



The Orthodox Faith

**A Journey Through and Examination of the Orthodox
Faith Guided by the Words of the Nicene
(Constantinopolitan) Creed**

Introduction to the Greek Orthodox Church

- Things to Consider:
- It is the oldest Church in Christendom
- It is an Apostolic Church -- St. Andrew
- It is the second largest body in Christendom
 - With 350 million people worldwide
 - It is democratic institution
 - It was instrumental in the revival of Greek and Roman studies and subsequently in the development of the Renaissance humanism



Goals for these Sessions

Who We Are and What We Believe



What does it mean to be Orthodox? What do we believe? What are we saying when we recite the Creed? How are our beliefs different from those of our Protestant and Roman Catholic brothers and sisters? How does the sacraments and Icons impact our lives?

The goal of this course will be to assist you in understanding the Orthodox beliefs. By utilizing the Creed as our cornerstone, we will explore its historical context, theological meaning, and significance for how we live in faith.

Each step along the way will find its foundations in Biblical texts, the teachings of the Councils, writings of the Saints, and in various historical documents to better understand the times and circumstances surrounding the rise of our great Tradition.

The Nicene Creed

We/I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried.

On the third day he rose according to the

Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and dead.

His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life,

Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,

Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead.

And the life of the age to come.

Amen.

The Creed

The Orthodox Symbol of Belief

- **Orthodox Christian's statement of belief**
- **Composed at the Council of Nicaea 325 A.D. and Constantinople in 381 A.D.**
- **Official name: The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed**
- **Describes essential statements of belief for the Orthodox Church**



“We/I believe....”

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεόν

- **Note: “Πιστεύομεν” from the first line of the Creed means WE believe, i.e. the bishops of the Ecumenical Council speaking for the entire Church**
- **Made singular in the Liturgy as a personal statement**



Who is the “We/I”????

- We are individual members of the Body of Christ, the Church
- Each with our own God-given gifts and calling
- Working in freedom toward the fulfillment of God’s purpose in the world through the help of the Holy Spirit
- The Church is a continuation of the Incarnation – the embodied presence of the resurrected Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.



*Now you are the body of Christ,
and each one of you is a part of it.*

1 Corinthians 12:27



Who is the “We/I”????

Church is the Body of Christ and like all bodies is comprised of many parts, each one important but in need of all the others.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many."

Ephesians 1:22-23, "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues." (languages)

What is the Orthodox Church?



Ephesians 2

19. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God,
20. built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.
21. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;
22. in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.



Icon with the Synaxis of the Apostles. ca. 1432

The Nicene Creed

“It is...one of the few threads by which the tattered fragments of the divided robe of Christendom are held together.” (J.N.D. Kelly, Church historian)



**Icon of the
1st Council of Nicaea**



Who we are

“Orthodox”

Orthos – right, correct or true

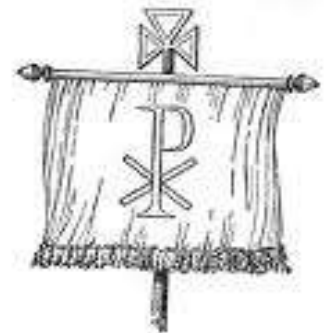
Doxa – I hold an opinion, I believe

Equals: Right Belief or True Doctrine

350 million worldwide (6M in N&S America)

Orthodox Church was:

- *Born on Pentecost*
- *Suffered persecution*
- *Adopted by the Roman Emperor Constantine (Battle of*
- *Milvian Bridge 312 --- Edict of Milan 313 --- New Rome 330,*
- *Changed the world.....*



Born on Pentecost

Acts of the Apostles 2

1. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
2. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
3. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.
4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.



**The Tower of Babel
Brueghel, Mid 16th cent.
In some ways Pentecost
is the opposite of what
happened with Babel**



Born on Pentecost



Acts 2:

- 41. So those who welcomed his [Peter's] message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added [to the group].**
- 42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**
- 43. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.**
- 44. All who believed were together and had all things in common;**
- 45. they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.**
- 46. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,**
- 7. praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**

Born on Pentecost

Holy Spirit now takes the role of Torah

Ideal first community centered on:

- Fellowship - giving up possessions
- Prayer –first Jewish then specifically Christian
- Breaking bread – first temple worship, then
- breaking bread at home, developing Eucharist and start of Church separate from Temple/synagogue
- House of God no longer geographically restricted to Temple
- Teaching of Apostles and conformity to them **IMPORTANT!**



Who is the “We/I”????

Our Church

Matt. 28:

16. But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated
17. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.
18. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
19. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
20. teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Called to worship and grow! And we are never alone because God's grace and Holy Spirit is always with us.



The Great Commission



Who is the “We/I”????

What is the Creed’s function for the church?

- ❑ It is a statement of articles of belief that binds us together in faith.
- ❑ We are bound to it but with freedom and difference. Member’s understanding, intensity, involvement can still differ.
- ❑ We need each other and **Tradition**. No one member of Church believes better than the communal Church.

“We know that when one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He is saved by the Church, as a member of it and in union with all its other members.” (Fr. Komiakov, Russian Orthodox theologian)

One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.....

- **One** – undivided and not many
- **Holy** – sanctified and set apart for the work of God
- **Catholic** – characterized by fullness and universality
- **Apostolic** – mission is to preach the Gospel to the world and was initiated by an apostolic.



Hagia Sophia



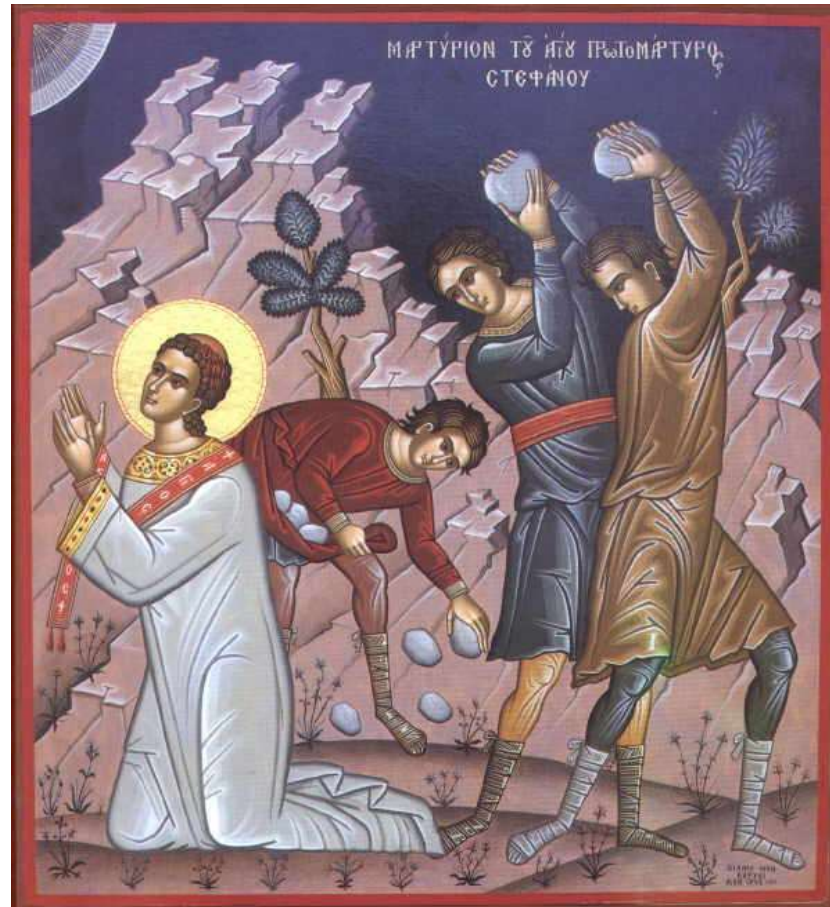
“I believe....”

Bible on Faith and Belief



- **Hebrews 11:1-3:** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.
- **Romans 8:24:** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?
- **2 Corinthians 4:18:** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- **Hebrews 3:6:** ...but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house-- whose house we are (the church), to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm until the end.

Many Suffered Persecution for Our Faith



Icon print of St. Stephen the Protomartyr: The first martyr for the Christian faith, and one of the first deacons.

Persecution for Our Faith Has Not Ceased

- In the 20th century, an estimated 40M Orthodox Christians died for their faith, primarily under communism.
- Recently in the Middle East many Orthodox churches have been burned and the Christians have had to flee or were killed.

Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

Oikoumene meant “the civilized world” i.e. the Roman Empire and later Christendom.



