The Office of the Prothesis (Neale translation)

Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom (ancient)

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The Office of the Prothesis

The Priest and Deacon go to the prothesis, and wash their hands, saying, I will wash my hands in innocency, O LORD, and so will I go to Thine Altar, to the end of the Psalm. Then they make three adorations before the prothesis, and each saith, GOD be merciful to me a sinner, and have pity upon me. G Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law, by Thy precious Blood, being nailed to the Cross, and wounded with the lance, and didst pour forth streams of immortality to men: glory be to Thee, our SAVIOUR. Deacon. Sir, give the blessing. Priest. Blessed be our GOD always, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen. Then the Priest takes in his left hand the Oblations and in his right the holy spear. In remembrance of our LORD and GOD, and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. (This he saith thrice.)

He then thrusts the spear into the right side of the seal, and saith, as he cuts, Into the left, saying, And as a blameless lamb dumb before His shearers, so He opened not His mouth. Into the upper part, saying, In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. Into the lower, saying, And who shall declare His generation? The Deacon, looking devoutly on this vite, saith, at each incision, Let us make our supplications to the LORD: holding his horarion in his hand. After these things, he saith, Sir, take up. pressed on the Holy Lamb, and is so to be taken here; but is sometimes used for the thing thus sealed, namely, the Holy Lamb itself, as in what follows. G 2 And the Priest, thrusting the holy spear obliquely into the right side of the Oblation, raises up the holy Bread, saying, For His life is taken away from the earth; [always, now and ever, and to ages of ages.]

And layeth it, cross downwards, in the holy dish. The Deacon saith, Sir, sacrifice. The Priest saith, while he cuts it crosswise, The Lamb of God is sacrificed, Which taketh away the sin of the world, for the life and salvation of the world. Then he turns it cross upwards, and the Deacon saith, Sir, stab. And the Priest, piercing the right side with the holy spear, saith, One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout Blood and Water: and he that saw it bare record, and his record is true. The Deacon then pours into the holy chalice, wine and water, first saying to the Priest, Sir, bless the Holy Union. And the Priest blesses them. Then the Priest, taking the second Oblation, saith, In honour and memory of the

most excellent and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, by whose intercessions receive, O LORD, this Sacrifice to Thy heavenly altar.

a The Holy Lamb. b The portion of S. Mary. c The nine portions of Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, &c. d Portions for the living. e Portions for the dead. And taking a portion, he places it on the right side of the holy Bread near its middle part, saying, At Thy right hand did stand the Queen in a vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours. Then, taking the third Oblation, he saith, Of the honourable and glorious Forerunner, Prophet, and Baptist John. And taking one portion, he places it on the left side of the holy Bread, making a beginning of the first row: then he saith: Of the holy and glorious Prophets, Moses and Aaron, Elijah, Elisha, David and Jesse, the Three Holy Children, and all holy Prophets. And he places the second portion orderly under the first. Then he saith: Of the holy and glorious and all celebrated Apostles, Peter and Paul, the Twelve, and the Seventy, and all holy Apostles.

And thus he places the third portion below the second, finishing the row. Then he saith: Of our holy Fathers, and œcumenical great Doctors and Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom, Athanasius and Cyril, Nicolas of Myra, and all holy Hierarchs. And taking the fourth portion, he places it near the first, beginning a second row. Then he saith again, Of the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen, the great and holy Martyrs Demetrius, George, Theodore, and all holy Martyrs, both men and women. And taking the fifth portion, he lays it under the first of the second row. Then he saith: Of our holy Fathers, filled with GOD, Antony, Euthymius, Sabbas, Onuphrius, and Athanasius of Mount Athos, and all holy ascetics, men and women. And thus, taking the sixth portion, he places it below the second portion, to the accomplishment of the second row. After this he saith:

