

The Divine Liturgy according to the Antiochene Syriac Maronite Church



The Holy Mass and my life as a faithful Christian

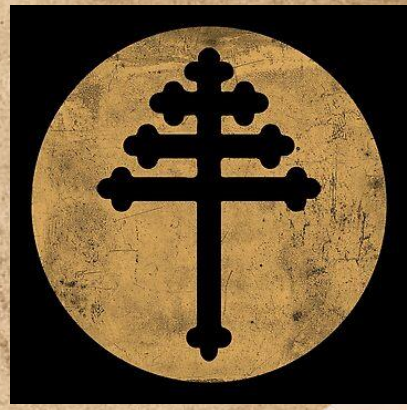
The Holy Mass is a renewal of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, yet it does not involve the shedding of blood. It is, at one and the same time, a sacrifice made on behalf of all Humanity.

The word “Mass” Koudas in Arabic means sanctification. The Lord Jesus, at the end of His Paschal and Eucharistic Supper, after sanctifying the bread and wine, prayed His priestly prayer to His Father for His disciples, saying: “O Holy Father, I sanctify Myself for their sakes, so that they too may be sanctified ” (John 17:19).

- The divine liturgy/Mass is not a play or a show performed in front of us.
- It is not just a weekly duty that I must fulfil.
- It is not an occasion and a place for meeting friends and loved ones.

The Holy Mass is a wedding where the soul becomes united with Christ.

The Holy Mass is the centre of your life as a Christian, so it is incumbent upon us to prepare ourselves for active participation in the Mass.



In the Mass, we contemplate each stage of Jesus' salvation



- His birth (the angels' praise)
- His public life and his wanderings in the villages and cities (the Gospel procession)
- His teaching (the Gospel recitation and the sermon)
- His throwing in the Garden of Olives and his prayer to the Father (the priest kneeling and his prayer: Hear me, O Lord. ..)
- His arrest and carrying the cross to Calvary (transferring the offerings from the small altar to the large altar)
- His death and resurrection (breaking the bread and putting the two parts back together after dripping them with blood)
- His ascension to heaven (raising the body and blood high)
- The descent of the spirit (through communion)
- The sending of the disciples (With the closing blessing (Go...)).

The Altar

The sacred space where the Eucharistic sacrifice takes place

Altar, an Arabic word derived from the Syriac "mzboho" madbho (ܡܘܙܒܘܗܘ), expresses the worship associated with the new sacrifice on the head of Calvary, and the feast of the Lord's body and blood for the life of the world.

On this altar, the Church on Earth presents to the Father the offering of the Son, in response to his commandment: "Do this in remembrance of me until my coming" (Luke 19).

The altar symbolises the tomb of Jesus, and the glory of his resurrection.

There is one altar in the church because Christ is one, the sacrifice is one, and the priesthood is one.

It is linked to the person of Christ, the source of forgiveness, so it is called the "forgiving altar" from which we receive our peace and share it among ourselves.

Symbols in the Mass and Meaning

The Incense

At every Mass incense is used. Incense symbolises Christ who “gave himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God with a sweet-smelling aroma. It became an expression of the prayer that we raise to God: “Let my prayer be offered as incense before you” (Psalm 14), and of the prayers of the saints as stated in John’s vision: “I saw the twenty-four elders offering golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Revelation).



The Lighting of Candles

The ritual of lighting candles and lights goes back to the liturgy of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and its symbolism is linked to the lights of the Resurrection and the joy of participating in the holy mysteries. The lighting of the candles announces the presence of Christ, the light of the world, whom we welcome among us.

The Incense Burner

The incense burner refers to the Virgin Lady who received Him in her innocent womb and was not burned by the heat of His divinity. By the chains of the censer, reference is made to the three hypostases who are equal in essence, power, and quality. And by the link with which the chains come together, to the one divine nature .



The Lighting of the Church

The lighting of the Church in preparation for the divine liturgy has such a great significance. In participating in this act we are proclaiming our readiness to be children of the light and to allow our deeds to be judged in the open light of day.

Symbols in the Mass and Meaning

The Cup, Tray, Stand and Lid



The cup and tray are essential elements in serving the divine sacrifice. Among the symbols of the cup is that it indicates the grave and the tray on the stone that was placed on its door. The cup also refers to the rock from which springs of salvation gushed and quenched the thirsty people, and the tray refers to the basket in which Moses placed the bread of life that God gave to his people in the wilderness .

The “stead” on which the offerings are prepared⁵ symbolises the shroud in which the Lord’s body was wrapped in the tomb, and the two small fountains to cover the cup and tray symbolize the handkerchief in which the Lord’s head was wrapped. The large fountain that covers everything symbolizes the glory of the Lord and His concealment under the forms of bread and wine.

