

What's the Difference?

A Simple Explanation

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Dear Fellow Pilgrim—

Jesus gave the commission to His followers to ‘*go into all the world and teach...*’ (Mt 28:19-20). This has been the exercise of many Christians throughout the two-millennia since His mortal ministry.

As a bishop of the Church, the task of fulfilling that commission becomes my responsibility at this time and in this part of the world. To the many who have asked me: ‘*What’s the Difference?*’ this is written with you in mind.

Most Reverend Rima Tamaiparea-Puki
Bishop

WHO ARE YOU?

Reformed... Old... Catholic Church...

“What’s in a name?” Some people have peculiar and lengthy names and unless an explanation is given, they remain a peculiarity. Often names are generational and connect to a parent or grandparent or an extended member of the family, perhaps even commemorating an event, a Christian Martyr or Saint.

Whatever the reason, there is always a meaning that comes with a name. Likewise, the Church has a peculiar and lengthy name, but for us, the name explains an identity of who we are, our connection to the universal Church and more importantly our relationship to the Founder of Christianity—Jesus Christ.

Do you call yourselves Catholic or Christian?

Yes! We are both. The best way to look at the Church as a whole is from the perspective of a family. In this light, we consider ourselves as members of the catholic (meaning: *universal*) and Christ-following family.

Can you explain the name?

We identify as a Catholic Church—a community of believers, a people of faith—who adhere to the teachings of Jesus Christ, as received from His Apostles and their successors the bishops, through the written word and sacred traditions. (II Thes 2:15)

The Old Catholic Church has its roots in Utrecht, Holland which legally separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the latter part of the 1800's.

Archbishop Andrew Hall connects us to the Church in Utrecht. His succession possesses the names of those bishops who established the Old Catholic Church.

The use of the word 'Reformed' further identifies us from the Roman Catholics and the Old Catholics whilst still acknowledging our family connection with these sister Churches.

Te Hāhi Katorika Tawhito—*The Reformed Old Catholic Church* is the name of the Church in New Zealand.

Do you have a Pope?

No. The various leaders of Christian denominations do not doubt that the Pope (currently Francis) leads the largest of the Church's in Christendom. All Roman Catholic Bishops make their allegiance to him as it is by his authority they head the various dioceses throughout the world. He is titled Supreme Pontiff which is wholly unique to the Roman Catholic Church.

We hold to the teaching that whilst some bishops have more jurisdictional roles and may further be distinguished with titles such as: *archbishop, metropolitan, primate or patriarch/matriarch*, each ranks equally.

Do you have an international representative?

Yes. Every mission territory or diocese has at its head, a bishop. When the bishops of the Church gather, they elect from among themselves one to be *primus inter pares* or first among equals, who is then voice of the Church. In this capacity the *primus* or Primate is the voice of the Church, whose primary role is the elder sibling to the bishops.

It is similar to that of the archbishop of Canterbury for the Anglican Communion or the patriarch of Constantinople who chairs the pan-Orthodox Synod neither having oversight outside of their own jurisdictions.

Our current Primate is His Eminence Andrew Hall, Archbishop in Scotland.

MEMBERSHIP

How do I become a Catholic?

Because a person is baptised at *such'n'such* a church, the mistake is that they are of that so called denomination. Christ when commissioning the Apostles said *'baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...'* (Mt. 28:19) thus, it qualifies a person to become a Catholic—or a member of the universal Church.

However this Rite of Christian Initiation is incomplete without receiving the Holy Spirit, Who confirms the individual a full and participating member of the Church. It's just a matter of talking with a priest and asking. The priest will get your details and introduce you to people who will take the responsibility of mentoring you. *Refer to page 16 on Confirmation.*

What are the Church's views on other religions?

Within Christianity is an array of various denominations. Our members are encouraged to fully participate — where appropriate — in the liturgical celebrations and worship services of these denominations — according to ones conscience.

We believe that God is the Source of all good. No one person or society can selfishly lay claim alone to that which is good.

We encourage our people to cast aside prejudices and to find the common ground within other faith communities. Likewise we invite those not of our faith and tradition to participate with us — no one person should be left without.

Can women fully participate in the Church?

Yes! There is nothing in the Church that a man can do, that a woman can't and vice-versa. Just to make it clearer, if a woman has a vocation to holy orders, she may choose to undergo the discernment process, like any other candidate.

Is that the same for LGBTQI people?

