

Orthodoxy 101

Purpose

Provide a basic introduction to Orthodox Christianity



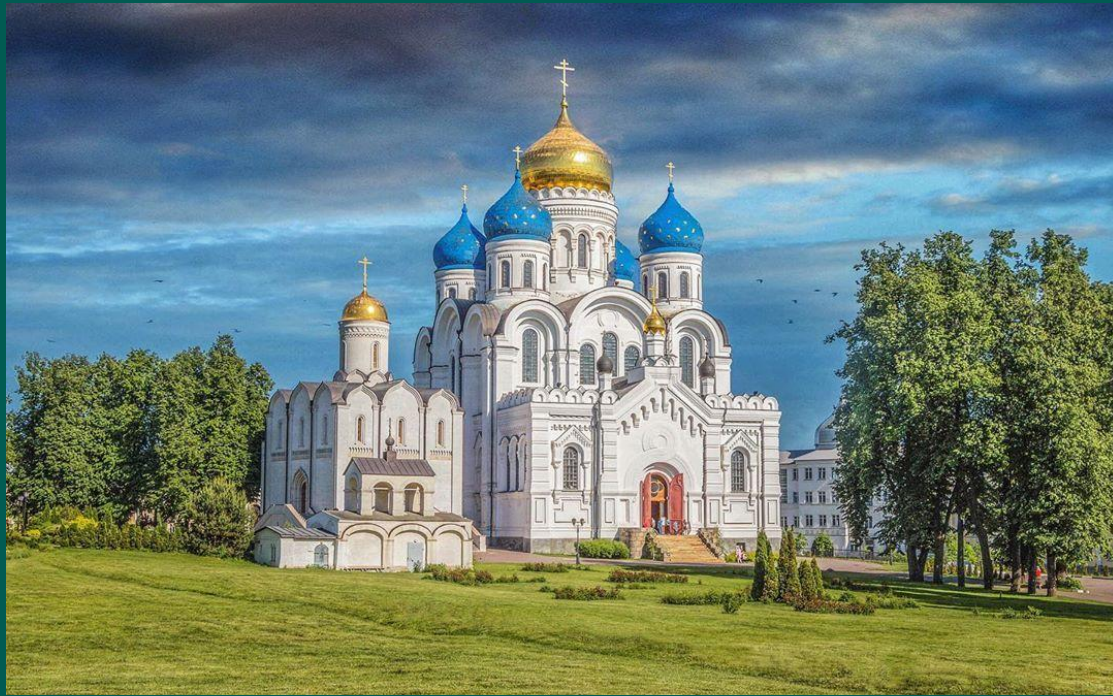
Overview

- *Who are the Orthodox*
- *What we Believe*
- *Orthodox Worship*
- *Orthodox Spiritual Life*
- *Key Differences*



Orthodox Christianity

Who We Are



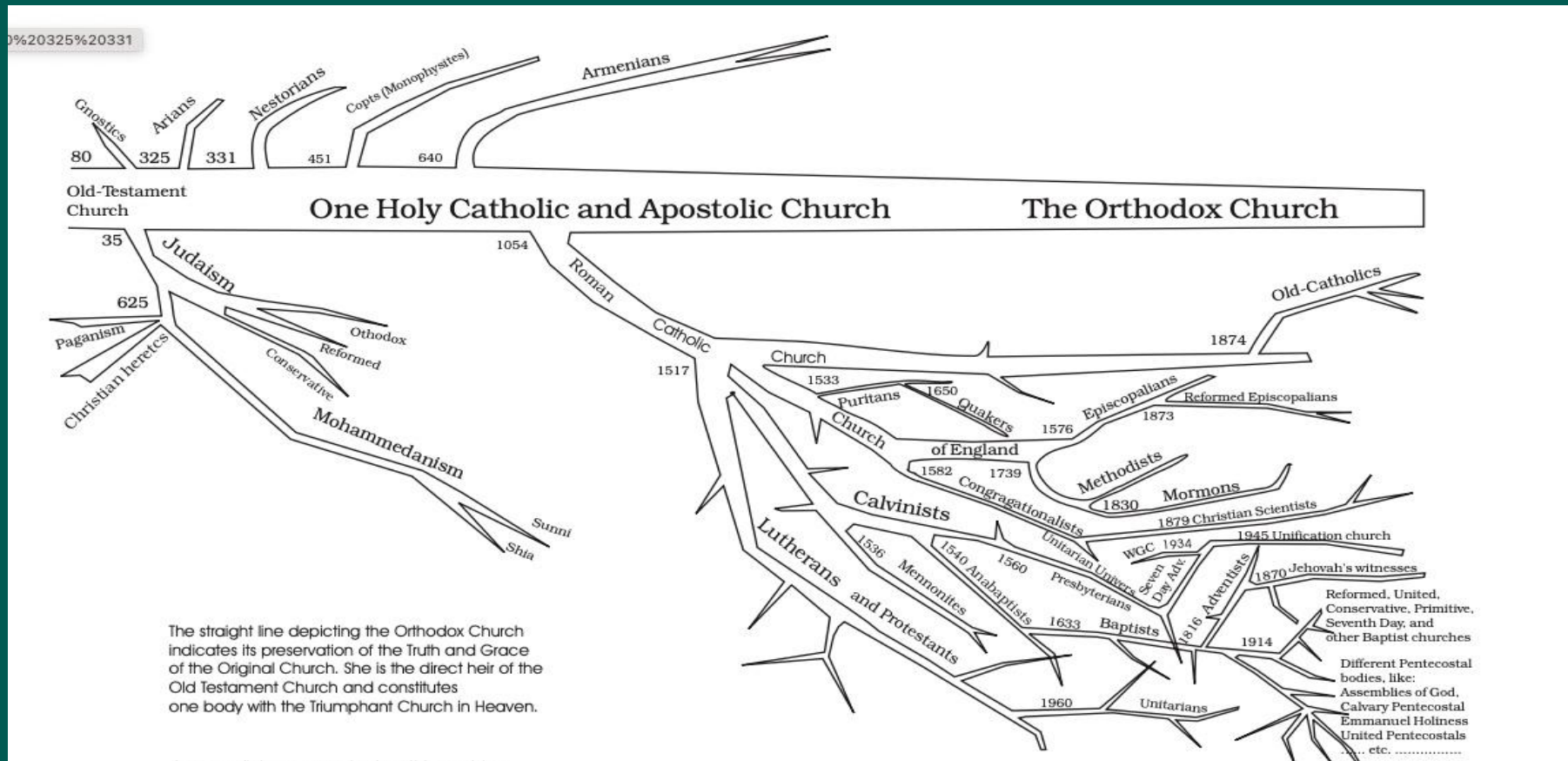
Orthodox?

