Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Archive of Metropolis Policies
For Clergy and Parish Leaders

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Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
5201 Ellsworth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

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Table of Contents

Administrative Topics ......................................................................................................................................................... 3
Governing Documents: Charter, Regulations, and These Policies ................................................................. 3
Permission from the Metropolitan ......................................................................................................................... 3
Vicars and Regions ......................................................................................................................................................... 3
Parish Council Elections & Ratification ................................................................................................................. 5
Clergy Compensation Guidelines ........................................................................................................................................ 6
Substitute and Supplemental Clergy Remuneration .................................................................................................. 6
Clergy Absences from Parish ........................................................................................................................................... 7
The Use of “Very Reverend” in Clergy Titles ...................................................................................................... 7
Letters for Pilgrimages to the Patriarchate or Mount Athos .................................................................................. 7
Gambling and the Use of Parish Property for Gambling Activities .......................................................... 8
Use of Parish Property for Political Events & Non-Orthodox Sacraments ......................................................... 8
Communication with the Parish .............................................................................................................................................. 8
Communications with and Invitations to other Hierarchs ....................................................................................... 8
Clergy & Presvyteres Retreats .......................................................................................................................................... 9
Parish Anniversaries & Major Celebrations (Consecration, etc.) ........................................................................... 9
Youth Protection & Safety .................................................................................................................................................. 9
Sacramental & Pastoral Topics ................................................................................................................................. 10
Extracurricular Activities During Liturgical Services .......................................................................................... 10
Prohibited Dates for Memorial Services .............................................................................................................. 10
Wedding Dates and Music .................................................................................................................................................. 10
Proper Place for the Celebration of Sacraments and Funerals........................................................................... 11
Preaching at Funerals or Other Services by Unauthorized Parties ...................................................................... 11
“Ecumenical” Participation of Non-Orthodox Clergy in Sacraments .................................................................... 12
The Reception of Converts into Orthodoxy ........................................................................................................ 12
Evening Divine Liturgies and Vesperal Liturgies ........................................................................................................ 12
The New and Official Translation of the Divine Liturgy ....................................................................................... 13
Presiding at the Divine Liturgy when a Hierarch is not celebrating, Concelebrations ................................................. 14
Clergy Attire ................................................................................................................................................................. 14
Curtain and Beautiful Doors in the Liturgy ............................................................................................................. 15
Cleanliness of the Altar ....................................................................................................................................................... 15
Suicide, Cremation .......................................................................................................................................................... 15
Sunday Closures .............................................................................................................................................................. 15
Great and Holy Wednesday ............................................................................................................................................... 15
Altar Servers ................................................................................................................................................................. 16
Confession and Spiritual Direction ............................................................................................................................ 17
Administrative Topics

Governing Documents: Charter, Regulations, and These Policies

All Parish and Metropolis leaders – Priests, deacons, paid and volunteer staff, council members, and other representatives and delegates of the Parish and Metropolis – agree, by their decision to serve, to abide by the dogmas, teachings, traditions, holy canons, discipline, worship and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Charter and Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the encyclicals of the Metropolitan, and the policies of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh.

Permission from the Metropolitan

Official permission from His Eminence for projects, travel, official functions, dispensation from policies, and any other matter requiring his blessing will only be given in writing (letter or email) and only directly from His Eminence or a designated Metropolis official (Chancellor or Assistant to the Metropolitan).

Vicars and Regions

What is a Vicar?

The term vicar originally comes to us from the Latin vicarius, being "a substitute," a sense which is still used today (doing something as a substitute for another person). The Roman Church defines "Vicar" generally as "the representative of any ecclesiastic entity," and various officials (bishops, administrative officers, etc.) will have vicars that can travel and serve in their place.

In Greek for vicar we use the term επίτροπος which comes from the ancient term for "steward" (Matt. 20:8 and Lk. 8:3) or "guardian" (Gal. 4:2). In the Church the επίτροπος was a senior Priest in areas of very high density (too many Parishes) or extremely low density (where travel times were too high) who was appointed to represent the bishop and act on his behalf – his vicarious presence. The Russian Church uses the title in a similar way, attaching it to auxiliary bishops (really chorepiscopi) of an Archbishop in charge of one of the smaller towns in his archdiocese.

Both uses of the word – "substitute" and "steward" - are appropriate in the context of their ministry to the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. The vicars are His Eminence’s presence among the people of the various regions when he is not able to attend, and are stewards of the shepherds and flocks that are entrusted to him.

