

### *Paschal Matins \_)*

The clergy vest for the services on this Bright Feast Day in all the "brightest order (i.e. not only in full, but also the brightest, most festive vestments), all tapers and candles are lit", for the expression of joy. The abundance of the grace of God, revealed in the resurrection of Christ, is expressed by the abundant burning of incense. The Ustav (Typicon) in this case prescribes building "two vessels with burning coals", to enclose in them "much sweet-smelling incense" and to place "one vessel in the middle of the church, and the other in the holy sanctuary, so that the whole church will be filled with sweet-smelling aroma". The priest distributes lit candles to all those standing around him which they hold during all of Matins, as a sign of full spiritual joy. After censuring the altar three times \_), the priest, holding in his hand the cross and candle (at the service without a deacon he holds in his left hand the cross and candle, in his right hand a censer), and the deacon with the censer leave the sanctuary and stand facing West. At a cathedral service other priests hold in their hands the Gospel and the icon of the Resurrection. If it is not a cathedral the Gospel and the icon of the Resurrection are held by pious laymen, only necessarily with cloths. At this time the church doors "that are to the West" (i.e. the exit) are shut, and "the rector with the priests go out through the north doors to the narthex", and in their absence through the western doors\_), "the deacons preceding him (and where they are not present, churchmen in order of precedence), with two candles and both choirs", then come the banners, and also the Cross from behind the Altar table and the icons of the Mother of God from behind the Altar table, accompanied by the people, "singing the stichera in tone 6: "Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels in heaven sing. Enable us on earth to glorify Thee in purity of heart 4)". Behind the priest go all the people, the children of Adam who strive for the New Adam in order that through the joyful news about His rising through the narrow gates they may enter into His new life. Therefore, from the narthex everyone will circle the temple from the West to the South, the East and the North 5), as though to meet his Savior outside. This represents the Myrrhbearing Women, who met the resurrected Lord outside of Jerusalem. Together with this, the solemn singing, the carrying forth of the banners, the pealing of the church bells mark the victory of Christ over Hades and death, liberating the souls of the forefathers from Hades, who out of the darkness of the abyss of hell to the high place of paradise in the mansions "go to the light with cheerful feet, praising the eternal Pascha". Having come again to the entrance, carrying the Gospel, the icon of the Resurrection and so forth, we stand facing the West. The rector, having taken the censer from the deacon in his right hand and holding in his left hand the cross, censes the icon and the choir and the brethren, while the deacon carries before him "a lighted candle". All the brethren stand

holding candles, praying with attention, and grateful for the sake of the One who suffered and is risen again for us, Christ our God". Then, "the rector comes before the great doors of the church" and censes the deacon. Then, the deacon, having taken the censer from the rector, censes him. Then the rector, holding in his left hand a cross, again takes the censer from the deacon and, standing before the church doors, facing East, makes a sign of the cross three times before the great doors of the church (which are closed) with the censer", and proclaims: "Glory to the holy, consubstantial, life-creating, and undivided Trinity". So begins the Paschal Matins before the closed doors of the temple, with the sign that the Myrrh-bearing women and apostles have received the first news of the resurrection of the Lord before the doors of His tomb. After the exclamation the singers sing "Amen". Then the clergy "in full voice" sing the Troparion three times: "Christ is risen", and after them the same Troparion is sung "with sweet singing" by the singers, also three times. Then the rector chants the verses, starting from: "Let God arise", and ending with: "Both now and ever". After each verse the singers respond with: "Christ is risen". "Then the rector sings in a higher pitch "Christ is risen", and opens the doors", similar to the Angel rolling the stone from the door of the tomb. Then everyone enters the temple 6), singing the second half of the Troparion: "And upon those in the tombs". "Then they strike all the large bells (kampani), and hit them until it is enough, in a cluster of three bell ringings", (i.e. all the bells are rung and they ring them for a long time in three sections). After the entrance of the clergy through the Royal Doors into the sanctuary, the Great Litany is intoned and immediately after the Paschal Canon is sung: "This is the day of Resurrection" with the refrain to each Troparion of the Canon: "Christ is risen from the dead". In the beginning we sing the Irmos of each Ode four times, we sing the Troparia by 12 (in those Odes where there are two Troparia, we sing each one six times and where there are three, we sing each one four 4 times). At the end of each Ode we again sing the Irmos twice and on the third time "together" (i.e. both choirs converge in the center of the temple for its singing). The clergy in the sanctuary begin singing each Ode of the canon and the singers on the Clerosi continue singing the Odes 7).

