

Guidelines for the Reception and Transfer of Clergy into the OCA

These Guidelines were Approved at the Fall, 2013 Holy Synod Meeting

A. The Metropolitan receives all petitions for admission of clergy from other Orthodox Churches (*The Statute, Article IV, section 2(i)*).

B. As a canonical principle, no clergyman from any Orthodox Church or jurisdiction may initiate a transfer to another Church or jurisdiction without the knowledge and blessing of his bishop and/or the appropriate diocesan authorities. Whatever the clergyman's reasons for seeking a transfer, he should communicate with his own bishop and receive from him a blessing to seek an assignment elsewhere. The normal practice within the OCA is for such a blessing to be issued in writing by the bishop.

C. All candidates petitioning to be received into the Orthodox Church in America must present a portfolio which includes:

1. Letter from the clergyman's bishop stating his willingness to release the clergyman; NOTE: Letters from bishops which release a clergyman prior to the completion of any portion of the process outlined below will not be considered.

2. Letter from the Metropolitan stating that the OCA has received his petition and is willing to consider receiving him upon successful completion of the process;

3. Letter of "willingness to receive" from the diocesan bishop willing to receive the clergyman;

4. All background material on the clergyman including Seminary records, clergy file from the previous Orthodox Church releasing him, baptism/chrisamation, ordination certificates (marriage certificate if married), proof of education, (military discharge if applicable) must be gathered in a portfolio for review which will include a completed clergy questionnaire;

5. The clergyman will be required to undergo a psychological evaluation (at his own or the receiving diocese's expense) and criminal background check (OCA will provide) equivalent to the one required for ordination within the Orthodox Church in America. (see Appendix A for recommended tests);

6. The Metropolitan and/or his delegate will review the portfolio and interview the clergyman (and wife if married) and issue a letter of acceptance. If the clergyman is not accepted, a letter will be issued as well.

D. If there is no OCA bishop that has asked for the clergyman, the Metropolitan will inquire of the diocesan bishops whether they have need of such. In general, the Metropolitan will not accept a clergyman without a specific assignment unless there are extenuating circumstances that require this.

E. Having been duly received, clergy from other Orthodox Churches are then transferred by the Metropolitan to the diocesan bishop for assignment as provided for above.

Appendix A: Recommended Psychological Tests. These tests are subject to change upon the recommendation of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Board of Theological Education and other qualified consultants.

- I. The psychological testing of candidates petitioning for ordination or reception into the Orthodox Church in America is now standard practice.
- II. The testing must be of equal or greater nature for all and at equivalent and qualified institutions. The tests cannot be done by someone not licensed and qualified to administer the tests.
- III. The Orthodox Church in America will pay for all standard testing for Seminary candidates who will be entering into service in the Orthodox Church in America. Those clergymen petitioning to enter into the Orthodox Church in America will either pay for the testing themselves or with some agreement with the Diocesan authorities with whom they will be serving.
- IV. All candidates for ordination or reception will have a standardized criminal background check which is paid for by the Orthodox Church in America.
- V. The information contained in both the psychological test and the criminal background tests are strictly confidential and can only be reviewed by competent and assigned authorities. The contents may not be shared with anyone outside of these authorities.
- VI. The tests and checks will not be conducted without the written permission of the applicant.
- VII. Currently, these tests are the standardized norms to be used:
 - A. Psychological Testing:
 1. Personality Inventory which can include 16 Personality Factor (PF), 16 Personality Test, Personal Data Inventory, MMPI-2 and MCMI-III
 2. Leadership Style which can include FIRO-B and MBT1
 3. Vocational Interest Scale which can include R-COPE (Religious Coping Index)
 4. Personal Interview with will include an in-depth clinical interview combined with other tests.
 5. The tests results will include a comprehensive written report which will include raw data and interpretive comments.
 - B. Background Check
 1. Criminal History
 2. Employment Verification
 3. Driver's License and SSN Verification
 4. I-9 Verification
 5. Sexual Offender Registry Search
 6. Consumer Credit History