

**The practical instructions in unfortunate and unexpected accidents  
that can happen during the Rite of the Divine Liturgy,  
and what to do in these cases.<sup>1\*</sup>**

*“...Thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful...”*

*Luke.10: 41- 42;*

This paper is based on the compilation of resources and solutions addressing the issues of unfortunate and unexpected accidents which may arise during the service of the Divine Liturgy titled: *Izviestije ucitiel'noje- (An Instructional Notice)*, and other supporting materials.

The issues addressed:

1. Practices pertaining to utensils and substances/articles used during the service of the Divine Liturgy, also,
  - Concerning the Matter of the Body of Christ.
  - Concerning the Matter of the Blood of Christ.
2. Concerning accidents which can happen during the service of the Liturgy, in the Service itself, and with the celebrants, also,
  - Concerning accidents in the Matter of the Body of Christ.
  - Concerning accidents in the Matter of the Blood of Christ.
  - Concerning accidents during the Consecration and Completion of the Holy Gifts.
3. Concerning accidents which can happen to the Priest himself, who serves the Divine Liturgy, and also concerning other accidents.
4. What must be done after celebrating the Divine Liturgy.
5. Some concluding thoughts

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The rite of the Holy Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ has central importance and place in the life of the Church. According to St. John of Kronstadt, “the Divine Liturgy is true heaven on earth.” This is why the celebrant preparing to serve the Liturgy is required to exercise particular care and professionalism. Yet, even the most careful preparation and observance does not guarantee prevention of “the specific unfortunate and unexpected cases and accidents”. I will present here some norms, solutions, and rules which guide the actions that follow such cases.<sup>2</sup>

The problems I am presenting are not new. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarch of Moscow, Joachim (Szavielov, 1674 –1690), requested monk Euthymius to study and prepare a uniform organization of practices adopted in specific and extreme cases.

Monk Euthymius compiled his findings and knowledge into *Izviestije ucziel'noje* (IU) (*An Instructional Notice*<sup>3</sup>, or *Teacher News*<sup>4</sup>). *Those interested can find it in older versions of Sluzebnik (in OCS only).*

The wide array of possible accidents within the subject matter of unfortunate and unexpected accidents that can happen during the Rite of the Divine Liturgy demands from clergy familiarity with the knowledge and practices prescribed by the pastoral and liturgical sources regarding the issues. My analysis is concentrated in three areas:

- a) Liturgical items – Antimins and substances – bread and wine
- b) Order of the services (what to do when.....)
- c) Extreme situations (i.e. death of the celebrant, fire in the altar, attack by intruders).

## **1. Practices pertaining to utensils and substances/articles used during the service of the Divine Liturgy.**

Although utensils and articles used during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy are not part of the Liturgy themselves, they are closely related to it. However, issues of these “specific cases” deal closely with them.

The most important article is the Antimins. According to its rudimentary definition and Greek translation (Gr. *Antimensia* – instead of the offering table), it is a silk (or other fabric) piece of cloth with an imprint of the representation of the entombment of Christ. It is a *conditio sine qua non* to serving the Divine Mysteries.

The blessing of Antimins is done only by a bishop; it contains the bishop’s signature which denotes the bishop’s approval, permission and blessing for the celebration of the Eucharist in a particular temple.

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<sup>2</sup> Hence, I am taking no credit for anything which I will present. In preparation of the text I have attempted to remain as close as possible to the original texts and instructions. The hierarchs, clergy and academics involved in organizing the subject matter have always advised not to interpret the compiled rules in order to avoid ambiguities. The specified regulations should be completely based on previous regulations and determinations.

<sup>3</sup> Translation from the Church Slavonic text of the Liturgicon by The Monastery of Saint Mark of Ephesus, Hopatcong, N.J.

<sup>4</sup> Interpretation of the title by Fr. Eugene Tarris.

Church tradition does not allow the offering of two liturgies on one Antimensia on the same day. Should the necessity arise, a second Antimens should be used (bishop's permission obtained) and the celebration be done by another celebrant.

The Antimens is opened only at the Liturgy, and it is not required for other services. In a situation in which the altar table (prestol) is not available, i.e. after fire, the Antimens is a substitute for the altar.

*Izviestije uczitiel'noje* states,

“If the Antimens is torn, has a hole in it, is blackened due to mold or moisture, or damaged to the point that the imprint and text can not be read, the Sacrament of the Holy Mysteries absolutely cannot be served on it. One who dares to serve using such an Antimens *commits a deadly sin* as one who desecrates and downgrades the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. Sanctions with which a priest will be reprimanded are reviewed by the diocesan bishop. The reprimand should correspond to the committed act.”

According to *Izviestije uczitiel'noje* possible sanctions by the bishop and adequate reprimands include:

- a) Suspension – lesser sanction (Gr. *apochorismos mikros*) – when one is temporarily excluded from the sacraments of communion for a specific amount of time (in most cases it is also required to complete a penance - *epitymia*),
- b) Deposition (Gr. *panteles apochorismos*) the most severe form of discipline which involves suspension from all priestly functions.

In 1900 *Nastol'naya Kniga Dlya Svyaschenno-Tserkovno-Sluzhitelei (Handbook for Ecclesiastic Celebrants*<sup>5</sup>) was issued, which also contained, within its broad scope, specific solutions and procedures for “unfortunate and unexpected accidents”.

It is time to replace an Antimens as specified in *Nastol'naja kniga* when “on the inside/front of an Antimens all print and handwriting is faded away, but the fabric is still strong and usable. What should a priest do? Should he return the Antimens to his bishop to restore the print and signature? Or, is it enough to just inform a dean and the priest will restore the faded prints and signature?” The editors state that the priest has a duty, without delay, to replace the Antimens. It specifies an obligation of returning the cloth to the hierarch. Any type of reconstruction of the print or handwriting is considered a forgery and desecrates the liturgical value of the object. Any reconstruction would be an overt offense to the hierarch.

“Having received a new Antimens,” instructs *Rukovodstvo dla siel'skich pastyriej* (S. V. Bulgakov, 1903), “the priest with care and respect presents it directly on the altar (prestol) at the usual place under the Book of Holy Gospels. This act is not accompanied by any particular prayers or ceremonies. There is no requirement to serve the Divine Liturgy on the day the new Antimens is brought.” Returned Antimenses are not to be reused.

*Nastol'naja kniga dla swiaszczzenno-cerkowno-sluzhitieliej*, also strictly prohibits washing stains from an Antimens (i.e. wine). This regulation also forbids sewing in torn parts of the Antimens or

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<sup>5</sup> Interpretation of the title by Fr. Eugene Tarris.

gluing them.<sup>6</sup> Care and respect for the House of God and the Most-Holy Sacrifice of Body and Blood should motivate clergy to care for the Antimins and all other items and substances used during the celebration of the Liturgy.

