

# **Liturgy of Preparation Of the Eucharistic Gifts**



## **St. Nina of Georgia Orthodox Catholic Church**

**An Affirming and Welcoming Community of the  
Orthodox Catholic Church of America**

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# Liturgy of Preparation

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The text of this Liturgy, except where indicated, is a modernized revision of that found in the 1922 edition of Isabel Hapgood's *Service Book of the Orthodox-Catholic Church*. This text is in the public domain; hence, this Service may be freely copied for use in those communities which desire to do so.

## **NOTE ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE** **"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit our Mother"**

It is an unfortunate fact of history that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, has been repressive when it comes to allowing women to fully be who they were created to be, equals with men, as illustrated in the Biblical creation story in which Eve is taken from the **side** of Adam, not - as the Church Teachers say - from his feet such that woman would be inferior to man, and to fully exercise their God-given capabilities, especially with reference to their abilities to answer God's call to serve Her as clergy at all levels: readership, diaconate, priesthood, episcopacy. The historical overemphasis on the "masculinity" of God has played a large part in legitimizing and perpetuating this repression.

When it comes to God the Son incarnate, it is historical reality that He was incarnated as and ever remains a Jewish man. Consequently, it is proper to refer to Him with masculine pronouns. Additionally, since the Eastern Orthodox tradition holds that every theophany (manifestation of God) in the Hebrew Scriptures is a theophany of the pre-incarnate Word of God, in order to preserve the continuity of existence of the Second Person of the Trinity it is proper to use masculine pronouns when referring to the Lord God spoken of and appearing in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The ancient languages of the Judeo-Christian Tradition, Hebrew and Aramaic, put the word for "spirit" (in general and specifically when referring to God the Spirit) in the feminine gender. One argument says that this is merely an accident of history, having nothing to do with the nature of the Holy Spirit. But is this really the case? Could it not be understood, rather, that the Hebrews had a very good reason for making "spirit" feminine? One way to ferret out this reason is to look at how the Spirit of God is spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures. To fully address this is beyond the scope of this note, so I will advise the reader to look at contemporary scholarship on the subject, eg Joan Schaupp's "The Feminine Imagery of God in the Hebrew Bible" *Priscilla Papers* vol. 14, no. 4 (Autumn 2000), which present evidence that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is there presented as feminine and as a mother. Hence, the practice for using inclusive language adopted for this text is to speak of the Holy Spirit as "Mother."

When describing the Spirit as Mother, there are two very important points to remember. First, the phrase "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit our Mother" might appear to say that there is one part of the Trinity that is masculine in gender, and another part that is feminine in gender. This is not the case. One fundamental teaching of Trinitarian theology is that all Three Persons share one Essence in a unique way such that what can be essentially predicated of one Person can be essentially predicated of all. The first Creation Story recounted in Genesis makes it clear that the creation of humanity was an act of the whole Trinity: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26 NRSV) It is the whole Trinity that is imaged in humanity. Thus the genders imaged in humanity - masculine, feminine, and (as we now know) genderfluid - are reflections of the genders present in the whole of the Trinity from which the image was made. The Father is genderfluid **and** feminine **and** masculine, as is the Son and the Spirit.

Secondly - and this is the point behind emphasizing "the Holy Spirit **our** Mother" - the Spirit is not the Mother of the Logos. The Second Person of the Trinity is begotten of the Father alone. With regards to relationship with humanity the Holy Spirit can indeed be called Mother, because an absolutely Traditional and historical designation for the Holy Spirit is "Comforter" ... and is not comforting a quintessential quality of being a mother?

The Trinity is always referred to by a singular pronoun, to make clear the reality of the One God worshiped in the Christian Tradition. The question then becomes, in light of the omnigendered essence of the Trinity: What pronouns should be used to refer to God the Trinity? The short answer is: Any and all. The longer answer involves more nuance, and must take into account the historical reality of male privilege and repressive patriarchy as well as the needs of any particular worshipping community. The argument can be made that to redress aeons of repression and to aid in the elimination of what aspects of oppressive patriarchy still exist the feminine pronouns should be used exclusively. That is the practice adopted in this text.

