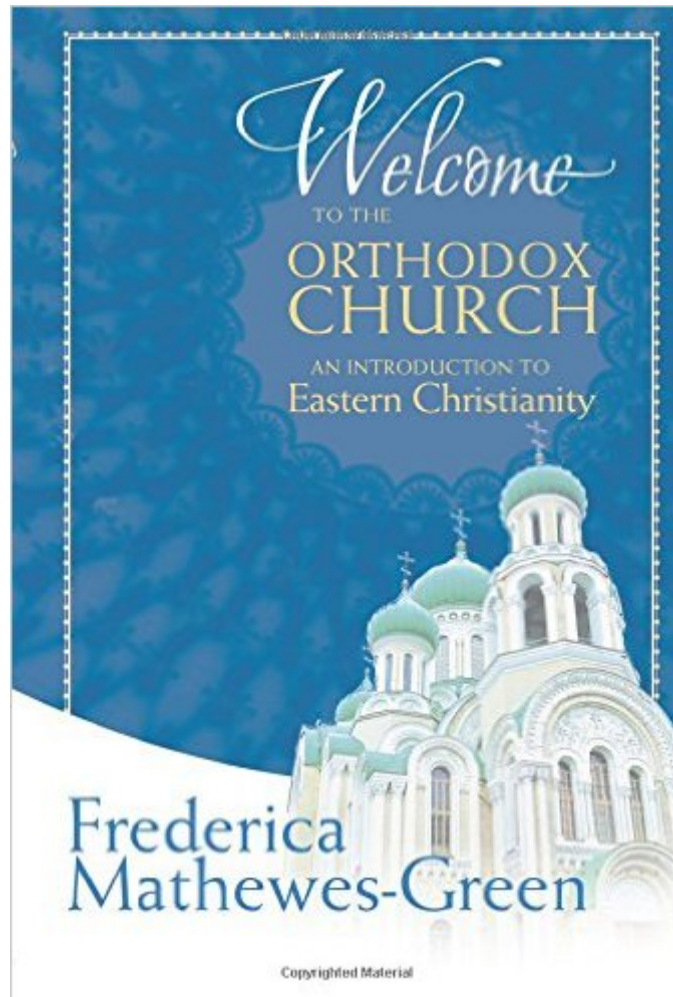


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# Welcome To The Orthodox Church: An Introduction To Eastern Christianity



## Synopsis

Welcome to the Orthodox Church—its history, theology, worship, spirituality, and daily life. This friendly guide provides a comprehensive introduction to Orthodoxy, but with a twist: readers learn by making a series of visits to a fictitious church, and get to know the faith as new Christians did for most of history, by immersion. Mathews-Green provides commentary and explanations on everything from how to venerate an icon, the Orthodox understanding of the atonement, to the Lenten significance of tofu. It's the perfect book for inquirers and newcomers, but even readers who have been Orthodox all their say they learned things they never knew before. Enjoyable, easy-to-read, and leavened with humor, *Welcome to the Orthodox Church* is a gracious guide to the ancient faith of the Christian East.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Full disclosure: I know Khouria Frederica personally. With that said, it's a very solid book. I've been Orthodox my whole life, read any amount of Met. Kallistos Ware and other Orthodox writers, and still learned a lot from this book, because she examines Orthodox doctrine from a Western perspective here. You get to learn not just what Orthodoxy is, but what it is not; the section on our different understandings of salvation is particularly good. The whole thing is both comprehensive and comprehensible--it handles the esoteric details of Greek semantics without hitting you over the head with them--sprinkled with wry humor, and told in Kh. Frederica's very distinct voice.

As a recent convert to Orthodoxy, I am overwhelmed by all that I have to learn. The writing style is

like a personal narrative, so it's like a story one can relate to rather than cramming facts ...and yet it has explained and taught me more facts ....as well as opened up the meaning of the faith as nothing else i have yet read. I DO recommend this for all new to the faith.

