

Norms proper to the Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholic faithful of the Byzantine rite in Italy

With *Rescriptum ex audientia SS.mi* of 28 August 2023, the [*Norms proper to the Apostolic Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholic faithful of the Byzantine Rite residing in Italy*](#) were adopted. Erected on 11 July 2019 with the *Bolla 'Christo Salvatori'* (AAS, 111, 2019, pp. 121-122), following the request of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and with the positive opinion of the Bishops of the Italian Bishops' Conference, the Apostolic Exarchate offers specific pastoral care for the numerous faithful of the Byzantine rite present in Italy, a number that is constantly growing also following the events of the war invasion of Ukrainian territory. The Exarchate is based at the parish of Saints Sergius and Bacchus of the Ukrainians in Rome. In October 2020, when the office of Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante* of the Exarchate ended, the first Apostolic Exarch was appointed by the Holy Father. The *Rescriptum ex audientia SS.mi* now establishes specific provisions in favour of the Exarchate.

The Exarchate is defined as a portion of the People of God formed by the faithful ascribed to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church *sui iuris*, with domicile or quasi-domicile in Italy and governed by the Exarch, who is a member by right of the Italian Bishops' Conference and must maintain close ties of communion and coordination with the Bishops of the Italian Dioceses and Eparchies in which the Exarchate is present. However, the Exarchate remains linked to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, from which it is an ecclesiastical circumscription outside the territory of the Church *sui iuris* itself.

To erect personal parishes, the Exarch must obtain the opinion of the local bishops concerned and inform the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches. The clerics of the Exarchate are obliged to cultivate a bond of unity with the presbytery of the diocese or eparchy in whose territory they minister, so that between the clerics of the Exarchate and the diocesan clerics the ministry is exercised in mutual pastoral assistance. In the case of pastoral service or presence for study in Italy of priests ascribed to the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church *sui iuris*, it will be necessary to provide for specific agreements, according to the models established by the Italian Bishops' Conference, between the respective Hierarchs and the Exarch and, if signed with a diocesan or Eparchial Bishop, the nihil obstat of the Exarch will be required. The Exarch, with the permission of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches, can also erect new Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

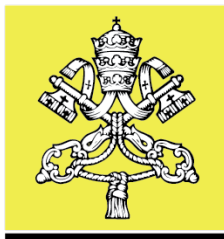
The number of the Exarchate's faithful is approximately 80,000, organized into over 170 communities divided into five pastoral districts: Rome, Naples, Milan, Venice and Florence-Bologna. In December 2021, the first parish of the Apostolic Exarchate was established in Novara. On 31 July 2022, the personal parish of Our Lady of Zhyrovyci and Saints Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus in Rome was also established. For the other communities, in accordance with canon 677 §1 of the Code of Canon Law, the Apostolic Exarch granted all non-parish priests, who have been legitimately entrusted with the pastoral care of communities of the Apostolic Exarchate, where therefore temporarily parishes of the Apostolic Exarchate have not yet been canonically erected, the license to administer the sacraments of Christian initiation in their respective communities. The administration of the sacraments of initiation is celebrated according to the current norms of the Catholic Church, in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and in conformity with the provisions established for the Exarchate. With regard to the administration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, the celebration of which takes place in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, it has been established that it is

to be performed, in accordance with current Canon Law, the provisions of the Italian Episcopal Conference and the provisions of the Exarchate, by the parish priests and vicars legitimately appointed for the pastoral care of the faithful of the Exarchate; where, on the other hand, the communities are temporarily entrusted to non-parish priests, it will be necessary to request the faculty from the Apostolic Exarch to administer the marriage and they must be registered in the appropriate register at the Curia of the Apostolic Exarchate in Rome. According to Canon 828 § 1 of the Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium, in fact, only marriages celebrated in a sacred rite in the presence of the local Hierarch or the local parish priest or a priest on whom, by one or the other, the faculty to bless the marriage has been conferred, and at least two witnesses, are valid. § 2 of the canon specifies that the marriage rite is considered sacred with the very intervention of the priest who attends and blesses.

