

Eastern Christianity

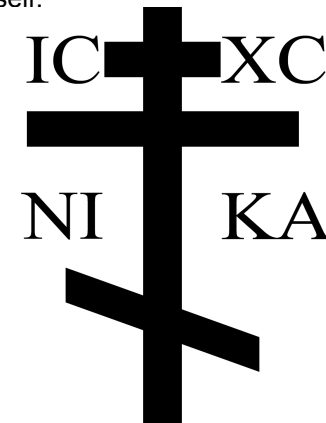
“From East to West may the name of the Lord be Praised”



Mr. Pablo Cuadra
Religion Class

The Christian Faith

- **A.** The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Christian Faith founded by our Lord Jesus was born in the **Middle East** and from the East it spread to all corners of the world announcing the Good News of Jesus Christ the Son of God, the savior.
- **B.** As it developed, the Apostolic faith took root in five important centers located in the cities of **Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria** and **Byzantium**. These bastions of faith became **Patriarchates** linked to the **Apostles** who founded them. Jerusalem for instance, was the Church of the Apostle James, Antioch and Rome both were founded by Peter and Paul, Alexandria was founded by St Mark, and St. Andrew, the first Apostle to be called, founded the see of **Constantinople** or **Byzantium**.
- **C.** It was in these five patriarchates that Christian identity, theology, liturgy and spirituality developed and matured; **Antioch** for instance, was the first place where the followers of Jesus were called **Christians** (Acts 11:26) and **Rome**, the see of Peter, the first of the Apostles, was the spiritual headquarter of a unified Christianity before the **Great Schism**. From these five spiritual centers other Christian communities developed, each spreading the faith, each sharing their unique Apostolic heritage, and liturgical practices, but all united in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith. Unfortunately, the Schism of 1054 put an end to a unified, Apostolic, Christendom, dividing Christianity into East and West.
- **D.** There are two major divisions in Christianity: **Western Christianity** and **Eastern Christianity**. This division is the result of the **Great Schism** of 1054 that split a unified Christendom into East and West. This schism was due in part to political and ecclesiastical disputes regarding the primacy of the See of Rome and the gradual estrangement between the Churches of East and West over the years.
- **E.** **Western Christians** are those Christians in the Western part of the Roman empire in Communion with the **bishop of Rome** or **Pope** that became known as **Latin** or **Roman Catholics**, for it was in the city of Rome that Peter and Paul were martyred. Rome was also the old capital of the Roman empire before it was moved to Constantinople.
- **F.** In the 16th Century the **Roman Catholic Church** experienced another split known as the **Reformation**. This movement is responsible for the birth of the **Protestant Churches**. Hence, that Protestant Christians are also part of Western Christianity.
- **G.** Western Christianity became very predominant in Europe, parts of the Middle East, The Americas, parts of Africa and Asia and Oceania.
- **H.** Those Christians in Eastern part of the Roman Empire or **Byzantium** became known as **Eastern Orthodox Christians**. Byzantium became known as **Constantinople** or the new Rome.
- **I.** Constantinople became the spiritual see of Eastern Christianity under the spiritual jurisdiction of the **Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople**. Constantinople is now modern **Istanbul, Turkey**.
- **J.** Eastern Christianity became very predominant in the Middle East, North Africa, Asia Minor, Eastern Europe, Balkans, and parts of India.
- **K.** **Byzantine Catholics** are for the most part Eastern Orthodox Christians that returned to full communion with the Bishop of Rome or Pope after the Great Schism of 1054.
- **L.** Pope **John Paul II** never ceased to exhort Christians of the East and the West to work for the full restoration of Communion. He repeatedly said the **“Church must breathe with its two lungs”**. Our Holy Father Benedict XVI continues the difficult task of urging all Christians to work for unity. So that one day we all can partake again in the same **Eucharistic meal** and profess together, in full communion, as brothers and sisters, the Apostolic faith that we have received from the Apostles and the Lord Jesus himself.



