

MOST FREQUENT ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are there Icons (pictures) and no statues?

The Icons are there to remind us of holy people; much as we keep photographs of our loved ones with us and it's the person we love not the photo we carry. Icons are the windows of the reality and the presence of the Holy Spirit in which the Icon represents. It is the transparency of God that shines in the holiness of the people it depicts. Icons are distinctive art forms of the Christian East. They proclaim the nature of the Church and the life of Grace to which we are called.

Why is there a screen with Icons that separates the Holy Place (Altar) from the body of the Church?

Since Jesus Christ joins Heaven and Earth, the Icon Screen joins the Holy Place to the body of the Church. The Screen is adorned with the images of Christ and those central to the mystery of His coming. The Screen reminds us that through Him we have access to God.

I notice the sign of the cross goes from right to left instead of left to right. Why is it different?

Jesus sits at the right hand of God. Touching the right shoulder first also expresses the Christian hope to be put among the righteous on the right hand of Christ.

Who are the Byzantine Catholics?

We are Catholics in union with the Pope of Rome, which shares the same faith and seven sacraments. The difference is that we Eastern Catholics have a different way or rite of expressing our faith in regards to Liturgy and customs.

What is the significance of so much Incense?

Perfumed Incense is burned during Divine Liturgy to recall the cloud which covered the desert (Exodus 13) symbolizing the presence of God. It is a sign of reverence for the sacred place and the sacredness of the people who are made in God's image. It also represents our prayer ascending like the smoke of incense before the Throne of God.

Why does the Orarion of the Deacon (Stole) drag on the floor?

The Deacon is the talking Angel interceding on behalf of the people of God. The Deacon petitions God to hear our prayers and to accept our offering. The Orarion (Stole) drags in the back touching the Earth while being held high in front. The talking Angel reaches for Heaven's acceptance on our behalf.

Why are there different color Liturgical Vestments worn by the Priest, Deacon, and Acolytes on various services?

The color of vestments is tied to the Liturgical significance of the service. White or gold is used for Sundays (each Sunday represents the Resurrection), feast days, and Holy days. Blue is used for feasts of the Mother of God. Red is used on the feast of a martyr, purple during the week of the Great Lent and black or red is used for a funeral or Liturgy for the dead.

Why do Byzantine Catholics offer so much veneration to the Virgin Mary?

The blessed immaculate Virgin Mary is the daughter of the Eternal Father, the wife of the Holy Spirit, and the Mother of Jesus Christ. Mary is truly recognized as the ladder in Jacob's dream. God used the Angel Gabriel to intercede on His behalf to his creation through the Blessed Virgin Mary; because of Her acceptance of God's plan, Mary is the ladder in which God brings salvation to the world through His son. Mary is the supreme example of co-operation between God's will and human freedom.

How come there is no kneeling?

Kneeling is recognized in the Latin Church as a sign of our humility before God and also a sign of penance and sorrow. Eastern Christians place their emphasis on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Standing reflects an attitude of joy and happiness.

Why is Liturgy (Mass) mostly chanted (sung)?

Our liturgy is chanted as a sign of our joyfulness in God's presence. Singing is the highest expression of joy in communication with words to express our emotions and the songs of the Angels.

The Latin Church has their hand folded in prayer while the Byzantines cross their arms across their chest. Why?

The folding of arms across the chest is the highest form of humility. It is also gratitude for the gift of our salvation. We use our whole body to worship and give praise.

I hear Kyrie I Elieson (Lord have mercy) chanted a lot throughout the Liturgy. Why?

By saying, "Lord have mercy", we ask God to love and help his whole creation.