

The Paschal Liturgy

The liturgy is served at the earliest hour in the morning so that the fast ends at midnight.¹

Although the liturgy is basically the same as established by the Lord Himself, it is the religious rite which least of all can be exposed to changes. But Pascha also imposes on it a seal of eminent majesty and special wondrously-solemn beauty. The beginning of the liturgy will change the same as the beginning of Paschal Matins. After the usual exclamation, the priest, holding in his left hand a cross with lit candles and in his right a censer, sings in the sanctuary: "Christ is Risen!", three times. This hymn is repeated also by the choir after the known paschal verses ("Let God Arise") are proclaimed by the priest. Then the special features of the liturgy relate to the singing of the festal antiphons and the singing of "As many as have been baptized into Christ" instead of the Trisagion and the solemn reading of the Gospel.

The Gospel tells about the Divinity of Jesus Christ and is read this day because the resurrection of the Savior serves as proof of His Divinity.²

In order for the believers to better master it the Gospel is read in parts alternately by all the church servers. How to divide the Gospel in the liturgy on the first day of Pascha is not uniform. In the churches of the capital and during the hierarchical service the Gospel is most often divided into three parts: 1) from first verse, ending at the fifth, 2) from the sixth verse, ending at the 13th, and 3) from the 14th verse to the end, corresponding to the flow of ideas in this Gospel (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 33). In significance of the fact that the glory of the risen Lord was spread to all nations, the Gospel is also proclaimed in different languages, particularly in Hebrew, Greek and Latin according to the languages of the inscription on the cross of the Savior³.

For reading the Gospel one deacon goes to the usual place before the Royal Doors, and faces east. Other deacons stand in various places, "from the holy altar table even up to the western door of the church, one after the other". Behind them all stands the Archdeacon". The Archdeacon stands facing east, the second deacon faces west, the third deacon faces south, and the fourth deacon faces north. Doing this represents that the Gospel of Christ the Savior is preached in all the earth and to all countries, and that this good news is preached with awesome attention to all the earth. Before the reading of the Gospel the Rector exclaims: "Let us attend!" and the Rector also, standing before the holy altar table facing east, reads: "In the beginning was the Word" and so on. The others also read.

The reading of the Gospel is accompanied by bell-ringing, which proclaims to all creation the lofty good news of the Divinity and incarnation of God the Word. This ringing is done as following: before the beginning of the Gospel and before each part in the church strike in Candia (the small hand bell), but after this impact strike the largest bell on the bell tower (usually, there is a "search", i.e. strike all the bells gradually, starting from the smallest and ending with the largest). At the end of the Gospel ring all the bells but not for a long time.

Then there are still following features in the liturgy: instead of "It is truly meet" sing the Irmos: "Shine! Shine!", with the refrain: "The angel cried"; instead of "Blessed is He that comes", "Let our mouths be filled", "We have seen the true Light!", "Blessed be the name of the Lord" and instead of the Psalm "I will bless the Lord", sing: "Christ is Risen!"; instead of: "Glory to Thee O Christ God, our hope" the priest sings first half of the Troparion: "Christ is Risen!", and singers finish. The priest with the cross says the dismissal the same as in Matins.

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8; sel. 1. **Gospel:** Jn. 1:1-17; sel. 1.

The blessing of the Artos is one of the special paschal rites, "in honor and glory and memory of the glorious resurrection" of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Artos is understood to be a Prosfora with an image on it of the cross crowned with thorns or with the image of the resurrection of Christ as signs of victory of Christ over death. The word "Artos" is Greek; translated into Russian it means "bread". The historical origin of the Artos is as follows: the Apostles, who were accustomed to partake a meal together with the resurrected Lord (Acts 10:41), after His ascension to heaven, remembering His covenantal words: "I am with you always" (Mt. 28:20), felt the invisible presence of the Lord through living faith in their assemblies, but could not see Him with carnal eyes. The natural expression of this burning faith of the disciples to their Teacher and their desire to have a constant reminder of His abiding with them, was that at a meal they left an unoccupied place for Jesus Christ to recline with them, but placed on the table before that place some bread as if for Him, and each time after the end of the meal, lifting up thanksgiving to God, lifted this bread, saying: "Christ is Risen!" (Refer to p.285, note 1). When the disciples of Jesus Christ went away to various countries for the proclamation of the Gospel, they whenever possible tried to observe this custom: each of the Holy Apostles in whatever country founded a new society of followers of Christ and when beginning a meal left a place and a fragment of bread in honor of the Savior, and after

