

Major Feasts in the Byzantine Rite

The **Twelve Great Feasts** are those customarily represented in the festal row on the iconostasis.

Seven feasts of the Lord:

September 14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross
December 25	Nativity of the Lord
January 6	Theophany of the Lord
7 days before Pascha	Flowery or Palm Sunday
40 th day of Pascha	Ascension of the Lord
50 th day of Pascha	Pentecost (Descent of the Holy Spirit)
August 6	Transfiguration of the Lord

Five feasts of the Mother of God:

September 8	Nativity of the Theotokos
November 21	Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple
February 2	Meeting of our Lord with Simeon and Anna (shares some features of a feast of the Lord)
March 25	Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the Theotokos
August 15	Dormition of the Theotokos

And five more great feasts, outside the twelve:

October 1	Protection of the Theotokos
January 1	Circumcision of the Lord / Feast of St. Basil the Great
June 24	Nativity of John the Forerunner and Baptist
June 29	The holy pre-eminent apostles Peter and Paul
August 29	The beheading of John the Forerunner and Baptist

Feasts of the Lord

These feasts have the following at the Divine Liturgy:

Proper first and second antiphons

A proper third antiphon, with the feastday troparion as a refrain

A proper entrance hymn

Troparion, kontakion, prokeimenon, epistle, Alleluia, Gospel, and Communion Hymn of the feast

Magnification and irmos are sung in place of “It is truly proper”

When a feast of the Lord falls on Sunday, its hymns completely replace those of Sunday

On post-festive days:

The feastday first and second antiphons are sung

The third antiphon and entrance hymn are the usual ones, with “O Son of God, (risen from the dead / wondrous in your saints)” replaced by a feast day invocation:

Exaltation of the Cross:	O Son of God, crucified in the flesh...
Nativity of the Lord:	O Son of God, born of the Virgin....
Theophany of the Lord:	O Son of God, baptized by John in the Jordan...
Ascension of the Lord:	O Son of God, who ascended in glory...
Pentecost:	O good Comforter...
Transfiguration of the Lord:	O Son of God, transfigured on the mount...

The troparion and kontakion of the feast are combined with those for the Sunday or weekday

The magnification and irmos are sung in place of “It is truly proper”

This continues through the leave-taking of the feast.

Great Feasts of the Mother of God and of the Saints

These feasts have the following at the Divine Liturgy:

Troparion, kontakion, prokeimenon, epistle, Alleluia, Gospel, and Communion Hymn of the feast

Magnification and irmos are sung in place of “It is truly proper”

When a great feast of the Mother of God or of a saint falls on Sunday, its hymns are combined with those of the Sunday:

Troparion of Sunday

Troparion of the saint

Glory... Kontakion of Sunday

Now and ever... Kontakion of the feast (one kontakion may be omitted)

Prokeimemon of Sunday

V. for the Sunday prokeimenon

Prokeimenon for the feast (with no verse)

Alleluia of Sunday

V. first verse for Sunday

Alleluia for Sunday (repeated)

V. second verse for Sunday

Alleluia for the feast

V. first verse for the feast

Alleluia for the feast (repeated)

The Magnification and irmos are sung in place of “It is truly proper”

Communion hymn of Sunday

Communion hymn of the feast

On post-festive Sundays, the feastday and Sunday hymns are combined as above.

On post-festive weekdays, the feastday and weekday hymns are combined; the exact rules are in the Typikon.

This continues through the leave-taking of the feast.

Vigil-rank Feasts

These feasts have Litija and the blessing of bread at Vespers, and ordinary feastday hymns at the Divine Liturgy.

