

The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy or celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of Orthodox worship and prayers in the Coptic Church. The word Liturgy means "the work of the people". The Divine Liturgy is the recalling of our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice of His own body and blood given for our salvation. "Eucharist" in Greek means "Thanksgiving". The Divine Liturgy or Eucharist is a New Testament Sacrament instituted by The Lord Jesus Christ Himself before His passion. The Holy Apostles and Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, describe the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist at the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday *"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'"* (Luke 22:19-20)

Major Feasts and Fasts of the Church



The Coptic Church celebrates seven major Holy feasts. The major feasts commemorate the Annunciation of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Nativity (Advent), Epiphany (Baptism of Jesus Christ), Palm Sunday, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Pentecost. The Coptic Church emphasizes the Resurrection of Christ as much as His Advent. The church has seasons of fasting matched by no other Christian community. Out of the 365 days of the year, Copts fast for over 210 days. During periods of fasting, no animal products are allowed.

Lent, known as "the Great Fast", starts with a pre-Lent fast of one week, followed by a 40-day

fast commemorating Christ's fasting on the mountain. This is followed by the Pascha (Holy) week, the most sacred week of the Coptic Calendar, which climaxes with the Crucifixion on Good Friday and ends with the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fasting seasons of the Coptic Church also include, the Advent (Fast of the Nativity), the Fast of the Apostles, the Fast of the Virgin Saint Mary, and Jonah's Fast.

Intercession of Saints

The worship of Saints is expressly forbidden by the Church; however, asking for their intercessions is central in any Coptic service. All Coptic Churches are named after a Patron Saint. Among all Saints the Virgin Saint Mary or Theotokos (Greek = Mother of God), occupies a special place in the heart of all Copts. It is worthy to note that the Coptic Church has had the least amount of changes than any other church in its ritual and doctrinal aspects.



The Coptic Orthodox Church



"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your Mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your Holy Temple" (Psalm 5: 6-8)

The Coptic Orthodox Church was established in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by St. Mark the Evangelist in the city of Alexandria, Egypt around 60 A.D.

What does "Coptic" mean?

The term "Coptic" is derived from the Greek word "Aigyptos" meaning "Egyptian". When the Arabs arrived in Egypt in the seventh century, they called the Egyptians "qibt". Thus, the Arabic word "qibt" came to mean both "Egyptians" and "Christians".



The term "Orthodoxy" refers to the preservation of the "Original Faith" by the Copts who, throughout the ages, defended the Old Creed against the numerous attacks aimed at it.

The Coptic Church, which is now more than nineteen centuries old, was the subject of many prophecies in the Old Testament. For example, in the holy book of Isaiah, the prophet states that "In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border." (Isaiah 19:19)

The Nicene Creed (Statement of Faith)

The Coptic Orthodox Church adheres to the Nicene Creed (Statement of Faith) of St. Athanasius (296-373 A.D.), the 20th Pope of the Coptic Church effectively defended the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ's Divinity at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. His affirmation of the doctrine earned him the title; "Father of Orthodoxy" and St. Athanasius "the Apostolic". This creed is the foundation of faith for the Coptic Church.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, God the Father, the Pantocrator (Almighty), Creator of heaven and earth, and all things, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried and on the third day He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, ascended into the heavens. He sits on the right hand of the Father, and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified. Who spoke by the prophets and in one holy catholic and apostolic church, we confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

Unity of the Church

The Coptic Orthodox Church believes that the Holy Trinity, God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit are equal to each other in **one** unity; and that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world.



Divinity of Christ

The Coptic Church believes that the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect in His divinity and He is perfect in His humanity, but His divinity and His humanity were united in one nature called "the one nature of the incarnate Word of God", which was reiterated by Saint Cyril of Alexandria. Copts, thus, believe in one nature out of two united natures "human" and "divine" that are united in one unique nature "without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration". These two natures "do not separate for a moment or the twinkling of an eye" (from the declaration of faith at the end of the Coptic divine liturgy).

Sacraments of the Church

The Seven Sacraments are also practiced by the Coptic Church. They are the following: Baptism, Christmation (Confirmation), Repentance & Confession, Eucharist, Unction of the Sick, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and these sacraments, or mysteries, are the channels by which we receive the graces and blessings of the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit has existed in the church since the day of Pentecost, when He dwelt in her according to the Lord's promise: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." (Jn14:16-17)

The Holy Spirit works in the church through the Sacraments, giving us His gifts, blessings and comfort teaching and guiding us to the way of truth. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)