

Concerning the Church Services
And
About All Major Subjects Related to them.

A. Concerning the Order of Church Services.

Concerning the time of performing church services. The worship in monastery churches, cathedral and city, having more than one clergyman, should be served daily, but in single clergy parishes and villages, on Sundays and Holidays (1), looking for an opportunity to do as many as possible (Ust. D. Kon. (Rules of the Spiritual Consistory), 34).

The Poltava Archpastor made the rule that in the city of Poltava where there were two clergymen there would be daily church services, and where there was one clergyman, there would be services on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday in addition to Sunday, and on those special days, such as the eve of Theophany, the days of Great Lent, Great and Holy Friday and Great and Holy Saturday and so forth. They should always begin at a certain time known to all the parishioners, according to the Cathedral Messenger (2) (Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1888, 4; Strannik (the Pilgrim), 1888, 3). See page 678.

The Dean should see that the priests in village churches, besides Sunday, the festive and major feast days, served a liturgy, as many as possible especially more often and should not omit the Presanctified liturgies in the Holy Forty Day Fast (3); in the city churches with one clergyman certainly three times a week, and if a solemn and major feast occurred during the week, he would serve the two-regular plus the feast, and if it occurred in four-regular he would serve daily (Instruktsiia blagochinnim (Instructions for the Deans), 10).

Notes:

(1) In the Podolsk diocese the local diocesan authority announced that the cancellation of church services in parish churches on Sundays and holidays, especially for a trip to the capitol city for personal business (instead of a call from the Diocesan Authority and Consistory) and without the written permission from the dean, the priests will be subjected to a fine 5 to 15 rubles, and deacons and psalm-readers from 2 to 5 rubles, at the discretion of the Diocesan Authority, for the benefit of the Diocesan

trusteeship (Podolsk Eparchialjnia Vedomosti (Podolsk Diocesan News) 1892, 46).

(2) In cities the submission of parish churches to the time of the ringing of the bells of the local cathedral depends on whether there is the special decision of the local Diocesan authority. In general there is no rule about this (Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1892, 12).

(3) The Novgorod Spiritual Consistory prescribed to the clergy of the diocese that services during the first week of Great Lent by all means begins with Monday instead of Thursday as is accepted in some parishes, so that those fasting have an opportunity to be present all week at the church services in the temple of God. That practice will itself be eradicated by engaging the fasting at home, as everyone will then know that the church services during the first days of the week applies to them. It is necessary to explain about the fasting beforehand from the church cathedra and at the performance of Christian needs in the homes emphasizing the importance and salutary effects for those who fast in visiting the temple of God (Novgorod Eparchialjnia Vedomosti (Novgorod Diocesan News) 1891, 6).

Some Archpastors were disposed to institute in all church liturgical magazines (1), in which the church services were marked out for the subscriber members of the clergy and church wardens, with the addition in the magazine after every Divine Service would be performed, whether they were performed in concurrence with some kind of exercise of need, but on the temple, royal or major feast days, special molieben (prayer) services for the patronal feast day or thanksgiving, and approximately how many people happen to be in church; about the important reasons why the Divine Services were not performed would also be written in these magazines (2); and about the non-performance of the Divine Services on the great feasts, and also on the major festival imperial days the Orel Hierarch ordered the clergy of his diocese to report to the diocesan authorities immediately, with an explanation of the reasons for such an omission. The Orel Deans, offering themselves as examples of not allowing any devotional departure from the Divine Services, are obliged, having direct or indirect, when it is possible and convenient, unrelenting supervision over the appropriate performance of this sacred work from the view of his jurisdiction over the clergy and how it relates to the negligent as well as to the especially fervent priests, deacons and psalm singers, to truthfully inform the Diocesan authority in their semiannual reports (Dispositions of the Orel and Nizhni-Novgorod Diocese, see Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1886, 30; about the imposition of this order in the Orel diocese see Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1889, 25).

The Holy Synod (see in Tserkovnyi Vestnik 1886, 13, Tsirkuliar Ukazatel' 1886, III, 28, No. 4) imposed on the clergy everywhere the duty to serve Vespers on Sundays and holidays, according to the rubrics, with the proper festivity, making the peal of the large bell, and upon ending Vespers, looking to the needs of the parishioners, to deliver sermons, to lead the conversation to subjects of faith and morality, edifying learning, to read the Lives of the Saints, or to serve Moliebens and Akathists (above III extract, page 249).

