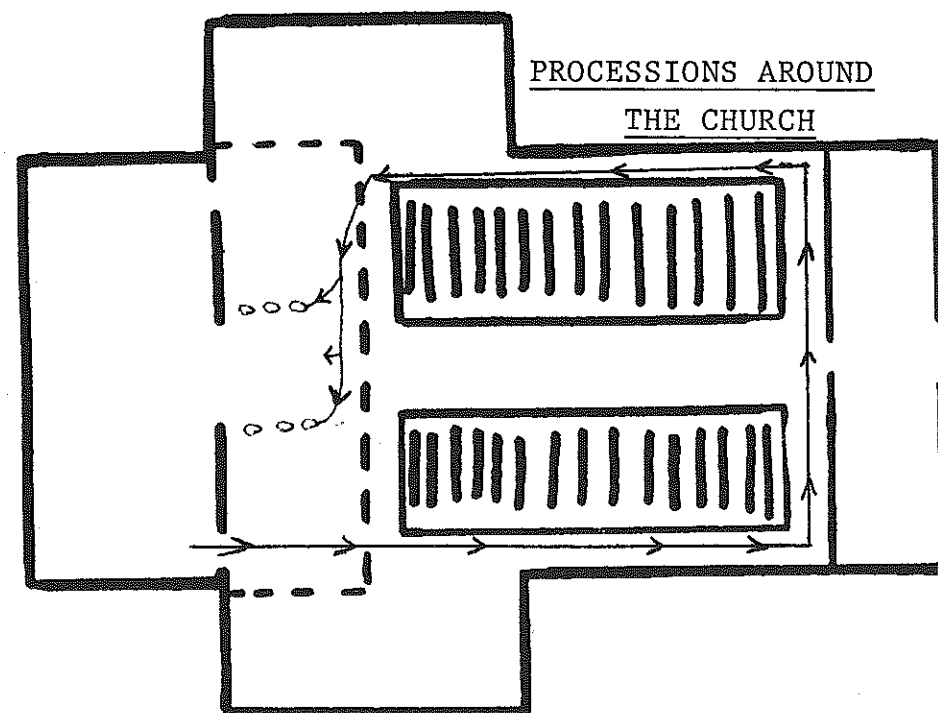


PROCESSIONS AROUND THE CHURCH

At times, most especially during special Feastdays (as September 14, the First and Third Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, etc.) one of the processions to be held that day (usually the one toward the end of the service) will circle the church. Here is one possible way that this might happen ---

- Upon exiting from the North Gate, the procession will go down the side aisle of the church.
- At the back of the church, the procession will turn and go across the back aisle, going past the middle aisle, until reaching the side aisle.
- The procession will then return to the Solea by way of the side aisle.
- The Altar Boys upon reaching the Solea will take up their positions.

During some of these processions, it is customary for the procession to stop so that the priest can offer various petitions. It is always best to check for the appropriate instructions as to where and when to stop.



The Memorial Service - Mnemosino

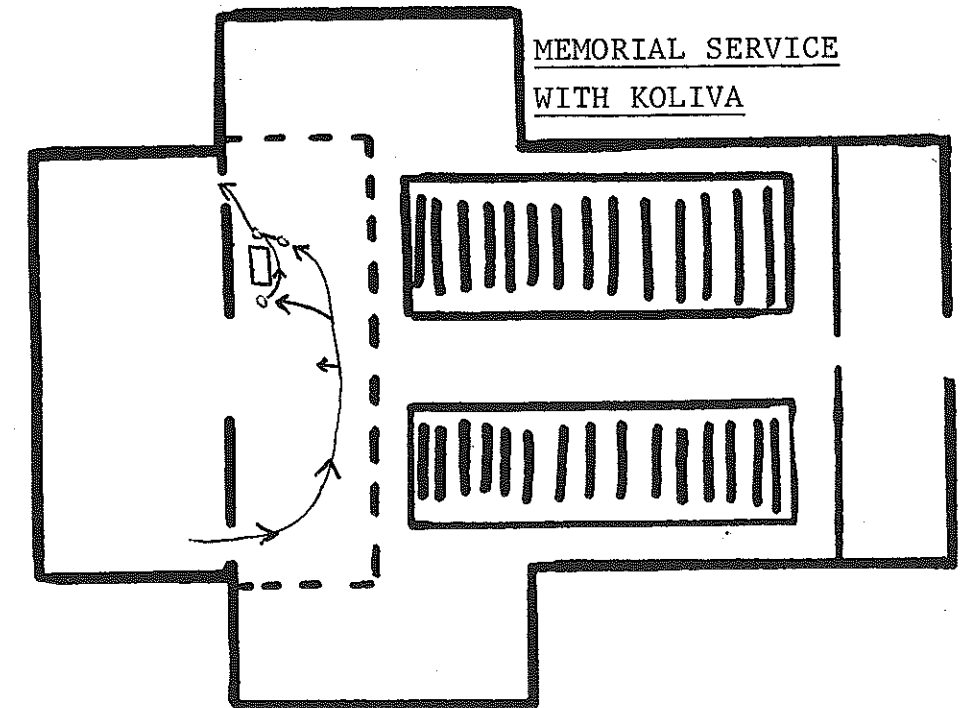
Symbolism: Prayers are offered by the living for the well-being of the soul of someone who has died. These prayers help the soul of that person feel somewhat refreshed.

