

# **THE GREAT BOOK OF NEEDS**

**Expanded and Supplemented**

## **VOLUME I**

**The Holy Mysteries**

Translated from Church Slavonic with notes by

**St. Tikhon's Monastery**

St. Tikhon's Seminary Press  
South Canaan, Pennsylvania

2000

# GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ON PARISH SERVICE OF NEEDS

The following directives, taken from Priest N. Sil'chenkov, *Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo pri otpravlenii Prikhodskikh Treb (Practical Handbook for the Administration of Parish Needs)*, Voronezh, 1888, (reprinted many times), are applicable even in modern times. Hence, they are printed here. Further notes, not found in the *Handbook* also have been added here, signified by square brackets “[ ]”.

The Priest, upon approaching any Divine Service, must always keep in mind the commandment of the Apostle Paul: “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1) Therefore, Priests must be especially careful that they always, but most importantly in the service of the Sacraments, be free from any weighty, mortal sin that has not been cleansed by repentance.

It is also very important that the Clergy be watchful over their sobriety, for if they, serving in the darkening of mind, skip anything or change any word or action related to the essence of a Sacrament. For example, if, during the Service of Baptism, they forget the words that constitute the essence of the Rite of Baptism, then they will be under the judgment of God and of the Church.

[When the *Directives* speak of the “essence” of a Sacrament, this refers to what is absolutely essential, as against the lesser parts. For example, in the Mystery of Baptism, the words “The servant of God, N., is baptized ...”, as against, for example, the Great Litany at the beginning; or in the Mystery of Marriage, the words “The servant of God, N., is crowned ...”, as against the Litany of Supplication at the end; or in the Mystery of Holy Anointing, the words of the *Prayer of the Oil*, as against the reading of the various Gospels (as important as they are); or if in the Mystery of Repentance, the Prayer after the Confession and the words of absolution are not pronounced; etc. In the Mystery of Baptism, water is used, and not some other medium, and a three-fold immersion, not a single immersion, etc.; in the Mystery of Chrismation, consecrated Chrism must be used, and not simple oil; etc. Indeed, great care must be taken with everything that constitutes the Sacramental Mystery.

Yet, can it not be said that even the so-called “lesser parts” are essential and should not be abbreviated or omitted without great need? The Priest must perform the Sacramental Mysteries (indeed, every *Office, Order, or Prayer* of the **Book of Needs**) with due piety and humility, read all the appointed Prayers with care, and not act according to whim or fancy, or in an altered state.]

The Priest, serving a Sacrament, must explain the meaning of it to those over whom or for whom the Sacrament is performed.

The Prayers at the homes of parishioners should be performed with reverence and dignity, with clear and understandable reading and singing, without haste or confusion, and without arbitrary changes or innovations.

The singing at the Divine Services (wherever they may be) should not be like disorderly screaming; rather, the singing must be done with attention and dignity.

The vestments and other belongings of the church, required for the Service of *Needs*, must be undamaged, authentic, and clean.

In general, according to the prescriptions of the Divine Services, the Priest must vest in the Phelonion (lit., **Riza**) in cases if there be a Gospel reading during the Service. The rest of the Services of *Needs* are performed with the Priest wearing Epitrachelion, without which the Priest should do no Service of *Needs*, with the exception of the Confession of a sick person who is in evident danger of death.

[Normally, unless the *Office, Order, or Prayer* be performed as part of the Divine Liturgy (and certain other Services when, according to *Rubric* the Priest is fully vested), when only Epitrachelion is specified, the Priest wears the Riasa as well. (In time of emergency, however, a ribbon or some similar object may be used in place of the Epitrachelion, in which case the Priest merely blesses it with his hand before it is used. After such use, however, the object (ribbon, string, etc.) should not be used again for its former function and should be disposed of properly, preferably by burning.)]

In ministering the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), the Priest must remember that it is so strictly prohibited to sell them, that if a Clergyman were to ask for as little as a penny for the administering of Communion, he would be defrocked. Therefore, one must be careful not to ask anything for the administering of the Sacraments, but be satisfied with what he receives as a voluntarily-given gift.

