

Guidelines for Clergy

Compiled under the guidance of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America

Dear Reverend Fathers:

“There is nothing more awe-inspiring and more blessed than the service of pastorship. Through earthly and heavenly shepherds the Lord feeds His flock of the believing, or of the not yet believing, souls” – Archbishop John (Shahovskoy)

In his treatise on pastoral theology, the late Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) reflected upon two types of pastorship: good pastorship and evil pastorship. An evil pastor “carries out the letter of the pastoral office without having its spirit, without entering into the work performed in the world by the One Shepherd.” In contrast, the good pastor is “a spiritual architect – a builder of souls....a father, mother, brother, son, friend, servant; a carpenter, a polisher of precious stones...a writer writing the Book of Life....[who] like a pure mirror of the Sun of righteousness, reflects for mankind the radiance of heaven and gives warmth to the world.”

To aid pastors in carrying out their divine service as “builders of souls,” the archpastors of the Orthodox Church in America have prepared the following guidelines for clergy. Not intended to be an all-encompassing pastoral handbook, these guidelines, rather, are a limited compilation addressing significant aspects of a pastor’s ministry. The guidelines also seek to provide guidance on contemporary issues faced by clergy carrying out the ministry in the context of North American society.

The Holy Synod expresses its gratitude to many persons for their work associated in preparing this document. Special appreciation is extended to the members of the former Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry under the chairmanship of His Grace, Bishop JOB, as well as the members of the Pastoral Life Ministries Unit under the direction of its Episcopal coordinator, His Grace, Bishop NATHANIEL.

It is my fervent prayer that pastors will apply these guidelines with a spirit of love, compassion, and humility in their ministry to build up the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God. May our Lord’s teachings about the True Shepherd inspire us and serve as the ultimate *guide* of good pastorship: “the power of the One Good Shepherd, which has been poured out into the world and has found sons – sons according to its heart” (Archbishop John Shahovskoy).

With love in Christ,

+Theodosius
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Pascha 1998

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A Selection of Clergy Disciplines According to the Canons of the Church

1. The clergy are strictly to observe the teachings of The Church, regarding Christ, the Sacred Scriptures and Holy Traditions (*Ephesus, c. 6, 7; Trullo, c. 1; Carthage, c. 2*).
2. The clergy are under the complete authority of the diocesan hierarch, without whose blessing they cannot function and to whom they must show proper respect (*Laodicea, c. 57; Holy Apostles, c.31, 39, 55; Carthage, c. 10*).
3. The clergy are to show respect and concern for other members of the clergy (*Holy Apostles, c. 56, 59*).
4. The duty of the priest is to instruct the faithful in the way of godliness (*Holy Apostles, c. 58*).
5. Clergy are to be examples to the flock through prayer and fasting as prescribed by the Church (*Carthage, c. 41; Holy Apostles, c. 69*).
6. Clergy should not abstain from the Eucharist (*Trullo, c. 80; Holy Apostles, c. 8*).
7. Clergy should always be diligent and sensitive in encouraging pious repentance and receptive to a sincere confession (*Holy Apostles, c. 52; Trullo, c. 102*).
8. Clergy must not run for political office (*Carthage, c. 16; Holy Apostles, c. 81, 83; Chalcedon, c. 7*).
9. Clergy may not accept secular appointments or engage in business without the permission of the diocesan hierarch (*Holy Apostles, c. 39; Chalcedon, c. 3*).
10. Clergy have the right to a hearing before a Church Court (*Chalcedon, c. 9; The Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America, Article XI*).

Some Considerations on Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability in the Church

The Episcopacy

1. The hierarch determines the assignment of the clergy in his own diocese.
2. The hierarch's official representative in a parish of his diocese is the assigned priest or rector.
3. The hierarch has direct supervision over all matters in his diocese involving canon law and the spiritual function, rights and duties of the clergy.
4. The hierarch alone may judge the merits of the transfer of clergy from one assignment in his diocese to another. A clergyman who would like to transfer from the parish to which he has been assigned must submit a written petition to his hierarch.
5. The hierarch alone has the right to invite another hierarch to serve in one of his own parishes. Should a parish wish to have the presence of another hierarch for a particular occasion, that request must be made in writing to its own hierarch.

Priests and Deacons

1. Ministry is identified by Our Lord in terms of being sent to serve. He gives Himself as an example and model for the service to be performed: "I am among you as one who serves" (*Luke 22:27; John 13:13*). Greatness in ministry is proportionate to greatness in service as we see when the Lord washes the feet of His disciples (*Matt. 20:25 f.; Mark 10:42 f.*). Thus the ministry is not to be mistakenly identified with holding a particular ecclesiastical office, but with having been sent to serve the Church, the Body of Christ, in a specific community.
2. The priest is the spiritual father of his parish, and every parishioner ought to respect him as such. The priest is addressed with the title of Father. This can remind him that he is to treat his parishioners, his parochial family, as a father treats his children, i.e., with love, kindness, patience, and understanding. Being edified by his example, the parishioners will respect him as their spiritual father and as their true guide along the path of salvation.
3. The priest must be diligent in preparing homilies for his flock, giving this priority over administrative duties. The homily at the Divine Liturgy should take place immediately after the reading of the Holy Gospel.
(See: On Preaching, *Encyclical Letter, Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, 1989.*)
4. The priest must see to it that the appropriate hymns and responses are sung during Divine Services in accordance with Orthodox Tradition and by persons trained for the exercise of this ministry. The choir director or cantor and the parishioners that make up the choir are directly responsible to the priest, who is the presiding authority in all worship services.
5. Often, it is not possible for the parish choir to participate in all liturgical services. The priest should encourage congregational singing under the leadership of a qualified cantor or musician.
6. It is a primary responsibility of the parish priest to continue ongoing education of the faithful in matters of dogma, tradition, precepts, and sacred rites of the Church. He supervises the Church School, gives direction to its instructors, and decides on appropriate resources and texts in

conformity to diocesan directives.

