

## Prayer over those Absolved from Suspension

This prayer (see chapter 49 in the Greater and chapter 8 in the Lesser Book of Needs) is necessary for the fulfillment of a penance<sup>1</sup>. Through it, the suspended is released from "the bonds imposed on him"<sup>2</sup>. By the canons of the church none can absolve those suspended by another, except when the suspended is near death or when the suspension, after formal inquiry, is wrong. But in the latter case the right of absolution is given only to such hierarchical authority, who is over the person, who laid the suspension on the sinner<sup>3</sup>. The exception only works for the sick (Apostolic Canons, 32; 1, 5; Ant., 6; Pouchenie sviatitelem [Instructions for Hierarchs], p. 9; for more information refer below, about confession and communion of the sick). The penitent, after fulfilling his penance, should be released from this (See Laod. 2, refer to Apostolic Canon 52), and the priest should not do this openly (see Carth. 6).

Priests should read the "Prayer Over the Absolved From Suspension" not only over those ending their penance term, but also over those for whom it would be required to confess and commune in the case of mortal danger before the termination of term of a penance, with the obligation, of course, to fulfill this penance to completion in case of recovery (Fr. Hojnatsky, p. 152).

According to one, the specified prayer is read when he, upon termination of the penance, confesses his sins before the priest and will prepare for communion, i.e. either directly after the usual Prayer of Absolution, or before communion and so forth (ibid., p. 152).

But it is better to approach this case according to another opinion by which it is necessary to read the "Prayer over the Absolved", after confession of sins of the penitent, before the prayer: "O Lord God of the salvation of Your servants", then the Prayer of Absolution of the Mystery of Repentance is also read: "May our Lord and God, Jesus Christ", (Zabelin, p. 203).

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<sup>1</sup> If anyone is found for whatever sin under penance and he again **falls into the same sin**, and then he should begin the same penance again. If he falls into a new sin requiring a penance, then in accordance with the importance of the fall into sin, the penance is increased (Neoc. 5 at the end of the Book of Needs "The Office of Confession").

If anyone found under penance individually **turns to another father confessor** with the aim of being released from the penance and to receive absolution, then for him the penance term by the church canons is increased (see Ap., 12-13).

<sup>2</sup> ) Believers sometimes voluntarily impose a penance on themselves. So, for example, others, being in illness, he is promised after recovery, to be directed to go on a distant pilgrimage; another on whatever occasion takes up a vow with a too strict and inadequate for his strength fasting; but in order that all this is actually done, a vow imposes on oneself some oath thus tying him to it. Such good intention penances or suspensions sometimes attract not only a heavy infringement, but also easy vows of an oath when, e.g., someone on the weight of a vow or for some extraneous reasons, will not be in the condition to precisely and completely fulfill the vow given by him. All such sinners, voluntarily heaping suspension on themselves, are called "**existing in suspension**"; but they quite often also attach an oath to the vows they are called "binding an oath on themselves". "But that such an oath was not the union of an untruth and did not impose on weak minds an uncomfortable yoke, for this the Holy Church tries

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weakening the strictness of the absolution of the union of the untruth, but the yoke to declare is vain and unworthy of any respect"; That is why in the prayer "about existing in suspension" the Holy Church also appeals to the Lord that he absolve "the sinful union", i.e. that union by which it is tied to the neglect of the oath maker". However, whoever has broken a lawful or sworn oath, then that did not come under the present absolution described by the prayer here (Novaia Skrizhalj [New Stone Tablets]).

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the conditions under church penance of his Bishop, he has no right **to seek the absolution of the Metropolitan**, because the Metropolitan (see the Rudder, commentary on the 32 Apostolic Canons) is not given similar rights as the Bishop and the Metropolitan has an equally allowed authority to knit and solve (A. Shagun, Course on the imposition of canonical rights, S.-Peterb., 1872, pp. 98-99).

"The Office of Confession" says that an **"unreasonable" suspension** by one father confessor may resolve the "reasonable" of another, "dangerously preserving his conscience". From comparison of given places of the "Office" with quotations at the end of the same "Office" penances may be assumed derived from the Spiritual Regulations that the "Office", permitting the priest to resolve the "unjust" suspension by the other priest, has in view those contemporary with him priests imposing suspensions on penitents whom, expressed in the Spiritual Regulations, keeping "for the Book of Needs, as the blind", really forbade the "injustice". And as such suspensions were not rare, then it did not admit necessary each time to send the suspended "to the former father confessor or to demand justice from his authority", i.e. the Bishop, but this was recommended only in that event, when "such confusion will come to the present father confessor".

In our time it is hardly probable who of the priests will decide whomever of his colleagues to recognize as "blind" in the specified sense and the very suspension imposed on whomever as unjust, especially in view of those conditions, which should be observed at a suspension (refer to note 2 on p. 1018 and p. 1026). But that is why everyone who comes to confession, when he appears standing under a suspension from another father confessor confessing, not only that he has turned "his conscience dangerously", but also that he not fall within the penalty for the violation concerning the absolution of the suspended of the existing general canons. It is necessary to approach, according to this rule, carrying each case of confession of designated persons to that "bewilderment", which even the "Office" of Confession prohibits the priest to absolve those tied to another father confessor.

*S. V. Bulgakov, "Handbook for Church Servers", 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 1039-1040.  
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