

# Byzantine Catholic Tradition



# Introduction

- The **Byzantine Catholic Churches**, also known as the **Greek Catholic Churches**, are the largest and perhaps the best-known group of Eastern Catholic Churches. The Ukrainian Catholic Church is part of this group.
- These Churches profess the same **Creed** (beliefs) and have the same **“Holy Mysteries”** or **“Sacraments”** as any other Catholic Church.
- They are unique in the sense that they follow the spiritual patrimony, liturgical customs, and theological language, and nuances particular of the **Christian East**. Eastern Christianity is heavily influenced by the **Patristic writings** of the **Greek Fathers**.
- Byzantine Churches have their own hierarchies and liturgies, as well as their own distinct apostolic lineages. They may look and act like Eastern Orthodox churches, but they recognize the pope of Rome as the head of the visible Church on earth and have suffered for the cause of that unity.



# Why are Byzantine Churches called Byzantine?

- The Byzantine Catholic Churches are so named because they follow the spiritual traditions of **Byzantium** (Constantinople). The term Byzantine is derived from Byzantium, the city that, in the year 325 A.D., became the political, cultural, and commercial center for the Eastern, Greek speaking part of the **Roman empire**.
- The city was later renamed **Constantinople** after Constantine's death and is now modern Istanbul, Turkey.
- The region known as Byzantium was evangelized by St. Andrew the Apostle known as the "**First called**"; According to tradition St. Andrew founded the See of Byzantium in the year 38 A.D.
- Ukrainian Eastern Christianity took a firm root in Ukraine in 988 when Vladimir, prince of Kyivan Rus', embraced the Christian Faith and was baptized.
- After **the Great Schism** of 1054 that split Christendom into East and West, the patriarchate of Constantinople became the Spiritual See of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.
- Although the Church of Rus' was under the supervision of the Patriarch of Constantinople, it nonetheless maintained ties with Rome and the West for centuries following the great Schism of 1054.
- For the most part, the other Byzantine Churches that broke away from the See of Constantinople after the great Schism of 1054, returned to full communion with the **See of Rome** and its bishop, the Pope. The return to Rome took place gradually in subsequent reunions.
- Two of the most notable reunions are the **Union of Brest** in 1595 and the **Union of Uzhhorod** in 1646.



# Which Churches make up the Byzantine Churches?



- The Byzantine Churches are “**Sui Juris**” Churches (self-governing Churches), they are:
  - A. The Melkite Catholic Church
  - B. The Ukrainian Catholic Church
  - C. The Ruthenian Catholic Church
  - D. The Romanian Catholic Church
  - E. The Greek Catholic Church
  - F. The Byzantine Church of Croatia, Serbia & Montenegro (or Križevci Catholic Church)
  - G. The Bulgarian Catholic Church
  - H. The Slovak Catholic Church
  - I. The Hungarian Catholic Church
  - J. The Russian Byzantine Catholic Church
  - K. The Belarusian Greek Catholic Church
  - L. The Italo-Albanian Catholic Church
  - M. The Macedonian Greek Catholic Church

Source: [Ascension – Faith Formation Leader](#)

# Who are Byzantine Catholics?

- **Byzantine Catholics** are Eastern Catholics, members of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church by reason of their **Baptism, Chrismation** (Confirmation), and participation in the **Holy Mysteries** (Sacraments) and the **Divine Liturgy** (Eucharist), the central aspect of worship .
- The **Catholic Church** headed by the bishop of Rome or **Pope** is a communion of 24 **Sister Churches** all equal in dignity: One Western (Roman Catholic or Latin Church) and 23 Eastern Churches. Although Byzantine Catholics **are not** Roman Catholics; they are under the Spiritual and temporal Jurisdiction of the **Bishop of Rome** or Pope.
- Byzantine Catholics together with Roman Catholics profess the same **Creed** (faith) and practice the same seven Holy Mysteries or Sacraments, each according to their own liturgical traditions, spirituality, and apostolic heritage. Therefore, Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics, use different words, expressions, or formulas to speak about the same realities, beliefs, devotions, or practices of faith.
- Byzantine Catholics are headed either by a **Patriarch** or by a **Metropolitan Bishop** in charge of the local bishops. Eastern and Roman Catholics can fulfill their **Sunday obligation** in each other's Church.
- For more see: [Who-We-Are-as-Ukrainian-Catholic-Church.pdf \(sspp.ca\)](#)



Praying before the Holy Icons

# The Nicene Creed- Our Faith

**I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is seen and unseen.**

**I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light  
from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father.  
Through Him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, He  
was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.**

**For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the  
third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures: He ascended into heaven and is  
seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.**

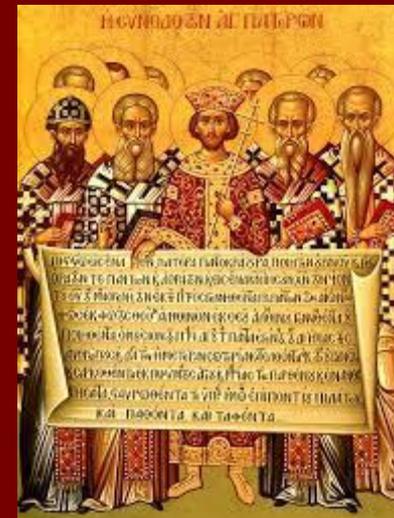
**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the  
Father and the Son, He is worshipped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I  
acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.**

For more see: [What-Eastern-Catholics-Believe.pdf \(sspp.ca\)](#)



# Decree Orientalium Ecclesiarum

## DECREE ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE EASTERN RITE

"All members of the Eastern Rite should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. All these, then, must be observed by the members of the Eastern rites themselves. Besides, they should attain to an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions."



*Icons, hymns, prayers, worship and liturgy of the Eastern Church unceasingly focus our attention, our hearts, minds, and spirits on Jesus Christ: His person, redeeming message, and divinity. Icons are windows into that holy realm where God and the saints now dwell. By beholding of the sacred icons, each liturgical year as events are celebrated, we see the unfolding of Our Salvation.*



Photo courtesy of Ryan Schuessler

# What are some common terms used to describe the jurisdiction of Byzantine Churches?



- **Archeparchy:** the Byzantine equivalent of an Archdiocese. It is led by a Metropolitan Archbishop also known as **Archeparch**.
- **Eparchy:** the Byzantine equivalent of a diocese. It is led by a bishop also known as an **eparch** who oversees all the parishes and ministries in his eparchy.
- **Parishes:** local churches led by a parish priest; sometimes with the assistance of a deacon or subdeacon.

# How do Byzantine Catholics celebrate the Paschal Mystery?



Byzantine Catholics celebrate the **Paschal Mystery** (the life, death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ) through five important cycles:

- The great cycle of a Christian's life.
- The Daily cycle
- The Weekly cycle
- The Annual cycle of movable feast
- The Annual cycle of stationary feasts

# The Five Cycles

## "The Cycle of a Christian's Life"

- **The Great cycle of a Christian's life:** from birth to death, the life of a Christian is infused with the **grace** of God through the **Holy Mysteries** (Sacraments) and prayer.
- In this cycle of life, men and women journey towards union with God and His promise of eternal life. This journey towards God's Kingdom begins at Baptism and Chrismation and ends with death.
- During this journey men and women are strengthened by the **Eucharistic meal**, received in Holy Communion at each **Divine Liturgy**, the central aspect of Byzantine Catholic worship.



# The Five Cycles

## "The Daily Cycle"



**The Daily cycle:** also known as the “**divine praises**”, are the prayers offered by the Church all day long. These prayers are offered in **monasteries** and in **parishes** where the clergy and Christian faithful gather to pray. In the Byzantine liturgical tradition, **the Church’s day** begins at evening, following the Jewish customs of counting the days. The daily cycle or divine praises is composed of the following:

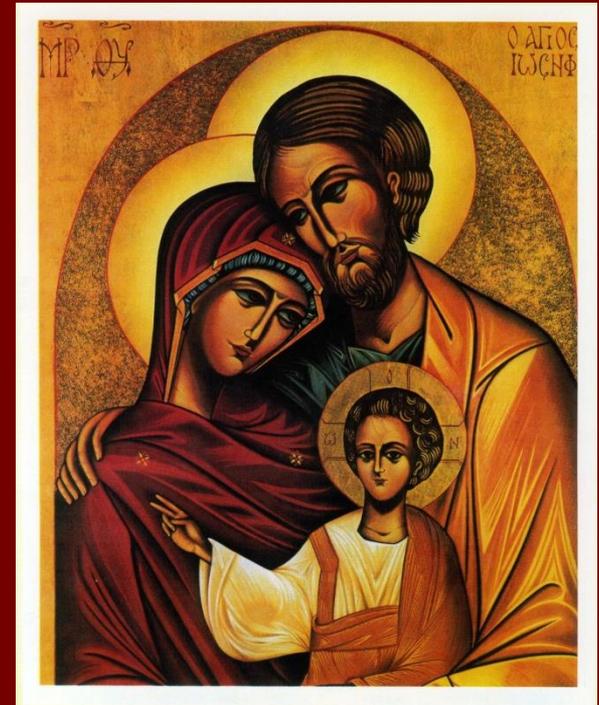
- **Vespers:** is the solemn **evening prayer** of the Church which begins the liturgical day. We thank God for the blessing of creation, especially for the gift of light both corporal and spiritual, and ask for pardon for our sins and offenses, and protection throughout the night.
- **Compline:** is a communal prayer before bedtime.
- **The Midnight Office:** is a **nocturnal vigil**, in which we meditate upon the unexpected coming of Christ.
- **Matins** (Orthros): is the **solemn morning prayer** of the Church, an office of supplication, repentance and praise.
- **The First Hour**, celebrated after Matins, is the first of the **four daytime Hours**; it is followed by:  
**The Third Hour**, celebrated at mid-morning.  
**The Sixth Hour**, celebrated at noon.  
**The Ninth Hour**, celebrated between mid-afternoon and Vespers of the new day.

**Typika:** is a service of psalms and prayers appointed for the Liturgy of the day, which is held when the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated.

# The Five Cycles

## "The Weekly Cycle"

- Each day of the **Weekly Cycle** is devoted to specific individual **memorials**. Sunday is dedicated to Christ's Resurrection. Monday - the Holy Bodiless Powers (Angels, Archangels, etc.). Tuesday - the prophets especially St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord; Wednesday - the Cross and recalls Judas' betrayal.
- Thursday - the **Holy Apostles** and **Hierarchs**, especially St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia. Friday is also consecrated to the Cross and recalls the day of the Crucifixion and Saturday is dedicated to All Saints, especially the **Mother of God** (Theotokos), and to the memory of all those who have departed this life in the hope of resurrection and eternal life.
- Each week, of the Weekly Cycle, is centered around the **Eight Tones** (the basis for Byzantine Church music), and each week has its appointed **Tone**. On Saturday Evening of **Bright Week** (the Eve of St. Thomas Sunday), **the cycle of Tones** begins with Tone One, and week by week, the sequence continues through the successive Tones, One to Eight, changing to a new Tone every Saturday Evening, throughout the year.



Source: Metropolitan Cantor Institute: [Liturgical weekly cycle of the Byzantine Rite \(MCI\) \(archpitt.org\)](http://www.archpitt.org)

# The Five Cycles

## "The Annual Cycle of Movable Feasts"

- The **annual cycle** or **liturgical year** brings to our attention the principal events in the life of Our Lord Jesus, and his Mother, the **Holy Theotokos**, the accomplishments of the Saints, and the theological doctrines of the Faith through special **feasts, fasts** and **commemorations**.
- The annual cycle is divided into **movable** and **fixed feasts**. The movable feasts are also known as the **Paschal cycle** because the date of their celebration is dependent on the central feast of the liturgical cycle which is **Pascha** (Easter). The liturgical year or annual cycle begins in the Byzantine Catholic tradition on **September 1**.
- The feasts associated with the annual cycle of **movable feasts** are: **Palm/Willow Sunday**, **Pascha**, **Holy Ascension** (the fortieth day after Pascha) and **Holy Pentecost** (the Descent of the Holy Spirit the **fiftieth day** after Pascha).
- For more see: [Movable Feasts-Paschal Cycle | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](http://www.sspp.ca)

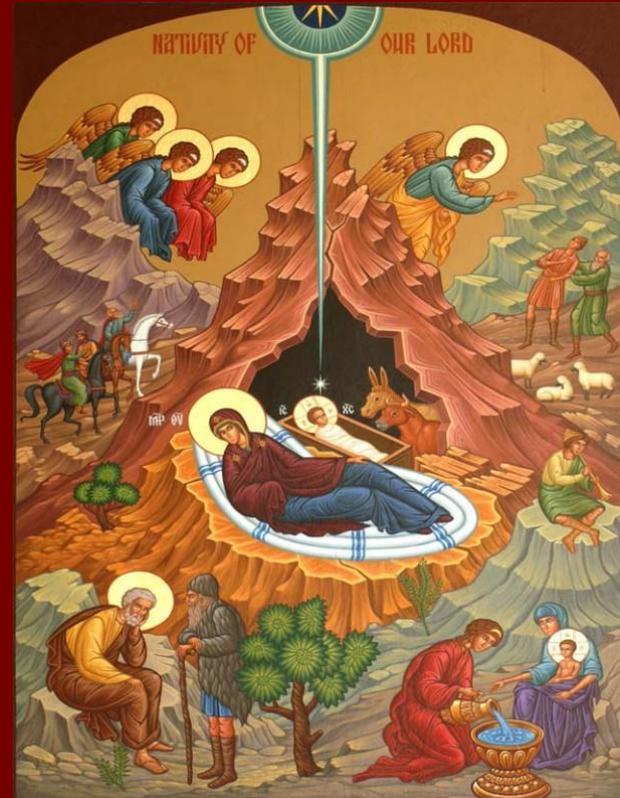


By the hand of Father Luke Dingman, [www.lukedingman.com](http://www.lukedingman.com)

# The Five Cycles

## “The Annual Cycle of Fixed Feasts”

- The **fixed annual cycle** is composed of memorials celebrated each year on the same date.
- Each day of the year is dedicated to the memory of particular Christian events or Saints, their particular feast or memorial is celebrated always on the same calendar date each year.
- Thus, in honor of each event or Saint(s), special **hymns** have been composed which are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the day.
- For more see: [Stationary Feasts | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)



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# The Great Feasts of the Church

- **Pascha** (Easter) is the “**Feast of feasts**” having a central and unique place in the Byzantine liturgical year. Next in importance come the “**Twelve Great Feasts**” of the Church. These feasts can be divided into two groups. **Feasts of the Lord** and **Feasts of the Mother of God** (Theotokos).

- **Great Feasts of the Lord**

1. The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-creating Cross **Sept. 14**
2. The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ **Dec.25**
3. The Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ **Jan. 6**
4. The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple **Feb. 2**
5. The Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (**Palm Sunday before Pascha**)
6. The Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (**40 days after Pascha**)
7. The Descent of the Holy Spirit (**50 days after Pascha**)
8. The Transfiguration of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

- **Great Feasts of the Mother of God**

8. The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos **Sept. 8**
9. The Entrance (or Presentation) of the Theotokos into the Temple **Nov. 21**
10. The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos **March 25**
12. The Falling-Asleep (or Dormition) of the Most-Holy Theotokos **Aug. 15**





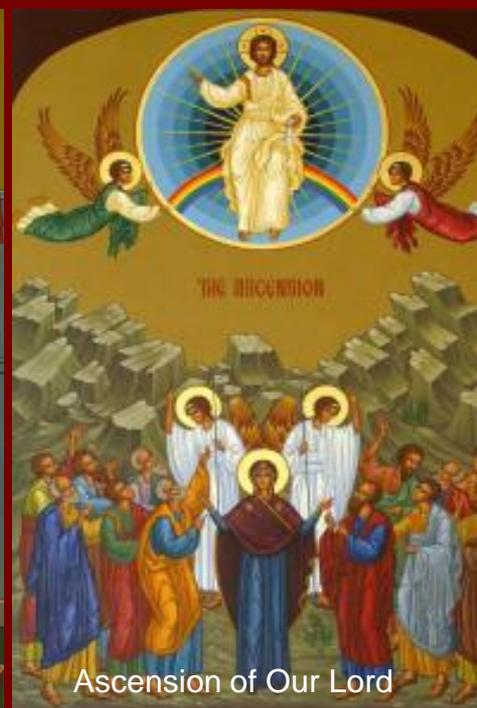
Nativity of Our Lord



Theophany of Our Lord



Annunciation



Ascension of Our Lord



Feast of Saints Peter and Paul



Dormition of the Mother of God

## Days of Obligation

While Ukrainian Catholic tradition emphasizes the importance of the twelve great feast days, there are **6 obligatory holy days** in addition to all Sundays.

