

Frequently Asked Questions

**May only Catholics or Scouts earn this?
Who may earn this activity patch?**

Any youth or adult may earn any of the activity patches. The requirements are grade-specific.

Is this activity considered a Religious Emblem and may a Scout receive a religious knot after completing this activity?

No. This activity is considered a Religious Activity, not a Religious Emblem program. Scouts may not receive a religious knot for earning this activity patch.

Will there be more Faith Activity Patches?

Yes. There may be additional Faith patches released, from time to time.

Who may serve as an adult mentor for this activity?

Any parent or adult who meets the standard BSA and diocesan safe environment requirements.

Is there any time requirement?

Only that the grade-specific requirements need to be completed while in the respective grade level.

Do the answers need to be submitted?

No. The answers should be reviewed by an adult. The Order Form and patch fee are the only things that need to be submitted.

Whom do I check with once I complete the requirements for my grade level?

Any knowledgeable parent, Scout leader, group leader, priest, religious or catechist.

Visit www.nccs-bsa.org for information on how to order patches for any of our religious activities.

Faith Series



Eastern Catholic Awareness Activity Patch



Content developed by the
National Catholic Committee on
Scouting®

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CatholicScouting.com

Eastern Catholic Awareness Patch

The goal of this patch program is to help Scouts and Scouters become aware of the fullness and diversity of the Catholic Church, although anyone can earn this patch. For many the phrase “Catholic Church” only conjures up images of the Pope, St. Peter’s Basilica, and other famous Roman Catholic Cathedrals, e.g., St. Patrick’s in New York City and Notre Dame in Paris. But these are images of only one part, although the overwhelmingly largest, of the Catholic Church. The rest of the Catholic Church is made up of the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches, which are in full communion with the Pope and the See of Rome. This program will provide a brief description of some of these Churches that you may encounter in the United States, and help you understand how they may differ from and how they are united to Rome.

General Requirements

Read (or listen to) the material about Eastern Catholic Churches and their Rites. If you have never attended an Eastern Catholic Divine Liturgy and live within an hour’s drive of one, you need to do so. If you are not close, you can view one via Live Stream on Facebook, searching for “Byzantine Catholic Proto-Cathedral of St. Mary” or YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3zurm-icVU> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUkoCQ6rJgA> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWQoNZswHZ0>) or (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKt0m73o8mw>). You may also view this virtual lesson to begin your understanding. (<https://youtu.be/UtY7v25Bcng>.) When completed, patches may be ordered from the NCCS website: nccs-bsa.org.

General Information

Eastern Catholic Churches are made up of eparchies (archeparchies) rather than dioceses (archdioceses). In the Christian East the sacraments are referred to as the ‘Holy Mysteries’. All Catholics have the same seven sacraments; however, the way of expressing them differs. Eastern Catholics in the U.S. generally use the term “Divine Liturgy” in English for Mass.

At the time of the early Church, there were several rich cultures around the Mediterranean Sea and Middle East and each of them has given rise to a different Church tradition. Of course, ancient Rome gave rise to the Roman or Latin tradition. The regions of ancient Syria and Lebanon gave rise to the Syriac tradition, which spread ultimately all the way across the Asian land mass to China and down to India. The tradition of the Byzantine Churches reflects the Greek or Byzantine culture and so members are called Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics (from Byzantium, the ancient name for Constantinople). In addition, many Greek Catholic Churches are further identified by their region of ethnic or national origin, such as Hungarian, Romanian, Ukrainian, or Italo-Greek.

