



Nebraska Ukrainian Orthodox Exarchate

Guidelines for Clerical Attire

We distinguish between two situations: (a) a priest or deacon working only in the church, i.e. being supported by his parish; and (b) a priest or deacon who needs to support himself with secular employment.

I. In General

The traditional appearance of an Orthodox priest, both in public and in private, is a matter of canonical regulation. Holy Canons reflect the proper functioning and life of the Church. They are not simply laws and rules, but guides to the life in Christ and patterns by which to accommodate the action of the Holy Spirit to our daily activities. Hence they are binding on all who live in spiritual sobriety and uprightness. Orthodox Canons are also an integral part of Holy Tradition, which together with Holy Scripture forms the ground of administrative authority, upon which our faith is built.

The inner and outer cassocks traditionally worn by Orthodox clergy are to the pious objects of tremendous respect and veneration. Ignorance or simple bigotry account for instances, in which clergymen are ridiculed for dressing in a traditional manner. However, the treatment for ignorance and bigotry is not the abandonment of Orthodox customs, but the enlightenment of those who are ignorant. Traditional Orthodox clerical attire is an outward witness to the grace of the priesthood.

II. Clergy who are not employed outside the church

A priest or deacon, who is fully supported by his parish and given the privilege not to work a secular job, should have the appearance of an Orthodox clergyman, i.e. he should wear his Rasson (Podrashnik, cassock) and outer Rasson (Riassa) as needed, his pectoral cross (as approved by the bishop for priests) and a Skufos (Skufia) or Kamilafkion (Kamilafka) always outdoors but indoors as customary.

Aside from church related functions*, which requires full Orthodox clergy attire (as outlined above), married clergy may wear dark (but not necessarily black) clothing. Monastic clergy should wear black only. Western-style clergy shirts are also acceptable.
Clergy should never wear shorts and casual or sports clothing in public.

III. Clergy working in secular employment

Clergy should wear dark clothing when not working in church related functions*. Clergy should never wear shorts and casual or sports clothing in public.

Guidelines for acceptable employment for Orthodox clergy are found in the *Guidelines for Clergy Employment* of this Exarchate. In any case, all secular employment must be congruent with the status of priesthood and be approved by the bishop, before a clergyman can accept an offer.

*Services, pastoral counseling, pastoral and ecumenical meetings, visitations, attending other churches or Services, public appearance and speaking, ecumenical events.