Eucharistic utensils should be made out of proper materials and within proper form according to their use. Chalice, paten, star, covers, spoon, and spear should be absolutely clean and not dusty. *Izwiestije ucziel'noje* warns under penalty of the bishop's reprimand that the chalice can not be wooden. Plating should be gold and silver; if the chalice is silver, gold-plating should be inside the cup.

The substances used to celebrate the Holy Offering of Body and Blood are bread and wine. The consciousness of a priest demands that careful determination be used that these be of good quality and form. According to the norms of *Izwiestije ucziel'noje*, prospora should be prepared only from wheat flour, well baked, and without additives, i.e. baking soda.<sup>7</sup> The bread is made with regular water and with a touch of salt and yeast.<sup>8</sup>

Professor of Sankt-Peterburg Duchownoj Akademii, Archimandrite Cyryl, warns not to glaze the breads with butter, oil, or egg. "Bread made out of anything other than wheat flour is equal to unrisen (unleavened) bread, and can not be used during the Liturgy. One who attempts the use of such a bread for the purpose of the Liturgy takes upon himself a heavy sin and may be subject to episcopal sanctions, including suspension from duties."<sup>9</sup> The same consequences, that of suspension (Gr. *apochorismos mikros*) or deposition (Gr. *Panteles apochorismos*), can also be brought upon the celebrant who dares to serve the Liturgy using bread which is either stale, burned, not raised, baked from molded, mildewed flour, or defective in any other way. *Izwiestije ucziel'noje* requires a priest (if he wants to avoid the bishop's sanctions) to personally supervise the baking of bread, so that the bread used for the purpose of the sacraments is ALWAYS of the best quality. The severity of the sanctions should be an adequate motivator to make that happen.

To be certain of the quality of bread, before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy and Proskomedia – Preparation, the priest should break in half one of the breads. Although Nomokanon rule 213 tells us of the use of five breads, *Izwiestije ucziel'noje* suggests having six breads in the case of some defect in the breads.

Although, it is easier with the use of refrigerators and freezers to keep the bread fresh for a long time. However, this fact poses its own risks of freezer-burn, bread drying out, falling apart, and/or acquiring a smell of other food items stored there. A priest should be mindful not to freeze the bread for prolonged periods of time, and absolutely NOT to freeze it with other, especially carnal, foods. If freezing of the bread is absolutely necessary, the best practice is to have a separate, clean refrigerator or freezer for that purpose.

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<sup>6</sup> S. V. Bukgakov. *Nastolnaja kniga dla swiaszczzenno-cerkowno-služiteliej*. Moskwa, 1900. p. 780

<sup>7</sup> Sluzebnik, Izdanije Moskowskoj Patriarchii 1977. *Liturgija Vasilija Wielikogo*, p. 511.

<sup>8</sup> Archbishop Vieniamin. (1992). *Nowaja Skrzyżal'*. Moskwa. 1.1, part.2, chapter. 6, §33, p. 154. As in, *Szczegolne wypadki podczas sprawowania sw. Liturgii*. Polska.

<sup>9</sup> As found in: *Szczegolne wypadki podczas sprawowania sw. Liturgii*. Polska.

*Izwiestije ucztitel'noje* also provides direction concerning the wine. The celebrant should take care that it is of these particular qualities: made from grape, sweet, aged (not fresh/young), not sour/vinegar, and have proper/pleasant taste and smell.

Only red wine can be used, to allow the human eye to understand the relationship to blood. Taking into consideration Apostolic Canon III<sup>10</sup>, S. V. Bulgakov demands of priests that the Most Holy Sacrifice of Body and Blood be served with wine of the highest possible quality. The liquid must be clear, without thickening or sugar crystals, additives (juices), not of watery consistency.

The author of *Nastolnaya Kniga Dlya Svyaschenno-Tserkovno-Sluzhitelei (Handbook for Ecclesiastic Celebrants/Servers)* also points out that any other juice or wine or combination thereof cannot be used. He states, “let no one dare to serve the Divine Liturgy using wine other than grape wine, or wine that has lost its quality and become soured, mildewed, or fermented. Whoever would attempt to serve Holy Eucharist using spoiled wine, or wine diluted with water to a point of making it “watery” takes on himself a deadly sin and is a subject to the bishop’s sanctions, including deposition (highest form of punishment).”

Warning priests of the consequences and sanctions for carelessness or ignorance regarding the substance of the Holy Blood, *Izwiestije ucztitel'noje* highlights the importance of the attention being directed when mixing wine and water. The rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and of the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, require that during the preparation (Proskomedia) wine be mixed with a small amount of fresh (cold) water, and later, following the Lord’s Prayer, we add some “hot” (boiling) water to the contents of the Chalice.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, when proclaiming the words of the Holy Gospel “*One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once, there came out blood and water. He who saw it bore witness, and his witness is true,*” the priest pierces with a spear the offered bread, which becomes the Lamb, and combines water with wine. If a priest celebrating the Holy Mysteries purposefully will not combine/mix wine and water, he commits a sin against the Holy Tradition of the Church (Council of Trullo, the Quinisext Council, A.D. 692, canon 32).<sup>12</sup>

The mystery of the Holy Eucharist is even more desecrated by the one who while proclaiming: “*Blessed is the warmth of Thy saints, always, now and ever, and...*” consciously and purposefully does not add to the chalice hot water, or instead of hot water adds cold water, even if it was boiled before. *Izwiestije ucztitel'noje* calls this act the sin of desecration/profanation. The Sluzebnik states, “let it be known to you, priest, when you add ‘the warmth’ do it with care and properly .... Do the same with wine and water when you pierce the holy Lamb.”

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<sup>10</sup> Apostolic Canon III. “If any bishop or presbyter offers any other things at the altar, besides that which the Lord ordained for the sacrifice, as honey, or milk, or strong-made drink instead of wine, [*the text here varies*] or birds, or any living things, or vegetables, besides that which is ordained, let him be deposed. Excepting only new ears of corn, and grapes at the suitable season. Neither is it allowed to bring anything else to the altar at the time of the holy oblation, excepting oil for the lamps, and incense.”

<sup>11</sup> *Boska Liturgia Świętego Ojca naszego Jana Chryzostoma*, Warszawska Metropolia Prawosławna, Warszawa 2001, s. 20 i 96-97; *Boska Liturgia Świętego Ojca naszego Bazylego Wielkiego*, Warszawska Metropolia Prawosławna, Warszawa 2005, s. 19, among other sources.

<sup>12</sup> .....”those who celebrate, the unbloody sacrifice not mixing water with it, adducing as authority thereof, John Chrysostom, a doctor of the Church”.... (reference to the church of Armenia). Interpretation of this author from: *Kanony kościoła prawosławnego* by Znosko, A. (1978). Chrzescijanska Akademia Teologiczna, Warszawa.