Symbols in the Mass and Meaning

The cross

The cross is the basic symbol of Christian life and liturgical celebration. It is a symbol of victory over death by the life that the Lord Jesus gave us, and a symbol of sacrifice and offering of the pure Lamb slain for our redemption and salvation. The cross in the early Christian traditions, especially in Antiochene Syriac theology, is a sign of the divine presence, accompanying all liturgical celebrations: in the Mass and in all the sacraments and rituals. From the cross comes liturgical life and all the symbols take on their full meaning.



Elements of offerings in the Mass

Bread, Wine and Water

Elements of offerings in the Mass: bread, wine, and water . Jesus took the bread and turned it into his body, and the wine and turned it into his blood. Just as material bread sustains a person in order to live, so the Lord made the bread of his body spiritual food for souls and a pledge of the eternal kingdom. Just as wine rejoices the human heart, so does he who is washed from his sins in the blood of Christ rejoice. As for the water that flowed with the blood from his chest pierced with a spear (John 19:4), the church mixes it with wine in the cup of the Mass, to announce the new, completed life in the mystery of redemption, and as a sign of union with Him.



Body movements during the Mass, because we pray with all our being, soul and body

The sign of the cross

The sign of the cross is the first movement our body makes in prayer. We draw it in the shape of a cross from our forehead to the stomach and then to the shoulders. The honorable Patriarch Estephan Al-Duwaihi explains its meanings: The movement from the head to the chest indicates the descent of the Son of God from heaven for our salvation. Moving it from the left shoulder to the right refers to his resurrection from death to life, and to his transfer of us, through his cross, from the misery of this world to eternal glory[17]. We say at the beginning of our prayers and actions: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” and in conclusion: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.”



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- + The sign of the cross in its external form is a declaration of our faith and union with Christ crucified
- + The sign of the cross with the words is a declaration of faith in the Holy Trinity.
- + The sign of the cross, then, sums up the entire essence of the Christian faith.

Body movements during the Mass, because we pray with all our being, soul and body.

Standing

Standing is a matter of respect for the words of God that we hear, for God to whom we turn in prayer, and for the Virgin Mary and the saints as well. It is to express the readiness to live the word of God, act according to it in our daily lives, and bear witness to Him.

Sitting

Sitting is for contemplation and reverence, which requires our body to be in a state of rest, which facilitates listening, contemplating, comprehending, and directing the attention of the mind and heart to Jesus. In doing so, we “seek the face of God” (Psalm 7:). Sitting to meditate helps us enter into the depths of our souls.

Prostration on the ground

Prostration on the ground in our Maronite spirituality and tradition, known as "al-Mataniyah," is derived from the Greek word in the New Testament (Metanoia) which means repentance.

Kneeling

Kneeling It is an act of faith and worship before God, before Christ, before the sacrament of the Eucharist. The folding of the knee symbolises, according to the Old Testament tradition, the folding of our strength before the living God, and the acknowledgment that everything we are is a gift from Him.

Body movements during the Mass, because we pray with all our being, soul and body

Opening the hands

Opening the hands is the state of the praying person. It is an expression of a state of peace and rejection of violence, and of the openness of the heart to God and His saints with trust and hope. For Christians, opening the hands recalls the open arms of Christ on the cross, in order to draw everyone to Himself (see John 1:) and embrace them.

Head bow

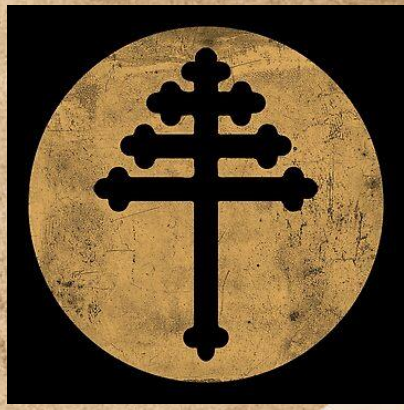
The bow of the head is a sign of humility before God, which takes away the spirit of pride from us. The bow means the bow of love. Bowing also means repentance and contrition of heart.

Joining of the hands

It is a sign of entrusting oneself into the hands of God. The priest joins his hands during ordination after anointing them with chrism, as a sign of accepting the deposit of the priesthood, identity, mission, and authority. He remembers this every time he joins his hands after prayer, as an expression of preserving the blessings and gifts he received from God.

