Liturgical Reform in the Byzantine Church

Rev. David M. Petras
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At the Last Supper, called the Mystical Supper, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his disciples some bread, saying, "This is my body," eat of it, all of you, and then he blessed a cup of wine and gave it to them to drink, saying, "Thus is my blood of the New Covenant, drink of this, all of you." He then gave them a command, "Do this in memory of me.(Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24)" Our Divine Liturgies repeat this command to show that when we are celebrating the Eucharist, we are fulfilling what our Lord told us to do. The Anaphora of St. Basil says, "Do this in remembrance of me, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this chalice, you proclaim my death and profess my resurrection." The Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, at least in its received form, does not repeat the words of our Lord, but it does remember his command as the priest says, "Remembering, therefore, this saving command, and all that has come to pass in our behalf ... offering you your own from your own." We will return to the point of what this command means.

It might seem to be a negative place to begin - to speak first of commands - that which we must do. Part of the problem of why the Liturgy does not enliven the Church is because it has been done only in obedience to laws. We were taught when we were young, that it is one of the laws of the Church that we must attend the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and holy days of obligation. It wasn't that we really wanted to be there, and the Liturgy was thought by many to be boring - still today - but it was the law. However, "command" has a different meaning for God's law and for human law. Human law is an attempt to interpret what is necessary to allow for good order in human life and society. Human law seeks to protect the rights of people and to create conditions where we can realize our human potential. It does not in itself enliven us. Therefore, the human law attempts to define when and how we must attend the Divine Liturgy. Human law can get us to the Church, but it cannot make us spiritually participate. The divine law, on the other hand, tells us, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. (John 6:53)" Human law just lays down the conditions for life, divine law gives life. We might even ask if divine commands are law in the human sense. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)" It is less a constriction on our behavior than a statement of fact. If we truly have faith, if we love God, we will do what he says, but his teachings are more revelation than prescription. The fact is that if we partake of his body and blood in Communion, we will have life in us. God's "commands" are all revelations that if we act upon them, we will find life, love and fulfillment of our created destiny. Human law is restrictive, because we do not have the power to give life to one another, though the keeping of the law may create the conditions for our well-being. Divine law, however, gives life of itself, for it is God's Spirit giving us life in wisdom and love.

There was another command that our risen Lord gave his followers after his resurrection.

This command was in regard to baptism, and on the mountain in Galilee, he told them, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)" This is, therefore, especially important to us as priests and catechists, because our mission is to teach, and our teaching is a part of the sacramental mystery of the Church. As we teach, so we also baptize, and as we baptize, the grace of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, restores the image of God in us and makes us his adopted children in Jesus our Lord.

Baptism is also important for any discussion of the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharist. The process of both baptism and Eucharist is the same and the two sacramental mysteries are essentially connected. In both we come to a knowledge of the faith, we profess our faith, and then seal that faith by a divine action, in baptism, the descent into water in baptism, coupled with the anointing of chrism, the seal of the Spirit, and in the eucharist, by communion in the holy body and blood of our Lord.

These sacramental actions sanctify us by the grace and power of God that we cannot supply by our own powers. We freely offer our assent, and then God infuses into us faith and love so that we become God-like. Baptism, however, is done one time, because we renounce evil once and for all, and commit ourselves to God once and for all. If this commitment must be repeated, then we might question whether it was a real commitment. This is perhaps the reason for the harsh judgment found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "It is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gifts and shared in the holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again, since they are re-crucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt. (Hebrews 6:4-6)"

Though baptism is given only once, it is only the beginning. Nicholas Cabasilas tells us, "The life in Christ originates in this life and arises from it. It is perfected, however, in the life to come, when we shall have reached that last day. (*The Life in Christ* I, 1)" Baptism is constantly renewed and nourished in the reception of Holy Communion. The two cannot be separated. This is why the reform of the rite of baptism for our Church has restored the giving of Communion to all who are baptized, even infants. Baptism and Communion are one mystery of Christ's presence in our lives, teaching us, transforming us, bringing us to perfection in God. Baptism is given once and Communion is given continually. Here we see the connection also with catechesis, both baptism and communion are the proclamation of the gospel, they are evangelization, and as such are at the core of all catechesis.

