

SOLEM BLESSING OF A CHURCH AND ALTAR

According to the Rites of the Maronite Antiochene Church

Introduction

1 No new church or altar should be used for the Celebration of the Divine Service or the administration of the Mysteries unless it is first consecrated by the bishop. However, a properly delegated priest may bless them using the following solemn blessing.

2. The priest wears all his liturgical vestments.

3. The deacon should see that all the necessary appointments and furnishing are provided for the church and altar.

Doxology

The priest, standing before the altar, signs himself with the hand cross saying:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

All: respond: Amen,

Psalm

The Deacon, choir or congregations sings or proclaims following psalm.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth and good will to all.

Praise the Lord, all you nations,
glorify him, all you peoples!

For steadfast is his mercy toward us,
and the truth of the Lord endures for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever,
and peace on earth and good will to all.

Prayer

The priest then says:

Almighty and ever-wondrous God,
you created all things,
visible and Invisible. You favored us with many gifts
and gave us dominion over all that is on earth. When we fell into
sin and went astray, you sent us your beloved Son, our Lord, Jesus
Christ. He took flesh from the Blessed Virgin Mary and suffered
and died on our behalf

in order to save our race from the slavery of sin and death.

Make us worthy to give you thanks and worship you for your
kindness and mercy.

Grant us to act in all our deeds for the sake of your glory and the
honor of your blessed name.

Now, O Lord,

we offer to your majesty this new church and altar.

May it be prepared for your service, May all that will take place
here be pleasing to your divine will and to the glory of your
majesty. We petition you to abide in this church as you did in the
temple of Solomon. Bless it and all those who donated their work
and alms.

Bless all those who will pray in this church, and those who are gathered with us, so that we may all glorify and thank you, now and for ever.

All respond:

Amen.

Incensation And Psalms of Praise

**The priest burns incense and incenses the cross, the clergy and people,
and finally church and the altar.**

**Meanwhile the deacon with the choir and congregation sings or proclaims the
Psalm of Praise (148, 149, 150 and 117).**

The angels praise you:

Praise to you O Lord.

Psalm 148

Praise the Lord from the heavens,

praise him in the heights;

Praise him, all you his angels,

praise him, all you his hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise to you O Lord.

Praise him, you highest heavens,

and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created;
He established them for ever and ever;
he gave them a duty which shall not pass away.

Praise to you, O Lord.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
You sea monsters and all depths;
Fire and hail, snow and mist,
storm winds that fulfill his word;

Praise to you, O Lord.

You mountains and all you hills,
you fruit trees and all you cedars;
You wild beasts and all tame animals,
you creeping things and you winged fowl

Praise to you, O Lord.

Let the kings of the earth and all peoples,
the princes and all the Judges of the earth,
Young men too, and maidens,
old men and boys,

Praise the name of the Lord,

Praise to you, O Lord.

For his name alone is exalted;

His majesty is above earth and heaven,

and he has lifted up the horn of his people. Be this his praise from all his faithful ones,

from the children of Israel, the people close to him.

Praise to you, O Lord.

Psalm 149

Sing to the Lord a new song

of praise in the assembly of the faithful. Let Israel be glad in their maker,

let the children of Zion rejoice in their king.

Praise to you, O Lord.

Let them praise his name in the festive dance,

let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.

For the Lord loves his people

and he adorns the lowly with victory.

Praise to you, O Lord.

Let the faithful exult in glory;

let them sing for joy upon their couches; let the high praises of God be in their throats.

Praise to you, O Lord.

And let two-edged swords be in their hands:

to execute vengeance on the nations,

punishments on the peoples;

To bind their kings with chains,

their nobles with fetters of iron;

To execute on them the written sentence. This Is the glory of all his faithful.

Praise to you, O Lord.

Psalm 150

Praise the Lord in his sanctuary,

praise him in the firmament of his strength.

Praise him for his mighty deeds, praise him for his sovereign majesty.

Praise him with the blast of the trumpet,

praise him with lyre and harp,

Holy, holy, holy are you, O Lord.

Praise him with tambour and dance,

praise him with strings and pipe.

Praise him with sounding cymbals,

praise him with clangorous cymbals.

Let everything that has breath

Praise the Lord.

Holy, holy, holy are you, O Lord.

Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all you nations;

glorify him, all you peoples!

For steadfast is his kindness toward us,

and the truth of the Lord endures ever.

Hail to you, O Mother of God.

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever. Amen.

May the prayers of the martyrs assist us,

and praise to you, O Lord.

Prayer of Blessing

After the psalms, the priest says following prayer of blessing:

O Christ our God, you created the world

and fashioned it from end to end. You laid the foundations of the holy Church upon Simon, the head of the blessed apostles, in whose hands you placed the keys to the heights and depths.

You appointed priests and bishops to serve the Church, while heaven, where you established a sanctuary for your honor, proclaims the glory of your majesty.

In your kindness bless + this church and this altar in the name of Saint N.

To you, our Lord and God, be glory for ever.

All respond:

Amen.

Psalm

The deacon with the choir and congregation sings or proclaims the following psalm

Psalms 26

Do me justice, O Lord! for I walked in integrity, and in the Lord I trust without wavering.

Search me, O Lord, and try me;

test my soul and my heart.

For your kindness is before my eyes,

and I walk in your truth.

I stay not with worthless men,

nor do I consort with hypocrites.

I hate the assembly of evildoers,

and with the wicked I will not stay. I wash my hands in innocence,
and I go around your altar, O Lord, giving voice to my thanks,
and recounting all your wondrous deeds.

O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, the tenting-place of
your glory.

Gather not my soul with those of sinners,
nor with men of blood my life.

On their hands are crimes,
and their right hands are full of bribes.

But I walk in integrity;
redeem me, and have pity on me.

My foot stands on level ground;
in the assemblies I will bless the Lord.

Conclusion

The priest blesses those present with the handcross, saying:

O Lord, save your people

**and bless + your inheritance. Feed them and carry them for
ever.**

(Ps. 28:9)