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NOTE

The encyclicals and articles contained in this document have been taken from various time periods in the history of the life of the Metropolis.

They are presented here for general reference as well as to inform new Clergy and Parish Council members of the existing practices and policies of the Metropolis.

Because these are historical documents, the original text has been used. Please, note, however:

All references to
“Diocese” are now “Metropolis”
and all references to
“Bishop Maximos” are now “Metropolitan Maximos.”

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Subject: Parish Council Election Procedures
Source: Encyclical (October 3, 2003)

As we approach the time for parish council elections in our parishes, I would like to remind you that the procedures for those elections must be in accordance with the Uniform Parish Regulations. Candidates who are nominated must be members in good standing of the local parish for at least one year prior to the date of elections, and living their lives in accordance with the faith and canons of the Church (Article VIII, Section 2). They must understand that their 'duties' include attending divine services regularly, participating in the sacramental life of the Church thereby setting an example for the parish, and aiding the parish priest in fulfilling the aims and purposes of the parish (Article XII, Section 1).

To that end, all candidates for election must attend a seminar conducted by the parish priest prior to the date of the election. Any candidate who does not attend the seminar and sign the declaration enclosed will have their name deleted from the ballot.

After the election, a letter from the parish priest is to be sent to me, 1) certifying the eligibility of all the candidates, 2) attesting to the proper conduct of the election process, and, 3) requesting ratification of the election results (with the names of those elected clearly identified). This letter is to be accompanied by, 1) the minutes of the Board of Elections recording the votes and results of the election, 2) the declaration of seminar attendance by the candidates, and, 3) a list of elected as well as ongoing parish council members with their addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses. A parish that is not current with its Archdiocesan Total Commitment obligation will have ratification of their elections delayed, pending a decision by the Diocesan Stewardship Committee. A checklist is attached to assist you in fulfilling these requirements.



Subject: Clergy Compensation Guidelines
Source: Encyclical (February 23, 1998)

Our parish councils are expected to follow the standards outlined in the Archdiocese Clergy Compensation guidelines. This would mean that if a priest's salary was within the guidelines last year, and now, with the new guidelines, is below, the expectation would be to increase the salary to be within the guideline range.

In dealing with these decisions, it is difficult not to engage in some 'evaluating' of the priest's work and ministry in the parish. Please refrain from such discussions, as they are always fruitless.

Finally, I want to point out that the increase in clergy remuneration is retroactive to January 1, no matter when the decision is taken.



Subject: Remuneration of Substitute Priests
Source: Encyclicals (February 23, 1996; August 5, 2002)

The honorarium offered for a priest who is substituting while your priest is absent from his parish (or during a vacancy in the parish) shall be a minimum of \$250. In addition, travel, hotel and meal expenses are to be paid by the parish in full. If the priest uses his car for transportation, then the IRS designated mileage allowance (presently at 30 cents per mile) is the minimum amount to be given to cover his travel expenses.

These amounts are, intended to cover the normal Sunday morning services. If weddings or baptisms are scheduled for later on a Sunday, these additional services require further remuneration at a minimum of \$100 for each service. This would also apply to Sacraments held on Saturdays or weekdays, and to funerals. (Please note that any honorariums that may be offered by the families involved are not to be taken into account.)

Arrangements for priests to substitute in a parish are handled by the parish priest through the diocesan offices. Parish Council members are not to enter into discussions with individual priests concerning these matters. In the event of a vacancy in a parish, the diocese will deal with the matter directly, with all arrangements and discussions being handled from the diocesan offices.

(Encyclical: February 23, 1996)

This is a reminder to all Priests and Parish Councils of the established policy of financial remuneration of Priests substituting in parishes. Priests "filling in" for Sunday Liturgies and other services are to be paid \$250 a service plus expenses: mileage (30 cents a mile as per IRS scale) and hotel accommodations (if applicable). This is not a new policy. This is a standard one that we have had in place in our Diocese for some years now. Consequently, the Diocese expects its parishes to be in compliance with it.

