

Eastern Rite Catholicism

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RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Required Daily Observances. None. However, daily personal prayer is highly recommended.

Required Weekly Observances. Participation in the Divine Liturgy (Mass) is required. If the Divine Liturgy is not available, participation in the Latin Rite Mass fulfills the requirement.

Required Occasional Observances. The Eastern Rites follow a liturgical calendar, as does the Latin Rite. However, there are significant differences. The Eastern Rites still follow the Julian Calendar, which now has a difference of about 13 days – thus, major feasts fall about 13 days after they do in the West. This could be a point of contention for Eastern Rite inmates practicing Western Rite liturgies. Sensitivity should be maintained by possibly incorporating special prayer on Eastern Rite Holy days into the Mass. Each liturgical season has a focus; i.e., Christmas (Incarnation), Lent (Human Mortality), Easter (Salvation). Be mindful that some very important seasons do not match Western practices; i.e., Christmas and Holy Week.

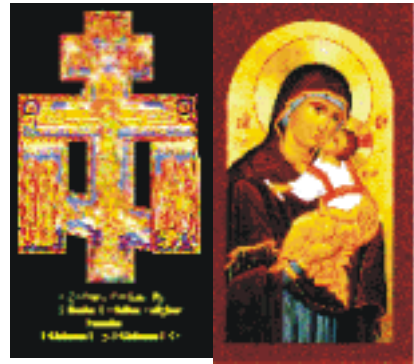
Holy Days. There are about 28 holy days in the Eastern Rites. However, only some require attendance at the Divine Liturgy.

In the Byzantine Rite, those requiring attendance are: Epiphany, Ascension, St. Peter and Paul, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Christmas. Of the other 15 solemn and seven simple holy days, attendance is not mandatory but recommended.

In the Ukrainian Rites, the following are obligatory feasts: Circumcision, Easter, Dormition of Mary, Epiphany, Ascension, Immaculate Conception, Annunciation, Pentecost, and Christmas.

RELIGIOUS ITEMS

Personal Religious Items



- Holy cards depicting popular icon images.
- For additional personal religious items, refer to the chapter on Roman Catholicism.

Congregate Religious Items

- Framed pictures or images of icons and wall hangings depicting icons.
- For additional congregated religious items, refer to the chapter on Roman Catholicism.

Searches. While Eastern Rite Catholic inmates may place great value in the Bible and other religious items (even articles that have been formally blessed), these can be handled by other people. Staff are expected to show the same respect for such items as for religious articles of all traditions. Religious articles are not to be mishandled, thrown, placed on the floor, or brought into the bathroom and placed on the toilet or basin.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Requirements. Reception of the Rites of Initiation – Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation – constitutes membership in the church. All three sacraments are given at birth. The Catechumens, those professing a formal desire to enter the church, are considered specially bound to the church and receive protection, guidance, and prayers.

Total Membership. In the U.S., there are about 472,000 Eastern Rite Catholics.

MEDICAL PROHIBITIONS

There are no medical prohibitions.

DIETARY STANDARDS

Eastern Rite Catholics over age 14 must abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent, Holy Saturday, Christmas Vigils, and the Vigil of the Epiphany. In the U.S., members are urged to abstain on Wednesdays during Lent, but this is not mandatory. Members fast and abstain on the Monday before Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. Abstinence consists of no meat, eggs, or dairy products. These requirements can be met by self-selection from the no-flesh option on the main line.

BURIAL RITUALS

In prison, the inmate will follow the Roman Rite unless an Eastern Rite priest is available. (See Roman Catholicism.)

SACRED WRITINGS

The Bible is the fundamental sacred text for Eastern Rite Catholics.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In prison, the Eastern Catholic inmate falls under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic structure, unless there is an Eastern Catholic staff chaplain.

There are a variety of Eastern Rite Catholic traditions. For information on a specific tradition, go to the Internet and enter "Eastern Rite Catholicism" in the search engine. The different Eastern Rite traditions will come up, each with its own website.

HISTORY

The Catholic Church is composed of Western Rite Churches (most notably, the Roman Catholic Church) and Eastern Rite Churches, derived from one of five other ancient Christian traditions: Byzantine (Constantinopolitan), Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, and Chaldean (East Syrian). The Roman Catholic Church is also referred to as the Latin Rite or Roman Rite Church.

There are about 22 autonomous Eastern Rite Churches, originating from the five Eastern traditions, which are in union with the Roman Church; i.e., they recognize the

authority of the Pope. Other autonomous churches from the five Eastern traditions are not in union with Rome; these are often referred to as Orthodox Christian churches. The Orthodox churches are to Eastern Rite Catholics what Protestants are to Western Rite Catholics.

The Christian faith, which originated in Jerusalem, spread to Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. Each of these churches expressed one faith, but maintained different liturgies, laws, and theological expressions. Most Eastern Churches at one time separated from Rome. One separation was called the Great Schism of 1054. A partial reunification occurred in later years, forming the Eastern Rite Churches of today.

In the United States, the following Eastern Catholic rites are found: Antiochene Rite (Maronites), Byzantine Rite (Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Greek Melkites, Romanians, and Belarussians), and the Armenian Rite. Members of other rites fall under the local Roman Catholic bishop. Another Eastern Catholic rite is the Syro-Malabar Rite from India.

In addition to Eastern Catholic rites, there are several other Western Catholic rites besides the Roman: the Ambrosian (Milian), Mozarabic (Toledo), Lyonais, and Braga. Members of these rites follow the Latin or Roman Rite when they are away from the area in which they practice.

THEOLOGY

Also see the Theology section under Roman Catholicism.

Icons. Icons are of great significance for Eastern Rite Catholics. Their purpose is to create reverence in worship; they serve as an existential link between the worshiper and God. Icons have been called prayers, hymns, and sermons in form and color. They are the visual Gospel. As St. Basil said, "What the word transmits through the ear, the painting silently shows through the image, and by these two means, mutually accompanying one another...we receive knowledge of one and the same thing."



The icon is a link between the human and divine. It provides a space for the mystical encounter between the person before it and God. It becomes a place for an appearance

of Christ. The *Theotokos* or the Saints – provided one stands before the icon with the right disposition of heart and mind. It creates a place of prayer. An icon participates in the event it depicts and is almost a re-creation of the event existentially for the believer.

The icon offers an external human expression of the holy transfigured state, of a body filled with the Holy Spirit. By omitting everything irrelevant to the spiritual figure, the figure becomes stylized, spiritualized, not unrealistic but supra-realistic. The icon figure is thereby set aside from all other forms of art. As S. Bulgakov said, “By the blessing of the icon of Christ, a mystical meeting of the faithful and Christ is made possible.”

Byzantine iconography refers to the distinct tradition and style embodied in Orthodox religious images painted during the Byzantine Empire, which lasted from the 5th Century to the fall of its capital, Constantinople, in the year 1453.