

***My Free Illustrated
History of the Catholic Church
from Christ to Pope Francis***



Basilica of St. Peter, Rome

Mr. Romeo Maria del Santo Niño, OP

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*Nihil Obstat:*Deacon Christopher May
*Censor Librorum**Imprimatur:*Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

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Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown, on the twenty-seventh day of July, in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-six, in the ninth year of my Episcopate.



Bishop of Allentown

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DEDICATED
TO
THE HOLY CHILD JESUS
AND HIS MOTHER
MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE

FOREWORD

This is an introductory text on the history of the Catholic Church. The book intends to give the average Catholic general knowledge of the significant events in the Church from its founding to the end of Pope Francis' papacy. It also aims to remove some misconceptions about the Catholic Church resulting from a poor understanding of its history.

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CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST CENTURY

1.1 The Founding and Beginning of the Church

When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church, began His public ministry, He chose twelve men among His faithful followers and taught them the way to God's kingdom. These men, whom He called "Apostles," were Peter and his brother Andrew, James and his brother John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Jude (Thaddeus) and his brother Simon, and Judas the traitor. Christ taught and trained them to lead the assembly of all believers, called the *Church*, toward Heaven. To accomplish this goal, He sent the Apostles into the world and gave them the power and authority to *teach, sanctify, and govern* the faithful.

To teach the faithful infallibly, Christ promised to send His Apostles the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all truth. To sanctify the faithful, He gave them the power to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass and dispense the sacraments. To rule and govern the faithful, He appointed St. Peter as the visible head of the Church, with the other Apostles as his helpers. To St. Peter specifically, He gave the "power of the keys" (Matt 16:18–19) and the mandate to feed the sheep of His flock. (John 21:15–17)



Fig. 1.1 Christ Gives the Keys to St. Peter

As a result, St. Peter became the first pope and the Apostles the first bishops of the Catholic Church. To ensure that the Church will continue perpetually, Christ also established the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which gave the Apostles the power to ordain their future successors—bishops, priests, and deacons.

Before His ascension, the eleven Apostles¹ went into Galilee, where Jesus said to them, “Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20). Then, on the day of His ascension, they gathered at Mount Olivet near Bethany, and Jesus said to them, “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After Christ had said this, the Apostles looked on and saw Him rise until the cloud took Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:8–9)



Fig. 1.2 Christ’s Ascension into Heaven

¹ Only eleven Apostles went to Galilee because, at this time, Judas Iscariot (the traitor) had already committed suicide.

After Christ's ascension into Heaven, the Apostles gathered in the "upper room" to join the Virgin Mary in prayer, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit whom Christ had promised. Meanwhile, they elected St. Matthias to take the place of Judas. On the tenth day, a sudden loud sound of a mighty wind filled the house where they gathered. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Virgin Mary and each of the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.



Fig. 1.3 The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

Filled with new power and courage, the Apostles began speaking of Jesus Christ to the multitude outside. But a miracle happened. Although the listeners were of different nationalities, they all understood the Apostles in their respective languages. Saint Peter also spoke to the crowd, and he preached so persuasively that more than three thousand people asked to be baptized right away.

Shortly after this, Saints Peter and John went to the temple to pray, where they saw a lame man lying at the gate. St. Peter said to him, “Silver and gold, I have none, but what I have, I give to you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk.”



Fig. 1.4 Saint Peter Heals a Lame Man

The lame man immediately stood up and joyfully walked with them to the temple, leaping and praising God. Seeing and hearing of this miracle, five thousand more people asked to be baptized. (Acts 4:4)

1.2 Jewish Persecutions

The Apostles continued preaching and performing miracles in Jerusalem. As the Apostles gained more followers, the chief priests became jealous, seized them, and prohibited them from speaking further about Christ, whom they had crucified. But the Apostles continued preaching and carrying out the mission that Christ had entrusted to them. To help them with their work, they even ordained seven deacons, one of whom was St. Stephen.² Through his powerful preaching, St. Stephen outraged some of the Jews, who took him out of the city and stoned him to death.



Fig. 1.5 The Stoning of St. Stephen

² There is no biblical or historical evidence that the early Church had ordained women as deacons. Although the Bible, in the original Greek, calls a woman who served in the Church a “deacon” (Rom 16:1–2; 1 Tim 3:8–11), the designation does not necessarily indicate that the woman received the laying on of hands (or the Sacrament of Holy Orders). The Greek word “*diákonos*,” which sometimes translates into English as “deacon,” means *servant* and refers to anyone who serves. This is why Christ Himself says (in Matt 20:28) that He did not come to be served but to serve (*diakonísai*) and that he who wishes to be the greatest of all shall be the servant (*diakonos*) of all (Matt 23:11).

1.3 The Conversion of St. Paul

Stephen's martyrdom only increased the number of converts to Christianity. However, the persecution of Christians became more aggressive. One active persecutor was Saul, but he, too, became a Christian when Christ confronted him in a vision, saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"³



Fig. 1.6 The Conversion of St. Paul, A.D. 36

Trembling and astonished, Saul asked, "Lord, what do you wish me to do?" Christ answered, "Arise and go into the city. There you shall be told what you must do." Saul's companions stood amazed because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul rose from the ground. He opened his eyes but could not see. Leading him by the hand, they brought him to Damascus. He was there for three days without sight.

In Damascus, there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Go look for a man named Saul of Tarsus. I have selected him to carry My name

³ After his conversion, Saul, whose other name was Paul (Acts 13:9), became known as "St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles."

before the Gentiles, kings, and Israel's children. I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Ananias went and found Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, laying his hands upon him, "the Lord has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, Saul received his sight, and Ananias baptized him. Saul stayed for some days with the disciples at Damascus; then he began preaching Jesus in the synagogues, saying that He was the Son of God. Those who heard him were astonished and said, "Is this man not he who persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem?" As Saul continued to preach about Jesus, the Jews plotted to kill him, but Saul found out about it. At night, the disciples came and helped him escape to Jerusalem, where the Apostles welcomed him.

1.4 The Spread of Christianity and the Beginning of Heresy

The new converts in Jerusalem formed the first Christian communities. Their conduct was edifying. They offered what they had to help others. People recognized that they were Christians by their love. The Apostles were their leaders. With Peter as their leader, the Apostles preached, administered the sacraments, and governed the community of the faithful that we call "the Church."

The Blessed Virgin Mary was still on earth when the Church began to expand. She was the comfort of the Apostles in their trials; she was their frequent recourse when they had problems or needed advice. She was truly the Mother of the Church. St. Maximus the Confessor, a Father of the Church, said that the Virgin Mary played a key role in the development of the infant Church.⁴ No one records the year of her assumption into Heaven, but St. Elisabeth of Schönau said, based on the Blessed Virgin's private revelation to her, that she lived on earth for a full year and about 3 months after Christ's ascension into Heaven, then remained in the tomb for about 40 days before she was assumed into Heaven.⁵

⁴ St. Maximus the Confessor, *The Life of the Virgin*, Chapter 7, No. 99.

⁵ St. Elisabeth of Schönau, *The Complete Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), pp. 210–211. However, other visionaries have provided different accounts. St. Bridget of Sweden said that the Blessed Virgin remained on earth for fifteen years after Christ's ascension and was in the tomb for fifteen days (*Revelations*, Book VII, Ch. 26, pp. 544–545 of the referenced PDF). This is close to Bl. Catherine Emmerich's statement that Mary died thirteen years and two months after Christ's ascension (*The Life of the Blessed Virgin*, Ch. XV, p. 222 of the PDF). The Venerable Mary of Agreda reported that the Virgin Mary passed away at the age of 70, which means that she remained on earth a little longer, about 22 years after the ascension (*The City of God*, Vol. IV, Book II, Ch. 17, Nos. 701–702, or pp. 592–593 of the PDF). The discrepancies in the data and details provided by these visionaries show that we must be cautious when accepting their revelations at face value. We may accept these private revelations as aids to piety or personal devotion, but we are not required to accept them as matters of Catholic doctrine or dogma.



Fig. 1.7 The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Church began to spread outside Jerusalem, into Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. St. Peter journeyed to these places to visit the newly established communities and encourage and confirm them in the faith. In Samaria, where St. Peter came to confirm the faithful, a certain man named Simon Magus (so-called because he was a magician) saw how the laying on of hands conferred the power of the Holy Spirit on the faithful. He offered to buy the sacrament's power from St. Peter, but St. Peter rebuked him because buying or selling spiritual things is sinful.⁶



Fig. 1.8 Simon Magus (in Black) Trying to Buy the Power of the Holy Spirit from St. Peter

After Simon Magus, other false prophets came, such as the Gnostics, the Ebionites, and the Cerinthians, who denied the divinity of Christ. It was to counter the errors of these false teachers that St. John the Evangelist wrote his Gospel, for, together with the growth and expansion of Christianity, the devil also began to sow the seeds of heresy.

⁶ The sin of buying or selling spiritual things is now called “simony,” after Simon Magus, who attempted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from St. Peter.

1.5 The Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 49)

In other places that St. Peter visited, such as the towns of Lydda (west of Jerusalem) and Joppa (on the sea coast), he also performed miracles. In Caesarea Palestinae (not the same as Caesarea Philippi), there was a God-fearing Roman centurion named Cornelius, whom St. Peter admitted to the faith, confirming the gospel teaching that salvation is open, not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. Moving forward, the converted Saul—also known by his other name, Paul—would later travel to various lands to bring the Good News to the Gentile world.



Fig. 1.9 The Conversion of Cornelius

After the conversion of Cornelius, St. Peter returned to Jerusalem. In A.D. 44, King Herod Agrippa continued the persecution of Christians. He beheaded St. James, who was the brother of St. John and cousin of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and imprisoned St. Peter. With the help of an angel, St. Peter escaped his prison cell, while a deadly disease punished Herod (Acts 12). In Jerusalem, St. Peter and the Apostles settled certain disputed issues among the Christians, such as whether circumcision was necessary for Gentile converts. In a gathering of the Apostles, now known as the **Council of Jerusalem** (A.D. 49), St. Peter presided as head of the visible Church and exercised a position of leadership among the Apostles (Acts 15). From A.D. 49 to the present day, the Catholic Church continues to settle disputed questions through gatherings of bishops, called *councils*.



Fig. 1.10 The Council of Jerusalem

1.6 The Voyages of St. Paul

In his work of spreading the gospel to the Gentile world, St. Paul made three missionary voyages. In his **first missionary voyage** (A.D. 45–49), Saint Paul and Barnabas, his companion, went to Seleucia and sailed from there to the island of Cyprus. They crossed the island as far as Paphos. After preaching through the whole island, they sailed to Perga and traveled by land to Antioch in Pisidia. They proceeded to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, then back again to Perga, and, finally, to Antioch in Syria, where they started (Acts 13:4–14:27). He was able to attend the Council of Jerusalem shortly after his first voyage.



Fig. 1.11 Saint Paul's First Missionary Voyage

In his **second missionary voyage** (A.D. 50–52), St. Paul and Silas (his new companion) started from Antioch, passed through Syria and Cilicia, and returned to Derbe and Lystra, where Timothy joined them. They continued traveling. When St. Paul reached Troas, St. Luke also joined him and became his secretary. In Philippi, the capital of Macedonia, St. Paul established a small church (Acts 15:40–16:18). The authorities arrested him and Silas for preaching the gospel, but they asked them to leave when they discovered that they were Roman citizens (Acts 16:19–40). St. Paul proceeded to Thessalonica, Berea, and several other cities, including Athens, where he preached about the “Unknown God” that the Greeks adored. Finally, returning by way of Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem, he came back to Antioch (Acts 18:18–18:22). It was during his second missionary voyage that St. Paul wrote his well-known epistles, the First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians.



Fig. 1.12 Saint Paul's Second Missionary Voyage

In his **third missionary voyage** (A.D. 53–58), St. Paul started from Antioch, passed through Galatia and Phrygia, and came to Ephesus, where he remained for two years. He then traveled to Philippi in Macedonia, Corinth in Greece, and Troas, where he stayed a week. He continued his tour of the islands of Lesbos and Chios, then Samos and Miletus. Then he sailed again to Tyre, Caesarea, and, finally, returned to Jerusalem (Acts 18:23–21:17). Everywhere he went, he preached the gospel, converted pagans, and established Christian communities. He also wrote other epistles that became part of the New Testament. These writings earned him the title “The Apostle of the Gentiles.”



Fig. 1.13 Saint Paul's Third Missionary Voyage

The Jews arrested him upon his return to Jerusalem, but Lysias (Acts 23:26), a Roman tribune, rescued him by moving him to Caesarea to prevent the Jews from murdering him. During his captivity, the Romans allowed him to preach, and, after two years in Caesarea, they sent him to Rome at his request so the emperor could judge him. As a result, St. Paul embarked on a fourth but non-missionary voyage, his journey to Rome. On his way to Rome, he was shipwrecked on the island of Malta but survived through a miracle. (Acts 21–28).

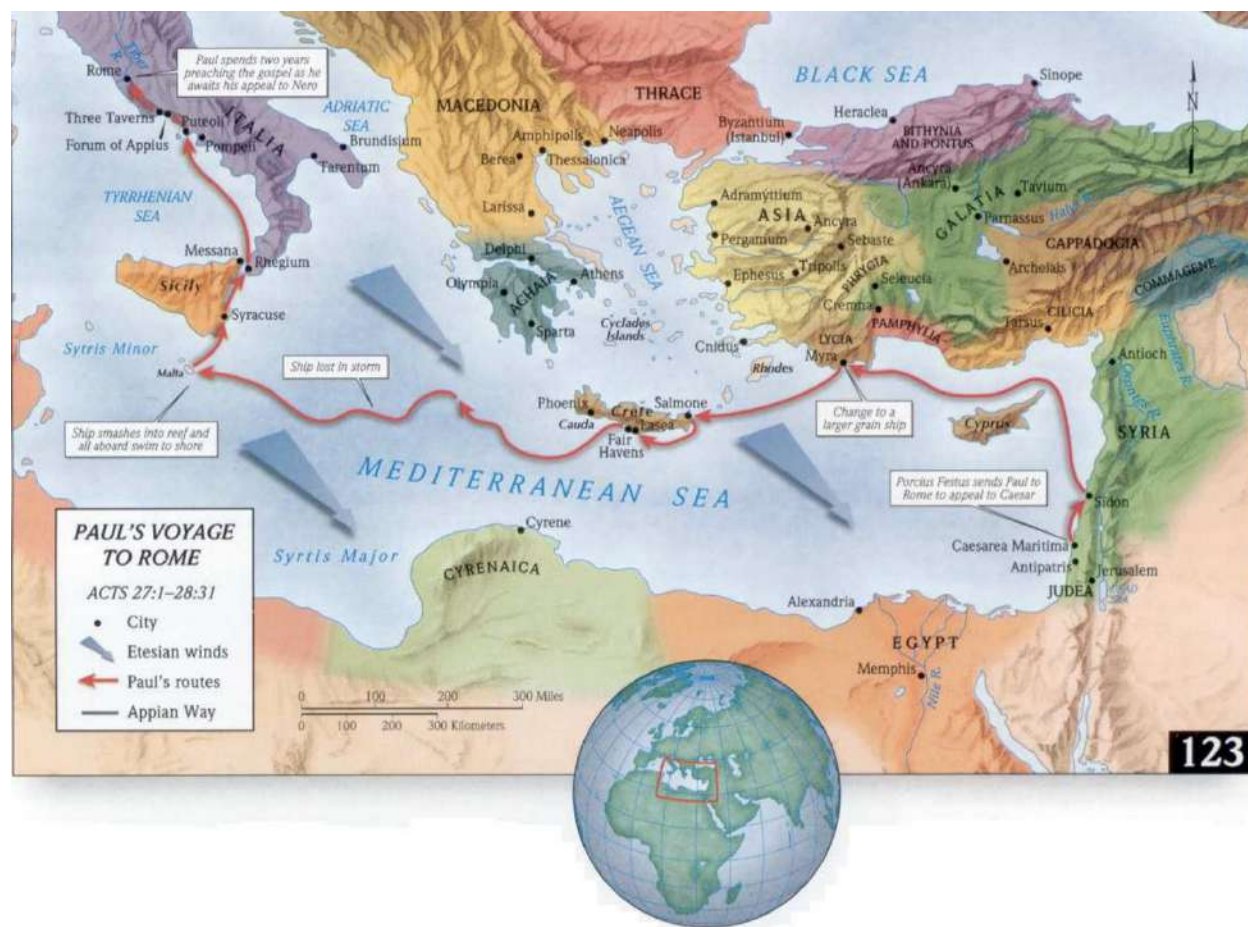


Fig. 1.14 Saint Paul's Voyage to Rome

While he was in Malta, Saint Paul performed miracles and healed many sick people. After three months, he went to Rome, where the Romans placed him under military custody.