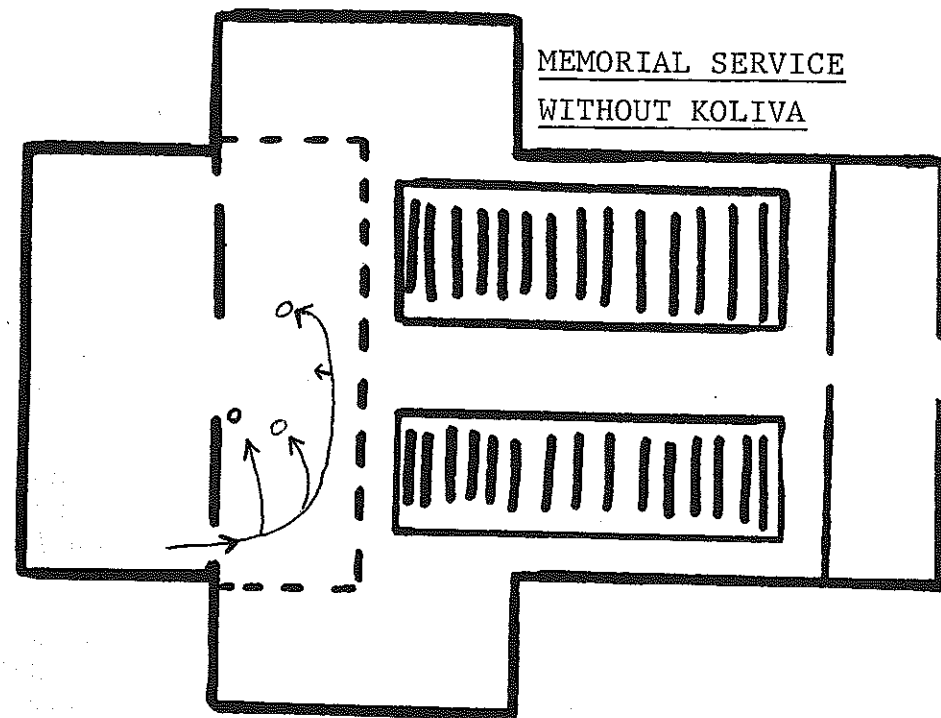
Items to be Carried: Two candles, Thimiato

Directions: The procession exits the North Gate at the priest's signal. All three of the Altar Boys proceed to the middle-back of the Solea, face the Altar, bow and then proceed to the table on which the Koliva has been placed. The two candles stand on either side, the Thimiato on the right side of the table. If the memorial service will be celebrated without Koliva, then the two candles proceed as they would for the Small Entrance. The Thimiato takes up a position at the foot of the steps leading up into the Altar (on the left as you look at the Altar from the Solea).

Following the service, and if there is Koliva, the Altar Boys proceed directly into the South Gate. If there is not any Koliva, then the Thimiato bows at the middle-front of the Solea and returns by way of the North Gate. The candles proceed as they would for the Small Entrance.

(See diagrams below and on next page.)