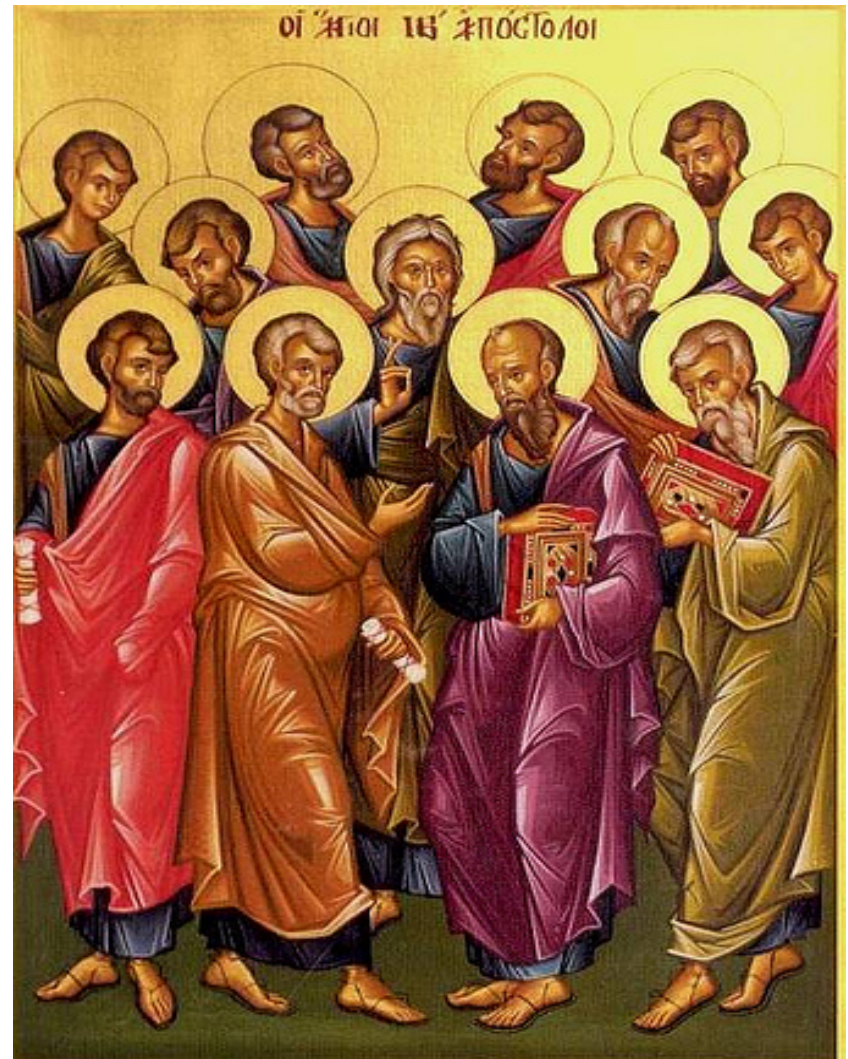
Did you know?

- From the **Jerusalem Church** Christianity spread East to Antioch, South to Alexandria, West to Rome, and North to Byzantium. Three of these five **Patriarchates or Apostolic Churches or Sees** gave rise to **Eastern Christianity**, these are:

A. Church of Antioch (Syria) founded by the Apostle Peter, it is divided into two liturgical traditions based on the **Liturgy of St. James** (uses the **Aramaic language**) these traditions are known as the **East Syrian** and **West Syrian** traditions. East Syrians are represented by the Chaldean, Syro-Malabar and Armenian Churches. The Armenian Church has also been influenced by the Byzantine tradition of Byzantium (Constantinople) and the Latin tradition of Rome. The West Syrians are represented by the Maronite, Syrian or Syriac, and Syro-Malankara Churches.

B. Church of Alexandria (Egypt) was founded by **St. Mark**; they followed the liturgy of St. Mark also known as the Liturgy of St. Cyril. Alexandria had a large Jewish population; this tradition has retained a great deal of Jewish overtones especially in Africa. This tradition produced the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches which also use the liturgies of St. Basil, and St. Gregory.

C. Church of Constantinople or Byzantium was founded by the **Apostle Andrew**; this tradition follows the liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom which are based on the Liturgy of St. James. The Orthodox Churches, and Byzantine Catholic Churches are representative of this tradition.



Ecumenical Councils

- The five **Patriarchates** held seven Councils known as **ecumenical councils** that defined theological beliefs on the **Trinity** and Jesus Christ, all of which were accepted by **Rome** in the West and **Constantinople** in the East.
- One of these councils the **Council of Ephesus** in 432, which defined Mary as "**Theotokos**, the Mother of God, was rejected, however, by the Nestorians, a group lead by **Nestorius** Archbishop of Constantinople that later became associated with the **Assyrian Church of the East**.
- The **Council of Chalcedon** in 451 declared that Jesus was one Person with two natures, Divine and human. The Armenians, Syrians, Coptics, and Ethiopians, who held the belief that Christ had one Divine nature, became known as the **Monophysites**, and formed the **Oriental Orthodox Churches**.
- Out of these seven ecumenical councils the **Oriental Orthodox** churches accepted the first three, the Assyrian church or Nestorian Church only the first two as Ecumenical. The united Western and Eastern Churches only accept as Ecumenical the first seven. The seventh council known as the **Second council of Nicea** in 787 was the last council of a unified Apostolic Christianity.



The Christian East

- The **Christian East** can be classified into four distinct **ecclesial communions**. The word communion describe groups of **sister churches** that are in full communion with one another.
- These four communions are:
 1. The **Assyrian Church of the East** also known as Nestorian Church (not in communion with any other church).
 2. The **Six Oriental Churches**: each of them is independent, however, are in full communion with each other.
 3. The **Eastern Orthodox Churches** under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople
 4. The **Eastern Catholic Churches** all of which are in communion with the **See of Rome** and its bishop the **Pope**.

(Source CNEWA)



The Ancient Churches of the East

- These Churches are not in communion with the **Eastern Orthodox Churches** and were separated from the rest of Christianity during the 5th Century A.D. due to Christological arguments about the nature of Christ. These Churches are represented by two communions known as:
- 1. **The Assyrian Church of the East.**
- 2. **The Six Oriental Churches or Non-Chalcedonian Churches** are:

Syriac or Syrian Orthodox
Coptic Orthodox
Ethiopian Orthodox
Eritrean Orthodox
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India)
Armenian Apostolic church.
- These Churches are also known as the **Ancient Oriental Churches** or **Lesser Eastern Churches**.



Did you know?

- Today, It is widely recognized by theologians and church leaders on both sides that the Christological differences between the Oriental Orthodox and those who accepted Chalcedon were only verbal, and that in fact both parties profess the same faith in Christ using different formulas.
- In 1994 **Pope John Paul II** and the spiritual leader of the Assyrian Church of the East His holiness **Mar Dinkha IV** signed a ***Common Christological Declaration*** that improved relations between the two churches. The document reads in part
- “Whatever our Christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of salvation.”

The Eastern Orthodox Churches

- The **Eastern Orthodox Communion** is classified into:

A. **Autocephalous Churches:** in Greek means “self-headed.” An autocephalous church possesses the right to resolve all internal problems on its own authority and the ability to choose its own bishops, including the Patriarch, Archbishop or Metropolitan who heads the church.

B. **Autonomous Churches:** There are five Orthodox churches which, although functioning independently on a day-to-day basis, are canonically dependent on an autocephalous Orthodox church. In practice this means that the head of an autonomous church must be confirmed in office by the **Holy Synod** of its mother autocephalous church.