The Councils:

- 325 Nicaea – Divinity of Christ
- 381 Constantinople I – Divinity of Holy Spirit; Creed
- 431 Ephesus - Theotokos
- 451 Chalcedon – Two natures of Christ
- 553 Constantinople II – More on two natures
- 681 Constantinople III - Monotheletism
- 787 Nicaea II – Iconoclasm



Third Ecumenical Council

Seven Ecumenical Councils

- **The seven Ecumenical Councils**
- **Author/artist unknown**
- **The author is emphasizing the democracy of the Councils**



Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils



The Rule of Faith: Russian Icon

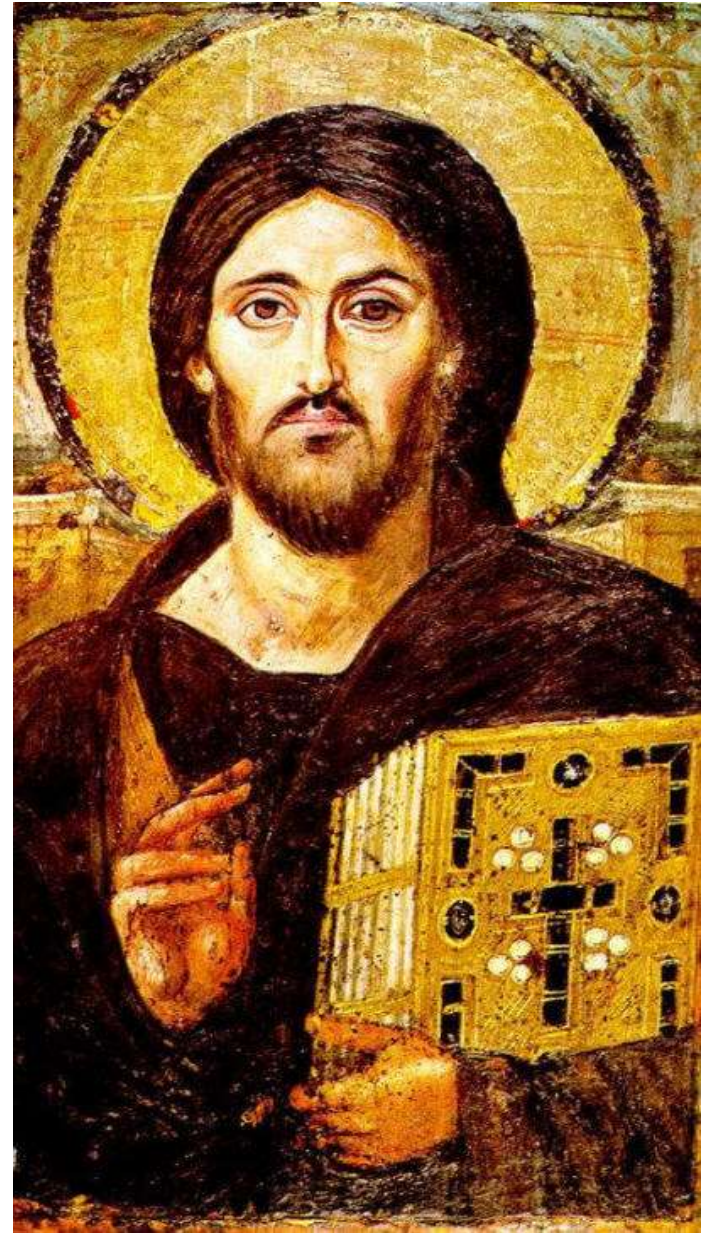


Christ is the Perfect Union of the Human and the Divine

Note the difference in the two eyes of Christ in this icon:
Tranquility/Compassion;
God/Human



6th c., Constantinople/ Sinai



Two Primary Sources of Authority: Scripture & Tradition

- Scripture — Old and New Testament — Foundational Cornerstone of the Faith
- Tradition — Includes Scripture, the writings, teachings, acts of the apostles, saints, martyrs, and fathers/mothers of the Church, and her liturgical and sacramental traditions throughout the ages, the oral tradition of the early Church and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils



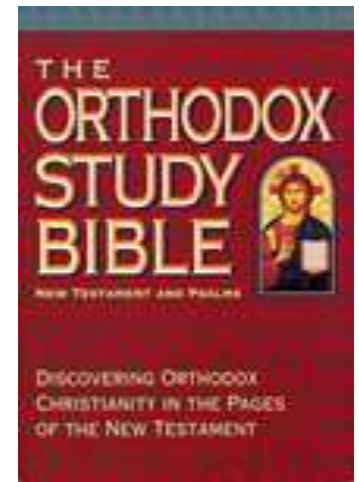


Scripture



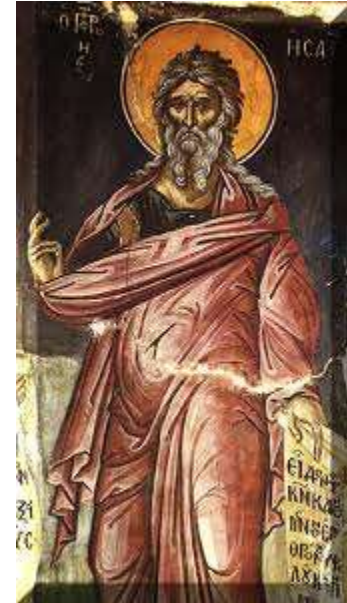
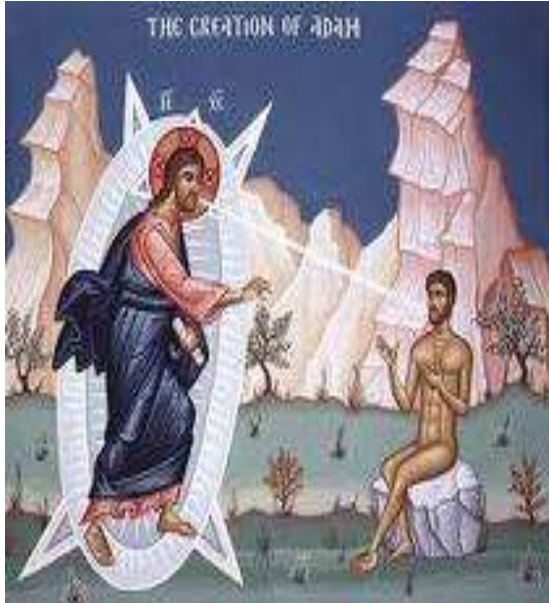
Why study the Bible?

- Divinely inspired and authoritative record of God's revelation of God's self to humanity – truth of God, condition of humanity and purpose of creation
- It's God's Word: Torah/Prophets/Wisdom/Christ
- It is the verbal icon of God - God is present in Bible like saints are present in icons
- Liturgy is grounded in Scripture (98 OT and 114 NT references in the Divine Liturgy)
- Anchor of on-going living Tradition



Old Testament

History from Creation to just after Alexander the Great



Canonization begins after 586 B.C (after Exile) and ends around 100 A.D (after sack of Jerusalem) with Council of Jamnia headed by Rabbi Akiba.



Scripture

Old Testament



Referred to by Jews as the **TaNaK**

- **Torah** is Instruction/Law/ Teachings (Books of Genesis, Exodus Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)
- **Nebi im/ Prophets:**
 1. Former prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings
 2. Latter prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 minor prophets
- **Ketibim /Writings:** Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Song of Solomon, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel





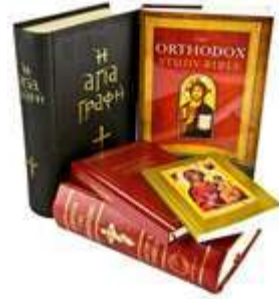
Septuagint



Septuagint is Greek translation of Old Testament (LXX)

- *Septuaginta* (70) Tradition holds that Egyptian King Ptolemy II asked 72 scribes to translate the Old Testament for his libraries. Miraculously all 72 translations were in complete agreement. **Contains Deuterocanonical** (called Apocrypha by Protestants) books and writings considered non-canonical by the Jews such as Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon, the 3 book of the Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Baruch and certain additional sections to otherwise undisputedly canonical books like Psalms and Daniel.
- Jews reject these mainly because they were late in their tradition and first written in Greek, not Hebrew or Aramaic.
- **This is the Scripture used by St. Paul and the Orthodox Church Fathers**

The New Testament Canon



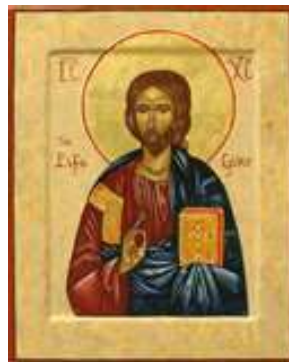
Reading the Holy Scriptures and Orthodox Literature

Gospel =s *euaggelion* good news or announcement

Non-Christian uses include: announcing a victory in war, emperor's birth or visit, etc.

Orthodox Christian view: Jesus' words/deeds/suffering/death/resurrection and their power for our salvation.

Gospels of the New Testament canon became fixed towards the end of the second century AD



Quick Review

1. Nicene Creed -- God made all things,
discussed the word “essence” -- Pontius Pilate
Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as does Christ
- 2 Biblical quotations establishing reason for a church
- 3 Byzantine Empire
- 4 Pentacost
- 5 Icons
- 6 Prosecution – past and present
- 7 Septuagint Bible -- used by St. Paul
- 8 New Testament -- Four Gospels

The Iconostasis

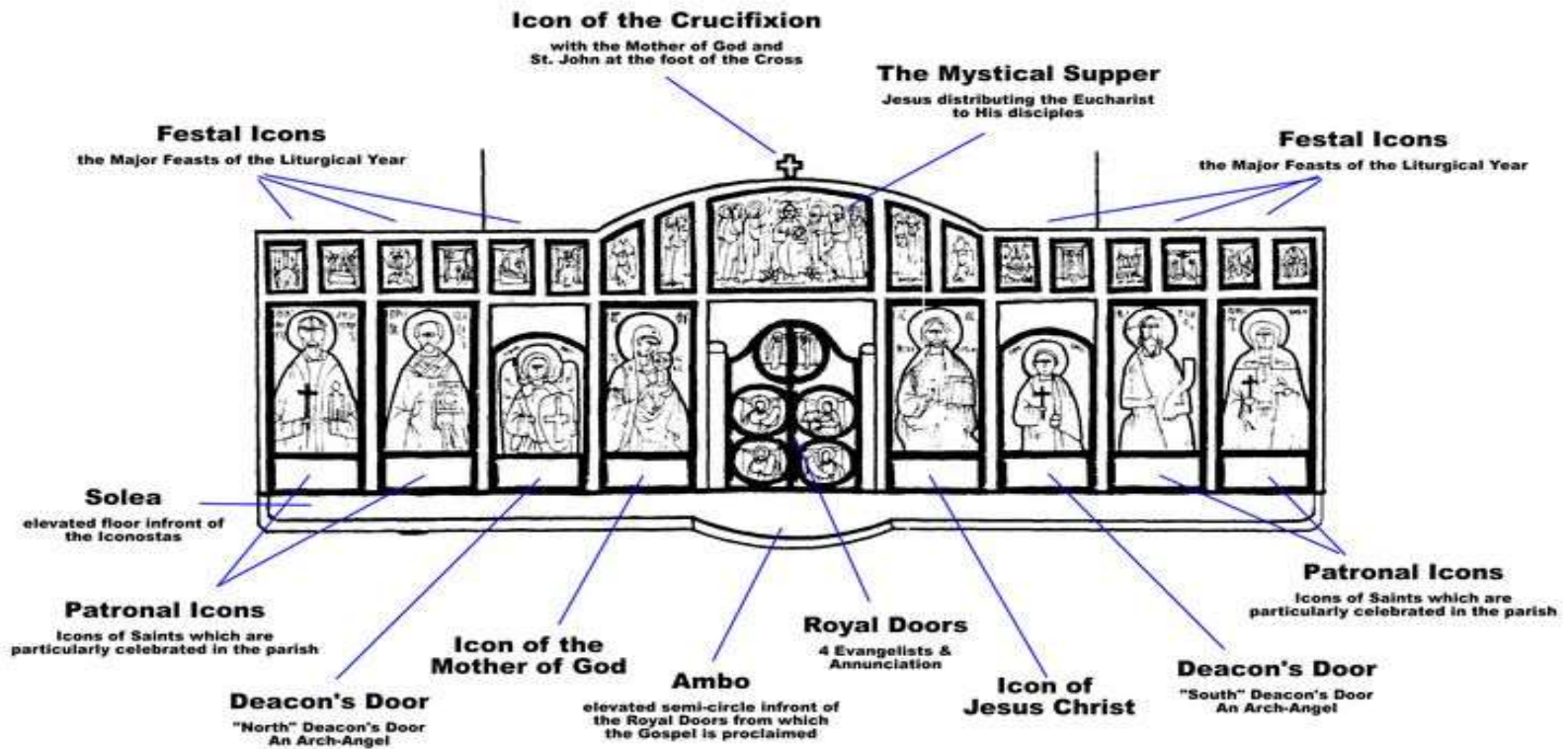
- A. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, the **Iconostasis** (Greek for icon stand) or **Templon**, is a screen (wall), consisting of one or more rows of icons, separating the nave from the sanctuary.
- B. In Byzantine spirituality the iconostasis is a boundary between two worlds, the divine and the human. In some small Byzantine churches the iconostasis may be completely absent and may be replaced by small icons. The Iconostasis has three sets of doors.
- C. The central doors are call **Holy doors** or **beautiful gate** and contain an icon of the annunciation. The doors to the left and to the right of the Holy doors are called the north and south doors, also known as the deacon or angel doors.
- D The Icons of the Savior, the Theotokos, The Archangels and the Saints, featured on the iconostasis, represent the reconciliation taking place between the human and the divine.



Iconostasis or Templon

Iconostasis

- May differ slightly in individual churches



Greek Orthodox Church



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Russian Orthodox Iconostasis





Orthodox Domes





Some Themes of Gospels



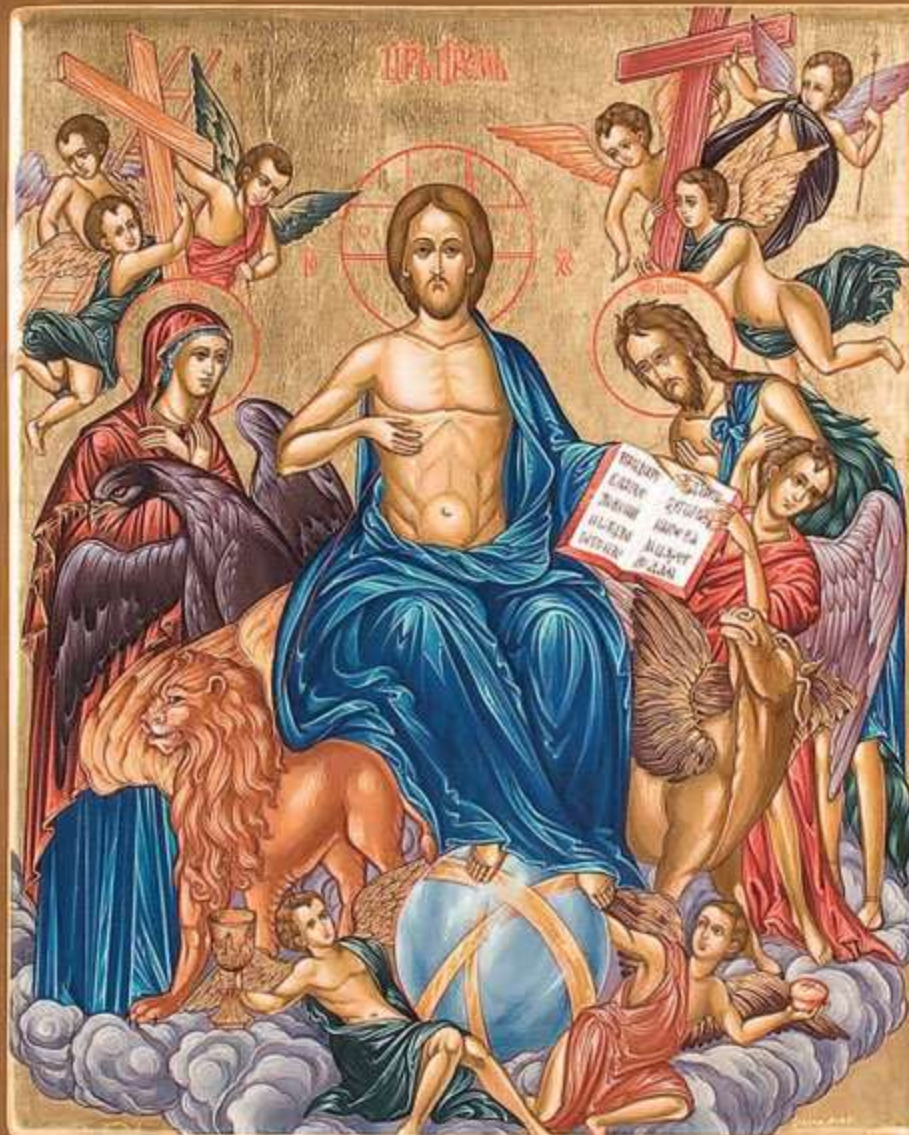
- **New mode of God's salvation** was being offered; new era; and it was being offered to all including/especially the marginalized of society
- **Validation of previous Scripture. Emphasis on the spiritual meaning of the law, not on the law for its own sake.**
- Special personal emphasis on **God as personal Father** (e.g. Lord's Prayer). not emphasized Old Testament where God was Father of Israel. For Jesus it is far more intimate (e.g. Abba - Daddy).
- **Jesus himself had a role in man's salvation;** Jesus is God and as Son; could forgive sins; not just a teacher or prophet. The use of "Amen" also not found in same way in OT – gives Jesus' own authority to his sayings.
- **New emphasis on love.** In OT love was for God and neighbor (= fellow Jews). For Jesus it extends to non Jews and even enemies.

RUSSIAN ICON of the King of Kings

**Note four symbols
of the Gospel
writers.**

Ephesians 1:22-23,
"And God placed all
things under his feet
and appointed him to
be head over
everything for the
church

**One can often find
them in a Greek
Orthodox church**





Orthodox Crosses



Four Symbols of Gospel Writers

- These images in both the OT and the NT prompted St. Irenaeus (140-202) to liken them to the four Gospel writers because of the content of their Gospels and their particular focus on Christ.
- “The first living creature was like a lion” symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power; “the second was like a calf,” signifying His sacrificial and priestly order; but “the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,” — an evident description of His advent as a human being; “the fourth was like a flying eagle,” pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church. And therefore, the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated.

St. Matthew



- Being more specific, St. Irenaeus explained the symbolism as follows: St. Matthew is represented by a divine man because the Gospel highlights Jesus' entry into this world, first by presenting His family lineage — “A family record of Jesus Christ, Son of David, son of Abraham” (Mt 1:1) — and His incarnation and birth: “Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about” (Mt 1:18). “This then,” according to St. Irenaeus, “is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is, that the character of a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel.”

St. Mark



- St. Mark, represented by the winged lion, references the Prophet Isaiah when he begins his gospel: “Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Isaiah, the prophet, it is written: ‘I send my messenger before you to prepare your way: a herald’s voice in the desert, crying, “Make ready the way of the Lord, clear Him a straight path.”’ “The voice in the desert crying” reminds one of a lion’s roar, and the prophetic spirit descending to earth reminds one of a “winged message.” The lion also signified royalty, an appropriate symbol for the Son of God.

St. Luke

- The winged ox represents St. Luke. Oxen were used in temple sacrifices. For instance, when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, an ox and a fatling were sacrificed every six steps (2 Sm 6). St. Luke begins his Gospel with the announcement of the birth of St. John, the Baptizer, to his father, the priest Zechariah, who was offering sacrifice in the Temple (Lk 1). St. Luke also includes the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the fatted calf is slaughtered, not only to celebrate the younger son's return, but also to foreshadow the joy we must have in receiving reconciliation through our most merciful Savior who as Priest offered Himself in sacrifice to forgive our sins. Therefore, the winged ox reminds us of the priestly character of our Lord and His sacrifice for our redemption.

St. Luke was a native of Antioch and unlike the other New Testament writers, was not a Jew, but a Greek



St. John

- Lastly, St. John, author of the fourth gospel, is represented by the rising eagle – a figure of the sky, and believed by Christian scholars to be able to look straight into the sun. John starts with an eternal overview of Jesus, the Logos, and goes on to describe many things with a "higher" christology than the other three (synoptic) gospels; it represents Jesus' Ascension, and Christ's divine nature. This symbolizes that Christians should look on eternity without flinching as they journey towards their goal of union with God.



RUSSIAN ICON
of the King of Kings

Note four symbols of the
Gospel writers.

One can often find them
in a Greek Orthodox
church



Tradition is what holds us together

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Note this is oral and written Tradition. Revelation never stops!



“Tradition is the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church.” (Vladimir Lossky - Major Russian Orthodox theologian)



Church Fathers on Belief



Evagrius of Pontus

“God cannot be grasped by the mind. If he could be grasped, he would not be God.”

St. Dionysius the Areopagite

“Leave the senses and the workings of the intellect, and all that the senses and the intellect can perceive, and all that is not and that is; and through unknowing reach out, so far as this is possible, towards oneness with Him who is beyond all being and knowledge. In this way, through an uncompromising, absolute and pure detachment from yourself and from all things, transcending all things and released from all, you will be led upwards towards that radiance of the divine which is beyond all being.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa

“Anyone who tries to describe the ineffable Light in language is truly a liar – not because he hates the truth, but because of the inadequacy of his description.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa

“It is a sort of knowledge to know that what is being sought transcends knowledge.”

Revelation

God reveals God's self, His understanding, desires and commands through inspired people and writing.

E.g. Saints, Fathers,
Prophets, Christ,
Scripture and Tradition



St. John the theologian and Gospel writer

Who is included in Tradition?

Fathers of the Church. (Gr. *Pateres*). Pious and educated individuals, most of them bishops, who lived during the first eight centuries of Christianity. They wrote extensively, taught, explained, and defended the faith of the Church. Some of the most important Orthodox Fathers are: St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom, St. Athanasius the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. John of Damascus, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine.



But never forget Mothers and Sisters!!!!

The Orthodox Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic

In a nutshell.....

“The Orthodox have received the faith of the Apostles contained in written and oral traditions, interpreted by the Fathers in councils, elaborated and enriched, yet fundamentally without change or interpolation.”

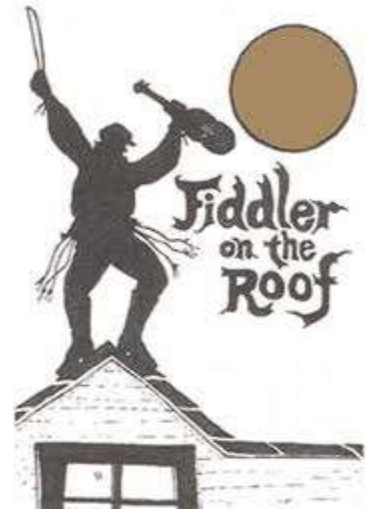


Tradition is:

**Bible, Creed, Councils of
the Church, writings of Saints
(Fathers and Mothers), service
books, icons, whole system of
dogma, church government,
worship articulated over the
ages.....**



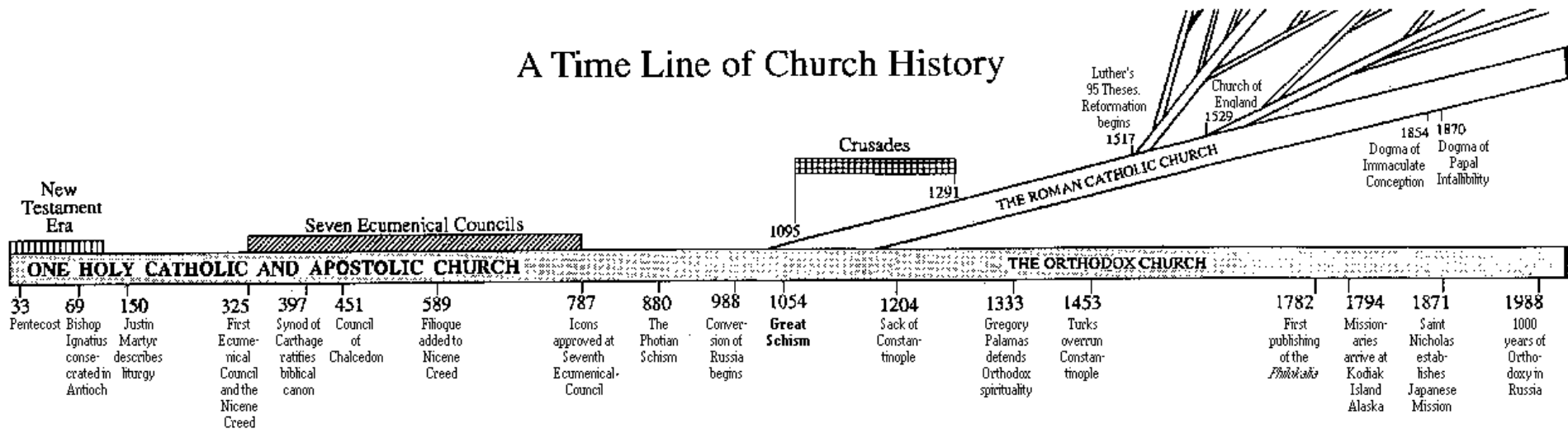
Tradition



- Tradition is not static
- Tradition is grounded in the Holy Spirit
- Tradition must be RECEIVED
- Tradition is not dictatorship
- But Tradition does/must set boundaries – necessary for governance and identity
- Tradition establishes and nurtures unity in diversity

Timeline of Orthodox East and Latin West.

At the core of the controversy was the role of the papacy and the manner in which doctrine is to be interpreted



An old Russian chronicle relates that Prince Vladimir of Kiev (d. 1015) could not decide which faith to adopt for himself and his people until his envoys reported from Constantinople that they had witnessed services there:

Moslems: “There is no joy among them.”

Roman Catholics: “without beauty”



Orthodox: "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men."



Predominantly Eastern Orthodox Christian countries

- Belarus
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Republic of Georgia
- Greece
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Romania
- Russia
- Serbia
- Ukraine

Countries with a high percentage of Eastern Orthodox Christians

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Estonia
- Egypt
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lithuania
- Syria

Not to be confused with Eastern Orthodox Church or Christianity in Asia. Oriental Orthodoxy is the communion of churches in Eastern Christianity which recognize only the first three ecumenical councils. There are approximately 84 M worldwide.

Predominantly Oriental Orthodox Christian countries where it is the largest single religious faith are:

Armenia, Eritrea, Ethiopia

Countries with a high percentage of Oriental Orthodox Christians include:

Egypt (Coptic), Syria, Lebanon, India



Some Differences From Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches

Minor

- Celibacy of Priests
- Immaculate Conception
- Original Sin
- Purgatory
- Infant Baptism
- Eucharist (mix bread, wine and water)
- Transubstantiation
- Leavened Bread



- ## Major
- Filioque - “and from the Son”
 - Infallibility of Pope
 - Primacy of Pope
 - Synergy (faith , works, Grace)
 - Predestination

Pope Pius IX reigned 1846 to 1878



Martin Luther

What is the Real Difference?

- One writer has compared Orthodoxy to the faith of Rome and Protestantism thus: Orthodoxy has maintained the New Testament tradition whereas Rome has often added to it and Protestantism subtracted from it; e.g. Rome added to the Nicæan Creed (Filioque - “and from the Son”) while numerous Protestant churches rarely study or recite the Creed.
- Rome has layers of ecclesiastical authority: much of Protestantism is anti-hierarchical or even “independent.”
- Rome introduced indulgences and purgatory; in reaction, Protestantism shies away from good works and discipline.