The use of this particular language of inclusion should not be considered an end solution, but rather an effort on the part of this community to be affirming of the absolute equality of women and to acknowledge that that equality is absolutely rooted in the Divine Order. This use does not preclude continued discussion and modification of the language we use to describe God as we work towards justice for women and the eradication of oppressive patriarchy.

**A GLUTEN-FREE HOST IS AVAILABLE. IF ANY COMMUNICANT DESIRES IT, OR IF THERE ARE OTHER CONCERNS ABOUT THE EUCHARISTIC ELEMENTS OF BREAD AND WINE, PLEASE SPEAK WITH THE PRIEST PRIVATELY BEFORE LITURGY.**

## Liturgy of Preparation

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*The Divine Liturgy celebrated in this community consists of three parts: the Liturgy of Preparation, in which the Holy Gifts of bread and wine are prepared; the Liturgy of the Word, in which the Saints and Resurrection are remembered and the Scriptures proclaimed; and the Liturgy of Communion, in which the Gifts become the real Body and Blood of Christ our God, of which **all** who desire to commune and receive our God into themselves may do so.*

*Two rites are presented here; either may be used at the discretion of the Officiant. The shorter form, however, may be served solely by the deacon.*

### I. LONG FORM

*After the priest and deacon vest themselves, going to the Table of Oblation, the Deacon prepares the Holy Things. The Holy Paten is set on the left side; the Holy Chalice, which is the cup, on the right; and with them the other holy utensils.*

*Then they go forth to the Table of Oblation (which is set in the middle of the church so that those present of Christ's Church and World which are remembered therein may see it) and, making three lowly reverences before the Table of Oblation, they say together:*

By Your precious Blood have You redeemed us from the curse of the Law, in that You were nailed to the Cross and pierced with a spear, You have poured forth immortality upon humankind as from a fountain, O our Savior. Glory to You.

Priest: Blessed is our God always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

*Then the priest takes in the left hand the altar-bread (prosforon), and in the right hand the holy spear, and making with it the sign of the cross three times above the seal of the bread, says:*

Priest: In remembrance of our Lord, and God, and Savior, Jesus Christ. (3x)

*And immediately the priest thrusts the spear into the right side of the seal, and while cutting it the Deacon says...*

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

*And while cutting the left side...*

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: And as a spotless lamb before his shearers is silent, so opened He not His mouth.

*And while cutting the top of the seal...*

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: In His humiliation His judgment was taken away.

*And while cutting the bottom...*

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: For His generation, who shall declare it?

*And so cut in this way, when the priest, having thrust the spear, obliquely, from below, into the right side of the bread, takes away the whole part with the seal, the deacon says:*

Deacon: *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*, take away.

Priest: For His life is taken away from the earth.

*And having laid it, inverted, on the Holy Paten...*

## Liturgy of Preparation

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Deacon: Sacrifice, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*.

*The priest sacrifices, cutting it crosswise...*

Priest: Sacrificed is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, for the life of the world, and for its salvation.

*The priest then turns upward the other side, which has upon it the emblem of the Cross. And when the priest pierces the right side with the spear...*

Deacon: Pierce, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*.

Priest: One of the soldiers did pierce His side with a spear, and at once there came forth blood and water. And he that saw it bare witness, and his witness is true.

*Then the deacon pours into the Holy Chalice the mingled wine and water in the amount according to the number of communicants, having first said to the priest...*

Deacon: Bless, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*.

*And the priest blesses it, saying...*

Priest: Blessed be the union of Your Holy Things always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

*Then, placing the spear upon the triangle on the seal of the altar-bread, the priest says...*

Priest: In honor and commemoration of our most blessed Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, through whose intercessions accept, O Lord, this sacrifice upon Your most heavenly Altar.

