

CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION

It is the duty of every Christian to partake of Holy Communion, since it is by this Sacrament that we become one with Christ and with one another. We ought to partake regularly, if possible whenever the Divine Liturgy is served (and not simply two or four times a year), and by fasting from midnight of the day on which Holy Communion is to be received. Regular reception of Holy Communion is especially beneficial – although this must not become the cause of disrespect towards the Body and Blood of Christ.

For worthy participation in the Sacrament, we ought:

- (i) to have an unshakeable faith in Christ our Saviour and in the teachings of the Orthodox Church;
- (ii) to attend church regularly, and to pray regularly;
- (iii) to cleanse our conscience from evil deeds, hate and injustice, forgiving all those who have injured us from the depths of our hearts; and we ought to have peaceful relations and charity towards those who are our enemies; &
- (iv) to make a sincere confession of our sins and offences in the presence of a spiritual father (a hierarch or presbyter especially appointed for this task).

It is forbidden to receive Holy Communion without the prior permission of a spiritual father; and the ideal is that it should be preceded by Confession, which is a second Baptism cleansing the stains on our souls and restoring our relations with God.

Needless to say, Holy Communion may only be received by members of the Orthodox Church – that is to say, those who are members in good standing of Churches in eucharistic communion with the Oecumenical Patriarchate.



Note: the section "General Information" in the Year Book (Imerologion) includes details of fasting dates and seasons. Information on fasting can be found in the appropriate section of the Year Book or in the leaflet with the title "Fasting" in the local series "An Introduction to Orthodox Christianity."

Orthodox Community of
Archangel Michael
and Holy Piran, Cornwall.
www.orthodoxincornwall.org.uk

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Guidance concerning
Holy Baptism,
Marriage,
Funerals,
Confession and Holy
Communion.



The information (of a procedural nature) in this leaflet is taken from the 2024 Year Book of the Holy Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.

Exarchate of Western Europe and Ireland.
www.thyateira.org.uk

Ecumenical Patriarchate.
www.ec-patr.org

HOLY BAPTISM

- i) Baptisms may take place throughout the whole year, except Holy Week and at Christmas (unless special permission has been given);
- ii) The Birth Certificate of the child must be produced on the day of the Baptism;
- iii) The person acting as Godparent should be a member of the Orthodox Church in good standing and must be conscious of the Godparent's obligations and responsibilities

A form of application for baptism can be obtained from the parish Priest.

HOLY MATRIMONY (WEDDINGS)

Weddings are not allowed in Church:

- a) from 12th December until Christmas;
- b) during Lent, except by special licence on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays thereof;
- c) from 1st to 15th August;
- d) on 5th and 6th of January, except by special licence;
- e) on the feast of the Holy Cross (September 14th).
- f) between a member of the Orthodox Church and a non-Christian, or with a member of a denomination not baptising in the name of the Holy Trinity.

The best man/woman (koumbaros/a) must be a member of the Orthodox Church in good standing, since according to tradition he/she acts as God-parent for the first child of the marriage. A non-Orthodox person can simply serve as a witness, although not acting as a participant.

In accordance with the laws of England and Wales, the ceremony of Civil Marriage should take place before the Ecclesiastical Marriage.

- i) The couple should notify their local Registry Office of their intended wedding date;
- ii) Having booked a date for the Church Wedding, the couple should make an early appointment to see their local priest.

During that meeting they will have to sign an application for the Archbishop's licence in the presence of two witnesses, stating that they are not related to each other within the prohibited degrees, and each of them must produce a certificate from the Church where they were baptised stating that they have not contracted a marriage.

*** In the case of a mixed marriage, the non-Orthodox member should:**

- a) produce his/her Baptismal Certificate; and
- b) sign a declaration that the children of the marriage will be baptised and brought up within the Orthodox faith and in accordance with her traditions.

*** In the case of a second marriage, the person concerned should:** produce a Divorce Absolute from the Civil Courts if the previous marriage took place only at the Registry Office, as well as a Divorce Certificate from the Ecclesiastical Court if the previous marriage was solemnised in an Orthodox church.

* If the previous spouse has died, then only the Death Certificate needs to be produced.

A form of application for holy matrimony can be obtained from the parish Priest.

For Divorces:

An ecclesiastical divorce may be granted after a civil decree has been issued. However, the parish priest must make every effort to reconcile the couple and avert a divorce. Should the priest fail to bring about reconciliation, the party seeking the ecclesiastical divorce should address a petition to the Ecclesiastical Court of the Archdiocese stating the grounds for such an action. The petition must be accompanied by:

- a) The Decree Absolute of the civil divorce;
- b) a copy/certificate of the ecclesiastical marriage which is to be dissolved; and
- c) the set fees of the Ecclesiastical Court per person.

FUNERALS

Relatives of the deceased person are requested to contact the local priest to arrange the time and other details of the funeral.

Inspired by affection towards her departed children, the Orthodox Church has, since early times, adopted the custom of burying her dead (as is evidenced in the catacombs and from the graves of the martyrs and the saints). Cremation, therefore, is contrary to the tradition of the Church and forbidden for Orthodox Christians. In cases where relatives cannot go against the expressed last wishes of their departed loved ones, the funeral service may take place in the church, and at the end of the service the remains will be handed over to the relatives.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

These are special prayers offered by the Church for the repose of the departed. Such memorial services (mnimossina) are offered on the third, ninth, and fortieth days following a person's passing away. They are also offered for the third, sixth, and nine months. From then on, yearly memorials are observed, as well as on the four Saturdays set aside for the dead during the ecclesiastical year.

Memorial services cannot be held from the Saturday of Lazarus until the Sunday of the Incredulity of Thomas (inclusive); not on the holy days between Christmas and Epiphany, at Pentecost, and on the Holy Days of Our Lord (Despotikai eortai) and the Dormition of the Mother of God (15th August).

In addition, it is recommended that the title feast of the church as well as the principle feasts of Our Lord and his Mother be avoided. If it is essential that the Memorial Service should be held, then it should take place after the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy and the distribution of the Antidoron.