

Outline for Consecration Discussion

1. What are we going to talk about today?

- Overview of service
- Significance & Themes

2. What happens in the consecration services?

- Vespers
- Orthros
- **Procession**
- **Relics**
- **Baptism and Chrismation of the Altar**
- Divine Liturgy

The Procession with the Relics and Consecration of the Altar occurs after Orthros and replaces the first part of the Divine Liturgy.

3. What's the significance of the procession?

What do we process with?

Relics, which we'll discuss below.

What do we sing?

Odes

- Incarnation: God with us
- Connection between the individual and the community.

Readings during the procession

1st Epistle Reading: Hebrews 2.11–18: Incarnation, freeing humanity from the devil

1st Gospel Reading: Matthew 16.13: Revelation of the Christ. The Church built on the Rock.

2nd Epistle Reading: Hebrews 9.1–7: Description of the Tabernacle. Christ greater than the old covenant.

2nd Gospel Reading: Luke 10.38–42, 11.27–28: Martha and Mary, always used in Marian feasts which aren't in Scripture. (Nativity, Presentation, Falling-Asleep). Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. (And who kept it more than the Theotokos, as outlined in the Annunciation in Luke 1)

How do we enter the church?

1st Prayer

- Connection of Temple with the Church: the faithful
- God rests in the saints, in the holies. (Psalm 21.4 LXX reading)

2nd Prayer

- Angels
- Psalm 23/24 & Pascha
- The Apolytikion a Church Consecration is the same apolitikion we sing each we week for Holy Resurrection.

4. Why do we place relics in the altar?

1st & 2nd Prayers

- Relics, catacombs, entombment in the altar.
- Literally, God rests in the saints.
- “Lord...make us worthy...to perform the consecration of this temple for our salvation...established upon the name of the saints of the church of the Resurrection”
- Psalm 22. “Thou hast prepared a table for me.” Which table is this? The Holy Table!
- And the living and departed are placed in a niche in the altar, where the reliquary is also placed.

5. Why do we wash and chrismate the altar?

Prayer at the bending of the knees

- Pentecost
 - OT: Giving of the Law
 - NT: Giving of the Holy Spirit
- Bezaleel, the craftsman of the tabernacle, whose name means “In God’s Shadow”.
 - The LORD said to Moses, “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and

intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.” — Exodus 31.1–5 (ESV)

- Connection between the inspiration of the Tabernacle and the Annunciation
 - And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.” — Luke 1.34–36 (ESV)
- In Exodus what Moses saw on the mountain was imaged in the Tabernacle. (Exodus 26.30)
- Prayer of dedication of the Temple
- 1 Kings 8
 - And it happened, when the priests came out of the holy place, that a cloud filled the house, and the priests could not stand to minister from before the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house.

The Washing

- Prayer connects to Jordan and Jesus’ baptism
- Psalm 83 and the dwelling place of the Lord.
- “I have chosen to be an outcast *within* the house of God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.”
 - God resting/dwelling in his holy ones.
 - Threshold language in Hebrew

The Chrismation and Vesting

Just as in the baptism of a person, after the Holy Table is washed, it is chrismated.

Psalm 132: The anointing of the table is the dwelling of brothers in unity.

Then as the newly baptized is given the robe of gladness, the Holy Table is vested in its coverings.

Psalm 25 (a judgment psalm) is read while the bishop censes the entire church.

Final Prayer: Our unworthiness contrasted with God’s goodness.