



the priesthood and not the priest who marries), but recognizes the excellence of celibacy and monastic life (eremitical or coenobitic, Matt. 19:21; I Cor. 7). We believe that, faithful to the Supreme Testament of Christ, the Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church works for the peace and unity of all in truth and love (Jn. 13:14-35).



WHY AM I ORTHODOX?

I am Orthodox, because I love the true God, Jesus Christ and his doctrine, as taught and preached by the Holy Catholic Apostolic Orthodox Church. *The Orthodox Church is the one that Christ founded.*

It teaches: the truths we must firmly believe, the duties we must practice, and the means we are to employ to sanctify ourselves. **It is the Depository of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ and continues His work on earth.**

Christ founded His Church to teach, sanctify, and save all men. **His Church will remain forever because Christ promised to be with her "to the end of the age" and to be her invisible Head.** Outside the Church there is no salvation because it received from Jesus the power and the means to save men.

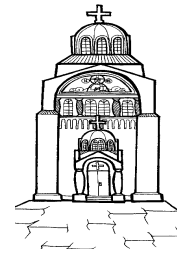
It has maintained for twenty centuries the same sacraments, the same doctrines and the same pastors who are the successors of the Apostles. Its name Orthodox comes from the fact that it rightly believes and teaches the doctrine of Christ. It has stood righteously in doctrine from Jesus Christ to this day.

We call ourselves Orthodox because we believe exactly what the Apostles taught.



WE ARE CHRISTIANS

FOR THAT REASON WE ARE ORTHODOX



We believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ has instituted a religious, hierarchical and visible society: **The Church** (Mat. 16:17-20); 18:18; 28:18-20; John 20:21-23).

The Church continues the work begun by Jesus Christ, prolonging in time and extending in space the Presence of the Incarnate Word. Through it, the divine life is communicated to souls. It is the Mystical Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:24).

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We believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ has transmitted to His Apostles (Mark 3:13-20) the threefold power :

(1) Of Teaching (Matt. 28:19-20; Lk. 10:16). (2) Of Order and Sanctification of Souls (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke. 22:19; I Cor. 4:1). (3) Of Government and Judgement (Mat. 28:18-20; John 20:12-23; Acts. 15:28).

We believe, according to the constant teaching of the Church, that the powers of the Apostles have been handed down only to the Bishops, their successors in the course of the centuries (Acts 20:28, Clement of Rome, Cor. 42-44, Ignatius of Antioch, Eph. 4:1; Magn. 6:1; Trall. 2:1; 13:2; Phil. 4, etc.).

Irenaeus of Lyons said, *"The Tradition of the Apostles, manifested throughout the world, is visible to every Church to all those who want to see the truth, and we can name those whom the Apostles have established as Bishops in every Church, as well as their successors down to our days"* (Adv. Haereses 3:3; Tertullian, De Praescript. 32).

We believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ is **the only Head of the Church** (Matt. 28:20; Eph. 2:20; Col. 1:18).





We believe, according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and of the Holy Fathers of the Church, that all the Apostles were equal, and that **all the Bishops, their successors, have received the full divine powers of binding and loosing** (Matthew 18:18; Jn. 20:21-23); Cyprian of Carthage said: *"It is certain that the other Apostles were, themselves also, what St. Peter was: invested with the same degree of honour and full powers"* (De Eccl. Unit. 4; St. Ambrose of Milan, De Incarn. 4:32; Leo of Rome, Sermon. 4:3; St. Augustine of Hippo, Sermon. 118; Gregory of Rome, Letter. 25:1 and 30:7; etc.).



Bishops

We believe that **only the Ecumenical or Universal Church is infallible**. It alone is *"the pillar and foundation of truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15); the Holy Spirit leads her *"into the whole truth"* (Jn. 16:13); *"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18); *"It is the very mouth of Christ"* (Hilary of Poitiers, De Trin. 7); *"Infallibility resides solely in the universality of the Church united in love; the immutability of dogma and the purity of the rite are entrusted to the guard, not of a hierarchy, but of the whole ecclesiastical people, which is the Body of Christ"* (Reply of the Four Orthodox Patriarchs to the Pope of Rome, Pius IX, 1848).

We believe that the essential unity of the Church, the unity of faith, does not exclude the existence of autocephalous or autonomous Churches (*"The universal Church is composed of numerous Churches"* (St. Augustine of Hippo, De Civit. Dei. 13:12)).

We believe that the Episcopate belongs to the very essence of the Church; we also maintain and perpetuate, in the succession of the Apostles, the Orders of the Episcopate, the Presbyterate, and the Diaconate, *"orders without which there is no Church"* (Ignatius of Antioch, Trall. 3:2).

We believe that the titles of Archbishop, Primate, Patriarch, are honorary titles. Its attributions, established by the Holy Councils, are intended to contribute to the good of the Church and to maintain unity.



We believe, by reason of the schism in the Patriarchate of Rome, that the Patriarch of Constantinople possesses the Primacy of Honour conferred on this See by the Councils of Constantinople (Canon 3) and Chalcedon (Canon 28).

We believe and maintain in its entirety the doctrine of the One and Indivisible Church: *"That which is believed by all, always, and everywhere; for this alone is true and rightly Catholic"* (Vincent of Lerins, Comm. 2:4).

We believe in and recognize the authority of the divinely inspired Holy Scripture (2 Tim. 3:15-17), of Holy Tradition (2 Tim. 2:2) *"A living bond with the ecclesiastical experience in its fullness,"* of the Nicene Creed - Constantinople (without the addition of the *"Filioque"*), of the definitions of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

We believe that the Sacraments have been instituted by Christ to be the channels of Divine Grace. The Mystery or Sacrament is a holy act in which, under the visible sign, the invisible Grace of God is communicated to the faithful. (Confess. Orthodox). These Sacraments are seven in number: Baptism (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 3:5; Titus 3:5); Confirmation (Acts 8:14-17); the Eucharist (Luke 22:19-20; Jn. 6:48-59; 1 Cor. 11:20-30); Penance (Jn. 20:22-23; Acts 19:18), Order (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6-14); Marriage (Eph. 5:32); the Anointing of the Sick (James 5:14-15).

We believe that the worship of the Church has as its centre the celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Divine Liturgy). It is the representation and actualization of the One Sacrifice of the Cross (*"The visible sacrifice is the sacrament of the invisible sacrifice."*) (St. Augustine of Hippo. De Civit. Dei. 5). *"Whenever this sacrifice is celebrated in memory of the Passion, it is the work of our Redemption that is accomplished"* (Silent Prayer of 9th Sunday after Pentecost). Christ, truly present under the species of bread and wine, is the source of unending life for his Church. Communion is always given to the faithful under both the species of bread and wine (Matt. 26:28).

We believe that the administration of the sacraments is always free: *"You have received freely, give freely,"* says the Lord (Matt. 10:8).

We believe that according to the teaching of Scripture (1 Tim. 3) and primitive Tradition, the Church authorizes the marriage of secular priests (before the reception of the diaconate; it is the husband who approaches

