

I. ENTRY INTO THE CHURCH

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prayers on the first day after a woman has given birth to a child

Having received the summons for the reading of the Prayers for the woman who has given birth, the Priest, taking with him Epitrachelion, *Book of Needs*, and Cross, goes to the home in which the birth has occurred.

Having come to the home where lies the woman who has given birth, and having vested himself with the Epitrachelion, the Priest positions himself near the bed, and turning to the Icon, he begins: Let us pray to the Lord; he reads from the *Book of Needs* the first Prayer: O Master, Lord Almighty, inserting the name of the woman who has given birth in those places in this Prayer and those following where it says, (*N.*). Likewise he proceeds to read the second and third Prayers and then, not making a Dismissal, immediately he reads the Prayer for the designation of the name of the infant, who is brought at this time by a member of the family, who stands with the infant behind the Priest.

Let us pray to the Lord. / Lord, have mercy.

O Master, Lord Almighty, Who healest every sickness and every weakness: Do Thou Thyself heal also this Thy handmaid, *N.*, who today has given birth, and raise her from the bed on which she lies. For, according to the words of the Prophet David, in sins were we conceived, and all are defiled before Thee. Preserve her and this child which she has borne. Cover her with the shelter of Thy wings from this day until her final end, through the prayers of the Most-holy Theotokos and all the Saints. For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray to the Lord. / Lord, have mercy.

O Master, Lord our God, Who wast born of our Most-holy Sovereign Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; Who, as an infant, didst lay in a manger and wast carried as a little child: Do Thou Thyself have mercy on this, Thy handmaid who has given birth today to this child. Forgive all her transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary, and protect her from every oppression of the devil. Preserve the infant who has been born of her from every spell, from every cruel thing, from every storm of adversity, and from evil spirits, whether of the day or of the night. Keep this woman under Thy mighty hand and grant her a speedy recovery, and purify her from uncleanness, and heal her sufferings. Grant health and strength of soul and body, and compass her round about with bright and radiant angels; and preserve her from every approach of invisible spirits; yea, O Lord, from sickness and infirmity, from jealousy and envy, and from the evil eye. And have mercy on her and on the infant, according to Thy great mercy, and

cleanse her from bodily uncleanness and the various afflictions of her womb. And by Thy quick mercy lead her to recovery in her humbled body. Vouchsafe that the infant who has been born of her may worship in the earthly temple which Thou hast prepared for the glorification of Thy holy Name. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray to the Lord. / Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, our God, Who wast well-pleased to come down from heaven and be born of the Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, for the salvation of us sinners, Who knowest the frailty of human nature: According to the multitude of Thy compassions, forgive Thy handmaid, *N.*, who has given birth today. For Thou hast said, O Lord: “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.” Therefore, we, Thy servants, pray, and having boldness on account of Thy forbearing love for mankind, with fear do we cry out to the Kingdom of Thy holy Name: Look down from heaven and behold the feebleness of us who are condemned, and forgive this, Thy handmaid, *N.*, and the whole household into which this infant has been born, and all who have touched her, and all here present; forgive all of them, inasmuch as Thou art a good God and the Lover of Mankind; for Thou alone hast the power to forgive sins; through the prayers of the Most-holy Theotokos and of all Thy Saints. Amen.

The Prayer at the designation of the name given to the infant is read “on the Eighth Day” of birth; but it is not forbidden to do this before the “Eighth Day”—it may be read even on the first day. If this be done at the place where the infant lies, it is according to the following Rubric:

Having heard the desire of the parents concerning the name they wish to give the infant (or the name predestined for the infant in memory of the Saint of that day)*, the Priest exclaims: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen And he reads the Trisagion. After the Exclamation, For Thine is the Kingdom, the Daily Troparion is said, e.g., Monday: Angels; Tuesday: Forerunner; etc., or that of the Saint(s) of the Day, or the Troparion of the patronal feast of the temple; then, having turned to the infant, he blesses him (her) three times, making the sign of the Cross over his (her) forehead, lips and breast, saying: Lord, have mercy, and the Prayer at the Naming of the Child. At the conclusion of the Prayer, he takes the infant in his arms, and, standing before the Icon of the Mother of God, makes with the infant the Sign of the Cross (he lifts him (her) up, then down, and then right and left), reading at this time the Troparion of the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord: Rejoice.... After this he makes a Small Dismissal: Glory to Thee, O Christ God, our Hope, glory to Thee. Glory to the Father.... Lord, have mercy (*thrice*). Bless. O Christ our True God, through the prayers of Thy Most-pure Mother, of Saint *N.* (the Saint whose name was given to

the infant), and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art Good and the Lover of Mankind. After the Dismissal, as usual, the Cross is given to the infant and the one holding him (her) to kiss.

