

**THE HISTORY OF THE LITURGY (2)  
THE SIX CENTURY**

**References:**

The Shape of the Liturgy, D. G. Dix  
Eucharist, Louis Bouyer  
Prayers of the Eucharist, Jassper and Cuming

**Notes For Servants:**

- 1.
- 2.

**Objectives:**

**General:**

**Specific:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Instructions:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Bible Verse:**

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.”

(Psalm 4:5)

**Lesson:**

See Attached Sheets.

## **THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA**

The Greek Liturgy of Saint Mark has now been translated into Coptic. Since the translation is traditionally attributed to Saint Cyril, it became known as The Liturgy of Saint Cyril. There are basically no differences between the two, the odd word is found in one version and not the other and vice versa.

Another anaphora known as the anaphora of Saint Basil was by now established side by side with the anaphora of Saint Cyril. It was believed that Saint Basil brought this anaphora with him from Cappadocia during his visit to Egypt in A. D. 357. This is the view held by Dom Engberding and Baumstark. Another researcher, Father Hanssens questions this theory and thinks that the attribution to St. Basil of the text that the Egyptians knew at a very early date is incomprehensible.

This view of Father Hanssens has been dramatically confirmed by the discovery in 1960 of a version of the anaphora in Sahidic Coptic that may well be dated to the late third century, years before Saint Basil was born.

There is no doubt that the anaphora of St. Basil has been derived from the anaphora of St. Mark. The similarity between the two is not co-incidental. The institution narrative is the same in both. Both anaphoras start with "The Lord be with you all" rather than the Cappadocian Paulene formula, "The love of God the Father .. "

The most probable explanation is that Saint Basil, during a visit to Egypt, edited an already existing anaphora that had evolved from the much older St. Mark's. Although similar in many respects, the anaphora of Saint Mark and that which bears the name of Saint Basil have some differences that we shall summarize; In the anaphora of Saint Mark all the intercessions are before the anaphora while in St. Basil's many intercessions were introduced into the anaphora while still retaining the pre anaphoral intercessions.

A third anaphora known as the anaphora of St. Gregory the Theologian started to make its appearance, first in the monasteries of Nitria, and later in the rest of Egypt. Like the anaphora of St. Basil, which it resembles in many aspects, it is based on the ancient St. Mark's but reflects more Cappadocian influence. It starts with the Paulene grace formula, "The love of God the Father ..", so characteristic of the Cappadocian liturgy.

It is believed to be written by St. Gregory during his visit to Egypt as a young monk around the middle of the fourth century. The anaphora is addressed to Christ rather than to the Father. It abounds with the mature Theology of the fourth century, The Christological and sotiriological formulas are greatly expanded into what sounds like one of the sermons of St. Gregory the Theologian.

## **THE CHURCH OF ROME**

In Rome, the Liturgy attributed to Pope Gregory the great, made its appearance in the sixth century and replaced the Liturgy of Hippolytus, which has been in use before it. The Liturgy of Gregory the great is quite different from that of Hippolytus both in structure and in the treatment of its subjects. This led many to believe that it could have not evolved from the Liturgy of Hippolytus.

Father Bouyer emphasizes this, "To explain the evolution that might have produced the canon of the Roman mass of St. Gregory with Hippolytus' Liturgy as a starting point, is to set a task for ourselves that has no chance of success."

Where then, did this Liturgy attributed to Pope Gregory the great come from? Father Bouyer answers this intriguing question by saying, "Ultimately we have to start with the Alexandrian Liturgy .. the Liturgy of St. Mark, which had long been classical in Alexandria." Father Bouyer further declares, "The analogies of content, structure and even similarities of expression are manifold between the solidly attested forms of the Roman Eucharist and those of the Alexandrian

liturgy. If we consequently wish to bring together all the elements capable of shedding light on the genesis of the present Roman eucharist, it is in relation to the Alexandrian eucharist that it is fitting to study it. Here, we are on solid grounds."

## **THE CHURCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

Constantinople, the city of Constantine, the second Rome and capital of the eastern empire, started to compete with Rome and Alexandria as an important "see". Not only did it eclipse Jerusalem and Antioch, it eventually dominated all the churches of the east, except those who refused to subscribe to the Chalcedonian formula. Sooner or later, the liturgical practice of Constantinople is forced on all the local churches, including those of Jerusalem and Antioch. We are therefore going to concentrate on the liturgical developments in Constantinople, which were in due time, extrapolated to all the eastern Orthodox churches.

Towards the end of the fourth century, the liturgy commonly used in Constantinople was an expanded version of the Egyptian St. Basil's, almost twice its size. The question that naturally arises is whether the Egyptian version is an abbreviation of the Byzantine, or the other way around. In 1932, Dom Hieronymus Engberding demonstrated that the Egyptian text is an earlier version of the Byzantine rather than an abbreviation of it, and his conclusions have been universally accepted. This was confirmed by the discovery of a version of the anaphora in Sahidic Coptic that goes back to the end of the third century. This version also has influenced the anaphora of St. James (see previous article).

The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which gradually replaced the Byzantine St. Basil's, may well be the form used in Antioch during Chrysostom's episcopate. It has much in common with the anaphora of the Apostles (see previous article) and at several points the wording is very similar to the Byzantine St. Basil's. It is a short anaphora, less than half the length of the Byzantine St. Basil, which is no doubt the reason it supplanted the latter.

It seems that this liturgy is derived from both the anaphora of the Apostles and that of St. Basil. St. John Chrysostom might have only abbreviated it and touched it up rather than authored it. It then received his name when he moved from Antioch to Constantinople.

To sum up, by the end of the sixth century, Egypt had three liturgies, the old St. Mark which was now translated into Coptic, and two other anaphoras that were derived from the latter, St. Basil's and St. Gregory's. Rome abandoned its early liturgy, attributed to Hyppolitus, believed to be of Egyptian origin, to adopt another liturgy, bearing the name of Pope Gregory the great, which is largely an adaptation of the Egyptian St. Mark. Constantinople starts to use an expanded form of the Egyptian St. Basil and later adopts a much abbreviated liturgy attributed to St. John Chrysostom.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Try not to deny that you are Christian.
2. Do not sacrifice your Christian morals, no matter what!
3. Have the courage to follow church traditions and dogma even when among non-copts.

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.”

(Psalm 4:5)