

but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul, which is by the Spirit.<sup>375</sup>

536 In a visible way, the Divine Services reveal the ecclesial community as an icon of the unseen community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through visible rites, the services celebrated by the Church act on our bodily senses: we see the church and the icons, we hear the prayerful singing, we smell the fragrance of the incense, we taste "how good the Lord is," and we touch with our lips the icons and Gospel Book. All our bodily senses take part in worship, so that we may wholly—in body, soul, and spirit—offer the Lord "rational worship" (see Rom 12:1).

## **B. The Rhythm of Liturgical Prayer**

537 Our existence in time points to the fact that we are limited and transient: time marks the beginning and the end of our earthly life. We measure chronological, historical time by various units of duration: days, weeks, months, and years. It is into this historical time that God enters. Although he is immortal, God became incarnate, was born, lived and died as a human, and by his Resurrection he broke asunder the bonds of transience: "We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Rom 6:9). In Christ we pass from transience to life eternal—"now and forever and ever." "It is always one and the same grace of the Holy Spirit acting, and it is always Pascha."<sup>376</sup> In the liturgical life of the Church, the Paschal Mystery is the centre of liturgical time. Here the events of salvation are made present and actual. In the Divine Services, the Church makes memorial of the saving mysteries of Jesus Christ. And while the Pascha of Christ persists in transient time, the divine worship of the Church exists in three cycles. These correspond to the three units of time—the daily, the weekly, the yearly.

### **1. The Daily Cycle—Horologion (Chasoslov)**

538 The Lord God created the world in time, with an alternation of light and darkness—that is, day and night—as well as the seasons of the year: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years" (Gn 1:14). The sequence of night and day in the story of creation of the world is a sign of the creative act of God, who brought all from non-existence into existence. This is why, as a memorial of this act, the

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<sup>375</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOM Homilies on 1 Corinthians, 7,2: PG 61, 55.

<sup>376</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Homilies on 1 Timothy, 5, 3: PG 62, 529.

services of the daily cycle begin in the evening: "And there was evening and there was morning..." (Gn 1:5ff).

539 A day, according to the Holy Scripture, is a period of life. The Lord God created the light, separating it from darkness. This is the meaning of the daily liturgical cycle: the raising of creation from the darkness of non-being to the light of being, and then, from visible light to light unseen. This is why the biblical day, as a symbol of the nearing of the world to God and the entering of God into the world, is at the same time the liturgical day.

540 Our Church's daily cycle of prayer is built on the ideal of unceasing prayer, expressed in the biblical number seven. This number is a symbol of fullness and perfection. The Scriptures proclaim: "Seven times a day I praise you, for your righteous ordinances" (Ps 118[119]:164). Saint Basil the Great also exhorts us to such prayer: "Let it also be a rule for us, to praise God seven times a day."<sup>377</sup> The foundation of this rule of prayer is the Psalms. In Divine Services, these biblical Psalms are interspersed with other prayers: hymns, stichera, troparia, konta-kia, prokeimena, litanies, etc. The services of the daily cycle—namely, Vespers, Compline, the Midnight Office, Matins, and the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours, as well as the Service of Typica—all of these are found in the liturgical book called the Horologion (Chasoslov).<sup>378</sup>

*a. Vespers and Matins*

541 Of the Divine Services of the daily cycle it is Vespers and Matins that have entered parish life most consistently. Great Vespers is celebrated each Saturday evening and Resurrection Matins every Sunday morning. On the feasts of the Lord and of the Mother of God and on the major feasts of saints, Vespers with Vigil is celebrated, which includes a Lytia service. At the Lytia, bread, wheat, wine, and oil are blessed to signify the bounty we have received from God, and to pray for their multiplication throughout the world. The unique theological, spiritual, poetic, and artistic riches of Vespers and Matins help us to integrate more deeply into our lives the history of salvation.

542 Fundamentally, Vespers is a prayer in which we alternately glorify the Lord, ask for his gifts, and repent for our sins. In Psalm 103[104] we praise the Lord for his creation. Then, in a series of penitential psalms ("Lord, I have cried out to you" — Ps 140[141]; 141[142]; 129[130];

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<sup>377</sup> BASIL THE GREAT, *Homily on Asceticism*, 1, 4: PG 31, 878.

<sup>378</sup> *Typikon of the Ruthenian-Catholic Church*, Lviv, 1899, 5.