

Section 2

Administrative Guidelines for the Mystery of Marriage

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is unique among the Mysteries of the Orthodox Church insofar as it is the 'original mystery' instituted by God in the garden of Eden before the fall. For this reason, unlike the other Mysteries, there are no references to sin in the Order of Marriage (except the Order of Second Marriage) as there are in the other services. Marriage is the Divinely-ordained normative estate of mankind, and the married couple is considered the foundation of society. The administrative regulations for Marriage are many, reflecting its sacramental, social, and civil implications. Since weddings usually involve a great deal of preparation and expense on the part of the couple and their families, Priests shall make every effort to ensure that all necessary ecclesiastical administrative forms are completed and submitted, so that a license can be issued in a timely manner. There should be no cause for a hurried administrative process, or to send documents via

overnight delivery services. The issuance of an Episcopal License to Marry by the Metropolitan to the Priest performing the wedding indicates the theological and ecclesiological fact that all sacramental authority originates from the Metropolitan and that no Mysteries or other services are celebrated in his Metropolis without his blessing. The requirements associated with the administration of this Mystery reflect the civil and legal ramifications of Marriage. The procedures specified in these guidelines shall therefore be rigorously and exactly followed to ensure correct processing of the Affidavit and timely issuance of the Episcopal License to Marry.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

I. Authority

1. Since all authority to conduct the sacred Mysteries and all worship services issues from the Metropolitan, the Mystery of Marriage must be celebrated by a Priest belonging to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America according to the Liturgical Tradition of the Orthodox Church.

II. General

1. An Affidavit for License to Marry is submitted by the Priest to his own Metropolitan, even if the proposed Marriage will take place at another parish within, or outside, the Metropolis.

2. An Affidavit for License to Marry shall be submitted only by Priests in parish ministry, specifically by the Proistamenos.

3. The couple planning to marry must obtain a civil marriage license from civil authorities in the location where the proposed Marriage will take place.

4. Before submitting the Affidavit for License to Marry, the Priest must verify that neither the groom nor the bride is already married, either in this country or elsewhere, and that there is no canonical impediment to their proposed marriage.

a. Canonical impediments include issues described in the following Sections.

III. Consanguinity Impediments (Prohibited Marriage Groups)

1. The groom and the bride shall not be related according to the criteria of the following prohibited marriage groups:

a. First Group: Parents with their own children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren.

b. Second Group: Brothers-in-law with sisters-in-law.

c. Third Group: Uncles and aunts with nieces and nephews.

d. Fourth Group: First cousins with each other.

e. Fifth Group: Foster parents with foster children, or foster children with the children of foster parents.

- f. Sixth Group: Godparents with godchildren, or godparents with the parents of godchildren.

IV. Second and Third Marriages

1. If the groom and/or the bride was previously married outside the Orthodox Church, he and/or she shall present to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry:

- a. The Civil Divorce certificate for the last marriage (or an exact copy)
- b. The death certificate of the spouse.

2. If the groom and/or the bride was previously married within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, he and/or she shall present the Civil Divorce certificate and the original Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce (for the last marriage) to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

3. Some Orthodox jurisdictions do not issue a Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce. Thus, if the groom and/or the bride was previously married within an Orthodox jurisdiction other than the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, he and/or she shall:

- a. Present the Civil Divorce certificate (for the last marriage) to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.
- b. Present their Orthodox Marriage Certificate (for the last marriage) to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

4. If the groom and/or the bride was previously married in the Orthodox Church, plans for a subsequent Marriage shall not be made or confirmed until the Decree(s) of Ecclesiastical Divorce is/are received by the party(ies) involved and submitted to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

5. All previous marriages, Orthodox and non-Orthodox must be recorded on a Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-3E/Archdiocese Form 165).

- a. If the groom was previously married, a Supplementary Marriage Record Form shall be submitted recording each prior marriage.
- b. If the bride was previously married, a Supplementary Marriage Record Form shall be submitted recording each prior marriage.

6. If the groom and the bride are currently married to each other (as is often the case with convert couples), or were previously married to each other, in a civil or non-Orthodox religious ceremony they must provide a copy of their civil marriage certificate, and a Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-2E/Archdiocese Form 165) shall be submitted for both the groom and the bride.

7. No more than three Ecclesiastical Marriages are permitted by the Church; if the groom and/or the bride was previously married, this shall not be the fourth Orthodox marriage for either partner.

