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## THE VALIDITY OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

The center of Orthodox worship is the mystery of the divine Eucharist, the performance of the Divine Liturgy, the offering of the bloodless sacrifice of the Lord and our God Jesus Christ. This great miracle is performed in the area of the Church and the Master Christ surrounds it with the validity of His High Priesthood, the head of the body of the Church. Whatever, in other words, the Hierarchs and priests of the Church militant perform here on earth, this Christ validates.

### **The main components of the validity of the Divine Liturgy**

These come from the majesty of the saving grace of the Great High Priest Christ, which is poured forth with the Holy Spirit in the mystery. Whatever distinguishes Him, the same also distinguishes the Divine Eucharist. These basic distinctions the Apostle Paul enumerates to us, saying that we needed such a High Priest, "holy, guileless, blameless".

First, He presents His holiness, his holy majesty, His obedience to the work of man's salvation unto death, "a death of the cross". He also presents His decisiveness to complete the work of the divine righteousness of His Father on earth. "It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15). So for this reason also the Divine Liturgy justifies the believer who participates in it. The Body and Blood of Christ justifies him "which is poured out for the life and salvation of the world".

Second, he projects His boundless guilelessness and kindness because "no guide was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). In His life upon the earth "he came benefactoring" men despite the wickedness and ingratitude of many of them. This is the strongest proof of His grace.. "This is grace from God". Whoever participates in the Divine Liturgy enjoys the inexhaustible kindness of His grace despite their unworthiness.

Third, he notes intensely the spotlessness of His divine person from every type of defilement of sin because "he did not commit sin". Christ has not relation with sin and His sinlessness as a man cannot be compared to any man. Because His birth was of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. He condescended to the sinners to deliver them from sin. And this condescension is heightened in the Divine Liturgy which is a recollection of His sacrifice upon the Cross. A sacrifice which gave remission of sins and eternal life.

Fourth, he reveals the theological truth that as a High Priest he is at the right of the majesty and the glory of God the Father which goes beyond the natural and spiritual heaven. After His resurrection and His ascension to the heavens "Christ is everything in all" (Col. 3:11). While the Apostle Paul called Christ "Son unto the age perfected". In other words, Christ, as the Son of God has the same natural quality of perfection as God the Father, because He is "the one born of the Father". And as Son of man, in other words, as a man He partakes in the perfection of His godhead. He is perfect God and perfect man and makes us also partakers according to the grace of His perfection in the mystery of the Divine Liturgy, where the one sanctifying unto the ages sanctifies us also. We partake in the perfection and unity of faith in His person with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit which performs the mystery of the bloodless sacrifice. We commune of His Body and Blood and we imperfect ones feel His holiness and His perfection in our weak human nature. The liturgist of the holies Christ makes us liturgists and communicants of His divine mysteries here in the world. He grants us to commune of His holiness, because His desire and His will is: "Become ye holy for I am holy".

### **The value of the divine Liturgy for contemporary man**

If contemporary man with a simple and sincere manner is able to believe with certainty in the godmanly presence of Christ and to meet Him in the worshipping area of the Church to live the revelation of His life. Because without material expenses, without anxiety of soul, without gnosiological demands he will touch the true meaning of life and will comfort his whole soul's world. He will give him that assurance which the world of constant changes and frustrations had deprived him of. He will inspire him to perceive the spiritual value which man has on the earth. Not as a legal, individual and financial unit which, if he does not produce he is led to the sideline. But a blessed presence of the love of That God which He grants to those who worship Him and to those who turn away from Him. A person who found faith in God and in himself and no longer depends any more on the evaluation of other people, but on the admiration and paternal loving care of the true God of the Church, Who lives and richly pours forth His grace in divine worship.

Archim. Ch. N.