This is one of the best crafted books I have read. For someone new to Orthodoxy, as am I, this book may be all you need to learn about the liturgy, history, and theology of the Faith. The author begins by describing the layout of an Orthodox church building, then leads you through the structure describing the parts of the church and the liturgical activities associated with each part. With each discussion, the author narrates the history and theology that is the foundation of that aspect of the liturgy. By the time you finish the book, you have a solid understanding of the liturgy, history, and theology of Orthodoxy. In addition tho the craftsmanship of the writing, the book is very personal and easy to read. When I attended my first Orthodox service, I felt comfortable knowing what was happening, why it was happening, and amazed that this is what happened in the early church services 1900 years ago.

I cannot say enough how great this book is. My parents sent this to me, as I am interested in learning more about the Orthodox Church. It is SO informative, and very easy to read. The explanation of the layout and contents of the church/temple really helped me to not feel so intimidated and confused by it. I really loved how she explained salvation and the differences between the East and West in their ideas of it. There were so many lightbulb moments for me. I still have a lot to learn, but I really couldn't have asked for a better introduction to the Orthodox faith.

I am a recent covert to Eastern Orthodoxy from the Roman Catholic Church. I bought Welcome to the Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity because I saw some of Mrs. Mathewes-Green videos on YouTube and I liked her method of teaching. Her book starts off wonderfully: Mrs. Mathewes-Green chooses to teach the reader of Eastern Orthodoxy by taking them through a tour of a church. The first few chapters are engaging and they contain a lot of information; I did not want to put the book down...until I came to Chapter 8. In Chapter 8, Mrs. Mathewes-Green writes the following (I'm sorry if I'm breaking Review Rules): "My husband and I were supporters of women's ordination in our previous denomination, and we recognized that, when we became Orthodox, the all-male priesthood was part of the package. We assumed that in time we'd learn the Church's reason for this." Time passed, and we never did learn the reason. It turned out that this has never been controversial, and since theology is done on

a need to know basis, the reasoning has never been explicitly formulated. (It seems significant that no previous generation of Orthodox Christians has been troubled by the all-male priesthood. Apparently something was obvious to them that is no longer obvious in our time.) Orthodox can't just adopt the explanations other churches give, in this or other matters; we need to think it through in the context of our own history and theology. Maybe the time has come to undertake that theological labor."Here's my issue with this statement: several times throughout the book, Mrs. Mathewes-Green makes it known that Eastern Orthodox do not change what was passed down to us. We simply receive the faith as has been passed down through the generations. Yet, because she is unclear about the all-male priesthood, she makes it okay to question the all-male priesthood. As a former Roman Catholic, I can say: this is Catholicism! The Second Vatican Council made it known that the "Church" needed to get with the times. I see no difference in this than what Mrs. Mathewes-Green is saying. If an all-male priesthood has been practiced since Our Lord, Jesus Christ walked the planet, why do we need to "undertake that theological labor?" I struggle to see why it's necessary to change when everything else is simply accepted. I believe this is a dangerous statement for the author to make. All it takes is for one person to read this and now more people question something that doesn't need to be questioned. People thinking about converting to the Eastern Orthodox Church, or new members of the Church, are seeking answers and they might believe that this is a topic that should be investigated. This is exactly why I left Catholicism. Because of this, I just can't read the rest of the book. This one statement forced me to question the author's capacity to teach the faith objectively.

A beautifully crafted introduction to Orthodox Christianity. The author sets out to teach us as though we were newcomers to a church community. By taking us into the church building she introduces us to the spirituality of the Eastern Church: icons as windows to heaven, the Divine Liturgy bridging our world to the next. But mostly she shows us that the ancient traditions still communicate and embrace and lead us to the unflagging love and mercy of God.

This book is a very good starting point for an inquirer. It dispels and debunks a lot of the common misunderstandings that people of other Christian denominations may have encountered when looking at the Orthodox faith from the outside. It is a very gentle and non-threatening...positive work, easy to read and understand. Reading this after attending Divine Liturgy over the years has given me a recognition, richness and understanding of the experience that I did not have previously. Highly recommend to non orthodox friends, family, or people who are just curious...or even to those

Orthodox who have never received education about the traditions of the church. Wonderfully done.

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