8. The Service of Second Marriage is usually conducted when both partners enter into a second or third Orthodox Marriage. It is not normally conducted when one partner is entering into a first Orthodox Marriage. Service of Second Marriage differs from that of the Crowning or Marriage as follows:

a. The First Marriage begins with "Blessed is the Kingdom ...;" the Second begins with "Blessed is our God ..."

b. After the petition for the Metropolitan, the Litany for the First Marriage continues with seven petitions for the couple; the Litany for the Second has only two ("For the servant of God (*Name*), and for the handmaid of God (*Name*), and for their protection and life together in God, let us pray to the Lord," and "That they may live together in righteousness and concord, let us pray to the Lord").

c. The Prayer after the Betrothal differs:

(1) At the First Marriage the prayer is Lord our God, Who accompanied the servant of the patriarch Abraham into Mesopotamia, where he was sent to espouse a wife for his master Isaac; and Who, through the drawing of water, revealed to him that he should betroth Rebecca: bless also the betrothal of these Your servants, (*Name*) and (*Name*), and confirm the promise which they have spoken to each other. Establish them in the holy union which is from You. For You, in the beginning created male and female, and by You the woman is joined to the man as a helpmate, and for the procreation of the human race. Wherefore, O Lord our God, Who sent forth Your truth upon Your inheritance, and Your covenant to Your servants our fathers, Your chosen ones, from generation to generation: look upon Your servant, (*Name*), and upon Your handmaid, (*Name*), and establish and make stable their betrothal in faith, and in oneness of mind, in truth and love. For You, O Lord, declared that a pledge should be given and confirmed in all things."

(2) At the Second Marriage the prayer is "Master, Lord our God, Who spares all and provides for all, Who knows the secrets of all and understands all, have mercy on us sinners, and forgive the transgressions of these Your servants, calling them to repentance and granting them pardon of their errors, purification of their sins, and forgiveness of their iniquities, both voluntary and involuntary. You Who know the frailty of our human nature, our Master and Creator, Who forgave Rahab the sinner and accepted the repentance of the Publican, do not remember the sins of our youth, for if You were to keep strict account of our iniquities, Lord, O Lord, who could stand before You? Or what flesh could be justified in Your sight? For You alone are just, sinless, holy, abundant in mercy and compassion, forgiving the evil deeds of us all. O Master, Who have claimed Your servant (*Name*) and Your handmaiden (*Name*) as Your own, unite them in true love for each other; grant them the repentance of the Publican; the tears of the sinful woman; and the confession of the thief; so that, repenting with their whole

heart and keeping Your commandments in concord and peace, they may be made worthy of Your heavenly Kingdom.

d. After this Prayer the First Marriage Service continues with Psalm 127, "Blessed are all those who fear the Lord ..., while the Second Marriage Service continues with the Prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, Word of God, Who were raised on the precious and life-giving Cross ..."

e. The Crowning and associated prayers, beginning with "God most pure, the Creator of every living thing ...," as well as the continuation through the Dismissal are identical in both the First and Second Marriage Services

V. Fourth Marriage Impediment

1. A fourth marriage is forbidden in the Orthodox Church for either partner.

VI. Marriages Between Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Christians

1. At least one of the marriage partners shall be an Orthodox Christian.

2. The Mystery of Marriage of an Orthodox Christian with a non-Orthodox Christian shall be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest, in an Orthodox Church, and according to Orthodox liturgical Tradition.

3. If one of the marriage partners (either the groom or the bride) is not an Orthodox Christian:

a. The non-Orthodox partner shall be a Christian who was Baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity in a denomination that expresses a belief in the Holy Trinity.

b. The non-Orthodox partner shall be willing to have any children issuing from the marriage Baptized in the Orthodox Church as well as raised and nurtured in accordance with the Orthodox faith.

c. The non-Orthodox partner shall not be a member of the following churches or religions (these marriages are prohibited in the Eastern Orthodox Church):

(1) Assembly of God

(2) Buddhism (i.e., a Buddhist)

(3) Christian Scientist

(4) Disciples of Christ

(5) Members of any Far Eastern Religion

(6) Hinduism (i.e., a Hindu)

(7) Islam (i.e., Moslems)

- (8) Jehovah's Witness
- (9) Judaism (i.e., a Jew)
- (10) Mennonite
- (11) Mormon (also called "Latter Day Saints")
- (12) Any Non-Christian
- (13) Pentecostal
- (14) Quaker
- (15) Salvation Army
- (16) Seventh Day Adventist
- (17) Spiritualist
- (18) Swedenborgian
- (19) Unitarian
- (20) Cults or New Age movements

4. A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian in accordance with the rites and traditions of the Church does not automatically become a member of the Orthodox Church, and is therefore not permitted to receive Holy Communion, Holy Unction, Holy Repentance, or an Orthodox Church funeral since these are privileges of the Baptized and Chrismated members of the Church.