1.7 Roman Persecutions in the First Century

It was Emperor Nero (reigned A.D. 54–68)⁷ who started the systematic persecution of the Christians. He set the city of Rome on fire in A.D. 64 and falsely accused the Christians of starting it. Following this, he seized, imprisoned, exiled, or executed Christians. Later, Emperor Domitian plunged St. John the Evangelist into a cauldron of boiling oil, but he emerged unhurt.⁸ However, Domitian banished him to the island of Patmos,⁹ where he wrote the Book of Revelation (Rev 1:9).



Fig. 1.15 The Torture of St. John the Evangelist in Boiling Oil

In A.D. 65, Emperor Nero beheaded Saint Paul in Rome and, on the same day and in the same city, he crucified St. Peter upside down.¹⁰

⁷ The date ranges given here and in the following paragraphs are the dates when these Roman leaders reigned as emperors, not the dates when the persecutions happened.

⁸ The New Testament does not record this incident, but we know it from Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*, Chapter 36.

⁹ See Pseudo-Hippolytus, *The Apostles and the Disciples*, No. 3.

¹⁰ We learn that St. Paul and St. Peter suffered martyrdom on the same day from St. Jerome in *De Viris Illustribus* (*On Illustrious Men*), Ch. 6



Fig. 1.16 The Crucifixion of St. Peter

According to St. Jerome, St. Peter received the crown of martyrdom upside down at his request because he felt that “he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord.”¹¹

¹¹ St. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* (On Illustrious Men), Ch. 1.

All the Apostles, except St. John, died as martyrs to the Faith. (See table below.¹²)

DEATH OF THE APOSTLES			
NAME	SYMBOL	PLACE OF APOSTOLIC WORK	DEATH
<i>Judas Iscariot</i>			Hung himself before the day of Pentecost, having despaired of God's mercy after betraying Christ for 30 pieces of silver
<i>St. James the Greater</i> (This was James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John)	Staff, wallet	Jerusalem	Beheaded by order of Herod Agrippa in Jerusalem in A.D. 44; the first Apostle martyred and the only Apostle whose martyrdom is mentioned in the Bible (Acts 12:1–2)
<i>St. Philip</i>	Double cross	Phrygia, Asia Minor	According to tradition, crucified at the city of Hierapolis in ancient Phrygia (western Turkey) in A.D. 54.
<i>St. Andrew</i> (Peter's brother)	X-shaped cross	Scythia, Greece, and Constantinople	Crucified on an X-shaped cross at Patras, Greece, in A.D. 60
<i>St. Matthew</i> , Evangelist	Short sword, winged man bearing lance	Arabia, Egypt	According to one tradition, martyred in Parthia in A.D. 60.
<i>St. James the Less</i> ¹ (This was James, the son of Alphaeus)	Fuller's club	Bishop of Jerusalem	Stoned and clubbed to death by the Jews in Jerusalem in A.D. 62
<i>St. Matthias</i>	Lance	Chosen by Apostles to replace Judas; details of his life are unknown.	According to tradition, stoned and beheaded in Colchis in A.D. 64

¹² Many details in this table came from Pseudo-Hippolytus, *On the Apostles and Disciples*. However, some came from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and other sources. St. James was stoned and then clubbed to death, according to St. Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, Ch. 2.

DEATH OF THE APOSTLES (Continued)			
NAME	SYMBOL	PLACE OF APOSTOLIC WORK	DEATH
<i>St. Peter</i>	One or two keys	Preached in Jerusalem, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Asia; Bishop of Antioch; Pope and Bishop of Rome	Crucified by order of Emperor Nero in A.D. 65; crucified upside-down at his request
<i>St. Paul</i>	Sword	St. Paul made three missionary journeys to Mediterranean countries.	Beheaded in A.D. 65 on the same day and in the same city that St. Peter was crucified
<i>St. Jude Thaddeus</i>	Club	Syria, Mesopotamia (now called Iraq), Armenia, and Persia (now called Iran)	Clubbed to death; martyred in Persia with St. Simon Zelotes in A.D. 65
<i>St. Simon Zelotes</i>	Saw	North Africa, Persia (Iran)	Hanged upside-down, then cut in half with a saw; martyred in Persia with St. Jude Thaddeus in A.D. 65
<i>St. Bartholomew</i>	Knife; or shown holding his skin in his hand	Arabia, Parthia, India, Armenia	Skinned alive and martyred in Armenia in A.D. 71
<i>St. Thomas Didymus</i> (This was the doubting Thomas in John 20:24-25)	Spear, arrow	Parthia, India, Far East	According to tradition, martyred in Calamene, India, in A.D. 72, possibly with a spear
<i>St. John the Evangelist</i>	Eagle, chalice	Asia Minor, Ephesus, Patmos; guardian of Mary after the death of Christ	Escaped martyrdom of boiling oil under Emperor Domitian; banished by Emperor Domitian to the island of Patmos and died at Ephesus in A.D. 100.

1.8 The Destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)

Although many of the Jews in Judea converted to Christianity, others remained obstinate, and the nation of Israel was soon punished for it. When they revolted against Rome in A.D. 66, the Romans, under the command of General Titus, marched with a vengeance and, in A.D. 70, destroyed Jerusalem and its temple.¹³ This event occurred during the reign of Roman Emperor Vespasian.¹⁴



Fig. 1.17 The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70

With the destruction of Jerusalem, famine and pestilence set in. The Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire.¹⁵ Many Jewish Christians became captives in Rome, but others settled in other areas of the Roman Empire.

¹³ The noted Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, gave an eyewitness account of this terrifying event in his book, *The Wars of the Jews*.

¹⁴ In A.D. 68, Emperor Nero committed suicide after the Praetorian Guard abandoned him and the Roman Senate sentenced him to death.

¹⁵ This event, when many of the Jews lived outside Israel, is known as the *diaspora*.



Fig. 1.18 Map of the Roman Empire
(where the Jews were dispersed)

1.9 The Continuation of Roman Persecutions

Meanwhile, the Romans continued to be concerned by the increasing number of Christian converts. It wasn't because the Christians posed a threat to their political and military power but because the ideals of Christianity were opposed to their idolatry and immorality. Thus, while the Jews first persecuted the Christians during the time of the Apostles, now the Christians faced the prospect of even greater persecution by the pagan Romans.

The intense persecution of Christians abated when Nero died, but it continued under Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96). This cruel emperor targeted the Roman upper class, which converted either to Judaism or Christianity. Among those whom he persecuted was his cousin, Titus Flavius Clemens, a Roman consul. At the end of Domitian's reign (in A.D. 96), St. John the Apostle returned to Ephesus under Emperor Nerva. He died at Ephesus in A.D. 100, making him the last Apostle to die. However, other emperors continued to persecute Christians even into the second and third centuries. There were ten waves of such persecution, with periods of peace in between. See the chart, *Ten Waves of Roman Persecutions*, in Chapter 2 of this book.

1.10 The Writers of the New Testament

The books of the New Testament, including the gospels (or those that deal with Christ's life), were not written during Christ's lifetime. However, they all appeared during the first 100 years of Christianity. Although Catholic scholars are still at odds as to which books of the New Testament appeared first, almost everyone agrees that the latest books were those of St. John the Evangelist, which appeared in A.D. 99.

There were four evangelists (gospel writers): **St. Matthew**, **St. Mark**, **St. Luke**, and **St. John**. Catholic tradition symbolized them as a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, respectively.



Fig. 1.19 Symbols of the Four Evangelists

In the figure above, the young man represents St. Matthew because his gospel speaks of Christ's *humanity*. The lion, the king of animals, represents St. Mark because his gospel speaks of Christ's *kingship*. The ox—an animal that priests sometimes use as a sacrifice—represents St. Luke because his gospel treats Christ's *priesthood*. And the eagle symbolizes St. John because his gospel message soars to the heights of Christ's *divinity*.

Besides writing the gospel, St. Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles, while St. John wrote the Book of Revelation. St. James and St. Jude each wrote an epistle; St. Peter wrote two; St. John wrote three; but St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, wrote most of the epistles in the New Testament.

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES

2.1 Roman Persecutions in the Second and Third Centuries

The brutal Roman persecutions lasted for three hundred years. The most severe persecutions in the second and third centuries were those under Trajan (A.D. 98–117), Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211), Maximinus Thrax (A.D. 235–238), and Diocletian (A.D. 284–305).

During these persecutions, the Romans threw Christians who refused to disown their faith or to worship the Roman gods (or idols) into cauldrons of boiling oil, then crucified, beheaded, or cast them into the arena for lions to devour. Some were thrown into the Tiber. Others were burned to provide light for Nero's games. They tortured entire families, including children and women, beyond description. Those were terrible times. Christians drenched Rome, the seat of paganism and monstrous idolatry, in their blood. The underground catacombs, where their fellow Christians buried them, still display the bones of Christians who suffered martyrdom in that city.



Fig. 2.1 The Martyrs at the Colosseum

THE TEN WAVES OF ROMAN PERSECUTIONS¹⁶					
NUMBER	EMPEROR	YEAR	PLACE	CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRIOUS MARTYRS
First	Nero	64–68	Rome	Christians accused of burning Rome; many killed by wild beasts, crucifixion, burning	St. Peter; St. Paul
Second	Domitian	95–96	Rome	Aimed at the higher classes	Flavius Clemens (senator); Flavia Domitilla
Third	Trajan, then Hadrian	106–138	Provinces	Severe and violent persecution; Christians exposed to wild beasts, burned at the stake, or crucified.	St. Ignatius of Antioch; St. Simon of Jerusalem; St. Clement of Rome; St. Symphorosa and sons
Fourth	Marcus Aurelius Antoninus	161–180	Lyons	Christians of noble birth banished; those of lower classes cruelly put to death.	St. Justin Martyr; St. Polycarp of Smyrna; St. Pothinus of Lyons
Fifth	Septimius Severus	202–211	Egypt, Carthage	Widespread persecution following the emperor's edict that forbidding conversion to Judaism or Christianity	Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons; St. Perpetua and her servant St. Felicitas
Sixth	Maximinus Thrax	235–238	Rome	Aimed especially at bishops and priests.	Popes St. Pontian and St. Anterus
Seventh	Decius	249–251	Rome, Africa, Near East	Systematic campaign to destroy the Church; better organized than earlier persecutions; some Christians fled to the desert.	Pope Fabian; St. Agatha in Sicily; St. Alexander of Jerusalem
Eighth	Valerian	257–260	Rome	Christians were forbidden to go to the catacombs; in Utica (near Carthage), 300 martyrs were thrown into a pit and covered with quicklime.	Pope St. Sixtus II; St. Lawrence; St. Cyprian of Carthage; St. Cyril the boy martyr; the <i>massa candida</i> (the holy martyrs of Utica)
Ninth	Aurelian	274–275	Rome	The emperor wanted only one official god (the sun god) for his empire; so, he persecuted the Christians.	Pope St. Felix; St. Denis, Bishop of Paris
Tenth	Diocletian ¹⁷ and Maximian	284–305	Rome, Provinces	Most cruel and systematic of all persecutions; over 6,000 members of the Theban Legion martyred.	St. Sebastian; St. Januarius; Lucy; Agatha; Catherine of Alexandria

¹⁶ The persecutions occurred during the reign of the emperors mentioned in the table. This does not imply that the emperors themselves were the ones who directly persecuted the Christians.

¹⁷ At first, Diocletian ruled the whole empire; in A.D. 286, Maximian ruled the western provinces.

2.2 Early Christian Martyrs

The so-called *Acts of the Martyrs* are the records of the trials and executions of early Christian martyrs. The notaries of the Roman court wrote some of these, and the early Christian writers wrote the others. Roman officials eventually put these Roman records in judicial archives. Still, in the third century, Emperor Diocletian destroyed many of them when he noticed that these *Acts* inspired the early Christians to become even more steadfast in their faith. Thus, very few of these records still exist today. The extant reliable accounts of the lives and heroism of the martyrs are those that eyewitnesses or their contemporaries wrote.

Some examples of these accounts or Acts are the following:

- The [*Martyrdom of St. Ignatius of Antioch*](#) (A.D. 117)
- The [*Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*](#) (A.D. 156), written by Pionius, based on an account from St. Irenaeus, a disciple of St. Polycarp.
- The [*Acts of Martyrdom of St. Justin and His Companions*](#) (A.D. 165)
- The [*Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs*](#) (A.D. 180)
- The [*Acts of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas*](#) (A.D. 207)—quoted by Tertullian and St. Augustine
- The [*Life and Passion of St. Cyprian*](#) (A.D. 258), written by his companion, Pontius the Deacon
- [*Martyrdom of Saints Fructuosus, Augurius, and Eulogius*](#) (A.D. 259)
- The [*Martyrdom of St. Crispina*](#) (A.D. 304)

In addition to the above *Acts* or records, the stories of other martyrs may be found in compilations such as [*The Martyrs of the Colosseum*](#) (by Rev. A. J. O'Reilly) and [*Victories of the Martyrs*](#) (by St. Alphonsus Liguori). The famous [*Roman Martyrology*](#) provides additional names, feast dates, and often only a brief description of the martyrs' death and heroism; however, the online [*Catholic Encyclopedia*](#) provides more detailed information about them. Liturgical readings have also documented and preserved some of these accounts.

Far from being fanciful or mythological, the tales of faith and heroism depicted in these accounts are wonderful and illuminating, and they serve as inspirational reading for people of all ages.

This book will present only a few of these martyrs.

St. Ignatius of Antioch



Fig. 2.2 Martyrdom of St. Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 117)

St. Peter appointed St. Ignatius Theophorus as the third bishop of Antioch (in Syria). During the reign of Emperor Trajan, Roman authorities apprehended St. Ignatius and sent him to Rome. On his way to Rome, he wrote seven epistles. In his epistles, he taught the reality of the Blessed Trinity,¹⁸ as well as the Incarnation of Christ—the Son of God, conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit¹⁹—and His dual nature as true God and true man.²⁰ St. Ignatius also affirmed the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist²¹ and the unity of this Sacrifice (“one flesh, one blood, one altar”).²² He declared the primacy of the Roman bishop (the pope),²³ the

¹⁸ *Epistle to the Magnesians*, Ch. 13

¹⁹ *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, Ch. 18

²⁰ *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, Ch. 20

²¹ *Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans*, Ch. 7. St. Ignatius goes on to say that where Christ is (through the Eucharist), there also is the Catholic Church. (Ch. 8).

