



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DENVER

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July 8, 2020

## PROTOCOL 20-12

The Reverend Clergy, the  
Pious Monastics and the  
Faithful Parishioners of the  
Holy Metropolis of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

As members of our Orthodox Christian Church which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ established through His Supreme Sacrifice on the Holy Cross, giving His holy Body and sacred Blood for the Life of the world, we have been facing unwelcomed difficulties in unnecessary discussions concerning the manner our people partake of the Holy Eucharist. In the past two thousand years of the Church, during the first millennium the manner of the people receiving the Holy Eucharist was evolving. But for the past millennium the Church established the way in which people of all ages, including baptized infants and the elderly, could easily partake of the holy Body and sacred Blood of the Lord without difficulties in receiving the holy gifts.

It can correctly be said that in the past millennium there has never been a problem in how the Holy Eucharist was received by the faithful Christians. Truly what a God-given blessing this has been for the Church. Going back into history to see how this holiest and greatest sacrament of the Church has become unquestionable, we must understand how our monotheistic faith became a natural part of this fallen world. We know that the Hebrew or Judaic people were the only monotheists believing in the one, true God. All other people of the world were polytheists. In the Jewish faith thousands of priests existed, offering the blood of tens of thousands of designated animals, for the forgiveness of the sins of the people, especially during the annual Passover celebrations. This was in fulfillment of the teachings in the Old Testament.

When the fullness of time had arrived, as we read in the New Testament, our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies which pertain to Him. Among the first prophecies we read in the Prophet Isaiah the following: Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (7:14). At the Mystical Supper, our Lord gave the bread and the wine as His Body and Blood. This was the fulfillment of the reality that He came as the only Priest of the New Covenant, giving the only necessary sacrifice on the Holy Cross, His holy Body and sacred Blood, for the Life of the world.

On the basis of this historic fact, we know that we receive the Holy Eucharist for the remission of our sins and for our eternal life in God's Kingdom which has been prepared by Christ for His Second Coming and the gathering of His people. The Divine Liturgy written by Saint John Chrysostom expresses this. From this historic reality the Church established by our Lord through His Supreme Sacrifice on the Cross infers that the Church which He established in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies has only one priest and one sacrifice.



As we look into the history of the Church and Her holy sacraments, we see that in the ordination of the clergy there are deacons, presbyters, and bishops. These three titles are administrative titles and not sacramental. Sacramentally it is only the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the Celebrant. This is the reason why all the sacraments of the Church are in the third person and never in the first person. The pronoun I is never used in any of the sacraments. In the Divine Liturgy the celebrant prays for the Father to send the Holy Spirit down and to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord.

As extensions of the One Priesthood in the New Testament, the priesthood of Christ, the presbyters or priests and bishops or hierarchs receive the consecrated gifts as the unbroken continuity of the original Supreme Sacrifice of the Lord. Consequently each celebration of the Divine Liturgy continues to be from the original Sacrifice on the Holy Cross, now in its divine essence, being the uninterrupted continuity of the one true gift which has brought the remission of sins and eternal life to the believing recipients. This holy gift of salvation is now offered by canonical priests and bishops of the one true Church who represent Him, receiving the same honor and respect, as would be given to Christ the Lord.

Our Lord came into His fallen world through the holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary as the one and only priest of the New Covenant. There is no need for any other sacrifice for one to inherit eternal life in the everlasting Kingdom of God. As we ponder these truths, it is evident that nothing which touches the Holy Body and Sacred Blood of the Lord can negatively affect the spiritual purity of this Divine Gift which prepares the believer for eternal life in the anticipated Kingdom of God, as promised by our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

On the basis of these historic facts there should never be any question in the minds of the members of the Church pertaining to this holy sacrament of the Church which our loving God has given to the heirs of His coming Kingdom.

With paternal blessings,

*+Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver*

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