



THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE AND ITS IMPEDIMENTS

I. On Orthodox Marriage

1. The institution of the family is threatened today by such phenomena as secularization and moral relativism. The Orthodox Church maintains, as her fundamental and indisputable teaching, that marriage is sacred. The freely entered union of man and woman is an indispensable precondition for marriage.

2. In the Orthodox Church, marriage is considered to be the oldest institution of divine law because it was instituted simultaneously with the creation of Adam and Eve, the first human beings (Gen 2:23). Since its origin, this union not only implies the spiritual communion of a married couple—a man and a woman—but also assured the continuation of the human race. As such, the marriage of man and woman, which was blessed in Paradise, became a holy mystery, as mentioned in the New Testament where Christ performs *His first sign*, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and thus reveals His glory (Jn 2:11). The mystery of the indissoluble union between man and woman is an icon of the unity of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).

3. Thus, the Christocentric typology of the sacrament of marriage explains why a bishop or a presbyter blesses this sacred union with a special prayer. In his letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius the God-Bearer stressed that those who enter into the communion of marriage *must also have the bishop's approval, so that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own desire. Let everything be to the glory of God* (V, 2). Therefore, the sacredness of the God-established union and the lofty spiritual content of married life explain the affirmation: *So that marriage should be honored among all, and the bed undefiled* (Heb 13:4). That is why the Orthodox Church condemns any defilement of its purity (Eph 5:2-5; 1 Thes 4:4; Heb 13:4ff).

4. The union of man and woman in Christ constitutes "a small church" or an icon of the Church. Through God's blessing, the union of man and woman is elevated to a higher level, for communion is greater than individual existence because it initiates the spouses into the order of the Kingdom of the All-Holy Trinity.

for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church
for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church
+Pacruca 1886

A necessary condition of marriage is faith in Jesus Christ, which must be shared by the bridegroom and the bride, man and woman. Consequently, unity in Christ is the foundation of marital unity. Thus, marital love blessed by the Holy Spirit enables the couple to reflect the love between Christ and the Church as a mystery of the Kingdom of God—as the eternal life of humanity in the love of God.

5. Protecting the sacredness of marriage has always been crucially important for the preservation of the family, which reflects the communion of the persons yoked together both in the Church and in society at large. Therefore, communion achieved through the sacrament of marriage does not merely serve as an example of a typical natural relationship, but also as an essential and creative spiritual force in the sacred institution of the family. It alone ensures the safety and formation of children, both for the spiritual mission of the Church as well as in the life of society.

6. It was always with the necessary strictness and proper pastoral sensibility, in the compassionate manner of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:12-15, 39), that the Church treated both *the positive preconditions* (difference of sexes, legal age, etc.) and *the negative impediments* (kinship by blood and affinity, spiritual kinship, an existing marriage, difference in religion, etc.) for the joining in marriage. Pastoral sensibility is necessary not only because the biblical tradition determines the relationship between the natural bond of marriage and the sacrament of the Church, but also because Church practice does not exclude the incorporation of certain Greco-Roman natural law principles that acknowledge the marital bond between man and woman as *a communion of divine and human law* (Modestin) compatible with the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage attributed by the Church.

7. Given our current context, which is unfavorable for the sacrament of marriage and the sacred institution of family, hierarchs and shepherds must actively cultivate their pastoral work in order to protect the faithful, standing by them to fortify their hope shaken by many hardships, and asserting the institution of the family upon an unshakable foundation that neither rain, nor river, nor wind can destroy, since this foundation is the rock which is Christ (Mt 7:25).

8. The pressing issue in society today is marriage, which is the center of the family, and the family is what justifies marriage. Pressure to recognize new forms of cohabitation constitutes a real threat for Orthodox Christians. This variously-manifested crisis in marriage and family profoundly concerns the Orthodox Church not only in light of negative consequences for the fabric of society, but also in light of its threat to particular relationships within the bounds of the traditional family. The main victims of these trends are the couples themselves, and especially the children.

Dr. J. J. ... of ... Daniel ...
to ... + ...