5. A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian is warmly invited to attend the Divine Services and, if he/she freely chooses to do so, is encouraged to receive instruction in the faith and join the Orthodox Church through the Mystery of Chrismation (it is assumed that they are already Baptized since this is a pre-condition for the Marriage); this is in light of the fact that the more things a couple holds in common, the more likely it will be that they will live their married lives in peace and harmony. In addition, shared faith and traditions spare the couple and their children many serious problems and strengthen the bonds between them.

VII. Marriage with a Widow or Widower

1. If the groom and/or the bride is widowed, he and/or she shall present the death certificate of the deceased spouse to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

VIII. Marriage of Minors

1. If the groom and/or the bride is under 18 years of age, both parents or guardians of the minor shall provide written consent.

IX. Marriage with Members of Other Parishes

1. If the groom and/or the bride is a member of another parish, he and/or she shall obtain a signed Certificate of Eligibility to Marry from the Priest of that parish, and submit it to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

2. If the groom and/or the bride came into the Denver Metropolis after the age of 16, he and/or she shall obtain a Certificate of Eligibility to Marry from the Priest of their previous parish, and shall submit it to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry.

X. Marriage of an Immigrant

1. If the groom and/or the bride came to the United States from another country at age sixteen or older, he and/or she shall produce (and submit to the Priest filing the Affidavit for License to Marry) either:

a. A certificate stating their eligibility to marry (Certificate of Eligibility to Marry, typically issued by their Metropolis in Greece).

b. A notarized statement from the nearest relatives (next of kin) stating the number of years they have known the individual and testifying that they are free and eligible to marry may be accepted for individuals from other countries where there is no Orthodox Church or where no one knows of them.

2. This certification is not required if the individual came to the United States before the age of sixteen, and established residence within the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

XI. Certificate of Eligibility to Marry

1. The form for a Certificate of Eligibility to Marry shall be as indicated thereon.

2. Photocopies of a Certificate of Eligibility to Marry are not acceptable.

3. A Certificate of Eligibility to Marry for a wedding that will be conducted outside the Metropolis shall be prepared as follows:

a. It will be filled out by the parish Priest, then sent to his Metropolitan.

b. The Metropolitan will verify the signature of the parish Priest and return the Certificate of Eligibility to Marry to the Priest.

c. The Parish Priest will, in turn, forward it to the Priest in the other Metropolis where the marriage will be celebrated.

4. A Certificate of Eligibility to Marry for a wedding that will be conducted outside the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America shall be prepared by the parish Priest, then sent to the Metropolitan for verification of the Priest's signature and for further transmission to the other jurisdiction.

5. A Certificate of Eligibility to Marry for a wedding that will be conducted in another parish within the Metropolis shall be prepared by the parish Priest, and then may be sent directly to the other parish Priest without the requirement for Metropolitan for verification of the Priest's signature.

XII. Sponsors (Koumbaro and/or Koumbara)

1. The Sponsor (koumbaro or koumbara) shall be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church.

2. The following persons can not be a Sponsor:

a. An Orthodox Christian who does not belong to a parish.

b. An Orthodox Christian who belongs to a parish not in Communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; should this situation arise, the Priest shall contact the Metropolis Office for clarification regarding the canonical status of the other parish.

c. A married Orthodox Christian who has not been married in the Orthodox Church.

d. Any one who has been excommunicated or anathematized from the Orthodox Church.

e. An Orthodox Deacon, Priest, or Bishop.

3. Non-Orthodox persons may, however, be members of the "wedding party".

a. A distinction can be made between the Orthodox Sponsor and the "best man" who by social custom stands next to the groom.

XIII. Forbidden Periods

1. The Mystery of Marriage is not permitted on the following days:

a. The day before and the day of the twelve Great Feast Days of Our Lord and the Theotokos:

(1) Circumcision of our Lord (December 31 and January 1)

(2) Theophany of our Lord (January 5 and 6)

(3) Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (February 1 and 2)

- (4) Annunciation (March 24 and 25) – which in any event is during the Great Fast
- (5) Palm Sunday (Saturday and Sunday)
- (6) Pascha (Saturday and Sunday)
- (7) Ascension of our Lord (Wednesday and Thursday)
- (8) Pentecost (Saturday and Sunday)
- (9) Transfiguration of our Lord (August 5 and 6), which in any event is during the Dormition Fast
- (10) Dormition of the Theotokos (August 14 and 15)
- (11) Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple (November 20 and 21)
- (12) Nativity of our Lord (December 24 and 25)

b. Great Lent and Holy Week

c. August 1 through 15 (Dormition Fast)

d. August 29 (Feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist)

e. September 14 (Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

f. December 13 through 25 (last portion of the Nativity Fast; Forefeast period of the Nativity).

Note: The Church has not forbidden the Celebration of the Mystery of Marriage during the Apostle's Fast after Pentecost.