The Book of Needs (Trebnik) of the Kievyan Metropolitan Peter Mohyla analyzing this subject concludes that ideal proportions of mixed wine and water should be three measures of wine to one of water.

Published in 1646 the Euchologion – a book of services also mentions the subject, stating that while being mixed with water, wine should not change its color, consistency/thickness, or natural taste. Mixed wine must retain its integrity (it should not taste watery).

In conclusion of the analysis of this subject, I want to present the very valuable advice of Priest Konstantine Nikolski: “Use of sanctified bread and wine during the blessing of Litiya (Gr. *litaneia* – rite performed on vigils of great holidays) is prohibited during the Proskomedija.”<sup>13</sup>

## **2. Norms pertaining to structure of the Rite of the Divine Liturgy**

The Service of the Holy Eucharist begins with the preparation (Proskomedija), during which the priest cuts a prosphora on four sides and removes a Lamb. Then mixed wine and water are poured into the chalice. Prepared in that manner the substances of bread and wine, later during the prayers of the anaphora, are changed (transubstantiated) into the Most Holy Body and Blood. It can happen that during the preparation the priest will not notice problems with the bread or wine, which were discussed earlier. What can/should he do in this situation? The number of possibilities applied in particular incidents during the Liturgy are substantial. I want to divide the systematization of norms providing answers to “the specific cases and accidents” which may possibly take place into two groups:

1. matters related to sanctified bread – Body of Christ,
2. cases related to transubstantiated wine –Blood of the Lord.

Defects not noticed during Proskomedija, but now noticed: 1) after the placing of the paten and chalice on the altar table, after the great entrance, 2) immediately before Anamnesis (lifting of bread and wine, while proclaiming: “*Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee on behalf of all and for all,*” 3) after the doxology which finishes the Anaphora, or 4) during clergy (own) communion, when with the fear of God a clergyman holds a particle of the Body of Our Lord.

If the celebrant notices in the substance of the Lamb some specific (mentioned above) inadequacy, without delay the Lamb should be put aside (on the altar) and replaced with a new one, perfect in every aspect. The new Lamb should be prepared with the same steps as the original, i.e. perform all the functions and read (quietly) all the prayers pertaining to bread beginning with the words: *In remembrance of our Lord, God....;*” then, following all the functions, read (quietly) all the prayers pertaining to bread only.

If the Liturgy was stopped due to finding an inadequacy in the substance of bread in the first case, after the placing of the paten and chalice on the altar table (great entrance), then after preparation of the new Lamb, the service continues, as usual, resuming in the place where it was stopped.

If, due to something lacking in the quality of the substance of the bread, discovered before the Anamnesis and words of establishing of the Last Supper: (Mt 26,26-29; Mk 14,22-25; Łk 22,14-20), that is right after the singing of the Creed, in the second scenario, the Liturgy must be

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<sup>13</sup> *Posobije k izuczeniju Ustava Bogosluzenija Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi*. St. Petersburg, 1862, p. 378.

stopped. Then after preparation of the new Lamb the service resumes and continues normally. Only texts which were not yet pronounced during the service are pronounced loud. In the case of discovering a problem with the substance of the bread in the third instance mentioned earlier, immediately before the Anamnesis (lifting of bread and wine, while proclaiming: *“Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee on behalf of all and for all.”*, or, after the doxology which finishes the Anaphora, the new Lamb must be prepared. Then, after preparing a new offering, the priest resumes the service quietly with the words of prayer; *“With these blessed powers, O Master who lovest mankind....”* It is important to observe that only prayers pertaining to the bread are read; texts related to the wine are omitted. In the fourth case, during the priest’s communion, then after preparation of the new Lamb, the service resumes with the words: *“...in the night in which He was given, or rather, gave Himself up for life of the world...”* (final words of the prayer that follows the singing of the *Holy! Holy! Holy!* (IN #54; IU p.515)).<sup>14</sup> Then the words establishing the Last Supper are pronounced: *“Take! Eat! This is My Body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins.”* (At the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great: *“He gave it to His Holy Apostles saying....”*) Leaving out all that pertains to the wine, the celebrant reads the prayer: *“Remembering this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day...”* And next, remaining loyal to the rite, the priest pronounces *“Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee on behalf of all and for all”*, he only lifts the diskos with the bread, because the wine was already been sanctified (along with the first Lamb), and does not need/require participation in the second rite. Ending the Eucharistic Canon the celebrant reads the prayer: *“Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable and bloodless worship, and ask Thee, and pray Thee, and supplicate Thee.....”* along with the thrice repeated prayer: *“O Lord, who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles at the third hour...”* and verses. The words of the epiclesis pertaining to the substance of wine are omitted, the priest only proclaims: *“And make this Bread the precious Body of Thy Christ”* and *“Making the change by Thy Holy Spirit.”*<sup>15</sup> Then, also quietly: *“That they may be to those who partake for the purification of soul, for the remission of sins...”* The service resumes with the communion of the clergy and completes the Liturgy according to the usual rite. It may be worth mentioning, that all prayers are repeated quietly and without the choir’s participation.

Professor of Saint Petersburg Duchownoj Akademii, Archimandrite Cyril, points out that in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> cases, the Lamb which was consecrated at first, but was found lacking in quality is consumed by the priest after his communion at the Holy Altar, or at the Table of Oblation before reading the prayer before consumption of the gifts: *“O Christ our God, who art Thyself the fulfillment of the law and the prophets...”*<sup>16</sup>

The same rules, described above, pertain also to situations discovered before or after the Great Entrance, when the bread is “missing from the diskos” – not to be found. Such cases generally arise due to a lack of discipline and care exercised by a priest.

<sup>14</sup> In the anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great these words read, *“...in the night in which He gave Himself up for the life of the world – He took bread into His holy and pure hands...”* *Service books of the Orthodox Church*, Vol. II. (1984). St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, So. Canaan, PA.

<sup>15</sup> At the Liturgy of Saint Basil proper words of Anaphora are to be pronounced.

<sup>16</sup> At the Liturgy of Saint Basil proper words are to be pronounced.

According to *An Instructional Notice* (IN), "if the priest, while serving, finds out before the consecration that the bread on the holy table prepared on the diskos for consecration is rotten, or is made from rye, or some other flour, or is a bit moldy or unleavened, let him immediately put it aside and take another, fresh and pure wheat bread, and let him say over it in silence: "*In remembrance of our Lord, and God...*" and all the rest of the Prothesis which has to do with the Lamb; let him extract the Lamb as usual and, having placed it on the holy diskos, let him offer it in sacrifice and pierce it. After this let him begin and sanctify from that place before the consecration from which he stopped serving, and thus let him serve the Liturgy as usual.

