

Resource Sheet 74

A GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX LITURGICAL TERMS

AER: The large veil used to cover the Chalice and Diskos.

AFTERFEAST: The period of time between a feast of the Lord or Theotokos and the apadosis ("leavetaking") thereof. During an afterfeast, the hymns of the feast itself replace those from the Octoechos.

ALLELUIA: Derived from the Hebrew, meaning "Praise the Lord", sung after the Epistle.

ALTAR: The eastern section of the Church, behind the Iconostasis. Access is through the Deacon Doors only by the Clergy and those to whom they give a blessing.

ALTAR TABLE: The Holy Table in the centre of the altar where the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. Only ordained clergy may touch the Altar Table.

AMBON: The term applied to the central part of the solea, i.e. to the space immediately in front of the Royal Doors. It is the place from which the deacon reads the Gospel, and from which the sermon is delivered.

AMEN: Derived from the Hebrew, meaning "so be it". This phrase concludes all Litanies and Services.

ANALOGION: A stand, about four or five feet high, with a sloping top; usually made of wood, and often covered with a cloth made of silk, damask, or the like. Such stands are used (1) for reading; (2) when an Icon or the Book of the Gospels is placed in the body of the Church for veneration by the faithful.

ANALOY: A tall table with a slanted top, upon which is usually placed an Icon.

ANAPHORA: The part of the Liturgy where the preparation of the Holy Gifts concludes with the Consecration. Also called the "The Eucharistic Canon."

ANTIDORON: The Holy Bread that is distributed at the end of Liturgy. It is the cut that remains of the Prosphora when the Lamb has been removed for Holy Communion.

ANTIMENSION: A gold cloth with an icon of the entombment of Christ embroidered. A relic is sewn into the cloth. This must be present on the Holy Table for the celebration of the Liturgy. It is consecrated and signed by the Bishop.

ANTIPHON: A selection of verses which were historically sung antiphonally by the two choirs. The term is most frequently applied to Psalm 102, Psalm 145, and the Beatitudes as they are chanted at Liturgy; also to the psalm verses and refrains which replace these

"antiphons" on Great Feasts. Each division of the hymns of ascents at Matins is also called an antiphon. Less commonly, the term is used synonymously with "stasis" in reference to the divisions of the kathismata.

APODOSIS: The last day of a festal season. On such a day, the service of the feast itself is repeated.

APOSTICHA: The stichera and verses chanted at Vespers (before the prayer of Saint Symeon) and at Matins (before the prayer, "It is good...")

ARTOS: The symbolic "Bread of Life" which is blessed on Pascha; left in the Church for all of Bright, and then prayerfully distributed to the people on Bright Saturday, although sometimes given on Saint Thomas Sunday.

AUGMENTED LITANY: The Litany which begins with the petition: "Let us all say..." Sometimes this Litany begins with the petition: "Have mercy on us..."

AUTOMELON: A hymn which has its own melody and is used as a model for other hymns. Hymns which are based on automela are called 'prosomia'.

BEATITUDES: The verse: "In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." And then Matthew 5:3-12 (ending with "...great is your reward in heaven." The Beatitudes are typically chanted at Liturgy as the third Antiphon.

BISHOP: The highest order of the clergy. The Bishop is the head of the Diocese and is the only rank of the clergy who can ordain by the laying on of hands. He is commemorated in almost all of the Divine Services. Higher ranks among bishops are Archbishops, Metropolitans, and Patriarchs.

BLESSING OF THE LOAVES: A ceremony occurring at the end of Vespers at Vigils, when a Litya is served. A table is placed in the centre of the church, and set on it are five loaves together with three small vessels, containing wine, oil, and grains of wheat. During the singing of the troparion, the priest goes around the table censing it; he then says the prayer of blessing and recalling the five loaves at the feeding of the five thousand in the desert.

BRIGHT WEEK: The entire week after Pascha, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, during which the Deacon and Royal Doors remain open.

CANDLES: Candles symbolize the Light of Christ. They are carried in procession; they are lit when we pray both at home and in Church.

CANON: See ODE

CATHEDRA: The Bishop's raised platform in the middle of the Church, upon which he vests and stands at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.