2. If the Mystery of Marriage must out of absolute necessity be celebrated on one of the non-permissible days, the Priest shall request an exception from the Metropolitan in writing to celebrate the Marriage stating the extenuating circumstances for authorizing the Marriage on a specific date by *oikonomia*.

3. If the Metropolitan permits the Mystery of Marriage on one of the non-permissible days for reasons of *oikonomia*, the wedding celebration shall be muted and due regard paid to the fasting restrictions of the season; e.g., no dancing allowed and only appropriate Lenten foods may be served.

XIV. Celebration of Marriage Outside an Orthodox Temple

1. If the Mystery of Marriage can not be celebrated in an Orthodox church (temple), such as may occur in areas of the Metropolis where no Orthodox church exists the Priest shall request an exception from the Metropolitan in writing stating the extenuating circumstances for authorizing the Marriage at a specific location by *oikonomia*.

2. The Mystery of Marriage shall not be celebrated outside an Orthodox church (temple) without the written permission of the Metropolitan.

3. Dispensation to celebrate the Mystery of Marriage outside an Orthodox church (temple) might not be granted if there is an Orthodox church (temple) in the area.

XV. Marriage of Couples Received into the Orthodox Church

1. Couples received into the Orthodox Church through Baptism and/or Chrismation shall be Married in the Church; this may be a private ceremony, involving only the Priest, the couple, and the sponsor.

XVI. Inter-Jurisdictional Marriage Issues

1. Note that some Orthodox jurisdictions, such as the Orthodox Church in America, do not marry couples previously married and accepted into the Orthodox Church through Chrismation, since they propose that the Mystery of Chrismation itself "fulfills" the previous non-Orthodox Baptism and Marriage.

2. The Mystery of Marriage performed in other Orthodox jurisdictions in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is recognized by the Archdiocese.

XVII. Inter-Metropolis Marriages

1. If a Marriage will be celebrated at a parish within another Metropolis (that is, not in the parish where the bride resides and in which the wedding customarily takes place), the following procedures shall be followed:

a. The Priest of the bride's parish shall prepare the Affidavit for License to Marry, and submit it to his own Metropolitan.

b. The Metropolitan will examine the Application, and upon approval will issue the Episcopal Permission to Marry to the Priest of the bride's parish.

c. Upon receiving the Episcopal Permission to Marry from his Metropolitan, the Priest of the bride's parish shall transfer it to the Priest of the parish where the wedding will take place, requesting the Priest to celebrate the Marriage on his behalf. This notation shall be written at the top of the Episcopal Permission to Marry and shall be signed by the bride's Priest.

d. After the Marriage is celebrated, the Priest serving the Mystery shall complete the bottom form on the Episcopal Permission to Marry, the Certificate of Marriage Performed, and return it to the priest who transferred it to him who in turn will record in his parish marriage registry before he forwards it to his Metropolitan.

e. After receiving the completed Certificate of Marriage Performed, the Priest of the bride's parish shall send it to his own Metropolitan so that the Marriage Certificate may be prepared and sent to the couple.

f. If the priest from the bride's parish traveled to serve the wedding at the other parish, he shall complete the bottom form on the Episcopal Permission to Marry, the Certificate of Marriage Performed, and send it to his own Metropolitan.

g. The marriage is recorded in the appropriate Parish Registers of both parishes.

XVIII. Inter-Parish Marriages

1. If a Marriage will be celebrated at another parish within the Metropolis (that is, not in the parish of the bride where the wedding customarily takes place), the following procedures shall be followed:

a. The Priest of the bride's parish shall prepare the Affidavit for License to Marry, and submit it to the Metropolitan.

b. The Metropolitan will examine the Application, and upon approval will issue the Episcopal Permission to Marry to the Priest of the bride's parish.

c. Upon receiving the Episcopal Permission to Marry from his Metropolitan, the Priest of the bride's parish shall transfer it to the Priest of the parish where the wedding will take place, requesting the Priest to celebrate the Marriage on his behalf

d. After the Marriage is celebrated, the Priest serving the Mystery shall complete the bottom form on the Episcopal Permission to Marry, the Certificate of Marriage Performed, and send it to the Metropolitan so that the Marriage Certificate may be prepared and sent to the couple.

e. The marriage is recorded in the appropriate Parish Registers of both parishes.

2. If a parish priest should celebrate the Mystery of Marriage for his own parishioners at another Metropolis parish church (as sometimes happens when a large wedding is planned at a small parish church and a larger neighboring Greek Orthodox parish church is made available), the priest records the Marriage only in the register of his own parish making the proper notation in the registry column marks "comments." However the name of the church where the Marriage takes place and the city is used. In effect, the Marriage is treated as though it were celebrated in a rented hall or other site.