Historical Relationship of the Churches

- **Roman Catholics and Orthodox agree on the First Seven Ecumenical Councils**
- **Schism in 1054 – Filioque**
- **Sack of Constantinople by Christian Crusaders 1204**
- **Sack of Constantinople by Ottomans in 1453**
- **Luther – 95 Theses at Wittenberg 1517**



Byzantine Influence on the Renaissance

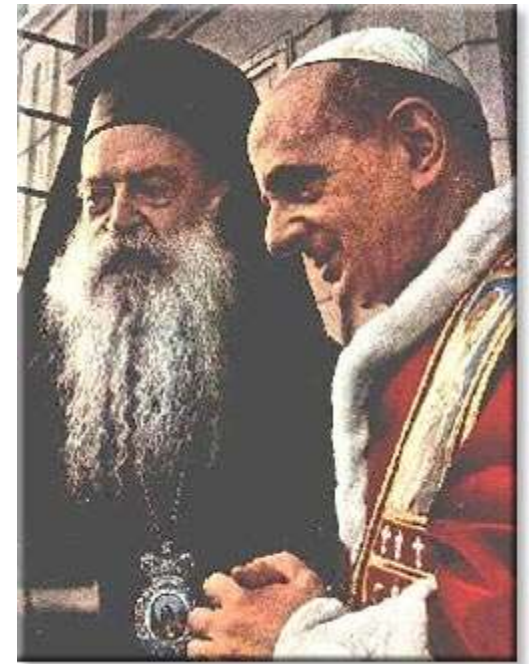
The migration of Byzantine scholars and other émigrés from southern Italy and Byzantium during the decline of the Byzantine Empire (1203–1453) and mainly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 until the 16th century, is considered by some scholars as key to the revival of Greek and Roman studies and subsequently in the development of the Renaissance humanism. These émigrés were grammarians, humanists, poets, writers, printers, lecturers, musicians, astronomers, architects, academics, artists, scribes, philosophers, scientists, politicians and theologians.

From left to right below: Demetrius Chalcondyles, philosopher; John Argyropoulos, scholar; Bessarion, statesman and scholar; Manuel Chrysoloras, scholar; El Greco, painter.



Cause for Hope????

- On December 7, 1965, Mutual Excommunication of 1054 was Annulled by Both Churches
- Vatican II – Equality of Rites in East and West
- Ongoing Dialogue and Official Visits and Religious Conferences Among all Churches



Picture above: Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenogoras of Constantinople exchange kiss of peace and mutually revoke bulls of excommunication in 1965

Pope Frances Greets Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople Bartholomew (270th holder of the title) At His Installation as Pope

Greeting Him as “My Brother Andrew”



The first meeting a Pope and the Russian Patriarchate since the Western and Eastern branches of Christianity split in the 11th Century.

In a joint declaration, they also urged the world to protect Christians from persecution in the Middle East.





Seven Sacraments

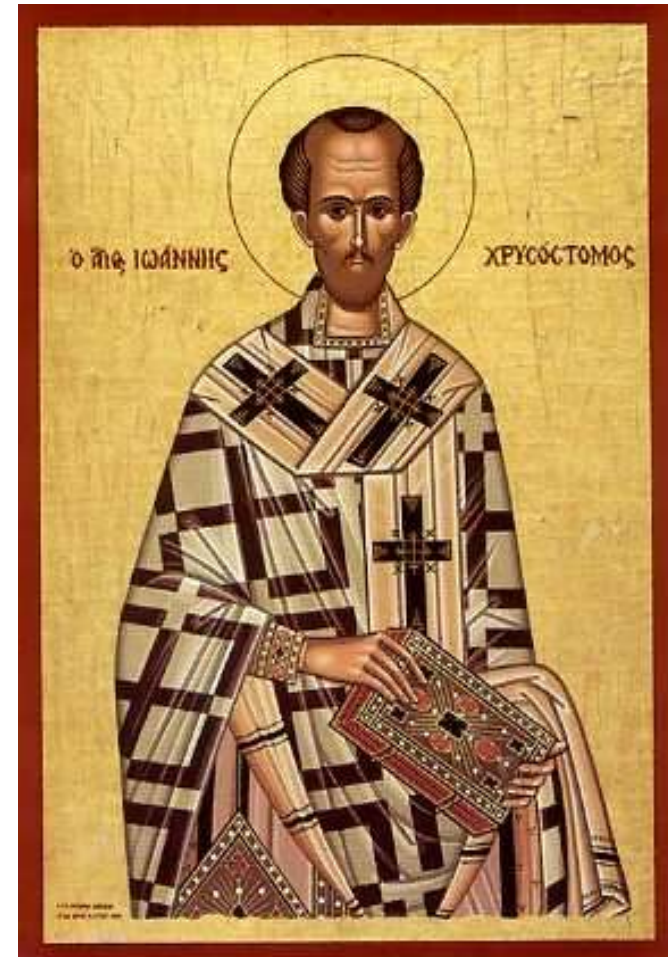


Outward and visible part of religion consisting of various ceremonies, words and symbolisms, producing an invisible action by the Holy Spirit that confers grace on an individual.

- **Divinely instituted by the Holy Spirit**
- **Communicates Sanctifying Divine Grace**
- **Theanthropic (both divine & human) – Churches nature is to continue the mystery of Christ's presence in our history**
- **Synergy (unequal but both necessary: divine Grace and Human Free Will)**

The Sacraments

“It is called a mystery because what we believe is not the same as what we see, but we see one thing and believe another In every sacrament there is the combination of an outward visible sign with an inward spiritual grace.” (Saint John Chrysostom)



The Sacraments

- Chief place in Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christian's worship belongs to the sacraments.
- At Baptism the person undergoes an outward washing in water, and at same time cleansed inwardly from sins; at the Eucharist visible bread and wine, in reality are the Body and Blood of Christ. Synergy (unequal but both necessary: divine Grace and Human Free Will)

"He who was visible as our Redeemer has now passed into the sacraments" (Saint Leo the Great).



Saint Leo the Great (pope 440 to 461). Known for persuading Attila the Hun in 452 to turn back from his invasion of Italy and for his Tome used by the orthodox Church at Chalcedon to help describe the two natures of Christ.

The Sacraments

- Other “lesser” sacraments can include: the rites for a monastic profession, the great blessing of waters at Epiphany, the service for the burial of the dead, and the anointing of a monarch.
- In all these there is a combination of outward visible sign and inward spiritual grace.
- The sacraments are personal: they are the means whereby God’s grace is appropriated to every Christian individually. E.g. when you say your name at communion, name at baptism.



**Ivory diptych showing
Christ crowning Romanos
IV and Eudokia, 11th cent.**



The Sacraments

- Number fixed in the seventeenth century
- Before that Orthodox writers vary the number of sacraments: **John of Damascus** speaks of two; **Dionysius the Areopagite** of six; **Joasaph, Metropolitan of Ephesus** of ten (15th century).
- Today the number seven has no absolute dogmatic significance for Orthodox theology, but is used primarily as a convenience in teaching.
- While all seven are true sacraments, they are not all of equal importance
- Baptism and the Eucharist occupy a special position



And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Seven Sacraments (*Mysterion*)



- **Baptism**
- **Chrismation**
- **Eucharist**
- **Confession/Penance**
- **Priesthood/ Holy Orders**
- **Marriage**
- **Holy Unction -Anointing the Sick with Holy Oil**



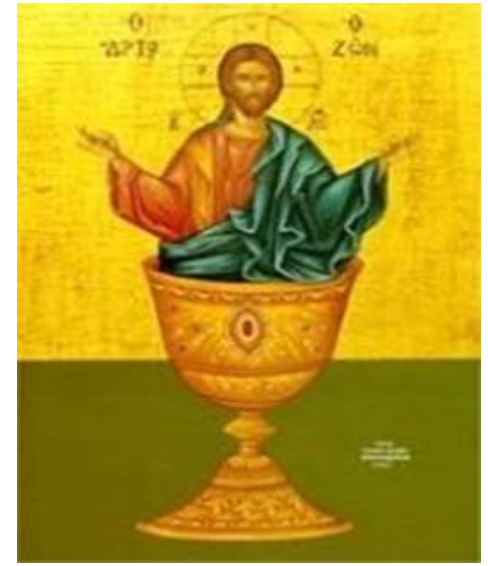
Seven Sacraments (*Mysterion*)



- **Baptism** – Matt: 28:19. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - Baptism symbolizes burial (as the child/adult is immersed in water) and resurrection and new birth in Christ (as the child/adult is lifted out). In baptism, one is born into the kingdom of God through renewal in Christ – becoming a new person.
- **Chrismation** — Acts 2: 38. "Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - It is a personal Pentecost the descent of the Holy Spirit. Through chrismation, the person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and is welcomed into the Body of Christ – His church.



Seven Sacraments (Mysterion)



- **Eucharist** – 1 Cor. 11: 24. “and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”
 - This “sacrament of sacraments” is the center of life. It is received as spiritual nourishment by the faithful for the remission of sins and life everlasting

Central Mystery of the Church “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:54)

Transform Human Community into the Body of Christ

Continuation of Pentecost (Renewal and Confirmation of Holy Spirit)

Messianic Banquet Where Heaven and Earth Mingle

Theosis (Mortal Humans Share in God’s Incorruptibility)

“God became man so that man could become God” St. Athanasius

Communion Cup





Seven Sacraments (Mysterion)



- **Confession/Penance** — 1 John 1: 9. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- Acts 3:19. “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,”
- **Sacrament of reconciliation** Confession is the remedy for spiritual sickness and reconciliation. It helps those who have been separated from God by sin to change their lives and to be received once more into God’s life.
- The penitent stand or kneels with the priest, who is witness rather than judge. The penitent confesses and expresses sorrow for having sinned, then the priest says the prayer of absolution through which God’s forgiveness is given.