7. The priest must include in his ministry personal contact with all parishioners. This shall include a visit to the homes of parishioners during the days of the celebration of the Feast of the Theophany, a traditional occasion for this. He can bless their homes and also discuss spiritual matters with them. If the number of homes to be visited is too great, or if winter weather makes it impractical, these visits may be done at another appropriate time of year.
8. Because the priest is the spiritual father, he must not delay visiting each parishioner who has fallen ill. He is to make no distinction as to whom he visits, for all need the healing power of his prayer (*James 5:13-16*). Once he has ascertained the degree of illness, he shall determine the ministry best suited.
9. On some occasions, when visiting in the privacy of a home, the priest may consider it necessary and advisable to have a deacon or another person accompany him.
10. The priest must not neglect to attend to the spiritual needs of shut-ins, who for reasons of poor health are unable to attend Divine Services regularly. Through frequent and scheduled visitations by the priest and fellow parishioners, the shut-in is reminded of his/her place in the fellowship of the Church and of the importance and blessing of being a part of the parish community.
11. By the virtue of his office, the parish rector has supervision over every organization in the parish. He directs the life, activities, and administration of the parish. Nevertheless, the priest must work in harmony with all the faithful of the parish council, which has an active role in parish life.
12. The rector is the presiding officer at the annual parish meeting. At his discretion, he may appoint others to chair various sessions of the meeting.
13. A priest or deacon may not absent himself from the diocese for any extended period of time without first receiving the explicit permission of his diocesan hierarch. If he has received his hierarch's blessing to serve in another diocese, he will be issued a Certificate of Canonical Order, which states that he has obtained the blessing of the other hierarch to serve.
14. When a clergyman plans to make a prolonged visit or vacation to another city where a hierarch resides or where there is a parish, the visiting priest must contact the hierarch or priest and be prepared to show ecclesiastical identification documents obtained from his diocesan hierarch.

Clergy on holiday/vacation should remember that they are, in fact, still clergy. When visiting other parishes, a clergyman should wear appropriate clerical garb. He should enter into the sanctuary, venerate the Holy Table, greet the rector and other clergy present, and remain in the altar to serve, or take the place assigned to the clergy. The rector should invite visiting clergy to serve.
15. A clergyman may not accept an invitation from the laity of another parish to celebrate in a parish that has a canonical priest assigned to it. The rector of that parish may, however, make such invitations with the blessing of his hierarch.
16. A clergyman should have personal liability insurance coverage and coverage for the personal contents of his rectory (i.e., clergy homeowner's/renter's insurance).

The parish should assume the cost of insuring the rectory if it owns it. The contents of the rectory

which are personal to the priest should be insured, with coverage cost assumed by the priest. Likewise, the parish must cover insurance costs for the contents belonging to the parish.

17. A clergyman may not claim a personal right of ownership to any property of the parish he is serving unless it has been specified by mutual written agreement with the official parish representatives. To clarify this matter, it is appropriate for an inventory of parish items to be made each time there is a transfer of clergy.
18. A clergyman may not enter into any contractual agreement or otherwise engage in a business enterprise which, by nature, may cause scandal or jeopardize the assets of the parish to which he has been assigned, or which might subject the parish to any claim, lawsuit, or other liability arising from such activity.
19. A clergyman may not seek secular employment in addition to his parochial responsibilities without the previous blessing of the diocesan hierarch and the knowledge of the parish.
20. Before a clergyman may begin to seek an assignment in a diocese other than the one in which he is presently serving, he must first receive the blessing of his hierarch.

The Laity

1. No one may schedule any liturgical service without the approval of the rector of the parish. This also applies to meetings affecting the life of the parish.
2. No one may invite any clergy to participate in a liturgical service without the approval of the rector.
(See Guidelines for the Ordination, Appointment and Transfer of Clergy, *Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, October 21, 1993*; System of Awards for the Clergy and Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, *Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, Spring 1994*; On Preaching, *Encyclical, page 5*.)

