

There are many books by leading Orthodox theologians and scholars on all aspects of the Orthodox Church and this leaflet series provides some basic information in the hope that it might prompt further enquiry.

**LEAFLETS IN THIS INTRODUCTION TO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY SERIES:**

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All text in these leaflets is mine except where indicated, therefore any errors of fact or in grammar are mine. I should be grateful to have those errors pointed out so that corrections can be made.

Fr.Nikitas - frnikitas@hotmail.com

**“The Orthodox Church** .....has preserved unadulterated the first and most ancient ecclesiastical tradition and teaching, has avoided innovations and personal interpretations of the Holy Scriptures and dogmas of the faith, and is administered according to the ancient synodical system under local bishops in collaboration with the faithful and successive groups of both local and broader Episcopal synods, of which the highest is the Ecumenical Synod, that of the Orthodox worldwide. The basic administrative canons, the details of which are regulated according to local needs, have been determined by the seven ecumenical synods. The Church is not managed by regional states in which it resides, although it collaborates in good works when asked to do so.

Within the entire Orthodox Church there is absolute cooperation in goodwill and mutual respect. Perchance minor human problems are addressed successfully through the application of the evangelical spirit.”

*Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople, from “Encountering the Mystery.” ISBN 978-0-385-51813-0*

Orthodox Community of Archangel Michael and Holy Piran, Cornwall.  
www.orthodoxincornwall.org.uk

In the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.  
Exarchate of Western Europe and Ireland.  
www.thyateira.org.uk

Ecumenical Patriarchate.  
Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχεῖον.  
www.ec-patr.org



Agia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) Constantinople.

Fr.N.10.20

# Introduction to Orthodox Christianity: “Old and New” Calendars.



Icon of the creation.

“When Mao Zedong declared on 1st October 1949 that China would follow the Gregorian calendar, the entire world agreed what the date was for the very first time, after the long history of attempts to reconcile the heavens with the clock, and of the universal establishment of the calendar.”

When speaking of calendars we have to do so aware of the many national, religious and cultural calendars that have existed over a period of time covering up to 5000 years in the history of the world. Some of these still exist and are in use but there are two principle calendars which have had a major influence, one of which is in use throughout most of the world today and within which the others operate.

The first is the Julian Calendar, named after the pagan emperor Julius Caesar in whose reign it was brought into use. This is often referred to as the Julian or **Old Calendar (OS)**. This calendar came into law on January 1<sup>st</sup> 45BC

The second was implemented in October 1582AD, during the time of Pope Gregory XIII, Bishop of Rome This is known as the **Gregorian Calendar** and used by the world's nations universally.

The history of calendars is an interesting study but not the purpose of this leaflet. Astronomers and mathematicians over many centuries of research determined that wherever we live in the world there are certain familiars – Sun, Moon, planets, stars, recognisable seasons and weather patterns recurring at regular intervals and over a roughly agreed period of 365 days – 366 in each fourth (Leap) year.

The secular progress of change from Julian to Gregorian took several centuries, for instance:-

Sweden 1753  
Japan 1873  
Bulgaria by 1916  
Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia around 1915  
Romania and Yugoslavia 1919  
Russia 1918 (again in 1940)  
Greece 1924  
China 1949

Great Britain adopted the New Calendar in 1752. It was necessary for eleven days to be eliminated in order to realign the Julian calendar with the Gregorian so the British Parliament eliminated 3-13<sup>th</sup> September 1752.

Atomic Time replaced Earth Time as the world's official time standard in 1972. The year is measured in oscillations of atomic cesium:

290, 091, 200, 500, 000, 000

Source for these and the quote on the front of this leaflet:  
**THE CALENDAR – David Ewing Duncan**  
A thorough and interesting book on this complex subject.

### **THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES**

Some Orthodox Churches retain the **Julian Calendar (OS)** whilst other use the **Revised Julian Calendar (NS)**. This means that celebrations occur on different dates (13 days apart). For example Christmas NS is on December 25<sup>th</sup> but in OS on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

Russia used the Old Style Julian Calendar until 1<sup>st</sup> February 1918. This was twelve days behind the west in the nineteenth century and thirteen behind in the twentieth century. The Orthodox Church of Russia did not adopt this change.

Revised Julian Calendar **(NS)** churches:

**Constantinople,**  
**Alexandria,**  
**Antioch,**  
Romania,  
Bulgaria,  
Cyprus,  
Greece,  
Albania,  
Estonia  
(and the OCA).

Julian Calendar **(OS)** churches:

**Jerusalem,**  
Russia,  
Serbia,  
Georgia,  
Poland,  
Sinai,  
Ukraine,  
and Japan.

Gregorian Calendar church:  
Finland.