Primarily this will be manifest in three important ways:

• They will represent him at meetings or functions,
• They will keep in contact with the clergy of their region, assisting them as they grow in their ministry and attending to them in times of distress, and
• They will help address issues of dispute within the region as appropriate.

This ministry is entrusted to them because of their dedicated service, esteem among their peers, and maturity in the exercise of their Priesthood. This ministry is not conducted in the absence of the Hierarch or the Chancellor, but is rather done in concert with them. Please continue to pray for their ministries, that in all they do God may be glorified and His Church may thrive!

**REGIONAL GROUPING**

The Metropolis is divided into 4 regions to encourage Parish cooperation, the sharing of resources, and mutual support; it also eases the administrative burden for Metropolis.

**REGIONS:**

- Within each region is a Regional Vicar (appointed by His Eminence) who:
  - Is responsible to the Metropolitan & Chancellor
  - Assists in dispute resolution cases within the region
  - Works with the regional Spiritual Court(s) if necessary
  - Is a resource for clergy pastoral care / counseling
  - Will have specialized continuing education and training
- Each region will host activities, meetings, etc., for its Parishes
  - Organized by the Clergy Syndesmos Regional VP (elected by Clergy Syndesmos)
  - Continuing education opportunities: Regional teacher training, Parish Council seminars, stewardship seminars, etc.
  - The burden of hosting events to be shared by the various Parishes (not just the vicar’s or VP’s Parishes)
  - Have periodic regional activities for clergy, GOYA, JOY, etc.
  - Each region is encouraged to have members on the various Metropolis Committees (Finance, Youth, Religious Ed., etc.)
  - Should meet in the late Summer to compile a regional calendar (festivals, regional events, etc.) which they can submit to the Metropolis for inclusion in the Metropolis calendar

**Metropolis of Pittsburgh Regions and their Parishes and Monasteries/Sketes**

**Central Region:** Canonsburg, Monessen, McKeesport, East Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh (2), Aliquippa, Ambridge, Mt Lebanon, Altoona, Johnstown, Oakmont, New Kensington, Saxonburg

**Northwest Region:** Cleveland (2), Cleveland Heights, Rocky River, North Royalton, Lorain, Akron, Canton (2), Massillon, Mansfield, Warren, Youngstown (2), Campbell, Farrell, New Castle, Erie, Perrysville, Hayesville

**Southwest Region:** Columbus, Huntington, Charleston, Belpre (mission Parish), Wheeling, Martins Ferry, Weirton, Steubenville, Morgantown, Clarksburg
Parish Council Elections & Ratification

Election Procedure:
- The procedures for those elections must be in accordance with the Uniform Parish Regulations and the Parish bylaws.

Eligibility:
- A candidate nominated for the Parish Council must be a Parishioner in good standing of the Parish for at least one year immediately preceding the date of the election and must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and Canons of the Church (UPR, Article 25).
- 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 Parishioners, and aiding the Parish Priest in fulfilling the aims and purposes of the Parish (UPR, Article 29).
- The Council President is also expected to represent the Parish at the Archdiocesan and Metropolis Clergy-Laity gatherings (or, in their absence, another member of the Council).

Pre-Election:
- All candidates for election must attend a Seminar conducted either by the Parish Priest or by other clergy and lay leaders within your Metropolis region prior to the date of the election. Only candidates who attend the seminar and sign the declaration enclosed will have their name included on the ballot.

Post-Election:
- A letter from the Parish Priest is to be sent to the Metropolitan:
  - Certifying the eligibility of all the candidates;
  - Attesting to the proper conduct of the election process; and,
  - Requesting ratification of the election results, with the names of those elected clearly identified.
- This letter is to be accompanied by:
  - The signed minutes of the Board of Elections recording the votes and results of the election,
  - The declaration of seminar attendance by the candidates,
  - A list of elected as well as ongoing Parish Council members with their addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses,
  - A copy of your Parish’s approved budget for the coming year, as distributed at your fall Parish Assembly, and,
  - If your Parish is not current in either its Archdiocesan or Metropolis Allocations, a letter from the Parish Council Treasurer indicating when the Parish will catch up to its current obligation.
- The “Conflicts Disclosure Policy Statement - Parish Council” is to be signed by each newly-elected Parish Council member, and kept on file in the Parish office. They are not to be sent to the Metropolis or Archdiocese.
After the Ratification is received by the Parish:

- The affirmation of office is administered by the Parish Priest in the presence of the congregation at the end of a Sunday Divine Liturgy. Following the dismissal, the council should convene (presided over by the Priest) for the election of officers, beginning with the President. Once the President is elected, s/he will preside over the remainder of the elections.
- All the members sign the Affirmation form. The original of that form is sent to the Metropolis (along with the results of the election of officers), and a copy is kept for the Parish files.