(Encyclical: August 5, 2002)



Subject: Clergy Absences from Parish
Source: Encyclical (October 2, 1996)

If a priest is to be absent from his parish for whatever reason, he must in writing ask for my permission to be absent at least ten days in advance. This request must indicate that the Parish Council is aware of this request. Please do not misunderstand this to mean that the Parish Council votes on whether the priest may be away. The bishop determines this, and he alone. It has been a long-standing practice, in our Diocese, for the sake of ensuring proper communication, that the parish council formally acknowledge awareness (not consent) of their priest's intended absence.



Subject: The Use of "Very Reverend" in Clergy Titles
Source: Encyclical (September 24, 1997)

[The Patriarchate has] brought to our attention that some of our married priests are using "Very Reverend" with their names. The only married priest that uses "Very Reverend" is the Chancellor of the Archdiocese; no one else. Archimandrites and the Archdiocesan Chancellor use "Very Reverend." For those that may have inadvertently used the title, please refrain from doing so and remove the title from your letterheads. Your assistance is appreciated.



Subject: Letters for Pilgrimages to Mount Athos
Source: Encyclical (May 19, 1997)

From time to time I am requested to write to the Ecumenical Patriarch in behalf of those seeking to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain. I am pleased to do so. However, please help me by requesting this at least two months in advance of the expected pilgrimage. The Patriarchate needs time to process our request and send us the letters to be forwarded.



Subject: Gambling and the Use of Parish Property for Gambling Activities
Source: Encyclicals (October 2, 1996; August 23, 2004; "The Illuminator", 1996)

It has been a long-standing practice and policy of this Diocese that gambling in any form by any church organization, or any group on church owned property is not permitted. We are in the business of saving souls. We are not in the business of "selling" souls to raise money to build or maintain our parishes. If we do not have the resources to do so, then we need to reevaluate whether we can or should have a full-time parish.

(Encyclical: October 2, 1996)

I once again take the opportunity to remind you of our long-standing prohibition on gambling within the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh. Bingo, cash raffles, and all forms of gambling are strictly prohibited from taking place on church property. No parish or parish organization is permitted to sponsor or promote gambling events.

This is a long-standing policy in our Diocese and Metropolis, and is applicable to each of our parishes. We have taken a stand against gambling through our Clergy-Laity Assemblies, and we have issued encyclicals and published articles in The illuminator. This letter is one more reminder of our policy.

When we recite our Parish Council Oath of Office, we pledge to uphold the teachings, traditions, and moral principles of the Church. I trust that our clergy and lay leaders will help to guide our parishes in the most appropriate and moral ways. I have no other recourse but to hold the priests and Parish Council members responsible when gambling violations occur in a parish.

There are a variety of ways to fund our parish ministries, but we especially rely on a strong stewardship program, and hard work. Gambling has no place in the life of an Orthodox Christian, and has no place in our parishes.

(Encyclical: August 23, 2004)

Q: We are a fraternal organization which spends much money helping the poor, and giving scholarships to poor students. Why can't we use the hall of our church for the game "night at the races" to raise the necessary funds?

A: My sincerest congratulations for your good deeds on behalf of the less fortunate in our society. To feed the hungry and provide scholarships to those who cannot otherwise pursue their studies is very praiseworthy and very Christian. We at the Diocese applaud these actions of your fraternal organization.

However, gambling in order to raise the necessary funds is not acceptable. Hopefully, you will find other ways and methods of raising funds, like, for example, soliciting directly those who may share

their monies with your fraternal organization, or organizing activities of service to the community. Imitate what your church does for the same reasons. Gambling is not allowed in our church communities. It is not a legitimate way of raising funds.

What our church community is not allowed to do on our church premises, which include the church hall, no one else is allowed to do, either. Our church premises are not rented out indiscriminately. We want to make certain that they are used for activities which do not offend our church faith and practice. This is the reason why our Diocese has taken this stand through our Diocesan Assemblies. It is tile responsibility of the Diocese to implement these decisions and to uphold the practice of the church.

