

Differences between eastern orthodox and roman catholic christianity religion ess...



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BUSTER**

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy were once the same body, the Holy Catholic Church. As the Church grew in numbers, Bishops were assigned to the individual towns, to oversee the congregations. They became very loyal to the particular town they served. Competition for authority arose among the Bishops as to who was the most important. The Bishop of Rome claimed he was the successor to Peter, and therefore he had the right to the title of Pope. This began a series of disputes among Christendom that finally split the church.

In 1054, a formal split occurred when Pope Leo IX, the leader of the Roman branch, excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople. Michael Cerularius, the leader of the Eastern branch, condemned the Pope in mutual excommunication. This date marks the major division in the church, and began what we know as denominations. (Textbook page 206)

To the present day, the Eastern and Western churches are still divided. We do need to note that in 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras agreed to formally remove the mutual excommunications.

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The Difference between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity

Papal Infallibility

The main difference between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity has to do with the recognition of the Pope. Roman Catholics recognize the Pope as infallible. The Pope has supreme authority over all

churches, speaking to the universal church on matters of faith, in his capacity as successor to Peter. (Textbook page 208) (Christianity, 2010). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/christianity>.

The Eastern Orthodox also has various bishops with one being the highest bishops. The Eastern Orthodox Church does not believe the highest ranking bishop, or archbishop, to be infallible, nor do they grant him with supreme authority over all churches. Orthodox churches believe that decisions are made collectively. (Textbook page 209) (Christianity, 2010). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/christianity>.

Purgatory

Another main difference is in the teaching of Purgatory. According to Roman Catholic theology, those souls destined for heaven must endure a state of purification. They must be cleansed of sins committed on earth. The rest go to hell for eternal punishment. Also from a form of merits or extra grace accumulated by the virtue of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints, indulgencies may be granted. The grace is applied to those in purgatory in order to shorten their time there.

(Textbook page 206

Catholic (2010) <http://www.catholic.com/library/purgatory.asp>

Eastern Orthodoxy teaches that after the soul leaves the body, it journeys to the abode of the dead (Hades). The soul will remain in this condition of waiting. Because some have a prevision of the glory to come and others a foretaste of their suffering, the state of waiting is

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called “ Particular Judgment”. When Christ returns, the soul rejoins its risen body to be judged.

The good and faithful servant will inherit life. The unfaithful will spend eternity in hell.

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(Christianity, 2010). [http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/christianity) (Orthodox, 2010). [http://www.ocf. org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath. html](http://www.ocf.org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath.html)

Doctrinal Development

In reference to Doctrine, in order to justify new doctrine, Roman Catholicism developed the theory of “ Doctrinal Development”. Roman Catholicism presents this theology as growing in stages to higher and more clearly defined levels of knowledge. It teaches the idea that Christ gave us an original deposit of faith, and a seed which grows and matures over the centuries. They believe that tradition is just as important as the Bible

Eastern Orthodoxy does not endorse the view that the teachings of Christ have changed from time to time. They believe that Christianity has remained unaltered from the moment that the Lord delivered the Faith to the Apostles (Mat. 28: 18-20). Eastern Orthodox of the twenty first century believes precisely what was believed in the first century. (Orthodox, 2010).

[http://www. ocf. org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath. html](http://www.ocf.org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath.html)

Nicene Creed

A major disagreement between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism centers around the adding of the “ filioque” to the Nicene Creed. This particular conflict is also known as the “ Filioque Controversy.” In Latin, this word means “ and from the Son.” It had been inserted into the Nicene Creed, changing the phrase pertaining to the origin of the Holy Spirit from “ who proceeds from the Father” to “ who proceeds from the Father and the Son”. Roman Catholicism made this change on the authority of the Pope. Eastern Orthodoxy believed this spurned the Apostolic Tradition which always taught that God the Father is the single Source of the Son and the Spirit. (Catholic, 2010). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/catholicorthodox_theological_difference (Orthodox, 2010). <http://www.ocf.org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath.html>

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Eucharist

There are several names given to this Christian ordinance. All of Christendom would agree that the ordinance is an act of worship, a remembrance of the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples, just before He was arrested and crucified. You will find this recorded in 1st Corinthians chapter 11. Other names for the Eucharist would be The Last Supper, Holy Communion, and the Blessed Sacrament. The local church may use leavened or unleavened bread, and wine or grape juice, depending on which denomination you attend.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine are consecrated. It is not just bread and wine, but actually becomes the body

and blood of Jesus Christ. The term use is Transubstantiation. Roman Catholics use unleavened bread.

Eastern Orthodoxy uses leavened bread, stating that it symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit. They do not believe that it is the actual body and blood of Jesus, but an act of worship done in remembrance as Jesus instructed. (Eucharist, 2010). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/eucharist> (Orthodox, 2010). <http://www.ocf.org/orthodoxpage/reading/orthocath.html>

Conclusion

There are other differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. Some of the differences are how faith is taught, the essence of God, the work of Christ, the Holy Scriptures, the nature of man, and the Virgin Mary. One more would be the difference in icons of Orthodox worship, and the statues of Catholic worship.

On page 8 of our textbook, it speaks of a moral imperative we have to study the different religions. With our planet becoming smaller and smaller by modern technology, all races and religions have a closer contact with each other. While we will not always agree with some teachings or religions, we can learn from each other, and possibly make this a better and safer place for our children. God is the final Judge.

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