At the beginning of the canon, and equally, according to the established custom (see Tser. Vest. (Church Messenger) 1892, 28), and at the beginning of each of its odes, the priest, holding in his left hand the holy cross and burning candle, and in his right the censer with incense, preceded by the deacon with his candle, does a censuring of the whole church, welcoming the faithful with the joyful exclamation: "Christ is risen" 8). There is a custom according to which this censuring is done before each Ode in changed vestments, as a sign of the numerous appearances of the Lord after the resurrection. Each Ode of the Canon consists of a Little Litany and its exclamation. After the 3rd, 6th and 9th Odes the usual

exclamations during the Matins Canon ("For Thou art our God", "For Thou art the King of peace", "For all the Powers of heaven praise Thee) are exclaimed. After the 1st Ode the exclamation is: "For Thine is the strength", after the 4th: "For Thou art a good God who lovest man", after the 5th: "For sanctified and glorified is Thine all honorable and magnificent Name", after the 7th: "Blessed and glorified be the might of Thy kingdom"; after the 8th: "For blessed is Thy name, and glorified is Thy kingdom" (see the Ustav (Typicon) and the Flowery Triodion).

After the canon we sing: "Let every breath", the stichera on the "Praises" and then, "both choirs coming together", we sing the stichera of Pascha ("Today a sacred Pascha is revealed to us") with the refrains ("Let God arise" and so forth). During the time of the stichera of Pascha, in conformity with the words of one of them: "Let us embrace each other", begins the kiss (christovaniye), i.e. the mutual kissing with the greeting: "Christ is risen", "Truly He is risen". The kiss first happens in the sanctuary among the church servers and is completed as follows: those approaching first kiss the Cross, either the Gospel, or an icon, looking because the greeter holds something in their hands (priests, usually have crosses in their hands, deacons hold Gospels, church servers hold icons of the Resurrection), and then kiss him on the lips, with the words: "Christ is risen"; and they answer the greeting with: "Truly he is risen". Then the clergy leave the sanctuary to exchange the kiss with the laity before the Royal Doors and there a line forms on the solea on the right side of the rector. First the church servers approach and having exchanged the kiss join in the line of clergy. Then the laity approach and exchange the kiss with all clergy and church servers, according to the common custom, i.e. the same way as it was done in the sanctuary among the clergy. Then the laymen also mutually exchange the kiss among themselves, both in the temple, and outside of the temple, with the same mutual greeting.

The joyful Paschal greeting reminds us of that situation when the Apostles (Lk. 24: 14, 34), after the news of the resurrection of Christ was suddenly spread, said to each other with amazement and joyful delight: "Christ is risen" and answered each other: "Truly, He is risen". The mutual kiss is an expression of love and reconciliation with each other, in memory of the general forgiveness, and of our reconciliation with God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ 9). During the exchange of kisses and greetings, from ancient times, the faithful give each other red eggs 10). In general the egg is a symbol of life. In this case the egg serves as a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for us. Just as from eggs, life is born from under its dead shell, which has been completely hidden, so even Christ lying in the grave as a corpse, is risen from this dwelling place of death and corruption. Together with this the egg is also a beautiful symbol of our rebirth to future life. As from eggs a living existence is born and starts to live with the fullness of life when it is freed from the shell, including within itself its seed. So also at the second