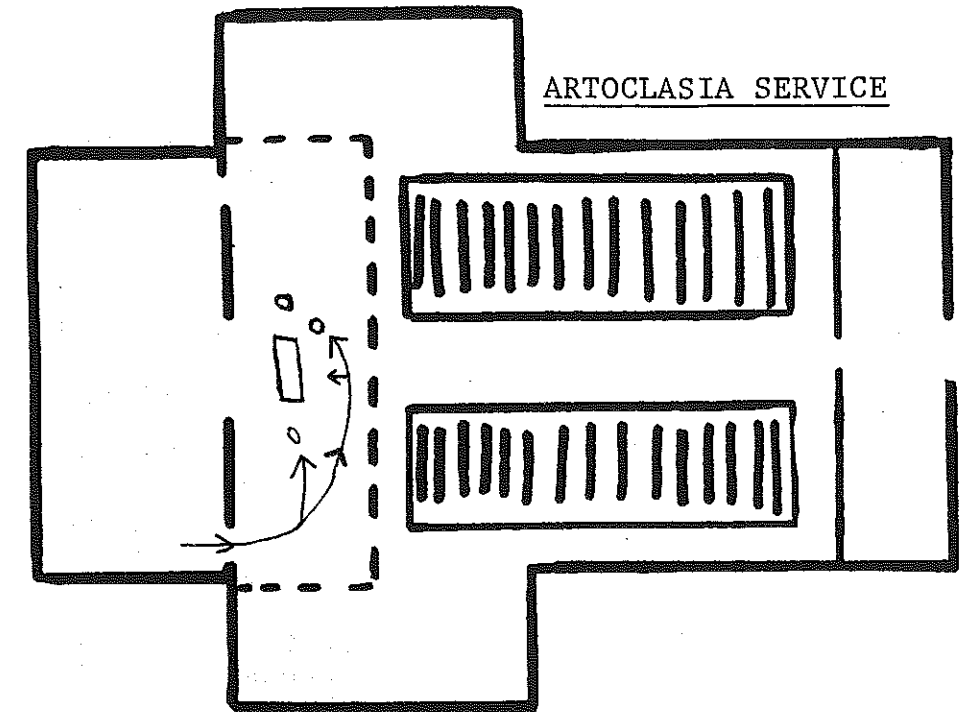
The Blessing of the Loaves Service - Artoclasia

Symbolism: Prayers are offered for the health and well-being of the family requesting the service. The five loaves of bread are symbolic of the five loaves Christ used to feed the 5,000 men on the Mount of Olives.

Items to be Carried: Two (or Four) Candles, Thimiato.

Directions: The table on which the five loaves of bread are placed is positioned in the middle of the Solea. Proceed at the signal from the priest as for the Small Entrance, with the Thimiato, however, taking up a position on the right side of the table, next to the priest. At the conclusion of the service, the Thimiato will proceed to the middle-front of the Solea, bow and return by way of the North Gate. The candles return as they do for the Small Entrance.

(See diagram on next page.)



Hierarchical Liturgy - When the Bishop is Present

When the bishop is present and is to celebrate at the Divine Liturgy, please note the following highlights and additions ---

- Two Altar Boys (unless deacons are present, or, unless two of the priests will be holding them) will be required to hold the bishop's candles. One of the candle holders has three candles (symbolic of the Holy Trinity), the other two candles (symbolic of the two natures of Christ - the human and the divine). The Altar Boy holding the three-candle holder always stands to the Bishop's right, the one holding the two-candle holder, to the bishop's left.
- This will first take place toward the end of the Orthros Service (following the Gospel lesson). The two Altar Boys, at the appropriate time, will proceed to the Bishop's throne by way of the North

Gate and take up their positions on either side of the Throne. Shortly, the bishop will proceed to the middle of the Solea. The Altar Boys are to follow and, as the bishop moves from one icon to another, are to accompany him, standing, the one holding the three-candle holder to the bishop's right, the one holding the two-candle holder to the bishop's left. At the conclusion of the bishop's prayer, he will take only the three-candle holder and bless the people. When the bishop enters the Altar, the Altar Boys are to return to the Altar through the two side gates.

- Prior to the Liturgy, after the bishop is vested, an Altar Boy should carry a pitcher of water, a water basin and a towel to the bishop and pour water on his hands, at the appropriate time, for the bishop to wash his hands.
- The bishop's candles accompany him next during the Doxology, as he censes. In this case they stand opposite the bishop as he is censuring. First, they stand behind the Altar Table (the one holding the three-candle holder always stands to the right of the one with the two-candle holder). When the bishop moves to the right side of the Altar Table, they then move to the left (opposite him). When the bishop moves behind the Altar Table, they exit by way of the North Gate and proceed to the middle of the Solea where they face the Altar, standing next to each other. When the bishop censes them they bow their heads. When the bishop re-enters the Altar, they bow and go into the Altar, the one on the right (with the three-candle holder) through the South Gate, the one on the left (with the two-candle holder) through the North Gate. They, thus, do not criss-cross.
- Shortly the bishop will proceed to the Throne and the candle holders are to exit the North Gate and proceed to take their positions next to the bishop. They will remain there until the time for the Small Entrance.
- When, at that time, the bishop moves to the middle of the Solea, they are to follow along. The bishop will take the candles from them (perhaps having one of them hold his staff). He will (usually) return the candles to them before he enters into the Altar. As soon as the bishop proceeds into the Altar, they are to proceed through the side gates as well and take up their positions for the censuring by the bishop.

- Next, during the singing of the 'Aghios o Theos' they may be needed to proceed to the middle of the Solea to await the giving to them of the bishop's candles. The bishop will be holding them and blessing the people. Upon finishing, he will hand them to the Altar Boys who will take them (kissing his hand) and return to the Altar by the side gates and place the candles on the Altar Table.
- At the Gospel lesson, the two Altar Boys will hold the bishop's candles, preceding the priest (or deacon) who will be reading the lesson from the pulpit (or bishop's throne). The two Altar Boys will stand on either side of the priest (or deacon) and upon the completion of the lesson will accompany him back to the steps leading up into the Altar, where the bishop will receive the Gospel Book.
- At the Great Entrance, the Bishop will cense and the Altar Boys will carry his candles (as already mentioned for censuring). During the Great Entrance, the bishop's candles will take up a position on either side of the stairs leading up to the Royal Gate. They come out in procession just before the censer and return right after the censer.
- At the Great Entrance also, the Altar Boy holding the Thimiato (Censer) will, as soon as the priest reaches the middle-back of the Solea, proceed to the bishop (who will be standing at the Royal Gate), and hand him the Thimiato (and kiss his hand). The bishop will return the Thimiato. He will in a few minutes take it again a second time. As soon as the priests enter the Altar, the procession concludes as usual.

It would be best to hold a practice session with your priest before the bishop is to visit your church, just to make sure you understand all the different things that will be taking place during the service.

X. OTHER DUTIES OF AN ALTAR BOY

Aside from participating in processions, there are a number of other duties that you are expected to perform as an Altar Boy. Here are some of them ---.

The Thimiato

The Censer should be watched carefully. Make sure that the charcoal does not burn down so low that incense cannot be placed on it. If it does need a new piece of charcoal, carefully light one and place it quickly inside the Thimiato.

Incense should be carefully placed on the charcoal only when needed. Incense is very expensive, so be careful how you use it. Here are some times the priest will need the Thimiato ---

- Shortly after the Gospel lesson during the Orthros Service.
- At the conclusion of the Proskomide Service.
- At the Great Entrance.
- Following the Consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ (right after kneeling).
- Immediately after the priest offers Holy Communion to the people. (Keep in mind that after the priest returns the censer to you, you should wait and lead the way back to the Prothesis Table for him, while slowly and quietly censuring.)

Cutting the Prosforo into Antidoron

Antidoron means 'instead of the gift' and is the name given the bread that is specially-blessed and distributed at the end of the Divine Liturgy to the people who did not receive Holy Communion ('the gift').

After the Great Entrance, begin quietly to cut the prosforo (the bread) into small cubes. Following the Consecration of the gifts (after kneeling), bring in the Antidoron and quietly stand by the left side of the Altar Table. The priest will take and bless the Antidoron.

The Zeon

Following the Great Entrance, also begin preparing the hot water - the Zeon - that will be used by the priest as he prepares Holy Communion. Once the water boils, turn the stove off or keep it on a very low setting. The water should not be too 'hot.' After the Lord's Prayer, carefully pour it into the container to be used making sure not to fill it to the very top - leave at least 1/8 of an inch. When the priest says "Proschomen" slowly walk behind the Altar Table to the right side of the Altar Table, extend your arms and hold the Zeon over the Altar Table. Make sure the handle is facing the priest.

The Zeon represents the fervor (zeal) of the saints. It is a symbol of the zeal our faith should have. Did you know that water is used with wine for preparing Holy Communion as a symbol of the time when the soldier pierced the side of Christ with his spear (after Christ had died on the Cross) and blood and water came out of the wound? Also, in the time of Christ, it was the custom to mix a little water with wine so that the wine would not be too strong. No doubt the wine used at the Last Supper had some water also added to it in accordance with this practice.