XIX. Responsibility for Submitting the Affidavit for License to Marry

1. The parish Priest is responsible for gathering all required documentation and for submitting a complete Affidavit for License to Marry package to the Metropolis for approval by the Metropolitan and issuance of the Episcopal Permission to Marry which is effectively the Ecclesiastical Marriage License.

2. If there is a question about the status of an Affidavit for License to Marry, the Priest submitting the Affidavit shall contact the Metropolis on behalf of the couple; the couple shall be discouraged from personally calling the Metropolis Office.

XX. Issuance of Episcopal Permission to Marry

1. The Episcopal Permission to Marry will be issued to the Priest who shall thereupon have canonical permission to celebrate the Holy Mystery of Marriage.

XXI. Requirement for both a Civil Marriage License and the Episcopal Permission to Marry

1. The Episcopal Permission to Marry is mandatory before the Priest can conduct a Marriage; under no circumstances may a Priest celebrate the Marriage ceremony without permission from the Metropolis.

2. Under no circumstances shall the priest serve the Mystery of Marriage without receiving from the groom and the bride a license from the civil authorities wherever such is required. A priest who celebrates a wedding without permission from the civil authorities is solely responsible for this act, and may be subject to punishment under civil law.

XXII. Celebration of the Mystery of Marriage

1. Since the Episcopal License to Marry is issued by the Metropolitan, the Mystery of Marriage must be celebrated by a Priest belonging to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America according to the Liturgical Tradition of the Orthodox Church.

2. The Mystery of Matrimony, as with all Mysteries, shall be served in accordance with the Euchologion.

3. The Mystery of Matrimony may be served in English or in Greek – or in both languages – according to the circumstances of the couple and those in attendance.

4. The Priest shall permit only the groom and the bride to drink from the common cup; no one else, not even the sponsor, may partake of it.

5. It is proper for the Priest to address the newlyweds at the conclusion of the service.

6. It is a commendable practice for the Priest to present the newly-married couple with a gift; particularly appropriate is a Bible or an Icon.

7. If the Marriage is between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian partners, a non-Orthodox Christian minister or priest may be invited to say a few words or offer a blessing prayer at the end of the Orthodox Service if requested by the non-Orthodox partner..

a. Such words or blessing, however, are expressly forbidden during the Marriage Service, between "Blessed is the Kingdom ..." and "Through the prayers of our holy fathers ..."

b. Such words or blessing should be spoken after the end of the Service; i.e., after "Through the prayers of our holy fathers ..."

XXIII. Musical Guidelines for the Celebration of the Mystery of Marriage

1. The music used at the Marriage celebration is usually taken from the tradition of the Orthodox Church, regardless of origin (Greek, Slavonic, Arabic, etc.).

2. If the Marriage is between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian partners, the non-Orthodox partner may desire to include music from their own religious heritage; this may be allowed at the discretion of the Metropolitan under the following guidelines:

a. The music or hymn shall be sung or played before or after the Marriage Service (i.e., before "Blessed is the Kingdom ..." and after "Through the prayers of our holy fathers ..."); it shall not be played or sung during the Marriage Service.

b. The music or hymn shall be in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

c. The music or hymn shall be those traditionally accepted, and not of an extreme or avant-garde nature such as "Christian rock" music or from Broadway musicals.

d. Any words in a hymn must reflect the basic Orthodox understanding of marriage; e.g., "two are united into one," the couple have "an abiding faith in God," etc.

e. Hymns such as those taken from the liturgical life of a non-Orthodox Church, such as "Ave Maria" or "Amazing Grace" have been acceptable, but require previous permission from the Metropolitan.

(1) The Ave Maria, which is particularly popular among Roman Catholic marriage partners has been very desirable; the Latin words sung are: "*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu en mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tuis, Jesus;*" i.e., "Hail Mary. full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus." Note that these words, however, refer exclusively to the Theotokos and have nothing to do with the bride.

f. "Cocktail songs" or Broadway show tunes are not permitted; if appropriate, these may instead be sung at the reception.

g. Musical instruments are not allowed. In the absence of an organ, however, classical string instruments may be allowed but only at the discretion of the Metropolitan, with his prior permission, and under the following guidelines:

(1) The musical instrument should be appropriate to the music or hymn; e.g., a guitar would not normally be used to play the "Ave Maria."

(2) The musical instrument should be suited to the Orthodox liturgical setting; for example, strings, flutes, and harps have been generally acceptable; guitars, mandolins, and bouzoukis are not. Such instruments have been allowed in places where the church organ was not in service or did not exist and when the players were invited relatives and friends of the bridal couple.

5. The chanter should offer the liturgical responses throughout the service; the choir may participate if requested. Exceptions may be made only at the discretion of the Metropolitan.