September 26	The Passing of the holy apostle and evangelist John
October 26	The holy and glorious great-martyr Demetrius
November 8	The holy archangel Michael and all angelic powers
November 12	The holy martyr Josaphat, Archbishop of Polotsk
November 13	Our holy father John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
December 5	Our venerable father Sabbas the Sanctified
December 6	Our holy father Nicholas the Wonder-Worker
December 8	The Maternity of Holy Anna
January 17	Our venerable father Anthony the Great
January 20	Our venerable father Euthymius the Great
January 30	The Three Holy Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom
April 23	The holy and victorious great-martyr George the Wonder-Worker
May 8	The holy apostle and evangelist John the Theologian
May 11	Our holy fathers Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of the Slavs
July 15	The holy great prince Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles
July 20	The holy and glorious prophet Elijah

When a vigil-rank feast falls on Sunday, the Sunday and feast-day hymns are combined.

Polyeleos-rank Feasts

These feasts are the lowest-ranked feasts with Great Vespers and Festal Matins. The polyeleos is sung at Matins, and ordinary feastday hymns at the Divine Liturgy.

September 1	The beginning of the Church Year
September 28	Our venerable father and confessor Chariton
October 6	The holy apostle Thomas
October 9	The holy apostle James Alpheus
October 18	The holy apostle and evangelist Luke
November 1	The holy priest-martyr Theodore Romzha, bishop of Mukačevo
November 14	The holy apostle Philip
November 16	The holy apostle and evangelist Matthew
November 30	The holy apostle Andrew the First-Called
December 12	The Mother of God of Guadalupe
December 13	The holy martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes
Sunday after Nativity	The holy and righteous Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of God
January 11	Our venerable father Theodosius, Founder of the common life
January 25	Our holy father Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople
January 27	Translation of the relics of our holy father John Chrysostom
February 14	The passing of our venerable father Constantine (Cyril)
February 24	The first and second finding of the head of John the Baptist
March 9	The Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste
April 6	The passing of our holy father Methodius, Teacher of the Slavs
April 25	The holy apostle and evangelist Mark

April 30	The holy apostle James
May 3	The passing of our venerable father Theodosius of the Caves
May 9	The transfer of the relics of our holy father Nicholas to Bari
May 10	The holy apostle Simon the Zelot
May 21	The holy emperor Constantine and his mother Helen
May 25	The third finding of the head of St. John the Baptist
June 11	The holy apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas
June 19	The holy apostle Jude
June 30	The Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles
July 2	The Deposition of the Robes of the Theotokos at Blacharnae
July 5	Our venerable father Athanasius of Athos
July 10	Our venerable father Anthony of the Monastery of the Caves
July 17	Our holy father and confessor Paul Gojdič,, Bishop of Prešov
July 24	The holy martyrs Boris and Gleb
July 25	The Dormition of Holy Anna, Mother of the Theotokos
July 27	The holy great-martyr and healer Panteleimon
August 9	The holy apostle Matthias
August 14	The translation of the relics of St. Theodosius of the Caves
August 31	The Deposition of the Sash of the Theotokos in Calcoprateia

When a polyeleos-rank feast falls on Sunday, the Sunday and feast-day hymns are combined.

Classes of saints and feasts

The Menaion speaks of the following classes of saints and commemorations:

The most holy Theotokos

The precious, holy, and life-giving Cross

The holy angels

the holy prophet forerunner and Baptist John

The holy prophets

One holy apostle

Two or more holy apostles

One holy hierarch (bishop)

Two or more holy hierarchs

One venerable (monk) or fool for Christ

Two or more venerables or fools for Christ

One martyr

Two or more martyrs

One priest-martyr (includes bishop-martyrs)

Two or more priest-martyrs

One venerable martyr (martyr who was also a monk)

Two or more venerable martyrs

One woman-martyr

One venerable woman-martyr (martyr who was also a nun)

Two or more women-martyrs or venerable women-martyrs

One venerable woman (nun)

Two or more venerable women

Confessor

Unmercenary healers (those who healed without pay)

Each class of saints has its own common hymns in the Divine Liturgy book (pp. 358-405), for use when the hymns for a particular saint are not available.