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Abbess. (from masc. abbot; Gr. *Hegoumeni*). The female superior of a community of nuns, appointed by a bishop; Mother Superior. She has general authority over her community and nunnery under the supervision of a bishop.

Abbot. (from Aram. *abba*, father; Gr. *Hegoumenos*, Sl. *Nastoyatel*). The head of a monastic community or monastery, appointed by a bishop or elected by the members of the community. He has ordinary jurisdiction and authority over his monastery, serving in particular as spiritual father and guiding the members of his community.

Abstinence. (Gr. *Nisteia*). A penitential practice consisting of voluntary deprivation of certain foods for religious reasons. In the Orthodox Church, days of abstinence are observed on Wednesdays and Fridays, or during other specific periods, such as the Great Lent (see fasting).

Acolyte. The follower of a priest from Greek *akolouthen*; a person assisting the priest in church ceremonies or services. In the early Church, the acolytes were adults; today, however, the duties are performed by children (altar boys). In some traditions the acolyte wears an orarion, but if he does this, he should not cross it in the front the way deacons do when receiving communion. This communicates to everyone that the acolyte is not ordained.

Aër. (Sl. *Vozdukh*). The largest of the three veils used for covering the paten and the chalice during or after the Eucharist. It represents the shroud of Christ. When the creed is read, the priest shakes it over the chalice, symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Affinity. (Gr. *Syngeneia*). The spiritual relationship existing between an individual and his spouse's relatives, or, most especially, between godparents and godchildren. The Orthodox Church considers affinity an impediment to marriage.

Agape. (Gr. "Love"). Feast of love; the common meal of fellowship eaten in gatherings of the early Christians (1 Cor. 11: 20-34). Agape is also the name of the Easter Vespers Service held in the early afternoon on Easter day. The faithful express their brotherly love and exchange the kiss of love honoring the resurrected Christ.

Age of Reason. This is the time in life when an individual begins to distinguish between right and wrong and becomes morally responsible for himself. It is considered to begin at the age of seven or so, and no later than twelve.

Agnets. (see lamb).

Agrapha. (Gr. "verbal words; not written"). Sayings or deeds of Christ which were never written or recorded in the Gospels (cf. John 21:25).

Akathistos Hymn. A hymn of praise comprising twenty-four stanzas and sung at the Salutation Services, dedicated to Virgin Mary *Theotokos*. It is divided into four parts, one part sung on each Friday of the Great Lent. On the fifth Friday, the entire set is sung in commemoration of a miracle performed by the Virgin in Constantinople (626 A.D.). The hymn is also known as "Salutations" (Gr. *Heretismoï*).

Alb. (Lat. *albus*, white; Gr. *stichari[on]*; Sl. *Podriznik*). The long white undergarment of the clergy, with close sleeves, worn under the chasuble or the *sakkos*.

All-Saints Sunday. (Gr. *Agion Panton*). A feast day of the Orthodox Church collectively commemorating all the Saints of the church who have remained anonymous. This feast day is celebrated on the Sunday following Pentecost.

Alpha-Omega. The first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing "the beginning and the end," or the divinity and eternity of Christ (Rev. 1: 8).

Altar. (Hebr. "a place of sacrifice"; Gr. *hieron*; Sl. *presto*). In Orthodox architecture, the term signifies the area of the sanctuary divided from the rest of the church by the *iconostasis*. English altar derives from Latin *altus*, high.

Altar Bread. (see *Prosphoro*).

Altar Table. (Gr. *Hagia Trapeza*; Sl. *Presto*). The square table in the middle of the altar, made of wood or marble, on which the Eucharist is offered. It is dressed with the "Altar Cloth" and contains the relics deposited there by the consecrating bishop. The center of the table is occupied by the folded *Antimission*, on which the ceremonial gospel book is placed, and behind this is the tabernacle with the "reserved gifts."

Ambon. (see pulpit).

Amnos. (see lamb).

Analogion. (Gr. Sl. *analoj*). A wooden stand or podium placed on the right side of the *soleas* near the south door of the altar. Usually with a sloped top, it is used as a stand for the gospel book or an icon.

Anathema. (Gr. "a curse, suspension"). The spiritual suspension with which the church may expel a person from his or her community for various reasons, especially denial of the faith or other mortal sins. The church also may proclaim an anathema against the enemies of the faith, such as heretics and traitors, in a special service conducted on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (first Sunday of Lent).

Anchorite. (Gr. *Anachoritis*, "a departurer"). A solitary monk or hermit; an individual who withdraws from society and lives a solitary life of silence and prayer.

Angels. (Gr. *Angelos*, "messenger"). Bodiless beings, purely spirits, created by God before man. They are superior in nature and intelligence to man; and, like man, they have understanding and free will. Some of them are appointed to guard the faithful (guardian angels). Angels are grouped in nine orders (*tagmata*) as follows: Angels; Archangels; Principalities; Powers; Virtues; Dominations; Thrones; Cherubim; Seraphim. In the Orthodox worship, every Monday is dedicated to the angels.

Annunciation. (Gr. *Evangelismos*). A feast of the Orthodox Church (March 25) commemorating the visit of Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to "announce" that she was chosen to be the Mother of God (Luke 1: 26-33).

Anteri. (see cassock).

Antidoron. (Gr. "instead of the gift"). A small piece of the altar bread (*prosphoron*) given to each of the faithful after the celebration of the Eucharist. Originally it was given to those who could not take communion, but it became a practice for it to be offered to all the faithful.

Antimens or Antiminsion. (Antimention, also Antimins) (Gr. and Lat. compounds, "in place of a table"; Sl. *Antimins*). It is a rectangular piece of cloth, of linen or silk, with representations of the entombment of Christ, of the four Evangelists, and with scriptural passages related to the Eucharist. The *antimens* must be consecrated by the head of the church (a Patriarch or Archbishop) and must always lie on the Altar Table. No sacrament, especially the Divine Liturgy, can be performed without a consecrated *antimens*.

Antiphon. (Gr. "alternate utterance or chanting").

1. A short verse from the scriptures, especially the psalms, sung or recited during the liturgy and other church services.

2. Any verse or hymn sung or recited by one part of the choir or chanters in response to another part.

Apocrypha. (Gr. "hidden or secret"). Some of the books of the Bible not accepted by all denominations of Christians as true and divinely inspired. Some of them were written much later but attributed to important individuals of the apostolic times, thus bearing a misleading title (*pseudepigrapha*).

Apodosis. (Gr., Sl. *Otdanive*). The "octave-day" of a feast day which lasts more than one day and usually occurs eight days after the actual feast day. The *Apodosis* of Easter occurs forty days after the feast, on the eve of the Ascension.

Apologetics. (Gr. "defenders").

1. The individuals and saints who defended the faith and the Church by their ability to present, explain, and justify their faith.
2. The theological science and art of presenting, explaining, and justifying the reasonableness of the Christian faith.

Apolytikion. (Gr. "dismissal"). The dismissal hymn sung in honor of a saint, Christ, or the Virgin Mary on the occasion of their feast day, especially at the end of the Vespers Service.

Apostolic Canons. A collection of eighty-five decrees of ecclesiastical importance, referring mainly to ordination and the discipline of the clergy. The church believes that they were originally written by the Apostolic fathers.

Apostolic Fathers. Men who lived during the first century of Christianity; for the most part, this group comprised the disciples of the Apostles; their teachings and writings are of great spiritual value to Christians. Major fathers are St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, St. Clement of Rome, and the unknown author of Didache.

