

15. WE MEET GOD AT HIS THRONE

Let us review what we have done thus far in the Divine Liturgy:

- first, we gathered the Church — God's people — together;
- second, we announced that we came together to meet with God, and to offer Him our gifts and our thanks;
- third, the Church prayed for everyone — for the whole world and for all of God's people.
- fourth, we sang songs of joy and praise to God.

During the singing of the third song (usually the **Beatitudes** or a **Resurrection Troparion**) the priest makes an entrance or procession with the Holy Gospel. The Gospel is God's own Word to us. It is the story of the life of Jesus Christ who is called **the Word** and the record of His teachings, Jesus' Word, which He spoke to us. Whenever we see the Gospel in Church, we think of Jesus Christ who brought us the **Good news** ("Gospel" means "good news") that is contained there.

The Gospel is always treated in a special way because it is a Holy Book. It contains the books or gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John which are part of the Holy Bible. Look in your Bibles for these books; they are at the beginning of the New Testament. We carry the Holy Gospel in processions in the Church, we venerate and kiss the Holy Gospel, and we keep it in a special place in the Church — on the Holy Altar.

When the priest makes the procession with the Holy Gospel, he brings it around the Altar Table, out the deacons' door to the middle of the Church. He brings the very Word of



God, Jesus Christ, into our midst. He lifts the book high above his head and says:

"Wisdom! Let us attend!

The priest calls us to **pay attention**, for God's Word is here with us.

The priest goes back into the Sanctuary and places the Gospel back on the Altar Table. As he makes the entrance with the Holy Gospel he says this prayer:

*"O Master, Lord our God
Who hast appointed in heaven orders and
hosts of Angels and Archangels for the ser-
vice of Thy glory:
Cause that with our entrance there may be
an entrance of holy Angels, serving with us
and glorifying Thy goodness"*

And he adds the words:

*"Blessed is the entrance of Thy saints:
always, now and ever, and unto ages of
ages. Amen."*

As the priest enters the Sanctuary, we sing the entrance hymn:

*"Come, let us worship and fall down before
Christ.
O Son of God, who rose from the dead,
Save us who sing to thee: Alleluia."*

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, has come to us. We meet Him and enter the Kingdom with Him to worship at His Holy Throne. We are all now in God's Kingdom because Jesus the King has come into our midst.

The choir now sings the theme-songs of the day and then we all sing the **Trisagion** (or Three-Holies) hymn to God. This hymn is often called the song of the angels because it is the song that the angels sing as they stand around God's Throne:

*"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal
have mercy on us.*

*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have
mercy on us."*

*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have
mercy on us."*

When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord on His Throne surrounded by angels, he reported:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."

(Isaiah 6:1-3)

Now the priest completes the Entrance as he goes behind the Altar Table to the back of the Sanctuary. He goes to the high place or throne where the bishop stands. He blesses God, saying:

*"Blessed art Thou
On the throne of the glory of Thy Kingdom,
Who sittest upon the Cherubim;
Always, now and ever and unto ages of
ages. Amen."*

The priest or bishop turns and faces us. Now **he will speak God's Word to us.**

Activities

Review the Trisagion in the manner in which it is sung in your parish.

Learn the Entrance Hymn: "O Come, let us worship . . ."