The Orthodox Church claims to be the continuation of the Faith of the Apostles since the Day of Pentecost over 2000 years ago.

“Orthodox” means “true teaching.” The Orthodox Church believes that she has maintained and handed down the Christian faith, free from error and distortion, from the days of the Apostles. There is a second definition, which is actually the more preferred, as “true praise.” To bless, praise, and glorify God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the fundamental purpose of the Church.

Orthodox Church Origins

- *Traces its origins to Jesus Christ and the apostles*
- *Born on day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles*



Orthodox Church Today

- Worldwide the Orthodox Church consist of a family of fifteen self-ruled churches, sometimes referred to as jurisdictions;
 - Orthodox Churches are united in Eucharistic communion with one another, sharing the same faith and praxis.

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Patriarchate of Alexandria

Patriarchate of Antioch

Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Patriarchate of Moscow

Patriarchate of Serbia

Patriarchate of Romania

Patriarchate of Bulgaria

Patriarchate of Georgia

Church of Cyprus

Church of Greece

Church of Poland

*Orthodox Church in America**

Church of Albania

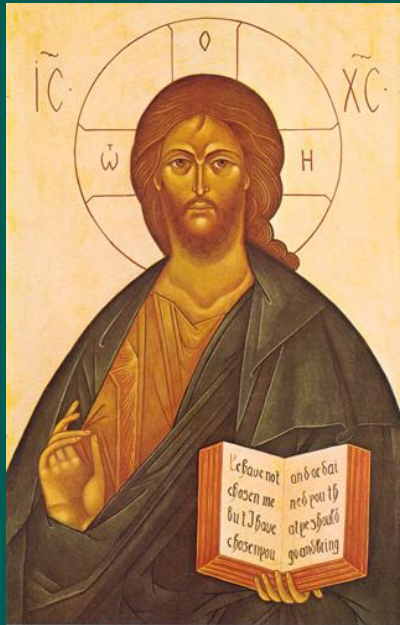
*Church of the Czech Lands and
Slovakia*

Orthodox Church Today

- *260 - 300 Million Orthodox Christians worldwide
In the United States (Pew Research)*
- *3000 parishes, missions, and monasteries with about
1.6 Million adherents in the United States.
(Orthodox History)*
 - *This Represents about .5% of Americans. We
are a smaller group than Jews, Muslims, and
Hindu BUT things are changing.*

Orthodox Christianity

What We Believe



Holy Tradition

That which is passed on or given over within the Church, from the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles until the present day