These are:

- Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day - December 25
- Theophany of Our Lord - January 6
- Annunciation - March 25
- Ascension of Our Lord - 40 days after Pascha (Easter)
- Feast of Saints Peter and Paul - June 29
- Dormition of the Mother of God - August 15

On a holy day of obligation, a homily should be preached by the priest and one of the Liturgies has the intention, "For Our Parishioners."

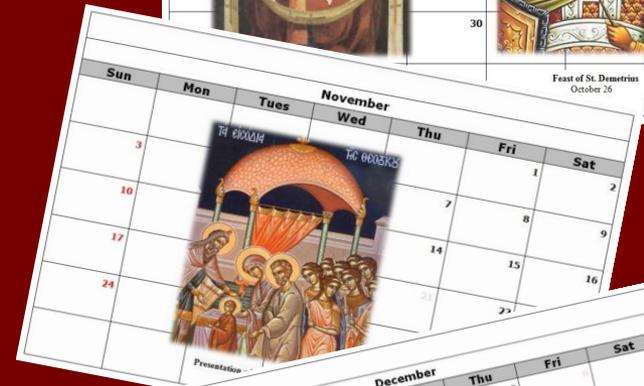
# The Penitential Seasons of the Byzantine Liturgical year

- **Fasting** is an important **discipline** in the Christian East. Major portions of the Liturgical cycle are taken up by periods of fasting. In the Byzantine tradition observed by Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics (and Orthodox Christians) there are four major penitential seasons, these are:
  - A. **Great Lent** also known as **the Great Fast** (40 days)
  - B. **The Apostles Fast** also known as the **Peter and Paul Fast**. (from the Sunday after Pentecost to June 28)
  - C. **The Nativity Fast** (pre-Christmas)also known as (**Pylypywka**) (40 days from Nov. 15-Dec. 24)
  - D. **The Dormition Fast** ( Ag 1-Aug 14)
- In addition to these periods of fasting Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics are to observe simple fasting on all Fridays throughout the year and strict fasting on the first day of the Great Fast and on Great Friday (Good Friday). The particular law of each jurisdiction is to be observed by the faithful regarding Fasting.
- For more see [Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)



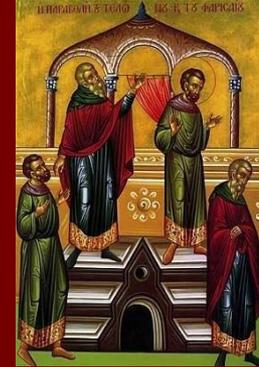
# Liturgical Year

- The Byzantine Liturgical year is very different from the **Latin Church's** Liturgical year used by Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, the Byzantine Liturgical year, begins on **September 1**.
- The Byzantine Liturgical year does not use the Roman Catholic structure and terminology for certain seasons; Greek Catholics do not have Advent or Ordinary time. In the Byzantine tradition the season prior to Christmas, known in the Latin Church as Advent, is called the **Nativity Fast (Pylypywka)**. There is no ordinary time in the Byzantine tradition, all Sundays are numbered after **Pentecost**.
- Byzantine Catholics like Roman Catholics, consider Pascha (Easter), the most important season of the Church Year. Like Roman Catholics, Byzantines have a Lenten season known as the **Great Fast** or Great Lent. Byzantine Catholics, like Roman Catholics, also celebrate the season of Christmas, known as the **Nativity of Our Lord**.



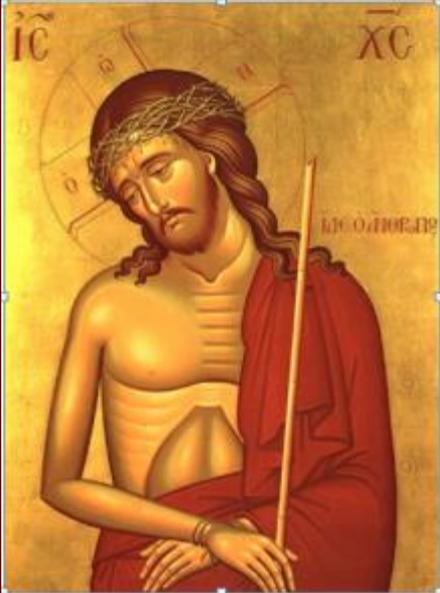
# Great Lent or The Great Fast

- Long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to meditate on its significance. Before we can *practice* Lent we are given its *meaning*. This preparation includes five consecutive Sundays preceding Lent, each one of them – through its particular Gospel lesson – dedicated to some fundamental aspect of repentance.”
- Zacchaeus Sunday – a lesson on our desire for God
- The Publican and the Pharisee – a lesson in humility
- The Prodigal Son – a lesson on returning home and repentance
- Meat fare – a lesson on how God wants us to love
- Cheese Fare – accentuates our need for forgiveness
- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, the Great Fast begins on a Monday seven weeks prior to Pascha (Easter). The Great Fast lasts 40 days, and unlike the Roman Catholic season of Lent, the Byzantine Great Fast includes Sundays. The first day of the Great Fast is a day of strict fast.
- During the Great Fast the prayer of St. Ephrem is prayed and the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- We prostrate ourselves before God during this penitential season.
- The Great Fast comes to an end on the Friday of the sixth week, before **Lazarus Saturday**. On this day we remember Christ’s raising of Lazarus from the dead and the promise of universal resurrection for us all.
- For more see: [Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](https://www.sspp.ca/periods-of-fast-during-the-liturgical-year/)



