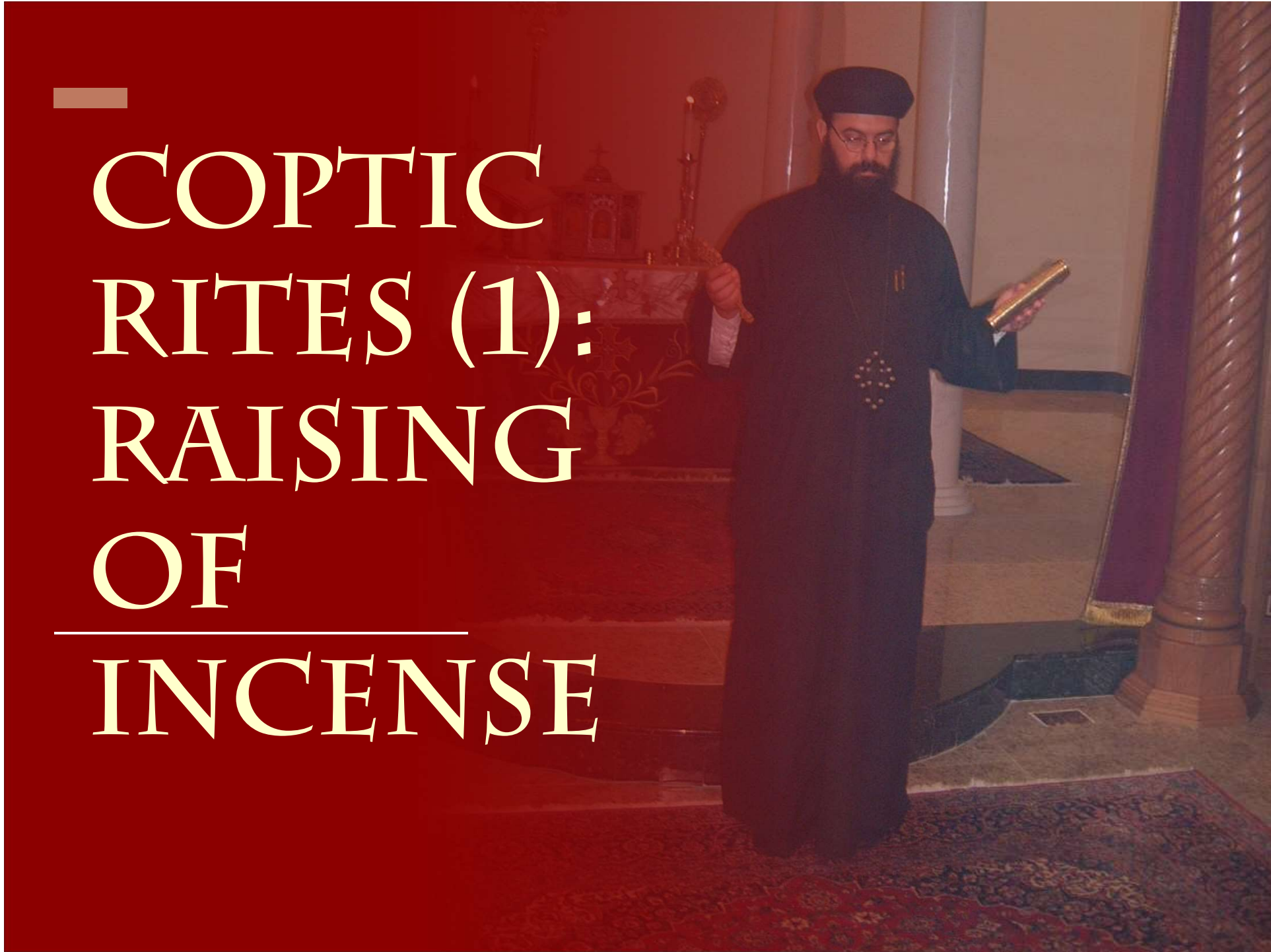




COPTIC  
RITES (1):  
RAISING  
OF  

---

INCENSE



# The Rite of Raising of the Incense

## ■ Introduction

1. The Lord's Prayer, Thanksgiving Prayer
2. The Litany
3. The Prayer for Mercy: Ɔ† N&I N&N (Efnoti Nai Nan)
4. The Litany and Gospel Reading
5. The Five Short Litanies
6. The Absolutions
7. The Benediction



# Introduction

# “Liturgy”

- Λειτουργία (leitourgia) "work for the people"
  - "litos ergos" or "public service".
  - All must be involved in the work.
- People called out for a certain purpose, separated from everyone else, to offer everything of themselves to God.
  - ~~x~~ Come late, sit in pew, watch the "show", yawn, ...
  - The more we learn about the Divine Liturgy, the more we participate, the more we give of ourselves.
    - The less we know about it, the more we become spectators
  - “Find a liturgy book and follow along. Get to know the parts of the Divine Liturgy, what each means and how each part contributes to the whole...”



# Liturgy

- Our portion of the “work”
  - Being fully present during the Divine Liturgy,
  - adding our voices to the singing,
  - praying for those we know (and those we don't), etc.,
- What's the most important thing for us to do in the Divine Liturgy?
  - We really only have one task: to worship God.
  - watchfulness... is not an option, it's a necessity: *'What I say to you I say to all: Watch!'" (Mark 13:37)*



# The Liturgy Prayers

---

1. Raising of Evening Incense (Vespers)  
\* Midnight Praises
2. Raising of Morning Incense (Matins)
3. Offering of the Lamb
4. Liturgy of the Word (Readings)
5. Liturgy of the Believers (Eucharist)





# Coptic Liturgies

- Liturgy of St. Basil
  - Most common
  - Shortest
  - Addresses God the Father
- Liturgy of St. Gregory
  - Usually prayed on feast days
  - Addresses God the Son
- Liturgy of St. Mark (St. Cyril)
  - Rearranged by St. Cyril
  - Usually prayed during fast days
  - Oldest, Longest
  - Addresses God the Father



THE  
RAISING  
OF  
INCENSE

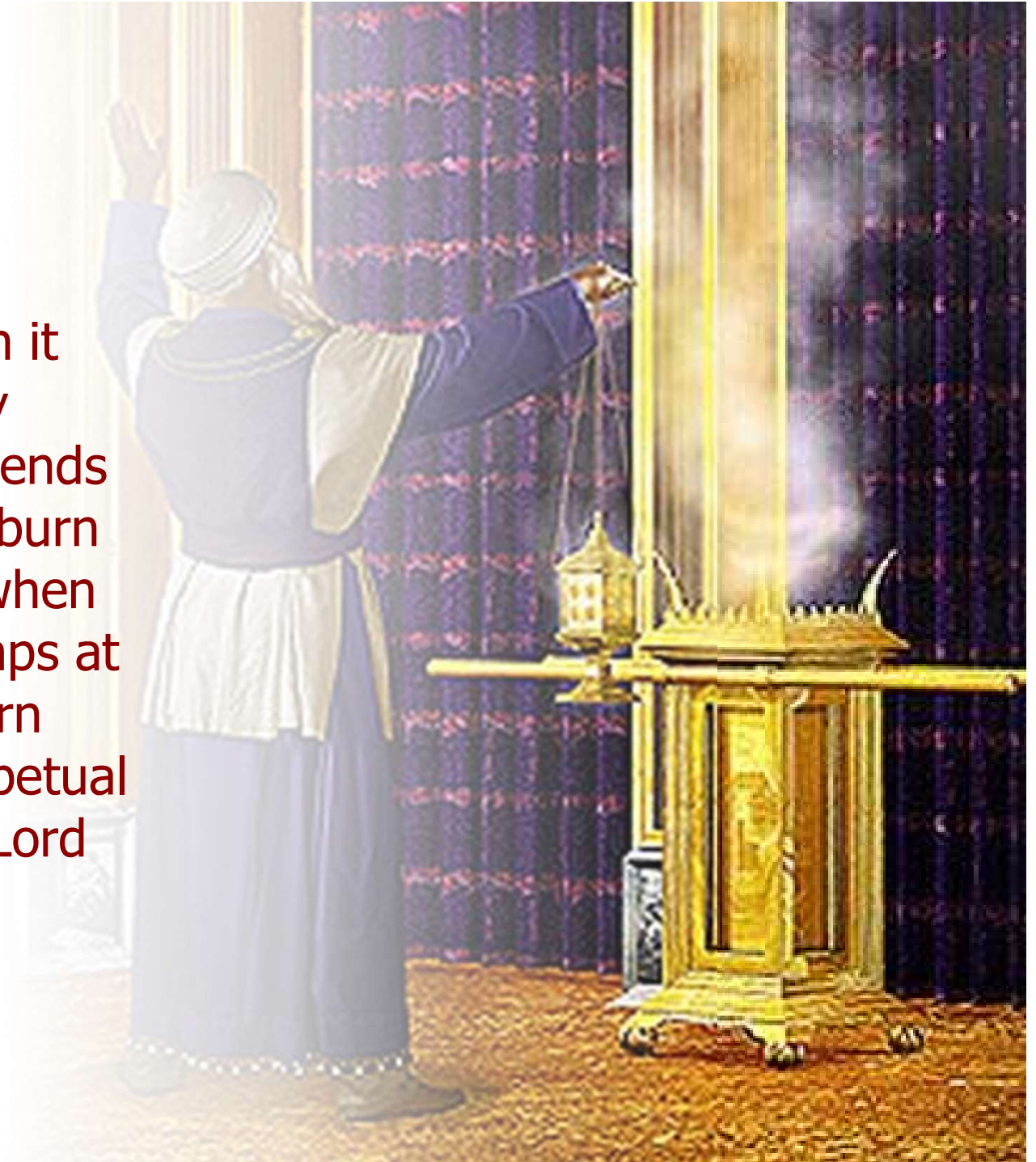
---





## — Daily Incense Offering

- “Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.  
(Exo 30:7-8)



# Opening the Veil of the Sanctuary

The priest opens the veil of the sanctuary from left to right symbolizing our transfer from the left side to the right side by the work of redemption of the Lord Christ.



The priest says, while opening the veil:

“Have mercy on us, O God the Father, the Pantocrator. O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, God of hosts, be with us, for we have no helper in our hardships and tribulations but You.”





# The Lord's Prayer

❖ Every service starts with the Lord's Prayer

❖ “In this manner, therefore pray Our Father in heaven, ...  
(Matthew 6:9-13)



# The Lord's Prayer

- Then, the priest prostrates:
  - before the altar
  - before the congregation  
(asking for their forgiveness )
- “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25)







# 1. Thanksgiving Prayer

- ❖ The priest stands outside the sanctuary holding a cross in his right hand.

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20

- ❖ The deacon stands behind the priest holding a cross in his right hand and saying all the responses.





Ἐπιπροσεύχθε ἑστᾶθῆτε.

قفوا للصلاة

Stand up for prayer.

Προσεύξασθε.

Pray

صلوا

Pray that God have mercy and compassion on us, hear us, help us, and accept the supplications and prayers of His saints, for that which is good on our behalf at all times\*, and forgive us our sins.

اطلبوا لكي يرحمنا الله ويتراءف علينا ويسمعنا ويعيننا ويقبل سؤالات وطلبات قديسيه منهم بالصلاح عنا في كل حين، \* ويغفر لنا خطايانا.

*\* If the Pope or a Bishop is present, the following is said*

And to preserve and confirm the life of our honored father, Papa Abba (...) and his partner in the liturgy, our father the metropolitan (bishop), Abba (...).

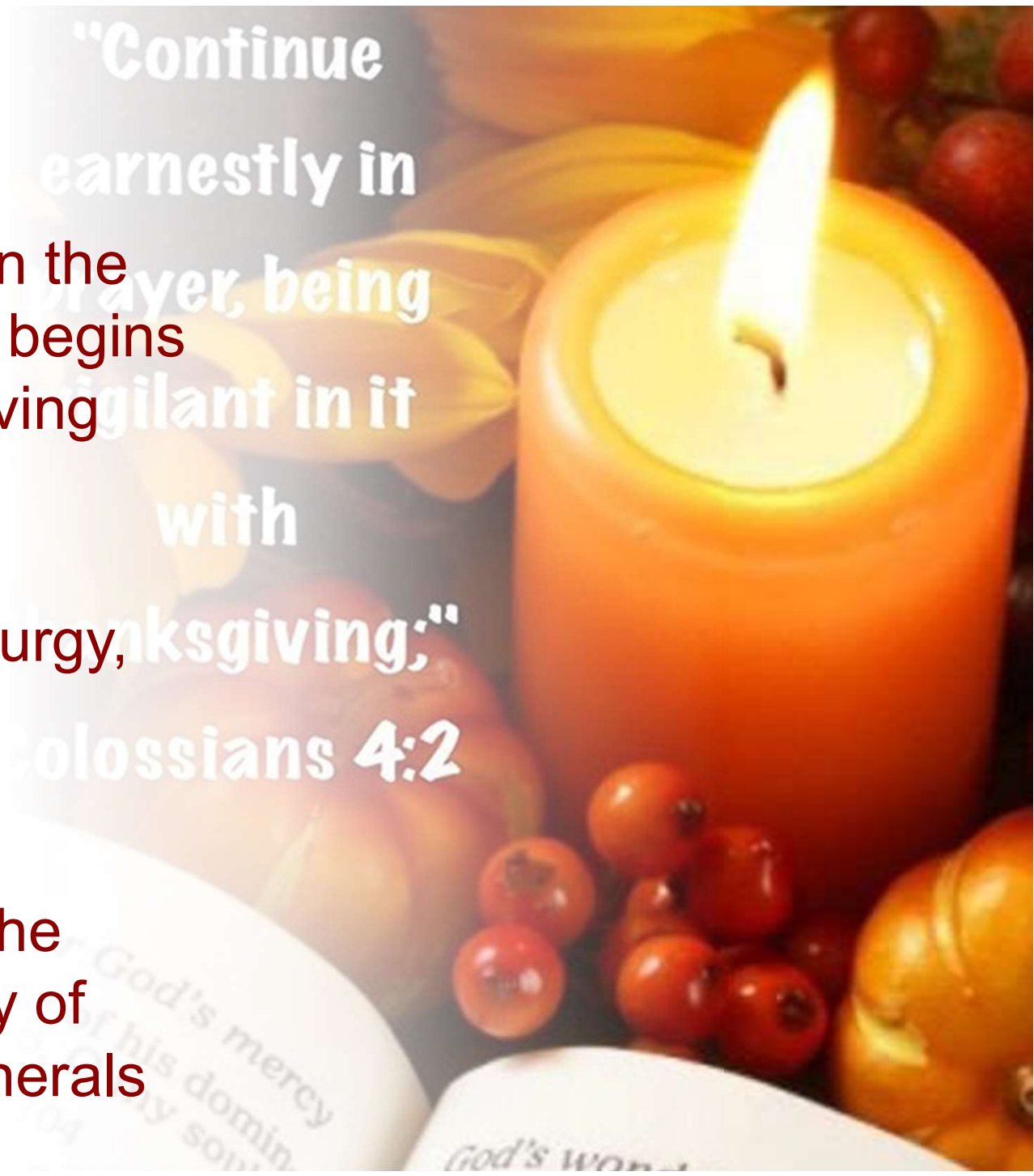
وأن يحفظ لنا وعلينا حياة وقيام أبينا المكرم البابا الأنبا (...). وشريكه في الخدمة الرسولية (...). أبينا المطران (الأسقف) أنبا.

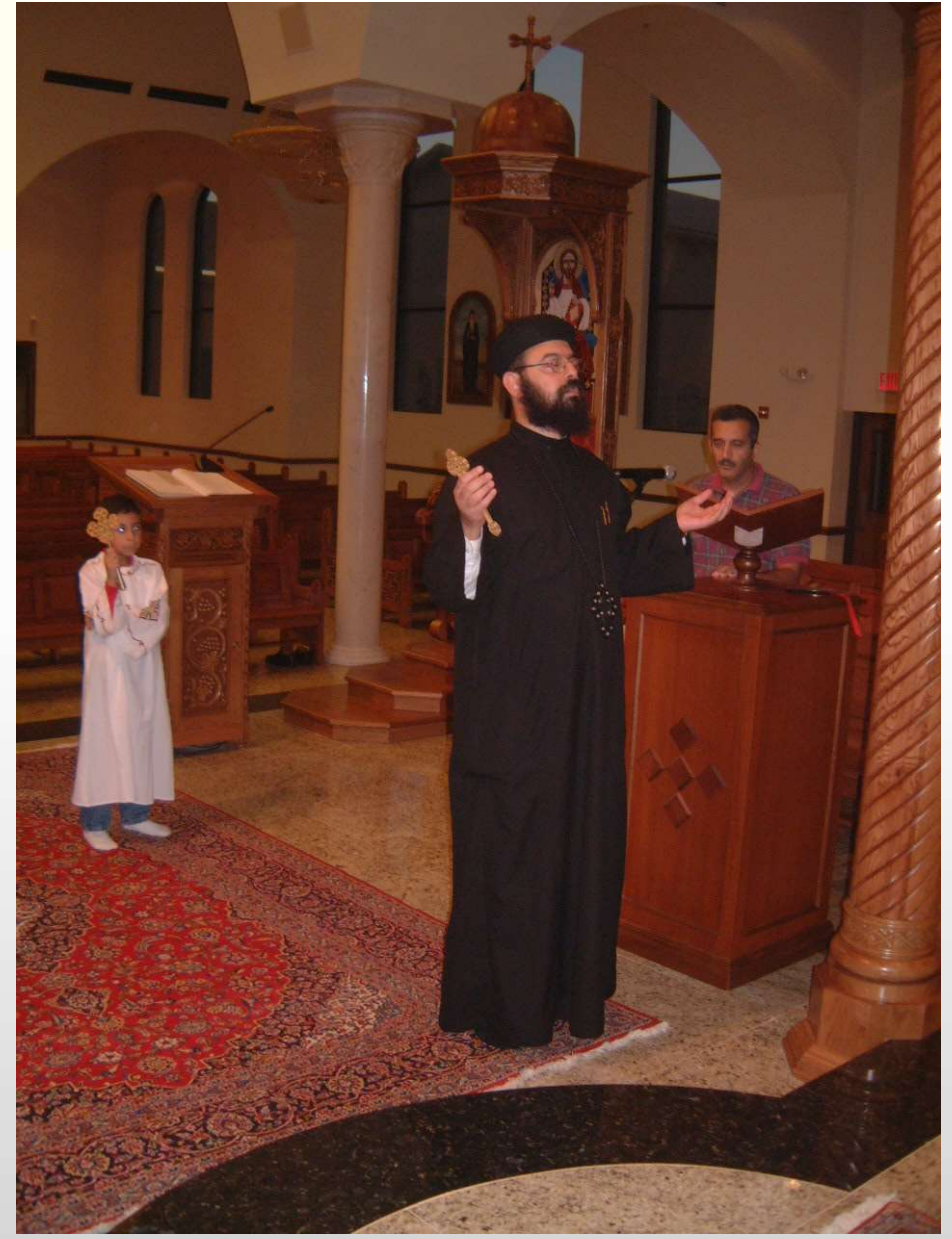
1. Thanksgiving  
— Prayer <sup>(1)</sup>

■ Every prayer in the Coptic church begins with Thanksgiving prayer:

- Raising of Incense, Liturgy, Baptism, Wedding, Ordination, Unction of the Sick, Liturgy of Waters, Funerals

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;"  
Colossians 4:2







❖ After the Thanksgiving Prayer, the priest steps inside the Altar and makes the sign of the cross on the incense box three times (in the name of the Trinity).



- ❖ The deacon needs to bring and hold the censor for the priest.
- ❖ The priest puts five (5) spoons of incense in the censer.

❖ These five spoonful are symbols of the five men in the Old Testament who offered acceptable sacrifices to God:

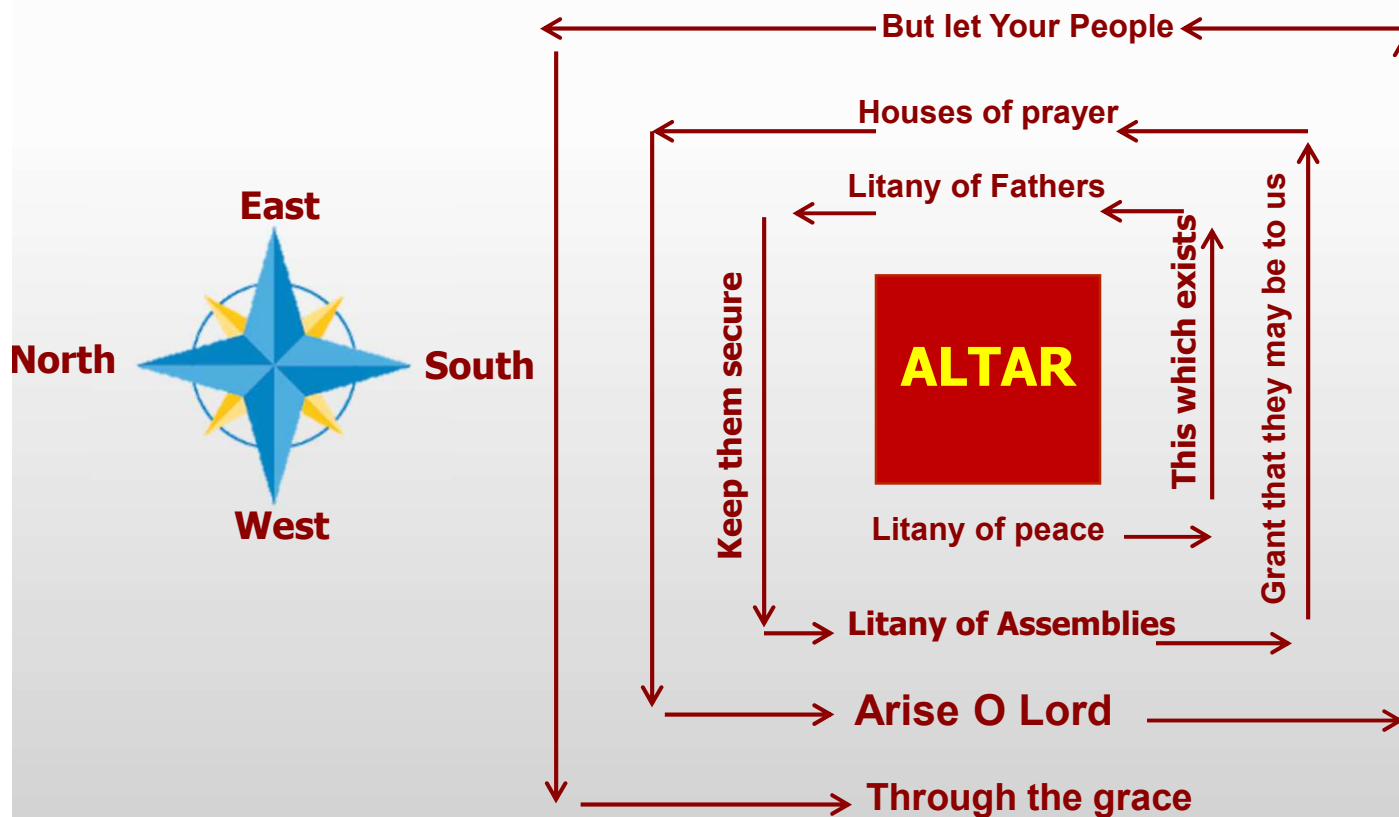
- ❖ **Abel**
- ❖ **Noah**
- ❖ **Abraham**
- ❖ **Aaron**
- ❖ **Zachariah**



After putting the spoonful of incense, the priest takes the censer and makes three complete processions around the altar and the deacon holding a cross proceeds before him.

During these processions, the priest prays for the peace of the Church, the Church fathers, and the assemblies.

The deacon responds to the litanies







# The Procession

- The procession three times around the (square) Altar
  - Represents the preaching of the Holy Trinity around the four corners of the Earth
- The procession is counter-clockwise
  - The Altar represents Heaven, time represents Earth. Going counter-clockwise means the heavenly things are not tied down to time or to the earth but is above, beyond, and opposite the earthly things.



# The Procession (3)

- After this, the priest comes out of the sanctuary and offers incense in the likeness of a cross
  - before the Altar (East)
  - the icon of St. Mary (North)
  - the saints attending the service (West)
  - St. John the Baptist (South)
  - Back towards the Altar
- During this, the congregation chants the Verses of the Cymbals
  - We offer greetings to all the heavenly hosts and to the church, the house of the angels.





**East**  
**The Pantocrator**



**North**



**South**



**West**

## THE VERSES OF THE CYMBALS

On **Adam days (Sunday through Tuesday)**, the people chant:

O come let us worship the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Δευῶνι μαρηνωψτ: Ἰϋτριάς  
εθοῦαβ: ἔτε Φιωτ νεμ Πωηρι:  
νεμ Πιπνευμα εθοῦαβ.

We are the Christian people, for He is our true God.

Δνον θά νιλᾶος: Ἰχριστιανός:  
Φαι τὰρ πε Πεννοῦτ: Ἰἀληθῖνος.

We put our hope in Saint Mary, that God will have mercy on us through her intercessions.

Οῦον οὔζελις Ἰταν: θεν  
θεθοῦαβ Ὑαριά: ἐρε Φνοῦτ ναι  
ναν: ζιτεν νεσιπρεσβιά.

On **Batos days (Wednesday through Saturday)**, the people chant:

We worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, one in essence.

Τενοῦωψτ ἰΦιωτ: νεμ Πωηρι:  
νεμ Πιπνευμα εθοῦαβ: Ἰτριάς  
εθοῦαβ Ἰνομοοῦσιος.

Hail to the Church, the house of the angels, Hail to the Virgin who gave birth to our Savior.

Χερε τεκκλήσιᾶ: ἴηι Ἰτε  
νιαστσελος: χερε τπαρθενος:  
ἐτασμεσ Πενσωτηρ.

**Δαδμ:** Adam – Beginning of the week, beginning of Creation

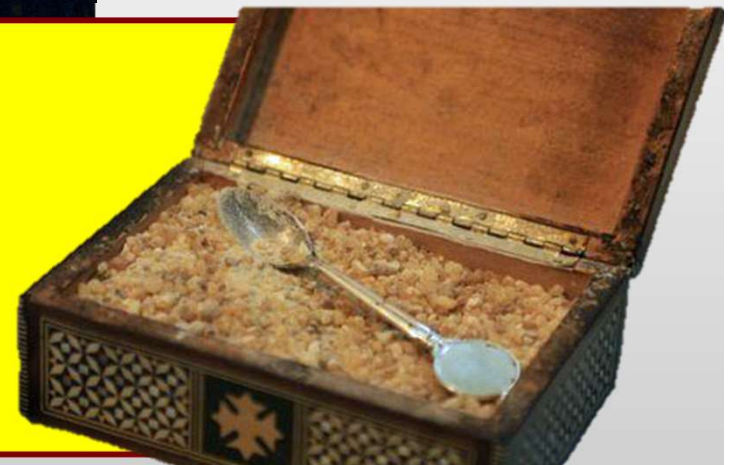
**Βατος:** (burning) Bush – The Incarnation

Salvation began with the First Adam and was completed with the Second Adam (Jesus Christ)

## 2. The Litany

- ❖ In the evening raising of incense (vespers), the priest prays the Litany for the **Departed**
  - ❖ The evening symbolizes the setting of the sun and the approaching end of our life on earth.
- ❖ The Litany for the Departed is also prayed in the matins of Saturdays as we remember the presence of the Lord in the tomb.

The deacon needs to hand the incense box to the priest at:  
"O God as the good One and lover of mankind ..."





❖ In the matins of Monday to Friday, the priest prays the litanies for the **Sick** and the **Travelers**.

❖ These two groups are remembered as they cannot come to the Church.



❖ The Litany for the travelers is prayed only in the mornings as this was the custom in the old days.

❖ It is not prayed on Saturdays, Sundays, or Feast days as it was expected that people are back home celebrating the liturgy and are not travelling on those days.



❖ In the matins of Sundays and the Lord's feasts, the priest prays the litanies for the Sick and the Oblations and not the Travelers



❖ Everyone should be at the Church on these days bringing their offerings and oblations.

❖ The priest prays the Litany for the Oblations at the altar

❖ The offerings are considered a sacrifice.

The deacon needs to say the litany response for the oblations from inside the Sanctuary.

# The Litanies

		Sundays, Feasts	Saturdays	Weekdays
Evening Incense				
	Departed	⊕	⊕	⊕



Morning Incense				
	Sick	⊕		⊕
	Oblations	⊕		
	Departed		⊕	
	Travelers			⊕



## The procession of the incense

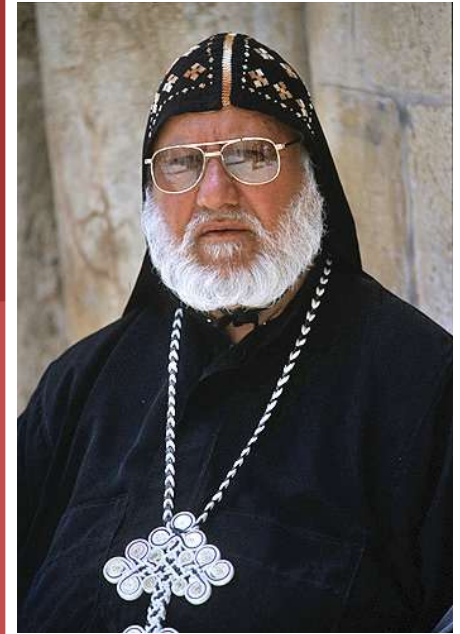
- ❖ After the litany(-ies), the priest enters the sanctuary and puts a spoonful of incense in the censer
- ❖ He starts the procession of the incense throughout the Church.