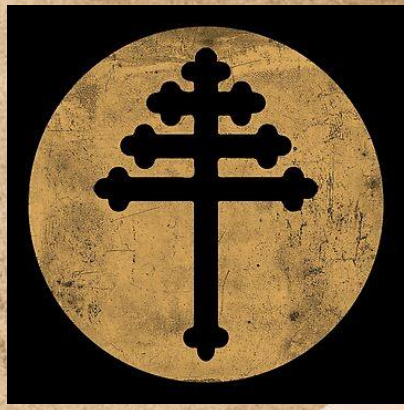
Silence

Silence in liturgical celebrations is an essential element, in order for us to receive in our hearts the word of God, and contemplate it. It is necessary in order for us to repeat in the heart what we have declared on the tongue, such as prayers, chants, supplications, and psalms and what we have done in the Mass.



Important elements

- In his observance of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, a priest should always face the Congregation at those times when he directly addresses the Community or when he gives a blessing or benediction.
- The words of Consecration, the Epiclesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit), as well as certain hymns and blessings, should be in the original Aramaic, the language spoken by Christ, to remind the faithful of their Maronite heritage and traditions.
- The faithful will bow their heads in accordance with an ancient Maronite custom.
- The first part of the Mass, the “preparation of the faithful,” shall consist of prayers, hymns, and readings that vary according to the seasons of the Church and feast days honored by our Holy Mother Church.
- On certain special feast days during the year, such as Ash Monday, Palm Sunday, Commemoration of the Finding of the Cross, etc., and for weddings, funerals, and baptisms, a special liturgy appropriate to the occasion will replace the usual prayers prescribed for the preparation of the faithful.



Parts of The Maronite Divine Liturgy



The Maronite Divine Liturgy or Service of the Holy Mysteries is one of the oldest in the universal church and has its roots in Apostolic times.

The Maronite Mass consists of several parts, each with its own significance and meaning. The two main parts of the Maronite mass are:

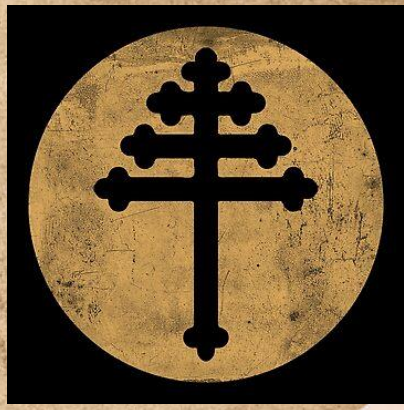
1- Liturgy of the Word



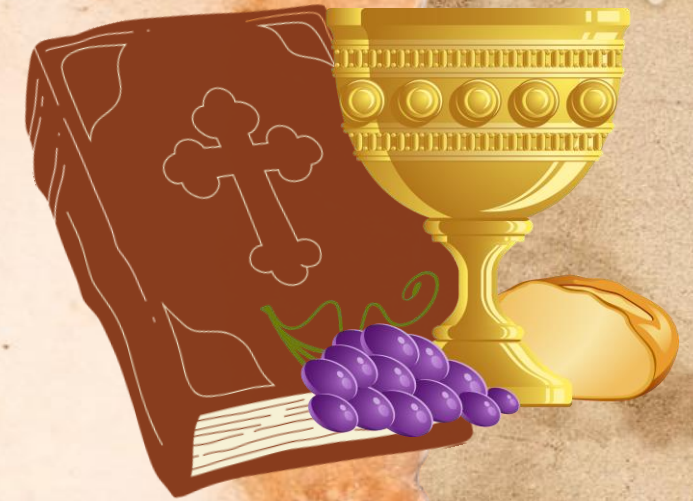
2- Liturgy of the Eucharist



While the Divine Liturgy consists of two parts, the service of the Word and the service of the Eucharist, each part can be further subdivided.



Parts of The Maronite Divine Liturgy



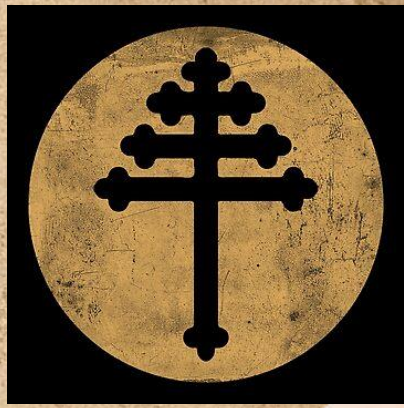
The First Part: The Preparation

- a. Preparation of the Offerings,
- b. Preparation of the Celebrant (the Priest),
- c. Preparation of the Faithful.

a. Preparation of the Offerings
Where more than one altar exists in a church, there is usually a smaller one to the right of the main altar known as the “preparation’s table,” and is used for the preparation of the offerings.

b) Preparation of the Priest commences with his confession before the altar where he prays for forgiveness and for support with prayers to celebrate the Holy Mass honourably and humbly. The Priest asks the participants also to pray for him in order that he may be enabled to celebrate the mass in faith, in truth, and in devotion as Christ desires him to do.