# Holy Week

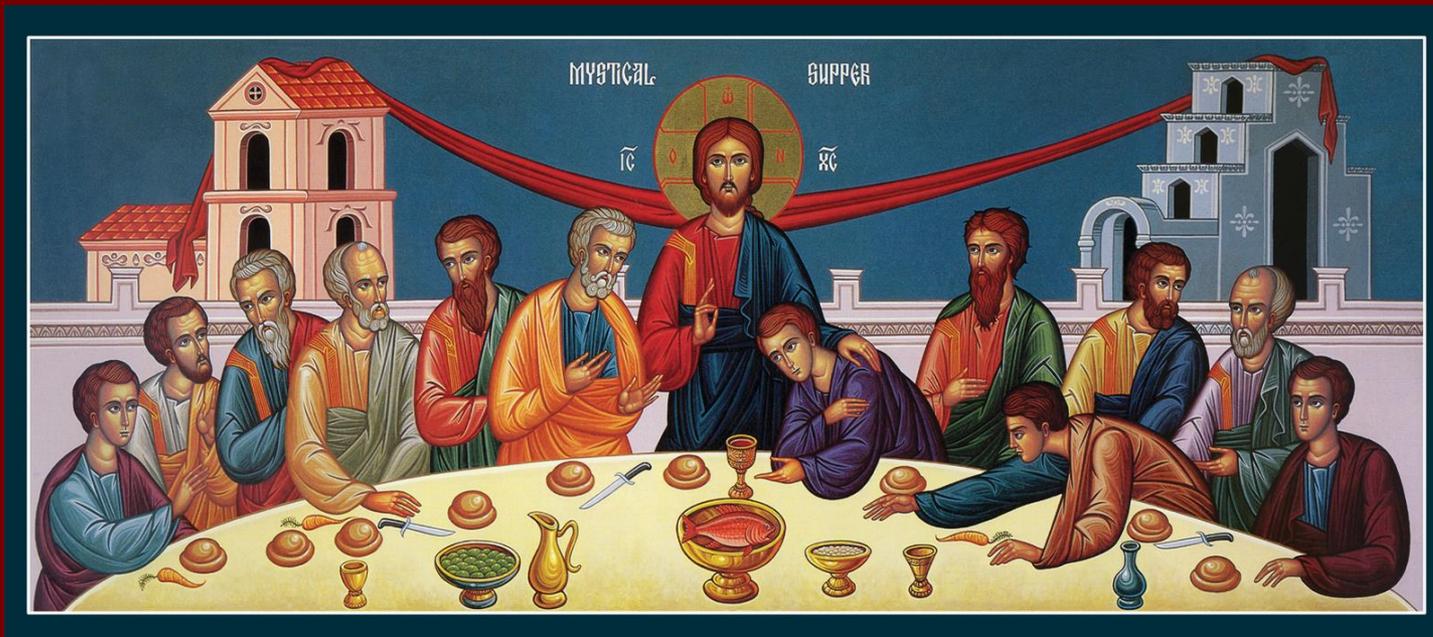
- The week after Palm Sunday is Holy Week –Holy Week is a separate season from The Great Fast.
- During The Great Fast each week has its own theme, during Holy Week each day has its own theme, based on the Gospel readings of the day.
- The theme of the first three days of Holy Week is that of Christ as Bridegroom, and the days are therefore referred to as the Bridegroom Days. The Bridegroom services are derived from the Parable of the Ten Virgins, which calls for preparedness at the Second Coming, for the “thief comes in the middle of the night”.
- On Holy Wednesday, the mystery of the anointing for **all of the faithful** takes place. Healing is intimately connected with repentance in Byzantine spirituality.
- Thursday’s theme centers on the **Mystical Supper.**
- Great Friday’s theme is the **Passion.**
- Holy Saturday is a day of hope and waiting. On Great and Holy Saturday afternoon, Vespers and a Divine Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated, marked with readings of Psalms and Resurrection hymn that tell of Christ’s descent into Hades. The “first resurrection of Adam” and the conquering of Death are commemorated.



For more see: [Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](https://www.sspp.ca/)

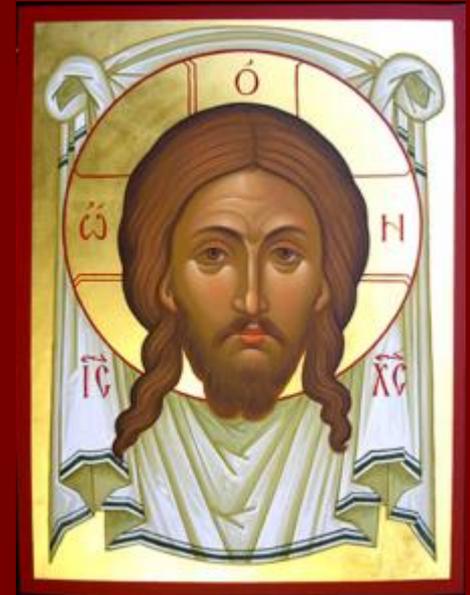
# Holy Thursday

- On this Holy day, the Byzantine Catholic Tradition commemorates four important events in the life of Jesus and his disciples leading up to his passion. These events are:
  - The washing of the Feet
  - The institution of the Eucharist
  - The agony at Gethsemane
  - The betrayal by Judas
- On Holy Thursday, the Liturgy of **St. Basil the Great** is celebrated. The Holy Chrism is consecrated by the bishop for the use in the administration of the Holy Mysteries, especially: Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick.
- In some Byzantine traditions a foot-washing rite accompanies the Divine Liturgy.



# Great and Holy Friday

- Good Friday, is a day of strict fast. As little as possible should be eaten on this day. It is the only day in the entire year that no Divine Liturgy of any kind can be celebrated. (The only exception to this is if the Feast of the Annunciation should fall on Good Friday.)
- Various traditions exist and vary even among parishes. In some parishes, the Matins of the Passion of Jesus, which include the reading of the Twelve Gospels, occurs in the morning. (In other places this might occur on Thursday evening.
- In the afternoon, around three o'clock, the great Vespers are celebrated, the accounts from the Gospels regarding the crucifixion and death of Jesus is read, special attention is given to role of **Joseph of Arimathea** in securing the body of Jesus for burial.
- Near the end of the service a shroud or plashchanytsia is carried in procession. The shroud itself represents the body of Jesus wrapped in a burial shroud and is a roughly full-size cloth icon of the body of Christ. It is carried to a spot near the front of the Church, which represents the tomb of Christ and is often decorated with an abundance of flowers.
- On Friday night, the Matins of Holy and Great Saturday, a unique service known as **Jerusalem Matins** is celebrated.
- The plashchanytsia will lay in the tomb until the Paschal Service early Sunday morning. In most churches, the shroud is never left alone, but is accompanied 24 hours a day by someone holding a vigil and praying before it.

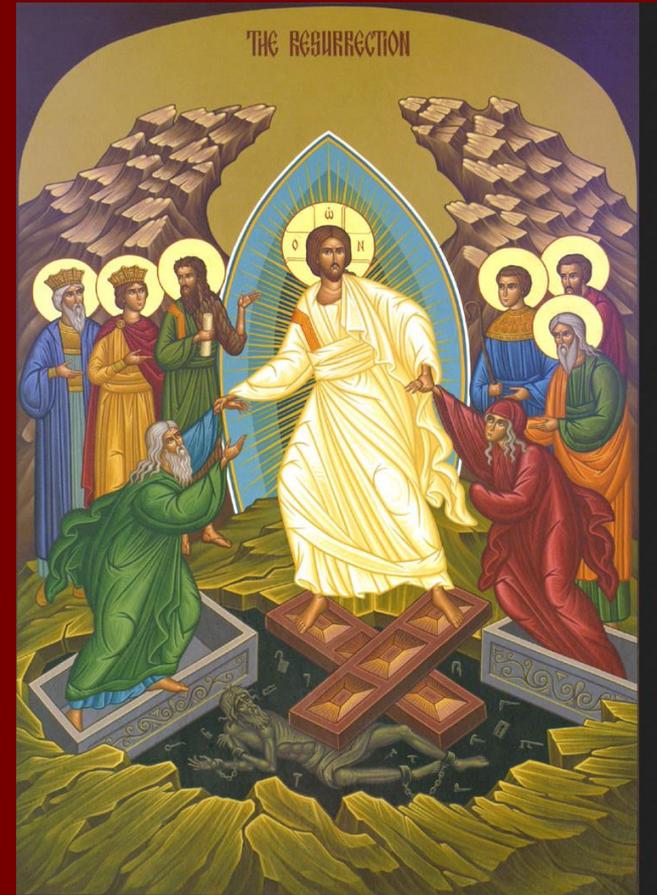


[Icon courtesy of Dmitry Shkolnik](#)

For more see: [Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)

# Holy Saturday

- This is the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection. On this day Byzantine spirituality reflects on Jesus' descent into **Hades**, the dwelling of the dead.
- The **Liturgy of St. Basil**, celebrated on this day, reminds us that Jesus descended into Hades to loosen the bond of death. Death has no power, it has been defeated from within, by the power of Christ. This is the longest liturgy of the liturgical year.
- In the Byzantine Catholic tradition Holy Saturday is a day of **vigilant anticipation**. On this day the liturgy focuses on Jesus' rest on the tomb.
- There is no icon that reflects the Resurrection of our Lord. The icon depicts Jesus's Descent into Hades and His Triumph over death.



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For more see: [Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saint Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)

# Celebration of Pascha- The Great Day

- **Pascha (Easter)** is the most important feast in the Byzantine liturgical year. It celebrates the resurrection of our Lord and his victory over the power of death.
- Holy Week comes to an end at sunset of Great and Holy Saturday. On Easter Sunday, the Church celebrates Pascha, the feast of feasts.
- Before the Divine Liturgy begins, the plashchanytsia is carried in procession around the church and is placed on the holy altar where it remains until the Feast of the Ascension.
- After the transfer of the plashchanytsia, all the lights of the church are extinguished, and the matins of the resurrection begins in darkness. The priest lights his candle, exits through the Royal doors and passes on the light to the faithful, who are holding candles.
- Throughout the matins, we sing ***ХРИСТОС  
ВОСКРЕС – CHRIST IS RISEN!***



# Celebration of Pascha (continued)

- Our rejoicing continues in the Divine Liturgy where we hear the Gospel proclaimed in as many languages as possible. The Resurrection of Christ strengthens and illuminates our beliefs. It is the guarantee of our salvation, and the divine inheritance that the Church of Christ keeps as its treasure and solid foundation.
- It is a tradition to bring food to church for blessing. In larger parishes this is often done on Saturday, but originally this was done after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.



- In the Byzantine tradition the first week following the celebration of Pascha is called **Bright Week**. Bright Week begins on the Sunday of Pascha and ends on the second Sunday of Pascha called **Thomas Sunday**. This entire week is considered a continuous day of celebration and joy for the **Resurrection of Our Lord**.

For more see: [Feast Day Traditions | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)

# What is the Divine Liturgy?

- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **Divine Liturgy** is the name used to refer to the celebration of the **Eucharist**. The Byzantine Tradition has several liturgies for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The most common are:

A. **The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom** is celebrated on most days of the year.

B. **The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great** is celebrated on 10 days of the liturgical year: on Christmas Eve, on the feast of St. Basil (Jan. 1), on the Eve of Theophany, on 5 consecutive Sundays of Great Lent, on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. This Liturgy in its present form differs from the Chrysostomian Liturgy in that the priestly prayers are considerably longer, especially the Eucharistic prayer with consecration.

C. **The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts** is celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays during Great Lent and on the first three days of Holy Week. It is essentially the office of vespers with a communion service added, the Holy Gifts having been consecrated and reserved the previous Sunday.



For more see: [DIVINE LITURGY | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)  
[Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)

# Parts of the Byzantine Liturgy

- The Divine Liturgy is composed of three main parts:
  - A. The **Proskomedia**, the service of preparing the holy gifts.
  - B. The **Liturgy of the Catechumens** or Liturgy of the Word.
  - C. The **Liturgy of the Faithful** or Liturgy of the Eucharist.

For more see: [DIVINE LITURGY | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](http://www.sspp.ca)



Proskomedia

# The Holy Mysteries

## Holy Mysteries of Initiation

- The sacraments are referred to as “Holy Mysteries” in order to emphasize the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. The mysteries, like the Church, are both visible and invisible. In every sacrament there is a combination of an outward visible sign with an inward spiritual grace, as God works through ordinary, physical means to give His grace to His followers.
- It is in these sacraments that we encounter Christ!
- The Mysteries are divided into three categories:
  - Holy Mysteries of Initiation – Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist
  - Holy Mysteries of Healing – Repentance and Holy Anointing
  - Holy Mysteries of Service – Marriage and Holy Orders

**Baptism:** The sacrament of baptism is administered in the Byzantine Catholic tradition by a **threefold immersion** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Chrismation:** In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition Chrismation (Confirmation) follows immediately after Baptism.

**Eucharist:** Following the command of the Lord to ‘let the little children come to me’ (Mt 19:14), the Church administers the Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist to infants on the same day, so that they become full members of the Body of Christ, fully integrated into the Church, and full participants in the gift of New Life in Christ.

For more see: [What is a Holy Mystery? | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)  
[Rites of Initiation | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](#)



Picture courtesy of blessedcelebrations.com

# The Holy Mysteries

## Holy Mysteries of Healing

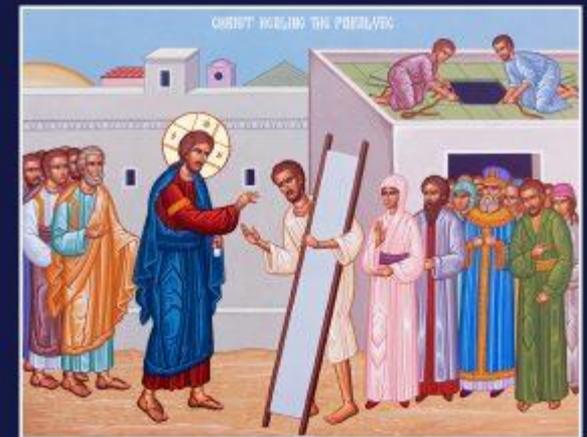
**Repentance:** Christ has given us a way by which He can touch us with His saving hand. It is through the Holy Mystery of Repentance, also known as the Sacrament of Confession.

The whole meaning of the Mystery is seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son-the open outstretched hand of a welcoming father. It welcomes, forgives and heals.

**Anointing of the sick:** When one is ill and in pain, this can very often be a time of life when one feels alone and isolated. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick reminds us that when we are in pain, physical, emotional, or spiritual, Christ is present with us through the ministry of His Church. He is among us to offer strength to meet the challenges of life, and even the approach of death.

As with Chrismation, oil is also used in this Sacrament as a sign of God's presence, strength, and forgiveness. Christ came to the world to "bear our infirmities." One of the signs of His divinity was to heal the sick. The power of healing remains in the Church since Christ himself remains in the Church through the Holy Spirit.

For more see: [Mysteries of Healing | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](http://www.spp.ca)



By the hand of Father Luke Dingman, <http://www.lukedingman.com/>

# The Holy Mysteries

## Holy Mysteries of Service

**Marriage:** In the Byzantine tradition the sacrament of marriage is referred to as the **Crowning**. Marriage is considered in Byzantine spirituality an icon of the relationship between Jesus and His Church. The first part of the wedding is **the service of solemn betrothal**, followed by prayers, and the granting and blessing of the rings. Then the ceremony continues with the crowning, the main ritual of the wedding, and the Liturgy of the Word. After the readings the couple share **the common cup** containing **blessed wine**. After the couples share the cup, a litany is recited followed by a procession around the **tetrapod**. After the procession the crowns are removed, and a final blessing is given.



**Holy Orders:** It is through this mystery which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate (bishops, priests and deacons).



For more see: [Mysteries of Service | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](https://www.sspp.ca/)

# Byzantine Rite Clergy

- In the Byzantine Catholic tradition priests can be from the celibate or from the married states. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **bishops** are selected from the celibate clergy, usually the monastic ranks. A priest that has been ordained cannot marry. However, a married man who wants to become a Byzantine priest can do so with the blessing of his bishop.



