

The Byzantine Catholic Church Is The New Testament Church Led By The Holy Spirit

The Byzantine Catholic Church traces its foundation to the 12 Apostles of Christ, who were the companions of Jesus as He walked on this earth some 2000 years ago. After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Apostles began to proclaim the Gospel, first to Jerusalem, then to the Gentiles. The first mission of the New Testament Church to the Greek-speaking Gentiles of the Levant was to Antioch, in the Roman province of Syria, where “the disciples were first called Christians” (Acts 11:26). Antioch became the staging area for the great missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul, which resulted in the foundation of a string of Greek-speaking Christian communities in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) and Greece. Similar missionary journeys were undertaken by other Apostles throughout the Hellenized Eastern Mediterranean, as well as deep into the heart of the Latin West, to Rome itself, the capital of the Empire.

As the Christian Church grew, each nation and culture that received the Gospel, in turn, influenced the growth of the Church. Even at a relatively early stage in the history of the Church, two major heritages developed and remain with us today: the Eastern or “Greek” tradition and the Western or “Latin” tradition. The Church in the West had its principal center at the Imperial capital of Rome and is known in our present-day as the Roman Catholic Church. The Church in the East grew and developed from the Churches in Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. These three Eastern centers shared a common language, Greek, and similar mode of discourse, which formed the basis for the subsequent development of the Eastern Christian tradition. The Byzantine Catholic Church shares in the inheritance of the first Greek-speaking Christian communities of the Eastern Mediterranean world, founded by the Apostles of Jesus Christ.