

Church & Clergy Etiquette

- ❖ When entering an Orthodox church, reverently make the sign of the Cross and quietly say, "God, forgive me a sinner and have mercy on me."
- ❖ So that we do not disturb worshippers or the Priest during special parts of the Divine Liturgy, we remain stationary in the narthex if:
 - the Priest is facing the congregation
 - the Priest censens the congregation
 - during the Small Entrance (Priest carries out the Holy Gospel)
 - during the Great Entrance (Priest carries out the Holy Gifts)
 - during the readings of the Epistle and the Gospel
 - during Consecration of the Gifts ("se imnoumen")
 - during the Creed & the Lord's Prayer
 - during the sermon
- ❖ Continue through the narthex quietly and reverently. First, light your candle. Candles represent the light of Christ and the flame of the Holy Spirit. You may then venerate the icons before you, the church's Patron Saint or Holy Theotokos. Seating in our church is to the right or left. You may sit on either side. The first few pews on the right are sometimes reserved for families commemorating the passing of a loved one so please sit behind those.
- ❖ Please do not clap in church.
- ❖ \Worshippers make the sign of the cross often. This reminds us that God's ultimate act of love for us was the crucifixion and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. To find out more about how and when the Orthodox make the sign of the cross and how, please go to www.st-demetrios.org/participating.htm
- ❖ If there is a book of the Liturgy in front of you, follow along, singing and praying with the other worshippers. It is important that you follow along so that you are not distracted during the service.
- ❖ It is acceptable to speak along with the chanters and choir, but please do not speak the priest's words. His words are specific prayers and blessings that only he can convey.
- ❖ Do not chew gum, eat or cross your legs. Crossing your legs is not permitted, not because it is "wrong" but because it is too casual and relaxed for being in church. Remember, sitting in church is a concession, not the normal way of prayer. So keep your feet on the floor and be ready for when the Priest says "let us attend" and everyone rises.
- ❖ If you leave before dismissal you are deprived of a special blessing, so please stay until the priest says "Let us depart in peace...". After Liturgy you also receive the Holy Bread, Antidoron. While Antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such should be eaten carefully so that crumbs do not fall.

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- ❖ Please note, attire is also an important part of attending Orthodox services. You do not need to be dressed "fancy" but respectfully so as to present yourself to God. Preferably, women should wear dresses or skirts and men should wear dress pants or suits. No jeans, shorts, short skirts or revealing clothing please. From time to time, medical or other reasons prohibit wearing of certain clothing. Please use your good judgment during these times or ask your Priest.
- ❖ Women who wear lipstick to church should blot their lips well before venerating an icon, receiving Communion, kissing the Cross, Priest's hand or Bishop's hand.
- ❖ When encountering a Priest during services or after, we kiss/venerate his hand to honor the fact that his hands hold the Holy Gifts. If the Priest is holding the Gospel, Cross or other Holy Object, kiss/venerate the object and then his hand.