



# ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND IN OREGON

*Office of the Chancellor*

## **EASTERN CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS IN FULL COMMUNION**

### **Children**

- 1) Unbaptized persons below the age of fourteen do not have personal choice of the Catholic autonomous church in which they will be ascribed by virtue of baptism.
  - a. If both parents are of the Latin Catholic Church, the child will belong to that church (CIC 96, 111 §1).
  - b. If one parent is a Latin Catholic and the other is an Eastern Catholic, the parents may agree to one or the other church to which the child will belong. If they do not agree, the child will belong to the autonomous church of the father, even if the baptism is conferred by a Latin Catholic deacon or priest (CIC 111 §1; CCEO 29 §1).
  - c. If only one of the parents is Catholic and is a member of an Eastern Catholic church, the child will belong by baptism to the autonomous church of the Catholic parent, even if the baptism is conferred by a Latin Catholic deacon or priest (CCEO 29 §1)

### Chrismation and Children

- 2) Chrismation (Confirmation) is always received at the time of baptism in the Eastern Catholic Churches. Except for a case of danger of death (CIC 883, 30), Latin Catholic priests do not have the faculty to confirm an infant, that is, a person under the age of seven years. Therefore, a Latin priest who baptizes an infant who thereby belongs to an Eastern Catholic Church cannot confer Chrismation (Confirmation). The parents should be advised to make arrangements for Chrismation by a priest of their own autonomous church as soon as possible. In every case, Chrismation pertains to the proper pastor of the Eastern church. A priest or deacon of the Latin Church may not baptize a child of Eastern Catholic parents, unless a priest of the parents' Church cannot; e.g., in danger of death when the priest of the Eastern Church is too far away to

bring the child to him or the priest of the Eastern Church cannot come to baptize the child.

In these circumstances, a priest or deacon of the Latin Church must:

1. State, in his own baptismal register, to which Eastern Church the child belongs;
2. Send notifications of the baptism to the priest of the Eastern Church. Chrismation occurs in the Eastern Church.

In the Eastern Catholic Churches, Chrismation (Confirmation) is always received at the time of Baptism. Since many Eastern Catholic children attend Catholic schools of the Latin Church, the question of Chrismation arises at Confirmation time. Since Chrismation cannot be repeated, it is prohibited to repeat this sacrament.

If it is found that a child belonging to an Eastern Church has not yet received Chrismation, the child must then be chrismated in his or her proper autonomous ritual Church.

### **Children and Eucharist**

- 3) In the Eastern Catholic Churches, the Eucharist is received within the baptismal liturgy, including infants. The parents of an Eastern Catholic child who is baptized by a Latin priest or deacon should be advised to approach the priest of their own *sui iuris* Church so that this practice may be observed. However, an Eastern Catholic child who has reached the use of reason but has not already received the Eucharist may be prepared for First Communion and may receive in the Latin parish individually or in association with the children of the Latin parish (CIC 912, 914, 923; CCEO 697)
- 4) Members of Eastern Catholic Churches may participate in the Eucharist in Latin liturgies on the same basis as Latin Catholics, including as liturgical ministers (CIC 230 52, 912, 923). Note that this includes the right of Eastern Catholic children who have received the Eucharist but are still under the age of seven years to continue to receive the Eucharist.

### **Reconciliation**

- 5) Eastern Catholics are free to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation in Latin parishes (CIC 991).

### **Marriage**

- 6) For the validity of marriage at least one of the parties must belong to the same autonomous church as the officiating priest or deacon or else delegation (and a dispensation, if needed) must be obtained from the appropriate Eastern Catholic hierarch. Contact the Marriage Tribunal for assistance.

### **Proper Minister**

- 7) Because of continuing differences of opinion among scholars about requirements for validity, a Latin deacon should not witness a marriage in which one or both parties are Eastern Catholics (CCEO 828 §§1-2, 832, §§1-3).

### **Transfer of Wife or Husband**

- 8) When marriage is entered between a Latin Catholic and an Eastern Catholic, or during such a marriage either the Latin husband or the Latin wife may choose, by formally declaring it and having it recorded, to transfer from the Latin church to the Eastern Catholic church of the other spouse, and an Eastern Catholic wife may choose to transfer from her Eastern church to the Latin church of her husband. The Eastern Catholic husband does not have this privilege. Once the marriage has ended, the person may remain in the autonomous church or may choose to return to his or her prior autonomous church. The records of the transfer and return should be made in the person's baptismal register entry, or if this cannot be done, in a document filed in the parish of new enrollment (CIC 112 §1, 2m; CCEO 33, 37).

### **Children and Transfer of *Sui Iuris* Churches**

- 9) In these same cases of transferring to the Catholic autonomous church of the other spouse, children under the age of fourteen born to the transferring spouse by a prior union, as well as children born to the parties to the marriage in question but baptized into the church of the parent who later decides to transfer, are ascribed to the Catholic autonomous church which their parent joins. If the children are over fourteen years of age, their autonomous church is not changed. For those children whose autonomous church was changed, once they have reached the age of fourteen they may remain or they may choose to return to their earlier autonomous church (CIC 112 §1, 3; CCEO 34).

### **Transfer – Petition to Bishop, Rome**

- 10) Other persons who wish to transfer from their particular Eastern or Latin Catholic *sui iuris* Church to some other Catholic *sui iuris* Church, whether Eastern or Latin may do so by petitioning for the agreement of the two bishops concerned (CIC 112 §1, 1; CCEO 32 §§1-2). If either or both of the bishops do not consent, the petition may be directed to the Holy See through the diocesan chancery (CIC 112 §1, 1; CCEO 32 §1).