the end of the meal together with them glorified the risen Lord, raising up the fragment of bread placed in memory of Him. What is accepted by the first students of the Gospel from the lips of the Apostles and was done by them daily, that is what the fathers of the Church of the following centuries have applied to the feast of the Resurrection of Christ in order to keep for ever the apostolic tradition in the Church. In this way this custom was really kept in the Church and through a number of centuries reached our time. As the Apostles during their assemblies have placed the particle of bread in the place appointed for the Savior reminded them of the risen Christ, so, intentionally the Holy Church even at the present time places an Artos on Holy Pascha in the temple in full view of the faithful to serve as their same reminder of the invisible presence of the risen Lord with us. Thus, preparing the Artos, the Holy Church imitates the Apostles and by these blessed loaves remembers the appearances of the risen Lord to the Apostles. At the same time the Artos reminds us that Jesus Christ by His death on the cross also has become for us the rising of the truly living bread. Such is the meaning of the Artos and is revealed in the prayer of its blessing (see below). Besides, in this prayer the priest, calling down the blessing of God on the blessed Artos, asks the Lord to heal any infirmity and illness and to grant healing to all who eat of the Artos⁴.

According to the Supplemental Book of Needs in monasteries the sanctification of the Artos is done on the first day of Holy Pascha and is done as follows: "The Artos, which is bread usually with a cross on it prepared for this, is brought to the priest in the sanctuary. After the Prayer before the Ambo and the ending of the Divine Liturgy, the Deacon says: "Let us pray to the Lord", and the clerics: "Lord, have mercy" and the priest reads this prayer over it: "O All-powerful God and Almighty Lord, Who by Thy servant Moses during the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and the liberation of Thy people from the bitter slavery of Pharaoh, didst command that a lamb be slain, prefiguring the Lamb, Thy beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily was slain on the cross for us, taking away the sins of the whole world, do Thou now also, we humbly pray Thee, look down upon this bread and bless and sanctify it. For we Thy servants, in honor and glory and in commemoration of the glorious Resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we also have received remission, freedom and release from bondage of the eternal slavery of the enemy and from the indissoluble bonds of Hades, do now offer this before Thy Majesty on this bright, all-glorious and saving day of Pascha. Grant that we who offer this and kiss it and eat of it become partakers of Thy heavenly blessing, and by

Thy power burn away from us every sickness and infirmity, granting health to all.

For Thou art the source of blessings, and the Bestower of healing, and unto Thee we send up glory, to the Unoriginate Father, with Thine Only-begotten Son, and Thine All-holy, Good and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages".

Choir: "Amen". "Immediately the priest sprinkles the Artos with Holy Water (of Theophany) saying: "This Artos is blessed and sanctified by the sprinkling of this Holy Water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen", three times. And after this he goes out and places it on the Analogion, and the people, as they receive the Antidoron, kiss the Artos".

On the day of Pascha and during all Bright Week the Artos with an image of the Resurrection of the Lord is placed on an Analogion purposely arranged either in the sanctuary or in the temple.