Apostolic Succession. The direct, continuous, and unbroken line of succession transmitted to the bishops of the Church by the Apostles. The bishops, who form a collective body (that is the leadership of the Church), are considered to be successors of the Apostles, and, consequently, the duties and powers given to the Apostles by Christ are transmitted through "the laying-on-of-hands" to the bishops and priests who succeeded them by ordination (*cheirotonia*) to priesthood.

Archangels. An Angelic order of angels of higher rank. The names of two archangels, Michael and Gabriel, are known (feast day on November 8); they are also known as "leaders of the angelic armies" (*taxiarchai*).

Archbishop. A head bishop, usually in charge of a large ecclesiastical jurisdiction or archdiocese (see Metropolitan).

Archdeacon. A senior deacon, usually serving with a bishop of higher rank (Archbishop or Patriarch).

Archdiocese. An ecclesiastical jurisdiction, usually a metropolis headed by an Archbishop.

Archimandrite. (Gr. "head of the flock or cloister"). A celibate presbyter of high rank assisting the bishop or appointed abbot in a monastery. In the Russian tradition, some Archimandrites have the right to wear the mitre and the mantle (*mitrophoros*).

Armenian Church. A monophysite denomination which broke from the Orthodox Church in the fifth century (451 A.D.). Communities which belong to the Armenian Church exist in the United States and other parts of the world.

Artoclasia. (see Vespers).

Ascension. A movable feast day, forty days after Easter, commemorating the ascension of Christ into Heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 12).

Ascetic. (Gr. "one who practices [spiritual] exercises"). A monk who has accepted a monastic life and intensively practices self-discipline, meditation, and self-denial, motivated by love of God.

Ascetic Theology. A theological field studying the teachings and the writings of the ascetics of the Church (see also mysticism).

Assumption. See Dormition. This is not to be confused with immortalism, the belief that the Virgin Mary was taken directly up into heaven without dying.

Asterisk. (Gr. "little star"; Sl. *Zvezditsa*). A sacred vessel having two arched metal bands held together in such a fashion as to form the shape of a cross. It is placed on the paten and serves to prevent the veil from touching the particles of the Eucharist.

Atheism. (Gr. "godlessness"). Denial of the existence of God. An atheist accepts only the material and physical world or what can be proven by reason and believes that everything that exists is by sheer accident, even the existence of matter.

Atonement. (Gr. *exilasmos*). The redemptive activity of Christ in reconciling man to God. The Orthodox believe that Christ, through His death upon the cross, atoned or paid for human sins.

Autocephalous. (Gr. "appointing its own leader"). The status of an Orthodox church which is self-governed and also has the authority to elect or appoint its own leader or head (*cephale*).

Autonomy. (Gr. "self-rule"). The status of an Orthodox Church that is self-ruled. An autonomous church is governed by its prelate, who is chosen by a superior jurisdiction, usually by a patriarchate.

Axios. (Gr. "worthy"). An exclamation made at ordination to signify the worthiness of the individual chosen to become a clergyman.

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Baptism. (Gr. "immersion into water for purification"). A sacrament instituted by Christ Himself, baptism is the regeneration effected by means "of water and the spirit" (John 3:5). An Orthodox baptism is administered by the priest (in case of absolute emergency, however, by a layman (*aerobaptismos*)) through three complete immersions and by pronouncing the individual's name along with the name of the Trinity, "the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen." Chrismation follows immediately after baptism.

Baptismal Font. (see *kolymbethra*).

Baptismal Garments. (Gr. *Fotikia* or *baptisika*; Sl. *krizhma*). The garments brought by the godparent to dress the infant immediately after the immersion in Baptism. In Orthodoxy, these garments are considered sacred and must be either kept safely or destroyed by fire.

Baptismal Name. (Gr. *onoma*). The individual's name given in baptism, commonly the name of a saint who becomes the individual's Patron Saint.

Baptistry. A special room or area in the form of a pool for baptizing in the ancient Church. Gradually, it was replaced by the baptismal font (see *kolymbethra*).

Beatitudes. (Gr. *Makarismoi*).

1. Blessings promised to individuals for various reasons.
2. The eight blessings given by Christ during his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 3-12).
3. Salutation addressed to an Orthodox Patriarch ("Your Beatitude").

Benediction. (Lat. "blessings to glorify God"). The closing blessing offered by a clergyman at the end of a service or other activity.

Bigamy. (Gr. *Digamia*). The act of contracting a new marriage while a previous one is still binding, an act forbidden by the Orthodox Church.

Bishop. (Gr. *Episkopos, Archiereas*). A clergyman who has received the highest of the sacred orders. A bishop must be ordained by at least three other bishops and is considered a successor of the Apostles.

Blasphemy. Evil and reproachful language directed at God, the Virgin, the Saints, or sacred objects. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a mortal and unforgivable sin because it presumes that God's saving action in this particular case is impossible (cf. Matt. 12: 31).

Burial. (Gr. *Taphe*; Sl. *Pogrebeniye*). The act of interment of the dead body of one of the faithful in consecrated ground, according to the appropriate Orthodox rites and service of burial (*Nekrosimos*). The Church may deny an Orthodox burial to those who have committed a mortal sin such as blasphemy, suicide, denial of faith, or acceptance of cremation.

Byzantine. Referring or attributed to Byzantium, the ancient Greek city on the Bosphorus, which later (331 A.D.) became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, and then of the Medieval Greek Empire of Constantinople. Its people are known as

Byzantines and its cultural heritage as Byzantine (i.e., Byzantine art, Empire, church, architecture, music, etc.).

Byzantine rite.

1. Performing church services according to the Eastern Orthodox tradition.
2. Christians who belong to Roman Catholic jurisdictions and accept their beliefs, but follow the customs of the Greek Orthodox Church, celebrating the liturgy in Greek, Slavonic, or in their native language, but in the Orthodox fashion.

-C-

Calendar. (Gr. *Hemerologion*). The yearly system determining the Orthodox holidays and hours. The Orthodox year begins on September 1. Because all feasts were arranged according to the Julian (old) Calendar, many Orthodox churches follow it to the present day, while other Orthodox churches have adopted the Gregorian (new) Calendar (since 1924). See also the article on the Calendar of the Orthodox Church.

Candles. (Gr. *Kerijon*). Candles made of beeswax are used in the Orthodox Church as a form of sacrifice and devotion to God or Saints. They are used in various Orthodox services and ceremonies and are symbolic of Christ, who is "the Light of the World." According to a different symbolism, the two elements of a candle represent the two natures of Christ: the Divine (the burning wick) and the Human (the wax body).

Canon. (Gr. "rule, measure, standard").

1. The Canon of the scriptures or the official list of books recognized by the church as genuine and inspired by God.
2. The Canon of Matins (a collection of hymns consisting of nine odes, the Heirmos, and sung at the Matins Service, the Orthros).
3. The Liturgical Canon, which refers to all liturgical material, including the Creed, used for the Liturgy and the consecration of the Eucharist (see also *kanon* and *Typikon*).

Canonization. The official declaration by the Church that a deceased Christian of attested virtue is a saint, to be honored as such, and worthy of imitation by the faithful.

Canons (or Canon Law). The law of the church, containing the various rules, ecclesiastical decrees, and definitions concerning the faith or the lifestyle of Orthodox Christians. The Canons generally provide for all administrative or disciplinary questions that might arise in the Church, and, consequently, are not infallible but can be changed or re-interpreted by an Ecumenical Council. See also the article on the Canon Law of the Orthodox Church.

Capital Sin (or Mortal or Deadly sin). Great offenses against God, or moral faults which, if habitual, could result in the spiritual death of the individual. A common list includes: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth. However, some Greek and Latin fathers have different lists.