²² *Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*, Ch. 4

²³ *Epistle to the Romans*, “Greetings.”

hierarchical structure of the Church and the importance of bishops,²⁴ as well as the duty of the faithful to be submissive to their bishops.²⁵ Note that the teachings of St. Ignatius reflect the beliefs of the early Church and are the same doctrines that the Catholic Church teaches today.²⁶

St. Ignatius so desired martyrdom that he begged the Roman Christians not to intercede for him or deprive him of his impending martyrdom.²⁷ He even prayed that he might entice the lions to devour him quickly and not be afraid to touch him.²⁸ When Emperor Trajan asked him who he was, he replied, “He who has Christ within his breast.” Thereafter, Trajan condemned him to the lions, and the bloodthirsty lions devoured his body at the Roman amphitheater.²⁹

²⁴ *Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians*, Ch. 2 and 3

²⁵ *Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, Ch. 6

²⁶ Besides the epistles of St. Ignatius, other early Christian writings reveal that the early Christians believed and practiced doctrines and practices still observed in the present Catholic Church. For example, the writings of St. Clement, St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, and others describe the primacy of the bishop of Rome, the early Christian practice of ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons, as well as the manner of celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass and resolving disputes through councils, all of which the Catholic Church still observes. This evidence strongly indicates that *the early Christian Church was, in fact, the Catholic Church!* Indeed, after reading and learning more about the Church’s early history, the former Anglican priest, John Henry Newman (1801–1890), converted to Catholicism, saying that “to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.” See his work, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1890), Introduction, Part I, No. 5, p. 8. Of course, Newman’s remark does not mean that every Protestant who studies Church history will convert to Catholicism. He merely meant to say that early Church history strongly favors the Catholic Church’s claim to authenticity.



Fig. 2.3 John Henry Newman

²⁷ *Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*, Ch. 4

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Ch. 5

²⁹ See the *Martyrdom of St. Ignatius of Antioch*, Ch. 2.

St. Polycarp of Smyrna

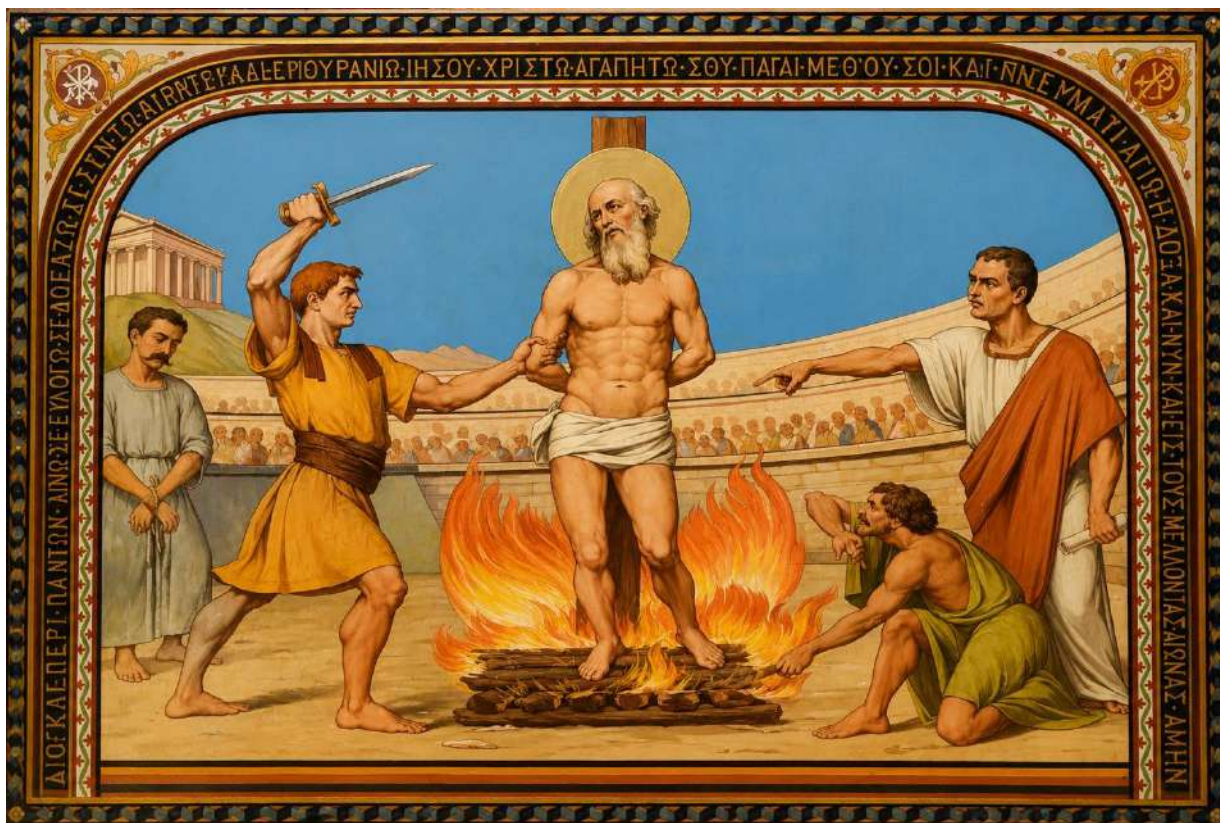


Fig. 2.4 The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp (A.D. 155)

Another second-century martyr was St. Polycarp, a disciple of St. John the Apostle. Indeed, it was St. John himself who ordained him as bishop of Smyrna.³⁰ St. Irenaeus, who preserved St. Polycarp's only surviving work, the *Epistle to the Philippians*, recalled that as a boy, he listened intently to St. Polycarp when he discoursed about his conversations with St. John and the other Apostles. Before he died, St. Polycarp went to Rome and made an agreement with Pope Anicetus that each church could keep its custom of celebrating Easter.³¹ Like many churchmen, he had been a target of Roman persecution. Although he was not afraid to die, he went into hiding on the advice of his friends. However, a servant, who was tortured to confess, revealed his location to the persecutors.³² Thus, the persecutors came and brought St. Polycarp to the city, but St. Polycarp refused to renounce his faith. The persecutors first tried to burn him at the stake but ended up stabbing him to death when the fire failed to consume his body.³³

³⁰ See St. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* (On Illustrious Men), Ch. 17.

³¹ See Eusebius, *Church History*, Book 4, Ch. 14, No. 1.

³² *The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, Ch. 6

³³ *Ibid.*, Ch. 15–16

St. Cecilia

Many artists portray St. Cecilia in paintings and holy cards as a lady playing a musical instrument—a harp, an organ, a violin, etc. Her connection to music stems from a reported incident in her life. According to the story, St. Cecilia, who had secretly vowed her virginity to God, was given in marriage to a rich pagan named Valerian. Then, on the night of her wedding, while everybody was making merry, she set herself apart, and, upon hearing heavenly music, she sang to God “in her heart” so that God might preserve her purity.³⁴

But St. Cecilia was one of the early Christian martyrs. She was also one of the earliest saints of whom the miracle of bodily incorruption was reported. She suffered martyrdom in A.D. 230 for defying the Roman prefect, and those who exhumed her body in A.D. 822 and again in 1599 reported it to be incorrupt.³⁵



Fig. 2.5 The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia
(This statue shows the wound in her neck where she was axed.)

³⁴ See *The Life and Acts of St. Cecilia*, p. 9. Unlike King David, who was renowned for his skill as a harpist (1 Sam 16:14–23), there is no record of St. Cecilia playing a musical instrument or even of having a beautiful voice. Her record only said that she “sang in her heart.” And, just because of this, many Catholics have since regarded her as the patroness of sacred music.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21. Some scholars have challenged these reports even though the sculptor, who made the statue of St. Cecilia, said that he had seen the body when it was exhumed (*Ibid.*, p. 22). But it is unnecessary to dwell on this controversy because the declaration of St. Cecilia as a saint was not because of her incorrupt body but because she died for the Faith.

The period of Roman persecution was also known as the **Age of Martyrs**. During this time, the lions devoured the body of St. Ignatius of Antioch, among others, at the amphitheater. The Romans tried to burn St. Polycarp at the stake and then stabbed him to death when the fire failed to consume him. They beheaded St. Justin Martyr and slew Saints Perpetua and Felicitas with a sword. They roasted St. Lawrence on a gridiron. The names are too numerous to mention. But here is the thing: had Christianity been a purely human invention, these terrible Roman persecutions would have destroyed it. However, because Christianity is the work of God, the torments and sufferings endured by Christians for their faith did not end Christianity; instead, they became the catalyst that propelled its further expansion. The more Christians were persecuted, the more pagan people were converted. For this reason, Tertullian—a noted ecclesiastical writer—did not hesitate to say that the blood of Christians was the *seed* of Christianity.³⁶

Of course, not all Christians died for their faith or became martyrs. Some of them, out of fear of torture or death, renounced their faith and became apostates. To save their lives, some even offered sacrifices to the Roman gods.

2.3 The Fate of the Roman Persecutors

One might wonder what happened to the Roman authorities who persecuted the early Christians. Just as Herod the Great, who persecuted the Child Jesus in His infancy, died a horrible death,³⁷ many of the persecutors likewise ended their lives unhappily. These persecutors include the Roman emperors under whose reign the persecution of the Christians happened, although they might not have directly performed the persecutions themselves. In some cases, the persecutions' ruthlessness and violence were due more to the work of the regional governors within the empire than to specific decrees from the emperors. Still, the emperors who permitted the persecution were ultimately responsible. Therefore, their lives also ended unhappily, as evidenced by the following facts:

NERO committed suicide when his subjects rebelled against him and when his friends and Praetorian Guards deserted him.

DOMITIAN was assassinated, and his body was ingloriously cremated.

³⁶ Tertullian, *The Apology*, Chapter 50.

³⁷ See *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Ch. 6, No. 5.

Discouraged by revolts within the empire, TRAJAN died suddenly. Unable to have a child, he had no choice but to adopt a son as his successor. His adopted son, HADRIAN, in turn, suffered a protracted illness that made him long for death.

MARCUS AURELIUS, disappointed by his son Commodus' poor character and lackluster military and political abilities, became quite fearful of his son's future and died unhappily. The remark he made in his *Meditations* seems to explain the reason for his fear: "What doesn't transmit light creates its own darkness."³⁸ In his *Roman History*, Dio Cassius said of him, "Just one thing prevented him from being completely happy, namely, that after rearing and educating his son in the best possible way, he was vastly disappointed in him."³⁹



Fig. 2.6 Emperor Nero



Fig. 2.7 Emperor Diocletian

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS died of an infectious disease and suffered from debilitating gout that immobilized him. He had two sons who couldn't get along; one of them, Caracalla, wanted him dead rather than alive and even attempted to kill him.

Betrayed by his successor, DECIUS died dismally in a swamp while fighting the Goths in the Battle of Abritus.

³⁸ Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book VIII, No. 57, Tr. by Gregory Hays

³⁹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, Vol. 9, Epitome of Book LXXII, pp. 67–69

Defeated in the Battle of Edessa and taken captive by Shapur, king of Persia, VALERIAN grew old in slavery and suffered a disgraceful death while in captivity.

The Praetorian Guards killed Emperor AURELIAN because they thought their emperor would unfairly punish and execute them.

DIOCLETIAN aged quickly due to illness, but he lived long enough to see his successors fight among themselves and cause his tetrarchy to fail.

2.4 Catacomb Art

The catacombs provided safety for Christians during the Roman persecutions. These were an underground mazes of passageways dug out of the soft, porous rock beneath Rome. Although they originally served as burial grounds, the Christians also used them as their secret meeting places. They prayed and celebrated Holy Mass here without the pagans noticing them. The early Christians embellished the catacombs with pious works of art. To this day, these artistic works, which we now call “catacomb art,” remain as a lasting monument to the faith they cherished and died for.



Fig. 2.8 The Good Shepherd at the Catacomb of Domitilla (A.D. 200)

2.5 Heresies During the Second and Third Centuries

In addition to Jewish and Roman persecutions, early Christians faced other challenges. They also had to contend with the more important challenges to the Faith, known as *heresies*, that is, unorthodox teachings spread by false teachers in the early Christian communities. Although the seeds of heresy started in Palestine during the time of Simon Magus, the second and third centuries saw the rise of Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, and Manichaeism.

Gnosticism (from the Greek *gnostikoi*, which means “knowledge”) refers to the belief of some early Christian groups claiming access to special and secret knowledge about God, Jesus, and the world. It has its roots in first-century Palestine and is a mixture of various belief systems, predominantly pantheistic and idealistic, but with some elements copied from the Judeo-Christian religion. Some gnostic writers even produced “Bible-like literature” that competed with the authentic gospels of the Evangelists.⁴⁰ Its errors persisted beyond the second century, and its influence may be seen even in today’s New Age ideas. In the United States, some gnostic churches demonstrate the survival of Gnosticism as a religion.⁴¹

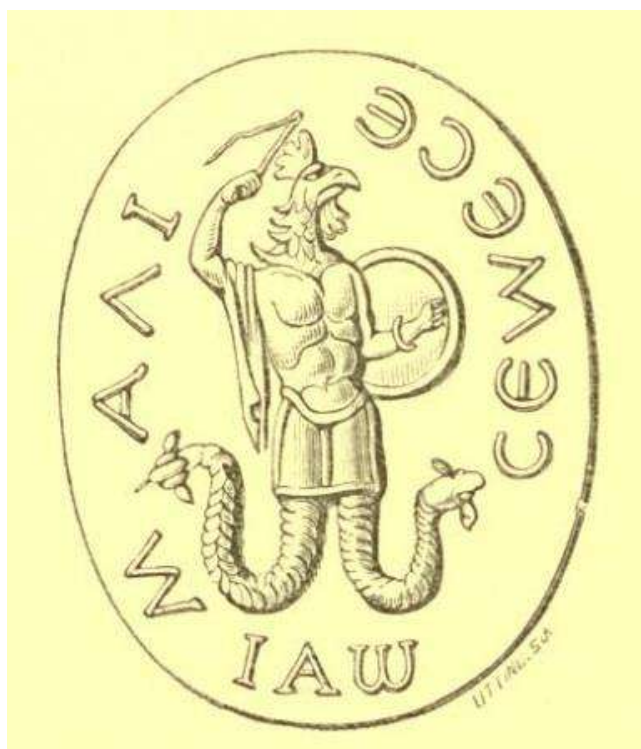


Fig. 2.9 The Gnostics and Their Remains

⁴⁰ For a listing of these gnostic texts and alternative gospels, see [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism).

⁴¹ See “Ecclesia Gnostica” from [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesia_Gnostica).

Marcionism, a heretical movement begun by the theologian Marcion (A.D. 85–160), rejected the God of the Old Testament and believed only in the God of the Christian gospel. Because it rejected all Old Testament literature, its Bible consisted only of an abbreviated St. Luke’s gospel and ten Pauline epistles.