In monasteries after the Liturgy there is a procession to the refectory with the icon of the Resurrection of Christ, with the Artos, with a lampada or two, with the ringing of all bells simultaneously, and with the singing of "Christ is Risen!". After the meal there is a lifting up of the Artos. At the raising of the Artos, the cellarer says: "Christ is Risen!" once; and all respond: "Indeed, He is Risen". Then, having signed the Artos cross-wisely, he says: "Let us worship His three-day resurrection", and places the Artos on the Panagiaron (a special vessel). Then everyone kiss the Artos, singing the ninth ode of the canon of Pascha: "Shine, shine". After kissing the Artos sing the Hypakoe and the Kontakion of Pascha, then comes the Dismissal, and the Artos is then returned to the temple, according to the former order, and is placed in its proper place in the temple (for details see "The Order of the Blessing of the Artos on the day of Holy Pascha in the Ustav and the Pentecostarion).

In parish churches during the cross processions done during Holy Pascha (see about them below), the Artos is carried around the temple. Both on the first day of Pascha and during all Bright Week the Artos with the image of the Resurrection of the Lord is placed on the Analogion in the temple.

After the liturgy "flesh meats" ⁵are **blessed** and laymen are permitted to eat these foods. ⁶The New Tablets says: "Piously completing the memory of Christ, the Lamb of God, who with suffering was slain for cleansing the

sins of the world, Christians, in proof of spiritual gladness on the day of Holy Pascha, prepare food from the meat of the speechless lamb, sanctified with the blessing of the church. And the Church of Christ from of old permits Christians to use this rite not for preserving the ancient Judean law but as an expression of Christian piety. For this, after the end of the fast, during the approach of the Lord's Holy Pascha, having saturated the souls of believers with doxologies as spiritual food and heavenly bread from the mercy meal of God, for a few bodily comforts and reinforcements, she also offers this bestowed creature i.e. the lamb, to God for our use, praying to God to bless it for us and to make it useful and pleasant in order that having tasted it with thanksgiving, more and more, we with spiritual hunger and thirst would search for the Very God, Who is the food of our souls and bodies, and would be continually satisfied by Him.

The "Prayer for blessing food and meat on the Holy and Great Sunday of Pascha" is printed in the Book of Needs and the Pentecostarion. Meats are blessed outside the temple. It is written in the Ustav [Typikon], "Orthodox Christians do not bring meat into the church, but into the house for the priest".

In the Book of Needs and the Pentecostarion is another "**Prayer for the blessing of cheese and eggs**". According to the New Tablets, this rite belongs more to the monks, who, after the completion of the liturgy on the feast of Holy Pascha, bless cheese and eggs, and then they offer this as blessed food at the meal before all other foods. According to the Ustav [Typikon], "eggs and cheese brought to the church are placed in the entryway and they do not have to be carried into the church at all"⁷.

It is said in the Ustav [Typikon] "Be it known that this bringing of meat and white food (i.e. cheese and eggs) is not Pascha, nor the lamb, as some say and accept, or any preparation (for the sacrament), as some kind of holiness being communed, but a simple offering⁸. It is not as if this was to be offered as a sacrifice to God, to be offered to God, but that only after the fast we begin to eat meat and cheese, food that will be blessed by the priest with offered prayers. And this is the reason for these offerings and not the existence of Pascha, and it is not meet to carry them into the sanctuary or the church, but keep them outside the church or in the entryway, for blessing by prayer according to the third canon of the Holy Apostles and the 99th canon of the Council of Trullo"⁹.

According to established custom, **church servers visit** the homes of church-goers during Pascha **with holy things**. As servers of the Holy

Church, filled with unspeakable joy in the light of the paschal days will wear this joy beyond the walls of the temple, go with the cross and icons to the public squares, bless and sing the joyful church hymns in the homes of their spiritual children, will open through that the opportunity to take part in the festival even for those who were not able to be in the temple on these great days, and to convert the domestic life of their flock for a while into a bright feast of incessant doxology¹⁰. By this, the Holy Church hopes to reach its children, that seeing its church servers going from house to house with holy things, joins to their hearts the belief that during the paschal days the church service does not end with their exit from the temple and that during these days it is necessary to spend time even at home not any differently than during the spiritual hymns.

