



Fervent Supplication – by Fr. Thomas Hopko

Following the readings from the holy scriptures and the liturgical sermon, the Liturgy of the Word, also called the Liturgy of the Catechumens, comes to an end with the so-called Litany of Fervent Supplication. This litany is the one through which the people pray for their own particular needs, as well as those of the entire Church, their neighbors, their country and the entire world.

At this time the intercessions are not made generally, as in the Great Litany, but very specifically on behalf of all persons in need of God's blessings, strength and guidance. Thus prayers are made for the sick, the suffering, the needy, the afflicted and the departed by name; as well as for such specific things as national guidance, deliverance from some particular threat, etc. Also at this time special prayers of thanksgiving and praise may be offered in response to some particular blessing of God. 'Because the offertory will follow, prayers are also made at the end of the litany "for those who bring offerings and do good work" in the particular community.

After the completion of the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the catechumens are prayed for and dismissed from the Divine Liturgy since, as not yet baptized, they are not competent to offer and to receive the eucharistic gifts. In the early Church all those under penance for their sins, and all who for one reason or another were not receiving Holy Communion, also left the liturgical gathering at this time.

At present the dismissal of the catechumens has become only theoretically significant since it is not the case that non-communicants, or even the non-baptized, leave the gathering for the eucharistic part of the service which, we have noted, is still officially called the Liturgy of the Faithful.

the prayer that God would illumine the catechumens with the Gospel of Truth and unite them to his Holy Church, granting them "in due time the laver of regeneration, the remission of sins and the robe of incorruption" in baptism; and after their theoretical dismissal from the liturgy, two prayers are read for the faithful who are already members of the Church, that God would hear their prayers and would make them worthy to offer and to receive the gifts of Holy Communion:

And enable us also whom Thou hast placed in this Thy service by the power of the Holy Spirit, blamelessly and without offence, in the pure witness of our conscience to call upon Thee. . . .

... to worship Thee blamelessly with fear and with love, and to partake without condemnation of Thy Holy Mysteries, and to be accounted worthy of Thy Heavenly Kingdom....

Source: <http://www.oca.org/OCorthfaith.asp?SID=2>