Baptism was reformed in another way. We have restored the practice of baptism by immersion. This is because baptism is a participation in the life and death of Jesus. Going down into the water symbolizes - not merely by a sign or representation, but in reality - our death to sin in Christ Jesus, our coming out of the water then symbolizes - in reality - our resurrection from the dead. St. Paul teaches us, "Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might rise to

newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)" Before this reform, baptism was performed in a very minimal manner, only a little water was poured on the head of a baby in the presence of a few witnesses. This does not mean that baptism was invalid, because baptism by pouring was recognized very early, for example, in the Didache, a church order from the beginning of the second century, allows it, but only if fresh, running water is not available (7:2). Therefore, the liturgical instruction of January 6, 1996 tells us, "the rite of triple immersion ... is a meaningful and highly expressive rite which is still present and encouraged today in the Western Church, though too often abandoned for simple reason of convenience. (§ 48)

I speak of baptism at length because it is about catechesis and about reform. Reform is a word that sometimes scares us. Some of our fellow Eastern Christians have transferred from the Roman rite, in some cases because they were afraid that the modern reform was too "Protestant," following the churches of the "Reformation." Any reform, then, would be treated with suspicion. The problem of the Protestant reform was that it attempted to go back to the scriptural beginnings, to the pure original teaching of Christ, but did not take into account the intervening tradition of the Church. I know that this is an over-simplification, but the final result was in fact a new form of the church seen by both the Catholic and Orthodox traditions as a distortion of the faith, though elements of the truth are still present. However, in the Vatican II Council, the Church proclaimed that it is always in need of reform, as, for example, in the Decree on Ecumenism (§ 6), "Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continued reformation of which she always has need."

Reform especially involves our worship in the Liturgy, because that is, in fact, where we most frequently and most religiously gather as a community. Our worship in the Liturgy is very close to our life and practice as Christian believers. Therefore, any change to this life and practice can be very stressful. It is something, though, that must be done. Every generation must examine itself, and ask whether it is following the commands of our Lord. Asa we have seen, following these commands brings life. Notice that we speak not of "form" but of "reform." "Form" is creation. By divine revelation, Jesus has given us the form of the Eucharist. In it Jesus revealed that the bread and wine become his body and blood for us, the Church is created through our participation in this holy and divine mystery. The Scripture also says that Jesus "blessed" the bread and wine. Today we sometimes interpret "blessing" as making the sign of a cross over a person or object., but this action is secondary. To bless primarily means to pray - designating the sanctification of the person or thing that is the object of the prayer. Thus at the Last Supper, Jesus said a prayer of blessing over the bread and wine. This is the form of the Eucharist. The Scriptures do not give us the text of Jesus' prayer, but the tradition of the Church has passed on this prayer in the many different forms of anaphora - which means a prayer of offering - that is used by the diversity of Christian Churches. In the Byzantine Church we generally use two anaphoras, attributed to St. Basil the Great and to St. John Chrysostom, but which contain the elements of the prayer of blessing as said by Jesus at the Mystical Supper. The Anaphoras are the form of the Liturgy and are an action of God. Hence the title of my commentary, "Time for the Lord to Act."

What we must do in every age and in every generation, then, is to "re-form" the Liturgy.

What is important is that reform is not a new creation, it is the restoration of a pre-existing value. Our own generation must ask the question: is what we are doing that which our Lord commanded, and is the Divine Liturgy today a fulfillment of his command, "Do this in memory of me." This is the only true reform.

Such a reform would not be authentic if it ignored the tradition of the Church. By this, of course, we mean living tradition and not dead traditionalism. The well-known scholar, Fr. Alexander Schmemann said that there are those who believe that all liturgical regulations form "an absolute and immutable law, and to touch or change this material in any way whatever is tantamount to the subversion of Orthodoxy." (*Introduction to Liturgical Theology,* 37; in Calivas, *Aspects of Orthodox Worship* 100).

As Byzantine Catholics, the Church has made it very clear that the starting point for our reform is the return to our genuine Eastern tradition. This is found enunciated in the well-known and oft-quoted *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches* (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) of Vatican II, paragraph 6, "(All members of the Eastern Churches) are to aim always at a more perfect knowledge and practice of their rites, and if they have fallen away due to circumstances of time or persons, they are to strive to return to their ancestral traditions." Thus principle from the Vatican II Council in 1965 then became a major point of reform, the foundation for a reconsideration of who we were as a church and whether we were conscientiously following the gospel and the tradition of the Church.

This statement of the Vatican II Council, however, did not just come out of thin air. In itself, it was a principle that the Church has always lived by in its constant reform, its on-going conscience of following the path of Christ. In the first millennium of the Church, East and West were united in communion of the one body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, early in the second millennium, that communion was broken gradually yet decisively. The Churches first became aware of different formulations of the faith, and differences in liturgical celebration seemed to them to signify that one or the other was not faithful to Christ. Later, the presence or absence of the phrase, "and from the Son," in the Creed in reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit became crucial. It was not really until the time of the Council of Florence that the two Churches began to become aware that there could be diverse ways of celebrating the Divine Liturgy that were faithful to Jesus' form at the Last Supper. The concept of different "rites," such as the Roman rite and the Byzantine rite, were accepted. At the end of the sixteenth until the beginning of the eighteenth century, a number of particular Eastern Churches were received into communion with the Church of Rome, but were allowed to keep their own liturgical rites, canon law, theology and spirituality. It was at this time that the division between East and West became set in stone. In 1729, the Propaganda Fide office of Rome forbade absolutely *communicatio in sacris* with the Orthodox Church. The Greek Church responded by a refusal to recognize Roman baptism and, indeed, any sacramental system outside of Orthodoxy. (Suttner, *Church Unity*, 81)

Even though when some of the particular Orthodox Churches entered into communion with Rome, they reaffirmed fidelity to their own traditions and rites, this principle soon began to

be eroded. The See of Rome itself has always maintained in principle, if not always in practice, the standard that the Eastern Catholic Churches should always be faithful to their traditions, except for awhile in the pontificate of Pius IX and then not for theological but for political reasons. This was not always true in the local areas where the so-called "Uniate" Churches were being created. The local Roman missionaries to the East and Roman bishops often expected more conformity to the West. The Eastern Christians themselves, saw the superiority of resources and the vitality of the Western Churches at this time and wanted to imitate them. Besides, the Western Church had all of the institutions of higher learning, and Eastern Christians were being educated in Western theology. This led to massive "latinization" of the Eastern Catholic Churches and even some "westernization" of the Orthodox rites. "Latinization" here does not mean all imitation of the West, for we have many Christian practices in common, but the imitation of Western liturgy, so that while the Eastern Church kept its liturgical texts, outwardly it began to look more and more like a Roman Mass. Icon screens were removed, Latin-type vestments were introduced, along with "low Masses," and "recited Liturgies," hand bells, patens, Roman style chalices and missals, and communion plates were all introduced, and the teplota, the use of sponges, communion to infants, baptism by immersion and so forth were all eliminated from the Eastern Catholic rites. This was a "reform," but a false reform, based on the erroneous principle that the Latin rite had to be more faithful to Christ, because Western European civilization was more successful in world culture than the East. I reiterate that the Roman Church itself, particularly in the *Decree on Ecumenism* of the Vatican II Council has recognized the dignity and value of the Eastern tradition, not only for itself but for the universal Church.