If a Council Member is elected mid-term to fill a vacancy

- They must attend a seminar before their service begins (scheduled with the Parish Priest)
- Their election must be ratified by the Metropolitan before they can be given the affirmation of office
- The affirmation is to be given at the beginning of the first Parish Council meeting following the receipt of the ratification letter from the Metropolitan.

Clergy Compensation Guidelines

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. Exceptions to the Archdiocesan Clergy Compensation guidelines are only granted by the Metropolitan, communicated via the Chancellor’s office.

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. Please communicate with the regional Vicar and/or the Chancellor to discuss challenges within the Parish.

Only the Metropolitan can authorize a reduction or withholding of a clergyman’s remuneration.

Substitute and Supplemental Clergy Remuneration

The Parish has an obligation to properly remunerate a Priest who is substituting while your assigned Pastor is absent from the Parish (for any reason), and to a clergyman who is not assigned to your community who is brought in to the Parish to assist with the Divine Services.

The honorarium offered to the substitute Priest for the usual Divine Services (Orthros and Divine Liturgy) shall be $300.00 for Sunday and $250.00 for weekdays or Saturday. 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 minimum amount to be given to cover his travel expenses should be the IRS designated mileage allowance (which was 56.5 cents per mile in 2013; use the current year’s figures when calculating).
If other services (wedding, baptism) are scheduled on a Sunday, these additional services require further remuneration at a minimum of $100.00 for each service. This amount also applies to sacraments held on weekdays or Saturdays, and to funerals. These amounts are the responsibility of the Parish; honoraria offered by families hosting a sacrament are not to be taken into account for these services.

If a Priest is substituting in a full-time capacity (including hospital visits, shut-ins, attendance at meetings or events), then the Parish should offer remuneration at the rate of $750-1,500 per week or $3,000-6,000 per month (depending on the size of the Parish and its pastoral needs). For substitute Clergy serving a Parish for all services during Great and Holy Week, the remuneration should be $3,000; if a clergyman is brought in to assist the assigned Priest during that time, then the remuneration should be $1,500.

Arrangements for substitute Priests, or for additional assistance, should be handled by the Parish through the Metropolis offices.

Clergy Absences from Parish

If a Priest is to be absent from his Parish for whatever reason, he must in writing ask for the Metropolitan’s permission to be absent at least ten days in advance. This request must indicate that the Parish Council is aware of this request.

The Use of “Very Reverend” in Clergy Titles

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 make the necessary correction.

Letters for Pilgrimages to the Patriarchate or Mount Athos

Requests for the Metropolitan to write to the Ecumenical Patriarch on behalf of those seeking to make a pilgrimage to the Patriarchate or the Holy Mountain should be made at least two months in advance of the expected pilgrimage. The Patriarchate needs time to process the request and send back the letters to be forwarded.
Gambling and the Use of Parish Property for Gambling Activities

**Summary**

Raffles of any kind (be they regular raffles, so-called “Chinese Auctions,” etc.) and other games of chance (gambling) are prohibited in this Metropolis for all Parishes, Parish organizations, and Philoptochos Chapters. There are no exceptions to this policy. His Eminence has stated on more than one occasion that any and all “blessings” or “exceptions” granted by his predecessor for this or any other practice are null and void – the current Metropolitan of Pittsburgh must bless any deviations from the norm on issues related to the Liturgy, governance, and life of the Parish.

Use of Parish Property for Political Events & Non-Orthodox Sacraments

Parish property or facilities are not to be used to host any non-Orthodox services, civil services, 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.

