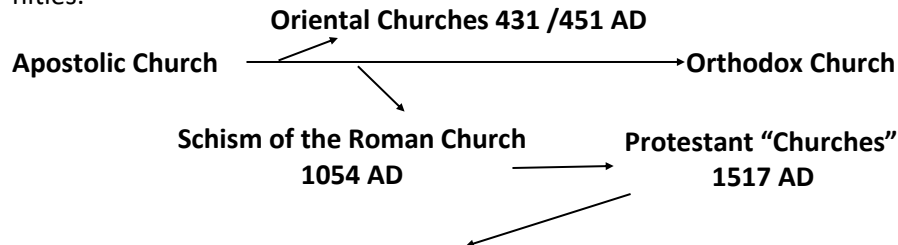




ment due to the Reformation, thus appearing multiple Protestant communities.



Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Baptists, Mormons, Adventists, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and thousands of sects...

**THAT DON'T AGREE ON ANYTHING!**

Faced with this terrible picture of disunited Christians, the Orthodox Church, pained by the separation from its brothers and sisters who recognize Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, prays always for the union of all in the true faith, transmitted by Our Lord, the Apostles and the Fathers and preserved in the Orthodox Church. **The true Christian doctrine, inherited from Christ and his apostles, was preserved intact in the Christian East.**

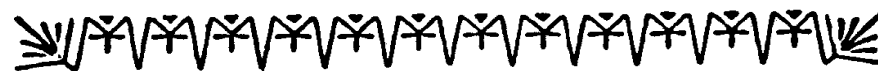
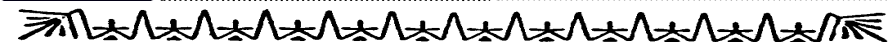
## ORTHODOX CHURCH?

We have mentioned some of the characteristics of Christ's Church. Along with the above notes, our Church has been awarded the adjective Orthodox (from the Greek: Orthodox: True Belief) (from Orthos: Straight and Doxa: Belief, Practice, Worship) to indicate that in her resides the true faith, in harmony with the original teachings of Our Lord. The regulator of this harmony and continuity is Christ Himself, according to His promise (Matt. 28:20; Marc. 16:20) The Holy Spirit is with the Church and guides her in truth (John 14:26). The uninterrupted succession of the Bishops has maintained a historical and sacramental continuity, which other Christian groups can hardly justly claim.



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# THE CHURCH

**BUT... WHAT CHURCH Do I Go To?**



God does not want us to live in isolation but to come together to live the Christian Faith as part of a **COMMUNITY**.

The community of believers in Christ is the Church.

**WE ARE THE CHURCH!**

Jesus Christ founded the Church 2000 years ago.

And he founded only one Church:

**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH:**

**ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC and APOSTOLIC**

God sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to dwell in the Church.

**The Holy Spirit guides the Church and sanctifies it, and as Jesus promised, the gates of hell have not prevailed over it.**

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS:**

**ONE:** Because ONE is its Head: Jesus Christ. *And the Church is the Body of Christ, and the Head and Body are the Body of One Lord: Jesus Christ the Son of God.*

**HOLY:** For holy is its Lord, and holy is the Spirit that dwelleth in it. Even if its members are sinners.

**CATHOLIC:** which means universal, because its members are all Christians of all times and all places, of all races, and of all cultures and languages.

**APOSTOLIC:** because it is built on the teachings of Christ's Apostles.

**ORTHODOX:** because *it believes, teaches, and lives what is right.*



**"AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD"**





## BUT... WHERE DO I FIND THIS CHURCH?

It is very confusing to find one's way around the sea of thousands of "churches" that surround us. When we look around we see Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Adventist "churches," etc., etc., etc. And the question arises:

*How can I know what is the Church that Christ founded?*

**ii... if they all say they are the Church of Christ...!!**

Pentecost 33 A.D. —————> Today  
Only One Church

***To know what is the Church that Christ founded, we must know the history of the Church.***

The Church was born in Jerusalem, Palestine.

At Pentecost, he sent the promised Holy Spirit to his apostles, who, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the women and brethren gathered in the same room where the Supper was performed, persevered with one accord in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:13-15).

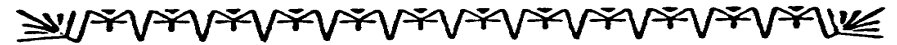
This was the first community of believers in Jesus, that is, the first Christian Church.

All the Apostles received, in equal measure, the Lord's Command. From Jerusalem, the Gospel was spread by the Apostles in neighboring countries. In Antioch, the great city of the East, believers began for the first time to call themselves "Christians," a salutary name we carry to this day. Then the Apostles and disciples of the Lord bring the Good News to all the great centers of the world, including Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, where St. Paul formed the first community, which he greets in his Epistle to the Romans (Ch. 16).

As they traveled and preached, they established churches, under the charge of which, by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Ghost, they left a bishop as their successor.

With the advent of Constantine the Great (306) to the imperial throne Christianity was officially recognized, and St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor and Constantine himself, became its chief advocates.

The administration of Christendom has been exercised by the bishops. The highest-ranking in each region was eventually given the title of Patriarch.



For administrative reasons, the Church was organized into ecclesiastical districts, namely:

**Rome:** founded by St. Paul and the first capital of the Roman Empire, in which St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred (67);

**Constantinople:** founded by St. Andrew and second capital of the Empire;

**Alexandria:** the main political, cultural and philosophical center of Africa, founded by St. Mark;

**Antioch:** the main center of the East, called the city of God, founded by St. Peter and St. Paul, of which St. Peter was its first Bishop;

**Jerusalem:** called the Mother of the Church, in which Our Lord preached and wrought redemption. In the apostolic era it was presided over by the apostle St. James (James), who was its first bishop. Each of these ecclesiastical centers has a Patriarch, who presides over them, and an episcopal synod.

In addition, the Church of Cyprus founded by St. Paul and St. Barnabas has enjoyed autocephaly. The primacy of this is an archbishop who also had temporal powers (conferred by the Emperor Justinian).

All patriarchs had equal rights, were independent in the administration of their Church, and were equal to each other. All believers in the Church have been united by their common faith, sacraments, and practices.

Rome being the capital of the Empire, its Patriarch was considered the first among his equals, this being an honorific title only. Subsequently, with the establishment of the Capital of the Empire in Byzantium, similar honors were given to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The supreme authority of the Church, for dealing with problems of a general nature and of doctrine, was and continues to be the Ecumenical Council.

Between the tenth and eleventh centuries, Christendom was to experience one of its greatest tragedies: ***The Great Schism.***

The thesis of Rome, upholding the supremacy of its bishop, the interpolation of the "Filioque" (which proceeds from the Father and the Son) in the creed and other doctrinal changes and in liturgical practices, apart from political reasons linked to the conflict between East and West, led to a profound rupture, which culminated in the year 1054.

The unfortunate division of Christianity would later be complicated, since the West, from the sixteenth century onwards, would suffer a dismember-