Of the wonderworking and unmercenary Saints, Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleemon and Hermolaus, and of all unmercenary Saints. Then taking the seventh portion, he puts it at the top, beginning the third row. Of the holy and just parents of GOD, Joachim and Anna, of N. (the Saint of the day,) and all Saints, through whose intercessions GOD look upon us. And taking the eighth portion, he places it in order a little below the first (of the third row). Yet further he saith: Of our holy Father, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, (if his Liturgy be said that day; but if S. Basil's be, he commemorates him.) And thus, taking the ninth portion, he finishes with it the third row. Then taking the fourth Oblation, he saith: Remember, O LORD and Lover of men, all Orthodox Sees, our Bishop N., the venerable Presbytery, the Diaconate in CHRIST, and every hierarchical rank, the Hegumen N., our brothers and fellow-ministers, Priests and Deacons, and all our brothers, whom Thou hast called to Thy Communion, through Thy mercy, O good LORD.

And taking a portion, he places it below the holy Bread. Then he commemorates also those living whose names he has, and thus taking their portions, places them below the holy Bread. Then taking the fifth Oblation, he saith: For the memory and forgiveness of sins of the blessed founders of this holy habitation. He then commemorates the Bishop that ordained him, and such other of the dead as he pleases; and lastly, saith thus: And of all our Orthodox fathers and brethren, who have departed in the hope of the resurrection and in Thy communion to eternal life, O LORD and Lover of men. (And he takes a portion.) Then the Deacon, himself also taking a Seal and the holy spear, commemorates those of the living whom he pleases; and lastly saith thus: Remember, also, O LORD, my unworthiness, and forgive me every sin, voluntary and involuntary. Then, in like manner, he takes another Seal, and commemorates whom he will of the departed: and puts the portions below the holy Bread, in the same way as the Priest. Then he takes the sponge, and gathers together the portions in the dish under the holy Bread, so that they are safe, and that nothing can fall off. Then the Deacon, taking the censer, and incense in it, saith to the Priest:

Sir, bless the incense. Let us make our supplications to the LORD. The Priest saith the Prayer of Incense. We offer to Thee incense, O CHRIST our GOD, for a savour of a spiritual perfume: receive it unto Thy heavenly altar, and send down in its stead the grace of Thy most HOLY SPIRIT. This is an innovation. S. Symeon of Thessalonica distinctly condemns it. "The Deacons must not offer portions; for they have not the grace of offering to GOD." (οὐ δι' διακόνου; μερίδας προσφέρειν... ἐπὶ καὶ τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ προσφέρειν τῇ Θεῇ οὐκ ἔχουσι.) The Greeks use a "holy sponge," in place of the purificatorium of the Latins. It is generally called Σπόγγος, but here μούσα, the more modern term for the same thing. Deacon. Let us make our supplications to the LORD. The Priest censes the Asterisk, and places it over the holy Bread, saying: And the star came, and stood over where the young Child was.

Deacon. Let us make our supplications to the LORD. And the Priest taking the first veil, covers with it the holy Bread with the disk, saying: The LORD hath reigned; He hath put on glorious apparel: the LORD hath put on His apparel, and girded Himself with strength. Deacon. Let us make our supplications to the LORD. Sir, cover. (παλμψον.) And the Priest, censing the second veil, covers with it the holy chalice, saying: Thy glory, O CHRIST, hath filled the heavens, and the earth is full of Thy praise. Deacon. Let us make our supplications to the LORD. Sir, shelter. (σκέπασον.) (21.) The Priest censing the covering which is called the Air, and covering both chalice and dish with it, saith: Shelter us with the covering of Thy wings, chase away from us every enemy and foe; give peace in our time; LORD, have mercy upon us, and on Thy world, and save our souls, for Thou art good, and the lover of men.