The Universal Church and its adherents have traditionally ostracised those who vocally identify as LGBT. Unfortunately, some of our sister Churches still discriminate based on vague quotes from scripture. We see this as un-Christian, and as a means of further dividing the people of God. Yes! LGBT people who are baptised and confirmed, possess all the rights and privileges as does any member of the household of faith. This includes the discernment process for ordination should they be so called to it.

COMMUNITIES

Do you have a 'Friar Tuck' following?

That's a really good question and I think I know what it is that you're trying to ask! The Church has always had people who have felt a calling to serve God in the Church in a variety of ways. It isn't limited to married people and unmarried people. Some have a calling to be both married and a member of the clergy; whilst others may wish to serve in a community of brothers or sisters or just be simple attendees at church.

The Church currently has two types of Communities. The first is a religious order called the *Order of St Benedict Camoldese*. There is a certain amount of formation to undergo in order to be a member of this Community. It is headed

by a Prior and he or she serves as the head of the Community.

The second is a Community of people who are not called to a religious life, who do not take any vows or necessarily live in a religious order. They are not headed by a Prior neither are clergy permitted among their membership. This is called the *Community of Faithful Prayer*. Many people of various religious and denominational backgrounds are members. Their sole apostolate is to pray for the Church and its mission at set times thus uniting them to others wherever they may be.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

What will I learn?

A Christian's vocation is to lead a life of holiness and all that that involves. Every experience with the Divine transforms how we interact in our ordinary lives.

Worship leads us to fulfil our promise to put God above all else and by so doing, God honours our efforts and imparts a grace in our works. We learn a respect for others, for creation, for life and even for death. The encounter with the Holy helps us to see the sacredness about the work we do, the life we live, and the people with whom we interact. When we acknowledge this, we affirm our witness of the Divine, Who is the Fountain of all-holiness.

What happens at Mass?

For Catholics, the Mass is the pinnacle of worship and more importantly the reception of Christ in Holy Communion. Various prayers, readings and hymns form the Liturgy of Holy Communion or the Mass.

Participation can be quite involved with certain postures like kneeling, genuflecting, bowing, standing and sitting at particular moments. The Mass is like a steady rhythm, easy to pick up after a few times. If you choose to attend, do so with an open mind; don't be too hasty to make rash judgements and be truly present in the moment.

What makes you different from other Churches?

'A kumara never speaks of its own sweetness...' If you were to ask about our similarities then I could possibly answer the above. Either speak with one of our clergy or meet with us at a church service near you. Details are on the back of this booklet.

What are the similarities between the Reformed Old Catholics and other Christian Communities?

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Faithful to seek after those things which are good. (Acts 14:22; I Cor 13:7)

We encourage our people to love God; to pray daily and frequently; to live lives of holiness finding God in the midst of their ordinary existence; to see Christ in our efforts; to read from good books; to develop talents; to have a healthy and honest work ethic; to be people of substance; to be happy with our circumstances and to praise God in all things!

The Church teaches its people to reflect the goodness of God with humility, with no judgement toward others, embracing the uniqueness that each individual possesses.

Some Christians find fulfilment in reading from the bible, or meeting often with other members of their church to discuss service activities, or acts of charity that could be performed to members in their communities. We too, would share in these likeminded efforts with other Christians.

The list of things to do is endless and if it is uplifting, encouraging and inspirational these virtues should be counted among our activities!

rites and Ceremonies

What are the Rites?

The Church teaches that Christ instituted seven Sacraments, necessary for salvation.

- **Baptism** – is the ceremony of initiation into the Church, being *'born of water'* (Jn 3:5) as was Jesus by John the Baptist in the river Jordan.
- **Confirmation** – is a continuation of the ceremony of initiation where the newly made Christian is then born *'of the Spirit'* (Jn 3:5) and confirmed a full and participating member of the Church, thereby enabling the neophyte for mission. The bishop traditionally anoints the candidates head with the oil of Chrism and with a light but firm smack on the candidates left cheek, affirms them of their being a soldier in Christ's army.