Assisting at Holy Communion

There are two Altar Boys who assist at the time for Holy Communion. One holds the red Communion cloth and assists the priest in making sure the people receiving Holy Communion place the cloth under their chin.

The second Altar Boy holds the Prosforo (holy bread). Those receiving Holy Communion take a piece of the holy bread to help them make sure that all the little particles from the Holy Communion they received are swallowed.

The Antidoron

At the completion of the Liturgy, the Altar Boys hold the Antidoron. Make sure you hold the tray high enough for the priest to reach.

Ushering

In some churches on Sundays, and in some churches during the better-attended church holy days, Altar Boys might be called upon to assist in ushering the people. Make sure you usher in a quiet and orderly manner, if called upon to do so. Ushering basically means to tell people when it is their turn to go up to the Solea to receive the Antidoron.

There will be other tasks and duties that you will also be performing (like hanging up your robe following services and also helping clean up after services). At all times, you are expected to follow the directions and orders of the priest and the leader or captain of the Altar Boys. Following instructions immediately is absolutely necessary for an Altar Boy.

Remember, God has chosen you to serve Him. You should do your best to serve Him faithfully and obediently.

XI. THE TONSURE OF AN ALTAR BOY AS A READER

Altar Boys undergo a trial period during which they learn what they are expected to do and how they are to behave in the Altar. There are some boys who discover, once they find out more about being an Altar Boy, that they really were not chosen to serve the Lord in that way. At times, the priest may find that some boys are just not fully able to assist him as Altar Boys. That is why there is a trial period.

Once your priest feels you are ready to become a full-fledged Altar Boy, then he will recommend your name to the bishop. The bishop will probably arrange for your tonsure as a 'Reader' the next time he is to visit your church.

The service for the 'Tonsure of a Reader' is a short one that can only be celebrated by the bishop. At the appropriate time, you will go out and stand in front of the bishop (together with any other Altar Boys who are also to be tonsured). You will be wearing your robe and will be holding in your hands the 'Orarion' or strap (which will be neatly folded). The bishop will ask you to say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Then you will kneel and he will read the prayer (see next page) invoking upon you the Holy Spirit.

After the prayer, he will cut your hair in the form of a cross (just as it happened when you were baptized) as a symbol of your gift of sacrifice to God at this holy moment in your life. Then he will place your Orarion over your neck as a symbol of your coming under the yoke of the priesthood and as a symbol of your dedication to serving God. While doing this, the bishop will proclaim "Axios" which means "worthy" and all the people in church will respond by saying "Axios" as an expression of their agreement and joy.

The bishop will later send a certificate to you stating that you have been tonsured a 'Reader.'

The Prayer for the Tonsure of a Reader

O Lord, God Almighty, elect this Your servant and sanctify him; grant unto him the ability to study and read Your divine words with all wisdom and understanding, while protecting him in a blameless life. Through the mercy and compassion and love of mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Παντοκράτωρ, ἐκλεξαι τὸν δούλον σου τοῦτον, καὶ ἀγιάσον αὐτόν· καὶ δὸς αὐτῷ, μετὰ πάσης σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως, τῶν θείων σου λογίων τὴν μελέτην καὶ ἀνάγνωσιν ποιῆσθαι, διαφυλάττων αὐτόν ἐν ἀμέμπτῳ πολιτείᾳ. Ἐλέει καὶ οἰκτιρμοῖς, καὶ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Υἱοῦ, μεθ' οὗ εὐλογητός εἶ, σὺν τῷ παναγίῳ, καὶ ἀγαθῷ, καὶ ζωοποιῷ σου Πνεύματι, νῦν, καὶ αἰεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων..

XII. EPILOGUE

Now that you have gone through The Altar Boy's Guidebook, you have seen and read quite a bit about what an Altar Boy does and why. You may have had lots of questions. Hopefully, they were all answered. If you have questions that you think of in the weeks and months ahead, ask your priest after services - he will be happy to answer them for you.

Remember that you have been called by God to serve Him as an Altar Boy. You have a special, important and holy role to play, not only when you are in the Altar, but also when you are at home or at school. You do not stop being an Altar Boy the minute you leave the Altar. That is why it is important for you to read the Bible regularly and discuss it with your friends, to pray as much as you can and to behave properly wherever you are. It is also important for you to make fasting, especially on Wednesday (the day Judas betrayed Christ) and Friday (the day Christ was crucified), and receiving Holy Communion a regular part of your life. Being an Altar Boy means being concerned about serving God as much as you can, wherever you are - at home, at play, at school, at church.

