

## Education Through Prayer

If you wanted a Christian education and if you wanted spiritual meanings to be renewed in you, you have to persevere in services other than the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is a place for understanding the word and for participation and sanctification. However, keeping up with remembrances of Saints and especially meditating in the Lord's Resurrection requires your presence in the Matins service every Sunday morning and also on Saturday and feast evenings' Vespers.

Particularly, Sundays' and Feasts' Matins get you into the core of the Paschal meaning, as the Matins' Gospel, which is the center of this service, is a narrative of the Lord's manifestations. Chanting (Evlogetaria and other chants) is also very Paschal. And Sunday is a remembrance of the Resurrection through teaching it. This teaching is intensified and varies partially from a Sunday to another. And if you understood, you will not get bored. Boredom results from you not knowing the structure of the Matins service and from not being aware of its meanings so you find yourself displaced and distracted.

If you were filled with the meaning of Resurrection you enter the Divine Liturgy which gives you the remembrance of the Savior's death and emission from death. The Liturgy is an activation and participation in the holies, but the Matins, being very Paschal, qualifies you to enter the Liturgy.

Also, Saturday evening's Vespers take us directly to the meanings of Resurrection and this service opens the liturgical day. You notice if you wanted to celebrate feasts, that the Vespers service launches the feast. The liturgical cycle must organize its services in a way that most people would be able to attend if they were feast lovers. So the Vespers is postponed to 5 or 6 p.m. and the Matins begin in a time that makes the believer able to come relatively early so that the Liturgy ends in a reasonable time.

Our main education occurs in worships especially that our people rarely read the Holy Book and religious books in general. The Liturgy alone cannot educate you especially that from what I see, when I arrive to a Church on a Sunday I see two or three people and then minutes pass and you see after a while that they have become ten and then twenty and not all believers are present before the Gospel reading. How could you have communion without hearing the Lord's Word to repent through it. And sometimes you notice people coming to communion from outside the Church as if it is an automatic process.

Our Liturgy is not long for the person that knows and understands it. Boredom comes from not knowing the faith and not knowing books. Of course, the priest must not prolong the rhythm and especially the chanter must not chant with long intonation as it is better to read the Epistle with intonation than to chant it because this gives a chance to understand. Words disappear in the tune especially

for a person that doesn't know the words. The step that I find successful today is that some people carry "Raiati" and read the Epistle and Gospel.

If God's Word was "A spirit and life" then we must reach it through methods that we mentioned some of or else we die from starvation or drought.

The thing that we said is the origin of everything. There is no reformation in our Church without understanding its meanings, all of these meanings. "Feast lovers" and those who revive through prayer must gather and ask their priest to celebrate all services at their times. The priest is there for this reason. Rituals, for us, carry the word of life and perseverance in these rituals is contacting life. "With you is the fountain of life O Lord".

If we were five or ten daily in the Vespers, and more than that at the beginning of the Matins, and if we opened our ears to understand the books and we felt the spread of the Word in our various prayers and chants, we would have put a solid basis for our contact with the Lord. We shouldn't dig for ourselves "broken cisterns that cannot hold water" but solid basins in which springs fall into so that every one of us becomes "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" that we live from today.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon