

CONTRASTS BETWEEN ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND ORTHODOXY

to Assist Orthodox in Better Understanding our Faith

A PERSONAL and NON-OFFICIAL PRESENTATION

Some issues may be oversimplified and lack nuances for sake of brevity

By: Fr. A. James Bernstein - Last updated 11/13/2020

Asterisks * and Red indicates Major Issues of Difference

PURPOSE: This chart is meant to provide a brief overview for Orthodox Christians of what are, in my opinion, contrasts between Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. It is not meant to be comprehensive. As such, some issues may be oversimplified.

QUALIFICATION: In presenting the Orthodox Christian positions I have purposely presented the positions as singular. In reality there exists within the history of Orthodoxy differing views, some which have been significantly influenced by Western Roman Catholic scholastic theology, culture and practice. My presentation ignores those influences and focuses on what I consider mainstream teachings and practices most clearly in continuity with the Apostolic/Patristic Church.

THEOLOGY

We begin with God. Our understanding of who God is determines our anthropology - of who man is, our soteriology - of what salvation is, our cosmology - of the future of all things. In all of these aspects Roman Catholicism has come to differ from Orthodox Christianity. Though we have much in common, having been a single Church until the Great Schism of 1054, we have drifted ever further apart, at an accelerating rate. This is not to deny that much in Roman Catholicism is profitable and has Christian roots. Or that many Roman Catholics are godly. Rather it is to say that the more one understands our differences the clearer it becomes that we differ greatly on some basic presuppositions. This first section on Theology presents our differences in understanding who God is. A proper understanding of **who God is and how God is known/experienced** is much more likely to result in spiritual healing and life than otherwise.

Roman Catholic

Orthodox

***TRINITARIAN UNITY IS IN** THE DIVINE NATURE/
ESSENCE. Absolute
Divine Simplicity
Hellenistic in origin

THE PERSONAL MONARCHY
OF GOD THE FATHER
Hebraic (Biblical) in origin

The word Monarchy means “single source”: The Father is personally the Source of the Son and the Spirit, the Son who is begotten and the Spirit who proceeds.

“I believe in ONE GOD, THE FATHER almighty, maker of heaven and earth...and in the Son OF GOD... and in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds FROM THE FATHER...” Nicene Creed. It does not say, I believe in One Divine Essence... or in the Common Nature shared by the Trinity. It says, I believe in One God the Father... and in the Son of God ... and in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father.

“When God was conversing with Moses, He did not say, ‘I am the essence’, but ‘I am the One Who Is.’ Thus it is **not** the One Who Is who derives from the essence, but **essence which derives from Him**, for it is He who contains all being in Himself.” St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, III.ii.12

Emphasizing the common nature shared by the Trinity as source of union rather than the Person of the Father can be viewed as a form of modalism.

Orthodox prayers are typically addressed to God the Father (through the Son and in the Holy Spirit) not to the Divine Essence or to God in a generic sense. Additional references are provided in the Appendix.

***FILIOQUE** (“and from the Son”) TRUE DOGMA HERETICAL

Filioque (Latin word meaning “and from the Son”). This word was unilaterally added to the original Nicene/Constantinople Creed by the Latin Roman Catholic Church of the West. It was initially added in Spain in the 6th century and was vigorously opposed by the Roman papacy for a few hundred years. The filioque clause was not officially added to the Latin mass until the 11th century.

Among many things it diminishes the Monarchy of God the Father, defining that the Spirit proceeds from the Father **and the Son** as from a single source. The Spirit is therefore deprived of an essential unique characteristic of the Divine Nature. The Holy Spirit is thereby reduced to being of a different order or nature from the Father and Son. That is of being “the odd one out.”

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you FROM THE FATHER, the Spirit of Truth who PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER, He will testify of Me.” John 15:26

See St. Photius the Great *“On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit.”*

http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/photios_mystagogy.html

Also see: <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Filioque> and *The 8th Ecumenical Council of 879-880*

https://orthodoxwiki.org/Eighth_Ecumenical_Council

More detailed information is provided in the appendix.

***GOD’S NATURE**

**IS UNKNOWABLE
ESSENCE .**

NO DISTINCTION between
God’s ESSENCE and God’s
DIVINE ENERGIES
Defined philosophically

**God is UNKNOWABLE in His
ESSENCE and KNOWABLE as Persons
experienced through His ENERGIES.**
God exists as the Father, Son, and Spirit
and acts personally through His Energies.
God cannot be defined philosophically

Orthodoxy teaches that God exists in His Energies as well as His Essence. God’s Energies are directly experienceable as uncreated Grace, Attributes, Actions, Light, Love, etc. This means that a direct experiencing of God **IS** possible. **The Holy Spirit Himself is made known to us in Divine Energies.** Without the Divine Energies God exists only as Essence and therefore is not possible to experience directly - only indirectly by effects.

St. John of Damascus: An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book 1 & 3.

St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* St Vladimir Press <https://svspress.com/gregory-palamas-the-triads/>

***GRACE**

Many different kinds of
graces/prevenient/
actual/special charisms/
gratuitous/of state/
habitual (sanctifying).
Are all **CREATED EFFECTS** of
God and **NOT GOD HIMSELF**

Always **GOD HIMSELF**. Revealed
through His UNCREATED ENERGIES
The **NATURAL PROCESSIONS/RAYS**
of the Divine Energies
Gk. (energia)/Attributes/Actions.

Are called **INFUSED VIRTUES**

Grace is either uncreated in which God Himself is **DIRECTLY** experienced through Divine Energy. Or created as Roman Catholics have traditionally held, in which there is no possible **DIRECT** experiencing of God. **We experience the Holy Spirit as well as the Father and the Son within us by means of Divine Energies.**

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23 (KJV) *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Corinthians 3:16 (KJV)

*"... the Trinity dwells in us by means of that in itself is communicable – that is to say, by the energies which are common to the three hypostases (persons) or, in other words, by **grace – for it is by this name that we know the deifying energies which the Holy Spirit communicates to us.**"* Lossky page 86.

Increasingly the RC church has dropped use of the term "created grace" and speaks of it as a condition made by God within man to prepare him for the Holy Spirit. Regardless, even a condition is a creation of God and Not God Himself. For a fuller explanation see *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, V. Lossky, chapter 4, Uncreated Energies.

Regarding RC views on grace see *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part 3, Section 1, Chapter 3, Article 2, Part 2, Grace* https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c3a2.htm

THEOLOGICAL METHOD

Historically **RATIONALISTIC**
& Scholastic. Very juridical.

MYSTICAL/ PATRISTIC
EMPIRICAL /EXPERIENTIAL

DOCTRINES

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT
changing/shifting/softening
of some doctrines

UNCHANGING
progressive clarifying of
unchanging doctrines

MYSTERY

Seeks **ABSOLUTE**
UNDERSTANDING
and definition

Has many **ANTINOMIES**
TRUE MYSTERY IS BETTER
THAN FALSE CLARITY

ANTHROPOLOGY/ SOTERIOLOGY / SALVATION

Man is created in the image and likeness of God. A proper understanding of who God is and HOW He is experienceable enables us to know what our ultimate goal is and what salvation is. If our understanding of how God is experienced is faulty, then we are less likely to achieve the ultimate goal for which we were created.

Roman Catholic

Orthodox

***ORIGINAL**
(ANCESTRAL) SIN

Traditionally
GUILT INHERITED
(Legal, Juridical emphasis)

MORTALITY INHERITED
a disposition to sin

Is GRACE natural to

No

Yes

human nature	Is a supernatural gift	The world is not 'grace-proof'
*GRACE & FREE WILL IN INITIATING FAITH	Prevenient GRACE ALONE initiates Faith. AUGUSTINIAN. 2 ND COUNCIL OF ORANGE 6 th c.	Simultaneous SYNERGISTIC Act of BOTH GOD and MAN ST. JOHN CASSIAN upheld

Grace and Free Will always work **synergistically**. Orthodox Christianity never examines or analyzes them separately or independently of one another.

The relationship of grace and free will "... has never had the urgency which it assumed in the West from the time of St. Augustine onwards. The Eastern tradition never separates these two elements: grace and human freedom **are manifested simultaneously and cannot be conceived apart from each other.**"
The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky, page 197.

"St. Augustine, in his attack on Pelagianism followed the example of his adversary in taking his stand on the same rational ground, where there was no possibility of the question ever being resolved... It is not surprising that ... St. John Cassian – who took part in this debate and was opposed both to the Pelagians and to St. Augustine, was not able to make himself correctly understood. His position... was interpreted on the rational plane, as semi-pelagianism, and was condemned in the West... As a master of Christian asceticism, S. John Cassian of Marseilles was the father of Western monasticism before St. Benedict, who in great part bases himself upon his writings." "**Orthodoxy ...has always asserted simultaneity in the synergy of divine grace and human freedom.**" Lossky, pages 198, 199.

See *The Conferences, John Cassian*, Ancient Christian Writers, Newman Press, **13th Conference**, 1997.

