

Communion of the Sick p.2

A dangerously sick **woman in the condition of natural uncleanness** is not denied Holy Communion¹ (for details see the Voronezhskiiia Eparkhial'niiia Vedomosti [Voronezh Diocesan News] 1870, 17).

During the communion **of a dying woman in childbirth**, it is not necessary to read the fortieth day prayers because the dying is allowed communion not because of the fortieth day prayer but due to the indulgence of the Church for her exclusive condition (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Guide for Village Pastors] 1862, 12; Voronezhskiiia Eparkhial'niiia Vedomosti [Voronezh Diocesan News] 1870, 17; Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 8; 1892, 23; refer to p. 874).

Patients, **suffering from vomiting**, according to the opinion of one, may be given communion; according to the opinion of others, they may not (see, e. g., Penzenskiiia Eparkhial'niiia Vedomosti [Penzan Diocesan News] 1871, 12; Saratovskii Eparkhial'niiia Vedomosti [Saratov Diocesan News] 1872, 6).

In The Great Book of Needs of P. Mogila it says, "The priest cannot always give Divine Communion to those vomiting who are not able to hold anything down from eating because of dishonor. For this also applies to those not able, who having cleansed their conscious through holy confession sincerely desire Divine Communion. Thus he will not give communion to one with a dulled mind so that certain destruction will not be traced to the Divine Mysteries".

But, paying attention, on the one hand, to all the important salvatory need for every one of the sick to receive communion, which, as numerous experiences testify, soothingly operates not only on the moral but also on the physical condition of the sufferer.

On the other hand, the Church, in case of dangerous illness, allows even the greatest sinners under imposed penance to communion, but from time to time, also those frenzied (Timothy of Alexandria, note 3), and that the bodily impurity is incomparably less impure than the moral.

Finally, that any church canon does not directly forbid to give communion to those dying from vomiting, but in The Great Book of Needs of Peter Mogila this prohibition concerns only vomiting that proceeds continuously, when there is no possibility to accept not only communion, but also simple food and drink ("nothing from eating"), it would be unfair to follow one general canon concerning the unconditional prohibitions to give communion to those dying from vomiting.

It is better to leave the resolution of this question in each special case to the personal discretion and pastoral conscience of the parish priest, who, maybe, will find the possibility to use a few minutes of a quiet condition of the sick and to grant him particles of the Body and Blood of Christ².

Thus these necessary precautions should be taken: near the sick should be placed clean domestic vessels or clean cloths in case the patient should have an expectation of renewed vomiting soon after the reception of the Holy Mysteries by him, then the patients' vomiting would not fall on the floor or on clothing and may be carefully collected, then burned, (see p. 721), but the ashes are placed in flowing water (Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], pp. 261-262; Zabelin, pp. 181-182; Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1897, 39; refer to Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Guide for Village Pastors] 1896, 24).

The mentally disturbed are not allowed to Holy Communion if the disturbed mention any abuse against God or against the holy Mystery or against something sacred or generally if they spout out with various curses of a bad condition of the soul, making the person unworthy of the Holy Mystery. If the mentally disturbed do not offend the holy things by their action, then they may be granted the Holy Mystery (Sv. Timofei Aleksandrijskij [St. Timothy of Alexandria], 3).

In the situation **of mental madness** there will be such moments when they recover consciousness. These moments are not always identical for all in their duration, it is not equal for all and do not always have an identical degree of clarity of consciousness. Also the priest should use these moments for the confession of the mentally confused, without hesitation. Patience and experience deliver to the priest the possibility to confess such ill persons and later even to give them the Holy Mysteries (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1889, 11).

The sick **suffering from St. Vitus's Dance** should not be allowed to commune the Holy Mysteries in the temple, because here of the closeness of breathing and so forth there may be an epileptic attack with it and involuntarily subject the Holy Mysteries to accidental spillage. It is better and safer to give communion to such sick in-home with the reserved Gifts and thus with some precautions, e. g., at the first weak signs of an approaching attack to keep from imparting the Holy Mysteries and to wait for a time for the epidemic episode to pass from the sick. Anyway in the condition of an attack of the patient, even though he would be threatened with near death, he cannot partake of the Holy Mystery, as physically he is not capable of receiving the Holy Mystery and might twist them to be thrown out, but that is why it should be left to the will of God (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Guide for Village Pastors] 1889, 21). - See pp. 1013-1015.