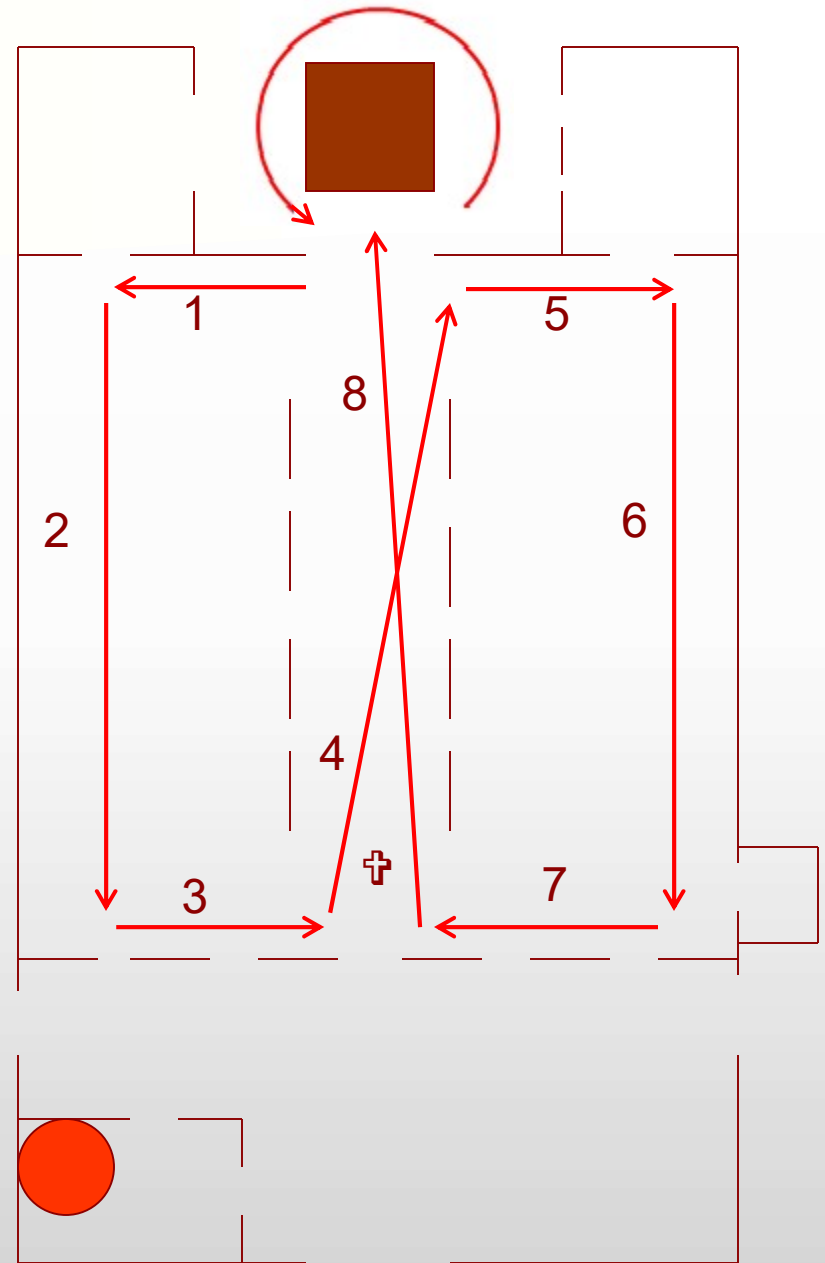
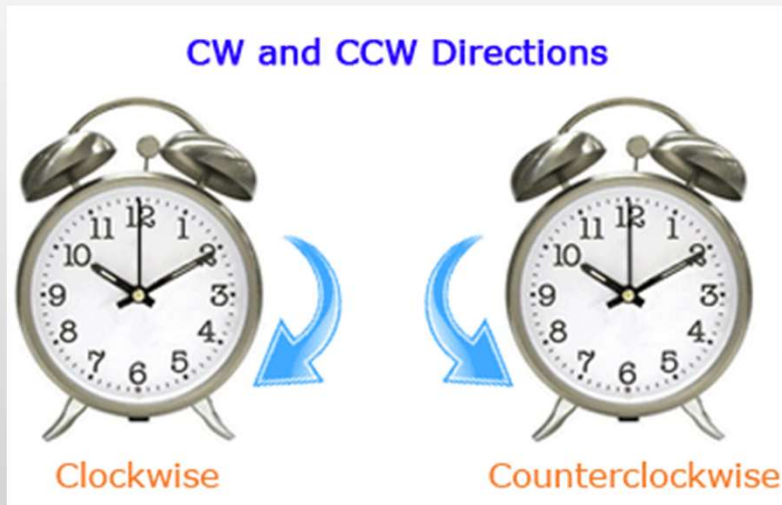
# The procession of the incense

The priest offers incense before:

- ❖ the main gate of the altar
- ❖ the Gospels on the pulpit (*Pima-en-evangelion* - Mangalia )
- ❖ the relics of the saints
- ❖ the bishop (if present),
- ❖ other priests (if present),
- ❖ the icons of the saints.



- ❖ The procession of the incense takes place in a counterclockwise direction
- ❖ In the Church we are above time, and the movement of the Church is opposite that of the world.





- This procession of incense symbolizes that of Aaron by which he blessed the people and stopped the plague among them (Numbers 16: 46-50).



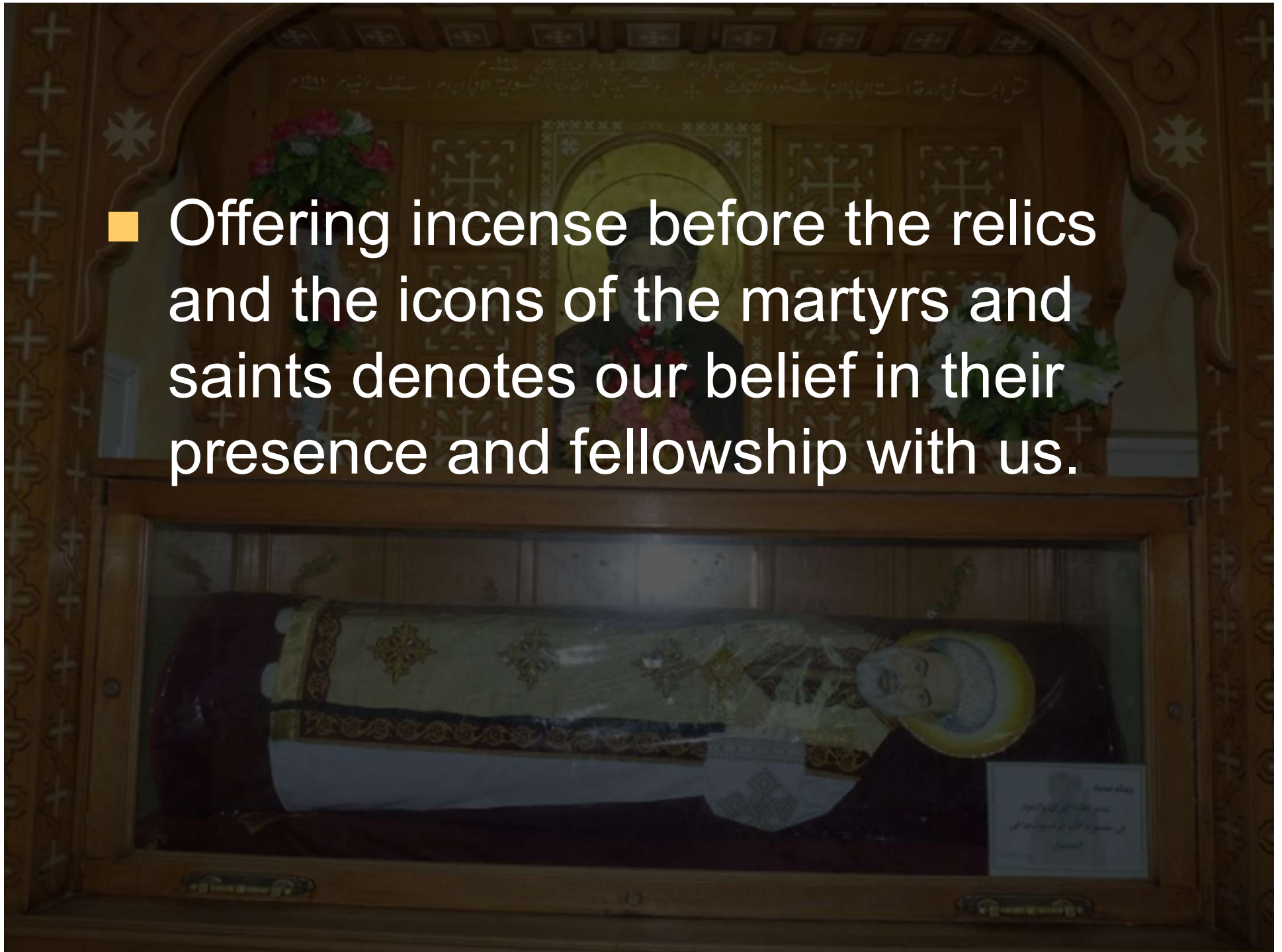
*“Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD.”*



- We notice that when the priest offers incense before the Gospel, he does this by putting the palm of his hand on the Gospel, followed by the back of his hand, and the palm once more before kissing it.
- This means that we give honor to the Gospel from:
  - within [heart] (the palm)
  - without [body] (the back of the hand)
  - and even more so from within [soul] (the palm again)



- Offering incense before the relics and the icons of the martyrs and saints denotes our belief in their presence and fellowship with us.



# The Doxologies

- During the procession, the congregation prays:
  - “Graciously accord O Lord...” (Vespers)
  - “Let us praise with the Angels...” (Matins)
  - Holy God...
  - Hail to you...
  - Doxologies for the occasion
  - Doxologies for the saints
  - Introduction to the Creed
  - The Creed.
- Doxology (*gr*):  
Glorification





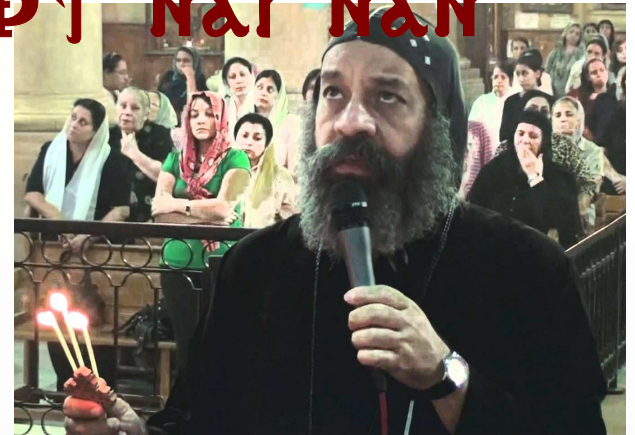
- ❖ During the procession of the incense everybody should stand.
- ❖ The incense represent the existence of God among His people.





### 3. The Prayer of Mercy: Ɔ† n̄ai n̄an

❖ At the end of the Creed, the deacon ignites three candles and handle them to the priest with the Altar Cross.



❖ The priest holds the cross in his right and raises his left in prayer, facing the East: “O God have mercy upon us, settle mercy upon us, have compassion upon us.”

Priest Turns to:	Says:
North	hear us
West	bless us
South	keep us
East	help us
take away Your anger from us, visit us with Your salvation, and forgive us our sins.	

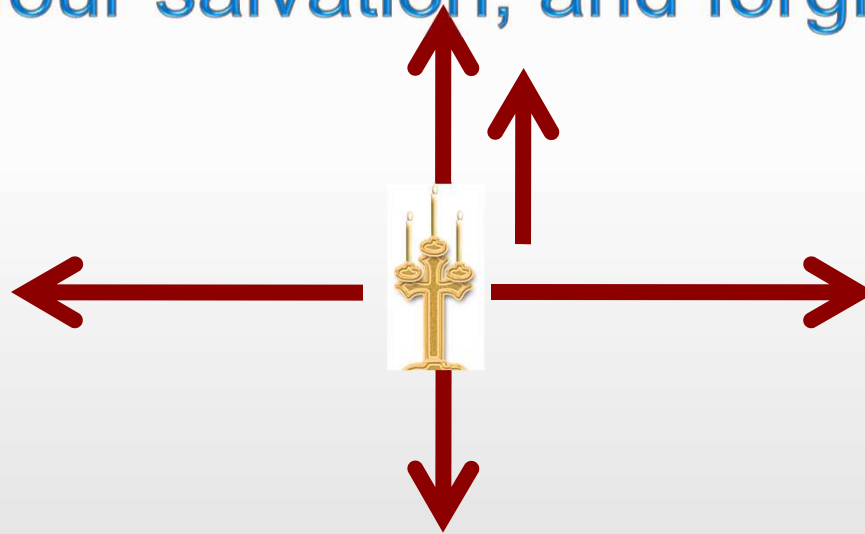


**East**

O God have mercy upon us, settle mercy upon us,  
have compassion upon us.

take away Your anger from us,  
visit us with Your salvation, and forgive us our sins.