Montanism is a movement similar in some respects to Gnosticism because its founder, Montanus, claimed to have received special revelations from the Holy Spirit. But Montanus went beyond himself and began making strange utterances or prophecies that contradicted the Church’s customs and traditions.⁴² Still, many followed him because he emphasized moralism and personal ascetic practices, which contrasted sharply with the laxity and worldliness of some churchmen.

Manichaeism, named after the false prophet Mani (216–274), affirmed the existence of two eternal principles—one good and the other evil. The spirit is good, and matter (or the body) is evil. Manichaeism, which teaches that the body is intrinsically evil, denies that Christ had a real body but only an apparent body.

In addition to these heresies, the third century witnessed the rise of three *heresies against the Blessed Trinity*. First, there was **Sabellianism** (after the heretic Sabellius), which denied that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were distinct Persons, but were merely three different modes or aspects of the same divine substance. Another heresy, known as **tritheism**, did not merely exaggerate the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit but went so far as to say that they were *three different gods*! Origen, a brilliant ecclesiastical writer of the third century, started as a powerful defender of Christianity, but some of his novel ideas were associated with teachings that became heretical. He taught the doctrine of **subordinationism** (also called Origenism), which affirms that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate rather than equal to the Father in being and nature.

2.6 The Apologists

Just as God raised martyrs to be heroic witnesses to the Faith during times of persecution, He also sent saintly scholars and men of learning who opposed injustice and defended the Faith during times of persecution and heresy. These were the great apologists.⁴³

⁴² See Eusebius, *Church History*, Book 5, Ch. 16, No. 7.

⁴³ The term “apology” is not used here in the sense of making an excuse or asking pardon for a mistake committed. Instead, it refers to the original meaning of the Greek word *apologeisthai*, meaning “to defend oneself.” A Christian apologist is someone who defends the Christian Faith.

Some of the apologists from the second and third centuries include the following:

Hegesippus of Palestine, who opposed Gnosticism and Marcionism;
Alexander of Lycopolis, who abandoned and opposed Manichaeism; and
Tertullian, who joined but later abandoned and opposed Montanism.

Another early apologist, **St. Justin Martyr** (A.D. 100–165), wrote two apologies. He addressed his *First Apology*, written in the form of a letter to Emperor Antoninus Pius, his sons, and his senate. The emperor reportedly accepted his apology favorably, granting his request to punish Christians solely for their crimes, not just for their Christian identity. St. Justin addressed his *Second Apology* to the Roman Senate, but this cost him his life because, in Chapter 3 of his apology, he exposed the ignorant prejudice against Christians by his rival philosopher, Crescens.⁴⁴ According to tradition, Crescens' hostility contributed to St. Justin's condemnation. St. Justin was beheaded in A.D. 165 under the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

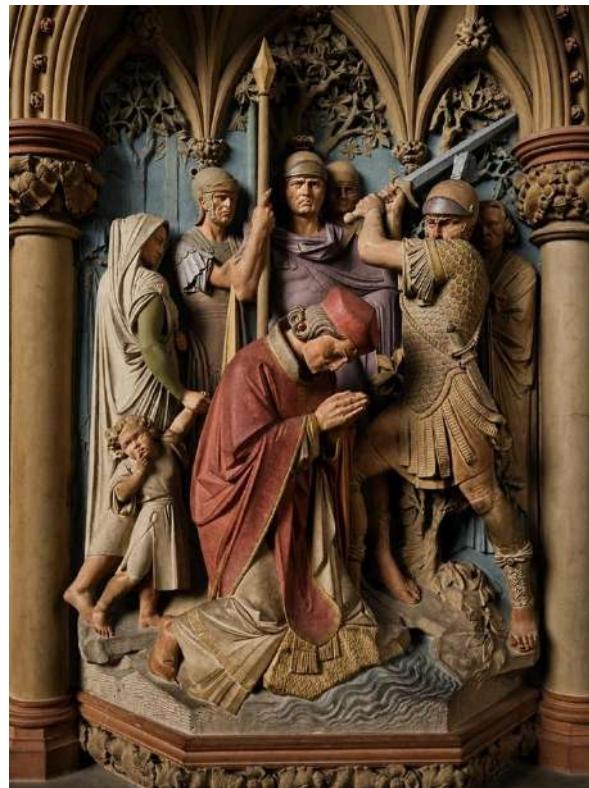


Fig. 2.10 The Beheading of St. Justin Martyr

⁴⁴ Tatian, one of St. Justin's pupils, mentioned this as the reason for St. Justin's execution in his *Address to the Greeks*, Ch. 19. The church historian Eusebius also mentioned it in his *Church History*, Book IV, Ch. 16, Nos. 7–9. For an account of St. Justin's martyrdom, see *The Acts of Martyrdom of St. Justin and Companions*.

2.7 The Fathers of the Church

The so-called “Fathers of the Church” were primarily teachers of the Faith and, of course, its defenders and apologists.⁴⁵ Their exemplary lives and adherence to the original teachings of Christ and the Church set them apart from other teachers and writers. Among the Fathers who combated heresy during the third century were **Saint Dionysius the Great**, who opposed Sabellianism, and **St. Gregory Thaumaturgus**, who defended the Church against Sabellianism and tritheism. In the West, **St. Irenaeus** defended the Church against the Gnostics, who claimed to possess a secret revelation from Christ. Future Church Fathers also opposed some of these heresies, such as Gnosticism and Manicheism, which persisted after the third century. For a list of Church Fathers, see [Appendix 1](#).



Fig. 2.11 Icon of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus
Defender of the Blessed Trinity

⁴⁵ Initially, the term “Father” primarily referred to bishops because they were responsible for elucidating the Faith. Later, it was also applied to philosophers and theologians who had lived exemplary lives, been faithful to Church teachings, and greatly influenced the Church with their writings. For example, historians consider the apologist St. Justin Martyr a “Father” of the Church because many scholars often quote him in their writings.

2.8 The Ecclesiastical Writers

In the early Church, there were also great Christian writers who, for lack of the requisite sanctity or orthodoxy, are today not called “Fathers” but merely *ecclesiastical writers*. The list is long, so only two notable ecclesiastical writers will be given here.

The first is **Tertullian** (155–225). Tertullian was born to pagan parents in Carthage, North Africa, in A.D. 155. Although little is known about his early life, his writings show that he had a good education in literature and rhetoric. He converted to Christianity before he became attracted to Montanism. As a Christian, however, he defended the Faith forcefully against heresy and Gnosticism and was sympathetic to the Christians during the cruel Roman persecutions. He became famous for saying that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity. Although fluent in Greek, he wrote most of his works in Latin and earned for himself the title “Father of Latin Theology.” His precise use of the words “person” and “substance” greatly influenced the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian tradition. However, he ran into conflict with the Church when, dissatisfied with the complacency of many churchmen, he later joined a Montanist sect that advocated strict moralism and asceticism. Later, he also left the Montanist sect to establish his own.

The next is **Origen** (185–254). Origen was born to Christian parents in A.D. 185. An avid student of the Bible, he practiced a strictly ascetic life and even castrated himself because of a literal interpretation of Matt 19:12.⁴⁶ He recognized three ways of interpreting Scripture: literal, moral, and allegorical, although he seemed to favor the last. He was a prolific writer, having produced hundreds of homilies and commentaries on almost every book of the Bible. He gathered many followers and received admiration, even from some of the Fathers. But, although he defended Christianity vigorously, he also started teaching unorthodox doctrines that put him in conflict with the Church. For example, he taught that the Trinity was a hierarchy rather than an equality of Divine Persons; that the soul preexisted the body; that the punishment of hell was not eternal, etc. The Fifth Ecumenical Council in A.D. 553 condemned several teachings associated with Origenism. He did not die as a martyr, but he suffered imprisonment and torture during the persecution by Emperor Decius.

⁴⁶ See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, Book VI, Ch. 8.

2.9 The Eremitic Life

Some men and women have dedicated their lives to serving God and their neighbors since the time of the Apostles. Saint Paul spoke of holy women, called “deaconesses,” who served in Christian communities during the Roman persecutions. Despite their designation as “deaconesses,” there is no record of the Apostles or early bishops ordaining these holy women by laying hands on them.

Subsequently, some Christians—men and women—isolated themselves and lived in individual cells to free themselves from human occupations and devote their time more fully to God and the Church. These dedicated Christians were called *anchorites*. Unlike hermits, who traditionally lived in total isolation far into the wilderness, the anchorites often lived in cells close to a town or village.

Eremitic life—a solitary life of prayer away from towns or villages—began to be the preferred form of consecrated life in the third century, especially during the time of Emperor Decius’ persecutions. These dedicated Christians, called *hermits*, found refuge in Egyptian deserts where they could devote themselves entirely to God and evade torture.

The first well-known hermit was **St. Paul of Thebes** (227–341). According to St. Jerome, St. Paul withdrew into the desert at a young age, where, when he got older, a raven delivered him half a loaf of bread every day for sixty years. But when his friend St. Anthony, another hermit, came to visit, the raven delivered a whole loaf so that they could each have enough to eat. St. Paul and St. Anthony ate together. The next day, St. Paul revealed to St. Anthony that his life was about to end and requested that he get the cloak that Bishop Athanasius had given him so that he might cover his body with it. When St. Anthony returned, he saw St. Paul in a kneeling position, with his head erect and his hands raised to Heaven. When he realized that St. Paul was dead, he fell to tears, seeing that even his dead body “was praying to God, unto whom all things live.” St. Anthony had the cloak to wrap his friend’s body with, but he worried that he did not have the tools to bury it. Soon enough, two lions came and began to paw the sandy ground nearby until they dug a hole large enough to hold a man. St. Anthony buried St. Paul’s body, and the next day, he returned to his home and told his disciples the tale of St. Paul the First Hermit. The piety and inspiring example of St. Paul contributed to the rise of monasticism in the fourth century.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ St. Jerome’s *The Life of Paulus the First Hermit* contains the complete account of St. Paul.



Fig. 2.12 St. Paul the First Hermit Being Fed by a Raven

2.10 The Celibate Life

Although our Lord Jesus Christ did not command celibacy for everyone, He recommended it for those who are willing and able to accept it (Matt 19:12). St. Paul, likewise, highlighted the superiority of the celibate state over the married state for those who wish to serve the Lord (1 Cor 7:32–35). Thus, celibacy became the norm for those who wanted to serve God, such as the anchorites, the hermits, the priests, and the bishops.

During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the Church did not prohibit the ordination of married men to the priesthood. Indeed, some of the Apostles were married men. However, many married priests and bishops left their wives and practiced sexual abstinence after ordination, and the Church did not permit single or widowed clergy to marry. In A.D. 385, Pope Siricius commanded celibacy for all priests in the Western Church.⁴⁸ However, the Eastern Church still ordains married men to the priesthood, but not to the episcopacy. Neither the Western nor the Eastern Churches permit single or widowed clergy to marry after ordination.

⁴⁸ Several popes repeated this mandate, and the First (1123) and Second (1139) Lateran Councils codified and confirmed it.

2.11 The Easter Controversy

Easter is an important feast for the Catholic Church. It is the day when Catholics celebrate the feast of Christ's resurrection. The early Church used "Pascha" (the Aramaic word for Passover) to refer to this feast. However, "Easter" became the popular term in England and other Germanic lands.⁴⁹



Fig. 2.13 Saint Polycarp and Pope St. Anicetus

⁴⁹ Some critics argue that Christians only borrowed the Feast of the Resurrection from the pagans. They base their argument on a text from St. Bede the Venerable—the well-known 7th-century author of *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*—who said that the month of Easter was named after a pagan goddess, *Eostre*. Indeed, St. Bede said this fact, not, however, in the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, but in his other book, *On the Reckoning of Time* (Tr. by Faith Wallis, Liverpool University Press, 1999), Ch. 15, p. 54. The Anglo-Saxon word "Eostre" actually refers to springtime. Before Christianity came to England, the English pagans, who celebrated natural seasons as religious feasts, happened to call this beautiful season "Eostre," which was also the name of their goddess of spring and fertility. Therefore, when the Anglo-Saxon Catholics called the Feast of the Resurrection "Easter," they were not naming it after the pagan goddess but after the natural season of spring. It just so happened that the name of the spring season coincides with the name of the pagan goddess. However, Christians did not borrow the Feast of the Resurrection from the pagans, for they had celebrated this feast (the "Pascha") long before Christianity came to England.

In A.D. 155, Saint Polycarp of Smyrna visited Pope St. Anicetus in Rome to discuss the date of Easter.⁵⁰ The Church of Smyrna and the Eastern Churches calculated and celebrated Easter differently from the Church of Rome and the Western Churches. They each tried to persuade the other to agree on a common method of determining the date of Easter so that there would only be one Easter date for all of Christendom. However, neither Saint Polycarp nor the pope succeeded in persuading the other.

Pope St. Anicetus and the Churches of the West wanted to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection on a Sunday. Following the custom of the Eastern Churches, however, St. Polycarp wanted to link Easter with the Jewish Passover, which is the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week. Pope Anicetus insisted that we no longer have to follow Jewish customs, but St. Polycarp said that his method was that of St. John the Apostle, whose disciple he was. Failing to persuade the pope, Saint Polycarp went back to Smyrna disappointed, but he at least got the pope's permission to continue celebrating Easter in their customary way. Several proposals have emerged over the centuries to reconcile the difference between the Eastern and Western Churches, yet the controversy continues. Although most Christian Churches today agree to celebrate Easter on a Sunday, they have not established a fixed date for Easter.

2.12 The Primacy and Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome

The fact that St. Polycarp did not act on his authority but went to Rome to seek the pope's permission to calculate the date of Easter based on the date of the Jewish Passover indicates that the early Church recognized the primacy and supremacy of St. Peter's successor, Pope St. Anicetus, Bishop of Rome.

Even before A.D. 100, we see an indication of the early Christians' recognizing the primacy and supremacy of the pope when the Christians in Corinth obeyed Pope St. Clement's injunction to stop the sedition within their community. In his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Pope St. Clement confirmed, against some rebellious Christians, the validity of their duly ordained priests and urged them to be humble and submissive to their ministers. The Corinthians eventually recognized their validly ordained priests in humble obedience to the pope's letter and even continued to read it publicly for several decades following this event.

⁵⁰ We know this from Eusebius, *Church History*, Book 4, Ch. 14.

In the Bible, we read St. Peter receiving the “power of the keys” (Matt 16:18–19) and the mandate to “feed the sheep” (John 21:17) from Christ. St. Peter exercised his role as Vicar of Christ when he preached the first Apostolic sermon on Pentecost (Acts 4:14–36) and presided over the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). Thus, even the Apostles regarded St. Peter not merely as “the first among equals” but as their leader and pastor of the entire Church.



Fig. 2.14 St. Peter Portrayed as Pope

In their writings, the Church Fathers also attested that the early Christians, contrary to the opinion of some scholars, recognized the primacy and supremacy of the Roman Pontiff.⁵¹

⁵¹ For quotes from some Church Fathers regarding this matter, see the article “Primacy of Rome” from the *Catholic Answers Magazine*, 4/1/1993.

