

Metropolitan Ilarion

HOW TO BEHAVE IN GOD'S TEMPLE



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(OHIENKO)

HOW TO BEHAVE IN GOD'S TEMPLE

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HOW TO BEHAVE IN GOD'S TEMPLE

The Orthodox Church has favored a distinct form of crossing oneself, proceeding from one point to the next, i.e. forehead, chest, right shoulder, left shoulder. Do not abbreviate the motions of your hand as you make the sign of the Cross. Make it as it should be made: in sincerity and humility.

After making the sign of the Cross one should bow his head, as a sign of humility before God.

The Orthodox Church does not favor crossing oneself with an open hand, or touching one's chest once again at the end of making the sign of the Cross.

In making the sign of the Cross, we recite the initial prayer, thus:

In the name of the Father (touch forehead), and the Son (touch chest), and the Holy (touch right shoulder), Spirit (touch left shoulder), Amen (bow head).

We must remember that Catholics make the sign of the Cross with an open hand, that is, all four fingers, and follow a different configuration: the forehead, the chest, the left shoulder, and finally the right shoulder.

We, of the Orthodox faith, cross ourselves differently — the thumb in opposition to the first two fingers, tips together; first, the right shoulder, then the left. Our Orthodox form of the Cross traces back to the first century of the Apostolic period, and the Ukrainian Orthodox way of crossing oneself dates back to the time of Volodymyr the Great, retaining its essential configuration into the present.

The sign of the Cross is the first identification of a Christian. We have an abiding

conviction that the sign of the Cross protects us from all evil. Every time we feel a need to ward off some evil that threatens us, or a need to bear up under impending misfortune, or simply a demonstration of our faith in the Almighty, we make the sign of the Cross and offer a supplication, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner;"

We should always cross ourselves (make the sign of the Cross):

1. At the beginning and the end of a prayer; 2. When we enter the Church; 3. Before kissing a consecrated item (see IV, 5); 4. Before and after a meal; 5. Before beginning a task and after completing it; 6. Before going to bed and after arising.*

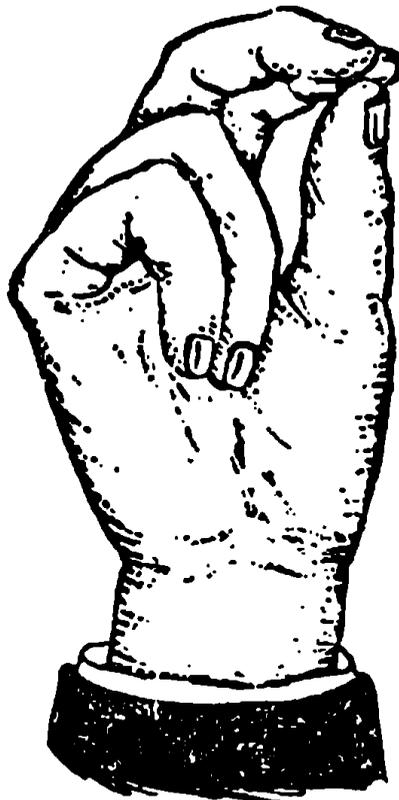
I

Making the Sign of the Cross

Every Orthodox Christian should know the proper way of making the sign of the Cross. Children should be taught this ritual in infancy by their parents, whose duty it is to do so.

In the Orthodox tradition we cross ourselves in this way:

We make the sign of the Cross with our right hand, by placing the thumb and the first two fingers to meet at their tips, as shown in the illustration. The thumb and the two fin-



* Concerning the sign of a Cross and its meaning, in full, see "The Sign of the Cross", 1955.

gers brought together in that way symbolize the Holy Trinity: God — the Father, God — the Son, and God — the Holy Spirit, as equal in Oneness, yet uniquely disparate.

The remaining two fingers of the right hand are folded into the palm. They symbolize the Godly and the human attributes of Christ, that is, that He is a true God and a true human being — a human Deity.

In this way the properly placed fingers impress upon us the Orthodox teaching concerning the Holy Trinity and the human-Divine essence of Christ.

This is the Orthodox Dogma relating to the Holy Trinity.

In making the sign of the Cross we first touch the forehead (thus asking God to sanctify our mind), then the chest (to sanctify our heart, our feelings), then the right shoulder, and then the left (to sanctify our strength). In this way we identify the Cross upon which Christ was crucified for our sake, and by means of which he saved mankind from original sin.

II

We Must Thoroughly Prepare Ourselves Before Attending Church

1. In preparing to attend Church services, and particularly the Divine Liturgy, we must seek reconciliation with those who have slighted us in any way, and ask to be pardoned by those whom we may have offended. Jesus Himself instructed us: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother had ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be re-

conciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). In the words of the prophet Hosea (6:6), God uttered: "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice . . .".

And when it is for some reason impossible to personally ask forgiveness of those whom you offended, then seek their forgiveness in your heart.

Children setting out to attend the Divine Liturgy ought first to kiss their mother's and their father's hand in token of begging their pardon for misdemeanors against them.

We must never forget to be generous, and be ready to share that which we have with those who have not; this is the source of all goodness. We should be especially generous on communion days.

2. We should attend Church whenever there is a service, following the example of earliest Christians: "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple . . ." (Acts 2:46).

And we must perceive with our whole being that we attend Church not because we are coerced into doing so, but because of our spiritual need, our ardent love of God which fills the heart of every true Christian. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth" (Psalms 26:8).

Apart from this, the Church is our School of Life wherein we learn the Orthodox Faith and the virtues of being, without which no man can be fully worthy.

