

Italy with congregations in North and South America, never separated from Rome and uses the Greek and Italo-Albanian languages in the liturgy. The Romanian Rite, centered in Romania with a significant population in the United States, reunited with Rome in 1697 and use Modern Romanian in their liturgy; in 1948, they were forced to join the Romanian Orthodox Church in Romania, but since the fall of communism, the Catholic Romanian Rite has regained independence. The Russian Rite, located mainly in Russia and China with congregations in Europe, Australia, and North and South America, reunited with Rome in 1905 and use Old Slavonic as a liturgical language. The Georgian Rite, based in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, reunited with Rome in 1329, severed ties in 1507, then in 1917 broke with the Russian Orthodox Church and again reunited with Rome as the Georgian Byzantine Rite, and has struggled for survival ever since, especially during Communist oppression; the Georgian language is used in their liturgy. The Slovak Rite is based in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Canada, and uses Old Slavonic in its liturgy.

The three largest of the Byzantine Rites are the Melkite, Ruthenian and Ukrainian. The Melkite Rite has strong congregations in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, United States, Brazil, Venezuela, Canada, Australia, and Mexico. The Melkites reunited with Rome during the Crusades but due to impediments caused by the Moslem occupations more officially reunited in the early 1700s and use Greek, Arabic, English, Portuguese, and Spanish in the liturgy.

The Ruthenian or Carpatho-Russian Rite is based in the Ukraine and the United States

with strong congregations in Ukraine, United States, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Australia, and North and South America. The Ruthenians reunited with Rome in the Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596 and the Union of Uzhorod in 1646. They employ Old Slavonic and English in the liturgy.

Finally, the Ukrainian Rite has large populations in the Ukraine, Poland, the United States, Canada, England, Australia, Germany, France, Brazil and Argentina. The Ukrainians reunited with Rome about 1595. However, Stalin forced the Ukrainian Rite Catholics to enter the Russian Orthodox Church in 1943, but since the independence of the Ukraine, they have reunited with Rome. This rite uses Old Slavonic and Ukrainian.

All Roman Catholics are welcome to attend the Divine Liturgy at these Eastern Rite Churches (which does indeed fulfill the Sunday obligation) and may receive Holy Communion. Particulars of Canon Law, however, do regulate marriages between a Latin Rite and an Eastern Rite Catholic. In all, these rites remind us of the universality of our Roman Catholic Church and the rich liturgical traditions we share as Catholics.

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Eastern Rite Churches Today

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The Eastern Rite Catholics are part of the Roman Catholic Church, not the Orthodox Church. While the majority of Roman Catholics belong to the Latin Rite, the Eastern Rites provide a special dimension to our Catholic heritage and spirituality. The Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches emphasized, "The Catholic Church values highly the institutions of the Eastern Churches, their liturgical rites, Ecclesiastical traditions and their ordering of Christian life. For in those churches, which are distinguished by their venerable antiquity, there is clearly evident the tradition which has come from the Apostles through the Fathers and which is part of the divinely revealed, undivided heritage of the Universal Church" (No. 1).

Vatican Council II recognized in its "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches," "The holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same

government. They combine into different groups, which are held together by their hierarchy, and so form particular churches or rites. Between those churches there is such a wonderful bond of union that this variety in the Universal Church, so far from diminishing its unity, rather serves to emphasize it. For the Catholic Church wishes the traditions of each particular Church or Rite to remain whole and entire, and it likewise wishes to adapt its own way of life to the needs of different times and places" (No. 2). Although these Eastern Rites differ from the Western or Latin Rite in "rite" and liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and Canon Law and spiritual traditions, they are fully part of the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership and pastoral care of the pope, the successor of St. Peter.

Today, the various Eastern Rites are organized under the four eastern patriarchates. (The following information was gleaned from the Catholic Almanac.)

The **Alexandrian Rite** is officially called the Liturgy of St. Mark. (St. Mark is traditionally considered the first bishop of Alexandria.) Their present liturgy contains elements of the Byzantine Rite of St. Basil and the liturgies of Sts. Mark, Cyril, and Gregory Nazianzen. This parent rite includes the Coptic Rite and the Ge'ez Rite. The Coptic Rite, which is situated primarily in Egypt, reunited with Rome in 1741 and uses the Coptic and Arabic languages in its liturgies. The Ge'ez Rite, based primarily in Ethiopia, Jerusalem, and Somalia, reunited with Rome in 1846 and uses the Ge'ez language in their liturgies.

The **Antiochene Rite** is the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem. This parent rite includes

the following rites: The Malankar Rite is located in India, reunited with Rome in 1930, and uses the Syriac and Malayalam languages in its liturgies.

The **Maronite Rite**, located primarily in Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt, and Syria but with large populations of the faithful also in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and Canada, has remained united with Rome since the time of its founder St. Maron, and uses the Syriac and Arabic languages in its liturgies.

The **Syrian Rite** is located primarily in Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Syria, with healthy communities in Asia, Africa, Australia, and North and South America, reunited with Rome in 1781, and uses the Syriac and Arabic languages in its liturgies.

The **Armenian Rite**, technically a distinct rite, derived from the Antiochene Rite and is an older form of the Byzantine Rite. Although it uses a different language, this rite is technically called the Greek Liturgy of St. Basil. This rite has jurisdictions primarily in Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, France, Greece, Romania, Armenia, Argentina and the United States. The Armenians reunited with Rome during the Crusades, and the ritual liturgical language is Classical Armenian.

The **Chaldean Rite**, also technically a distinct rite, also originated from the Antiochene Rite. This rite is also divided into two rites: The Chaldean Rite, located primarily in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Turkey and the United States, reunited with Rome in 1692, and uses the Syriac and

Arabic languages in the liturgy. The Syro-Malabar Rite, located in India, claims to have originated with St. Thomas the Apostle, and uses the Syriac and Malayalam languages in the liturgy. Although the Syro-Malabar Rite was never in formal schism, for centuries no communication occurred between them and Rome until the time of the missionaries in the 1500s.

The **Byzantine Rite**, the largest Eastern Rite, is based on the Rite of St. James of Jerusalem with the later reforms of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom. These rites employ the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. This parent rite comprises many rites, which are themselves highly ethnic oriented. The Albanian Rite, centered in Albania, reunited with Rome in 1628 and uses Albanian as its liturgical language. The Belarussian (formerly titled Byelorussian) Rite, centered in Belarussia with large populations in Europe, North and South America, and Australia, reunited with Rome in the 1600s and uses Old Slavonic as their liturgical language. The Bulgarian Rite, centered in Bulgaria, reunited with Rome in 1861 and uses the Old Slavonic language in the liturgy. The Croatian Rite, based primarily in Croatia with a significant population in the United States, reunited with Rome in 1611 and employs Old Slavonic as a liturgical language. The Greek Rite, which is centered in Greece and Turkey with congregations also in Asia Minor and Europe, reunited with Rome in 1829 and uses the Greek language in the liturgy. The Hungarian Rite, situated in Hungary with significant populations throughout Europe and North and South America, reunited with Rome in 1646 and uses Greek, Hungarian, and English in their liturgies. The Italo-Albanian Rite, mainly in