**North**  
hear us



**South**  
keep us

**West**  
bless us

❖ The Cross reminds us that it is through the sacrifice of the Cross that God saved us.

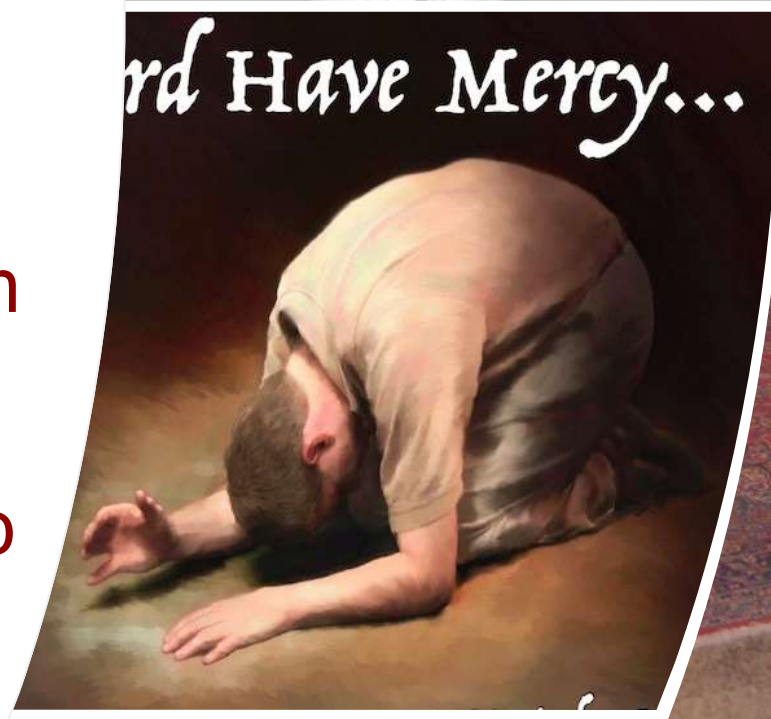
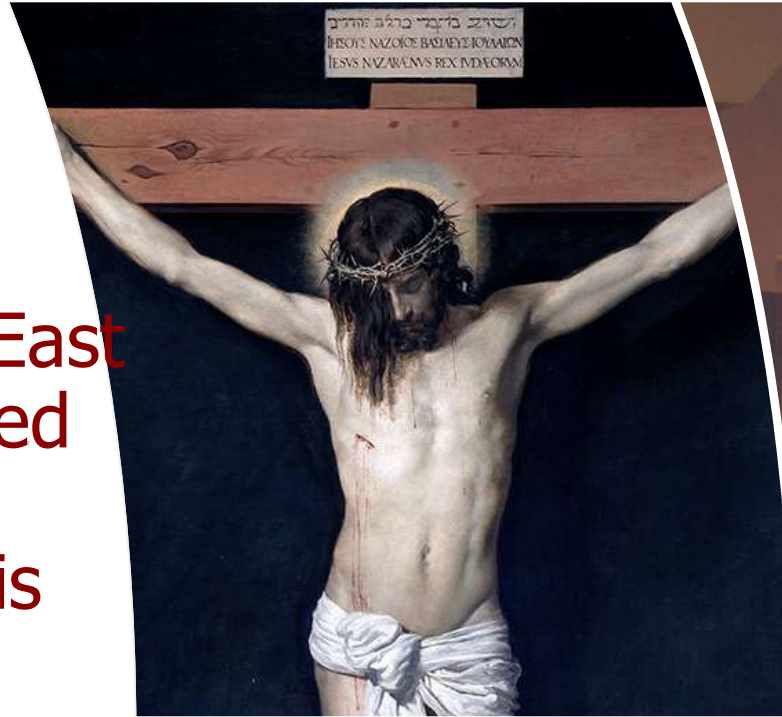
❖ The candles indicate that the One who was crucified was the light of the world, and gave us light through His Salvation.

❖ The three candles on the cross indicate that the Holy Trinity was involved in the Salvation.



- The prayer starts and concludes towards the East as it is directed towards God requesting His mercy and forgiveness.

- The Congregation responds with "Lord Have Mercy" (3x) asking God to grant us His mercies.





- ❖ The left side (**north**) denotes rejection, that is why the priest while facing north, says, “**hear us.**”

يصلي الكاهن تجاه بحري قائلاً (واسمعنا) لأن الشمال هو جهة الرفض لذلك نصلي لله حتى يسمعنا ولا نكون مرفوضين.

- ❖ Looking towards the congregation (**west**), he pleads for blessing for all the people: “**bless us**”

ويصلي تجاه الغرب قائلاً (باركنا) هذه يقولها الكاهن وهو ناظر للشعب ليبارك الله الشعب وهو ضمن الشعب يطلب البركة لنفسه.

- ❖ The right side (**south**) reminds us of God’s mighty hand, that is why the priest prays “**keep us**”.

ويصلي تجاه قبلي قائلاً (واحفظنا) هذه جهة اليمين فيطلب أن الله يحفظنا في يمينه.



## 4. The Litany of the Gospel

- ❖ After the prayer of  $\Phi\text{†}\ \text{N}\bar{\alpha}\text{I}\ \text{N}\bar{\alpha}\text{N}$ , the priest takes the censer and prays the Litany for the Gospel.



The deacon needs to bring the censor and the incense box to the priest and take the cross and candles.

Then he needs to take the cross and gospel and stand behind the priest. A second deacon can help.



“Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the **things which you see**, and have not seen them, and to hear the **things which you hear**, and have not heard them.

But as for you, blessed are your eyes, for they **see**, and your ears, for they **hear.**”

Προσευχασθε ὑπερ  
τοῦ ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου

Pray for the Holy Gospel.

صلوا من اجل الإنجيل المقدس

Pros-ev-eksasthe e-per  
to agio evan-geleio





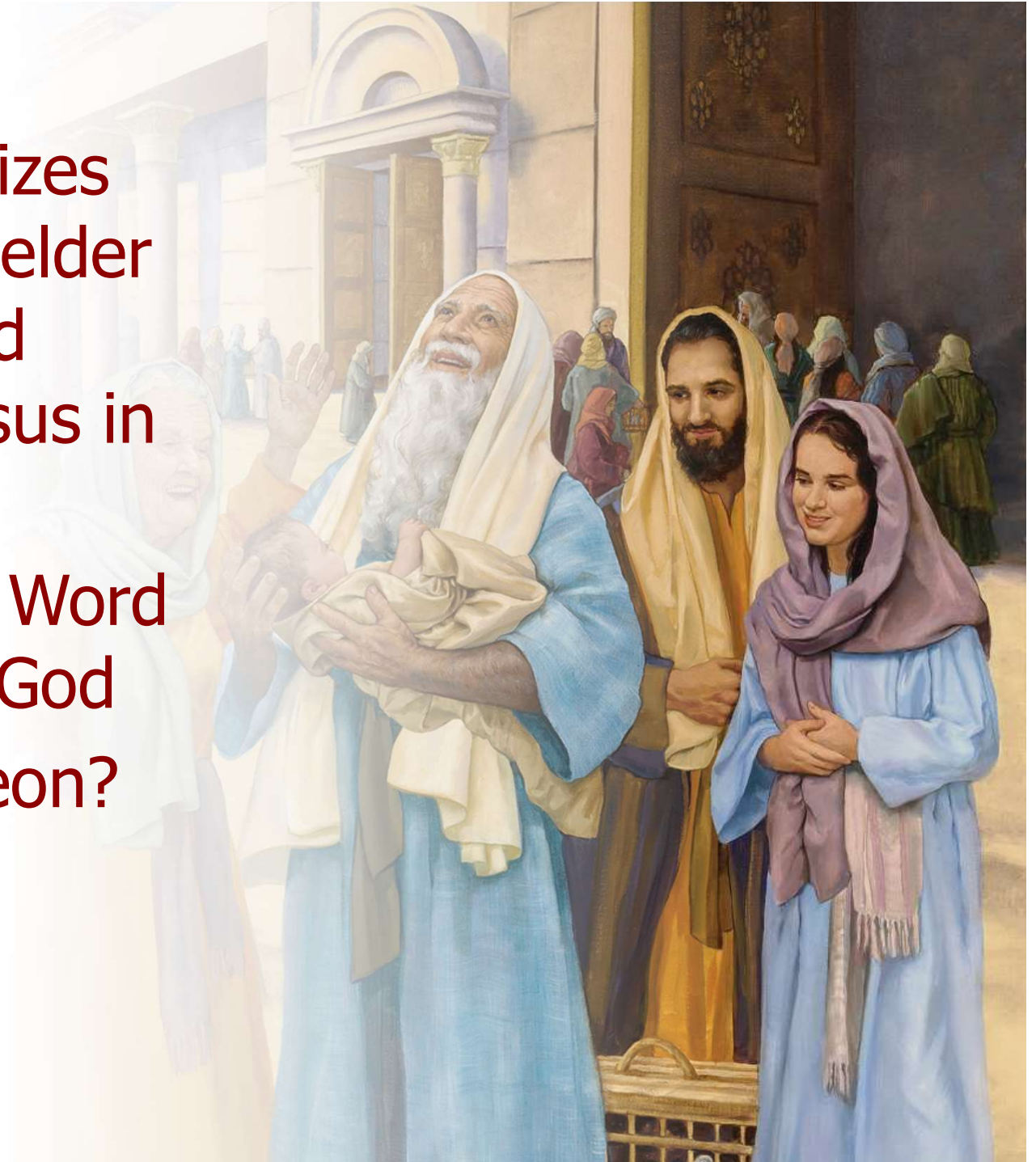
❖ At the end of the Litany, the deacon enters the sanctuary **first** followed by the priest.

