



The Veneration of the Honorable Chains of the Holy and All-Praised Apostle Peter

In about the year 42, Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great and king of the Jews, grew wroth against the Church of Christ, and slew James, the brother of John the Evangelist. Seeing that this pleased the Jews, he took Peter also into custody and locked him up in prison, intending to keep him there until after the feast of the Passover, so that he could win the favor of the people by presenting him to them as a victim. In prison, the apostle was held secure by two iron chains. During the night before his trial, an angel of the Lord removed those chains from Apostle Peter and led him out from the prison (Acts 12:1-11).

Christians who learned of the miracle took the chains and kept them as precious keepsakes. For three centuries the chains were kept in Jerusalem, and those afflicted with illness approached them with faith and received healing. Holy Hierarch Juvenaly, Patriarch of Jerusalem, presented the chains to Eudokia, wife of the emperor Theodosius the Younger, and she in turn transferred them from Jerusalem to Constantinople in either the year 437 or 439.

Eudokia sent one chain to Rome to her daughter Eudoxia (the wife of Valentinian), who built a church on the Esquiline hill dedicated to the Apostle Peter and placed the chain in it. There were other chains in Rome, with which the Apostle Peter was shackled before his martyrdom under the emperor Nero. These were also placed in the church and every year, on January 16/29, the chains of Holy Apostle Peter were brought out for public veneration.

Sunday, January 29

*Thirty-third Sunday after Pentecost
Zacchaeus Sunday*

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter and commemoration of Righteous Priest Maxim of Totma, Fool-for-Christ (†1650)

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Wednesday, February 1

Moleben 5:30 P.M.

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Sunday, February 5

*Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia*

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Beginning of Fast-free Week

A MEMO FOR A CHRISTIAN DESIRING TO APPROACH THE HOLY CUP TO COMMUNE OF THE LIFE-GIVING BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST THE LORD

TRANSLATED FROM WWW.KIEV-ORTHODOX.ORG

An Orthodox Christian who desires to approach the Mystery of Communion ought to remember that for the communion to be not “for judgment and condemnation”, he has to follow a set of essential and disciplinary conditions. The disciplinary conditions are not strictly required and, in some circumstances (such as illness, difficult or dangerous situation in one’s life and so on), they can be altered and even overlooked all together. However, every Orthodox Christian has to remember that these disciplinary conditions were called to life by the rich experience of the life of the Church, and, therefore, under normal circumstances the rule of preparation (confession, participation in Divine Services, fasting, accomplishment of the prayer rule and so on) is required.

1. Total Understanding. The person has to fully understand what the Temple of God is and why he comes there. He comes to commune with God, to be a partaker of the Godhead, to be united with Christ, to eat of the Lord’s Mystical Supper for his sanctification and for remission of sins, but not to participate in a religious ceremony or a rite. Apostle Paul speaks about it: “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not” (1 Corinthians 11:20-22).

2. Sincere Desire. The person has to have a totally sincere desire to be united with Christ. This desire is to be joined to the fear of God (reverence before the holy things) and be void of any hypocrisy: “Beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 9:10). The person must remember that “whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:27).

3. Peace in Heart. The person approaching the Cup ought to have peace in his heart, that is, in his heart there should be no malice, enmity or envy toward anyone. Having unkind feelings in his heart, it is impossible for the person to approach the Mystery of Communion. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” Matthew 5:23-24).

4. Rootedness in the Life of the Church. The person should not transgress any Church canons which promulgate when the person is banned from the Communion and excommunicated from the Church. This means that the person desiring to commune must remain within the boundaries of Faith and Christian ethical standards, for “the grace is given to those who transgress neither the boundaries of the Faith nor the traditions of the Fathers” (from the Epistle to Diognetus (2nd century)). If the person abandoned the Faith and committed deadly sins, he is to be restored to the Church through the Mystery of Repentance.

5. Intense Spiritual Life. And finally, the last and very important essential condition. The Christian life, to which every believer is called to, is impossible without his leading an intense spiritual life as a constant inner struggle within his heart between the old man with his nature damaged by sin and the new man born in Christ in the Mystery of Baptism, who has received a seed of eternal life which he is called to grow. The intense spiritual life includes constant self-examination and resistance to sin, compulsion of oneself to following Christ’s commandments and to doing good deeds, to sincere repentance, to abstinence and so forth. The following disciplinary conditions result from this last essential condition, for they are offered by the Church as conducive to leading the correct spiritual life.

6. Liturgical Fast. Before Communion, according to the most ancient tradition of the Church, the so-called liturgical fast, or the fast before Communion, is required. This fast is not eating or drinking anything after the midnight before receiving the Communion, for it is universally accepted that one may approach the Holy Cup only on the empty stomach. For the midnight services (on Pascha, Nativity, etc.), it is to be remembered that the duration of the liturgical fast, according to a 1969 ruling of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, is no less than six hours. A question might arise: what if someone who is preparing to commune of the Holy Mysteries swallows some water while bathing or washing his face – may such a person commune? Holy Hierarch Timothy of Alexandria (†385) writes in his canonical epistle: “He must. Otherwise Satan, having found this an opportunity to prevent him from communing, is going to do it more often” (16th Answer). When in doubt, the person can ask the priest in the morning before the service.