"If this is found out before the pronouncement of the divine words themselves, then, having said all of the Prothesis, let him celebrate the Liturgy further, beginning with the words of the prayer: "*With these blessed powers...*" and let him further celebrate everything in order.

He does the same thing when, after the Proskomedia, before the Great Entrance or after the entrance the holy Lamb is not found on the diskos for some reason (mouse, insects, fallen on the floor or other), and the priest can't find it."

According to S. V. Bulgakov<sup>17</sup>, if, before the consecration of the gifts, it is determined that the Lamb is defective, rotten, or from rye flour, or some other flour or moldy or unleavened, and another, new bread for preparation of the new Lamb is not available the service should be immediately interrupted and concluded. The author of *Nastolnaya Kniga Dlya Svyaschenno-Tserkovno-Sluzhitelei* (Handbook for Ecclesiastic Celebrants) instructs that the celebrant determining the lack of availability of new proper bread concludes the Divine Liturgy proclaiming the dismissal (Gr. *ekfonesis*): "*Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee!*" then the choir responds, as usual: "*Glory to the Father, and...*" Then, priest concludes with proper dismissal/otpus (Gr. *apolyxis*).

If it is determined that the Lamb is defective after the Eucharistic Canon and the celebrant does not have spare bread for preparation of the new Lamb, the liturgy continues with a normal rite. According to Bulgakov, the priest should receive the communion only of the Holy Blood. And later, if it is possible, consume the defective Lamb (treating it not as the Body of Christ, but as a blessed bread). If the defect, however, would preclude its consumption, then the Lamb needs to be burned and its ashes placed under the Holy Table.

The only sure way to avoid such misfortunes is to make sure that before every service the altar breads are of the best quality and condition. Before the Proskomedia begins, the priest should break one of the breads in half and verify its quality. In preparing for the service of the Holy Eucharist, instead of the usually prescribed five breads, it is practical to have at least one additional (six) to verify the quality of the remaining breads, and another (seven) to be used as a new host should anything happen to the original one.

### Concerning Accidents in the Matter of the Blood of Christ.

Lack of concentration and care, and possible ignorance of priestly duties can lead to:

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<sup>17</sup> Bulgakov, S. V. (1900). *Nastolnaya Kniga Dlya Svyaschenno-Tserkovno-Sluzhitelej*. Kharkov. Chapter on Divine Liturgy, p.715.

1) the pouring only of water into the chalice during the Prothesis, or 2) only of wine, 3) the fermenting and turning to vinegar of the wine (either during or possibly before the service) which prohibits its consumption. The case of fermentation of wine most often is a result of carelessness of the priest regarding cleanliness of the utensils, or not paying attention to the quality of the wine.

1) Mistakes regarding the substance of the wine should be corrected before the Anaphora. The best possible time is during the removal of the small cover when the celebrant can visually inspect the content of the chalice.

When the priest, even to the point after the consecration of the Body, but before the consecration of the Blood, sees that there is no wine in the chalice but only water, let him pour this water into a clean and proper vessel and let him pour in wine and a bit of water, saying: “*One of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance. ..*” Further, let him begin with these words: “*and in a like manner, after supper He took the cup, saying...*” and the rest (IN).

If after saying the words he sees that there is no wine in the holy chalice but only water, let him do the same thing and say everything as has been indicated. If he finds out about this during communion itself, let him pour the water into another vessel and pour into the chalice wine and a bit of water, saying: “*One of the soldiers...*” and the rest. He shall begin from the words: “*And in a like manner, after supper He took the cup, saying: Drink of this all of you...*” (all silently). Also, he says the prayer: “*Remember therefore,...*” and, elevating the chalice, then says: “*Thine own of Thine own...*” and the prayer: “*O Lord Who sent Thy Holy Spirit ...*” Omitting that which he must say over the holy bread, he says: “*And that which is in this chalice ...*” and, blessing only the chalice, let him say: “*Changing it by Thy Holy Spirit...*” and the rest of all the prayers until communion. Having thus communicated let him celebrate the Divine Liturgy as usual. The water that was poured out earlier let him pour into the holy chalice and consume after the ending of the Divine Liturgy and after the consumption of the rest of the Divine Mysteries.

2) If at the Prothesis, the priest forgets to pour water into the wine in the holy chalice and recalls this before the consecration of the holy chalice, let him immediately pour a bit of water, saying: “*One of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance and immediately there came out blood and water, and he who has seen it has borne witness, and his witness is true.*” If he remembers that he has not poured it in, and does not pour it in he sins mortally. If he remembers this after the consecration, let him not pour in water, but let him pour in the usual warm water at its time (IN).

Further on the subject *An Instructional Notice* teaches,

“It is necessary for the priest and deacon when he pours the wine carefully to avoid all these accidents, so that through his own carelessness he may not sin mortally; he has to be careful that the wine is not vinegar, that it is not grown moldy, that it is not corrupted and is in no way defiled. For when he sees its unfitness let him not dare to serve with such wine. Let him remember that it is necessary for all Christians to think about this - how to best please God. “*With fear,*” said the Lord, “*work out your salvation.*” Therefore, priests who take their awesome service lightly, fulfilling it ineptly and irreverently, have a great sin and will suffer much.”

3) Should there occur a need of the presbyter to prepare new wine mixed with water beginning from the parts recited and performed at the Proskomedia, as any of the above mentioned cases

(i.e. sour wine, vinegar), the next is always the rite of the consecration of the wine mixed with water. Initiating to repeat the Holy Sacrifice, the priest pronounces silently: “*And in a like manner, after supper He took the cup, saying.*” “*Drink of it all of you, this is my blood...*” Further, the priest needs to continue as described earlier.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy and after consuming of the gifts, if it is possible, the priest consumes the previous mix of wine and water. If it is spoiled in a way that prevents consumption, then the spoiled wine should be poured into a river. The questions pertaining to accidental spilling of the Holy Blood I will discuss in the next section. Consequently, however, we must remember that in the case of accidental complete emptying (spilling) of the content of the Chalice, the priest should take the necessary steps described above in the case of spoiled wine. The priest combines new wine and water and consecrates it quietly.

The editorial committee of *Rukowodstwo* and *Nastol'naja kniga*, strictly forbids pouring wine into the remaining Holy Blood in the chalice. Those who attempt such an act are subject to ecclesiastical sanctions, including deposition, the highest form of punishment.

