

The Triumph Of Orthodoxy

PROCESSION WITH THE ICONS
&
THE ANATHEMA SERVICE



SAINT LAWRENCE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Anathema Service Explained

What Is an Anathema?

By St. Theophan the Recluse, + 1891

Rarely does the Procession and Anathema Service, which is now being performed, take place without censures and reproaches on somebody's part. And no matter how many sermons are given explaining that the Church here acts wisely for the salvation of her children—still the malcontents just keep repeating their line. Either they do not listen to the sermons, or these sermons do not strike home as regards the latter's perplexities, or perhaps they have formed their own conception of this rite and do not want to abandon it, no matter what you tell them. To some people our anathemas seem inhumane, to others constricting. Such charges might be valid in other situations, but there is no way they can apply to our Rite of Orthodoxy.

Let us see—what false teachings and what false teachers are excommunicated? Those who deny the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, divine providence; those who do not confess the all-holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One God; those who do not acknowledge the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and our redemption by His death on the Cross; those who reject the grace of the Holy Spirit and the divine Mysteries which bestow it, and so forth. Do you see what manner of issues they touch upon? These are issues which are the very reason the holy Church is the Church, principles upon which she is founded and without which she could not be that which she is. Therefore those who rise up against such truths are to the Church what those who make attempts against our lives and our property are to us in our daily life. Robbers and thieves, after all, are nowhere permitted to carry on freely and go unpunished! And when they are bound and handed over to the law and to punishment, no one considers this to be inhumane or a violation of freedom. On the contrary, people see in this very

thing both an act of love for man and a safeguard for freedom. If you judge thus here, judge thus also concerning the society of the Church. These false teachers, just like thieves and robbers, plunder the property of the holy Church and of God, corrupting her children and destroying them. Does the holy Church really err in judging them, binding them, and casting them out? And would it really be love for man if she regarded the actions of such people with indifference and left them at liberty to destroy everyone else? Would a mother permit a snake to freely crawl up to and bite her little child, who does not understand the danger? If some immoral person were to gain access to your family and begin tempting your daughter, or your son—would you be able to regard their actions and their speeches with indifference? Fearing to gain a reputation for being inhumane and old-fashioned, would you tie your own hands? Would you not push such a person out the door and close it against them forever?! You should view the actions of the holy Church in the same way. She sees that individuals of corrupt mind appear, and corrupt others—and she rises up against them, drives them away, and calls out to all those who are her own: Beware—so-and-so and such-and-such people wish to destroy your souls. Do not listen to them; flee from them. Thus she fulfills the duty of motherly love, and therefore acts lovingly—or as you put it, humanely.

Do you not see with what wisdom and foresight the holy Church acts when she has us perform the present proclamation and listen to it? And yet they say, “This is outdated.” It is precisely now that it is relevant. Perhaps a hundred years ago it was not relevant. But one must say concerning our time, that if a Rite of Orthodoxy did not as yet exist, it would be needful to introduce one, and to perform it not only in the capital cities but in all places and in all churches: in order to collect all the evil teachings opposed to the Word of God, and to make them known to all, in order that all might know what they need to beware of and what kind of teachings to avoid. Many are corrupted in

mind solely due to ignorance, whereas a public condemnation of ruinous teachings would save them from perdition.

Thus, the Church excommunicates, expels from her midst or anathematizes for the same reason that any society does so. And she is obliged to do this in self-preservation and to preserve her children from destruction. Therefore there is nothing blameworthy or incomprehensible about this present Rite. If anyone fears the act of anathema, let him avoid the teachings which cause one to fall under it. If anyone fears it for others, let him restore him to sound teaching. If you are Orthodox and yet you are not well disposed toward this act, then you are found to be contradicting yourself. But if you have already abandoned sound doctrine, then what business is it of yours what is done in the Church by those who maintain it? By the very fact that you have conceived a different view of things than that which is maintained in the Church, you have already separated yourself from the Church. It is not inscription in the baptismal records which makes one a member of the Church, but the spirit and content of one's opinions.

