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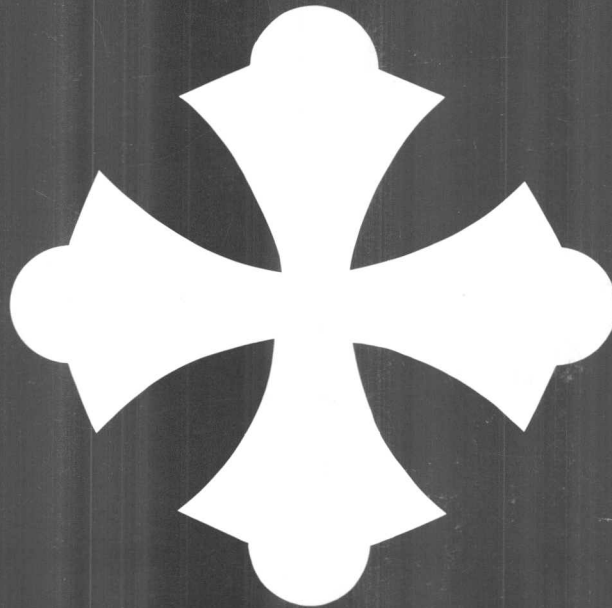
# COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

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THE COPTIC LITURGY



*Society of Coptic Church Studies*

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## ***ABOUT THIS ISSUE***

This issue is not intended to be a collection of scholarly articles on the Coptic Liturgy. Such a work in the English language is greatly needed and we know that some of our readers are waiting impatiently for it; but it is beyond our present means. We have a more modest and more urgent aim. The articles chosen in this issue are meant to guide the new English-speaking Coptic generation in its liturgical life.

***Participation of the People of God in the Eucharist*** is an introduction to the Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Church, its role in worship and its main divisions with emphasis on the Eucharistic Liturgy which is the theme of this issue. The various theological aspects of the Eucharist are discussed by following the words and actions of the Coptic liturgies and by referring to the teachings of the Fathers who lived the liturgy from the early days of Christianity.

We thank *the Rev. James Furman*, Rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Honolulu, for his article on ***The Coptic Liturgy of Saint Gregory***, one of the three liturgies which the Coptic Church now uses. The author's scholarship and traditional background have been well appreciated by the editors and readers of this journal in his previous contributions on the Nag Hammadi library, the Cappadocian Fathers and St. Constantine of Assiut.

In ***The Mystery of Redemption***, *Father Tadros Malaty* deals with the theology of the Eucharist, specifically as regards its relation to the Sacrifice of the Cross. The article is a chapter from his book *Christ in the Eucharist* which is reviewed in this issue. We are happy that Father Malaty serves now as the priest of St. Mary Orthodox Church at Ottawa, Ontario. This means an easier access to his extensive works and publications in America.

*Editor*

### ***Acknowledgement***

Scripture quotations in this volume, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973 and used by permission of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches.

The picture on the backcover is taken from a color icon drawn by the Coptic iconographer Stephen Rene', the deacon at St. Mark Coptic Church in London. He is a disciple of Dr. Isaac Fanous of the Coptic Institute at Cairo. Mr. Rene' may be addressed at 205e Ladbroke Grove, London W10 6HG, U.K.

# ***PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE EUCHARIST***

***Rodolph Yanney, M.D.***

Eucharist is the mystery in which the church as visible community is changed into the Church as the Body of Christ, the new People of God and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is achieved by means of a thanksgiving and sacrificial meal, in which the whole Church offers to God, in Christ, her head and High Priest, the sacrifice of praise, commemorating and making present and available the realities of salvation — the death, resurrection and coming back of the Lord.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the summit of all worship. It comes as the climax of all the Church liturgy—whether daily liturgy or sacramental liturgy. The Church spends much time in the Liturgy of Praise. Following the Jewish tradition, her day starts in the evening by the *Daily Office*<sup>1</sup> and the *Vesper Raising of Incense*. Before dawn the Church is awake again waiting for her Bridegroom, chanting the midnight Daily Office, which is again followed by the *Matins Raising of Incense*.<sup>2</sup>

The Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Church has three main divisions: the Offertory, the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic Liturgy.

## ***Offertory***

In the Offertory, the deacons carry the bread and wine (traditionally used to be brought by the people) which the priest receives and puts on the altar. It is a complicated rite that carries many theological significances<sup>3</sup> and during which the people sing *Kyrie Elison*, asking for God's mercy. Then, while the clergy and deacons carry the offerings and make a circuit around the altar, the people shout in utter amazement and joy.

*“Halleluia! This is the day made by the Lord. Let us rejoice and be happy. Redeem us, O Lord. Make it an easy passage. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Halleluia!”*<sup>4</sup>

It is here that Christ comes as High Priest to offer His Eucharist.

## ***Liturgy of the Word***

While the Eucharistic Liturgy goes back to the Last Supper, the Liturgy of the Word originated in the Jewish synagogue. It is a combination of worship (by prayer,

processions and chants) and teaching. In the Coptic rite there are four readings from the New Testament: a reading from St. Paul, then from one of the Catholic epistles, then the Acts of the Apostles and finally the Gospel. The gospel is preceded by an Alleluia psalm. Otherwise, the Old Testament readings are reserved for the Great Lent and Holy Week. The biography of the Saint (or Saints) of the day is read from the *Synaxarion* after the Acts. Except on Sundays, Lent and Pentecost, the Scripture readings are related to the saint of the day. Sundays, Lent and all the days of Pentecost follow a yearly cycle revolving around the life and teachings of Christ. The Gospel is always the culmination of all the readings and is sung by the bishop or priest, with two deacons carrying candles, one on either side, while the congregation stands in reverence. The message is clear, it is Christ who proclaims His word in the church during the liturgy. The presence of Christ is manifested in the proclamation of the Gospel as well as in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Word does not consist only in teaching, but it is a corporate action of worship. The priest recites a prayer for each reading, including the litany of the Gospel which he says aloud. He offers incense to the Gospel, as representing the Word of God, and to the icons of the saints and to each one of the congregation as if he is collecting the prayers of the whole Church to offer before Christ. Between each reading the people sing special hymns. The Trisagion which is the hymn of the Seraphim (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8) is sung before the reading of the Gospel. Although a liturgy of its own, the Liturgy of the Word prepares the worshippers for the Eucharist, "You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3).

### *The Eucharistic Liturgy*

Saint Justin, the second century martyr, says concerning the Eucharist, "No one else is permitted to partake of it except one who *believes* our teaching to be true, and who has been *washed* in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration, and is thereby *living as Christ* has enjoined."<sup>5</sup> Sharing in the Eucharist is a right and a duty of the faithful who are baptized and who lead a Christian life. All the faithful recite the *Nicene Creed* before the Eucharistic Liturgy. This is followed by the kiss of peace, as our Saviour Himself has taught (Mat. 5:23, 24). The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, *the Didache*, states, "Anyone at variance with his neighbor must not join you, until they are reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled." Gregory Dix writes, "Only the native churches of Egypt still keep the kiss in its original place before the offertory."<sup>6</sup>

The atmosphere of a Coptic church during the Eucharist is one of joy rather than awe. This is the 'messianic banquet' (Is. 25:6), the 'great supper' (Luke 14:16) and the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. 19:9) where every faithful is His bride. In the Coptic rite, kneeling and prostrations are prohibited both during and after the Eucharist. Tertullian writes early in the third century, "We regard it as unlawful to fast or to worship on our knees on the Lord's day." This was confirmed a century

later by the Council of Nicæa, “Since there are some who are bending their knees on Sundays and on the days of Pentecost, the holy Council has decided, so that there will be uniformity of practice in all things in every diocese, that prayers are to be directed to God from a standing position.” Sunday has been considered a small Easter in which we meet the resurrected Lord in the Eucharist. Everyone approaches the heavenly Groom in the posture of a bride standing before her bridegroom, not kneeling as a slave before his master.

