2026-04-05: Monday Eve

Background

- Sacrifice System
- Jews in Diaspora - if they brought a sheep or an ox or doves... the animals could not withstand a long journey. Or if they did, they might arrive damaged and not suitable for sacrifices.
  - So the chief priests and the Temple would offer animals to be sacrificed
  - But if you are coming from outside, your money was worthless in the Temple...
  - So you need to change it with money changers who take a certain percentage for the service of changing the money
  - And their scales were unfair
  - And they would overprice the animals
- Two problems:
  - Buying and Selling in the House of the Lord ("Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" (John 2:16))
  - Thievery and Robbery ("You have made it a den of thieves")
- The House of God lost its reverence and its sanctity
- The House of Prayer became a house of buying and selling

What is the House of God to me?

- Social House
  - "I go to see my friends"
  - Sometimes someone will say "I don't come to Church because I don't know anyone..." - you don't know the Lord of the House??
  - It is good for us to have fellowship together after the Liturgy, as we do; but it CANNOT be my main goal. Once I turn the Church into a Social House, instead of a House of Prayer, I risk falling away from the Church
- Service House
  - This is the one who comes only for his assigned service
  - I have service on this day, I am here and I am early and I am committed and dedicated and my service is perfect. If I don't have service? You will never see me.
  - I am here if I have a lesson to give, or a hymn to teach, or a liturgy to lead, or to serve in the altar, or to do my water service, or to make orban... but if I don't have service, don't expect me to be in the Church.
  - That's not the purpose of the House of God!
- Intellectual Endeavor
  - Someone who comes because they like knowledge, they like theology, want to learn something new
  - "We never learn anything new in Sunday School, it's the same lessons"

    - "Abouna your sermon was the same as last week or the same as last year... give us something new."
    - Acts 17: [19] And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak? [20] For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” [21] For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.
    - If the lessons are not new or I know them already, then don't expect to see my in the Church.
- Performance
    - Sometimes, someone may be fought with the temptation of the Church being a house of performance...
    - If I am not the one giving the lesson, don't expect to see me
    - If the microphone is not reaching me, or the cymbals are not reaching me, or the triangle is not here, don't expect to see me
- Routine
    - I come because I am used to it
    - "I showed up, I did my part." - maybe even "Now it's Your turn, God to do Your part."
    - And if there's any sort of inconvenience... don't expect to see me in the Church
- "Get Something"
    - I am here for comfort in a bad time
    - I am here for advice in a time of trouble
    - I am here for emotional relief when no one else will listen to me
    - But if life is good, no advice needed, content... don't expect to see my in the Church
    - "Did I feel something"
    - "Did I benefit"

What is the House of God really?

- House of Prayer
    - “For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah 56:7)
    - Where we go to pray, to speak to God, and hear His answer to me
- House of Healing
    - Hospital for Sinners
    - Sacramental Life (Yesterday’s Sermon)
    - “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” (James 5:14-15)
- House of Reconciliation
    - “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

    - Some come to Church to win arguments… but we are on the side of peace
- House of Learning and Growing and Increasing and Improving
    - Readings, Sermons, Sunday School Lessons
    - From the servants and elders and role models
    - 1:1 Father of Confession
        - Sees where I am lacking and helps me to identify it, adjust it, and to grow
    - Not just an intellectual knowledge, but a Personal knowledge and an Experiential Knowledge
- House of Giving and Serving Others
    - To take the blessing of the service
    - ”The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” - 11th Hour Gospel
    - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)
    - “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” (Acts 2:44-45)

How to Revere the House of God

- Prepare Myself
    - "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12)
    - Physically, Spiritually, Socially
    - Be bathed, well-groomed, well-dressed, tonia is clean (deacons)
    - Be Reconciled with Others
    - Be Repentant
    - Spiritual Preparation
        - Vespers and Matins
        - Praying the Psalms
    - What do I wear?
        - Clothing reflects reverence
        - We dress for interviews, weddings, graduations, etc. - how much more for God's house? How much more to meet the King of Kings?
- Arrive on Time
    - "O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You" (Psalm 63:1)
    - Arriving Late: Rushing, distracting others, missing prayers
    - Arriving on Time: Calmness, Peace, Slow Down, Enter the Presence of God
- Pray
    - "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)
    - Participant not a spectator
    - Hymns and Responses
    - Lift up your hearts
- Behavior
    - How do I speak?
        - The Church is a House of Prayer, not a House of Conversation
        - Guard your tongue - silence gives room for prayer
        - If a conversation is needed, then quickly and in hushed tones

    - How do I walk?
        - Walk quietly, not running, with purpose, not aimlessly
        - Not chewing gum, not eating or drinking, not taking a phone call
    - How do I stand?
        - Attentively
        - Not leaning
        - Not sitting casually
- Undistracted
    - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)
    - Friends
    - Services
    - Devices

Revision #2
Created 2026-04-05 20:56:38 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba
Updated 2026-04-05 22:35:58 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba