



Denominations | Orthodoxy

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Brief Recap

- Theosis
 - Asceticism
 - Essence vs. energies

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What do they believe about the canon?

- While the New Testament canon of the Orthodox is (almost?) identical to Protestant and Catholic canons, their Old Testament canon differs from both, as they follow the Septuagint, whose divergences from the Hebrew text they believe to be inspired changes. Thus, their OT canon includes all of the apocryphal books of Roman Catholicism, plus 4-5 more:
 - 3 & 4 Maccabees (4th Maccabees often included as an appendix)
 - Psalm 151
 - The Prayer of Mannaseh in Chronicles
 - 1 Esdras
- Traditionally, “canonical” is understood by the Orthodox to mean something like “acceptable to read in worship.”

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What do they believe about the canon?

- The Gospel Book
 - The Gospel Book is by far the most important part of Scripture for the Orthodox and is not only venerated and placed on the altar during the service, but is ornately decorated and often covered with icons.
 - At certain times, it is processed around the church accompanied with candles.

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What do they believe about the sacraments?

- Ware: “The whole Christian life must be seen as a unity, as a single mystery or one great sacrament, whose different aspects are expressed in a great variety of acts, some performed but once in our life, others perhaps daily.”

Baptism

- The Orthodox hold to baptism by triple immersion, generally practicing infant baptism.
- At baptism, full forgiveness of sin is received, and Christ is “put on,” as participants become members of His Body.

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What do they believe about the sacraments?



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What do they believe about the sacraments?

- Unlike Roman Catholics, the Orthodox believe it is the Spirit who works through these elements after they are blessed, not an infusion of grace into them that can then “grace” other things.

Chrismation/Confirmation

- Immediately after baptism, a child is chrismated or “confirmed” with chrism (special oil/ointment made by each autocephalous church). The priest anoints various parts of the child with the sign of the cross as he says, “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- Having been made a part of the body of Christ, the communicant now receives the Holy Spirit, with chrismation being an extension of Pentecost.

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Eucharist

- Like Roman Catholicism, Orthodox believe that at the *epiclesis* pronounced by the priest, the bread and wine of the altar turn into the body and blood of Jesus.
- The Eucharist, re-presenting the sacrifice of calvary as in Roman Catholicism, is considered a propitiatory sacrifice.
- Unlike Roman Catholics, Orthodox require a total fast—water and food—the morning prior to receiving the Eucharist. In some regions, Orthodox only receive the Eucharist a few times a year, owing to an extreme sense of “preparedness” before partaking. In other places, parishioners partake more regularly.

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What do they believe about the sacraments?

- Unlike in Roman Catholicism, communion is prepared by mixing together the broken pieces of bread and wine, and both elements are served simultaneously with a spoon to standing recipients.
- Also, unlike Roman Catholicism, communion is served to infants.

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What do they believe about the sacraments?

- At the end of the liturgy, all those present are invited to partake of the antidoran (“instead of the gifts”), a piece of bread that the Eucharistic bread was cut out of (i.e., the leftover). This bread is blessed but not consecrated, and can be consumed by everyone present, including non-Orthodox, as an expression of Christian fellowship.

Repentance

- Once children reach an age where they are capable of understanding right and wrong—about six or seven—they may partake in the sacrament of Repentance/Confession. In Repentance, all sins that they have committed since baptism are forgiven, and they are reconciled to the Church. Sometimes this is called “second baptism.”

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What do they believe about the sacraments?

- In so doing, the priest communicates that he is merely a witness to the repentance, and that God is judge. After hearing confession and possibly giving advice, the priest prays the prayer of absolution, which, in its earliest formulations, calls up on God to forgive the sins that have been confessed (i.e., does not pretend the direct power to forgive sins with the first-person language that developed later).
- How often or with what cadence one should partake in Repentance has never been articulated, particularly as the Orthodox reject the Roman Catholic formal distinction between venial and mortal sins.
- In conjunction with Repentance, penance may be assigned, but it is very frequently not.

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What do they believe about the sacraments?

Holy Orders

- Major Orders
 - Bishop, Priest Deacon
 - Only bishops can ordain by laying on of hands, and the ordination of a bishop must be done by multiple bishops.
 - Priests are divided into “white” (married clergy) and “black” (single, monastic). Ordinands (including deacons) must decide which path they are going to take before ordination, as marriage after ordination to a Major Order is forbidden.

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