c) Preparation of the Faithful consists of three components:
1. The opening prayers and the blessing of the incense.
2. The prayer to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, or a hymn or psalm, or one of St. Ephrem’s Hymns (Ephremiate); varying according to the Proper of the Mass, this is followed by the singing of the Trisagion (Qadishat) 3- Readings and Instructions



The Liturgy of the Word



The Maronite Mass
can be concelebrated
by
any number of priests
at the Altar together

Service of preparation and purification

The service of the Word begins with:

- a period of preparation of the bread and wine. The bread and wine are prepared by the celebrant right before Mass on a side-table.
- the priest wears the alb which is usually a long white robe.
- the lighting of the candles
- the entrance of the priest and the hymn

The alb (robe) symbolises purity and the baptismal garment.
The draping form of the alb emphasizes the priest's liturgical role, directing attention away from himself and toward the true source and summit of the celebration which is Jesus Christ.

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As the offerings are prepared on the side altar, we present ourselves—our love for God and each other, our good deeds, our pains and concerns, and our prayer intentions. Together with the priest, we step into the house of the Lord, humbly bowing before the throne of the Holy One, interceding for one another in prayer. Following the priest's lead, we commence the service of the word, marking ourselves with the sign of the cross in reverence to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as we lift up today's opening prayer.

The priest and faithful prepare themselves: they ask God to forgive their sins and to help them celebrate the liturgy well.



Cong: lbai-tokh a-lo-ho'eh-let waq-
dom beem dee-lokh segh-det.
Mal-ko shma-yo-no ha-so lee
khool dahh-teet lokh.

I have entered your house
O God and have
worshipped before your
throne.
O King of heaven,
forgive all our sins.

This prayer expresses the reverence and humility of the worshiper as they enter into God's presence, acknowledging His sovereignty and holiness. It reflects the act of approaching God's sanctuary with awe and respect. The prayer also includes a plea for forgiveness, acknowledging human fallibility and the need for God's mercy and grace to cleanse and forgive sins.

Cell: Mal-ko shma-yo-no
ha-so lan khool
dah-tai-nan lokh.

O King of Glory,
forgive all our sins.

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Cong: Sa-laow 'a-lai
meh-tool mo-ran

Pray for me for to the Lord

Cell: a-lo-ho nqa-bel
qoor-bo-nokh
oo-net-ra-ham'a-lain
bas-loo-tokh.

May God accept your offering
and have mercy on us
through your prayer.

Opening Prayers

Cong: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen.

This is a short hymn of praise. It affirms the belief in the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit—as three distinct persons in one Godhead.



Etro Prayer

Cong: O Lord, accept the fragrance of this incense which we have offered to you.



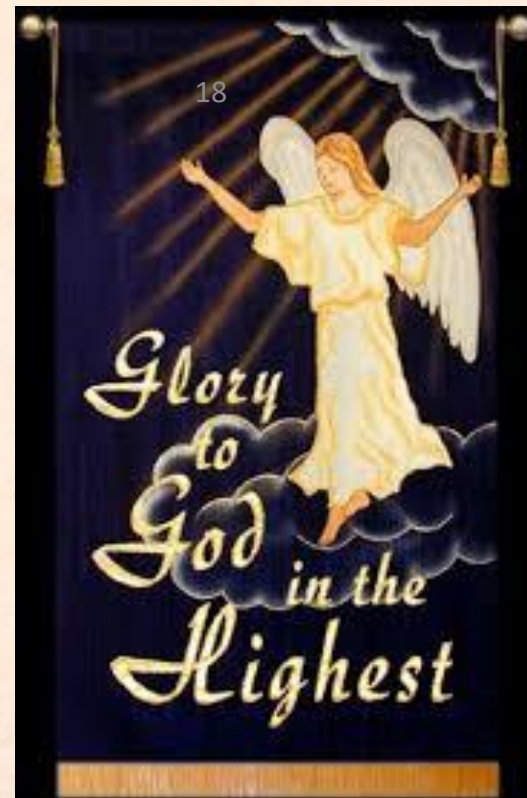
This prayer is recited during the liturgy when incense is being offered. It symbolises the prayers of the faithful rising to God as a sweet fragrance. It's a symbolic act of offering one's prayers, desires, and intentions to God, asking for His acceptance and favour.



Glory to God in the highest



- The Gloria has its roots in early Christian worship and liturgy.
- It draws from the angelic proclamation recorded in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:14) when the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
- It is fitting that the Liturgy begins with the angelic hymn, for in our faith we believe that whenever the Divine Liturgy is celebrated on earth, the boundaries between heaven and earth are removed and earthy worshipers join in the eternal Heavenly Liturgy chanted by the angels.