From the time right after Pentecost the Catholic Church began to grow and evolve in part through the cultural experience of these cultures that gave refined expression to the then new faith. As this evolution occurred, the Churches grew and actively shared communion with one another. But occasionally some disputes occurred which led to a break in that communion. The definitive break between East and West occurred in 1054, due to a deep disagreement between two men: the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, and Pope Leo IX. Since then, the Churches have been trying to reestablish some sense of that initial unity and actual communion. The only Churches to achieve that actual communion so far have been the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches who have reestablished their communion with the Pope and the Roman Church – although two, the Maronite and the Italo-Greek Catholic Churches may be said never to have broken communion. <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/eastern-rites-a-family-tree-11126>

Maronite Catholic Church

1. It is claimed that the Maronite Church has always been in communion with Rome.
2. The two eparchies in the United States are the Eparchy of St. Maron in Brooklyn, NY (<http://www.stmaron.org>) and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, CA (<http://www.eparchy.org>).
3. The Maronite Church traces its heritage back to a community founded by a hermit priest, St. Maron, who lived in the mountains of Lebanon, and who died in 410 A.D. He inspired his followers to gather into what became the Syriac Maronite Catholic Church
4. Various orders of the Maronites use the Rabbula Cross since it has Early Church and Syriac monastic roots. This cross is named after the scribe of an ancient Syriac Gospel Book. It is a concave pattee cross with eight small buds enclosed within a circle.
5. The celebration of the Eucharist is called the Holy Qurbono.
6. Some Maronite Saints are: St. Maron, St. John Maron, St. Sharbel, and St. Rafka (1832-1914, who was canonized in 2000)
7. The ancient Liturgical language in the Church is Syriac, which is a dialect of Aramaic, though a good part of the liturgy today is prayed in Arabic and English; however, the use of Aramaic is exclusively reserved for use to say the Words of Institution for the consecration of the bread and wine.
8. St. Peter is said to have a relationship with this Church because of his residence in Antioch where he presided as bishop for some years prior to his travelling to Rome. So, the practice of the Maronite Church started in Antioch, but it spread with the people. Traditionally, wherever there was a monastery, the community of worshipers built a city around it. The Maronite Church is a monastic Church and most of the priests are monks.
9. The form of the Divine Office or Daily Prayers of this Church is called the Hoosoyo and forms part of the pre-anaphoral Liturgy of the Church. It has four parts: Proemion, Sedro, Qolo, Etro.
10. The Syriac word Hoosoyo refers to the "mercy seat" which rested above the Ark of the Covenant in the Jewish temple.
11. The Maronite Catholic Church is a global Church. The homelands of the Maronites today can be found in Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq.
12. In the rest of the world (the Diaspora, or scattering), Maronites and their Churches can be found in Europe (mostly in France), in both North and South America, and in Australia.

Ruthenian Byzantine Church

1. There are four Ruthenian eparchies in the United States: Holy Protection of Mary Eparchy of Phoenix, AZ; the Eparchy of Parma, OH; the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, PA; the Eparchy of Passaic, NJ.
2. The Liturgy is in English though some of the responses and stanzas of the hymns may be in Church Slavonic.
3. You will see icons on the walls and ceiling but will not find Holy Water fonts in these Churches.
4. Some Eastern Catholic Churches use the "Three-Barred Cross". The short bar on the top symbolizes the board that the Roman soldiers nailed on the cross, upon which was inscribed "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek. The Center (and longest bar), onto which his hands were nailed, represents the crossbar which Christ carried to Golgotha, where He was crucified. The lowest bar was a footrest onto which Christ's feet were nailed.
5. The gesture of personal reference is a simple bow (no genuflecting) done during blessings by the priest, by the deacon when censing, or upon entering or leaving the Church.
6. The Churches of the Byzantine tradition use leavened bread for Communion. After consecration it is added to the chalice and both are distributed using a gold spoon. The loaf of bread is called a Prospora. In some of the Churches following the Byzantine tradition, a small amount of hot water called "Zeon" or "Teplota" is added to the chalice right before communion. The warmed chalice suggests the living body of the risen Christ. Churches of the Syriac tradition tend to use unleavened bread and do not use "Zeon" water.
7. The Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner") is used frequently in the Eastern Catholic Church. Parishioners use a 'chotki', a knotted prayer rope, and repeat this prayer on each knot.
8. The Theophany of Jesus (Baptism, Epiphany) is second only to Pascha (Easter) in importance among the holy days of these Churches. It is celebrated with a blessing of water.