In a stupor, or in a **trance**, i.e. lost feeling and consciousness, it is forbidden to impart the Holy Mysteries³, until they regain consciousness and feeling and confess their sins with warm contrition⁴ (Uchitel'noie Izvestie [Teacher's News]; Kn. o dolzhn. presv. prikhod. [Book on the Duties of the Parish Presbyter], 114).

Obviously, one does not give communion to the **dead**⁵.

In extreme need the priest not only can but should also **confess blood relatives**, father, mother, brother, wife⁶ and the rest. He should so come; first, to the call of Christian duty not to let his close relatives depart this life into eternity without the necessary parting words, as, obviously, the specified case may only be attracted in mortal danger. This priest has no less right to do confession according to the very essence, as he has the power to bind and loose in the sacrament of repentance those not related to him by any ties including ties of relationship, but it equally stretches out to all, in whatever relationship to the priest they were found. It is yet possible to attach to this the following canon of the Church parallel to the case in point: "if there is no other priest, the priest himself may baptize his own children" (Nomocanon, 207; refer to p. 883 above). If, according to the teaching of our Church, "for those who sin after baptism, repentance is the other means for cleansing our new sins" (see the Catechism), that, thus replacing baptism, which the priest may do "over his own children", similar to this, i.e. repentance, why cannot the priest also generally do this over his close relatives, "if there is no other priest" and the insuperable danger of this demand? (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1888, 6; Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 30; 1896, 8).

The sick are given communion at any time (refer to p. 718). Similarly there is no time restriction through which it is possible to again give communion to the sick even during the same illness⁷. Ancient Christians even in a healthy condition received communion every Sunday and in illness can receive communion of the Holy Mysteries even more frequently (Posobiye k Izucheniyu Ustava Bogosluzhenia Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi [Manual for the Study of the Ustav of the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church, p. 711). Finally, there is no restriction concerning the **place** of communion for the sick⁸.

The sick are given communion from the reserved Holy **Gifts**⁹ or from the Holy Gifts directly consecrated this very day in the Divine Liturgy¹⁰ (see pp. 729-733).

According to the opinion of one, as in the ancient Church, Holy Communion after the Liturgy was directly carried to all the sick, that even now it is quite appropriate and everywhere the custom will be accepted, according to which the **priest** in full clerical vestments **with the chalice** in his hands **goes** from the temple to the home for the communion of the sick¹¹ (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1889, 14).

But, according to the opinion of others, in the view that such communion of the sick is not convenient, not safe and to the uneducated people may lodge a wrong presentation about the importance and meaning of the reserved Gifts (refer to note 3 on p. 1059), the specified custom should be allowed only in exceptional cases¹² (for more details, see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 44).

The sick are given communion **without** observance of the canon laid down for the **preparation** (see p. 1044) for Holy Communion¹³, even immediately after eating food, but not other than as after confession¹⁴.

The sick should **confess alone**¹⁵, **to certainly give communion to** their churchmen and **to all** who are in this house in person. This has come into view before the connivance and concealment of secret dissenters, by self-interested, unfair or ill-intentioned priests (Spiritual Regulation, Supplement for the Orthodox Church Clergy, 15).

The sick, found lying on their deathbed, even if they were under suspension by the hierarchy, the priest not only can but also should **absolve all sins**, if the sick have repented¹⁶ and to grant them communion of the Holy Mysteries. But should thus firmly remember that those **found under suspension, after recovery**, are certainly obligated to fulfill the penance imposed on them, and, upon completion of the time of excommunication or suspension, it is obligatory to appear before that confessor who imposed the penance (I, 13; Anc. 6, 22; Carth. 7, 52; Carth., 7; Gregory of Nyssa 5;. Kn. o dolzhn. presb. Prikh. [Book on the Duties of the Parish Presbyter], 110; and also see above pp. 984 and 1040).

It is only possible to grant forgiveness to those of the dying who resolutely do not want to be confessed. If those dying agree to receive the mystery of repentance, then they should without any doubt be given absolution by him. It is impossible to refuse absolution even from those of the dying, who were tempted in their lives (but also equally those who fell into mortal danger in robbery, extortion and so forth), but after the completion of their crimes they express deep repentance. Through forgiveness the dying may receive absolution of sins, if they truly repent in their soul (Napominanie sviashch. [Reminder for Priests], p. 225).

