

Adult Catechism March 20 , 2017

Christ Our Pascha: Prayer in the Ukrainian Catholic Tradition: Special Blessings, Funerals, Akathists, Molebens, Liturgical Hours *Part 1: Blessings in the Ukrainian Catholic Tradition*

BYZANTINE SIGN OF THE CROSS Crossing oneself with two fingers brought to the thumb represents the Trinity. The last two fingers held to the palm represent the two natures of Jesus - God and man. Unlike the Latin Rite where where the Sign of the Cross is made from left to right, the Sign of the Cross in Eastern rites is made typically from the right to the left shoulder - to signify Christ enthroned at the right hand of the Father. According to tradition and in the words of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), The Sign of the Cross is made with three fingers because it is impressed upon us in the name of the Holy Trinity. From the forehead we pass to the breast, then from the right to the left. (Quoted in Gasparri: Catholic Catechism, p. 248).

BOWS AND BLESSINGS We bow and make the Sign of the Cross many times during the Liturgy, as a sign of our faith, and the receiving and accepting of Gods blessings. Following the making of the Sign of the Cross, reverence to God is further expressed by bowing the head. We bless ourselves every time we mention the Persons of the Trinity by name, or whenever the priest blesses the congregation. We also bow and sign ourselves whenever we enter or leave the church.

SACRAMENTALS (taken from <https://www.catholicsacramentals.org/>) The Catechism teaches us that sacramentals are “holy things or actions of which the church makes use to obtain for us from God, through her intercession, spiritual and temporal favors.” A sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the church to excite good thoughts and to help devotion. It is through the prayers of the church offered for those who make use of these sacramentals, as well as through the devotion they inspire, that they convey and obtain God’s grace and blessings.

Types of Sacramentals: We are surrounded by sacramentals. The Church has placed them in every aspect of our day-to-day life. They may more or less be divided into categories, though some sacramentals may fall under more than one. For instance, a rosary is both a prayer and a blessed object of devotion.

1) Blessings of priests and bishops -- All blessings are considered sacramentals. The blessings of priests and bishops, such as the consecration of churches, and the blessings bestowed on water, candles, or religious objects are all sacramental actions. Lay Catholics are free to bless objects, and we do so often in blessing our children, blessing meals, blessing Advent wreaths or Mary Gardens, etc. However, our blessings act as ‘mere’ plea to God. Priests alone have been given the power to bless with a guarantee, as it were, and it is they and they alone who can take a new crucifix or rosary and turn them into sacramentals with the power and prayers of the entire church behind them.

2) Exorcisms -- One of the most remarkable effects of sacramentals is their ability to drive away evil spirits. Exorcisms constitute the second category of sacramentals. They can be found in

prayers or even placed upon other sacramentals such as the St. Benedict medal.

3) Blessed objects of devotion -- The Church blesses an untold variety of objects which the faithful use to inspire devotion. It would be impossible to list them all, but some of the main ones are holy water, candles, , crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints. Sacramentals such as these play a pivotal role in the devotion and spiritual life of any Catholic and should be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

4) Rubrics and prayers -- It is easy to forget that rubrics and prayers are all sacramentals, such as the bowing of the head at the holy name of Jesus or the sign of the cross. Many of these actions are used so often that they are performed flippantly and without thought. How often in a day do we make the sign of the cross, forgetting that it is a testimony of faith in the Trinity to Whom we belong and in the act of Redemption. All these things should be done deliberately and devoutly, since they were deliberately instituted by the church to aid us in attaining a deep love of God.

Part 2: Services for the Deceased (Taken from

<http://www.spp.ca/Funeral%20Rites.htm>) Humans were not created for death. Humanity was created to live forever by God's grace, in an intimate fellowship with God. However, when Adam and Eve sinned and disobeyed God, this relationship was severed. Through sin, humanity became cut off from the source of life, and death came into the world. The experience of death is a part of the fallen world. However, we have the promise that this condition is not permanent. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we know that death is not the absolute end to our existence. Our faith in the Lord assures us that He will resurrect us once again, reuniting our body and soul. Our transformed bodies will be taken to heaven, where they will no longer be vulnerable to pain, sickness, and death.

From the very beginning the Church has prayed for the dead. Prayers are offered because as members of the Church we are obligated to pray for each other and therefore we pray not only for the living, but for the dead. Our memorial prayers remind us of our own eventual death and our responsibility to prepare for it. The Ukrainian rite funeral typically consists of four events: A prayer service, a Parastas or Panachyda, is celebrated on the eve of the funeral either in the funeral home or the church. The funeral divine liturgy is conducted in the church. The burial or internment takes place at the cemetery in the context a Panachyda. A memorial lunch (tryzna) provides an opportunity for friends and family to share memories, and express condolences.