Concluding this section on the norms and structure of the rite of the Holy Eucharist, I want to bring a suggestion made by a professor of Saint Petersburg Seminary, Archimandrite Cyril, who reminds priests that the service of the Holy Mystery requires of them full concentration and attention. In a similar fashion as IN, he reminds: If the priest forgets whether he said the words of the Lord over the bread and wine as well as the prayer: “*O Lord Who sent Thy Holy Spirit..*” or the words of completion: “*And make this Bread..., And that which is in this chalice..., Changing them by Thy Holy Spirit,*” and is in doubt and anxiety concerning the consecration of the Mystery, let him not be anxious in vain, but let him silently have this thought in his mind, that if the presented gifts are not consecrated yet, the bread and wine are now consecrated; and let him say upon them the words of the Lord, beginning from this : “*On the night when He was betrayed ...*” and the rest; and concerning the words which he is not sure were said, let him say them again and celebrate the prayers to the end.

Lastly, *An Instructional Notice* instructs that when many priests serve, all the priests must say with one voice the words of the Lord: “*Take eat..., Drink of this all of you..., Thine own of Thine own...,*” and further, “*And make this Bread..., And that which is in this chalice...,*” and, “*Changing them by Thy Holy Spirit ..,*” rather than each one hurrying to say them alone. All the priests say these things quietly, but the oldest does so out loud.

### **3. Concerning Accidents which can happen to the Priest himself, while he serves the Divine Liturgy, and also concerning other accidents.**

I realize that it is impossible to foresee all possible scenarios that can occur during a service of the Divine Liturgy. Many things come unexpectedly in life and that unexpected factor presents a need to address and formulate a proper response to such incidents as they arise. Combining a number of sources I can present answers to some possible occurrences which may take place during the service of the Divine Liturgy.

## 1) Sudden illness of the priest

If before the consecration of the Body and Blood of the Lord the priest serving the Liturgy becomes seriously ill so that he can not serve further, or dies suddenly, the Liturgy is stopped and is not finished – even if there is another priest present at the Divine Liturgy and is prepared to serve. In such a case the Liturgy should start anew.

If this happens after the consecration and the epiclesis, then let another priest serve the Divine Liturgy - if he happens to be there to listen to the service - beginning from that place where the first priest stopped.

If a priest who becomes ill remains alive and can receive the Holy Mysteries then let the priest who is serving in his place put aside a little particle of the Holy Lamb and, taking some of the precious Blood with a spoon, let him commune himself and let he himself take communion according to the order and serve the Liturgy.

According to *Izviestije ucztitel'noje* “If there should be no other priest to serve the Liturgy and to consume the Holy Things, then some reverent and pure man should take the veil and, not touching it with bare hand, cover the Holy Things in order that nothing may come upon the diskos or into the holy chalice until another priest comes.” They need to cover the paten and the chalice in order to protect the Holy Body and Blood from insects or any type of damage. Then, when another priest comes, “let him celebrate the whole Divine Liturgy on another day or on another holy table, beginning from the Prothesis. He should prepare a new Lamb and in the service consecrate it, because he was not present and did not hear the Liturgy. After the consumption of the new sanctified Lamb, he should consume the former Lamb, and drink the Divine Blood or, having put everything into the chalice together, consume them on the Table of Oblation.”

The commentary by Father Konstantine Nikolsky<sup>18</sup> points out that the consumption can be accomplished in two ways:

- a) after receiving the new sanctified lamb, the priest consumes the Lamb consecrated at the previous service. In the same parallel manner the priest consumes the content of the chalices – all takes place on the altar;
- b) after the communion (*of the faithful*) the priest places in the chalice with the newly consecrated Body and Blood the Holy Gifts -Body and Blood- sanctified at the previous service. All is consumed at the Table of Oblations at the end of the Liturgy.

In another case *An Instructional Notice* teaches, “if it happens that a priest be forced to leave serving of the Liturgy before the consecration of the Holy Gifts, let another or even the same priest, another day, having celebrated again the whole Divine Liturgy and carried the Holy Mysteries to the table of oblation and consumed them, consume the bread and wine which was left over, but not as the Body and Blood of Christ, rather as blessed bread and wine.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Posobije k izuczeniju Ustava Bogosluzenija Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi. S-Peterburg, 1862, p. 468.

<sup>19</sup> Father Nikolsky brings here also advice offered by Metropolitan Makary in his citation of 1558 (Archives, vol. 1. No.253), instructing priests who had to leave the Divine Liturgy due to illness and then returned, to complete everything according to *Izviestije ucztitel'noje*. Then, he suggested, when the time for lifting up of the Holy Gifts approached, to lift both Lambs on one diskos as at the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. See: *Posobije k izuczeniju Ustava Bogosluzenija Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi*. S-Peterburg, p. 468-9.

If for some reason there was no priest available to serve the Liturgy on that altar for a long time after an accident, and “the Holy Gifts, consecrated or unconsecrated, because of the absence of the priest, become corrupted, that is if the bread becomes moldy and the wine sours and is turned into vinegar, so that these gifts become unfit for consumption - let the priest take them and scatter them on a flowing river,”<sup>20</sup> or burn them and place the ashes under the holy altar.

2) In a case when the priest begins to serve the Liturgy and at the Prothesis or further on during the Liturgy, up to the Great Entrance, he be called to baptize or hear a confession because of the danger of death and if this be close, let him stop the service at this place and quickly go there. Upon having accomplished the saving ministration for the one who is deathly ill, let him return and finish the Divine Liturgy. During the time of his absence, he needs to delegate to someone in the church to read something that is pertaining and useful for the salvation of the people who are present, for example: the epistles, the Psalms, the canons, or some teaching (IN).

If the priest is kept away through unavoidable circumstances, mentioned above, for a long time and therefore is very late, and it is only after the Proskomedia itself, the authors of *An Instructional Notice* prescribe the priest “to leave off serving the Liturgy that day, and on another day, starting with the Proskomedia, again celebrate everything according to the rite. After the consumption of the Holy Gifts he should consume separately that which was prepared before.”

If the priest is called to baptize or hear a confession because of the danger of death after the Great Entrance and the consecration of the Gifts, *An Instructional Notice* teaches him not to leave off serving the Liturgy, placing his hope in the will of God in His concern for the sick person.

If the Divine Liturgy is stopped due to the priest being called to baptize or hear a confession because of the danger of death immediately after the completion of the Proskomedia, but before exclamation of: “*Blessed is the Kingdom...*,” and the priest is aware that due to circumstances (distance, or other reasons) he will not be able to resume and complete the Divine Liturgy, then he may cease the Service of the Holy Mysteries completely. A new Offering of the Body and Blood should be prepared the next day, according to Archimandrite Cyril of Saint Petersburg Seminary, and after consuming the Holy Gifts, the priest should consume the Bread and the Wine prepared the previous day, regarding them as a blessed bread and wine (IN).