As early as 1754, Pope Benedict XIV published a Greek *Euchologion* which was purified of all Latinizations and was intended as a model for the Divine Liturgy in Byzantine Churches united with Rome. It was not received with enthusiasm in the Slav Eastern Churches, which experienced two waves of "latinization." The first came shortly after the Union, and the motive was to incorporate what they perceived as the superior Western culture into the experience of the Eastern Church. The second came after the partition of Poland by the Catholic Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Orthodox Russian Empire. In those Polish territories incorporated into Russia, the Eastern Catholic Church were gradually dis-established and absorbed into the Orthodox Church. The Russian Church was implacably opposed to the existence of what were labeled the "Uniate" Churches. In order to protect themselves, the Eastern Catholics attempted to create a Byzantine Catholic Rite which differed enough from the Russian rite to justify their separate existence. While this new synthesis did incorporate some local variant customs, and retained some old Slavonic practices from the Church before the reform of the Patriarch of Moscow Nicon in the mid-seventeenth century, most of it was a certain "latinization" of the Ruthenian Church. The history of this is complicated, but it is clear that the motivation for this was not to have a pure Eastern rite, but for political reasons to distance the Ruthenian rite from the very Orthodox Moscow rite. Again, it was a reform, but not for the true purposes of reform - faithfulness to the commands of Christ as embodied in tradition. The final result of this process was the publication of a somewhat latinized edition of the Divine Liturgy in the *Služebnik* (*Liturgicon*) of Lviv in 1905. This is the book that is used by some of our priests even today for the Divine Liturgy in Church Slavonic.

This, in turn, led to a further reform - for the Church is always in need of reform. The Archbishop of Lviv, the great Andrew Szeptytsky (1902-1944) became dissatisfied with this latinized *Liturgicon* and wanted to reform it once again, this time according to true Byzantine principles. Since the earlier reformers, mentioned above, had just achieved their objective of creating a hybrid ritual different from the Orthodox, they were not too receptive to Metropolitan Sheptytsky's proposals. Again, the story is quite complicated, but it led to a split in policy between Metropolitan Andrew and his suffragan bishops. The split was irreconcilable, so the whole issue was turned over to the new Congregation for Eastern Church, established by Pope Benedict XV in 1917. This office undertook the process of reform, of returning the Ruthenian ritual back to its traditional roots, and to guide the process, relied on the research and advice of Archbishop Andrew's friend, Father Cyril Korolevsky. (He was actually a Frenchman, Jean-François Charon, who changed his name when he joined the Ruthenian Church.) His work was a true reform, returning the rite to its more authentic Eastern form. This was difficult to do, since the Liturgy had been modified for almost three centuries. He used the traditional texts of the Ruthenian Church where there was a unanimous tradition and followed the usage of the Great Russian Church where there were discrepancies, since his goal was to return to the universal Slavonic standards. This work was completed in 1941, and it was a true reform - the restoration of the Liturgy according to its Eastern form. After the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Oriental Congregation also produced the Liturgies of St. Basil the Great and the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, along with an Epistle and a Gospel book, a small Books of Needs (containing the sacramental mysteries, blessing and consecrations, the Book of Hours for the Divine Praises and - in 1973 - an Archieraticon, the book of the bishop's rites. This conscious decision to restore the Liturgy was followed up by Rome in the solemn decrees of Vatican II, then in the Canon Law promulgated for the Eastern Churches, and most recently in the Liturgical Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches of January 6, 1996.