Cassock. (Gr. *Raso*; Sl. *ryassa*). The long black garment with large sleeves worn by the Orthodox clergy as their distinct attire. Another such cassock with narrow sleeves (Gr. *Anteri*; Sl. *Podrasnik*) is worn under the cassock. It symbolizes the death of a clergyman to this world and his burial and subsequent dedication to God and his heavenly kingdom.

Catechism. A summary of doctrine and instruction, teaching the Orthodox faith in the form of questions and answers. The catechetical or Sunday school of each parish is responsible for such instruction of children or other faithful.

Catechumen. (Gr. "those who learn the faith"). A convert to Christianity in the early church who received instruction in Christianity but was not yet baptized. Catechumens were permitted to attend the first part of the Eucharist (Liturgy of the Catechumens), but were dismissed before the Consecration of the Gifts.

Cathedral. (Gr. "the main chair"). The principal church of a bishop's jurisdiction, the chief church in every diocese.

Catholic. (Gr. "universal, concerning the whole"; Sl. *Sobomaya*). A term describing the universality of the Christian message, claimed to be exclusively theirs by the Orthodox Church. However, in the West, it has come to mean the Roman Catholic church (v. Eastern Orthodox Church). It also means that the church is whole, from the meaning "of the whole."

Celibacy. The unmarried state of life. Unlike the Roman Church, Orthodoxy permits a clergyman to be married; however, his marriage must occur before his ordination to be

a deacon or presbyter. Orthodox bishops are only chosen from the celibate clergy, but widowers, who have accepted monastic vows, may also be chosen.

Censer. (Gr. *Thymiato*; Sl. *kadillo*). A metal vessel hung on chains, used in church ceremonies for burning incense. There are twelve small bells attached to the chains, representing the message of the twelve Apostles.

Chalice. (Gr. *Potirion*; Sl. *Vozduh*). A large cup of silver or gold, with a long-stemmed base, used for the Eucharist. It is one of the most sacred vessels of the church and is handled only by the clergy.

Chancellor. (Gr. *Protosyngelos*). The chief administrator and church notary in a diocese or archdiocese. He is the immediate administrative assistant to the bishop and handles all records, certificates, and ecclesiastical documents of his jurisdiction.

Chant. (Gr. *echos*; Sl. *glas*). The music proper to the Orthodox services. There are eight tones or modes in the Orthodox Byzantine chant, chanted by the chanters or cantors.

Chanter. (Gr. *Psaltis*). A lay person who assists the priest by chanting the responses and hymns in the services or sacraments of the church. Today, chanters have been replaced to some extent by choirs.

Chapel. (Gr. *Parekklisi[on]*; Sl. *Chasovnya*). A side altar attached to a larger church or a small building or room built exclusively or arranged for the worship of God. A chapel can belong to an individual or an institution or can be part of a parish church.

Chasuble. (Gr. *feloni[on]*; Sl. *felon*). The name for the sleeveless garment worn by the *presbyter* in the celebration of the liturgy in the Western Rite. Short in front, with an elongated back, and an opening for the head, it is one of the most ancient vestments of the Church, symbolizing the seamless coat of Christ.

Chatjis. (see *Hatjis*).

Cherubic Hymn. (Gr. "the song of the angels"). Liturgical hymn sung after the Gospel-reading and during the Great Entrance. Its text in English is as follows:

"We, who mystically represent the Cherubim, And chant the thrice-holy hymn to the Life-giving Trinity, Let us set aside the cares of life That we may receive the King of all, Who comes invisibly escorted by the Divine Hosts."

Chrism. (Gr. *Myrron*). Sanctified oil composed of several ingredients and fragrances, used in the sacrament of Chrismation (after Baptism). The Holy Chrism in the Orthodox Church is exclusively prepared by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and is blessed in a series of preparations and ceremonies. Holy Thursday is customarily the day of its consecration.

Chrismation. (see Baptism and Chrism).

Chrisom. (Gr. *Ladopano*; Sl. *knzhma*). A piece of white linen for the wrapping of the infant after Baptism. The Orthodox preserve it as a sacred object because it signifies the purity and holiness of the baptized Christian.

Christology. A subject or field of dogmatic theology examining the belief of the church and the history of beliefs about Christ.

Churching. (Gr. *Sarantismos*). A service of thanksgiving and blessing of women after childbirth. In the Orthodox church, this rite is performed on the fortieth day after birth and is reminiscent of the Old Testament ceremony of purification (Lev. 12: 2-8) and the presentation of Jesus at the Temple (Luke 2: 22-29).

Communion. (Gr. *koinonia*). The receiving of the sacrament of the Eucharist after proper preparation, fasting, and confession. Orthodox Christians are encouraged to receive communion as often as possible, even daily.

Communion of Saints. The Orthodox Church believes that all the people of God-members of the Church, either the living on earth or the departed in heaven-are in constant communion and fellowship with each other in faith, grace, and prayers, since they constitute one Body in Christ-the Church.

Compline. (Gr. *Apodeipnon*; Sl. *Velikoye PovecheAye*). A worship service performed after dusk. It is often combined with Vespers to form an all-night vigil. There is a Great Compline and its abridgement, known as Small Compline.

Confession. (Gr. *Exomologisis*). The act of confessing or acknowledgment of sins by an individual before God in the presence of a priest, who serves as a spiritual guide and confessor (*pneumatikos*) authorized to ask for forgiveness and to administer a penance.

Confessor.

1. *Pneumatikos* (see confession).

2. A person who defended and publicly confessed the Faith, thereby exposing himself to persecution (*Homologetis*).

Consecration. (Gr. *Heirotonia*). When a priest becomes a bishop, he is consecrated, not ordained.

Consecration of a Church. (see *Engainia*). An official anointing and blessing of the temple from the bishop.

Council, Ecumenical. (Gr. *Synodos*; Sl. *Sobor*). Assembly of representatives from all church jurisdictions convoked for the settlement of ecclesiastical or doctrinal problems and disputes. The Orthodox Church recognizes the following seven Ecumenical Councils:

1. Nicaea, in 325. Fathers present, 318. Condemned Arianism, defined divinity of Christ, and composed first part of Creed.
2. Constantinople, 381. Fathers, 180. Condemned Apollinarianism, defined divinity of the Holy Spirit, and completed the Creed.
3. Ephesus, 431. Fathers, 200. Condemned Nestorianism and defined the term *Theotokos*.
4. Chalcedon, 451. Fathers, 630. Condemned Monophysitism.
5. Constantinople, 553. Fathers, 165. Condemned heretics and pagans.
6. Constantinople, 680. Fathers, 281. Condemned Monothelism. The so-called *Quinisext* or *in Trullo* was held in Constantinople.
7. Nicaea, 787 (again in 843). Fathers, 350. Condemned Iconoclasm.

Crosier. (Gr. *Ravdos* or *Pateritsa*). The pastoral staff of a bishop over the Western Rite, signifying his responsibilities and the authority by which he spiritually rules his flock.

Crowns. (Gr. *Stephana*). A metal crown or wreath made of cloth in the shape of lemon blossoms, with which the priest "crowns" the newlyweds during the sacrament of Matrimony. The crowns are white, signifying purity, and represent the power that is given to the newlyweds to become "king and queen" of their home.

Deacon. (Gr. "assistant, servant"). The first of the three orders of priesthood. A deacon is not permitted to perform the sacraments, but assists the bishop and the presbyter in the Eucharist and other services or ministries of the church. **In some traditions, and** throughout history, deacons have been blessed to administer certain sacraments without the presence of a priest or bishop on a needs basis. This includes the deacon serving the typika with reserved sacrament, hearing confession without granting absolution (mostly in monasteries), and also baptizing in a time of need when a priest or bishop is not available (the canons even allow laity to do this if there is great need).

