

WHAT IS THE ORTHODOX CHURCH?



The Orthodox Church is the society of the Christian faithful, founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Faith of the twelve Apostles, who live united by the same doctrine, by the law of God, by the divinely instituted hierarchy and by the practice of the Sacraments, and obey the Legitimate Pastors.

The Orthodox Church possesses the authentic doctrine of Christ, as it came from his lips and was preached by the Apostles in the first century of the Christian era, there in

Palestine; it practices its commandments, lives the life of grace that he left us by his death and sacraments, hopes in eternal life, follows the teachings of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and remains closely united with its pastors, the Orthodox priests and bishops, descendants in a straight line of the Apostles. It recognizes only as the sole and eternal head of the Church Our Lord Jesus Christ who directs, teaches and saves us. She is the depository of the Doctrine of the Lord and continues His work of salvation and love throughout the earth. God promised His Church the assistance of the Holy Spirit not to fall into error or to teach it, and to abide in it until the consummation of the ages.

The Holy Orthodox Church is the Unity of Faith and Love of all the (local) Churches, which have preserved Orthodoxy, the tradition of Faith, Order, Liturgy and Devotion, as it was confessed in the beginning *"everywhere, always and by all."*

Even though historically its territories have been Eastern, after the Great Schism, the Holy Orthodox Church emphatically rejects the idea of being a "partial" or Eastern expression of the Christian faith. On the contrary, he confesses his faith, full, catholic or universal.

It is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church!



DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

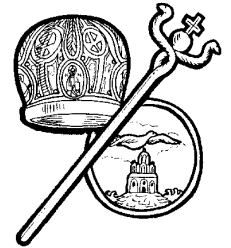


The fundamental difference is that which has to do with the universal supremacy of the jurisdiction of Rome and the Papal Infallibility, which the Orthodox Church cannot admit, since it is opposed to Scripture and Tradition.

Ultimate authority and infallibility rest with the Ecumenical Council.

In addition to the above, there are other considerations that can be grouped into two basic sections: (a) *general differences* and (b) *special differences*.

To give a synthetic idea of them, we pass on to a schematic review from the reading of which we can infer the great possibility of overcoming them if we consider the spirit of brotherhood that animates, above all, the work of true Christians.



DOGMATIC, LITURGICAL AND DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

In the Orthodox Church only 7 Ecumenical Councils are admitted. In the Roman Church: 20.

The Orthodox Church does not admit the coming of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, but only from the Father. For this reason, the Orthodox Church rejects the addition of the "Filioque" in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, approved by Rome.

The Consecration of the Bread and Wine in the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is effected by the Preface, the Words of the Lord, and the Epiclesis, and, preferably, not only by the words spoken

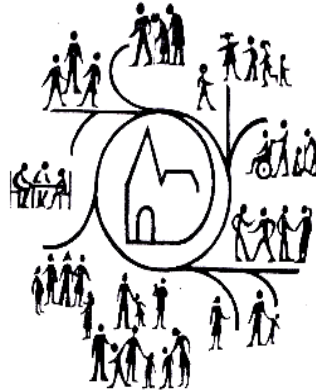


by Christ at the Last Supper, as the Roman Church teaches.

The Orthodox Church does not admit the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome in any case. Infallibility is the prerogative of the whole Church, and not of one person.

The Orthodox Church teaches that the decisions of an Ecumenical Council are superior to the decisions of the Pope of Rome or any ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The Orthodox Church does not admit the Universal Supremacy of Right of the Bishop of Rome over the entire Christian Church. All bishops are equal. It recognises only a Primacy of Honour or a Supremacy of Fact (Primus inter pares).



The Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin like other human beings. The Roman Church, by definition of Pope Pius IX, in the year 1854, proclaimed the Immaculate Conception as a "Dogma" of Faith.

The Orthodox Church denies the existence of Purgatory and Limbo.

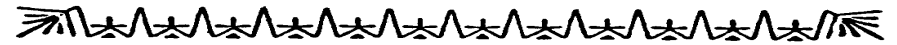
The Sacrament of Holy Unction can be received several times by the faithful, in case of any spiritual or bodily illness, and not only in danger of death as in the Roman Church.

In the Orthodox Church the ordinary minister of Holy Chrism is the Priest; in the Roman Church it is the Bishop, and the priest alone extraordinary.

The Orthodox Church does not admit the existence of indulgences.

Different theological conceptions of religion, Church, Incarnation, Grace, images, eschatology, Virgin Mary, Tradition, Hierarchy, Holy Spirit, Purgatory, Sacraments, Cult of the Saints, infallibility, State...

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Minister is the Priest, and not the contracting parties, as the Roman Church would have it. It admits divorce in exceptional cases.



SPECIAL DIFFERENCES

In the Orthodox Church, only icons are allowed in temples. In the Roman Church, sculptures and all kinds of carved images are used.

Those to become Orthodox priests can freely choose between Marriage or Celibacy.

Baptism is by triple immersion in the Orthodox Church. In the Roman Church is by sprinkling.

Leavened bread is used in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

The Orthodox and Roman calendars are different, especially regarding Easter.

The Communion of the faithful takes place under both kinds.

In the Orthodox Church there are no devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Corpus Christi, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, Christ the King, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and other similar commemorations.

The process of canonization of a saint is different in the Orthodox Church, where the people take a greater part in the recognition of his/her holiness.

In the Orthodox Church there are 3 Minor Orders: Reader, Acolyte and Subdeacon. In the Roman Church there are 2: Reader and Acolyte.

The Holy Myron (Confirmation) and Communion in the Orthodox Church take place immediately after Baptism.

In the Formula of Absolution of Sins in the Sacrament of Confession, the priest absolves not in his own name, but in the name of God: "God absolves you from your sins ..."

In the Roman Church, the Priest absolves in his name as God's representative: "I absolve you of your sins"

"The Orthodox Church does not admit the temporal power of the Church. In the Roman Church such a doctrine is a dogma of faith.

The Orthodox Church is NOT a Catholicism without a Pope... It has NOT separated itself from any church... for it is the Church of Jesus Christ... And it is... THE CHURCH FOR MORE THAN 2000 YEARS ...