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The Divine Services

1. Only a canonically ordained clergyman can perform holy services. He must not be under suspension or excommunication by his hierarch or by his own sins. He must be properly prepared, spiritually and physically, for divine worship.
2. At Divine Liturgy the clergyman, like each Christian person, must be at peace with all people. Though others may not be at peace with him, he must harbor no anger, resentment, or ill will against anyone.
3. As part of the necessary preparation demanded of the clergy in order to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, he must fast from the previous evening, celebrate (or read) Vigil (or, at least, Vespers), the canons and prayers before Holy Communion, and be clean in body and conscious.
4. If a clergyman develops any health problem that may be an impediment to the celebration of the holy services or to his daily ministry, he must make this known to his hierarch without delay and follow his advice. The hierarch shall make every attempt to consult with medical experts about the matter before he makes a decision.
5. In addition to the Vigil, or Vespers and Matins, and the Divine Liturgy celebrated on Sundays and on the prescribed Great Feasts, the priest must strive to enhance the daily liturgical life of his parish by celebrating these services and other devotional services at appropriate times.
6. In all holy services, the clergy are to follow the order and rubrics prescribed by the service books approved for use in the Church, giving priority to those of the Orthodox Church in America. Any departure from the usual order or rubrics must meet with the specific approval of the diocesan hierarch.
7. Before beginning the Proskomedia, the serving clergy must read in full the Entrance Prayers (*kairon*) and, as they dress themselves, must pray the Vesting Prayers.
8. The Divine Liturgy is normally celebrated in a consecrated temple. The holy gifts are brought in procession and placed on a consecrated antimimension that remains on the Holy Table. The priest is responsible for the good maintenance of liturgical vestments and sacred vessels. He may assign to the deacon duties appropriate to his rank.
9. In the case of a specific necessity, the Divine Liturgy may be celebrated outdoors or in a suitable place other than a consecrated temple. This may occur only with the blessing of the diocesan hierarch. Before the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the site must be blessed with holy water. In such an instance, the priest celebrates on the antimimension that is placed on an appropriate table that should be set aside for this purpose.
10. Only an antimimension authorized or signed by a ruling diocesan hierarch can be used on the Holy Table. Antimensia are not to be washed or burned. If the antimimension needs replacing, the diocesan hierarch must be contacted.
11. Prosphora for the Divine Liturgy is prepared from pure wheat flour, water, salt, and yeast, using no other ingredients. It is carefully prepared, usually with appropriate scriptural readings and personal prayer by a person designated for preparing it. The bread must be well baked.
12. The wine should be sweet, made from red grapes, without additives or fortifications.

13. The Holy Table and Table of Oblation are to be covered with clean cloths. It is the responsibility of the priest to see that the sanctuary (altar) and all of its appointments are clean and well maintained at all times.
14. Only the tabernacle and the articles necessary for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy should be on the Holy Table. These include the Book of Gospels, the antimension, and hand cross(es). There is a general practice to decorate the sanctuary with flowers, both cut flowers and potted plants. Neither should be placed on the Holy Table itself, but may be placed on a stand behind the Altar Table.

We are warned by St. Basil the Great to take great care that insects and other foreign objects do not fall into the holy vessels and onto the gifts. The presence of plants and flowers in the sanctuary increases this possibility. The appropriate place for flowers is around the icons placed for veneration or adorning the narthex of the temple. The use of artificial flowers inside the altar and in the temple should be discouraged.
15. No one is permitted to enter the sanctuary unnecessarily. A person having a specific purpose in the sanctuary may enter only with the blessing of the priest.
16. No layman, including altar servers, and all the laity, including elected parish officials, is permitted to touch anything on the Holy Table or on the Table of Oblation. Money should not be brought into the sanctuary.
17. A priest is to celebrate the Divine Liturgy each Sunday and feast day as prescribed. A priest is not permitted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy twice in the same day, nor may he permit the celebration of two Divine Liturgies on the same Holy Table or antimension in the course of one day in any temple.
18. If, during the course of the Divine Liturgy, particles placed on the discos have fallen onto the antimension or its eiliton, the serving clergy are responsible to gather them and place them into the chalice. The communion cloths must be clean. If they are no longer serviceable, they should be burned in an appropriate place and the ashes disposed of in a fitting manner.
19. Liturgical commemoration of hierarchs:
 - a. It is the custom of the Orthodox Church in America, following the contemporary usage of the Russian Church, that, at the usual commemorations during the divine services, the name of the metropolitan is elevated before the name of the diocesan hierarch.
 - b. Only if another hierarch is present at the service is his name elevated, but the name of the local hierarch is mentioned first. If the visiting hierarch is celebrating, he will elevate the name of the local hierarch, and then the serving clergy will elevate the name of the visiting hierarch.

The Mystery of Baptism

Baptism and Chrismation must be understood and experienced as corporate acts of worship and praise. They must be communal actions of the Church as the mystical Body and Bride of Christ, common liturgical actions of the whole people of God, witnessed, celebrated and accomplished by all, together in one place, at one time. See: On the Spiritual Life in the Church, Encyclical Letter, Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, 1988.

1. Baptism is normally performed in the temple. In the case of an adult baptism, the rite may take place outdoors at a suitable aquatic site. Preferably, each deanery should have at least one large baptismal font designed for the immersion of adult catechumens.
2. The candidate for baptism should bear the name of a recognized Orthodox saint. This matter should be discussed with the prospective parents long before the birth of the child. An adult convert to the Church should also bear the name of an Orthodox saint, especially if the name given at birth is unusual to the Orthodox tradition.
3. The Mystery of Holy Baptism is administered in full accordance with the Office of the Service. No exorcism or prayer is to be shortened or omitted. Baptism is properly performed by triple immersion; therefore, mere pouring is not normally permitted. It is necessary to have a font large enough for full immersion.
4. The final step in Christian Initiation is the partaking of the Holy Eucharistic Mysteries. In the instance of Baptism or Chrismation, it is desirable that the newly illumined receive Communion as soon as possible from the chalice, during the Divine Liturgy, and not from the reserved sacrament.
5. The sponsor of a candidate for Holy Baptism is a guarantor to the Church that the person will be reared and/or educated in the Orthodox faith; he/she must be a practicing member of the Orthodox Church. A person can guarantee only that which he/she possesses and practices; therefore, a non-Orthodox is unable to guarantee sponsorship because he/she has neither the faith nor the practice. The sponsor should be of the same gender as the candidate.
6. A worthy sponsor is already leading a full sacramental life, confessing sins through the Mystery of Penance and receiving Holy Communion. The priest is to instruct the parents and the sponsors of their respective obligations to the catechumen, and to exhort them to live a full sacramental life. The sponsor, as well as the parents, should be prepared to receive the Eucharist at the time together with the newly baptized person.
7. A person who has excommunicated himself/herself, or has been suspended from reception of the mysteries by a hierarch, for whatever reason, is ineligible to be a sponsor.
8. The child's parents or an adult catechumen may request that a non-Orthodox person witness the mystery. That person may be present and considered an honorary witness if there is no negative or scandalous deterrent. This person, however, is not the sponsor of the candidate or the Godparent.
9. The priest must enter the required data in the parish metrical book after carefully ascertaining all necessary information that includes checking all facts and spelling for accuracy and completeness.