This practice does not include gambling among the legitimate ways of raising funds. Once more, not only is gambling prohibited to the Christian communities of the Diocese, but also to all who utilize the premises of our churches. To violate this practice is tantamount to violating the will of the Lord. In the best interest of yourselves, the people which you serve and your organization, I hope and pray that you will find appropriate means and ways of raising the funds needed for the praiseworthy philanthropic activities of your fine fraternal organization.

(The Illuminator, 1996)



Subject: Use of Parish Property for Political Events
Source: Encyclical (October 18, 1996)

Parish property or facilities are not to be used to host any political events, gatherings, fund-raisers, or any events that seek to benefit one political candidate over another. This also includes the renting of church halls to groups that seek to use the facilities for such purposes. Thank you for your constant vigilance and attention to this matter.



Subject: Extracurricular Activities During Liturgical Services
Source: Encyclical (April 23, 2001)

From time to time, the diocese receives questions concerning the activities of lay people during the Divine Services. In all of these issues, common sense and prudence should be applied keeping the solemnity of the Holy Services in mind.

It has come to our attention that during church services some of our parishioners are doing works which could be done after church. Of course as good pastors, we should always encourage and inspire the faithful to attend services so that they can take advantage of the worship opportunities that the Church offers them. Our advice is to apply the general policy in its aspirational form that extracurricular activities should be postponed until after the end of Divine Liturgy where possible.



Subject: Prohibited Dates for Memorial Services
Source: Encyclical (April 3, 2001)

This is a reminder to all priests that no memorial services are to be done from the Saturday of St. Lazarus through the Sunday of St. Thomas the Apostle and on any of the Feasts of the Lord or the Theotokos.



Subject: Unacceptable Wedding Practices – Prohibited Dates and Instruments in Church
Source: Encyclical (August 22, 1996)

Weddings are not to be celebrated under my circumstances on Wednesdays or Fridays, as well as the days listed [in the] Archdiocese Yearbook. Please pay close attention to this practice, which all of you should be very familiar with.

In addition, harps, trumpets, flutes, violins and any and all other instruments are not authorized or permitted to be used and played during weddings (or other services, for that matter). This is not a new practice or directive. Please do not call seeking dispensation or permission. It will not be granted. I expect that you will follow these directives carefully and respectfully.



Subject: Proper Place for the Celebration of Sacraments and Funerals
Source: Encyclical (May 17, 1995)

It has come to my attention that, although the practice of celebrating baptisms in rivers and weddings under blossoming apple trees does not have many followers amongst us, unfortunately, the practice of celebrating funerals at funeral homes has a number of devotees.

It is obvious that the place for the celebration of all sacramental and liturgical services is the church. Just as the Holy Eucharist, the central sacrament of our faith is celebrated in the Church, so should all other sacramental and liturgical services be centered in and around the church. This age-old practice differentiates the Orthodox Church from other groups and denominations.

While there may be cases for exceptions to this rule, such an exception must be requested from the Office of the Bishop prior to any scheduled service being set in a place other than the local parish. Permission must also be given and not simply assumed, for this specific service to take place outside of the parish church.

(Encyclical: May 17, 1995)

Q: How much flexibility can our church allow in the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals outside of the Church building proper? Can we celebrate sacraments at homes, funeral homes, or other non-Orthodox churches?

A: We do not celebrate our sacraments and services in places other than, our own "sacred places" is not a matter of rigidity but of proper canonical order. It is the kind of order to which Saint Paul referred when he wrote, "Let everything be done in a fitting and orderly way" (I Cor. 14:40).

The place where all the sacraments take place is the church, for this is where the congregation gathers to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It is not without significance that we are called a "Eucharistic Church," a church which gathers around the Eucharist and of which the Eucharist is the central sacrament we are the Church which is the Eucharist. During the Eucharistic Service (the Divine Liturgy), the Holy Spirit descends "upon us and upon the gifts of bread and wine, not only to transform the gifts into the very body and blood of Christ, but to also consecrate, the congregation, so that, at the end, "holy gifts" may be given to the holy people of God.

