

Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,

There are quite a few differences between the Orthodox Church, both the Oriental and Eastern families, and the Roman Catholic Church. I will mention some differences and I'll attempt to make my answers short and to the point. If you would like more information, please email me at Orthodoxy4ever@yahoo.com and I'll be glad to answer any and all of your questions and I'll do as much research as possible to get you the answers.

A few of the main points can be summarized as follows:

1. The Papacy (Papal Supremacy and Infallibility)
2. The Filioque (The Procession of the Holy Spirit)
3. Purgatory and Indulgences
4. The 'New Dogmas'
5. Various other practices enforced by the Catholic Church

1. Roman Catholic View: The Apostle Peter is seen as having been chosen by Christ to be the head of the Church, and the bishop or patriarch of Rome is seen as his unique successor. The Pope is said to be 'Infallible' when speaking 'Ex-Cathedra', from the chair of Saint Peter.

Orthodox View: The Holy Apostles received from our Lord Jesus Christ equal spiritual power. All bishops are equally successors of the Apostles. No individual bishop is superior to the Ecumenical Councils, nor is any bishop considered infallible. Everything which our Lord Jesus Christ said to Saint Peter was also said to each and every Holy Apostle.

2. Roman Catholic View: Filioque: Latin word meaning "and the Son" was added unilaterally by the Roman Church to the original text of the creed many centuries after it had been composed at the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381).

Orthodox View: John 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." This verse is clear and simple. Our Lord Jesus Christ here says that He will send the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Procession and Sending are completely different as is clear by their definitions.

3. Roman Catholic View: Even after a sinful action is forgiven, there still remains a "temporal punishment" due to that sin which must be expiated. Since no one is without sin, everyone who is repentant (in a state of grace) must spend time in purgatory before entering heaven. This punishment may be remitted in Purgatory, or by indulgence.

Orthodox View: Such reasoning is excessively mechanistic and quite foreign to the spirit of the gospel. There is no such thing spoken of in the Holy Bible and our Lord Jesus Christ never spoke of such a place at any time and he never mentioned it when speaking to the thief on the cross or in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The Orthodox Churches do believe in a state of existence between the time of death and the dawning of the Last Day, when our Lord Jesus Christ will judge the world. But this place is either Paradise, which is a place of rest for the righteous or Hades which is a place of suffering for the wicked. In regard to indulgences, it is enough to say that Heaven cannot be purchased!

4. Roman Catholic View: Catholics believe that Saint Mary was free from 'original sin' which is essentially saying that she was not mortal like the rest of the human race.

Orthodox View: Orthodoxy calls Saint Mary “the first of the redeemed” – the first human to receive the great blessing of salvation which she herself mentioned in the Gospel according to Saint Luke 1:46-47. We do not agree with the Catholic concept of the 'original sin' either. No one is born with sin; we are born with a corrupt nature with a predisposition to sin because of Adam and Eve's sin, which separated us from God

5. Roman Catholic View: In regards to Holy Communion, normally they give lay communicants the Holy Body of our Lord alone. They have separated the order of the sacraments of initiation- Baptism, then Eucharist, and then Confirmation at different ages. Their Priests have to be celibate.

Orthodox View: In Holy Communion we receive the Holy Body and Blood, which is the ancient tradition from the time of our Lord Jesus Christ. We administer the sacraments of initiation- Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist- jointly to infants, just as the early Church did. Priests are married unless they choose to remain celibate.

I hope these answers were short and to the point. If you find any errors in what I have said, please do let me know.

Please keep me in your prayers.