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Original

Ecumenical Patriarchate Orthodox Metropolis of Korea

THE SERVICE OF "ARTOKLASIA"

or

"THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD"

In the very rich liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, there are many daily divine services, during which we worship and glorify the Triune God with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19). The Service of Artoklasia, which we will celebrate tonight, is one of the most popular divine services among Orthodox Christians.

The roots of the Artoklasia extend back to the earliest years of the Church. In fact, it is a remnant of the so-called “agape” (love) meals that traditionally took place either before or after the Holy Eucharist during the ancient Christian era. The Book of Acts, for example, relates that the early Christians used to gather “daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46).

The term “Artoklasia” means “slicing the bread,” reminding us of the “breaking of the bread” (Acts 2:42, 20:7, etc.) that, in the New Testament, signifies the celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Bread, being the most basic element of the Mediterranean diet, was used by the Lord Himself in His teaching, both on a practical and spiritual level. Our Lord Jesus Christ blessed the bread in many of His miracles during His redeeming work on earth (see Mt. 14: 13-21, 15: 32-38, Luke 24:30, etc.) because “bread strengthens man’s heart” (Ps. 104:15).

Also, at the Last Supper, the Lord uses bread in order to deliver the Sacrament of the Eucharist. (Mt. 26:26). He also spoke symbolically by drawing a parallel between the bread and Himself as “the bread of life,” and “the living bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:35, 51). In addition, the bread symbolizes the universal Church. This is because its members used to be dispersed widely, like wheat in the fields, but through Christ they were gathered in one body, like the bread. (See Teaching <Didache> of the Apostles IX, BEΠ, 2,218).

The ritual of the Service of Artoklasia, which you will attend shortly, has been influenced by the account of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, a miracle mentioned by all four Evangelists (Mt. 14: 13-21, Mk.6: 30-44, Lk.9: 10-17, John 6: 1-14). As we know, John mentions that Jesus took five loaves from His

Disciples and after saying a prayer of thanks, He distributed them along with two fish, first to His Disciples and His Disciples to the people seated on the ground. Today, out of respect for Korean customs, we are using five pieces of Tok, which is made from rice, instead of five loaves of bread, since rice—not wheat—is the basic grain of the daily Korean diet.

The piece of Tok that you will be given at the end of the Service is not the Holy Eucharist. It is simply a blessed piece of Tok. By the act of sharing Artoklasia with everyone at the end of a common prayer, our Orthodox Church reminds us of two very important teachings: First, we ought to share part of the spiritual and material goods that God has provided with the destitute and needy people around us. And secondly, by singing the beautiful hymn “The rich have turned poor and gone hungry, but they who seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing” we are reminded not to concentrate our minds on the acquisition of material wealth, “where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Mt. 6:19), but instead to have unshaken faith in God’s promise: “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt. 6:33).

***+Ambrose Cho Song Am
Metropolitan of Korea***

The Service of Artoklasia

(Blessing of the loaves)

Bishop: Blessed is our God, always, now, and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Bishop: O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things;
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life –
come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
and save our souls, O Good One.

Reader: Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3x)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
O most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.
O Lord, cleanse us from our sins.
O Master, pardon our transgressions.
O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.
Lord, have mercy. (3x)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and unto the 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.

Priest: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Hymn: Phos Hilaron (*see page 6; sung in Korean by choir*)

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray to you,
hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x; *chanted after each petition*)

Deacon: Again we pray for all pious Christians.

Bishop: Again we pray for our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Deacon: Again we pray for our Archbishop Ambrosios, and all our brothers and sisters in Christ.
Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness and remission
of sins of the servants of God, let us pray to the Lord.
Again we pray for the unity of our country and the salvation of our people, let us pray to
the Lord.
Again we pray for the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of
God and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Again we pray for the preservation of this holy Church, and this city and parish, and every
city and land, from the wrath of God, pestilence, famine, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword,
invasion by enemies, civil wars, sudden death, and that our God who loves mankind will be
merciful, gracious and favourable toward us, and will fend off and turn away all the wrath
and every illness that threatens us, and will deliver us from his righteous chastisement
impending against us, and will have mercy on us.

Bishop: Hear us, O God, our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who sail the distant seas, and be gracious and show mercy, O Master, upon our sins and be merciful to us.

For you are a merciful God who love mankind, and to you we ascribe glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be with all.

People: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: To you, O Lord.

Priest: O most merciful Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, through the intercessions of our most pure Lady Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, by the power of the precious and life-giving Cross; through the protection of the venerable bodiless powers in heaven; through the prayers of the venerable and glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist; of the holy, glorious and all-praised Apostles; of the holy, glorious and victorious martyrs; of our righteous and God-bearing Fathers; of our Fathers among the saints the great hierarchs and Ecumenical teachers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom; Athanasius, Cyril and John the Almsgiver, Patriarchs of Alexandria; of our Father among the saints Nicholas, Bishop of Myra of Lycia the miracle-worker; of the holy and glorious great Martyrs: George the victorious, Demetrios the Myrrh-flowing, Theodore Tiron and Theodore the General, Menas the miracle-worker, and the priest-Martyrs Haralambos and Eleftherios; of the holy and righteous ancestors of our Lord God Joachim and Anna, of Saint Efthimios, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all your saints, make our petition acceptable to you; grant us the remission of our transgressions; shelter us under the cover of your wings; banish from us every foe and adversary; make our life peaceful; Lord, have mercy on us and your world, and save our souls, for you are a good God who love mankind.

Priest: (*sings*) Hail, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb; for you have borne the Saviour of our souls.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Bishop: (*Blesses the loaves saying:*)

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and with them fed the five thousand: Do you, the same Lord, bless these loaves, the wheat, the wine and the olive oil, and multiply them in this city, country and parish, in the homes of those who have brought these gifts, and in all your world; and sanctify all your faithful servants who partake of them.

For it is you, O Christ our God, who bless and sanctify all things, and to you we ascribe glory, together with your beginningless Father and your all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Hymn: **The rich have turned poor** (*3x, sung in Korean by choir*)

부 자 는 궁 핍 하 여 주 릴 지 라 도

주 - 를 - 찾 는 - 자 - 는

모 - 든 것 에 복 받 아 부 족 함 이 없 도 다

The rich have turned poor and gone hungry but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing.

Bishop: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: **Amen.**

O JOYFUL LIGHT

Second Tone

N. Takis (melody from Sakellarides)

Moderato

O Joy-ful Light of the ho-ly Glo - ry of the heav - en-ly, ho - ly, im-
 - mor - tal and bless-ed Fa - ther, Je - sus Christ, we
 come now to the hour of the sun - set, and we be - hold the eve-ning
 light! We praise God, the Fa-ther and Son, and Ho - ly Spi-rit in one.
 It is fit - ting at all times that we should praise thee with glad-some
 voi - ces, O Son of God, the Gi - ver of
 Life. Be - hold, all cre - a - tion sings thy glo - ry.