It is a great honor to be an Altar Boy. Not everyone is chosen to serve the Lord in this special way.

Congratulations and God bless you!

May God the Father, Who has called you to serve His Son in proclaiming His Message of Salvation, inspire you always with the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

AMEN.

GLOSSARY

ACOLYTE

An Altar attendant, coming from the Greek word 'akolouthos' meaning attendant or follower. It can also be traced to the Greek word 'akolytos' meaning free (from stain or sin) to enter the Holy of Holies. They assisted during the celebration of services in the early Church. Today, Altar Boys perform those duties. Altar Boys are symbolic of the angels who are the attendants of God.

AERA

Largest of the three coverings placed on over the Paten and Chalice. Symbolizes the sheet used to wrap the body of Christ when it was taken down from the Cross. The priest places it over his shoulders during the Great Entrance. It is also a symbol of the stone that was used to seal the Tomb of Christ. During the recitation of the Creed, it is shaken over the Paten and Chalice, symbolizing the rolling away of the stone from the Tomb, as a result of the earthquake.

ALTAR

Called 'Ieron' in Greek, meaning 'holy.' The place of sacrifice. Heaven itself. In the Orthodox Church it is the area just behind the Iconostasion. It faces East. Only bishops, priests, deacons and other members of the clergy (Altar Boys, Readers, etc.) are permitted inside the Altar.

ALTAR TABLE

Called 'Aghia Trapeza' in Greek, meaning the 'Holy Table'. Upon the Altar Table the bloodless sacrifice is offered - bread and wine are consecrated and miraculously, mysteriously become the Body and Blood of Christ. At the consecration of a church, relics of saints (fragments from their bones) are placed within the Altar Table, as a reminder that the Church was built upon the blood of her martyrs, and also, to carry on the early tradition of the Church of celebrating the Liturgy over the tombs of the saints and martyrs.

AMVON

The pulpit, where the sermon is preached and, at times, the Gospel lesson proclaimed.

AMEN

From the Hebrew, meaning 'truly' or 'certainly.' Equivalent to saying "so be it."

AMNO

The Lamb of God. Piece of the Prosforo that represents Christ who came willingly to sacrifice Himself on the Cross for us.

ANALOGION

The stand used by the chanters.

ANTIDORON

From the Greek 'anti' and 'doron' meaning 'instead of the gift.' This is a reference to the specially-blessed bread given to those who did not participate in receiving Holy Communion.

ANTIMENSION

Means 'in place of the table.' A rectangular cloth that when folded is placed underneath the Gospel Book on the Altar Table. On it are icons of Christ being placed in the Tomb, the four Evangelists, angels, etc. Within the cloth are sewn relics of saints. As a result, the Antimension is a portable Altar Table and is used whenever a Liturgy is to be celebrated at a place where a consecrated Altar Table is not available.

APOSTLE

Reference to one of the twelve disciples of Christ. The names of the twelve apostles are: Andrew, James, John, Philip, James (of Alphaeus), Thomas, Bartholomew (or Nathaniel), Matthew, Jude (or Thaddeus), Simon and Judas Iscariot (who was replaced by Matthias).

APOSTOLOS

The Book of Epistles. It contains the Epistle readings for each day of the Church year and is used by the chanters. These readings are taken from the Book of Acts, the Epistles of St. Paul and the General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude.

ARTOCLASIA

The Blessing of the Loaves Service. A service celebrated for the health and well-being of the family offering it. The five loaves of bread used are symbolic of the five loaves Christ used to feed the 5,000.

ASTERISK

The Astir or Star. Two pieces of metal formed in the shape of a cross and bent to stand on the Paten. It symbolizes the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem and which appeared over the stable in which Christ was born.

BANNERS

See Exapteryga.

BAPTISMAL FONT

A large circular tub that is filled with water and used for Baptisms.

BELL

In Greek 'kampana' - used to call the faithful to worship.

BEMA

Another name for the Altar, meaning platform (as the Altar is higher than the Solea and the Nave of the church.)

BISHOP'S THRONE

Located on the Solea, to the right as you look at the Altar. Used by the bishop when presiding at services. A visible reminder that the local church and the priest are subject to the bishop's authority and are to be obedient to him.

CATHOLIC

Means universal. In the Creed, the Church is referred to as being "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." Catholic here means that the Church is for all people, regardless of age, color or nationality.