coming of Jesus Christ on earth we, having rejected everything corruptible here where we already have the seed and the beginning of eternal life through the power of the resurrection of Christ, shall be reborn and shall resurrect to the other life. Furthermore, the egg marks two situations for us: the present and the future. On the one hand, as the egg contains a piece of its future existence, life has already appeared, is not full but imperfect. And we in our present earthly condition do not quite reach the satisfaction of the supreme aspirations of our souls for the true, the good and the prosperous. On the other hand, like the existence which came from eggs, we begin to live a full life, satisfying our particular needs, and after our resurrection we shall enter the perfect life where our mind learns truth face to face, our will shall reach for its highest moral development and our senses will enjoy never-ending blessedness. The decorated red egg reminds us that we receive our new life through the most pure blood of Jesus Christ. It is the same color, belonging to bright colors, revealed as a sign of our joy for the victory of Jesus Christ over death, for His resurrection from the dead and for the fulfillment of His act of our atonement. The custom of the mutual exchange of eggs, according to the tradition kept in the Orthodox Church, is necessitated from the very beginning by St. Mary Magdalene (refer to July 22) who, having stood before the Emperor Tiberius, brought him a red egg with the greeting: "Christ is risen!" <sup>11</sup>).

After the exchange of kiss is done we read the inspired sermon of St. John Chrysostom, wonderful in the depth of thought and powerful in feeling <sup>12</sup>). Also we sing the Troparion in honor of this holy hierarch <sup>13</sup>). Then follows the Litany: "Have mercy on us, O God" and "Let us complete our morning prayer", and after these, the prayer, the departing Dismissal ("Wisdom", "Bless", "Blessed is He That Is, Christ our God", "Confirm, O God"). Instead of the doxology: "Glory to Thee, O Christ God", the priest sings the beginning of the Troparion: "Christ is risen" which is completed by the singers. Then the priest with a cross in his hands says the Dismissal, after which, raising the cross, exclaims three times: "Christ is risen"; and the people answer him: "Truly, He is risen". Following the Troparion "Christ is risen", we sing: "And unto us He has given eternal life. Let us worship His third day resurrection", and thus Paschal Matins is concluded.

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) Paschal Matins begins after the Midnight Service. In the contemporary Ustav (Typicon) the time of the ringing of the church bells for the Paschal Matins is not precisely determined. It says in this Ustav: "About the time for Matins the Paraecclesiarch, receiving the blessing from the rector, goes out and strikes the bells with large strokes and until it is enough". According to the established church practice, at the present time the ringing of church bells for the Paschal Matins usually begins at 12 o'clock midnight. For Moscow it has been regularized by the

ever memorable Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow. In March 1849 he issued this instruction to the Moscow churches. "Before Matins, on the day of Holy Pascha, the churchmen on the bell towers should be reliable and circumspect. And it is useful for them to have watches as a precaution against the premature erroneous ringing of the church bells". "If in the Kremlin before the Paschal Matins cannon will be fired (which should be three shots during the following hour), then, as a precaution one also should not be guided by them for the ringing of the church bells". "For the beginning of the ringing of church bells for Paschal Matins listen for the Dormition bells and hear the first impact of them in silence, and on the second impact begin ringing the church bells". "For bell towers that are remote from the Kremlin, and cannot hear the Kremlin bells, begin ringing the church bells after the ringing of the church bells of those churches, which are closer to them than they are to the Kremlin. And do not pay attention to those, which are farther away". "Decency requires the exact execution of this order and immediately inform those who don't comply". This order has been submitted to all Moscow cathedrals, monasteries and churches through the Consistory. In the following year of 1850, the detailed schedule of the hours of the ringing of the church bells throughout the year has been printed and sent to all the churches of Moscow, under the name: "The instruction for the times of the church Divine services, according to the Ustav (Typicon) of the Moscow Greater Dormition Cathedral". In this instruction on the day of Holy Pascha one must ring the church bells for Matins at 12 o'clock midnight and for the Liturgy at 6 o'clock in the morning. All temples of Moscow are obligated to follow this instruction. The example of Moscow soon affected the time of the ringing of church bells for the Matins of Pascha even in other places of Russia.

\_) According to the "Order of the Church Services, Ceremonies, and Observances in the Greater Dormition Cathedral in Moscow, before the beginning of the cross procession, the bishop in the sanctuary "censing sings: Thy Resurrection" (refer to note 4).

