



October 20, 2004

## Teleturgical Encyclical 14

The Pious Priests of  
the Holy Metropolis of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

I have recently received a number of questions and reports regarding the procedures for receiving converts to the Orthodox faith through Chrismation.

The normal way that individuals are joined to Christ, and to His Body, the Church, is through the Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation. The order for this Service is specified in the Euchologion.

When persons who have previously been baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity in a heterodox faith present themselves to be received into the Orthodox Church, they may not be Baptized again. Rather, they are received and joined to the Church simply through Chrismation.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as our Holy Archdiocese, and therefore this Metropolis of Denver, recognizes the Baptism performed in the following heterodox churches, and converts from these churches shall be received into the Orthodox Church through Chrismation only:

- 1 Anglican Catholic
- 2 Anglican Communion (Church of England, Episcopal, etc.)
- 3 Assembly of God
- 4 Baptist
- 5 Church of the Brethren
- 6 Lutheran
- 7 Methodist
- 8 Moravians
- 9 Non-Chalcedonian and Monophysite Orthodox Churches
- 10 Old Catholic (Polish National Catholic Church, Church of Utrecht, Liberal Catholic Church, etc.)
- 11 Presbyterian
- 12 Roman Catholic
- 13 United Church of Christ.

Baptisms performed in the following churches are not recognized, and individuals from these churches shall be joined to Christ in the Orthodox Church through Baptism and Chrismation:

- 1 Anabaptists (Mennonite, etc.)
- 2 Christian Scientist
- 3 Disciples of Christ
- 4 Jehovah's Witness
- 5 Mormon (also called "Latter Day Saints")
- 6 Quaker

- 7 Salvation Army
- 8 Seventh Day Adventist
- 9 Swedenborgian
- 10 Unitarian

Heterodox Baptisms may be recognized if they were done (a) in water, and (b) In the "Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," and by a church or denomination that has an expressed belief in the Most Holy Trinity. Some heterodox denomination pastors and ministers may not baptize specifically in the name of the Trinity, but use some generic formula such as "in the name of the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier," or they may not 'baptize' in water but "in the air" or "in the spirit." Consequently you must be very cautious whenever inquiring of converts how they were "baptized." If it cannot be ascertained that the heterodox baptism was done in a recognizable manner, the convert must be properly baptized according to the rite of the Orthodox Church.

When the Chrismation of a convert is to take place, it should be done immediately before the Doxology at the end of Matins preceding the Divine Liturgy. Converts are not to be Chrismated after the Gospel, after the Creed, or at any point in the Divine Liturgy. If for pastoral reasons you believe that a Chrismation should take place at another time, such as on an evening, please write to request my blessing before you make any schedule or commitment.

The order to be followed is as specified in the enclosed service booklet. No other format, such as that contained in the Hapgood Service Book with the renunciations, is to be used.

Since the establishment of the Metropolises, it is the responsibility of each Metropolitan to distribute the Holy Chrism received from the Ecumenical Patriarchate through the Archdiocese to his parishes. Should you need a fresh supply of Holy Chrism, please write to me.

Please ensure that your stock of Holy Chrism is clean and fresh; I ask that each of you examine the stock in your altar and ensure that it is so. Holy Chrism is to be stored either on the Holy Altar (usually in, on, or next to the Artoforion) or on the "side altar" (the skevofylakion or diakonikon). It is not to be thrown into a drawer like some miscellaneous item.

When you receive a new supply of Holy Chrism, make sure it is poured into a clean and appropriate container. I have a supply of small glass bottles with an attached brush that are very suitable for this purpose; if you need one, please write to me with your request.

If the Holy Chrism becomes old, discolored, with no aroma, and with very little of it left, you are to pour it in an oil vigil lamp with a fabric wick so that it may be burned.

Do not dilute Holy Chrism with anything else, such as olive oil. We are living in the twenty-first century, and there is nothing hampering your ability to obtain and maintain a fresh supply of Holy Chrism.

Too often Holy Chrism has been poured into the customary metal containers where it is spilled, becomes contaminated, or turns rancid. Holy Chrism is sacred and precious; just as you would not use sour or spoiled wine for Holy Communion, you must not use discolored and tainted Chrism for Chrismation. The same principle also applies to Holy Unction prepared on Holy Wednesday.

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May our Lord, Who has called you to His priestly ministry, bless you and strengthen you to faithfully serve His Church and to properly administer His Holy Mysteries.

With Paternal Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver