

calendar. Since this reform took place after the schism of 1054, Orthodox Christians continued to follow the Julian calendar. During the twentieth century, however, some Orthodox Churches have begun to follow the new calendar of Gregory XIII.

Church of Constantinople

Numerically, the Byzantine Rite of Constantinople (Byzantium) is the largest in the Eastern Churches. Constantinople, home of the Imperial Court, granted special honors to the Patriarch of that city. He ranked second to the Pope of Rome, or even held at times, an apparent first. To this very day, the liturgical pomp and pageantry are colorfully displayed in the hierarchical vestments, noted particularly at pontifical celebrations. The tradition of Byzantium is reflected in architecture, art, sacred, and theological writings.

Different Eastern Rites

Alexandrian Rite:

- 1- Coptic rite (indigenous Christians of Egypt)
- 2- Ethiopian rite (Ethiopians)

Antiochian Rite:

- 1-East Syrian
 - a) Syro-Chaldean (Chaldean Catholics)
 - b) Syro-Malabar (Syro-Malabarese Catholics In India)
- 2-West Syrian
 - a) Syro-Antiochean (Syrian Catholics)
 - b) Syro-Malankarese (Malankarese Catholics in India)
 - c) Syro-Maronite (Maronite Catholics in Lebanon)

Armenian Rite (Armenians)

Byzantine Rite:

- 1-Greek-Byzantine (Greeks)

2-Melkite-Byzantine (Melkites)

3-Byzantine-Slavonic:

- a. Bulgarian (Bulgarians)
 - b. Ukrainian (Ukrainians)
 - c. Ruthenian
 - d. Russian old (Raskolniks)
 - e. Russian Reformed (Russians, Serbs)
 - f. Hungarian
 - g. Slovaks
- 4-Rumano-Byzantine: (Rumanians)

5-Italo-Byzantine:

- a. Rite of Monastery at Grottaferrate (near Rome)
- b. Italo-Albanese (Italians of Greek and Albanian origin)

6-Georgian-Byzantine (Georgians)

7-Roman-Byzantine (presented in the liturgical book Euchologion, published by order of Pope Benedict XIV, 1754, but never put into practice.

Rite of the Western Church:

- 1- Romans or Latin
- 2- Ambrosian (centered in Milan)
- 3- Mozarabic or Spanish
- 4- Celtic and Gallican (no longer exist).

This information is taken from the Byzantine Ukrainian Rite

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History of the Eastern Catholic Church and its Rites

With the emergence of the Christian Church in 313 from the period of persecution, a new era prevailed. In areas where Christianity flourished, patterns of expressing the Christian faith evolved into progressively more mature and complex forms. Local customs and traditions gave each local church a distinct form. In the western part of the Empire, the Latin Rite of the Roman See prevailed. The rite of the Church of Constantinople prevailed in the East, though the rites of the Churches of Antioch and Alexandria also exerted a notable influence. Antioch has been the centre of influence upon all Christendom. It was there that St Peter began his apostolate before going to Rome. The term Christian was first used in Antioch (see Acts 11:26).

Alexandria, the home of monasticism, was the glory of Egypt. At one time, the Patriarchate of Alexandria comprised 11 archbishoprics and more than 100 bishoprics. Patriarch Alexander and his successor St. Athanasius were among the leading Fathers of the first ecumenical council held in Nicea 325. During the following centuries, successive heresies destroyed this ancient stronghold of the Christian faith.

Schism

A crippling blow to the Christian Church was experienced in 1054. Political motivations dominate this historical date of unanswered questions. At the time of Michael Caerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, the Church of Jesus Christ suffered a schism (division) that has lasted to the present. Although the separated Eastern Churches (now called Orthodox Churches) retain all the sacraments and doctrine they do not acknowledge the Pope of Rome as

the infallible head of the whole Christian Church.

Today millions of Eastern Churches are estranged from the Roman See. Under the leadership of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, the Vatican council urged all to work and pray to restore full union between the separated Eastern Churches and Catholic Church (*Decree on Ecumenism*, no 14).

Reunion with the Roman See: There have been many attempts at reunion with the Roman See. The major ones were at the Ecumenical Council of Lyons in 1274 and the council of Florence 1439. At the time, they appeared successful. Nevertheless, for various historical reasons they were doomed to failure.

Downfall of Eastern Christendom: Constantinople, the final stronghold and fortress of Eastern Christendom fell to the Turks in 1453. The pendulum of the Church now swung west to the restored imperial court of Rome. Meanwhile Islam swept across Northern Africa, the Holy Land and Spain.

Importance of Rites

Briefly, a rite in the Catholic Church may be defined as the manner of expressing the one and the same teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ approved by the Apostolic See. The Importance of a rite stems from the fact that it is an expression of individuality and identity, a distinguishing characteristic of a certain country or people. It is a sacred link that joins a people with its ancestors. A rite therefore is the fruit of the spiritual endeavors of the soul of a people. It is the product of many generations who have lived the Christian faith. Apart from such seemingly secondary causes, there are much more fundamental sources from which a rite derives its sacredness and significance. The purpose of the Church is to perfect and to sanctify people. One of the means that the

church must employ in the pursuit of this mission is external form of worship for the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments, and for religious expression.

Centuries of spiritual values are contained and expressed through a rite. From an artistic point of view, a rite is a priceless treasure. It is a masterpiece of art, drama, poetry and music. It contains beauty of expression in word and in action. The beauty of the church is reflected in the diversity of rites, which enhance its catholicity and universality. It is a permanent roof of a living Church for all times and peoples. The Church is indeed universal, catholic and apostolic when it embraces with equal love various peoples, cultures, civilizations and traditions.

The Fathers of Vatican II were aware of this when they declared in the *Constitution on the Liturgy* (no 4, see also *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches* no 3)

Faithfully obedient to tradition, the Council declared that the Church considers that all lawfully acknowledged rites are of equal authority and dignity. The Church wants to preserve these rites in the future, and desires to foster them in every way.

Some differences between Eastern and Western Churches

Though the Eastern and Western Churches believe in "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all", the manner of expressing this faith varies. Some these differences are:

Unity in diversity: The Catholic faith is one, but it is expressed in varying rites. Different rites express the faith in various ways. This unity in diversity adds to the beauty of the Church, and reflects the Christian faith through many more prisms. Each culture is able to express its worship of God in a particular way, showing

forth his glory to all. Today there are more than ten million Catholics practicing their faith according to various rites of the Eastern Church: each of these is full union with the Holy Father in Rome.

More expressive liturgy: The Eastern rites see their liturgy as a major expression and proclamation of their faith. Their church is seen as making heaven present (icons, incense). Gestures are repeated frequently, and often by different individuals at different moments. More ceremonial and singing mark the Eastern liturgical celebrations in contrast to the more restrained Western liturgies. However, both East and West express their faith in their worship, and their prayer reveals the Christian faith they hold so firmly.

Catholic and Orthodox: The term Catholic refers to a person or Church in union with the Holy See, Orthodox means a person or Church holding the full Christian faith and celebrating all the sacraments, but not in full union with the pope. In the past decade, Pope Paul VI and the Greek Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras have begun some symbolic gestures of friendship and brotherhood as first step toward the unity desired by Christ among all his followers. Just before the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965 Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras cancelled out the ancient anathemas (made at the time of the schism of 1054) as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation.

Calendars

When Christianity was founded, the Roman Empire was following the Julian calendar, which was organized by Julius Caesar. Over the centuries, this calendar was found to be somewhat inaccurate, so that by the sixteenth century, it was some two weeks behind. Pope Gregory XIII introduced our present calendar in 1582, and this is known as the Gregorian