6. The playing of any music, or the singing of any hymns, not expressly part of the traditional Orthodox Marriage Service is forbidden during the Marriage Service (i.e., between "Blessed is the Kingdom ..." and "Through the prayers of our holy fathers ...").

a. The Lord's Prayer may be sung during the Marriage Service, at the discretion of the Priest; it is preferable, however, for it to be sung before or after the Service. Within the Service the Lord's Prayer should be said by all.

XXIV. Completion of Documentation After the Marriage

1. The Priest shall complete the bottom form on the Episcopal Permission to Marry, the Certificate of Marriage Performed, and submit it to the Metropolitan.

2. The Priest shall also complete all civil documentation required by local law and submit it in accordance with prescribed civil procedures.

3. The Priest shall record all data in the Parish Register of Marriages.

XXV. Issuance of the Marriage Certificate

1. After the Certificate of Marriage Performed has been received, a Marriage Certificate will be issued by the Metropolitan, and mailed to the married couple.

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING THE AFFIDAVIT FOR LICENSE TO MARRY

1. After counseling with the couple who intend to marry (this should require several visits), instructing them on the significance of Christian marriage and advising them regarding the administrative procedures for obtaining an Ecclesiastical Marriage License, the Priest shall submit the following documents to the Metropolis:

- a. Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist (required for all marriages)
- b. Affidavit For License To Marry (required for all marriages)
- c. Such other documents as listed below if required.

2. Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist:

- a. The Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist is required for all marriages.
- b. The purpose of the Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist is to gather the information necessary to complete the Affidavit For License To Marry, and to provide the priest with a checklist to ensure that all required documentation is submitted to the Metropolis Office for processing, episcopal review, and issuance of the Episcopal Permission to Marry.
- c. The Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist shall be filled out completely, including:
 - (1) All information typed or printed neatly.
 - (2) Exact birth dates (month, day, and year).
 - (3) Exact locations (city, state, and Zip Code; country if not in the U.S.).
 - (4) Exact birth dates (month, day, and year).
 - (5) The religious denomination of the non-Orthodox applicant; the word "Protestant" is not acceptable.
- d. Part A, Basic Information, shall be filled out by the Priest.
- e. Part B, Impediments to Marriage, and Part C, Additional Factors Concerning the Proposed Marriage, shall be completed by the Priest; all required documentation shall be gathered and assembled as part of the complete marriage package.
- f. Part C, Documentation Checklist, shall be used by the Priest to ensure that all required documents are included in the complete package submitted to the Metropolis Office.

3. The Affidavit For License To Marry:

- a. The Affidavit For License To Marry is required for all marriages.

b. The Affidavit For License To Marry shall be submitted to the Metropolis no less than 30 days prior and no more than 60 days prior to the planned wedding date.

c. The Affidavit For License To Marry shall be filled out completely, including:

(1) All information typed or printed neatly.

(2) Full street, city, and state addresses.

(3) Full Month, day, and year dates.

(4) Exact Baptism and Chrismation dates (month, day, and year).

(5) First and last names of the bride and/or groom provided in English; they may also be provided in Greek if they are of Greek descent.

d. The Affidavit For License To Marry shall be signed by the Priest who shall affix the Parish Seal to the Affidavit.

4. Decree of Dissolution of Marriage issued by the Civil Court.

a. The Decree of Dissolution of Marriage is required if the groom and/or the bride was previously married, whether or not the marriage was recognized by the Church

b. The groom and/or the bride shall present an exact copy of the Civil Divorce certificate(s) for the last marriage.

c. A photocopy of the Decree of Dissolution of Marriage is acceptable, but the Priest shall:

(1) Examine the original.

(2) Ensure that the original is a Decree of Dissolution and not some other document

(3) Ensure the original is official (look for the judge's signature and/or a stamp with the Civil Court "date entered").

5. Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce (if required).

a. The Decree of Dissolution of Marriage is required if the groom and/or the bride was previously married by the Church.

b. The groom and/or the bride shall present the original Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree for a subsequent Church marriage.

c. A photocopy of the Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is not acceptable.

6. Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-3E/Archdiocese Form 165) (if required):

a. The Supplementary Marriage Record Form is required if the groom and/or the bride was previously married by the state or by the Church, even to each other.

b. A separate form shall be submitted for each individual previously married.

c. If the couple was previously married to each other (often the case in regard to convert couples):

(1) A Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-2E/Archdiocese Form 165) is required for each person.

(2) The couple shall submit a copy of their civil marriage certificate.

7. Baptism and Chrismation Certificates.

a. Baptism and Chrismation Certificates are required for the Orthodox partner(s).

b. A transcript or photocopy of the Baptism and Chrismation Certificate(s) is acceptable.

