The Order of Washing of the Feet

*Which takes place on Holy Thursday after Divine Liturgy*

*After the Prayer behind the Ambo, the bishop comes out through the Royal Doors, and taking his staff, he goes to the throne in the middle of the church. Before him one deacon carries the Gospel, and two other deacons, the pitcher and basin. The deacon places the Gospel on the analogion. The priests, sitting at the High Place, quietly recite the 50th psalm. Coming to the throne, the bishop sits on a seat prepared for him. Then the protodeacon, receiving a blessing from the bishop, leads the priests from the altar, two by two, saying to each: “Disciple, the Teacher calls thee.” The priests, going to the throne, bow to the bishop and receive a blessing, kissing his right hand and miter, and then sit at the places prepared. While this is happening, the chanters chant:*

Ode V, 6th Tone

*Irmos:* United by the bond of love and offering themselves to Christ Who reigneth over all, the Apostles were washed clean; and with feet made beautiful, they brought to all good tidings of peace.

The Wisdom of God that restraineth the untamed fury of the waters that are above the firmament, that setteth a bridle on the deep and holdeth back the seas, now poureth water into a basin; and the Master washeth the feet of His servants.

The Master showeth to His disciples an example of humility; He Who covereth the heaven with clouds girdeth Himself with a towel; and He in Whose hand is the breath of all things kneeleth down to wash the feet of His servants.

*Stichera of the Washing:*

*1st Tone:* Thou Who didst gird Thyself and didst wash the feet of Thy disciples, O Christ God, wash the thoughts of our souls, and gird us with unity of spirit that we may perform Thy commandments in goodness.

*2nd Tone:* Desiring to receive the great benefaction, let us, O ye faithful, run with reverence to the precious washing, which doth not wash away defilement of the flesh, but mysteriously sanctifieth the soul; for Christ our Saviour, Who looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble, boweth Himself and toucheth feet of the earth, granting firm support against the attack of every opposing power. To Him let us thankfully cry out: O Good One Who dost show us that the most excellent way to exaltation is humility, save us, for Thou art the Lover of Mankind.

*3rd Tone:* In his piety Peter did not wish his feet to be washed by the immaculate hands which created Adam; but hearing: If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me, he was seized with great trembling, and cried out to Thee: O Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. O great gift of the Master! He maketh the disciples partakers of grace and promiseth them that they may have part with Him in ineffable glory; and likewise of the Mystical Cup He said that they might drink it anew with Him in the heavenly kingdom, which do Thou also vouchsafe us, for Thou art merciful and the Lover of mankind.

8th Tone: Today the One Who is unapproachable in essence took on the work of a servant, He Who covereth the heaven with clouds girded Himself with a towel, He Who divided the Red Sea poured water into a basin, and bending His knee He began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Then, when He had washed the disciples’ feet, He said to them: Ye are clean, but not all of you, signifying His betrayer. It would have been better for thee, Judas, if thou had not been conceived in thy mother’s womb; it would have been better, O betrayer, if thou had not been born, O stranger to the Son of God; because of thee the choir of the disciples of Christ was rent, and a crucified thief embraceth the True Grape; through thee the wall was rent asunder, the transgressors destroy the Temple not made by hands; for if thou did value the myrrh of the sinful woman as priceless, how did thou not fear to betray the blood of a righteous man into the hands of the transgressors? It would have been better for thee, O stranger to the Son of God.

*Glory, Both now. Same Tone.*

Judas, held by diabolical slumber, fell asleep unto death. It is time to keep vigil, time to be sober. Let the heart groan, let the eyelids weep, let the psalms be chanted: for great is the might of the Cross. Christ is at the doors, the sacrificial Lamb is come. Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

*Then the ectenia by the deacon, during which the bishop and the priest sit, resembling the Lord with the disciples.*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God, and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy temple, and for them that with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord.

For our great lord and father, His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill; for our lord the Very Most Reverend Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad; for our lord the Most Reverend Bishop George; for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

For this land, its authorities, and armed forces, and all who in faith and piety dwell therein and in every land, let us pray to the Lord.

For the God-preserved Russian Land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and in the diaspora, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

That He may deliver His people from enemies both visible and invisible, and confirm in us oneness of mind, brotherly love, and piety, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city (or town, or holy monastery), for every city and country and the faithful that dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For travelers by sea, land, and air; for the sick, the suffering; the imprisoned and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

For the blessing and sanctification of this washing through the power and activity and infusion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That it will be for a washing away of the defilement of our sins, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may be delivered from all tribulation, wrath, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us O God by Thy grace.

Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another, and all our life unto Christ our God.

***Exclamation:* For Thou art the sanctification of our souls, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages.**

*Choir:* Amen.

*Deacon:* Let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord have mercy.

*The bishop stands (the priests remain seated) and prays in a loud voice:*

O Most-good God, Unapproachable Divinity, Who did take on the form of a servant, and did wash the feet of Thy disciples with Thy most pure hands, and wipe them with a towel, as an image of saving humility, look also now upon us unworthy servants, who imitate the glories of Thy condescension, and vouchsafe us to be cleansed of fleshly sins and uncleanness of soul by the touch of this water. Grant unto us the invisible infusion of the Most Holy Spirit; strengthen us against the deceitful serpent who bruiseth our heel, that having been cleansed, we may serve Thee acceptably, passing over serpents and scorpions and all the powers of the enemy. For unto Thee is due all glory, honour, and worship, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

***Bishop:* Peace be unto all.**

*Choir:* And to thy spirit.