Then the Priest, taking the censer, censes the prothesis, saying thrice: Blessed be our GOD, who is thus well pleased: glory be to Thee. The Deacon saith at each time: Always, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen. Then they both adore reverently, three times. Then the Deacon, taking the censer, saith: At the oblation of the Holy Gifts, let us make our supplications to the LORD. The Priest saith the Prayer of Prothesis: O GOD, our GOD, Who didst send forth the Heavenly Bread, the nourishment of the whole world, our LORD and GOD, JESUS CHRIST, as a Saviour and Redeemer and Benefactor, blessing and hallowing us; Thyself bless this Oblation, and receive it to Thy heavenly altar: remember, of Thy goodness and love to men, them that offered it, and them for whom they offered it; and keep us without condemnation in the celebration of Thy holy mysteries. For blessed and hallowed is Thy holy and glorious Name, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

And after this he there makes the Dismission, saying thus: Glory be to Thee, CHRIST, our GOD and Hope: glory be to Thee. Deacon. Glory. Both now. LORD have mercy. Sir, give the blessing. And the Priest gives the Dismission, saying: {if it be Sunday, CHRIST, that arose from the dead,} {if not, CHRIST, our true GOD,} through the intercessions of His spotless Mother, and our holy Father, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, (or, if it be the Liturgy of S. Basil, of S. Basil the Great, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia,) and All Saints, have mercy upon us, and save us; for Thou art good and the lover of men. Deacon. Amen. After the Dismission, the Deacon censes the holy prothesis; then he goes and censes the holy Table all round in the form of a Cross, saying secretly: In the tomb bodily, in Hades spiritually, in paradise with the thief, while Thou wert, O CHRIST, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST on the throne, as GOD filling all things and incircumscript. Then he saith the fifty-first Psalm. In the meantime he censes the Sanctuary and all the Church, and comes again to the holy Altar, and again censes the holy Table and the Priest; then he puts down the censer in its place, and comes close to the Priest; and they stand in front of the holy Table, and make three reverences; praying secretly, and saying:

O heavenly King, the Paraclete, the SPIRIT of truth, Who art every where present, and fillest all things, the Treasure of good things, and Giver of life, come and tabernacle in us, and cleanse us from all stain, and save our souls, O good GOD. Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. Twice. O LORD, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. Then the Priest kisses the Holy Gospel, and the Deacon the holy Table. Then the Deacon, bowing his head to the Priest, and holding his horarion with the three fingers of his right hand, saith: It is time to sacrifice to the LORD. Holy Sir, give the blessing. The Priest, signing him with the Cross, saith: Blessed be our GOD always, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen. Deacon. Holy Sir, pray for me. Priest. The LORD make straight thy goings to every good work.

Deacon. Holy Sir, remember me. Priest. The LORD our GOD remember thee in His kingdom, always, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Deacon. Amen. Then he makes a reverence, and goes out, and standing in the accustomed place, over against the holy doors, makes three reverences, saying to himself: O LORD, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew Thy praise. After this, he begins, Sir, give the blessing. Priest. Blessed be the kingdom, &c. [The Liturgy will be found at page 93.] Ποιεῖν. King translates "to perform;" and Goar, doubtfully, "faciendi." The word often, in late Greek signifies to sacrifice. So the LXX, Isaiah xix. 21; 1 Kings xi. 33; Levit. ix. 7. So in S. Luke ii. 27, "τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτοὺς πατὰ τὸ εἰκείμενον τοῦ νόμον"—ought to be translated—"that they might offer a sacrifice according to the custom of the law." So facere is often used in Latin, Virg. iii. 77, "Cum faciam vitula pro frugibus." And the similar word βίζων, as every one knows, constantly means the same thing.

Source. English translation by J. M. Neale, from *The Liturgies of S. Mark, S. James, S. Clement, S. Chrysostom, and the Church of Malabar*, translated, with introduction and appendices, by John Mason Neale (London: J. T. Hayes, 1859); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1859 edition at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes and the editor's introduction are left out. Neale's introduction, appendices and numbered notes are also left out. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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