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

*And with the spear taking out that portion, the priest lays it on the right side of the Holy Bread, near the center of the Bread, saying...*

**Priest:** On Your right hand stood the Queen, clothed in a vesture wrought with gold and divers colors.

*Then out of the same altar-bread the priest takes out the Nine Ranks and lays it on the left side of the Holy Bread, near the center of the Bread. And taking out the first particle, the priest says...*

**Priest:** In commemoration of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and of all the angelic powers;

*And taking the second particle, the priest says...*

**Priest:** Of the most honorable and glorious prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John; of the holy, glorious Prophets, Moses and Aaron; Elijah and Elisha; David and Jesse; of the Three Holy Children, also of Daniel the Prophet; and of all the holy prophets.

*And taking the third particle, the priest says...*

**Priest:** Of the holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of all the other holy Apostles.

*And taking the fourth particle, the priest says...*

**Priest:** Of our holy Fathers and Saints, the Prelates Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom; Athanasius and Cyril, Nicholas of Myra in Lycia; Peter, Alexis, Jonah and Philip of Moscow; Nikita, Bishop of Novgorod, Leonty, Bishop of Rostoff; and of all your holy Prelates.

*And taking the fifth particle, the priest says...*

Priest: Of the holy Apostle and First Martyr and Archdeacon, Stephen; of the holy Great Martyrs Demetrius, George, Theodore of Tyre, Theodore the Strategist; and of all holy Martyrs, both men and women; of Thekla, Barbara, Euphemia, Kyriaka, Paraskeva, Katherine; and of all other holy martyred women.

*And taking the sixth particle, the priest says...*

Priest: Of our devout and God-bearing Fathers, Anthony, Euthymius, Sabba, Onuphrius, Athanasius of Mount Athos, Anthony and Theodosius of the Catacombs, Sergius of Radonezh, Barlaam of Khutinsk, and of all our devout fathers; of our devout mothers in God, Pelagia, Theodosia, Anastasia, Eupraxia, Fevronia, Theodulia, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt, and of all our holy and devout mothers.

*And taking the seventh particle, the priest says...*

Priest: Of the holy and wonder-working Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon, Hermolaus; and of all the Holy Unmercenaries.

*And taking the eighth particle, the priest says...*

Priest: Of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, of Saint Nina Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of Georgia, of Saint *NAME (the Saint of the day)*, of Saints Methodius and Cyril, the Equals of the Apostles and Evangelizers of the Slavs, of Saint Equal to the Apostles the Great Prince Vladimir, of Saint Herman of Alaska and Saint Tikhon the Wonderworker, Apostles to America, and of all the Saints, through whose supplications do You visit us, O Lord.

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

*And taking the ninth particle, the priest says, depending on the particular Liturgy being served:*

Priest: Of our Father in the Saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople. (OR)

Priest: Of our Father in the Saints, Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

*Then the priest cuts two pieces from the altar-bread, from one taking particles to remember the living, and from the other to remember the reposed.*

*Holding the first piece in the left hand and the spear in the right, the priest cuts particles saying...*

Priest: Remember, O Lord, Lover of Humankind, every Bishopric over both Orthodox and all Christians, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Catholic Church of America, and our Bishop Mar Stephen, the honorable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, and every Sacerdotal Order, our siblings and fellow-ministers, the priests, the deacons, and all our siblings whom You have called into Your communion, through Your tenderness of heart, O all-good Lord.

*Then the priest makes mention, by name, of the living who are to be prayed for, beginning with the priest's ordaining bishop (if alive), and at each name the priest takes out a particle, saying...*

Priest: Call to remembrance, O Lord, *NAME*.

*Then holding the second piece in the left hand and the spear in the right, the priest cuts particles saying...*

Priest: In memory, and for the remission of sins, of the most holy matriarchs and patriarchs, and of the blessed founders of this holy Community and Temple.



## Liturgy of Preparation

---

*Then shall the priest make mention of the ordaining Bishop (if reposed) and of whatsoever persons the priest may desire, who have departed this life, by name. And at each name, the priest shall take out a particle, saying...*

Priest: Call to remembrance, O Lord, *NAME*.

*And, in conclusion, the priest shall say...*

Priest: And of all our parents and siblings, Orthodox and all Christians and all humankind, who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection, of life eternal, and of communion with You, O Lord, who love humankind.

