

A close-up photograph of a priest in ornate gold vestments placing a ring on a bride's finger during a wedding ceremony. The priest's hands are the central focus, with the gold ring being placed on the bride's finger. The background is blurred, showing other people in white clothing.

Adult Catechism Class

SACRAMENTS II

Marriage, Ordination, Unction

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?



- In our worship services Sacraments hold the central spot
- They have a double character
 - An outward visible sign
 - An inward spiritual grace
- Called Mysteria because
 - “what we believe is not what we see” (St. John Chrysostom)
 - Cannot explain how it happens – how exactly the Holy Spirit works
 - Bring us into union and communion with God

SACRAMENTS



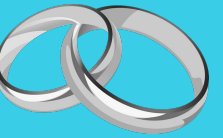
- No set number in the Orthodox Church
- However, there is a “hierarchy”
 - Eucharist and Baptism/Chrismation stand over all – then Confession, Unction, Marriage and /Ordination
- Other sacramental services:
 - Blessing of waters
 - Funeral
 - Tonsuring of a monastic
 - Consecration of a monarch
- Also, many other practical blessings

SACRAMENTS

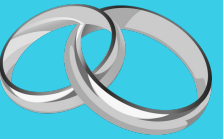


- Christ is the true Celebrant of each Sacrament
- Clergy perform the visible part
- Sacraments are personal
 - Grace of God given individually
 - Reflect our devotion and worship
 - Name is used

MARRIAGE

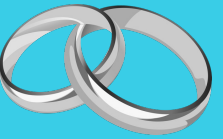


INTRO TO MARRIAGE



- Marriage, just like the Church, reflects the Holy Trinity (a unity in diversity)
- We are called to live as a family, even if we do not get married
- God blessed Marriage as the union between a man and a woman (Adam & Eve in Genesis)
- The Sacrament of Marriage imparts to us a special gift of the Holy Spirit (charisma) to help and preserve our union
- Some people are called to celibacy and/or monasticism and this lifestyle requires God's grace as well
- Marriage is not required to become Orthodox (like Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist)

STRUCTURE OF MARRIAGE



➤ The Service has two parts:

- Betrothal (exchange of rings)
- Crowning (stefana)

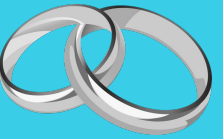
➤ Betrothal Service

- The exchange of rings is a visible symbol that the two partners join in marriage of their own free will and consent
- It is also a pledge to remain faithful to one another

➤ Crowning Service

- Signifies the special gift of the Holy Spirit
- Crowns of joy and martyrdom, since marriage involves self-sacrifice on both sides
- Scripture readings (Eph. 5:20-33 & Jn. 2:1-11)
- The common cup
- The circling of the table

DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE



- The Orthodox Church sees divorce as an unfortunate consequence of sin and broken relationships
- Divorce is formally acknowledged by the Church when reconciliation is no longer possible
- Remarriage is possible up to 2 times after the first marriage
- Remarriage is allowed as a concession to those who desire to stay in the Church
- First marriage is seen as unique and indissoluble
- Second/third marriage ceremony is different (has a penitential character)
- Without an ecclesiastical divorce decree, an Orthodox Christian is not in full communion with the Church (or not in good standing)
- Get advice from your priest

ORDINATION



INTRO TO ORDINATION



- Three Major Orders:
 - Bishop
 - Priest
 - Deacon
- Minor orders:
 - Subdeacon
 - Reader
- Ordination to Major orders is done individually by *cheirotomia* (laying on of hands), and always happens during the Liturgy
- Scriptural terms: *presbyteros* (elder) and *episkopos* (overseer) were used interchangeably for a while
- St. Ignatius of Antioch makes clear distinction between the three orders in the second century
- Only one Bishop, Priest, Deacon can be ordained at a Liturgy
- The Sacrament of Ordination is the prerogative of the Bishop only

INTRO TO ORDINATION



- Ordination of a bishop is done by at least two or more bishops, since the Office of the Bishop is collegial (shows the unity of the Church)
- Even if the Ordination belongs to the bishop, it requires the consent of the entire congregation by proclaiming: Axios! (He is worthy!)
- Two types of clergy:
 - Married
 - Monastic (or Celibate)
- Candidates choose what type they are called by God through prayer and advice from spiritual father
- Marriage of a prospective candidate must take place before Ordination
- A widowed clergy is not allowed to remarry
- Bishops are required to be celibate (and take the monastic vows)
- The governing Synod in each autocephalous Church appoints bishops to vacant sees

CLERGY FUNCTIONS



- Priests are delegated by the bishop to a parish to fulfill the ministry of teaching the faith and performing the Sacraments (except Ordination and Holy and Great Myrrh)
- A priest does not act alone but on behalf of the bishop
- Although remunerated by the parish, the priest is appointed and ordained by his bishop
- The Bishop has the sole authority to remove a priest from office
- Thus, a priest is not an employee of the parish he serves but (through obedience) responds directly to his hierarch
- Deacons can only assist in services

CLERGY FUNCTIONS



- The Diaconate is a permanent office in the Church, not a mere stepping-stone to becoming a priest
- For a full celebration of the Divine Liturgy, all three Major Orders are involved, but for practical reasons a priest can officiate it alone
- The office of the Deaconate was created with the purpose of supporting the ministries of the Church (thus, women were initially involved in this office as well)
- Over time, the Deaconate morphed into a liturgical function (thus, only men are now allowed)
- The ordination of women to Priesthood is not supported by Tradition and Scripture

UNCTION



INTRO TO UNCTION



- in Greek *efchelion*, “the oil of prayer”
- First mentioned in James 5:14-15
- “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven”
- Dual purpose:
 - Bodily healing
 - Forgiveness of sins
- It is a mystery how God works in this Sacrament because healing does not always happen immediately (sacraments are not magic)
- Different function in the Orthodox Church than in the Catholic Church (last rites)

STRUCTURE OF UNCTION



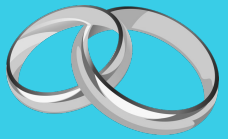
- Petition for the sick
- Hymns
- A cycle of seven Epistle and Gospel reading
- The general theme is
 - God's mercy and compassion upon us
 - Sin is at the root of our ailing (in both body and soul)
- A Prayer of Forgiveness is offered at the end
- Clergy anoint the people with the Holy Unction oil specially consecrated at this service on the face and hands
- It is customary (if possible) to have seven priests serve, according to the seven Scripture readings

NOTE ON HOLY OILS USED IN THE CHURCH

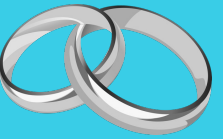


- At least 4 kinds
 - Holy Chrism
 - Holy Unction
 - Oil of Gladness
 - Holy Oil

RECAP



MARRIAGE, ORDINATION, UNCTION



- Sacraments confer a spiritual grace through a tangible element
- Central aspect of our worship
- Mystery – work of the Holy Spirit
- Individual and personal
- Bring us into union and communion with God

THANK YOU