Special attention of the pastor is demanded by those who are ill who had their **secret, heavy fall into sin**, from which recognition hitherto protected their vanity, false pride and shame. Such sinners are presently met in all social classes and many of these sinners hide their heavy sinful secrets even in the last minutes of their life. To raise consciousness of these secrets in such people is not that easy even for the most skilled priest. And meanwhile it is necessary for him to do this: first of all to prepare the departing for a peaceful death, then to calm the strongly reluctant conscience of the departing. Such people for the most part give a sign that they have something lying heavy on their conscience. It is only necessary to be able to read such a condition in the sick, but expressively by shining eyes. In their uncomfortable

metania then in that, then on the other side, and after that skillfully position them to the opening of overwhelming oppressive secrets. The reverential saying of the prayer before confession usually read by the clergy before the parting words of the penitent, remembering the invisible presence of our all-knowing Savior and calling on the penitent for the report in all his deeds, of course, in this difficult situation can have a great influence on ending all accounts with visible life. But in order that this prayer had entirely the meaning that saying it led to the desired goal, it is necessary to first glance at the soul lying on his deathbed, to enter into the heaviness of testing him in the struggle and to shine before him in short expressive words both all the infirmity of human nature and the immense great mercy of God. Here it will be pertinent for the priest to say first, that all of us are weak and greedy for the same heavy crimes while having conditions, if only the grace of God does not protect and support us, that in many of our lives there will be such hours and minutes when we become vassals of the most criminal aspirations and inclinations. The most inspired by the Holy Spirit are the people who have presented us examples of great holiness, who have not because of weakness avoided such human falling. There was a time in the life of the divinely inspired David when he fell into a heavy sin, and other great righteous persons quite often were exhausted before requiring holiness from us and fell into sin. But the moral worthiness of the person is also expressed in that he, having recognized the weight of his own guilt, prayed for the merciful God for pardon, has revealed to Him the wounds of his own soul and asked Him for healing his infirmities. When the heart-to-heart talk will approach this place, then the pastor of the Church may already take the second step, to point to that greatly immense mercy of God, which was shown in the sending down of His Son to earth in order to condition the sinner to repentance, to raise the consciousness of his moral wretchedness and to lead him out of the types of the sinful. In view of this immeasurable mercy of God, he will not be worthy of forgiveness, who does not wish to reveal his heart before Him, will stand to invent different excuses for the concealment of his crimes, and will consider one's own guilt excessively unnecessary of open recognition. Such a position already expresses the exasperation of the sinner, of darkened moral feelings, and confession becomes impossible. In verbal confession of sins before spiritual fathers is raised the consciousness of their weight and one's own recognition of guilt in them. Our sinful heart serves as the source of all our crimes and once by the suggestion of the same heart will exorcise the conscience that the mouth already involuntarily serves as external expression of consciousness of the weight of the crimes and revelation of the guilt of the sinner. In such a way, true repentance only comes to an end according to the structure of human nature and with the request of the word of God. And if the pastor of the Church manages to raise a determination by those lying on their deathbed for an open confession and the recognition of the mystery of their life, he can be confident that he has completed half of his difficult action. The determination for an open recognition of his secret actions is already the beginning of true correction. And once departing from this world he has dared to reveal before his spiritual father the interior of his heart, he has by this

stated his readiness to give himself over to the mercy of God. Here the clergy of the church may already turn to that prayer before confession, which may finish the conversation with the ending accounts with his contemporary way of life, and here he can still remind him that this parting prayer is together reconciling him, by the consciousness of his sins, with the mercy of God and by His sent Redeemer, before Whom he is going to appear (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1897, 18).

The specified way of action in the relation to the patients guilty of secret heavy sins, of course, is not unique. The skilled pastor of the Church may also have other ways to deal with the one lying on his deathbed to relate his sinful secrets before him, conforming to his former way of life, with surrounding conditions, features of his illness and so forth.

¹ The bleeding of the sick woman should not serve as an obstacle to her communion in the case of need (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 5).

The woman in childbirth, who is found in mortal danger, on the same day of childbirth not only if it is possible but also should receive communion (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1895, 3).