Anathema and Its Meaning

by St. John Maximovich, +1966

In the acts of the Councils and the further course of the New Testament Church of Christ, the word "anathema" came to mean complete separation from the Church. "The Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes," "let him be anathema," "let it be anathema," means a complete tearing away from the Church. While in cases of "separation from the communion of the Church" and other penances laid on a person, the person remained a member of the Church, even though his participation in her grace-filled life was limited, those given over to anathema were thus completely torn away from her until their repentance. Realizing that she is unable to do anything for their salvation, in view of their

stubbornness and hardness of heart, the earthly Church lifts them up to the judgment of God. That judgment is merciful unto repentant sinners, but fearsome for the stubborn enemies of God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . . . for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 10:31; 12:29).

Anathema is not final damnation: until death repentance is possible. "Anathema" is fearsome not because the Church wishes anyone evil or God seeks their damnation. They desire that all be saved. But it is fearsome to stand before the presence of God in the state of hardened evil: nothing is hidden from Him.

The Anathema Service

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, the people led by the clergy process with icons around the church, singing the following:

We venerate Your most pure image, O good One,
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our
God.
Of Your good will You were pleased to ascend the Cross
in the flesh
and deliver Your creatures from bondage to the enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to You:
You have filled all things with joy, O our Savior,
for You came to save the world.

*Upon entering the church,
the clergy and people gather at the center icon:*

Great Litany

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace from above and for the salvation of
our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare
of the holy churches of God, and for the union of
all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For (*Commemorated Hierarch*), for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and all the people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the president of our country, for all those in civil authority, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, for every city and country, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For seasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord God will look upon His holy Church with a merciful eye, and preserve her unharmed and unconquered by heresies and superstitions, and protect her with His peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He will heal her dissensions, and turn all that have fallen away to the knowledge of the Truth by the power of the Holy Spirit, and join them to His chosen flock, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That with the light of Divine understanding He will enlighten minds blinded by unbelief, and that His faithful flock will be strengthened and kept steadfast in the true faith, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For travelers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Remembering our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For to You are due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and for ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O most high God, the Master and Fashioner of all that is, who fill all creation with Your majesty and uphold it with Your power: to You, our most generous Lord, we who are unworthy offer thanks, since You do not turn away from us because of our sins, but give even us the fullness of Your bounties. You sent Your only-begotten Son for our deliverance and showed Your immeasurable pity for the human race, since You strongly desire that we should turn to You and be saved. Knowing the weakness of our nature, You strengthen us with the effective grace of Your Holy Spirit; You comfort us with Your saving faith and the perfect hope of eternal goodness, and, guiding Your people to the Zion on high, You cherish us as the apple of Your eye. We confess Your incomparable love for mankind, and we give thanks for Your compassion.

But seeing our many stumblings, we earnestly ask You, all-gracious Lord: look upon Your Church and see that, although we have joyfully received the Gospel of salvation, yet the thorns of vanity and passion make it to bear little fruit in some places, and to be fruitless in others; and following the increase of iniquity, some by heresy, others by schism, oppose the truth of Your Gospel, abandon

Your heritage, reject Your grace, and subject themselves to the judgment of Your all-holy Word.

O Lord, most compassionate and all-mighty, do not be angry with us forever: Your Church prays that You would have mercy, have mercy on us, offering Jesus Christ, as the author and completion of our salvation, as our only advocate and mediator before You; establish us in the right faith by Your power; illumine the eyes of the wandering with Your divine Light, that they may understand Your truth; soften their bitterness and open their ears, that they may hear Your voice and turn to You, our Savior; correct, O Lord, the perverseness and lives of those not in accord with Christian piety; grant that we all may live holy and blameless lives, so that the saving Faith shall root in us and remain fruitful in our hearts.

Do not turn Your face from us, O Lord, but show us the joy of Your salvation; grant to the shepherds of Your Church both a holy zeal and solicitude for the salvation and conversion of the wandering with the spirit of the Gospel; that being guided by You, we shall arrive where perfect Faith, fulfillment of hope, and true love abound; and that, there with the choirs of the most pure heavenly hosts, we may glorify You, our Lord, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ages of ages!