9. The sign of the cross is made with the thumb of the right hand and the first two fingers (*Representing the Trinity*) from the forehead ("Father") to the lower breast ("Son") to the right shoulder ("Holy") and finally the left shoulder ("Spirit"). The ring finger and the little finger are folded on the palm (*Representing Jesus' divine and human natures*).
10. These Churches have great devotion to Mary, the Mother of God – she is referred to using the Greek term coined in the Second Ecumenical Council as "Theotokos" which means "the one who gave birth to God" or "God-Bearer".
11. The name "Ruthenian" originally applied over a broad area to many peoples who are now called Ukrainians, Belarussians, Rusyns, Lemkos, and Boykos. The Rusyns reentered communion with Rome of 1646 at the Union of Uzhorod. In the U.S., the Ruthenian bishops decided to call their Church the "Byzantine Catholic Church".
12. The Ruthenian Church traces its origins to the missionary activity of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and their seven helpers who were sent by the Emperor of Constantinople at the request of King Rastislav of Moravia to teaching Christianity and convert the Slavic peoples of his realm. This included part of the Carpathian Mountains and an area later known as Red Ruthenia which straddles borders of present-day states of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine.

Ukrainian Greek Catholic

1. This Eastern Catholic Church has the largest population of members.
2. The Eparchies in the United States are: Eparchy of Stamford, CT, the Archeparchy of Philadelphia, PA, Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, OH and Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago, IL.
3. The Ukrainian Church traces its roots to the Byzantine imperial Catholic parishes established in the coastal cities and towns of the Black Sea in the south of Ukraine and the missionaries from the mission of Sts. Cyril and Methodius who came from Moravia and later from Bulgaria.
4. The official foundation date for the Ukrainian Catholic Church is 988 when the entire nation was baptized following the decision of the ruler of Kyivan-Rus' Grand Prince Volodymyr to embrace Christianity in its Byzantine form.
5. Grand Prince Volodymyr had sent out his diplomats to help him choose a religion for his people. They visited the Jews, the Moslems, the Romans, and the Byzantines. They reported to the Prince what they found that the Jews do not eat pork and have many complicated rules, that the Moslems do not eat pork and do not drink. Among the church buildings of the Romans they saw no beauty. But in Constantinople they were overwhelmed - they found their ideal, and they reported: *"We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth, for on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty."*
6. Pope St. Clement (1st Century) and Pope St. Martin I (7th Century) were exiled to Ukraine by emperors and died as witnesses to the faith there.
7. In 1946, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Soviet Union was suppressed and forced to join the Russian Orthodox Church. Many of the clergy and faithful were arrested and imprisoned. Those who were not, continued to practice their faith in an underground Church.
8. In 1988, with perestroika, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church emerged from the underground with millions of faithful and an active clergy, much to the surprise of Soviet authorities and indeed even Rome and the rest of the world. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has reestablished its primatial see in Kyiv, the capital city of Ukraine.

Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Catholic Churches

1. The name Syro-Malabar is coined from the words Syriac (referring overall to the Syriac Liturgical Tradition, in this case, the East Syriac liturgy) and Malabar (the historical name for Kerala). Syro-Malabar historian and theologian Bishop Mar Placid Podipara describes the Church as “Catholic by faith, Indian by culture, and East Syriac/Oriental in liturgy.”
2. This Church is the second largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches.
3. The cross used by the Syro-Malabar Church has the descending dove at the top symbolizing the Holy Spirit. In early Christian archeology and iconography, God the Father was depicted in and through His creations, hence the lotus flower/leaves on which the cross is erected symbolizes the Heavenly Father.
4. The Church traces its origin to St. Thomas the Apostle, who landed in Cranganore (Muziris) in 52 A.D. and founded seven Christian communities in Kerala.
5. The early Christian community in India was known as St. Thomas Christians. They were also called Nazranis, meaning those who follow the path of Jesus of Nazareth.
6. Among the saints and holy persons venerated in the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church are: St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Bartholomew the Apostle, St. Pantaenus (200 AD), St. Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception, and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.
7. Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in America: there is one eparchy covering the entire U.S. It is St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Diocese of Chicago, IL (<http://www.stthomasdiocese.org/>)
8. The original liturgical language of the Syro-Malabar faithful is Syriac (a form of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus). The vernacular languages of Malayalam and English are now commonly used.
9. St. Thomas spread the Gospel throughout India and spent the years 64-68 AD preaching the Gospel along the coast of China near Kung Wang Shan. Thereafter he returned to India, and after continuing to spread the Gospel there, he was martyred in 72 A.D. at Mylapore, near Chennai/Madris.
10. In the 16th century, the Thomas Christians encountered Portuguese Latin Catholic missionaries who had conflicting ideas. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Protestant missionaries also arrived in India with more conflicting ideas and this resulted in the many divisions among the St. Thomas Christians.
11. Those that remained in full communion with the Bishop of Rome also remained in communion with their spiritual mother Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church with whom they share the East Syriac Liturgical and Spiritual Tradition and thus they became the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. Their Orthodox counterpart derived from the Assyrian Church of the East, based in Mesopotamia and Persia (modern day Iraq and Iran); they were once referred to as the Nestorian Church and their dioceses spread from Persia across Asia to China. But today many of the Indian Orthodox from this group have embraced the West Syriac tradition (see below).
12. There is a second, smaller Eastern Catholic Church with its roots in India and the Apostle Thomas. This church is the **Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**, which follows the **West Syriac Tradition**. Its spiritual mother church is the Syriac Catholic Church with its headquarters in Damascus, Syria. The Orthodox counterpart of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is now split between the Holy Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Holy Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church (of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch). These all follow the West Syriac Tradition. The languages of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church are: Malayalam, Syriac, English, Tamil, and Nadu.
13. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in America: There is one eparchy covering both the United States and Canada. It is the St. Mary, Queen of Peace Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in USA and Canada based in Elmont, NY. (<http://syromalankarausa.org/>)
14. Among the saints and holy persons venerated in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church are: St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Bartholomew the Apostle, St. Pantaenus (200 AD), and the Servant of God Geevarghese Mar Ivanios.

Eastern Catholic Churches and their Rites

The 1990 Code of the Eastern Catholic Churches (from the USCCB-sponsored website <http://www.intratext.com/X/ENG1199.HTM>) provides:

- “Canon 27: A group of Christian faithful united by a hierarchy according to the norm of law which the supreme authority of the Church expressly or tacitly recognizes as *sui iuris* is called in this Code a **Church sui iuris**.
- “Canon 28: A **rite** is the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, culture and circumstances of history of a distinct people, by which its own manner of living the faith is manifested in each Church *sui iuris*.”

All of these Eastern Churches are in full communion with the Pope in Rome. This means that all their sacraments (i.e., Penance, Eucharist, etc.) are valid for all Catholics to receive.

- **Alexandrine**- Coptic (or Egyptian), Ethiopian (or Abyssinian), Eritrean
- **Syriac** has two branches:
 - **West Syriac**: Syro-Malankarese, Syrians, Maronite
 - **East Syriac**: Chaldean, Syro-Malabarese
- **Armenian**-Armenians
- **Byzantine**-Albanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Belarusians, Ruthenians, Greeks, Hungarian, Slovak, Italo-Greek-Albanian, Ukrainian, Yugoslavs/Serbs/Croatians/Montenegrins/Macedonians, Melkites, Romanians

Eastern Catholic Divine Liturgies follow a sequence of types of prayer similar to that found in the Roman Mass. This sequence arose organically from the early days of the Church and is detectable in all early manuscripts of the liturgy from around the Mediterranean and Middle East. Most of the wording of their actual prayers is somewhat different, but there is a sequence of types of prayer that you will recognize.

- Both begin with prayers derived from the Old Testament, then prayers to mark the feast of the day, followed by a reading of the Epistle and then the Gospel.
- Then after prayers of offering and thanksgiving, the Gifts of Bread and Wine are presented on the altar, and the Nicene Creed is recited by the entire community.
- After this follows the “Anaphora” and the “Epicicles” when the Bread and Wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. This recalls Christ’s action at the Last Supper, the “Anamnesis” or remembrance of this holy action. In the Syriac tradition this section is called the “Qurbano”.
- Then we say the “Our Father” and the distribution of Communion.
- Closing prayers and the final blessing conclude the liturgy.