

Liturgy

Liturgy.....	1
Meaning of the word.....	1
Purpose.....	1
It makes ZERO sense to:.....	2
Not the purpose of Liturgy!	2
Origin	3
A "Code word" for the Eucharist:.....	4
How did we get to the Modern day liturgy?	4
Notes	4
What is necessary.....	5
Modern aberrations	5
Divine Liturgy – the one thing needful.....	6
Any other time is like dying	6
Very Personal reflections.....	6

Meaning of the word.

- Original meaning: "Work of the people" meaning a "public work"
- An Obligatory thing imposed by the state.
- In ancient Athens: "Any duty imposed on a private citizen by public authority from building war ships to providing a chorus for play" (the heavenly banquet pg 35)
- Words mean things.
 - WHY do we call it Liturgy?
 - Do you consider YOUR work in the liturgy to be obligatory?
 - Are you part of the work, or just an observer?
 - WHY would you be obligated?

Purpose

- Meet God, stand in His presence
- Enter the kingdom:
 - Begins with "Blessed is the Kingdom"
 - Note how the perfect prayer begins just like the Our Father: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come..."
- Commune the body of blood of Christ
- A mystery
- Become holy, perfected
- Look towards the future (according to Christ's own words)
 - Eschatological - WHY?
 - Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day
 - For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (Paul)
- We have no existence, no humanity without God. We take in His body and blood and become alive in steps.

- You are what you eat.
- We believe that there is a massive outpouring of grace during liturgy. Grace is like rain. Unless the ground is prepared, the rain is not absorbed.

It makes ZERO sense to:

- Attend liturgy without the desire to enter the Kingdom and stand in His presence.
- Expectation
- Attention
- Partake of His body and blood
- Stand and pray as one. BOO on pews!

St. Nicholas Cabasilas ca. 1323-1391: The essential act in the celebration of the holy mysteries is the transformation of the elements in the Divine Body and Blood; its aim is the sanctification of the faithful, who through these mysteries receive the remission of their sins and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

As a preparation for, and contribution to, this act and this purpose we have prayers, psalms, and readings from the Holy Scripture; in short, all the sacred acts and forms which are said and done before and after the consecration of the elements.

While it is true that God freely gives us all holy things and that we bring him nothing, but that they are absolute graces, he does nevertheless necessarily require that we should be fit to receive and or preserve them; and he would not permit those who were not so disposed to be thus sanctified.

It is in this way that He admits us to Baptism and Confirmation; in this way He receives us at the divine banquet and allows us to participate at the solemn table. Christ, in His parable of the sower, has illustrated this way that God has of dealing with us. “A sower went forth,” he says, “to sow” (Mat. 13:3) - not to plough the earth, but to sow: thus showing that the work of preparation must be done by us.

Therefore, since in order to obtain the effects of the divine mysteries we must approach them in a state of grace and properly prepared, it was necessary that these preparations should find a place in the order of the sacred rite: and, in fact, they are found there. There, indeed, we see what the prayers and psalms, as well as the sacred actions and forms which the liturgy contains, can achieve in us. They purify us and make us able fittingly to receive and to preserve holiness, and to remain possessed of it. (Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Introduction and the Prothesis 1)

Not the purpose of Liturgy!

Not the main purpose, but also present.

- Teaching - happens, but is not the primary focus.
- preaching
- Evangelization - WAY different than most Protestant services.
- Socializing (on the deck, in the Hall)
- Not the only service we are required or need to attend.
- NOT fulfilling a minimum rule
- Liturgy is WORK, never passive! We do not sit down, have a coffee, and get fed!

Origin

- All 3 synoptics
- Not John (Why! - John 6 says it all)
- & St Paul in Corinthians
- Also mentioned in Acts as part of their regular way of life.

- John gave the promise John 6, the synoptics gave the initiation of the mystery

- John 6:47-58 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (48) I am that bread of life. (49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) **I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.** (52) The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.**

- Mat 26:26-29 **And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. (27) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; (28) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (29) But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**

- Mar 14:22-25 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. (23) And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it. (24) And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. (25) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

- Luke 22:13-20 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. (14) And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. (15) And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: (16) For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (17) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: (18) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. (20) Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

- 1Co 11:23-29 **For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.**

(25) After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (27) **Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** (28) **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.** (29) **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**

1. Initiated by the Lord (John 6, then the Last Supper)
2. Necessary for life!
3. Passed on by the Apostles to the church
 - a. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,
4. Eschatological
 - a. you must not be content or distracted by this life.
5. Literal - church always believed this.
6. Hard to believe.
7. Requires preparation, effort, repentance

A "Code word" for the Eucharist:

- Act 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to **break bread**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.
- Luke 24:30-35 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them. (31) And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. (32) And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (33) And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, (34) Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. (35) And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in **breaking of bread**.

How did we get to the Modern day liturgy?

- Jewish worship style
- Disciples worshipped in the temple, added the Eucharist.
- Eventually, it was impossible to be in the temple.
- Things evolved. Evolved to its basic form in 4th century
- St John Chrysostom, is abridgment of St Basil
- Also St James
- Our liturgy is essentially the same as that of the 4th century!

