

THE PREPARATION OF GIFTS AND ANAPHORA

As demanded by the Jewish leaders, Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Rome, sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion. After a series of tortures, he was led to Golgotha. He was crucified at Kapalam (Golgotha) after a prolonged trek of agony. After drinking the vinegar offered, he said: "Every thing is completed." He cried aloud and said: "Father into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last (Lk 23:44-46, Jn. 19:28-30). Joseph of Arimathea and Jesus' relatives buried his body in a nearby tomb; and on the third day, in all glory he resurrected (Lk. 24:1-12, Jn. 20:1-10).



The holy Qurbana is a celebration of the mystery of redemption consummated in Jesus. Anaphora, the consecratory rite, makes us participate in the central events of the messianic mystery, namely, His passion, death and resurrection. The



preparatory service prior to anaphora helps us participate in the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

PREPARATORY SERVICE

This service is a preparation for anaphora, a celebration of the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Jesus. **There are two types of preparation: material and spiritual.** The preparation of the offerings for sacrifice, their deposition and covering them with the sosappa are the different elements of the material preparation. Dismissal of the unworthy, paying obeisance, washing of hands, the creed, the entry of the celebrant into the sanctuary are that of spiritual preparation.

Preparation of the Offerings

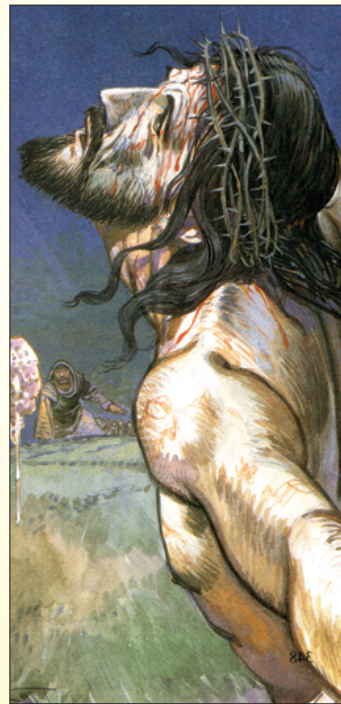


The celebrant, after incensing and purifying the chalice and the paten that will hold the body and blood of Jesus, takes bread and wine in them. We remember Christ's passion here; The prayer during the ritual of adding water into wine reminds this: **"...One**

of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once blood and water came out" (Jn. 19:34). While the celebrant prepares bread and wine in the paten and the chalice, the community dedicate themselves, spiritually.

Activity

Make a chart of all the liturgical rites, highlighting their symbolic meanings, from the Karozutha prayer to the entry of the celebrant into the sanctuary .



The Worthiness of those Who Participate in Anaphora

The deacon invites us to participate in anaphora with awe and reverence: “Let all who have been baptised and sealed with the sign of life, participate in these holy mysteries affectively and devoutly.”

Sending off the Unworthy

In the olden days, there was a practice of sending off those who had not received baptism and the seal of life and others who were not receiving the holy communion, after the liturgy of the Word. This practice exhorts us of the necessity of the inner purity of those who participate in the holy Qurbana. Those who don't live a life befitting to the baptismal principle will be deprived of heavenly bliss once and for all.

Prostration

This rite observed in Raza, is purely a practice in the liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church. The celebrant kisses the four corners of the sosappa spread on the bema three times each, while the celebrant, deacon and the choir in exchange sing: “the crown of justice adorned by your priests...” This hymn reveals the office of the priest; also we are reminded that the bread and wine are transformed, into the body and blood of Jesus with the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Washing of Hands

Prior to the carrying of the sacred offerings to the altar, the celebrant washes his hands. This symbolizes the spiritual purification of the worshipping community in the ocean of God's grace.

The Offering of the Gifts and the Hymn of the Mysteries

The celebrant brings bread and wine kept on the bethgazza to the altar. The hymn sung at this time is the hymn of the mysteries.



The procession conducted by the celebrant carrying the already set chalice and the paten reminds us of the journey of Jesus to Calvary. The raising up of the eucharistic mysteries in the form of a cross hints at his death on the cross. Thereafter, the celebrant covers the chalice and the paten with the sosappa, this signifies the burial of the sacred body of Jesus.

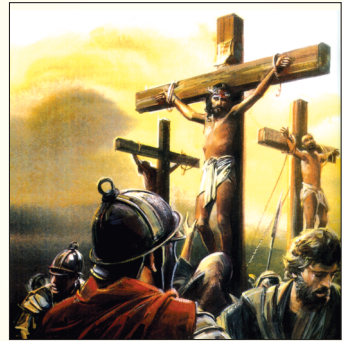
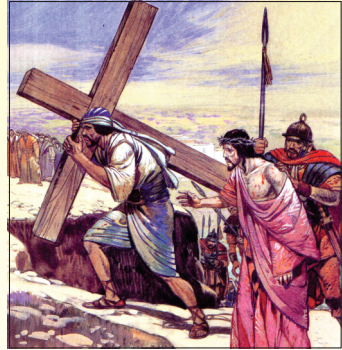
The hymn starting with the line “thathanu-mathupol...” is the second part of the hymn of the mysteries. Through this hymn, we commemorate St. Mary, the apostles, especially St. Thomas, the patriarchs, the martyrs and the dead. Following their examples, we can become sanctified and please the Holy Trinity by fasting, prayer and repentance.