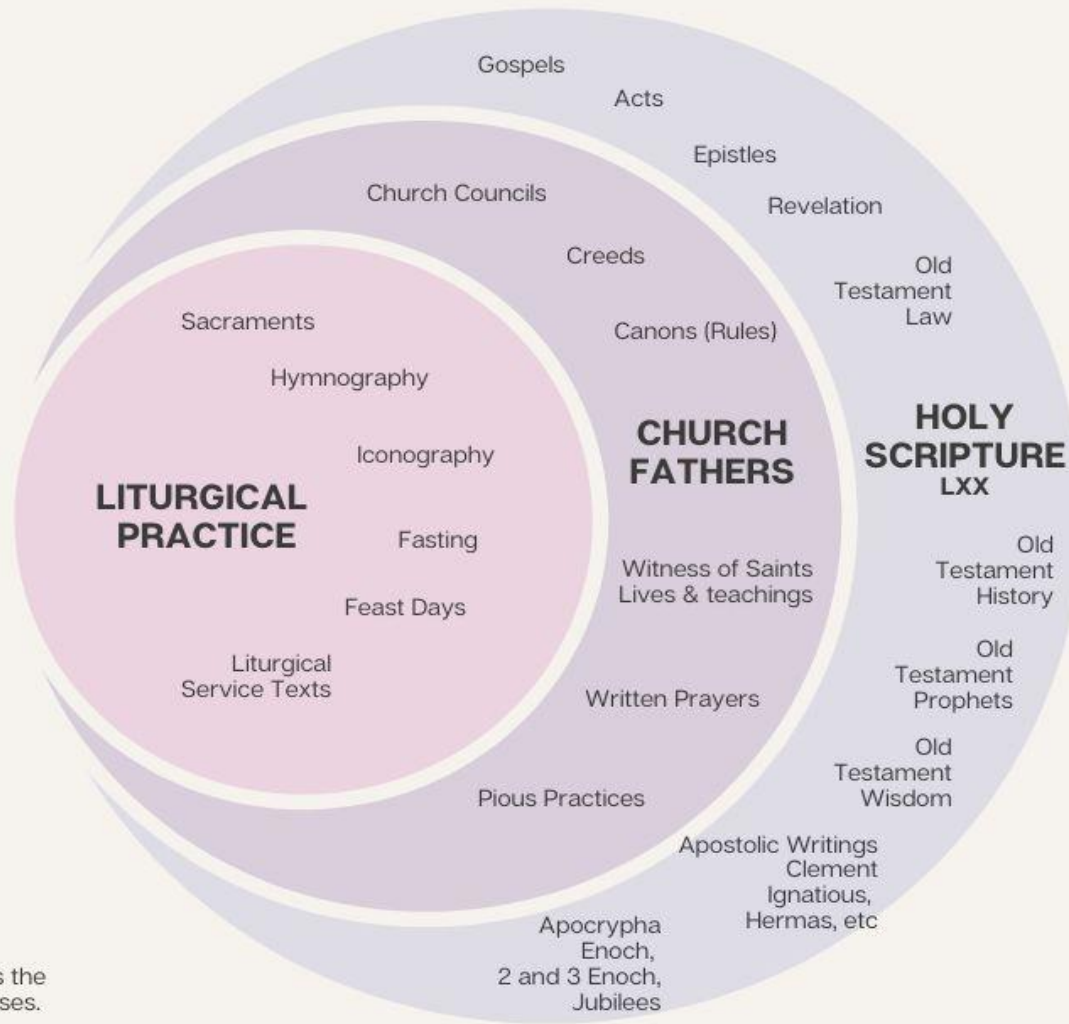
Consists of...

- *Holy Scripture*
 - 27 books- New Testament
 - 46 books - Old Testament [according to the Septuagint (LXX)]
- *Prayer & Liturgical worship*
- *Accepted creeds & acts of the Church's councils*
- *Writings of the Holy Fathers*
- *Lives of the saints*
- *Icons and musical expression of the Church*

To an Orthodox Christian, Tradition means the Holy Bible; it means the Creed; it means the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and the writings of the Fathers; it means the Canons, the Service Books, the Holy Icons, etc. The Holy Bible forms a part of Holy Tradition, but does not lie outside of it. One would be in error to suppose that Scripture and Tradition are two separate and distinct sources of Christian Faith, as some do, since there is, in reality, only one source; and the Holy Bible exists and found its formulation within Tradition.

HOLY TRADITION

The Life of the Holy Spirit in the Church



Not a comprehensive list but offers the most important for teaching purposes.

The Church

The Church
is...

Because...

ONE ■ *It is one body with one Head, Jesus Christ*
■ *It cannot be divided or separated because Christ cannot be divided or separated*
■ *It does not possess numerous branches that, while similar, are not the same*

HOLY ■ *The Holy Spirit dwells in God's people as they respond to His call to salvation and eternal life.*

CATHOLIC ■ *The Church is whole, complete, lacking in nothing for salvation & universal.*

APOSTOLIC ■ *It maintains and continues in the apostles' teaching, mission, ministry and experience.*

Orthodox Hierarchical Structure

- Christ** = The Head of the Church (which is his body)
- Synod of Bishops** – Conciliatory is highest earthly authority
- Bishops** (Episcopos) = “over-seers” of their local diocese
- Priest** (Presbyter)= The presiding one
- Deacon** = servants