Communication with the Parish

Official communications from the Metropolis are generally conveyed in three manners: letters delivered via US Postal Service or another delivery service, via facsimile, and via email. Each parish should ensure that the Metropolis has the following information, and when changes occur those should be proactively communicated to the Metropolis:

- Mailing address for the Parish (if different than the physical address; i.e. PO Box)
- Email addresses for the Priest and Parish Secretary (or, if no paid secretary, the volunteer responsible for general secretarial duties)
- Email addresses for the members of the Parish Council, Philoptochos Board, and Audit Committee
- Email addresses for the leaders of the Youth and Young Adult ministries and Educational ministries (advisors, coaches, chaperones, drivers, Sunday School and Greek School educators, etc.)
- Home address and emergency contact information for the Priest

Communications with and Invitations to other Hierarchs

The proper protocol for communicating with other Hierarchs is through your Metropolitan. It is not appropriate to write directly to the Patriarch, Archbishop, or other Hierarch and request his participation in your church’s consecration, anniversary celebrations, or other events, or to request commemorative letters.
and the like. The invitation is issued by the Metropolitan.

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Clergy & Presvyteres Retreats

One of the primary concerns of the work of this Metropolis is to promote the health of our wonderful Parish communities. Every thorough assessment of health by a medical professional examines all the various systems of the body to ensure that all the parts are functioning well and working harmoniously together. If any part requires rest or recuperation, it frequently necessitates that the body slow down or rest to accommodate this. Our Parish communities should also be good stewards of the health of their various members and ministries. A crucial component is the health and well-being of the Parish Priest, who act as the spiritual leader of the community on my behalf, leading the ministries in a way that brings the people closer to their God, and his Presvytera, the partner in his life and ministry.

Each year there are at least two opportunities to promote clergy & clergy family health and growth: our Metropolis’s Lenten Clergy-Family Retreat, and a Fall Retreat (in even-numbered years this takes place within the Metropolis; in odd-numbered years there are national retreats for the Clergy and Presvyteres). These retreats will offer educational sessions, networking opportunities, and a chance for refreshing the ministry of our Priests and Presvyteres.

The Parish communities are asked to assume the cost of sending their Parish clergy (Proistamenoi, assistant clergy, and interim pastors) and clergy spouses to these retreats – a cost that is easily justified considering the positive effect these events have on the ministry and health of the Parish clergy. If there are any difficulties in implementation, please have your Parish clergy contact the Chancellor for assistance.

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Parish Anniversaries & Major Celebrations (Consecration, etc.)

Communities approaching milestone celebrations (major anniversary years, consecration of the Parish, etc.) should begin planning their festivities at least one year in advance, and should be in communication with the Assistant to the Metropolitan from the beginning. This will allow for solicitation of letters or visits from other Hierarchs (if desired), and appropriate planning of the celebratory banquets and services.

Parishes are also encouraged to contact communities who have successfully navigated these events in the past for best practices, organizational advice, and other assistance. For references, please contact the Assistant to the Metropolitan.

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Youth Protection & Safety

The protection of our youth is of the highest importance for all the ministries of our Metropolis and its Parishes. This has been true since the very first days of our various programs (Summer Camp, Athletics, Folk Dance, etc.), and has been likewise prioritized in our communities. The laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are among the most comprehensive and protective in the nation, and reflect a desire to see that all children find enjoyment in organized activities (schools, camps, etc.) that are safe and well-run.

The Archdiocesan Youth Safety Policy, as well as the most current version of the Metropolis Policy, are hereby incorporated into these Policies by reference in their totality.

Sacramental & Pastoral Topics

Extracurricular Activities During Liturgical Services

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.

Prohibited Dates for Memorial Services

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 inclusive, on any of the Feasts of the Lord or the Theotokos, and on any Sunday that includes a special procession.
Wedding Dates and Music

Weddings are not to be celebrated on fasting days, including Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as the days listed in the Archdiocese Yearbook (which is updated annually). Please consult with the Metropolis Registrar on questions of acceptable scheduling.

The preferred musical accompaniment for the marriage sacrament is the human voice (cantor or choir). It has been an established practice to also allow for the organ to be used for processions, recessions, and music played outside of the sacrament. Stringed instruments may be requested in writing and well in advance of the sacrament. They will only be allowed on a case-by-case basis. All other instruments are prohibited for use in any of the sacraments.

Regarding the type of music permitted: only traditional Orthodox hymnography (Byzantine music or musical settings from other Orthodox musical traditions) or traditional Western Christian church music may be used within the Church (i.e., before the ceremony, for the procession and the recessional); there will be no blessing for non-liturgical melodies. During the ceremony, only traditional Orthodox settings of the hymns of the Marriage sacrament may be used.

All questions related to the above should be directed to the Metropolis Registrar.

