
Guidelines for the Mystery of Marriage

Fourth Group: First cousins with each other;

Fifth Group: Foster parents with foster children, or foster children with the children of foster parents;

Sixth Group: Godparents with godchildren, or godparents with the parents of godchildren.

If the Groom and/or Bride is Divorced from a Previous Marriage (Civil or Religious)

If the groom and/or the bride was previously married in the Orthodox Church, and the marriage(s) was (were) terminated by civil divorce, he/she must obtain a Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce from their Metropolitan. Plans for the Marriage shall not be made or confirmed until the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce is received.

No more than three Ecclesiastical Marriages are permitted by the Church. If the groom and/or the bride was previously married, this may not be the fourth Orthodox marriage for either partner, since a fourth marriage is forbidden in the Orthodox Church for either partner.

Marriages Between Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Christians

At least one of the marriage partners must be an Orthodox Christian.

The Mystery of Marriage of an Orthodox Christian with a non-Orthodox Christian must be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest, in an Orthodox Church according to Orthodox liturgical Tradition.

If one of the marriage partners (either the groom or the bride) is not an Orthodox Christian:

The non-Orthodox partner must be a Christian who was Baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity in a denomination that expresses a belief in the Holy Trinity. The parish priest is responsible for verifying how a person was previously baptized, and he submits his recommendation to the Metropolitan.

The non-Orthodox partner must be willing to have any children issuing from the marriage Baptized in the Orthodox Church as well as raised and nurtured in accordance with the Orthodox faith.

A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian in accordance with the rites and traditions of the Church does not automatically become a member of the Orthodox Church, and is therefore not permitted to receive Holy Communion, Holy Unction, Holy Repentance, or an Orthodox Church funeral since these are privileges of the Baptized and Chrismated members of the Church.

A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian is warmly invited to attend the Divine Services and, if they freely choose to do so, is encouraged to receive instruction in the faith and join the Orthodox Church through the Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation. This is in light of the fact that the more things a couple holds in common, the more likely it will be that they will live their married lives in peace and harmony. In addition, shared faith and traditions spare the couple and their children many serious problems and strengthen the bonds between them.

Marriage of Minors

If the groom and/or the bride is under 18 years of age, both parents or guardians of the minor(s) shall provide written consent.