Standing is also the posture of a priest offering his sacrifice, and as a priest each participates in the offering of the Church. In the liturgy, the bishop (or presbyter) speaks for the whole church in the *plural*; everyone is co-celebrant with him in all the aspects of the eucharistic action. *The universal priesthood of the faithful* is received in the sacrament of chrismation. The *Homilies of Macarius* state, “By the anointing, all have become kings, priests and prophets of the heavenly mysteries” (Cp. 1 Pet. 2:9 and Ex. 19:6). So we do not go to the church merely to ‘hear’ mass or ‘receive’ communion. The word liturgy means common action, and in this common action everyone has his own particular function. The bishop, the deacon, and all members of the congregation - each has his own part in the eucharistic action. St. Clement of Rome (c. 96 AD) says, addressing the whole church of Corinth, “Let each of you brethren, make Eucharist to God according to his own order, keeping a good conscience and not transgressing the rule of his liturgy.”<sup>7</sup> In the Coptic Church, the priest cannot perform the liturgy by himself, without deacons and congregation. A Roman Catholic author vividly describes the role of the Coptic congregation in the liturgy,

Perhaps in no other liturgy is the intervention of the community in the solemn moment of the sacrifice so impressive as in the Visigothic liturgy and in the anaphora of the *Coptic liturgy of St. Basil*. In the latter, every word of the anamnesis and of the consecration is ratified in chorus by the assembly’s acts of assent, of faith and of adoration. After having recalled the mysteries of the Lord, the celebrant continues:

*Priest: And He left us this great mystery of piety when He had resolved to give Himself for the life of the world.*

*Community: We believe it and we firmly profess that it was so.*

*P.: He took the bread in His holy, immaculate, blessed, life-giving hands.*

*C.: We believe that it really happened thus.*

*P.: And He raised His eyes to heaven, to You, God His Father and Lord of all. He gave thanks. He blessed it. He sanctified it.*

*C.: Amen, amen, amen. We believe it, we acknowledge it, and we glorify Him.*

*P.: He broke it and gave it to His holy and pure disciples, saying, “Take it and eat of it, all of you. This is My body, which is broken for you, and given to many for the remission of sins. Do this in memory of Me.”*

*C.: We believe that it was really so. Amen.*

*P.: In like manner He also took the chalice after having eaten and mixed water and wine in it. And He gave thanks.*

*C.: Amen.*

*P.: And blessed it.*

*C.: Amen.*

*P.: And sanctified it.*

*C.: Amen, amen, amen. We believe this also and we acknowledge it and we praise Him.*

*P.: And He tasted it and gave it to His holy and pure disciples, saying, "Take it and drink of it, all of you. This is My blood of the New Testament, which is poured out for you and will be given for many in remission of sins. Do this in memory of Me."*

*C.: Amen. We believe that it was really so.*

*P.: "Every time you eat this bread and drink this chalice, you are proclaiming My death, acknowledging My Resurrection and making a memorial of Me until I come."*

*C.: Amen, amen, amen. We proclaim, O Lord, Your death, we acknowledge Your Resurrection and Your Ascension, we praise You, we bless You, we give You thanks and we invoke You, Lord our God, Etc.*

Joseph Aloysius Assemani, *Codex Liturgicus Ecclesiae Universae*, book 4, part 4; *Missale Ecclesiae Alexandrinae*, part 2, *Anaphora S. P.N. Basilii Magni* (Rome, 1754; reproduced by Hubert Weller, Paris, 1902), pp. 53-56.<sup>8</sup>

Rather than follow the western divisions of the liturgy, this article will follow it in the six aspects of the Eucharist.

### **(I) Eucharistia (Thanksgiving)**

*Priest: Lift up your hearts*

*People: They are with the Lord.*

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

*People: He is meet and just.*

The term *Eucharistia* was used by the early Fathers in three senses; to denote either the whole liturgic service<sup>9</sup>, or the thanksgiving recited by the president of the service<sup>10</sup>, or to describe the consecrated elements.<sup>11</sup> Origen says, "We are not people of ungrateful hearts . . . The sign of our gratitude towards God is the bread called Eucharist."<sup>12</sup>

*Thanksgiving* is a poor word to translate the Greek *Eucharistia* and it is far from describing that act of total adoration of God in His splendor and in His action in creation and in redemption as all eucharistic prayers do. Evelyn Underhill says,

referring to the Coptic liturgy of St. Mark, “. . . those Christian voices we hear in the early liturgies *‘with lips that keep not silence, and hearts that cannot be still’* give thanks no less for the eternal magnificence of the Word, than for His voluntary self-emptying for us.”<sup>13</sup> She also says,

“For the Christian standing in awed and grateful worship, before the loving kindness of the Eternal, thanksgiving, Eucharist, must be the prevailing colour of devotion. And in that thanksgiving, that hallowing of the name of God, he dares . . . to associate himself with the whole spiritual universe, which exists to declare the ineffable glory of the Godhead; as if he is dimly aware that in his worship man is taking his small part in a cosmic mystery too great for his mind to grasp, yet near enough for his soul to apprehend.”<sup>14</sup>

With the whole heavenly hosts, the Church sings the angelic hymn,

*“Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are imbued with Thine Holy Glory”.*

It is no exaggeration to define the Eucharist as the life of Paradise.<sup>15</sup>

## **(2) Anamnesis**

*For every time ye eat this Bread, and drink of this Cup, ye do preach My death, and confess My resurrection and remember Me until I come.*

It is not adequate to translate the word *anamnesis* as remembrance. It means the recalling of an event or thing in its effectual fulness. In every Passover the Jews re-experienced their deliverance. In the same way, by doing what Christ did in the Upper Room, we live the saving action of our Lord. A modern Orthodox theologian writes, “The liturgical ‘memorial’ actualizes the before and after . . . The liturgy, freeing us from the weight of time . . . brings the divine Presence into man’s soul and permits him to recognize it.”<sup>16</sup> The Eucharist recalls three temporal dimensions—past, present and future. This is not a mental recall, but sacramentally everything is really there - the Upper Room, the Cross, the empty tomb, the Parousia . . . We are mystically at the foot of the Cross with the women and the beloved disciple, we are in the garden with Mary Magdalene witnessing the resurrected Christ, we are at the moment of His Second Coming at the last trumpet with his angels and myriads of saints.

## **(3) Sacrifice**

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God . . . For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. (Heb. 10:12, 14)

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which was offered once and for all, is the fulfillment of all sacrifices, “He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not



the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." (Heb. 9:12) The heavenly sanctuary which Christ entered is the presence of the Father, of which the holy of holies in the Temple was the figure, and the altar in churches is the sacramental representation.<sup>17</sup> For we can look at the one sacrifice of Christ from three aspects:

1. *The historical aspect.* 'He was crucified for us at the time of Pontius Pilate', as the Nicene Creed says. But Christ was not merely a man, limited in His actions by time and place, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself . . ." (Heb. 9:14)

2. *The heavenly aspect.* While it is on earth that Christ fulfilled His sacrifice, it is in heaven that it is accepted. Calvary is a part of history, but the heavenly sanctuary is beyond time and space. Christ's sacrifice has been accomplished, historically, once for all; but His priestly intercession remains for ever. Our perpetual High Priest constantly pleads His fulfilled and effectual sacrifice. "I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain . . ." (Rev. 5:6). "For Christ has entered not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, *now* to appear in the presence of God on our behalf." (Heb. 9:24)

3. *The Sacramental Aspect.* The Eucharist is one with the heavenly sacrifice and the sacrifice of the Cross. The Eucharist is a liturgical projection of the heavenly action of the High Priest; and at the same time it is the anamnesis of His historical sacrifice on Calvary. When the priest calls the people to lift up their hearts, he is reminding them that the place of the Eucharist is in heaven. Liturgy is the work of Christ in heaven, although it is performed on earth, to quote St. John Chrysostom.

To say that 'the Eucharist is the same sacrifice of the Cross' has never been a new teaching in Christianity. The teaching of our Lord about His death as an atonement and a sacrifice came with His teaching about the Eucharist (Matt. 26:28, John 6:51). St. Paul joins the Cross with Communion and speaks about 'eating from the altar' (1 Cor. 10:16; Heb. 13:10). The early Church Fathers, including the Apostolic Fathers, spoke of the Eucharist as an offering and a sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, 'We offer Christ sacrificed on behalf of our sins,'<sup>19</sup> St. John Chrysostom explains more,

"This is one sacrifice and not many . . . For we always offer the same, not one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing: so that the Sacrifice is one . . . While offered in many places, He is one body, hence one Sacrifice. What we offer now, which was offered then, cannot be exhausted . . . We offer always the same Sacrifice, or rather we perform an anamnesis of a Sacrifice."<sup>20</sup>

There is never a question of a repeated sacrifice.

*Who offers the Eucharist?* Since it is the same Sacrifice of the Cross it has the same Priest. None of the Fathers in the early Church taught otherwise.<sup>21</sup> The Church, the Body of Christ, is not separate from Him when He offers the Eucharist. The earthly priest is the visible icon of Christ Who leads the church in the liturgy.

*What is the offering in the Eucharist?* There is no other Sacrifice except that of the Cross, and nothing can be added to it. Evelyn Underhill explains,

“The Eucharist . . . is first the Church’s representation before God of the perfect self-offering of Christ . . . Secondly it is her own self-offering and that of each of her members, in and with Christ her head . . . To the inward and heavenly sphere, the Church by her Eucharistic worship is admitted to join her sacrificial acts to the eternal self-offering of her Lord.”<sup>22</sup>

The bread and wine offered by each member is a token of his own life. St. Cyprian finds in Rev. 17:15 that the water added to the wine in the offering represents the people united to Christ. The Church dares not offer herself except in Christ and with Him. The offerings of all Christians converge in and are sanctified in the Sacrifice of Calvary in the heavenly sanctuary. In the *epiclesis*, the Eucharistic Prayer asks for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the people before it asks for His descent upon the offering, “*that Thine Holy Spirit may descend upon us and upon these oblations.*” As the people offer the oblation in order to be consecrated, they offer themselves to be sanctified by the same Spirit Who sanctifies the oblation. Eucharist is a call for every believer that he may carry his cross every day and follow the Lord, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God’ (Rom. 12:1).

### ***Presence of God in the Eucharist***

The Eucharist represents sacramentally the action of the Holy Trinity in the plan of salvation. The Father accepts the sacrifice offered by Christ united to His Church. In the midst of the congregation He praises the Father (Heb. 2:12), and He brings many sons to the glory of the Father (cp. Col. 3:3, 4 & Heb. 2:10).

The fourteenth century Byzantine theologian, Nicholas Casabilas describes the role of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist, “The Church received the Holy Spirit after our Lord’s ascension; now she receives the gift of the Holy Spirit after the offerings have been accepted at the Heavenly altar; God who accepts them, sends us the Holy Spirit in return.”<sup>23</sup> The *Epiclesis* (invocation of the Holy Spirit) has been an integral part of all ancient eucharistic prayers, and has been restored back in most Western liturgies in the recent years.

Christ is present in the Eucharist not only in His Spirit, or as the invisible High Priest, but He is also present in His Body, the same body which was crucified and risen. The Fathers have taken the words of Christ (Matt. 26:26-28) literally and they are completely unequivocal in their belief that what is received in Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>24</sup> The whole Eucharistic Prayer is essential for the change and conversion of the bread and wine. It is one indivisible whole.<sup>25</sup> Evelyn Underhill explains further,

“For the early Church, the whole of this great prayer was a single act of worship, within which and through which God in His threefold Being was recognized and adored, the oblation of the bread and wine was made at

once a memorial and as a prevailing sacrifice, the supplications of the Church were presented, and the power of the creative Spirit was invoked on offerers and offering. There was no attempt to identify consecration with any one formula or one moment; whether the recital of the *Words of Institution*, or the *Epiclesis*. All was summed up and completed by the Lord's Prayer."<sup>26</sup>

The Fathers described the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. St. Ignatius of Antioch writes, "The Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour." St. Justin Martyr says, "The food which has been eucharistized is the Flesh and Blood of Jesus who was made flesh."<sup>27</sup> Saint John Chrysostom says, "The magi worshipped this Body when it lay in a manger . . . You behold Him not in a manger, but on an altar; not with a woman holding Him, but with a priest standing before Him; with the Spirit descending with great bounty upon the oblations."<sup>28</sup> The Fathers teach that there is no separation between the humanity and divinity of Christ in the Eucharist. St. Clement of Alexandria states that to drink Jesus' blood is to participate in His incorruptibility.<sup>29</sup> St. Ambrose, commenting on John 6:41, says, "How did bread come down from heaven, and bread that is living bread? Because our Lord Jesus Christ shares both in divinity and body; and you, who receive the flesh, partake of His divine substance in that food."<sup>30</sup> The same belief is echoed in *the confession* which the priest recites at the end of the anaphora,

" . . . *this is the life-giving Body which Thine Only-Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, took of our Lady and Queen of us all, the Holy Theotokos Saint Mary. And made it one with His Godhead without mingling, without confusion, nor alteration . . . Indeed I believe that His Divinity and His Humanity never parted.*"

### ***Eucharist as Intercession***

" . . . since he always lives to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25)

Before we can partake of the heavenly food there remains one absolutely essential act and aspect of the Eucharist, *the intercession*.<sup>31</sup> The Church, the Body of Christ, shares with her Head in His eternal intercession as "an advocate with the Father" and "the expiation of our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:1 & 2). This sharing is expressed in the Coptic liturgy of St. Gregory,

"*For Thy people and Thy Church beseech Thee and Thy Father through and with Thee . . .*"

The Church (never separate from Christ) asks for the living and for the dead. In the seven *Short Intercessions* in the liturgy of St. Basil the Church asks for her peace, for her clergy, for the safety of the whole world and for the whole creation: water, vegetations, fruits and farm animals. In raising her temporal needs and the

needs of the world before the heavenly altar, the Church cannot separate them from the whole eucharistic action. In the seventh intercession, the priest, pointing to the oblation, says,

*"Be mindful, O Lord, of those who offered these oblations"* (i.e. the members of the church who brought the offering), *"those for whom they were offered"* (i.e. the whole world), *"and those by whose ministry they are offered"* (the priest).

In the prayer for the departed, the priest starts by the commemoration of the saints (the *diptychs*) . . . The visible part of the Church does not really ask on behalf of the saints, it is the opposite. This is expressed plainly in the liturgy of Saint Cyril,

*"O Lord, we are not worthy to intercede for their blessedness. But that they, standing beside the judgement seat of Thy only begotten Son, may in their turn intercede for our weakness and our wretchedness."*

The Church remembers them, because they share the same Eucharist. Origen says, "The blessed who have departed are present in spirit at the gatherings of the Church."<sup>32</sup>

After the diptychs, the Church moves to remember her departed members. Saint John Chrysostom affirms that this is an Apostolic tradition,

*"Not in vain was it decreed by the Apostles that in the awesome Mysteries remembrance should be made of the departed. They knew that here there was much gain for them, much benefit. For when the entire people stands with hands uplifted, a priestly assembly, and that awesome sacrificial Victim is laid out, how, when we are calling upon God, should we not succeed in their defense?"*<sup>33</sup>

St. Cyril of Jerusalem says,

*"We believe that it will be a very great benefit to the souls for whom the supplication is put up while that holy and most awful Sacrifice is set forth."*<sup>34</sup>

When we remember our beloved ones who have departed we feel that their membership in the Church is realized in the Eucharist. The Eucharist transcends the borders between the living and the dead, this age and the next, as the response of the people in the liturgy says,

*"As it was, so will it be generation after generation till the endless bounds of all ages. Amen."*

The Eucharistic Prayer makes sure that no body is forgotten. This is especially the case when the liturgy is performed on behalf of a particular person. The priest should then say a special prayer from the liturgy of St. Cyril,

*"Those whose names we mentioned and those whom we didn't mention, each individual separately;*

*"Those of whom each of us thought and those who are not related to us . . ."*

*The liturgy has always been a corporate action where the oblation is offered on behalf of all and for all; it is never the action of a segment of the Church or limited to an accidental purpose. In the Eucharist, the Church is not separate from Christ Who has been offered 'to bear the sins of many.' (Heb. 9:28)*

### **Communion**

"On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast . . ." (Is. 25:6)

"And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at the table in the kingdom of God." (Luke 13:29)

St. Theophilus of Alexandria writes, "The divine gifts are laid forth, the mystical table is ready, the life-giving bowl is mixed. The King of Glory summons, the Son of God holds reception, the enfleshed Word of God urges us to come. The hypostasized Wisdom of the Father who has built for herself a temple not made by the hands of men (Prov. 9:1), distributes her body as bread and bestows her life-giving blood as wine . . ." <sup>35</sup> St. Ambrose says, "The people who have been purified and enriched with wonderful gifts begin to walk in procession towards the altar saying: I will go to the altar of God, to God who rejoices my youth . . . They hasten to go to the Heavenly Banquet . . . The Church, seeing such a great grace, the celebration of the wedding banquet of Christ, invites her sons, invites her neighbors to run to the sacraments . . ." <sup>36</sup>

Prefigured by the shadows of the Old Testament, the Eucharist is the pledge of the heavenly banquet (Mat. 26:29). In the Eucharist, the faithful approach the real Tree of Life (Rev. 2:7 & 22:2), eat of the Paschal Lamb (Ex. 12; Mark 14:14; 1 Co. 5:7) and the true and hidden Manna that came down from heaven (John 6:50, 51, 58; Rev. 2:7), share in the peace offering (Lev. 7) and are cleansed with the burning coal which touched and sanctified the lips of Isaiah (Is. 6:7). On the other hand, an Orthodox theologian <sup>37</sup> describes the relation between the eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet.

"The Day of the Lord will come, but it comes continually in the Church. The Master comes to His own. Eucharist is the Lord's table present in the Church, "that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:30). It is the feast of the Lamb Who heralds now His second and glorious coming. It is the banquet where we will eat and drink, and where He will taste with us the new wine in His kingdom. We expect His coming to us in every Eucharist when we say, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' (Rev. 22:20) This is our Eucharistic Prayer, *Maranatha*-our Lord is coming." <sup>38</sup>

According to the tradition and ancient canons of the Church, all those participating in the Eucharist should receive Communion. The Eucharist is one corporate action with its sixfold aspects. St. John Chrysostom says, "You come to our feast, you join our hymns of praise, you place yourself among the faithful, and yet

you communicate not? 'I am unworthy,' Someone replies. Then you are unworthy to join our prayers."<sup>39</sup>

The Fathers in general and St. Cyril of Alexandria in particular take the words of the liturgy '*Holy things to holy men*' to mean the gift of holiness, set in motion by Baptism and the indwelling of the Spirit. They do not imply a precondition of spiritual perfection based on one's performance.<sup>40</sup>

The blessings received in Communion are many, both to the individual and to the whole Church. To participate in the Eucharist is to participate in the life of Christ. The faithful become concorporeal (one body) with Christ and partakers of the nature of God. The Eucharist provides the most intimate type of union that is possible with Christ (John 6:56). Participation in the one Body of Christ is the basis of union among the faithful.<sup>41</sup> The Eucharist is the Bread of Life, and, like the manna, has been considered by the Fathers as 'food and journey provision along life's way'. It subdues the passion, causes the virtues to flourish, repels the devil, lifts the fallen, heals the sick, and gives spiritual wisdom. It is the 'seed of immortality' and it bestows incorruptibility to man's mortal body<sup>42</sup> (John 6:48 & 53-59). This teaching appears throughout the Egyptian liturgies. The Euchologium of Serapion says after the epiclesis, "*Grant that to all who communicate, the means of life they receive may bring the healing of every sickness and the strength for every kind of progress and virtue . . .*"<sup>43</sup> In the last confession before communion, the priest says, "*Given for us for salvation, remission of sins and an everlasting life to whomsoever partakes of it.*"

We conclude with the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa.

"The God who was manifested mingled Himself with the nature that was doomed to death, in order that by communion with the divinity human nature may be deified together with Him. It is for this purpose that by the divine economy of His grace He plants Himself in the believers by means of that flesh, composed of bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers so that man also may share in immortality by union with the Immortal."<sup>44</sup>

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price . . . Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:17, 20)

### ***References and Notes***

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# ***THE COPTIC LITURGY OF SAINT GREGORY***

***The Rev. James E. Furman***

The fingerprints of a faith are seen most clearly on the things that it touches most often: prayers, sacraments, devotions. This general rule has particular application to the Coptic Church and its “Liturgy of St. Gregory.” This Liturgy offers unusually direct access to what Egyptian Christianity believes about Jesus because it is directed to the Son Himself.

Since the Anglican Communion is developing stronger dialogue with the Coptic Church, it is important to study and understand classic resources such as the Liturgy of St. Gregory. However, my own interest in this Liturgy has an origin that is neither academic nor impersonal.

The editor of *Coptic Church Review*, wrote a letter to me in which he expressed great love for the Liturgy of St. Gregory. He stated that, “I have never seen anything like it among all the ancient liturgies. When it is sung in church, with its lovely tunes, it is unbelievable, something not of this world. I have been attracted to it since my childhood.”

With these comments in mind, it was natural to seek a translation of the text. Interestingly, the most current English version of the Liturgy is a Nineteenth Century Anglican effort (1870), produced by a publisher associated with the Oxford Movement’s “Tracts for the Times” (Rivington’s). This suggests that interest in the Oriental Orthodox is a traditional Anglican concern.

St. Gregory seems to be pre-Nicene (Third Century?) in its original form. Centuries of modification (roughly the span from Constantine to Charlemagne) were completed by the Ninth Century. The exact stages in this process of continuity and change cannot be reconstructed with any ease or claim to assured accuracy.

I do not intend to make a detailed historical analysis of the Liturgy of St. Gregory. That which seems most appropriate is something like an appreciation of the Liturgy, an approach that notes the mood and message of the finished product.

In his *Shape of the Liturgy*, Dom Gregory Dix pointed out that the Liturgy of St. Gregory represents a strong tradition characteristic of eastern Syria. Ancient Christian Syria had a focus on the eucharistic experience as a special moment of sanc-

tification rather than as a part of a rationally explicable “history of redemption.” The hallmark of this approach is that the Eucharist is offered directly and fervently to the Son, a procedure followed by “nearly all of the sixty or seventy lesser Syrian liturgies” (p. 180). Hence, the Egyptian Liturgy of St. Gregory is remarkable for the fact of still being used, not for its orientation.

The Liturgy is headed “The Anaphora of the Holy Gregory.” In fact, it could well be titled “A Liturgy of the Saviour.”

The “St. Gregory” in question is St. Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389). However it is not probable that he wrote or arranged any portion of the Liturgy. Instead, his reputation as a master of Christology may have made it logical to associate him with a text so centered on our Lord.

The Coptic Church uses three eucharistic liturgies: St. Basil, St. Cyril, and St. Gregory; the Liturgy of the Word is the same for each. The Liturgy of St. Basil is the most commonly used; St. Gregory is usually reserved for feast days although it can be used at any time. Precisely because it is normally chosen to emphasize festal seasons, St. Gregory has a priority claim on study and discussion.