*INCARNATION'S PURPOSE	SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT	TRANSFORMATION , Theosis, Metamorphosis/Deification/ Divinization/Transfiguration
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The ORTHODOX position is: the Son of GOD who is God by NATURE became man so that man could become GOD by GRACE. Always maintaining the distinction between Creator (God) and Creation (Man), To forever become by Grace what God is by nature without ever becoming God by nature.

Substitutionary Atonement is a late medieval concept. PENAL Substitutionary Atonement is from the Protestant Reformation and is anathematized by the Orthodox Church.

Though the language of substitutionary atonement can be found in Scripture and Patristic writings, it is not the essential purpose for the Incarnation. **Expiation** is the primary purpose, **not Propitiation**.

*HOW GOD IS PRIMARILY KNOWN	Through REASON by means of CREATION and CREATED grace. BY PHILOSOPHICAL Speculation.	DIRECTLY , Mystically, EXPERIENTIALLY by partaking in God's Nature through UNCREATED DIVINE ENERGIES (2 PETER 1:4)
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St. John of Damascus: *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book 1 & 3.*

St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*.

The 9th Ecumenical Council of 1341 – 1351. Synodal Tome: <https://maximologia.org/the-synod-of-constantinople-1351/> “... the Fathers apply to the energies the name of rays of divinity, penetrating the created universe...the energies are not effects of the divine cause, as creatures are; they are not created, formed ex nihilo, but flow eternally from the one essence of the Trinity. They are the outpourings of the divine nature... for **God is more than essence**. The energies ... is that mode of existence of the Trinity which is outside of its inaccessible essence. **God thus exists both in His essence and outside of His essence.**”

The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky, page 73.

God existing in His essence and outside His essence “... makes it possible to understand how the Trinity can remain incommunicable in essence and at the same time come and dwell in us...”

The Mystical Theology, page 86.

***PRIMARY PRESENT
SPIRITUAL GOAL**

Historically to **SATISFY**
and **APPEASE** God.

To be **TRANSFORMED**
By **CONSTANT PRAYER**
By **PURIFICATION**, Gk. Katharsis
By **ILLUMINATION**, Gk. Phosis
By **DEIFICATION**, Gk. Theosis

***SALVATION'S ULTIMATE
GOAL**

Forgiveness/Heaven
VISION (Beatific) of
God's Essence. Happiness

Theosis / **DEIFICATION** /
UNION with God
**To forever become by Grace what
God is by Nature Without Ever
Becoming God**
Resurrection/Heaven

“... it is considered blasphemy to say that man partakes of God's essence. Man is utterly incapable of partaking of the essence of God ... when a person partakes of the glory or energy of God, he knows only what God reveals to him and as much as God reveals to him.” Fr. John Romanides, *Patristic Theology*, p.163. What we are able to partake of is God in His Divine energies, never God in His essence.

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods.”
John 10:34

“...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, ...” 2 Peter 1:4

St Justin Martyr (100-165 AD)

“all men are deemed worthy of becoming gods” Dialogue with Trypho 124

Irenaeus of Lyons, (130-200AD),

“...we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods...”

St. Irenaeus Against Heresies 4:38, 3-4

“The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.” Against Heresies (Book V, Preface)

St. Athanasius the Great (296-373AD)

“For He was made man that we might be made God.” On the Incarnation, Section 54.

“... the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified, ... “ Defense of the Nicene Definition 14.

Additional references are provided in the Appendix.

***IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

DOGMA

HERETICAL

The **Immaculate Conception** is a Roman Catholic dogma which asserts that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was preserved by God from the transmission of original sin at the time of her own conception. It is commonly confused with the doctrine of the virginal conception of Christ. Orthodox reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as heretical because Orthodoxy does not see ancestral sin as an inheritance of guilt or stain from the Fall and therefore there is no reason for the miraculous removal of either. We only inherit the consequences of the Fall i.e., mortality and a disposition to sin – which can be resisted. The Orthodox assert that Mary was not an exception to the human race but fully human and subject to temptation. See: <https://orthochristian.com/73378.html>
St. John of Shanghai is credited with saying, “It is a bad solution for a non-existent problem.”

MARY

ASSUMPTION

DORMITION

Her death NOT necessary

Died

Before the Middle Ages, the Western Church had an identical doctrine as the Eastern Church.

VENIAL & MORTAL SIN DISTINCTION

YES

NO

The R.C. Church makes a very clear distinction between sins committed that will send a person to hell if not repented of before death (mortal sins) and sins that will not send a person to hell (venial sins). The Orthodox do not make such a strict distinction. Though some sins are more severe than others, all sins matter.