❖ They both make a procession around the altar while holding the Gospel while praying the prayer of Simeon the Priest inaudibly: *"Lord, now You are letting your servant depart in peace, according to Your word..."*  
(Luke 2:29-31)





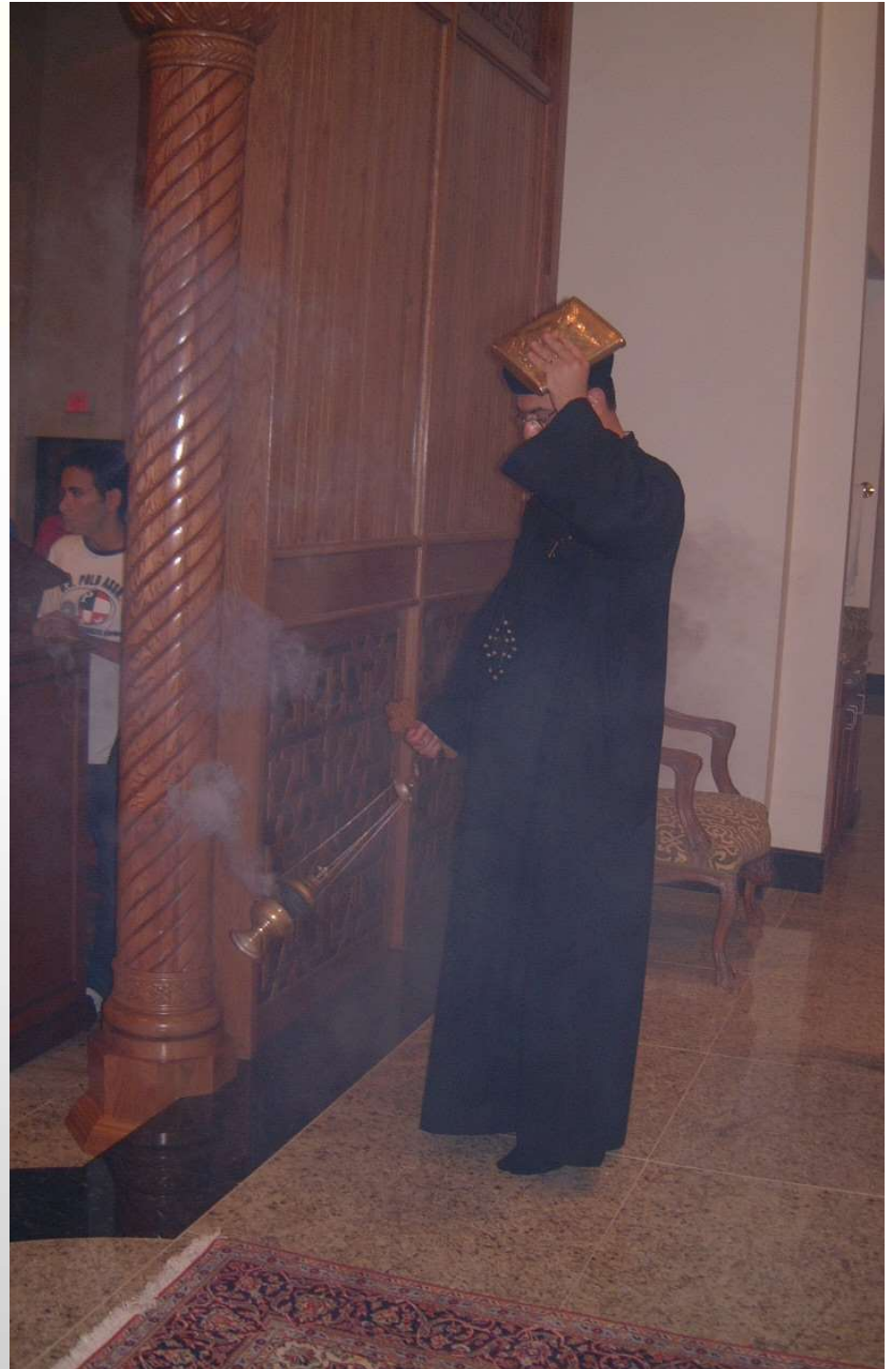
- ❖ This symbolizes Simeon the elder as he carried the child Jesus in the Temple.
- ❖ Jesus is the Word (Gospel) of God
- ❖ Who is Simeon?



- ❖ The procession around the altar symbolizes the spread of the word of God around the world.
- ❖ The Prayer of Simeon the elder recited by the priest during the procession symbolizes the end of the Old Testament, which Simeon represents, and marks the beginning of the New Testament with the birth of the our Savior Jesus Christ.



❖ At the end of the procession, the priest stands at the door of the sanctuary facing west and raising the Gospel above his head as a sign of veneration.





Then the deacon stands at the door of the sanctuary on the southern side raising the cross, and says:

ΣΤΑΘΗΤΕ ΜΕΤΑ ΦΟΒΟΥ

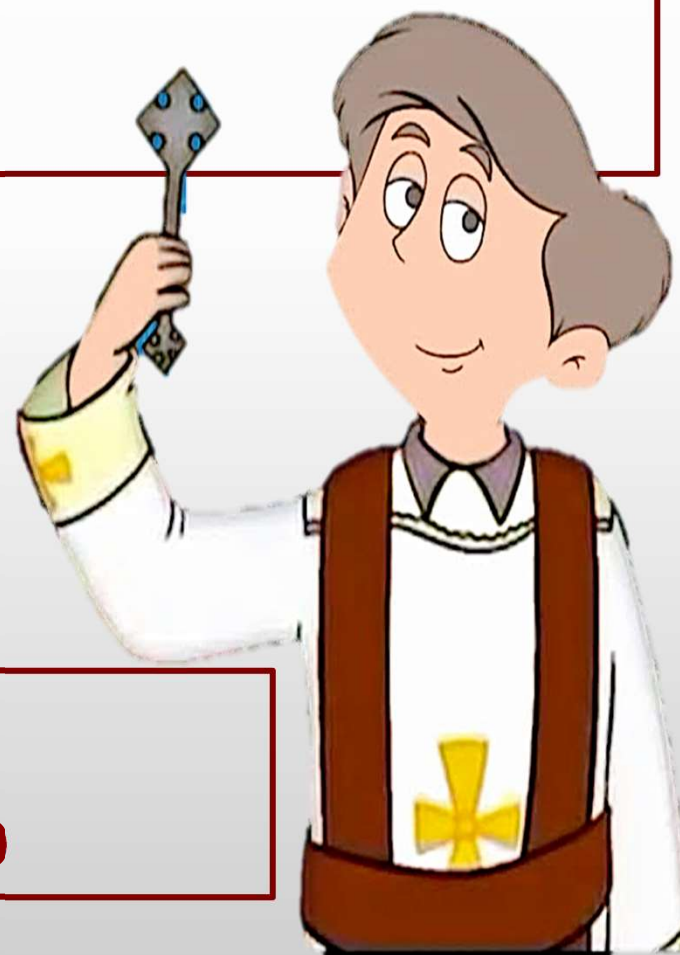
ΘΕΟΥ ἈΚΟΥΣΩΜΕΝ ΤΟΥ ἉΓΙΟΥ

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΥ

Stand with the fear of God.  
Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

قفوا بخوف الله لسماع الإنجيل المقدس.

Sta-thee-te meta fovo Theo,  
ako-somen to agio evan-geleio

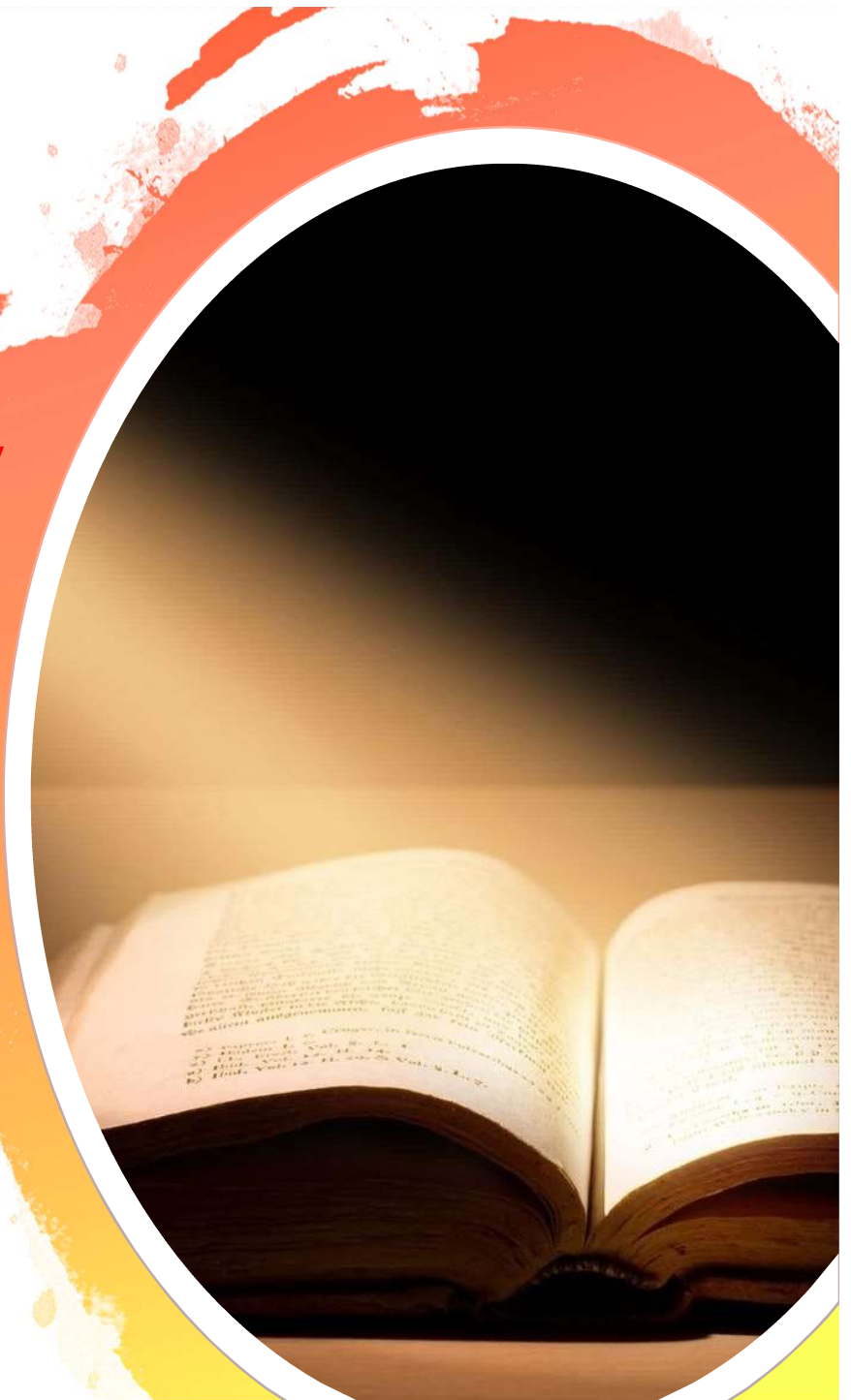




- ❖ The psalm and Gospel are read.
- ❖ If the bishop is present, he reads the Gospel.
- ❖ During the reading, two deacons hold two candles on either side of the Gospel.
- ❖ The priest raises incense while the Gospel is read.