CHAPTER 3

THE FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH CENTURIES

3.1 The Reign of Constantine the Great

God finally put an end to the terrible Roman persecutions when **Constantine the Great** (A.D. 307–337), a Christian convert, became the Western Emperor of Rome. The story of his conversion to Christianity is interesting.⁵² Before his conversion, Constantine was at war with Maxentius. Seeing that Maxentius' army was superior to his, Constantine considered which of the gods he should invoke for assistance. One day, at sunset, a bright cross appeared in the sky with an inscription that said, "BY THIS, CONQUER." The following night, Christ instructed him in his sleep to prepare a standard with the sign of the cross and use it in battle. Constantine obeyed and ordered his soldiers to carry a standard bearing the sign of the cross. Under this sign, he defeated Maxentius' army in the famous Battle of the Milvian Bridge, and he attributed his victory to the Christian God. Since then (A.D. 312), he became a staunch defender and protector of Christianity.



Fig. 3.1 Emperor Constantine's Vision of the Cross

⁵² Read the full narrative by Socrates Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Book I, Ch. 2.

During his rule, Constantine practiced religious tolerance, and, jointly with the Eastern Emperor Licinius, he issued the **Edict of Milan** (A.D. 313), which granted Christians the opportunity to practice their religion freely.⁵³ He even built beautiful churches for them and demonstrated great honor and distinction to priests, bishops, and popes. His mother, St. Helena, also became a Christian and used her wealth to visit those places in Palestine that were memorable to our Lord. During one of her visits, she discovered the Holy Cross, on which Christ was crucified. Following her and her son's example, many pagans also abandoned their idols and converted to Christianity. The practice of unjust slavery decreased,⁵⁴ and Rome had gone from being the seat of paganism to being the center of Christianity.



Fig. 3.2 Emperor Constantine the Great and His Mother, Queen Helena

⁵³ Emperor Constantine did not make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. He merely made it legal for Christians to follow their religion, as the pagans did. Emperor Theodosius I (also known as Theodosius the Great) was the one who made the Catholic religion the state religion when he issued the **Edict of Thessalonica** in A.D. 380.

⁵⁴ However, the practice of slavery and the slave trade persisted in Christendom until the popes began to prohibit it from the fifteenth century onward. For example, see Pope Eugene IV, *Sicut dudum* (1435); Pope Paul III, *Sublimis Deus* (1537); and more. Although the Old Testament sanctioned some form of slavery for the Israelites, and although some Catholics had practiced it, the Catholic Church as an institution never endorsed it. See *Catholic Church and Slavery* on Wikipedia.

Unifying the Roman Empire, which Emperor Diocletian had split into administrative Western and Eastern regions under the Tetrarchy, was another of Constantine's great accomplishments. Constantine built an imperial residence in Byzantium and named it Constantinople after himself. Constantinople is now the modern-day city of Istanbul in northwestern Turkey.

After Emperor Jovian died in A.D. 364, the Roman Empire split once more. Emperor Valentinian ruled the Roman Empire in the west, while Emperor Valens ruled in the east.⁵⁵ Eventually, the Eastern Roman Empire became known as the **Byzantine Empire** because its capital was Constantinople, the old city of Byzantium.

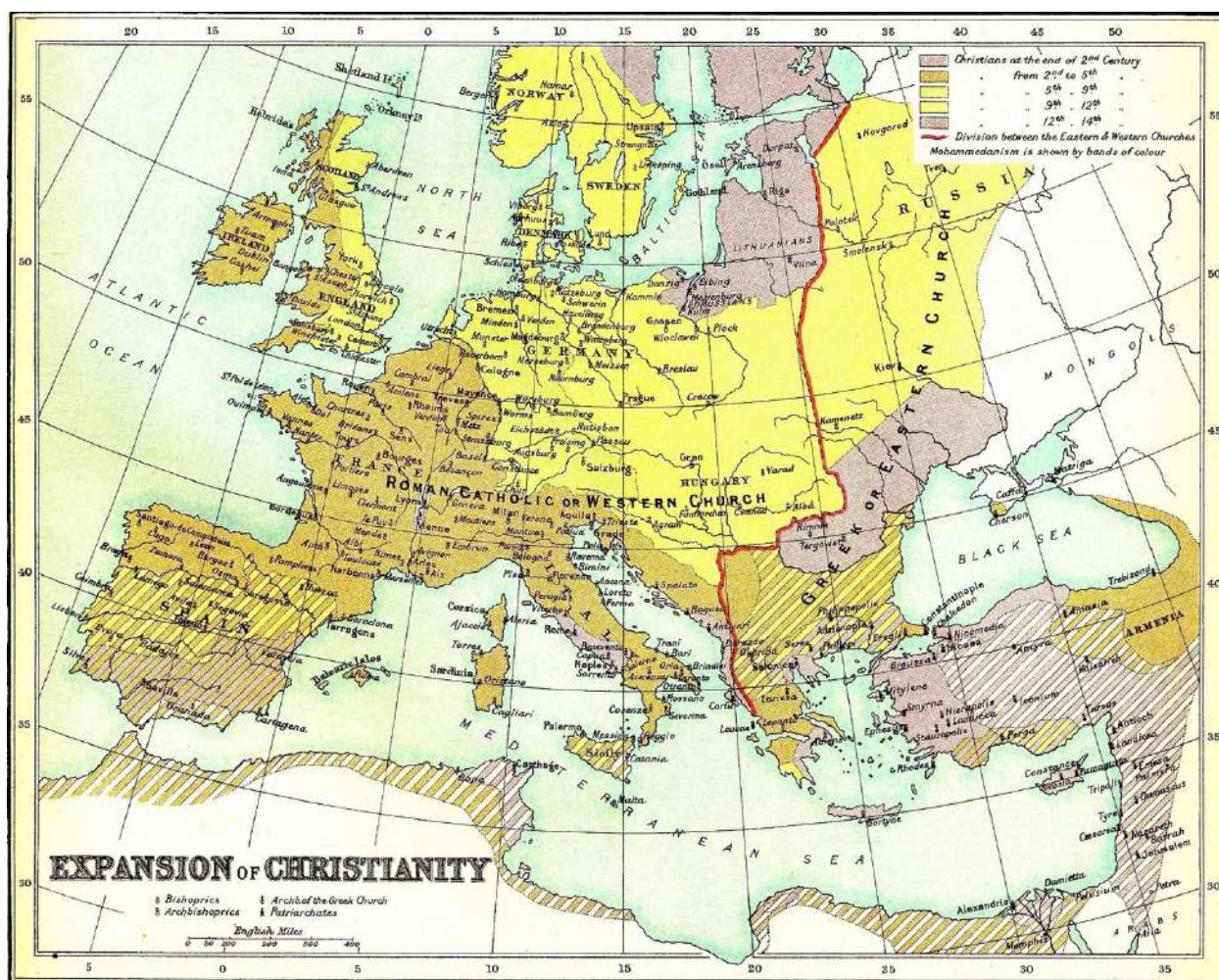


Fig. 3.3 Division of the Roman Empire and the Church into East and West
(The red line in the map indicates the approximate dividing line between the two.)

⁵⁵ For a listing of Roman emperors up to A.D. 491, see the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#).

3.2 Heresies During the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Centuries

While the Church enjoyed a respite from persecution during the reign of Constantine the Great, her battle against heresy continued. It was during this time that the Church, by defending the Faith against the criticisms and attacks of the heretics, was able to refine and clarify her doctrines on Christology and the Trinity.

HERESIES OF THE FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH CENTURIES			
FOUNDER (Heresy)	ERROR OF HERESY	OUTSTANDING CATHOLIC OPPONENTS	CONDEMNATION
Arius (Arianism)	Denied the divinity of Christ.	In the east: St. Alexander of Alexandria, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa; In the west: St. Hilary of Poitiers, St. Ambrose of Milan	First Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). Christ's divinity was reaffirmed against the Arians in the First Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381).
Donatus (Donatism)	Taught that the validity of the sacraments depended on the moral qualities of the person administering them.	St. Augustine, St. Optatus of Milevis.	Council of Carthage (A.D. 412).
Pelagius (Pelagianism)	Denied original sin and the necessity of grace for salvation.	St. Augustine, St. Prosper of Aquitaine.	Council of Carthage (A.D. 412); Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431); Council of Orange (A.D. 529).
Mani (Manichaeism)	Taught that there were two eternal powers: God and Satan. (A synthesis of all religions existing to that time.)	St. Augustine.	Decree of Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 381/382); Council of Lateran (A.D. 1139) under Pope Innocent II.
Nestorius. (Nestorianism)	Taught that there are two persons in Christ, and Mary is not the Mother of God.	St. Cyril of Alexandria.	Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431).
Eutyches (Eutychianism, aka Monophysitism)	Taught that there is only one nature in Christ—the divine. His humanity was absorbed into His divine nature "as a drop of honey into the sea."	In the east: Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople; In the west: Pope St. Leo the Great.	Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), and Second Council of Constantinople (A.D. 553).
Apollinaris of Laodicea (Apollinarianism)	Taught that Christ had a human body but a Divine Mind, not a human mind.	Pope St. Damasus I.	First Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381).*
Macedonius (Macedonianism)	Denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and taught that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son.	Pope St. Damasus I, St. Athanasius of Alexandria.	Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381).

3.3 The Doctors of the Church

The term “Doctor of the Church” is a title the Church grants to a holy person who has greatly illumined the Church in some aspect of the Catholic Faith. Since the Church officially grants this title, a special proclamation by a pope or a general council is required. On the other hand, only those who lived during the patristic era (the first seven centuries of Christianity) can hold the title “Father of the Church,” but no special church proclamation is required. Thus, St. Dionysius the Great was a Father of the Church but not a “Doctor,” since no pope or council has ever proclaimed him with that title. However, a pope has declared some Fathers of the Church, like St. Athanasius and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, to be “Doctors of the Church.” Some saintly teachers of the Faith, who lived after the seventh century, also receive honors as “Doctors” but do not receive the title “Fathers.” For instance, St. Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church, does not receive the title of Father because he lived in the thirteenth century, which is long past the patristic era.

Moreover, the title “Doctor of the Church” does not necessarily speak of academic excellence in the same way that the title “Doctor of Theology” does. The Church has even given the title “Doctor of the Church” to ordinary saints who were not masters of theology or Holy Scripture. An example of this is St. Therese of Lisieux, a simple Carmelite nun who, despite not having any academic degrees, has nonetheless illumined the Church with her holiness and example. In her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, she showed us how to be a saint without the need to perform any miracles, simply by approaching and trusting God as a child would his father. We refer to her spiritual doctrine as “The Way of Little Childhood.” But this is not a new doctrine, because Christ taught it (Matt 18:1–5).

There are currently 38 Doctors of the Church, the most recent additions being St. Gregory Narek, St. Irenaeus of Lyons (both proclaimed by Pope Francis in 2015 and 2022, respectively), and St. John Henry Newman (proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV in 2025). St. Gregory Narek is a Doctor but not a Father of the Church, whereas St. Irenaeus, who fought Gnosticism in the second century, is a Father and now also a Doctor. For the current list of Church Doctors, see [Appendix 2](#).

This chapter will highlight only three Doctors of the Church to prevent this book from becoming unduly long. These are **St. Athanasius of Alexandria**, **St. Augustine**, and **St. Cyril of Alexandria**, all of whom fought heresy powerfully during their time. Because they lived in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Church considers them Fathers. But there were also many other Fathers during the patristic era whom the Church has not yet declared as Doctors.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria

One of the most widely held heresies that the Church had to struggle with during the fourth century was Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ. In addition to the work of a small band of heretics, the support of many well-meaning clergymen, bishops, emperors, and local governors made it difficult to eradicate this heresy. St. Athanasius (A.D. 296–373), a powerful champion of orthodoxy who stood against the world (*contra mundum*), prevented this heresy from engulfing the Church. His work has earned him recognition as a Father and a Doctor of the Church. Arians surrounded Constantine the Great in his court. It was through the lies and false accusations of his Arian advisers that Constantine wrongfully banished St. Athanasius from his post in Alexandria to Trier, a Roman city in northern Europe. However, Constantine was not an Arian, and claims of his baptism and subsequent death as a heretic are untrue.⁵⁶

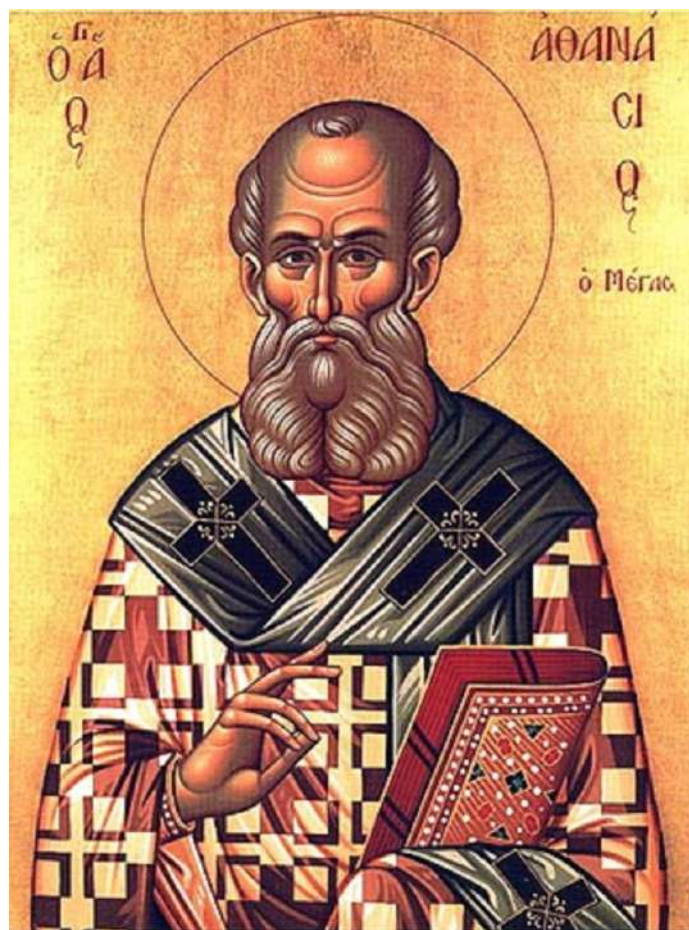


Fig. 3.4 An Icon of St. Athanasius

⁵⁶ See “Was Constantine the Great Baptized an Arian?”

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2012/05/was-constantine-great-baptized-arian.html>

Arius (A.D. 256–336), a Catholic priest from Cyrenaica (in Libya), was not the only one who denied the divinity of Christ. The philosopher Porphyry (A.D. 234–305) suggested that Christ was only a pious prophet, but His disciples began teaching that He was divine. In his book *Against the Christians*, Porphyry attacked them for inventing “myths” about Christ.⁵⁷

Although Constantine was not an Arian, one of his nephews, Julian the Apostate (A.D. 331–363)—who also became an emperor—was so influenced by Arianism that he renounced the Catholic Faith altogether. He falsely blamed the murder of his family on the Christians. Instead of acknowledging his apostasy, he taught that the early Church had lost its true faith, claiming that Christians had corrupted the Church and altered His original teachings. In his writings, Julian pointed out the problems and contradictions in the Christian faith and spoke about the corruption that the early Church had suffered.⁵⁸

Against these opinions, St. Athanasius staunchly proclaimed and defended the Catholic belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation. His fidelity to Holy Scripture and Apostolic teaching (Tradition) enabled him to triumph in the end, despite all obstacles. In A.D. 381, the First Council of Constantinople reaffirmed against the Arians the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, doctrines already proclaimed in the First Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). For his success and accomplishments, St. Gregory of Nazianzus—another Father and Doctor of the Church—called St. Athanasius the “Pillar of the Church.”