To go to Church is a part of our centuries-old Ukrainian tradition. Our Prince Volodymyr Monomakh (d. 1125) urged this lesson upon his children, saying to them:

“Do not be indolent to attend that which is good, and most of all the Church”. This is a thoughtful lesson for all.

3. We must prepare ourselves outwardly when we enter into God’s temple; our bodies must be clean and our attire becoming the sanctity of God’s presence. We do not wish to be queried: “Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?” (Matt. 22:12).

Likewise, Church Elders of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, ought to take care that there is utmost cleanliness and order in God’s Temple at all times. The Congregation will assemble there to praise the Lord.

4. The Ukrainian Church retains the custom established in very early times that attendance at the Divine Liturgy precludes the taking of any food. This custom is widely observed. It is a form of fasting for the Lord, a Liturgical fast. The Apostles “had prayed with fasting” (Acts 14:23). Only children and the infirm may break the fast; all others should heed it.

5. To arrive late for Worship or to leave before its conclusion is strictly forbidden by the 9th Apostolic Canon.

When one cannot attend the entire Service because of some urgent circumstance, one should at least come in briefly to offer a prayer during a part of the Service.

6. The Church holds the church choristers in great esteem and prays for them; they should therefore be on time to serve in their capacity. “I will sing, yea I will sing praises unto the Lord” (Psalms 27:6). “Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord” (Psalms 68:32).

Members of the Church Choir — Come to Church on time!

7. A female who is in a state of uncleanness is forbidden to attend in God's Temple during this time, nor is she allowed to partake of the Holy Communion (Canon 2, of Dionysius).

8. No one is to bring into God's Temple any kind of animal (Canon 88, VI Universal Sobor).

III

We Must Enter God's Temple In Awe

1. We enter God's Temple with propriety and reverence, in awe of God and with a sense of piety because we enter a place that is sanctified, where God dwells with us invisibly. David, the Psalmist, says: "I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple" (Psalm 5:7). During every Divine Liturgy in the Great Litany we avow to the Almighty: "For this Holy Temple and for those who with faith, reverence, and in fear of God enter therein, let us pray unto the Lord".

2. The ancient "Instructional Information" teaches us thus: "Upon entering God's Temple, direct your gaze at the Holy Altar and in awe render proper veneration. And all those who are in the Temple, let them remember that they stand in heaven in the presence of the Lord and therefore let them offer prayers to the Lord, Which is with them in the Temple."

3. Upon entering the Holy Temple let us pay attention to our outward appearance: we must clean our feet of dirt, snow, or any other grime before we enter the Church, not inside it. "Fear the Lord and serve Him in cleanliness". (Joshua 24:14).

IV

Our First Steps In God's Temple

1. Having entered God's Temple, we cross ourselves (make the sign of the cross) thrice and bow from the waist after each crossing, repeating the Publican's Prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Or this prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me a sinner!" Let this be our constant prayer in Church and elsewhere.

Let him who can, on entering the Temple, kneel, bow, and say the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father"), or "Holy Virgin, Mother of God". This is the outward manifestation of our total humility before the Lord, our Creator.

2. On entering the Holy Temple, kiss the icons that are in place on the tetrapod (a small table at the front end of the middle aisle).

The custom in the Ukrainian Church postulates that after venerating the icons the penitent turns towards the congregation and bows to the brothers on the left and to the sisters on the right, saying softly: "Forgive me, a sinner."

An accepted practice from earliest times stipulates that the faithful, having entered the Holy Temple, should place a wax candle before the icon or in the candle holder, as a sign of the sincerity of his Prayer and the purity of his Faith. More than one candle may thus be placed, according to one's resources.

3. In honouring the Icons, we remember those who are portrayed in them, and our reverence is directed to them. The 367 Fathers of the VII Universal Sobor in Nicaea in

the year 787, established an immutable Dogma in regard to the veneration conferred upon Icons:

“Through the portrait on the icon we see the Proto-icon of those whom we take care to remember, to cherish and to venerate. For the veneration and honour which we bestow on the icon is transferred to the Proto-icon; and whoever bows before an icon, bows before that Person, who is represented on the icon. This teaching was given to us by our Holy Fathers, and is the Tradition of the Universal Church, which throughout the world has accepted the Holy Gospel.”

4. Approaching, or passing by the Royal Doors, one should pause and bow in their direction, and make the sign of the cross. Behind them is the most sacred place in the Temple. This form of veneration should be observed at all times.

5. Before kissing the Holy Cross or an Icon or a Relic or the Book of Gospels, one should bow twice from the waist and make the sign of the cross; venerate the object, cross himself again, bow once more and retire.

6. We hold in greatest respect and reverence the Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified for our redemption. The Holy Fathers of the VI Universal Sobor in the year 692, tell us in the 73rd Canon:

“Seeing that the life-giving Cross has shown us the way to Salvation, we ought to make every endeavour to render the honour deserved to that which has been the means whereby we have been saved from the old lapse. Therefore our thoughts, our words, and our feelings are totally inherent in our veneration to it; it is the sign of our Victory.”

This is a truth of Orthodoxy, remembering the third Sunday of the Great Lent as the Sunday of Veneration of the Cross, when we sing: "Thy Cross, O Lord, we venerate."

And you, Dear Reader, be present in the Temple on this day and venerate the Precious Cross.

7. In Ukrainian Churches, the custom established in antiquity provides that women assemble on the left of the Church, and the men on the right. All are facing the east, toward the Holy Altar.

If convenience so dictates, a married couple may take its place either on the left or the right and remain together.