CENSER: The vessel that bears the charcoal and incense, symbolic of the prayers we offer to God.

CHALICE: The Holy Cup in which the wine and water are put during Proskomedia, and later in which the Holy Bread (the Body of Christ) is added before the Communion of the Faithful.

CHERUBIM: The second highest rank of the Angelic Order.

CLERGY: Three ranks ordained with the Laying-on-of-Hands. The three are Bishop, Priest and Deacon.

COMMUNION: The Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Eucharist. The Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit during the Anaphora.

COMMUNION HYMN: A psalm verse appointed to be sung during the Communion of the clergy.

CREED: The Symbol of Faith that was formulated at the 1st and 2nd Ecumenical Councils, held respectively in the cities of Nicea and Constantinople.

DEACON: The first rank of the ordained clergy. He assists the Priest and Bishop during the Divine Liturgy.

DISMISSAL THEOTOKION: The theotokion appointed to be sung after the troparia at the end of Vespers, after: "God is the Lord..." at Matins and at the end of Matins.

DISKOS: The round metal dish on a pedestal, sometimes called 'paten', upon which is placed the Holy Bread.

DOGMATICON: The principle theotokion of each tone. It is always used at Sunday Vespers (Saturday evening) at "Lord, I have cried...". It is used at the same place at Vespers on Friday evening (in the tone of the week) and at Doxology, Polyeleos, and Vigil services (in the tone of the preceding sticheron).

DOXASTICON: A sticheron appointed to be sung after "Glory...".

DOXOLOGY: A hymn of great antiquity, beginning with the words of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest...". Its use is appointed at Compline, Midnight Office and Matins. There are two variations, one of which is sung (also known as the "Great Doxology"), the other of which is read.

ECTENIA See LITANY

ENTRANCE: A procession, exiting the Altar / Sanctuary through the north door, and entering the Altar / Sanctuary through the Royal Doors. Entrances occur at Vespers, before the chanting of "O Gentle Light..." and twice at Liturgy.

ENTRANCE HYMN: See ISODICON

EPIKLESIS: The act of the "consecration" of the Holy Gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit.

EPISTLE: One of the Letters in the New Testament, read before the Gospel by the Reader or an appointed person (aka "Apostle.").

EPITAPHIOS: A large cloth icon of the Saviour entombed which is used during the Holy Friday and Saturday services.

EPITRAKHILION: The "stole" wore around the neck by the Priest and Bishop. All services are performed with this vestment.

EVANGELISTS: Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: the authors of the Four Gospels.

EVLOGITARIA: Troparia sung at Matins after the kathismata; they are accompanied by the refrain, Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. They take two forms: (1) Evlogitaria of the Resurrection, which are used on Sundays. (2) Evlogitaria of the Departed, which are used at Matins for the departed, and at Pannikhidas.

EXAPOSTILARION: A hymn occurring at the conclusion of the canon at Matins, and frequently developing the theme of Christ as light of the world. It is termed "exapostilarion" because it "gives the dismissal", as it were, at the end of the canon. The first exapostilarion on Sunday is always linked with the Gospel of the Resurrection, used earlier in the service. Exapostilaria are generally read, but occasionally may be sung. Also known as: Photogogicon, Hymn of Light.

FAN: The Processional Fan, bearing an Icon of the Holy Angels, held by the Altar-Servers, over the Icons, Gospels, the Holy Gifts, etc. during the Divine Services.

FASTING: Abstaining from certain foods and activities in order to draw closer to God. Orthodox Christians fast on most Wednesdays and Fridays and during the Four Lenten Periods. Total fasting (no food or drink) is required before receiving Holy Communion.

FEAST DAY: A Holy Day commemorating an event in the life of Our Lord, His Mother or the Saints.

FOREFEAST: The days leading up to a feast of the Lord or Theotokos. During a forefeast, hymns of preparation for the feast replace those from the Octoechos. See also AFTERFEAST

GOSPEL: One of the first four books of the New Testament. At the Divine Liturgy the Deacon intones the Gospel. At the Vigil, the reading is done by the Bishop or Priest.

