

The Churching

Of a Mother and Child after Forty Days



Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

2018 Draft Version

By the grace of God, this work was completed for the benefit of English-speaking faithful with the help of St. Barnabas Orthodox Mission, Washington D.C.

Churching is a special service celebrated for a mother and newborn child upon their entry into the church temple for the first time, on the fortieth day after childbirth. The mother should carry two candles and may be accompanied by the child's intended sponsor (godparent) for baptism.

This service appears in some editions of the sacramental services of the Church (*Koodasha Kramam*). The Syriac text of the service (*Tekso d'Ma'altho*), which has been translated into Malayalam and now English, appears to be largely an adaptation of the Churching service as performed in the Byzantine tradition.

The service employs rich imagery from the presentation of our Lord Himself in the temple at Jerusalem, by the Virgin Mary and Righteous Joseph, in the days following the Nativity (Lk 2:22-40). As such, the hymns in this edition have been arranged according to the third liturgical tone, the tone assigned to the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (*Ma'altho*) on February 2.

***This booklet is a preliminary edition and is subject to future edits**

THE SERVICE OF CHURCHING

Standing at the entrance of the sanctuary at the west of the nave, the mother should carry two candles and may be accompanied by the child's intended sponsor (godparent) for baptism. Standing before the mother and child at the western entrance, the priest begins the service.

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

May His mercy and compassion be upon us, / weak and sinful, / in both worlds forever and ever. / Amin.

Introductory Prayer

Priest: O Lord our God, Who on the fortieth day was brought as an infant into the Temple, according to the Law, by Mary, the Bride Unwedded and Your holy Mother, and was carried in the arms of the righteous Simeon, may You Yourself, O Omnipotent Master, bless (†) this infant that has been presented, that **he/she** may appear before You, the Creator of all things, and increase in **him/her** every work that is good and well-pleasing unto You, driving away from **him/her** every adverse power by the sign of Your Cross (†); for You are He Who guards infants, O Lord, counting them worthy of holy Baptism, so that **he/she** may receive the portion of the Saints and the Elect of Your Kingdom, being preserved with us by the grace of the Holy, Consubstantial, and Undivided Trinity. For unto You belongs glory and honor, now and always, forever and ever.

People: Amin.

Deacon: Stoumen Kalos

People: Kurielaison

("Lord, have mercy")

Priest: Let us all pray and beseech the Lord for mercy and compassion.

People: O merciful Lord, have mercy upon us and help us.

PROMIUN

Priest: Glory and thanksgiving, praise and adoration, and unceasing exaltation truly at all times and all hours, may we ascribe unto You, O Lord, the Open Door of mercies for sinners and the harbor of life who gives life to the dead. Praise to You, O Lord, the hyssop who cleanses the defilements of our race and the shower who washes and whitens those with blemishes; to You belong glory and honor at this time of the purification service of your handmaid at all festivals, times, and seasons, and all the days of our life.

People: Amin

SEDRO

Priest: O Lord God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who by Your word has created all nature, both rational and irrational creatures, and has brought all things from nothingness into being, we pray to You and implore You: You have saved this Your servant, **(baptismal name of the mother)**, by Your will. Purify her, therefore, from every sin and from every defilement as she now draws near to Your holy Church; and let her be counted worthy to partake of Your Holy Mysteries without condemnation.

Bless also this child who has been born of her; increase **him/her**, sanctify **him/her**, enlighten **him/her**, render **him/her** chaste, and endow **him/her** with good understanding. For You alone have brought **him/her** into being, and have shown **him/her** the light which bodily sense perceives (the physical light), so that **he/she** might be accounted worthy also of the ideal light (spiritual light) and be numbered among Your holy Flock; through Your Only Begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your Most-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always, forever and ever.

People: Amin

QOLO

(More d'Ramsho - Tone 3)¹

Mary desired
 To fulfill the laws
 Appointed for - all of Isr`a`el,
 And she carried
 Her Son and two doves
 To the temple - after forty days

And there, the priest,
 Righteous Sim'e'on,
 Raised up off' rings - to God the Father.
 The Lord who gave
 Priesthood to Moses
 Was held and raised - in the old man's arms...*Barekmor*

† Glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

May all our prayers
 Join those of Mary
 To win vic' try - o'er Satan's armies
 May Satan fall
 Just as the walls of
 Jericho fell - as the trumpets blew

Unto the ages of ages and forevermore

May the mem'ry,
 Lord, of Your mother
 And all Your saints - be for our blessing
 May those faithful
 who have departed,
 Lord, in Your hope - be counted with them

¹ While the Malayalam text of this service likens the melody to *Daivam Chonnan*, which is *More d'Ramsho* in the Second Tone, this booklet presents this *qolo* (hymn) in the Third Tone, the tone assigned for the Presentation in the Temple, and for other dedication-themed services such as the Blessing of the Rings during the wedding service.

Lord have mercy upon us and help us

ἘΤΡΟ

Priest: O Lord our God, the Son of the Invisible Father, our Messiah, You came down from heaven and were incarnate of the Virgin for the sake of our race, the weak and pitiful. On the eighth day, You fulfilled the law of Moses; as commanded in the Scriptures, You received circumcision and a sacrifice was offered according to the rite of purification. You, O Lord, are that acceptable sacrifice and sweet fragrance, by which Your Father reconciled with our race. At this time, Sovereign Master, All-Powerful, bestow Your grace upon Your servant (**name of the mother**) who has come to Your holy temple this day; grant her absolution from all her transgressions and sins; Grant her the grace of Your Holy Spirit to make her worthy to raise up glory and honor to You, and Your Father, and Your living and Holy Spirit, now and always, forever and ever.

People: Amin

At this time, the mother should be led into the temple and brought before the entrance of the Holy Altar, where the Gospel will be placed over her head and read aloud.

GOSPEL

(Pethgomo for the Gospel – Psalm 66:13-14)

Halleluyah, Halleluyah

I will come into Your house with burnt offerings;

I will offer my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth has promised
Halleluyah

Deacon: *Barekmor.* With stillness, fear and purity, let us attend and listen to the Good News of the living words of God in the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is read to us.

Priest: †Peace be unto you all.

People: May the Lord God make us worthy, with your spirit

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, The life-giving proclamation from St. Luke the Evangelist who preaches the good news of life and salvation to the world.

People: Blessed is he who has come and is to come; Glory be to Him who sent Him for our salvation; and may His mercy be upon us all, forever.

Priest: Now, in the time of the Incarnation of our Lord and our God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, † God who took flesh of the Holy Virgin Mary, these things thus came to pass.

People: We believe and confess

(The priest reads the Gospel of St. Luke 2:22-28)

Priest: †Peace be unto you all.

BO'UTHO of MOR EPHREM*(Tone 3)*

Lord, have mercy upon us
 O Lord receive our service
 Send us from Your treasure-house
 Mercy, grace, and forgiveness

O Lord, by making noble
 The childhood of bless'd Isaac
 You made joyous his parents,
 Both Abraham and Sarah

Christ, who became an infant,
 Was nursed as a newborn child
 Like a child, He played and ran
 In the streets of Nazareth

By His grace, as is written,
 The Lord protects the children,
 And by His mercy and care
 The infants grow and mature

Glory to Him who accepts
 Like first-fruits and offerings
 The tears of the penitent
 And the pray'rs of the feeble

Lord, who hears our petitions
 Answer us in Your mercy
 Lord, be reconciled with us
 Have compassion upon us

The benediction is prayed over both mother and child

CONCLUDING BENEDICTION

Priest: May the God who created everything out of His loving-kindness, by His grace, bless (†) you both. May you be preserved as it is written. May He be your guardian day and night. May He grant you, blessings, goodwill, and mercy, accept our prayers for you, and guide you according to His Holy will. May you be protected by Him from all deceit under the wings of the life-giving Cross (†). May He be a fortress, refuge, and power that keep you from all afflictions and punishments. May He cleanse you from your sins with His hyssop, remove afflictions from you, and shelter you from all hardships throughout the days of your life. May He be rest and refuge for you from the labors and burdens of this life. May you raise up glory and praise to Him and His Father and His Holy Spirit now and always, forever and ever.

People: Amin