Dean. (Gr. *Proistamenos*). An honorary title given to a presbyter, meaning:

1. the senior priest in a cathedral of a diocese;
2. the senior priest in a large parish;
3. the head of the faculty in a theological seminary.

Deaconess. A pious lay woman assisting in the church as a caretaker or charity worker. The practice of using deaconesses in the Church was very ancient; however, it gradually disappeared. Recently the office of deaconess has returned in the Church of Alexandria with the ordination of five deaconesses. A deaconess is not a female deacon, but rather an entirely different clerical order concerning to women, such as adult female baptisms.

Dikirotrikera. (Gr. "set of two and three candles"). A set of two candleholders, one a double-branched candlestick and another a triple-branched, both used by the bishop in blessing at the liturgy. The *Dikeron* (double candleholder) signifies the two natures of Christ, while the *Trikeron* (triple candleholder) signifies the Holy Trinity.

Diocese. (Gr. *Episkopi*). A town or fully organized church district under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and pastoral direction of a bishop.

Diptychs. (Gr. "folding boards").

1. Lists of names of the living and dead, written on cardboard for their commemoration in the liturgy.
2. An official roster of the names of the heads of Orthodox jurisdictions read during the liturgy by concelebrating bishops or by the head of an ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Dismissal. (Gr. *Apolyxis*; Sl. *Otpust*). The closing prayers and benediction, including the dismissal hymn (*Apolytikion*), in a church service.

Dogma. Basic beliefs and truths contained in the Bible and the Holy Tradition of the Church as defined by the Ecumenical Councils. Dogma is studied in the field of dogmatic theology.

Dormition (see assumption). A feast day (August 15) commemorating the "falling asleep" (*koimisis*) of the Theotokos.

Dormition Fast. A fasting period from August 1-15 preparing for the falling asleep of the Theotokos.

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Eagle. (Gr. *Dikephalos aitōs*; Sl. *Orletz*). Small circular rug or permanent design on the church's floor, presenting a double-headed eagle with outstretched wings soaring over a city. It signifies the watchfulness and authority of the bishop over his diocese. The double-headed eagle was also the symbol of the Byzantine Empire.

Easter. (see Pascha).

Ecclesia. (Gr. "the gathering of the people").

1. The gathering of the faithful at the church for worship and fellowship;
2. The church where the liturgy is celebrated;
3. The Church as the Body of Christ.

Ecclesiastical. Whatever deals with or pertains to the Church and its life.

Ecclesiology. The branch of theology studying the nature, constitution, function, and membership of the Church.

Ecumenical Council. (see council).

Ecumenical Patriarchate. The "First Among Equals" of all the Orthodox autocephalous churches, it was founded by St. Andrew the Apostle. Visit the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople home page for more information, historical notes, encyclicals, official documents, and photo and video galleries.

Ecumenism. The movement of Christian Churches toward a mutual understanding of their problems and the concept of unity and love willed by Christ.

Ektenial. (Gr. "long" or "elongated"). A type of petition or litany used in Orthodox services, particularly in the liturgy. They refer to the world in general, peace, leadership, and those in need. The response to an ektenial petition is "Lord have mercy."

Encyclical. (Gr. "moving in a circle"; "circulating"). A letter by the head of an Orthodox jurisdiction (Archbishop or Patriarch) to those under his spiritual authority. The content of such a letter may vary, but it must refer to specific administrative or spiritual topics concerning the faithful.

Engainia. (Gr. "blessing for renewal"). The ceremony of consecration of a new church, conducted only by a bishop. It is performed before the Eucharist, and it mainly consists of the washing of the Holy Table of the altar, the depositing of relics in it, and the blessing of the church icons.

Engolpion. (Gr. "upon the chest"). The bishop's medallion, usually of enamel and richly decorated with precious stones, hanging upon his chest and signifying his episcopal office.

Entrance. (Gr. *Eisodos*). The solemn procession of the celebrating clergy carrying the Gospel at the liturgy, after the antiphons (Small Entrance), and carrying the Holy Gifts during the chanting of the cherubic hymn (Great Entrance).

Epanokalymafko. The monastic black veil hanging over the back of the *kalymafki* of a celibate Orthodox clergyman, especially the prelate of a church (see *kalymafki*). Some Orthodox prelates of Slavic background wear white *epanokalymafko*.

Eparchy. (Gr. "province, region"). An ecclesiastical jurisdiction headed by a bishop, metropolitan, or archbishop.

Epigonation. (Gr. "on the knee"; Sl. *Palitsa* or *Nabedrennik*). An oblong or rhomboidal vestment (approx. 12 x 12 inches) suspended from the belt and hung over the right side above the knee of a clergyman of higher rank. It signifies the cloth used by Christ to wipe his disciples' feet before the Last Supper and also signifies the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Epiklesis. (Gr. *Epiklesis*). Special prayer or petition by the Priest to "invoke" or to call upon the Holy Spirit, in order that God's Grace will descend for the consecration of the Holy Gifts at the Eucharist.

Epiphany. (Gr. *Theophania*; Sl. *Bogoyavleniye*). The feast in the Orthodox Church commemorating the baptism of Christ (January 6), and celebrating the "manifestation" of God in the Holy Trinity.

Episkopos. (see bishop).

Epitaphios. (Gr. "on the tomb"; Sl. *Plaschanitsa*).

1. The winding sheet on which the dead body of Christ is sewn or painted, representing his shroud.
2. An ornamented bier representing the tomb of Christ. On Good Friday, the Epitaphios is placed on the bier, which is adorned with flowers, and is carried in a procession representing the funeral of Christ.
3. The special service on Good Friday evening commemorating the burial of Christ.

Epitrachelion. (Gr. "about the neck"). One of the most important vestments, hanging from the neck down to the feet. An Orthodox priest must wear this particular vestment to perform a sacrament.

Equal to the Apostles. (Gr. *Isapostolos*). An honorary title given to saints such as St. Constantine and Sts. Cyril and Methodios for their missionary work in the Church.

Eschatology. (Gr. "the last things to happen"). The theological field concerned with life after death, especially the "last things," i.e., the state of the dead, the Second Coming of Christ, and the Final Judgment.

Eucharist. (see Communion).

Euchologion. (Gr. "the book of prayers"; Sl. *Sluzhebnyk*). A liturgical book used by the clergy, containing the various services, sacraments, and prayers required for the administration of sacraments and other ceremonies and services of the Church.

Evangelists. The authors of the Gospels (*Evangelia*), who, according to Church belief, were inspired by God in the writing of the Bible. The Evangelists are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In the Orthodox Church, they are symbolically represented by a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, respectively.

Exapostelarian. (Gr. "dispatching"). A special hymn sung at Matins after the Canon. It refers to Christ's activity after the Resurrection, particularly His dispatching of the disciples to preach to the world.

Exapteryga. (Gr. "six-winged angels"). Metallic banners adorned with representations of angels, which are carried at various processions during church services.

Exarch. (Gr. "representative with full authority"). The head of an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, usually an Archbishop, representing the head of the Church (i.e., Patriarch) in the administration of a national Church.

Excommunication. (Gr. *Aphorismos*). A penalty or censure by which a baptized individual is excluded from the communion and fellowship of the Church, for committing and remaining obstinate in certain mortal sins. Church members may excommunicate themselves by absence from the sacraments and by actions contrary to Church law.

Exorcism. The expulsion of an evil spirit or demon from a person.

-F-

Father Confessor. The priest with whom you regularly go to confession for, and this is not the same thing as a spiritual father (see Spiritual Father). For most people it is best that this is one person, however if you are traveling or your father confessor is not available, you can seek any priest or bishop for confession. In some traditions a deacon is given the blessing to hear confessions but does not grant absolution. When a priest or bishop visits he grants absolution to those who have confessed.