It was not followed up properly in the Ruthenian Church, however. The work came to fruition, unfortunately, during the Second World War, and the churches in Europe were suffering. When the Communists came to dominate Eastern Europe, our Churches there came under persecution, were disestablished and had to go underground. In our own Church in America, Bishop Basil Takach was very sick and died in 1948. Bishop Daniel Ivancho was prepared to introduce the reformed Liturgicon, but was removed from office for other reasons. His successor, Bishop Nicholas Elko was unfortunately opposed to the reform, and his successor, Archbishop Stephen Kocisko, was very cautious about introducing any change. Actually a faithful translation of the 1941 Ruthenian Liturgicon was made by Bishop Elko, but he distributed along with it instructions for the celebration of the Liturgy that reverted to the 1905 latinized Liturgicon. Everything was put on hold for thirty years. Bishop Emil Mihalik of Parma was the first to promulgate the reformed Liturgy - albeit it in a pastoral format. There was opposition from the other eparchies, and Bishop Emil's promulgation had a rough road to follow. Bishop Andrew Pataki followed with another promulgation in 1986, again in a pastoral format, which was accepted by the Eparchy of Van Nuys, and then by the Eparch of Passaic in 1996, when Bishop Andrew was transferred there. I will return to these shortly. Finally, when Judson Procyk became Metropolitan in 1995, his desire was for the true reform that had been prepared

for many generations. To this end, he established a Liturgy Commission that was charged with making a translation of our liturgical books that would fulfill the commission of our Church to be faithful to its tradition. This would be a true reform, because it would fulfill the gospel of our Lord as passed on through tradition, as the Decree on Eastern Churches said, "All members of the Eastern Churches should be firmly convinced that they can and ought always preserve their own legtimate liturgical rites and ways of life, and that changes are to be introduced only to forward their own organic development. They themselves are to carry our all these prescriptions with the greatest fidelity. (§ 6)"

This is where we are now. Our Church has existed in America effectively since the 1880's. In each of the generations since then there has been a reform of the Liturgy. The first reform was the implementation of the hybrid ritual of the Ruthenian Church in reaction to the Russian Orthodox. This was not an authentic reform, since the motives for it were political and sociological and constituted a loss of tradition. The second reform was what some have called the "americanization" of the Liturgy. The leaders of the Church felt that to fit in with the American culture, the Liturgy had to be shortened, and efficient Western type rituals that would not be a burden on the people were introduced. Some priests were able to cut the Liturgy down to thirty minutes. This, too, was not a true reform, since it abandoned the gospel mission of the Church to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and instead surrendered to the culture and created a minimal form of worship that did not demand much of us except, of course, that God always acts in his Divine Liturgy, even if celebrated poorly. Nor should we necessarily condemn the bishops and priests who did this, since they acted according to their conscience and wanted to keep the numbers of people in the Church. As this was going on, however, a true and authentic reform was implemented. In the late 1940's and into the 1950's, many of the clergy and people came to a conscientious awareness that our Liturgy could be celebrated in the vernacular language. At that time, the idea was almost unheard of in the Roman Church. We knew, though, that the vernacular language was the tradition of the East. Theodore Balsamon, who lived in the twelfth century, the most famous of all Byzantine canonists, formulated the Byzantine principle regarding Byzantine liturgical languages, "Those who are wholly orthodox, but who are altogether ignorant of the Greek tongue, shall celebrate in their own language' provided only that they have exact versions of their customary prayers, translated on to rolls and well written in Greek characters." It took great courage at this time for our priests to celebrate the Liturgy in English, and their initiative was supported by Bishops Daniel Ivancho and Nicholas Elko. I think this was the first step in fulfilling the commandment of our Lord regarding the Liturgy, "Do this in memory of me."

