

The Liturgy of the Catechumens

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The first part of the Divine Liturgy is called the Liturgy of the Catechumens. In early Christian times, when Christians were baptized at an older age, there were catechumens, that is people who had not yet been baptized, but were taking catechism lessons, in other words they were getting to know the Christian faith. Catechumens were allowed to follow this first part of the Liturgy. As we shall see, at a certain point in the Liturgy, the priest calls upon the catechumens to leave the church, since they couldn't yet take part in the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist, which is celebrated in the second part of the Liturgy. Today, there aren't so many catechumens because Christians are now baptized at a young age. There are some, though, who belong to another religion or another confession within Christianity and who choose the Orthodox Christian faith as adults. Before they're baptized, they have to pass through the stage of catechism. So even today there are people who are catechumens.



The first part of the Liturgy contains:

- a) the beginning and the litany of peace
- b) the antiphons and small litanies
- c) the small entrance
- d) the thrice-holy hymn
- e) the readings and the sermon.