

Who are the Orthodox?

In Apostolic times, before the term *'Christian'* was first used in Antioch to describe followers of Jesus Christ, their lifestyle was known simply as *'the Way'*. The Apostles spread their faith across the Roman Empire, speaking and teaching in Greek, their Church grew rapidly. The New Testament Epistles of Saint Paul were addressed to Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse and Thessalonika.

These were Churches nurtured by Saint Paul himself in Greek cities. Just as Greek culture passed its philosophy and idolatry to the



Roman world, so too did Christian faith pass to the world through the same Greek people. Greek culture is the very foundation of Western society, yet no doctrine or event has so affected Greek thought as has Christianity. Greeks have remained steadfast and faithful to that original conversion by Saint Paul. Just as the early Christians suffered martyrdom rather than deny their faith, Orthodox Christians have continued to suffer martyrdom, even until recent times under the harsh rule of Muslim and Communist regimes. Despite this, Orthodox Christianity remains, as it always has, ancient, changeless and above all, faithful to Christ against all odds.

Where can I Learn More?

If anything you have read here rings even a small bell of truth in your heart, don't you owe it to yourself, to history, to Christ Himself to find out more? Orthodoxy is a treasure house of truth, spiritual insight and simplicity of faith, lit by a continuous Christian testimony of people living since the time of Christ in the Holy Spirit. There are even more insights, truths and discoveries that might surprise you; *"and the truth will make you free"* (John 8:32). Consider it a challenge where you have nothing to lose, and much to gain. You will not be pressured, saddled with guilt or proselytized. You will not be coerced, brainwashed or hit for money. Simply come and see; is this the truth or not? You decide. Just call or contact any member of our Church, and ask to meet the priest. He will make time for you, answer any of your questions, and teach you even more of the ancient truths about Christ. You deserve to know and choose for yourself.

Holy Trinity Cathedral of Phoenix
1973 E. Maryland Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85016
www.holytrinityphx.org



What is Orthodoxy?

You have ventured into a Church of ancient Christianity. Neither Roman Catholic or Protestant, there is nothing modern about Orthodoxy, remaining virtually unchanged for two millennia. It traces its historical origin to the day of Pentecost and sees its founders as the very Apostles (so attested by any encyclopedia). This seamless history is for the Orthodox not an idle boast, but miraculous proof of God's Grace and presence in the promise of Christ that *"the Gates of Hell would not prevail against the Church"* (Mat 16:18).

The Orthodox faith was summarized in the 4th century *Nicene Creed*, at the same council the very canon of the New Testament was debated. Like other Christian faiths, it professes belief in Jesus Christ as God and Savior; the *messiah* promised in the Old Testament.

Who Runs Orthodoxy?

Orthodoxy is not led by a single, dominant Hierarchy or Pope, nor are its beliefs subject to individual interpretation (as in Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths). Instead, its doctrines were set by world-wide councils of its leaders, subject to acceptance only by the entire Church. In this democratic way it is Christ alone who rules by unity. The last such 'Ecumenical Council' was held in the 8th century. Though some might consider such a faith archaic and out of touch, the Orthodox faithful highly regard the purity of truth upheld by such an ancient methodology as highly relevant today. Why? Because the truth of Christ's message was meant for all ages, and should be heard clearly, not through centuries of re-interpretation. "true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).



Where are the Orthodox?

"Eastern" Orthodox Christianity has been separated from "Western" or Roman Catholicism for a millennium, and so to this day Christians of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia remain Orthodox. Countries such as Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Serbia and Georgia are predominantly Orthodox. All the ancient and most sacred sites of Christianity also remain Orthodox, such as Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments, the manger in Bethlehem where Jesus was born and the tomb in Jerusalem where He resurrected. Today, in a world where change churns as the restless sea, Orthodox Christianity maintains its continuity and can be found everywhere in the world, growing and healthy. It does not spread because of any intense missionary activity. Immigrants brought their faith with them around the world, and it impressed and changes many with its ancient simplicity, persistent truth, spiritual harmony and mystical nature. Orthodox Christianity has over 250 million followers, and is recognized as one of the major faiths in the United States, and the world.

Why is Orthodoxy so Different?

The ancient roots and customs of Orthodoxy certainly stand out among Christian "denominations", as do its architecture, governance, language, art and style of worship. But what really sets this faith apart can be found in its name: "Orthodox". This Greek compound word means "True-Glorification". The idea is to keep *pure* the faith; seated in historical truth, unchanged and sacred, steadfast as is God. Case in point: Orthodoxy remains almost alone rooted in the ancient "Resurrectional Theology", as the rest of Christianity contemplates "Redemptive Salvation" which emphasizes death from sin with salvation requiring the sacrifice of blood, paid in full by Jesus' execution. This may be scriptural, but it is also harsh judicial legalese. It does not address the Christian knowledge of a less *legal and calculating* Divine Love. Scripture and history offer a more profound view of the gift of redemption. God visited us in the person of Jesus Christ, and demonstrated on Himself our salvation by *rising from the Dead*. Without legal formulas, but with love and direct intervention, never violating our free will, God showed us that he would raise our bodies from the grave for eternity. It is a simple view of salvation to be sure, but a profound and powerful one. "Quite different, yet somehow the same"; a frequent quote from those introduced to Orthodoxy.