Prayer of forgiveness and Incensing (Hoosoyo)

The term Hoosoyo in Syriac has the meaning of atonement or pardon and can also refer to God's mercy seat.

The prayer of forgiveness is unique to the West Syriac churches. It fulfills several purposes. It is a rite of purification in preparation for hearing the Word of God and to be worthy to receive the Eucharist. It presents a series of petitions before God.

The priest: (placing incense in the thurible, he says:)

To the glory and honour of the Most Holy Trinity.

The Celebrant, or someone appointed by him, chants the Prayer of Forgiveness.

Meanwhile, either the Celebrant, or another priest or deacon, incenses the cross three times three (in the middle, to the right, and to the left), the four corners of the altar, the clergy, and the congregation.

Concelebrant:

Barekh Mor Reeshkohneh (Your Blessing)



Incense is burned during the prayer. Incense by its very nature purifies the atmosphere and reminds the faithful to purify themselves.

Traditionally incense was a precious commodity and was burned as an offering for one's sins. St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians declares: "Follow the way of love, even as Christ has loved you. He gave himself for us as an offering to God, a gift of pleasing fragrance." (5:2)

Qadishat aloho

Qadishat aloho;
Qadishat Hayeltono;
Qadishat lomoyouto
ItraHam 'alain

Holy are you, O God; Holy are you,
O Strong One;
Holy are you,
O Immortal One.
Have mercy on us



The repetition of "Holy are you" emphasises the sacredness and holiness of God. It is a recognition of His transcendent nature and His separateness from all that is sinful or impure. It also emphasises the holiness, strength, and mercy of God, as well as the dependence of humanity on divine grace.

Readings



Psalm of the Readings Syriac: ramremain

Chanting verses from the Psalms or hymns before and during the various Scripture readings is an ancient practice which introduces the readings and allows the readers to approach the lecterns.

The Reading of the Scriptures

The number of readings from Scripture besides the Gospel has varied throughout the centuries. The present use in the Maronite church is two readings with the first being usually from an epistle of St. Paul. The second one is from the gospel.

The Homily

Preaching a homily after the scripture readings can be traced to Apostolic times and to Christ himself.

After a reading from the Epistles of St Paul, or from other Apostles, followed by a reading of the Gospel, the priest explains in his sermon or homily the meaning of our Christian beliefs and how to apply ourselves daily to the living of a good Christian life.

preparation for hearing the Lord's words, the Gospel is fried and incense before reading it. Then it is recited, with eyes and hearts fixed on it

Lighting of a candle when reading the Epistle on the northern side. Lighting two candles when reading the Gospel, so that the congregation stands, because the Lord is speaking to them directly.

We learn from the Scriptures how to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, how to live a good Christian life, how to increase our faith, our hope, and our love for God, our neighbours, and all members of the Christian Community.

The pre-anaphora

Anaphora” is the Syriac word for “Offering.”



A series of actions and prayers are preformed in preparation for celebrating the Eucharist. The term "Pre-Anaphora" refers to the preparatory prayers and rituals that take place before the Anaphora, which is the central part of the Divine Liturgy where the Eucharistic Prayer is offered.

The term Anaphora comes from the Syriac and means to lift on high or to elevate. Therefore, it has the meaning of offering, which is the principal action that is taking place.

The Creed



The service of the Word ends with a standing recitation of the Creed.

We declare in this prayer that we believe in God the Creator Father, we believe in Jesus Christ who suffered for us, in the Holy Spirit who gives life, in the Church and in eternal life with God.

The life of Christians lies solely in their faith in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Also, proclaiming this constitution before the words of sanctification is an occasion for personal questioning and an examination of conscience to know where my heart is: “For where your treasure is, there will be your heart” (Matthew 6/20).

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The creed is also a clear call to examine our conscience. Do we act according to what we believe? Do we live according to what we proclaim: “For you will be approved by your words, and by your words you will be judged” (Matthew 12:37).

“

Offering of the Gifts and Incensing

After the celebrant ascends to the altar and receives the gifts, he offers them to God recalling the ancient tradition described throughout the Old Testament. He prays that God will respond to the petitions of the faithful to remember their departed, and for their spiritual and material needs. The celebrant incenses the gifts, the altar and worshipers as preparation for the sacred rite that follows.



Part 2 The Liturgy of the Eucharist



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The Liturgy of the Eucharist



The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the central part of the Divine Liturgy in the Maronite Rite, during which the offerings are consecrated and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is the moment in which we draw near to God and share in the mystery of our salvation through the Holy Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

The Offering of the Gifts

The Eucharistic Prayer (Anaphora)

The Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Epiclesis)

The Consecration of the Eucharist

Holy Communion

In the Maronite Rite, this liturgy is also called **Qurbono**, meaning “the Offering” or “the Oblation.”



The Liturgy of the Eucharist



The start

The Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Maronite Rite begins after the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word, when the priest ascends to the altar and receives the offerings (bread and wine). He presents them to God through the prayers of offering, proclaiming the Church's readiness to offer the divine sacrifice. The priest then incenses the offerings, the altar, and the faithful, as a sign of sanctifying the offering and lifting the Church's prayer to God, in preparation for entering the sacred Eucharistic Prayer.

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The Anaphora

The Anaphora

This term is used in the Maronite Mass to refer to the entire Eucharistic section, beginning with the Prayer of Peace and continuing until the end of the Divine Liturgy. The priest addresses God saying “Nafour...”, which means “Let us offer,” “Come, let us offer,” or “Let us lift up,” inviting the faithful to participate spiritually in the offering of the sacrifice.

The Anaphora or **Nafour** in the Maronite Mass is the Eucharistic Prayer raised by the priest in the name of the Church during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Through it, the offerings are consecrated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is called **Nafour** because in it the Church lifts the offering to God, and from it flows the fountain of grace and salvation for the faithful.

The word "نافور" is a Syriac word meaning "Come, let us offer", and it is an invitation for the faithful to join the priest in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Anaphora



The Prayer of the Anaphora or “Nafour” is the Prayer of Sanctification, and according to the Maronite rite and tradition, there are 72 Nafours. However, in the latest liturgical renewal, the following were selected:

Nafour: The Twelve Apostles

Nafour: Saint Peter, Head of the Apostles

Nafour: Saint James

Nafour: Saint John the Apostle

Nafour: Saint Mark

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Nafour: Saint Xystus, Pope of Rome

Nafour: Saint John, Golden Mouth

Nafour: Saint John Maron



The Rite of Peace

The Rite of Peace is not merely a human greeting, but a profound liturgical act flowing from the peace granted by Christ, risen from the dead, to His Church.

How is the Rite of Peace performed?

The priest announces the peace that comes from God, saying: *"Peace be with you all."* Peace is first given from the altar, that is, from Christ present in the Eucharistic sacrifice. Peace is then passed from the priest to the servers, and then to the faithful.

The exchange of peace is done with reverence and calm, without words by a simple gesture of hands open to receive and then to give

Theological and Spiritual Meaning

Peace is a divine gift, not just a courtesy.

It expresses reconciliation and unity before partaking in the Body and Blood of Christ.

It recalls the words of the Lord: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you"* (John 14:27).

It takes place before the sacrifice is offered in keeping with Jesus' warning recorded in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Mt 5:23-24)





The Syriac passages

The Syriac passages in the Maronite Liturgy are prayers and hymns recited or chanted in **Syriac**, the language of the Maronite Church and its spiritual heritage.

In the Maronite Liturgy, the essential words are recited in Syriac, because Syriac is the authentic liturgical language of the Maronite Church and is close to the language of Jesus Himself.

Theological meaning:

- The essential words are the words of Christ Himself at the Last Supper.
- Reciting them in Syriac expresses fidelity to the Apostolic and Antiochene tradition.
- Syriac here is not just a language, but a carrier of the mystery and the faith heritage.



Words of Consecration



Words of Consecration

The priest begins the second part of the Eucharist with the consecration of the offering, in which we recall the Last Supper that Christ shared with His disciples before His Passion and death on the Cross. The priest offers thanks to God, glorifies Him, and praises Him with the angels, while remembering the great, incomprehensible mystery. He repeats the words of Jesus Christ, the Savior, which express this mystery: *“Take and eat... Drink from this...”*

Through these words, the sacrifice is completed, for the bread is no longer ordinary bread and the wine is no longer ordinary wine; rather, the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes the Blood of Christ that flowed from His Body on the Cross.

المحتفل : (يأخذ الكأس قائلاً) :

هَقَّأ حَلَا فُصَا وَصَرَكِي يَهْأ
 مَح سَعْنَا مَح مَتْنَا
 جَنَر. هَجَبَه.
 هَيَّوَد لَللَّقْبَهْ يَه. مَ أُصَّن:
 هَجَه أُعْدَه مَدَه فُلُحْم
 هُنَا وَح أَمْدَه يَه. وَمَا وَك
 وَوَلَّصَف سَبَّأ
 وَسَلُفْتَم هَسُك هَقَّأ
 فَدَا مَ هَضَلَهَد
 حَسَهْصَا وَسَهَقَا
 هَلَسْنَا وَحَلُكَم حُلُصْتَه.

الشعب :

أُصَّح.

المحتفل : (ينحي)

آمين.