### **Transfer and Practice**

- 11) The practice of receiving the sacraments in another Catholic autonomous church, no matter how prolonged, and/or registration in a parish of another church are not sufficient to bring about

transfer from one's own Catholic autonomous church and enrollment in the other church (CIC 112 §2).

### **Anointing of the Sick**

12) The sacrament of the Anointing of the sick may be conferred upon members of Eastern Catholic churches on the same basis as other members of the Christian faithful (CIC 1004 §1, 1103 §2; CCEO 739 §2, 740).

### **Funerals**

13) For *any* reasonable cause, the funeral of a deceased Catholic, whether Eastern or Latin, may be celebrated in a church of another Catholic autonomous church (CIC 1177 §§1-2; CCEO 875).

### **Marriage Case**

14) In certain limited circumstances, a petition for a Declaration of Nullity involving an Eastern Catholic may have to be referred to the tribunal of the particular Eastern Church. The diocesan tribunal will make an assessment and assist in sending the materials to the appropriate tribunal.

## **ORTHODOX AND OTHER EASTERN CHRISTIANS NOT IN FULL COMMUNION**

When an Eastern Orthodox person becomes Catholic, he normally transfers into a corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. They should always be encouraged to continue practicing their own rite. However, it sometimes happens that they will transfer to the Latin rite. Questions regarding this transfer should be addressed to this office. The CCEO (Canon 35) requires that baptized non-Catholics coming into full communion retain and practice their ritual tradition. A determination must be made regarding which specific autonomous Catholic Church the baptized Orthodox person must enter. An already baptized member of an Eastern Church, which is not in full communion with the Catholic Church, becomes a member of the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church when he/she is received into full communion, even if the reception is by a priest of the Latin Church.

After suitable liturgical and doctrinal preparation, the Eastern Orthodox person is only obligated to make a profession of faith in order to be received into the Catholic Church since the person was fully initiated at the time of Baptism.

This should be recorded in the baptismal register and there should be a note regarding the Catholic Eastern Church into which the person is being received. In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, by recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.

Children of Eastern Catholic Churches, who have not received the Eucharist at the time of their Christian initiation, should receive their first Holy Communion in their own autonomous Church.

### **Penance, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick**

15) Members of such churches may receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from Catholic ministers if they seek these sacraments on their own and they are properly disposed (CIC 844 §3; CCEO 671 §3). However, the pastors of such Eastern churches may not agree with this provision on the part of the Catholic Church. Note that this includes the right of such children who have already received the Eucharist but are still under the age of seven years to continue to receive the Eucharist. (CIC 97 §2, 213, 843, §1, 846 §2, 912, 913 §1, 923, CCEO 16, 674 §2, 710, 909 §2).

### **Other Sacraments**

16) Thus, members of such churches are to seek the sacraments of baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), matrimony, and holy orders from their own pastors.

### **Serving as a Godparent**

17) A member of such a church may be admitted as a baptismal godparent, not merely as a Christian witness, for an infant or an adult, along with a Catholic godparent, on the condition that the Catholic education of the person being baptized is provided for and that the prospective godparent is a suitable person.

### **Serving as a Lector**

18) A member of such a church may be admitted to serve as a lector during a sacramental liturgical celebration.

### **Marriage**

19) For marriage between a Catholic and a member of such a church, the usual pre-marriage promises are required (CIC 1124-1126; CCEO 813-815).

20) For marriages between a Catholic and a member of such a church, a wedding ceremony before either a Catholic priest or the Eastern priest not in full communion is valid. A wedding before such an Eastern priest is also licit if a dispensation from canonical form has been obtained from the Catholic local ordinary (CIC 1127 §1; CCEO 834 §§1-2.). However, for the validity of such a marriage before a priest of the Diocese, at least one of the parties must be a subject of the officiating minister, that is, a member of the Latin autonomous church (CIC 1109; CCEO 829 §§1-2). The tribunal should be consulted concerning a marriage between a Catholic

who has joined an Orthodox Church and a Latin Catholic (CIC 11, 1127, §1; CCEO 834, §§1-2).

- 21) Members of such a church not in full communion may be admitted as maid of honor, bridesmaid, best man, and groomsman, that is, as attendants or canonical witnesses, at a wedding in a Catholic church .

#### **Proper Ministers**

- 22) Because of the continuing differences of opinion among recognized experts concerning the requirement for the validity of marriage between a Latin Catholic and an Eastern Christian not in full communion, a Latin deacon should not witness such marriages, but only a priest.
- 23) At the request of the wedding couple, the Catholic local ordinary may permit the Catholic priest to invite the Eastern priest not in full communion, who may participate by reading the Scripture, giving a brief exhortation, and blessing the couple in the sense of good wishes and invocation of God. The nuptial blessing is to be imparted by the presiding priest. The Catholic priest may accept a similar invitation if offered to him by the Eastern priest not in full communion, if the Catholic local ordinary so permits.

#### **Reception into Full Communion**

- 24) An already baptized member of an Eastern Christian church which is not in full communion with the Catholic Church becomes a member of the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church when he or she is received into full communion, even if that reception into full communion is by a priest of the Latin church (CCEO 35). For such persons, only suitable doctrinal and spiritual preparation and the profession of faith are required (CCEO 897).