The Priest should not perform the Services of *Needs* in a parish other than his own; all needs of the parishioners must be fulfilled by their own Clergy. But if there is a need to administer a Sacrament to the sick, or if it is necessary to baptize a child (or even an adult) without delay, if there be a danger to his own life and a local Priest cannot, for some reason, come immediately, then none of the Clergy have the right to refuse to perform a Sacrament.

## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In the various Offices and Orders, a number of ecclesiastical terms are used to refer to parts of the church building and its furnishings. These include:

- Altar:** (Lit., *Altar*) This is used in the *Book of Needs* (and other liturgical books) to refer to the room within which the Eucharist is celebrated. In some cases, however, as in the *Office for the Consecration of Antimensia*, it may also refer to the Antimension itself. (See **Table of Oblation** (*Zhertvennik*) below.) When “Altar” is used as an adjective, then it refers to items (e.g., “Altar-cloth,” “Altar Covering”, etc.) used on the Holy Table (or the Table of Oblation).
- Analogion:** (Lit., *Analogii*) This is a small stand (or table) on which icons are set, as well as other ecclesiastical appurtenances necessary for certain *Offices*.
- Church:** (Lit., *Tserkov*) If capitalized, i.e., “Church”, this refers to the Church as a whole, e.g., the Orthodox Church. If not capitalized, i.e., “church”, this refers to the building within which the Divine Services are celebrated. The *Book of Needs* (and other liturgical books) often uses another term, “temple” (lit., *Khram*), which is synonymous with “church”. For consistency, the term “church” is used throughout this work for both *Tserkov* and *Khram*.
- Holy Doors:** These are the main doors leading into the Holy Altar. Sometimes the *Book of Needs* (and other liturgical books) use the term “Royal Gates”, or even, in fewer cases, “Royal Doors” for the entrance into the Altar. For consistency, the term “Holy Doors” is used throughout this work in all cases where the entrance into the Altar is meant.
- Holy Table:** (Lit., *Trapeza*) This is the special table upon which the Eucharist is celebrated. In some Offices the term “Throne” (lit., *Prestol*) is used in reference to the Holy Table. For consistency, the term “Holy Table” is used throughout.
- Narthex:** (Lit., *Pritvor*) This is a smaller room just before the main part of the church where certain lesser Services, e.g., the Hours, and the Litya are celebrated.
- Royal Doors:** These are the doors opening into the main part of the church from the Narthex.

**Sanctuary:**

(Lit., *Svyatilishcheh*) When used as part of a rubrical note (its occurrence being infrequent), this usually refers to the main part of the church building, situated between the Narthex and the Altar; sometimes called, in modern terminology, the Nave. (In Slavonic rubrical notes this term also is used, although even more rarely, to refer to the Altar itself.) When used as part of a Prayer, it may mean the Old Testament Tabernacle (or Temple) itself, or the main part of the Tabernacle (or Temple), or the Holy of Holies of either; depending on context it may refer to the Orthodox church building itself or the Holy Altar. In this work the term, when found as part of a rubrical note, for consistency will always refer to the main part of the church building.

**Table of Oblation:**

(Lit., *Zhertvennik*; sometimes *Predlozhenie*) In most churches, there is a room off to the north side of the Altar, called the *Zhertvennik*, within which stands the Table of Oblation, itself called the *Zhertvennik*. In ancient times the *Zhertvennik* was a special place away from the church building itself. (The Slavonic term, *Zhertvennik*, also signifies the Old Testament Altar.) In the *Office for the Consecration of Antimensia*, the Antimension itself is referred to as the *Zhertvennik*. (In such cases, the term has been rendered as “Altar”.)

## INTRODUCTORY PRAYERS

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

*Reader:* Amen. O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most-holy Trinity: Have mercy on us. Lord: Cleanse us from our sins. Master: Pardon our transgressions. Holy One: Visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

*Priest:* For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Reader:* Amen.

*And if a Psalm (or Psalms) shall follow, the Reader continues:*

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship God our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

*And then the appointed Psalm(s).*