

Comparison of Some Christian Beliefs and Practices

Doctrine or Sacrament	Orthodoxy	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism
Baptism	Early in infancy, conferring full membership thenceforth	Early in infancy, transitional status pending confirmation	Individual choice
Holy Communion	From infancy, given by priest to every individual in good standing with Church	Variable—taken by priest <i>on behalf</i> of congregants, or given without regard to relationship to Church	Varies widely in each denomination—generally no pre-existing relationship to Church a prerequisite
Holy Unction	Sacrament of healing and forgiveness of the sick	Originally administered only when one was about to die. Now used for the sick also	Not used
Confession	Obligation of every believer in the presence of God and the priest	When done, done anonymously to a priest	Personal, without participation of clergy
Change of the consecrated bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ	Entirely mysterious, wrought by God and undefined by doctrine	Follows specific guidelines, timing during liturgy, etc.	Not doctrine. A "representation" only
Virginal conception & birth of Christ	Entirely mysterious, achieved by the Holy Spirit. No interest in birth process. Scripture is sufficient	Doctrinal elaboration by Church, expanding on scriptural evidence	Regarded as a human event of a divine process. Doubted by many Protestant ministers.
Chronology of the New Testament Church	Established at Pentecost, per Acts of the Apostles, uninterrupted since	Separated from Orthodoxy in 1054 over dispute regarding papal primacy	Derivatives traceable principally to the Reformation
Sources of doctrine	The Apostolic Teaching in Scripture and Tradition, illuminated by the Church Fathers and Councils	Orthodoxy, with minimal interest in Church Fathers, but much elaboration by Vatican	Scripture, understood principally by personal interpretation

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Role of priest	Normally married (monastic priests are not), leader of a parish and the agent <i>through whom</i> God works. NO powers except direct from God under the Church's hierarchy	Normally single (celibate). Powers and duties specified by Church hierarchy	Variable. In some cases highly structured, in others, locally determined. The priesthood not accepted as a doctrine in many denominations.
Language of worship services at St. Anna	English is used for all services. Greek and Slavonic is used only for the Gosepl reading during the Liturgy.	Originally, only Latin. Now the vernacular, but Latin is making a comeback	The language of the local population