

Differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the (Byzantine) Eastern Orthodox Church



- When the Roman Empire was divided into two zones, Latin-speaking Rome began to claim superiority over Greek-speaking Constantinople, and disputes arose over church boundaries and control.
- The Byzantine (Orthodox) church and Catholic church formally split in **The Great Schism of 1054** when Pope Leo IX excommunicated the Byzantine Patriarch of Constantinople Michael Cerularius and the Byzantine Patriarch excommunicated the Pope.



- The churches broke over the claim that the Pope has universal authority for all Christians and was above the other Patriarchs within the Christian Church:

The Church Patriarchs: The Patriarch of Rome (i.e. The Pope), The Patriarch of Alexandria, The Patriarch of Antioch, The Patriarch of Constantinople, and The Patriarch of Jerusalem

- There were other disagreements as well, including which day Easter should be celebrated on, whether purgatory was a valid concept, whether leavened bread or unleavened bread should be offered as communion and eaten on holy days, and the status of the Holy Ghost.
 - The Eastern church sharply disagreed when the Western church introduced into the Nicene Creed the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not from the Father alone—as earlier Church Fathers had taught—but from the Father and the Son.
- Despite the Schism of 1054, total alienation came a century and a half later, because of the Crusades, when Christian knights made military campaigns to save Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Islamic World.
 - In 1204 the Fourth Crusade was diverted to attack and capture Constantinople brutally. Thousands of Orthodox Christians were murdered, churches and icons were desecrated, and undying hostility developed between East and West.¹

Some differences between Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church:

Roman Catholic	Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine)
Services in Latin or local language	Services in Greek or local language
The Pope has authority over all bishops	The Patriarch and other bishops head the church as a group.
Pope has authority over kings and emperors	The Byzantine Emperor claims authority over all religious leaders
Celibate priesthood	Priests (but not bishops) can marry

¹ Crow, Paul A. , Marty, Martin E. , Chadwick, Henry , Spencer, Sidney , Benz, Ernst Wilhelm , Hogg, William Richey , Pelikan, Jaroslav Jan , Hick, John , Fredericksen, Linwood , McGinn, Bernard J. , Sullivan, Lawrence E. , Wainwright, Geoffrey , Lindberg, Carter H. and Stefon, Matt. "Christianity". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 18 Oct. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity>. Accessed 31 October 2022.