Christian Liturgy

The difference between:

Static arts (images, architecture)

and

Temporal arts (dramatic action, music)

Paul Florensky, an Eastern Orthodox theologian, described liturgy as a "synthesis of all the arts": it takes place in a static church building, among static images, but itself it is a dramatic action and is accompanied by singing and recitation.

This course will not deal with liturgy as such in a technical sense but with the use of the arts in liturgy, in particular the use of music.

A few notes on what "liturgy" is and its structure.

The word "liturgy" is derived from two Greek roots meaning "the people" (λαός, *laos*) and "work" or "action" (ἔργον, *ergon*), cf. syn-ergy, en-ergy etc. So it means the "action of the people" or "public action."

This sacred institution is still called "the divine liturgy" in the East.

In the West the Latin liturgy ends in the words of the dismissal *ite missa est*, so it began to be called *missa* or "Mass."

Religious services from the early days of Chrstianity included two types:

The office, or monastic hours, which are services that are performed throughout the 24-hour cycle by reciting and singing some texts, such as psalms, beginning with 12AM (Matins) and then repeating every 3 hours (so there are 8 in a 24-hour cycle), including Vespers (6PM) and ending at 9PM with Compline.

The eucharist (Greek for "thanksgiving") originally included the commemoration of the events of the Last Supper (subsequently the consecration of the host). Later the instructional part was added.

So the basic structure of the Mass / Divine Liturgy in ancient times consisted of two parts:

The Liturgy of the Word (= Mass of the catechumens): the instructional part that included readings from scriptures. After that part, catechumens in the narthex were dismissed and the faithful in the nave stayed for the celebration of

The Liturgy of the Eucharist (= Mass of the faithful): a commemoration of the events of the Last Supper (breaking of the bread, sharing in the wine).

A brief analysis of the Catholic Tridentine Mass (the rite developed at the Council of Trent in the 1500s and in use until the 2nd Vatican Council, 1962-1965):

I. Liturgy of the Word (= Mass of the Catechumens)

A. Introductory rites

1. Introit (Entrance song, antiphonal psalm)

[post-Vatican II: greetings, penitential rite]

2. Kyrie ("Lord have mercy," a former Litany)

3. Gloria ("Glory to God," hymn)

4. Opening prayer

B. Instruction

1. Reading from the Epistle

2. Gradual (verses with responsorial psalm)

3. Alleluia

4. Reading from the Gospel

[post-Vatican II: readings from the Old Testament and a homily were added]

5. Creed

II. Liturgy of the Eucharist (= Mass of the Faithful)

A. Preparation of the gifts

1. Offertory (antiphonal psalm)
[contemporary: gifts are brought, collections are made]

While Motet is sung:
2. Censing

3. Washing of hands

4. Prayer over Gifts ("secret")

B. Canon of the Mass
(performed during Sanctus and Benedictus)
[contemporary: performed separately]

1. Lift up Hearts (dialogue: celebrant and congregation)
2. Preface

3. Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy")
during Sanctus:
a. Preliminary intercessions (for the living)
b. Pre-consecratory invocation over the offerings

4. Consecration
a. narrative of the institution + acclamation ("mystery of faith")
b. memorial of Christ
[contemporary: the great Amen added]

5. Benedictus ("Blessed")
during Benedictus:
a. post-consecratory invocation of the Holy Spirit
b. concluding intercessions (for the dead)
c. concluding doxologies ("Through Christ," "Through him")

C. Communion

1. Lord's Prayer
2. Breaking of Bread
3. Commingling
[contemporary: during Agnus; also adds a doxology]

4. Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
during Agnus Dei:
rite of peace [contemporary: moved up before "bread"]

5. Communion chant (antiphonal psalm)
during communion chant:celebrant's communion, lay communion, putting away utensils, etc.