This "tradition," or practice of ours, has its roots in the early church, reflecting the life of Christ Himself, Who appeared to the disciples as they were on the road to Emmaus and manifested himself "at the breaking of the (eucharistic) bread" (Luke 24:35).

The sacrament of orders (ordination) can only take place at a consecrated church, and around a consecrated altar. And so it is with all the sacraments and sacramentals: the

faithful are baptized, married, and buried out of the sacred place which sanctifies their lives through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Church. It is a long-standing Christian practice for these sacramental celebrations to take place in the context of a Eucharistic Service (the Divine Liturgy). In other words, the very least which is expected is that these sacramental celebrations take place in the "sacred place" sanctified by the celebration of the Eucharist.

It is only by the way of exception and by applying "oikonomia" (not necessarily 'leniency,' but 'good stewardship') that the church, in exceptional cases, allows things to be done differently.

Thus, the sacrament of the Holy Oil and the sacramental of Holy Water may be celebrated also at the homes of the faithful, by general dispensation and current practice. However, in case of all other sacraments and sacramentals, special dispensation may be granted by the bishop to celebrate in places other than the appointed place, i.e., the church of the congregation. In each of these cases, the priest will ask the bishop for a special dispensation, after he judges that the special circumstances call for such a dispensation.

Exceptions confirm the practice of dispensation; however, they do not revoke the basic principle of the congregation. Otherwise, we would violate both the spirit and the apostolic practice and faith of Holy Orthodoxy.

(*The Illuminator*, 1994)



Subject: Preaching at Funerals or Other Services by Unauthorized Parties
Source: (Encyclical: April 27, 2003)

Please be reminded that there is to be no preaching, public speaking, eulogies, etc. within the church by anyone who is not authorized to do so. Only our priests and those who have been given a blessing from the local bishop to preach should be addressing the congregation at any church service. Any variations from this rule must be forwarded to the Diocese prior to the event.

This is especially to be enforced at our funeral services. The priest (and if present, the bishop) is to deliver the homily/eulogy. All others who wish to speak should do so at the *makaria*.

(Encyclical: April 27, 2003)



Subject: "Ecumenical" Participation of Non-Orthodox Clergy in Sacraments
Source: "The Illuminator" (1995)

Q: Can a fully vested minister of a non-Orthodox Christian community take part in the Sacraments of our Church, such as, for example, weddings? Do you, our bishop, allow these so-called "ecumenical" celebrations?

A: The response to both of your questions is an emphatic no. There are no "ecumenical" sacraments, and I, as your Bishop, reflecting and defending the age-old practice of our Church, prohibit such "celebrations."

Sacraments are always celebrated in an ecclesial context. The Orthodox Christian Sacraments presuppose the life of the Orthodox Church, which these sacraments sanctify and celebrate. One of these sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, is the "Sacrament of the Church": the Church is made fully present where the Eucharist is celebrated. The Eucharist is the central sacrament of the Church. The other major sacraments are celebrated within, or in conjunction with, the Eucharistic celebration.

Thus, Baptism and Confirmation should be held within the Eucharistic celebration so that the newly baptized and confirmed person may also receive the Eucharistic Gifts.

The Sacrament of the Holy Priesthood (Ordination) is always celebrated within the Eucharistic celebration. Confession and Holy Unction, the healing sacraments of the Church, normally precede the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Marriage is more appropriately celebrated following the Eucharist and following the receiving of Holy Communion together by the prospective husband and wife.

This means that the sacraments cannot be shared except by Orthodox Christians, who share in the same ecclesial life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We make an exception in the case of the so-called "mixed marriages." In these cases, by applying what the Church calls "oikonomia" (dispensation), the Church allows its sacrament of marriage to be shared by other Christians who are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity.

In the case of those who marry Christians from other Christian communities, we allow the non-Orthodox partners to have their church bless their marriage. However, we do not allow the clergy of the other churches to be involved with our marriage ceremony. Only after the conclusion of our marriage ceremony, the other minister may say a brief prayer and offer remarks. He should, however, do this without wearing liturgical clergy vestments.