The Mystery of Chrismation

1. Chrismation is to take place immediately after the Mystery of Baptism according to the prescribed ritual.
2. The priest must ensure that the vessel containing the Holy Chrism is properly identified and stored in an appropriate place, usually in the tabernacle.

The Reception of Converts

1. After the established catechetical instruction as been administered, non-Chalcedonians are to be received through Holy Confession, Penance, Confession of the Orthodox faith, and the reception of the Holy Eucharist. These include Monophysites (Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, and Syro-Jacobites), and Nestorians.
2. Catechumens who previously have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity in a manner recognized as authentic by the Church, after having completed the established catechetical instruction and making a personal affirmation of the Orthodox faith, are received through the Mysteries of Penance, Chrismation, and Holy Eucharist according to the prescribed ritual. This group includes Roman Catholics and some Protestants.
3. Catechumens from non-Christian religions who do not believe in the Holy Trinity, or from those that do not baptize with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are to be received into the Church through the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Eucharist. This is preceded by an adequate period of catechetical instruction as determined by the local hierarch. This group includes Baptists, Buddhists, Jews, etc.
4. Catechumens from all non-Trinitarian groups and cults, including Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Quakers, Unitarians, and adherents of Bah' ai, Unification, and Unity, must be baptized.
5. In any case of doubt as to the rite of the reception to follow, or doubt about a prior baptism, the hierarch must be consulted. In instances of reasonable doubt about a prior baptism, after approval is given by the hierarch, the Office of Holy Baptism is performed conditionally with addendum: *"if not already baptized, the servant of God, (Name), is baptized..." (Holy Apostles, c. 49).*
6. After having performed the prescribed rites of reception, the priest must enter the required information in the parish metrical book.

The Mystery of Penance

Confession, the mystery of reconcillation with the Church, must be regular and frequent. It must be an abiding element in the lives oif the faithful, deformalized and revitalized as the most common and normal actions of a people continually united and reunited with each other and with God. See: On Spiritual Life in the Church, Encyclical.

1. The priest, as spiritual father and confessor of the flock entrusted to his care, must determine the frequency with which the spiritual child confesses his/her sins.
2. For those who seldom receive Holy Communion, the priest must keep in all its strictness the obligation for confession before communion. However, if someone wants to confess more often than he/she communes, the Spiritual Father should be prepared to hear that person's confession at all times.
3. For reception of Holy Communion more than once a month, Confession must be on a regular basis, and heard not less than once a month.

4. If General Confession is practiced, then the Order of Prayers before Confession must be read. The General Service of Prayers Before Confession is not meant to replace or be a substitute for personal confession.
5. The clergy are reminded that they must also avail themselves of the Mystery of Penance regularly and faithfully. The priest who does not have a Spiritual Father upon beginning his priestly ministry must seek one. If he cannot find one, then he must turn to his hierarch to appoint one for him. In some instances, there is a senior priest who has been appointed by the hierarch as diocesan confessor to whom the priest can turn.
6. The secrecy of the Mystery of Penance is considered an unquestionable rule in the entire Orthodox Church. Theologically, the need to maintain the secrecy of confession comes from the fact that the priest is only a witness before God. One could not expect a sincere and complete confession if the penitent has doubts regarding the practice of confidentiality. Betrayal of the secrecy of confession will lead to canonical punishment of the priest.

St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite exhorts the Spiritual Father to keep confessions confidential, even under strong constraining influence. The author of the *Pedalion* (the *Rudder*), states that a priest who betrays the secrecy of confession is to be deposed. The Metropolitan of Kos, Emanuel, mentions in his handbook (*Exomologeteke*) for confessors that the secrecy of confession is a principle without exception.

7. The testimonial given by the Spiritual Father before an ordination does not constitute an exception. If the confessor discovers an impediment to ordination, he is not obligated to deliver the testimonial, and does not need to provide any reason for justifying his refusal. See Confidentiality of Confession, *Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, 1988*. See: Confession and Communion, *Report to the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, 1972*.

The Mystery of Marriage

The Church's vision of marriage is as an icon of the Trinitarian life of God Himself. In such a union, human love and desire for companionship become a love pervaded and sanctified by Divine Grace. God unites in body and spirit, heart and mind. Love unites in such a way that two lives become one life in perfect harmony. Such love implies a relationship in marriage that is total in character. To live up to its high calling, the Christian family must be firmly established in the faith. See: On Marriage, Encyclical Letter, Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, 1976.

1. The priest must make sincere and determined efforts through preaching and teaching to make his parishioners aware that the Mystery of Marriage takes place within the context of the total life of the parish.
2. The rector must seek to know who among his parishioners intend to marry and must make himself available for guidance and advice. His responsibilities include instructing the couple on the Orthodox Christian teaching of marriage. This should take place well before wedding plans are made so that the couple may understand and follow the Church's teaching and discipline on the Mystery of Marriage.