*And lastly, taking a particle from the first portion, the priest says...*

Priest: Call to remembrance, Lord, my unworthy self, and pardon me every transgression, whether voluntary or involuntary. Remember, O Lord, [the Deacon *NAME*, and] all participants here present in this Liturgy, the Peoples' Work.

*Then, taking the sponge, the priest gathers together all the particles taken from the final two portions of the altar-bread on the paten, below the Holy Bread, so that they may be in safety, and that none of them may fall. Then the Deacon takes the censer, and having placed incense therein, says to the priest...*

Deacon: Bless, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*, the censer. Let us pray to the Lord.

*Then the Priest says the Prayer of the Censer...*

Priest: Unto You, O Christ our God, do we offer incense for an odor of spiritual fragrance, which do You accept upon Your most heavenly Altar, and pour forth upon us in return the grace of Your All-Holy Spirit our Mother.

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Strengthen, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title!*

*Then the Priest, having censed the Star-Cover, places it over the Holy Bread, saying...*

Priest: And the Star came and stood over the place where the young Child and Mother Mary were.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Make beautiful, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title!*

*The Priest, having censed the first veil, covers the Holy Bread with it and says...*

Priest: The Lord is King, and has put on glorious apparel; the Lord has put on His apparel, and girded Himself with strength. He has made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved. Ever since the world began has Your seat been prepared: You are from eternity. The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voices; the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwells on high is mightier. Your testimonies, O Lord, are very sure: holiness is fitting for Your house forever.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Cover, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title!*

*The Priest, having censed the second veil, covers the Holy Chalice with it saying...*

Priest: Your virtue, O Christ, has covered the heavens, and the earth also is full of Your praise.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Shelter, *Mother/Father/Officiant's title!*

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

*The Priest, having censed the large veil, that is to say, the Aer, covers the Paten and Chalice with it, saying...*

Priest: Shield us with the shelter of Your wings, and drive away from us every foe and adversary. Order our lives in peace, O Lord. Have mercy upon us and upon Your world, and save our souls for You are good and love Humankind.

*Then, taking the censer, the Priest censes the Table of Oblation, saying...*

Priest: Blessed are You, O our God, who in all this are well pleased. Glory to You! Blessed are You, O our God, who in all this are well pleased. Glory to You! Blessed are You, O our God, who in all this are well pleased. Glory to You!

Deacon: Always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Then both make three devout reverences. And the Deacon, taking the censer, says...*

Deacon: For the Precious Gifts now offered up, let us pray to the Lord.

### **The Prayer of Oblation**

Priest: O God our God, You sent forth the Heavenly Bread, the Nourishment of the whole world, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour and Redeemer and Benefactor, blessing and sanctifying us. Do You, the same Lord, bless also this oblation, and accept it on Your most heavenly Altar. Call to remembrance those who offer it, and those for whom it is offered, inasmuch as You are good and love humankind, and preserve us blameless in the holy ministry of Your Divine Mysteries. For sanctified and glorified be Your most honorable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Spirit our Mother, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### **Dismissal of the Preparation**

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God, glory to You!

Deacon: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit our Mother, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. *Mother/Father/Officiant's title*, bless!

Priest: May Christ, our true God, who was born in a cave, through the intercessions of his all-undefiled Mother, of our Father among the Saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (*or, if the Liturgy of St. Basil be used: of Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia*), and of all the Saints, have mercy upon us, and save us, for He is good and loves humankind.

Deacon: Amen.

*After the Benediction the Deacon censes the Holy Oblation. Then the Deacon goes and censes the Holy Altar round about, in the form of a cross, saying...*

Deacon: In the grave with the body, but in Sheol with the soul, in that You are God; in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit our Mother were You, O Christ, filling all things, in that You are infinite.

