



HOLY CROSS - ST. NEKTARIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH (BARRIE)

ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΤΙΜΙΟΥ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΥ - ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΕΚΤΑΡΙΟΥ

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WHAT IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING?

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A member in good standing is every Orthodox Christian, regardless of culture or heritage, who has not only been Baptized and Chrismated into the Holy Orthodox Church, but continues to live and practice the Orthodox faith. Practically this means participating in the life of the Church. As a guide, a *koubaro/koubara* (*Nouno/Nouna, Godparent, Sponsor*) must be in good standing with the Church and be able to receive Holy Communion in order to participate in any sacrament of the Church.

Since a sponsor serves as an example for the newly baptized or newly married and guides and instructs them in the Orthodox faith, they must be living a life befitting of an Orthodox Christian. In other words, they must be canonically able to participate in all of the Sacraments of the Church. For example, if they are single, they cannot be co-habiting with anyone out of wedlock. If married, their marriage must have been performed in a Canonical Orthodox Christian Church by a Canonical Orthodox Christian Priest. Couples not married in the Orthodox Church cannot participate in the sacraments until they are married in the Orthodox Church.

Though the Church does not permit divorce, out of love and compassion, she may issue an *ecclesiastical divorce* upon submitting an application to the Archdiocese of Canada. Those, however, who have obtained a civil divorce but have not been released from the Church through Spiritual Court, cannot receive Holy Communion, nor can they be a Sponsor at a Baptism or a Wedding.

It should be noted that an Orthodox Christian who has been absent from the Church for many months or years cannot receive the Sacraments until he is reinstated in the life of the Church through the Sacrament of Repentance and Holy Confession.

How do I get back into good standing with the Church?

The Orthodox Christian who sincerely wishes to become an Orthodox Christian in Good Standing should meet with the Priest who will then explain the necessary steps they will need to take in order to accomplish this.

We cannot take it for granted that, simply because we were Baptized and Chrismated in the Orthodox Church, we are automatically entitled to receive the Sacraments. An Orthodox Christian who does not practice and live according to the teachings, Holy Canons, and Dogmas (laws) of the Church unfortunately loses all of their privileges and rights which are reserved for Orthodox Christians.

However, EVERYTHING can be resolved with prayer, hard work, and God! Do not dismiss anything or lose hope! God wants us all to seek His forgiveness and repent for our sins. If you have any questions or you need help, please do not hesitate to speak with us.

With fatherly love and blessings,

+ Fr. Theodoros