V

When To Stand And When To Sit

1. Orthodox Christians attend services in the Temple standing, and very seldom in a sitting position. Our Lord decreed that: "And when ye stand praying..." (Mark 11:25), hence the First Universal Sobor (325 A.D.) command the Christians in Temples to "offer prayers to our Lord, standing".

Small children and those who are aged and infirm are allowed to remain seated in the Church.

2. Some Orthodox Churches on the North American continent where alien influences are strong, accepted the custom to remain seated during Worship Services.

In consideration of the fact that this custom has prevailed for some time, it is permitted to sit during certain parts of the Divine Liturgy, as:

a) During the Great Litany: "In peace let us pray to the Lord". At the end of the

Great Litany we rise and remain standing until the conclusion of the reading from the Gospel.

b) During the Litany of Fervent Supplication: "Let us all say, with all our soul and with all our mind let us say", immediately after the reading from the Gospel, then we sit until the Hymn of the Cherubim. However, when the priest reads the Litany for the departed, we attend standing.

c) During the singing of the Litany: "Let us complete our prayer unto the Lord", which follows the Hymn of the Cherubim, we remain seated, but at the announcement, "and our whole life unto Christ our God", we rise and remain standing until the Litany preceding "Our Father", during which we sit; we stand through "Our Father", and remain standing until the end of the Liturgy.

d) During the sermon we sit.

3. We must stand during:

a) The reading from the Epistle and the Gospel.

b) Whenever a Priest or Deacon censers.

c) When the Clergy and the faithful are receiving Communion.

4. In the Ukrainian Orthodox Church the custom has evolved to kneel in token of one's humility before the Lord during these three interludes in the Liturgy:

a) During the Great Entrance at the conclusion of the Cherubimic Hymn. The congregation kneels throughout the Great Entrance.

b) During the transformation of Gifts, but only for the interval, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee", because it is at this time that, according to the Orthodox Faith, the Priest invokes the Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the Flesh and Blood

of Christ. This is the most sacred moment in the entire Liturgy.

c) During the singing of the Lord's Prayer.

The Catholic rite differs in that it is assumed that the Transformation occurs when a priest says: "Take, eat...", and, "Drink ye all of this", hence the congregation kneels at the announcement, "Take, eat...", during which time the Orthodox stand, but kneel at the commencement of the singing, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee".

d) Communicants in the Orthodox Church receive Communion standing; in the Catholic Church they kneel.

5. The Church Regulation does not require kneeling from Easter till Pentecost, and from Christmas Day till Jordan (Jan. 19, new calendar), as provided by the I and VI Universal Sobors (I. 20; VI. 90). This is so because through His Birth and His Resurrection Jesus Christ sanctified us, made us His true sons, or, according to Apostle Paul (Gal. 4:7): "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ".

6. When one attends Liturgical Services daily (e.g. monastics) then one does not kneel on Sundays and Holy Days (I, 20 and VI, 90 Universal Sobors), because "we treat the Day of Resurrection as the day of rejoicing for the Resurrected of that day" (Regulation of Peter of Alexandria 15).

7. The most important part of the Divine Liturgy is the Eucharistic Canon. It begins with the Priest's enunciation after The Creed: "Let us stand reverently...", and ends with the Transformation of Gifts into the Flesh and Blood of Christ, when the Choir sings, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee,

just before the Priest intones, "Especially for our most holy, most pure . . .".

This is a sacred moment in the Divine Liturgy when the faithful remain standing and pray devotedly in a spiritually uplifting manner.

It is not permitted to collect alms (offerings) at this time.

VI

Ones Behaviour In God's Temple

1. One's behaviour in God's Temple should be reverent, because the Lord is with us here, invisibly. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). And one should refrain from dwelling upon the worldly, but should have his thoughts on the Heaven — "Let us lift up our hearts!" And David the Psalmist teaches us: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2).

2. God's Temple deserves our greatest veneration. It is Holy, and therefore no consumption of food or beverages is permitted in it; nor is there to be any bed made therein (74 Canon, VI Universal Sobor). Our Saviour Himself warned us: "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (St. John 2:16).

Before the Service in God's Temple, and also after the conclusion of the Service, we must observe absolute propriety of behaviour and reverence. Audible conversation in the Temple is not allowed.

3. Even the immediate vicinity of the Temple of God is Holy. We must remember that we are on hallowed ground. The same applies when we are in a cemetery en-

closure. Canon 97 of the VI Universal Sobor, 692 A.D. declares: "Those who injudiciously treat consecrated places as if they were commonplace, and whose behaviour therein is offending, we command that they be driven away from those places".

Likewise, our behaviour in Temple auditoriums which are attached to the church building is to be reserved to comply with the Canon cited earlier (Canon 97). If any entertainment is planned to be held in the auditorium so situated, a prior consultation with the parish dean is necessary.

Smoking in these places, as well as on cemetery ground, is not allowed.

4. He who is ashamed to publicly obey the regulations prescribed and the decrees of one's Faith, is not a Christian. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33).

5. Lay members are not allowed to enter the Sanctuary (altar area) without sufficient cause. When it is urgent to do so, then entrance must be made in awe and reverence. When passing by on the rear of the altar, one should bow one's head and make the sign of the cross. One is within the most sacred place.

The ancient "Instructional Information" points out: "Let the Priest direct the sacristan and all the Church elders serving in the Sanctuary to move about the area with awe and reverence and likewise near the Table of Oblation (Zhertivnyk) when the Holy Gifts are upon it; and that they make the proper veneration when approaching or passing by".

This "Instructional Information" also advises that: "Only the Priest or Deacon may attend to the wiping and cleaning of the Altar and the Table of Oblation — in order to prevent unsanctified hands from handling sanctified objects".