The opening phrase is a salutation which echoes with the ideas of both Philo of Alexandria and Origen: “Thou who didst exist, who didst pre-exist, who abidest for ever, the everlasting, of the same substance and throne and joint-creator with the Father . . .”

St. Gregory’s theme is incarnational history rooted in the Old Testament. That is, the Fall and its dark consequences are prominent. Less familiar to most Western Christians is the vivid description of Christ as the “one who didst create man out of nothing, and didst place him in the Paradise of delight and when he fell from thence by the deceit of the enemy, and through disobedience to Thy holy commands, didst will to renew him and to replace him in his former dignity, entrusting no Angel or Archangel, or Patriarch or Prophet with our salvation, but, unchangeable, didst assume flesh and become man . . .”

Dialogue between deacon, priest and people follows. This introduces a “Sursum Corda” which is followed by an elaborate passage centering on Christ the Redeemer. “It is truly just and right that we should praise Thee, bless Thee, serve Thee, adore Thee, glorify Thee, the only True God, the lover of men, the ineffable, the incomprehensible, without beginning, eternal, without time, the uncircumscribed, the unsearchable, the immutable, the Creator of all, the preserver of every thing, who pardoneth our sins, who saveth our life from destruction, who crowneth us with mercies and compassions.”

Punctuated by phrases assigned to the deacon, this lengthy section continues with language that recalls the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem. At last, the Liturgy comes to a “Sanctus” that is an extended celebration of the heavenly hierarchy.

The priest follows with the thanksgiving for creation and for redemption. He speaks, in the singular, in the name of the whole human race. "As the lover of man thou didst create me a man; Thou hadst no need of my service, though I had need of Thy Lordship; of Thy compassion Thou didst bring me into existence, Thou didst establish the Heavens above me as a roof, Thou didst make the earth firm for me to walk upon; for my sake Thou didst confine the sea; for my sake didst Thou give life to animals in their kinds . . ."

Earlier portions of the Liturgy weave together many phrases and quotations from both the Old and New Testaments, however, this material follows a different procedure. Large and complex passages are evoked, not quoted. The effect is to incorporate a massive image rather than to "decorate" a clause. In this section we move rapidly from Ezekiel 34:11-31 as developed by St. John to "special material" found in St. Luke alone: the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan.

"Thou, my Lord, didst convert my punishment into Salvation; like a Good Shepherd didst hasten to seek that which had gone astray; like a Good Father didst labour with me who had fallen; didst bind me up with all remedies which conduce to life."

The point of this material is that the priest speaks to Christ face-to-face: the history of salvation has become the history of his own soul. The priest stands as the "sin representative" of the congregation. He is speaking as the thankful Prodigal who is invited to his father's feast. Throughout this section the people punctuate the priest's words with their chant: "Lord have mercy." This interplay gives the effect of a Classic Greek drama with its use of the chorus.

A "kenotic theology" derived from Philippians 2:6-11 describes the work of Christ as the Liturgy unfolds. "Thou who didst ever exist, comest for us on earth; didst enter the Virgin's womb, albeit God that cannot be contained; Thou didst not think it robbery to be equal with God, but didst empty Thyself and take on Thee the form of a servant, didst bless my nature in Thyself, didst fulfil Thy law for me, didst make known to me how to rise from my fall, didst give remission to those who were detained in Hades . . ."

Having made this recitation, the Liturgy suddenly changes in tone, briefly alluding to the Cross for the first time. A reference to the Last Supper connects the authority of the sacrament with Christ. This "offertory" identifies the present time of the Liturgy in progress with the original moment in the Upper Room.

"I offer to Thee, my Lord, the symbols of my service; my actions are a copy of Thy words. It is Thou who hast given unto me this ministration which is full of mystery; Thou hast given to me the participation of Thy flesh in the Bread and Wine: For in the night in which Thou wast betrayed by thy sole will and power . . ."

The people chant their "acceptance" of the words of the priest at this point almost as an interruption: "We believe, we believe that it is so in truth." This statement allows the drama of recital to continue.

This section of the Liturgy is a continuous dialogue in which priest and people chant consecutively in a complex sharing of affirmations. The consecration of the elements represents the tenor of this material.

“Thou didst take bread into thy holy spotless and immaculate and blessed and lifegiving hands, Thou didst look up to Heaven, to God Thy Father and Lord of all, Thou didst give thanks . . . Thou didst bless it . . . Thou didst sanctify it, didst break and give it to Thy glorious, holy disciples and holy apostles saying, Take, eat thereof, all. For this is My Body which is broken for you and is given for many for the remission of sin. Do this for a commemoration of Me.” The consecration of the wine repeats this unusually full and amplified pattern.

If the *anamnesis* is highly enriched, the *epiclesis* is equally thorough. The point is that the Liturgy is no longer offered in anticipation; it now proceeds in the actual Presence of Christ. The psychology of the Liturgy after the consecration seems to be that “He is near and there is much to be said.”

In the presence of the eucharistic Lord, priest and congregation pray for a Messianic renewal of the orders of human society. Various segments of the Church are prayed for in terms of their characteristic needs.

“We beseech Thee, O Christ our God, strengthen the foundations of Thy church; let the concord of charity take root in us; let truth and faith increase; make straight for us the path of piety; bind together the pastors, confirm their flocks; give dignity to the clergy, continence to the monks, purity to those in virginity, a good life to those who are in marriage, mercy to the penitents, kindness to the rich, gentleness to those of rank, help to the poor; strengthen the aged, instruct the youth, convert unbelievers, let the schisms of the church cease, destroy the pride of heresies, and reckon us among those who are made one by piety.”

Following the “Prayer for the Church,” there is a special version of a “Prayer for the World.” It seems to be a prayer for the re-Creation of the world, drawing upon a range of images that recall Genesis 1-2.

“. . . Bestow harmony on the world, and a kindly tempering of the atmosphere. Remember, O Lord, the fulness of the rivers and bless their waters . . . Rejoice the face of the Earth; let its furrows be well-watered; let its fruits be multiplied; Prepare its seed-time and harvest; Regulate our life according to Thy holy and blessed will; bless the crown of the year in Thy goodness . . .”

Prayers for the sick and suffering lead to a final invocation of “the whole choir of Thy saints, through whose prayer and intercession have mercy on us all, and sanctify us for the sake of Thy Holy Name which is called upon us.”

“The Prayer of the *Fraction*” is directed expressly to the Son. It is in classic *berakah* form: a thanksgiving for an action of God leads to an intercession. In effect, this passage asks that the eucharistic assembly will be made part of the eucharistic pattern, filled and blessed with the Life of the Risen One.

“Purify us also, O our Lord, as Thou hast sanctified these gifts which are placed before Thee, and of visible hast made them invisible, and a mystery understood only by Thee our Lord, and our God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ . . .”

The priest then offers a “*Confession*” which is a vigorous statement of eucharistic faith. “I believe, I believe, and I confess to my last breath that this is the life-giving flesh which thou didst take, O Jesus Christ our God, from the mistress of us all, the pure Mother of God, the Holy Mary, and which Thou didst unite with Thy Deity without commixture or confusion or change . . .”

This “Confession” confronts the issue of Monophysitism and makes a strongly orthodox statement. “I believe that Thy divinity is not separated from Thy manhood for a moment or the twinkling of an eye, being given for us, as the salvation and forgiveness of sins and the eternal life of those who partake thereof.”

Strikingly, the language of this passage seems to be the basis of the 1971 “Vienna Statement” in which Copts and Roman Catholics attempted to set aside the Greek phrases and definitions which have been problematic for so long. The relevant section of the Vienna Statement is “We all believe that Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word, the Incarnate God. We believe that He was perfect in His Divinity and Perfect in His Humanity and that His Divinity never departed His Humanity not even a single instant nor a twinkle of an eye” (quoted in *Coptic Church Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 7).

