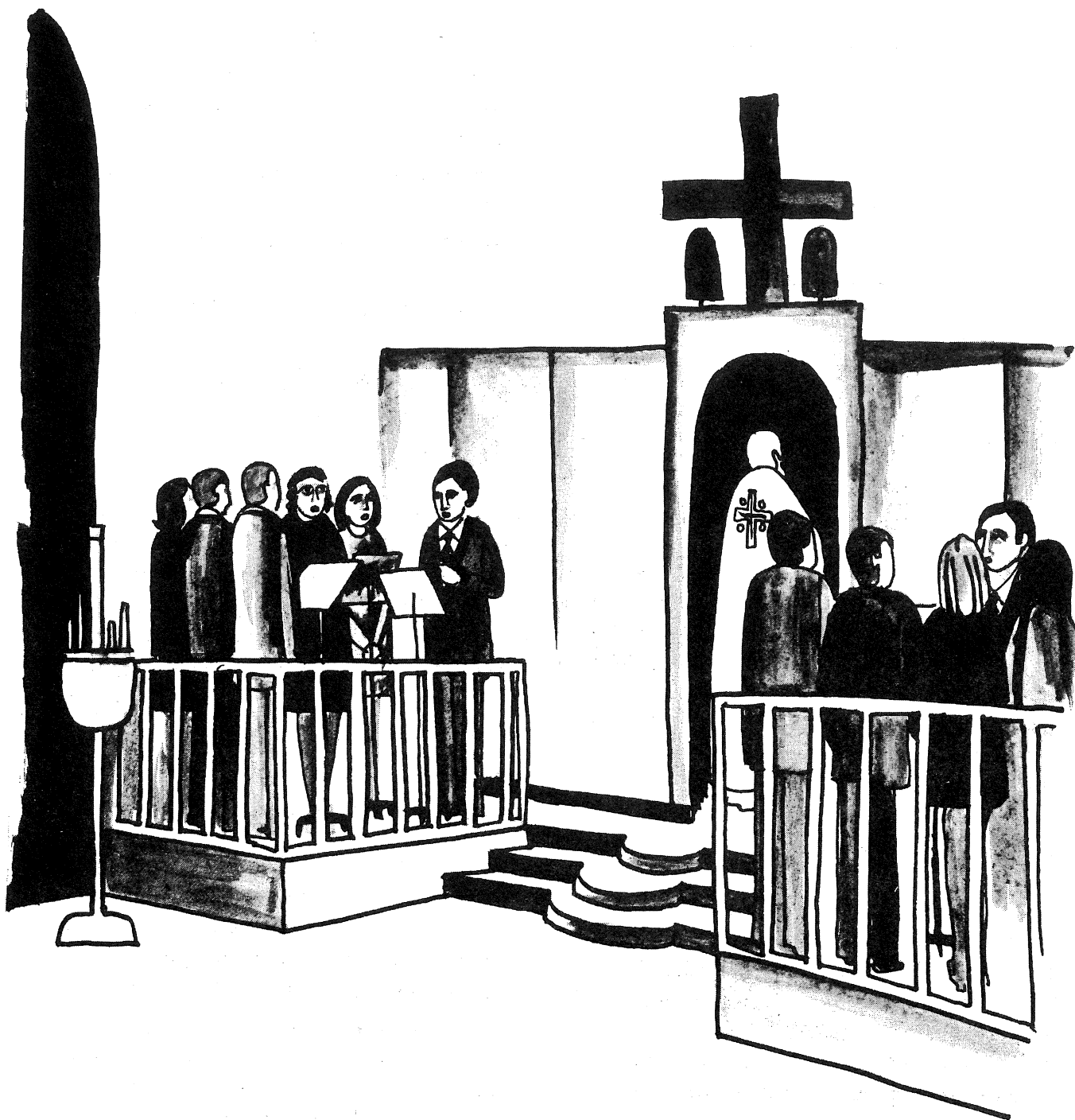


## 14. THE CHURCH SINGS PRAISES TO GOD

The Church began her preparation to meet God by praying for the whole world and for the people of God. These songs are usually very joyful. Many of them, especially on

feast days, come from the Psalms. Others praise God's Son, the Only-begotten Son of God, or His Mother, the Most-Holy Theotokos, or speak of the Resurrection or other feasts.



## Antiphons

At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, we sing three songs which are called Antiphons (because they used to be sung "antiphonally" by two choirs "answering" each other). Find the three Sunday antiphons in your prayer book; write the first line (or the refrain) of each song here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

With each antiphon, the priest also says a prayer. In the prayer of the third antiphon, the priest remembers that Jesus promises to fulfill the requests of all those who are gathered together in His Name. Right after this prayer, the priest makes the entrance with the Holy Gospel. (We will speak about this entrance in Lesson 15.)

## Troparia and Kontakia

More songs of praise are sung after the Entrance. Two kinds of songs are called **Troparia** and **Kontakia**. (In some Churches, a Resurrection Troparion is sung as the third antiphon.) There may be several troparia and kontakia sung during each Divine Liturgy depending upon what we are celebrating.

The troparia and kontakia are like "theme-songs" for the day. If it is a Sunday, the theme-song is about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. On Christmas, the theme-song is about the birth of Christ. On Epiphany, the theme-song tells us about Christ's baptism in the River Jordan. For example, here is the theme-song for the Feast of Epiphany (Theophany):

*"When Thou, O Lord,  
Was baptized in the Jordan,  
The worship of the Trinity was made  
manifest!  
For the voice of the Father bare witness to  
Thee,  
And called Thee His beloved Son!  
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,  
Confirmed the truthfulness of His Word.  
O Christ our God,  
Who has revealed Thyself and has  
enlightened the world,  
Glory to Thee!"*

If it is a special saint's day, the theme-song tells us something about that saint. If more than one event is being celebrated — such as a Feast Day which happens on a Sunday — then we can sing the theme-songs for the Resurrection **and** the theme song for the feast, and even (on any day) the theme-song for the feast or patron saint of our parish.

## Sunday Troparia and Kontakia

As we said before, Sunday is the day we remember the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Since the Resurrection is celebrated every week, there are many theme-songs written about Christ's Resurrection. The Church uses eight sets of these troparia and kontakia. Each week, one set of resurrection songs is sung — the first Sunday after Easter Tone 1 is sung, the second Sunday after Easter

Tone 2, and so on until all eight sets have been sung, and then we begin all over again. Here are the theme-songs in Tone 1:

### Troparion, Tone 1

*"When the stone had been sealed by the  
Jews:  
While the soldiers were guarding Thy most  
pure Body;  
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,  
Granting life to the world.  
The powers of heaven therefore cried to  
Thee,  
O Giver of Life:  
Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!  
Glory to Thy Kingdom!  
Glory to Thy dispensation,  
O Thou who lovest mankind."*

### Kontakion, Tone 1

*"As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in  
glory,  
Raising the world with Thyself.  
Human nature praises Thee as God,  
For death has vanished!  
Adam exults, O Master!  
Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage,  
And cries to Thee:  
Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all,  
O Christ!"*

Look up these Sunday theme-songs in your Divine Liturgy book (they are usually in an Appendix at the back. The numbers or names might be different, but you can find them easily by looking for eight songs that are sung on Sunday.) Take one of the songs and draw a picture of what it is saying. Write the theme-song underneath. With other members of the class, make a mural showing all eight Sunday troparia.

Learn how to sing the theme-song (troparion) of your parish church.