

## THE INTRODUCTORY SERVICES AND THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



Two of the disciples of Jesus were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus in utter despair at the departure of Jesus. On their way, Jesus joined them; and he conversed with this sorrowful duo about the prophecies related to Jesus made by Moses down to many other prophets. Their hearts glowed with the presence and words; they could not make him out. With hearts aglow they remained in the inn with him; and when Jesus took bread, blessed, broke, and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. They remembered how their hearts glowed, on their way when Jesus talked with them (Lk.24:13-35).

Only when we break bread with hearts glowing with the Word, we are able to recognize God. The liturgy of the word is arranged in the holy Qurbana with the

experiencing of this truth. The introductory prayers as well as the liturgy of the word in the beginning of the holy Qurbana enable us to recognize and experience Jesus in the sacrifice on the altar.

## THE INTRODUCTORY SERVICE

Through the introductory prayers, we recall the long wait for the Lord, our redeemer and celebrate his sacred birth and the private life. The introductory prayers start with the hymn Annappesahathirunalil down to the resurrection hymn Sarvadhanam Karthave and the following prayers.

### Annappesahathirunalil (On that day of paschal feast day)

The chanting of this hymn reminds us that we celebrate the holy Qurbana according to Jesus' command on the day of the Paschal Banquet. After instituting the Holy Eucharist he said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22: 19). Whenever we offer this sacrifice of the holy Qurbana we obey this command. The new covenant of love was also given on that day. Love is the essential quality for offering the holy Qurbana. God never accepts a sacrifice offered with a venomous heart. Jesus said, "When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come to offer your gift" (Mt 5:23-24). So, while chanting this hymn, if you remember that you have enmity with anyone, go and reconcile with him and then participate in the Mass.



### ACTIVITY -1

Find out the important services in the introductory rite of the holy Qurbana and write down the meaning of these services.

## Glory to God in the Highest

This song sung by the angels at the birth of Christ reminds us of his birth. **We must, here, praise Jesus who, out of his love renounced his heavenly majesty and was born as a human being in a manger braving all the limitations.** The birth of the promised redeemer was to spread the Good News to mankind enslaved by sin. The word 'peace' in the second stanza of the hymn means 'redemption'. Every Christian should grow into this perfect state of peace-salvation.



"Our Father who art in heaven..."

**"For God so loved the world that He gave His only son."**(Jn.3: 16) **God incarnated to redeem us with the divine grace lost when our forefathers sinned. He gave us the right to call Him Father.** So, recalling the birth of Jesus we address Him 'Father', and pray. This prayer taught us by Jesus enables us to praise Him extending our thoughts heavenward.

The hymn of praise "holy, holy, holy" is sung along with the Lord's Prayer. This hymn is constantly echoing in heaven and when we chant it, we are reminded that all those in heaven keep company with us; hence, we must say these prayers with great respect, piety, and love.

## Let us pray, Peace be with us

We are reminded of the presence of Jesus when the deacon makes this announcement. As St.Paul said, Jesus is our peace. (Eph. 2: 14).

## The Prayers by the Celebrant

In the following prayers by the celebrant, he expresses thanks for this great gift of the Holy Eucharist, and implores blessings to offer it in a worthy manner.

## Psalms

The psalms help us to look back upon the history and life of the people of the old covenant and to affirm them as a part of the redemptive work. **They were the heartbeats of the religious life of the Israelites.** We praise God sharing their sentiments. Jesus made use of the psalms for his prayer.

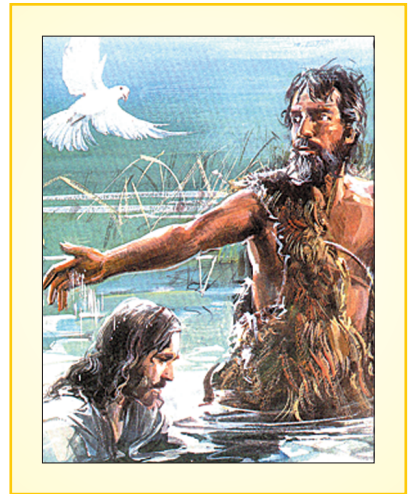


### The Kissing of the Cross

This is a rite practised in Raza, the solemn form used by the Syro-Malabar Church. Jesus, through his sacrifice on the cross, won salvation for mankind. The kissing of the cross is to highlight our hope in Jesus affirming the importance of the cross in our Christian life. We believe that the cross will be the sign of Jesus' second coming (parousia). The prayers in connection with the kissing of the cross refer to the second coming of Jesus, and of the Church, his bride.

### The Resurrection Hymn

The resurrection hymn that follows reminds us of the baptism of Christ. This is also considered as a song in praise of the resurrected Jesus. (The sanctuary veil is removed now symbolizing the gates of heaven being open and the revelation of the Holy Trinity during the baptism of Jesus; Then the sanctuary, which is a symbol of heaven, is seen. At this juncture, the glow of lights and the incense fumes give the worshipping community a heavenly experience.)



**During the chanting of this hymn, we recall the baptism of Jesus, his death and resurrection interpreted as his second baptism, our baptism through which we become participants of the salvific mysteries of Jesus, and the heavenly glory awaiting us.** With the following prayer of the celebrant, the introductory rites conclude.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

We recall, here, the public life, of Jesus proclamation of the gospel and evangelization.

### The Trisagion

The Liturgy of the word starts with the trisagion. In the first part, the deacon invites us to raise our voices and glorify the living Father; and in the second part, addressing the holy, mighty, and immortal God, we implore His mercy. This hymn gives us the very same experience of prophet Isaiah when he heard the angels praising God as 'holy, holy, holy'.

### Readings From the Sacred Scripture

There are four readings altogether: the first two from the Old Testament and the next two from the New Testament. The contents of the Old Testament being Law and the Prophets, the first reading is from the Pentateuch, also called 'the Law'; and the second from the Prophets. Sometimes, the second reading may be from the Acts of the Apostles. The third and the fourth readings will be from the Epistles and the Gospels respectively. Prior to each reading, the celebrant prays and the community sings. In response to the first two readings, the community says: "Praise be to the Lord our God". After the readings of the epistle and the gospel, they reply, 'Praise be to Christ, our Lord'.



### ACTIVITY - 2

Read the passages

Isaiah 6: 1-7;

Revelation 4:1-11.

and find out the importance of Trisagion in the holy Qurbana. Try to understand also the feelings that is created in us while singing this song.

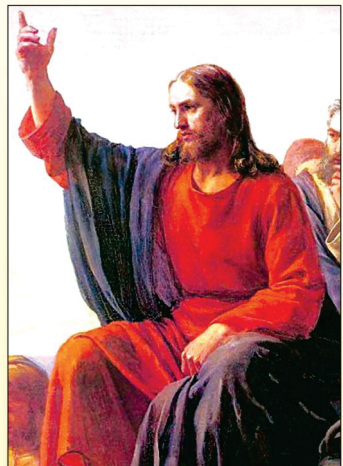
## The Procession with the Gospel book and the Reading

Prior to the reading of the gospel, holding the gospel book, the celebrant advances to the bema in a procession. **The celebrant, taking the gospel book from the right side of the altar and coming to the bema, signifies the arrival of Jesus to the earth. We are reminded that Christ himself, not the priest, comes holding the gospel book aloft.** It is taught in the Second Vatican Council that in the liturgy, Jesus himself gives the Word to us. The people bend their heads and receive the blessings when the celebrant blesses them with the gospel book saying, 'Peace be with you'.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. (Ps. 119:105). Through every holy Qurbana, Jesus himself gives the word of God necessary for our daily life. The word of God grants life, power, and health. When we apply these words in our life, it illuminates our life.

## The Homily

The homily is the interpretation of the word of God. **There is a special spirit and power for the homilies given during the celebration of the holy Qurbana. The Church teaches us how we must apply the word of God in our day-to-day life and produce results.** One who pays attention to the homily carefully and puts it into practice will be like the wise man who has built his house on rock.



## **Karozutha / ( Karozuza) Prayer**

Karozutha prayer is the response to the Word heard and an expression of our faith. **The prayer is mainly for spiritual benefits than material blessings.**

We profess, here, our faith in the power and protection of God. The deacon winds up the karozutha prayer seeking the blessings to live according to the word of God and dedicating all to the hands of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **The Prayers of Blessing**

Through these prayers of blessing, the community is blessed and made ready to attend anaphora, the most important part of the holy Qurbana. Earlier, those who did not receive baptism were allowed only to attend up to the service of the Word. This prayer was also to bless them, before they left. When the celebrant recites this prayer, we must bow our heads and receive the blessing.

The liturgy of the Word ends with this prayer of blessing. We are able to receive the word of God as the spiritual food, through the liturgy of the Word and get ready for the liturgy of the breaking of the Bread.

**LET US  
READ AND  
MEDITATE THE  
WORD OF GOD**

(Jn. 1 : 1 - 18)

### **A Verse to Remember**

“We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life” (1Jn.1:1).

### **Let us Pray**

O Jesus, bless us to offer the holy Qurbana with one spirit and one mind just as it was in the ancient Church.

### **My Resolution**

I will carefully pay attention to the homily of the holy Qurbana.

### **Teachings of the Fathers of the Church**

Jesus turns off from the altar where a person of enmity renders sacrifice.  
(St. Cyprian).

### **QUESTIONS**

1. The liturgy of the Word in the holy Qurbana prepares us to recognize and experience Jesus. Explain.
2. What are the important parts of the introductory rites?
3. What does the resurrection hymn remind us of ?
4. What experience does the trisagion prayer give us?
5. What all things are indicated through the procession with the gospel book and the reading?