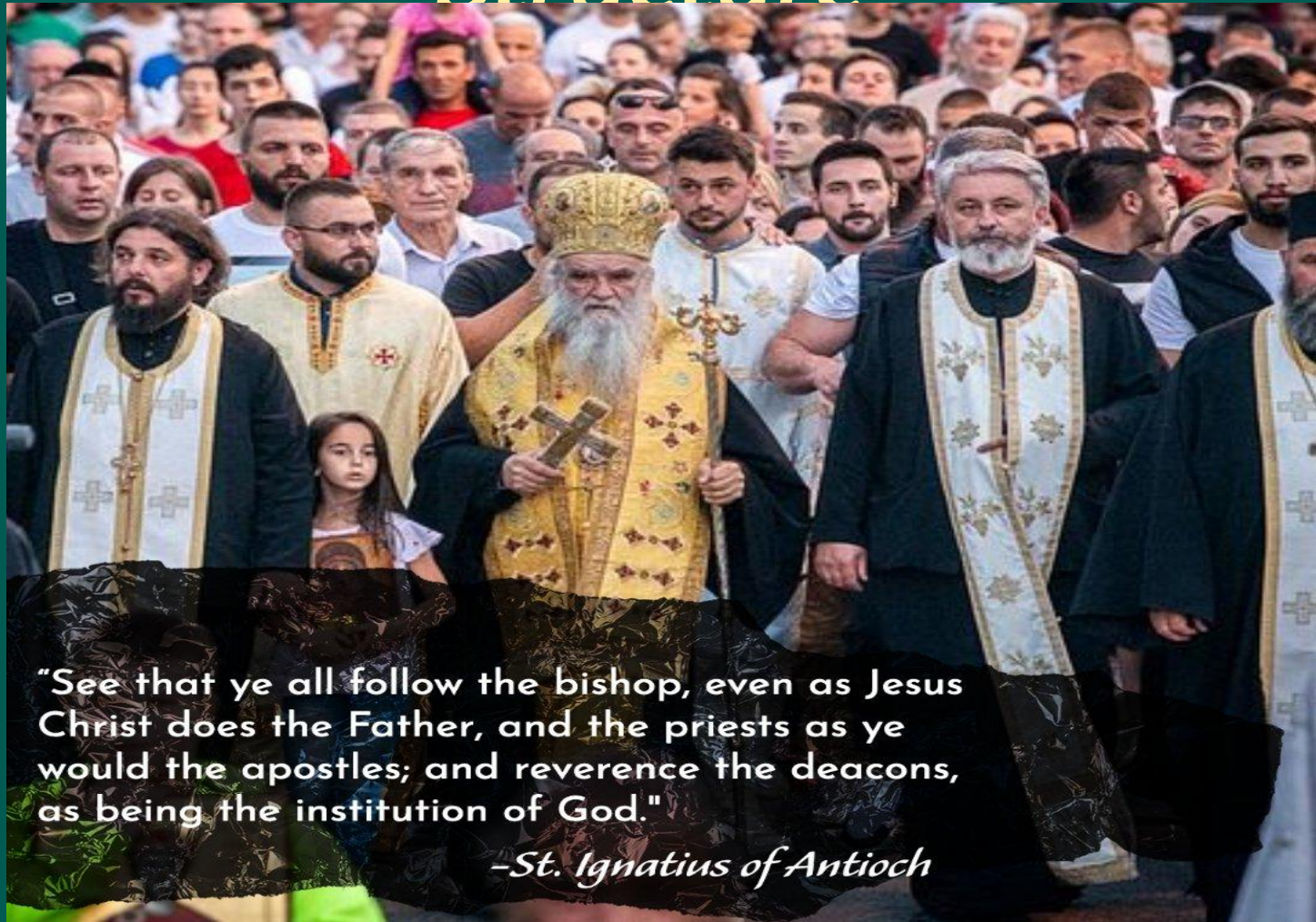
Bishops – celibacy required – exclusively male

Priesthood – married, celibacy optional, must be married prior to ordination, exclusively male

Diaconate – exclusively male but the Early Church had a female diaconate to assist in female baptisms and ministries but no liturgical functions.

Minor Clergy - Subdeacons, readers, acolytes

Orthodox Hierarchical Structure



"See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the priests as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God."

-St. Ignatius of Antioch

Epistle of St Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans - Late 1st Century to Early 2nd century AD

Salvation

- *Salvation is a dynamic process by which we experience and are healed by God's Energies (Grace). In so doing we grow in likeness to Christ – Theosis*
 - *Essence vs. Energies*
- *Theosis comes by **Faith** in Christ and **Living a lifestyle** according to Orthodox Church.*
 - *This Lifestyle is the basis of the Orthodox Worship and Spiritual Life (cooperation)*

Salvation

Faith and Works:

Salvation is achieved through a combination of faith and good works, not through either alone. Faith is seen as a vital, living force that naturally produces good works, while works are not a means to earn salvation but rather a demonstration of that faith.