As already mentioned, the Vatican II Council in 1965 proclaimed more solemnly that Eastern Catholics must be completely faithful to their heritage. This resulted in a slow return in our Metropolia to more Eastern traditions. Law, however, always gives more of an impetus. Since the promulgation of the Eastern Canon Law, we have returned in many ways to a more authentic observance of the Eastern liturgical practices. This has included:
1) the restoration of the original form of the Creed (without the words "and the Son" - in the suffragan eparchies, but not officially in Pittsburgh yet;
2) the reintroduction of the zeon-teplota, in only a few parishes at present;

3) the restoration of the Lenten practice of the Presanctified Liturgy, and the abstinence from the Divine Liturgy on weekdays;
3) but most importantly in baptismal practices: baptism at the Divine Liturgy; the giving of Communion to all the baptized; baptism by immersion.
The last is so very important because it gives us a heightened awareness of the commitment we make as Christians, and a greater understanding and appreciation of our life in Christ. A famous Roman Catholic liturgist, Fr. Aidan Kavanagh, said (speaking for the Roman Catholic Church) that the most important reform of Vatican II was the restoration of the baptismal rites, because it is the grace of these rites that make us Christians. This is equally true for the Eastern Church. The Lenten season is important in connection with this, because it is a time of the renewal of our baptismal commitment by prayer and fasting.

Today, though, I want to conclude with what I would call the second step of the reform of the Divine Liturgy to the command of our Lord, "Do this in memory of me." The role of the deacon in the Liturgy is to offer our petitions to the Lord. This is important, for we must lay all our needs to God, who alone provides for our lives. The role of the people is to sing hymns, and the hymns we sing glorify God and remind us of the unity of our celebration with the angelic Liturgy in heaven. But the role of the priest is to do what our Lord commanded, "Do this in memory of me," What the priest says is what the people should come to know, for it is the memory of the great deeds of salvation that God has done for us. It is the sacrifice, and the redemption and the deification. This is the core of what the Liturgy is about and why you need a priest to celebrate it, for it can be accomplished only in the power of the Holy Spirit, who seals the ministry of the human priest. I would hold with the author of the *Protheoria* in the eleventh century, commenting on the quiet recitation of the anaphora by the bishop, "the people ask what the aim of this practice is, adding that to know the prayers this way is like trying to know a garment from touching the fringes."

For this reason, the Council of Hierarchs of our Church have restored the prayer office of the presbyter for public hearing. The presbyteral prayers are that part of the Divine Liturgy in which the priest prays in the name of the people, who make the prayer that of the whole community by sealing it with the Hebrew word, "Amen," which means "So be it." Perhaps the words of St. Paul, in regard to speaking in tongues, are also directly applicable here, "If you pronounce a blessing [with] the spirit, how shall one who holds the place of the uninstructed say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying. (1 Corinthians 14:16)" If the priest says a prayer that the faithful do not hear, how can they say "Amen" to it? Of course, this problem only arises when the Liturgy is celebrated in the vernacular language, for otherwise the people would not understand the prayer in any case. To restore the presbyteral prayers aloud, particularly the Prayer of Offering after the Great Entrance, the Anaphora itself and the Prayer of Thanksgiving are a restoration of the commemoration of what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us at the Mystical Supper. This is truly a reform, a restoration of the original form of the Divine Liturgy, and also one that is confirmed by tradition. St. John Chrysostom described the interplay between priest and congregation: "One sees that the people contribute much to the prayer...during the fearful mysteries, the priest speaks for the people, and the people speak on behalf of the priest, ... The prayer of thanksgiving is again a common prayer offered by the

priest and by all the people. The priest begins, and the people join him and respond that it is just and right to praise God: this is the beginning of the thanksgiving. Why are you surprised if the people mix their voice with that of the priest? Do you not know that these holy hymns rise to the heavens, where they mixed with those of the angels, the cherubim and the heavenly powers?" (In I Cor. Hom. 18)