People: Amen.

Choir: Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who works wonders! (3x)

Priest: Let us Orthodox people, now celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy, glorify our good God above all else, who is blessed forever.

This is our God, who took thought for and established His beloved inheritance, the holy Church, setting her foundation in Paradise, comforting with His true word our forefathers who fell through disobedience. This is our God, who, directing us to His promise of salvation, left Himself not without witness, but foretold the coming salvation, first through the forefathers and prophets, and by many images gave a lively description of it. This is our God, who by the prophets of old often spoke to the fathers, and in these latter days spoke to us by His Son, by whom time was created; who declared the goodwill of the Father towards us, disclosed the mysteries of heaven, confirmed the truth of the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit, sent His apostles through the whole world to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and confirmed it by various powers and miracles.

Following this saving revelation, and holding fast to the good tidings of the Gospel, we confess...

Nicene Creed

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us

men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets;

And in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Anathemas

All Clergy: This is the faith of the apostles! This is the faith of the fathers! This is the Orthodox faith! This faith has established the universe!

Priest: Furthermore, we accept and confirm the councils of the holy fathers, and their traditions and writings which are agreeable to divine revelation.

And though the enemies of Orthodoxy oppose this providence and the saving revelation of the Lord, yet the Lord has considered the reproaches of His servants, for He mocks those who blaspheme His Glory, and has challenged the enemies of Orthodoxy and put them to flight!

As we therefore bless and praise those who have obeyed the divine revelation and have fought for it, so we reject and anathematize those who oppose this truth, if while waiting for their return and repentance, they refuse to turn again to the Lord; and in this we follow the sacred tradition of the ancient Church, holding fast to her traditions.

To those who reject the existence of God, and assert that the world is self-existing, and that everything therein came into being by chance, and not by the providence of God: Anathema!
Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who say that God is not spirit, but flesh; or that He is not just, merciful, wise and all-knowing, and utter similar blasphemies:
Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who dare to say that the Son of God and also the Holy Spirit are not one in essence and of equal honor with the Father, and confess that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not one God: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who irrationally say that the coming of the Son of God into the world in the flesh, and His voluntary passion, death, and resurrection were not necessary for our salvation and the cleansing of sins: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who reject the grace of redemption preached by the Gospel as the only means of our justification before God: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who dare to say that the all-pure Virgin Mary was not virgin before giving birth, during birthgiving, and after her childbirth: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who do not believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and apostles, and by them taught us the true way to eternal salvation, and confirmed this by miracles, and now dwells in the hearts of all true and faithful Christians, and teaches them in all truth: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who reject the immortality of the soul, the end of time, the future judgment, and eternal reward for virtue and condemnation for sin: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who reject all the holy mysteries held by the Church of Christ: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who reject the Councils of the holy fathers and their traditions, which are in accord with divine revelation and kept piously by the Holy Orthodox Church: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To those who mock and profane the holy images and relics which the holy Church receives as revelations of God's work and of His chosen ones, to inspire their beholders with piety, and to arouse them to follow these examples, and who dare say that they are foolish things, vainly invented, and are grounded upon no warranty of Scripture: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To the Theosophists and other heretics, those who dare to say and irrationally teach that our Lord Jesus Christ did not descend to earth and become incarnate once only, but has been incarnate many times; and who likewise deny that the true Wisdom of the Father is His only-begotten Son, contrary to Divine Scripture and the teaching of the holy fathers: Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Priest: To the persecutors of the Church of Christ, impious apostates, who have lifted their hands against the anointed of God, who slay His sacred ministers, who profane the holy things, who destroy the temples of God, who subject our

brethren to inquisition: Anathema! Anathema!
Anathema!