⁵⁷ Porphyry’s book is no longer extant, and all we have are fragments or citations from the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers. For a collection of these fragments and citations, see [Porphyry Against the Christians](#) (compiled by Robert M. Berchman, 2005), Ch. 7.

⁵⁸ See [Arguments of Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian, Against the Christians](#) Arguments, pp. 59–61. Porphyry’s and Julian’s ideas laid down the foundation for the so-called “great apostasy hypothesis” that some Christian denominations (such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses) still teach today. According to this hypothesis, the early Church suffered a great apostasy or corruption and became today’s Catholic Church, while the true Church founded by Christ hid itself and remained unheard of until the latter half of the second millennium. Some denominations, which call themselves Christians despite their lack of belief in Christ’s divinity, defend this hypothesis to explain their silence for centuries before the Protestant Reformation. However, historical records do not support their hypothesis. Historical sources do not say that the first Christians originally did not believe in Christ’s divinity, and His Apostles only made them believe it. On the contrary, the persecutions against Christians by the Jews and Romans, as well as the written attacks against Christians by the likes of Porphyry and Emperor Julian, prove that the earliest Christians believed in Christ’s divinity; otherwise, why did they have to persecute them and write negative criticisms against them to change that belief? Indeed, if there was any major heresy, infidelity, or apostasy during the early Christian era, it was not that of the early Christians but rather that of Arius, Porphyry, Emperor Julian, and other heretics, infidels, and apostates.

St. Augustine

St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430), another Father and Doctor of the Church, also contributed greatly to the fight against heresy during the fourth and fifth centuries. His mother's prayers and the preaching of another notable saint and Father of the Church, St. Ambrose, converted him, despite his embracing Manichaean heresy during his younger days. After his conversion, however, St. Augustine did not merely engage in theoretical disputations with various heretics (the Donatists, the Pelagians, and the Manichaeans) but also went on to explain the various dogmas of revelation. He wrote extensively about God, the Holy Trinity, the role of grace, and its influence on our free will and sanctification.



Fig. 3.5 St. Augustine and His Mother St. Monica

Although the major heresies in the Church had already been settled and condemned by various church councils during this period, some of them continued to recur in various forms beyond the sixth century and up to the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648) and beyond. It is not unusual to see, even today, scholars whose teachings still echo the old errors of the ancient heretics in the first few centuries of the Christian era.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, St. Cyril of Alexandria (A.D. 376–444) was a disciple of Athanasius. Like St. Athanasius, he is both a Father and a Church Doctor. He became the Patriarch of Alexandria in A.D. 412 but is primarily known for his stand against Nestorius, who rejected Mary as the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) and denied that there is only one Person in Christ. Saint Cyril is given the title “Doctor of the Incarnation” because he insisted that there are not two Christs but only one Christ, God and man. Christ is one Person with two natures—one human and the other divine. By His human nature, Christ suffered on the cross and redeemed us from our sins.



Fig. 3.6 St. Cyril at the Council of Ephesus

The Council of Ephesus upheld St. Cyril’s teachings in A.D. 431. His commentaries on Holy Scripture were numerous, but only a few have survived.

3.4 Progress in Holy Scripture

By the end of the first century, the sacred writers had already completed writing all the books of the Bible. St. John the Evangelist wrote his last epistles in A.D. 99, and with his death, no more new revelation was expected. However, although all the books of the Bible had already been written, the canon of Holy Scripture remained undefined.⁵⁹ The Bible, as it is known today, with its list of 46 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, did not yet exist. Thus, during the first few centuries of the Church, even the Church Fathers didn't infallibly know which sacred books belonged to Holy Scripture.

Meanwhile, together with the gospels of the evangelists and the epistles of the Apostles, numerous other books proliferated in Judea and the Roman Empire, all pretending to be of Apostolic origin and competing for Church recognition as inspired writings. Although many of these books bear the name of the Apostles in their titles, they have a dubious Apostolic origin, and some even contain heretical teachings. Therefore, the Church does not recognize them as inspired and calls them "apocryphal books." They do not appear in the Bible, and, for this reason, some called them "the lost books of the Bible." Examples of these apocryphal books include the *Gospel of Peter* (c. 190), the *Acts of Andrew* (c. 260), the *Apocalypse of Paul* (c. 380), and many more.⁶⁰

Due to the disruptions caused by the Roman persecutions and the doctrinal turbulence caused by heretics during the first three centuries of the Christian era, the canon of the Bible was not formally defined dogmatically until the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546. However, the Church, which existed before the writing of the first New Testament book, was not altogether ignorant of divine revelation. Despite the absence of a defined canon, the Church traditionally used some of these sacred books in Mass readings, prayers, and liturgy. Likewise, the Church Fathers quoted them in their writings and homilies. Thus, by relying on her Sacred Tradition and reflecting on her experience with and use of the books, the Church, during her council deliberations, was able to identify which books were authentically from the Apostles and which were not. Indeed, the Church had enunciated the correct list of inspired books even as early as A.D. 397 at the Council of Carthage. (See *Denzinger*, #92).

⁵⁹ The so-called "canon of the Holy Scripture" refers to a list of books that the Catholic Church considers inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bible consists only of these books, or those written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁰ For a list of New Testament apocryphal books, see <https://studythechurch.com/bible/nt-canon/nt-apocrypha-list>.

The oft-spoken charge that the Church suppressed many early Christian writings to promote the “myth” that Christ was divine is, therefore, not historically accurate. The Church has a God-given mandate to teach the truth and preserve the Faith. By enunciating the canon of Holy Scripture, the Church did not hide, suppress, or destroy any ancient book. She simply distinguished the inspired books that belong to Church Tradition from the biblical counterfeits produced by Gnostics and heretics.

Note, however, that not all New Testament apocryphal books are worthless. Some of them, although not included in the canon of Holy Scripture, are historically valuable. For example, the *Protoevangelium of James* contained a narrative on the Virgin Mary’s early life. In this apocryphal book, we also learn the names of her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne.



Fig. 3.7 St. Anne and St. Joachim

In addition to correctly enunciating the canon of Holy Scripture, the fourth century saw significant progress in disseminating God's revelation to the world. The language most widely used at the time was Latin. Although Latin translations of some of the sacred books were available since the second century, **St. Jerome** (A.D. 347–420), at the request of Pope St. Damasus I, undertook the task of improving the existing Latin translations as well as translating the whole Old Testament from the original Hebrew and Greek into Latin.⁶¹

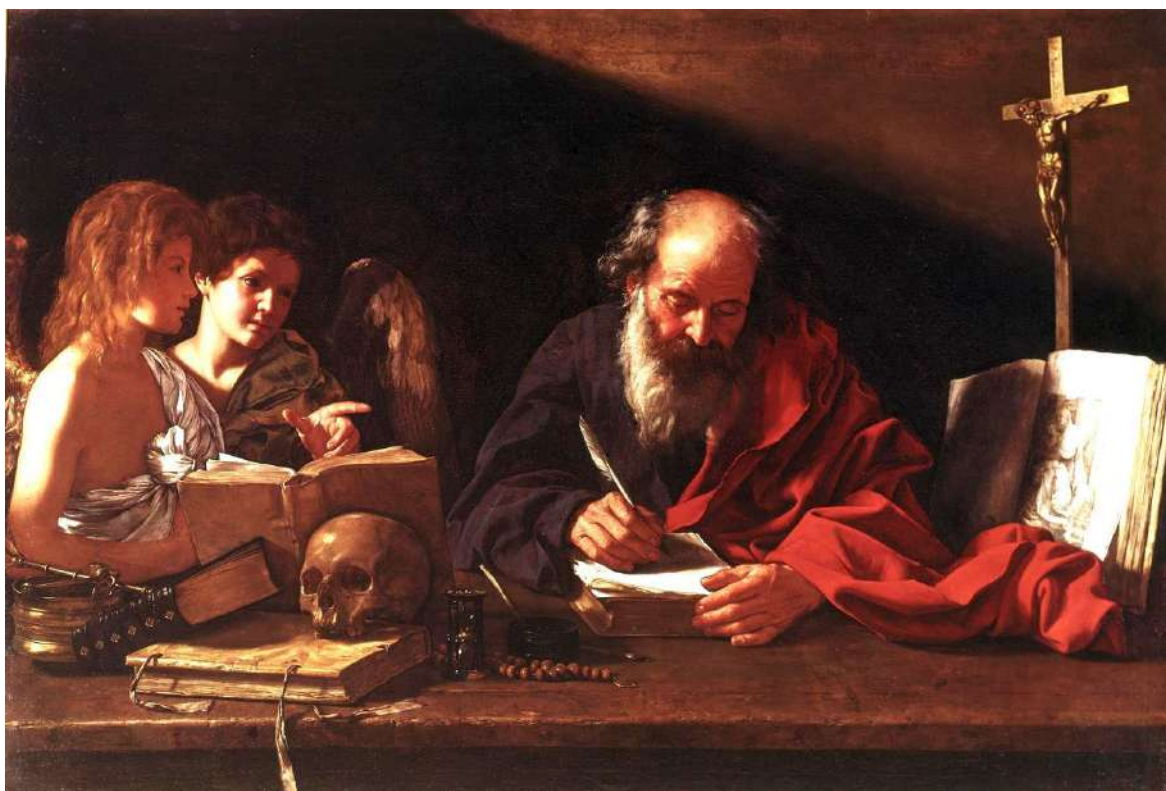


Fig. 3.8 Angels Visit St. Jerome in His Study

His translation eventually replaced all previous Latin translations of the Bible, and it became the only Latin Bible in the Western Church until the Council of Trent. Due to its widespread use, people appropriately called it the **Vulgate Bible** (from the Latin *vulgata*, which means “disseminated”). It was the Bible used in church readings and homilies, but until the invention of the printing press in 1445, the physical Bible existed only in churches, monasteries, and the homes of the nobility.

⁶¹ Pope Damasus I's injunction to St. Jerome to translate the entire Bible into Latin reflects the Church's effort to make the Holy Scripture accessible to all. This contradicts the claim of those who say that the Church did not want the faithful to read the Bible for themselves. The Catholic Church never discouraged the individual *reading* of the Bible, but she discouraged the faithful from individually *interpreting* it without the guidance of the Church, as the Protestants do.

3.5 The Rise of Monasticism

Besides the progress made by the Fathers in combating heresy and the progress made by the Church in developing the Canon of Holy Scripture, the rise of monasticism and religious orders in the fourth century was another important development that would have a profound effect on the future life of the Church. Some monks lived in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine even during the third century, but they usually lived alone and served God in solitude. In the fourth century, however, **Saint Anthony the Great**, aka St. Anthony of Egypt (A.D. 251–356), began bringing monks together to live in communities instead of in isolation. He drew up a rule of life for his new monks, which included making vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.



Fig. 3.9 St. Anthony and St. Paul the First Hermit

The monks spent their time fasting, praying, and working. Although they lived together in small monasteries, each of the monks had his room or cell where he prayed and performed works of penance. Although the monks were often bound by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, most of them (unlike many present-day monks) were not ordained priests or deacons. Soon, monasteries and monastic life spread outside Egypt and throughout the Christian world. Saint Augustine brought monasticism to Africa and even organized female religious communities, for which he also drew up Rules. However, monasticism came close to perfection with **St. Benedict of Nursia** (A.D. 480–543), who built a monastery at Monte Cassino in A.D. 530. His now-famous *Rule of St. Benedict* is remarkable for its moderation, and it has become the template that other religious orders followed.



Fig. 3.10 St. Benedict of Nursia Writing the Rule

The Benedictine motto, *ora et labora*, summarizes the spirit of St. Benedict's rule: "pray and work." However, St. Benedict widened the concept of work to include not merely manual labor but also intellectual labor. Monks became involved in various forms of trade, agriculture, teaching, and other intellectual pursuits. In this regard, preserving ancient literature and history was one of their greatest contributions to the Church and the world. They meticulously copied and preserved the works of the renowned Greek and Latin authors during the Barbarian Invasions and throughout the Middle Ages. They also devoted much of their time to diligently copying the books of Holy Scripture, an effort that they continued until the invention of the printing press in 1445. Without the dedication and industry of these Benedictine monks, we would have lost much of the legacy left by the ancient world.

3.6 The Barbarian Invasions

The Roman Empire, which had persecuted the Church for three centuries, began declining. Luxury and pride had pampered it, while greed and moral corruption had severely weakened its financial and military might. In the fifth century, several Germanic and Asian tribes from the north swept through the empire's territories. The tribes here were the Huns, the German Goths (both the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths), the Vandals, the Lombards, the Angles and Saxons, and the Franks.⁶²

The invasion of the Roman Empire by fierce tribes from the north is known as the *Migration of the Nations*, even though the migrants were not nations but nomadic tribes or barbarians. Many history books referred to these people as "barbarians," but they were not complete savages. Many of them respected women and had high ideals of loyalty and devotion to their tribes. They also possessed a certain degree of agricultural and hunting skills and culture, although not as advanced as the Greeks or the Romans. However, they were also fierce and violent, which was probably how they got the reputation of being "barbarians."

In A.D. 376, the ferocious **Huns** from the east swept across Western Europe, driving Germanic tribes who were on their way to retreat into the territories of the Roman Empire. The Huns were Mongolian migrants from Russia or Central Asia. They were ruthless marauders and caused havoc wherever they went.

⁶² Some scholars blamed Christianity, with its doctrine of "turning the other cheek" (Matt 5:39), for the weakness and subsequent downfall of the Roman Empire. However, the empire's failure to resist the barbarian invasions was not due simply to its embrace of the Christian religion. With power comes affluence, and with affluence comes corruption. The empire's inherent weakness resulted from years of political rivalry, its policy of recruiting soldiers from cheap slaves and immigrants rather than its citizens, and its practice of debasing its currency to finance its luxury.



Fig. 3.11 The Marauding Huns in Battle

The retreating **Visigoths**, who used to live on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, at first got permission from Emperor Valens to take refuge in the empire, but the mean attitude of Roman officials eventually caused them to fight back. In A.D. 378, the Visigoths fought the forces of Emperor Valens at Adrianople (now located in Turkey) and won. They then proceeded westward and overran Athens and Corinth. In A.D. 410, the Visigoths, led by Alaric I, invaded Italy, sacked Rome, and finally settled in France and Spain.



Fig. 3.12 Alaric in Athens

Meanwhile, the Huns continued to ravage Europe. In A.D. 451, Attila, King of the Huns, known later as the “Scourge of God,” was about to attack and pillage Rome when Pope St. Leo the Great negotiated a deal with him not to invade the city. Attila died in A.D. 453, and with his death, the threat from the ferocious Huns also ended.



Fig. 3.13 Attila, King of the Huns, Invades Italy

Along with the movement of the Visigoths, another Germanic tribe, the **Vandals**, invaded other parts of the Roman Empire, particularly France and Spain. They even crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to go directly to Africa and establish their capital in Carthage.

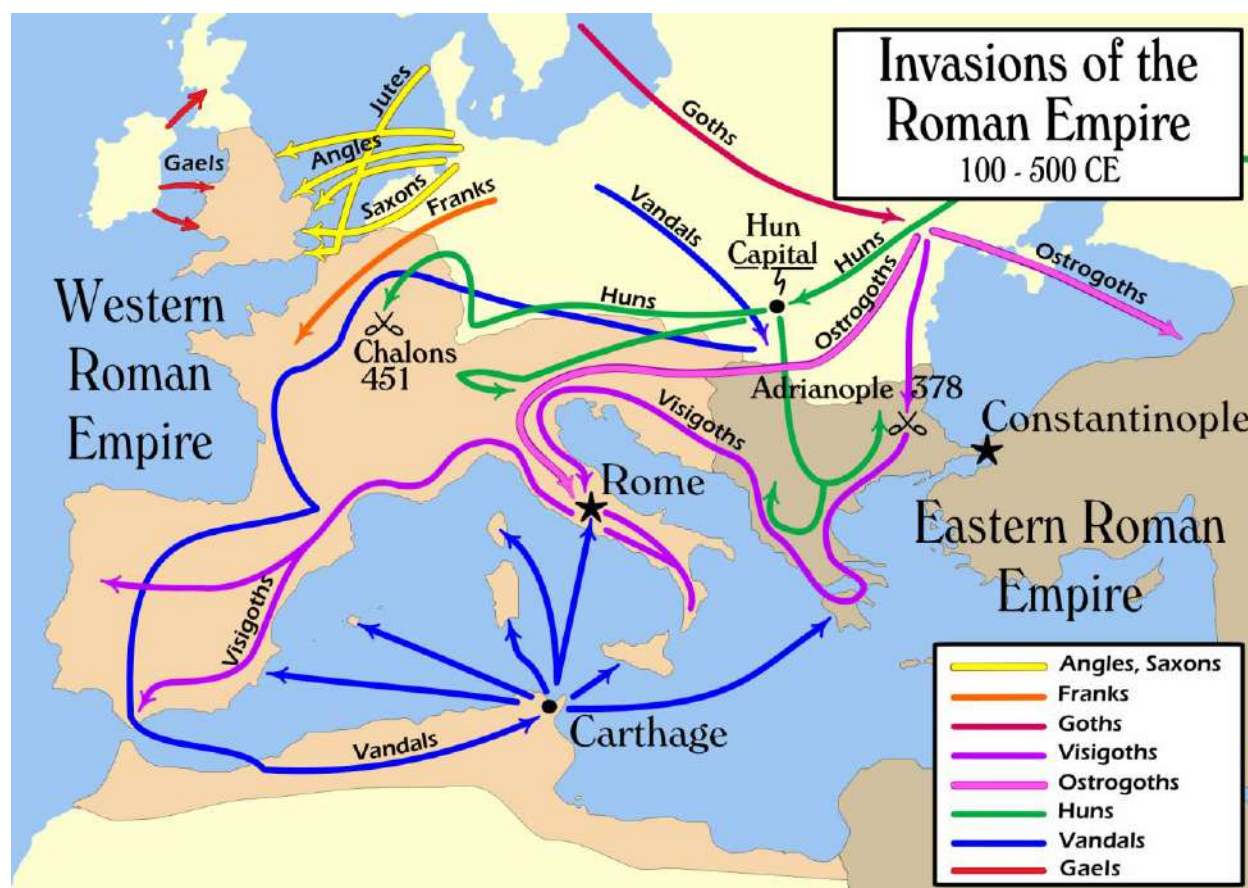


Fig. 3.14 Map of the Barbarian Invasions

In A.D. 455, under the leadership of Geiseric, the Vandals crossed the Mediterranean, went up the Tiber River, and entered Rome. Pope St. Leo the Great again met the Vandals there, pleading with them not to destroy the buildings and slaughter their inhabitants. Geiseric granted the Pope's request but took possession of the art treasures. Geiseric died in A.D. 477, but his kingdom in Carthage lasted until A.D. 534, when Belisarius, a general of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527–565), defeated it.



Geiseric, King of the Vandals

Pope St. Leo the Great

Fig. 3.15 Geiseric and Pope St. Leo the Great

The **Ostrogoths**, a Germanic tribe that used to live near the Black Sea, occupied the areas left by the Visigoths when they fled from the Huns in A.D. 376. Many of them also migrated into the Roman territories in A.D. 380 and had since cooperated with both the Visigoths and the Romans at different times. They crossed the Danube River and proceeded to northern Italy, where they settled.

In A.D. 476, Odoacer, a Germanic chieftain, came to Rome and deposed Romulus Augustulus (the last of the Western Roman Emperors) and proclaimed himself King of Italy. This event marked *the end of the Western Roman Empire*. Although the Western Roman Empire had fallen, the Eastern Roman Empire (or the Byzantine Empire) continued to exist for another thousand years until it fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Although Odoacer claimed to recognize the supremacy of the Byzantine Emperor, the Emperor felt that the Germanic king was performing nothing more than lip service. In A.D. 489, he ordered an Ostrogoth leader, Theodoric, to expel Odoacer and his forces from Rome. Theodoric carried out his commission, killed Odoacer, and ruled Italy until he died in A.D. 526.



Fig. 3.16 Theodoric, Ostrogoth King

After Theodoric's death, the succeeding Ostrogoth kings became defiant of the Byzantine Emperor, who tried to gain control of most of Italy. When Ostrogoth Totila became the new king, he recovered these Italian territories, including Rome, which he plundered. In A.D. 552, Emperor Justinian renewed his efforts toward supremacy, defeated Totila and Teia (the last Ostrogoth king) in battle, and, by further extinguishing all pockets of resistance, regained control of the whole country.

The **Lombards** were the last of the barbarian tribes to confront the Byzantine Emperor. After the death of Emperor Justinian in A.D. 565, they took control of northern Italy. They wished to control the entire country, but Pope St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 590–604), through his diplomatic skills, negotiated to pay them an annual tribute to keep them from pillaging Rome.⁶³

⁶³ This state of affairs continued until A.D. 754, when the Lombards lost their power to the Frankish King Pepin (the father of Charlemagne), who reconquered twenty-two towns from the Lombards and donated them to Pope Stephen II.

The **Angles**, the **Saxons**, and the **Jutes**, who used to live in Denmark and northwestern Germany, abandoned their lands when the Huns advanced westward. They invaded and fought the Celts, the native inhabitants of Britain, where they established seven new kingdoms. Likewise, the **Franks**, who used to live on the east side of the Rhine River, crossed the river to escape the merciless Huns and went into Gaul, which is now called France (a name taken after the tribes who migrated there).



Fig. 3.17 The Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes Sailing to England

The *political landscape* of Europe changed drastically at the end of the sixth century. The Byzantine Emperor still controlled the area around Constantinople, but not much of the rest of the Western world. There was a Lombard kingdom in northern Italy, a Frankish kingdom in Gaul (or France), a Gothic kingdom in Spain (where the Visigoths settled), and seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in Britain. The *religious landscape* changed, too. Although the Church triumphed over major heresies during this period, she suffered severe losses. The barbarians destroyed many churches and monasteries, set fire to libraries, killed priests and bishops, and inflicted incalculable damage on Christendom. But, on the positive side, the “barbarian nations” presented themselves as fresh candidates for a new evangelization, unspoiled and uncontaminated by the moral defects of the ancient Roman civilization. The Church now had a new mission and a new world to win for Christ.

3.7 The Conversion of France

In France, Christian immigrants from Asia Minor founded the Church at Lyons as early as A.D. 150. Although the barbarians from the east, such as the Visigoths, were Arian Christians, the Franks who went to France were entirely pagan. In A.D. 493, their king, Clovis, married a pious Catholic princess named Clotilda, who often spoke to him about the Christian religion and the need to pray to Jesus in times of difficulty. In one of his numerous battles with the Germans, he found himself overwhelmed by enemy forces. Following his wife's advice, he prayed and vowed that if Christ granted him victory, then he would convert and become a Christian. He did win the battle, and in A.D. 496, he, together with 3,000 men, was baptized by St. Remigius, the Bishop of Rheims. All of France was soon converted after that. Since then, France has remained a Catholic country.



Fig. 3.18 The Baptism of King Clovis of France

3.8 The Conversion of Ireland and Scotland

The conversion of Ireland was largely, but not solely, due to the missionary work of **Patrick of Ireland** (A.D. 389–461). He is known to many as the *Apostle of Ireland*, although he was not Irish but British, nor was he the first missionary to go to Ireland.



Fig. 3.19 St. Patrick Evangelizing the King of Ireland

Popularly called “St. Patrick,” although not officially canonized by the Church, Patrick was consecrated bishop and commissioned for his mission to Ireland around A.D. 432. To convert Ireland to the Faith, he began working with the chieftains, the lawyers, and those who had the greatest influence on the people. He knew that when they converted, others would follow. He wanted to convert the whole country but fell short of his goal on account of his death. However, his successors continued the work and eventually converted the entire country to the Faith. Zealous Irish missionaries later spread throughout Europe, establishing monasteries in regions like

Switzerland, Germany, and attracting many locals. Their simple lives attracted the barbarians in Western Europe, who then entered the monasteries in droves.

In A.D. 563, the Irish missionary, **St. Columba** (A.D. 521–579), who is known today as the *Apostle of Scotland*, came to Iona (a small island on the western coast of Scotland) with twelve other companions to establish a monastery and begin the Christianization of the Scots. Because he founded numerous churches and monasteries, people sometimes called him “St. Columcille” (or St. Columbkille), which means “St. Columba of the churches.”

The United Kingdom

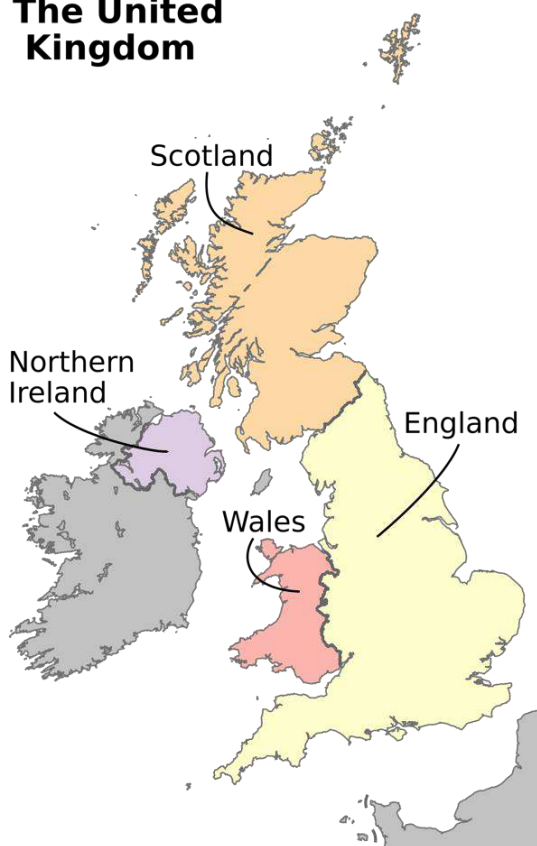


Fig. 3.20 Map of the United Kingdom



Fig. 3.21 St. Columba at Bridei's Fort

Since some of the missionaries were scholars, they founded schools that immediately became seats of learning in the country. Students from Scotland and other parts of Europe went to study in Ireland, which became known as the “Isle of Saints and Scholars.” When the students returned to their homes, they preached the gospel there, which hastened the conversion not only of Scotland but also of northern and central England.

3.9 The Conversion of England

When the Saxons invaded England and established seven new kingdoms in the country, they not only destroyed the Roman civilization there but also drove the Christians to Cornwall and Wales. Indeed, there were also Christians in Great Britain as early as the second century. There were British martyrs during the persecution of Diocletian.

In the year A.D. 597, Pope St. Gregory the Great planned to send Benedictine monks to England to preach there. A story explains why Pope St. Gregory wanted to convert the pagans in England. In A.D. 575, a Benedictine monk, who would later become Pope St. Gregory the Great, saw some handsome young men being sold as slaves in the markets of Rome. After inquiring about them, he learned that they were Angles (Germanic pagans from England) who had come to Rome. He was so impressed by their good looks that he exclaimed in his heart, “These are not Angles but angels!” He felt so bad to see such good-looking men lost and deprived of God’s grace, which would make them as beautiful as angels. Since that time, he always wanted to convert the Angles in Britain. (See the last two paragraphs in the Venerable Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book II, Ch. 1.)



Fig. 3.22 Pope St. Gregory the Great

Pope St. Gregory commissioned forty Benedictine monks to go to England and assigned Augustine of Canterbury⁶⁴ to lead the group. King Ethelbert of the Kingdom of Kent, under the influence of his Christian wife, readily received the missionaries and, together with several thousand other people, was baptized. From Kent, the gospel was preached and accepted in other kingdoms as well. The pope's representative in France, the bishop of Arles, ordained Augustine as a bishop when he returned to France to request more missionaries. He then returned to England with a new band of missionaries and became archbishop of Canterbury before he died in A.D. 604.

The conversion of England to the Faith occasioned the establishment of more Benedictine monasteries and the rise of monasticism in England. One of these monks was St. Bede the Venerable (A.D. 672–735). Although he wrote volumes of commentaries on the books of Holy Scripture, his most important work was the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*. (This book was written in Latin.) Much of what the world knows today regarding the Anglo-Saxons and the early history of England comes from this book.



Fig. 3.23 St. Bede the Venerable Translating the Last Chapter of St. John's Gospel

⁶⁴ Not to be confused with St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430), who was a Father and Doctor of the Church.

3.10 The Growth of Christianity in the East

It would be incorrect to think that Christianity only grew in the West. Christianity also grew extensively in the East.

Although the Apostles St. Jude Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew both preached in **Armenia**, the one primarily responsible for the expansion of Christianity in the country was St. Gregory the Illuminator (A.D. 240–332), who converted the Armenian monarch, King Tiridates III, to the Faith. Unfortunately, his successors—the bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Church—officially broke off with Rome in A.D. 555 when they rejected the decree of the Council of Chalcedon that two natures, human and divine, co-exist in the single Person of Jesus Christ. Throughout history, however, some Armenians have attempted to restore communion with the Catholic Church. Eventually, in 1749, these attempts resulted in the formation of what is now known as the *Armenian Catholic Church*.



Fig. 3.24 St. Gregory the Illuminator

According to ancient sources, Christianity spread to **Syria** through the miraculous healing of Abgar V, King of Edessa. According to popular belief, King Abgar V, who was long suffering from leprosy, heard of the miraculous healings performed by Christ. He, therefore, sent his scribe and ambassador Hannan to Christ Himself and promised Him the protection and hospitality of his city if He would come to Edessa and heal him. Christ praised the king's faith but said He couldn't go to Edessa because He had to do the mission that God the Father had sent Him to do. However, He sent Hannan back to the king with the promise that after His ascension, He would send one of His disciples to Edessa and heal him. Hannan went back to the king and gave him Christ's message. He even brought with him a cloth containing an image of Christ, which he also gave to the king.⁶⁵ After His ascension, Christ fulfilled His promise to the king, sent one of His 72 disciples, named Addai, to Edessa, and healed him. The king was converted, and so were his subjects. Aggai, a local convert who died a martyr, succeeded Addai as the bishop of Edessa.



Fig. 3.25 Hannan Gives King Abgar V the Cloth with Christ's Portrait

⁶⁵ The cloth is regarded by many as a relic of Christ and is known today as the Holy Mandylion. It is believed to have an image of Christ's face similar to the one in Veronica's veil. While some claim that the image was miraculously imprinted on the cloth, others say that it was only painted. The cloth vanished during the Crusades in the 12th century, only to resurface in France under the reign of King Louis IX. It has then been missing again after the French Revolution, but an alleged replica of it is kept in the pope's private chapel at the Vatican.