If, due to the absence of the priest and the excess of the time passed, the Holy Gifts, consecrated or unconsecrated, become corrupted, (the bread becomes moldy or the wine sours and it turns to vinegar), so that these gifts become unfit for consumption, they should be placed in a running river, and/or burned, with ashes disposed of accordingly, as discussed above.

### 3) Attack on the church or life of the priest.

In the situation where “enemies or foreigners or pagans or thieves attack the priest who is serving and the Liturgy can in no way be celebrated, let him consume the Holy Things, so that they may not be left to the attackers for abominable disrespect. Then let him himself escape if he can.

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<sup>20</sup> *An Instructional Notice.*

However, *if he does not go away he does better, for if he will be killed he will receive a martyr's crown.*"

IU also points out, "if someone persecuting the Holy Orthodox Faith desires to kill a priest who is serving, then the priest must not in any way go away from the service, but he must continue to celebrate, although it should happen that he must accept death, for if he is killed, he will be counted among the martyrs."

#### 4) Problem of profanation of the Holy House of God.

It may happen as a result of the attack of heretics, protesters, or objectors against the church or of the faith that human blood is shed inside the church. In such circumstances the Service of the Holy Mystery is prohibited. *Nastol'naja kniga dla swiaszczенно-cerkowno-služitieliej* states that great risk/possibility of violation of *sacrum* of the sanctuary/church is counted among the *unfortunate and unexpected accidents*.

According to the opinion of S. V. Bulgakov such acts of desecration of the temple include, but are not limited to: premeditated actions (firearm shots, and/or wounds created by knives or any sharp objects), and accidental acts (flows of blood due to a blow, or a cut; menstrual flow; miscarriage; sudden death of a priest or anyone from the laity present; death or a birth of an animal; touching of the liturgical utensils, antimins, or the altar table by a lay person – even in a case of emergency, i.e. fire).

When such a profanation of the temple takes place before the Great Entrance, the priest immediately should pause and conclude the service of the Divine Liturgy, consume the prepared bread and wine (not as Body and Blood of our Lord, but as blessed articles), removes the liturgical vestments and should leave the temple without finishing the service.<sup>21</sup>

If the temple was desecrated after the Creed, during or after the Anaphora, then the presbyter should continue and complete the service according to the usual rite (*there is a bit of discrepancy here, the regulation assumes because of lack of instruction, nothing will happen during the Litany of Fervent Supplication, for practical reasons it is good to look at the solution to the problem at hand as before and after the Anaphora*). He should not dare to serve the Holy Mystery again, until after explanation of the case to the diocesan hierarch, and with the bishop's blessing the place is cleansed through the usual prayers for this case, and the church is consecrated (IN 42).

#### 5) Fire, storm, or a roof collapse.

In the unexpected event of a structural collapse of the building or a fire *An Instructional Notice* suggests, "If during the service of the Divine Liturgy by a priest the church is burning, or if from a storm or for some other reason the roof starts to fall, then let him carefully take the Holy Things along with the antimension and go out from the church, and in some other worthy place,

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<sup>21</sup> Similar advice is offered by S. V. Bulgakov (1900), *Nastol'naja kniga dla swiaszczенно-cerkowno-služitieliej*, Moskwa, p. 706. Also by Priest Konstantine Nikolski (1862), in *Posobije k izuczeniju Ustava Bogoslužzenija Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi*. S-Peterburg, p. 468.

let him serve the Divine Liturgy on that antimimension, beginning from the place where he stopped.”

6) Insect intrusion.

In the case of insect falling into the chalice, An Instructional Notice teaches, “if before the consecration of the Holy Gifts a fly falls into the holy chalice, one must take it out and, wrapping it in paper or cloth, burn it.

If this happens to be a spider or something else poisonous, then one must pour the wine out of the holy chalice into another worthy vessel and pour into this holy chalice other wine with a little water, saying these words: “*One of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance.*” and thus let him serve the Liturgy as usual, but after the completion of the Liturgy let him pour out that wine into a flowing river.

Should this happen after the consecration and it would be terrible and abominable for the Divine Blood to be swallowed by the insect, the priest must then carefully and with all attention take out that which fell into the chalice so that the Divine Blood may not fall anywhere, and he should wash that which is taken out in wine three times. Then let him put that wine aside. Let him wrap in paper or in clean linen that which was taken out and, after the completion of the Liturgy, burn that creature with the paper or the linen on a brick or on a clean rock, and spread the ashes where the washing of hands takes place. Let him pour into a flowing river the wine with which the insect was washed. If, however, the river should be far away, having dug a hole near the church, in a proper place so that it would not be tread upon by feet, let him pour it out and cover it.

Possible practical suggestion: when the celebrant notices even a small number of insects flying in the altar, to avoid the insect falling into the chalice priest should place a folded small cover on it to protect the content. The cover must be removed for the time of consecration and may be placed on the top of the chalice again for protection afterward.

7) If in the winter the Divine Blood in the chalice freezes.

In such a case, according to *An Instructional Notice*, “the priest or deacon, should have heated the veils over the fire, covered the holy chalice with them until the wine defrosts, or, having put the holy chalice into a vessel of boiling water, let him carefully hold it, being careful that none of the water flows into the chalice.” Today we can use a number of modern alternative methods, such as electric heaters from a safe distance, and the like. Safety of the Holy Gifts should be a priority at all times, however.

Although unlikely, if such takes place, the most important thing is to be very careful regarding the contents of the chalice – the Holy Blood - so while attempting to defrost it, it is not spilled or something does not fall into it.

In a case where transubstantiated wine freezes, it prevents the particles of the Body to be immersed, and communion of the clergy and laity becomes impossible; therefore, it must be thawed out before the service proceeds. Discussing the subject of winter frosts S. V. Bulgakov recommends priests to pour more wine into the chalice and only very little water.

When continuing the Divine Liturgy according to the proscribed rite and before the words: “*The Holy Things for the Holy!*” the priest discovers that the holy Lamb on the diskos is “so frozen

that he will not be able to break it at the proper time,” according to IU, “having covered it with the asterisk and the veil, let him hold the holy diskos with the divine Lamb above charcoal in a cup on the holy table until it defrosts.”

Again, if such would take place, a modern solution may be utilized observing all safety and care of the Holy Body.

#### 8) Communion of priests and laity.

The time of communion of both clergy and laity requires heightened concentration and caution. The priest must take all precautions so as not to spill or drip the Holy Blood. Not even a single drop spilled on the antimins, altar table, liturgical vestments, or anything else, can be overlooked. *An Instructional Notice* also warns, “if the priest has a shaggy mustache and through carelessness soaks it with the Divine Blood, he sins; but let him suck it well with his lips and afterwards wipe it with the veil and in the future let him control it well and thus avoid this sin.”