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Proper Place for the Celebration of Sacraments and Funerals

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 Metropolitan prior to any service being even scheduled in a place other than the local Parish. Permission must also be given in writing and not simply assumed, for this specific service to take place outside of the Parish church.

The only blanket exemptions to the above: the sacrament of Holy Unction may be celebrated by the Priest in a person’s home or at the hospital for the benefit of the ill; and the small Blessing of Waters (Agiasmos) may be celebrated at any location requiring God’s blessing and mercy.

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Preaching at Funerals or Other Services by Unauthorized Parties

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
Metropolitan to preach should be addressing the congregation at any church service. Any variations from this rule must be forwarded to the Metropolis prior to the event.

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

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“Ecumenical” Participation of Non-Orthodox Clergy in Sacraments

We do not allow the clergy of the other churches to be involved with our sacramental ceremonies. Only after the conclusion of our ceremony, the other minister may say a brief prayer and offer remarks. He should, however, do this without wearing liturgical clergy vestments.

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The Reception of Converts into Orthodoxy

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, even if the candidate should request it. 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.

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Evening Divine Liturgies and Vesperal Liturgies

The only Vesperal Divine Liturgies that are permitted are those prescribed to be celebrated as part of the Great Feasts of Pascha, Great and Holy Thursday, Theophany, and the Nativity of our Lord. These Vesperal Divine Liturgies are specially crafted for those particular celebrations – setting apart these occasions as Baptismal feasts and allowing for neophytes to enter the Christian Church and celebrate the major Holy Days – and are not considered to be templates for further application according to the current practice by the Church of Constantinople.

For those Priests who for pastoral reasons want to celebrate Divine Liturgies in the evenings, there are only three available options:

**Option 1:** A vigil that allows for the sequential celebration of Vespers, Matins, and the Divine Liturgy. (This practice is preserved in monastic settings, with the addition in many places of other monastic rite services, such as Midnight Office and the Hours.)

**Option 2:** The celebration of Matins and Liturgy successively in the evening (Greek custom) or the Hours and Liturgy (Slavic/Monastic custom).
Option 3: The celebration of the Divine Liturgy “alone” in the evening, without Vespers or Matins preceding it. The congregation may be led in the reading of the Service of Holy Communion** before the Liturgy, giving the celebrant ample time to take kairos, vest, and celebrate Proskomede at the Table of Oblation while providing a prayerful preparation for the people’s participation in the Liturgy. However, this removes the Liturgy from the greater context of the celebration of that particular Saint or feastday and should be considered an option of last resort for when there is no cantor available.

The evening Divine Liturgy should be celebrated respecting the cycle of the Liturgical day rather than the calendar day – i.e. it should be celebrated on the evening before the day (e.g. the feast of St. Euphemia falls on September 16; if an evening Liturgy is to be celebrated for her feast, then it should be conducted on the evening of September 15). No evening Divine Liturgies are to be celebrated on Saturdays or Sundays.

The Metropolitan’s expectations regarding the canonical celebration of multiple Liturgies for the feasts of the Nativity of our Lord and Theophany are as follows: The Typikon of the Great Church of Christ calls for two Divine Liturgies to be celebrated for these feasts (these, plus Pascha, are the only days when multiple Liturgies are prescribed for a single feastday): a Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, and an Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. For many Parishioners, the Vesperal Divine Liturgy is their primary celebration of the feast; this cannot be, though, for our Parishes. The Vesperal Divine Liturgy is not a replacement for the Liturgy celebrated on the day of the feast – the primary festal Liturgy and the Synaxis par excellence of the Church for that occasion. Each community is expected to celebrate the Orthros and Divine Liturgy on both the Nativity and Theophany.

For each feast, when the feast falls on a Tuesday through Saturday, the Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is to be celebrated the evening before (December 24 for the Nativity, January 5 for Theophany), and the Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is to be celebrated on the feastday (December 25 and January 6) in the morning. When either feast falls on a Sunday or Monday, then the celebration of that feast is altered from this pattern; the day before the feast (Dec 24 / Jan 5) features an Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John in the morning and a stand-alone Great Vespers in the evening, and the feastday itself receives a morning Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. (If the feast falls on a Sunday or Monday, then the Royal Hours are celebrated in the morning on the Friday beforehand.)

The New and Official Translation of the Divine Liturgy

- All Priests and deacons of this Metropolis, and visiting clergy within the Metropolis, are to use the official translation and rubrics as promulgated by the Eparchial Synod, approved by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and distributed by the Holy Cross Press. Even if your Parish does not have the same text in the pews, the clergy are to use the Official Text.
- The following portions of the Liturgy are to be omitted in all Parishes:
  - The Litany of Fervent Supplication (pgs. 23-25), Prayers for the Catechumens (pgs. 27-28), Supplication and First Prayer of the Faithful (pgs. 28-29), and second Supplication of the Faithful (pg. 31).
- The duplicated Completion Litany (pg. 61).
- However, the second prayer of the faithful (after the Gospel) is to be said, either quietly or aloud, before the intonation of the exclamation “That, ever guarded by Your might…”
- All Parishes should be using the Eparchial Synod’s official translations of the Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and Paschal Hymn (Christ is Risen).
- The Metropolitan is to be commemorated within the divine services as “Archbishop and Father Savas.”
  - When another Metropolitan or Archbishop is presiding (or standing at the throne), they are to be commemorated as “Archbishop [Name].”
  - If a Hierarch is present but neither vested nor standing at the throne, he is not to be commemorated; in this case, the presiding Priest will still not bless the congregation with his hand, but will simply bow at the times of blessing.

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**Presiding at the Divine Liturgy when a Hierarch is not celebrating, Concelebrations**

- The Proistamenos is to preside over the Liturgy in his Parish on a regular basis. He may choose to offer the place of first celebrant to another clergyman (a resident retiree, an assistant Priest, a visitor) out of respect to his Priesthood and experience (or, in the case of the assistant, to train him), but it is not to be expected that he will do so.
- The exception to this is if the visiting clergyman is the Chancellor of the Metropolis or an Archimandrite. If any clergy of these ranks within our Metropolis visits your Parish, they shall be expected to preside at the Liturgy unless they choose to defer to the Proistamenos.
- The Metropolitan appreciates the custom, practiced in a number of places, that when a Parish is hosting a feast day celebration (for its patron, a major event in the life of the Parish, or another feast associated specifically with the congregation) that the host Priest serves last regardless of his true place in the order.
- When there is a clergy concelebration of more than 2, the following guidelines should be followed to determine seniority: the Metropolis Chancellor, followed by Archimandrites (by date of ordination), followed by the remaining clergy (by date of ordination).
- Only one Priest is to stand in front of the altar during the Liturgy (except when making appropriate metanoias, exchanging the kiss of peace and holding the aer, preparing to commune, preparing the gifts for the communion of the faithful)
- The presiding Priest is to read all the prayers of the Liturgy. The petitions (in the absence of a Deacon), exclamations, and blessings should be shared among the concelebrating clergy (with the exception of the exclamations of the Anaphora, which should be said by the celebrant).
- Visiting clergy who choose not to concelebrate at the Divine Liturgy should not sit in the congregation, but rather should sit in the sanctuary or at the cantor’s stand.

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CLERGY ATTIRE

Because the anderi (cassock) is not seen in and of itself as an unambiguous garment of Christian clergy in the United States, clergy who do not have the liturgical privilege of wearing a Cross but who do wear the anderi when in public may wear a small and simple wood, silver, or gold Cross without jewels, or a cross pinned to anderi.

Regardless of one’s choice of everyday clerical attire (anderi or “western” clerical), we should have an appearance that is clean and not unkempt.

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CURTAIN AND BEAUTIFUL DOORS IN THE LITURGY

In Parish use the curtain and Beautiful Gates are not closed at any point during the Divine Liturgy.

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CLEANLINESS OF THE ALTAR

While others may assist, the cleanliness of the Altar area, and specifically of the Holy Table and items thereon, are the responsibility of the Proistamenos. The Gospel, vessels, antimension, and other items should be kept in good condition and should be cleaned (in whatever fashion is appropriate to each item). This includes the exterior of the holy vessels (like the base of the Holy Chalice).

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SUICIDE, CREMATION

Requests for funerals for those who commit suicide should be directed to His Eminence through the Chancellor in wiring in each instance.

For those who are cremated: the Trisagion service with the addition of the funeral Epistle and Gospel can be celebrated at the funeral home in lieu of the funeral service, and a normal Trisagion can be remembered at various points of remembrance. No memorials with kolyva are to be celebrated.

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SUNDAY CLOSURES

Do not close the Parish on a Sunday without prior communication with the Metropolitan or the Chancellor.
**Great and Holy Wednesday**

On Great and Holy Wednesday, if your community is accustomed to two services, then the Sacrament of Holy Unction should be celebrated in the afternoon, and the Orthros of Great and Holy Thursday in the evening with an anointing during the service. Texts of the Orthros are available by contacting the Metropolis.