CENSER

'Thimiato' in Greek. The container in which incense is burnt as an offering and symbol of prayer. On the chains of the Censer are twelve bells representing the twelve Apostles.

CHALICE

The cup where the wine and water are poured that will become the Blood of Christ during the Liturgy.

CHURCH

The building dedicated to God. It is called the dwelling place of God because the Body and Blood of Christ are always kept in the Tabernacle on the Altar Table.

COMMUNION, HOLY

The offering of the precious Body and Blood of Christ to the faithful.

CONSECRATION

The service setting a church building apart to be used for worshiping God. Relics of saints are placed in the Altar Table during this service.

CREED

The Nicene or the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Recited at every Liturgy. Contains the chief articles of the faith.

CRUCIFIX

The cross found behind the Altar Table with the body of Christ upon it.

DAYS OF THE WEEK - SPECIAL COMMEMORATIONS

Each day of the week is dedicated to a special commemoration -

Monday	-	The angels
Tuesday	-	St. John the Baptist & all the Prophets
Wednesday	-	The betrayal of Christ by Judas (fast day)
Thursday	-	The Apostles and St. Nicholas
Friday	-	The Crucifixion of Christ (fast day)
Saturday	-	The Martyrs and the Dead
Sunday	-	The Resurrection of Christ

DOGMA

Divine truth revealed by God and formulated by the Ecumenical Councils. The beliefs of the Orthodox Church.

EPIGONATION

Vestment worn by bishops and some priests. Symbolizes the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. Also symbolizes the towel worn by Christ and used to wash the Apostles' feet.

EPIMANIKIA

The cuffs worn by bishops, priests and deacons around their wrists. Symbol of the bonds used to tie Christ's hands when He was scourged. A reminder of how trust should be in God.

EPITAPHIOS

The specially-made tapestry on which is depicted the body of Christ as He was buried in the Tomb.

EPITRACHELION

The long vestment worn by bishops and priests around their neck. Symbol of the grace, power and authority of the priesthood. Symbol of the cross Christ carried. The little tassels at the bottom symbolize the souls entrusted to the bishop's or priest's spiritual care.

EUCCHARIST, HOLY

The Divine Liturgy. The offering of bread and wine and their miraculous change into the precious Body and Blood of Christ through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

EVANGELION

The Greek word for the Gospel Book. Contains the Gospel lessons for each day of the Church year.

EXAPTERYGA

Means six-winged. The two circular banners having depicted on them the six-winged angels. Symbols of the angels who guard the Throne of God.

FELONION

Priest's vestment that looks like a cape. Symbolizes the seamless robe Christ wore during His trial and just before His Crucifixion. A reminder of righteousness.

ICON

Paintings or pictures representing Christ, the Virgin Mary, angels or saints. Windows into Heaven.

ICONOSTASION

The icon screen that divides the Solea from the Altar.

INCENSE

Called 'Livani' in Greek. Burnt in the Thimiato (Censer). It symbolizes prayer rising to Heaven.

KALIMATA

The two veils cut in the shape of a cross and used to cover the Paten and Chalice. They symbolize the swaddling clothes that the Virgin Mary used to wrap the infant Jesus.

KANDILI

Greek name for vigil light.

KOLIVA

Boiled wheat used during Memorial Services. Symbol of the Resurrection.

LAMBADA

Greek word for the large candles used in church.

LIPSANA

See Relics.

LIVANI

See Incense.

LORD'S PRAYER

The prayer given by Jesus to His disciples and which is recited at every Divine Liturgy.

MANOUALIA

The large candle holders usually found in the Narthex and the Solea.

MATINS

See Orthros.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

In Greek called 'Mnemosino.' Special prayer service offered for Orthodox Christians who have died. Often done with Koliva (see Koliva).

NARTHEX

First part of the church one enters. Pangari, icons are found here. The preparation area for entering the church.

NAVE

The main part of the church where the people gather and participate (where the pews are). Between the Narthex and the Solea.

NORTH GATE

The door located at the left end of the Iconostasion, as you face and look at the Altar from the Solea.

ORTHROS

The morning prayer service of the Orthodox Church.

PANAGHIA

Means 'All-Holy' and is a name given to the Virgin Mary.

PANTOCRATOR

Means 'He who holds everything.' Usually used to refer to the icon of Christ usually found in the dome (ceiling) of the church building.

PATEN

The small tray or disk used to hold the bread to be offered and consecrated during the Liturgy. Symbolic of the manger the Virgin Mary laid the Christ child. During the Liturgy, it also is symbolic of the Tomb of Christ.