Important elements of funerals: **The open casket:** During the funeral service the remains are blessed with holy water, and the absolution prayer is read. At the end of the service, the faithful proceed to the coffin to give a final farewell to the departed. These are powerful statements of our belief and would not be possible should the casket be closed. The Church in its wisdom understands the importance of the bereaved of seeing the body of the departed and of getting closure from the good-byes. **Psalms:** Integral to the funeral services is the chanting of psalms of the Old Testament. **Saints:** As well as praying to the Lord directly, we also ask His Saints to intercede on behalf of the departed loved one. **The Absolution:** This is a prayer that is read over the deceased asking God to forgive every sin that the person committed throughout

his/her entire life, whether known or unknown, and whether committed in malice or weakness. **Braided Bread and Fruit:** Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." This reality is expressed by the use of bread during the funeral. The bread is circular in form symbolizing eternity. A candle, symbolizing Christ, the light of the world, is placed in the center. The fruit reminds us not only to be Christians in faith, but also to produce the fruit of good works. **Eternal Memory:** This is hymn is taken from the Gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion. The Lord is crucified with two thieves, one of whom repents and says, "Remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." (Luke 23:42) As we sing "Eternal memory" for our departed, we are saying, "Remember them, Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom". **The Final Farewell or Last Kiss:** This is the time when the people are asked to say farewell to the mortal remains of the departed. In its essence, the Funeral rite is a service of Resurrection, a service of thanksgiving for the passage from physical life into the fullness of life in the embrace of the Holy Trinity!

Part 3: Prayer Services Done in the Ukrainian Catholic Tradition

Molieben: A molieben (also called a moleben, service of intercession, or service of supplication) is a supplication prayer service in honor of either our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, or a particular saint or martyr. It is a Slavic service, but closely related to the Paraklesis service. A molieben is usually served by an ordained priest, but a laymen can also do a molieben, although in a modified form. A paraklesis is a service of supplication specifically for the living (as opposed to a Memorial Service, which is a supplication for the departed). This service is most often addressed to the Theotokos, but may be used to seek the intercessions of any saint. The distinguishing feature of a paraklesis is the inclusion of a supplicatory canon to the saint whose intercessions are being sought. A paraklesis can be served as a stand-alone service or, in a slightly abbreviated form, in conjunction with Vespers. It is appropriate to be served at any time of need. In Slavic practice, there is a similar service that is called a molieben—this service is either served as a stand-alone service or in conjunction with the Divine Liturgy.

Vespers: Vespers is first service of the Daily Cycle of divine services celebrated in the Eastern Church tradition. Because the liturgical day begins at sunset, Vespers is traditionally served in the early evening. For many parishes, Vespers is the principal evening service.

The Vespers service (the first service of the liturgical day) is meant to remind us of the Old Testament period, the creation of the world, the first human beings fall into sin, of their expulsion from Paradise, their repentance and prayer for salvation, the hope of mankind in accordance with the promise of God for a Saviour and ending with the fulfillment of that promise. The service begins with the opening of the Royal Doors and the silent censuring of the Altar Table and the entire sanctuary so that clouds of incense fill the depths of the sanctuary. The silent censuring represents the beginning of the creation of the world. Without form and void, and the Spirit of God hovered over the original material earth, breathing upon it a life-creating power, but the creating word of God had not yet begun to resound.

The 103rd Psalm describes the creation of the world and glorifies the wisdom of God. As it is chanted, the priest goes forth from the sanctuary and completes the censuring of the entire church and the faithful therein. This sacred action not only remembers the creation of the world, but of the blessed life in Paradise of the first human beings, when the Lord God Himself

walked among them. The open Royal Gates signify that at that time the gates of Paradise were open for all people.

To symbolize how man was deceived by the devil and transgressed against the will of God and fell into sin, the Royal Doors are closed. Because of their fall, mankind was deprived of blessed life in Paradise. They were driven out of Paradise and the gates were closed to them. The deacon comes out from the sanctuary and stands before the closed Royal Gates, as Adam did before the sealed entrance into Paradise, and intones the Great Litany asking for peace from above, and to send down upon us "from on high" the peace of Heaven and that He save our souls.

During the chanting of these verses the deacon censures the church once more. This entire period of the divine service, beginning with the opening of the Royal Gates, through the petitions of the Great Ektenia and the chanting of the psalms, represents the miserable state of mankind to which it was subjected by the fall of our forefathers into sin. With the fall all the deprivations, pains and sufferings we experience came into our lives. We cry out to God, "Lord, have mercy" and request peace and salvation for our souls. We feel contrition that we heeded the ungodly counsel of the Devil. God is asked for the forgiveness of our sins and deliverance from troubles, and all hope in his mercy is placed in God. The censuring at this time signifies the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the people's own prayers as well, which are offered to God.