5. Concerning mixed marriages of Orthodox Christians with non-Orthodox Christians or non-Christians:

i. Marriage between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians is forbidden according to canonical *akribeia* (Canon 72 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council).

ii. With the salvation of man as the goal, the possibility of the exercise of ecclesiastical *oikonomia* in relation to impediments to marriage must be considered by the Holy Synod of each autocephalous Orthodox Church according to the principles of the holy canons and in a spirit of pastoral discernment.

iii. Marriage between Orthodox and non-Christians is categorically forbidden in accordance with canonical *akribeia*.

6. The practice adopted in implementing ecclesiastical Tradition with respect to impediments to marriage should also take into account the relevant provisions of state legislation, without going beyond the limits of ecclesiastical economy (*oikonomia*).

† Bartholomew of Constantinople, Chairman

† Kuvyavaycovw
Baδoγapocw
† Baδoγapocw

† Theodoros of Alexandria

† Theophilos of Jerusalem

† Theophilos of Jerusalem

† Irinej of Serbia

+ Irinej of Serbia

† Daniel of Romania

† Daniel of Romania

† Chrysostomos of Cyprus

† Chrysostomos of Cyprus
† Chrysostomos of Cyprus

† Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece

† Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland

+ Sawa of Warsaw

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| † Emmanuel of France | <u>† Εμμανουήλ Γαλλίας</u> |
| † Nikitas of the Dardanelles | <u>† Νικήτας Δαρδανελών</u> |
| † Nicholas of Detroit | <u>† Νικόλαος του Δετρόιτ</u> |
| † Gerasimos of San Francisco | <u>† Γεράσιμος Σαν Φρανσίσκο</u> |
| † Amphilochios of Kisamos and Selinos | <u>† Αμφιλόχιος Κισάμου και Σελίνου</u> |
| † Amvrosios of Korea | <u>† Αμβρόσιος Κορέας</u> |
| † Maximos of Selyvria | <u>† Μάξιμος Σελυβρίας</u> |
| † Amphilochios of Adrianopolis | <u>† Αμφιλόχιος Αδριανούπολης</u> |
| † Kallistos of Diokleia | <u>† Κωνσταντίνος Κάλιστος</u> |
| † Antony of Hierapolis, Head of the Ukrainian Orthodox in the USA | <u>† Αντώνης</u> |
| † Job of Telmessos | <u>† Γκιόβαννι Τελμессός</u> |
| † Jean of Charioupolis, Head of the Patriarchal Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of the Russian Tradition in Western Europe | <u>† Ζαν ντε Χαριούπολης</u> |
| † Gregory of Nyssa, Head of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox in the USA | <u>† Επίσκοπος Γρηγόριος της Νύσσης</u> |