C. **Canonical Churches under Constantinople:** These are churches which, because of special circumstances or political turmoil in their countries of origin, have been received under the canonical protection of the **Ecumenical Patriarchate**. The Patriarchate provides these churches with **Holy Chrism** or **Myron** and confirms the election of their bishops.

D. **Churches of Irregular Status:** The canonical status of each of the churches in this group is questioned in some way by Orthodoxy as a whole. This is not to put them all on the same level, as some are considered simply uncanonical, while others are in full schism and out of communion with the Orthodox Church

- Source (CNEWA)



Eastern Orthodox Churches

- **Autocephalous Orthodox Churches Headed by a Patriarch**
Nine Patriarchates : Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia.
- **Autocephalous Orthodox Churches Headed by an Archbishop or Metropolitan:**
Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, Czech and Slovak Republics, Orthodox Church in America.
- **Autonomous Orthodox Churches:**
The Orthodox church of Mount Sinai dependent on the Patriarchate of Jerusalem
The Orthodox Church of Finland and Estonia dependent on the Patriarchate of Constantinople
The Orthodox Church of Japan and China dependant upon the Moscow Patriarchate (not recognized as such by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople).
- **Canonical Orthodox Churches under Constantinople:**
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA and Diaspora
Russian Orthodox Exarchate in Western Europe
Albanian Orthodox diocese of America
Ukrainian orthodox Church of Canada
- **Orthodox Churches of Irregular Status:** The old believers, Ukrainian Orthodox Church kiev patriarchate and Ukrainian autocephalous Church, Belarusan autocephalous church, Macedonian Orthodox church, The Old calendar orthodox Churches.

(source CNEWA)



Did you know?

- The Assyrian Church of the East, The Oriental Churches of the East, and the Eastern Orthodox Churches all have counterparts in the **Eastern Catholic Churches** that are in full communion with the see of Rome and its bishop, the bishop of Rome and successor of Peter the first Pope.



The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

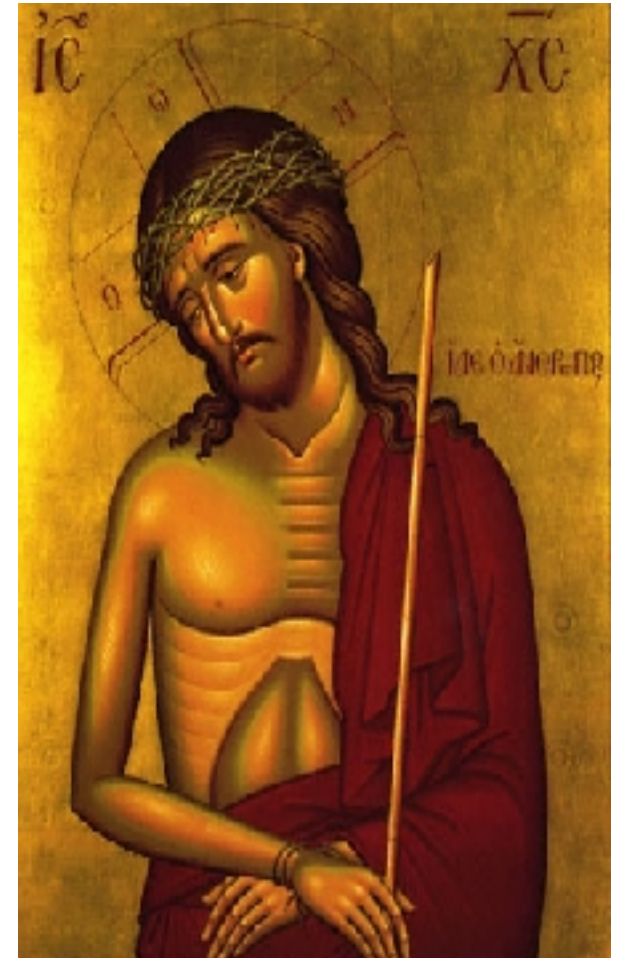
- A. The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is comprised of a Communion of 23 **Sisters Churches** or **Sui Juris** Churches (autonomous churches) under the **universal jurisdiction** of the **Bishop of Rome** or Pope, the successor of St. Peter, first bishop of Rome, upon whom Jesus founded the Church (Matthew 16:18-20), and to whom Jesus entrusted the **Petrine ministry** of leading the flock of the Universal Church (John 20: 15-19), and the mission to guard the orthodoxy of our Apostolic faith (Luke 22:32).
- B. Each autonomous Church or Sister Church in **its local modality**, is equal in dignity, and has the right to establish its own disciplines, the right to establish its own clergy, the right to follow its own customs, spirituality, and laws. Hence, that no *Sui Juris* Church is more important than the other for instance, Roman Catholics are no more Catholics than Ruthenian Catholics or Coptic Catholics or Chaldean Catholics and vice-versa.
- C. The **Latin Church** or **Roman Catholic** Church is the largest and perhaps the best known of all these Sister Churches, but not the most important in dignity. The Roman Catholic Church or Latin Church is governed by the Code of Canon Law for the Western Church and the Eastern Churches are governed by the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches.