3. Counseling and teaching should include the following:
 - Procreation of children is not in itself the sole purpose of marriage; nevertheless, marriage presupposes a desire to have children. The couple should pray for God to grant them the blessings of childbirth and wise nurturing of the family.
 - *"Let marriage be held in honor, and let the marriage bed be undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4).* Sexual union is one of the blessings of marriage. The priest should remind the couple that they belong to each other. Couples may abstain from sexual union for a season by mutual consent, but should be made aware that refraining entirely from this act may result in unnecessary difficulties in their marriage.
4. The priest should make known to his faithful that before setting a date, renting a hall, or considering any activity related to the social aspect of the marriage day, a couple planning marriage must first seek the blessing, guidance, and advice of their parish priest.
5. The couple must respect the seasons, times, and days during which marriage may be blessed. The priest must also uphold the teaching of the Church in regard to these things. The most appropriate time for a wedding is Sunday, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.
6. Marriages are not to be celebrated on:
 - evenings before Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year,
 - Saturday evenings throughout the year,
 - evenings of the twelve Great Feasts or patronal feast of the parish,
 - during the course of all the fasts,
 - the Great Forty Day Fast, Apostles' Fast, Dormition Fast, and Nativity Fast,
 - from Sunday of Meatfare to the Sunday of Cheesefare,
 - during the course of Bright Week,
 - from the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord (*Dec. 25*) through the Feast of the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist (*Jan. 7*),
 - on the evening and day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (*Aug. 29*), and
 - on the evening and day of the Elevation of the Cross (*Sept. 14*).
7. Because marriages are normally celebrated on Sunday after the Divine Liturgy, the request to hold the ceremony on a Saturday requires a written petition for consent to the diocesan hierarch by the rector of the church where the marriage is to be performed. The couple must be exhorted to attend the Divine Liturgy on the following Sunday so that the marriage can be sealed by the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

If permission is given for a Saturday wedding, it shall be celebrated no later than a time of day established by the hierarch so that the priest may serve the Vigil or Vesper service.
8. The ritual of the marriage ceremony is to be celebrated in an Orthodox Church building. Halls, gardens, and other places are not appropriate.
9. The priest, as a pastor of souls, must also be available to counsel those already married, who are experiencing difficulties in their married status.
10. The priest is responsible for entering into the metrical book the required information.

A. Mixed Marriages

A mixed marriage is a marriage between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Orthodox Christian who is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and who confesses the unique Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Church tolerates this because of her pastoral concern and love for the faithful. Thus, a mixed marriage is not the norm, but is permitted in the hope that the non-Orthodox spouse will seek entrance into the Church.

1. A petition for a mixed marriage must be submitted to the diocesan hierarch for his blessing.
2. In a mixed marriage, the Orthodox partner should not consent to have children of the union baptized outside the Orthodox Church as a pre-marriage agreement.
3. Toleration of a mixed marriage does not extend to marriage between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Christian person, such as a Christian Scientist, Jehovah's Witness, Jew, Mormon, Moslem, Unitarian, etc.
4. Active participation on non-Orthodox clergy in this service, as in all the mysteries of the Orthodox Church, is not allowed. Conversely, Orthodox clergy may not participate in Non-Orthodox services and rites.

B. Second Marriage and Marriage Between Divorced Persons

1. The Orthodox norm for those who marry is one marriage. A second marriage is tolerated under certain conditions. A third marriage is extended under certain precise circumstances.
2. The Church does not grant divorces. However, it recognizes that because of human weaknesses and sin marriages sometimes disintegrate and are ended by civil decree (divorce).
3. In her mercy and wisdom, the Church may grant permission to remarry through the diocesan hierarch. Petition is made to the hierarch through the parish priest. A clear statement of repentance from the divorced party, whether or not he/she is considered the culpable one in the divorce, and a clear statement that the reason he/she desires to enter a second marriage is that it is considered necessary for his/her salvation is to be addressed to the diocesan hierarch through the parish priest. (See: Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality, and Sanctity of Life, *Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, Tenth All-American Council, 1992, page 5.*)
4. Under no circumstances can there be a fourth marriage.
5. The Order of Service:
 - If one party of the marriage is being married for the first time (even if that person is not Orthodox), the order of the first marriage is used.
 - If both the partners are divorced and/or widowed, the order for the second marriage is used.

C. Marriage Outside of the Orthodox Church

1. Orthodox Christians who marry outside the Orthodox Church thereby exclude their marital life from the life of the Church, exclude themselves from participation in the Holy Eucharist, and

therefore exclude themselves from full membership in the Church.

2. Such persons, after a period of penance, may be restored to Eucharistic fellowship by recommendation from the priest and on the approval of the hierarch.
3. Normally, such an act of restoration includes the confirmation of the marriage through a rite approved by the hierarch.
4. Priests are reminded that converts to Holy Orthodoxy are not to be remarried when they embrace the Orthodox faith. See: *On Marriage, Encyclical*.

The Mystery of Unction

The services of healing through anointing of the sick must be understood and experienced as corporate acts of worship. See: On Spiritual Life in the Church, Encyclical, page 5.