Paschal Vespers

For this service, the rector is clothed "in full sacred vestments": like Great Vespers, there is an entrance and a Great Prokeimenon; after the entrance, in commemoration of the evening appearance of the Lord to the disciples, the rector reads the Gospel, narrating this event¹¹, in the sanctuary, turned toward the people (Jn. 20:19-25; sel. 66).

¹ According to the explanation in the "Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger]", the liturgy should be served right after Matins or after a short interval (Tserkovnyi Vestnik 1894, 8; refer to p 568, note 4).

The Liturgy of Preparation [Proskomedie] is done during the singing of the Hours (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1891, 7). When you cense after the Liturgy of Preparation [Proskomedie] consider the instruction of the Typikon (Chapter 22) that the rule for exiting the sanctuary for the censuring of the entire temple will not change even for the Paschal Divine Services. Therefore under this situation where the Royal Doors remain open, all entrances and exits should be made through them (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 30).

From the feast of Pascha up to Ascension at the beginning of the liturgy instead of "O Heavenly King" priest should read "Christ is Risen". From Ascension up to Pentecost, the priest should read the Troparion of Ascension. "Glory to God in the highest" in this case is dropped, but "O Lord, open Thou my lips" is read (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 31).

² This Gospel Reading presents such a transcendent teaching about the person of Jesus Christ and especially His Divinity that is not attributable to any apostle. Here is how Blessed Augustine expresses the transcendence of this doctrine: "Meanwhile, as the other three evangelists described only the mortal life of Jesus Christ and spoke about His divinity, John, not wishing any more in view of the earth, from the first words of his Gospel rises not only above the earth and higher than space and the visible sky, but even above the angels and all invisible powers, and is lifted to the Creator of all things". However, not only Christian teachers but also pagan scholars are amazed by the unusual transcendence of this Gospel reading. Therefore one of the philosophers mentioned by Augustine said that the beginning of the Gospel of John should be printed in gold letters and placed in a prominent place in all temples.

³ This custom having the deepest meaning in the east (whence it is come and passed on to us) has for our convenience the possibility of replacing these languages with reading in the languages of the foreigners who live in this or that province in Rus. Such reading with the goal of the missionaries can be transferred to agree with the practice of the Eastern Churches of reading the Gospel in foreign languages at the service of Vespers on the first day of Pascha. Thus the priest should always read the Gospels in the languages of those who reside in his parish. In those parishes with the base population of Russians, then it is more proper to read the Gospel either in Russian or in Slavonic. (Rukovodstvo dlia Selskikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1885, 13; 1888, 8).

⁴ The use of the "Artos" is a custom of the Greek Eastern Church. This rite is not known in the West. "The Office of the Artos" undoubtedly came to the Russian Church together with Christianity and the divine services from Greece, where the raising of the Artos (and Panagia) was a custom that had become stronger in church practice. Comparing the various hand-written liturgical books belonging to the 14th through 17th centuries, it is apparent that in the Russian Church this rite had universal meaning and was then steadily observed in the monasteries. In the days of the patriarchate we had a custom that an Artos and also the Prosphora for the liturgy were delivered to the Moscow Dormition Cathedral from the royal court on the first day of Pascha. On the first day after the liturgy the Patriarch and the assembly in a cross procession with the Artos appeared before the Sovereign. Here, after the Archdeacon elevated the Artos, it was then kissed by the Sovereign, the Patriarch and others. Then the Artos was carried back into the temple and here again the Archdeacon elevated it. In view of the fact that the blessing of the Artos was done only in the cathedral church and in the monasteries in the Penza archdiocese, an order was issued in 1894 that the Artos be positively blessed in all the churches as required by the Typicon [Ustav] (Penzenskiia Eparkhialniia Vedomosti [Penza Diocesan News] 1897 8).