In view of the closeness of an untimely death, one should give communion to the woman giving birth, even if there is no time to completely wash her and properly dress her (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1895, 7).

There are no reasons to deprive the dying woman in childbirth of communion before the forty day period of purification. The appearance, completely independent of her will, when the Church allows giving communion in the of fear of death to even persons found under penance, is more than that the church canons, on which the woman in her monthly period of cleansing or in giving birth should not enter the temple and partake of communion, has in view the healthy or temporarily ill (see p. 874), and not a **dying women** (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 23).

It is obviously understood that in all the specified cases it is important to take care in the selecting of the time for partaking communion when the diseased conditions cease and when the possibility to give communion to the woman cleansed from bodily uncleanness. If there are such suitable opportunities and there is no danger in waiting, then it is necessary to give communion at any time, only if a need approaches (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 8).

Refer to p. 874, notes 2 and 3.

² **One dying from intoxication** may be given communion after confession, if he does not suffer from continued vomiting and has not lost consciousness (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1896, 40).

³ If the reserved Gifts have been completely prepared for giving communion to the sick, i.e. already watered (refer to note 4 on p. 1063) in a vessel, and the patient suddenly dies or for a long time loses consciousness, or yet, in whatever case, the **patient cannot receive communion at all**, then the prepared Holy Gifts may either be given to a child found capable and worthy to receive them or to use them on another day with the liturgical Holy Gifts (Fr. Popov, part 2, p. 76; Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1894, 47; Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], p. 262).

⁴ Another matter is **singing the Moleben**, in which God is asked to ease the illness and heal the sick. It may be also done when the patient is not conscious. It may be done both with his participation, and without his immediate participation. Both the sick and their blood relatives addressed with prayers to Lord Jesus Christ, during His terrestrial life for help, and the Lord equally stretched out His hand of help and gave the grace of healing, such as when the sufferers asked for mercy from Him and when they informed Him of a difficult condition of these or those sick living together with them and sympathizing with them. The reference of the sick or his circle of friends to Church prayers, for the fulfillment of the established mysteries over him, is a matter of faith. And the faith, in itself serving as the strengthening of the spirit, frequently during the Church prayers reduces the illness of the sick who asked for the grace of healing. Therefore let us not forget to turn the sick and their circle searching for the healing of the sick to warm prayers of assistance with intercessory prayers, for the actions of the faithful are more valid than medical means, the prescriptions of science (Sluzhen. sviashch. [Priest's Service], p. 250).

⁵ "For", say the fathers of the VI Ecumenical Council, "are written: take, eat (Mt. 26:26). But **bodies of the dead** are not to receive, because they cannot eat" (canon 83; see also Council of Carth., 26).

⁶ Generally there is no prohibition in the church canons for the priest not **to confess his wife**, but all the more in cases of extreme danger. For some of our priests beyond the borders, it is a similar confession, - business as usual (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1889, 29; 1892, 30). - Refer to p. 1051.

⁷ Among the simple people, especially among sick old men and women, it is the custom "not to let six weeks pass", i.e. to have communion every time six weeks pass. Clearly, the priest should not refuse such ill persons, once they have the faith and warm disposition for receiving communion, for a refusal, motivated because they received communion recently, is extremely improper, in view of this, because **no conditions exist for the sick receiving communion** (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1895, 7; refer to note 2 on p. 1053).

The Book of Needs of Metr. P. Mogila says: "if the sick, having often received the Divine Mysteries will live and again be in mortal trouble, longs for Divine Communion, in no way should the priest deny giving him communion again even if it happens often"

⁸ Priests should inspire their own parishioners not to bring the **dangerously difficult sick for communion of the Holy Mysteries** to church, but to invite the priests of their own parish to the homes where the sick are (Ordered by the Ryazan Bishop in the Riazanskiia Eparkhial'niiia Vedomosti [Ryazan Diocesan News], 1873).

As the need of some priests to visit the sick for the parting words to their home is frequent, then the Tobolsk Bishop reminded the clergy, that not under any circumstances were they allowed this under fear of the strictest responsibility (see Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1887, 47; refer to p. 720).

Under the instruction of the Don Spiritual Consistory, the **sick with infectious illnesses** from seven years of age and above should be **given communion** with the reserved Holy Gifts mainly in their homes, whenever possible in special vessels which necessarily are carefully washed with clean water and wiped with special cloths out of white clean canvas (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1895, 34).

⁹ The Priest should eradicate the view peculiar to some that the reserved Gifts are weaker in value than the communion given in the liturgy (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1888, 12).

For the communion of the sick the priest in an epitrachelion and cuffs takes with awe a particle of the Holy Gifts from the tabernacle (see p. 732) and places in the special sick call kit used for the communion of the sick.

Copper sick call kits should not be allowed; both for the sake of the worthiness of the Holy Gifts and in turning into danger (see the resolution of Metr. Philaret in Dushopeznoe Chtenie [Edifying Reading], 1872, part 2, p. 120).

It is advised to take one or just so many particles for how many of the sick there will be, for which the priest administers. In such case as he will not need to bring the Holy Gifts for him into the house and, if there will be a need to enter into another's house after giving communion to the sick, then it will be possible to also enter with the gifts as it will already be leisurely (Fr. Popov, p. 75). However, while departing for the communion of those sick who live far from the temple, it follows to have in view that there may still be other sick for whom it is necessary to grant holy communion (refer to note 4 on p. 1053).

Bearing the Gifts wrapped in the covering, the priest also should bear it on his chest, with the appropriate sick call kit, in a handbag made of suitable materials (with a cross sewed on the front part of it), and by means of a ribbon which are put around the neck (Instruktsiia blagochinnim [Instructions for Deans], 14).

The cross and epitrachelion should be wrapped in clean cloths.

The priest goes with the reserved Gifts only to the sick and besides indispensably accompanied by a clergyman (refers to note 3 on p. 1053). He must not leave the sick call kit with the Holy Gifts in houses of the sick even for a short time and not go anywhere without them (Uk. Sv. Syn. [Decrees of the Holy Synod], 16 Dec. 1776).

The priest, having the sick call kit of the Holy Mysteries on him, neither should enter into any controversial matter nor must he also enter any situation not to present them (Uk. Sv. Syn. [Decrees of the Holy Synod], 13 Mar. 1776).

The priest, going with the sick call kit including the Holy Mysteries on his chest, is ordered to observe due good order and respect for the secular authorities. Otherwise those guilty will be sent to the spiritual court of the authorities (Uk. Sv. Syn. [Decrees of the Holy Synod] 8 Jul. 1751; 13 March 1777).

The clergy, during their trips in the settlements with the Gifts for partaking of the Holy Mysteries, should not be examined by the horse patrols and other attendants at drinking assemblies (Uk. Sv. Syn. [Decrees of the Holy Synod] 1846, 30 Oct. 1846).

While going out from the house or church with the reserved Gifts the priest wears his clothes (Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1896, 39).

Relating to this is whether the priest, going with the Holy Gifts (or even without them), is to be protected from attacks, for example, being shot by a revolver, - "The Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] has given such an explanation: it will be applied according to need and laws; it is known that priests of Montenegro, or in our places in the Caucasus, they are forced to

carry and consequently in extreme cases even to use weapons; but from this it still does not follow that the cleric may absolutely freely use the weapon; so, if it happens that he has deprived someone of life, even by necessary defense, then the clergyman would need special permission from the Holy Synod after this (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1894, 40).

But to this explanation of the "Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger]" should add that, by canon 55 of St. Basil the Great, let clergymen, setting upon robbers, be deposed from his rank (See also Gregory of Nyssa, 5). Generally it follows to have in view that clerics who unusually take up arms and stain their hands in blood, in any matter: that the fulfillment of the Holy Mysteries demands pure hands, peaceful conscience, tranquil soul, not having partaken in any heavy sin, even if involuntary (see Archim. John, Course in Church Law, vol. 2, pp. 72-73).