1. The Mystery of Holy Unction is administered to Orthodox Christians for the healing of soul and body. It may be for a particular person or for a number of persons gathered together.
2. While especially appropriate for the sick and dying, the Mystery of Holy Unction is intended for the living. Those who are already dead must not be anointed with this Holy Unction.
3. It should be understood that the service is primarily for those who are ill in body and in soul and are able to be present if the service is performed in public. Otherwise, the priests ought to go to the bedside of the person for whom the healing is sought.
4. This mystery is bestowed on those who have confessed and are at peace with God in their souls. One cannot expect to receive healing without repentance; confession precedes the healing.
5. If it is not possible to use the full order of service to anoint a person who has fallen ill, an abridged form that has been approved for use by the diocesan hierarch may be used.
6. In some dioceses, deaneries, and parishes, for the benefit of the local Orthodox community, it has become a custom, although not prescribed by the Typikon, to celebrate this mystery on fasting and festal seasons. Although it is not prescribed in the Triodion, one such example is the celebration of the mystery on Great and Holy Wednesday for the entire gathered community.
7. Normally, oil which has been sanctified at a previous celebration of the Mystery of Holy Unction is not reserved for the subsequent anointing of the sick, but should be burned in an oil lamp or poured over the body of the person for whom it had been offered if that person dies.
8. The custom of allowing the faithful to take oil home with them to anoint others should not be encouraged since the usual ministrant of the Mystery of Holy Unction is of the priestly rank. If garments and the like are brought forward at the service, they may be sprinkled with holy water, but should not be anointed with the sanctified oil.

Funeral Guidelines

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and

remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

1. The Church has no specific rules determining the length of time between death and the burial. Interment varies according to the climate, civil ordinances, customs, and circumstances, and may be held immediately following death, or after a number of days.
2. The hour of interment is also not fixed; it may be at any time during the day to accord with cemetery regulations and parish needs.
3. It is assumed that, unless the death was an accidental or untimely one, the priest has been ministering to an aging person, or one suffering from some ailment or sickness, and has prepared the person for death through participation in the Mysteries of Penance and Holy Eucharist.
4. The priest should read the Prayers at the Departing of a Soul and passages from Holy Scripture. Merely to be present at the bedside of one's spiritual child and not minister with audible prayer is unworthy of the priesthood.
5. If the priest was not at the bedside of the dying parishioner at the time of death, he must make contact with the family, offering to assist them through the time of grieving and mourning.
6. The Service for the Departed (*panikhida*) is sung on the eve of the burial whether the body is in the temple, funeral home, or elsewhere.
7. The body of the departed may be brought into the temple at any time prior to the time of the Funeral Service, whether days before or on the day thereof.
8. According to traditional practice, the casket is open from the first Service for the Department (*panikhida*) until the conclusion of the Funeral Service. The deceased is made in the image and likeness of God; the physical body is not to be shunned or rejected because it is in an altered state. To view the body at the funeral home but not in the church is illogical.
9. The casket is positioned so that the feet of the departed are toward the iconostasis. Thus, the person, if alive, would be standing facing the Holy Altar.
10. The Funeral Service is usually served in the temple on the day of the burial.
11. The Divine Liturgy may be celebrated on the day of the Funeral Service. This takes place before the Funeral Service. Celebration of the Divine Liturgy is precluded during the Great Fast when the weekday liturgy is not celebrated.
12. The Funeral Service and burial is generally not officiated on Sunday or Pascha. If the Funeral Service is scheduled for Monday, the body may be brought into the temple only after the service of Vespers on Sunday evening. There may be circumstances for which immediate burial may be necessary, and in this case pastoral discretion is to be used.

13. Between the day of Pascha and the Sunday of St. Thomas, the Funeral Service follows the Typicon for these specific days of celebration.
14. An Orthodox clergyman may not take part in a service for a non-Orthodox deceased person even if that person is related to a parishioner. If invited, however, he may offer some words of consolation at the graveside or funeral meal.
15. Non-Orthodox clergy may not be invited to participate in the Funeral Service or offer any form of homily or public statement in the temple, or participate in the graveside service. The officiating priest, however, cannot control what takes place after the Orthodox service of burial has been concluded in a public cemetery.
16. Prayers for the dead are usually offered immediately after the burial at the memorial meal, on the third, ninth and fortieth day after death, and every year thereafter.
17. Saturday is the usual day for a memorial service. It can be scheduled immediately before the Vigil or Vesper Service. In this way, the prayers for forgiveness and repose preceding these services are illumined through the proclamation of the Lord's Resurrection in the hymns that are sung in the following services.

However, the Service for the Departed (*panikhida*) may be served after the Sunday Divine Liturgy if the hierarch has given his blessing for this to take place at that time.

18. The Church has set aside definite days on which remembrance of the dead should take place. Among these are Meatfare Saturday, the second, third and fourth Saturdays of the Great Fast, the Saturday preceding Pentecost, and St. Demetrius Saturday.
19. In addition to these specific times, the faithful may have the names of the deceased remembered at the Proskomede and during the Divine Liturgy.
20. Memorial services are not permitted on feast days or from the Nativity of our Lord to Theophany, and from Palm Sunday to the Sunday of St. Thomas.
21. The rector is responsible for entering into the metrical book the required information about burials.

A. Non-Communicants

1. Membership in the Body of Christ, His Holy Church, is defined by participation in the Holy Eucharist. Inasmuch as a person, by refusing to partake of the Divine Body and Blood of Christ during his/her lifetime, has chosen freely not to be incorporated into the Body of Christ, unless there is reason to assume that the person has returned to Christ at the end of his/her earthly existence, that person will not be buried from the temple.
2. The burial service of such a person should only be a Service for the Departed (*panikhida*), including scripture readings for the dead. The priest may be vested in the epitachelion.