# Liturgical Vestments

## Priest's Vestments



**Epitrachil** (stole)



**Stichar** (Alb)



**Cuffs**

**Poyas** (belt)



**Phelon** (Chasuble)

**Epitrachil**

**Stichar**

## Deacon's Vestments



**Dalmatic**

**Orar** (deacon's stole)

## Bishop's Vestments

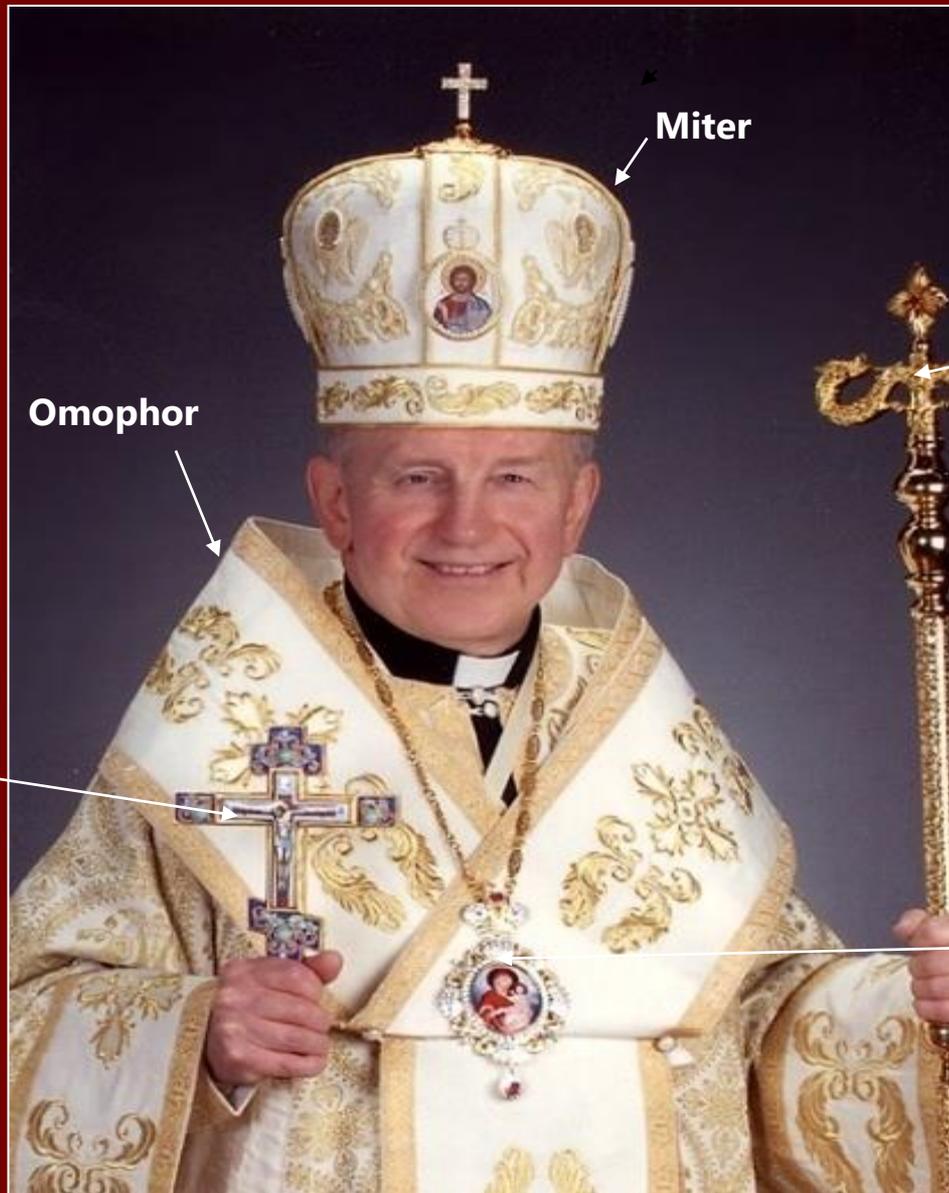


**Omophor**

**Sakkos**

**Stichar**

# Bishop's Insignias



Miter

Omophor

Crozier

Byzantine Cross

Ecclesiastical Ring

Panagia

# Liturgical Colors

- In the Ukrainian Catholic tradition, there are really only two liturgical colours: bright and dark. In general, the following **liturgical colours** are used depending on how many different kinds of vestments a church has.

## BRIGHT:

- **White:** is the symbol of God's uncreated light. White vestments are worn on the great feast of Pascha (Easter) and throughout the Easter season.
- **Gold:** is the color of glory, greatness and virtue. It is assigned to Sundays, as the days of the Lord — the King of Glory; gold is also used on feasts like Christmas, Ascension, Theophany, other feasts of the Lord, and at liturgies when we are praying for the living.
- **Green:** is the color of plants and a symbol of new life — it is used on Pentecost (Descent of the Holy Spirit) and that whole week.
- **Blue:** is the color of the feast days of the Most Holy Mother of God. It is the color of the sky, and it conforms to the teaching about the Mother of God, who held the Resident of the Heavens in Her Most Pure Body.

## DARK:

- **Red:** is used on the on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (Sept 14.), at liturgies for the deceased and for funerals, on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent), and on weekdays in Lent.



# Byzantine Architecture



- The church building has many symbolic meanings; perhaps the oldest and most prominent is the concept that the Church is **the Ark of Salvation** (as in Noah's Ark) in which the world is saved from the flood of temptations.
- Churches are frequently built in the form of a Cross to proclaim that we are saved through faith in the Crucified Christ, for Whom Christians are prepared to suffer all things.
- The Church building is divided into three main parts: the **narthex** (vestibule), the **nave** (the temple proper) and the **sanctuary** which is separated from the nave by an iconostasis (icon screen). The altar is situated in the sanctuary, in the eastern part of the church.
- A notable feature of Byzantine churches is the presence of domes on top of the cupolas. Every cupola is crowned by a Cross, the instrument of our salvation. The number of domes carries theological significance. Some churches feature a three-dome arrangement to represent the persons of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Others choose a five-dome configuration to represent Jesus and the four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.





# The Byzantine Sanctuary



The Sanctuary is the Holiest place in a Byzantine Catholic Church. It is located behind the **iconostasis** (altar screen). It contains the following:

- **Altar:** It is located in the center, just behind the **Royal doors**. On top of the altar is the **tabernacle**, the **book of the Gospel** and the **antimension** are placed. Behind the altar is a **candelabra** containing seven candles is found. (See graphic # 1 –next page)
- **Tabernacle :** This is the sacred vessel used to reserve the Eucharist used to bring communion for the sick or for the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts. it is usually shaped in the form of a Church. The presence of the Christ in the tabernacle is signaled by a vigil lamp. (See graphic # 8 –next page)
- **Table of Preparation :** This table is also known as the **table of oblation**; it is found in the sanctuary left to the altar. This is the table used for the service of preparing the **prosphora** (bread) and wine. On top of the **table** rest the **chalice** (cup) the **diskos** (paten = round plate), **the spear** (liturgical knife), a **liturgical spoon** (for the distribution of holy communion), the **asterisk** or star ( a metal stand that holds the cover for the Eucharistic bread or prosphora). (See graphic #2- next page)
- **Antimension:** a rectangular piece of silk or linen decorated with the image of **Christ's entombment** and the image of the **four Evangelists**. A small **relic** of a martyr is sewn into it. During the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), the antimension is placed on the center of the altar. **The antimension serves as an altar in case of pastoral necessity and the Eucharist cannot be celebrated without it.**

# Inside a Byzantine Catholic Church

Dome

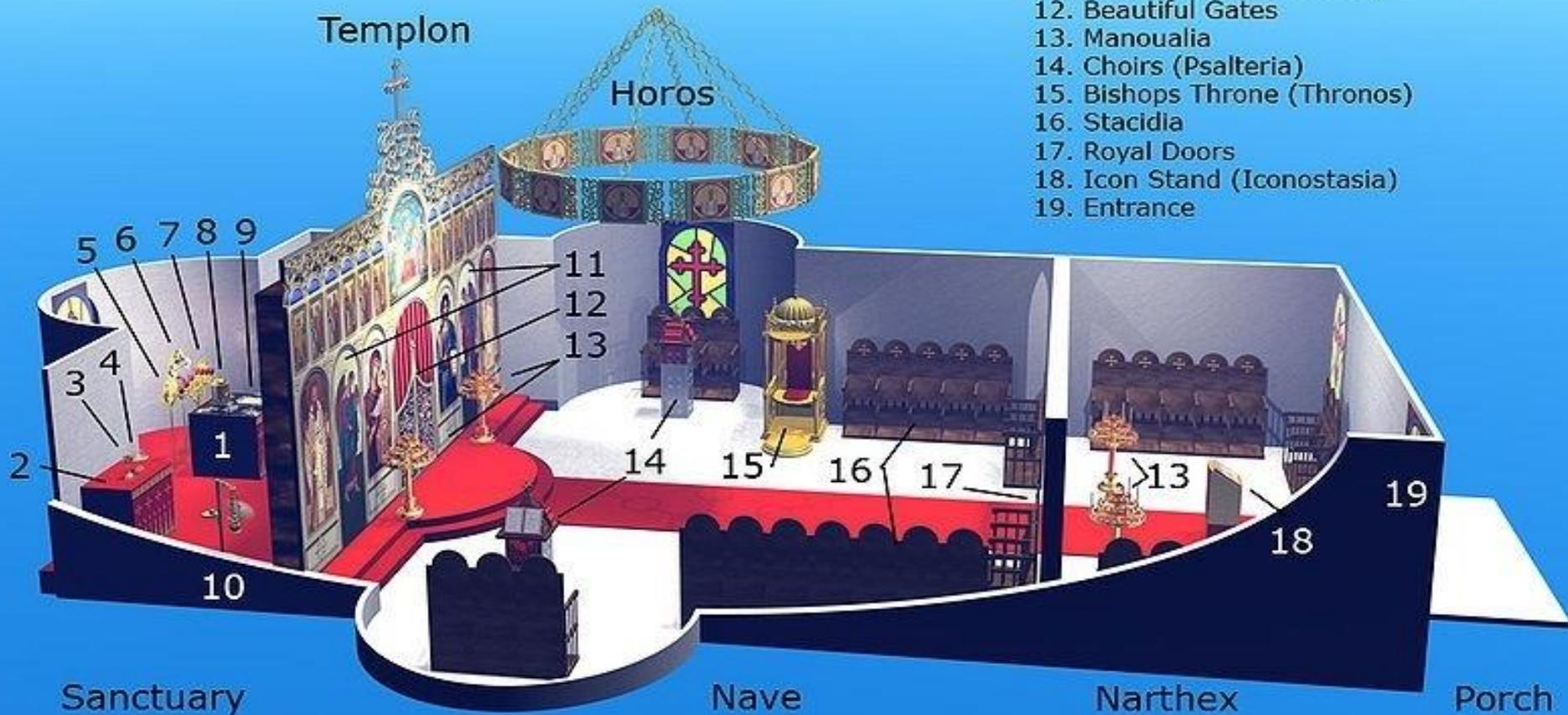
Christ - Pantocratoros  
Ruler of the Universe



1. Altar
2. table of Preparation
3. Chalice
4. Discos & Asterisk
5. Fans - Exiptera
6. Processional Cross
7. Candelabra
8. Tabernacle
9. Gospel Book
10. Censer
11. Angel (Deacon's Doors)
12. Beautiful Gates
13. Manoualia
14. Choirs (Psalteria)
15. Bishops Throne (Thronos)
16. Stacidia
17. Royal Doors
18. Icon Stand (Iconostasia)
19. Entrance

Templon

Horos



Sanctuary

Nave

Narthex

Porch

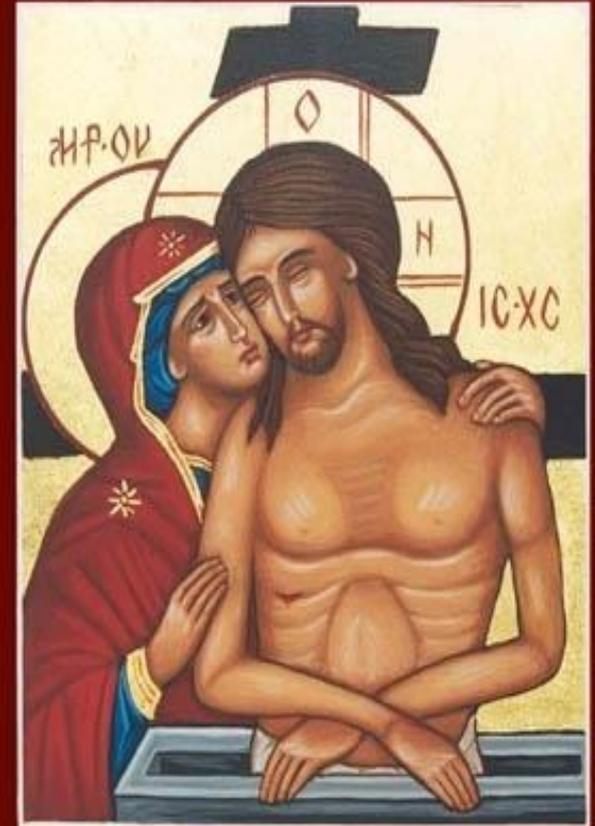
# The Iconostasis



- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, the **Iconostasis** (Greek for icon stand) a screen (wall), consisting of one or more rows of icons, separating the nave from the sanctuary.
- In Byzantine spirituality the iconostasis is a boundary between two worlds, the divine and the human. In some small Byzantine churches, the iconostasis may be completely absent and may be replaced by small icons.
- The Iconostasis has three sets of doors. The central doors are call **Holy Doors** or **Royal Doors** and contain an icon of the Annunciation. The doors to the left and to the right of the Holy doors are known as the deacon doors.
- The Icons of the Savior, the Theotokos, the Archangels and the Saints, featured on the iconostasis, represent the reconciliation taking place between the human and the divine.

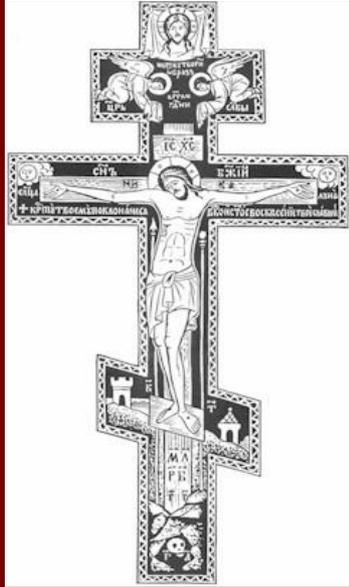
# Holy Icons

- An icon (from the Greek word eikon) is an image, which tries to express a spiritual reality or a religious truth. Icons offer a presence, and prayer and a sense of communion. Icons use many symbols to remind us of these realities. For example, the lock of hair on the forehead of most icons of Christ symbolizes wisdom. Even the colours used in iconography have specific meaning.
- In the Byzantine tradition **Icons** (holy images) are considered windows to heaven. Icons are never painted they are written by **iconographers**. Icons have been used in the devotion of the **Christian East** from the very beginning.
- **St. John Damascene** wrote, "anyone who seeks to destroy the Icons of Christ or His Mother, the Blessed Theotokos, or any of the Saints, is the enemy of Christ, the Holy Mother of God, and the Saints, and is the defender of the Devil and his demons."
- An icon could be an image of Christ, the Holy Theotokos, the Saints, Angels, or important aspects in the life of Jesus or the Church. Byzantine Catholics pray in the presence of Icon (not to the icon itself). Byzantine Catholics venerate the Holy Icons to show respect for the sacred.
- For more see: [Icons and Iconography](#)



# Byzantine Symbols

Byzantine Cross



Icons – “Christ Pantocrator”



Christogram – “Jesus Christ Conquers”



Blessed Candles

# Byzantine Liturgical Postures and Gestures

- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition there are several liturgical postures and gestures, the most common are:
- **Standing:** It is the **official posture** of the Church. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, standing is a symbol of the Resurrection. Standing during prayer has been a Christian tradition since the very beginning of the Church. While it's true that kneeling was also part of liturgical prayer, standing was highly favored and seen as a sign of respect and adoration. Just as we have a secular tradition of standing to show respect when a lady or one's superior enters the room, the east traditionally shows respect and subservience to God by standing in attention and awe.
- Sitting is acceptable during Bible readings (except for the Gospel when we stand if we're able), the chanting of the Psalms, during the litanies, and the sermon.
- It is not customary to kneel during the consecration of the Eucharist because in the Byzantine culture, kneeling was associated with penance, *not* adoration. We are standing with our Resurrected and Glorified Lord and this is our proper liturgical sign of being united with Christ as one body. There is no disrespect in standing. Kneeling is considered penitential. We only kneel at certain services during Lent, such as during our Liturgies of the Presanctified Gifts.
- **Bows and Prostrations:** There are two basic kinds of prostrations, known as Great Metania, and Small Metania. Both are preceded by the sign of the Cross.

