

As Pascha stands out from the ranking of other feasts, its **order of services** differs from the services of other feasts. Some daily services usually performed by the Holy Church during Bright Week are changed. At Paschal Matins there are no six psalms 1), we do not sing the Polyeleos, nor the Magnification, we do not read the Gospel, we do not sing the Great Doxology; we do not project the usual paradigms for Compline, the Midnight Service, the Hours, and instead of the Psalms which are included in structure of these services we sing special stichera glorifying the resurrection of Christ and His victory over Hades and death. During all of Bright Week we do not read from the Psalter 2). Expressing an exuberance of joy, the Holy Church does all services with almost uninterrupted singing. Now St. John of Damascus for the most part composed the poetic hymns, based on the writings of the ancient fathers of Church, mainly Saints Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa and others. The Divine Services during all of Bright Week is done before open Royal Doors, signifying that by the resurrection of Jesus Christ "the heavens opened" (John 1:51) and He opens "the doors of Paradise for us". "Let it be known", the Rubrics (Ustav) says, "that the Royal Doors of the Sanctuary, the great ones and also the little side doors, according to the church are not closed even during communion" 3). During all of Bright Week, according to the standard custom (see Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1892, 29), the church bells ring every day as a sign of celebrating the victory of the risen Lord over death and Hades 4).

#### Notes:

1) On the day of Pascha and during all the remaining paschal season until the Sunday of Antipascha, in the opinion of some, it is not necessary to read the "Lighting of the Lamps" prayers at Vespers, and also the prayers placed at Matins in our service books, because (1) the reading of the Lighting of the Lamps prayers and the morning prayers in our Church are connected, the former with Psalm 103 and the latter with the Six Psalms, and neither the former nor the latter is necessary on Pascha or during all of Bright Week. (2) The rubrics (Ustav) has neither a single word nor a hint at their reading anywhere on Pascha and during all the week, although it definitely speaks about reading the Lighting of the Lamps prayers and the morning prayers at the performance of the usual All Night Vigil and Matins. (3) The contents and essence of these prayers are permeated with a special repentant feeling, conscious of our heavy responsibility before God for sins and asking for forgiveness from Him. That is why they do not come under the spirit and character of the feast of Pascha and all of Bright Week, when, in the words of Chrysostom, it must be that "no one called out petitions from the tomb that cried over sins asking forgiveness". And finally, (4) the priests definitely cannot find enough time, even if in some way they would have wished to read these prayers.

The only time in this case might be to appoint the singing of "Christ is Risen" in place of the Primordial Psalm as it actually does replace and with it the reading of Psalm 103 (LXX) and the Six Psalms, during which time the reading of the Lighting of the Lamps Prayers and the Matins Prayers is necessary. But concerning this a) it definitely suppresses the Rubrics (Ustav) and b) during this time the priest is censuring according to the order, and intoning the verses "Let God arise". To arbitrarily read these prayers where they fall at the beginning of Vespers or Matins or during the canon is opposed to the Rubrics (Ustav) and causes disorder in the structure of the Paschal services.

According to another opinion, in view of this, is that the Matins Prayers are not connected to Psalm 103 and the Six Psalms, but to the Great Litany. And also in view of this the name "Lighting of the Lamps" is kept in the Rubrics (Ustav) even for the Paschal Vespers (see the Order for this Vespers) meaning that the Vespers and Matins prayers should be read even on Pascha during the Great Litany. (See Rukovodstvo dlia seljskikh pastireii (Manual for Village Pastors) 1886, 4; Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) 1891, 30; Svod ukaz. i zamet. (Digest of Rulings and Comments) p. 330.

2) The bending of the knees is the intensified spiritual effort of prayer and repentance. Therefore the Holy Church specially established the frequent prostrations to the ground during Lent. With the approach of Pascha it gradually ordered them to be dropped. The Holy Church designates Great Friday as the last day for doing the prostrations to the ground. On Great Saturday they are completely "abolished"; they especially should not be done on Pascha "as the feast of feasts and the holy day of holy days". Even the 20<sup>th</sup> canon of the First Ecumenical Council decreed that not only on the day of Pascha, but also from Pascha up to Pentecost not to bend the knees during the Divine Services but to pray standing, representing the Rising from the dead (Tserk. Vest. (Church Messenger) 1891, 32; 1895, 20, 47).

3) The Royal Doors are opened before the Cross Procession at the beginning of the Paschal Matins (Tserk. Vest. (Church Messenger) 1895, 5), and remains open throughout the Paschal season.

4) According to the "Tserk. Ved." (Church Messenger) (1893, 18), in Tobolsk until today they keep the ancient custom of decorating the temples during the days of Pascha. So, in 1893, exceptionally beautiful decorations again distinguished the constructed home church of the theological seminary from all the Tobolsk churches. The stairs leading into the church was filled with living fir-trees from the village that were lit with multi-colored lampadas placed in beautiful

lanterns. At the top of the stairs the attention of pilgrims was fixed at first on two graceful lanterns, with beautifully cut out transparent initials "X. B." (Initials for Christ is Risen), and then to a rather tastefully constructed candelabra made from the branches of a fir tree, on which candles were replaced by spherical colored lanterns with many lights. Further, down in the long corridor were thick fir tree decorations and those many-lighted lanterns, with the monogram brightly burned on a green background with the initials "X. B." The ceiling of the corridor, to its full extent, was covered with the large tasteful fringes from pine needles. The decoration of the corridor was finished with an artfully made arch with multi-colored columns, the monogram and the transparent image of the Resurrection of Christ. The students exclusively of the local seminary did all this work.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Manual for Church Servers**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0567-8  
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