B. Non-Orthodox Persons

1. If a priest is asked to bury a non-Orthodox person, he must consult with his diocesan hierarch, and with the hierarch's blessing bury the person according to the service prescribed in the Book of Needs.

C. Suicide

1. The act of suicide is a profound tragedy affecting a parish. It necessitates prayers for forgiveness for the sake of the departed and exhorts the members of the parish community to repentance and sorrow.
2. The Orthodox Church normally denies a Church burial to a person who has committed suicide. However, factors bearing on the particular case may become known to the priest who must share this information with the diocesan hierarch; the hierarch will consider the factors and make the decision concerning Funeral Services.

D. Members of Masonic and Other Secret Fraternal Societies

1. If a parish priest is aware that a member of his flock is a Freemason, he should make it a pastoral concern to speak privately with the person, showing the incompatibility of Orthodoxy with Freemasonry.
2. When a communicating member of a parish falls asleep in the Lord and that person is also a member of one of these societies, the priest will show love and concern for the deceased. In his counseling of the bereaved family he must not be hostile, but must inform the family that only the Funeral Service for an Orthodox Christian will be served.
3. Patiently and tactfully, and with discretion, he will state that no words or symbols other than those of the Orthodox faith can be introduced into the church or the funeral home.

The Church does not intend to control or prohibit others from executing particular rites after the Funeral Service which may take place after the priest leaves the burial site after committing the body to the ground.

E. Cremation

1. The practice of cremation is not a Christian one and is to be discouraged. Cremated remains are not to be brought into the temple for a burial service or for any other reason.
2. Although cremation is not encouraged, and the Funeral Service over cremated remains is denied, the remains may be buried only with the hymn *Holy God...*

F. Autopsy and Organ Donation

1. The priest should be sufficiently informed to help guide the faithful in this area of medical procedure. Some people think that they cannot refuse an autopsy to be performed on a loved one. No one is obliged to give approval for this procedure.
2. Unless there is a specific legal reason, such as determining the cause of death, an autopsy ought to be avoided. The desire for scientific information through experimentation is not enough reason to merit an autopsy. Nevertheless, this is a decision that the family itself must make. The Church

is concerned that respect for the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit be maintained.

3. Donation of body organ(s) after death may be allowed as long as respectful care is exercised toward the body before, during, and after the extraction operation. Care must be taken that the organ(s) are given as a gesture of altruism, free of any commercial overtones.
4. The Church does not consider the sharing of organs as a lessening of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the deceased, or as a transmigration of part of the donor to the recipient. A healthy person not in expectation of imminent death may donate non-vital organs as long as his/her quality and integrity of life is not diminished or endangered.

Ecumenical Witness

In the encyclical On Spiritual Life in the Church, a section on the Temptation of False Ecumenism states that Orthodox Christians must be concerned about an understanding of ecumenical activity which is wrong: i.e.

To believe that true ecumenism requires us to deny that the fullness of grace and truth abides in the Orthodox Church; to confess that the Orthodox faith is partial, incomplete and now without errors; to admit that Christ Himself is but one of many spiritual teachers in human history, Whose way is not unique, Whose truth is not perfect, Whose grace is not full, and Whose life is not eternal and divine.

However,

We see the genuine ecumenical movement as working toward this goal, i.e., organic Christian unity. We sincerely believe that we fulfill our ecumenical duty as well as our responsibility as the Episcopate of the Orthodox Church in America by calling all men to follow the way toward Christian union and the unity of the Christian Church which can be fruitful and can lead, by the Grace of God, to some positive results.

(See Christian Unity and Ecumenism, *Encyclical Letter, Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, 1973.*)

On the basis of what we hold in common with non-Orthodox citizens, we may:

- present a common witness to faith in God and defend this wherever it is threatened or denied,
- support the right of believers to propagate their faith and to conduct religious education and mission,
- coordinate the possibilities and efforts in the work of serving those in need of help and assistance, joining with all those who work for the good of others,
- be united in affirming of the Christian ideal of the human person as a creature made in the image and likeness of God, and
- work together to support the desire to achieve true Christian unity in the truth and love of God.

(See *Christian Unity and Ecumenism, Encyclical, page 15.*)

A. Ecumenical Organizations on Various Levels

1. Orthodox participation in Councils of Churches or Ministeriums is acceptable with the blessing of the diocesan hierarchy.
2. Participation and cooperation in work for the good of society in such areas as educational opportunities, morality, responsible citizenship, Christian charity, social services, and other areas of concern to the community are acceptable.
3. Educational enrichment of members of a community through seminars, lectures, cultural programs and the like are beneficial for the better understanding of others.
4. Orthodox services may be celebrated at which non-Orthodox are present, i.e., Vespers, Service of Intercession (*moleben*), etc., but the readings, hymns, and responses must be led by Orthodox Christians. Non-Orthodox choral groups may not be invited to give the responses or sing the hymns of the services.
5. Although a service of prayer may be tailored for a particular occasion, it must be clearly demonstrate that it is the prayer of the Orthodox to God for the spiritual enlightenment and well-being of all the participants.

