
The Journey

Catechumen Manual



The Disciples & Christ on the Road to Emmaus

Greek Orthodox Mission Church of Salem, Oregon

1st Edition

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Prayer for the Making of a Catechumen:

O Lord our God, we pray unto You, and we beseech You, that the light of Your countenance may be shown upon Your servant, and that the Cross of Your Only-begotten Son may be graven in his/her heart and his/her thoughts; that (s)he may flee from the vanity of the world and from every evil snare of the enemy, and may follow Your commandments. And grant, O Lord, that Your



Holy Name shall cleave to him/her and that (s)he may be united, in due time, to Your holy Church; and that the fearful mysteries of Your Christ may be administered unto him/her; That having lived according to Your commandments, and preserved without flaw the Seal, (s)he may receive the bliss of the elect in Your Kingdom; through the grace and love towards mankind of Your Only-begotten Son, with whom thou art blessed, together with Your all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Welcome Letter:

Dear Catechumen,

I greet you with the love and peace of our Lord and welcome you to the Catechumenate program of our Holy Metropolis of San Francisco. As you prepare to be received into the Church through Holy Baptism and/or Holy Chrismation, it is my fervent prayer that your journey be a blessed one. May it lead not only to enlightenment, but also to



theosis – a transformative process whose goal is likeness to or union with God. As Saint Paul preached to the Galatians 3:27, “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” thus making Christ the center of your identity and union with Christ the goal of your journey. I urge you, as Saint Peter wrote, to become “partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4) and to live your life fully committed to the Orthodox faith and exemplifying the Lord’s love in all that you do. In the early Church, your catechumenate may have lasted for as many as three years. Certainly, this was the general practice in the time of Saint John Chrysostom, in the fourth century. The question, however, is not the duration of your study, but your growth in Christ. Nor is it simply general instruction in the Faith or

how the Orthodox Church compares with other Christian churches and confessions. It is as much about maturation as it is about learning. For this, the present manual aims to be a guide. Use it as a springboard. One that engages you in matters of the Faith, but even more so, one that connects you with Him Who is the Alpha and the Omega.

It is in this spirit and for this purpose that I welcome you to the program. I convey to you my blessings on your journey to Orthodox Christianity. May it be a life-changing one!

With Love in Christ,



Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

Becoming Orthodox:

So, you're exploring the idea of joining the Orthodox Church? Relax! It is a joyful and well-worn path, with many souls who have made this journey before you, and many more will come after you. Therefore, let's start with a few things.

First thing: All are welcome to attend any and all of the services and classes offered. We believe that Christianity is a living faith, and therefore must be received from living persons. Your introduction to the local clergy and community will enrich you and benefit you in many ways. So, come and see!

Second thing: When a person first becomes interested in the Orthodox Church a series of initial interactions take place. Perhaps one visits a liturgy, researches Orthodoxy online, or engages in a conversation with someone who is an Orthodox Christian. We pray that these initial interactions are blessed and launch that person to becoming an "Inquirer". The Inquirer stage is fairly fluid and unique to the individual. Sometimes it lasts years, other times weeks or months. We pray too that this time is blessed!

Third thing: When one desires to become a member of the Body of Christ, a period of instruction is necessary. From the earliest days of the Church, this was called the Catechumenate, and those wishing to join were called Catechumens. One must know the Gospel. One must know what the Church is, and isn't; what membership in the Church means, responsibilities and expectations for members, benefits of membership, and what discipleship means to believers in Christ Jesus. Sometimes a local Church

has a New Members Class, sometimes they have a series of classes. Whatever your situation is, you can be assured that many have come this way before you.

The time you spend, as a catechumen is time well spent. You'll not only have the chance to learn more about the Orthodox faith, but you'll also have the chance to immerse yourself into the Orthodox way of life. You won't have to go the Catechumenate alone. We will provide a mentor for you to help you walk this part of the journey. You will also have access to the priest for one-to-one meetings. You may get impatient (many of us did!) for your entrance into the Church, but make no mistake, in no time, your catechumenate will have come to an end, and you'll be a member of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church once and for all!

Are you ready for the journey of your lifetime? If the answer is "Yes!" then this manual is for you. We've provided you with information and resources to guide you through this journey. The manual also contains a letter of welcome from our archbishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos. In the early Church, it was the Bishop that oversaw the Catechumenate. We are blessed that he remains involved and blesses us. Finally, the prayer for the "Making of a Catechumen" is included so that God blesses you and your journey. The Church prays for the Catechumens at every Divine Liturgy and the people of God pray privately for you as well.

Welcome again! May it be blessed!

Required Reading:

The required reading of a Catechumen will consist of two works:

1. ***The Orthodox Church***: by Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy) Ware.
2. ***The Orthodox Way***: by Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy) Ware.

There is a suggested reading list for those interested in learning more about God, Church organization and history, theology, and saints. The Catechumen will also attend instructional meetings and services. The reason the Church requires service attendance is that Orthodox Christians can explain up to a point what a service is like, but a Catechumen will only know fully after services are attended. This is so important that one of the Church's priests, Fr. Jerry, has a saying, "Orthodoxy is more often caught than taught."

Helpful Links & Resources:

Listed below are some links on Orthodoxy:

- **Orthodox Christian Network**: Orthodox Christian News, Radio, and Video Programming: www.myocn.net
- **Ancient Faith Radio**: Online audio and video programming, including two 24-hour internet-based Orthodox radio stations, live call-in programs and an extensive list of downloadable Orthodox content. Ancient Faith Ministries exists to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through accessible and excellently crafted publications and creative media that lead to a living experience of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. www.ancientfaith.com

- **Get to know the Original:** Finding the living roots of Christianity. www.gettoknowtheoriginal.net
- **Journey to Orthodoxy:** For those on the path to the Orthodox Christian Faith this website shares stories of others who have travelled this path. www.journeytoorthodoxy.com

Online Instructional Programs:

- **The Way:** An Introductory Course to the Orthodox Faith. This website gives an overview:
 - A. <http://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk/courses/an-introductory-course-to-the-orthodox-faith>
 - B. Here is a link to the twelve videos: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXnuWl5TJO1Xu8rFR62toGASn7EtfY_8
 - C. If you wish to read the transcripts, here is the link: <http://www.holyresurrection.us/Talks/>
- **Discovering Orthodox Christianity:** <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/discovering>

Metropolis & Archdiocese:

Here are the links for our Metropolis, Archdiocese, and Ecumenical Patriarch web sites:

- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: <http://goarch.org>
- Metropolis of San Francisco: <http://sanfran.goarch.org/>
- The Ecumenical Patriarch: <https://www.patriarchate.org/> (allow some time for loading).

Location & Contact:

Chapel of St. Patrick

Blanchet Catholic School 4373 Market St NE Salem, OR
97301

Web Page:

<http://www.salemorthodoxchurch.org>

Email:

<mailto:frgerasimos@sntgrg.org>

Phone:

503-391-6707

Service Times:

Wednesday: 6 p.m. Vespers with Book Study and Lenten Potluck to follow (Paraklesis on the first Wednesday of the month).

Divine Liturgy on alternating Saturdays and Sundays each week (Check the web calendar to be sure).

Saturdays: 8:40 a.m. Pre-Communion Prayers & 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (followed by coffee hour).

Sundays: 9 a.m. Orthros & 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy (followed by coffee hour).



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