Seven Sacraments (*Mysterion*)

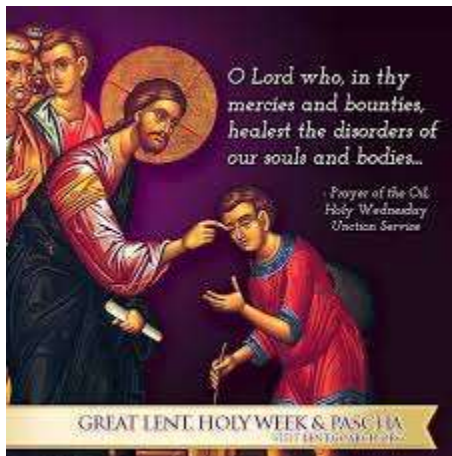


- **Marriage** — 1 Cor. 7: 3. “The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

“Marriage is honorable for it brings into the world more to please God.” (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

Marriage is an expression of God’s love for humankind. In marriage, a man and a woman become one spirit and one body through the Holy Spirit.

The rings are blessed and exchanged to show that each partner enters the marriage as a free commitment. The priest then places crowns on the heads of the bride and groom, symbolizing God’s matrimonial blessing, martyrdom and membership in God’s Kingdom. The ceremony also includes the “Common Cup” symbolizing the couple’s total sharing of life.



Seven Sacraments (Mysterion)



- **Holy Unction** - Anointing the Sick – James 5:
 - 14. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;
 - 15. and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven
 - This is the church's prayer for spiritual and physical healing. Through anointing with oil, the person's sufferings are united with those of Christ, and sins are forgiven.
 - On Holy Wednesday, during Lent, many Orthodox are anointed for spiritual healing and physical wellbeing in preparation for Easter



Seven Sacraments (Mysterion)



- **Priesthood/Holy Orders** – Acts 6: 3. "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."
 - Through Holy Orders, clergy receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and Apostolic succession, enabling them to continue the ministry of Christ in the Church.
 - This sacrament is for the ordination the three orders of the Clergy – deacon, priest and bishop.

The central Mystery of Orthodox Christianity is the Incarnation. That is what we celebrate with every Eucharist.



Unity between Christ and Church is effected, above all, through the Eucharist. Christ offers, is, and accepts the sacrifice



Eucharist



Orthodox Prosthophora Bread Seal

It comes from the Greek word for Thanksgiving.

All mainline Christian denominations agree that:

- It is a sacrament which calls into **remembrance** what Jesus was, said and did.
- It enhances and deepens the **communion** of believers not only with Christ but with one another
- Breaking the bread and pouring the wine are at least **symbols of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.**

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

- Eucharist is Church gathering to remember and celebrate the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, thereby, participating in the mystery of Salvation.
- This is why in the Orthodox Church it is known as the Divine Liturgy.
- The word liturgy means people's work, emphasizing community/communion.
- Eucharist is center of Church's life and principal means of spiritual development, for individuals and the Church as a whole.



Last Supper by Theophanes the Cretan, 16th cent. Athos

The Sacrament of the Eucharist



- All other activities of the Church are directed by and centered around it.
- Touches not only the mind but also the emotions and the senses.
- Orthodox Church believes that Christ is truly present with us in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
- The Eucharistic gifts of bread and wine become for us His Body and His Blood.
- These Holy Gifts are transfigured into the first fruits of the New Creation in which ultimately God will be "all in all".

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

- Orthodox Church believes that after consecration the bread and wine **become in very truth the Body and Blood of Christ: they are not mere symbols, but the reality.**
- Orthodoxy insists on the reality of the change without attempting to explain the manner of the change: the Eucharistic Prayer uses the term *metaballo*, to ‘turn about,’ ‘change,’ or ‘alter.’
- The Roman Catholic doctrine of **Transubstantiation indicates a change of substance** It denotes the idea that during the ceremony of the “Mass,” the “bread and wine” are changed, in substance, into the flesh and blood of Christ, even though the elements appear to remain the same.



Pope Benedict XVI celebrates Mass April 17, 2008 at Nationals Park in Washington, DC.

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Today some Orthodox writers use the word transubstantiation, but they insist on two points:

1. There are many other words which can with equal legitimacy be used to describe the consecration, and, among them all, the term transubstantiation enjoys no unique or decisive authority;
2. Its use does not commit theologians to the acceptance of Aristotelian philosophical concepts.



I am the living bread
which came down from
heaven; if any one eats of
this bread, he will live for
ever; and the bread which
I shall give for the life of
the world is my flesh.
—John 6:51

Transubstantiation

- The earliest known use of the term "transubstantiation" to describe the change from bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist was by Hildegert de Lavardin, Archbishop of Tours, in the 11th century.
- During the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of transubstantiation was heavily criticized as an Aristotelian "pseudophilosophy" imported into Christian teaching and jettisoned in favor of Martin Luther's doctrine of sacramental union, or in favor, per Huldrych Zwingli, of the Eucharist as memorial.

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Orthodox position: “ ...The word transubstantiation is not to be taken to define the manner in which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord; for this none can understand but God; but only thus much is signified, that the bread truly, really, and substantially becomes the very true Body of the Lord, and the wine the very Blood of the Lord.” (English translation, *The Doctrine of the Russian Church*, London, 1845, quoted by Bishop Ware)



Priest celebrates Eucharist at
Visoki Decani Monastery,
Serbian province of Kosovo
and Metohia

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

‘If you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it is through the Holy Spirit ... we know nothing more than this, that the word of God is true, active, and omnipotent, but in its manner of operation unsearchable.’ (St. John of Damascus)



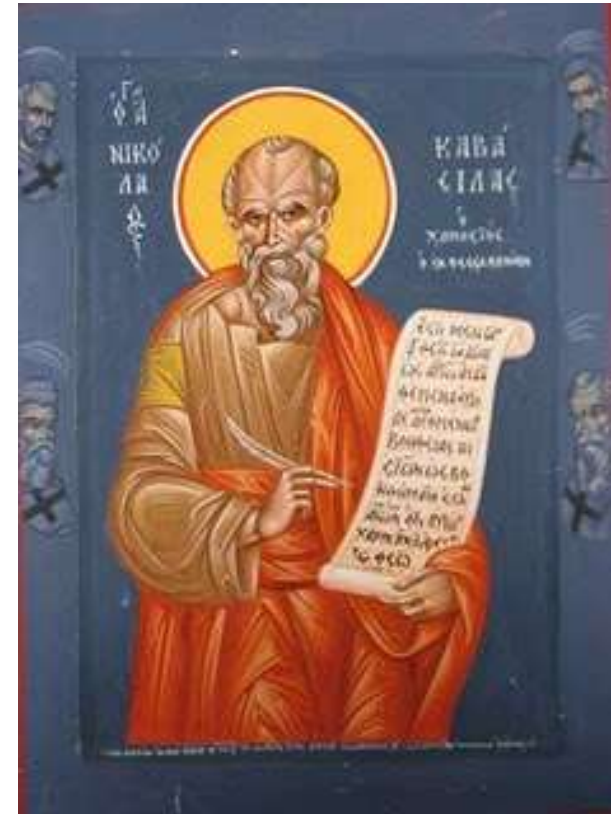
The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

- Consubstantiality is a term commonly applied to the Lutheran/Protestant concept of the communion supper, the idea that in the communion, the body and blood of Christ, and the bread and wine, coexist in union with each other. “Luther illustrated it by the analogy of the iron put into the fire whereby both fire and iron are united in the red-hot iron and yet each continues unchanged” (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, F.L. Cross, Ed., London: Oxford, 1958, p. 337)

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Nicholas Cabasilas sums up the standard Orthodox position as follows:

“First, the sacrifice is not a mere figure or symbol but a true sacrifice; secondly, it is not the bread that is sacrificed, but the very Body of Christ; thirdly, the Lamb of God was sacrificed once only, for all time ... The sacrifice at the Eucharist consists, not in the real and bloody immolation of the Lamb, but in the transformation of the bread into the sacrificed Lamb.”



Nicholas Cabasilas (born 1319/1323 in Thessalonica, died after 1391) was a Byzantine mystic and theological writer. He is considered a saint by the Orthodox Church.

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

- The Eucharist is not a bare commemoration or imaginary representation of Christ's sacrifice, but the true sacrifice itself.
- The sacrifice is not repeated in the Eucharist, but is made present.
- During the Liturgy eternity cuts across time, and at this point we become true contemporaries with the events which we commemorate.
- Antidoron, which is blessed bread but not consecrated and in most Orthodox parishes non-Orthodox present at the Liturgy are permitted (and encouraged) to receive it, as an expression of Christian fellowship and love.



11th cent. fresco of Basil the Great in the cathedral of Ohrid. The saint is shown consecrating the Gifts during the Divine Liturgy which bears his name.

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

“The Eastern Orthodox, however, interprets each sacramental act as a prayer of the entire ecclesiastical community, led by the bishop or his representative, and also as a response of God, based upon Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit upon the church..... In the *mysterion* of the church, the participation of men and women in God is effected through their "cooperation" or "synergy"; to make this participation possible once more is the goal of the incarnation. (Bishop Kallistos Ware)



**Easter procession led
by Bishop in Jerusalem**

The Eucharist: Other differences between Orthodox and Roman Catholic

- Leavened bread is used in Orthodoxy
- Roman Catholic Church dispensed with Epiclesis (Invocation) using only words of Institution for consecration
- Until Vatican II in 1964 laypeople could only receive the consecrated bread
- RC priest can celebrate Eucharist more than once a day—Orthodox priest cannot
- Orthodox priest faces East – sacrifice directed to God not the people in the pews



Baptism



Baptism in the Early Church

During the life of Christ he preaches its need “No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit (John 3:5)



Matthew's Gospel ends with a call to baptize all nations in the name of the Trinity



As the Creed states “I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.”

