

WHAT ARE THE 'DIFFERENCES' BETWEEN ROMAN CATHOLICS, EASTERN ORTHODOX AND EASTERN CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS?

1. Both Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are "Eastern Christians". Roman Catholics (and Protestants) are "Western Christians" (terms referring to the half of the ancient Roman Empire where each particular "expression" of the same basic Christianity was developed).
2. Eastern Christians (both Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) and Western Christians (Roman Catholics, and to some extent, Protestants) believe, to a greater or lesser degree, in the **SAME DOGMAS** (revealed truths, or basic experienced realities).
3. But, their manner of explaining the **SAME DOGMAS** leads to **DIFFERENT THEOLOGIES** (e.g., describing a room, one person could start by speaking of furniture, rugs, ornaments and end with the walls and ceiling; another person seeing the same room could begin by the walls and ceiling, then end by discussing furniture: different descriptions [theologies], but the same reality of the room [dogma].) If the description is of two different rooms, then we have a problem – this is usually not the case between Catholics and Orthodox.
4. These **THEOLOGIES** (views or explanations of the same basic realities = **DOGMAS**) are not usually contradictory, but rather complementary. Each reality (DOGMA) is so profound and rich that no one explanation exhausts it totally, but can describe it adequately.
5. **ORTHODOX** means "true (authentic) belief" or "true (authentic) worship". The opposite of Orthodox is not Catholic, but rather "Heterodox" = "another, or wrong, belief". Thus Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholics are all "Orthodox Christians".
6. **CATHOLIC** means "fullness" (literally "according to the whole"), meaning the Church possesses the fullness of the truth, life, sacraments, Gospels, etc. The opposite of Catholic is not Orthodox, but rather "heretical" (= according to a partial view, Thus Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholics are all Catholic Christians.
7. The "separation" between Catholic and Orthodox is not based on doctrine, but on Church government policies. The dialogue is going on very strong at present to re-establish communion between these Churches (Catholic and Orthodox).
8. As Eastern Catholics, we could be seen as Eastern Orthodox Christians who are in communion with the Catholic Church. We believe and do everything the Eastern Orthodox do, but we are also in communion with the Roman Church – which they are not.
9. The following table shows some differences in the theologies (ways of explaining the same realities) between East and West. Be careful, however: this is a gross oversimplification. And keep in mind: the **DOGMA** (Reality described) is the same – the explanations (**THEOLOGIES**) come from different perspectives.

WESTERN CHURCHES	EASTERN CHURCHES
THEOLOGY is usually done by analysis, definition, based on some philosophical system. It is systematic, linear (either-or) and illuminates the intellect. It is mind-centered. The Theologian applies his intellect to revealed truths to understand them better. Preference for juridical, philosophical clarity rather than poetic synthesis.	THEOLOGY is usually done by description, based on experience, prayer and celebration. It is to lead to union with God and holiness. It is heart-centered. The true Theologian knows God by experience primarily. More symbolic; more paradoxical (both-and). Preference: poetic synthesis rather than philosophical analysis.
TRINITY is one divine Nature subsisting in Three Persons. God is the fullness of Being. Prayers are usually addressed to "God".	TRINITY is an experience of Three Hypostases (Persons) who by faith we know share the same Essence. It is a Mystery of relationships and communion we are called to enter. Prayers are usually addressed to "Father, Son and Holy Spirit".
CHRIST both human and divine, is usually approached through His humanity. Christ our Brother. We are to follow Christ.	CHRIST both human and divine, is usually approached through His divinity. Christ our God. We are to become Christ (sons in the Son)
HOLY SPIRIT proceeds from the Father and the Son. Usually seen as the "Love" of God.	HOLY SPIRIT as well as the Son, both proceed from the Father as the Source. Usually seen as the "Power" of God.
GRACE is a created reality in us, an effect of the Holy Spirit. It is "supernatural" – man can be "natural" without it. It is added to human nature.	GRACE is the life of God in us – it is uncreated = the Holy Spirit Himself. It is "natural" for man to have it, "unnatural" to be without it. (Sin is against nature) Grace completes human nature.
MAN seen in terms of Greek philosophy: he has a body and an immortal soul. The mind is the center of man.	MAN seen in Biblical terms as the image and likeness of God: three dimensional (like the Trinity): body, soul (mind) and spirit (heart). Heart (spirit) is the center.
ORIGINAL SIN the inherited stain or guilt of Adam passed down to each person.	ORIGINAL SIN is simply that we are born mortal (= born out of communion with God, outside of Paradise) There is no inherited stain or guilt.
REDEMPTION is an act of God's <u>justice</u> . Atonement - a debt is paid.	REDEMPTION is an act of God's <u>mercy</u> . Communion of love and life is restored, man is healed.
CRUCIFIXION is usual focus of attention for redemption. (pay debt)	RESURRECTION is usual focus of attention for redemption (destroy death and sin, give new life)
CHURCH is seen as a <u>universal</u> organism that has several "departments" ("rites")	CHURCH seen as a <u>communion</u> of sister Churches. Mystery of Church is fully incarnate in each of them.

UNITY OF CHURCH depends mainly on obedience to the Pope. Dioceses are directly under his jurisdiction	UNITY OF CHURCH comes from the Holy Eucharist . Church of Rome is rallying point for the intercommunion of sister Churches. Bishops in communion Synods with the Pope guarantee the unity of the Church
MARY as Virgin and Mother. We relate to her sharing	MARY as Theotokos, model and symbol of the Church
GOAL OF SPIRITUAL LIFE is salvation.	GOAL OF SPIRITUAL LIFE is union with God. Salvation is <u>beginning</u> of spiritual life.
REALITY divided into either sacred (holy) or profane (secular)	REALITY is all sacred, sacramental by nature – only sinful eyes see things apart from God.
SACRAMENTS are visible sign of invisible realities, instituted by Christ to give grace. There are 7 of them.	MYSTERIES are Christ acting in the Church. There are at least 7, but all the Church does is sacramental. The risen Christ meets the believer and gives the Holy Spirit.
LITURGY is prose, tends to be verbal; sometimes sung, usually recited.	LITURGY is poetry, always sung. Christ acting through all baptized present. All senses involved. An experience of the Kingdom of heaven. The worship of heaven made present on earth – we all share in it.
EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY: “model” is the Last Supper; down to earth atmosphere; clear messages with simple words; frugal use of symbols; Focus: Here and now. Beauty in simplicity. Music: use of various musical instruments in the Liturgy.	EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY: “model” is the Heavenly Liturgy; cosmic reality; subconscious, holistic, more use of the senses; repetition as a way into the Inner Self; Focus: Eschatology (heaven on earth) Beauty in its fullness. Music: Liturgy sung from beginning to end – the human voice is the most important instrument.
PRAYER – there is a sharp distinction between “Liturgy” and “Devotions” (e.g. rosary, stations, novenas) which have little in common with liturgy and sacraments.	PRAYER – there are no “devotions” – all prayer is either liturgical or very similar to it in form and content. (e.g. Paraclisis, Akathist are like the liturgical Office)
SOCIAL JUSTICE flows from Christ’s humanity	SOCIAL JUSTICE flows from the communion of the Trinity
INDIVIDUAL is stressed – community tends to be secondary.	PERSON is stressed, seen in relationship to the community.
We act toward one another as Jesus did: follow Christ	The Trinitarian community of love is the model for us: become Christ