

Suggestions about the participation of believers in the Divine Liturgy

According to the Rite of the Syriac Orthodox Church

As it is known, the Divine Liturgy is based mainly on the involvement of the believer in the service in order to obtain a spiritual benefit for his Salvation. In the liturgy, according to the rites of the Syriac Orthodox Church (as arranged by the fathers), there are passages recited by the cleric (celebrating the service), passages recited by deacons and other passages dedicated to the faithful.

Most of the texts and prayers that believers are supposed to recite are passed on to the deacons and the choir. What believers do at Mass today is sit and listen without really participating, which causes them to lose their true spiritual advantage and communication with the Creator. In addition, many children are absent from church due to their lack of understanding of the Divine Liturgy or inability to participate.

Group sharing

According to practical and feasible propositions, the believer can find his effective role in the collective participation during the service of the Divine Liturgy, without any change in the texts of the service of the Liturgy. At the same time, the Syriac language will be preserved, and in this way, we can involve the believer in the service and fulfill his commitment in his church, thus showing the importance of the Syriac language, and perhaps seriously pushing the generations to learn it.

Before we begin to introduce the mechanism for implementing this participation, we must be certain that the success of this initiative depends on the cooperation of the clergy, deacons, congregation, church committees and the people as well.

Mechanism of execution

As usual, most Syriac churches show the texts of the Divine Liturgy on a display screen. In order to implement the collective participation, short sentences should be chosen from the Liturgy, mainly intended for the people, and displayed on the screen, so that they appear as follows: (1) the Syriac text written in Syriac letter, (2) in Arabic letter, (3) in letter of the official language of the country (Swedish, or English ... etc.), in addition to (4) its translation into Arabic, (5) and in the language of the country. This is what makes the believers understand the meaning of the prayers and hymns and participate together in their recitation.

Here is an example (the language of the country is Swedish for example):



The **red rectangle** at the bottom of the slideshow, represents a warning sign for believers, signifying that the next slideshow belongs to them (believers).



The **blue rectangle** at the bottom of the presentation slide means that the actual text is for believers and that they are reading or reciting it.

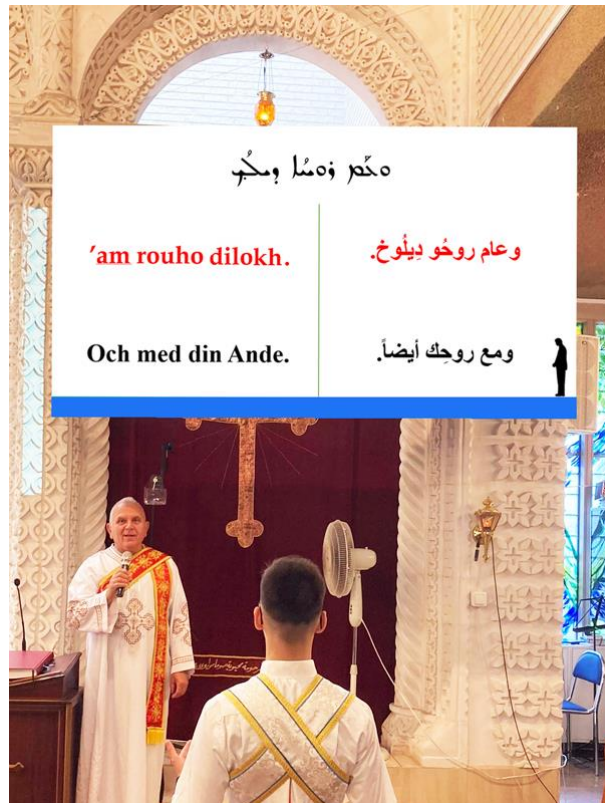
The symbol at the bottom right of the image indicates that people should be standing during this reading. The colors of the rectangles are optional.

The blue rectangle can be replaced with the word "people" at the top of the slide.

Motivating believers to do their part by participating

In fact, this is the most important step in the work. It depends on the success or failure of the participation. The more we do our duty with a little effort, the more the noble goal we aspire to will be achieved as our Syriac people have done for many years.