Two final prayers close the anaphora. The first is a thanksgiving. The second is a Trinitarian prayer that the blessings given in the Eucharist will be confirmed and continued.

The Liturgy of St. Gregory reveals the deep and intense piety of the Coptic Church, its meditation on Scripture and delight in the saints. It is a valuable introduction to another member of the Christian family.

It is possible to consider the Liturgy of St. Gregory a “living fossil”, something born in the caravan cities of Syria and now surviving in the ruin-rich Valley of the Nile. However, such an attitude is blind and deaf: blind to the importance of something used by millions of Christians, deaf to a rich Biblical theology of considerable subtlety.

I do not suggest that Western Christians ought to borrow or copy this or that aspect of St. Gregory. Rather, Western Christians can enjoy its total structure, feel its texture, consider its insights. In doing these things, they will discover that the “poetry” of a liturgy is, in fact, its life-giving and Life-given substance.

Perhaps the best comment on this Coptic Liturgy is a teaching given in a different context by one of modern Russia’s great spiritual guides. “There is nothing on earth holier, higher, more solemn and life-giving than the Liturgy. The Liturgy is the constant reiteration of God’s love for mankind and an all-powerful petition for the salva-

tion of the whole world and every individual person . . . The Eucharistic Sacrifice, or Christ's most Pure Body and Blood, is the inexhaustible source of reconciliation with God, the mercy of purification, sanctification, renewal and divinization for all believers . . . an active prayer for the bringing to Christ of all the peoples of the world" (John of Kronstadt in *The Life of Father John*; Alexander Semenov, 1979; p. 115-116).

# ***THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION***

***Father Tadros Y. Malaty***

## ***The Sacrifice of the Cross<sup>1</sup>***

God as a real Father, embraces man as his lover. But we rejected His love, turning away by our disobedience. Thus there was the necessity to offer a bloody sacrifice, so as to redeem man, bear the result (death) of his sin against God, and intercede for him.

All the human race received this rule of the bloody sacrifice through Adam, and most religions practised it. But many abused its notion and rites; some sacrificed their children to appease the wrath of God.

For this reason, the written Law of Moses directed us to offer bloody sacrifices, describing their rites accurately and in detail. For “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”<sup>2</sup>

These sacrifices were symbols of the unique sacrifice, i.e. that of the Cross. For the “Lamb of God” bears our sins and disobedience and pays the price. He is the only One who can pay, redeem, intercede and raise us up.

We can see this sacrifice of Christ hidden in all the history of God’s dealings with man. The Patriarchs saw it through the symbols and rejoiced.<sup>3</sup> Moses saw it through the law and God’s actions with His people.<sup>4</sup> The Prophets foresaw it in the prophecies.

The prophet Isaiah saw the Victim bowing his head, to bear our sins, redeeming us by the Cross. He said<sup>5</sup>,

“Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? . . .

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities; . . .

stricken for the transgressions of my people . . .  
although he had done no violence . . .

Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him . . . when He makes Himself an offering for sin . . .

He poured out His soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”.

The apostle Paul compares this sacrifice to the old sacrifices.<sup>6</sup>

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption . . .

For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own; for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of time to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”.

In these magnificent phrases, we catch the depth of the theme of our redemption, Christ’s suffering; the shedding of His blood has a sacrificial quality.

### *This sacrifice is unique*

—*First*: It is the unique sacrifice in which the “Victim” offers His will as a sacrifice to the Father. He expressed His absolute obedience and inward abandonment to the Father, and His fervent love. He chose death as the ultimate extreme of obedience and by this He gave the Father infinite honor, worship and glory. He offered that highest and most precious possession, His own will, which St. Paul calls “Self-emptying”<sup>7</sup>. This self-emptying could not be offered by the old victims, for these had no “will” to offer.<sup>8</sup>

*Second*: The High Priest here is not a man suffering from sin<sup>9</sup> or offering the blood of animals for the purification of the flesh, but He is the heavenly One, who offers His own blood as a heavenly and mighty sacrifice, which does not need to be repeated . . . for it brings us to the heavenly place, i.e. “the good things that have come.”

Thus, the sacrifice of the Cross is unique for it is the sacrifice of “self-emptying” and a heavenly one, not subject to the laws of “time” and “place”.

There never was a moment when Christ did not wish to be sacrificed, and now He is still in heaven as the slain “Lamb”<sup>10</sup> making intercession for His church through His blood.



To understand this notion, we say that the sacrifice of the Cross forms one redeeming action of God, although it was fulfilled in many stages. For our salvation, the Son was incarnated, baptized, tempted, suffered, was crucified, died, was buried, resurrected and ascended to heaven . . . These stages are one integral redeeming action, and cannot be isolated one from the other.

*Examples:* Through His incarnation the Son was united with us, and we abode mystically in Him. But we cannot enjoy this union with Him outside the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the burial with him in the baptistry so that we may rise up with Him in the new life.

And through His baptism, the Church - His body - enters with Him to receive the Spirit of adoption from God, but she cannot enjoy this without the Cross, which reconciles her with God . . .

Likewise in the Last Supper, the Lord brought His Church into the mystery of the Cross, bestowing upon her His sacrificed Life, i.e. his sacrificed Body and Blood, as a true sacrifice, and the Church still enjoys sacramentally the one sacrifice of the Cross through the Eucharist.

Upon the Cross He fulfills the role of Victim which He accepted at the Last Supper. And His acceptance of the resurrection or the new life from His Father is a fulfillment of His self-oblation in the last Supper, this life-giving sacrifice.

In brief, the Lord offered one sacrifice which took many essential and integral stages, especially the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. It is one sacrificial, supernatural and divine action, always present in the Church to last for eternity.

### ***A Real Sacrifice***

The Church is Christ continuing to act and to operate in His body. He bestows this mystery upon her, so that she may offer His own sacrifice by His Holy Spirit.

Thus what He entrusted to her on the night of His suffering was a true sacrifice, as we conclude from His words.<sup>11</sup>

My Body given . . . broken for you,

My Blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins,

The new covenant in my Blood . . . shed for you.

For this reason, the early Church used these Greek words, "thusia = sacrifice and prosphora = oblation, for the "Eucharist".

St. Paul clearly implies that the Eucharist is a "sacrifice" when he contrasts "the table of the Lord" and "the table of demons" (1 Cor. 10:20, 21). Also the references in Hebrews, chapter 10 are to the sacrifices of the Old Testament to which Calvary and the Eucharist are compared as fulfillment and antitype to the prefigured type.

Thus the ecumenical councils and the early Fathers of the Church<sup>12</sup> taught us that the Eucharist is a real unbloody Sacrifice.

For, St. Ignatius, the eucharistic assembly of the Church is *thusiasterion* "the place of the sacrifice and he who is not within it is deprived of the bread."<sup>13</sup>

St. Clement of Rome<sup>14</sup> says that the bishop's work is to offer "prospheretia" the oblation.

### ***Eucharist and Calvary***

On the Cross Christ physically shed His blood. And had this sacrifice ended by His death like the old ones, He would have been unable to bring us to heaven. But He rose again proclaiming the Father's acceptance of this sacrifice, proving that He is the Living Victim, always present in His church, offering the same sacrifice sacramentally without physical shedding of blood nor physical death, because He can die no more.

In other words,<sup>15</sup> on the Cross, the Word of God spoke the practical, saving and loving speech, by shedding His blood. And in the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit awakens the hearts of men to hear the same Word of the Cross, by recalling its effect. By the power of the Holy Spirit we enjoy unity with the Crucified Christ as a response to love and to the effective hearing of the word of God. We hear the practical voice of Salvation, which is the death of Christ and His resurrection, not simply by partaking of Christ's Body and Blood, but the Body sacrificed for our salvation. This means that Christ is not present in the Eucharist "statically" but dynamically.