المحتفل : (يأخذ الخبز بيديه . قائلاً) :

هَحَهْصَا يَه وَمَمَر سَعَا وَكَه مَحْم سَتَا
 بَهَد لَلسَعَا حَاتَهْ يَه. مَبْتَعْدَا
 هَجَنَر. هَجَبَه.
 هَجْرَا هَيَّوَد لَللَّقْبَهْ يَه. مَ أُصَّن:
 هَجَه أُجَهَد مَدَه فُلُحْم
 هُنَا وَح أَمْدَه يَه. فَرْنَا وَك
 وَسَلُفْتَم هَسُك هَقَّأ
 فَدَا مَرَا هَضَلَهَد
 حَسَهْصَا وَسَهَقَا
 هَلَسْنَا وَحَلُكَم حُلُصْتَه.

الشعب :

أُصَّح.

المحتفل : (ينحي)

آمين.

Celebrant (taking the bread in his hands, says):

On the day before His saving Passion, He took the bread in His holy hands, blessed it, consecrated it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying:

"Take and eat, all of you; this is my Body, which will be broken for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life."

People:

Amen.

Celebrant (taking the chalice in his hands, says):

Likewise, He took the cup mixed with wine and water, blessed it, consecrated it, and gave it to His disciples, saying:

"Take and drink, all of you; this is my Blood, the Blood of the New Covenant, which will be shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life."

People:

Amen.

The Consecration of the Offering or the Prayer for the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Offering



This stage is called the **Consecration of the Offering** or the **Prayer for the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Offering**, and it is the most important moment of the Mass because it marks the moment of the **transformation of the offering** and the preparation of the faithful to receive the Sacraments.

Reminder to the faithful of the meaning of the Sacraments:

The celebrant recalls the **death, burial, resurrection, and second coming of Christ.**
(“Whenever you partake of these Sacraments, remember my death, burial, and resurrection until my coming.”)

The people respond by **professing Christ and asking for mercy and forgiveness.**

** (“We remember your death, O Lord, we profess your resurrection, and we await your second coming...”)*

The Eucharistic Prayer



The Eucharistic Prayer is the heart of the Mass, in which the Church offers the bread and wine, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they are transformed into the **Body and Blood of Christ**, as thanksgiving to God and in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the world.

Celebrant (blessing the people three times: center, left, and right):

The love of God the Father + the grace of the only-begotten Son + the fellowship and coming of the Holy Spirit + be with all of you, my brothers and sisters, forever.

People:

And with your spirit.

Celebrant (raising his hands and eyes to heaven):

Let our thoughts, minds, and hearts be lifted up to You.

People:

They are with You, O God.

Celebrant (folding his hands and bowing):

Let us give thanks to the Lord with fear, and let us worship Him with reverence.

People:

It is right and just.

Celebrant (extending his hands):

With our heart, mind, and tongue we give thanks to You, O God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You who are the one true God.

While Your faithful people are spiritually united with the invisible crowds and the countless ranks of the heavenly hosts, all together they glorify You with one voice, crying out:

People:

Holy, Holy, Holy are You.

Prayers of the faithful



Prayers of the Faithful (Intentions)

Petitions are offered for the universal Church, the hierarchy and clergy, and for all the faithful. Requests are also made for the material needs of the faithful and for peace in the world. The saints are commemorated, and prayers are offered for the faithful departed.



The Breaking, Sprinkling, Mingling and Elevation



While the people chant an appropriate hymn, the priest performs this rite, which **summarizes the entire mystery of salvation**:

1 The Breaking-It symbolizes the crucifixion and death of Christ.

Just as His Body was broken on the Cross for the salvation of humanity, the bread is broken to remind us that Christ offered Himself out of love for us.

2 The Sprinkling-It symbolizes the life given by the Blood of Christ.

The sprinkling is a gentle action indicating that the Blood of Christ, shed on the Cross, has become for us a source of life and salvation.

3 The Mingling-It symbolizes the unity of the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the living Christ, the Body is never separated from the Blood; rather, He is fully present—God and Man—in the mystery of the Eucharist.

4 The Elevation-It symbolises the Resurrection of Christ and His Ascension into heaven, and proclaims that the mystery of redemption has been fulfilled, and that the risen Christ raises us with Him to new life and eternal glory.

During the Mingling, the priest places a small portion of the consecrated bread into the chalice containing the wine.

This act is done three times, symbolising:

-The full union of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

-The unity of the faithful with Christ and with one another.

The threefold action also recalls the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Lord's Prayer and the Rite of Repentance



The **Lord's Prayer** (Our Father) and the **Rite of Repentance** are two essential parts of the Maronite Mass that prepare the faithful for Holy Communion.

They prepare the heart and the spirit to enter into the mystery of Communion in peace and reconciliation.

