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Served By

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Liturgical Schedule

Divine Liturgy
 Sunday: 8:30 am
 Holyday: 9:00 am

Confessions

One half hour before
 the divine liturgy or
 by appointment

I will e-mail a bulletin to anyone who wants to receive a copy. Send a bulletin to your of state children.

All the services of the Eastern Church are so ordered that a true Christian might lead a heavenly, holy life even on earth, in constant service and pleasing of God, in union with God, in company with His angels and all the saints. The Divine services are a blessed fount from which the heavenly Grace abundantly pours forth its gifts upon all those who serve the Lord in fullness of heart--gifts of mercy, peace, consolation, purification, sanctification, enlightenment, healing, renewal, and--what is most precious--the gift of worship, in Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion

The Divine Liturgy that we celebrate today did not come into existence overnight, but is the product of centuries of spiritual experience. When archeologists excavated the ruins of an ancient city, they proceed layer by layer. Sifting through the artifacts they are able to tell who lived in the city, for how long they lived there and when another group took possession of it. In the same way, by examining the Divine Liturgy in its present form, we can see the contributions of the many people who celebrated it in the past and handed it on to the next generation, leaving their marks for better or for worse.

In excavating an ancient city, archeologists find artifacts left by the most recent inhabitants first, and only after careful digging, do they find those of the earliest civilizations. In studying the Divine Liturgy we also find that the first things encountered are often the latest developments. The vesting of the priest before the celebration of

Twenty Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

The holy apostles Erastus, Olympas and Rhodion and their companions. Erastus was the treasurer of the city of Corinth and ministered to blessed Paul the Apostle.

Propers

Tone 8
 Pages 161-163

November

15 **Beginning of Phillip's Fast**
 21 **Entrance of the Theotokos**
 9 am
 Pages 268-271

the Liturgy was not a part of the ceremony of the earliest Christians but a ritual that developed later.

from Old Testament to New

After the priest has entered the Church and venerated the icons and the altar, he proceeds to put on the vestments for the celebration of the Liturgy. In the Old Testament, in chapter 28 of the Book of Exodus, the Lord gave Moses instructions on how to make vestments for Aaron and his sons who were to be priests, "for glory and beauty." However, the first Christian bishops and priests did not assume the vestments of the Hebrew priesthood, since, as the Letter to the Hebrews explains, the Old Testament priesthood and sacrifices had given way to the High Priesthood of Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross (Hebrews 9,10). Instead, for the first three centuries of the Church, the bishops, priests, and deacons did not wear any special vestments, but ordinary clothes, though of finer quality than those worn every day. This is all that can be gathered from the few references to liturgical dress dating from this time period.

The Canons of Hippolytus, dating from the beginning of the third century, contain this rubric for celebrations of the Eucharist: "As often as a bishop takes of the sacred mysteries, let the deacons and priests be gathered together, clothed in white robes, more beautiful than those of the rest of the people" (Canon 37)

Even at the end of the fourth century, the Apostolic Constitutions mention that the

bishop who will celebrate the Liturgy should be dressed in "splendid raiment." The Greek words used here simply refer to the expensive clothing worn by the upper class members of society.

The Origin of Vestments

How then did the current vestments for clergy originate?

Our vestments derive from two sources: the style of clothing worn in the ancient world and garments worn by officials in the Byzantine Empire. The sticharion or alb, the phelonion (the cape-like vestment worn by the priest) and the dalmatic worn by the deacon were all a part of the style of clothing worn by people in the Roman Empire during the first centuries of the Christian era.

In addition, it would seem that the call of Hyppolytus and other sources for white garments to be worn at Liturgy is a reference to the "chrisom" – the baptismal garment given to the newly-baptized. The modern sticharion undoubtedly stems from this garment which priests probably wore to celebrate the Liturgy as a sign of their baptismal union with Christ from which their ministry in the Church flowed. This baptismal garment was essentially the tunica of the ancient world – the basic garment for men and women.

In the sixth century the styles of clothing began to change, but the Church, being conservative, retained the earlier style of dress for her ministers. The priest's epitrachilion or stole, the deacon's orarion, and the bishop's omophorion are all derived from "scarves of office" that were worn by the Emperor and awarded to other officials in the Empire, arranged in different ways over the shoulder. These served as insignia of office in the political and social life of the late Roman Empire.

It was not until after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 that Eastern bishops began to wear the mitre or crown. Originally, this was only worn by the Emperor in Constantinople. The bishop's sakkos, the episcopal outer vestment, along with the cuffs – all part of the Emperor's dress – were adopted at this same time. Before this Eastern bishops wore priest vestments with the Omophor over them. After the Turkish armies took the city of Constantinople in 1453, the Patriarch became the civil head of the Greek-speaking population as well as remaining head of the Church. As such, the Patriarchs adopted the dress of the Emperor. The belt was a sign of military as opposed to civil office in the Empire. However, because the belt served to gather up the loose fitting sticharion, it may have been adopted more for practical reasons than any others.

The Meaning of Liturgical Dress

As liturgical vestments became a part of the spiritual experience of the Church, they were given a symbolic meaning, often based on events in the life of Christ. The sticharion, for example, was seen as the seamless robe which Christ wore to His crucifixion and for which the soldiers gambled. The cuffs were symbols of the Lord's hands which were bound as he stood before Pilate. The bishop's omophorion was seen as a symbol of the lost sheep being carried by the Good Shepherd and so forth. The Eastern Church, starting from the Book of Revelation, sees Her worship as the experience of the worship of heaven in earthly forms. The vestments of the priest remind him and all of the faithful that he is to be clothed with the divine grace that will enable Christ to lead the Church through him. The priest, fully vested before the Altar, is no longer an individual, but a sign to all of the "beauty and glory" that will belong to each of us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Church in the early Middle Ages saw Herself as the New Israel of God and interpreted Her worship as the fulfillment of the forms of the Old Testament. Many people began to interpret the priest's vestments as stemming from the clothing of the Levitical priesthood, though, as mentioned already, the early Christians did not model their vestments after those of the Jewish Temple.

Originally the vestments were put on in silence, but by the late Middle Ages, the service books began to prescribe various Psalm verses to be said as each item was put on. In the 14th century Patriarch Philotheos' Diataxis prescribed the order for putting on the vestments and the Psalm verse to be recited for each garment. This pattern, with minor variations, was adopted throughout the Eastern world.