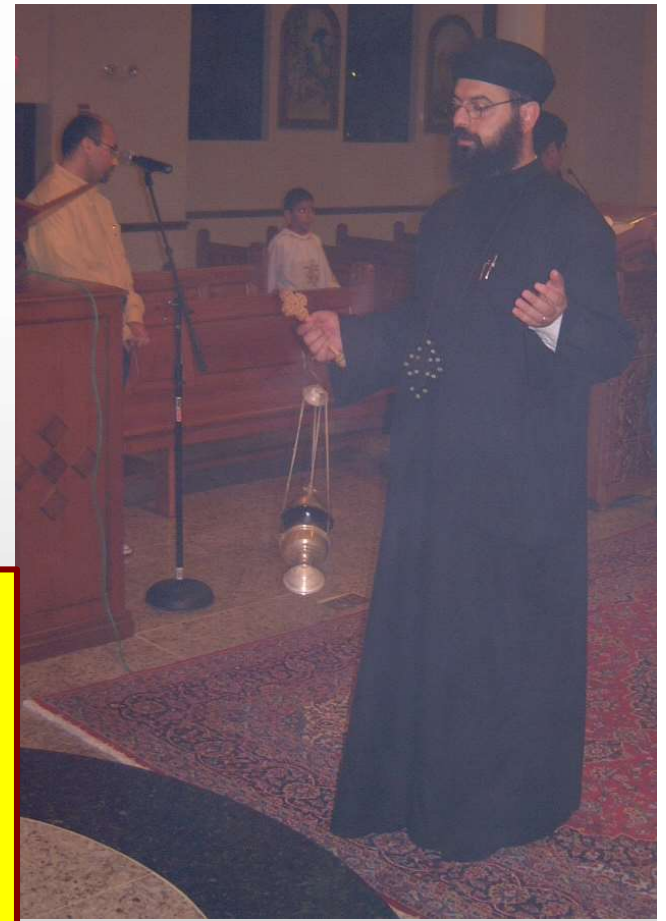
- ❖ Lighting the candles on either side of the Gospel reminds us of what the psalmist David said,
  - ❖ “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (Psalm 109:105)
- ❖ Raising incense before the Gospel symbolizes the life of the Lord Christ which spread everywhere as a sweet savor of incense:
  - ❖ “Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth” (Song of Solomon 1:3)



## 5. The Five Short Litanies

- ❖ After reading the Gospel, the priest stands before the door of the sanctuary holding the censer and he prays the five short litanies.

- ❖ The deacon stands behind the priest holding a cross in his right hand and saying all the responses.





# The Five Short Litanies

1. The peace of the church
2. The fathers (Patriarch, bishops)
3. The place (salvation of world)
4. The season
  - i. Waters of the river:  
Paoni 12 to Paapi 9  
(June 19 to October 19/20)
  - ii. Seeds and herbs:  
Paapi 10 to Tobi 10  
(October 20/21 to January 18/19)
  - iii. Air of Heaven, Fruits:  
Tobi 11 to Paoni 11  
(January 19/20 to June 18)
5. The assemblies (congregation)





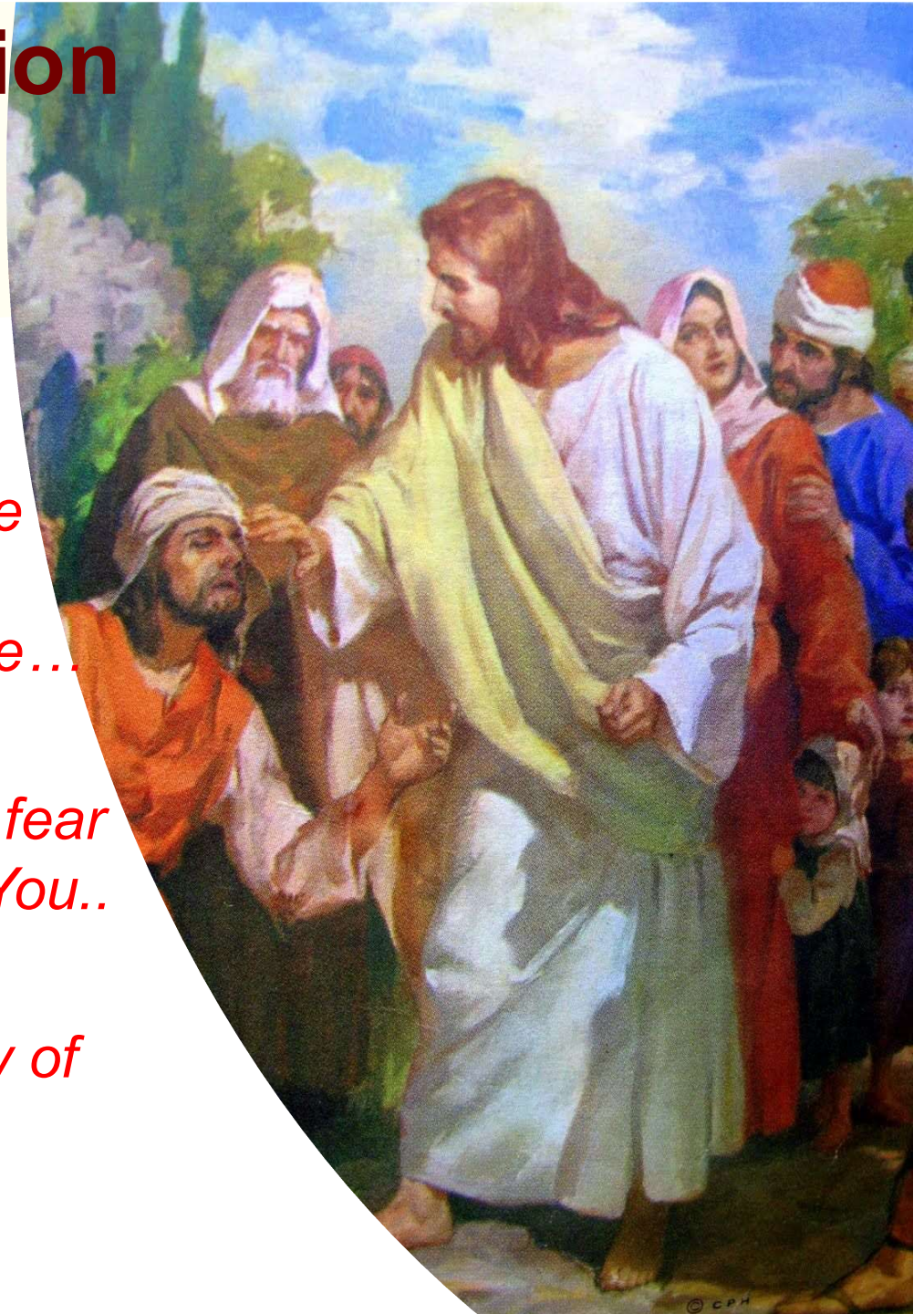


## **6. The Absolutions**

- At the end of the litanies, the priest gives the censer to the deacon.
- He ascends to the Altar to pray inaudible two absolutions while the congregation prays the Lord's Prayer.

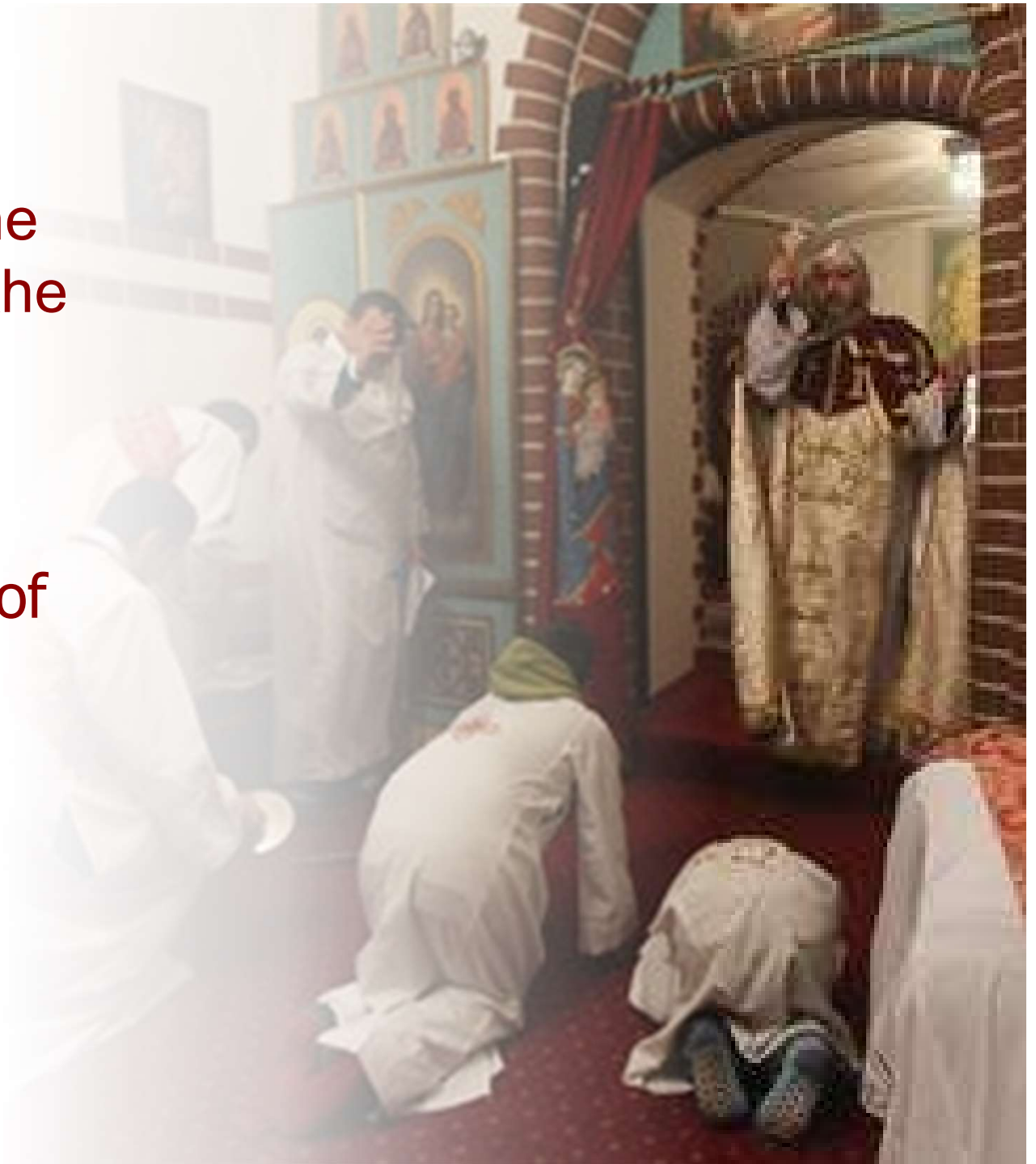
# Prayer of Submission to the Son

- ❖ The Priest prays inaudibly that God may:
- ❖ **Grant us peace:**
  - ❖ *We worship Your ineffable compassion, and we ask You to give us Your peace...*
- ❖ **Turn us:**
  - ❖ *Turn us, O God, unto the fear of You and the desire of You..*
- ❖ **Grants us Heaven:**
  - ❖ *And may we all be worthy of Your kingdom in the heavens...*





- At the end of the Lord's Prayer, the congregation bows down.
- The deacon kneels in front of the Sanctuary holding the Gospel and saying the responses:



Ἐν Πιχριστος Ἰησους Πενβοις

In Christ Jesus our Lord.