The "Our Father" is prayed with hands extended.

Celebrant (extending his hands):

Open, O Lord, our mouths and our lips; sanctify our bodies and souls; purify our minds and our consciences....

All (with hands extended):

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be Thy name;

Thy kingdom come;

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses ,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

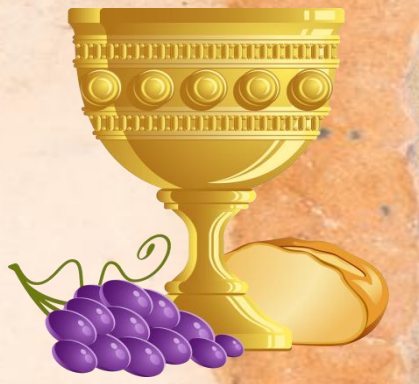
but deliver us from the Evil .

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are yours

forever Amen.



Invitation to Communion



Immediately prior to receiving communion, the gathering pray as one:
Make us worthy, O Lord,
to sanctify our bodies with your holy Body
and purify our souls with your forgiving Blood.
May our communion be for the forgiveness of our sins
and for eternal life.
O Lord our God, to you be glory forever.



Holy Communion



Holy Communion is the climax of the Maronite Mass, where the faithful come forward to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, uniting with Him and being strengthened by His grace.

In Communion, we do not receive a symbol, but Christ Himself, alive, who nourishes our spiritual life, makes us one body in Him, and sends us forth to live the Gospel in our daily lives.



Thanksgiving



Celebrant: While the celebrant consumes what remains, he purifies the vessels, and the people sing hymns of thanksgiving, such as *“I have eaten Your Holy Body...”*.

Thanksgiving in the Christian faith, and especially in the Maronite tradition, is a spiritual attitude before it is words spoken. It is an acknowledgment of God’s free gift and a response of the heart to the grace we have received. In the Divine Liturgy, thanksgiving reaches its peak after Communion, when the faithful recognise that they have partaken of the Body and Blood of the Lord, allowing God to dwell within them and renew their lives. Therefore, hymns of thanksgiving are not merely the conclusion of the Mass, but a proclamation of faith, surrender, and a commitment to live according to the grace received.

Thanksgiving is:

- Recognition of God’s presence and salvific work
- Humility before His greatness and love
- Readiness to transform grace into life and witness





The final blessing

Celebrant: *“Go in peace, my brothers and beloved, with the nourishment and blessings you have received from the altar of the forgiving Lord. May the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity accompany you: the Father + the Son + and the Holy Spirit + the one true God, to whom be glory forever.”*

After Communion, the priest sends the faithful into the world to live out what they have celebrated, carrying the nourishment of the Eucharist and God’s blessing into their daily lives.

Theological meaning:

“Go in peace” – an invitation to live in the peace of Christ and serve others.

“With the nourishment and blessings” – the Eucharist is the food for the journey.

Blessing of the Most Holy Trinity – the Mass concludes with a blessing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In short: It is the moment of mission, where the liturgy ends and the faithful begin their calling.

Farewell



In his farewell to the altar, the celebrant acknowledges that every encounter with God could be the last.

He prays that the Eucharist may be a source of forgiveness and transformation, and that this encounter may lead him from the altar on earth to the throne of Christ, standing without shame, because he has truly lived what he celebrated.

The priest prays silently,
“Remain in Peace Holy Altar of God, I hope to return to you in peace. I know not whether I will return to you again to offer sacrifice”.

The sending



After partaking in the Eucharist, the faithful are sent into the world to bear witness to Christ through their lives and actions, renewed by the grace of the Sacrament. They become good leaven and fine salt, chosen by the Lord to manifest His glory in the world through faithfulness, love, and good works.

The Mass does not end at the church door; it begins there.

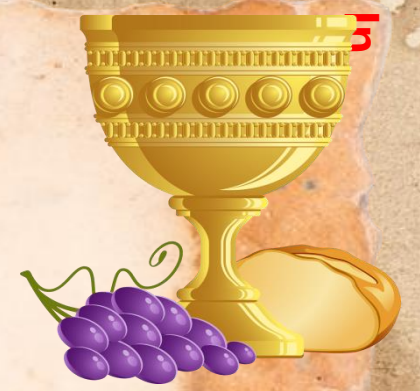
The faithful are sent to be:

- Witnesses of the Gospel
- Leaven in society
- Light and salt in the world



Each member of the congregation now leaves the Church strengthened and encouraged to live as Christ did, with the hope of fulfilling St. Paul's words: *"Every Christian must be another Christ in the society and environment in which he lives and works."*

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The Book of the Maronite Mass According to the Antiochian Syriac Maronite Rite
ChatGPT

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Prepared by
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