“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” James 2:17

Examples of works: Practice the virtues of following the commandments, being humble & kind, hospitality, almsgiving, prayer, repentance, love, mercy, fasting...etc.

Salvation

Emphasis is on healing and experiencing God.

"Acquire the spirit of peace, and a thousand souls around you shall be saved". -St. Seraphim of Sarov



Orthodox Christian Worship



Characteristics of Orthodox Worship

Apostolic

Orthodox churches still use forms of worship that were practiced in the first centuries (synagogue and temple). Our worship is based to a great extent on passages from Scripture. We sing most of the service, joining our voices in simple harmony to ancient melodies.

God-Centered (Theocentric)

Our worship is focused on God, not on our own enjoyment, fulfillment, or fellowship. We come into the presence of God with awe, aware of our fallenness and His great mercy. We seek forgiveness and rejoice in the great gift of salvation so freely given. Orthodox worship is filled with repentance, gratitude, and unending praise.

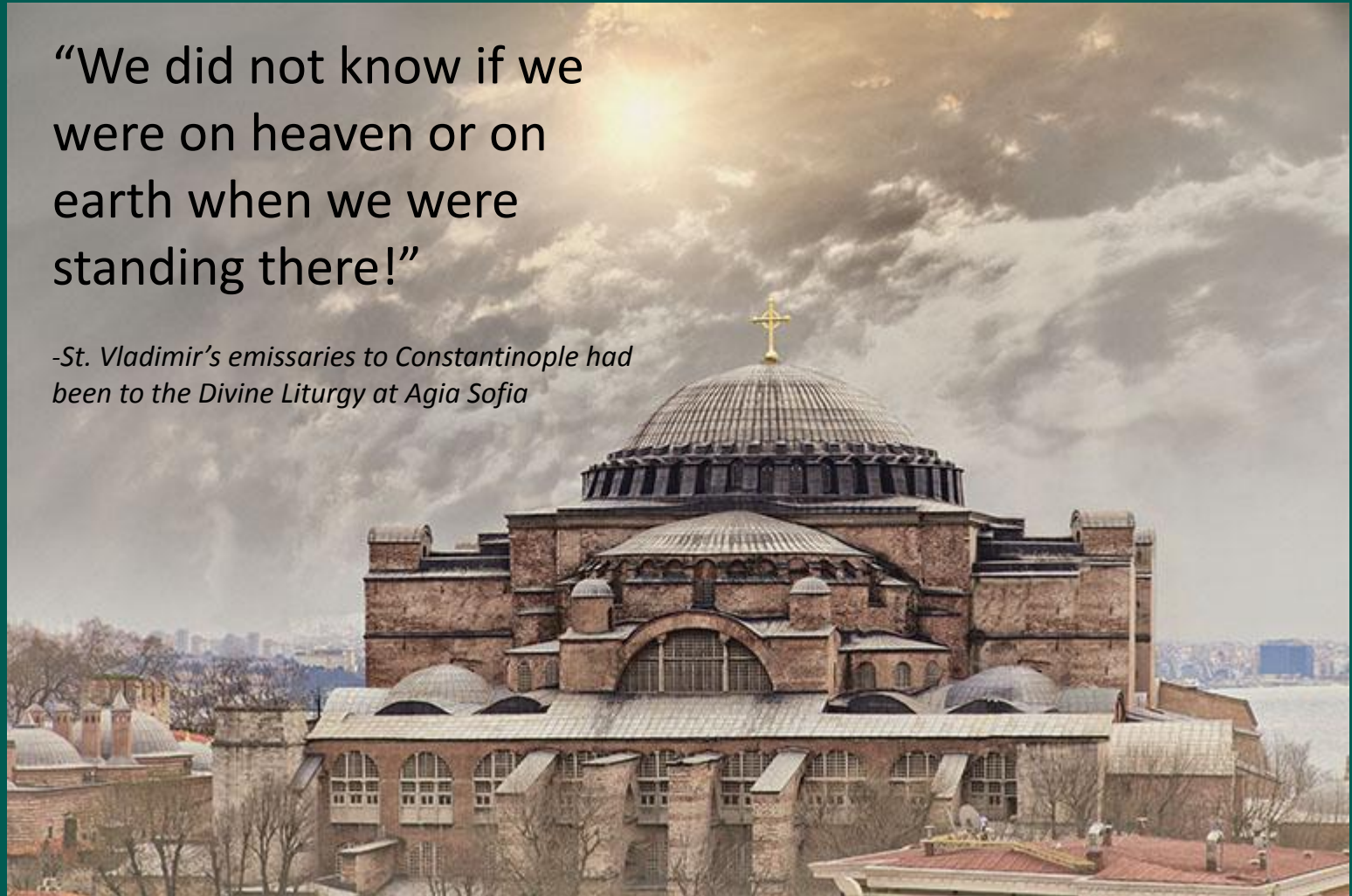
Beauty

We try, as best we can, to make our worship beautiful as witnessed to us in scripture (Ex. 25, 26 & Rev. 4) where there is gold, silver, precious stones, blue and purple cloth, white robes, crowns, embroidery, incense, bells, and anointing oil. However, true Orthodox worship is comfortable, warm, and joyful.

Orthodox Worship

“We did not know if we were on heaven or on earth when we were standing there!”

-St. Vladimir's emissaries to Constantinople had been to the Divine Liturgy at Agia Sofia



The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy - the service in which the Church "makes present" the Paschal mystery of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, God and Savior - stands outside of time. Not only does it bring those present into contact with realities that transcend created time, but it is actually held "in common" with the heavenly Liturgy (Rev. 5), and with all other celebrations throughout the world of the one sacrifice of the Cross. NOT A SYMBOL – A REALITY!



Daily Cycle of Services

Each day, the following services are celebrated in monasteries and churches of the Byzantine liturgical tradition around the world:

- **Vespers** is the solemn evening prayer of the Church which begins the liturgical day. We thank God for the blessing of creation, especially for the gift of light both corporal and spiritual, and ask for pardon for our sins and offenses, and protection throughout the night.
- **Compline** is a communal prayer before bedtime.
- The **Midnight Office** is a nocturnal vigil, in which we meditate upon the unexpected coming of Christ.
- **Matins** is the solemn morning prayer of the Church, an office of supplication, repentance and praise.
- The **First Hour**, celebrated after Matins, is the first of the four daytime
- The **Third Hour**, celebrated at mid-morning.
- The **Sixth Hour**, celebrated at noon.
- The **Ninth Hour**, celebrated between mid-afternoon and Vespers of the new day.
- **Typika**, a service of psalms and prayers appointed for the Liturgy of the day, which is held when the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated.

The Annual Cycle - Feasts & Fasts of the Church

- **Great Feasts of the Church**

- The Nativity of the Theotokos - 8/21 September
- Elevation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross – 14/27 September
- Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple – 21 November / 4 December
- The Nativity of Christ - 25 December / 7 January
- Theophany of our Lord – 6/19 January
- The Presentation of Christ at the Temple – 2/15 February
- The Annunciation – 25 March/ 7 April
- Palm Sunday – Sunday Before Pascha
- Pascha/Easter – the Resurrection of Christ*
- The Ascension of Christ – 40 Days after Pascha
- Pentecost – 50 days after Pascha
- The Transfiguration - 6/19 August
- The Dormition of the Theotokos – 15/28 August

- **The Fasts of the Church**

- The Great Fast (40 days + Holy Week)
- The Apostle's Fast (All Saints - Sts. Peter & Paul)
- The Dormition Fast (2 weeks before Dormition)
- The Nativity Fast (40 days before Christmas)
- Wednesday and Friday
- Communion Fast (Midnight before Communion - complete fast)

Orthodox Christian Spirituality



Orthodox Spiritual Life

- *An Orthodox Spiritual Life consists of...*
 - *Frequent reception of Sacraments*
 - ***Ascetical Practices***
 - *Daily Prayer Rule, Church attendance, Fasting, Humility, Obedience & virtuous life.*
 - *Continual Remembrance of God*
 - *Prayer of the Heart (The Jesus Prayer)*
 - *Almsgiving and sharing our talents*

Spiritual Life

7 Main Sacraments (Mysteries)

Our Sacraments bring God's presence into our lives as we:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Baptism | Become members of Christ's Body, Mystically experience Christ's Death & Resurrection . (<i>Matthew 28:19-20</i>) Replaces Circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12) Household (Child) Baptism- (<i>Acts 16:15 - Acts 16:33 - 1 Corinthians 1:16</i>) |
| Chrismation | Anointed and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. (<i>Acts 8:14-17 & Acts 19:5-6</i>) |
| Holy Communion | Receive Christ's Divine Body & Blood for for remission of sins and life everlasting. (<i>John 6:51-58 - Matthew 26:26-28 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-25</i>) |
| Confession | Be forgiven by & reconciled with God and His People. (<i>John 20:22-23 & James 5:16</i>) |
| Marriage | Assists each other in Salvation & Child-bearing. (<i>Genesis 2:24 - John 2:1-11 - Matthew 19:4-6</i>) |
| Ordination | Ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons for service in the Church. (<i>Acts 6:1 -7 - 1 Timothy 4:14 - 2 Timothy 1:6</i>) |
| Holy Unction | Receive God's healing grace through prayer and anointing. (<i>James 5:14-15</i>) |

Some Unique Liturgical Orthodox Practices

- Orthodox Christians should not under any circumstances whatsoever celebrate, perform, or participate in a sacramental type services other than that of the Orthodox Church. We celebrate closed communion.
- Orthodox Christians celebrate Pascha (Easter) on a differing dates than Catholic and Protestant confessions.
- Some local Orthodox Churches Celebrate Christmas (& other feastdays) according to the Julian Calendar (Dec. 25 falls on Jan. 7 of the secular calendar).
- According to Orthodox canonical tradition marriages are only between two Orthodox spouses (man & wife) or between an Orthodox spouse and a recognized non-Orthodox Christian partner (in an orthodox parish) with a blessings from the bishop.
- Orthodox do not cremate their departed or funeral is not permissible.