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**Altar Servers**

Anyone who enters the Holy Altar requires a blessing. For those who wish to be made Readers of the Church, His Eminence will tonsure candidates on the occasion of his pastoral visit who are old enough and capable of reading the Epistle (and other scriptural pericopes appropriate for the non-clergyman) within the Church in a way that said readings can be heard and comprehended by the people. Such tonsures will be arranged by the Parish Priest with the Metropolitan’s Assistant.

The Parish Priest is responsible to bless acolytes at the beginning of their service to the Church. The blessing to serve is not an offikion and, therefore can be performed by the Proistamenos outside of the Hierarchical visit. It is not good to have these servers (a) serve for months or years before receiving a blessing to serve from the Metropolitan, or (b) for the Parish to go on for months or years having the young men not serve because they await the Reader’s tonsure from their Hierarch.

Therefore, the Proistamenos has His Eminence’s blessing within his Parish to pray the following over the new servers (and any that have not received the blessing beforehand but have been serving up to this point). It is a simple blessing, not an offikion, and therefore is not to be conducted with any fanfare, and is not to receive a reply of “Axios.”

**Deacon:** Bow your heads to the Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Servers:** Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** O Lord our God, You do not dwell in manmade temples, nor are you in need of the service offered by human hands, for You are the One who gives the breath of life to all and sustains all of creation. Nevertheless, O Lord, accept this (these) your servant(s) [NAME], who is (are) prepared to serve your Holy Church, the place where Your glory abides. Enable him (them) to serve you in an irreproachable and blameless manner, in purity of life and heart, and make him (them) worthy to receive the reward of those who love the beauty of Your House. For You, our God, are Holy and to You we offer up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

This blessing can be conducted before the Liturgy, at the end of the Liturgy, or in another service, but cannot be done during the Liturgy between “Blessed is the Kingdom” and the singing of “Blessed be the name of the Lord...”
Confession and Spiritual Direction

After prayerful consideration of various discussions, materials, and presentations on the topic(s) of confession and spiritual direction that have been held within the Metropolis, His Eminence has set the following forth as his expectations on the topics of Confession and Spiritual Direction.

For the purpose of this policy, there are 3 roles delineated:
1. Those who can celebrate the mystery (sacrament) of Confession
2. Those who can give Spiritual Direction
3. Those who can give Pastoral Counseling

Upon ordination, Priests have the blessing to perform the sacraments of the Church (except for Ordination, which is reserved for the Hierarchs). This blessing includes the grace to hear confessions.

However, when first ordained we know that Priests need guidance from experienced Priests on the celebration of the sacraments, which is why Priests are assigned as assistants to experienced clergy in larger Parishes, and in those cases where they instead begin immediately as Proistamenoi they are associated with another senior Priest in the area for guidance and assistance.

Therefore it is appropriate for Priests who are newly ordained, whether serving as assistants or as Proistamenoi, to begin the practice of hearing confession by working with the very young, whose confessions are generally less complicated, under the tutelage of their senior Priest.

The senior Priest will remain in regular contact with the Metropolitan, and will advise His Eminence when he thinks the junior Priest is ready to begin hearing teenaged and adult confessions. The Metropolitan will grant the blessing, and the junior Priest will begin hearing those confessions, continuing to utilize the guidance and direction of the more senior Priest.

All Priests generally are to see confession as the exercise of a sacramental role within the Church which allows for the unburdening of sins from the people, the assurance of God’s love and forgiveness, and the dispensation of select tools to assist the penitent in making progress in the Christian life.

His Eminence will only bestow the office of Confessor upon those Priests in whom he sees the charismatic gift to delve deeper into Spiritual Direction and care. This gift is the result of much study, practice, guidance, and the work of the Spirit. Those who desire Spiritual Care (who wish for the Spiritual Father to probe their hearts, to help them with the logismoi, and to give more intimate direction for life) should be directed to those who have my blessing to dispense it.

The sacrament of confession and the exercise of Spiritual Direction each have their own times and places and practitioners, and are different from Pastoral Counseling, which has its own place and practitioners (those who are trained and experienced in the craft). Those who struggle with serious psychological or interpersonal challenges should be directed to a Pastoral Counselor or Therapist for their care and guidance.