

# History of the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church

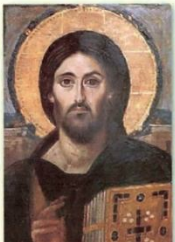
## **I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.**

Jesus Christ founded His Church.

Jesus Christ gives four marks, or characteristics, to His Church through the Holy Spirit. The four marks are: the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Through the transmission of the faith by the twelve apostles the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is a communion of twenty-three Catholic churches. This is a short history of one of the churches of the Catholic Church, specifically, the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church.

### **FROM JERUSALEM TO BYZANTIUM**



**Oldest Known  
Icon of Christ the  
Pantokrator,  
St. Catherine's  
Monastery, Sinai**

Jesus Christ, our Lord, was crucified and died to save the us, the members of the human race, from our sins and from eternal death that comes from sin. He resurrected from the dead to give us new life in the Holy Trinity. Jesus established His Church as His Body where humans can access His salvation. Before He ascended into heaven, He gave the apostles this Great Commission:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of time.

Matthew 28:19-20

The apostles traveled to near and distance places to preach the Gospel, the Good News of God's salvation.

Saint Peter the Apostle, head of the college of apostles, journeyed to Antioch, where the disciples were called "Christians" for the first time (Acts of the Apostles 11:26) and then to Rome where in A.D. 64 he was crucified upside down.

His brother, Saint Andrew the First-called, journeyed to Byzantium, a free-city of the Roman Empire, that was a port, a fishery, and an economic and transportation center located at the meeting of the continents of Europe and Asia.

There he established a church in the years A. D. 36 to 38 and appointed Saint Stachys as the first bishop of Byzantium.



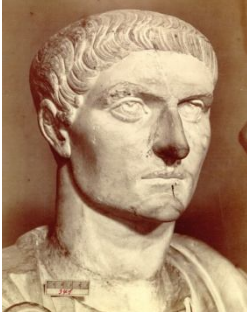
**Call of the brothers: St. Andrew,  
first called, and St. Peter, the head  
of his College of Apostles.**



**Crucifixion of St. Andrew**

In the year A.D. 62 Saint Andrew was crucified at Patras, Greece, on an X shaped cross.

## FROM BYZANTIUM TO CENTRAL EUROPE



Emperor Constantine  
the Great

The Roman Emperor Constantine the Great moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium which he renamed Constantinople, New Rome in 330.

In 381 the Second Ecumenical Council decreed that the bishop of Constantinople had the priority of honor after Rome.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451 used the division line of the Roman Empire into east and west to divide the responsibility of evangelizing Europe between the Pope of Rome in the west and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in the east.

In 861 Rastislav, Prince of Great Moravia, sent emissaries to Rome to ask Pope Nicholas I for a bishop and teacher who could teach in the Slavic language, and for the Code of Roman Law. The pope was unable to send anyone.

In turn, Rastislav sent representatives in 862 to Constantinople to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to ask for a man who could teach them the Faith in their own language.

Emperor Michael consulted with Patriarch Saint Photios and sent Constantine the Philosopher, known today as Saint Cyril, and Constantine's brother, St. Methodius on the Great Mission.

Saint Cyril invented an alphabet for the Slavic tongue and began translating the Bible with the first verse of the Gospel according to Saint John, "In the beginning was the Word..." In this way, the practice of translating the Bible in a language other than Hebrew, Greek or Latin, and the concept of worship in the vernacular was begun. During their journey to Great Moravia in 862-863, the brothers preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the local inhabitants. Oral tradition accepted this as the traditionally held beginning of the Byzantine Catholic Church in Central Europe.

Saints Cyril and Methodius were summoned to Rome by the pope who wished to question the introduction and use of the vernacular Old Slavonic in worship within his patriarchal territory. Pope Adrian received them and listened to their presentation, approved the books, had the Slavonic Gospel enthroned on the altar of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, and directed Saint Cyril to offer the Divine Liturgy in Slavonic. Although St. Cyril died in Rome, the pope appointed St. Methodius as papal legate, and he returned to labor in the vineyard, establishing new dioceses but he endured imprisonment and persecution.



Return of the Relics of Pope St. Clement,  
Fresco in St. Clement Basilica, Rome. Pope  
Adrian II is depicted on the left wearing the  
papal tiara and flanked by Ss. Cyril and  
Methodius.