Fanar. The Greek neighborhood of Constantinople (Istanbul) where the [something missing](#). Also Phanar?

-G-

Guardian Angel. (Gr. *Phylakas Angelos*). The Orthodox believe that certain angels are appointed by God at baptism to guide and protect each faithful person. A prayer of the Orthodox Liturgy asks for "an angel of Peace, a faithful guide and guardian of our soul and bodies."

God-parents. (Godfather, Gr. *Nounos*; Godmother, Gr. *Nouna*). Sponsors at Baptism and Chrismation taking the responsibility for the faith and spiritual development of the newly-born Christian. The Orthodox people highly regard the spiritual bond and relationship between godparents and their godchildren, and marriage between them is prohibited (see affinity).

-H-

Hagia Sophia. (Gr. *Agia Sophia*). The Cathedral of Constantinople in which the Ecumenical Patriarchs and Byzantine Emperors were enthroned. It is the greatest Orthodox church, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God. It was built by the emperor Justinian in the year 532 A.D.; its architecture is an outstanding example of the so-called Byzantine Orthodox order. Select this link to visit the web site on Hagia Sophia.

Hagiography. (Gr. *Hagiologia*). The writings of the Church Fathers and the study of the lives of the saints. The Orthodox Church is a reservoir of such writings, which the faithful are urged to read for their spiritual growth and development.

Hatjis. (or *Chatzis*; fem. *Hatjina*; Ar. "pilgrim"). A title or name given to those who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and are "baptized" in the Jordan River. Such a pilgrim may assume the title of Hatjis for the rest of his or her life. One also may attach this word before the baptismal name to produce a variation such as *Hatji-Yiorgis* or *Hatji-Yiannis*. Such names often become surnames, especially common among Greeks.

Hegoumenos. (see abbot).

Heresy. (Gr. "new and personal belief or idea"). The denial or rejection of a revealed dogma or belief accepted and professed by the Church. An individual who begins a heresy is a heretic and is excommunicated. Heresy is a choice, something a person chooses to believe instead of believing the teachings of the Orthodox Church.

Heretismoι. (see *Akathistos* hymn).

Hermit. (see *Anchorite*).

Hesychasm. A spiritual movement in the Byzantine Empire (fourteenth century) developed on Mount Athos, Greece. The term means "to be quiet" and signifies the system of spiritual development through meditation, contemplation, and perfection to the degree of absolute union with God (*theosis*). It is one of the forms of Orthodox Mysticism and is still practiced in the Orthodox world.

Heterodoxy. Different, alien, and presumably false belief or teaching. The Orthodox Church describes as such all other Christian denominations.

Hierarchy. The higher clergy or College of bishops who are assigned to rule over spiritual matters of the church.

Holy Water. (Gr. *Agiasmos*). Water blessed at the service of the "Great Blessing" on the feast day of Epiphany (Jan. 6) or on other occasions (Small Blessing). It is used for the blessing of people, as at Holy Communion, or for the blessing of things for their well-being.

Holy Wisdom. (see *Hagia Sophia*).

Horologion. (Gr. "Book of the Hours"; Sl. *Chasoslov*). The Liturgical book containing the services and prayers of the different hours of the day, i.e., Compline, Matins, Vespers, and the Office of the Hours (see hours).

Hours. In Orthodox monasteries, monks maintain special services for the main hours of the day. Each hour commemorates a special event, as follows:

1. First hour (6:00 A.M.): Thanksgiving for the new morning and prayer for a sinless day.
2. Third hour (9:00 A.M.): the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
3. Sixth hour (12:00 noon): the nailing of Christ to the Cross.
4. Ninth hour (3:00 P.M.): the death of Christ.

-I-

Icon. (Gr. "image"). A Byzantine-style painting in oil on wood, canvas, paper, or a wall (fresco) representing Christ, the Virgin Mary, or other Saints and scenes from the Bible. The Orthodox Church uses icons for veneration with the understanding that the respect is paid not to the material icon but to the person represented "in spirit and truth" (cf. John 4: 24).

Iconoclasm. (Gr. "the breaking of icons"). It refers to the conflict in the Byzantine Empire between 727 and 843 over the use of icons in the church. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 and 843) decreed the use of icons, following in the main teaching of St. John of Damascus.

Iconography. The study and the art of painting of icons. In the Orthodox Church, iconography was developed mainly in the monasteries, which became the centers of its study and development.

Iconostasis. (Gr. "an icon-stand"). In the Orthodox Church, the term signifies:

1. The stand on which the main icon of the Patron Saint of the church is placed for veneration.
2. The screen separating the sanctuary or altar from the church proper and adorned with various icons. There may be two or three tiers of icons in an iconostasis, but the main tier must follow a certain iconographic form, as follows (from north, or left, side to south): the icon of the Patron Saint of the church, of the Virgin Mary, of Christ, and of St. John the Baptist.

Iliton. (or *Eiliton*, Gr.). The silk cloth used to wrap the corporal (or *antiminsion*).

-J-

Jesus Prayer. A short prayer that the Orthodox constantly repeat to practice devotion to God; the tradition of repeating this distinctive prayer was developed in Orthodox monasteries. The text of the Jesus Prayer is:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

Judgment. The Last or Final Judgment, which, according to the Church's belief, will occur at the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. The judgment that takes place immediately after an individual's death is called particular judgment.

Jurisdiction. (Gr. *Dikaiodosia*). The right and the authority of a bishop to rule over his diocese as a spiritual overseer. It includes legislative, judicial, and executive authority, which can be exercised only by individuals who have been canonically ordained and appointed to rule over the jurisdiction in question.

-K-

Kalymauki or kamilafki. (Sl. *kamilavka*). The black cylindrical hat worn by Orthodox clergy. The black monastic veil (*epanokalynafkon*) worn by the celibate clergy at various services or ceremonies is attached to the *kalymauki* (see *Epanokalymafkon*).

Kanon.

1. Short hymns consisting of nine odes, sung at the service of Matins.
2. The special service known as the Great Kanon sung on the evening of the Wednesday of the fifth week of the Great Lent.

Kathisma. Liturgical hymn.

1. The twenty stanzas into which the Orthodox Psalter is divided.
2. The second kanon of the Matins.

Keri. (see candles).

Kerygma. (Gr. "message; preaching"). Proclaiming or preaching the word of God in the manner of the Apostles. It is a method of church instruction centered mainly on Christ and the concept of salvation.

Khouria. An honorary title for the priest's wife or mother in the Antiochian tradition.

Koimissis. (see Dormition).

Kolymbethra. A large, often movable, circular basin on a stand, containing the water for immersion in Baptism. It symbolizes the Jordan River or the pool of Siloam.

Komoskini. See prayer rope.

Kontakion. A liturgical hymn that gives an abbreviated form of the meaning or history of the feast of a given day. The *kontakion* is sung after the sixth ode of the Canon in the liturgy and the Service of the Hours. St. Romanos the Melodist is considered to be the most important hymnographer of the *Kontakion*.

Koumbaros (fem. koumbara).

1. The "best man" in a wedding.
2. The sponsor in a baptism.
3. The address that Greek Orthodox use for their best man or their child's sponsor.

-L-

Laity. (Gr. *Laikos*; Sl. *Miryane*). Members of the Church who are not ordained to the priesthood.

Lamb. (Gr. *Amnos*). The symbol for the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross (cf. John 1: 29). In the Orthodox liturgy, the amnos is the first square piece from the altar bread (prosphoro), inscribed with the letters ICXCNIKA (an abbreviated form for "Jesus Christ conquers"). This particular piece is consecrated during the Eucharist.