The Old Testament verses of these psalms of "Lord, I have cried" are alternated with New Testament hymns composed in honor of the saint or feast of the day. The last verse is called the Theotokion, or Dogmatikon, since it is sung in honor of the Mother of God, and in it is set forth the dogma on the incarnation of the Son of God from the Virgin Mary.

During the chanting of the Theotokion the Royal Gates are opened, and the Vespers Entry is made. At this time the choir chants a hymn to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ: "O Gladsome Light". In the hymn, the Son of God is called the Gentle Light that comes from the Heavenly Father, because He came to this earth not in the fullness of divine glory but in the gentle radiance of this glory. This hymn also says that only with reverent voices, and not with sinful mouths, can He be worthily exalted and the necessary glorification be accomplished. The entry reminds the faithful how the Old Testament righteous, in harmony with the promise of God that was manifest in prototypes and prophecies, expected the coming of the Saviour, and how He appeared in the world for the salvation of the human race. The censer at the entry signifies that our prayers, by the intercession of our Lord the Saviour, are offered to God like incense. It also signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church. The blessing with the sign of the Cross shows that by means of the Cross of the Lord the doors into Paradise are opened again.

Christ is praised as the Light which illumines man's darkness, the Light of the world and of the Kingdom of God which shall have no evening. At this time, the prokeimenon is chanted, and on the more important feasts there are readings selections from the Scriptures in which there is a prophecy or a prototype which relates to the event being celebrated, or in which edifying teachings are set forth, which relate to the saint commemorated that day.

Vespers ends with the reading of the prayer of St. Simeon the God-Receiver, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace" This prayer is followed by the reading of the Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer, and the singing of the salutation of the Theotokos, "O Theotokos and Virgin, Rejoice!...", or the troparion of the feast, and finally the thrice-chanted prayer of the Psalmist: "Blessed be the name of the Lord from henceforth and for evermore." The 33rd Psalm is then chanted until the verse, "But they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing." Then follows the priestly blessing, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His grace and love for mankind, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages."

Akathist: An akathist (Greek, akathistos) is a hymn dedicated to a saint, holy event, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. The word akathist itself means "not sitting." The akathist par excellence is that written in the 6th century to the Theotokos. In its use as part of the Salutations to the Theotokos service (used in the Byzantine tradition during Great Lent), it is often known by its Greek or Arabic names, Chairetismoi and Madayeh, respectively. The writing of akathists (occasionally spelled acathist) continues today as part of the general composition of an akolouthia, especially in the Slavic tradition, although not all are widely known nor translated beyond the original language. Most of the newer akathists are pastiche, that is, a generic form imitating the original 6th century akathist into which a particular saint's name is inserted.

The Trisagion Prayers are often said as a prelude to the akathist hymn. The akathist hymn itself is divided into thirteen parts, each of which has a kontakion and an oikos. The kontakion usually ends with the exclamation: "Alleluia!" Within the latter part of the oikos comes an anaphoric entreaty, such as "Come!" or "Rejoice!" The thirteenth kontakion (which does not have a corresponding ikos) is usually followed by the repetition of the first ikos and kontakion. After the thirteen kontakia and ikoi, additional prayers are added, such as a troparion and another kontakion. In some akathists, Psalms are also included.

Matins (also spelled Mattins, from the Latin, matutinae, "morning"), also called Orthros (from Greek, meaning "morning", "dawn" or "day break"), is the longest and most complex of the daily cycle services. Matins is celebrated in the morning, unless it is celebrated as part of a vigil in the evening.

The morning service of the Church is called Matins. It opens with the reading of six morning psalms and the intoning of the Great Litany. After this, verses of Psalm 118 are sung: God is the Lord and has revealed himself unto us. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The Troparion is then sung and, if it be a monastery, various groups of psalms which differ each day are read. Once again there are hymns on the theme of the particular day. On major feast days, special praises and psalms are sung, which on the Lord's Day sing of Christ's resurrection from the dead. On major feasts and on Sundays, the Gospel is also read.

After the Gospel there is a long intercessory prayer followed by a set of hymns and readings called the Canon. These songs are based on the Old Testament canticles and conclude with the song of Mary, the so-called Magnificat (Lk 1.46–55). The Great Doxology is chanted followed by the morning litanies. The troparion is also repeated once again before the congregation is dismissed to begin the activities of the day.

The Matins service of the Church unites the elements of morning psalmody and prayer with

meditation on the Biblical canticles, the Gospel reading, and the particular theme of the day in the given verses and hymns. The themes of God's revelation and light are also always central to the morning service of the Church. Sometimes, particularly in churches of the Russian tradition, the Matins and the Vespers services are combined to form a long vigil service. On special feast days, the blessing of bread, wheat, wine, and oil is added to the Vespers, even when it is served separately from Matins. The faithful partake of the blessed food and are anointed with the oil as a sign of God's mercy and grace.