The Apostles Peter and Andrew were brothers. Peter represents The Christian West and Andrew represents the Christian East. And the Icon represents longing for Christian Unity between East and West.

Eastern Catholic Churches

- Eastern Catholic Churches or *Sui Juris* Churches are classified as followed:
 - A. Eastern Catholic Churches with no Eastern counterpart.**
 - B. Eastern Catholic Churches with Counterpart in the Assyrian Church of the East.**
 - C. Eastern Catholic Churches with Counterpart in the Ancient Oriental Churches.**
 - D. Eastern Catholic Churches with Counterpart in the Eastern Orthodox Churches.**



Eastern Catholic Churches

- **Eastern Catholic Churches with no Counterpart:**

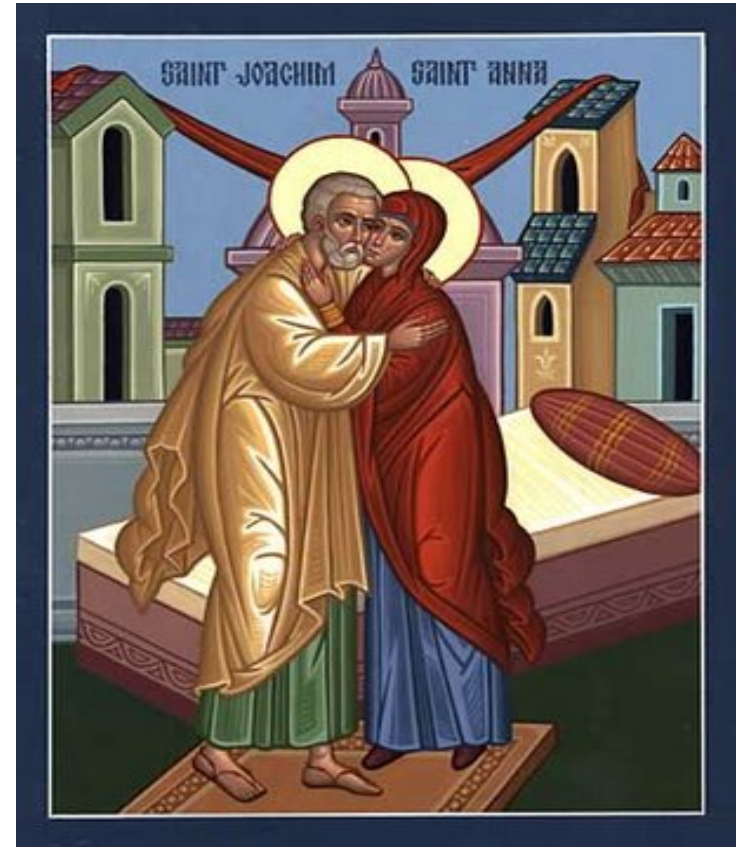
These are two Eastern Catholic churches which, because of unique historical circumstances, do not have an immediate counterpart among the other eastern churches. These Churches never broke away from the Apostolic See of Rome.