Lamentations service. (Gr. *Epitaphios threnos*). Special hymns referring to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and His burial (see *Epitaphios*).

Lance or spear. (Gr. *Lonche*). A small, lance-shaped, double-edged knife used by the priest for the cutting of the altar bread in the service of the Preparation of the Holy Gifts (see *Proskomide*).

Language. According to the Orthodox tradition, the Church adopts and uses the language of any particular country or ethnic group that she serves. The main liturgical languages in the Orthodox Church are Greek, the various descendants of old Church Slavonic, and Arabic.

Last Supper. (Gr. *Mystikos Deipnos*; Sl. *Taynya Vercherya*). The last meal of Christ with His disciples in the "Upper Room" before his arrest. With this supper, he instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Leavened Bread. (Gr. *artos*). Bread made with yeast (*enzyma*) and used for altar bread for the Orthodox Eucharist (as opposed to the unleavened bread used by the Latin Church). Leavened bread is also acceptable for the purpose in the more liberal Protestant churches.

Lent. (Gr. *Sarakosti*). The fifty day fast preceding Easter for the spiritual preparation of the faithful to observe the feast of the Resurrection. Besides Lent, the Orthodox Church has assigned a number of other fasting periods (see abstinence).

Liturgics. The theological field that studies the liturgies and the various services and rituals of the Church.

Liturgy. (Gr. "a public duty or work"). The main form of worship for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This service is performed every Sunday morning (with the exception of Pascha and Christmas).

Logos. (Gr. "word"). A symbol for Christ, the word incarnate, or "word made Flesh," which is also called "the Word of God" (cf. John 1:1-4).

Lord's Prayer. The prayer taught by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. 6: 9-33 and Luke 11: 2-4). It begins with the phrase "Our father ([Father?](#))..." and is the most common Orthodox prayer.

-M-

Magnificat. (Lat. "My soul doth magnify the Lord"; Gr. *Megalynalion*). A hymn of praise in honor of the Mother of God (*Theotokos*). Its verses follow Mary's own words beginning with the phrase "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (cf. Luke 1: 46-55). It is sung after the eighth Ode of the Canon at Matins.

Mantle. (Gr. *Mandias*). A distinctive and elaborate garment, purple or blue in color, worn by the bishop in various church ceremonies and services, such as Vespers, but not during the liturgy.

Martyr. (Gr. "witness"). One who willingly suffered death for the faith.

Martyrika. (Gr. "a sign of witnessing"). Small decorative icons or crosses passed out to the guests who witness an Orthodox Baptism.

Martyrology. A catalogue of martyrs and other saints arranged according to the calendar.

Matins. (Gr. *Orthros*). The Morning Service, which is combined with the liturgy. It begins with the reading of six psalms (*Exapsalmos*), the reading of the Gospel, the chanting of the Canon, and the Great Doxology.

Memorial. (Gr. *Mnymosyno*). A special service held in the Orthodox Church for the repose of the souls of the dead. Memorial services are held on the third, ninth, and fortieth day; after six months; and one or three years after death. Boiled wheat is used as a symbol of the resurrection of everyone at the Second Coming of Christ.

Meneon. A liturgical book containing the lives of the saints and the special hymns (*stichera*) for the feast-days of the Orthodox Saints. It is divided into twelve volumes, one for each month.

Metania. (Greek metanoia) It is performed by first making the [Sign of the Cross](#). Then, one bends from the waist, reaches toward the floor with the right hand open and facing outward, and touches the ground. It is used as the substitute for the prostration when it is normally prescribed, but not permitted by the Canons of the Church. The metania is often used when [venerating](#) an [icon](#) and when approaching a [hierarch](#) or a [priest](#) for his [blessing](#).

The metania is known by other various names:

- Lesser prostration, little prostration, small prostration, waist prostration, half prostration
- Waist reverence (Slavonic: *poiasnyi poklon*), little reverence
- Small bow

Metropolitan. The prelate of the largest or most important city (*Metropolis*) or province with primacy of jurisdiction.

Mitre. (Gr. *Mitra*). The official headdress or "crown" of a bishop. In Slavic churches, some archimandrites are allowed to wear the mitre as a recognition of their service to the church (*mitrate* or *mitrophoros*). The mitre derives from the crown of the Byzantine emperor.

Monastery. The dwelling place and the community thereof of monks or nuns living together in a communal life (*cenobites*) in a convent and practicing the rules of prayer and vows. The members of some monasteries live alone in solitude (*anchorites*).

Monk. (Gr. *Monachos*; fem. *Monache*). An individual who denies the world in order to live a religious life under the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Monophysitism. A heresy which arose in the fifth century concerning the two Natures of Christ. The monophysites accepted only the Divine Nature of Christ and were condemned as heretics by the Fourth Ecumenical Council, at Nicaea (451 A.D.) (see also Copts).

Monothelism. A heresy of the seventh century, which developed in an attempt to reconcile the monophysites with the Orthodox. The monothelites accept the two Natures of Christ, but deny His human will (*Thelesis*), accepting thereby only his Divine

Mortal Sins. (see capital sins).

Mother Church. The Church of Jerusalem, as being the first Christian Church. Commonly, the Orthodox consider as Mother Church the Ecumenical Patriarchate as being the senior Church of the Orthodox World.

Mount Athos. The center of Orthodox monasticism, situated on a conical mountain on the Chakidi Peninsula, Greece.

Mysticism. The search through various prayers and practices to achieve unity with God in life (*theosis*) (see hesychasm).

Name-day. (Gr. *Onomastiria* or *Onomastiki eorti*). The tradition of the Orthodox people is to celebrate one's name-day instead of a birthday. Since the Orthodox people are usually named after a saint's name, all those having the same name celebrate together. Celebration of the name-day is considered to be spiritually important, and the celebrating individual develops special spiritual ties with his Patron Saint and consequently, with God.

Narthex. The vestibule area of the church, leading to the church proper or the nave. In the early Church, this area was assigned for penitents and those who were not yet baptized (catechumens).

Nave. The center, the church proper of an Orthodox Church, where the faithful remain to observe the liturgy and other services.

Neophyte. (Gr. *Neophotistos*). A newly baptized individual or convert of the early Church.

Nounos. (see godparents).

Novice. (Gr. *Dokimos*). An individual who accepted the monastic life, undergoing a period of probation in preparation for taking his vows.

Nun. (Gr. *Monachi* (fem), or *Kalogria*). A woman following the monastic life, living in a convent and leading a strict contemplative

-O-

Oblation. (see *Proskomide*).

Offertory. (see *Proskomide*).

Oktoechos. (Gr. "eight modes" or *Paraklitiki*). Service book containing the canons and hymns of the eight tones or modes of Byzantine music. They are used in all services, arranged every eight weeks, one for each tone, and are attributed to St. John of Damascus (eighth century), one of the greatest Orthodox hymnographers and theologians.

Omophorion. (Gr. *Omophorion*). One of the bishop's vestments, made of a band of brocade, worn about the neck and around the shoulders. It signifies the Good Shepherd and the spiritual authority of a bishop.

Orarion. (Lat.) One of the deacon's vestments, made of a long band of brocade and worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. It signifies the wings of the angels.

Ordination. (Gr. *cheirotomia*). The sacrament of the Holy Orders, imparted through the laying on of hands upon the candidate for the diaconate. According to Fr. John Chryssagvis, the only ordination is to the diaconate. Once a deacon, a man can be elevated to the priesthood and consecrated a bishop, but he is always a deacon. There is also some confusion about Readers and Subdeacons, on whether or not they are ordained. Following the same line of thought here from Fr. Chryssagvis, it is more preferable to say that they are not ordained, and that ordination has to do with handling the gifts.