8. Baptism Certificate.

a. A Baptism Certificate is required for the non-Orthodox partner if either the groom or the bride is not an Orthodox Christian.

b. A transcript or photocopy of the Baptism Certificate(s) is acceptable.

9. Death Certificate.

a. A Death Certificate if the groom and/or the bride is widowed.

10. Written Consent of Parents or Guardian

a. Written Consent of Parents or Guardian is required if the groom and/or the bride is under 18 years of age.

b. If the individual has two parents or two guardians, both shall provide this written consent.

c. The legal guardian(s) shall provide this written consent form.

11. Certificate or Letter of Parish Membership

a. A Certificate or Letter of Parish Membership is required if the groom and/or the bride is a member of an Orthodox parish other than the one in which they are being married.

b. The groom and/or the bride shall obtain the Certificate or Letter of Parish Membership from the Priest of their parish.

12. Certificate of Eligibility to Marry:

a. The Certification of Eligibility to Marry is required if:

(1) The groom and/or the bride came to the United States after the age of sixteen; if so, he and/or she shall produce either:

(a) A certificate stating their eligibility to marry (typically issued by their Metropolis in Greece).

(b) A notarized statement from the nearest relatives (next of kin) stating the number of years they have known the individual and testifying that he/she is are free and eligible to marry.

(2) The groom and/or the bride came into the Denver Metropolis from another Metropolis after the age of 16; if so, he and/or she shall produce:

(a) A certificate stating their eligibility to marry issued by the Priest of their previous parish.

13. Request to Perform the Mystery of Marriage on a Non-permissible Day.

a. A Request to Perform the Mystery of Marriage on a Non-permissible Day is required if the Mystery must out of absolute necessity be celebrated on one of those days.

b. The Priest shall submit the Request to Celebrate the Mystery of Marriage on a Non-permissible Day in writing.

14. Request to Perform the Mystery of Marriage Outside an Orthodox Church (Temple).

a. A Request to Celebrate the Mystery of Marriage Outside an Orthodox Church (Temple) is required if the Mystery can not be celebrated in an Orthodox church (temple).

b. The Priest shall submit the Request to Celebrate the Mystery of Marriage Outside an Orthodox Church (Temple) in writing.

15. Parish Register(s).

a. All Marriages shall be recorded in the appropriate Parish Register(s).

b. If the Marriage documents were submitted by one priest, and signed over to the priest of another parish (within this Metropolis or in another Metropolis), the Marriage shall be recorded in the Parish Registers of both parishes.

16. **Note:** The entire package of documents, including the Affidavit For License To Marry, will be returned to the Priest if:

a. Exact information is not provided

b. Incomplete information is provided

c. All additional documents, decrees, and certificates as may be required are not attached.

Marriage Data Sheet and Checklist

Part A — Basic Information

The couple should fill out items 1 through 11:

1. Name of Groom: _____ (First, Middle, Last)
2. Date of Birth: _____
3. Place of Birth: _____
4. Citizenship: (e.g., U.S., Greek) _____
5. Full Address of Groom:
(Street) _____
(City) (State) _____
6. Name of Bride: _____ (First, Middle, Maiden)
7. Date of Birth: _____
8. Place of Birth: _____
9. Citizenship: (e.g., U.S., Greek) _____
10. Full Address of Bride:
(Street) _____
(City) (State) _____
11. Proposed Date of Marriage: _____

Part B — Impediments to Marriage

The Priest shall fill out all items:

12. Are the Groom and Bride related in a prohibited marriage group? Check only if Yes.
If answer to Item 12 is Yes, the Marriage cannot be allowed.
13. Is this the fourth (or greater) marriage for the Groom or Bride ? Check only if Yes.
If either answer to Item 13 is Yes, the Marriage cannot be allowed; no more than three Ecclesiastical Marriages are permitted by the Church; if the groom and/or the bride was previously married, this shall not be the fourth Ecclesiastical Marriage for either partner.
14. Was Groom or Bride previously married? Check only if Yes.
If answer to Item 14 is Yes, the Civil Divorce certificate for the last marriage and the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce for the previous Ecclesiastical Marriage shall be attached.

If the groom and/or the bride was previously married by the state or by the Church, even to each other (as often occurs in the case of convert couples), Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-2E/Archdiocese Form 165) shall be attached.

If the groom and the bride were previously married to each other, a copy of their civil marriage certificate shall be attached.

Plans for this Marriage shall not be made or confirmed until the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce is in hand.

15. Is Groom or Bride not a Baptized Christian? *Check only if Yes.*

If either answer to Item 15 is Yes, the marriage cannot be allowed.