\_) Our Ustav (Typicon) in the given case has in view the features of the architecture of ancient temples, where three doors are constructed from the narthex into the temple. The middle door is referred to as the "church", the "great", the "beautiful", the "royal", but the side doors smaller in size are the "northern" and "southern". Most narthexes looked like a covered running gallery, contiguous to the temple on three sides, the northern, western and southern. During the present construction of temples, especially the warm and in most cases unique way for the entrance into the temple and the exit from it is possible only through the western

doors or through the narthex, adjoining the temple with only the western side. (Rukovodstvo dlia seljskikh pastirej (Manual for Village Pastors) 1889, 44).

4) "For the celebration," the Moscow Metropolitan Philaret teaches, "we start with the hymn in which we witness that the Angels in the heavens sing of the resurrection of Christ. Then we ask for the grace to glorify it with a pure heart. And from the beginning this hymn is exclaimed in the closed sanctuary when the church was still silent. What does this order mean? The Angels have learned about and glorified the resurrection of Christ before mankind. For people found out about it first from the Angels. Heaven was not visibly opened for the earth. When Christ opened heaven it was not visible. By the power of His cross, and, together with His resurrection, patriarchs, prophets, and Old Testament saints entered it, during the doxology of the Angels. Through faith, and not by seeing, we know about this solemn cross procession of the heavenly Church. And that our knowledge of it was not too dark, and the informed imitation of it in the Church on earth is not too mortal. For this we need to ask for grace and a pure heart from Christ our God, because "with a pure heart we will behold God" (Mt. 5:8)".

5) One of the Priests, holding to the letter of the Ustav (Typicon), exits the sanctuary with the cross procession through the northern door of the temple (where there is such a one) and from there reaches the closed western door, bypassing not all of the temple around, but only a quarter of it. Others, exiting through the north door of the temple, go to the West and, not stopping opposite the western door, passes by it, further, to the South, the East and the North and arrive again at the closed western door. The third (as few temples have a northern door) exit at the western door, pass around the temple and come again to the western door already shut. From the church Ustav (Typicon) it is not obvious, that before the beginning of the Paschal Matins the cross procession should go all around the church. In the order of the sacred services, observable in the Moscow Greater Dormition Cathedral, not much is spoken about the procession around all of the church. The silence of the Ustav (Typicon) about the circular procession does not weaken the custom of going around the church for Pascha, just as for Great Saturday Matins. Although in the Ustav (Typicon) nothing is said about the procession on this Saturday around the temple with the burial shroud, however the general custom of the procession has for a long time already been addressed in a rule, not anywhere written, but fulfilled by all. Agreeing with this custom, a few of those priests act not against the Ustav (Typicon) "who, going out the north door of the temple" go to the West and not stopping opposite the western door, go pass it, further, to the South, the East and the North and come again to the closed western door. And as most of the temples have only one entrance door on the western side, necessarily

the Paschal procession is made through the western door, after which it is shut", and after the circular procession around the church the procession stops before this door for the performance of the beginning of the Paschal Matins. The third category of priests also does not contradict the Ustav (Typicon). The absence of a northern door in temples should not be considered as an infringement of the Ustav (Typicon). What may constitute variations in the performance of a ceremony should confuse no one in the present case. It is inevitable, because not all temples are equally constructed. The majority do not have a northern exit door. There are even such churches where it is impossible to go around. In the latter case even at the consecration of a temple the procession around it, placed in the order, is cancelled (Rukovodstvo dlia seljskikh pastirej (Manual for Village Priests) 1894, 16).

6) According to the explanation of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, as if together with the inhabitants of the unseen world to the West in the darkness of night, we stood before the shut gates of the temple, as if before the shut gates of paradise. Through this the Church wants to tell us it is like it was before the resurrection of Christ. Then the doxology of the Most Holy Trinity and the risen Christ, the cross and the censer open the gates of the temple for us, as if it were the gates of paradise and heaven. Through these signs the Church says to us: as the grace of the Most Holy Trinity and the name and the power of the risen Christ, so do faith and prayer open the gates of paradise and heaven. The burning candles in our hands not only mark the light of the resurrection, but also the time reminds us about the wise virgins, and heightens our readiness, with light of faith, with the oil of peace, love and mercy, to meet the second, glorious coming of the heavenly Bridegroom at midnight and to find His Royal Doors open for us.

7) The Paschal Canon constitutes the main existing part of the Paschal Matins. It is "the crown of all spiritual song" and represents by itself an outstanding work of church literature not only from the side of the magnificence of its external form, but also in its internal worth, according to the strength and depth of the thoughts included in it, according to the height and richness of its contents. Belonging to the creativity of the famous "golden flowing" hymnographer, St. John of Damascus, apart from all the other canons of this holy man this one, however, is endowed with majestic strong images and expressions, skilful turns of speech and combination of words, living and rapid transitions of ideas, and gleams with unusual power and with exalted feelings. And all this involuntarily adjusts and disposes the soul to the highest sacred spiritual ecstasy. This deeply meaningful canon enters our consciousness in spirit and the very meaning of the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, and forces us to comprehensively live with the soul and to

understand this event, depicting and explaining in the brightest and most expressive pictures the meaning that it has for us and for our salvation. According to this canon the resurrection of the Lord is the source of all our supreme spiritual joy, the basis of our salvation, the statement of our belief, the pledge of immortality and paradisiacal blessedness, the glory of the Church. All that is pleasant, light, joy of life for men is anyhow connected to this event or proceeds from it. And the resurrection is so important not only for humanity, but also for heaven and its sacred inhabitants, and for the earth, with all its creatures, and the very infernal regions, with the prisoners therein, who were freed by the risen Christ from under the eternal fetters (bonds) of Hades. Inspired with feelings of high sacred delight before the immense blessings of the resurrection, the holy hymnographer in the Paschal Canon calls everyone and all to the gladness and celebration and addresses the people living on earth, inviting them to cleanse their feelings, to be enlightened spiritually, to behold Christ shining with the unapproachable light of the resurrection and to drink the new vintage, the new grapes of birth (fruit), of the new feast of faith in the kingdom of Christ and playing to hymn the Guilty One (Christ), the blessed One and the most glorified of the fathers of God. That for the whole universe, for the heavens, the earth and for all creation, it also proclaims: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice. Let the whole world, visible and invisible, keep the feast, for Christ is risen, our eternal joy". That for the inhabitants of heaven, the angels, and for the captives in the prisons of Hades, the Old Testament captives, it also says: "The souls bound in the chains of Hades, O Christ, seeing Thy compassion without measure, pressed onward to the light with joyful steps, praising the eternal Pascha". And here the mind's eye of the hymnographer beholds the magnificent picture of the general triumph of heaven and earth, the whole Church of God, and the earthly and heavenly militants triumphing, with the Most Pure Mother of God at the head, is a picture of the celebration of all creation which he also conveys to the hearers in the strongest and most expressive features: "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem. The glory of the Lord has shone on you. Exult now, and be glad, O Zion. Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your son". Besides its deeply dogmatic thoughts, the Paschal Canon is not alien even to its moral instructive character. St. John of Damascus even during these minutes of mainly enthusiastic and joyful condition of the spirit does not leave the hearers without a corresponding moral lesson. Calling all believers to that spiritual enlightenment and renewal, to that cleansing of feelings, to that excitation of various kinds of pious thoughts within, to the historical memory, etc., the holy hymnographer in vivid and expressive colors carries forth and always holds before the eyes the majestic image of Christ, shining with the unapproachable light of the resurrection, and, describing, how many blessings He revealed to us, through that involuntarily inspiration and fills every