Delegation of the Patriarchate of Alexandria

† Gabriel of Leontopolis

† Γαβριήλ Λεοντοπόλεως

† Makarios of Nairobi

† Μακάριος Ναϊρομπι

† Jonah of Kampala

† Ιωνάθαν Καμπάλα

† Seraphim of Zimbabwe and Angola

† Σεραφίμ Ζιμπάβγουε και Ανγκόλα

† Alexandros of Nigeria

† Αλεξάνδρος Νιγηρίας

† Theophylaktos of Tripoli

† Θεοφύλακτος Τριπόλεως

† Sergios of Good Hope

† Σεργίου Καλής Ελπίδας

† Athanasios of Cyrene

† Αθανάσιος Κυρήνης

† Alexios of Carthage

† Αλεξίου Καρθαγίνης

† Ieronymos of Mwanza

† Ιερώνυμος Μβανζα

† George of Guinea

† Γεωργίου Γουινίας

† Nicholas of Hermopolis

† Νικόλαος Ηρμιοπόλεως

† Dimitrios of Irinopolis

† Διμήτριος Ιρινόπολεως

† Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria

† Δαμάσκιος Τζοχάνεσμπουργκ και Πρετορία

† Narkissos of Accra

† Νάρκισσος Ἀκκρας

† Emmanouel of Ptolemaidos

† Ἐμμανουὴλ Πτολεμαίδος
Ἐπιφάνιος

† Gregorios of Cameroon

† Γρηγόριος Καναδάς

† Nicodemos of Memphis

† Νικόδημος Ἀλεξανδρείας

† Meletios of Katanga

† Μελετίος Κατάγγα
Ἰννοκέντιος

† Panteleimon of Brazzaville and Gabon

† Innokentios of Burudi and Rwanda

† Ἰννοκέντιος Μπουρούδι
Ῥουάντα

† Crysostomos of Mozambique

† Neofytos of Nyeri and Mount Kenya

† Νεοφυτὸς Νυερί
Ἄμουντ Κενυά

Delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem

† Benedict of Philadelphia

† Βενέδικτος Φιλαδέλφειας

† Aristarchos of Constantine

† Ἀριστάρχος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως

† Theophylaktos of Jordan

† Θεοφύλακτος Ἰορδάνου
Νεκταρίου Ἀνθιδόνος

† Nektarios of Anthidon

† Philoumenos of Pella

Philoumenos of Pella

Delegation of the Church of Serbia

† Jovan of Ohrid and Skopje

Jovan of Ohrid and Skopje

† Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral

Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral

† Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana

Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana

† Vasilije of Sirmium

Vasilije of Sirmium

† Lukijan of Budim

Lukijan of Budim

† Longin of Nova Gracanica *† MWA*

Longin of Nova Gracanica

† Irinej of Backa

Irinej of Backa

† Hrizostom of Zvornik and Tuzla

Hrizostom of Zvornik and Tuzla

† Justin of Zica

Justin of Zica

† Pahomije of Vranje

Pahomije of Vranje

† Jovan of Sumadija

Jovan of Sumadija

† Ignatije of Branicevo

Ignatije of Branicevo

† Fotije of Dalmatia

Fr. Sam. Đurđić

† Athanasios of Bihac and Petrovac

Fr. Anđeo

† Joanikije of Niksic and Budimlje

+ Franjo Đurđić

† Grigorije of Zahumlje and Hercegovina

+ Br. 3x Spiridon

† Milutin of Valjevo

Fr. Miroslav

† Maksim in Western America

Fr. Maksim

† Irinej in Australia and New Zealand

Fr. Irinej

† David of Krusevac

† Jovan of Slavonija

+ Jelena Čučević

† Andrej ^{of} Austria and Switzerland

+ Anđeo

† Sergije of Frankfurt and ^{all} Germany

Fr. Sergije

† Ilarion of Timok

+ Sr. Ilarion

Delegation of the Church of Romania

† Teofan of Iasi, Moldova and Bucovina

Teofan, MMB

† Laurentiu of Sibiu and Transylvania

Laurentiu, M.

† Andrei of Vad, Feleac, Cluj, Alba, Crisana and Maramures

f Andrei

† Irineu of Craiova and Oltenia

Irineu

† Ioan of Timisoara and Banat

Ioan

† Iosif of Western and Southern Europe

Iosif, of Western and Southern Europe

† Serafim of Germany and Central Europe

+ Seraxiu

† Nifon of Targoviste

+ Nifon

† Irineu of Alba Iulia

Irineu

† Ioachim of Roman and Bacau

+ Ioachim, M.B.

† Casian of Lower Danube

+ Casian al Dunarii de Jos

† Timotei of Arad

Timotei
f de colonii of the Americas

† Nicolae of America

+ Sofronie al Oradei

† Sofronie of Oradea

† Nicodim of Strelhaia and Severin

† Nicodim al Severinului
si Strelhaiei

† Visarion of Tulcea

† Visarion

† Petroniu of Salaj

† Petroniu al Salajului

† Siluan in Hungary

† Siluan, Episcopul Episcopiei
Ortodoxe Romane din Ungaria

† Siluan in Italy

† Siluan al Episcopiei Ort.
Ro. a Italiei

† Timotei in Spain and Portugal

† Timotei al Ep. Ort. Pa
a Spaniei si Portugaliei

† Macarie in Northern Europe

† Macarie Dragos
al Ep. Ort. Rom. a Europei de Nord

† Varlaam Ploiesteanul, Assistant Bishop to the Patriarch

† Varlaam Ploiesteanul

† Emilian Lovisteanul, Assistant Bishop to the Archdiocese of Ramnic

† Emilian Lovisteanul

† Ioan Casian of Vicina, Assistant Bishop to the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas

† Ioan Casian de Vicina

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† Georgios de Pafos

† Chrysostomos of Kition

† Chrysostomos de Kition

† Chrysostomos of Kyrenia

† Χρυσόστομος Κύρηνου

† Athanasios of Limassol

† Ἀθανάσιος Λεμεσίου

† Neophytos of Morphou

† Νεόφυτος Μορφου

† Vasileios of Constantia and Ammochostos

† Βασίλειος Κωνσταντίας

† Nikiphoros of Kykkos and Tillyria

† Νικηφόρος Κύκκου

† Isaias of Tamassos and Oreini

† Ἰσαΐας Ταμάσου

† Barnabas of Tremithousa and Lefkara

† Christophoros of Karpasia

† Χριστόφορος Κερπασίας

† Nektarios of Arsinoe

† Νεκτάριος Ἀρσινόης

† Nikolaos of Amathus

† Νικόλαος Ἀμάθου

† Epiphanius of Ledra

† Ἐπιφάνιος Λεδραίου

† Leontios of Chytron

† Λεοντίος Χυτρίου

† Porphyrios of Neapolis

† Πορφύριος Νεαπόλεως

† Gregory of Mesaoria

† Γρηγόριος Μεσαορίας

Delegation of the Church of Greece

† Prokopios of Philippi, Neapolis and Thassos

† Προκόπιος Φιλιππῶν, Νεαπόλεως καὶ Θάσσοῦ

† Chrysostomos of Peristerion

† Χρυσόστομος Περιστερίου

† Germanos of Eleia

† Alexandros of Mantineaia and Kynouria

† Ἀλεξάνδρος Μαντινείας καὶ Κυνουρίας

† Ignatios of Arta

† Ἰγνατίος Ἀρτάκης

† Damaskinos of Didymoteixon, Orestias and Soufli

† Δαμάσκιος Διδυμοτείχων, Ὀρεστιάδων καὶ Σουλφίου

† Alexios of Nikaia

† Ἀλέξιος Νίκαιας

† Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Aghios Vlasios

† Ἱεροθέος Ναυπακτίας καὶ Ἁγίου Βλασίου

† Eusebios of Samos and Ikaria

† Εὐσέβιος Σάμου καὶ Ἰκαρίας

† Seraphim of Kastoria

† Σεραφίμ Καστοριάς

† Ignatios of Demetrias and Almyros

† Ἰγνατίος Δημητριάδων καὶ Ἀλμυρού

† Nicodemos of Kassandreia

† Νικόδημος Κασσανδρείας

† Ephraim of Hydra, Spetses and Aegina

† Ἐφραίμ Ἡδραίων, Σπέτσων καὶ Αἰγίνης

† Theologos of Serres and Nigrita

† Θεολόγος Σερρών καὶ Νιγρίτας

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- † Anthimos of Alexandroupolis *† Ανθιμος Αλεξανδρουπολης*
- † Barnabas of Neapolis and Stavroupolis *† Βαρναβας Νεαπολης & Σταυρουπολης*
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- † Theoklitos of Ierissos, Mount Athos and Ardameri *† Θεοκλιτος Ιερισσου, Αθων & Αρδαμερι*
- Delegation of the Church of Poland**
- † Simon of Lodz and Poznan *† Σιμων Λοδου & Ποζναν*
- † Abel of Lublin and Cheim *† Αβελ Λυβλιν & Τσεμ*
- † Jacob of Bialystok and Gdansk *† Ιακωβ Βιαλιστοκ & Γδανσκ*
- † George of Siemiatycze *† Γεωργιος Σιεμιατυτσε*

The Sacrament of Marriage and its Impediments

† Paisios of Gorlice

+ Bishop rasilje

Delegation of the Church of Albania

† Joan of Koritsa

+ Joani i Korçës

† Demetrios of Argyrokastron

~~Demetrios~~

† Nikolla of Apollonia and Fier

~~Nikolla~~

† Andon of Elbasan

+ Andon Elbasanit

† Nathaniel of Amantia

+ Nathaniel i Amantias

† Asti of Bylis

+ Asti i Bylisit. Asti

Delegation of the Church of the Czech lands and Slovakia

† Michal of Prague

+ Michal

† Isaiah of Sumperk

+ Isaiah

+ Jérôme de Suisse, chef
du Secrétariat du Saint
et grand concile.

Jérôme de Suisse