- These Churches are:

A. **The Maronite Catholic Church**

B. **The Italo-Albanian Catholic Church**

Note: All of these **Sister Churches** are in full communion with the see of Rome and its bishop the Pope.



Eastern Catholic Churches

**Eastern Catholic Churches with
Counterparts in Assyrian Church of the East:**

- A. The Chaldean Catholic Church
- B. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

Note: All of these **Sister Churches** are in full communion with the see of Rome and its bishop the Pope.



Iraqi Chaldean Catholic worshippers attend Sunday mass at a Chaldean church in Amman, Jordan, Sunday, Feb.18, 2007. Overall, there are an estimated 750,000 Iraqi refugees in Jordan, ballooning its population by 14 percent. Of that, about 2,000 are Iraqi Christians and most of those are Chaldean Catholics, who once formed Iraq's largest Christian community and are linked to Rome, acknowledging the Pope as the head of their church. (Source AP)

Eastern Catholic Churches

- **Eastern Catholics Churches with counterparts in the Ancient Oriental Churches of the East:**
- These Churches are:
 - A. **The Armenian Catholic Church**
 - B. **The Coptic Catholic Church**
 - C. **The Ethiopian Catholic Church**
 - D. **The Syrian Catholic Church**
 - E. **The Syro- Malankara Catholic Church**
- **Note:** All of these **Sister Churches** are in full communion with the see of Rome and its bishop the Pope.

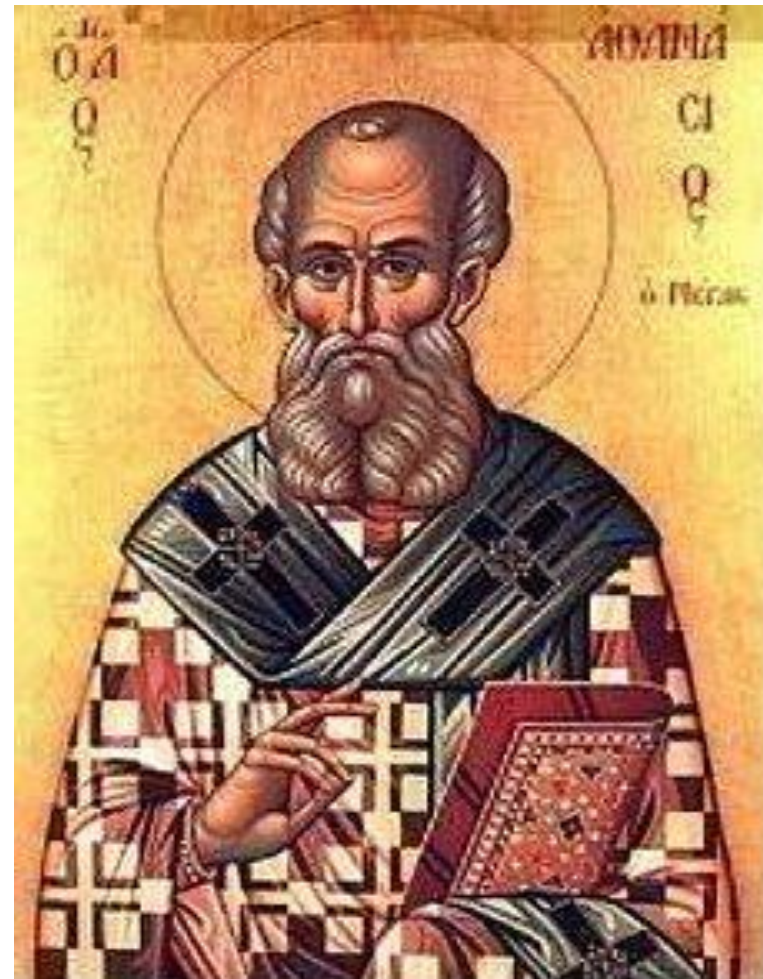


Eastern Catholics Churches

- **Eastern Catholic Churches with Counterparts in the Eastern Orthodox Communion:**

These Churches are called **Byzantine Churches** or **Greek Catholic Churches**, they follow the liturgical traditions, spirituality and customs of the Eastern Orthodox Communion from which they are derived. The Byzantine Churches are sub-divided into:

- A. **The Melkite Catholic Church**
- B. **The Ukrainina Catholic Church**
- C. **The Ruthenian Catholic Church**
- D. **The Romanian Catholic Church**
- E. **The Greek Catholic Church**
- F. **The Greek Catholic Church, Eparchy of Krizevci**
(former Yugoslavia)
- G. **The Bulgarian Catholic Church**
- H. **The Slovak Catholic Church**
- I. **The Hungarian Catholic Church**
- J. **The Russian Byzantine Catholic Church**
- L. **The Belarussian Greek Catholic Church**
- **M. The Albanian Greek Catholic Church**
- **N. The Macedonian Greek Catholic Church**
- **Note:** All of these **Sister Churches** are in full communion with the see of Rome and its bishop the Pope.



Who is an Eastern Catholic?

- A. **An Eastern Catholic** is a member of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church by reason of his or her baptism, and chrismation (Confirmation), and his or her participation in the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) and the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), the central aspect of worship.
- B. **Eastern Catholics** are Not Roman Catholics, however, like Roman Catholics are under the Spiritual and temporal Jurisdiction of the **Bishop of Rome** or **Pope**.
- C. **Eastern 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. Hence, that Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics, use different words, expressions, or formulas to speak about the same realities, beliefs, devotions, or practices of faith.
- D. **Eastern Catholics** are members of any of the 22 Eastern Catholic, Sister Churches or *Sui Juris* Churches (autonomous) in Communion with the See of Rome and Its bishop the Pope. Each sister Church is headed either by a **Patriarch** or by a **Metropolitan** bishop. Eastern and Roman Catholics can fulfill their Sunday obligation in each other's Church.



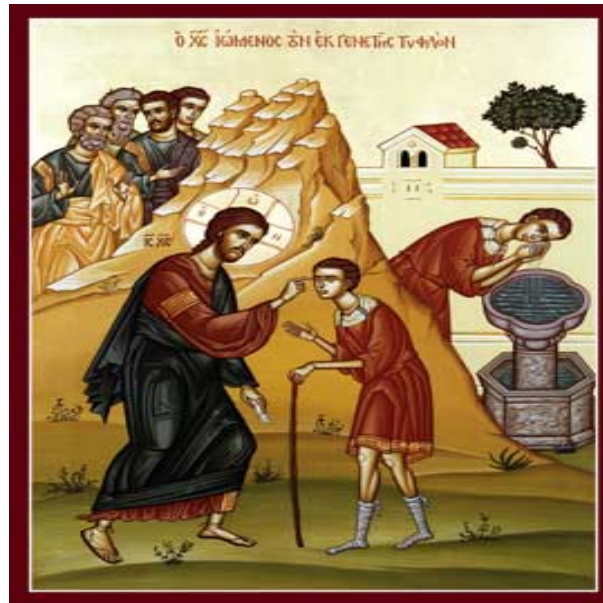
Next Presentation

- The next presentation will be a follow up of this presentation and will deal with the Byzantine Churches and its practices.



The Jesus Prayer

“Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ του Θεού, ελέησόν με τον αματωλόν.”



“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

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