

What makes a person Ukrainian Catholic? The most common way is through Baptism/Chrismation/Eucharist in the Church. It is these same sacraments in the Roman Church that makes a person Roman Catholic. These holy mysteries, when celebrated in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, make a person Ukrainian Catholic.

However, there may be some circumstances that alter the above statements. A child born to two Ukrainian Catholic parents is unquestionably a "Ukrainian Catholic" even if the baptism is in a Roman (Latin Rite) church.

BUT, if Roman Catholic parents decide that they want the mysteries celebrated in the Ukrainian Catholic Church but the child to be a Roman Catholic, the person is Roman Rite, even in the holy mysteries are celebrated in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The baptismal certificate does not automatically make someone a member of a particular (Ukrainian, Roman or any other) Church.

Even if for the past seven years or seventy years, a person has attended the Ukrainian Catholic Church's Divine Liturgy every Sunday and holyday never missing one, this does not make them Ukrainian Catholic. If a person wants to attend a Ruthenian Church or Ge'ez Church, it does not make them a member. There is no problem in *attending* any Catholic Church as often as you want. *Membership*

becomes an issue when dealing with sacraments.

A person is usually chrismated (or "confirmed") in the same particular Church. For Byzantines, chrismation immediately follows the Baptism by the priest in the same ceremony, (unless someone is baptized in an emergency situation).

For Romans, the Bishop performs the sacrament, at a later time. So a person who is baptized Roman Catholic cannot be chrismated in the Ukrainian Catholic Church without the permission of the Roman ordinary. Chrismation, since it is delegated from the Roman bishop, does not make the person Ukrainian Catholic. Obviously a person chrismated in the Ukrainian Church cannot be "re-Confirmed" in the Latin (or any other) Church under any circumstance.

The biggest issue is marriage. In the Eastern Code of Canon Law one is to marry in the Church of the groom, which would mean in Roman Church, if the groom were Roman. BUT, the Roman Code differs, allowing marriage to be in the church of either party. SO, two Roman Catholics cannot marry in the Ukrainian Church.

Speaking of marriage, canon 33 says that a "wife is at liberty to transfer to the Church of the husband at the celebration of or during the marriage; when the marriage has ended, she can freely return to the original Church sui iuris." (The marriage

ending part means the husband dies or there is an annulment.) There is no such passage allowing a husband to change.

So, if a person wants to change from one Church *sui iuris* (i.e. Roman) to another (i.e. Ukrainian), one has to ask for a transfer of ritual Church. In the United States this is done between a bishop of each of the Churches agreeing. Both Churches will interview the person to be sure that it is being done for good reasons. Good reasons include: the desire to return to the rite of one's ancestors; for peace in the home where there are different rites; the person cannot follow their current rite because of their religious formation in the new church; adoption and others not listed here. The individual makes a petition to the pastor of the Church to which he wants to belong (the pastor cannot initiate this). The pastor then can provide guidance in the creation of a petition in this example to the Bishop of his Eparchy. This then begins the process of interviews and discussion between the two bishops. If they agree, a formal transfer of rite is granted. P.S. It is more difficult to go from Ukrainian to Roman than to go from Roman to Ukrainian.

Fr Jonathan Morse

(Fr Morse added a precautionary note along with this article. Due to the fact that many individual circumstances may exist in a particular situation, always check with the local hierarchy if you contemplate a proper transfer to a Church other than the one in which you were initiated at baptism)