⁵ In some places in Russia there exists a custom to invite the priest to the house for the blessing of foods prepared for the feast before Pascha on Great Saturday, usually, in the time interval between the ending of the liturgy and the beginning of the reading of the Acts of the Holy Apostles. In this case one of the priests after "Blessed is our God", reads: "O Heavenly King", "the Trisagion Prayers" "Our Father", then "Let us pray to the Lord" and the appointed prayers. Then the food is sprinkled with holy water and follows with the (not paschal) dismissal. The other priests, literally holding the Book of Needs, after "Blessed is our God" sings "Christ is Risen!", three times, then "Let us pray to the Lord", and the prayers. They do not sprinkle with holy water nor say the paschal dismissal. Singing "Christ is Risen!" on Saturday during the blessing of food explains that 1) on this day in the liturgy after the Epistle reading instead of the Alleluia, the verses "Arise, O God" is sung, 2) during this singing the church servers vest in bright vestments, and 3) the Gospel reading is about the resurrection of Christ. All this, in their opinion, proves that celebrating the Resurrection of Christ already began and consequently not only is it possible, but also "Christ is Risen" should be chanted during the blessing of food. But it is impossible to agree with such explanation according to the first because at this time until midnight a shroud representing the burial of Christ, Christ in the tomb, is in the temple, and the church Ustav (Typikon) rules that after the liturgy the brethren are to abide in silence and awe, awaiting the beginning of the paschal services. In the second, because all the preceding action of the Church, as singing "Arise, O God" and so forth, does not signify the announcement about the resurrection of Jesus Christ being accomplished, but only the preparation of the joyful feast and the announcing to us before hand about the approaching time of the resurrection of Christ. So the Holy Church acts in imitation of its Heavenly Founder, Jesus Christ, who predicted the resurrection. The Church begins the actual service of the Resurrection after midnight and begins it with the all-joyful hymn "Christ is Risen". And consequently, this hymn from this time until the Ascension of the Lord itself becomes a necessary appointed hymn of the Divine Services not only of the church, in general, but also in individual homes. All Christian needs and blessings also begin with the singing of "Christ is Risen". This hymn also anticipates the prayers for the blessing of food, brought to the temple by Orthodox Christians, if, certainly, they are consecrated on Pascha after the liturgy as stipulated by the Ustav [Typikon]. It flows from this that singing "Christ is Risen!" on Great Saturday for the blessing of food not during its proper time serves as a direct violation of liturgical order. Thinking that one of the prayers appointed for the blessing of cheese, eggs and meat, in this case, without singing "Christ is Risen!", is not enough for their blessing, grants to food a greater meaning than they have (see above extract from the Ustav [Typikon]).

Therefore, in case of the invitation to bless food on Great Saturday, the priest, after the usual beginning, may read the prayer without singing "Christ is Risen!" and without the paschal dismissal. Nothing is said about the sprinkling of the food with holy water in our Book of Needs. But as in general Church blessings (for example, the blessing of vegetables on the Sixth of August, etc.) are ordinarily done with sprinkling holy water, then those priests who after the reading the prayer will sprinkle the food with holy water do not violate the church Ustav [Typikon], especially where it is the custom. The Book of Needs of Peter Mogila, after reading the prayers for the blessing of food, says: "and then the priest will sprinkle all the food with holy water". (For details see Rukovodstvo dlia Selskikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1896, 12).

⁶ Although Orthodox Christians have a custom to prepare bread (kulich) in their homes as if it were a domestic Artos, and they bring it together with cheese and eggs on the first day of Pascha to the entryway of the temple for blessing. But in our Books of Needs there is actually no special prayer for the blessing of bread brought on the first day of Pascha. This is why we cannot use the prayer for the blessing of bread beforehand "for reading at the church on the day of Pascha, with the preliminary blessings of food, meat, cheese and eggs". This prayer is found in old Uniate liturgical books as not only not implemented, but also borrowed from an impure source (Rukovodstvo dlia Selskikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 19).

⁷ At the present time the preparation of paschal foods are more plentiful in the south than in the north of Russia. In Great Russian provinces, except for eggs and so-called Paschas (cottage cheese), they bless only bread, called a kulich. In Little Russia, except for bread or Pascha, they bring roast pig, cheese, eggs, butter, bacon and so forth for blessing. This custom is observed also in Montenegro and Germany exactly as it is done in our Little Russia. (Kurskiia Eparchialjniia Vedomosti [Kursk Diocesan News] 1893, 14).

