

Kursk-Root Icon Rules

Western American Diocese

Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

I. Rules for those accompanying the miraculous Kursk Root icon during her visit to the parishes and homes of the Western American Diocese

1. The most holy Mother of God is one and the same in all of Her icons. The clergy and laity who accompany the miraculous Kursk-Root icon must recognize and understand that a particular mercy of the all-holy Theotokos has been revealed to them, and that this obedience must be undertaken with fear of God, piety, and responsibility.
2. When transporting the miraculous icon on an airplane, it must absolutely be placed in a hard case to keep it from any damage. In no circumstance is it permissible to place the Kursk-Root icon in a suitcase and place it in checked luggage. The priest carrying the icon with him should have an official letter of explanation from the Higher Church Authority regarding the Kursk icon.
3. Upon arrival in the Western American Diocese, the official meeting of the Kursk icon should take place either in the cathedral church, or in the primary church of the deanery or region.
4. In churches, the Kursk icon is placed on a sturdy analogion, and under no circumstances on a folding one. The rector of the church should arrange for the decoration of the icon (or entrust this to a responsible party). A place for donations is placed near the icon. The size of the Kursk icon is approximately 14" wide by 16.5" tall.
5. During outdoor services with the icon (for example, at a major holiday or a youth camp), all necessary measures must be taken to protect this ancient icon from the heat of the sun and from rain. The icon should be placed either in the shade or under a canopy.
6. When the icon is taken in a car to visit homes and apartments of parishioners, other parishes, hospitals, and so on, no fewer than two people must accompany the miraculous icon. The first is the driver, and the second (usually a priest) holds the Kursk icon in his hands, at least in its soft case hung around his neck, preferably in the back seat. It is categorically prohibited for a person, clergy or laity, to drive the icon in a car without a second person!
7. Crossing the road with the miraculous icon is forbidden. The driver must drive the priest with the icon directly to the entrance of the building that will be visited, and, after the visit, must drive up again to the entrance to pick up the priest.
8. In case of inclement weather, it is mandatory to take maximal care in guarding the icon from strong wind and rain: the icon should be carried around the neck in the waterproof case specially sewn for it (or in the hard case, or in exceptional circumstances the usual soft case).
9. The Kursk Root icon is never to be left without supervision, neither in a church or in a private home.
10. At night, the icon is kept either by the ruling bishop, or the rector of the church being visited,

or with the priest assigned by the hierarch to accompany the icon.

11. The Kursk Root icon does not visit cemeteries, nor individual graves in them, and is not brought there for burials or panikhidas.

12. During parish meals, the icon is solemnly carried into the parish hall-trapeza with the singing of the troparion of the Kursk icon: "As an unassailable wall...", and is placed on a sturdy analogion.

13. Removing the metallic riza (cover) from the icon is forbidden.

14. On church property, the Kursk icon may be carried without its case (the priest being vested in the epitachelion for this purpose). Outside of the church and its property, the icon is carried in either the soft or hard case, even for the shortest of distances.

II. Visitation of the homes and apartments of parishioners

1. The priest who visits the homes of parishioners is vested in the epitachelion when he accompanies the miraculous icon.

2. In the home to be visited a table should be prepared where the icon may be set during the moleben. It is recommended that the table be covered with a clean white tablecloth, and that a pillow in a clean white pillowcase be set on it (for resting the icon).

3. A candle or lampada (vigil lamp) is lit either before the icon or in the icon corner.

4. A list of names (of the living only) is prepared and placed on the table for commemoration at the moleben.

5. If the visit with the icon takes place in the evening when it is dark, the lights should be turned on in all of the rooms, since the miraculous icon will be carried around the whole house or apartment.

6. Archpriest Boris Kritsky, long-time guardian of the icon, had the custom of never sitting with his back to the miraculous icon when a meal or tea was offered to him by the family or individual being visited.

7. It is the duty of the rectors of churches to instruct their parishioners in advance (from the ambo, on the parish message board, in the parish newsletter, as a separate instruction sheet, on the web site of the parish) how they should receive the miraculous icon in their homes and apartments.

III. Donations

1. It was the understanding of the ever-memorable Metropolitans Anthony, Anastassy, and their successors that the donations made during the visits of the Kursk icon to parishes and private homes were for "the upkeep of our Church Abroad from the most-pure Theotokos". Thus it has long been the case that all collected monies are remitted to the Synod for the upkeep of the administrative center of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

2. During all public molebens before the Kursk icon in churches, a plate is set out for the collection of donations. The collected monies are fully remitted to the Synod (via the diocesan treasurer).
3. All monies donated during visits of the miraculous icon to private homes or apartments are fully remitted to the Synod (via the diocesan treasurer). Under no circumstances is it permissible to set a price for visiting with the Kursk icon!
4. Checks related to donations received during the icon visit are to be made out to the diocese: Western American Diocese.
5. The monies collected in the parish and through the visitation of homes must be remitted to the diocesan treasurer without delay.
6. Parish priests are advised, for statistical reasons, to keep a record of how many molebens were served in homes and apartments.
7. If a parish or priest incurs travel expenses related to the visit or transportation of the icon from parish to parish, receipts showing the total of the expenses are to be submitted to the diocesan treasurer, who will reimburse this expense to the parish or priest.

The above set of rules were compiled by the Diocesan Council of the Western American Diocese with one main purpose: as an expression of love by the clergy and the faithful of the diocese to the most-pure Mother of God, to care for and guard the Protectress of the Russian diaspora – the miraculous Kursk Root icon of the most-holy Theotokos.