



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DENVER

October 20, 2004

Teleturgical Encyclical 15

The Priests, Deacons, and Monastics of
the Holy Metropolis of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
(Matthew 28:19-20)*

From time to time questions are received at the Metropolis Office regarding the reception of converts from some Christian denominations through Chrismation, as well as concerning the eligibility of certain non-Orthodox Christians to marry an Orthodox Christian in the Mystery of Holy Matrimony.

As you are aware, much has been written in various publications, and much has been spoken in numerous forums, concerning these matters. In regard to our practice, the Holy Eparchial Synod of Bishops of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, following the protocols and practices established by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has determined that an individual who was previously Baptized in water, in the "Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" by a heterodox Christian church or denomination that has an expressed belief in the Most Holy Trinity is to be received into the Orthodox Church by extreme oikonomia through Chrismation, not through re-baptism, and may be wed in the Mystery of Marriage to his/her Orthodox fiancée.

In general, an individual Baptized in one of the following churches may be received through Chrismation and/or may be married to an Orthodox spouse:

- 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.

It is generally assumed that priests and ministers of these thirteen denominations who conduct baptisms, do so in conformance with the elements listed in the previous paragraph; that is, in the

Name of the Holy Trinity with the use of water. However, it sometimes occurs that certain pastors do not baptize in the "Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," or may not use water (sometimes they anoint with oil). Consequently the Presbyter must be very cautious whenever inquiring of converts how they were "baptized." He should insist on seeing their baptismal certificate or a transcript of it. If it cannot be ascertained that the heterodox baptism was done according to the criteria cited above, the convert must be properly baptized according to the rite of the Orthodox Church.

It should be further noted that "baptisms" performed in the following churches, however, are not accepted and individuals from these churches may not be married to an Orthodox spouse in an Orthodox Mystery of Marriage. They are to be received into 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.

Our parishes have also experienced a recent influx of Armenian, Coptic (Egyptian), and Ethiopian Oriental Orthodox Christians. Individuals from these Oriental Orthodox Churches are to be received simply through Confession since they profess the same Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

Should Armenian, Coptic, or Ethiopian clergy request to borrow one of our parishes for the celebration of their Liturgy or another sacrament (e.g., Baptism or Marriage), they may do so provided that:

- 1 Their hierarch contacts me to request permission to use one of my churches
- 2 They do not enter the Holy of Holies or utilize the altar area in any way.

May our merciful and risen Lord, Who called each of you to serve at His Holy Altar as a Presbyter, grant you strength and wisdom to faithfully and properly discharge the fearsome duties of the priestly office.

With Paternal Blessings,



✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver