



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE REVISED DIRECTIVES AND LITURGICAL RUBRICS MAY 2021

We are grateful for the ability to return to many of our practices prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following directives and rubrics contemplate the fully vaccinated status of both clergy and laity. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The final dose is defined as the second dose of a two-dose vaccine (i.e. Pfizer or Moderna), or the first dose of a one-dose vaccine (i.e. Johnson & Johnson). Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to continue to observe wearing of a face mask over the nose and mouth, and to observe social distancing.

Considering the ever-changing landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic, the clergy and other parties involved (couple, sponsor, etc.) must understand, accept, and adhere to revised special directives and liturgical rubrics as outlined by the Metropolis and the updated guidelines set forth by local authorities.

As always, the sacrament of marriage may only be celebrated if the couple has a valid civil license at the time of the sacrament. Before celebrating the sacrament, the priest must have an orientation meeting with the couple and the sponsor. In case the wedding application was already submitted before the wedding was postponed, please coordinate with the Metropolis Registrar to arrange the proper paperwork.

As part of our shared responsibility to reduce the spread of the virus, the couple is to provide the parish with the names and contact information of guests (categorized by household) and vendors who will attend the sacrament. The priest should receive the information at least three days before the sacrament; last-minute changes to the guest list are permitted as long as the total number of guests does not exceed the total permitted by the local authorities.

1. General Instructions

- a. Number of Participants: If applicable, the number of participants must not exceed the total number of people permitted by the local authorities, if any. This number must take into consideration the clergy and other support staff.
- b. Bridal parties, ring boys and flower girls are permitted.
- c. Decorations: Adorning the church with flowers and other decorations for weddings is permitted.
- d. Photographer/Videographer/Organist: They may be present; however, they must be considered part of the total number in attendance. Photographers and videographers are encouraged to speak with the parish priest in advance of the service regarding the photography of the sacrament.
- e. Veneration of Sacred Objects: Offering of the Holy Gospel and other sacred objects for physical veneration may resume.

2. Safety Instructions

- a. Wearing of face masks and observing social distancing is encouraged for those who are not fully vaccinated or as independently determined by the individual.
- b. Clergy not fully vaccinated should consider wearing a facemask and/or protective eyewear. Priests who are fully vaccinated may independently determine if they desire to wear a face mask and/or protective eyewear.
- c. Hand sanitizer stations are encouraged to remain in place.
- d. All vessels, tables, and liturgical items must be properly cleaned before the start and at the conclusion of the sacrament.

3. Special Liturgical Rubrics

- a. Entrances and Processions are allowed in the traditional manner.
- b. Placement of the Clergy, Couple, Sponsor and bridal party may resume customary locations.
- c. The Betrothal and Exchange of Rings may resume as normal.
- d. Joining of Hands may resume as normal.
- e. The Crowning may resume as normal.
- f. The Common Cup must be on the table on the solea from the start of the service, and the prayer may be read before the couple.
- g. The Couple's Procession (Dance of Isaiah):
 - i. The priest holds the Gospel, as normal.
 - ii. The priest will lead the procession around the table with the couple as normal.
 - iii. The sponsor(s) may walk behind the couple while holding the ribbon.
 - iv. Flower petals may be tossed by family members.
 - v. After the third procession around the table, the couple will return to their original place on the solea.

4. Conclusion of the Sacrament:

- a. The priest will remove the crowns from the heads of the couple.
- b. The priest will use the Gospel to separate the hands of the couple.
- c. Receiving and greeting lines may resume.
- d. The faithful may be dismissed in the customary manner of the parish.
- e. Photos may only be taken on the solea or as otherwise discussed with the parish priest.