Hours: There are also other prayer services in the Eastern Christian tradition such as the hours. The Hours are four relatively brief prayer services of the Daily Cycle that mark the various principal hours of the day. **First Hour** corresponds to daybreak (6:00 a.m.). **Third Hour** corresponds to mid-morning (9:00 a.m.) **Sixth Hour** corresponds to mid-day (12:00 noon) **Ninth Hour** corresponds to mid-afternoon (3:00 p.m.) These services, together with the other services of the Daily Cycle, are usually contained in a bound collection called the Book of Hours, also known as the Horologion (Greek) or Chasoslov (Slavonic). Three chapters from the Psalter appointed for the particular Hour are read (First Hour: Psalms 5, 89, 100; Third Hour: Psalms 16, 24, 50; Sixth Hour: Psalms 53, 54, 90; Ninth Hour: Psalms 83, 84, 85) The troparion of the day is chanted. The theotokion and Psalm verses of the Hour are chanted. The Trisagion Prayers are prayed. The kontakion appointed for the Hour is chanted. The Prayer of the Hours Thou Who at all times and at every hour ... is prayed. The final prayer appointed for the Hour is prayed.

Complines and Nocturne: **Compline** is the final church service of the day in the daily liturgical cycle, prior to going to sleep. The English word Compline is derived from the Latin completorium, as Compline is the completion of the working day. The word was first used in this sense about the beginning of the 6th century by St. Benedict. There are two versions of Compline: great and small compline. Great compline is a church service commemorating such occasions as the Eve of the Nativity of Christ or providing a structure to pray the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete during Lent. Small compline is the private, bedtime prayer office. Compline is called the "after-dinner" service of the Church. It is a service of psalms and prayers to be read following the evening meal; after Vespers has been served.

Nocturne is the midnight service of the Church. In monasteries it usually begins the all-night vigil of the monks. It contains a number of psalms together with the normal prayers found in other services, such as the call to worship, the Thrice-Holy, the Our Father, the Troparion, etc. Its theme is obviously the night and the need for vigilance. In the parishes, it is known almost exclusively as the service preceding Easter Matins at which the winding-sheet depicting the dead Saviour is taken from the tomb and is placed on the altar table.

Part 4: Horologion, Octoechos, Triodia and Menaion The **Octoechos** is literally "Eight sounds"... the greek for "eight tones". Essentially, Octoechos refers to the system of 8 core melodies, and the 60+ variants used in singing the liturgies, and the 300+ specific texts. There are 8 sets of propers (troparia, kontakia, prokimenia, aleluiaria). Each tone has one of each for sundays, and for each week day. Each tone has a melody for it's troparia, its kontakia, its prokimenia, and its aleluria. So it's 32 melodies (in 8 families), and 56 sets of lyrics. Not counting the additional variants for the hours, and the Irmosi. So, Tone 1 is a troparion

melody, kontakion melody, prokimenion melody, and alleluarion melody. These melodies are all in the same key, all use similar shapes, and are musically related. There are additional melodies for use with Irmosi, magnifications, and recitivi (reading tones; not always used). It also is 7 troparion texts (1 per day), 7 kontakion texts (1 per day), 7 prokimenion texts (1 per day), and 7 alleluarion texts (1 per day), all fit to those melodies. plus daily theotokia in the same musical tone. So, given the day of the week, and the week's tone number, one knows the melody and which words. The Tone of the Week starts counting after pentecost, and resets every 8 weeks.

Horologion – book of the liturgy of the Hours, a set of liturgical services distributed throughout the whole day. It includes: **Vespers** (daily, Resurrectional, Great with vigil; **Small Compline** (Great Compline is celebrated three times a year on Christmas Eve, Epiphany Eve, on the Eve of the Annunciation, some days of the Great Fast); **Nocturn** (daily, Saturday, Sunday); **Matins**; **First Hour** – celebrated around 6 am or right after the Matins; **Third Hour** – at 9 am; **Sixth Hour** – at 12 pm; **Ninth Hour** – at 3 pm; **The Typica** – outside of the Great Fast this service can be taken after the sixth hour, and during the Great Fast – after the ninth hour.

Lenten Triodion- Book of the changeable parts for the season of the Great Fast beginning at the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee to the Lazarus Saturday of the Passion Week

Floral Triodion-Pentakostarion – book of the changeable parts for the Horologion, celebrated from the Lazarus Saturday to the Pentecost.

Menaion-Book of the changeable parts for the Horologion, celebrated on the unchangeable feasts of the liturgical year, i.e. feasts of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Theotokos, and the Saints. The Liturgical Year in the Byzantine Church starts on September, 1, and it is also called the Indiction.