- **Eucharist** – or Holy Communion is the pinnacle of Catholic worship. Christ instituted this Sacrament with His Apostles on the night before He died. Christ teaches the Church that He is present in the Eucharist (Jn 6:53-56) and that we should participate wholly in this ceremony known as the Mass.
- **Confession** – is about reconnecting with the Divine and seeking clarity on personal issues that may be a hindrance in ones Christian progress. It's about being vulnerable to God, taking advantage of the opportunity to receive God's gift of forgiveness and healing. In the person of the priest, Christ embraces the penitent soul. (Mt 11:27-30; 16:19; Jn 20:21-23)
- **Anointing of the Sick** – otherwise known as Unction. This Sacrament is about God the Holy Spirit being the Comforter in times not only of illness, but in distress, uncertainty and loneliness. The Faithful may call on a

priest to impart a blessing or anoint them at such times. (Mk 6:13; Jas 5:14-15)

- **Marriage** – is the uniting of two people committed to live in love with each other before God and the Church. (Mt 19:1-12; Eph 5:31-32)
- **Holy Orders** – refers to people who are called to leadership in the Church. Christ instituted the office of bishop, priest and deacon; the Church instituted subdeacon, acolyte, lector, exorcist and porter. (Acts 6:3-6; 13:2-3; I Tim 3:1; 3:8-9; 4:14; 4:16; 5:17-19; 5:22)

Various ceremonies or services are performed by the sacred ministers away from the church proper such as: the blessing of a home, school, work place, women after child-birth, animals, vehicles. Pastoral visits to local hospitals, hospices, retirement villages etc...

In extreme and rare circumstances that warrant the specific consent of the *Bishop*, after examinations by mental health professionals have

been conducted, a priest may perform a service of exorcism. Request may not always be granted.

What are some of your practices?

The first action any Christian will be taught is the *Sign of the Cross*. In this simple act we invoke the three Persons of the Blessed *Trinity* of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We try to make use of resources that will enhance our spirituality like the Rosary, various forms of contemplation or meditation. We use holy water at church and in our homes, candles and oil lamps, icons, statues, the crucifix, prayer books, incense, reading of holy scripture or *Lectio Divina*. Meditation books from the Saints and leaders who have written on such practices and fasting at certain periods.

Whilst these sacramentals or aids can satisfy the superficial by providing a tangible resource, their deeper significance teaches *The Faithful* of the relationship between humankind and the Divine.

MONEY

Is tithing mandatory for membership?

No. This is left to individual conscience. Some members who choose to adhere to this teaching, and contribute whether it be money, produce or time is at the discretion of the individual.

Like any organisation, the Church needs money to pay its bills, to supply its ceremonies, even to support the community events. Every bit helps and we hope it's used according to the purposes for which it was solicited.

A priest-friend would ask '*does your car run on holy water?*' Be generous knowing that finances are going toward a holy cause.

So how does the Church function financially?

An offering is taken at every Sunday Mass which is then collected and tallied with information to be passed to the parish council who then decide how that money should be used.

If the church is not in possession of its own building then rent will be deducted; a donation is given to the organist, the preacher and celebrant for their preparation and travel; incense, coals, altar wine and bread, candles, vestments, printing of pew sheets, postage stamps are all deducted from the offerings given at Mass.

When clergy are called upon to perform the liturgies of the Church, a blessing of a home, pastoral visits and the like, the priest may be given an envelope with an offering.

In their will, do members have to leave money or a proportion of their estate to the Church?

Like tithing, bequeathing property or money to the care of the Church is at the discretion of the parishioner. The expectation is that if property or money is bequeathed then specific instructions should be left for its proper disbursement.

ATTIRE AND VESTMENTS

What is the usual attire for Liturgies?

It differs from season to season from person to person. What a person wears reflects their own creativity. Is it warm? Comfortable? Does it speak of your own individuality? Don't let your attire be anything to overwhelm or prevent you from attending the holy Liturgies. Keep this in mind: wear something that is respectful to you, to those around you and for the occasion.

On one occasion a family attended Mass attired in *korowai*, or *piupiu* draped over their shoulders which are traditional māori clothing worn at very rare and special occasions. They deemed it appropriate to be dressed this way for Christ – present in the Eucharist.

For clergy who are visiting with us, they are invited to fully participate at any of our liturgies or prayer services in their respective clerical attire—if they so desire. Often visiting clergy will be invited to be seated in the sanctuary, deliver a reading, prepare a brief sermon or assist in the distribution of Holy Communion.

Do you wear vestments?

Yes. The Church is rich in symbolism and we have retained many of the classical vestments that are identified with the western Church.

Only those of the sacred ministers who have a role to play will be vested — unless otherwise directed.

It should be noted that the vestments only pertain to those garments worn at liturgical rites like the stole and cope, chasuble, mitre, pallium etc and should not be confused with the cassock which is for everyday attire.

GLOSSARY

Can you explain some of the terms used in this booklet?

