

# Catholicism (Universal) vs. Eastern Orthodoxy (Correct Doctrine)

## Opening Prayer

Loving Jesus, right before you went on your humble path to your cross, you prayed to your Father for unity and for our protection in your name. You prayed that your disciples be one as you are one with the Father. This is our prayer today; that we seek out your protection in the Body of Christ, your Church, and we come to know and love her so we can be one with all of our brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world, especially our Orthodox brothers and sisters, which we hope to better understand today. This was the first real division in your Church and so help us to be a vehicle towards healing the Body of Christ. Guide the leaders and Bishops of your Church with your Holy Spirit to bring us back together so that we may experience the Lord's full measure of joy. Sanctify us in the Truth and bring us to complete unity in your Love so we may see your heavenly Glory. You are our Father, our God, and our Rock of salvation! Amen.

## Explain my experience growing up in an Orthodox AND Catholic Church

### What do I love about the Orthodox Church?

The liturgy, chanting, icons (kissing of the icons as you enter), incense, lighting of offertory candles as you enter church, sacramental traditions (Stefana Greek Wedding), Baptisms with the entire Church, spitting as they deny Satan, Obedience to fasting, focus on prayer, infants receive full initiation, reverence for the priest.

### Why did I choose to be Catholic?

- I came to believe in the Primacy of the Pope as the head of the Church and the Vicar of Christ.
  - I recommend the book *"The Mystical Body of Christ,"* by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.
- A clarity of teaching that can only be found in the Catholic Church.
- Bears the marks of Unity, Oneness, and Universality more clearly.
- I believe Mary and, in turn, Jesus are understood and loved with fuller clarity.
  - *"The Theology of the Body"* by Pope St. John Paul II.

## General Claims

Both Churches claim to be the original church since Jesus founded it over 2,000 years ago. Both Churches recognize each other's Apostolic succession. The Catholic Church defines the Orthodox Church as being in Schism (separated) from the Body of Christ since 1054 A.D. The Orthodox Church defines the Catholic Church as heretical (divorced/teaching false doctrine) from the body of Christ. The Catholic Church defines the Orthodox sacraments and its teachings as valid and allows Eastern Orthodox Christians to receive Communion at a Catholic Mass. The Orthodox Church does not allow Catholics to receive Communion at their Divine Liturgy and doesn't believe Catholicism teaches correct doctrine. Also, they don't always accept sacraments performed outside the Orthodox Church, but that varies, and may depend on the Patriarch.

## Difference in practice

- Organ & piano are used at Mass vs. no musical instruments, only Chanting is used in the Divine Liturgy.
- Rosary vs. prayer rope with knots
- Most Catholic priests are celibate, while an Orthodox man can get married prior to becoming a priest.
- Statues and stained glass vs. iconography are used to adorn the Church.
- The Body and Blood are offered separately vs. being offered together (Eastern Rite Catholics do this).

- Initiation sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation) are offered separately vs. all at once (Eastern Rite Catholics do this).
- More emphasis on using the Mind to know God using Logic and Reasoning vs. Emphasis on using the Heart to know God by experiencing his Love.

### What are the main Points of Contention between the Catholic and Orthodox Church

Topic	Catholic	Orthodox
The Office of Peter and the Apostles and Papal Infallibility.	<p>The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the “rock” and foundation of his Church. He gave Peter the keys (authority) of his Church and instituted him shepherd (Leader) and head of the whole flock.</p> <p>“The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head.” This pastoral office of Peter and the apostles belongs to the Church’s very foundation. CC881</p> <p>“The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful—who confirms his brethren in the faith—he proclaims by a definitive act “Ex Cathedra” a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops, when together with Peter’s successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium,” above all in an Ecumenical Council. CCC 891</p> <p>CCC 871-896</p>	<p>They recognize Peter’s primacy in relation to the apostles only as a position of honor. They view his authority as equal to the rest of the Apostles (first among equals). To make decisions all the Patriarchs or Bishops must form a consensus. They don’t recognize Papal infallibility.</p>
The Filioque — “and the Son.”	<p>Use the phrase, “The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father <b>AND</b> the Son” in the Nicene Creed.</p> <p>CCC 243-248</p>	<p>Use the phrase “Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father” in their Creed.</p>
The Fall, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and what happens to souls after death is articulated differently, but I think generally we agree on these topics.	<p>After the Fall of Adam all humankind (except Mary by a special grace from God referred to as the Immaculate Conception), are born with what we refer to as <b>original sin</b> and the consequence of death. Baptism breaks us free from original sin and death, but we still have a human tendency to sin referred to as</p>	<p>After the Fall of Adam, all men became <b>subject</b> to an ancestral curse and were made <b>subject</b> to death. It is the goal of human life not to sin, and to be restored to our original god-likeness. But in fact, all people do sin. It is only possible to be freed from sin by the saving work of Christ. There is an intermediate state of the soul</p>

