

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.

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**“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](http://www.orthodoxincornwall.org.uk)

In the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.  
Exarchate of Western Europe and Ireland.  
[www.thyateira.org.uk](http://www.thyateira.org.uk)

Ecumenical Patriarchate.  
Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχεῖον.  
[www.ec-patr.org](http://www.ec-patr.org)



Agia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) Constantinople. Fr.N.03.19

# Introduction to Orthodox Christianity: Times & Seasons (in service books).



**The Book of the Gospels rests on the Holy Table (Altar) and usually has a metal protective cover. On one side is shown the crucified Christ and on the other the risen and triumphant Christ. The four evangelist – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - are also depicted on both sides.**

The books listed in this leaflet are not a requirement nor necessary for everyone but they form the liturgical “tools” for priests, deacons and others taking an active and leading role in worship.

## THE TYPIKON

At the beginning of each year the Typikon is published by the Holy Patriarchate and contains the order for daily services for the entire year. So it is not a service book in itself but provides the set framework and rubrics (directions) for the celebration of services day by day with the various books providing the needed texts.

## EVANGELLION - Εὐαγγέλιον. Book of the Gospels.

This book contains the four Gospels in selected passages for every Sunday, weekday, saints day and other commemorations including liturgical seasons such as Lent, Paschaltide (Easter), and Advent.

The importance of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is emphasized by the Book of the Gospels being kept permanently on the Holy Table (Altar).

## APOSTOLOS – Ἀπόστολος. Book of readings from the New Testament Acts of the Apostles and Letters.

This book has a similar structure to the Book of the Gospels. It may also have a metal protective cover but is not kept on the Holy Table.

## PSALTER – Ψαλτήριον. Book of the Psalms of David.

This book contains the Psalms divided into sections called kathismata, to be used in services and also includes the nine Biblical Canticles. The psalms are used extensively in Orthodox services.

## OCTOECHOS - Ὀκτώηχος. Book of Eight Tones.

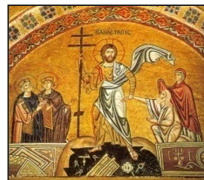
Also known as the Paraklitike – Παρακλητική – it contains the variable portions for the daily offices through the week. Throughout the year, the services proceed week by week through the various tones. On the Sunday of St. Thomas (the first after Pascha) the sequence begins with Tone One, and then through the different tones until Tone Eight is completed; after which the offices for Tone One are resumed, and so once more through the whole sequence. The texts of the Octoechos are combined with those for the fixed feasts from the Menaia (see opposite).

## TRIODION - Τριώδιον. Book of the Three Odes.

Often called the Lenten or **Penitential Triodion**, this book contains the variable parts for all services from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (22 days before the Great Lenten Fast) and concludes with Saturday in Great (Holy) Week. The title Three Odes derives from the fact that many of the canons contain only three canticles or odes.

## PENTEKOSTARION – Πεντηκοστάριον. Book of the Fifty Days.

Following the period of the Triodion this book contains services from Holy Pascha (Easter) to All Saints Day - the Sunday after Pentecost. For obvious reasons the book is also known as the "Joyful" or "Festal" Triodion.



## MENAIA – Μηναία. Book of the months.

Divided into twelve months beginning from September 1<sup>st</sup> – the start of the ecclesiastical year – the book or books contain the day by day list and information of the saints and other commemoration which are on fixed dates in the calendar.

The **Synaxarion** – συναξάριον – with short accounts of the lives of the saints is a separate book but the readings are incorporated in the Menaia.

Finally in this leaflet:

### Euchologion – Εὐχολόγιον.

**Book of Prayers** for the priest and in part for the deacon containing a variety prayers and services from the Mysteries (sacraments), to prayers for special occasions. A larger and more comprehensive volume is the Great Euchologion. The Ieratikon – Ἱερατικόν – (large or small) is an altar book for the priest.

### Horologion – Ὁρολόγιον.

**Book of Hours.** Whilst the Euchologion is a book for the priest, the Horologion is a choir book for reader and singers and will provide all they need, drawing also when necessary on the Octoechos, Triodion, Pentekostarion and Menaia.

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Whilst it is not usual to see congregations holding books at services there are many available for whatever the occasion or need.

All services and prayers in Orthodoxy owe their origin to the Holy Bible, to the witness of the Holy Fathers and Mothers who have been blessed with Divine revelation and inspiration to contribute to the richness of Holy Tradition in praise of the One True God - the Most Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.