

Meatfare Week (35)

On the days of this week **"we do not sing Alleluia"**, i. e. we do not sing "Alleluia" **at Matins** instead of "God is the Lord", as the "Alleluia" is sung during Great Lent and on Wednesday and Friday in Cheesefare Week. At Matins we sing only two verses (instead of three) of the **Sessional Hymns**. At **Compline** the Canon to the Theotokos is dropped; and to be exact they also are dropped in the **Inter-hours**.

On Meatfare Saturday, before the commemoration (on Meatfare Sunday) of the Last Judgment, the Holy Church prays for the departed, so that together with us they also stand at the right hand of the Judge, and especially prays for those who have died, who, as the Synaxarion says, were stolen suddenly by death in a foreign country, on the sea and on impassable mountains, on cliffs, from starvation, from plagues and hunger, in war, in fires, from cold, and have undergone all kinds of other generic types of death, and also about poor and needy, and in general for all who "have not received commemoration in the legitimate psalms and hymns". On a Saturday, instead of another day, before Meatfare Sunday it is necessary to pray for the repose of souls because the Sabbath Day is the day of rest, according to its innate meaning. It is the most important day for prayer for those who repose with the Saints. Besides this, the present prayer for the departed who repose the Holy Church reminds us about our inevitable end and our standing for trial before the incorruptible Judge, that, fearing these things to better prepare us for the spiritual struggle which are to come in the saving fast.

The service for Meatfare Saturday is performed in the same way as for the Saturday before the feast of Pentecost, with the only exception that on the Meatfare Saturday the hymns of the Octoechos are sung according to the tone in the order, and on the Saturday before Pentecost we must use the 6th tone.

The **peculiarities of the service** for these days are that: a) at Vespers, instead of the Prokeimenon, we sing the "Alleluia", with the priest exclaiming the verses: "Blessed are they whom Thou has chosen", and "Their souls shall dwell with the blessed"; b) in Matins after the usual verses, i. e. the 16th Kathisma we sing "Blessed are the undefiled" (i. e. the 17th Kathisma), on two stases, and after each of them at the "Glory", together with the "Alleluia", we sing the end of the stasis, three times, namely, after the first stasis we sing the words: "Unless Thy law had been my study", and after the second stasis we sing the words: "My soul shall live". After the second stasis we sing with the refrain: "Blessed are Thou, O Lord", the Troparion for the departed: "The choir of the saints have found the fountain of Life". After the 6th ode of the canon we sing the Kontakion: "With the saints give rest", and the Ikos. As after the first stasis "Blessed are the undefiled", so after the second stasis and the hymn "Blessed are Thou, O Lord", and after the 6th Ode of

the Canon, before the singing of the Kontakion: "With the saints give rest" there is a Litany for the Departed. In it we call out: "Again we pray for the repose of the souls of the servants of God, the forefathers, fathers and brothers, Orthodox Christians who here and everywhere lie asleep". After this, usually, from a special book the departed Orthodox god-fearing Emperors, Kings, Great Princes, and god-fearing Empresses, Queens, Princesses are commemorated by name. In other temples after this a table is placed before the Royal Doors, and on the table is a cross and before it a candle in its holder, and sometimes even kutiya. In other temples only a candle in a large candleholder is placed before the Royal Doors. While intoning these litanies, the priest or deacon hold a censer.

This service for the departed is performed and when, if the **Feast of the Three Hierarchs** (Jan. 30), or the **Translation of the Head of John the Forerunner** (Feb. 24) falls on Meatfare Saturday the service for these feasts is performed on Meatfare Friday. But if the **Saint's Feast of the Temple** or the **Feast of the Meeting of the Lord** falls on Meatfare Saturday, then on Meatfare Saturday we sing the service of the temple feast or the Meeting of the Lord; then we sing the service for the departed, evening and morning, on the previous Saturday or on Meatfare Thursday. When the Saint's Feast of the temple falls on Meatfare Saturday, then the service for the departed may be sung only at the sepulcher, in the temple there must only be one service to the temple; and where there is no sepulcher, the service is sung as noted above; however, *at the sepulcher* may also be understood the vestibule, in which it is necessary to perform the order for the departed after the dismissal of Vespers (Ustav (Rubrics) chapter 14).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp., (Kharkov, 1900) p 0492-3
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