Key Teachings that are Different from other Christian Group

- .Scripture*
- .Infallibility*
- .Ecclesiology*
- .Sacraments and the Eucharist*
- .Anthropology (Fall of Humanity)*
- .Immaculate Conception*

Differences on Scripture

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>There is one source of divine revelation -Tradition. Scripture forms the oral part, and the writings of saints, decisions of ecumenical councils, icons, etc., are also part of it.</p> <p>"We can say that Scripture is a God-inspired image of Truth, but not Truth itself. . . If we declare Scripture to be self-sufficient, we only expose it to subjective, arbitrary interpretation, thus cutting it away from its sacred source. Scripture is given to us in Tradition. The Church, as the body of Christ, stands mystically first and is fuller than scripture." (Florovsky)</p>	<p>Alongside Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition (i.e. teachings handed down from Christ and the apostles to the present) are to be considered sources of divine revelation.</p> <p>Tradition and scripture are interpreted by the magisterium or teaching authority of the church.</p>	<p>Scripture alone is the only infallible guide and the final authority on matters of Christian faith and practice.</p> <p>- One of the foundational principles of Protestantism but some groups may vary.</p>

Old Testament Differences

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>At the time the Christian Bible was being formed, a Greek translation (300-100 BC) of Jewish Scripture, called the Septuagint (the work of 70 Jewish Scholars), was in common use and Christians adopted it as the Old Testament of the Christian Bible.</p> <p>Most New Testament quotes from the Old Testament are based upon the Septuagint.</p>	<p>In 382., Pope Damasus I had Jerome translated the Bible into Latin – the Vulgate (common translation)</p>	<p>The Old Testament according to 7th & 10th century AD Judaism (Masoretic Text) rather than the Septuagint.</p> <p>The books that are not included supported such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayers for the dead (Tobit 12:12; 2 Maccabees 12:39-45)• Intercession of saints in heaven (2 Maccabees 15:14)• Intercession of angels (Tobit 12:12-15)

Differences on Infallibility

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>Papal infallibility is rejected. The Holy Spirit guides the Church in all truth through ecumenical councils .</p> <p>An Ecumenical Council is a gathering of many bishops, priests and lay theologians who were called to defend the Truth in the face of heresy.</p> <p>Dogmas do not develop they are revelations of truth, universal and unchanging.</p>	<p>The Pope is infallible when, through the Holy Spirit, he defines a doctrine (ex cathedra) on faith and morals that is to be held by the whole church.</p> <p>This is a dogma and therefore a required belief within Catholicism.</p> <p>Believe in the development of doctrine.</p>	<p>The only source of infallible is the Bible.</p> <p>Biblical inerrancy is the historically traditional doctrinal position that in its original form, the Bible is without error.</p> <p>Biblical Infallibility holds that the Bible is inerrant on issues of faith and practice.</p>

Ecclesiological Differences

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>The invisible Christ is made present through the visible unity of the bishop and the people: the Head and the Body.</p> <p>“...the church of God abiding in every place: to the local church, to the community led by a bishop and having, in communion with him, the fullness of the Church.” (Schmemmann)</p> <p>Eucharistic Ecclesiology – the Eucharist manifests the whole Church, her “catholicity.” In the Eucharist the Church is realized as the Body of Christ.</p>	<p>“Each community, each local community is but a part, a member of a universal organism; and it participates in the Church only through its belonging to the “whole.”</p> <p>Consequently, the need for a universal head becomes a reality. – Pope of Rome.</p> <p>The Pope is the “Vicar of Christ” he is the visible head of the church on earth, he has has universal power over the Church and Councils.</p> <p>*Vicar = in place of</p>	<p>A separation between the visible church on earth and the invisible church in heaven.</p> <p>There is an invisible church in heaven and a visible human church on earth which is contingent, relative and changing.</p> <p>Each congregation is independent and self-ruled.</p>

Differences on Fall of Humanity

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>We do not inherit the Adam's guilt but the consequences of his sin.</p> <p>Mortality is now inherited as well as a distortion of intelligence, creativity, our sense of God, our ability to discern between good and evil, an inability to consistently do what is good and avoid evil.</p> <p>Spiritual death results so God responds by sending His Son to reestablish our relationship with God- this is salvation. A real loss of our potential to realize our God-likeness.</p>	<p>Original sin teaches that the conditions inherited from the fall are transmitted through the act of procreation. Each new born child is an inheritor of the guilt of Adam and thus an object of God's wrath and judgment, deserving punishment.</p> <p>“Original sin is the privation of sanctifying grace in consequence of the sin of Adam.” (Catholic Encyclopedia)</p>	<p>Total Depravity</p> <p>It is the teaching that, as a consequence of the Fall, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin and, apart from the grace of God, is utterly unable to choose to follow God or choose to accept salvation as it is freely offered.</p>

Sacramental Differences

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>There are 7 main Sacraments of the Church:</p> <p>Baptism (Infant)</p> <p>Chrismation (Infant)</p> <p>Confession</p> <p>Eucharistic Communion (Infant)</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Unction</p> <p>Clerical Orders</p> <p>Only Orthodox may receive these sacraments.</p> <p>Minor Sacraments include: Funerals, Betrothals, Church consecrations, blessing of water, etc.</p>	<p>There are 7 Sacraments:</p> <p>Baptism (Infant)</p> <p>Confirmation</p> <p>Confession</p> <p>Eucharistic Communion</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Unction</p> <p>Clerical Orders</p> <p>Only Catholics may partake of these Sacraments.</p>	<p>2 Main Sacraments among Protestants:</p> <p>Baptism</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>There are wide varieties of understanding throughout Protestant Churches.</p>

Sacramental Differences

<i>ORTHODOX</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant</i>
<p>There are 7 main Sacraments of the Church:</p> <p>Baptism (Infant)</p> <p>Chrismation (Infant)</p> <p>Confession</p> <p>Eucharistic Communion (Infant)</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Unction</p> <p>Clerical Orders</p> <p>Only Orthodox may receive these sacraments.</p> <p>Minor Sacraments include: Funerals, Betrothals, Church consecrations, blessing of water, etc.</p>	<p>There are 7 Sacraments:</p> <p>Baptism (Infant)</p> <p>Confirmation</p> <p>Confession</p> <p>Eucharistic Communion</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Unction (Last Rites)</p> <p>Clerical Orders</p> <p>Only Catholics may partake of these Sacraments.</p>	<p>2 Main Sacraments among Protestants:</p> <p>Baptism</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>There are wide varieties of understanding throughout Protestant Churches.</p>

Eucharistic Differences

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>Through the descent of the Holy Spirit during the Liturgy the bread and wine change into the Body and Blood of Christ.</p> <p>The entire church calls upon the Holy Spirit not just the priest.</p> <p>The “change” is regarded as a mystery and is not explained beyond that.</p> <p>Leavened Bread (Artos)</p> <p>CLOSED COMMUNION – ONLY ORTHODOX MAY PARTAKE</p>	<p>The consecration becomes effective through the priest, who acts in the person of Christ.</p> <p>They term this change as “transubstantiation” – outwardly remain as bread and wine but a change in substance occurs.</p> <p>Unleavened Bread (Azumo)</p> <p>CLOSED COMMUNION</p>	<p>If practiced then the Bread and wine are symbols do not change in substance.</p> <p>There are wide varieties of understanding throughout Protestant Churches.</p> <p>OPEN COMMUNION/VARIES</p>

Immaculate Conception

<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant (Typical)</i>
<p>The Orthodox Church believes that the Virgin Mary had inherited all of the consequences of Adam's (Original) sin.</p> <p>She had the same condition as all mankind however, she remained without (conscience) sin. All-Pure!</p>	<p>1854 Pope Pius IX . From the first moment of her existence, she was preserved by God from the lack of sanctifying grace that afflicts mankind, and she was instead filled with divine grace.</p> <p>This would seem to make the Virgin Mary divine and take away the great honor of being able to resist the temptation of sin.</p>	<p>They reject that Mary was sinless and the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.</p> <p>Some understand the term Immaculate Conception for the conception of Christ.</p>

Modern Moral Topics

Abortion:

The Orthodox Church strongly opposes abortion, viewing it as a violation of the sacredness of human life from conception.

Homosexuality:

The Church views homosexuality as sinful behavior when acted upon however through pastoral care and reconciliation, offers guidance and support to individuals struggling with their sexual identity. It affirms the traditional view of marriage as between a man and a woman.

Contraception:

Intercourse outside of marriage is deemed sinful. Within the context of marriage it is blessed and necessary for the propagation of children. Using contraception in order to avoid bearing children for selfish means is not accepted but for pastoral purposes like spacing children and protecting health it may be blessed as long as it is non-abortifacient.

Fertility:

(IVF) treatments are generally, impermissible for married couples due to the potential discarding of embryos. Surrogacy is not allowed as adding a third person into the marriage is unnatural.

Euthanasia:

The Church opposes euthanasia, but it acknowledges that extraordinary measures to prolong life may not always be necessary and may even consider it compassionate to allow a natural death when no cure is possible.

Gender roles:

“there are neither male nor female” Galatians 3:28 says St. Paul. Each gender holds the same dignity and importance before God. Yet, this does not deny that there are different genders (Male & Female) and that within society and the Church each play specific roles as created and gifted by God.