Thus we look upon the redemption not as something of the past, nor as something that was done, but as something that still goes on. It is operative in human history, liberating men of each succeeding generation from their particular enslavements . . .<sup>16</sup> This mystery is the continuous sacrificial action of Christ. For He is present in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and He still has His inner attitude, that is His obedience to the Father until death, accepting passage through death into risen life. It is this attitude that effects reconciliation of man with God. This attitude may flow effectively into our lives through our unity with the Only-Begotten Son, so we meet the Father as ours through His only Son, and the Father once more recognizes us as sons of obedience through His Son also.

Thus the Eucharist is the continuous redeeming action of the Cross. The history of salvation continues to embrace all generations. Men are slowly drawn more closely to Christ Who is patiently working by His love to shape us to greater maturity.

We mention here some phrases of the early Fathers and some texts of the prayers of the liturgies which reveal the effect of the Eucharist in our Salvation and our spiritual progress:

\*For this table is the sinews of our soul, the bond of our mind, the foundation of our hope, our salvation, our light and our life,

\*When you see it set before you, say to yourself:

Because of His body I am no longer earth and ashes, no longer prisoner but I am free.

Because of this I hope for heaven, and to receive the good things therein, immortal life, the portion of angels, converse with Christ.

This Body, nailed and scourged, was more than death could stand against . . .

This is even that Body, the blood-stained, the pierced, and that out of which gushed the saving fountains: the one of blood, the other of water, for the world.

*St. John Chrysostom*<sup>17</sup>

\*By It the soul is cleansed, by It it is beautified and inflamed.

*St. John Chrysostom*<sup>18</sup>

\*The Church grows from day to day in stature and in beauty by the cooperation and communion of the Logos, Who condescends to us until now and continues His going out of Himself in the anamnesis of His Passion.

*St. Methodius of Olympus*<sup>19</sup>

\*To Thee We have offered this bread . . . we have offered also the cup . . . and make all who partake to receive a medicine of life, for healing of every sickness and for strengthening of all advancement and virtue, not for condemnation.

*Euchologium of Serapion*

\*This oblation of thy servants . . . that it be to us for the pardon of offences and the remission of sins and for the great hope of resurrection from the dead and for new life in the kingdom of heaven.

*Liturgy of S.S. Addai and Mari*

### ***A Living Anamnesis***

The sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were symbols of Calvary and of the Eucharist consisted essentially of the destruction of the victims. The death of victims and the fire that destroys them are the signs of God's acceptance of the offering. Their work ends at this point, and it becomes necessary to offer another victim for another occasion.

But the sacrifice of Christ is unique, for His resurrection is the sign of the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice, and the sign of its power to be present in the Church, continuing His redeeming and sacrificial act. For this reason the heavenly High Priest bestowed upon us His mystery, i.e. His Sacrifice. He gave us His sacrificed Body and Blood, that is the mystery of His death; His resurrection and His ascension as a living commemoration (*anamnesis*), acting in our lives.

Thus we understand the Lord's commandment, "Do this in my *Anamnesis*".

For the Greek word "*anamnesis*" does not mean merely a remembrance or a memorial of a thing regarded as being absent, but it means a recalling or representing the thing in an active sense<sup>20</sup>. It does not mean a remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ as something purely of the past, something that was done, but as a real and present sacrifice which has its effect on us. It is an "efficacious commemoration"<sup>21</sup>

The early Fathers of the Church explain this meaning:

\*But do we not daily offer the sacrifice? We offer it, but in making the anamnesis of His death. And this is unique, not multiple. It was offered once as He entered into the Holy of Holies. The anamnesis is the figure of His death. It is the same sacrifice that we offer, not one today and another tomorrow. Christ is One only everywhere, entire everywhere, one only Body. As everywhere there is one Body, everywhere there is one sacrifice. This is the sacrifice that we now still offer. This is the meaning of the anamnesis: we carry out the anamnesis of the sacrifice.

*St. John Chrysostom*<sup>22</sup>

\*(on the Lord's words)

I have called It and It really is "My Body". The smallest part of this particle can sanctify thousands of souls and is sufficient to give life to those who receive It.

*St. Ephraem Syrus*<sup>23</sup>

\*The Eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who suffered for our sins, and which God the Father raised up.

*St. Ignatius*<sup>24</sup>

\*The Food which has been "eucharistized" is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made flesh.

*St. Justin Martyr*<sup>25</sup>

\*The mingled cup and the prepared bread receive the Word of God and become the Eucharist, the Body and the Blood of Christ.

*St. Irenaeus*<sup>26</sup>

\*The bread which He took and gave to His disciples He made his own very Body by saying, "This is my Body".

*Tertullian*<sup>27</sup>

\*What can be sacrificed so full of love, and accepted so gratefully, as the flesh of our sacrifice, which became the Body of our priest?!

*St. Augustine*<sup>28</sup>

Thus in the Eucharist the Church is presented to the Golgotha, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to enjoy the sacrificial Holy Body and the precious Blood of her Saviour, practising the saving deeds of her heavenly Father. In other words the Eucharist is an anamnesis of the redeeming action of Christ in the mysterious sense that it is still active and continuous.<sup>29</sup>

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14. 1 Clem 44.
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23. Mimre 4 on the Passion.
24. Ep. on Sym 6:2.
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28. *On the Holy Trinity*, book 4.
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## ***BOOK REVIEWS***

### ***Christ in the Eucharist***

*By Fr. Tadros Malaty. Sporting, Alexandria: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1986. Pp. 216. (For ordering, contact the author at St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, P.O. Box 6970, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2A 3Y6)*

“Many people wrote about the Eucharist; some concerning historical points, others dealt with the ritual side, others with theological conception. But let us examine the Mystery, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to see our Lord Jesus Christ, feel His love, understand His work of salvation, practice His fellowship, enjoy His divine revelations and partake of His eternal glory.

“Truly I wonder whether the Church, during the celebration of the Eucharist, is raised to heaven to be with her divine Bridegroom, or whether the earth itself is transformed to heaven, as the heavenly Bridegroom Himself comes with His angels to embrace and to take for Himself His Bride, whom He loved.”

With this introduction Father Tadros Malaty shows his resolution not to deviate from the spiritual line he intends for this book about the Coptic liturgy, nor to know anything, as the book’s title implies, other than Jesus Christ, the life giving Sacrifice.

The book is divided into four parts. Book I deals with *The Liturgy in the Early Church Conception*. This part discusses the theology of the Eucharist from seven aspects. It describes the Eucharist as the mystery of worship, the mystery of thanksgiving, the mystery of redemption, the mystery of the New Testament, the mystery of the new Pasch, the mystery of the Church, and the mystery of the Sabbath.

In Book II, *The Liturgy and the Bible*, the author discusses the various relations between the Eucharist and the Bible: the importance of the liturgy of the Word and how the Eucharistic Liturgy leads to the Bible. There is a special chapter on the liturgy and the Old Testament in which many of the O.T types of the Eucharist (the passover, the manna, the offering of Melchisedech, the messianic banquet and others) are explained.

Book III deals with *The Eucharistic Rites and Ceremonies in the Coptic Church*. This long section (120 pages) is a commentary on the Divine Liturgy of the Coptic

Church. It explains the various rites and includes many quotations from the three Coptic liturgies now in use.

Book IV, *Liturgical Texts*, gives a short introduction to the liturgical sources which are still available from the first five centuries.

As the only book in English that comments on the Coptic liturgies, this is a valuable source both to the scholar and to the English-speaking parishioner and it makes a good spiritual reading, especially with its extensive quotations from the Church Fathers. However, the reader has to live with some language and printing errors, which we hope to be corrected in a later edition.

### ***The World of the Desert Fathers***

*By Columba Stewart OSB. Foreword by Sister Benedicta Ward SLG. 1986. SLG Press (Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford OX4 1TB England). \$5.00 including postage and packaging. pp. 46 x vii. - Airmail rate \$10.00.*

The SLG Press must be congratulated on providing us with another valuable text which enlightens mind and spirit. Dom Columba's work is a companion volume to Sister Benedicta's earlier collection entitled *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers*. These stories and sayings bridge the cultural gap between Coptic Egypt of the fourth century and our own troubled times. Those readers who are concerned about the poverty of much modern spiritual writing, will find the authentic world of Coptic spirituality in these forceful though gnomic sentences and paragraphs. Dom Columba is surely right when he notes in the Introduction: "Some of the texts in this collection may seem irrelevant, others even offensive, but most of them will compel comparison with one's own experience through the contrast in atmosphere. Within the tension of contrast, one may hear an echo or two."

The translation is in clean, clear English. Dom Columba, a monk of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, has done a fine piece of work. His commentary on the text, which stands out in excellent italic print, helps us to understand the likely context of a saying or story and to press the reader towards the inner meaning of the 'saying' which is the real goal of a serious reader, for, as Sister Benedicta says in her useful Foreword, "These stories are not modern biography; they are brief, anonymous anecdotes told, not to reveal character or outline action, but as edifying and instructive examples. They are part of an ancient tradition of literature, in which words have a resonance beyond their surface meaning. They are addressed, like the sayings, to each one who reads them as part of the way to Christ, not simply as introductions to the person or event recorded."

The immediacy of some of the sayings translated here may be caught by reference to only three which jumped out of the page for the present writer: 'Anyone who

keeps death before his eyes at all times conquers despair'. 'Woe to anyone whose name is greater than his work.' 'If you see me having a thought about someone, you also have it.' It does not require wide reading to remind us of the Gospel sayings of the Lord or those of the sayings of Jesus found in Egypt's gnostic literature.

Each section has a good introduction and provokes thought. A fine example can be found in the Section "Death in the Desert". Dom Columba says: "Western culture has developed an elaborate system of funeral arrangements designed to minimize contact with the physical reality of death . . . For Egyptians, the desert was especially related to death, for it was the place of burial, the abode of the dead, the realm of spirits and demons . . . The monks of the desert spoke of death as their call, a call to join the Lord." These sentences give something of the flavour of the commentary. Here is an incident from the Section which follows: "A brother knew an old man, and seeing how wonderfully he cared for the dead, said to him, 'If I should die, will you care for me in the same way?' He replied, 'I will care for you in the same way, until you say, "Enough" '. Not long after, the disciple died, and the old man's word was put into practice. Having cared for him reverently, the old man said to him in the presence of all, 'Have you been well cared for, child, or is there still a little bit remaining to do?' And the young man gave forth the reply, 'You have done well, father, for you have fulfilled your promise.' "

This is an important book. It can be recommended, without reservation or qualification, to all those who know the Desert Fathers and to young people who ought to know them. It is an excellent introduction to the first generation of Christian monks in the Egyptian deserts. Here is the violent spirituality, the rugged desert humour and the unforgettable insights of the Coptic Orthodox Fathers. This book should be read again and again and become the subject of meditation.

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### ***Prayer for Unity***

*By Bishop Oliver Tomkins. SLG Press 1986. (Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford OX4 1TB England) \$3.00 including postage and packing: pp. 16.*

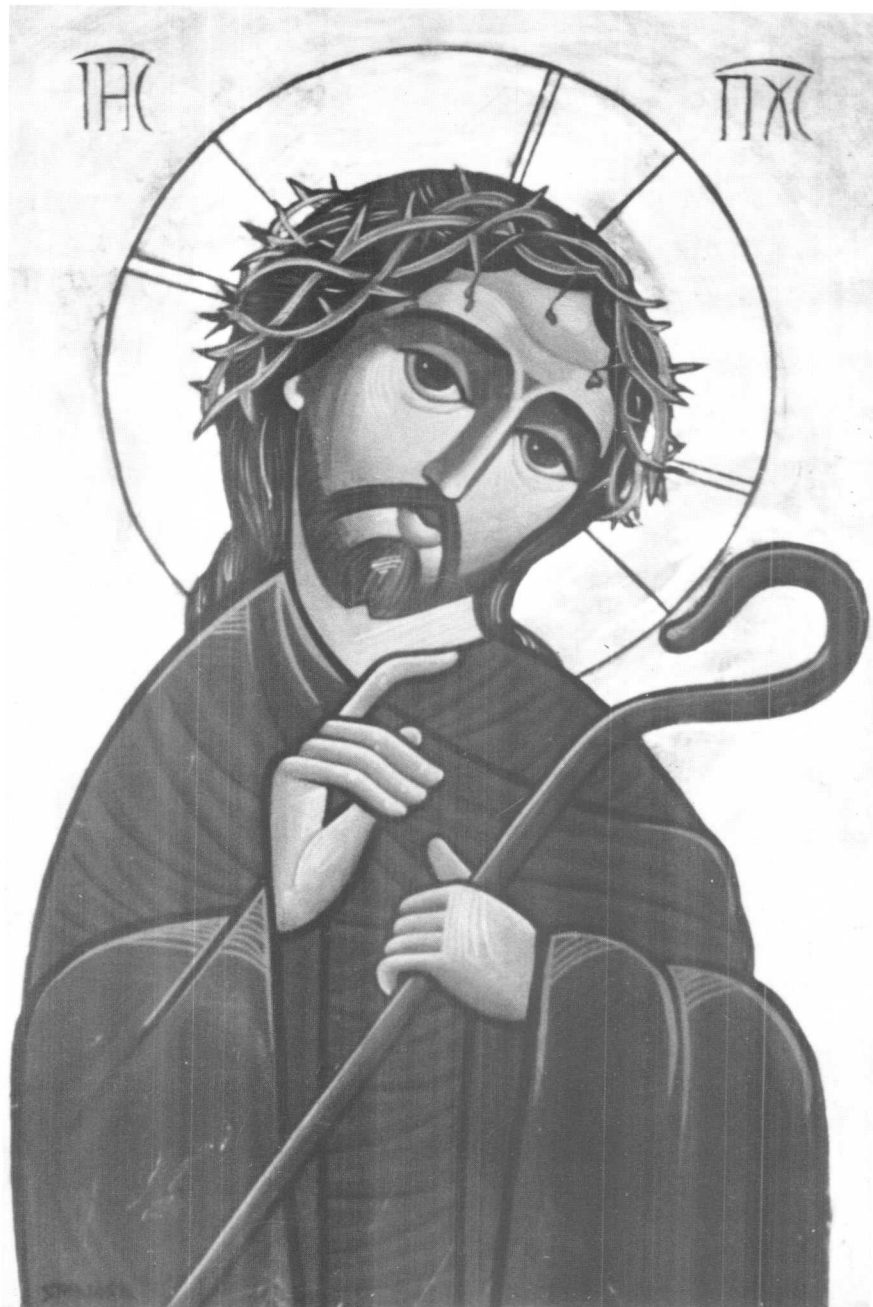
Bishop Tomkins has been associated with the ecumenical movement for over forty years. He was Secretary of Faith and Order from 1940 to 1945. This short but powerful essay is not about schemes for church unity. It seeks rather to root the prayer of Christians for Unity in the Unity of the Holy and Undivided Trinity who is life-in-communion. The approach seems to be entirely convincing. The booklet contains a black-and-white print of the famous Rublev Icon of the Hospitality of Abraham which is a 'visual aid' drawing the observer into the heart of the ultimate



mystery of the Holy Trinity. Bishop Oliver gives a compelling interpretation of the icon which he has developed from his friendship with Russian Orthodox emigres living in the West. This interpretation may be of special interest to Orthodox Christians. It lies at the heart of this small but helpful study.

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Thou enduredst the injuries of the wicked,  
Yieldedst Thy back to the stripes,  
Didst give Thy cheek to blows,  
For my sake, O my Lord, Thou didst not turn  
away Thy face from the shame of the spitting.

*From the Coptic Liturgy of St. Gregory*