⁸ In Orthodox society, especially in the provinces of Great Russia, the name "Pascha" for special foods from cottage cheese and sour creams blessed on the first day of Pascha is quite common and ordinarily blessed on the first day of Pascha together with red eggs and bread or a kulich. But, in view of that meaning which, according to the above definitive explanation of the Ustav [Typikon], from the church point of view has "such a finding" that it is not possible to call any food Pascha (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1893, 32).

⁹ The observance of this custom in the north of Russia did not raise any misunderstanding at all that we see in southwest Russia. At the end of the 16th century the Patriarch of Antioch Joachim, while visiting the southern-Russian Metropolia, condemned the excessive respect the South-Russian people have for Paschal food. After a short time, the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremiah, who was personally engaged in the eradication of various disorders in the southern-Russian Metropolia, by the way, issued a circular decree "to consider simple, instead of holy paschal breads", and those who disagreed were excommunicated from the church. In the year 1590 a council of six western-Russian bishops was held in Brest under the presidency of the Kievan Metropolitan Michael Ragoza reaffirmed the condemnation made by Patriarch Jeremiah. The Lvov Brotherhood on the basis of the patriarchal decree and conciliar definitions completely rejected the offering of paschal food to the church and its blessing. But the Lvov Bishop Gideon Balaban zealously rose up against it. The dispute between the brotherhood and Gideon lasted a rather long time, but the ancient custom remained immutable and Gideon, in 1606, reissuing the Book of Needs, left in it the previous prayers for the blessing of meat, food, cheese and eggs. (Kurskiia Eparchialjniia Vedomosti [Kursk Diocesan News] 1893, 14).

Confined women are not forbidden to partake of blessed Paschal food (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1890, 27).

¹⁰ One of the priests describes this visitation of the parish in this way: After the end of the church services and after their refreshment of strength with food and a short rest, the clergy go into the temple. The priest is vested in a Phelonion and an Epitrachelion. The so-called God-bearers carry icons of the Resurrection of Christ, of the temple and other icons, which are exclusively used for religious processions (they have staffs or wooden handles on the bottom part and consequently are quite convenient for

carrying). Having taken the icons, the God-bearers form rows before the sanctuary and wait for the priest to exit the sanctuary. When the priest leaves the sanctuary with a cross, the *trezvon* [strike a full *zvon* on all bells three times, pauses in between] begins on all the *campanas* [bells] in the bell tower, which is maintained during the flow of the whole day. After the usual beginning by the priest, the clergy begin to sing: "Christ is Risen". It is echoed by the God-bearers and the whole procession goes to that part of the parish where it was established that the thanksgiving service would begin.

Ordinarily, for doing the *Moliebens* at the homes during Holy Pascha, the parish is divided into the sites called *fifths* [*piatina*]. The fifth [*piatina*] may contain either a greater or smaller number of houses depending on the number in the parish. The thanksgiving service in the *fifths* [*piatina*] is always kept fixed, since it long was the established order and it is impossible for the priest to break this order and not cause unhappiness. During the day it may be necessary to bypass the thanksgiving service in only one fifth [*piatina*]. In that fifth where they are waiting for the thanksgiving service, they go with urgent preparation for the meeting of holiness. The cross procession stops before the cottage. The God-bearers with icons form rows before the doors, waiting for the meeting of the host of the home. The host comes out with bread on a towel and with the domestic icon; the hostess comes out with a simple wooden salt box. Both of them begin to bow before the icons, doing a full prostration before each one. The hostess covers the icons with linen or canvas towels which become her offering to the parish temple. After touching one of the icons she covers her head with one of the towels believing that by doing this God will relieve her from a whole year of headaches, a belief that is similar to the ancient Christians signing the apostolic "frontals" on their head and receiving healing from various illnesses according to their faith. The hosts after the meeting bring the icons into the house and put them into the holy corner. The candles, which they took from the church wardens who accompanied the procession with a box filled with candles, are then lit. The singing of the *Molieben* begins, during which the God-bearers quite often sing, who, it is necessary to observe, are offended if the priest does not permit to them to participate in the singing and who sometimes find their singing not harmonious or sounding good. It may be true that it is not harmonious. It strongly corresponds to the motifs of the plain people Russian songs. But it helps to chant with the help of the priest thus and for the God-bearers to follow his tune. After a short practice tolerable choral singing is noticed.