PURGATORY

YES

NO

INDULGENCES

YES

NO

TREASURY OF MERITS

YES

NO

***HELL FIRE**

Traditionally **PHYSICAL**
God’s Absence

SPIRITUAL Divine Energy of God’s
Love. God’s Presence.

MONASTICISM

More Peripheral
Has many religious orders
focused on service.
Little interaction with parishes

More Central
Historically vital with close organic
contact with laity and parishes.
Current rebirth in world Orthodoxy

FASTING

Post Vatican 2 Deemphasized
Optional

Continues to be Stressed
Vital

ECCLESIOLOGY

Christ Himself established His Church. For most of the first millennium of Church history the Orthodox and Roman Catholics were a single Church and functioned **Conciliarly**. Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were the five Patriarchal centers. Major decisions were decided in **Ecumenical Councils**. Only gradually did the single Western Patriarch, the Pope and the four Eastern Patriarchs drift apart and the Western Church went into schism. Without any check, the single Western Patriarch accrued ever more authority to itself to such a degree that the Patriarch of Rome began to adopt heretical ideas.

Roman Catholic**Orthodox*****POPE of Rome**

Has **SUPREMACY**
Is **INFALLIBLE** (when
Speaking officially, ex
cathedra)
UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION

Has **PRIMACY**
Is **FALLIBLE**
Has only **LOCAL JURISDICTION**
Some were declared heretics

St Paul rebuked St. Peter in Antioch publicly for withdrawing and leading others to withdraw from eating with Gentile Christians because of intimidation by Judaizers from Jerusalem. Galatians 2:11-14

Apostolic Council of Jerusalem: The Apostle James, first Bishop of Jerusalem, as opposed to St. Peter presided and declared the Council's decision. Acts: 2:1-20

"Whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of antichrist."
St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, 6th century. *Letter to John the Faster.*

Pope Honorius (7th century) was anathematized for the heresy of Monothelism by the 3rd Council of Constantinople (680 AD). It was subsequently accepted and confirmed by subsequent Popes.

No Pope of Rome called, officiated or even attended an Ecumenical Council prior to the great schism of 1054 AD.

Decisions of those Ecumenical Councils though binding upon all were not first reviewed by or approved by the Pope. They were not submitted to him as the final arbiter of truth.

The Council of Pisa and Council of Constance (15th century) resolved the schism of having three anti-popes. In so doing the Council of Constance decreed in *Haec Sancta Synodus* that primacy of authority resided in the Ecumenical Council and not in the bishop of Rome.

In present day Roman Catholicism: *"The pope alone has the right to convoke, suspend, and dissolve an ecumenical council; he also presides over it or chooses someone else to do so and determines the agenda (can. 338). The vacancy of the Holy See automatically suspends an ecumenical council. Laws or teachings issued by an ecumenical council require the confirmation of the pope, who alone has the right to promulgate them (can. 341). The role of the pope in an ecumenical council is a distinct feature of the Catholic Church."*
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synod>

Orthodoxy never claimed to have a Patriarch that is infallible. There have been a number of times in which Patriarchs have become heretical. A prime example is the Patriarch of Constantinople Nestorius, after which the heresy of Nestorianism is named. The Roman Catholic church claims that the Pope is infallible when speaking officially, ex cathedra. There have been times when the papacy was abysmally corrupt, during which it would have been impossible to claim virtue, let alone "infallibility." A brief description of such a time in the 9th/10th century follows.

The **Cadaver Synod: Pope Formosus'** body was exhumed by his successor, **Pope Stephen VI**, and placed on trial fully vested in the Lateran Cathedral in 897! A deacon served as the defense lawyer. Charges were made by Pope Stephen. The previous pope's body was then thrown into the Tiber River with a curse. **Pope Sergius III** in 904 had his two immediate predecessors, **Pope Leo V** and **Pope Christopher**, murdered. He then fathered an illegitimate son by Marozia who later became **Pope John XI**. Marozia was known as "lover, mother, and grandmother of popes." This period of papacy is known as the "pornocracy." **Pope John X** was the reputed lover of Marozia's mother Theodora. Marozia had him deposed and murdered! Marozia's son was too young to be pope, she had two puppet popes, **Leo VI** and **Stephen VII**, elected in succession and controlled them until her son became 21 years of age, and then had him become **Pope John XI**. **Pope John XII** became pope in 955 and was Marozia's grandson. This pope turned the Lateran Palace into a brothel.

For an Orthodox critique of Papal claims see: *The Primacy of Peter*, Fr John Meyendorff, St Vladimir Press.
<https://svspress.com/primacy-of-peter-the/>

***CATHOLICITY**

In **SUBMISSION** to
 Universality
 of the Pope

FULLNESS is in **LOCAL DIOCESE**
 Wholeness

The fullness of the Church is manifested as a Local Church, the diocese with bishop celebrating the Divine Liturgy with his presbyters, deacons and faithful.

"... catholicity comprehends (encompasses ed.) not only unity but also multiplicity... unity with multiplicity which makes the Church catholic in its wholeness as well as in each of its parts. The fullness of the whole is not the sum total of the parts, for each part possesses the same fullness as the whole."

The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky, page 176.

4th Council of Constantinople Is Rejected
(879-880) Many accept as
8th Ecumenical Council

Widely Accepted
CONDEMNED THE FILIOQUE

Overview of 8th Council: https://orthodoxwiki.org/Eighth_Ecumenical_Council/
 Synodal Tome of Council: <https://maximologia.org/the-synod-of-constantinople-1341/>

5th Council of Constantinople (1341-1351) Many accept as 9th Ecumenical Council **Is Rejected**

Widely Accepted

**CONFIRMED ESSENCE/ENERGY DISTINCTION
 UPHELD HESYCHASM AND ST GREGORY PALAMAS**

Synodal Tome: <https://maximologia.org/the-synod-of-constantinople-1351/>
 Overview of Ecumenical Councils: https://orthodoxwiki.org/Ecumenical_Councils

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

LINEAGE / Individual pedigree alone

LINEAGE plus TRUTH
 Lineage is not enough
 Succession of Church is required not just ordination

PRIESTLY POWERS TO DO MASS

Conferred as **INDELIBLE MARK** . If done outside of authority is **Valid but Illicit**

Can only be done under proper **ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY**

LITURGICAL DIFFERENCES

Roman Catholic

Orthodox

***EUCHARIST**

Uses **UNLEAVENED BREAD**
 Adopted about 7th century
TRANSUBSTANTIATION
 philosophical Understanding

Uses **LEAVENED BREAD**
A GREAT MYSTERY
 Patristic understanding
 Beyond Philosophical categories

THE EPIKLESIS calling down of Holy Spirit to consecrate bread and wine

Historically was only **implicit**
 Post-Vatican 2 some optional prayers are explicit

EMPHASIZED and explicit

BAPTISM NORM

POURING

3 FOLD IMMERSION

*BAPTISM/CHRISMATION/ COMMUNION	SEPARATED	UNITED
*COMMUNING INFANTS	NO	YES
COMMUNION OF SANCTIFIED BREAD and WINE	Typically ONLY SANCTIFIED BREAD	ALWAYS BOTH
COMMUNION PRIOR TO CHRISMATION/ CONFIRMATION	YES	ABSOLUTELY NOT
EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION	WITHIN & OUTSIDE MASS	NOT DONE Eucharist is to be eaten, not adored
CORPUS CHRISTI PUBLIC PROCESSION with DISPLAYED BLESSED SACRAMENT	YES	NO
PRIVATE MASS INTENTION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL	YES	NO
LOW MASS	YES (traditionally)	NO
HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION	Yes. Viewed legally. Not to attend is a sin.	No. Viewed therapeutically. Not to attend is not necessarily a sin
GREAT LENT WEEKDAYS	MASS HELD	ONLY PRE-SANCTIFIED
VESPERS, MATINS ETC.	Now EXCEPTIONAL	NORMATIVE
CENTRAL IMAGE	Primarily focus is on CRUCIFIX	Primarily focus on RESURRECTION/ PANTOCRATOR (Christ enthroned) in Dome and Iconostasis
CLERGY SERVE	FACING THE PEOPLE	ONLY FACING THE ALTAR
WORSHIP CHANGES	Significant change since Vatican 2. Protestantization	Since 5th cen. changed little

DIFFERENCES IN PIETY

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>
DEVOTION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS	YES	NO
STIGMATAS	YES	NO
SACRED ART	NATURALISTIC Sentimental/Sensual Statues	ICONOGRAPHIC Mystical
SACRED MUSIC & WORSHIP	Post Vatican 2 CHANGING /Contemporary	TRADITIONAL Changes little, Non-Instrumental
PEWS / CHAIRS	TYPICALLY YES	TRADITIONALLY FEW
PRIESTS	MOST CELIBATE	MOST MARRIED
CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE	Huge Problem	Rare
CREMATION	YES	NO
SIGN OF THE CROSS	CHANGED IN 12/13 TH CEN. Entire hand left to right	ORIGINAL FORM 3 fingers right to left
STATIONS OF THE CROSS	YES	NO
THE ROSARY (for sporadic prayer)	YES	NO
PRAYER ROPE (for continual prayer)	NO	YES

APPENDIX INCLUDING ADDITIONAL NOTES, QUOTES, REFERENCES AND LINKS

TRINITARIAN UNITY IS IN: PERSON OF GOD THE FATHER

"I believe in ONE GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY maker of heaven and earth...and in the Son OF GOD... and in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds FROM THE FATHER..." Nicene Creed

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, & Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; 1 Peter 1:3

"... for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things..." 1 Corinthians 8:6

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" 2 Cor 1:3

"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." 2 Cor. 11:31

"...the will of our God and Father..." Galatians 1:4

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ..." Ephesians 1:3

"... the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory..." Ephesians 1:17

There is "one God and Father of all..." Ephesians 4:6

"... I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ..." Ephesians 3:14

"giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Eph 5:20

"... from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 6:23

"Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever." Philippians 4:20

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." Colossians 1:3

"...do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Col. 3:17

"...our God and Father,..." 1 Thes. 1:3

Also:

"God is One because the Father is One." St. Basil the Great Contra Sab., 3; PG 31:605a
The Trisagion: HOLY GOD: THE UNORIGINATE FATHER; Holy Mighty: The co-eternal Son; Holy Immortal: the all-Holy Spirit.

"It is the Father who distinguishes the Hypostases (Persons) in an eternal movement of love...He confers His One Nature upon the Son and upon the Holy Spirit alike..." The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky, page 60.

FILIOQUE

"Eastern Christianity's most profound and characteristic conviction about the Trinity is that God is known primarily as a person and not, as advocates for the filioque claimed, as an essence... In the case of Augustine, the greatest flaw was to understand God the Father as primarily "simple essence" rather than as "person" (hypostasis). This mistake opened the way for conceiving the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, since both are, according to the Creed, "of one essence" or "consubstantial" (homoousios). As St. Photios put it, however, "he is consubstantial because he proceeds from the Father, but he does not proceed because he is consubstantial." In other words, the procession of the Holy Spirit is determined by the personhood

(hypostasis) of the Father, not by his consubstantiality or essence. For Photios, reducing personhood to a shared essence distorted the Trinity as it had been revealed by the scriptures. The person of the Spirit cannot proceed from an essence but only from a person, namely, God the Father – the “cause” of both the Son and the Spirit. Indeed, so important was the primacy of personhood rather than of essence that true monotheism was at stake. God is one, the Greek fathers claimed, because the particular person of the Father is one... The result of doctrinal filioquism, then, was to confuse God the Father as an essence rather than a person, and to diminish the equal divinity of the Holy Spirit in relation the Son.” The Age of Paradise, Fr. John Strickland, pages 217-219.

Short History of the Filioque

The Nicene/Constantinopolitan Creed was defined by the 1st (325) and 2nd (381) Ecumenical Councils. An anathema was declared against any who would alter the Creed.

The filioque was first added to the Creed unilaterally in the West, in Spain, at the local 3rd Council of Toledo (589).

It was added for a local utilitarian purpose, to give the Son greater dignity in the Church’s struggle against local Arians (Goths) who denied the Divinity of Christ.

There was no need for that as the original Creed says that the Son of God is “Light of Light very God of very God” consubstantial with the Father. Clearly indicating His Divinity.

This interpolation of the original Creed was done WITHOUT approval of the Pope or of a major or Ecumenical Church Council. (Spain was at that time considered an outer province of the Empire).

The filioque was subsequently approved in the West by the Frankish Council of Frankfort (794) which was in part a desire of Charlemagne to distance his new European Frankish Empire from Byzantium. Amazingly the Franks accused the Greeks of heresy because they did not use the filioque in the original Creed!

Pope Hadrian wrote one of the longest letters in papal history to refute the Franks.

Pope Hadrian’s successor Pope Leo III forbade using the filioque.

To affirm this, Pope Leo III in 810 had the original Creed inscribed in Greek and Latin on two heavy silver tablets WITHOUT the filioque and had them prominently placed at the tomb of St. Peter for all pilgrims to see. He added to the inscription: “I, Leo, have placed these for love and protection of the Orthodox Faith.”

St. Photius wrote a detailed refutation of the doctrine of “double procession” in his *Mystagogy*.

Rome continued to use the Creed WITHOUT the filioque until the 11th century.

The Original Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was reaffirmed by a number of subsequent Ecumenical Councils. They include Canon 7 of the 3rd Council (431), the 4th Council (451), the 5th Council (553), the 6th Council (680-681), and the 7th Council (787).

“The dogma of the Holy Spirit had been defined for the church by the 2nd council, repeated by the 3rd, confirmed by the 4th, established by the 5th, proclaimed by the 6th, and sealed by the 7th.” Jaroslav Pelikan.

Additionally, the 8th Orthodox Ecumenical Council, “the Photian Council” (879-880) declared an anathema against any changes to the original Creed. This council was originally accepted and fully endorsed by the Papacy whose legates were present at the behest of Pope John VIII (who was subsequently brutally murdered in part because of his desire to reconcile with Byzantium.)

This condemnation of the filioque was recognized as legitimate by the papacy for nearly 200 years!

When in 1014 Henry II of Germany arrived in Rome he demanded that Pope Benedict VIII (who owed to Henry II his restoration to the papal throne after usurpation by Antipope Gregory VI), for the first time in history, include the filioque in the papal mass sung in Saint Peter’s Basilica. This he did.

The filioque is also explicitly denounced as heretical by the 1848 Encyclical of Eastern Patriarchs held in Constantinople signed by bishops of the Holy Synods of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem.

(This Encyclical also recognizes the 4th Council of Constantinople (879-880) to be the 8th Ecumenical Council.)

How the Filioque Distorts Theology, Ecclesiology and Soteriology

The repercussions of the filioque are huge. How we relate to God is significantly affected by what we believe about Him. False beliefs lead to damaging spirituality.

The filioque destroys the Monarchy of God the Father as the single *arche* Source/Fountainhead of the Trinity and makes for two Sources/Heads the Father and the Son.

It no longer is the Person of the Father that holds the Trinity together (There is One God because there is One Father.) Rather in Latin Scholastic theology it becomes the non-personal shared Essence/Nature of the Three Persons.

It results in the 3 Persons of the Trinity being viewed as RELATIONSHIPS within the One Essence and a diminishing of their Personhood.

In this understanding God becomes an abstract idea, a remote and impersonal Being, a God of philosophers rather than the personal God of the Hebrew Patriarchs.

The Holy Spirit is made a subordinate member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit then may be viewed as the love between Father and Son.

The subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Son results in a diminishing of His ministry in both the Church and individual life.

Orthodoxy stresses that Church unity and infallibility are both the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast, in Rome it became focused in the papacy.

The subordination of the Holy Spirit leads to a greater emphasis upon Church as an Institution, a Magisterium, on Papal authority, rather than the Church as a Living Organism.

Scriptural Interpretation and the Filioque

Scriptures used by Rome to bolster use of the filioque are understood by Orthodox as distinguishing the Holy Spirit's procession in eternity, before the creation of the world, outside of time as opposed to the Spirit proceeding through or from the Son in time, after the creation of the world. As an example:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father (IN TIME AFTER THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND THE INCARNATION) the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, (OUTSIDE OF TIME, IN ETERNITY, BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND THE INCARNATION) He will testify of Me." John 15:26.

There is an eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone and a temporal sending from both the Father and the Son in time.

SALVATION'S ULTIMATE GOAL: DEIFICATION

To forever become by Grace what God is by Nature without ever becoming God. For we never partake of or experience God's Essence.

Jesus answered them, *"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are gods'"*
John 10:34

*"...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**, ..." 2 Peter 1:4*

St Justin Martyr (100-165 AD)

*"all men are deemed worthy of **becoming gods**" Dialogue with Trypho 124*

St. Theophilus of Antioch, (185AD),

*"he should receive as reward from Him immortality, and **[man] should become God**"
To Autolycus 2:27*

Irenaeus of Lyons, (130-200AD),

*"...we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length **gods...**"*

St. Irenaeus Against Heresies 4:38, 3-4

*"The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, **become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.**" Against Heresies (Book V, Preface)*

St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215)

"The Word of God became man, that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God."

Exhortation to the Heathen Chapter 1

*"...inalienable inheritance of the Father, **deifying man...**", Exhortation to the Heathen, 11.*

*"... meditating on the heavenly mode of life according to which we **have been deified...**", Instructor 1:12.*

*"...**man becomes God since God so wills,**" Instructor 3:1*

Hippolytus of Rome, (170-236AD)

*"For the Deity, (by condescension) does not diminish aught of the dignity of His divine perfection; having **made thee even God unto His glory.**" Refutation Of All Heresies 10:30*

*"If, therefore, man has become immortal, **[man] will also be God.** And if [man] is made God by water and the Holy Spirit after the regeneration of the laver he is found to be also joint-heir with Christ after the resurrection from the dead.", Discourse on the Holy Theophany, 8*

St. Gregory of Neocaesarea, (213-270AD) *"For we hold that the Son of God was made man on account of our salvation, in order that we might receive the likeness of the heavenly, and **be made divine** after the likeness of Him who is the true Son of God by nature..." Sectional Confession of Faith 16.*

St. Anthony the Great, (251- 356AD) *"So he is never able to look up and know God, who has created all things that man may be saved and **deified.**" On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life 34. Philokalia vol# 1.*

St. Athanasius the Great (296-373AD) *"For He was made man that we might be made God." On the Incarnation, Section 54.'*

*"... the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be **deified,** ... " Defense of the Nicene Definition 14.*

St. Basil the Great (330-379AD) *"Abiding in God, the being made like to God and, highest of all, **the being made God.**"*

On the Spirit, 23.

St. Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus (330-390AD) *"While His inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and become One Person because the Higher Nature prevailed ... in order **that I too might be made God so far as He is made Man.** " Oration 29:19*

"What greater destiny can befall man's humility than that he should be **intermingled with God**, and by this intermingling should be **deified**" Oration 30:3

"And how is He not God, if I may digress a little, by whom **you too are made God**?" Oration 39:17

"...**as much Man for your sake as you are made God for His.**" Oration 40:45

"For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is **united to God** is also saved." First Letter to Cleodnius.

St. Maximus the Confessor (580-662AD) "God made us so that we might become 'partakers of the divine nature' and sharers in His eternity, and so that we might **come to be like Him through deification by grace.**" Various Texts 1:42, Philokalia vol 2

"A sure warrant for looking forward with hope to **the deification of human nature** is provided by the **incarnation of God, which makes man god to the same degree as God Himself became man.** For it is clear that He who became man without sin **will divinize human nature without changing it into the divine nature**, and will raise it up for His own sake to the same degree as He lowered Himself for man's sake. ... Then the passion of deification is actualized by grace: ... and the person found worthy to **participate in the divine is made god** and brought into a state of rest." Various Texts 1:62-63, Philokalia vol 2

"For He becomes truly man so that by grace **He may make us gods.**" Various Texts 2:26 Philokalia vol 2

"The action of this divine energy bestows a more than ineffable pleasure and joy on him in whom the unutterable and unfathomable **union with the divine is accomplished.**" Various Texts 4:19 Philokalia 2

"Created man cannot **become a son of God and god by grace through deification**, unless he is first through his own free choice begotten in the Spirit ..." Various Texts 5:97 Philokalia 2

RECOMMENDED BOOKS & SITES

Fr Thomas Hopko: <https://www.svots.edu/content/roman-presidency-and-christian-unity-our-time>

The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky,

In the Image and Likeness of God, Vladimir Lossky

Both books: St Vladimir Seminary Press

St. Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*

https://www.amazon.com/Mystagogy-Holy-Spirit-Fathers-church/dp/091658688X/ref=olp_product_details?encoding=UTF8&me=#customerReviews

St. John of Damascus: *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Books 1 & 3.

St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*

St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ*, St. Vladimir Press

St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, St. Vladimir Press

St. Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ*, St. Vladimir Press

13th Conference of The Conferences, John Cassian, Ancient Christian Writers, Newman Press, 1997

The Deification of Man by Georgios Mantzarides

Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Vol 1. The Experience of God by Fr. Dumitru Staniloae

The Ancestral Sin (i.e., Original Sin) by Fr. John S. Romanides,

Orthodox and Catholicism: What Are the Differences by Fr. Theodore Pulcini, Ancient Faith Press

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/orthodoxy-and-catholicism-what-are-the-differences/>

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy by Fr. Andrew Damick, Ancient Faith Publishing, See chapter 2

Orthodox Church Listing of Synods and Councils including Eight and Ninth Ecumenical Councils

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txw/orthcoun.htm>

Fr. John Strickland Ancient Faith Publishing, Vol 1 of 4, 2019 / Vol 2 of 4, 2020

The Age of Paradise (Pentecost to the First Millennium)

The Age of Division (Great Schism to Protestant Reformation)

Acquiring the Mind of Christ by Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer), St Tikhon Monastery Press 2015

St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality by Fr. John Meyendorff, St. Vladimir Press

My book: Surprised by Christ: My Journey from Judaism to Orthodox Christianity, Fr. James Bernstein

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/surprised-by-christ/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Surprised-Christ-Journey-Orthodox-Christianity/dp/1888212950>

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Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (1992) online:

<https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>

Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott

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