

THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

In form and content, the PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY is probable the most ancient of all the Eastern Liturgies in use today. St. Sophonius at Jerusalem in 646 AD calls this liturgy "an apostolic institution," meaning that it was in general use at that time and had been instituted during the time of the Apostles. It can well be called the most "apostolic" in its order and spirit. It is attested at Byzantium as the Lenten substitute for the Divine Liturgy by Canon of the Council in Trullo (692 AD) which takes it for granted that this is the only conceivable Liturgy allowed during the Great Fast.

Something of the nature of the Presanctified Liturgy can be traced back to the Pre-Nicene times of the fast days in the West, so that it may be recognized that this liturgy was in use in Byzantium before 440 AD.

The PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY is a survival of the practice of the early Christians of taking a portion of the Holy Gifts home after the Holy Eucharist was celebrated in the catacombs and other hidden places. With this reserved Holy Mysteries, (Sacrament) the Christians could continue to communicate the Heavenly Bread during the following weeks on those fast days when there was no Eucharistic celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

When this practice of the domestic reservation of the Holy Mysteries, (Sacrament) was given up (5th century), the custom was transferred to the local parish churches, where the Reserved Sacrament was kept on the Holy Altar Table in a special receptacle, and then it was distributed during the following week.

THE LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS DIFFERS FROM ST. JOHN'S AND ST. BASILS LITURGIES IN THAT THE ELEMENTS OFFERED FOR COMMUNION HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND CONSECRATED PREVIOUSLY.

Since this liturgy is preformed only during the Great Fast Season, the Gifts of the Liturgy are consecrated at the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom on Cheese-Fare Sunday, Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Annunciation when the holy day occurs on a weekday; and the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of the Great Fast.

Historically, the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great were always referred to by ancient Christians as "**Pascha**", **Christos Onesti**, the offering and the consecration at these liturgies were participated in by the faithful