The written example of meeting the cross procession in one home also repeats itself in the others. It happens that they ask the priest to come and bring holiness not only through the doors of the home but also through the gate, that certainly is one and the same. But it happens quite often in such cases that they can strongly confuse the unknown for them with the priest, but sometimes, perhaps, also to frighten him. Here is, for example, such a case: in the house where the priest goes to serve a *Molieben*, there is a sick woman, a possessed woman [*klikusha*] or, according to plain people, "possessed woman [*krikukha*]". It happens that such an unfortunate woman suddenly, during the time when the priest enters into the house, throws herself unexpectedly at his feet and begins to shout and beat herself. In order that this would not happen unexpectedly, priests should try to learn beforehand if there is such a sick person in the house and if they have taken safety measures, for example, in such cases they discover that the possessed woman timidly hides herself, and then unexpectedly throws herself down. That they find and hold her is far from being useless. Sometimes they persuade the possessed woman to lie on the floor at the threshold so that those with the icons pass through it and the priest crosses over it. People bearing icons pass by the sick woman, and the priest, following behind them, cannot see this and suddenly encounters something lying by the threshold, covered from above. From there a quiet sobbing is heard. The priest stops, starts to say that this is sinful, advises that he will pray more fervently for the sick woman during the *Molieben*, tries to convince that after the prayer God will cause the sick woman to recover. But, not looking at this, they continue to ask him to go past her, and only after persistent orders on his part they lift her up, or she jumps up and scolding the priest runs away. It happens that they put a child on the threshold before the entrance to the cottage, so that the priest would step over the sick child, not taking precautions to prevent stepping on the child due to the narrowness and darkness of entries to the wooden cottages, it is possible he may not notice the baby placed there and step on him with his feet. Also they sometimes superstitiously put on the table under the table cloth some kind of grain or salt and try to arrange these items so that the Gospels or the cross carried for *Moliebens* are laid on them. At a first glance this may not in any way be noticed because the grain or salt is spilled in a thin layer under the cloth. But, knowing such customs exist, it is necessary to test the table by hand in order to notice this. It should be understood by these examples that

these superstitions and others similar to them should not be supported (For details see the Kurskiia Eparchial'niia Vedomosti [Kursk Diocesan News] 1889, 17).

Some priests, after the end of going about the parish with holy icons (usually on Friday, before Vespers), during the approach of the holy icons to the temple meet them in this manner: vested in white vestments, with a cross and tri-candled holder in the left hand and a censer in the right, two burning remote lanterns are carried before them, go out of the temple and, having met the holy icons near it, stop the carrying and accompanying of the holy icons, cense the holy icons and those present and, then, having prayed before the holy icons, return to the temple during the trezvon [strike a full zvon on all bells three times, pause in between] of bells, after which Vespers begins. Such a meeting of the holy icons makes a stronger impression upon the parishioners and by doing Vespers after it, usually, is accompanied by an enormous gathering of the prayerful (for details see the Podolskiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Podolia Diocesan News] 1893, 33-14).

¹¹ It says in the "Order of sacred serving and the rites observed in the great Dormition Cathedral": "the hierarch reads the Holy Gospel in the Sanctuary, facing the people". In monastery and cathedral churches before the reading of these gospels, all the concelebrants leave the sanctuary and form columns according to rank. It became necessary to adhere to such a custom and there are places where this is not accepted (Tserkovnyi Vestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 6).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Manual for Church Servers**, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0575a-581
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © May 9, 2006. All rights reserved.*