	<p><b>concupiscence.</b> Any Christian with mortal sin after baptism is again subject to death, but this is forgiven in the confessional. All venial sin is forgiven at Mass. Jesus paid the price of original sin through his death on the cross and opened up the door to eternal life for all who are baptized without mortal sin. We believe there is still <b>temporal punishment</b> for our personal sins that can be removed through penance in this life or through <b>purgatory</b>.</p> <p>CCC 396 - Original Sin  CCC 1030 -1032 – Purgatory  CCC 1471 – Indulgences  CCC 490 -Immaculate Conception</p>	<p>between death and the final day of judgement, during which souls benefit from the prayers of the faithful. They don't call this state purgatory and they don't practice the use of indulgences. Mary is venerated as the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. She is given the title "Theotokos, meaning God-bearer. They don't accept the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. They believe this teaching shows Mary as unlike other human beings and divine like.</p> <p>How is Mary different from Adam and Eve who were fully human before the fall?</p>
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## The Office of Peter and the Apostles and Papal Infallibility

The role of Peter and the office of the papacy presents the greatest source of division between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.

For Catholics, the Council of Florence clearly asserted, "The Roman Pontiff is the successor of Peter, the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and teacher of all Christians."

For the Orthodox, although Peter held a special place among the twelve, the "power of the keys," that is, the primacy of authority, it was not an exclusive prerogative of Peter, but rather a charism bestowed on all the apostles, among whom Peter was the first among equals.

## How do we discern these differences? What is the Truth?

Since the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, we can identify the Church and the Truth by knowing Jesus Christ.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body". 1 Corinthians 12:12

To fulfill the Father's will, Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. The Church "is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery." CCC 763

## Who is Jesus Christ (Priest, Prophet/Teacher, and King)?

### The Church is the Body of Christ, which has clear Leadership, Authority, and Unity through Peter

"And he has put all things under his feet and has made him (Jesus) the **head over ALL things for the Church, which is his body**, the fullness of him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:22

"For the husband is head of the wife as **Christ (Husband) is head of the Church (Wife), his body**, and is himself its Savior." Ephesians 5:23

- Jesus left his authority to Peter and the Apostles who are the head of the Church, and specifically Peter as head of the apostles. Just as the husband is head of his wife and family in a Christian household, Peter and the Apostles

are head over all things on behalf of Christ for the household of God. In turn you destroy the body, when you cut off the head.



"The Helmet of salvation" – Ephesians 6:17

"Come, let us sing joyfully to the **Lord**; cry out to the **rock of our salvation!**" Psalm 95:1

### Design Provided Identification and Unity

Beyond protection, the Roman helmet served as a symbol of unity and identity within the legion. Ornate plumes, crest holders, and engraved markings were added to Roman legionaries' unique helmets. The decorations were not only visually appealing but also helped soldiers identify their fellow soldiers and officers during battle.

This sense of unity and cohesion among soldiers was more than a morale booster; it was an essential ingredient in the success of the Roman legions. Knowing that fellow soldiers were fighting with them, distinguished by their helmet decorations, made people more committed to the cause when facing difficult enemies. The soldiers were not just fighting for the emperor or Rome. They were fighting for the man that stood next to them on the battle line.

**Peter and the Apostles, but specifically Peter, are the foundation of the Church with Christ as the cornerstone. This provides unity and strength.**

"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow **citizens** with the saints and members of the **household of God**, built upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a **holy temple** in the Lord, in whom you also are built into it for a **dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**" Ephesians 2:19

"And I tell you, you are **Peter** and upon this **rock** I will build my **Church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Mat 16:18

"Petros (Gk.) a masculine noun meaning "rock" or "stone". Kepha in Aramaic "sizeable rock". It was a new name for Simon and a God-given role.

Temples of the OT were built upon a great stone.  
(1 Kings 5:31; Ezra 3:10).

"The **Lord** is my **rock** and my **fortress** and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take **refuge**, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Psalm 18:2

"Listen to me, you who pursue justice, who seek the Lord; Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the **quarry** from which you were taken; Look to **Abraham, your father**, and to Sarah who gave you birth; Though he was but one when I called him, I blessed him and made him many." Isaiah 51:1-2



### Miracle of Meribah Ex. 17 & Numbers 20

The name "Massah and Meribah" means "testing" and "**quarrel**" respectively, reflecting the Israelites' lack of trust and obedience.

"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these **instructions** to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to **behave** in the **household of God**, which is the Church of the living God, the **pillar and bulwark** of the **truth**. 1 Tim. 3:14-15

**The Church has clear authority to teach and govern. Peter alone has his own special authority to teach and govern, given to him by Jesus Christ.**

"I will give you the **keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat 16:19)

"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the **key of knowledge**; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering." (Luke 11:52) The key is Jesus and his Church, who are inseparable, and the Holy Spirit and the office of Peter are inseparable.



- Teaching authority on faith and morals, the Authority to forgive or not forgive sins, and to include or exclude membership in the household was given specifically to Peter and his office. Mat. 18:18 does NOT include the giving of keys to ALL the Apostles. The keys were only given to Peter. The rest of the Apostles have authority if exercised in union with Peter.
- In the OT Davidic empire, the king appointed a cabinet of ministers for specific tasks in the kingdom (1 Kings 4:1-6; 2 Kings 18:37) Of those a **prime minister** was elevated to a unique status of authority, **ranked second only to the king**.
- The prime minister's office is handed down to a successor by the symbolic act of handing on the "**key of the house of David**" Jesus is the new Davidic king, who appoints **Peter the prime minister** over the Kingdom of heaven in the Church. Isaiah 22:15-25

Other important references (Revelations 21:10-27, 1 Peter:3-10)



**Jesus Christ was the High Priest, the first-born Son of God, who redeemed and sanctified us. Peter is a type of High Priest and firstborn son. Peter is the Steward of the Feast (The Mass) who offers sacrifice for the Church and all the nations on Jesus's behalf.**

- Jesus was the High Priest by laying down his life on the cross for the redemption of sins for the whole world.

"He came to **Simon Peter**; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "if I do not wash you, you have no part in me." A **servant** is not greater than **his master**; nor is **he who is sent** (apostle) greater than he who sent him. John 13:6-8, 16



- It is the lowly and most humble who are most exalted in God's Kingdom. Although Peter and his successors are the head of the Apostles and the Church. They really are the servant of all servants and the **Steward** of the wedding feast. Recall the readings of the Wedding at Cana. John 2:8-10

In the ancient order of Melchizedek, the patriarch and, eventually, his firstborn heir wore the two crowns of **ruling (King)** and **religious authority (High Priest)**.

Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18) **Priest** of "God Most High," the **King** of Salem (Zion) Psalm 76:2, Psalm 110:4

- Aaron and his descendants from the tribe of Levi were the **priests** of the Mosaic covenant.
  - Through the Mosaic covenant, Yahweh consecrates his "first-born son." (Ex. 4:22) Israel to be a kingdom of priests over the family of nations (Ex. 19:6)
- David was **King** and performed **priestly** functions. 2 Samuel 6:17
  - Through the Davidic covenant, Yahweh established David and Solomon as his "**first-born**" sons (Psalm 89:27) to act as kings and priests over Israel (2 Sam 6:12-19; 1 Kings 3:15; 8:62-63).

"I have chosen David, **my servant**; with my holy oil I have **anointed him**. **My hand will be with him**; my arm will make him strong. "**He shall cry to me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock of my salvation!'**" **I myself make him the first-born, Most High over the kings of the Earth.** Psalm 89:21-22, 27-28

"The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in **office**; but he (Melchizedek, a type of Christ) holds his priesthood permanently, because he **continues forever**. Hebrews 7:23-24."

Genesis implies that the order of Melchizedek is the patriarchal order of priests that functioned for many centuries before the ordination of Aaron and his sons that took place at Mount Sinai (Lev 8:1-36). In other words, it is the original, pre-Levitical form of the priesthood that was exercised during the long stretch of pre-Mosaic history. This was the age of natural religion, an era when priestly authority was rooted in the authority of the family. In these ancient times, the father of the family conducted public rites of worship, and his **sons became his successors in the ministry**. In particular, the **first-born son**, by natural right, was the primary heir who stood to receive the **full measure** of his **father's priestly and ruling responsibility**. In patriarchal times, the first-born son succeeded his father as the ruling and religious head of the family.

## Peter is Simon Bar-Jonah – Son of Jonah and Chief Patriarch of the new covenant

Jesus said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For **as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.** The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, **something greater than Jonah is here.**” Mat 12:39-41

“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **Simon Peter** replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” And Jesus Answered him, “**Blessed are you, Sim Bar-Jona!**” For **flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.** Matthew 16:13-17

**Jesus left his very self to his chosen first born son Peter to be head and leader of his heavenly household, the Church, and this office continues with Peter’s successors.**

“When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will **guide you into all the truth**; for **he will not speak on his own authority**, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **All that the Father has is mine**; therefore, I said that **he will take what is mine and declare it to you.** John 16:13-15

**Peter is commanded and sent on Mission to Shepherd the entire flock for Jesus, the Chief Shepherd - 1 Peter 5:4**



“When they **finished breakfast**, Jesus said to **Simon Peter**, “**Simon, son of John**, do you love me **more than these?**” He said to him, “Yes Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “**Feed my lambs.**” A second time he said to him “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said yes Lord you know that I love you. He said to him “**Tend my sheep.**” He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?” **Peter** was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “**Feed my sheep.**” Jn 21:15-17

The difference between a sheep and a lamb might be significant. A lamb is a baby, a sheep is an adult. Perhaps Jesus was asking Peter to take care of both the general people (the lambs), and the apostles (sheep). Regardless of that interpretation of sheep and lambs, it is clear Jesus is asking Peter to feed and tend his flock. That is what a shepherd does. It appears that he is asking Peter to shepherd his Church on earth, on his behalf.

“And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be **one flock, one shepherd.**” Jn 10:16

## Other Examples of Peter's leadership among the Apostles

- Next to Jesus, Peter is mentioned more than any other apostle in Scripture (152 times).
- He stood up and spoke on behalf of the apostles to lead in their replacement of Judas. (Mt 19:27, Acts 1:15, 2:14)

- He stood up to lead the apostles at the birth of the Church at the Pentecost (Acts 2:14)
- The disciples were referred to as Peter and the Apostles. (Acts 2:37, 5:29)
- Peter was given the authority to forgive sins before the rest of the apostles. (Mat 16:18)
- He was always named first when the apostles were listed (Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Acts 1:13) -- sometimes it was only "Peter and those who were with him" (Luke 9:32);
- John ran ahead of Peter to the tomb but upon arriving he stopped and did not go in. He waited and let Peter go in. (Jn 20:4)

### What do the early Church Fathers have to say about Peter?

"In adhering to this faith, publicly transmitted by the Apostles to their Successors, Christians must observe what their Bishops say and **must give special consideration to the teaching of the Church of Rome, pre-eminent** and very ancient. It is because of her antiquity that this Church has the greatest apostolicity; in fact, she **originated in Peter and Paul, pillars of the Apostolic College. All Churches must agree with the Church of Rome**, recognizing in her the measure of the true Apostolic Tradition, the Church's one common faith." *Saint Irenaeus of Lyons born in Smyrna (Turkey) around 135-140 A.D. In his youth he attended the school of Bishop Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John.*

"[Jesus said:] Simon, my follower, I have made you the **foundation** of the holy Church. I betimes call you Peter, because you will support all its buildings. You are the **inspector** of those who will build on earth a Church for me. If they should wish to build what is false, **you, the foundation, will condemn them.** You are the **head** of the fountain from which my **teaching** flows; you are the **chief of my disciples.** Through you I will give drink to all peoples. Yours is that life-giving sweetness that I dispense. I have chosen you to be, as it were, the **firstborn** in my institution so that, as the heir, you may be **executor of my treasures.** I have given you the keys of my kingdom. Behold, I have given you authority **over all my treasures.**" *Homily by St. Ephraim the Syrian A.D. 353, born 306 A.D. and a Doctor of the Church and a Deacon of a Church in Turkey.*

"But you say [Mt. 16:18], the Church was founded upon Peter: although elsewhere the same is attributed to the apostles, and they all receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the strength of the Church depends upon them all, **yet one among the Twelve is chosen so that when a head has been appointed, there may be no occasion for schism.** 393 A.D. *St. Jerome born in Croatia in 347 A.D., Doctor of the Church who oversaw the translation of the Bible in Latin called the Vulgate.*

### The Marks of the Church are One, Catholic, Holy and Apostolic

**Unity (Oneness)** is a mark of the Church.

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:4-5

"I appeal you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree and that there be no dissension among you, but that you be **united in the same mind and the same judgement.**" 1 Corinthians 1:10,

"Now the company of those who believed were of **one heart and soul**, and no one said that of the things which he possessed was his own, but they **had everything in common.** Acts 4:32-37

### Questions to consider

**Would the Church been able to successfully fight against Nestorianism if all the bishops are required to come to a consensus at ecumenical councils?** Nestorius was the patriarch of Constantinople which held the view that Christ was two people a divine Person and a human person and didn't agree with the title of God-bearer or Theotokos for Mary. This was condemned at the council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.



It seems difficult to form Church doctrine when every Bishop must agree for anything to be ratified? Is that perhaps why there is still no official universal clear teaching on how the Orthodox church handles members who have gone through civil law divorces, the use of contraception, or if sacraments can be recognized for those who received them through other Christian denominations? Also, they struggle to determine who can authorize bishops to be autocephalous.

**Catholicity (all Humankind/Universal/Numerous as the Stars)**- For by one Spirit we were baptized into One body. Jews or Greeks, Slaves or Free, and all were made to drink of the one Spirit. " For as many as you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all One in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. 1 Cor 12:13, Galatians 3:27-28. Mt 28:19

- Orthodoxy is more National oriented and aligned with the culture where its members are located. For example, there is the Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, American Orthodox Church.
- The Eastern Orthodoxy is not the same as Oriental Orthodoxy (Non-Chalcedonian), which rejected the 4<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council.
- There are 14 autocephalous (self-headed) regional churches and the American Orthodox Church

### **The Filioque "And the Son"**

It is not wrong to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Also, it is not wrong to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father AND the Son.

The Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit "of the Father" (Mt 10:20) and as the Spirit "of the Son" (Gal 4:6).

"And because you are sons, God has sent the **Spirit of his Son** into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'. (Gal 4:6)

Jesus says, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, **the Counselor** will not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you.** John 16:7

"I and the Father are One." "The Father is in me and I am in the Father" John 10:30, 38

"But one of his soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out **blood and water.**" John 19:34

Jesus continues to pour out his Spirit and divine life to us through his Church which is the Body of Christ through the sacraments ministered by the priesthood.

### **What do the Early Church Fathers say about the Filioque?**

"Why, then, should we not believe that the **Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son, when he is the Spirit also of the Son?** For if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from him, when he showed himself to his disciples after his Resurrection he would not have breathed upon them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" [Jn 20:22]. For what else did he signify by that breathing upon them except that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from him. 416-417 A.D. *St. Augustine of Hippo, Doctor of the Church*

"Since the Holy Spirit when he is in us effects our being conformed to God, and he actually **proceeds from the Father and Son**, it is abundantly clear that he is of the divine essence, in it in essence and proceeding from it." A.D. 424 *St. Cyril of Alexandria born in Algeria and Bishop of Hippo.*

### **Other Resources**

CatholicBridge.com - [Orthodox and Catholic Relations - 2Lungs.org](http://OrthodoxandCatholicRelations-2Lungs.org)

[Explaining the Faith with Fr. Chris Alar, Catholic vs. Orthodox: Explaining the Difference](#)