6. Prayers after Communion

Blessing and dismissal

The example in the video:

A solemn high Mass according to the Tridentine Rite (the Roman Missal 1962)

Order of music for Mass of the fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 1986

Performed ad St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater, London, on Sunday, August 31, 1986

Chants: some plainchant, polyphonic pieces from the Mass of Pope Marcellus by Palestrina

A brief analysis of the Divine Liturgy (Greek or Slavic Orthodox)

The same two major parts:

I. The Liturgy of the Catechumens (= Liturgy of the Word)

II. The Liturgy of the Faithful (= of the Eucharist)

There are some structural similarities with the Latin Mass:

- Only two readings (Epistle and Gospel)
- no homily
- the liturgy is performed almost entirely by the clergy and singers, not the congregation
- the Eucharistic Canon is mostly performed in the background *sotto voce*, with chants over it

There are some differences with the Latin Mass:

- the rite of preparation of the gifts takes place even before the public liturgy at the side altar by the priest
- The singing is antiphonal (by the left and right choirs)
- The chants use the so-called 8 "church modes" or 8 "tones" (types of scale)
- The Liturgy of the Catechumens has a lengthy sequence of three litanies (one great and two little), each with an antiphon (a psalm or other chant); in the West, *Kyrie eleison* ("Lord have mercy") is what is left from this part
- The *Trisagion* ("Thrice Holy") chant before the readings
- The Little Entrance of the clergy with the Gospel
- The Cherubic hymn before the Canon
- The Great Entrance of the clergy with bread and wine
- During the Canon, instead of "Blessed is he" two different chants

According to Hugh Wybrew

There are, as it were, two liturgies celebrated:

- one by the priest in the altar space, inaudible to the congregation (prayers)
- the other by the deacon and the choir on the solea, audible to the congregation (antiphons, litanies, hymns, chants, readings, processions, the Creed, Lord's prayer, Communion)
- occasionally the priest comes out to the solea through the Royal Doors

The liturgy is celebrated for the congregation but not by them

Eastern Liturgy (Greek or Slavic Orthodox; cf. von Gardner, pp. 91-94**)**

I. Liturgy of the Catechumens (= Liturgy of the Word)

1. Opening benediction and *Great Litany* (Ektene, Ektenia)
[most common phrase: "Lord have mercy" or *Kyrie eleison*]

2. First Antiphon (sung antiphonally)
Little Litany

3. Second Antiphon (sung antiphonally) + Troparion "Only-begotten Son"
Little Litany

4. Third Antiphon (sung antiphonally) + Introit verse
during the Third Antiphon: **the Little Entrance of the clergy with the Gospel**

5. Troparia and Kontakia (hymns) of the feast (sung by both choirs)

6. Trisagion ("Thrice holy"; sung by both choirs)

[7. Prokeimenon (sung antiphonally-responsorially)]

8. Reading from the Epistle

9. Alleluia (with psalm verses; often sung antiphonally-responsorially)

10. Reading from the Gospel

[11. Augmented Litany]

[12. Litany of the Catechumens]

II. Liturgy of the Faithful

1. The Cherubic Hymn (sung by one or both choirs)
during the Cherubic Hymn: first and second Prayers for the Faithful

2. the Great Entrance of the clergy with bread and wine

3. Litany of Supplication #1; prayer over Gifts

4. Creed (sometimes sung)

5. The Eucharistic Canon (Anaphora)

a. Dialogue: celebrant and choir (incl.: “Lift up your hearts”)

b. Hymn of Praise (“It is meet”)

c. “Holy, holy, holy” (cf. Sanctus)

d. Consecration: narrative of the institution (intoned by the priest)

e. Hymn of Thanksgiving (“We praise thee...”)

6. Hymn to the Theotokos (Mother of God; two types for two different liturgies)

7. Litany of Supplication #2

[8. Lord’s Prayer (usually sung)]

9. Communion

a. Communion Hymn
during the Communion Hymn:
celebrants’ communion

[b. Lay communion; communion verse]

Closing prayers, benediction and dismissal

The example in the video:

Choir director Theodoros Basilikos