

Holy Ascension Orthodox Christian Mission

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made;

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from the heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man;

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried;

And arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father;

And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

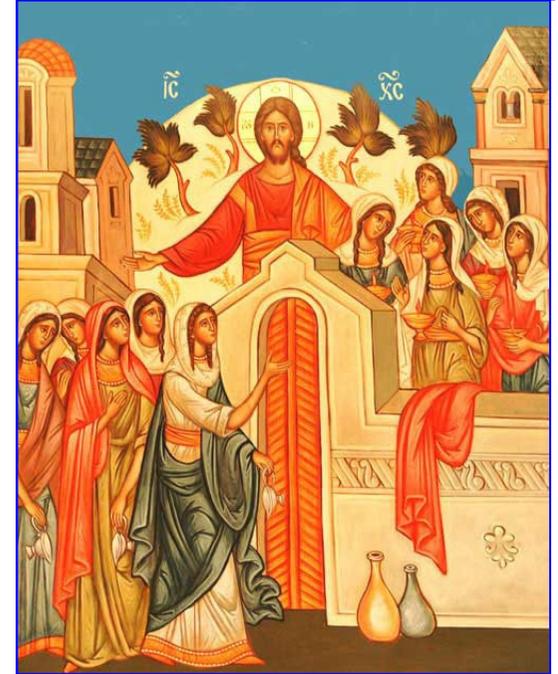
ATTIRE: USING GOOD JUDGEMENT

When attending services, there are those who feel that God will accept us regardless of our attire. Yes, God does accept us as we are, but what are we doing to prepare ourselves for Him? This is why we must take proper care in what we wear. We need not be dressed 'fancy' as to impress others. We need to be dressed 'respectfully' to present ourselves to God. Preferably, women should wear dresses and the men should wear suits or semi-formal attire during the summer season.

From time to time, medical or other reasons arise which may prohibit the wearing of certain clothing. You should use your good judgment when these situations arise. Speaking with your priest will help also.



Orthodox traditions & Church Etiquette



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www.ascensionorthodox.org

In the Orthodox Church, there are many customs and traditions, which are an important part of our worship. Some are cultural and some are pious customs. Some are essential and some are not.

LIGHTING CANDLES

Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an offering to accompany our prayer. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the Church.

There are times, though, when candles should not be lit. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle and Gospel Readings, during the Little or Great Entrances, and the Sermon. If in doubt, one of the faithful or even the priest will be available to guide you.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY

The time to arrive at Church is before the service starts. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the Church quietly and observe what is happening. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished then you can start lighting candles and venerating icons. If the priest is giving the Sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded.

Try not to interrupt the Liturgy by your entrance. The best way to avoid this situation is to arrive on time.

"LET US ATTEND"

In the Orthodox cultures, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered very disrespectful. In our Australian culture, while there are no taboos, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable when sitting. Crossing one's legs in church is not permitted, not because it is 'wrong' but rather because it is too casual and relaxed for being in church.

Remember, sitting in church is a concession, not the normative way of prayer. You surely do not want to get too relaxed and let your mind drift. In fact, when you do sit in church, you should sit attentively. Keep feet on the floor, ready to stand at attention, which is what **"let us attend"** means.



EXCESSIVE COSMETICS

Women who wear lipstick to church should blot their lips well before venerating an icon; receiving Communion; kissing the Cross; or a priest's or bishop's hand.

DURING CHURCH SERVICES COMMUNICATE WITH GOD . . . ONLY

Wait until coffee hour to say "Hi" to friends and family members. It is not appropriate to greet people and have conversations during the services.

LEAVING BEFORE DISMISSAL

Leaving church before dismissal deprives us of a blessing. Worship has a beginning, **"Blessed is the Kingdom . . ."** and an end **"Let us depart in peace . . ."**

To leave immediately after Communion is to treat the church like a restaurant where we come and go as we please.



VENERATING ICONS

When you enter the church, it is traditional to venerate the icons. Usually, there are icons at the entrance to the church and many churches have icon stands in the front as well.

When venerating (kissing) the icon, please be aware that it is improper to kiss an icon on the face.

HANDLING THE BLESSED BREAD (ANTIDORON)

After receiving Holy Communion and at the end of the Divine Liturgy, it is customary to receive a piece of blessed bread (antidoron) -- the bread that was left over after Holy Communion was prepared. While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread, and as such, it should be eaten carefully so that crumbs do not fall.

Both adults and children should always remember to treat and consume the antidoron with respect.