*The Deacon also censes the Sanctuary and all the Temple. Returning again to the Holy Altar, having again censed it and the Priest, the Deacon puts the censer aside in its place, and approaches the Priest. And standing together before the Holy Altar, they make three lowly reverences, praying and saying together...*

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards humankind. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards humankind. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

*If the Priest celebrate without a Deacon, the words assigned to the Deacon in the Office of Oblation and in the Liturgy are said by the Sacristan. But if many Priests serve, as in a Cathedral, only one Priest shall perform the Office of Oblation, and shall say what is herein set forth, but no other of the Priests shall say that Office separately. They only take out the particles for the living and the dead.*

*The Liturgy of Preparation ends fifteen minutes prior to the start of the Liturgy of the Word. After that time has elapsed, the Deacon (or the choir leader) calls all to worship, saying...*

Deacon It is time to sacrifice unto the Lord. Bless,  
*Mother/Father/Officiant's title.*

## II. SHORT FORM

*These prayers are to be used at the Table of Oblation, and may be done fully by the deacon.*

*The deacon elevates the bread.*

Deacon: Blessed are You, O God of all, for You have given us this living bread, fruit of the earth and with work of our hands. Let it become life-giving bread. Bless the lives of those who offer it, and those for whom we pray.

*The deacon cuts the Lamb from the altar-bread and sets it on the paten. Then the deacon uses the spear to cut particles from the remainder of the altar-bread, saying:*

Deacon: Remember, O God, the Holy Theotokos, all the Saints, and those among the living and the departed: NAMES.

*The deacon elevates the wine.*

Deacon: Blessed are You, O God of all, for You have given us this wine, fruit of the vine and work of our hands. Let it become our spiritual drink, the very Mystery of the Blood which flowed from the side of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The deacon pours the wine and the water into the chalice, saying:*

Deacon: The fervor of faith, full of the Holy Spirit our Mother. Water is mixed with wine, wine with water, so let these two become one, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit our Mother.

*The deacon places the star-cover on the paten and covers it and the chalice with the veils, saying:*

Deacon: O God, Holy Mighty One, Who accepts the sacrifice of praise from Your people, accept the prayers we are about to offer, for our sake and for all

## Liturgy of Preparation

---

of creation. Grant us the grace to be a living sacrifice acceptable to You. We ask this in Your holy name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit our Mother.

*The deacon covers the paten and the chalice with the aer and censes them, saying:*

Deacon: May the Lord wash away our sins with the hyssop of love. May God cleanse us and heal us in the great ocean of mercy and love.

*The very act of the People of God gathering is an integral part of the worship. Worshippers are welcomed and encouraged to greet one another, beginning the transition from ordinary to sacred time. Visitors especially are bid welcome. The clergy, vested, join the congregation. Clergy move to their appointed places. As quiet talk yields to silence, a moment of stillness gathers all into prayer in this sacred time. After a short period of silence the deacon says:*

Deacon: It is time to sacrifice unto the Lord. Bless,  
*Mother/Father/Officiant's title.*

### **ABOUT THE CHAPEL COMMUNITY**

St. Nina of Georgia Orthodox Christian Chapel is a loving, inclusive and affirming place of worship within the Orthodox Catholic Church of America. Our mission is to show the love of Jesus Christ to everyone. We strive to make a home for those whom no one else has reached, or who have come to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable in their former religious communities. At the same time, we welcome those who are for the first time coming to learn of God's love for humankind and seeking a way to worship and pray with others. The mercy of God is important to us as we realize that we are redeemed by the love of God. St. Nina's Chapel and the Orthodox Catholic Church of America make no distinction among persons with respect to sexual or gender identity, orientation, or expression, and we fully include everyone in our sacramental life. We are not a specifically "gay church" but we have many LGBT people among us in all capacities, lay and clerical. As well, we welcome and have women who are so called by God participating in every level of the ordained clergy. We welcome people on the basis of love, not category. One of the Orthodox Catholic Church of America's historical roots is in the first congregation in the United States established to meet the needs of gay men and lesbians who were rejected by their own faith traditions, organized in Atlanta in 1946.

For more information about the Orthodox Catholic Church of America, please visit  
**[www.orthodoxcatholicchurch.org](http://www.orthodoxcatholicchurch.org)**

