

## **For Those Who Offer *Prospora* at Divine Liturgy**

It is appropriate that we prepare ourselves properly when we offer. We can do so by bearing in mind the following guidelines:

- i) In accordance with our Lord's word (*Matt. 5, 23-4*), whenever we offer, we should be certain to make sure that we are at peace with all men, insofar as that is within our power. We must not bear a grudge toward anyone. If we have wronged someone, we must seek their forgiveness; if someone has wronged us, we must freely forgive them.
- ii) When we offer for a particular liturgy, we should be present for that liturgy.
- iii) Additionally, though we may not be prepared to partake of the Holy Mysteries at every liturgy we attend, we are strongly encouraged by the Church to prepare ourselves to partake at least at that liturgy in which we offer.
- iv) And as part of this preparation, if the parish is serving vespers on the eve before the liturgy, we should, if at all possible, make sure to attend. This is especially true when we offer on a Sunday morning.

The first guideline is a command of our Lord, and must always be observed. With regard to the others however (ii-iv), life is unpredictable and it may not be possible every time for us to fulfill them. But we should regret any failure on our part to do so. We must never let it become the norm for us, but rather, it should always be seen as an unfortunate exception. Moreover, it is important to know that one who is not in good standing with the Church, or who has fallen into a serious sin and has not yet been reconciled to the Church through the sacrament of confession, cannot offer.

Below are some further guidelines that point out practical ways in which we can help the clergy when we offer:

- v) We should bring the *prospora* loaves to the church on the evening before the liturgy. For a Sunday liturgy, this means either right before or right after Saturday vespers. If we are offering for an evening liturgy, we should be sure to have them at the church by noon of the same day. If for any reason we must bring the *prospora* later than expected, we should let the clergy know as soon as possible.
- vi) If there is a conflict with our schedule, such that we know we will not be able to offer for the day on which we are scheduled, it is up to us to

make arrangements to trade days with someone else on the list. Also, if for some reason, we have forgotten we were scheduled or have been unable due to circumstances to bake the *prosphora*, we must call the clergy as soon as possible to advise them of the problem and help to make alternate arrangements.

vii) If we are offering for a Sunday liturgy, or for Pascha or Christmas, we should always prepare five loaves of *prosphora*. If it is an occasional weekday liturgy, only three loaves need be provided.

viii) When we offer, we are given an opportunity to provide a list of names for whom the priest is to pray at that particular liturgy. This is the greatest act of intercession we can make on behalf of our loved ones. The list of commemorations should have a clear division between the living and the departed. Moreover, if there any non-Orthodox on the list, they should be clearly marked as such. It is best not to include any more than a dozen names altogether. We should also be aware that the *prosphora* cannot be offered for those in sin who are unreconciled with the Church.