Notes

- Greatest prayer. St. Sophronius
- A time to put your heart before God - public and INTIMATE private prayer of the heart.
- Mystery of mysteries -
- Only one liturgy in the world, over all time.

- Catholic. Whole church is present at every liturgy.
- John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.
- WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING LITURGY:
 - without intention to commune?
 - without preparation?
 - without purpose?
- Get out of the hall, the deck, stop socializing! This is about your life, perfection! Wake up.

What is necessary

- Bread, wine, water, antimins, priest, 1 more person
- In prisons, has been served on the chest of a martyr as a living antimins

What must we bring

- Expectation
- Preparation
- Be at peace with everyone Mat 5:23-24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; (24) Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Modern aberrations

- Shortening - giving in to the modern laziness, short attention span
- Getting rid of prayer for catechumens. This is stupid.
- Not people of the book anymore, psalms not used.
- Lateness
- Not communing. Liturgy expects we will commune.
 - Choir: Let our mouth be filled with Thy praise, O Lord, that we may hymn Thy glory, for Thou hast vouchsafed us to partake of Thy holy, divine, immortal, and life-creating Mysteries. Keep us in Thy holiness, that we may meditate on Thy righteousness all the day long. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
 - Priest: Aright! Having partaken of the divine, holy, most pure, immortal, heavenly, and life-creating, fearful Mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks unto the Lord.
- Misunderstanding the purpose of liturgy and the role of the people
 - It is not a play
 - it is not "done" by the clergy and choir
 - It is the people of God praying together.
- Fulfilling a requirement
- The only service attended

What makes you feel alive?

Special personal prayer during the liturgy.

Divine Liturgy – the one thing needful.

Any other time is like dying

Very Personal reflections.

The best two days of the week are Thursday and Sunday. I believe I am most alive, and doing my most important work on this earth on those two days – when I celebrate the liturgy.

I am finding that I have much more anticipation of the liturgy than I had earlier in my ministry. I am not sure why that is, but I think several things have contributed.

I have seen God's grace move through our parish after we started celebrating at least one weekday liturgy – we have been doing this for over two years. We have built a temple that we could not afford (and a rational, worldly man would say we cannot afford it even now), and I have noticed subtle, invisible things in my soul. I am not a better person, but I pray more, and the liturgy is an incredible consolation.

Building was tense, and keeping the building has its moments too. I should not be anxious! I am a Christian! But, the fact remains, that due to weak faith, I do get anxious. This anxiety is obliterated by the liturgy. Of course, it comes back, but the feeling (that is not the right word – I do not think there is a word) I had during the Liturgy remains.

I am a priest, and must pray for my flock, and anyone who “crosses my path”. This I do, but prayer alone is very difficult. There are the inevitable “mind games”. I know that the “effective prayer of a righteous man availeth much”, but I am not righteous, and I “hear” the whispers of “Do not trouble the Master” (because I am sinful). Of course, through all of this I still pray, but I do not pray well.

I have the great privilege to be a priest of the Most High God and when I serve the liturgy, I have great confidence in my prayers before the altar, God receives the prayers of his priests. I know that the wine and bread become the body and blood of Christ through my ministrations, and not in any way because of my virtue, not any bit less than if St John Chrysostom was serving, and also know that in the same way, my pastoral supplications before the altar are received by God because He receives the prayers of his priests.

I have been reading books about and by Fr Silouan, Archimandrite Sophrony and Archimandrite Zacharias (three generations!) and have been deeply affected by many things in these books. Some time I will find the quote, but I believe Fr Sophrony said that he only *felt truly alive* when he was celebrating the liturgy, and outside of the liturgy, he felt like he was dying. Fr Zacharias has described Fr Sophrony's zeal for the liturgy – a zeal much greater than my own - and this has also made a deep impression on me. I in my own sinful way, I have started thinking this way. So much of what I do daily is “dead” – mind wandering, wasting time, useless and stupid emotions of irritation, anxiety, anger, etc – and even my prayer “in my closet” can often have little warmth, but during the liturgy I am in the presence of life and truly alive, and my prayer has life in it.

A pastor's life is filled with problems. Any psychological approach to them inevitably causes fatigue, fear, anxiety, confusion. Celebrating the liturgy is not a psychological solution, but a spiritual one (the idea of turning a psychological feeling into a spiritual one I have gleaned from Archimandrite Zacharias – and it deserves much attention). I am not confused when I celebrate the liturgy. I do not forget the problems, and for many of them, I still have no idea what to do, or remembering them causes a great emotional “sting” in my heart, but at no other time am I so sure that God will help me in all things, and help those I love and care for. I am never so happy as when I am praying for my loved ones during the liturgy!

So much of my time is wasted! I do not always pray well in the liturgy, but it is never a waste of time.

These are just a few of the reasons I can think of off the top of my head about what the liturgy means to me. At the beginning of the liturgy the priest announces the Kingdom ("Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages!") , and we enter it. What better place can we be or more important activity can we do?

I am convinced that I was born to serve the liturgy. I do not know why, and I do not do it well, but I am intensely grateful for the great blessing to do so.