Certainly the name given the infant shall be a “Christian” name, that of a Saint of the Orthodox Church. Out of veneration for the name of Jesus and the Most-holy Virgin Theotokos, the name is not given in their honor, that is, the name “Jesus” is not given to anyone; the name “Mary” can be given in honor of the holy women Mary of Egypt, Mary Magdalene, and so on, but not in honor of the Theotokos. Also, it is not appropriate to give a name to the newly-born that is obscure or difficult to pronounce.

It is necessary to take care that the choosing of the name for one being prepared for Baptism not be taken lightly, unwisely and not founded on some sort of prejudice, superstition or frivolity. Simple people sometimes fear certain names, because, according to their understanding, the name is lucky or unlucky; cultured people come across certain names for their children that are unseemly, and it is necessary to reveal to parishioners what the designation of the name of a Saint signifies, and why it is given to the infant at Baptism.

Good sense necessitates that one name not be given to many children in one family, that is, that the same name be given to a newly-born infant that has been borne previously, i.e., of children who are now deceased.

**PRAYER AT THE NAMING OF A CHILD
ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF BIRTH**

On the Eighth Day of birth, the infant is brought to the church; the one holding the infant stands before the (western) doors of the church. The Priest begins:

Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Then: **Amen. O Heavenly King... Holy God ... Glory ... O Most-holy Trinity ... Lord, have mercy (thrice). Glory ... Our Father ... For Thine is the Kingdom....** Then the Dismissal Troparion of the Day or that of the Saint(s) of the church.*

This means the Troparion to the Angels on Monday, to the Forerunner on Tuesday, to the Cross on Wednesday and Friday, to the Apostles and St. Nicholas on Thursday, to All Saints on Saturday, and to the Resurrection on Sunday. On the Sundays (and Weekdays) of the **Pentecostarion** the Troparion from the **Pentecostarion** are said.

The Priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the forehead, lips and breast of the infant, and says this Prayer:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

O Lord our God, we entreat Thee, and we supplicate Thee, that the light of Thy countenance be signed on this, Thy servant (*handmaid*), *N.*, and that the Cross of Thine Only-begotten Son be signed in his (*her*) heart and understanding, so that he (*she*) may flee from the vanity of the world and from every evil snare of the enemy, and may follow after Thy commandments. And grant, O Lord, that Thy holy name may remain unrejected by him (*her*), and that, in due time, he (*she*) may be joined to Thy Holy Church, and that he (*she*) may be perfected by the dread Mysteries of Thy Christ, so that, having lived according to Thy commandments, and having preserved the seal unbroken, he (*she*) may receive the blessedness of the Elect in Thy Kingdom: By the grace and love for mankind of Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thy Most-holy, Good and Lifegiving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Then, having taken up the infant in his arms, the Priest stands before the doors of the church, or before the Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, and makes the Sign of the Cross, saying:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from Thee shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, illumining those who are in darkness. Rejoice, O venerable Elder, who received in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection.

Then the Dismissal.

The text of the Dismissal is, as follows:

May Christ our True God, through the prayers of His Most-pure Mother, of Saint *N.* (*Saint whose name the infant is*), and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, as He is good and the Lover of Mankind.

(*Or, from the **Trebnik (Book of Needs)** of Met. Peter Mogila*) May He Who deigned to be carried in the arms of the righteous Simeon for our salvation, Christ our True God, through the prayers of His Most-pure Mother, and of all His Saints, save us and have mercy on us, as He is good and the Lover of Mankind.

Let it be known that, if the newly-born infant, being exceedingly weak, does not suck, but appears likely to die, it is not fitting to wait (as some wickedly say) six or eight days, and then to baptize him (her), but at the very hour of his (her) birth to wash him (her) only, and immediately to baptize him (her), that he (she) not die unillumined. Since they that are five months pregnant are, by the laws and canons, responsible for murder if it happen that by any shock they abort the infant, so much more is it necessary to avoid the condemnation of them that are brought forth, that they die not unillumined.

PRAYERS FOR A WOMAN ON THE FORTIETH DAY OF CHILDBIRTH

On the Fortieth Day the child is again brought to the temple to be churched, that is, to make a beginning of being brought to Church. And the child (if alive) is borne by the mother, who, already being cleansed and washed, stands before the (western) entrance and desires to receive the Rite after the Baptism.

The Priest, having vested himself with Epitrachelion, begins:

Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Then: Amen. O Heavenly King.... Holy God ... Glory ... O Most-holy Trinity ... Lord, have mercy (thrice). Glory ... Our Father ... For Thine is the Kingdom.... Then the Dismissal Troparion of the Day (or that of the Saint(s) of the church); Glory ... now and ever ... (in the Tone of the Troparion):

Through the prayers of all the Saints and the Theotokos, grant us Thy peace, O Lord, and have mercy on us, for Thou only art compassionate.

