

## Concelebrating with the Latin priests – requirements

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### Memorandum

To: Clergy of the Eparchy  
From: +john michael

Date: 10/12/06

Re: Vesting at concelebrations with the Latins

I am writing as one who perhaps more experience than the majority of our priests concelebrating the Eucharist in the Latin rite, owing to the many meetings and conferences I attend. In ten years as a bishop I have been a part of occasions of greater and lesser solemnity, but one thing that seems fairly common is that the Eastern Catholic concelebrants always stick out in a crowd. We all know that canon law specifies that concelebrants of different rites are supposed to wear the vestments proper to their own rite, but that is not the “sticking out” I am referring to.

I recently concelebrated the funeral mass for a Latin bishop. I was very gratified to note that, unlike most such situations, every concelebrating Latin priest was *fully vested*. The chasubles even matched! The mass had a simplicity and solemnity that was very characteristic of the Latin liturgical tradition.

But the Eastern Catholic priests still stuck out, not because of their different vestments, but because, unlike their Latin brothers, they were not fully vested: *not a single one*. Everyone, of whatever rite, wore some version of “vestments lite” that, I suppose, was meant to be something like the alb-and-stole uniform that has been in vogue in the Latin rite for many years now. (I might note that the bishop-concelebrants were fully vested, as we usually are, though I have to admit that I have seen some pretty strange assortments of vestments on other occasions.)

So, there we were, once again looking as if we were trying to imitate the Latins, but pathetically behind their latest liturgical trends. It was as if we finally catch on to their practices just in time for them to change them on us.

I am being a bit facetious, but only a bit. Here’s my point: in our tradition, we *never* celebrate the Eucharist only partially vested. We always vest fully. Therefore, I believe that the proper interpretation of canon law means that *we are to vest fully as we would for our own Divine Liturgy when we concelebrate a Latin mass*, regardless of whether the Latin concelebrants are fully vested or are wearing only alb and stole. Our priests who have bi-ritual faculties ought ordinarily to wear their Byzantine vestments when concelebrating the Latin mass, unless they are the “presider” at that mass.

As inconvenient as it is to take a full set of vestments with us, we must take care to honor our tradition properly in such circumstances and to represent it well. *Clergy of our eparchy, therefore, are to vest fully for all Eucharistic celebrations in any rite whatsoever*, without regard (except for color) for what the other concelebrants might or might not wear.

I appreciate your taking the time to read this memo, and look forward to your cooperation.