B. Lay Participation in Ecumenical Witnessing

1. If the laity become involved in ecumenism, they must be well-grounded in the Orthodox faith and ecclesiology and possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of comparative theology, discipline, and practice. The parish priest must inform the faithful in these matters. Ongoing diocesan and parochial educational programs should be tailored to these needs.
2. On the local level of ecumenical encounter, it is necessary to state the difference between dialogue and official representation on behalf of the Church, and local, informal discussion on various topics and concerns.
3. Any clergyman or lay person representing the Church in an official capacity must have the blessing of his/her diocesan hierarchy.
4. Although non-Orthodox clergy may not deliver a sermon in an Orthodox church, they may be invited to give lectures or presentations in the educational facilities of the church, In any case, the diocesan hierarchy is to be consulted for his blessing.
5. With the knowledge and blessing of his diocesan hierarchy, an Orthodox clergyman may deliver a sermon in a non-Orthodox church which will in no way compromise the tenets of the faith and Orthodox Tradition.
6. Non-Orthodox clergy present for a liturgical service in an Orthodox church may be afforded a place of honor in the body of the temple, but not in the sanctuary or on the clerics.
7. If a parish sponsors an open house for the local non-Orthodox community, a non-Eucharistic service, such as Vespers, Matins, or a Service of Intercession (*moleben*) may be served. Appropriate explanations for the benefit of the non-Orthodox guests should be part of the preparations.
8. If non-Orthodox groups have been invited or make themselves present for a scheduled service, sufficient time should be devoted to explanation and orientation prior to the worship service. The

distinction between communing members of the Church and those who are present as guests should be made, along with an invitation to those present to enter into the spirit of the service.

9. Care must be taken to explain liturgical actions, symbols, and terminology of the Church for they are not always self-evident or immediately understood by non-Orthodox.
10. The same care should be taken to promote good understanding of what is being celebrated by explaining the structure of the services and the various themes being considered and celebrated within its context.
11. If non-Orthodox are present for the Divine Liturgy, it is prudent to announce who is permitted to partake of the Eucharist prior to its distribution.

Even after offering this specific information, it should not be presumed that the guests will necessarily understand or heed it. Therefore, it is prudent for the priest to ask one or more questions of a person he does not know to ascertain his/her Orthodox standing.

In any case, the priest is reminded that he is the guardian of the Eucharist. Deacons who have been given the blessing to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful must defer to the priest in uncertain situations.

12. Non-Orthodox clergy present in the church on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, baptism, or another similar event may not participate in any part of the service.

However, in the case of a wedding, non-Orthodox clergy may offer a prayer or blessing at the reception or at another appropriate time outside the church.

13. A non-Orthodox clergyman may offer a prayer at the graveside, as is the custom pertaining to military honors, American Legion, VFW, or prayers recited by Union or Fraternal organization representatives. If possible, these should be scheduled prior to the final Orthodox service of interment.

C. Ecumenical Religious Services

1. Ecumenical services are frequently very different from Orthodox services. Before asking the diocesan hierarch to give his blessing, the Orthodox participants should review the text of the service so they can determine whether or not an Orthodox presence might be misconstrued. Mere presence, without active participation in such a service, may be viewed as an affirmation of all that is stated, implied, and proclaimed.
2. If the content of the service compromises or offends the Orthodox faith or ecclesiology, then there can be no Orthodox participation. For the purpose of witness, it is necessary to convey to the non-Orthodox precisely and succinctly why Orthodox participation is not possible.
3. In the Orthodox tradition, liturgical vestments are worn only when a liturgical function is being performed. Therefore, liturgical vestments are *not* to be worn even when some participation in an ecumenical service is permissible.

4. Likewise, a priest should dress as he is generally seen by his clerical peers, wearing a clergy shirt and suit, or cassock, as is his custom.
5. Orthodox clergy, in the context of ecumenical services, may preach, offer a prayer in the Orthodox Tradition, and read from Holy Scripture.
6. An ecumenical service, as such, is not to be conducted in an Orthodox church. Prior to an Orthodox service being held for the benefit of true ecumenical witness, and at which there is to be a major attendance by non-Orthodox clergy and laity, the permission and blessing of the diocesan hierarch must be secured.
7. Local Orthodox clergy fellowships, under the guidance of their hierarchs, should come to a oneness of mind concerning ecumenical activity and uniformity of practice. These guidelines may be presented as a basis for such activity and take precedence over local decisions.

Matters of Appeal

1. The first instance of appeal for priest and parish alike is the district dean. Depending on the nature of the situation or dispute, the diocesan hierarch may appoint other clergy to assist the dean in determining action.
2. For instances involving ecclesiastical court, see Article XI, "Church Courts and Canonical Procedure," *The Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America*.

Attached Clergy

1. These guidelines apply to attached as well as to assigned clergy. The attached priest or deacon is one who generally does not have specific responsibilities in a parish apart from the celebration of Divine Services, and who usually does not receive remuneration from the parish.
2. Attached clergy include supply clergy to the deanery or diocese, retired clergy and those on leaves of absence. Attached clergy do not include those who have been permanently released from all sacred functions (*deposed*) or those under canonical suspension.
3. Clergy who have been given leaves of absence do not serve in any parish other than the one to which they have been attached without the express permission of the diocesan hierarch.

Metrical Records and other Ecclesiastical Reports

1. It is the rector's responsibility to complete the parish metrical records and all other ecclesiastical forms or reports that are required by the Central Church Administration and the diocesan chancery. These are to be completed in a timely fashion.
2. All metrical records are the property of the parish and are not to be taken by the priest in the event he leaves the parish. When a priest transfers from the parish, he turns the church seal and records over to the district dean who entrusts them to the newly assigned rector.