Subject: The Reception of Converts into Orthodoxy
Source: Encyclical (May 19, 1997)

Converts to our faith, coming to us from the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches that baptize with a Trinitarian formula, are received into our Church through the Sacrament of Chrismation. They are not received through the Sacrament of Baptism. Any one that receives such a convert through Baptism and not Chrismation will be immediately suspended and brought to a Spiritual Court hearing. This is not a new policy or directive. No one has the authority or right to arbitrarily change this practice of our Church.



Subject: Sharing the Eucharist with Roman Catholics
Source: Encyclical (November 27, 1996)

Recently, it was published in secular and religious newspapers that the National Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops (NCCB) has decided to offer the Roman Catholic Eucharist to the members of the Eastern Orthodox Church who desire to receive it.

Fr. John Hutchkins, Director of Ecumenical Affairs of the NCCB, made the point that we Orthodox Christians will not accept the offer; however, they make it for the sake of being consistent with recent developments in Roman Catholic Ecclesiology. We certainly appreciate the offer, and we take it as the tendering of an 'olive branch.' However, Fr. Hutchkins is correct in his assessment of the Eastern Orthodox reaction.

Full Eucharistic Communion is the goal of the Christian movement toward the restoration of full Christian unity among Christians. It is true that the Orthodox Church shares so much in common with the Oriental Orthodox, and the Roman Catholic Churches. However, full communion can only be reestablished on the basis of full communion in the faith. Eucharistic Communion is the expression of

this full communion in the faith, and not the way of achieving it. The theological dialogue between our Churches has as its purpose to reestablish this full communion in the faith.

Unless this happens, unless we are certain that the other Christians believe exactly the same way as we do, unless we fully recognize in their faith the faith of our Church and unless a "Council" is convened to celebrate this unity in the faith, we cannot share our Eucharistic Communion with the other Christians.



Subject: The Timely Processing of Sacramental Applications/Forms
Source: Encyclical (August 5, 1997)

Please mail in wedding affidavits at least 30 days prior to the wedding. We have had to process too many lately that were being faxed days before the wedding. Also, once you complete a baptism, chrismation, wedding or funeral, please forward the proper papers to the diocese. Recently, we received copies of baptismal certificates from last year. This creates a problem for us and for the Archdiocese.



Subject: Commemoration of the Metropolitan During the Holy Services
Source: Encyclical (November 26, 1997)

Regarding the promotion of five of our Synodal bishops to the rank of Metropolitan, let me specify the way of commemorating during all liturgical (and "paraliturgical") services, according to the Patriarchal letter.

- 1) At the *Eirinika* as well as at all petitions where the bishop's name is mentioned, you will commemorate "Your canonical bishop" according to the age-old tradition of the church, as follows: "For our Archbishop and Father, Maximos, and all our brotherhood in Christ, let us pray to the Lord."
- 2) At the Divine Liturgy, the canonical commemoration of your ruling bishop is as follows: "Above all, remember, Lord, our Archbishop and Father Maximos, grant that he may serve Your holy Churches in peace..."
- 3) At the "Above all, remember, Lord..." the Metropolitans commemorate the Patriarch.

(Encyclical: November 26, 1997)



Subject: Fax Machines with Dedicated Line Required for Every Parish
Source: Encyclical (October 10, 1997)

Most of our parishes have fax machines and those that do with a few exceptions are all on a dedicated phone line. I would like to have all of the diocesan parishes have dedicated fax machines by the end of the calendar year. We will be communicating with you by fax in some matters to help get the information to you more swiftly. We are told that the Archdiocese is also working towards that goal. If some of our parishes do not have the resources to do so, please let us know in writing. We will contact your sister parishes to see if they can assist you in funding this effort. All of our parishes will be expected to be fax-capable (on a dedicated line) by January 1, 1998.



Subject: Communications with and Invitations to the Archbishop
Source: Encyclical (June 24, 1997)

The proper protocol for communicating with His Eminence Archbishop [Demetrios] is through your diocesan bishop. It is not appropriate to write directly to the Archbishop and request his participation in your church's consecration, anniversary celebrations, or other events. The invitation is issued by the bishop. Please follow proper procedures.