This last point, "confirmed by tradition," however, is the problem. There is no doubt that for many centuries the prayers of the priest have been said silently, either during a hymn of the Liturgy or when the deacon says a litany. Have we been doing it wrong for so many centuries? The answer is, of course, not entirely. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the priest has been saying the words of commemoration. All the centuries have seen a valid Liturgy in which Christ transforms us through the sacrificial presence of his holy Body and Blood. But why do we ask the question now? The reality is that the question has been asked many times in tradition, but with special urgency now that the people can again understand the words of the Liturgy in the vernacular. For many years now, there has been a movement to restore the presbyteral prayers. The *kollyvades*, a movement on Mt. Athos, said the anaphora aloud in the eighteenth century. Mojzes, in his recent book *Il movimento liturgico nelle chiese bizantine (Rome* 2005, 112-123) describes the movement towards the public recitation of the Anaphora in the Russian Church from 1905, as preparation for the Synod of 1917. Bishops Nazarius of Nižnij-Novgorod and Sergius of Finland supported the proposal, along with theologians A, P. Golibtsov and V.I. Eksemplarskij and others. He quotes Tikhon, the future Patriarch, on page 112, "it is not undesirable to read some of the prayers aloud." This proposal was also very active in the Greek Church. The *Zoe* ("Life") movement dominated Greek liturgy life for almost fifty years (1907-1960) and proposed the public recitation of the anaphora. (See Mojzes 159-162) The proposal has not faded since. In Greece today, the Major Archbishop Christodoulos has founded the Special Synodical Committee on Liturgical Rebirth. Among its first recommendations (Encyclical 2784, March 31, 2004) was the public recitation of the prayers, "In order to restore the Eucharist as a vital dialogue of life and love between God and His people, Celebrators, Bishops and Presbyters, are advised to read most of the Priestly Prayers of the Holy Eucharist with audible voice, so that the participation of the faithful in all that takes place is made possible, so that by hearing the Prayers they can actually pray through them, and reply 'Amen', consciously and willingly." (Pavlos Koumarianos, *Liturgical Rebirth in the Church of Greece Today*, p. 4)

The saying of the presbyteral prayers aloud, then, is a decisive step, a definitive decision to restore the Liturgy. In this we are encouraged by the actual practice of other churches, and by the recommendation of the Holy See in its 1996 liturgical instruction, paragraph 54. What does it all mean? I think it means life. The Divine Liturgy is a commemoration of our Lord, as one who came into our midst, and is present with us to the end of time. But he is not simply present, but acting and giving life. Every celebration of the Divine Liturgy is a "time for the Lord to act." We commemorate his death and resurrection, but this commemoration is a divine remembrance, and when God remembers, the holy acts he did for us happen again, not in a bloody way as in the historical cross, but in just as real a way mystically and sacramentally. Because of this, we can truly say that the Liturgy is a sacrifice. As the anaphora begins, the deacon invites us all to pray,

“Let us stand aright, let us stand in awe, let us be attentive to offer the holy anaphora in peace.” The people respond with the meaning of the anaphora, it is the mercy Christ wants, it is peace with God, it is a sacrifice of praise. The new translation has corrected the old mistake that occurred here. The Cross is, of course, essential to our faith. It is the love of God for us - both in the historical sacrifice on Calvary and in the sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy, but the Cross must be perfected by the Resurrection. The Christ present among us today is not a dead body, but the life-giving eucharist given in Communion. Before giving Communion, the priest unites the holy bread which has become the Body of Christ with the holy cup that contains the blood of Christ to manifest that the Lord we receive in Communion is the living and life-giving body of Christ, one of the Holy Trinity. Through the Body of Christ that we receive, we are united with the Father and the Spirit, so that immediately after Communion, we can sing, “We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit .... “ Because it commemorates the Resurrection, that is, makes this mystery present, we do not pray the anaphora on weekdays of the Great Fast. Likewise, the new translation of the Liturgy has corrected the Cherubic Hymn as the priest brings the bread and wine to the altar for the anaphora. The old translation said, “that we may welcome the king of all, but the new says, “that we may receive the king of all ... ,” for we will receive him in Communion for the sake of life and resurrection. The Divine Liturgy, then, is the act of God’s love for us, and the reading of the anaphora will make that much more clear for us, as the priest proclaims in the Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, “you so loved your world that you gave your only-begotten Son that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have life everlasting.”