HIGH PLACE: The holy part of the Church, located in the eastern most section of the Church "behind" the Holy Altar Table. Whenever a server passes from one side of the altar through

the High Place, he always crosses himself. Prior to any Entrances, etc. Altar-Servers reverently gather at the High Place.

HIRMOS: SEE IRMOS

HOLY WEEK: The week before holy Pascha, during which we commemorate the Passion of Christ. Orthodox Christians fast very strictly this week and attend many Divine Services reliving the final days of our Lord before His Holy Resurrection.

HOURS: The short services that are read four times in a day, each commemorating a particular theme. The 3rd and 6th Hours immediately precede the Divine Liturgy. The 1st hour is read following Matins. These services are compiled into the Horologion.

HYMN OF LIGHT: SEE EXAPOSTILARION

HYMN OF ASCENTS: These hymns in each of the Eight Tones, are chanted at Sunday Matins immediately before the Prokimenon. They are divided into three antiphons (but four in the case of the eighth tone), each antiphon being made up of three troparia. At weekday vigils, for both saints and feasts, the first antiphon of the Hymns of Ascents of the fourth tone is used. Also known as Hymns of Degrees, Antiphons

HYMNS OF DEGREES: See HYMNS OF ASCENTS

HYPAKOÉ: A hymn sung at Matins on certain Great Feasts and Sundays: (1) On Great Feasts it occurs after the third tone of the canon. (2) On Sundays it comes at the end of the reading of the kathismata (i.e., after the Evlogitaria of the Resurrection and the Small Litany).

IDIOMELON: A hymn having its own unique melody and not used as a model for any other hymns. Most of these melodies have been lost. Idiomela, therefore, are generally chanted in the appointed tone. See also: AUTOMELON, PROSOMION

ICONS: The Sacred Images of Our Lord, His Mother, or the Saints. Icons may also depict a sacred event. We cross ourselves and bow before venerating (kissing) Icons. Orthodox Christians have one or more Icons in the corners of the rooms of their homes.

ICONOSTASIS: The screen of Icons separating the altar / sanctuary from the body of the church (nave), and fitted with three doors. The central doorway, which is closed by double gates and a curtain, is known as the Royal Doors or the Holy Doors.

IKOS: A poetic hymn usually found following a kontakion.

INCENSE: The pieces of fragrant substance that are burned in the censer.

IRMOS: The opening hymn of each ode of a Canon. In the original Greek text, all the remaining troparia in the ode follow the same meter as the irmos.

ISODICON: The hymn sung at the Small Entrance in the Liturgy, as the clergy enter the Sanctuary. There is a standard isodicon / eisodicon / introit beginning "O come let us worship..." which is used on most days; certain Great Feasts have a special isodicon, which is said by the deacon or priest. Also known as Entrance Hymn.

KATAVASIA: An irmos (or, in a few instances, two irmoi) appointed to be sung at the end of an Ode.

KATHISMA: Each of the twenty divisions of the Psalter.

KLOBUK: The black headpiece with a veil worn by monks and Bishops.

KONTAKION: The hymn appointed to be sung after the sixth ode of the canons (sometimes also after the third ode); it is generally followed immediately by its ikos. Both the kontakion and the ikos are derived from the early kontakion, which was a long poem, intended to be sung in church. It consisted of a short preliminary stanza, followed by some 18-24 strophes, each known as an ikos; the preliminary stanza and every ikos.

LAMB: The cubed portion of the first Prosphora that is prepared for consecration as the Body of Christ. When there is to be reservation of the Holy Gifts a second Lamb is used cut from the top and / or bottom middle section of the prosphora seal. This usually happens just once a year at the Divine Liturgy of the Last Supper on Great and Holy Thursday.

LENT: One of the four periods set aside each year when we are called upon to fast and pray fervently. Before Pascha the lent is called: GREAT LENT or GREAT FAST.

LITANY: A set of petitions offered to God by the Deacon. The faithful respond with either "Lord have mercy!" or "Grant this, O Lord!"

LITURGY: The Eucharistic Service of the Church, usually called the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy most often used is the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. The Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is used ten times a year, notably on the five Sundays of Great Lent.

LAMPADA: The hanging lamps before Icons.

MATINS: The morning service of the Church usually celebrated with Vespers as the All-Night Vigil

MITRE: The jewelled crown wore by Bishops, (and in the Slav tradition, Archmandrites and Mitred Archpriests) during Divine Services.

MYSTERY: The Orthodox term for "Sacrament", the means by which God's Grace is imparted to us by His Holy Orthodox Church. Only Orthodox Christians, duly prepared, may receive the Holy Mysteries.

NARTHEX: The western section of the Church. Also called the Vestibule or Porch. Some services begin in the Narthex.

NAVE: The large centre area of the Church where the Orthodox Faithful stand and pray worshipping the Lord God.

OBLATION TABLE: The table located on the northern wall of the altar. Here the Holy Gifts are prepared during the Service of the Proskomedie.

ORARION: the stole worn by the Deacon over his left shoulder. Archdeacons and Protodeacons wear a longer, crossed orarion. Subdeacons wear a Deacons orarion that is crossed in the front and the back.

PANAGIA: The oval icon worn by Bishops. The term means "All-Holy" and refers to the Mother of God, the Panagia, Our Lady, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

PASCHA: The Greek word for "Passover", commemorating the Christ's Resurrection from the dead. Pascha ranks above all Holy Days and is termed "The Feast of Feasts."

PECTORAL CROSS: The cross worn by Priests and Bishops. The style of a Priest's cross represents his rank within the Church.

PHYLONION: The outer garment of the Priest (aka "chasuble").

PRIEST: The second rank of the Ordained Clergy.

PROCESSION: The liturgical movement of the Clergy, Altar-Servers, Choir and Faithful usually around the outside of the Church. Processions are held during Holy Week, Pascha, Bright Week, and on Parish Feast Days.

PROKEIMENON: The short verse of the Psalms chanted at Vespers, Matins and before the Epistle at other Services.

PROSKOMEDIE: The preparatory part of the Divine Liturgy after the Kairon or prayers of the clergy. In the Proskomedie the Holy Gifts are prepared and intercession made for the living and the departed together with commemorations of all the saints of the Church.

PROSPHORA: The Loaves of Holy Bread that are prepared for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The top is impressed with a seal enabling the priest to fulfil the customary prayers.

PROSTRATION: A reverential bow. A full prostration is performed by crossing oneself and touching the knees, hands and forehead to the ground. A half or waist prostration is performed by crossing oneself and bending over and touching the right hand (fingers) to the ground. This so called metania replaces the full prostration on the days we do not fully bow.

READER: A man tonsured by the Bishop into the lesser ranks of the clergy. He has the dignity to wear a cassock and to receive Holy Communion in his stikharion.

ROYAL DOORS: The centre double doors on the Iconostasis. Only Ordained Clergy may pass through these doors, and only at certain times in the Divine Services.

SERAPHIM: The many-eyed Angels that are closest to God at His Heavenly Throne.

SOLEA: The elevated area in front of the iconostasis.

STAR: The liturgical utensil that sets above the diskos and symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem that "stood over the place where the Young Child lay."

STIKHARION: The first robe used by the Clergy. The Deacon's stikharion is ornate. The Stikharion of the Altar-Servers is modelled after the deacon's robe.

THEOTOKOS: The Most Holy Mother of God meaning "Birth-Giver of God."

TONE: There are 8 Tones or types of general melody used during the Church Year.

TRIKIRION: The triple candle holder carried by the Bishop in his right hand, symbolizing the Holy Trinity.

TRISAGION: The Thrice Holy (HOLY God, HOLY Mighty, HOLY Immortal...) Prayers are chanted before the Prokimenon and Epistle / Apostle Reading. The Thrice Holy Prayers are also part of the usual beginning of all our Orthodox prayers.

TROPARION: The short hymn sung at Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy commemorating the Feast or Saint.

VESTMENT: The special holy robes worn by all Ordained and Lesser Clergy and Altar-Servers

ZEON: The hot water brought to the Priest at the time of receiving of Holy Communion. Also called Teplota.