

ANAMNESIS

A word of Greek origin meaning remembrance, memorial, or commemoration, and as such part of the [liturgy](#) for the Eucharist. Greek [versions](#) of the scriptures use the word to translate various forms of the Hebrew root *zkr*, which in Arabic is pronounced *dhikr*.

The text of the anamnesis reminds the faithful of the Lord's salvific work through His sufferings, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. The Eucharist is not only the mystery of the crucifixion but is also the fulfillment of the Lord's instruction to His apostles, "Do this in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24). It is also related to the Passover that was ordered to be celebrated by the Israelites every year as a commemoration of God's salvation, insofar as the [Lord](#) made Himself the true Passover of the new [covenant](#) replacing the symbol or figure of the old covenant (I Cor. 5:7-8).

In the three eucharistic Divine Liturgies used by the Coptic Orthodox Church (Saint Mark's, or the so-called Cyrillian; Saint Basil's; and Saint Gregory's), the anamnesis comes before the words of consecration, and in most of them is also summed up after the consecration and immediately before the EPICLESIS. Hence, [in a Coptic](#) context, the anamnesis does not only have the sense of the remembering, but also the representing of all the main events and of making them present in the minds of the faithful. This is why the anamnesis is preceded by the remembrance of the Lord's incarnation, birth, and teachings.

The whole process of remembrance, whether in the preanamnesis or anamnesis, requires the preparation of the minds of the faithful in order that they may share effectively in worship. The officiating priest and the deacons are dressed in their white and gold vestments, the priest as figure of the Lord, and the deacons as figures of the angels. They together have to prepare the altar for the holy sacrifice. In this aspect three elements should be distinguished: the altar, the deacons, and the

preparation, which are all figures of heavenly realities. Therefore, the officiating priest expresses these meanings inaudibly in the prayers of preparation.

Even the entombment of the [Lord](#) is presented on the altar when, after the prayer of thanksgiving, the priest covers the paten with a mat and likewise the chalice with another mat, and he covers both with the veil then places another mat on the veil, which represents the large stone that closed the Lord's tomb. The triangularly folded mat on the veil is a figure of the seal on the stone.

When after the prayer of reconciliation the priest and deacon raise the veil, an action symbolic of the removal of the stone from the Lord's sepulcher, the deacon draws the attention of all worshipers to the presence of the [Lord](#) on the altar, asking them to enter effectively into the everlasting sacrifice of the risen Lord.

After the people's chanting of the cherubim's hymn of "Holy," the priest continues the anamnesis, expressing in humility to God the [Lord](#) how man, who was created by Him and placed in the paradise of grace, disobeyed His commandments and consequently was exiled from this paradise.

Thou hast never abandoned us unto the end but didst ever visit us by Thy Saintly Prophets. In the fullness of time Thou didst appear to us, we who are living in darkness and the shadows of death; through Thine Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord, God and Savior [Jesus](#) Christ; Who is of the Holy Spirit and of Saint Mary the Virgin; He took flesh and became man and taught us the way to salvation; He blessed us with the grace of the high birth through water and spirit, and made of us a [congregation](#) that is sanctified by His Holy Spirit; He is the One Who offered Himself for our redemption from death that has swayed upon us; that to which we are all bound in abeyance because of our sins; He descended into Hades as accorded to the Cross.

He rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the heavens and sat at the right hand of the Father; and appointed a day for retribution, whence He shall appear to judge the world in equity and give each according to his deeds.

It is noteworthy that the center of this anamnesis is the priestly action of Christ in His incarnation, His passion, His resurrection, His ascension, and His second coming for the resurrection of the dead. His sacramental presence in this anamnesis abstracted from time and place, granting us communion with Himself, constitutes the heart of this heavenly liturgy. Saint JOHN CHRYSOSTOM explains this action in his commentary, "We offer even now what was done then, for we perform the anamnesis of His death."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Agpeya*, The. New York, 1981.
- Atiya, A. S. *History of Eastern Christianity*. London, 1967. Dalmais, I. H. *Introduction to the Liturgies*. London, 1961. Danielou, S. J. J. *The Bible and the Liturgy*. Ann Arbor, Mich., 1956.
- Ishak, F. M., trans. *The Coptic Orthodox Mass and the Liturgy of Saint Basil*. Toronto, 1977.
- *Khulaji al-Muqaddas, al-*. Cairo, 1959.
- Kropp, M., O. P. "Die Koptische Anaphora des Heiligen Evangelisten Mattäus." *Oriens Christianus*, ser. 3, 7 (1932):111-25.
- Lee, R. D. "Epiclesis and Ecumenical Dialogue." *Diakonia* 9 (1974). Yuhanna Salamah. *Al-La'ali' al-Nafisah fi Sharhuqus wa Mu'taqadat al-Kanisah*, 2 vols. Cairo, 1909.

GABRIEL ABDELSAYED

Tags: [Liturgy](#)