

CHURCH OF THE EAST LITURGY

The Creed of Aphraates

(from Henry Hill, "The Assyrians: The Church of the East," in *Light from the East*, ed. by Henry Hill (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1988), 126, with additions from Moffett, 130)

Now this is faith:

When a man shall believe in God, the Lord of all,
Who made the heavens and the earth and the seas and all that is in them,
Who made Adam in His image,
Who gave the Law to Moses,
Who sent His Spirit in the Prophets,
Who sent the Messiah into the world,
And that a man should believe in the bringing to life of the dead,
And believe also in the mystery of Baptism:
This is the Faith of the Church of God.
And that a man should separate himself
from observing hours and Sabbaths and months and seasons,
and enchantments and divinations and astrology and magic,
and from fornication and from revelling and from
vain doctrines, the weapons of the Evil One, and
from the blandishments of honeyed words, and
from blasphemy and from adultery,
And that no man should bear false witness,
and that none should speak with double tongues:
These are the works of the Faith that is laid on
the true Rock which is the Messiah, upon whom all the building doth rise.

The Anaphora of the Holy Apostles Addai and Mari¹

(from William Macomber, "The Ancient Form of the *Anaphora of the Apostles*," in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. by Nina Gargoian, Thomas Mathews and Robert Thomson (Washington, DC: Centre for Byzantine Studies, 1982), 73-88)

- Celebrant: We are offering the oblation to God, the Lord of all.
People: It is right and just.
Celebrant: Let our minds be on high.
People: To thee, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, glorious King.
Celebrant: Let us give thanks, worship, and praise.
People: To the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit from now and forever.
Celebrant: Praise to thee,² adorable and glorious Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who created the world in his goodness and its inhabitants in his mercy, redeemed men in his clemency and wrought his favor

¹ A reconstructed version of the original anaphora, based on the versions used by the Maronite churches (the Syrian churches which accepted the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon) and the Chaldean churches (the Nestorian churches which submitted to Rome after the sixteenth century).

² The later Chaldean version adds: "Worthy of praise from all mouths and thanksgiving from all tongues."

toward mortals. A thousand thousand of those on high, Lord, worship thy majesty and ten thousand thousands of the armies of ministers of fire and spirit praise it in fear, together with the cherubim and seraphim that cry one to another and say:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

Celebrant: We too, Lord,³ thy sinful servants, give thee thanks because thou hast wrought in us thy favor that cannot be repaid; thou hast put on our humanity so as to give us life by thy divinity, thou hast exalted our low estate, raised up our prostration and given life to our mortality, thou hast justified our sinfulness, forgiven our debts, illumined our knowledge, condemned our enemies, and glorified our humility. In view of all these thy favors towards us, may we send up to thee glory and honor in thy holy Church before thy propitiatory altar, now, at all times and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Celebrant: Do thou, Lord, in thy abundant mercies make a good commemoration of all the righteous and just fathers in the memorial of thy body and blood, that we offer to thee on thy holy altar as thou hast taught us in thy holy Gospel and hast said: "I am the bread of life that have come down from heaven so that mortals might live by me."

We make, Lord, the commemoration of thy passion as thou thyself hast taught us. For in the night in which thou wert handed over to the crucifiers, thou didst take bread, Lord, in thy pure and holy hands, didst look up to heaven, to thy glorious Father, didst bless, Lord, break and give to thy disciples and say to them: "This bread is my body, which for the life of the world is broken. Take, eat of it, and it will be for you unto eternal life."

Likewise over the chalice in the same manner, thou didst give thanks and praise and didst say, Lord: "This chalice is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. All of you, take and drink of it, and it will be for you unto eternal life forever. Each time, indeed, that you eat of this holy body and drink of this chalice of life, commemorate the death and resurrection of your Lord until the great day of his coming."

We worship thee, Only-Begotten of the Father, first born of the divine essence, spiritual lamb that came down from heaven to earth so as to become a propitiatory sacrifice on behalf of all men, to take away their wickedness by his good pleasure, make propitiation for sinners by his blood, and sanctify the polluted by the sacrifice of himself. Give us life, Lord, by thy true life, cleanse us by thy spiritual cleansing, and grant us that we may gain life by thy life-giving death, stand before thee in propriety, and minister to thee in holiness; and may we offer this oblation to thy divinity, may the good pleasure of thy majesty be content with it and may thy mercies be poured out upon us all.

³ The Chaldean version has: "With these heavenly hosts, we give thee thanks, Lord, we too..."

Yes, we pray thee, Only-Begotten of the Father, through whom peace with us has been accomplished, offspring of the Most High, by whom those on high have been reconciled with those below, good shepherd that laid down his life on behalf of his flock and saved them from ravening wolves, merciful Lord that uttered a cry on the cross and gathered us in from the dissipation of vanity, El, the God of spirits and of all flesh, may our prayers be lifted up to thee and may thy mercies descend on our petitions; and may this oblation be acceptable before thee, which, for the commemoration of thy passion we offer on thy propitiatory altar. May thy divinity be content with it and may thy good pleasure be fulfilled by it, may our debts be pardoned by it and our sins be forgiven by it, may our departed be commemorated in it, and may we give thanks, worship, and praise to thee, and to thy Father who sent thee for our salvation, and to thy life-giving and Holy Spirit, now, at all times and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Celebrant: We offer, Lord, this oblation before thee for the commemoration of all the righteous and just fathers, the prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, priests, ministers, and of all the children of holy Church that are signed with the signing of holy baptism; and us too, Lord, thy humble⁴ servants that are gathered together and are standing before thee and have received by tradition the example that has come from thee, as, rejoicing, praising, exalting, and commemorating, we celebrate this great and awful sacrament of thy passion, death, and resurrection.⁵

And may thy Holy Spirit come, Lord, and rest on this oblation of thy servants, and may it be to us for the pardon of debts and the forgiveness of sins, for a blessed resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven.

And in view of thy glorious economy toward us, we thy sinful servants, saved by thy innocent blood, give thee thanks with open mouth that gives thanks in thy holy Church before thy propitiatory altar,⁶ now, at all times, and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

⁴ The Chaldean version adds: "weak and wretched."

⁵ The Chaldean version has: "... of the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

⁶ The Chaldean version has: "... may we give thee thanks and praise without ceasing in thy Church, saved by the precious blood of thy Christ, with open mouths and unveiled faces, as we send up glory, honor, thanksgiving and worship to thy living, holy and life-giving Name."