soul with the most heartfelt and deepest feelings of awe, boundless fidelity and love for Him, our Savior, and holds in those praying these feelings throughout his canon. The holy hymnographer achieves this purpose so much the more as he perfectly penetrates himself and is enlivened by this veneration and love for the Risen One. But that is why his word also fires up other hearts. He in all his thoughts and feelings burns with the flame of this love and that he continually turns to, and also during this time appeals to the Savior in the most fervent gentle and deeply worthy expressions, that burn with feelings of an uncontrollable attachment to Him, and the need for an eternal mutual and blessed dialogue with Him, that offers prayerful cries to Him about glorification and about worthy participation in the good blessings of the resurrection in His kingdom. And finally, he glorifies Him as the All Perfect and Omnipotent God, as the Savior eternally abiding with us as the support and the foundation of all our expectations and hopes. All this the holy hymnographer pours out in an abundant stream into the hearts of his hearers, igniting in them the flames of reverential love for the Risen Lord. Together with this inspired bright celebration of the resurrection of Christ the soul of the hymnographer as though released from all ordinary daily activity in the world, is turned to heaven, to the world on high, and beholds the wonderful broad vistas of this world. Before the sight of the holy hymnographer is that unapproachable light, with which the Risen Christ the Savior shines, that wonderful celebration of the heavens and in general of all the invisible world, with its inhabitants, are the light-bearing angels, singing together with the earth and all of creation of the visible world of the Lord Risen from the dead, is that wonderful glory, which fills everything with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that eternal joy and eternal gladness in the kingdom of Christ, the doors of which the holy hymnographer sees as opened by the resurrection of the Savior, that the children of Holy Zion before him are dancing with joy, coming to him from the North, and the West, and the sea, and the East blessing Christ, that is the new Jerusalem in the full radiance of the glory of the Lord, that is the infernal regions of the earth and the prisoners of Hades coming to the light praising the eternal Pascha. That finally, through Christ he sees the lightening of our mortal bodies into the grandeur of incorruption, the revelation of a new blessed life in Christ, leading us from earth to heaven in dialogue with the Risen One in the never ending day of His glorious kingdom. All these ecstatic pictures are brought to the consciousness of his hearers, deeply touch their hearts, ennoble and inspire their souls and, as if acquiring them from the light from on high to the world, release them from everything lowly, earthly, and fulfill their most sacred and joyous feelings. In such a way, the Paschal Canon of St. John of Damascus not only in the perfection in the power and richness of its contents corresponds with the light of Christ to the feast, not only does it fully embrace the most expressive language explaining to us its

thought and meaning, but also it directs all hearers to its deeply moral and instructive influence. Therefore it is no wonder that the Orthodox Church places such an unusual and honorable meaning to the Paschal Canon, and that it occupies the most significant part of the Paschal Matins (For more details see the Novgorod Eparchialjnia Vedomosti (Diocesan News) 1897, 8).

8) On the question whether the deacon should say during the time of censuring together with the priest at the Paschal Canon: "Christ is risen" or "Truly, He is risen, the "Tser. Vestnik. (Church Messenger)" (1894, 16) answers in this way: According to the Ustav (Typicon), no one, not another priest, not the deacon, nor the people should say the greeting. According to custom, the priest, personally, and on behalf of his concelebrant, the deacon, greets the people with the words: "Christ is risen.

9) Our using the words, "Christ is risen, and "Truly, He is risen", expresses, on the one hand, the joyful confession of the Christian faith, and, on the other hand, meets the confirmation of that same undoubted hope of salvation to eternal life, granted to and for us by the One who suffered and is risen, Jesus Christ. All the essence of our holy faith, all the strength and firmness of our desire and hope, all the fullness of eternal joy and blessedness are included in these brief words. The Metropolitan of Moscow Philaret says: "Whether one should base faith, create hope, ignite love, enlighten wisdom, give wings to prayer, bring down grace, overcome troubles, death and evil, give vitality to life, create in order that this blessedness be not a dream, but existence, the glory be not a phantom, but an eternal thunder bolt of eternal light, lighting everything up, and isn't it amazing? On all this there will be enough power in the one wonderful phrase: "Christ is risen". That is why this exclamation is so familiar and annually repeated innumerable times. Always, however, when it is heard by us, it amazes our hearing with all the power of novelty and meaning as if it were a revelation from on high. As from a spark, from this exclamation the believing heart is ignited by the heavenly fire, with sacred delight, as if it feels the close presence of the Very shining Divine light of the risen Lord. It is clear in itself that our exclamations, "Christ is risen", "Truly, He is risen", should be invigorated by the living faith and love for Christ our Savior. Accompanying these exclamations, our brotherly kiss should be an expression of the true joy for our salvation, a symbol of the wonderful abolition of all enmity and divisions, the outpouring of heartfelt feelings of love and relations with each other. Therefore we in these sacred and divine minutes should root out from ourselves all hostile feelings, forget and trample down all unpleasant attitudes if such were regretfully between anyone of us. The holy Church also wants to inspire us when it discloses to us in the hymn, "This is the

day of resurrection, let us be illumined by the feast. Let us embrace each other. Let us call brothers even those that hate us, and forgive all by the resurrection" (Sieiat. Blagoch. (Seeds of Piety, Archpriest Nordov, vol. 1, page 9).