People: Anathema! (3x)

Memory Eternal and Many Years

Deacon: And celebrating the annual commemoration of all who, by word, writing, teaching, suffering, and pious life have contended for Orthodoxy as its defenders and allies, the Church of Christ exclaims:

Priest: To the holy and right-believing Emperor Constantine, equal to the Apostles, and to his mother, Helen, and to the Orthodox rulers of the Roman Empire: Theodosios the Great, Theodosios the Younger, Justinian; and to the other Orthodox rulers of Constantinople, the New Rome, the holy fathers, great hierarchs and teachers of the Church, Athanasius and Cyril, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Methodius and Cyril, and all the other pastors of the Church: Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal!

People: Memory Eternal! (3x)

Priest: To the most holy patriarchs of Constantinople the New Rome, Alexandria and All Africa, Antioch and the East, Jerusalem and All Palestine, Moscow and All Russia, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, the Catholiki and Patriarch of Georgia, the Archbishops of New Justiniana and All Cyprus, Athens and All Greece, Tirana and All Albania, and All America and Canada, Sinai and Raithu, Karelia and All Finland, and the Metropolitans of

Warsaw and All Poland, Tokyo and All Japan, Kiev and All Ukraine, and Prague and All the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and to all Orthodox metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops: Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal!

People: Memory Eternal! (3x)

Priest: To all who have suffered and fallen in battle in defense of the Orthodox faith, and of their country; and to all Orthodox Christians deceased in the true faith and piety, and in hope of the Resurrection: Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal! Memory Eternal!

People: Memory Eternal! (3x)

Priest: In this way, the Orthodox Church of Christ triumphantly commemorates those who have in times past contended in piety, to teach all her Christian children to follow their examples, but also has the duty to extol those who now labor for Orthodoxy and by saving faith and virtue prepare themselves for eternal beatitude.

Deacon: To those who love Christian piety, the defenders and protectors of the Church of Christ: the Orthodox and Christ-loving kings, princes, and governors, grant, O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health, salvation, visitation, good success in all things, victory and triumph over enemies, and preserve them for many years! Many Years! Many Years! Many Years!

People: Many Years! (3x)

Deacon: To (*Commemorated Hierarch*): Many Years! Many Years! Many Years!

People: Many Years! (3x)

Deacon: To all the most reverend Orthodox metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops, and to all the clergy: Many Years! Many Years! Many Years!

People: Many Years! (3x)

Deacon: To all those in civil authority, grant, O Lord, Many Years! Many Years! Many Years!

People: Many Years! (3x)

Deacon: To all Orthodox Christians rightly holding the saving faith, and living in obedience to the Church of Christ, grant, O Lord, peace, quiet, prosperity, and abundance of the fruit of the earth, and keep them for Many Years!

Choir: (*sings*) God grant you many years! God grant you many years! God grant you many years!

Priest: Glorify all these, O Holy Trinity, and confirm them in the right faith even to the end; and convert the enemies and those ignorant of the Orthodox faith and Christ's Church, that they may come to know Your eternal Truth, through the intercessions of our most holy Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and of all the saints.

People: Amen.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers...

People: Amen.

The clergy and faithful venerate the holy icon, while the choir sings the Te Deum Laudamus, the composition of St. Ambrose of Milan.

We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord.
All the earth worships You, the Father everlasting.
To You all angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the powers
therein.
To You cherubim and seraphim continually cry out: Holy, Holy,
Holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory!
The glorious company of apostles praises You.
The goodly fellowship of the prophets praises You.
The noble army of martyrs praises You.
The holy Church throughout the world confesses You.
The Father, of an infinite Majesty;
Your honorable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
You are the King of Glory, O Christ.
You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
When You took upon Yourself to deliver man, You did not abhor
the Virgin's womb.
When You had overcome the sharpness of death, You opened the
Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
You sit at the right hand of God, in the Glory of the Father.
We believe that You shall come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray You, help Your servants, whom You have
redeemed with Your precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Your saints, in glory everlasting.
O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance.
Shepherd them and bear them up forever.
Day by day we magnify You,
And we worship Your Name, now and ever, and unto ages of
ages.
Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as we have set our hope on
You.
O Lord, in You have we trusted; do not put us to shame. Amen.

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