

# The Order for Confessing and Communing the Sick

*Based on the Euchologion published by the Patriarchate of Antioch (Damascus 1964)*

*The Euchologion assumes that the only person to be communed outside the church temple is one who is near death and unable to come or be brought to the church temple. This is in accordance with Canon XXXVI of St Athanasios the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria (293-373), which states: “No priest shall carry forth the mysteries and go with them about the streets, except for a sick man, when the end and death’s hour of need draw nigh. And when they carry the mysteries (without), they shall suffer none but the sick to partake. And they shall not do according to favour and give unto one beside the sick, but unto the sick alone. And if any constrain them that they should give him of the mysteries, he shall be unto him as he that hid his lord’s money in the earth, because that he honoured not the church. Let him go thither and not be sluggish, for there is no need.” While it may be acceptable to commune the sick and/or shut-in whether or not they are near death, it remains the practice of the Church that only they (not their relatives or caregivers who may be standing by) be communed outside the church temple.*

*The Priest carries upon his breast the portable artophorion in which are the Immaculate Mysteries. Upon arrival at the place where the sick man abides, the Priest blesses and dons his epitrachelion, covers a table with a clean cloth and places upon it the artophorion, the precious Cross and two candles in their stands. With all reverence he opens the artophorion, takes from it a small portion of the Immaculate Mysteries, places that portion into a small chalice, and then carefully pours into the chalice a small amount of sweet, red wine. Then, in the hearing of the sick man, the Priest prays as follows:*

Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee. O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit, and heal our infirmities for thy name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(twelve times)*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King. *(bow)*

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God. *(bow)*

O come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God. *(bow)*

*(Psalm 50)* Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

*All others leave the room so that the Priest may hear the confession of the sick man. Upon completion of the confession, the Priest places the edge of his epitrachelion over the head of the sick man and says the following prayer:*

O Lord our God, who didst remit the sins of Peter and the harlot through their tears, and didst justify the Publican who acknowledged his iniquities: Accept Thou the confession of Thy servant N., and overlook his *(her)* sins whether voluntary or involuntary, by word or by deed, or thought. Forgive him, O Thou art good and lovest mankind, for Thou alone hast power to remit sins, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*The Priest then says the following, making the sign of the Cross over the penitent:*

God it was who forgave David through Nathan the Prophet, when he confessed his sins, and Peter weeping bitterly for his denial, and the sinful woman in tears at His feet, and the Publican, and the Prodigal Son: May that same God forgive thee all things, through me a sinner, both in this present world and in that which is to come, and set thee uncondemned before His fearful Judgment Seat. And now, having no further care for the sins which thou hast declared, depart in peace.

*The Priest then removes his epitachelion from the sick man's head and offers him the precious Cross to kiss.*<sup>1</sup>

*Laying aside the Cross, the Priest takes up the chalice in his left hand, and the spoon and red communion cloth in his right hand, and says the following pre-communion prayers:*

I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, who didst come into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first. And I believe that this is truly Thine own immaculate Body, and that this is truly Thine own precious Blood. Wherefore, I pray Thee, have mercy upon me and pardon my transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, of knowledge and of ignorance; and make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thine immaculate Mysteries, unto forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting. Amen.

Of Thy Mystic Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant, for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies, neither will I give Thee a kiss as did Judas; but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy kingdom.

[Not unto judgment nor unto condemnation be my partaking of Thy Holy Mysteries, O Lord, but unto the healing of soul and body.]

*The Priest places the red communion cloth under the chin of the sick man and communes him, saying:*

The servant of God, *N.*, partakes of the precious and all-holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto the forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting.

*After wiping the lips of the sick man with the red communion cloth, the Priest himself carefully consumes what remains in the chalice of the Immaculate Mysteries, and thoroughly cleanses and dries the chalice and spoon. After laying them aside, he says:*

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> The Priest may now anoint the sick man on his forehead, chin, cheeks, and hands with Holy Oil saying, "O Holy Father, Physician of our souls and bodies, have mercy, forgive and save Thy servant *N.*."

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit, and heal our infirmities for thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*The Priest says the Apolytikion of the day, followed by:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Through the intercessions, O Lord, of all Thy saints and of the Theotokos, grant us Thy peace, and have mercy on us, for Thou alone art compassionate.

*After putting everything in its place, the Priest may say this brief prayer of thanksgiving:*

Glory to Thee, O God. (*thrice*)

I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast not rejected me, a sinner, but hast vouchsafed me to become a communicant of Thy holy things. May Thy holy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, be unto me for life eternal, and Thy precious Blood unto forgiveness of my sins. May this Eucharist be unto me for joy, health and gladness; and at Thy fearful second coming make me, the sinner, worthy to stand at the right hand of Thy glory, through the intercessions of Thine all-immaculate Mother and of all Thy saints. Amen.

*Then the Priest says the dismissal:*

Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to Thee.

May (*characteristic phrase, if any*), Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; of (*N., daily commemoration*); of (*N., patron saint of the church temple*); of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of (*N., the saint of the day*) whose memory we celebrate, and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us. Amen.