

Your Liturgy Appointment

The liturgy is an appointment for you with the Lord. In social life, no one arrives late for an appointment. If you were late, the other will consider you not serious in your work if you gave him an appointment or that you are not missing him, and you will make him wait and regret the time he lost while waiting. Why do we only find three people, and mostly old women, at the beginning of the service on a Sunday or in a feast?

Doesn't this mean that the words said by the priest or chanted by the chanter do not concern the people that are absent for unjustified reasons? They would be home drinking coffee, having breakfast, or listening to the news. They slept the previous night and woke up like any other day. Do they internally say: The liturgy happens whether we came or not, and we shall take our share from it later? These people don't know that Christ is waiting for them in his church and that the words organized to be said in the Liturgy were put by our ancestors for us to grow in God's love and reach the depth of Christianity. Why don't they know that the Lord loves those who came from the beginning and wants those who were late not to be late anymore? He forgives the weakness of their energy and the lack of their enthusiasm in order for them to gain this enthusiasm and be renewed through knowledge and not miss any beneficial word.

I once entered a church during the specified time for the Vespers and noticed that the service started two or three minutes earlier. At the beginning of the service, the vespers' psalm is read. So I said to the priest after the service: You have taken away from people that come on time several verses from the psalm that could have helped them in their salvation. Their repentance might have needed some words that they didn't hear.

Some of us don't have enough eagerness. If you loved Christ, you should search for his appearing, and his appearing in the Divine Liturgy is great. He has said: "The words I have spoken to you are light and they are life". Don't you want light? Don't you want life? You cannot make a religion for yourself; you take the religion you inherited from your Fathers and Grandfathers. And the Christian religion that you follow has prayer as its heart and has the Liturgy as the heart of prayer.

I hope that you recognize that the Liturgy is one whole structure and that you cannot take a part and leave another. As a clarification I say: How could you arrive after the Gospel? Wouldn't you be trying to convince yourself that what was read for the faithful is not important for you? And concerning the Epistle, who said that it, in addition to the chants that precede it, don't benefit your spiritual growth? How could you take the Lord's body without the Gospel? The Lord gives us all of these. All of this is for your salvation, and consequently, for the salvation of your

family. Your family wants you strong in faith and beneficial for them through faith.

You love them with everything you got, with what you learned from the Church of the Lord. Do you let your wife teach your children Christianity alone without playing a role in that? Do not rely on the religious education of schools. It is equally important, as education, and even more important, for you to have Christianity in you, in your speech, and in your eyes.

Come, and let us be together every Sunday so that no one would remain a stranger between us, the people that pray. We are all together Christ's body. Do not separate us through your absence. In Church we all become one: Come.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon