

ON LEAVING THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

A brother who had sinned was turned out of the church by the priest. Abba Bessarion got up and went out with him, saying, "I, too, am a sinner."

Commentary from Fr. Simeon

It has come to my attention recently that rumor is floating around that, for some reason or another, people who have fallen afoul of statutes and/or by laws are no longer Orthodox Christians. Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.

Sometimes, in extreme circumstances, it is necessary for the Church to ask someone to leave, or place them under some kind of ecclesial sanction. These are extreme cases, and the final say on this matter is always the diocesan bishop. These extreme cases are always a pastoral problem, because it is always preferable to "seal" confession and penance, keeping it between the confessing priest and the penitent. Any publicly imposed penance, such as someone "turned out of the church by the priest," runs the risk of starting gossip: "I wonder what he/she did wrong?" All of us know how unhealthy that is. Abba Bessarion, one of the most respected and holiest members of his ancient and strict monastic community, stands up and leaves with one turned out, showing us that there were problems implementing "the rules" in their strictest interpretation in the late 300's.

For us, we must remember that an Orthodox Christian does not cease to be an Orthodox Christian simply because they have sinned, or are prevented by circumstances from fulfilling the OCA Statute's mandate that we confess and receive communion, at a minimum, annually (OCA Statute, Article XII, section 7.d.iii). Even those who, for whatever reason, have willingly separated themselves from Holy Orthodoxy, but have never received sacraments elsewhere, are still considered "Orthodox Christians" if they choose to identify themselves as such. There is a wide chasm between someone who is not a member in good standing, as defined by statutes and by-laws of the Church, and someone who is no longer an Orthodox Christian.

The only way someone ceases to be an Orthodox Christian in my mind is when that person:

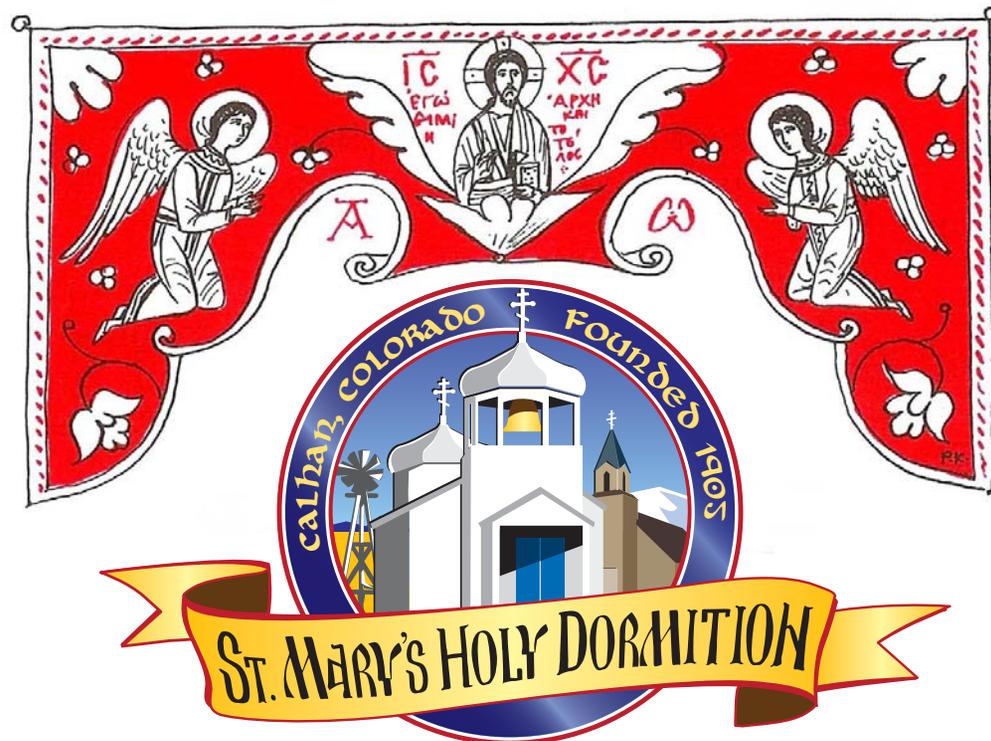
1. Publicly says that they are not an Orthodox Christian
2. Receives sacraments, notably Baptism and/or Communion, outside the Orthodox Church

Even in these cases, the Canons of the church have a simple remedy that would

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SUNDAY BULLETIN

16 July 2017



ORTHODOX CHURCH
CALHAN, COLORADO

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Rector's cell—719-761-8214

<http://www.holydormition.net/>

Priest—Rev. Simeon B. Johnson, Rector



RECTOR'S WELCOME

Christ is in our midst! He is, and ever shall be!

Welcome to St. Mary's Orthodox Church. We are a small, multi-ethnic parish in Calhan, Colorado. While the parish was founded by Slovak pioneers, we welcome everyone, no matter what your ancestry.

If this is your first time here, thank you for worshipping with us.

After services, we would like to invite everyone to the Parish hall across the street for coffee and fellowship.

Fr. Simeon B. Johnson—Rector

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

Sunday, July 16

9:30 AM—Divine Liturgy & Fellowship

Saturday, July 22

1:00 PM—Baptism of Logan and Austin followed by luncheon

5:30 PM—Great Vespers

Sunday, July 23

9:30 AM—Divine Liturgy & Fellowship

Formal "grave blessing season" ended with the Feast of Ascension. If, however, you would like graves blessed at any other cemetery, please speak to Father and we'll schedule a time.

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

July 16 – Delmar Manyik

July 16 – LD Meier

July 17 – Harry and Polly Mikita

July 17 – Bryan Hlatki

July 18 – Brooklyne Elizabeth Billmire

July 20 – Ernie and Jeanie Mikita

July 21 – Whitney Tunink

July 22 – Luke Meier



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allow people who have committed these acts to return to the Orthodox Church and become "members in good standing" again. Usually, this is solved by a simple Confession and receiving Communion. In the case of receiving Sacraments outside the Orthodox Church, the bishop would have to be involved and would likely add no more than Chrismation to Confession and Communion, if circumstances truly required such.

Saturday, 10 January 2015