Archbishop – 1. Where a region has three or more bishops, the *Synod* may recommend that an *Archbishop* be appointed and an archdiocese established. This gives the *Archbishop* a right to vote in a neighbouring *Diocese* should retirement or demise call for the election of a successor. 2. Upon retirement emeritus status may be granted. 3. The *Synod* may recommend to the *Primate* that a bishop be awarded this title personally.

Bishop – holds the fullness of the priesthood and heads the local *Church* or *Diocese*. Their primary responsibility is to teach, to govern and sanctify *The Faithful* of the *Diocese* and work with the *Clergy* in the jurisdiction.

Church – from the Greek *Ecclesia* meaning assembly or gathering of *The Faithful*; distinguished from ‘church’ with a lower-case c referring to a building.

Crucifix – an image of Jesus on the Cross.

Diocese – a jurisdiction over which a *Bishop* heads the local *Church*.

Discernment – a process where an individual reflects and considers the next major move in their Christian journey. Whether it be marriage, a *Vocation* to priesthood or the religious life...

Holy Water – has been blessed by a *Priest* or *Bishop* for use in the church, or the homes of *The Faithful*.

Liturgy – another word for ‘service’ pertaining to a service in church for baptism, for the *Mass etc...*

Martyr – a person who has died for the causes of the Faith and is revered by the *Church*.

Mass – is the pinnacle of Christian worship. It is at the *Mass* that Christ makes Himself present under the auspices of bread and wine.

Metropolitan – Where a country has two or more archbishops, the *Synod* may recommend an *Archbishop* be appointed *Metropolitan*, chairing the local synod and having the right to take possession of a neighbouring diocese until a successor is installed.

Mission – is a territory where the Church is not yet fully established. It may be headed by a priest with jurisdictional power given by the *Primate*.

Neophyte – a newly baptised person.

Old Catholic – refers to the *Church* in Utrecht, Holland.

Ordination – a ceremony conducted by the *Bishop* setting apart a person to a various office in the Major or Minor Orders.

Patriarch/Matriarch – a senior *Bishop* who has established the *Church* and participated in the

consecration of Bishops who themselves have established the *Church*.

Pope – from the Latin *Papa* meaning father; also the title for head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Primate – a *Bishop* chosen to represent the Church on an international level.

Roman Catholic – also known as the *Church of Rome* headed by the *Pope*.

Sacramental – an item that is blessed or set-apart by the *Church* to increase devotion eg: holy water, rosary, *Crucifix*, an image of our Lord or the Saints.

Saint – a person who lived a life of holiness and whose virtues are renowned.

Sign of the Cross – is a movement of tracing the shape of the cross over oneself.

Synod – synonymous with the word *council*; in this respect it refers to the *Synod* of Bishops who meet to discuss the affairs of the entire *Church*.

Synod may also be conducted at local level chaired by the *Metropolitan*.

The Faithful – a term meaning those believers who are involved in the life of the *Church*.

Tithing – a *tithe* literally means a tenth of a person's income donated to the work of the *Church*.

Trinity – the doctrine of one God in three Divine persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Vestments – garments that are worn only for liturgical rites.

Vocation – from the Latin *Vocare* meaning to call. A vocation is a calling to lead a life of holiness additionally to

CONTACT

How can we connect with you?

For further inquiries contact us or contact clergy who can better assist you:

Email: roccnz.pihopa@gmail.com

Facebook: Te Hāhi Katorika Tawhito

Website: www.reformedoldcatholicchurch.co.uk

Primate of the ROCC

Most Reverend Andrew Hall

majesticscot@yahoo.co.uk

Bishop of the ROCCNZ

Most Reverend Rima Tamaiparea-Puki

tamaiparea_puki@hotmail.com

Co-Priors of the Order of St Benedict Camoldese

Monsignor Ray McIntyre

kiwimac@gmail.com

Reverend Allister Kelley

ajkelley5867@gmail.com

Priests of ROCC

Reverend Kahira Rau (Shiralee)

kahirarau@gmail.com

Fr Rob McKay

watersofsebus@gmail.com

Fr Bob Riha-Scott

bobscottnz10@hotmail.com

Community of Faithful Prayer

Sr Antonia CFP

dmura@xtra.co.nz

United Ecumenical Catholic Church

Right Reverend Gordon Fraser

gordon.fraser@kinect.co.nz

Auckland Rainbow Community Church

Mr Peter Lineham

peter@lineham.co.nz

Inclusive Catholics

Fr Graham-Michael Wills

brgeem@gmail.com

