

St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

Ann Arbor, MI ~ Founded 1981

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Parish Instructional letter 02/18

January 9/22, 2018

St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow

With thanks to God for our growing clergy brotherhood in our St. Vladimir Parish, this letter is issued to assist all our parish clergy to harmonize our service to the Lord and to align us, to the greatest extent possible, to the norms of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is understood that each clergyman will serve with some idiosyncrasies. But these should be minimized. We should, as a rule, all strive to serve to a set standard, and this will be especially important as, God willing, our clergy brotherhood continues to grow.

- A) Clergymen should arrive at the evening services not less than 15 minutes before the beginning of the Divine Services. 30 minutes would be ideal. It should never be the case that the parishioners must wait for the clergymen to be ready to begin the service beyond the scheduled start time. With this in mind clergymen should plan their arrival time accordingly.
- B) Clergymen should arrive at the Divine Liturgy not less than 45 minutes before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. This allows for all entrance prayers to be read before the Hours are begun. The priest assigned to serve the Proskomide should arrive earlier than this – in order to substantially complete the preparation of the Gifts by the time the other clergymen arrive.
- C) Clergymen should, as a rule, wear their Riasa over their Podriaznik when on official ministry/business in or outside the temple. This is the “official uniform” of Priests and Deacons in the Russian Church. Readers and Subdeacons wear the Podriaznik in such instances.
- D) This petition, and all others similar too it, shall be intoned as follows: “Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, pardon and remission of the sins of the servants of God, the brethren and parishioners of this holy temple.” It is important to understand that brethren = clergy, and not the men of the parish. This is often misunderstood, thus, using this formula, we here pray for the clergy and parishioners: all the people of God.
- E) At the list of the saints intoned at Matins, and at the other rare times that these saints are invoked en masse (for instance, the Litya at Vigil or the Lesser Blessing of Water):
 - Immediately following the commemoration of the Great Martyr George the following shall be included: “the holy Great-martyr, Myrrh-streamer and Wonderworker Demetrius” (святого славного великомученика мироточиваго и чудоиворца Димитрия)
 - Immediately following the commemoration of St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco the following shall be included: “Jonah of Hankow (Ионы ханькоуского), Mardarius of Liberyville (Мардария Либертивилскаго)

- F) There is no singing in the altar except for the hymns that are sung by all the faithful, and the appointed hymns to be sung during hierarchal Divine Services.
- G) The “silent prayers” read by the priests during the Divine Liturgy should be read inaudibly, ideally silently, so as no to distract other serving clergymen who are trying to read/concentrate on these same prayers.
- H) Priests other than the principal celebrant should stand approximately 2-3 feet away from the altar, being careful to form a straight line if there is more than one priest on one’s side of the altar, and read from the Priest’s Service Book (Sluzhebnik) while holding it in one’s hands. When the Sluzhebnik is not being actively used it should be placed in one’s pocket or held, but not placed on the altar or other surface.
- I) Clergymen should remain in their place before partaking of Holy Communion until the prayer “Remit, pardon, forgive...” (Ослаби, остави, прости...) is read in its entirety by the senior priest. At the conclusion of this prayer the other priests take their place in line by seniority at the northwest corner of the altar table. The deacons remain at the high place until they are called by the senior priest.



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Rector, St Vladimir Orthodox Church