PISTEVO

Greek word for Creed (see Creed).

PLATYTERA

The icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ as a child, usually found on the back wall of the Altar.

PRESVYTERA

The title given to the wife of a priest in the Greek Orthodox Church.

PROSFORO

Name of the specially-prepared bread that is offered to be used during the Liturgy and from which the bread that will become the Body of Christ and the Antidoron are taken.

PROSKENITARION

The stand that holds the icons that is usually found in the Narthex.

PROSKOMIDE SERVICE

During this service the bread and the wine that will be offered and consecrated during the Liturgy are prepared. This service symbolizes the birth of Christ.

PULPIT

See Ambon.

RELICS

The remains of saints, fragments of which are imbedded in the Altar Table during the Consecration Service, and also sewn into the Antimension.

ROYAL GATE

In Greek, the 'Oraia Pele.' The middle gate of the Iconostasion leading into the Altar. Only bishops, priests and deacons are permitted to enter through it.

SANCTUARY or SACRISTY

Another name for the Altar (see Altar).

SOLEA

The area between the Nave and the Altar, usually raised a step or two. On the Solea are usually found the Bishop's Throne, the Analogion, the Pulpit and the Manoualia.

SOUTH GATE

The door located at the right end of the Iconostasion, as you face and look at the Altar from the Solea.

SPEAR

In Greek, the 'Longhi.' Symbolic of the spear used by the soldier to see if Christ were dead. Blood and water came out of the wound inflicted by the soldier.

SPONGE

The small sponge used with the Antimension to wipe the Paten and the Antimension during the preparation of Holy Communion. Also, the sponge used with the Chalice. Symbolic of the sponge used to offer Christ vinegar as He was on the Cross.

SPOON

In Greek, the 'Lavis.' Used to administer Holy Communion to the faithful. Symbolic of the pincers which a Seraphim (angel) used to place a piece of coal in the mouth of the prophet Isaiah to cleanse him of his sins during a vision of the throne of God. In similar fashion the Spoon is used to place Holy Communion in our mouths to unite us with Christ and cleanse us of our sins.

STICHARION

The long vestment worn by bishops, priests and deacons. Also, the Altar Boy's robe. Called the "robe of salvation and the garment of joy." Symbolic of purity, of a spotless life and of spiritual joy.

TABERNACLE or ARTOFORION

An Ark in which the Body and Blood of Christ are kept throughout the year for use in bringing Holy Communion to the sick. Located at the middle-back of the Altar.

THIMIATO

Greek word for Censer (see Censer).

ZEON

The hot water used by the priest as he prepares Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy. Represents the zeal of the saints.

ZONI

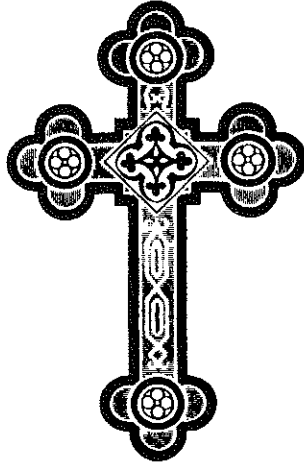
The belt worn by bishops and priests that is put on over the Sticharion and Epitrachelion. Symbolizes strength. Also symbolizes the cord used by the soldiers to tie the hands of Christ.

APPENDIX

ALTAR BOYS WORKSHOP

DAILY ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

7:30 - 8:15 a.m.	Wake-Up
8:15 - 8:30 a.m.	Chapel (Matins)
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Camp Clean-Up
10:00 - 10:45 a.m.	<u>First Workshop</u>
10:45 - 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 - 11:45 a.m.	<u>Second Workshop</u>
11:45 - 12:00 noon	Break
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Swimming
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Free Time
5:00 - 5:45 p.m.	<u>Study Period</u>
5:45 - 6:00 p.m.	Preparation for Chapel
6:00 - 6:30 p.m.	Chapel (Vespers)
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 - 8:45 p.m.	Athletics
8:45 - 9:00 p.m.	Break
9:00 - 9:45 p.m.	<u>Third Workshop</u>
9:45 - 10:00 p.m.	Break
10:00 - 11:00 p.m.	Preparation for Bed



THE ALTAR BOY'S GUIDEBOOK

A Workshop Manual
for
Greek Orthodox Altar Boys

by

Fr. Michael T. Kontogiorgis