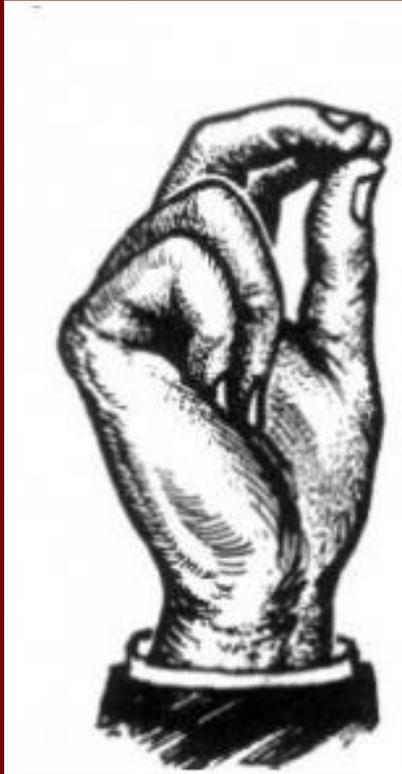


**Great Metania:** the worshipper prostrates the whole body, touching the ground with the forehead.

**Small Metania:** The worshipper bows from the waist, touching the hand to the ground.

**Bows** (reverence): At certain times the worshipper merely bows the head.

# The Byzantine Sign of the Cross



- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **the Sign of the Cross** is made with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand joined at the tips (the third and fourth fingers being closed on the palm).
- By joining the thumb and the first two fingers, we express our belief in the **Most-Holy Trinity**.
- The two fingers closed on the palm represent **the two natures of Christ** divine and human.
- With the thumb and first two fingers joined, we touch first the brow, then the breast, the **right** shoulder and then the **left**, making on ourselves the Sign of the Cross and signifying by the four points that the **Holy Trinity** has sanctified our thoughts (mind), feelings (heart), desires (soul) and acts (strength) to service of God.
- By making the Sign of the Cross on ourselves we also signify that Christ has saved us by His sufferings on the Cross.
- The Byzantine way of making the sign of the cross pre-dates the Latin style used by Roman Catholics.

# The Jesus Prayer

- The Jesus Prayer is the briefest meditation in the Eastern Church's tradition. It was developed within the monastic community as an answer to the biblical admonishment to "pray without ceasing."
- The power of the *Jesus Prayer* is rooted in a conviction that God's presence is transformative. This prayer centers on the Holy Name itself. It may be said in its entirety: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner"; it may be changed to "us sinners" or to other persons named, or it may be shortened. **The power lies in the name of Jesus**; thus "Jesus" alone, may fulfill the whole need of the one who prays.
- **A prayer rope (Chotky)** is a devotional instrument of prayer, in the form of a loop made up of complex knots, usually out of wool or silk, that is used by Byzantine Catholics to focus one's thoughts on the "**Jesus Prayer**"

For more see: [Jesus Prayer | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church \(sspp.ca\)](http://www.sspp.ca)



Image courtesy of Jay Korban

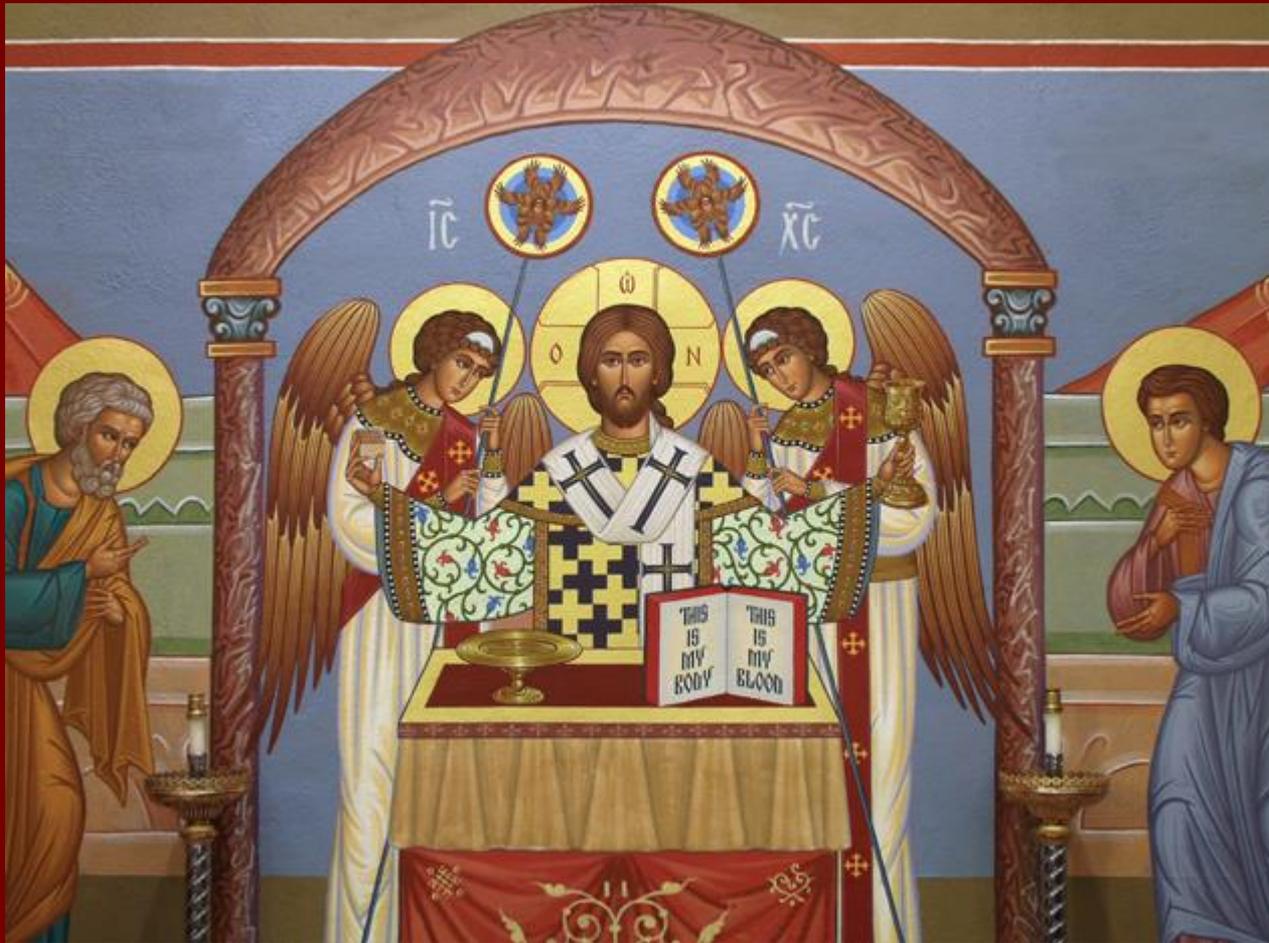
# St. Cyril and Methodius



Icon of St. Cyril and Methodius

- Saints **Cyril and Methodius** were Byzantine Greek brothers born in Thessaloniki in the 9th century, who became missionaries of Christianity among the **Slavic peoples** of Great Moravia and Pannonia.
- Through their work they influenced the cultural development of all Slavs, for which they received the title "**Apostles to the Slavs**". They are credited with devising the **Cyrillic alphabet**, the first alphabet used to transcribe the Old Church Slavonic language.
- After their deaths, their pupils continued their missionary work among other Slavs. Both brothers are venerated in the Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches as saints with the title of "**Equals to the Apostles**".
- In 1880, **Pope Leo XIII** introduced their feast into the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1980, Pope John Paul II declared them **co-patrons of Europe**, together with **Saint Benedict of Nursia**. The feast of St. Cyril and Methodius is celebrated on May 11th.

# God is with us!



By the hand of Father Luke Dingman, [www.lukedingman.com](http://www.lukedingman.com)