- Note word acknowledge (also translates as confess) here is an echo of the start of the I/We “Believe” of the Creed
- It is more public than “believe”
- Baptism is public, visible and objective
- Not private and subjective or due to merits
- It is humbling. We are bathed publically as a acknowledgement/confession that we are children of God



Galatians 4:

6. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
7. So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Ritual Cleansing in Judaism

- Various observed by the ancient Israelites
- Biblical and oral law generally prescribe a form of water-based ritual washing for removal of any ritual impurity.
- Impurities included: menstruation, childbirth, sexual relations, unusual bodily fluids, skin disease, death, and animal sacrifices.
- Purified through the waters of the *mikvah*
- Sometimes just hand washing, other times full immersion



An ancient mikvah in Jerusalem

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

One thing all Christian denominations agree on is the importance and necessity of baptism for the forgiveness of sins despite difference on when and how.



Act 2:

36. Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified"

37. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

38. Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."



Early Church baptisteries

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Water: outer washing and sacrament of inner cleansing



Nicodemus and Jesus, Alexander Bida, 1874

Eph 5:

26. in order to make her [the Church] holy by cleansing her with the **washing of water** by the word,

John 3:

5. Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being **born of water** and Spirit.

6. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Titus 3:

5. he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the **water of rebirth** and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Abba and Baptism

Jesus and the Father in the New Testament

Many scholars believe that the cry of "Abba"
Was uttered by the baptized as they came out
of the water

Romans 8: (also at Galatians 4:6-7)

14. For all who are led by the Spirit of
God are children of God.

15. For you did not receive a spirit of
slavery to fall back into fear, but you have
received a spirit of adoption. When we
cry, **"Abba! Father!"**

16. it is that very Spirit bearing witness with

17. our spirit that we are children of God,

(Early Christian
painting of a
Baptism - Saint
Calixte Catacomb
- 3rd century)



Early Schism Related to Baptism

- Question in early Church (3rd through 5th centuries A.D.): Was your baptism valid if it was conducted by a priest later found to be in heresy?
- Donatists said “No”!!!
- Orthodox said “Yes”
- What was important for the Orthodox was the “what” not the “who”, i.e. if performed in the prescribed for and intended to be act of baptism in Church then it was valid.



"Augustine of Hippo Refuting Heretic,"
(Illuminated manuscript, thirteenth century)
Heresy started with Donatus Magnus and St.
Augustine was one of the church fathers
That fought against it.

Early Christian Baptism

- All Christianity saw it as a means of Grace
- Early Church Fathers emphasized that baptism was a preparation for the Resurrection
- It was the “seal of the Holy Spirit”
- That the provided illumination “*photisma*” (once again Light is important for Orthodoxy)



Baptismal bath,
St Johns Church, Ephesus

Baptism: Orthodox and Roman Catholic

- Infusion (RC) changed in the 13th century
- **Immersion (O) buried/died in Christ like three days in Hades**
- In Greek "*baptizo*" means to immerse or dunk
- **Separation of Chrismation (confirmation) from Baptism**
- Orthodox do all at once: baptism, chrismation and Holy Communion
- **Chrismation cannot be earned**
- Chrismation is olive oil and approximately forty other oils from various plants and flowers symbolizing the bounty of God



Pope Benedict XVI, left, and Bartholomew I, the heads of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches



Infant Baptism



Why Infants?

- God's grace is not dependent on human's cognitive development – it is given by a loving to God from the start of life.

“ For this reason we baptize children, although they have no sins...in order to confer on them sanctification, adoption, inheritance...that they may be members of Christ and become the abode of the Holy Spirit.” (St. John Chrysostom)



Still requires a personal response as infant grows to maturity

Baptism and the Reformation

- Following Luther's split from the Roman Church (early 16th cent.) Reformers begin questioning all Church rites
- **Anabaptists insisted on a believer's baptism, i.e. you had to be old enough to have developed faith first.**
- They managed to alienate everyone with this doctrine since their position to other Christians (including Reformation Christians) was that their baptisms just didn't count.
- **This was generally rejected eventually by all but has had lasting effects on Protestantism**



Anabaptist were persecuted by Reformation and Roman Catholic churches

Baptism is Covenant

- God had covenants with Adam, Abraham, Noah Moses and others
- Now we become sons and daughters in the New Covenant made possible by and through Christ

Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ



Confession/Penance

for the forgiveness of sins.

“Everyone who has been baptized in an orthodox manner has received secretly the fullness of grace; and if he then goes on to perform the commandments, he will become consciously aware of this grace within him. We for our part cannot possibly add to that grace, but it is revealed and manifests itself to us increasingly, in proportion to our fulfillment of the commandments. Whatever, then, we offer to Him after our regeneration, was already within us and came originally from Him.”

(St. Mark the Monk)



St. Mark the Monk flourished about the year 430. He was a disciple of St John Chrysostom and wrote some very important hesychastic treatises which have been included in the Philokalia. He spent sixty more years in the Nitrian desert

Confession/Penance

for the forgiveness of sins.

Needing baptism/forgiveness means acknowledging guilt.

1. It is an estimation of human responsibility
2. Not a block to self-esteem, but a step toward self-honesty
3. Not shameful IF it opens us to repentance/forgiveness

Bottom line: We all need forgiveness from God. God is the only One without sin, omniscient and therefore solely capable of knowing and forgiving our sins in an absolute sense.

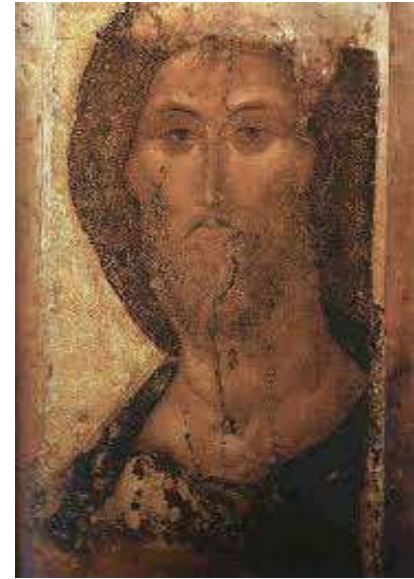
The sinful self is allowed to die.



El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos)
Christ Blessing ('The Savior of the World')
about 1600



Icons



- Icons are created for the sole purpose of offering access, through the gate of the visible, to the mystery of the divine and invisible.
- Icons are painted to lead us into the inner room of prayer and bring us close to the heart of God.

Henri J.M. Nouwen “Behold the Beauty of the Lord Praying with Icons” ;Notre Dame, Indiana., Ava Maris Press, 1993



Icons



- Praying with icons leads us into the mystery of God's self revelation.
- It is a mystery beyond history, yet made visible through it.
- It is a divine mystery, yet human too.
- It is a joyful, sorrowful and glorious mystery transcending all human emotions, yet not leaving any human emotion untouched

Icons

- **Jesus is God's Best Icon**
- **Icons in the Church Symbolize Heaven and Earth Under One Roof**
- **Fidelity to a Sacred Prototype Means Fidelity to a Transfigured Reality**



Theotokos of Vladimir (early 12th cent.)



Icons & Saints



- I. Icons are venerated NOT worshipped**
- II. Icons have provided a teaching function and serve to remind us of God**
- III. Icons affirm our physical nature and are justified by the Incarnation (“The Word was made flesh....” and you could see and touch Him!)**



Holy Icons



- These are images, paintings, frescoes and mosaics which bear witness to the reality of God's kingdom on earth.
- They relate us to God by proclaiming the Gospel, teaching doctrine and providing spiritual inspiration.

St. Luke

Christian tradition states that St. Luke was the first icon painter. He is said to have painted pictures of the Virgin Mary.



Standardization of forms – Archetypes – Garments and Body

- Non- naturalistic
- Garments do not necessarily conform to physical body
- Body depicted symbolically
- Eyes can be disproportionately large to express inner person
- Limbs often thin (especially ascetics)
- Hands can be larger to remind us of prayer
- Emphasis on the inner/spiritual person
- Express “in-betweenness” – in contrast to linear perspective, invitation to participate