¹⁰ As the in-home observance of rank, standing for participating clergy during a liturgy, is impossible, because of the distinction of church from the house, in the absence of an altar and consequently that the parting word of the patient in-home is not a part of the liturgy. There is no basis to even absolve the priest according to this ranking in the home, i.e. separately by the particle XC and separately by the Holy Blood from the chalice. For the sick the way of partaking of the reserved Gifts from a spoon in the home is established. In view of this, the **sick priest**, not having the ability to come to the altar of God during a liturgy, according to the opinion some, partakes in the home as does the layman from a spoon with the reserved Gifts, and only should wear an epitrachelion as the testimony of his dignity. On the day of serving the liturgy with another priest; the Holy Blood is poured on the part intended for the parting words of the sick according to the established order and brought in sick call kit (for the convenience of the sick) to the house of the priest for his partaking from a spoon. But if the house of the priest stands very close to the church, and it generally would be convenient to bring him the chalice, then during the consumption of the Holy Gifts remaining in the Chalice is the Holy Blood, there is put in the part of the Body of Christ left for the sick and the sick partakes from the spoon out of the chalice (refer to note 2 on p. 724). As to what part of the Holy Lamb the sick priest should partake, then even in this case there is no distinction in the communion of the priest from the communion of laymen, i.e. the sick priest is given communion with the same particles of the Holy Lamb as are the laymen (Pskovskiiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Pskovian Diocesan News] 1895, 3). But, according to the opinion of others, the sick priest partakes from the particle XC (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 12). Anyway, for the lack of the specified particle, the sick priest receive communion by the Holy Body and from parts of the Holy Lamb with the inscription: НН and КА (see p. 724).

¹¹ Similarly, according to the opinion of some, it is possible to give communion even to **ill children** who have not reached seven years of age. And concerning the reading in the given case of whatever prayers appointed it is guided by local custom and personal pastoral discretion (see Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1888, 5; 1889, 14). However, it is necessary to have in view that those diocesan authorities, who published decisions concerning the measures for the prevention of infectious epidemical illnesses of healthy children during their communion, did not order in a number of these measures the indicated way of giving communion to children (see p. 1043 and refer to note 1 on p. 1042)

¹² Obviously, communion of the sick similarly is only for a **conditional payment**, as this is practiced in some places (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1889, 44), in any case it should not be allowed (refer to note 1 on p. 1016).

¹³ The "**Office**" of giving communion to the sick specified in the Book of Needs is appointed in that case when it is necessary "to quickly give communion to the very sick" but when the condition of the patient is not that extreme that haste is required, the Office of Confession and the Office of Giving Communion to the Sick should be completely read through. In such a sense it is necessary to also understand the notes made in the specified office: "And if the sick person has already confessed, then the (priest) gives communion to him". These words specify not only in case, but sooner on the need of confession before communion and, of course, according to the specified office of confession. This may be concluded from the subsequent words: "if the sick person has confessed", the reservations "if not, he (priest) shall question him (her) concerning his (her) various sins". It means that, if the condition of the sick person is such that he can hardly fulfill the most necessary and without the prayers for confession the priest begins the confession, after which the conclusion is with the necessary words of forgiveness, consisting of the fulfillment of the mystery of Holy Repentance ("May our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, by the grace and compassion..."), gives communion to the sick person (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1896, 17; refer to Mystery of Confession, by Prof. A. J. Almazov, vol. 2, pp. 90-91).

¹⁴ According to need the mystery of repentance may also be done **without an epitrachelion (stole)** (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1885. 43).

¹⁵ When in the house there is one room and in it several of the weakest patients, then it is possible **to confess** them separately and **in the presence of other patients**, but, to eliminate the confusion of the one confessing, some in this case recognize quite on the spot a confession in the midst of mimicry (see the Mystery of Confession by Prof. A. J. Almazov, vol. 2, p. 449). According to the opinion of others, the priest, in the specified case, should place the one confessing aside from the other patients and to stand before him so that the other sick persons cannot see the face of the one confessing, and this will agree with the

instructions of the Book of Needs, where it says that before the confession of the sick person "orders the priest to step back a little from what exists" (Pskovskiiia Eparkhial'niia Vedomosti [Pskovian Diocesan News] 1895, 3) -Refer to pp. 1036-1037.

¹⁶ During the fulfillment of the mystery of repentance, it is obligatory for the preparation for the communion of the sick person, the priest may only **present the sick person questions** about major sins and in view of the exhaustion of the sick be content with the general expression of repentant contrition and even the indicating signs of affirmation or negation (The Service of the Priest, p. 249; refer to the Mystery of Confession, by Prof. A. J. Almazova, vol. 2, p. 91).

*S. V. Bulgakov, "Handbook for Church Servers", 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 1056-1062.
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