

## 20. WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

"Eucharist" is a Greek word which means "to give thanks." The Divine Liturgy ("liturgy" meant in olden times a "public service" or a kind of work done together by all the people) is a common service to God in which we give thanks. Our thanks to God is our real offering or gift to Him. We thank God for all His works, but especially for sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to us to give us new life.

At this point in the Divine Liturgy, after all the faithful have confessed the Creed together, the priest says a very long prayer. It is called the **Eucharistic Prayer** or **Prayer of Thanksgiving**.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving is a very long prayer that is broken up into many sections, some of them sung by the people and some of them said aloud or quietly by the priest. If we put them all together, we can understand the meaning of our prayer of thanks and our offering to God.

The first part of the prayer is a dialogue or conversation between the priest and the people:

**Priest:** *Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear! Let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation (sacrifice) in peace.*

**People:** (We offer) A mercy of peace! A sacrifice of praise!

**Priest:** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*

**People:** And with your spirit.

**Priest:** *Let us lift up our hearts*

**People:** We lift them up unto the Lord.



**Priest:** *Let us give thanks unto the Lord.*

**People:** It is meet and right to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one in essence, and undivided.

This part of the prayer is much like an **invitation:**

First, the priest invites us to offer our sacrifice — our gifts of our lives to God. We answer saying we offer peace and praise to Him.

Second, God blesses us — He gives us His love, He gives us the grace of Jesus Christ, and He gives us the Holy Spirit who brings us together.

Third, the priest invites us to lift our hearts. We answer saying we lift them up to God.

Finally, the priest invites us to give our thanks to God. We answer saying this is the good and right thing to do — to worship God in the Holy Trinity.

Now the priest continues the long prayer of thanks. We thank God for creating us, for not forgetting us when we disobey and turn away from Him. We thank Him for saving us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Here are the words of the prayer:

*It is meet and right to sing of Thee, to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to give thanks to Thee, and to worship Thee in every place of Thy dominion:*

*For thou art God . . . (unknowable) and eternally the same, Thou and Thine only begotten-Son, and Thy Holy Spirit.*

*Thou it was who brought us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away, didst raise us up again, and didst not cease to do all things until Thou hast brought us up to heaven and hadst endowed us with Thy Kingdom which is to come.*

*For all these things we give thanks to Thee, and to Thine only begotten-Son, and to Thy Holy Spirit; for all things of which we know and of which we know not . . . and we thank Thee for this Liturgy which Thou hast found worthy to accept of our hands.*

Underline the places where we thank God. Draw a line around the words that describe who God is. Put a letter C by the sentence that tells of creation. Put an F by the sentence that tells how we turn away from God when we disobey Him. Put an S by the sentence that describes how Jesus saves us.

The priest now says that, although there are always many archangels and angels constantly surrounding God and singing songs of praise to Him, we also wish to join in their song and sing:

*Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth!  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest!*

### Activity

In your own words write an invitation to someone to come and worship God. Tell them the kinds of things they can expect to do if they come to worship.

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