Similarly, exceptional caution needs to be exercised regarding the Body of our Lord. The priest must pay particular attention to the particles of the Body, even the smallest ones that fall on the antimins and the altar table, so they do not fall on the floor in front of the altar and are not stepped on. Such inattention leads to committing a great, even mortal, sin and is deserving of the bishop’s sanctions.

Additionally, great care must be exercised when handling the particle of the Holy Body in such time IU instructs, “If a priest, while serving, places the Divine Body on the palm of his right hand, or at a concelebration receives it from a hierarch, let him never cover the right hand with the left and let him not hold it upon his head but over the holy table, bowing his head, and looking piously upon his palm with fear and faith, let him say the usual prayers and receive Communion. After Communion, let him inspect the palm of his right hand well and, if there should be left some tiny particle, let him take it with his tongue to his lips and lick his palm so that nothing may be left upon it. After this, having taken the sponge from the antimension, let him wipe well his palm over the diskos and on the iliton as well.”

#### 9) Spilling or dropping of the Holy Gifts.

According to *An Instructional Notice*, “If the precious Blood should drip because of the carelessness of the priest during the Liturgy, he sins mortally. If it falls or drips on a board (and if he will be able to bend down and reach it), let him wipe it up with his tongue; if this be impossible then it is necessary to wipe it well with a sponge, and later carve out the board and burn the shavings on a clean rock or brick and bury the ashes near the church in a worthy place.

But if it drips on the bare ground, then that place on which it drips has to be scraped and the scrapings burned and buried near the church in a worthy place. If it drips on rock then it has to be licked up as well, if possible, and if not it must be well washed with a sponge and water, and the water must be gathered up in the sponge and one must pour it on a flowing river.”

*An Instructional Notice* continues,

“If the Divine Blood drips on the indiction of the holy table or on the antimension, then let the priest first suck around that place with his lips and then let him wipe

the antimimension well with a sponge; after the completion of the Liturgy, having taken the indiction off the holy table and placing the holy chalice or the tray for the antidoron only under that place on which the Master's Blood dripped, let the priest himself wash it three times with pure water and let him pour the water into a flowing river or into a hole in a worthy place near the church. Once the indiction has dried, let him place it back on the holy table.

When the Holy Blood drips on the veil or on a sacred vessel, then first let the priest suck it up well with his lips and wipe it with a sponge; after the completion of the Liturgy, let him three times wash it well with water over the tray for the antidoron and let him pour the water into a flowing river or in to a hole in the ground in a worthy place near the church.”

The exception is antimins, which, according to *the Handbook for Ecclesiastic Celebrants*, as discussed earlier, is not to be washed. Indeed, S. V. Bulgakov instructs that the antimins on which Holy Blood is spilled, and is stained, be returned to the diocesan hierarch.

Further, IU points out: “If the Divine Blood drips on a rug or carpet, then first it is necessary to wipe it damp with the sponge with which the holy chalice is wiped and wash the sponge well over the antidoron tray and to cut off the wet piece and burn it on a rock. The ashes and the water with which it was washed must be scattered on the ground in a worthy place near the church and covered over with earth.”

Then, immediately after communion of the Divine Mysteries, following the rule of *An Instructional Notice*,

“the priest or deacon must wipe the rest of the Divine Body from the diskos into the chalice with all attention so that none of the tiny crumbs may fall or be left on the diskos. For this, let him wipe the diskos well over the holy chalice with the antimimension sponge being as careful as possible that nothing be left upon it. Also, if there is something on the antimimension or on the iliton, having gathered it together on the diskos, let him put it into the holy chalice and let him look well so that nothing may be left on either.

The priest must do this at every Liturgy, and under mortal sin and deprivation of his order let him never shake off the antimimension or iliton over fire or over water, for upon it nothing else is left but crumbs of the Divine Body from the priest's carelessness. Therefore, as has been said, let them be carefully gathered together on the diskos and put into the holy chalice and consumed by the priest or the deacon at the table of oblation.”

10) The incident of spilling of the Holy Blood, or both, Holy Body and Blood, must be reported with remorse and sadness to the diocesan hierarch. It should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances. Until the bishop makes a determination in the case the priest should not serve the Holy Liturgy. If the Holy Offering was spilled on the antimins, it should be returned to the bishop.

The sanction for the accidental spilling of the Holy Gifts is at the discretion of the diocesan hierarch. According to the church regulations (documents of the Holy Synod of October 28,

1729; XI, 28) the priest who is responsible for spilling of the Holy Gifts (through carelessness, not intentionally) must be suspended from serving for six months.<sup>22</sup> According to the regulation epitimia – penance in such a case may consist of a period of time spent in prayer and reflection at a monastery.

Nomocanon rule 158 warns that a priest who intentionally and deliberately committed spilling of the Holy Gifts was deposed - suspended of all priestly functions.

Spilling of a chalice may not necessarily happen due to a mistake or clumsiness of a priest. Such a case may easily take place while distributing communion. Communion to persons mentally ill, retarded, someone with limited control of his/her movements, involuntary movements, neuropath, or even an infant (because of inexperience of a parent, or uncoordinated reactions of a child) may present specifically magnified risks of such accidents. When the Holy Blood spills in such a case then, after careful examination of the situation by the diocesan hierarch, he places on the priest epitimia in a form of a rule of prayer (it is done for the purpose of calming the priest's conscience).

Also, another reason for such an occurrence may be the actions of third persons: acolytes, starostas, subdeacons. To eliminate, or at least lower the risk of such taking place *Izwiestije ucziel'noje* instructs: “The priest must teach the sacristan and all who serve at the altar that they must walk past the table of oblation and the holy table when the Divine Mysteries are on them with fear and reverence, passing by or approaching they must make a low prostration.”

In addition, to all of the above, St. Philaret (Drozdow), Metropolitan of Moscow (1821-1867), adds, the repentant celebrant should, in case of accidental spilling of the Holy Mystery, voluntarily undertake a three day long fast and intense prayer, since, “God has not allowed for this dramatic event without a cause”. The hierarch saint, instructs the priest to serve Moleben and Akathist to the Merciful Lord.<sup>23</sup>

Analyzing the subject of spilling of the Holy Mysteries *the Handbook for Ecclesiastic Celebrants* of S. V. Bulgakov directs priests that the Holy Gifts moved to the Table of Preparation be consumed immediately after the prayer: “O Christ our God, who art Thyself the fulfillment of the law and the prophets...,” during singing of the Psalm 33: “I will bless the Lord at all times...” – before the Dismissal and any other additional services (Moleben, Panakhida). Through this simple step the priest will significantly eliminate the risk of spilling of the Holy Mysteries on the Table of Preparation.

11) According to IN, “If immediately after communion of the Holy Mysteries the priest should vomit Them up, then it is necessary to gather up the vomit in a flaxen or linen cloth and to place it in a clean vessel, and to keep it until it dries out well; then on a brick or on a clean rock burn it and throw it into a flowing river.” The IN also reminds us that it is “necessary to scrape the land on which it fell and burn it and to bury the ashes near the church or throw them into a river.”

12) I will conclude by bringing out the analysis of an extraordinary incident. If by the action of God after the Epiclesis “a miracle is revealed, that is, if the bread manifests the appearance of a child or a meat (flesh), or the wine the appearance of blood and if in a short time this appearance

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<sup>22</sup> As found in: *Szczegolne wypadki podczas sprawowania sw. Liturgii*.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

does not change, that is, if they do not appear again under the forms of bread and wine, but if they remain thus without change,” following IN, “then let the priest not take communion because it is not the Body and Blood of Christ, but a miracle from God manifest only because of a lack of faith or some other reason.”

In such a case *An Instructional Notice* directs that “the priest takes another prosphora (if only the appearance of the bread has changed) and as is proper, performs the Prothesis upon the Lamb, beginning with the prayer: “In remembrance of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” three times and continues throughout the remainder of prayers according to the ritual of Proskomedia. After preparation of the new holy Lamb,”let him put aside that which was changed by a miracle and keeping them honorable let him begin from the prayer: “*With these blessed powers,*” and everything according to the order. He repeats nothing over the chalice.”

“And if in the chalice the wine takes on the appearance of blood, then having poured it into another chalice or some other worthy vessel, let him again pour in wine and water saying upon it the proskomedia as usual, “*One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear...*” and the rest in order, “and let him consecrate it, and during the communion, let him take Communion as usual and celebrate the Liturgy.”

It is important to remember that transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood should always be accomplished while retaining its original form. In the case when consecrated gifts were changed into actual body and blood, then priest “should not dare to use them for communion of clergy or laity, because they are not the Body and Blood of Christ, but a miracle performed by God.”

Also, according to an observation made in *Izviestije Uczitiel'noje*, “If that which became noticed as meat or a child” before the invocation of: “The Holy Things for the holy!” again takes the appearance of bread or if in the chalice in which there was blood it becomes wine again, let him not pierce another Lamb, let him not pour other wine into the chalice, but let him take Communion with these and serve the Liturgy as with the true Body and Blood” (IU p. 531).<sup>24</sup>

#### **4. Concerning clergy communion, frequency of service, and what must be performed at the conclusion of the Divine Mystery**

IN<sup>25</sup>: “If a priest serves the Liturgy but does not receive the Holy Mysteries, he seriously and mortally sins and falls under the fault of excommunication. In all of this let the priest know that he may celebrate only one Liturgy a day, on any one holy table, for this unity of the Holy Sacrifice marks the one death of Christ which He accepted once, and His one passion which He suffered for us once.”

“Immediately after communion of the Divine Mysteries, the priest or deacon must wipe the rest of the Divine Body from the diskos into the chalice with all attention so that none of the tiny

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<sup>24</sup> *Izviestije uczitel'noje. Sluzebnik, Liturgija Vasilija Velikogo*. Izdanije Moskovskoj Patriarchii, 1977.

<sup>25</sup> All quotations below are from *An Instructional Notice*, translation from the Church Slavonic text of the Liturgicon by The Monastery of Saint Mark of Ephesus, Hopatcong, N.J.

crumbs may fall or be left on the diskos. For this, let him wipe the diskos well over the holy chalice with the antimimension sponge, being as careful as possible that nothing be left upon it; also, if there is something on the antimimension or on the iliton, having gathered it together on the diskos, let him put it into the holy chalice and let him look well so that nothing may be left on either.”

“The priest must do this at every Liturgy, and under mortal sin and depravation of his order let him never shake off the antimimension or iliton over fire or over water, for upon it nothing else is left but crumbs of the Divine Body from the priest's carelessness. Therefore, as has been said, let them be carefully gathered together on the diskos and put into the holy chalice and consumed by the priest or the deacon at the table of oblation.”

“After celebrating the Divine Liturgy, during the consumption of the remaining Holy Mysteries on the table of oblation, the priest must carefully watch that nothing, even the smallest crumbs or drops, be left in the holy chalice. Therefore he must wash out the chalice not only once but two and three times and then drink it, and with a sponge or cloth which is set aside for this, dry the chalice and leave the sponge or cloth in the holy chalice.”

“On the table of oblation a lighted candle must stand all the time when the Divine Mysteries stand there, until the Holy Gifts are consumed.”

“The priest must teach the sacristan and all who serve at the altar that they must walk past the table of oblation and the holy table when the Divine Mysteries are on them with fear and reverence, passing by or approaching they must make a low prostration.”

“When the sponge for the antimimension and for the chalice and the cloth turn black and dusty, the priest himself must wash them well with his own hands over the sacrarium<sup>26</sup>. Let this washing take place often so that they may be clean.”

“Finally, after celebrating the Divine Liturgy and after the consumption of the Holy Mysteries, the priest before devesting himself of the holy vestments, or after devesting himself, not leaving the holy altar, must read with all sincerity and with a thankful heart the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Holy Communion.”

“When he leaves the church let him not immediately betake himself to some other deed, but let him for a certain time abide in prayers and meditations since he has been made worthy of such a gift in the Holy Liturgy, and let him thank God and beg that He might make him worthy all the days of his life to receive such a gift.”

“On this day let him abstain from over-eating, too much drinking and sleep, and especially if he has a wife, from carnal relations and all bodily love for the sake of love and honor of the Heavenly King Who received him in the temple and dwelling of his soul.”

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<sup>26</sup> The original Old Church Slavonic text uses term, “*altarnaja umyval'nica*.”

## **5. Some concluding thoughts**

First, the hierarchs, clergy and academics involved in the organization and clarification of the subject matter have always advised not to interpret the compiled rules in order to avoid ambiguities and to retain simple, intuitive, and obvious resolutions to problems that may arise. Most importantly solutions and their application should be unmistakable. The specified regulations should be completely based on previous regulations and determinations.

Second, *Izviestije ucziitel'noje* demands that each event of “unfortunate and unexpected accidents” taking place during the service of the Divine Liturgy was at first and without delay explained to the diocesan hierarch. It is the fundamental step to the resolution of the incident. Most important is that the priest does not hide anything. The truth and facts must be presented in their totality – even, and most importantly, when the event is a cause to the ecclesiastical sanctions against the priest himself.

Third, it is necessary to clearly understand that all situations that may take place during the Most Holy Eucharist do not happen without a purpose and without God’s will, since all that befalls us is taking place because God allows for it. Hence, it is very important to ask yourself: Why have I experienced such a great tragedy? Why has God allowed for that misfortune? Did God have no other way? Where does my fault lie?

*The End and the Glory be to God!*

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