7. Confession. Tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church requires a mandatory confession before Communion: “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many die” (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). Confession before Communion can take place either the night before or in the morning before the Liturgy, or even, if the priest is too busy because of great crowds of people and so forth, several days before Communion.

8. Bodily Fast. He who desires to commune should properly prepare for this Holy Mystery. The mind should be kept from wandering towards insignificant everyday matters and from looking for diversions and fun. During the days of preparation, if the circumstances allow, one has to attend church services and more diligently accomplish the prayer rule at home. The means for attaining such a more-focused spiritual life is fasting: the body is to abstain from meat and dairy and other food are to be eaten in limited quantities. The fasting before the Communion usually lasts several days. The following general rule should be observed: the less often the person communes, the longer

and stricter the fast should be. The measure of fasting is also determined by family and social conditions (living in the family where the Church traditions are not followed, hard physical labor – under such circumstances the measure of fasting may be reduced). It is worth mentioning that for the Christians who observe weekly fasting days, as well as long fasting periods, the liturgical fast before Communion during the Paschal Bright Week, as a rule, is cancelled all together (with the obvious exception of fasting from midnight till after Communion).

9. Participation in Church Services and Prayer at Home. Since the Church services help better prepare for the Liturgy, any Christian with no major health problems should make an effort to come to the temple and pray with the rest of the faithful at the evening Church service. Prayer at home includes, beside the usual morning and evening prayers, reading the Rule of Preparation for the Holy Communion: canon in the evening, while the rest of the Prayer Rule after the morning prayers in the morning. Russian tradition also calls for reading of three canons: the Canon of Repentance to the Lord, the Canon of Supplication to the Most Holy Theotokos and the Canon to the Guardian Angel. These canons must be read if the person was absent from the evening service in church. Those who desire to do more can also read other prayers, for example, the Akathist to Sweetest Jesus.

10. Bodily Purity. There are specific requirements for bodily purity of men and women: they are prescribed not to abstain from intimate marital relationships. Ancient ascetical tradition also prescribes abstinence from Communion for men if they had a nocturnal involuntary emission the night before Communion and for women during their monthly cycle and for forty days after childbirth.

..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth

Crown Point IN: A large Crown Point Roman Catholic parish is sending Christian parishes in the Lake County an appeal for “food”, “item or service” or “a monetary donation” to help the parish to host, let us quote, “... a poker tournament and Las Vegas night... In this event we are tapping into people’s preparation for lent and the fat Tuesday... The extravaganza is sheer bliss for all senses. The dining will include three different buffets during the night and a plethora of delicious desserts... There will be an open bar serving beer, wine and soft drinks for people to enjoy. This mixture of diverse flavors, ... festive music, unbelievable basket raffles, libations from the bar, and charity gaming, will create an unforgettable experience. ... The unique style and atmosphere of this extravaganza will come to life through bountiful buffets and libations, ... gaming hosts who encourage an exhilarating experience and an exciting gaming in poker, blackjack, money wheel, roulette and other gambling. We are planning for more than 300 guests, some will pay \$60 for the poker tournament and the rest will pay \$10 to attend the Las Vegas portion...”. What is it? An orgy of the ancient Rome making a comeback to the Roman Church?



Tokyo, Japan: With the support of the “Japanese association for the study of Eastern Christianity”, publication of a Japanese translation of the *Philokalia* continues, reports Graecia Orthodoxa. Since the 18th century, *Philokalia* has been the fundamental anthology of Orthodox spirituality. The original Greek version contains 1206 pages representing over thirty authors, both ancient and medieval, it has been printed in abridged forms and translated into various languages—most notably Slavonic, Russian, modern Greek, Romanian, English, French, and Italian. Now a new translation can be added to the list: translation work was recently begun of the *Philokalia* into Japanese with the support of the “Japanese association for the study of Eastern Christianity”, led by Professors Hisao Miyamoto (Univ. Sophia, Tokyo), Masaki Omori (Univ. Nanzan) and Riushiro Tani (Univ. Kyusyu).

Many experts are working on the translation from Greek to Japanese, one of whom is Rei Hakamada, a specialist in studies on St. Gregory Palamas. Eventually, ten volumes will be published. Five volumes have already been published: vol. 3 (2006), vol. 1 (2007), vol. 7 (2009), vol. 4 (2010), and vol. 5 (2011). Five more are being prepared for publication.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. January bulletin cover sponsor is Madge Petri — health of family and January birthdays.
2. The church board members are going to be blessed for the new years of their ministry at the end of the Liturgy next Sunday, February 5.
3. Please, continue to look, when grocery shopping, for the ingredients needed for our major fund-raising products. We need margarine, flour, nuts, sugar, sour cream and sour kraut. Thank you for your continuous support!
4. Next year, 2013, our annual parish meeting will be held on Sunday, January 20.
5. **ATTENTION:** BEGINNING NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, THE PRICE FOR THE VOTIVE 6-DAY GLASS CANDLES GOES UP FROM \$4.00 TO \$5.00, DUE TO THE INCREASE IN COST OF THE CANDLES.