6. Sacristans and others assisting the Bishop or the Priest are obliged to exercise utmost awe and reverence in the execution of their functions, keeping in mind that they are before the throne of the Lord, on which are placed the sanctified Holy Gifts. Hence, they are forbidden, as are all others, from engaging in any kind of conversation or free behaviour, or unnecessary walking, or peering at the congregation through "deacon's" doors, etc.

Such assistants must take care not to approach too close to the Royal Doors or the Holy Altar.

Usually only the Priest himself adorns the Holy Altar. In case of urgent need, the senior elders help under his care.

Only a consecrated person may pass between the Royal Doors and the Holy Altar — a lay person is not allowed to do so. And only a consecrated person may touch any of the main sanctified articles upon the Altar — lay people are barred from doing so. Likewise, only ordained persons may kiss the Holy Altar.

The ancient "Instructional Information" specifies: "Defiled (non-consecrated) hands must never touch these things (the Holy Gifts and the sanctified articles on the Altar), under the threat of mortal sin and severe Church penance, except in cases of extreme emergencies.

We must always bear in mind that our Lord Jesus Christ dwells upon the Holy Throne in the Temple.

7. Readers and others who serve the Priests must not bow to the congregation (23rd Canon, Carthaginian Sobor, 318 A.D.).

8. No one, except a Bishop, or a Priest, or a Deacon, is allowed to enter through the Royal Doors; during the Eucharist our Lord Jesus makes His entrance there.

9. "It is not becoming to a female to enter the Sanctuary", states the 44th Canon of the Laodicean Sobor, 364 A.D. Apostle Paul admonishes: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church" (1 Corin. 14:34-35).

That a woman may not enter the Sanctuary is a Canon (Regulation) established by the Church Fathers and strictly adhered to in the entire Orthodox Universal Church.

10. a) Church Services are the ultimate Schools of Christian Orthodox teaching. Among the Ukrainians, Church Services are conducted in the Ukrainian vernacular and therefore the Service content is understandable to all, instructing all in the Faith and the proper virtues of life. For that reason the faithful must surrender to careful listening and full sentence of the Service, with complete accord of the soul, the heart and the mind.

Church Services give us the entire life of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fullness of of Christian teaching, hence, we must listen carefully in order to understand fully and to live through the experience that is presented, with our whole being.

10. b) Upon entering the Church let us endeavour to become the sons of our Lord.

All of us are equal here, identical one to the other; we are all brothers, therefore we must show and feel the greatest love for each other, the essential brotherly love.

In the Temple of God we should shun our daily concerns, things of this world. We are in His House and our thoughts should dwell upon our Lord. Let us bare our hearts to Him; we should not be ashamed of tears which are shed from the depths of our soul in token of our repentance for sins we have committed. Tears before God are the most precious tears, and are most fruitful because they cleanse us of our transgressions.

In God's Temple there are no rich and poor; no educated and illiterate; no famous and lowly — all of us are equal before God, all of us are His Children — we are all equally members of Christ's Body, of His Eternal Church.

There is not, nor can there be any partisanship in the Church. Once you have crossed the threshold of God's Temple you are no longer a partisan — you are the faithful servant of the Lord and must think only of what is dear to Him.

11. Any distractions, like whispering, giggling, squirming, ogling, looking round, walking about, premature leave of the Temple, are not countenanced. We are in the presence of the Lord Which inhabits the Holy Temple.

Always remember that the children who are present learn how to behave in the Holy Temple by watching and imitating the behaviour of their elders.

12. During all important parts of the Divine Liturgy and following every petition by a Priest or a Bishop, the faithful reverently make the sign of the cross and bow. When a Priest or a Bishop declaims, "Peace be with you all", the entire congregation

bows, as it does at the declamation: "Bow your heads unto the Lord". At this time the faithful stand.

13. When a Bishop or a Priest blesses the congregation in the Holy Temple, with the Cross, the Book of Gospels, and Icon or the Chalice, all make the sign of the cross and bow their heads; all stand.

When a Bishop or a Priest blesses the congregation with his hands, or tapers, or with a censer, all bow their heads but do not cross themselves.

During the Holy Easter Week a Bishop or a Priest censers the congregation with a crucifix in his hand, and utters, "Christ Is Risen!", all cross themselves and respond: "Indeed He Is Risen!"

14. The task of the Church is to offer salvation and enlightenment to the faithful by bringing them to Christ, thus Christianizing them. The Church sermon, given by a Bishop or a Priest, carries a great deal of weight in this endeavour. It strengthens the spiritual well-being of a person and molds his Christian perspective, imparts to him the fundamentals of faith and virtue. For that reason we must listen attentively to a sermon to profit from it. To leave the Church during a sermon, or to engage in any other distraction is not permitted.

15. To vacate the Church before the conclusion of the Service is not acceptable. One may leave only at the end of the Service, as provided by the 9th Apostolic Regulation. The exit is made in reverence and without fuss, without press and undue haste.

The blessing conferred by the Priest at the conclusion of the Service symbolizes purification and sanctification of all in the congregation, therefore we must wait to accept it in humility. Let no one leave the Temple without first receiving the final

blessing by the Priest, because it sanctifies us.

In leaving the Temple we must make the sign of the cross and bow to the Holy Altar, or to the Royal Doors.

16. The Ukrainian Church perpetuates the ancient custom of having older pious persons, both men and women, to stand during the Lesser Entrance and the reading from the Gospel and also during the Great Entrance (with large lighted candles). The usual number is 3-6 men who stand on the right, and the same number of women who stand on the left of the tetrapod and further back, the women facing the men. The candles are held in the right hand, or in both hands, and symbolize ardent Faith and pious prayers of the entire congregation to our Lord.