بالمسيح يسوع ربنا.

Ἰας κεφαλὰς ἡμῶν τῷ Κερῶ κλινάτε.

Bow your heads to the Lord.

إحنوا رؤوسكم للرب

Ἐνωπιον σου Κυριε Before You, O Lord أمامك يا رب

Προχωμεν Θεου μετα φοβου. Αμην.

Let us attend in the fear of God. Amen.

أنصتوا بخوف الله آمين

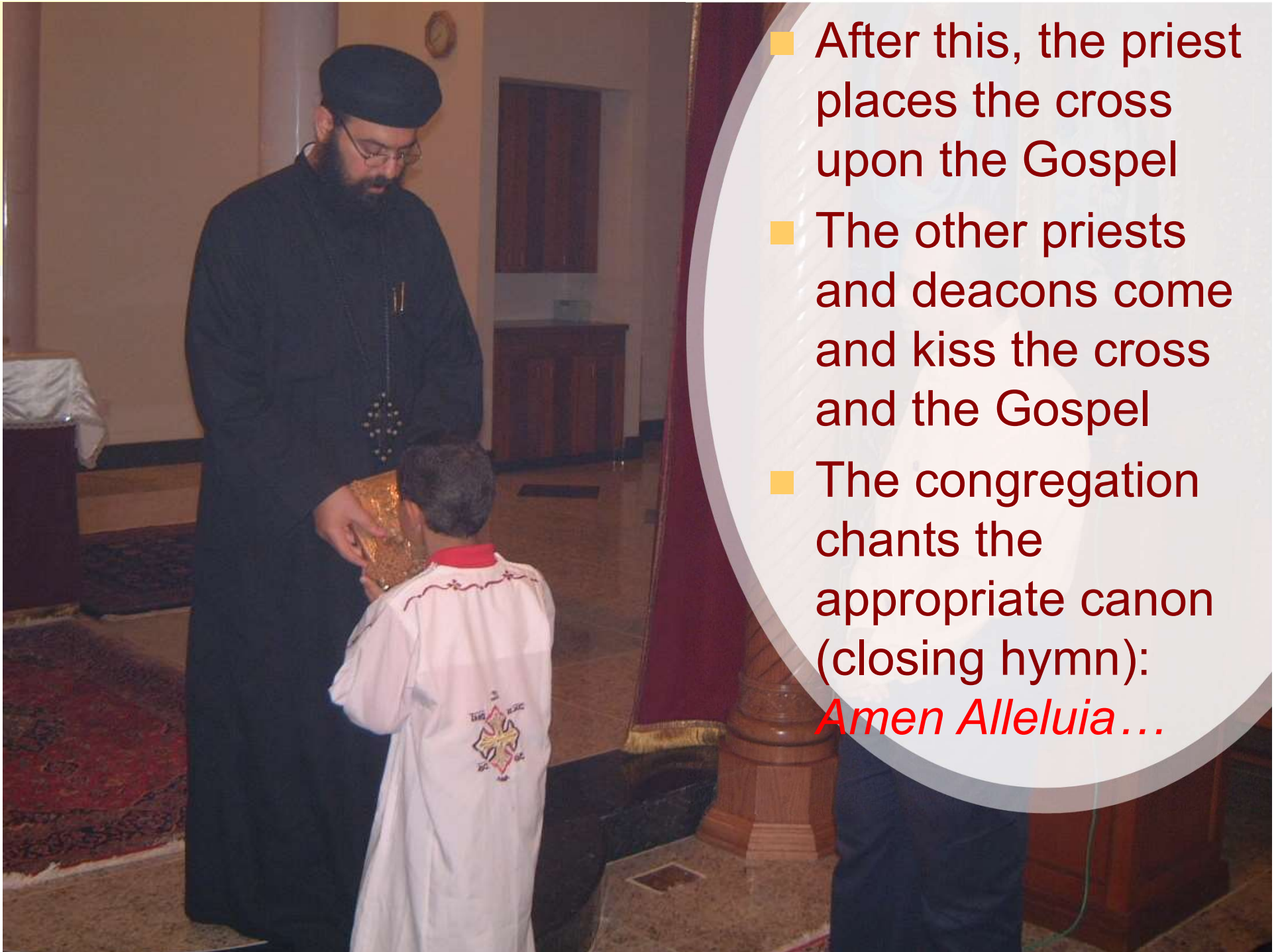




- At the end of the second absolution, the priest, facing the congregation, signs them with the cross: ***“Peace be with all”***
- He prays the third absolution:
- ***O Master, Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son and Logos of God the Father, who has **broken every bond of our sins... Dispense to us Your mercy and loose every bond of our sins*****



- ❖ This absolution is prayed for the congregation to be absolved from their sins and to be sanctified for the liturgy:
  - ❖ *“The Hories for the Holy...”*
- ❖ The absolution absolves us **if** we are coming to the church with **repentance** and we practice the mystery of **confession**.
- ❖ *This is the same absolution prayed at the end of the sacrament of confession*

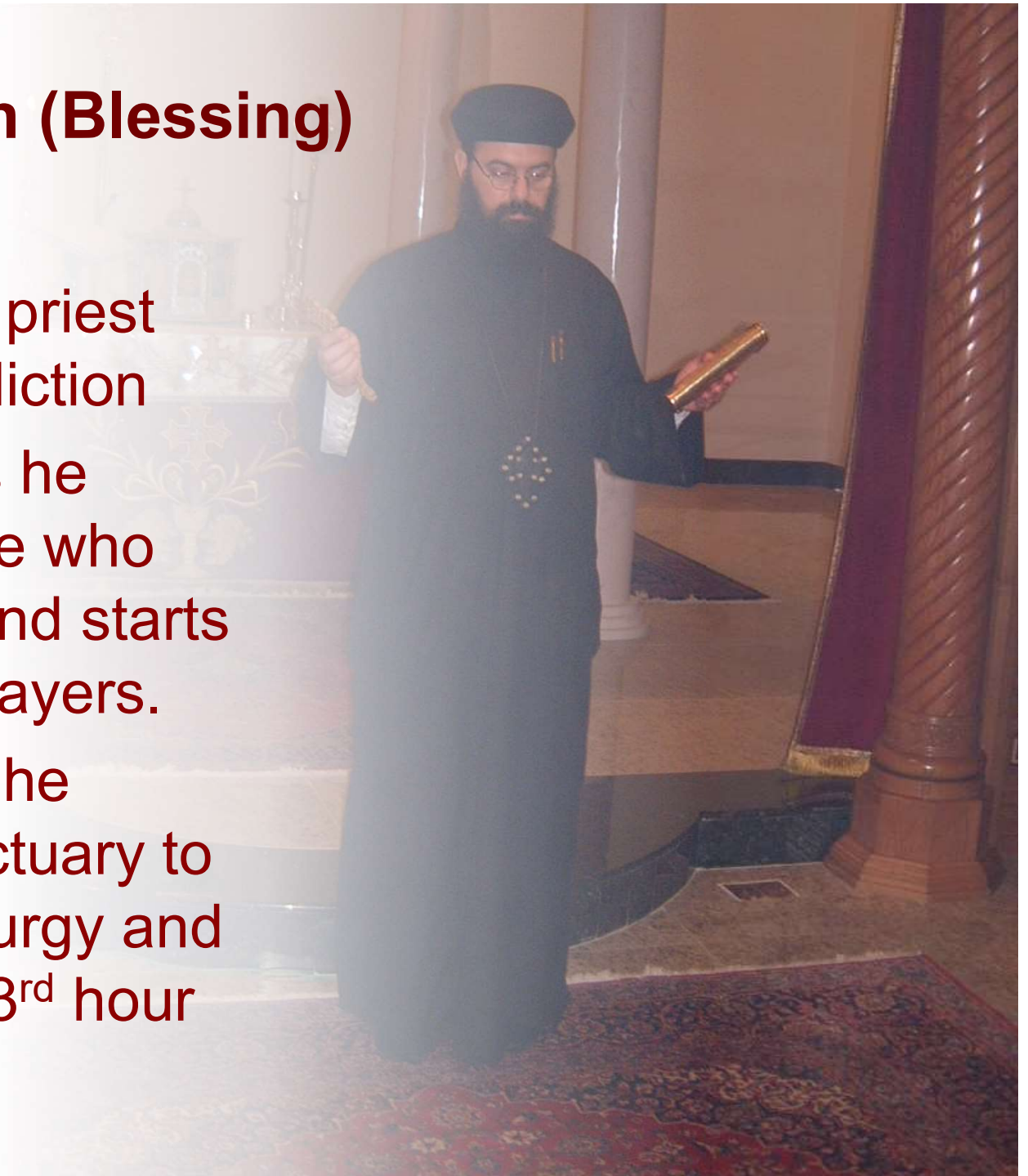


- After this, the priest places the cross upon the Gospel
- The other priests and deacons come and kiss the cross and the Gospel
- The congregation chants the appropriate canon (closing hymn):  
*Amen Alleluia...*



## The Benediction (Blessing)

- At the end, the priest says the benediction
- During vespers he dismisses those who wish to leave and starts the midnight prayers.
- During matins, he enters the sanctuary to continue the liturgy and starts with the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour Agpya prayers.





# “Prepare the Passover”

- Raising of Incense is preparation for the Liturgy
- Does the Bishop usually attend the raising of incense?
- Vespers: Yes
- Matins: No
  - “And He sent Peter and John, saying, **“Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.”** (Lk 22:8)
  - Bishop represents The Lord; the priests represent the disciples.

