

and granted us Your future kingdom."⁵⁰⁸ Our grateful response for such infinite divine gifts is a heartfelt shout of thanksgiving to our Creator and Saviour for his work of creation and salvation. "I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol" (Ps 85[86]:12-13).

814 The summit of thanksgiving to God is the Divine Liturgy, in which the Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist. The word eucharistic means thanksgiving. Consequently, to participate in the Eucharist also means to be a partaker in the universal thanksgiving of Christ's Church. In the Eucharistic Prayer (Anaphora) the Church prays to the Heavenly Father: "For all this we give thanks to You, to Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit; for all things which we know and do not know, the benefits bestowed upon us both manifest and hidden."⁵⁰⁹

815 Saint Basil the Great describes for us a profound experience of the prayer of thanksgiving:

Now if we bear a natural love and good will toward our benefactors and undergo any kind of hardship to make a return for what was first rendered to us, what words can fitly treat of the gifts of God? So many are they in number as even to defy enumeration; so great and marvellous are they that a single one of them claims for the Giver all our gratitude.⁵¹⁰

c. Penitential Prayer

816 Penitential prayer (or prayer of repentance) is not only a manifestation of sorrow for trespasses committed but also a turning of the penitent to his Creator: "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for you, O God" (Ps 41[42]:2). A person's repentance goes through three stages: 1) conversion—turning away from sin and returning to life in God; 2) purgation—healing from passions and cleansing from the consequences of sin; and 3) union with God in contemplation. All three stages find expression in the penitential prayers of the Church.

817 Penitential prayers typically consist of two parts. Initially, the penitent realizes who the Lord is, acknowledges his majesty, holiness, and purity, and his active mercy towards a sinner. The penitent then recognizes the difference between God's holiness and their own sinfulness, and the dissimilarity between themselves and God. "For you [God] are just

⁵⁰⁸ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

⁵⁰⁹ *Liturgicon*, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Anaphora.

⁵¹⁰ BASIL THE GREAT, *The Long Rules*, 2:2: PG 31, 911.

in all that you have done to us ... For we have sinfully and lawlessly departed from you" (Dan 3:27, 29). Penitential prayer consists in the sinner asking for mercy, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, they may achieve likeness to God and union with him. The words of the publican, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Lk 18:13), are an example of penitential prayer. The liturgical petition "Lord, have mercy" is the most common form of such prayer.

818 The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete is the finest and most complete model of penitential prayer. This ancient text serves as a school of prayer for communal-liturgical and individual penitential prayer. The Canon contains penitential meditations on Holy Scripture, as well as moral and ascetical teachings and exhortations; it reflects deep emotion and the experience of remorse. It is sung to a particular chant and is accompanied by penitential gestures, that is, deep prostrations (the great metania). Thus, the entire person—intellect, will, emotions, and body—is incorporated into the dynamic of penitential prayer. The fruit of such penitential prayer is the capacity to accept the grace of conversion, purification, and union with God. In other words, the person who prays thus is able to receive inner transfiguration.

d. Prayer of Supplication

819 Supplication, the act of prayerfully requesting something of God, holds an important place in our relationship with God. Prior to his passion, Christ prayed to the Father for all the apostles, asking that the Father would keep (preserve) them so that they may all be one (see Jn 17:11). He also prayed for all of us, those who would come to believe in him through the word of the apostles (see Jn 17:20-21). In the litanies of supplication of the Divine Liturgy, the Church asks God for the salvation of the entire world.

820 Christ exhorts us to direct our supplication to God, "Ask, and it will be given to you ... For everyone who asks receives" (Mt 7:7-8). At the same time Christ assures us that the heavenly Father already knows what we need even before we ask (see Mt 6:8). Prayer of supplication is important for us in that we learn what it is that we should be requesting of God. The Church turns to God that he may grant us "all that we request for salvation."⁵¹¹ Sometimes people turn to God in prayer demanding unconditional fulfilment of their desires and needs. True supplication, however, is not a demand, but rather a readiness to accept God's reply,

⁵¹¹ *Horologion*, Vespers, Third Prayer of Light.