



CHURCH TERMINOLOGY

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Many of our youth often ask me why our Coptic Church is different than other churches and I always answer, “**our church is original, traditional and unique.**” We always go back to the original sources of our church, we go to the early fathers, we go back to the ecumenical councils and also we go back to the Didache (or the Didascalia the teachings of the Apostles).



alter board is a rectangle piece of wood with a cross in its middle on which is written the letters “Alpha” and “Omega.” It is always anointed with Holy Myron by the hands of a bishop or a higher rank. We can take the Alter Board to any place and pray a Divine Liturgy.

III: APOCALAPSIS CEREMONY

I will define some of the expressions or terms we use in our Coptic Church and are different than other churches or may be used but with a different meaning.

I: THE ABSOLUTION

It is the pronouncement of remission of sins to the penitent. The Holy Spirit grants him, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the remission of his sins. He must be truly contrite for his sins, confess them in the presence of a priest and promises to respond to the Divine Grace by not reverting to his former evil ways. The priest pronounces absolution separately to each confessor and collectively during the Divine Liturgies. Many of the protestant churches do not have confession as a sacrament and do not practice confession in the manner the Coptic Orthodox does.

II: ALTER BOARD.

A church whom does not believe in the Sacrament of Eucharist does not have an alter nor a sanctuary. The

It means the Holy Book of Revelation written by St. John the Beloved, tells us about Heaven and the Lord’s Last Advent. The nightly vigil of Bright Saturday is called “APOCALAPSIS.” The special rituals held on that night symbolizes the Lord carrying us to Heaven through His death and His glory. Usually on that night we read all the Holy Book of Revelation and pray the Midnight Praises and then pray the Divine Liturgy. Many of the non-traditional churches do not have this ceremony.

IV: CHRISM

A consecrated oil used in two sacraments the baptism and chrism as well as the consecration of the church and of the sacred vessels. The priest is allowed to use that holy oil during the sacrament of Baptism and Chrism while only bishops or higher rank use it for consecration. The tradition of using the sacred oil goes back to the Old Testament (Exodus 39) where God ordered Moses the prophet to prepare a compound anointing Oil of Myrrh, Cassia and sweet calamus



mixed with pure olive oil. It was used in anointing the priests, kings and the Tent of the Tabernacle and its furniture.

V: DEACON (servant) AND DEACONESS

The institution of the diaconate is traditionally seen in the ordination of the seven deacons, among which St. Stephen and St. Philip, by imposition of hands for the service of the poor and distribution of alms (Acts 6:1-6).

Deacons wear a stole crosswise over the left shoulder and under the right arm. It is a winglike red cloth, which reminds us that the deacon is angel-like. In funerals it is replaced with a black one. A deacon cares for the altar service as well as people: Diaconia is a priestly degree as follows:

1. Subdeacon
2. Deacon
3. Archdeacon

The first Epistle to Timothy (3:8-10) lists the qualities to be expected in candidates for the diaconate. To be admitted, they must be men of high principles, above reproach, not given to hypocrisy or double-talk, not indulging in excessive drinking or amassing of riches.

DEACONESS:

A maid that had devoted her life to serve God, and to prayers as well.

St Paul mentioned Phoebe as a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). She is officially in charge of certain duties in the Church. She helps the priest in serving women, particularly the sick and needy, besides at their baptism. She is not to be ordained but raised. In the early Church, deaconesses were recognized as a

distinct order of women who were vowed to perpetual chastity. They were, nevertheless, allowed to perform only certain duties in the care of women, and no sacerdotal services in the Church.

VI: DIDASCALIA

Instructions, that is, Catholic doctrine, of the twelve disciples of our Savior.

The work is usually classified among writings dealing with church offices and orders, and it purports to be a compilation of instructions made by the Apostles immediately after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Following a brief opening addressed to all Christians to give heed to the teaching of the documents, the treatise turns to the duties of bishops, including bishops' courts for lawsuits between believers, and the conduct of worship services. There follow instructions on how to deal with widows, how to assign deacons and deaconesses in their responsibilities, and what to do with orphans. Other subjects included in the Didascalia are martyrdom, fasting and the Holy Resurrection Season, heresies and judgments against heretics, and the relationship of the Old Testament rituals to the New Testament church. Practical advice is given in relation to morality, decency in language, dietary freedom, and how to treat visitors.

VII: DOGMA

An article of faith; a truth set forth with and by church authority, based on the Holy Bible.

VIII: DOXOLOGY

An ascription of glory to the Holy Trinity.

In the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the celebrant recites



the 'Gloria in Excelsis', 'the Angelic Hymn', or what the western church calls the Greater Doxology (Glory be to God on high ..).

Almost all our prayers included the 'Gloria Patri', or the lesser doxology (glory be to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit ...).

IX: EUCHARIST

It is the Sacrament of Thanksgiving or of Holy Communion. Our Lord Christ established it in Person (Matt. 26:26) and the entire congregation participates with the celebrant and deacons together in the Eucharist's prayers and Hymns. Although all sacraments contain and impart Grace, the Eucharist carries the most sublime Grace of all.

In the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the true Body and Blood of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Whereas in other sacraments the Lord bestows His gifts in accordance with each sacrament. In the Eucharist He offers His entire self, so that partakers may enter in full and complete communion with Him. Being the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for all humanity, the Eucharist is universal in nature, embracing the living and the dead, and is not, as in the case of other sacraments, a Grace restricted to one individual.

The Eucharist has also been known as the Sacrament of Thanksgiving, the Lord's supper, the Lord's table, The Lord Christ's table, the Sacred Table, Holy Communion, the Holy sacrifice, the Divine Mystery.

X: ICON

Icons are flat pictures, usually painted in egg tempera on wood, but also wrought in mosaic, ivory, and other materials, to represent the Lord, the Heavenly

creatures and saints. We honor the icons (holy pictures) because they remind us of our Lord Jesus Christ, heavenly creatures and saints. Icons are anointed with Chrism (Myron) to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We don't worship icons but we honor saints. Statues are forbidden.

XI: ICONOSTASIS

It is called 'Iconostasis', simply a wooden or a marble stand that holds the sanctified icons. It comprises three doors, the central or Royal Door admitting to the main altar. On the right side of the royal door is put our Lord's Icon, whole on the opposite side we find the Virgin Mary's Icon. This Iconostasis reminds us of the saints and heavenly creatures who are present with us to participate in our praise of God.

Sarah



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Sarah, the first matriarch, was Abraham's wife. In the beginning of her life her name was Sarai. She prayed for years and years to have a baby. That was what she wanted most in her life. One day when Sarai was very, very old (much too old to bear a child), God appeared to Abraham and told him that Sarai was to conceive a baby boy. Sarai laughed when she heard this, because she did not believe God could give her a baby. She thought she couldn't give birth to a child at her old age. The next year on that day while Sarah was 90 years old, she conceived a baby boy and she called him Issac. Sarah was very happy. God had given Abraham a little baby boy just as he had promised. (Genesis 18: 1-15)