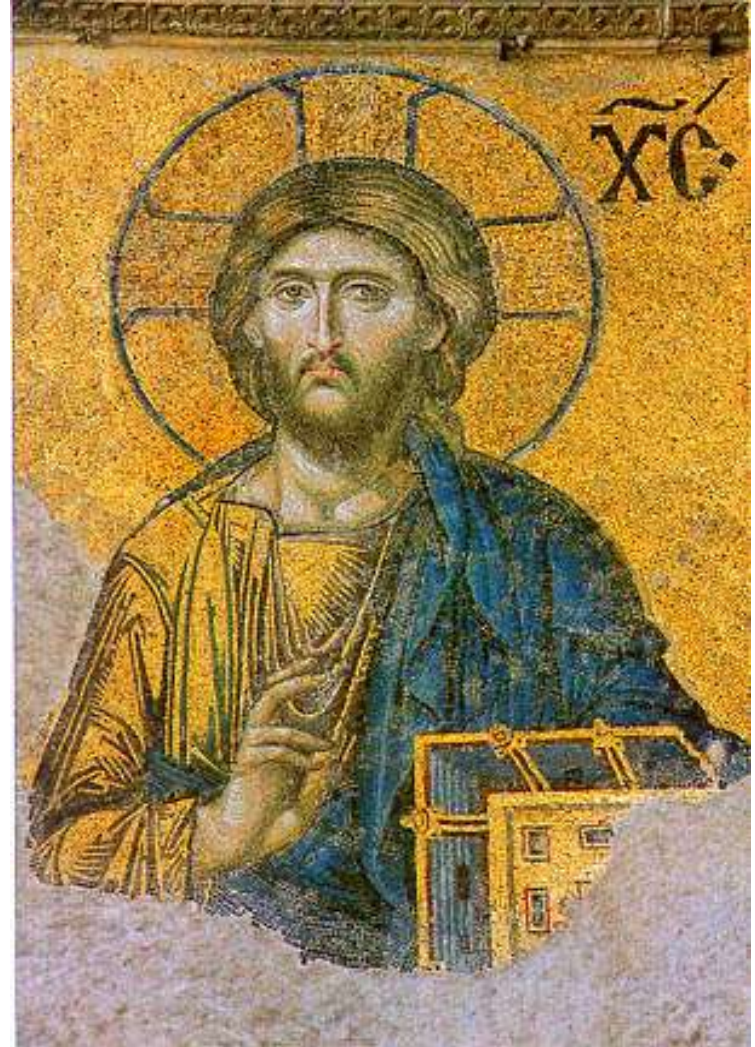


Icon of Saint Mary of Egypt
and Saint Zosimas

How does Christ see you?

- Does he look angry?
- Compassionate?
- Warm?
- Cold?

Many icon writers will try and achieve a psychological balance in their icons. A viewer with sin on his/her heart will see a different expression on Christ's face than someone with less sin, even though it is the exact same picture.



Seven Functions of Icons

1. To enhance the beauty of the Church
2. To instruct us in matters of Orthodox faith
3. To remind us of these teachings and our Tradition
4. To lift us to the prototypes (community of saints)
5. To inspire us to imitate the virtues of the prototypes/personages
6. To serve as means of worshipping God and venerating the Saints
7. To help transform us, to sanctify us



Iconoclasm

- Iconoclasm is the destruction of religious icons and other images for religious or political motives. It is a frequent component of major political, economical, or religious changes. In Christianity, iconoclasm has generally been motivated by people who adopt a literal interpretation of the Ten Commandments, which forbade the making and worshipping of "graven images or any likeness of anything.



The Arguments for Icons

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

And so could be seen and touched and thus depicted.

The Incarnation: because God the Son took on flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, having a physical appearance, it is now possible to use physical matter to depict God the Son and to depict the saints.

More importantly, matter (part of human nature) was involved in our salvation when it was taken up by God in the Incarnation.



The Arguments for Icons

Colossians 1:

15. He is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation;

16. for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,

The oldest known icon of Christ Pantokrator, encaustic on panel (Saint Katherine's Monastery). The two different facial expressions on either side emphasize Christ's two natures as fully God and fully human.



The Triumph of Icons

“Of old God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was not depicted at all. But now that God had appeared **in the flesh** and lived among men, I make an image of the God who can be seen. I do not worship **matter**, but I worship **the Creator of matter**, who for my sake became **material** and deigned to dwell in **matter**, who through **matter** effected my salvation. I will not cease from worshipping the **matter** through which my salvation has been affected.”

(St. John of Damascus)



The icon is a symbol to be venerated (*dulia*), not worshipped (*latreia*).



One of the earliest known depictions of the Crucifixion in Christian art. Made in Rome about AD 420-30. The panel is one of four, originally mounted on the sides of a small ivory casket, each carved with a scene from Christ's Passion.

Declaration of the Seventh (and final) Ecumenical Council



As the Prophets beheld,
As the Apostles taught,
As the Church received,
As the Teachers dogmatized,
As the Universe agreed,
As Grace illumined,
As the Truth revealed,
As falsehood passed away,
As Wisdom presented,
As Christ awarded,
Thus we declare,
Thus we assert,

Thus we proclaim Christ our true God and honor His saints,
In words,
In writings,
In thoughts,
In sacrifices,
In churches,
In holy icons.



On the one hand, worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord.
And on the other hand, honoring and venerating His Saints as true servants of the same Lord.

This is the Faith of the Apostles.

This is the Faith of the Fathers.

This is the Faith of the Orthodox.

This is the Faith which has established the Universe.

Nicene Creed



Why a Creed?????

About Christians and the Creed.....

“In a world that celebrates individuality, they are actually doing something together. In an age that avoids commitment, they pledge themselves to a set of convictions and thereby to each other. In a culture that rewards novelty and creativity, they use words written by others long ago. In a society where accepted wisdom changes by the minute, they claim that some truths are so critical that they must be repeated over and over again. In a throwaway, consumerist world, they accept, preserve, and continue tradition. Reciting the creed at worship is thus a counter-cultural act.”

Contemporary Roman Catholic biblical scholar, Luke Timothy Johnson

Nicene Creed

Why a Creed?????

Islam, Judaism, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. all acknowledge Jesus in some way.

But the Creed answers for the Orthodox Jesus' famous question to his own disciples:

“But who do you say that I am?”





“I believe....”



- **Knowledge** – objective, demonstrable, repeatable, scientific, etc.
- **Belief** – the articles and narrative of our faith



Interestingly the Greek word “*pistis*” means both belief and faith

Latin splits it: “*credere*”/ belief “*fides*”/faith

“I believe....”

- **Faith** – subjective, response of whole person characterized in trust, obedience and love. Dynamic and lived. Attends to Mystery. Commitment to a way of life in relation to a personal triune God Who is Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Calls us to witness.
- **Orthodoxy (correct belief) and Orthopraxy (correct conduct)**



James 2:

- 19. You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**
- 20. But are you willing to recognize ... that faith without works is useless?**

“I believe....”

God is Mystery. Like the horizon, we think we see its end, but as we approach, we see that there is really more than we could ever behold.

The search to reach it becomes the purpose of life. We are born thirsting for the Infinite.



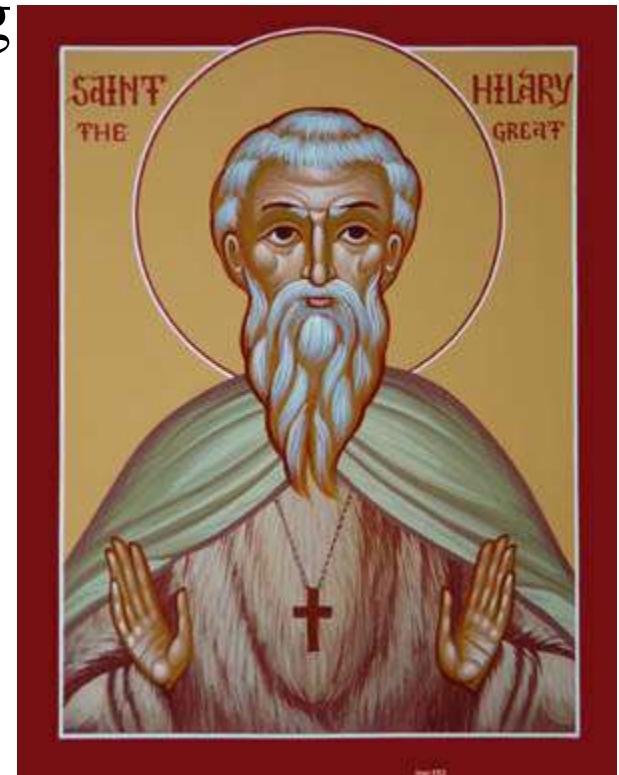
“I believe....”

The call of a true worshipper (and theologian):

“Let imagination range to what you may suppose is God’s utmost limit, and you will find Him present there; strain as you will, there is always a further horizon towards which to strain. Infinity is His property, just as the power of making such effort is yours.”

(St. Hilary)

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Living the Orthodox Faith



1. **Believe that God exists and that our destiny is union with Christ.**
2. **Keep commitments of the sacraments and hold Orthodox Tradition dear.**
3. **Develop a life of true prayer.**
4. **Live the words of the Creed and Scripture.**
5. **Recognize presence of Christ in the Church and strive to serve both.**
6. **Develop and act upon concern for those less fortunate.**
7. **Live each day as if it were your last.**
8. **Respect yourself and others as we are all children of God.**
9. **Read Scripture and good Christian/Orthodox literature.**

What's "doing good?"

- **The Seven Capital Virtues in Orthodoxy (a more positive spin on the Seven deadly Sins)**
 1. Humility – we sin and need forgiveness
 2. Liberality – share good fortune with others
 3. Chastity – desire the moral good when it comes to sex
 4. Mildness – control of emotions, understanding weaknesses in others
 5. Temperance – self control in eating and drinking (and vice)
 6. Happiness – desire the good fortune of others and ourselves
 7. Diligence – faithfully fulfilling the duties to God, family and society



Orthodox Spiritual Work of Mercy

1. Admonish and teach the sinner
2. **Instruct the ignorant**
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. **Comfort those that are sorrowful**
5. Bear wrongs patiently
6. **Forgive all injuries**
7. Pray always for the living and the dead

(Fr. George Grube, Orthodox priest and author)



Christ the Teacher icon

Quiz

- How many Orthodox monks does it take to change a lightbulb?

Answer

- Change? — What is change?

