

**A Guide To The Orthodox Liturgy**  
**Parish of St Aidan and St Chad, Nottingham,**  
**Thyateira Deanery**  
**Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain**  
**Ecumenical Patriarchate**



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Welcome to today's service.

We have produced this brief guide to help you follow the service and to help understand what is happening at each stage.

Significant points in the service are underlined **thus** and sections where we would particularly like you to join in are highlighted **thus**. Our services are mainly in English but, being based on the Russian tradition, some Slavonic is used and a little Greek.

### **The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom**

The service starts with the words “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, followed by **The Great Litany**.

This is the first of five groups of litanies, which are a series of short prayers (each punctuated by a response from the choir) for peace and salvation for the people of the world, this city and in this church. Each litany ends with a commemoration to the Mother of God and to Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Then the choir sings three hymns called **Antiphons**, separated by short litanies:

1. “Bless the Lord, O my soul...” [Ps 102 (103)]
2. “Praise the Lord, O my soul...”
3. “In thy Kingdom, remember us O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom”, followed by the Beatitudes (starting “Blessed are the poor in spirit....”)

Towards the end of the Beatitudes, the server leads **The Little Entrance**, a procession of the Gospel Book into the body of the Church. The Priest or Deacon chants “**Wisdom! Stand aright!**” and goes back inside the Altar carrying the Gospels (Christ entering the Holy of Holies).

The choir sing various hymns (called **Troparia and Kontakia**) for the Saint or the Feast of the day, including one for the Resurrection (if it is a Sunday) and at least one for our patrons, Saints Aidan and Chad.

Shortly afterwards, the choir sings (slowly) the **Trisagion** hymn in English or Slavonic (**Holy God / Svyatyi Boje**). “Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”

The Trisagion is followed by the **Prokeimenon** of the day - listen out for the reader chanting, “The Prokeimenon in the 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Tone”.

Immediately afterwards, the Reader intones the **Epistle reading**, standing in the middle of the church, during which the Priest or Deacon censes the church and the congregation. It is customary to bow as you are ‘censed’.

At the end the Priest addresses the congregation, “Peace be with you all”, to which we all respond, “**And with thy spirit**” and the choir, led by the Reader, sings “Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia”.

The Priest or Deacon reads the **Gospel** and then, usually, the **sermon**.

Next there are several **major litanies**, including The Litany of Fervent Supplication, The Litany for the Departed, The Litany for the Catechumens and The Litany of the Faithful. The Litany for the Departed is delivered while the Priest censes the altar.

*Catechumens are people who have not yet been received into the Orthodox Church. Although the litany ends with “Let all the Catechumens depart, let none of the Catechumens remain”, don’t worry if you are not Orthodox; this refers to a very old tradition that is not adhered to now, so please just stay where you are.*

After the litanies, while the Priest prays quietly, the choir sings the **Cherubic Hymn**,

“We who in this mystery, represent the Cherubim  
And who sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity  
Let us now lay aside all the cares of this life”

The atmosphere of the service becomes increasingly serious and reverent.

The Cherubic Hymn ends with **The Great Entrance**, which is a procession that with the Priest, bearing the paten and chalice, containing the bread and wine to be consecrated. He says a number of prayers while standing in front of the iconostasis, including prayers for the hierarchy of Bishops and Priests, for all in need, for all orthodox and for ‘all people everywhere’.

As the Priest re-enters the altar area, the choir completes the Cherubic Hymn:-

“That we may receive the King of All, invisibly escorted by the ranks of Angels, Alleluia”

There then follows the **Litany of Supplication**, which focuses more on the individuals in the service. The prayers include a prayer for “a Christian end to our lives, painless and unafraid, and with a good answer before the dread judgement seat of Christ” – unsurprisingly a lot of us cross ourselves at that point. Shortly after this, the Priest faces the congregation and says “Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess”, to which the choir respond with a short hymn to the Holy Trinity. He then cries out “Christ is in our midst, he is and shall be” and then “The Doors, The Doors, in wisdom let us attend” and everyone sings the **Nicene Creed**.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of Heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of the Father before all worlds. Light of light, Very God of Very God.  
Begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made.  
Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven,  
and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again, according to the scriptures,  
and ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father,  
and he shall come again with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;  
and Whose Kingdom shall have no end.  
And in The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father,  
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,  
who spake by the Prophets.  
And in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

There now follows a number of prayers and hymns leading up to the Consecration of the Bread and Wine.

The Priest cries, "Let us Stand aright; let us stand with fear; let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Offering in peace", to which the choir responds, "Mercy of peace, A sacrifice of praise!". There follow some very peaceful and reverent interchanges between the Priest and the choir who are representing the whole congregation.

At the end the Priest removes the star over the paten and invokes the chant of the Angels of Heaven, "Singing, crying, shouting, the triumphal hymn and saying", to which the choir responds with the chant "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabbaoth" and ending "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest".