The Creed

The holy Qurbana is the celebration and observance of the faith of the Church. Before we step into Anaphora, the central part of the holy Qurbana, the community proclaims their experience of faith. We pronounce here, one faith in the Holy Trinity, the Church and the heavenly life.

The Entry into the Sanctuary

The celebrant approaches the altar after genuflecting thrice with extreme devotion. **The celebrant, at this juncture, is thanking God and praying for having made him worthy to enter the most holy place and offer Qurbana of the Body and Blood of Jesus.** He celebrates the divine mysteries for the remission of the people's debts, the forgiveness of their sins, the salvation of their souls, the reconciliation of the whole world and for peace and tranquility of all the Churches. Then he kisses the altar, the throne of God, thrice, reeling the presence of the Holy Trinity.



ANAPHORA (CONSECRATION)

Anaphora is the central part of the holy Qurbana. It is a Greek word meaning 'lifting, dedicating.' In the Syro-Malabar liturgy, there are three anaphoras : the anaphora of the apostles (of the venerable Teachers of the East, Mar Addai and Mar Mari), the anaphora of Mar Theodore, and the anaphora of Mar Nestorius. We follow the anaphora of the apostles.

There are four prayer cycles in the anaphora; each prayer cycle consists of four subdivisions, and **they are the prayer request, private prayer, G'hantha prayer and prayer of praise**, the center of them being the G'hantha prayer. 'Bowing' is the meaning of the Syriac word 'G'hantha'. This prayer is called G'hantha prayer because the celebrant bows himself and prays. This is also called thanksgiving prayer because paying thanks is the aim of this prayer.

The First G'hantha Cycle



In the first G'hantha round, consisting of prayer of request, private prayer, **the first G'hantha prayer and prayer of praise**, we thank God for showering blessings upon us profusely. The G'hantha prayer ends with the canona "we offer praise, reverence, thanks and adoration." Now, the celebrant raises his hand above his head and makes a sign of the cross on himself.

Prayer Request

The priest, who approaches the altar enriched with the presence of God, becomes conscious of his unworthiness and implores the community to pray for him. It is the duty of the people of God to pray and empower the celebrant who intercedes to God for them.

Wishing Peace

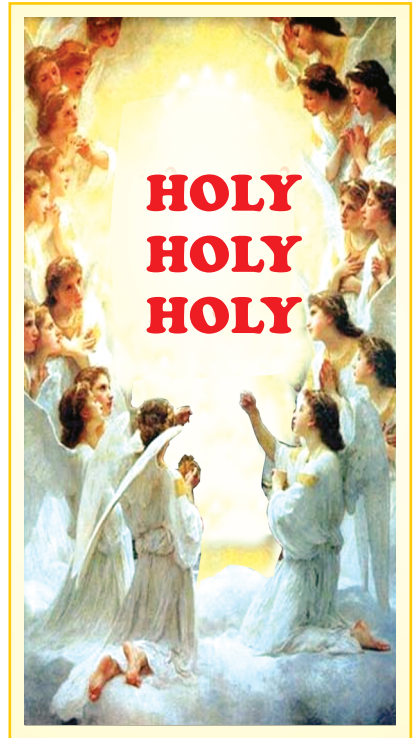
The celebrant turning towards the people wishes them peace; and the deacon, in return, accepts it from the hands of the celebrant and gives it to the people. “Jesus is our peace.” (Eph. 2:14). When we mutually exchange this peace, we proclaim that we are worthy to offer the sacrifice in reconciliation with all the people across the world.

Memorial Prayer (Dptychs)

Here we remember both the living and the dead, calling their names. We can mention our personal intentions too. The following prayer, “Let us... with repentance and holiness...” by the deacon clarifies how the community should participate in the Qurbana. The private prayer that follows explains that the holy Qurbana is offered for the good of the congregation and for the praise of the Holy Trinity.

Incensing

The celebrant, while blessing the censor, offers the incensing in honour of the Holy Trinity and for the good of the community.



A Prayer of Dialogue

The ensuing prayer in the form of a dialogue persuades the people of God to participate in the holy Qurbana with devotion. The prayer of St. Paul starting with the line “the grace of our Lord Jesus...” makes us experience the blessings and presence of the Holy Trinity. The celebrant, then, exhorts us to lift up our thoughts and minds heavenward. The response by the community “God of Abraham...” confesses that God is not of the dead, but of the living. The prayer of dialogue ends with the proclamation that the holy Qurbana is being offered to God, the Lord of all and it is right and just indeed.