During the Vesper Service, the men and women asked to hold lighted candles do so during the Vesper Entrance and during the Litia (preceding a Holy Day), and during the Matins, at the time of "Polielei" and the Gospel Reading.

17. In the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, as in all other Churches, collection plates are passed among the congregated at some point of the Divine Liturgy. Such collections are not allowed during the Eucharistic Canon (see earlier reference V, 7), because this is the most sacred part of the Divine Liturgy, but immediately following, "It is worthy and right..." Collectors make their rounds quietly and unobtrusively, acknowledging each gift with a small bow. In case of need the collection may be carried out by a Priest.

Collections are counted after the conclusion of the Liturgy.

We must always remember that our Church is maintained by the offering of our

faithful. If we expect our Church to grow and flourish, our offerings must be generous.

VII

The Sacrament Of Penance (Confession)

1. The Holy Church teaches us that "There is no human being that has not sinned during his lifetime". Our transgressions against the Lord and our misdeeds against our fellowmen are so numerous that a human being would perish under their weight were it not for the Sacrament of Penance instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, by means of which He forgives us all the evil we have committed, if we truly repent before Him.

In this way the Sacrament of Penance cleanses a person and offers a renewed life.

Confession washes us clean of daily misdeeds, cleanses us of all defilement, lifts the burden of our mortal sins. Without the Holy Confession a human being, weighted down by defilement, would perish like a plant which is denied the light of the sun.

Holy Confession is associated with Holy Communion — the one complements the other; the two act to sanctify life, the highest purpose of human existence.*

And as the prettiest and most fragrant flowers thrive under the hot sun, so do perfect humans under the influence of the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion.

2. All faithful, from the age of seven, come to Confession. It is an accepted practice in the Orthodox Church that the faith-

* See my work "Sanctification — the Purpose of Human Life", 1954.

ful come to Confession and receive Holy Communion several times a year, particularly before memorable Holy Days, but at least once a year, during Great Lent. We thus follow the example set by early Christians which, according to Acts 2:46: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart".

An ancient custom practised in Ukraine requires the bride and groom to come to Confession and partake of the Holy Communion before the marriage ceremony. We honour this custom today as well.

3. The clergy make their Confession in the Sanctuary, at the Altar, and the faithful confess in the Church on the left side. In case of need, that is, when the number of faithful to Confession is large, Confession may be made on the right side as well.

4. In preparing ourselves for Confession, we must make peace with those who have offended us; also we must seek forgiveness of those whom we have slighted in any way. Confession or Repentance cleanse us of sins and unites us with Christ. When we cannot manage to do so before Confession, we must try to acquit ourselves of this obligation before Holy Communion.

The ancient Holy Fathers teach us: "When he who has been offended by you is far away, ask his forgiveness in your heart and say a prayer for him, that God may pardon you", and "Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:4).

In like manner we must forgive all who offended us and henceforth never remind them of the offence committed. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6:14).

5. We must go to Confession a day before taking Holy Communion, so that we may have sufficient time to assess our transgressions. Confession on the day of receiving Holy Communion is an exception rather than a rule.

6. Before Confession we must pause to review our life and recall our transgressions so that we may have a complete account to present to our confessor.

7. The Orthodox Universal Church had established secret Confession in earliest Apostolic times. It was officially accepted in the Orthodox Church by one of its first protagonists, St. Basil the Great (329-379), and since then our Church has observed the custom without change.

Public Confession is not accepted by the Orthodox Church. The practice of Public Confession is limited to some Protestant sects.

8. Before we go to Confession our thoughts must dwell only upon our past life, upon our unbecoming deeds by action, by word, or by thought. We must express our atonement by smiting upon our chests and imploring humbly: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

9. Upon approaching the Confessor, we should kneel thrice and touch the ground (floor) with our foreheads, making the sign of the cross prior to each prostration, before the Book of Gospel or the Holy Cross lying on the anoly. We should then kneel (or bow) and place two fingers upon the Book of Gospel (as in taking an oath), and then with a penitent heart and in a clear voice enumerate our sins and transgressions. As we catalogue our sins we must face the Holy Cross and the Book of Gospel and avoid turning towards the Confessor, who

is merely a witness to our confession before our Lord.

After the Confession we bow once from the waist, make the sign of the cross and humbly retire, offering prayers all the while.

In the Great Kievan Trebnyk of 1646, prepared by Metropolitan Petro Mohyla and based upon the teaching of the Holy Fathers, the lesson on Confession is stated thus: "He who wishes to confess, that is, sincerely repent for his transgressions, first of all, prepares himself thoroughly by careful introspection of his conscience, recalling all his misdeeds committed against God and his fellowman. He is emotionally impassioned and suffers contrition for his sins and misdeeds, having violated the Lord's Commandments, thus meriting God's wrath upon himself and forfeiture of His Blessing. Then before confessing with fear and trembling in his heart, approaches the hierarch and facing the East, in utter humility, makes three low bows and kneels down".

10. When we enumerate our sins in the presence of the Confessor, we really confess our sins to the Ultimate Judge, our Lord God, Which is present beside us and hears our account. The Priest in this case is merely a witness of our voluntary repentance. We must confess all our transgressions however repugnant they may be, concealing nothing, and when our repentance is sincere and genuine, our Lord will forgive us. Jesus Christ Himself declared: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6:14).

11. Our Lord God is present, though invisible, during the Act of Confession. He hears our confession and through the lips of the Priest forgives our sinful commis-

sions. Respecting this, Christ said to His Apostles (and through them to the Bishops and the Priests): "...Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (St. John 20:22-23).

Whatever penance the Priest may impose on us, we must fulfil it in all humility.

12. The Orthodox Church fully recognizes secret Confession. A Priest who divulges any part of the secret Confession is subject to severe punishment.

13. The Orthodox Church requires the penitent to abstain from food following Confession before Holy Communion. This fast is to glorify our Lord. It is not required of children and those who are infirm.

The 50th Canon of the Carthaginian Sobor, of the year 318, warns: "The Holy Sacrament of Communion is permitted only to persons who have fasted in the interim".

14. After Confession we must hear or ourselves read the Prayers to be said before Holy Communion. These prayers are to be found in the Trebnyk (Page 63-67), or in the Prayer Book.

VIII

The Sacrament Of Holy Communion

The greatest Sacrament, the Sacrament of Sacraments, is Holy Communion or as it also called, the Holy Eucharist. In this great Sacrament, each individual person, having first cleansed himself through the Sacrament of Confession, receives, in the appearance of bread and wine, the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through this act each person draws nearer to the Lord and becomes His son, or His daughter.

One should take Holy Communion frequently, but not less than once a year, usually during the Great Lent, or preferably during every Lenten period.

The Venerable Father of the IV century, Hegumen Appolos, instructs: "He who shuns Holy Communion, he also shuns God". This is the teaching of the Orthodox Church.

It is through the Holy Communion that all Christians are united in one Body — into One Holy Universal and Apostolic Church whose Head is its Founder our Lord Jesus Christ.

Regarding Holy Communion, our Lord declared: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him — hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (St. John 6:56, 54).

Blessed is he who bears this in mind, the greatest of Sacraments, and partakes often of the Holy Communion.

2. Those who are to receive Holy Communion offer humble prayers and especially heed the Holy Liturgy.

3. When a Deacon or a Priest announces: "With fear of God and with faith and love, draw near!", those who are to receive Holy Communion prepare themselves to do so.

4. The prayer preceding Holy Communion, "I believe, O Lord, and I confess . . .", which is read aloud by the Priest standing within the Royal Doors is repeated by those waiting to receive Holy Communion.

5. At the end of the prayer the communicant kneels and bows low, making the sign of the cross, stands, and devoutly ascends the Solea.

6. Before receiving the Holy Communion as we approach the Chalice, we cross our hands upon our chest, right hand over left, as a token of our humility. We do not

cross ourselves or make low bows again, because we did so already.

The 101 Canon of the VI Universal Sobor, held in 692, instructs: "He who wishes to receive Holy Communion during Liturgy, let him cross his hands upon his chest and in this posture receive Holy Communion".

We receive Holy Communion from the Priest who stands within the Royal Doors or in front of them. We receive the Holy Sacrament while standing, that is, we do not kneel when the Holy Communion is administered.

7. The Fathers of the VI Universal Sobor, 692, by Canon 101, have established that: "Man, having been created in the image of God, the Holy Apostle clearly identifies him as the Body of Christ and the Temple of God. Thus Man has been placed above all other living creatures and through suffering on the Cross has been vouchsafed the gift of heaven. He who eats and drinks of the Body and Blood of Christ is continually transmuted into a state of eternal life, sanctifying his body and soul by Holy Communion. He who would partake of the Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy, and through it unite with Christ, let him draw near and accept the Communion of Christ's Grace".

8. When a communicant approaches the Holy Chalice, he announces his name (it will be repeated by the Priest) and opens his mouth. On receiving the Holy Communion, he swallows it, minding that nothing of it should remain in his mouth. He presents his lips so that the Priest may wipe them. Then he kisses the bottom rim of the Chalice, as if it were the Rib of Christ (he does not kiss the Priest's hand), and humbly retires, having bowed and made the sign of the cross.

Kneeling and bowing to the ground after receiving the Holy Communion is not acceptable because through the symbolic unity with Christ upon receiving the Holy Communion, one has from that moment become the son or daughter of God.

9. After receiving the Holy Communion the communicant is offered prosphora (holy bread) and warm water to rinse down the elements of Holy Communion. When the Priest announces: "...always now and ever, and unto ages of ages," the communicant approaches the Solea and bows his head as the Chalice is momentarily placed upon his bowed head. The communicant stands during this ceremony, because he has already become the son, or she the daughter of God.

10. The procedure in the Ukrainian Trebnyk, dated 1647, concerning Holy Communion, is given as follows: "When the Deacon appears within the Royal Doors and announces, 'With fear of God...', the Priest takes, the Chalice from him and, placing himself within the Royal Doors, holds the Chalice in both hands. Then the communicant approaches closer and repeats after the Priests, the prayer. 'I believe O Lord, and I confess...'. At the end of the prayer, the communicant comes forward in great humility and in awe of God, moves emotionally even to tears and bows to the ground from a kneeling posture, and on arising crosses his hands on his chest. The clergy in attendance who hold the large covering under the Chalice, place it under the communicant's chin, who then, opening his mouth and looking upward, receives the Holy Eucharist from the Priest. The communicant, if heavily mustached, must take care not to dip his mustache into the Sacrament (the Blood of Christ). After administering the Holy Sac-

rament the Priest wipes the communicant's lips, after which the communicant reverently kisses the bottom edge of the Chalice and bowing low retires, in his spirit praising and thanking the Lord for the great blessing and grace that he has received".

We still practise this ancient Church procedure.

11. Children from infancy up to seven years of age partake of the Holy Communion without prior Confession, but all others necessarily do so after Confession.

12. A mother who brings her child to receive Holy Communion holds the child with its head resting on her right arm, the body in a horizontal position. The child is not required to partake of the warm water.

13. When the communicants are administered the Holy Communion, the congregation should remain standing.

14. After receiving Holy Communion the communicant should attentively listen to, or himself read through, the Thanksgiving Prayers that follow the Sacrament (Turn to pp. 68-72 for the text in our Trebnyk).

15. The communicant should pass the rest of the day in joyous reverence and humility. Among the Orthodox, since the earliest times, it is accepted that the communicant, after receiving Holy Communion, must abstain from spitting on that day.

16. On the day of receiving Holy Communion, the communicants do not kneel and do not make low reverences, because they have become the sons and daughters of God.

17. An ancient custom in Ukraine practised still, is to dress oneself in one's finest clothes, as for a most memorable Holy Day, on the day of receiving Holy Communion. On this day through the Grace of our Lord, we unite with Christ by partaking of the Holy Communion; therefore the receiving

of the Holy Eucharist is our paschal day, our own Holy Day.

We should, therefore, extend sincerest greetings to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ on the occasion of this great and solemn event — the receiving of the Holy Eucharist.

18. Having received the Holy Communion, we must endeavour to live virtuously and piously henceforth, as becomes the sons and daughters of God. On no account should we allow our soul to sink into an abyss of corruption. Let us be mindful to partake of the Holy Communion frequently so that we are always united with our Lord.

IX

Let Us Respect Our Clergy As Our Spiritual Fathers

1. When a Bishop or a Priest in meeting a parishioner in Church or elsewhere blesses him, the recipient of the blessing bows his head but does not make the sign of the cross; and if so disposed, he may kiss the hand that bestows the blessing (the right hand, not the left).

2. Hierarchic blessings among the Orthodox are accepted as follows: the adherent approaches the Hierarch without crossing himself, places his right hand in the palm of his left, with the palm of his right hand uppermost, and bows his head. The Hierarch, having bestowed a blessing, places his right hand upon that of the adherent, who bows and kisses it.

3. The entire Christian World has recognized the V Commandment requiring respect for one's father and mother: "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12), and hence the accepted custom of

kissing the hand. A Bishop or a Priest is our spiritual father and for that reason deserves the full respect of his spiritual children. Our Lord Jesus Christ declared: "He that heareth you (Apostles, and by the same token, Bishops and Priests), heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me" (Luke 10:16).

Apostle Paul admonished: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour" (1 Timothy 5:17) and, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . ." (Heb. 13:17).

For that reason the ancient Apostolic Decrees (Book II, par. 33) instruct us to always hold in highest regard our spiritual fathers, "because they received command over life and death from our Lord; the dispensation to judge the sinners and prescribe their penance: those who repent are granted dissolution and a privilege to be restored".

Every Priest is our spiritual father and we are his children. That is why we address him: Father.

This high regard for the spiritual mentor is well known in Ukraine since earliest times, and since then, has become a totally Ukrainian custom. Therefore he who respects a Bishop or a Priest, not only fulfils God's Commandment but is also loyal to our ancient Ukrainian tradition.

Prince Volodymyr Monomakh (d. 1125) in his teaching of children admonishes: "Respect Bishops, Priests and Monastics, and accept their blessing in love!"

4. It must be further added that due respect to the Clergy exerts a great potential influence in strengthening the congre-

gation — it nurtures obedience which promotes accord and brotherly love among the faithful.

5. Every Church parish governing body, in resolving an important matter, invariably seeks the counsel of its Parish Dean, since his prime responsibility is the state and well-being of the Church entrusted to him.

X

Comments By Our Holy Father St. John Chrysostom On Respecting The Clergy

An eminent Father and Teacher of the Church of the 4th Century, and outstanding Evangelist of his time, the author of the Divine Liturgy which we continue to celebrate as originally composed, Patriarch of Constantinople, St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) contributed immensely to the glory of the Church of our Lord. His constant admonition was to venerate Christ's Disciples — the Bishops, the Priests, and the Deacons.

We take the liberty to quote him verbatim on this subject (dated March 10):

“Ignatius, called Theophorus (God-bearer), affirms in respect of Bishops by saying: Take heed that God may accept your souls and save them unto eternity. He who humbles himself before Bishops and Priests, the servants of the Church, that one shall also inherit eternal bliss with them in God's Kingdom. The Holy Spirit inspires me, saying unto me: Do not attempt anything without the Bishop's mediation, for where he will dispose much good will accrue; and where Christ's name shall be uttered there will congregate the Universal Church.

The sheep do not graze where they will, but where they are herded by the shepherds; and the stragglers who fail to heed the call of their shepherd will be preyed upon by the wild animals.

It pleases God when His Disciple is revered. Who venerates God's emissary him God regards benignly. It is an ill-conceived notion to attempt an act without the intercession of a Bishop. Priests must be hearkened to, as if they were Christ's Apostles. We must also hold in deep respect the Deacons, those servants at the Eucharist because they also serve in God's Temple.

Therefore hold in veneration him who serves the Church, as you would a father, and a Bishop as Christ Himself; and the Priests as Apostolic allies, for without them the Church is not sanctified.

He who guards the essence of the Covenant abides by the Word: All that is spoken unto you by the Priest you should discharge without deviation either to the left or to the right. The person who scorns the Priest and will not obey him deserves condemnation.

Thus speaks the prophet Malachi: Heed the spoken word of the Priest; garner the wisdom of the law from his lips because he is God's Oracle; he reassures the unsure and turns many away from falsehood.

Another declares: Praise God with all your soul and render respect unto His emissaries. Love your Creator with all your strength and do not forsake His servants. Fear God and respect the Priest.

Paul writes to Timotheus in this wise: Priests who are mindful deserve a double esteem.

Once again, the Law declares: The Priests have been sanctified by our Lord

God and they bring sacrifices and gifts to Him on our behalf.

And God spoke unto Aaron saying: Speak to My servants in the Temple of the Testament, and they will assume upon themselves the sins of their people. Isaiah says: You, the Priests, are called the servants of God. Jeremiah states: I shall glorify and exalt the soul of the Priest.

We implore you, brothers, — know those that labour in your behalf and honour them. It is good, my beloved, that you should esteem the Priests as God's consorts, selected and exalted by the Lord.

Nowhere is it said in the Writings, neither now, or at any other time, to oppose the Priest; he who opposes shall be condemned. Because it is written: Do not speak evil unto the elders among the people.

And our Lord Christ, the Chief Priest over all Priests, declares: Who welcomes you welcomes me; and he who welcomes me welcomes Him who sent me. He who accepts the Prophet, as a Prophet, will receive the prophet's reward; he who accepts the Righteous, as the Just, will receive a just reward".

Glory to God, now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

XI

The Great Meaning Of The Church

The Church is our very own Mother who always attends upon us, as her children, to comfort us and to alleviate the heaviness we often bear. We must not feel any sense of shame to openly come to her with all our afflictions, all our shortcomings. We must

not be ashamed to shed tears in Church when there is a need to cleanse our souls burdened with sin. The relief we experience after such cleansing, and the resultant joy, are gifts that only the Church can offer.

The Church is our Sacred School for the duration of our temporal life. She teaches us the way of virtue in life, which alone leads us to the true happiness on earth and the reward of eternal salvation in the life to come.

The Church transforms every one of its faithful into a worthy human being. What is more, She transforms us into sons and daughters of God, that is, She transmutes a human being into a transcendent being, whose image and likeness is nearest to that of his Creator.

Human truth is capricious and inconstant. Only the Church teaches us God's Truth — which is eternal and immutable.

A plant cannot thrive without light and air, and a true human being cannot survive without the Church. Hence, the Church constitutes the life-giving sun which nurtures the human being into a true son of God.

The Church is eternal and will never cease to continue in her God endued work. So long as the world prevails, so will God's Church, teaching us the highest moral and spiritual lessons, and calling upon us to rally to God's Truth in order to be sanctified, which is the purpose of our life upon earth.

And hence the transcendent meaning of the Church becomes all the more clear as we co-exist with others within the labyrinth of conflicting interests and influences: she protects us from assimilation, endows us with a measure of self-respect, and teaches

us to be true to our adopted country and to remain true to the country of our fathers. Our salvation, our strength and our happiness is in our Church.

Ages will pass, political associations and party affiliations of men will dissolve, but the Holy Church will remain permanent and timeless — the source of God's eternal Truth, and a consolation unto all of mankind.

Because of this, every father and every mother has a prophetic duty to perform — to teach and to habituate their children to attend Church. What we ourselves inculcate in our children in their infancy, that they will carry forth into their life. That is our sacred duty, for which we must give an account before our Lord, and for which we render account to ourselves in our conscience on a daily basis.

And every father and mother teaching the children to attend Church, is providing them with the most essential education, and thus molds them into the worthiest of persons.

And great honour is due those parents who nurture their families into religious families. The children, on reaching adulthood, will repay their parents' solicitude a hundredfold.

Each one of us should remember well: many Ukrainians do not attend Church; many belong to assorted sectarian groups. Our duty is to explain to our brothers and sisters the true way, and to lead them to the Orthodox Church, because only there will they find their salvation and true enlightenment.

XII

CONCLUSION

An Appeal To Fathers And Mothers

I bestow my blessing upon all parents to read aloud to their children what I have set forth in this booklet. The teachers in Sunday Schools should thoroughly explain the import of what is said in the book to their pupils during instruction in Religion.

It would do the most good and be most profitable for a father and a mother to find a spare moment, especially on Sundays, to read some part of the Lesson to their children. A father and a mother are the first and most important teachers of their children, and it is their duty to impart the spiritual knowledge to their offspring, and to put into practice such learning by bringing the children to Church.

The lessons, briefly stated here, are most essential for the good of our Christian structure and our spiritual growth; "and let the whole earth be filled with His glory" (Psalm 72:19) — so that all may know, "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

And let us always remember that the parents are the first to teach their children the virtuous Orthodox way of life; the nurturing the children receive in their infancy will remain with them throughout their life. It falls mainly to the mother to assume responsibility for the religious bringing up of the child — to teach the child at least the most significant aspects of one's Faith; the prayers and their hab-

ituation, and attendance at Church, which should also become second nature.

Besides this, Dear Parent, in your home converse with your children in your native Ukrainian tongue. It is your sacred duty to acculturate your children in the use of the Ukrainian language, a duty that is irrevocable and totally binding. Should the parents fail in this responsibility, no other power or agency will do this for them. We must always bear this in mind!

The importance of the Ukrainian Language to the Ukrainian people is fundamental. The Language is the heart of the people. When the Language dies so does the people. He who renounces his Language inflicts a wound to the very heart of his people.

When all Ukrainians become the true sons and daughters of their Orthodox Church, and in addition become consciously aware of their Ukrainian Heritage, then we shall truly become saintly in the eyes of our Lord, and respectable in the eyes of others.

And only then "will the Grace of the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all".