Orthodox. (Gr. "correct or true belief"). The common and official name used by the Greek Christians and Eastern Christian Church. The Orthodox Church maintains Her belief that She alone has kept the true Christian faith, complete and unaltered.

Orthodox Sunday. The first Sunday of Lent, commemorating the restoration of icons in the church (see Iconoclasm).

Orthros. (see Matins).

-P-

Paganism. Belief in religions other than Christianity, especially ancient Greek polytheism, which was a non-revealed religion.

Palm Sunday. (Gr. *Kyriaki ton Vaion*; Sl. *Verbnoye Voskresenye*). The Sunday before Easter, commemorating the triumphal entrance of Christ into Jerusalem. The Orthodox use palms or willow branches in the shape of a cross, which the priest distributes to the faithful after the liturgy.

Panagia. (Gr. "All Holy"). One of the Orthodox names used to address the Mother of God. In Orthodox art, the term Panagia denotes an icon depicting the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child, or the bishop's medallion (*Encolpion*) which usually is decorated with an icon of the Panagia (especially in the Russian Church). (See also *Theotokos*.)

Pantocrator. (Gr. "He who reigns over all; almighty"). One of the appellations of God. In Orthodox art, Pantocrator is the name of the fresco decorating the center of the dome, depicting Christ as the almighty God and Lord of the Universe.

Paraklitiki. (see *Oktoechos*).

Pascha. (Gr. *Pascha* or *Lambri*). The feast day of the resurrection of Christ, known also as "the Feast of Feasts." It is the greatest Orthodox festival, celebrated the Sunday following the first full moon after the Spring equinox. It is a movable feast, and the dates of the other movable feasts of the Orthodox Church are calculated from it.

Paschal week. (Gr. *Diakaimsimos* or "bright week"). The week following the Sunday of Easter (*Pascha*), signifying the spiritual renewal and joy brought to the world by the resurrected Christ.

Paschalion. The table of dates for Easter and all movable feasts of the year.

Pastoral theology. The theological field that studies the ways and methods to be used by the clergy for carrying through their duties as Pastors of the Church.

Paten. (Gr. *Diskos*). A small round and flat plate made of gold or silver on which the priest places the particles of bread at the celebration of the Eucharist.

Patriarch. (Gr. "in charge of the family"). The highest prelate in the Orthodox Church. Today, there are eight Orthodox prelates called patriarchs (see Patriarchate).

Patriarchate. An ecclesiastical jurisdiction governed by a patriarch. There are eight such jurisdictions today in the Orthodox Church, the four ancient Patriarchates of the East, and the four Slavic patriarchates.

Patristics. The theological field that studies the lives and the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

Patron Saint. (Gr. *Poliouchos*; Sl. *Nebesny Pokrovitel*). A saint chosen by a group, nation, or organization to be their special advocate, guardian, and protector. The Patron Saint of an individual is usually the saint after whom the individual is named, but this is not required.

Pedalion. (see Rudder).

Pentecost. (Gr. "fiftieth Day"). A feast celebrated fifty days after Easter, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the disciples of Christ. It is considered to be the birthday of Christianity.

Pentecostarion. A liturgical book containing all the prayers, hymns, and services performed during the period of fifty days between the feasts of Easter and Pentecost.

Phelonion. Like the chasuble, the phelonion was originally a sort of [poncho](#), a round vestment with a hole in the middle for the head, which fell to the feet on all sides. In its present form (dating from about the fifteenth century) the front is largely cut away (from about the waist down) to facilitate the movements of the priest's hands. In Russia the longer front remained common until quite recent times. The use of the phelonion is not limited to the [Divine Liturgy](#) but is specified for any major liturgical function. It is also called phenolion (φαινόλιον; plural phenolia φαινόλια) in some books.

Polychronion. (Gr. "for many years"). A prayer sung by the chanter or choir in honor of the celebrant bishop or presbyter. Its full version is: "for many years of life" (Gr. *Eis Polla Eti Despota*; Sl. *Mnogaya Lyeta*).

Polyelaion. The great candelabra hanging from the ceiling inside the temple.

Polyeleos. (Gr. "oil candelabrum"; "abundance of oil and grace").

1. Special hymns sung during the Service of Matins.
2. A descriptive adjective used to describe Christ as the God of Mercy.

Prayer Rope. a loop of knots, usually made of wool but sometimes of wood, that is worn privately and used during prayer to keep track of the number of [prayers](#) which have been said. The rope is usually used with the [Jesus Prayer](#): "Lord [Jesus Christ](#), Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Presbyter. (Gr. "elder"). A priest in charge of a parish. A protopresbyter is an honorary title granted by a bishop in acknowledgement of service to the church.

Presvytera. (Gr.; Sl. *Matushka*). An honorary title for the priest's wife or mother in the Greek tradition.

Prokeimenon. (Gr. "gradual introduction"). A liturgical verse or scriptural passage sung or read before the reading of the Epistle. It serves as an introduction to the theme of this particular reading.

Proskomide. (Gr. "gathering of gifts" or "preparing to receive the gifts"; Sl. *Shertvennik, sometimes Proskomedija*). The Service of the preparation of the elements of bread and wine before the Liturgy. It takes place on the Table of Oblation (*Prothesis*), which is situated at the left (north) side of the altar.

Prosphoro. (Gr. "offering gift, an item dedicated to God and offered as a votive," also *prosphora*). The altar bread which is leavened and prepared with pure wheat flour to be used for the Eucharist. It is round and stamped on the top with a special seal (*sphragis* or *Panagiari*). Sometimes it is made in two layers symbolizing the two natures of Christ (Human and Divine). The inscribed parts of the top are used for the Eucharist, and the rest of it is cut into small pieces to be distributed to the faithful (*antidoron*).

Pulpit. (Gr.; Sl. *Amvon*, "an elevated place, podium"). A small raised platform or elaborate podium at the left (north) side of the solea and in the front of the *iconostasis*. Decorated with representations of the four Evangelists, it is the place on which the deacon or priest reads the Gospel and delivers his sermon.

-R-

Raso. (see cassock).

Reader. (Gr. *Anagnostis*, Sl. *Chtets*). The individual assigned to read, chant, and give responses in church services. Usually, such a person will be blessed by the bishop with special prayers and in a special ceremony.

Relics. (Gr. *Leipsana Agia*). The remains from the body of a Saint or even a Saint's possessions, such as clothes or vestments. The relics are honored and venerated by all Orthodox. Upon the consecration of a new church, the consecrating bishop embeds holy relics in the Altar Table, following the ancient traditions of the church in performing the Eucharist on the tombs of Martyrs (*Martyria*).

Rite. (Gr. *Telete*, Sl. *Tchin*). The performance of a religious ceremony following a prescribed order of words and actions (*typikon*).

Rudder. (Gr. *Pedalion*). The book containing the rules and regulations prescribed by the Ecumenical Synods and the Fathers. It is the Constitution of the Orthodox Church.

-S-

Sacrament. (Gr. *Mysterion*; Sl. *Tainstvo*). The outward and visible part of religion, consisting of various ceremonies, words, and symbolisms, producing an invisible action by the Holy Spirit that confers grace on an individual. All Sacraments were instituted by Christ for the salvation of the believer.

Sacrifice. (Gr. *Thysia*; Sl. *Zhertva*). The bloodless offering to God, which is the Holy Eucharist offered at the Liturgy. It signifies the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for man's salvation, which was the final, ultimate, and complete bloodless sacrifice.

