

glorious beyond compare than the seraphim."

- Historically the Byzantine Catholic Church used to be known as the Greek Catholic Church.
- The usage of the word Byzantine became popular in the U.S., because it helped distinguished the church from the other Greeks. was associated with the term "Greek."
- In Europe, the term Greek Catholic is still the norm.

What are some of the differences between Byzantines and Roman Catholics?

- The Liturgy (Mass) is almost completely chanted (song) and is different from the Roman Mass.
- Communion is given out to standing communicants, who receive both the precious Body and Blood. (The priest uses a gold spoon to drop the bread/wine into their mouth.)
- Icons are used and venerated instead of statues.
- Incense is used throughout the Liturgy.
- Byzantine Churches have large Icon Screens, which separate the Altar area (sanctuary or Holy Place) from the rest of the church, much as the communion rail did in the Roman Rite. .
- It is proper to stand during the Byzantine Liturgy as opposed to kneeling in the Roman Mass.
- The Liturgy of is from St. John Chrysostom, which dates back to the 300's.

There is little difference between Melkite Byzantine, Ruthenian Byzantine, and Ukrainian Byzantine Catholics.

- Theologically, all the particular Churches can be viewed as "sister Churches". According to the Second Vatican Council these Eastern Churches, along with the larger Latin Church share "equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others as

regards rite, and they enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, also in respect of preaching the Gospel to the whole world (cf. Mark 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff."

- The main difference is their ethnicities. These sub-branches of the Byzantine Catholic Church are known as Jurisdictions. In the USA, the Ukrainian church is the largest Byzantine Jurisdiction, and has become a melting pot of different nationalities.

I'm currently a Roman Catholic, how do I become a Byzantine Catholic?

- To attend a Byzantine Catholic Church on a regular basis, you don't have to do anything special if you are already a Catholic. Simply go.
- Some people find that they are spiritually fulfilled at a Byzantine Church, and in order to bring closure to their spiritual journey, they would like to be officially recognized as a Byzantine Catholic. This process is known as changing rites.
- Basically, the process is simple: After discussing this with your priest, you write a letter to your Roman Catholic Bishop and the Byzantine Catholic Bishop. In the letter, you state spiritual reasons why you want to change rites. At that point, they will begin to process the paperwork and will reply to your request.
- Note that you are not converting. You are simply changing rites.

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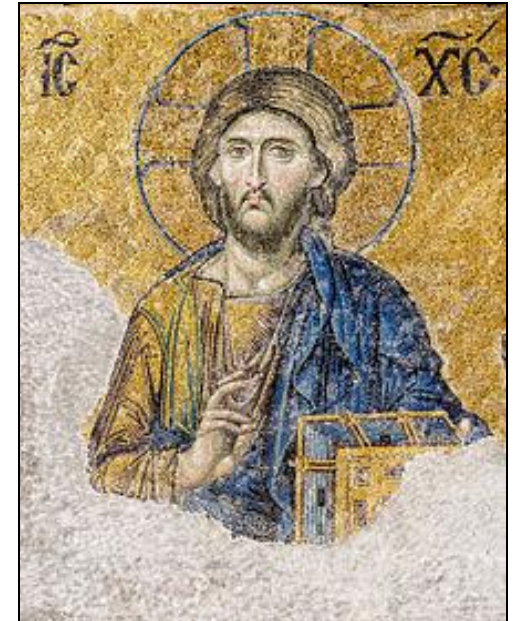
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Pamphlet 656

Byzantine Catholics



Jesus Christ Pantocrator

(Detail from deesis mosaic) from Hagia Sophia

What is the Byzantine Catholic Church?

- The Byzantine Catholic Church is a branch of the Catholic Church.
- The Byzantine Catholic Church is in full communion with the Pope of Rome, whom is recognized as the visible Head of the Catholic Church.
 - Byzantine Catholics are recognized as being "Catholic" by the local Roman Catholic Bishops and the Bishops of the United States of America and the whole world. However, Byzantine Catholics are NOT Roman Catholics, but Catholics who are identified as being Eastern Catholics.
- As Catholics, Byzantine Catholics and Roman Catholics share the same faith and have the same seven sacraments. The difference is that

Byzantine Catholics have different customs and traditions that date back to the early centuries of the church.

At the Last Supper, after Jesus changed bread and wine into His own Body and Blood, He told His disciples to "Do this in Memory of me." This they did. As the disciples brought the Gospel to different parts of the world, they adapted ceremonies of the Liturgy to the customs and music of that people.

In the end, four great centers of Christianity emerged with distinctive Christian customs, but the same faith. These centers were located in the great cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome and Alexandria. A couple of centuries later when the capital of the Roman Empire was moved to the Eastern city of Byzantium and renamed Constantinople, an adaptation of the Antioch way of celebrating Liturgy was made. Thus, a new center of Christianity arose in Constantinople and her ritual became known as the Byzantine Rite. From Constantinople the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe were converted by Sts. Cyril and Methodius and naturally followed the Byzantine Rite.

Are Roman/Latin Catholics of the Byzantine Rite?

• No, Byzantines are their own separate church. "sui iuris" is often the term used to describe this state. The Eastern Catholic Churches are autonomous, self-governing particular churches in full communion with the Pope. Together with the Latin Church, they make up the Catholic Church as a whole.

Roman Catholics may attend a Byzantine Church to fulfill their Sunday obligation.

Holy Communion in a Byzantine Church.

- During communion, both the Body and Blood of Christ are given to the person.
- Rather than wafers, the Byzantine Catholics use little portions of bread cut from a loaf, which is usually baked by parishioners.
- The consecrated bread is put in the chalice. The Holy Gifts are distributed under the forms of Bread and Wine by means of a small golden spoon. When receiving the Blessed Sacrament, one approaches the priest with hands folded right over left on the breast, and tilts his/her head back and opens his/her mouth. The priest then drops the Blessed Sacrament into the mouth of the recipient. The recipient should not touch the spoon with their mouth or tongue.
- Unlike Roman/Latin Catholic Churches, Byzantine Catholics do not say, "Amen" after receiving Communion.

Veneration

- A genuflection is not made upon entering a Byzantine Church. Instead, a "metania" is made by bowing and making the sign of the cross as a sign of reverence.
- *Metania* (or metany) comes from the word *metanoia* (Greek *μετάνοια*). It is performed by first making the Sign of the Cross. Then, one bends from the waist, reaches toward the floor with the right hand open and facing outward, and touches the ground. The metania is often used when venerating an icon and when approaching a hierarch or a priest for his blessing.

Sign of the Cross

- In the Byzantine Catholic Rite, the Sign of the Cross is made by holding the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand together, while the other fingers are tucked into the palm, then making the sign of the cross from the forehead



to the breast, to the right shoulder and then the left shoulder.

- The three fingers held together are an act of faith in the Holy Trinity, while the two remaining fingers signify the human and divine natures of Christ. This way of blessing oneself is very ancient and was in use in both the east and the west until the middle ages.

Before he became pope, Innocent III (1198-1216) wrote in *The Sacred Mystery of the Altar*, "The Sign of the Cross is made with three fingers, because it is imprinted under invocation of the Trinity... so that it descends from the upper part to the lower, and crosses over from the right hand to the left because Christ came down from the heaven to the Earth and crossed over from the Jews to the Gentiles." Another rationale for touching the right shoulder first is that "Jesus sits on the right hand of the Father".

The Blessed Virgin Mary is referred to as "Theotokos".

- The Council of Ephesus decreed in 431 that Mary is *Theotokos* because her son Jesus is both God and man: one Divine Person with two natures (Divine and human) intimately, hypostatically united. "Theotokos" is a Greek word meaning "God-bearer." A title commonly translated into English as "the Mother of God."
- Because of Mary's unique role and unique relationship with her Divine Son, she has a special place of honor in the Church.
- The Church is awed by the mystery that her womb contained the uncontainable God, and the hymns of the church proclaim Mary to be "higher in honor than the cherubim and more