The Second G'hantha Cycle

With the private prayer, “Lord, free our minds from every impurity...” the second G'hantha round starts. Here, the prayer is for granting self-confidence to celebrate the Qurbana with hope and a mind-set free from all evils. Through this second G'hantha, **the God, who created the whole world, and everything in it is thanked. Creation and redemption of mankind are parts of the salvific scheme of God.**

The Hymn 'Holy'

In the following hymn, we join the heavenly hosts, and praise God. **This hymn is a fusion of the song of praise by the seraphs in the vision of Isaiah (Isa. 6:3), the vision of heaven in St. John's Revelation (Rev. 4:8) and 'the Hosana' sung by the people at Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:9).** With this song of praise, the second G'hantha ends.

The Third G'hantha Cycle

With the private prayer 'God thou art holy' by the celebrant during the hymn 'Holy', the third G'hantha prayer starts. This prayer leads us to the experiential awareness of sins the prophet Isaiah had, consequent to his vision of heaven.

We recall the redemptive work of God and thank Him in the third G'hantha prayer following the request for prayer by the celebrant. This prayer is divided into two; and the description of the institution of the Holy Eucharist is placed in between. In the first part we thank God in memory of Jesus' mystery of incarnation; and in the second part, following the institution narrative, **Mother Church praises God for all the graces, showered by Him, which are beyond expression of thanks.** Thus ends the third G'hantha.



The Institution Narrative

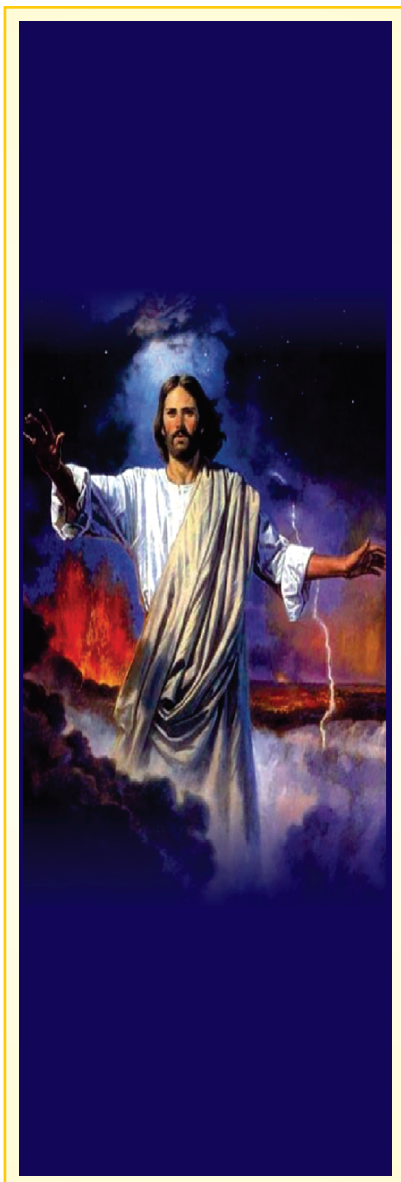
We commemorate in the description of the institution how Jesus during the Last Supper, blessed bread and wine saying, "This is my body, this is my blood" and gave his sacred body as well as blood to the disciples. We commemorate in every holy Qurbana the divine moments when Jesus instituted the sacred mystery of the Holy Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:25).

The Fourth G'hantha Cycle

The fourth G'hantha round starts with the intercessory prayer by the celebrant. Extending his hands, he intercedes for the Church and civil authorities and for all the living and the dead. In this fourth G'hantha, following the prayer of request by the celebrant, thanks is being rendered for the sanctifying process in the Church by God. St. Mary and all the fathers of the Church are remembered; and pray for peace and harmony. The mysteries of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, our Lord and redeemer, are recalled and observed.

Invocation to the Holy Spirit

We celebrate, here, the mystery of the resurrection of Jesus. The sacrifice on the altar is consummated with the descent of the Holy Spirit who was instrumental in the resurrection of Jesus. We pray that the Holy Spirit may descend and dwell upon the Qurbana and bless it so that those who receive these mysteries will be granted remission of debts, forgiveness of sins, great hope in the resurrection of the dead and new life in the heavenly kingdom. The



fourth G'hatha as well as anaphora ends with the prayer of the celebrant, "We offer glory and honour..."

In anaphora, qualified as the consecratory part of the holy Qurbana, we commemorate and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit. When we participate in anaphora actively, we receive a salvific experience.

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

(Heb. 10 : 1 - 15)

A Verse to Remember

"...it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all"

(Heb. 10:10)

Let us Pray

Jesus, the divine lamb, who is broken for us on the altar, we praise you, singing 'Holy, Holy, Holy, in the company of the angels.

My Resolution

I will offer my life as a sacrifice together with the sacrifice by Jesus.

Teachings of the Fathers of the Church

When water is mixed with wine in the chalice, the worshipping community unites with Christ; thus the group of the faithful unites with the one on whom they placed their trust. (St. Cyprian)

QUESTIONS

1. When we participate in Anaphora, what are we sharing in?
2. What do we commemorate during the preparation of gifts?
3. What are the rituals performed during the hymn of the mysteries?
Also give their symbolic meanings.
4. How many Anaphoras are there in East Syrian liturgy? Name them.
5. What are the actions of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the invocation to the Holy Spirit in our Qurbana?