

RECEPTION OF AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Unlike Christian candidates who are from those ecclesial communions of the Reformation (e.g., “Protestants”), candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Churches who are Orthodox Christians have special circumstances. Because the Catholic Church believes the Orthodox have valid ordained ministers, their sacraments of initiation: Baptism, confirmation/chrisimation and Eucharist are valid as well. Therefore, Orthodox Christians only need to make a Profession of Faith (RCIA, art. 474; Profession of Faith, RCIA art. 490-492 is all that is required). An entry is then made in the parish baptismal register.

There is another important distinction regarding Orthodox Christian candidates. When received into full communion of the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Christian candidate technically becomes a member of the corresponding Eastern Rite Catholic Church. For example, a Ukrainian Orthodox Candidate becomes a member of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. This too is entered into the parish baptismal register. The Catholic Church believes that the ritual traditions of Eastern Rite Catholics and the Orthodox Christians are significant and should be practiced fully. An Orthodox Christian candidate seeking to become Catholic may worship in the Latin Rite Catholic Church, though his/her membership is with the particular Eastern Rite Catholic Church.

An Eastern non-Catholic who wishes to become a Catholic must be enrolled in the respective Catholic rite. Therefore, for example, if the person was Russian Orthodox, he or she is inscribed by law in the Russian Catholic church *sui iuris*. To be ascribed to the Latin church, or a different Eastern Catholic church, permission of the Apostolic See is necessary, or with permission of the Eastern and Latin bishops who have jurisdictions in the same territory (CCEC, can. 35).

Therefore, no permission is needed for the Orthodox Christian candidate to become Eastern Rite Catholic; however, to become Latin Rite Catholic, the Latin bishop of the Diocese of Gary and the Eastern Rite bishop of Northwest Indiana would have to both approve the candidate becoming Latin Rite Catholic. Such a request should be made in writing to Bishop Dale J. Melczek including the reasons for becoming Latin Rite Catholic.