Sacristy. (Gr. *Skevophylakion*; Sl. *Riznitsa*). A utility room at the right side (south) of the altar, where vestments and sacred vessels are kept and where the clergy vest for services.

Saints. (Gr. *Agios*). All holy men, women, and angels, who, through a pure and holy life on earth or through martyrdom and confession of faith in word and deeds, have merited the canonization of the Church.

Sakkos or Dalmatic. The main vestment worn by the bishop during the Liturgy. It originates from the vestments of the Byzantine emperor.

Salutations. (see *Akathistos* hymn).

Schism. Formal separation from the unity of the one true Church. See Met. Kallistos Ware's article on the schism of East and West [HERE](#).

See. (Gr. *Hedra* or *Thronos*). The official "seat" or city capital where a bishop resides (esp. for a large jurisdiction); hence, the territory of his entire jurisdiction may be called his See.

Service books. They are special books containing the hymns or the services of the Orthodox Church. There are eight, as follows: Gospel (*Evangelion*), Book of Epistles (*Apostolos*), Psalter (*Octoechos* or *paraklitiki*), *Triodion*, *Pentecostarion*, Twelve *Menaia*, *Horologion*, and Service or Liturgy book (*Euchologio* or *Ieratiko*).

Service Book or Ieratikon or Litourgikon or Euchologio. (Sl. *Sluzhebnyk*). The liturgical book containing the prayers and ceremonial order of the various church services including the Liturgy.

Sign of the Cross. The Orthodox make the Sign of the Cross to signify their belief in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross for man's salvation. It is made by the right hand in a cruciform gesture touching the forehead, chest, right and left shoulders with the tips of fingers (the thumb, index, and middle finger joined together as a symbol of the Holy Trinity, the ring and little fingers touching the palm as a symbol of the two Natures of Christ).

Solea. An area with elevated floor in front of the iconostasis of the church, where the various rites and church ceremonies are held.

Soteriology. Theological field studying the mission and work of Christ as Redeemer (*Soter*). [Saviour. Lytrotes is Redeemer in Greek.](#)

Sphragis. (see *prophoro*). [But sphragis means so much more, so maybe article on that to which prophoro article refers. \(Sphragis as sealing.\)](#)

Spiritual relationship. (see affinity).

Spiritual father/mother. This person is not to be confused with a father confessor. Spiritual fathers/mothers are rare and difficult to find, and your father confessor is not automatically your spiritual father. See podcast on AFR:
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/illuminedheart/the_spiritual_guide_in_eastern_orthodoxy

Stavropegion. Monastery or monastic community directly under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Stichar. (see Alb).

Subdeacon. (Gr. *hypodiakonos*). A layman who has received a special blessing by the bishop to serve in the church, assisting in the services and ceremonies. Subdeacons serve the bishop when he is present, but if he is not present then typically they are in charge of acolytes and altar boys. Also, they wear an orarion crossed in the front at all times the same way a deacon looks when receiving the eucharist.

Synaxarion.

1. A brief biography of a saint read in the church on occasions of his feast day.
2. Book or books containing lives of the saints.

Synaxis. (Gr. "assembly"; Sl. *Sobor*). A gathering of the faithful in honor of a saint or for reading passages from his biography (*synaxarion*).

Synod. (see Ecumenical Council).

-T-

Tabernacle. (Gr. *Artophorion*; Sl. *Darochranitelnitsa*). An elaborate ark or receptacle kept on the Altar Table, in which the Holy Gifts of the Eucharist are preserved for the communion of the sick or for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during Lent.

Thaumaturgos. (Gr. "miracle-worker"; Sl. *Chudotvorets*). A title given to some saints distinguished among the faithful for their miracles.

Theotokos. A theological term commonly used by the Orthodox to indicate the doctrinal significance of Virgin Mary as Mother of God.

Theotokion. (Gr. "referring to *Theotokos*"; Sl. *Bogorodichey*). A hymn which refers to or praises *Theotokos*, the Mother of God.

Three hierarchs. (H?) The Orthodox Church considers in particular three bishops (hierarchs) of the Church as Her most important Teachers and Fathers, who contributed to the development and the spiritual growth of the Church. They are St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom. Their feast day is observed on

January 30, a day also dedicated to Hellenic letters since the three hierarchs contributed to the development of Greek Christian education and literature.

Titular bishop. An auxiliary bishop without his own territorial or residential diocese, who is usually assisting a senior bishop with a large jurisdiction (Archbishop or Patriarch). The episcopal title of a titular bishop is taken from an ancient diocese which once flourished but now exists only in name, and, therefore, a titular bishop does not have his own jurisdiction.

Tradition, Orthodox. (Gr. *Paradosis*). The transmission of the doctrine or the customs of the Orthodox Church through the centuries, basically by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Transfiguration. (Gr. *Metamorphosis*). The transfiguration of Christ is a major feast day (August 6) commemorating the appearance of Christ in divine glory along with Moses and the prophet Elias on Mount Tabor (cf. Matt. 17: 1-7).

Triodion. (Gr. "three odes or modes").

1. The period between the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican, and Cheese-Fare Sunday.
2. A Liturgical book containing the hymns, prayers, and services of the movable feast before Easter, beginning with the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican and lasting until Easter Sunday.

Trisagion. (Gr. "thrice-holy").

1. One of the most ancient hymns of the church, used by the Orthodox in every prayer or service: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us."
2. Memorial Service performed by the graveside or in church for the repose of the soul.

Typikon. (Gr. "following the order"; Sl. *Sluzhebnyk*). Liturgical book which contains instructions about the order of the various church services and ceremonies in the form of a perpetual calendar.

-U-

Unleavened bread. Used in the eucharist in Latin (Western) churches.

Unction. (see Chrism).

Uniats. (see Byzantine Rite).

-V-

Vespers. (Gr. *Esperinos*; Sl. *Litiya*). An important service of the Orthodox Church, held in the evening, which is mainly a Thanksgiving prayer for the closing day and a welcome of the new one to come the following morning. On the eve of an important holiday, the Vesper Service includes *Artoclasia* or the blessing of the five loaves (Gr. *artos*; Sl. *Litiya*) for health and the well-being of the faithful.

Vestments. (Gr. *Amphia*). The distinctive garments worn by the clergy in the liturgy and the other church services

See also:

- Epigonation
- Epitrachelion
- Omophorion
- Orarion
- Rason
- Sakkos
- Sticharion
- Zone

Vigil. (Gr. *olonychia*). Spiritual exercises during the night preceding the feast day of a saint or another major feast, observed by various spiritual preparations, prayers, and services.

-W-

Western Rite. The Western Rite is the western liturgical expression within the Orthodox Church, and resembles the Roman Catholic Church (pre Vatican II) liturgically. Currently four jurisdictions maintain an active Western Rite: Antioch, Romania, Russia, and Serbia. Western Rite parishes in these jurisdictions are fully canonical and practice the same faith, are in full communion with the rest of the Orthodox Church. More can be found at www.orthodoxwest.com, which is the official website of the Antiochian Western Rite of North America.

-Y-

Year of the Church. (see calendar).

-Z-

Zeon. (Gr. "boiling"). The hot water used by the priest for the Eucharist. It is added to the chalice during the Communion hymn in commemoration of the water that flowed out of the side of the crucified Christ when he was pierced with the spear.

Zone. The belt or girdle worn by the priests on his *stichar*. It signifies the power of faith.

Abbreviations

appr. = approximately

Ar. = Arabic

Aram. = Aramaic

cf. = see, check

esp. = especially

fem. = feminine n. = neuter

Gr. = Greek

Hebr. = Hebrew

Lat. = Latin

masc. = masculine

Sl. = Slavonic