**The Consecration** now begins, during which the Priest repeats the words of Christ at the Last Supper:-

"Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins"

"Drink from this, all of you, this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins"

And then, holding both the cup and the paten aloft, he cries:-

"Offering thee thine own, of thine own, on behalf of all and for all"

and the choir respond "We hymn Thee, we praise Thee, we bless Thee" etc

The Priest then prays three times to Our Lord to send down the Holy Spirit to participate directly in the consecration, for example:

"O Lord who, at the third hour, didst send down thy most Holy Spirit upon thine apostles, take him not from us, O Good One, but renew him in us who pray unto Thee"

Followed by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit, where the Priest says:-

"And make this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ" – Everyone responds loudly "Amen"

"And that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of Thy Christ" – Everyone responds loudly "Amen"

"changing them by Thy Holy Spirit" - Everyone responds "Amen, Amen, Amen"

At this point people bow deeply and some may prostrate themselves, unless it is a feast day, including any Sunday.

The choir leads in singing a hymn of praise to the Mother of God, “It is very meet to bless thee...”, while the Priest censes the Altar. There then follows the **Litany before the Lord’s Prayer**, which is similar to the Litany of Supplication. We usually chant the **Lord’s Prayer** in Greek, and/or Slavonic and then in English. Please join in if you can.

Отче наш, Иже еси на небесех	Our Father, Who art in Heaven
Да святится Имя Твое,	Hallowed by thy name
Да приидет Царствие Твое	Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, On Earth as it is in heaven
Хлеб наш насущный даждь нам днесь.	Give us this day our daily bread
И остави нам долги наши,	And forgive us our trespasses,
Яко же и мы отсавляем должником нашим.	As we forgive them that trespass against us
И не введи нас во искушение,	And lead us not into temptation
Но избави нас от лукавого	But deliver us from the evil one

We are now very close to communion, when the Priest raises the consecrated lamb, with the words: “Let us attend. The Holy things for the Holy”. Then he breaks the main part of consecrated bread into four pieces, saying:

“The Lamb of God is broken and distributed, broken, yet not divided, ever eaten yet never consumed, but sanctifies those who partake”

Then he comes into the centre of the church to read the following **Communion Prayers**. We all join in, especially those who are about to receive.

“I believe, Lord, and I confess, that Thou art in truth the Christ, the Son of the living God, who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I believe also that this is indeed Thy most pure Body, and that this is indeed Thy precious Blood. Therefore, I pray thee: have mercy on me and forgive my transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary, in word, in deed, in knowledge and in ignorance; and count me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thy most pure mysteries for the remission of sins and for eternal life Amen.”
Of thy mystical supper, O Son of God, today receive me as a communicant; for I will not speak of the mystery to Thine enemies, “nor will I give Thee a kiss, like Judas: but like the thief I confess Thee; “Remember me Lord in Thy Kingdom”.
Not unto judgement, or condemnation, be the partaking of Thy Holy Mysteries unto me, O Lord, but for the healing of my soul and body.”

The Priest then receives communion himself while the choir sing or read. A candle is placed in the centre of the iconostasis.

After a short while the Priest then presents the Gifts to the congregation, saying “With fear of God, with faith and love, draw near”, while the congregation bows.

Then people receive **Communion** while the choir sing in English (and sometimes Slavonic and Greek) “The Body of Christ, ...”. If you are not Orthodox, you can still come up to receive a blessing by the Priest.

After communion the Priest cries “O God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance” and the choir respond, “We have seen the True Light, we have received the Heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith” etc.

The Priest censes the gifts before saying: “Blessed is our God”, then turning to the congregation, he says : “always, now and forever and unto the ages of ages, amen” and choir responds “Let our mouths be filled with thy praise, O Lord” etc. as the Gifts are then taken to the Alter of Preparation.

Then follows a short **Litany of Thanksgiving** before we conclude the service with the choir singing, three times, “Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from henceforth and for evermore”.

*If it is a feast day the Priest may cense the ikon of the feast three times, while the choir sing the Troparion of the day.*

The Priest gives a final blessing, makes any announcements and then we all (non-orthodox included) **kiss the cross** and receive some of the ‘antidoron’ (blessed but not consecrated bread).

### ***A few notes on etiquette...***

*... in case you are worried about ‘making mistakes’ (but please don’t be worried).*

*Our Lord told us that there were really only two commandments – love God and love one another (Matt. 22:35-40). So, there aren’t any rules as such, more common-sense practice, based on love and respect for Our Lord and for each other.*

We tend to stand during most of the service but sit down if we are tired or unable.

*It is customary to stand during the Epistle & Gospel readings, the Consecration, and while people are receiving Communion and to sit during the Sermon.*

*You can light a candle as an offering or prayer at any time but perhaps check where we are in the service in case there is an entrance or other important part of the service about to take place. The litanies are often a fairly good time to light a candle.*

*If you would like to receive a blessing during communion, approach the priest with your hands in a lowered prayerful position and he will know what you wish to happen. You may notice that those receiving will tend to hold their hands in a cross, over their chest, as a sign that they want to receive.*

*Also please feel free to kiss the cross at the end and receive a piece of the ‘antidoron’ bread.*

We hope you have found this a useful introduction to the service.

Please do join us after the service to have something to eat and drink and to meet us.



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