*Deacon:* Bow your heads unto the Lord.

*Choir:* To Thee O Lord.

*The bishop prays secretly:*

O Lord our God, Who hast shown us the measure of humility in Thy surpassing condescension, Who has called him that is willingly last to be first, give us grace in serving one another. Lift us up through Thy divine humility, preserve us undefiled, ever washed by tears, purifying us through the enlightenment of Thy cleansing grace; that always falling down before Thee in truth, we may find mercy and compassion at Thy Dread Judgment.

***Exclamation:* For Thou art merciful and the Lover of mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to Thine unoriginate Father, and Thine All-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages.**

*Choir:* Amen.

*After this prayer the bishop sits on his throne. The protodeacon receives a blessing from the bishop and exclaims:*

And that He will vouchsafe unto us the hearing of the Holy Gospel, let us pray unto the Lord God.

*Choir:* Lord have mercy. *Thrice.*

*Deacon:* Wisdom, aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

***Bishop:* Peace be unto all.**

*Protodeacon:* **The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to John.** *And he* *reads the 44th section(13:1-10), the first Gospel of the Washing:* **At that time, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God;** *The bishop and the priests sit during this reading. When the protodeacon says* ***thrice****:* **“He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments,”** *the bishop stands and begins to lay aside his garments: his miter is given to the deacon, then he takes off his panagia and cross, omophorion, sakkos and palitsa, and lays them on a table. He does not take off his priestly garments, the belt, cuffs, epitrachelion and sticharion. He then puts his miter on again. The priests sit with their miters, kamilavkas and klobuks on. When the bishop is laying aside his garments, the protodeacon repeats,* **“And laid aside His garments.”** *When the bishop has laid aside his garments, the protodeacon says*: **And took a towel and girded Himself.** *Then the bishop girds himself with a towel, throwing it over his left shoulder and around his neck and down his right side, and the end of it he places on his left arm. And while the protodeacon is saying:* **After thatHepoureth water into a basin** *(thrice)***,** *the bishop pours water from a pitcher into a basin. The protodeacon says these words thrice, and the bishop pours the water cruciformly thrice, saying quietly:*  In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *And when the protodeacon says:* **And began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.** *Having washed the feet of three of the priests, the bishop again pours water into the basin three times, which two deacons hold before him. The bishop washes the feet while kneeling on one knee, and he pours water on the feet of each one three times and then wipes them with the towel. Each priest then kisses the bishop’s miter and hand, and the bishop kisses their hand.*

*When the protodeacon proclaims:* **Then cometh He to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto Him:** *the senior priest stands and says:* Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? [**Jesus answered and said unto him,**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-13-7/) *The bishop answers:* What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. **Peter saith unto him,** *The senior priest says:* Thou shalt never wash my feet. **Jesus answered him,** The *bishop answers:* If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me. **Simon Peter saith unto him,** *And the senior priest again:* Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. *Pointing at his hands and head, the* *priest sits down.* **Jesus saith to him,** *The bishop says:* He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all, *and he washes the feet of* *the priest. After this the bishop goes to his place, and takes off the towel, and the* *protodeacon reads to the end of the first Gospel of the washing:* **For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.**

*Then the protodeacon again proclaims:* **And** **that He will vouchsafe unto us the hearing of the Holy Gospel, let us pray unto the Lord God.**

*Choir:* Lord have mercy. *Thrice.*

*Deacon:* **Wisdom aright. Let us hear the Holy Gospel.**

***Bishop:* Peace be unto all.**

*Protodeacon:* **The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to John.** *And he begins to read the second Gospel of the washing, section 45:* **At that time, when Jesus had washed the feet of the disciples;** *and when he says:* **and had taken His garments,** *the bishop begins to put on his garments, and the protodeacon repeats* *this many times:* **and had taken His garments,** *until* *the bishop has put on his garments. After the vesting of the bishop, the protodeacon continues reading the rest of the Gospel*: **And was set down again,****he said unto them***, the bishop sits down and all the priests arise, and the bishop himself, while seated, concludes the reading of the Gospel, which the protodeacon holds for him, beginning with the words*

**Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you; the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**

*After the reading of the Gospel,* ***the bishop stands*** *and in the hearing of all,* ***says this prayer****:*

***(NEXT PAGE)***

***Prayer***

**O Lord our God, Who according to the multitude of Thy mercies didst empty Thyself, and take on the form of a servant, Who during Thy saving and life-creating and voluntary passion wast pleased to eat with Thy holy disciples and apostles; and afterwards didst gird Thyself with a towel and didst wash the feet of the disciples, granting them an example of humility and love, one for another, and didst say: As I have done to you, likewise also do ye one to another; do Thou also O Master come down into the midst of Thine unworthy servants who have followed Thine example, washing every defilement and uncleanness from our souls, that having been washed of the dust of our sins, and having been wiped by the towel of love of one for another, we may be able to please Thee all the days of our life, and obtain grace before thee; for Thou art the One Who blesseth and sanctifieth all things, O Christ our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, with Thine unoriginate Father, and Thine All-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.**

*Choir:* Amen.

*Then the bishop and the clergy enter into the altar.* Blessed be the Name of the Lord is chanted, *and the rest of the Liturgy as usual.*