To guide the congregation and motivate them to participate, one of the deacons stands at the front of the temple on the right or left, facing the people to serve as a guide, to recite the prayers reserved for the people, while leading and motivating those present to do so together. (There may also be another deacon - his face toward the display screen - and may use a laser light pen to underline the text being read).



The picture shows the guiding deacon with the microphone in his hand (his face towards the people)
And also the deacon holding a laser light pen (his face toward the display screen) - the presence of this deacon is optional.

Note: In large churches, it is preferable that two ordained deacons stand, one in front of the right temple and one in front of the left temple. The position of the deacons in relation to the display may vary depending on the design and visibility of the church.

Motivating factors

According to special meetings, 4 to 8 people from among the youth of the church are selected and trained on the specific texts of the people. And then can be distributed among the ranks of the believers, so that they too can play their role as a driving force.



The image represents a number of young men and women of the church doing their motivational role

Stages of implementation

In the first stage, during the first six months, the texts are selected so that the number does not exceed 10, and they are read without melody (or sung in the future with a melody that corresponds to the melody of the Mass). In a second phase, the number of entries is gradually increased, to include the majority after about a year and a half.

Unique participation

Some believers may participate individually in the Divine Liturgy service:

- Reading the message,
- Reading of one of the Tobdinies in Syriac, Arabic or in the language of the country,
- There are also messages that can be added to the above.



A believer reads the message of the Holy Bible or reads one of the Tobdenies

Coordination and follow-up committee

To ensure the success of these propositions, it is necessary to form a small committee of two or three people, one of whom is from the deacons, and the other two members of the Scouts, the Youth Fraternity, the Women's Committee or the families. ... The task of this committee is to coordinate and monitor, as well as to select the deacons, to play the role of orientation, as well as to coordinate and select the members to play their role as stimulator. The mission of the committee is also to define and explain in detail the working mechanism before all believers during the Divine Liturgy service. It is best to do this several times.

The project tools

- Projector with display screen,
- A computer with PowerPoint,
- A PowerPoint file of the Divine Liturgy compatible with the above propositions,
- Laser pen (optional),
- Coordination and follow-up committee.

Remarks:

✚ There are churches that make certain types of individual commitments. What we are presenting and focusing on in this study is the mechanism for implementing and enforcing group participation proposals, which, if found in some churches, have limited participation.



The role of the coordinating committee with the coaches and motivators is temporary and will diminish relatively, over time, until the believers are trained in their own hymns and readings. People gradually become the real coaches of newcomers to the church.

- ✚ The passages recited by the faithful are chosen as they are from the Divine Liturgy, according to the rite of the Syriac Orthodox Church. We are currently coordinating with Reverend Father Dr. Yohanon Habel, Director of St. Ignatios Syriac Orthodox Seminary in Stockholm, to prepare a PowerPoint file for the Divine Liturgy according to these proposals. It will be distributed via the "Qenshrin" website once completed.
- ✚ Some of our Syriac churches in Sweden will implement the first stage (with some participation) of the PowerPoint file they currently have, and we will be informed of the progress of the work as well as the difficulties they face.
- ✚ After two years of starting and to ensure the transmission of the participation to future generations, and understand the meaning of what is repeated, and also to give desire to learn the Syriac language. Children (ecclesiastical monasteries for example) and young people (ecclesiastical monasteries brotherhoods) will be trained on some simplified passages dedicated to the people, in order to read and write them in Syriac language with the understanding of their meanings. In a second stage, they will be trained on new positions. In this way, we encourage the youth to participate seriously in the Divine Liturgy and understand its stages and parts, which contributes to their true spiritual benefit.
- ✚ These propositions may be modified in accordance with the propositions submitted by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate (the Liturgical Committee) when they are received in the future. It is a matter of selecting the participation texts and the corresponding melodies, in order to generalize their application to our Syriac churches.

Thank you to all those who contributed with us in the preparation of this study, clergy and laity. We hope for the success of this project in cooperation between clergy, deacons, deaconesses, religious council, church committees and the people as well.

The content of this file can be modified to serve suggestions for sharing. To see the latest updates, please visit the following link:

<https://www.qenshrin.com/archives/17006>

And the Lord is the reconciler.

Pierre Gergi

<https://qenshrin.com>

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