In November 2021, the Ecclesiastical Court of the Exarchate was also established as the judicial body of first instance for the faithful of the Apostolic Exarchate with jurisdiction, throughout the country, for cases concerning the protection of the rights of individuals or the ascertainment of the nullity of marriages of the faithful of the Exarchate. By the Apostolic Signatura, the Bologna Ecclesiastical Court was assigned as the Court of Appeal. In this case, the matrimonial discipline, both substantive and procedural, enshrined in the Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium applies. In addition to the ordinary matrimonial process, also the Exarch, if he is invested with the episcopal order, may pronounce ecclesiastical judgments of matrimonial nullity at the end of the *processus brevior*, introduced by Francis in the Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium with the Apostolic Letter in the form of m.p. *Mitis et misericors Iesus* of 15 August 2015. Having been approved by the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, it follows that ecclesiastical sentences of matrimonial nullity pronounced by this Ecclesiastical Tribunal, which is in fact part of the organization of the judicial apparatus of the Catholic Church, as well as those pronounced by the Exarch, may also be rendered enforceable in Italy pursuant to Article 8.2 of the Villa Madama Agreement (See P. PALUMBO, *Il caso delle sentenze di nullità matrimoniale pronunciate dal tribunale dell'Esarcato Apostolico per i cattolici ucraini di rito bizantino residenti in Italia*, in A. FUCCILLO, *Diritto, religioni, culture. Il fattore religioso nell'esperienza giuridica*, Giappichelli, Torino, 2022, p. 550 ss.).

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Rescriptum ex Audientia Sanctissimi: Norms proper to the Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholic faithful of the Byzantine rite in Italy

RESCRIPTUM EX AUDIENTIA SANCTISSIMI

Norms proper to the Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholic faithful of the Byzantine rite in Italy

The Holy Father Francis, in the audience granted to the undersigned Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, on 23 June 2023, considering that the preservation of one's identity of origin is useful for the preservation and growth of the Catholic faith, has accepted the proposal to provide for whatever may be helpful for the fruitful spiritual care of those belonging to the Apostolic Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholic faithful of the Byzantine rite residing in Italy, erected on 11 July 2019 by the Bull *Christo Salvatori*. Therefore, it has decided to adopt the following provisions:

Art. 1 - The Exarchate is a portion of the People of God formed by the faithful ascribed to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church *sui iuris*, with domicile or quasi-domicile in Italy and governed by the Exarch in the name of the Roman Pontiff.

Art. 2 - The Exarch is a member by right of the Italian Episcopal Conference and, consequently, is bound by the norms that regulate its functioning, and follows its directives.

Art. 3 - The Exarch, in the exercise of his office, must maintain close ties of communion and coordination with the bishops of the Italian dioceses and eparchies in which the Exarchate is present.

Art. 4 - To erect personal parishes, the Exarch shall obtain the opinion of the local bishops concerned and then informs the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches.

Art. 5 - The clerics of the Exarchate must cultivate a bond of unity with the presbytery of the diocese or Eparchy in whose territory they exercise their ministry. In this spirit, they shall foster joint pastoral and charitable initiatives and activities, which may be the subject of special agreements or conventions stipulated between the Exarch and the local bishop.

Article 6 - The clerics of the Exarchate and those of the dioceses or eparchies in whose territory the personal parish of the Exarchate is located shall exercise their ministry in mutual pastoral assistance.

Art. 7 - The pastoral service or presence for study in Italy of priests ascribed to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church *sui iuris* are regulated by agreements, according to the models established by the Italian Episcopal Conference, between the respective Hierarchs and the Exarch. If they are signed with a diocesan or eparchial bishop, the *nihil obstat* of the Exarch is required.

Art. 8 - The Exarch, with the permission of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches, may erect new Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

From the Vatican, 28 August 2023

Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti

Prefect