10) There is a custom to go to the graves on Pascha with eggs and to exchange the kiss of peace with dead relatives. The eggs that are brought are left on the graves, and in some places those candles that were held during Paschal Matins are also left on the graves (Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1892, 16).

11) Bringing such a small value gift as an egg to Emperor Tiberius, St. Mary Magdalene simply fulfilled Judean custom. In antiquity pagans and Judeans had the custom of appearing before an important person and especially for the first time bringing a gift to him from themselves as a token of respect and love. In similar cases poor people usually brought tree fruits and eggs from domestic fowl. Therefore even St. Mary Magdalene, who devoted herself to apostolic deeds connected with the poor and needy, appeared before Emperor Tiberius with the presentation of the Gospel, and honored him with a similar gift, which was the custom of poor people, was, of course, known even in Tiberius. Bringing Emperor Tiberius a red egg with this greeting: "Christ is risen", she told in this way the most important circumstances of the earthly life of the Savior, especially about His guiltless suffering and death on the cross. In consequence of this Tiberius, became angry with the unfair behavior of the Jews, of the procurator Pilate and the high priest Caiaphas, and inflicted deserved punishment on them. The earliest Christians, having learned about the simple heartfelt offering of the equal-to-the-apostles woman, began imitating her, and during the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ began to exchange red eggs with each other. Little by little this custom became widely spread and became universal in Christianity. Such an origin of this custom demonstrates that all Christian societies even those not Orthodox, keep it and unanimously witness that it existed in the Christian Church from its very beginning and draws its beginning from the example of the equal-to-the-apostles woman. In particular, it proves that the ancient hand-written Greek Typicon, recorded on parchment and kept in the library of the Holy Resurrection Monastery near Thessalonica, is accurate. At the end of this Typicon, after the prayers on the day of Holy Pascha, the following is written: "the prayer for the blessing of eggs and cheese is also read, and the hegumen, kissing the brethren, distributes eggs to them and says: "Christ is risen". So we have received from the Holy Fathers, who kept this custom from apostolic times, for the Holy Equal-to-the-apostles Mary Magdalene first showed the faithful the example of this joyful gift offering" (Perm Eparchialjniia Vedomosti (Perm Diocesan News) 1894, 10).

12) His Eminence Plato, Metropolitan of Kiev, made the following paraphrase of this sermon.

"If any man be devout and loves God" who truly honors God and sincerely loves Him, "let him delight in this fair and radiant feast", i.e. of the glorious resurrection of Christ which we now celebrate and in whom the Lord has so wonderfully shown also His mercy to the human race, and the wisdom in his redemption from eternal ruin, and the power over the enemies of our salvation. "If any man be a wise servant," who was given talents from God, talents of time, power, and ability, and does not hide them vainly in the earth, nor expends them only on earthly affairs and pleasures, but wisely uses them in service of the Lord and acquiring eternal blessedness. "Let him enter with rejoicing into the joy of his Lord", let him be a participant of that spiritual joy, which the Lord prepared for His faithful servants, by the redeeming blood of the Savior (Mt. 25:21). "If any have labored in fasting," who during the past lent did not remain in idleness, but fervently labored under the duty of his salvation, "let him now receive his denarius", receive the God-given fruits of the resurrection of Christ that award that was promised by God to the good workers (Mt. 10:10; 20:1-8). "If any have worked from the first hour", did the will of God from childhood, or from the time God called him into His garden, i.e. into the Church of Christ, "let him today receive his just recompense". "If any have come at the third hour", has started the duty to God not suddenly, but after a little bit of time, "let him with thanksgiving" thank God for his condescension. "If any have arrived at the sixth hour", came to call on God even later when he has coursed through half of his life "let him have no misgivings, for he shall in no way be deprived" from those blessings, which the risen Lord God grants to every one, wishing to taste of it. "If any have tarried until the ninth hour", even more slowly and started to labor at his duty to God, then even as day of his life declines towards the evening, "let him draw near, doubting and fearing nothing": for now is the grace of God revealed as the savior of all mankind (Tit. 2:11). "If any have arrived even at the eleventh hour", even the one who came to his duty to God very, very late, began occupying himself with the salvation of his soul already in old age, "let him not be alarmed at his tardiness. For the Master, being jealous of his honor", and being compassionate, "will accept the last even as the first. He gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has worked from the first hour", granting justice to all. "And He gives satisfaction to the first", rewarding him according to his righteousness, "and He is merciful unto the last" according to His condescension, and "and to one He gives" that which he earned, "and upon the other He bestows gifts" according to His benevolence. "And He both accepts the good works" with joy and "and embraces the intention" with love; "And He honors the acts" as He should, "praises the