Part C – Additional Factors Concerning the Proposed Marriage

The Priest shall fill out all items:

16. Is Groom or Bride non-Orthodox? *Check only if Yes.*

If either the groom or the bride is not an Orthodox Christian, but is a Christian Baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity in a denomination that expresses a belief in the Holy Trinity, the Marriage may be allowed; attach a copy of the individual's Baptismal certificate or transcript and submit to the Metropolis for acceptance (the original Baptismal certificate or transcript is never taken or kept).

17. Is Groom or Bride widowed? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 17 is Yes, the death certificate(s) of the deceased spouse(s) shall be attached.

18. Is Groom or Bride under 18 years of age? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 18 is Yes, written consent letter(s) from the legal guardian(s) (both parents or both guardians if appropriate) shall be attached.

19. Is Groom or Bride a member of another parish? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 19 is Yes, a certificate or letter of membership from the Priest of that parish shall be attached.

20. Did Groom or Bride come to the Denver Metropolis after the age of 16? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 20 is Yes, a certificate stating eligibility to marry from the Priest of their previous parish shall be attached.

21. Did Groom or Bride come to the United States after the age of sixteen? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 21 is Yes, one of the following types of certificates shall be attached:

- a. A certificate stating eligibility to marry (from Ecclesiastical authorities).
- b. A statement from their nearest relatives (next of kin) stating the number of years they have known the individual and testifying that they are free and eligible to marry.

22. Is the Sponsor an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church ? *Check only if Yes.*

If the proposed Sponsor (koumbaro or koumbara) is not an Orthodox Christian, or if he/she is an Orthodox Christian who does not belong to a parish, or who belongs to a parish not in Communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, or was married outside the Orthodox Church, they cannot be a Sponsor.

23. Is proposed date of Marriage on a non-permitted day ? *Check only if Yes.*

If answer to Item 23 is Yes, the Priest shall attach a written request explaining the circumstances for performing the marriage on that day.

Plans for this Marriage shall not be confirmed until permission from the Metropolitan is obtained.

24. Location where Marriage will be celebrated: _____

If Marriage will not be celebrated in an Orthodox Church, the Priest shall request permission in writing from the Metropolitan to perform the wedding at a specified location.

25. Name of Priest who will celebrate the Marriage: _____

Part C – Documentation Checklist

The Priest shall fill out all items:

26. Is the Affidavit For License To Marry completely filled out, including:

- (1) Full street, city, and state addresses?
- (2) Full Month, day, and year dates?
- (3) Exact Baptism and Chrismation dates (month, day, and year)?
- (4) First and last names of the bride and/or groom provided both in Greek and in English if they are of Greek descent?

Yes

27. Are the following additional forms (or exact copies) attached?

Yes

Not Required

- a. Decree of Dissolution of Marriage Issued by Civil Court (Groom).....
- b. Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce (Groom)
- c. Decree of Dissolution of Marriage Issued by Civil Court (Bride).....
- d. Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce (Bride)
- e. Supplementary Marriage Record Form (Denver Metropolis Form M-2E/Archdiocese Form 165)
(Required even if Groom and Bride were previously married to each other; i.e., outside the Church)
- f. Civil Marriage Certificate
(Required if Groom and Bride were previously to each other under civil; law; i.e., outside the Church)
- g. Baptism and Chrismation Certificate (Groom).....
(Photostat copy acceptable)
- h. Baptism and Chrismation Certificate (Bride)
(Photostat copy acceptable)
- i. Death Certificate (for Groom's former spouse)
(Photostat copy acceptable)
- j. Death Certificate (for Bride's former spouse).....

(Photostat copy acceptable)

- k. Written Consent of Parents or Guardians (Groom).....
- l. Written Consent of Parents or Guardians (Bride).....
- m. Certificate Or Letter Of Parish Membership (Groom).....
- n. Certificate Or Letter Of Parish Membership (Bride)
- o. Certificate stating Eligibility to Marry from parish Priest (Groom)
- p. Certificate stating Eligibility to Marry from parish Priest (Bride).....
- q. Certificate stating eligibility to marry (Groom).....
 - 1. (Or statement from his nearest relatives)
- r. Certificate stating eligibility to marry (Bride).....
 - 1. (Or statement from his nearest relatives)
- s. Request to Celebrate the Marriage on a Non-permissible Day
- t. Request to Celebrate the Marriage Outside an Orthodox Church (Temple)

DO NOT SUBMIT OR MAIL THE

AFFIDAVIT FOR LICENSE TO MARRY

OR THIS

MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENTAL DATA SHEET

UNLESS

ALL INFORMATION IS COMPLETE AND

ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS, DECREES, AND CERTIFICATES

ARE ATTACHED

*** OTHERWISE THIS PACKAGE WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU ***

WITH NO ACTION TAKEN BY THE METROPOLIS