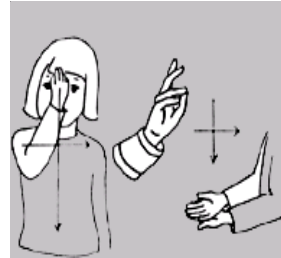




MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Orthodox Christians make the sign of the cross. We join the index and the thumb of the right hand that we believe in:

- God the Father who loves us
- God the Son (Jesus) who saves us
- God the Holy Spirit who lives in us




The three fingers are joined together to show that we believe in one God not three. The other two fingers remind us that Jesus was both God and man at the same time. We drop the two fingers into the palm of the hand to show that Jesus came down from heaven to save us.

Making the sign of the cross, we pray:

In the name of the Father (as we touch our forehead)
and of the Son (as we touch our chest)
and of the Holy Spirit (as we touch first our left and then our right shoulder).
One God, Amen.

When we make the sign of the cross,
we are praying not only with our mind and heart but also with our body.

 Have you ever noticed an egg hanging down in front of the Altar?

 Well that is not just any type of egg... it's an OSTRICH EGG!

 Can you guess why we hang an Ostrich Egg in the front of the church?

Well...

In the Coptic Orthodox Church, the ostrich egg is considered to be a symbol of the Resurrection, as St. Mary Magdalene used an egg to explain to the emperor how life can emerge from something which appears dead. The ostrich egg is also a symbol of the spiritual life, as it is said that after laying her eggs in the sand, the ostrich concentrates her gaze on her eggs, refusing to turn her head in any other direction until the eggs have hatched.

That is just like us... from the first moment we step into church, we must concentrate our mind on God and not turn our head in any other direction. We should give all of our thoughts and all our attention to the Holy Liturgy and not to the un-holy world!

So next time you notice the Ostrich Egg in church ask yourself ... which direction is your head facing... towards the Lord or towards the world???