offering." "Therefore enter all of you into the joy of our Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise, the second." from the Merciful Master! "You rich and poor, make glad with one another", as children of the one Father of Heaven! "You sober minded and you slothful," in the work of your salvation, "honor the day" of the world-wide celebration! "Rejoice today, you that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast" when heaven and earth rejoice, and all creation celebrates! "The table is full; be satisfied, all of you." "The calf is fatted;" slaughtered for our sake, "let no one go away hungry!" "All of you shall enjoy the banquet of faith, receive, all of you, the riches of mercy" of God! "Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal Kingdom has been revealed" the heavenly one which is prepared for the faithful rich in inheritance. "Let no one weep for his transgressions, for the pardon of the Savior has shone forth from the grave" to all the sinners, willing to accept it. "Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free", if only we again shall not be enthralled by our sins. "He" the Life-giver, "that was held by it has extinguished it". Having descended into Hades" the Son of God "made Hades captive and embittered it". "And the Prophet Isaiah, receiving this beforehand, cried out: Hades was embittered when it met Thee in the lower regions" (Isaiah 14: 9). "It was embittered, for it was destroyed", became empty. "It was embittered, for it was mocked", an outcome of its struggle with the Savior. "It was embittered, for it was slain", lost what consisted of its life and power. "It was embittered, for it was cast down", from its throne and was deprived of its authority over the human race. "It was embittered for it was bound" and now cannot operate with freedom and its power, as before. "It received a body, and met God face to face. It received earth and met Heaven. It received that which was seen, and fell upon that which is unseen". So God caught him in His wisdom! O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory" (1 Cor. 15:55)? Where is the sin with which you, O Death, wounded people? Where, O Hades, is your triumph over the human race? "Christ is risen, and you were cast down", as powerless. "Christ is risen, and the demons have fallen". They were your slaves, through which you caught people. "Christ is risen, and the Angels rejoice", looking on the wonderful celebration of the Son of God and the salvation of men. "Christ is risen, and life lives", even there where before there was an area of death and corruption. "Christ is risen, and not one of the dead remains in the grave. For Christ, rising from the dead, has become the first fruits of them who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). "He first rises as the head, and afterward He raises up all His members", those believing in Him and having in themselves His life-creating Spirit (1 Cor. 15:21-23. Rom. 8:1). "To Him be glory and dominion, unto ages of ages. Amen." (Kiev. Eparchialjniia Vedomosti (Kievan Diocesan News), 1893,7).

13) This reading of the sermon of St. John Chrysostom cannot arbitrarily be omitted by the priest and replaced with any other sermon or lecture. Rich in its internal contents, it corresponds to the most festive feast of the Resurrection of Christ, because it is familiar to all Orthodox people from childhood. It is a beautiful conclusion to the Paschal Matins. The priest who composes his own sermon for the Feast of Light must select some other moment in the Paschal Divine Services. More important it does not follow to connect with such, again with the composition of the sermon, the singing of the Troparion to St. John Chrysostom, as it is integrally connected to the sermon of the Holy Father (Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1888, 28).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Manual for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0568-0575  
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