Then, bending down his head to the mother, as she stands with the infant, the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross over them; and touching the infant's head, he says the Prayer:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

O Lord God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who by Thy word hast created all nature, both reason-endowed *men* and irrational *animals*, and hast brought all things from nothingness into being, we pray and entreat Thee: Thou hast saved this Thy servant, *N.*, by Thy will. Purify her, therefore, from every sin and from every defilement as she now draws near to Thy holy church; and let her be counted worthy to partake, uncondemned, of Thy Holy Mysteries.

(Let it be known, that if the infant not be found among the living, the Prayer is read only thus far. Then the Exclamation:

For Thou art a good God, and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

But if the infant be alive, the Exclamation is not pronounced, but the following is added, to the end:)

And bless the child which has been born of her. Increase him (*her*); sanctify him (*her*); enlighten him (*her*); render him (*her*) chaste; and endow him (*her*) with good understanding. For Thou hast brought him (*her*) into being, and hast shown him (*her*) the physical light, and hast appointed him (*her*) in due time to be counted worthy of spiritual light, and that he (*she*) may be numbered among Thy holy flock, through Thine Only-begotten Son with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thy Most-holy, Good and Lifegiving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

prayer for the mother of the child

O Lord our God, Who didst come for the salvation of the human race, come also upon Thy servant, *N.*, and count her worthy, through *the prayers of* Thine honorable Priest, of entrance into the temple of Thy glory. Wash away her bodily and spiritual uncleanness, in the completion of the forty days. Make her worthy also of the communion of Thy precious Body and Blood.

For sanctified and glorified is Thy most-honorable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

If the mother has come without the infant, then, at the conclusion of these prayers, the Priest goes into the Altar, saying: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant ...; and he brings out the Cross from the Holy Table; the mother goes with him as far as the Ambon and makes there three bows; after this the Priest pronounces the Small Dismissal and offers the Cross for kissing.

If the infant is alive and is borne by the mother to the temple, then, after the prayer for the mother of the child, the two prayers for the child which follow are read in the narthex of the church; at the beginning of the first prayer for the child, the Priest again makes the Sign of the Cross on the head of the infant.

prayers for the child

The Priest, making the Sign of the Cross over the child, prays:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

O Lord our God, Who on the fortieth day wast brought as an infant into the Temple, according to the Law, by Mary the Bride Unwedded and Thy holy Mother; and wast borne in the arms of the righteous Simeon: Do Thou Thyself, O Omnipotent Master, bless this infant that has been presented, that he (*she*) may appear before Thee, the Creator of All; and do Thou increase him (*her*) in every work that is good and well-pleasing unto Thee, driving away from him (*her*) every adverse power by the sign of the likeness of Thy Cross, for Thou art He that preserveth infants, O Lord, that, being counted worthy of holy Baptism, he (*she*) may receive the portion of the Elect of Thy Kingdom, being preserved with us by the grace of the Holy, Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity. For unto Thee are due all glory, thanksgiving and worship, together with Thy Father Who is without beginning, and Thy Most-holy, Good and Lifegiving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

And the Priest says this Prayer:

O God the Father Almighty, Who, by Thy mighty-voiced Prophet Isaiah, hast foretold unto us the incarnation from a Virgin of Thine Only-begotten Son and our God, Who, in *these* latter days, by Thy good pleasure and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of us men, through immeasurable loving-kindness hath deigned to become an infant of her; and, according to the custom of Thy holy Law, after the fulfillment of the days of purification, didst suffer Thyself to be brought into the Sanctuary, being Thyself the true Lawgiver, and didst will to be carried in the arms of righteous Simeon, of which mystery we have recognized the prototype in the aforementioned Prophet, revealed by the coal in the tongs, and of which we the faithful also have an imitation by Grace. Do Thou Thyself now also, O Lord Who guardest infants, bless this child, together with his (*her*) parents and his (*her*) sponsors, and count him (*her*) worthy, in due season, of the new birth through water and the Spirit; number him (*her*) with Thy holy flock of rational sheep, who are called by the name of Thy Christ. For Thou art He that dwelleth on high, and regardeth the lowly, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

(And if the infant be baptized, the Priest performs the Churching; but, if not, he does this after the Baptism. And, after the Prayers, he makes here the Dismissal.)

Then, taking the child, the Priest makes with him (her) the Sign of the Cross before the gates of the church, saying:

The servant (*handmaid*) of God, *N.*, is churched: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then he brings him (her) into the church, saying:

He (*she*) enters into Thy house, he (*she*) worships towards Thy holy temple.

And he goes to the middle of the church, saying:

The servant (*handmaid*) of God, *N.*, is churched: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then he says:

In the middle of the church shall he (*she*) sing praises unto Thee.

Then he brings him (her) before the doors of the Altar, saying:

The servant (*handmaid*) of God, *N.*, is churched: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*And, if the child be a male, he brings him into the holy Altar (but if the child be female, only as far as the Holy Doors), saying:**

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant (*handmaid*) depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

*And after these things he lays him (her) before the doors of the Altar, and there the mother, having made three bows, takes him (her) up, and departs. And the Priest, as is customary, makes the Dismissal**.*