Notes:

(1) Undoubtedly, the rector must determine the importance of these liturgical magazines (Tserkovnyi Vestnik 1894, 44).

(2) The visitation of the Divine Services by few parishioners and even by their complete absence cannot serve as a valid reason for the omission of a Divine Service on the appointed days. The experience testifies that the performance of the Divine Worship usually raises diligence in the parishioners in visiting the temple and gradually increases the number of those who pray in it.

In view of the existence of various kinds of adverse conditions within the entire year for the non-performance of the solemn celebration of Vespers, the Kostroma Diocesan Authority in 1892 has determined: "the solemn celebration of Vespers with the reading of the Akathists are to be done on Sundays and Feast Days in the city and in the churches with many clergy and in all the village churches. The Vespers are to begin annually from September 14 and to continue up to Holy Pascha". Among the adverse conditions which have led up to the determination which specified that clergy of churches, especially those with one priest, not to have the possibility precisely to perform the festal Vespers on all Sundays and Feast Days, because the peasants look for such days of thanksgiving in the summer in the villages and in the fields, and during the entire year like the baptism of children, the parting word of ill persons, in the eating of meat are the performance of marriages and other needs. On the other hand, in the summer "harvest" time of village work, the peasant-farmers tired from the heavy and urgent work during the six working days, find it difficult to go and very few do go to church for the Summer Vespers (Kostroma Diocesan News 1892, 11).

But under the order of the Stavropol Diocesan Authority, the clergy undertake on Feast Days and Sundays to serve the Great Vespers and

Akathists, but afterwards conduct conversations, not hesitating with a small number of parishioners, in the reasoning that Lord God cared for any Christian soul; the soul-saving conversations were conducted with the parishioners after Vespers, not hesitating that such conversations are held between Matins and Divine Liturgy; the last does not prevent the message, but it becomes necessary to serve Vespers, and after this to conduct conversations, for these are established to divert the people from unusual Sunday and Feast Day entertainments, that is performed during the absence of clergy will not be attained; why the latter should in every way struggle with the indifference of the people and even with his diversion from visiting a church for Vespers and the conversations during the Summer harvest time (Stavropol Diocesan News 1892, 5).

The Orenburg Diocesan Authority issued precisely the same order (see Tserkovniya Vedomosti (Church News) 1894, 7).

Similarly the Novgorod Diocesan Authority in 1891 most sternly ordered the clergy that it strictly not forsake under one or another pretext outside of the church service conversations with parishioners and the services of Great Vespers with the Akathists on Sundays and Feast Days, under fear of transfer to another worse place and even complete dismissal from their position, in consideration that the explanations of the persons who have not fulfilled the orders hitherto made on this subject are in general not well-founded and indicate only their negligence and coldness for that work to which they were called, as it is seen from this what kind of pastor he is, who, having a parish with a large population, find time and opportunity both to lead the Divine Services and at the same time to do various needs (trebi), and to have conversations with his parishioners, and then to even serve Vespers with Akathists; and do not recognize the incompatibility of this or the other, as do others, having parishes with much less population. In 1892 the Authority also found it necessary to order the clergy of the diocese, that: a) Great Vespers on Sunday be unfailingly served in each church and by all means with the Akathist, recalling, that the small quantity or even absence of pilgrims should not prevent the clergy from serving the Vespers with the Akathists, as it is necessary that the Divine Services maintain the continuity of the given Rubrics (Ustav) for the celebration of the Divine Services and besides it is required by the higher church authority; b) that outside of the service conversations also be conducted by all priests and on all Sundays and Feast Days; c) that the priests on those days, when they are absent, and namely in the evening hours, in the parish, for performing there the Needs (trebi), using such a convenient time in that village they are absent from and served Vespers or Prayer Services (Molieben) and offered conversations

(Novgorodskii Eparch. vedomosti. (Novgorod Diocesan News) 1893, 4;
Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1893, 25)

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp, (Kharkov, 1900), pp 674-76
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