In **India**, Christianity came largely through the work of St. Thomas the Apostle (the “doubting Thomas,” aka Thomas Didymus), who sailed to the Malabar region (present-day Kerala, India) in A.D. 52. The influx of East Syrian traders, who also settled in Kerala and called themselves “Thomas Christians,” likely aided his work. St. Thomas remained in the country until his martyrdom in A.D. 72. However, more East Syrian Christians came to Kerala in the fourth century to escape the persecution of the Persian Emperor Shapur II (309–379). By A.D. 600, large Christian communities were already firmly established in Kerala. Christians of the Latin Rite did not come to India until the 15th century, when Portuguese explorers and colonizers began forming colonies in various places in India.



Fig. 3.26 Greek Icon of St. Thomas the Apostle
(The spear represents the instrument of his martyrdom.)

3.11 The Growth of Christianity in Africa

Although the Church's founder in Africa is unknown, it is known that St. Mark the Evangelist went to Egypt and became the first bishop of Alexandria.

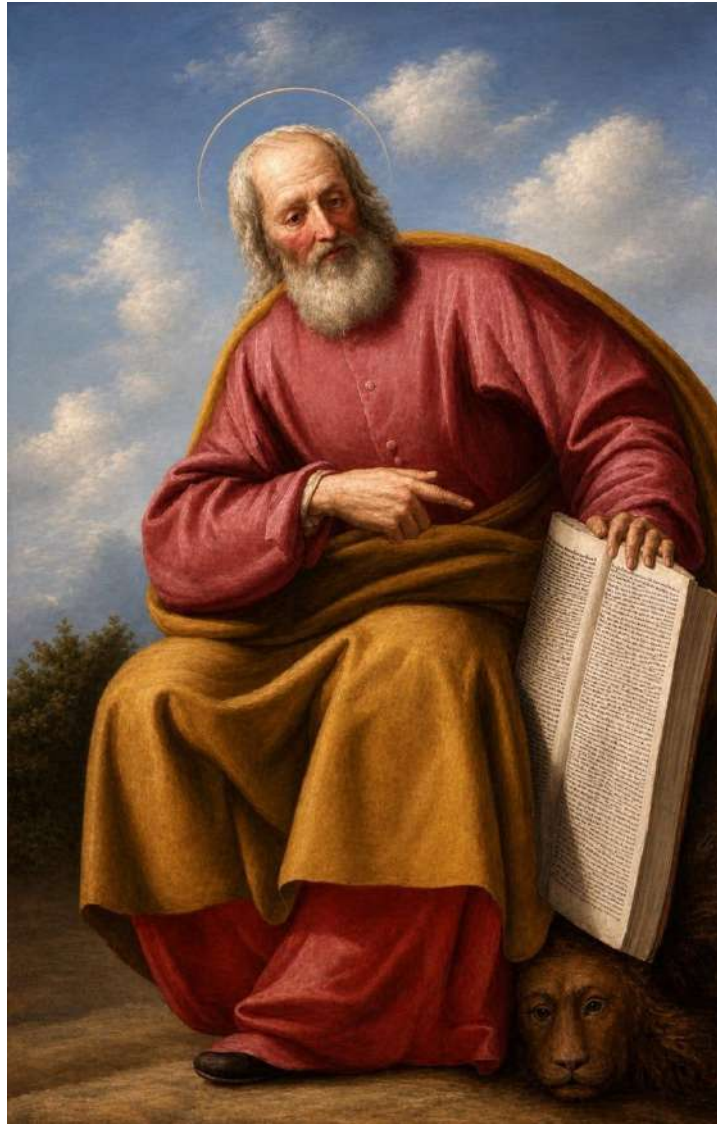


Fig. 3.27 St. Mark the Evangelist, First Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt

However, Carthage became the epicenter of Catholicism in North Africa. Christianity grew so quickly that by the year 200, the Christians had already made up the majority in almost every city. Indeed, the great St. Augustine, as well as the well-known ecclesiastical writers Tertullian and Origen, came from Roman North Africa and Egypt. Unfortunately, the Vandal invasions in the fifth century and the Muslim invasions in the seventh century left the once-thriving African Church in ruins.

CHAPTER 4

THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES

4.1 The Byzantine Empire Versus the Persians

Although the Western Roman Empire ended in A.D. 476, the Byzantine Empire (formerly known as the Eastern Roman Empire) survived in the east. (To see the dividing line between the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, see Fig. 3.3.) In A.D. 572, the Persians made war with the Byzantine Empire. In 614, the Persians attacked the city of Jerusalem, killed 60,000 people, and carried off the relics of the Holy Cross that St. Helena had found. By 622, the Persians had won Syria, parts of Turkey, Palestine, and Egypt. The Christian Byzantine Emperor **Heraclius I**, who reigned from A.D. 610 to 641, organized a new army and won against the Persians in a decisive battle known as the *Battle of Nineveh* (A.D. 627). He recovered the relics of the Holy Cross in A.D. 630 and brought them back to Jerusalem, a significant event that the Church still celebrates every year on September 14. The Byzantine Empire also regained all the countries the Persians had conquered. Emperor Heraclius received honors for this victory as a savior of Christian civilization.



Fig. 4.1 The Battle Between Heraclius I and the Persians

4.2 The Rise of Islam

In Arabia, the seventh century saw the rise of Islam. *Mohammed* (A.D. 570–633), the founder of Islam, did not preach religion until he was forty. His famous book, the *Koran* (or Quran), contains a mixture of tales and sayings taken from the Holy Scripture and pagan folklore. Mohammed believed in Allah, the one God (Quran 112:1), of whom he claimed to be a messenger and prophet (Quran 33:40). He did not believe in the Trinity or Christ's divinity, claiming that Jesus was no more than a prophet or a messenger of God (Quran 5:73–75). For references to the Koran or Quran, please visit www.Quran.com.⁶⁶



Fig. 4.2 The Calling of Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel

⁶⁶ Mohammed did not write the *Koran* himself because he could neither read nor write. His followers initially memorized his teachings and later recorded them in writing.

Mohammed gained many followers when he began to preach, but he also made many enemies among the polytheistic and idolatrous people of Mecca (in Arabia). To escape the persecution of his enemies, he fled to the city of Medina (in A.D. 622), where his teachings found acceptance. He gathered more followers and began to wage war against those who wouldn't accept his teachings, calling them "infidels" or "unbelievers." His enemies were not merely the pagans but also Jews and Christians (Quran 5:51; 9:30). To Mohammed, the Christians were also unbelievers because they accepted the Trinity (Quran 5:73). He told his followers that it was their duty to engage in a "holy war" (*jihad*) against the unbelievers, promising Paradise for those who die for Allah (Quran 9:111; 4:74). According to the Koran, this holy war was not meant to be just a war of words or an intellectual debate with people of other religions. The Koran intended it to be an actual war (Quran 5:33), which included inflicting terror upon the enemies (Quran 8:12). Of course, not all present-day Muslims follow this extreme prescription of the Koran. They believe that other forms of warfare, such as spiritual, psychological, social, and intellectual ones, could carry out the jihad without necessitating bloodshed.

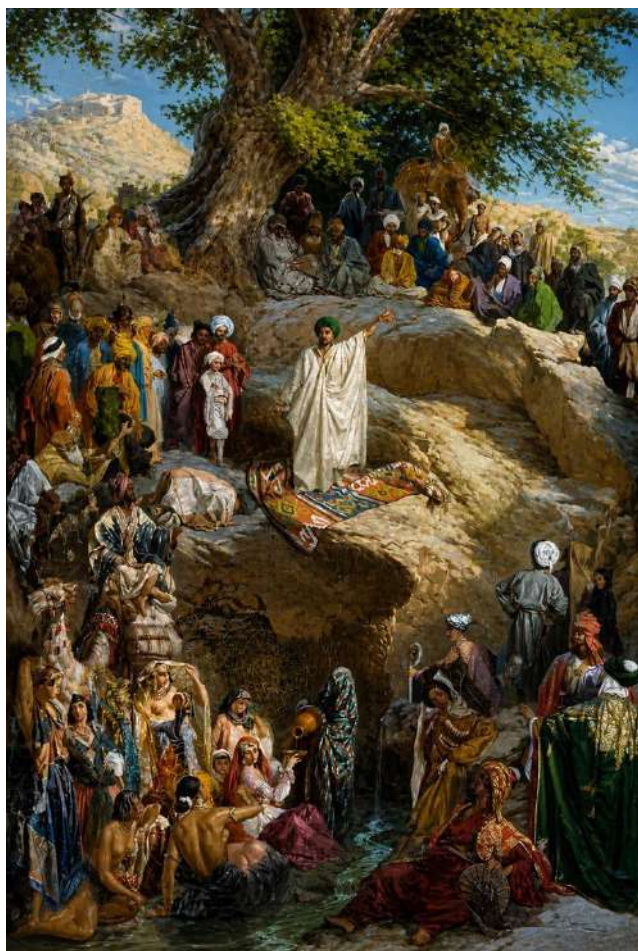


Fig. 4.3 Mohammed Preaching

In A.D. 630, Mohammed returned to Mecca and conquered it. Shortly thereafter, the religion of Islam spread throughout all of Arabia. Mohammed died in A.D. 633, but he did not name a successor before his death, which explains why there are now two major divisions of Muslims: the Sunnis and the Shiites.

After Mohammed's death, his followers carried out their holy war outside of Arabia. By the early part of the eighth century, they had conquered Palestine (including the city of Jerusalem), Syria, Egypt, Persia, much of North Africa, and a greater part of Spain. The small islands in the Mediterranean, namely, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus, were also subdued.

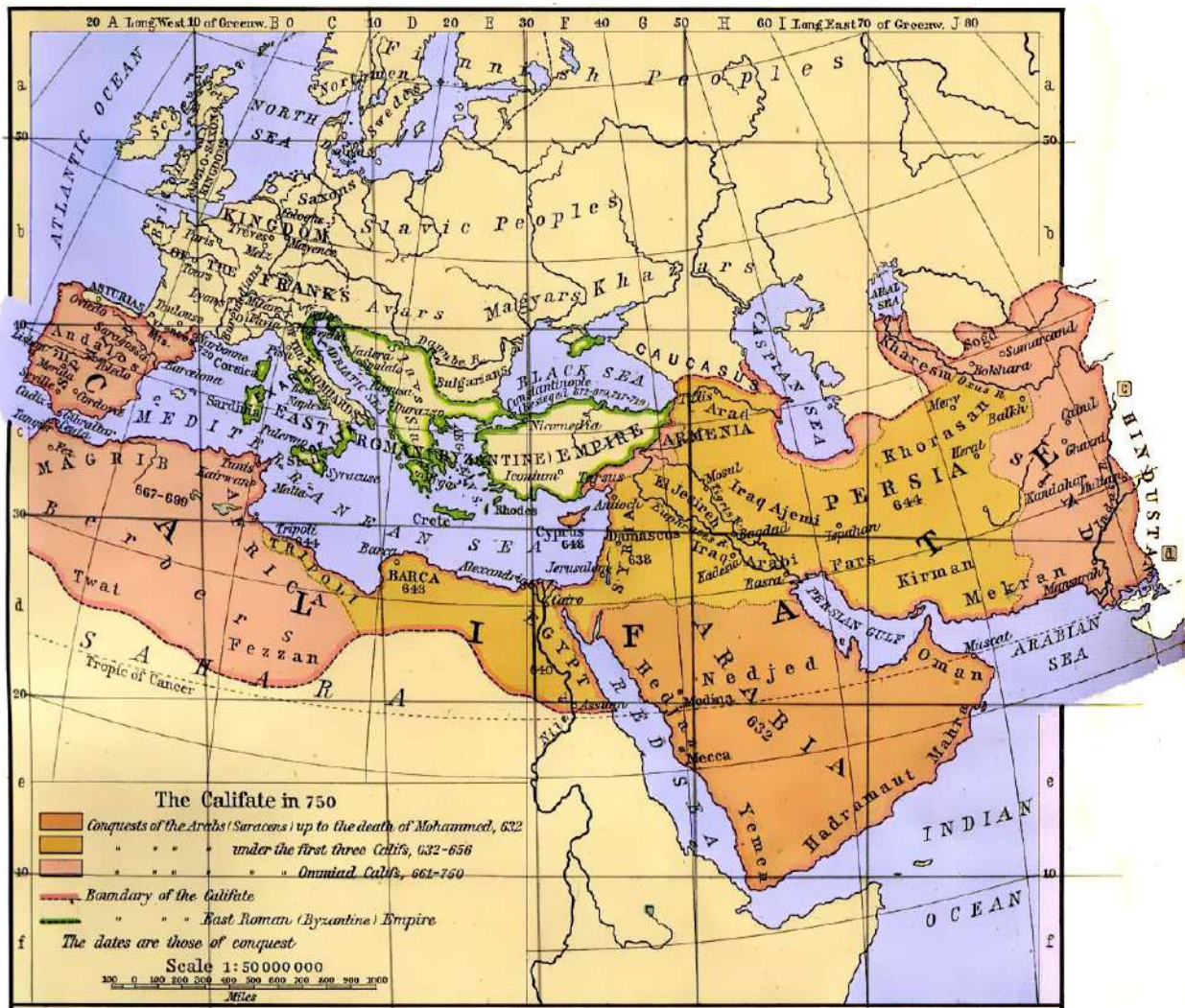


Fig. 4.4 The Spread of Islam

In all those places conquered by the Muslims, Islam destroyed and replaced Christianity. However, by using excellent libraries in Syria and Egypt, the Muslims also acquired great skills in trade, the sciences, art, and philosophy. The works of

Muslim philosophers provided Christian theologians of the Middle Ages with a better understanding of Aristotle's philosophy.

At that time, people called the followers of Mohammed by various names. In Arabia, they were known as the Arabs. In Turkey, they were called Turks. They went by the names Moors in Spain and Saracens in France. Today, people simply refer to them as "Muslims."

It seemed like the Muslims would dominate all of Europe and all of Christendom because of their past conquests. But by divine providence, things changed. In the east, the Byzantines defeated the Muslims at Constantinople (A.D. 718). In the west, the Franks, under the leadership of Charles Martel (aka "the Hammer"), also stopped their advance in the *Battle of Tours-Poitiers* (A.D. 732), which was historically reported as leaving three hundred thousand Saracens dead on the field. This action effectively arrested the further expansion of Islam in Europe. However, the Muslims continued to be a threat in Europe. In Spain, the Moors' stranglehold on the country would not end until 1492.



Fig. 4.5 The Battle of Tours-Poitiers

4.3 The Monothelite Heresy

At the same time that Islam's errors were spreading throughout Europe, the heresy of **Monothelitism** was also gaining ground in the Church of Constantinople. Sergius, the patriarch, taught that Christ had one will: the divine will. Therefore, like the Monophysites, he denied that Christ possessed a human will. The learned **St. Sophronius the Wise** (A.D. 560–638), Patriarch of Jerusalem and currently regarded as one of the Church Fathers, opposed him on this issue. They consulted Pope Honorius I (A.D. 625–638) on this matter, but he failed to resolve it. However, in A.D. 680, the Third Council of Constantinople upheld the teachings of St. Sophronius and condemned the Monothelite heresy.

4.4 The Partial Christianization of Germany

In England, monasteries produced many missionaries. **St. Boniface** (A.D. 675–754), originally named Winfrid, was one of the Anglo-Saxon monks who went to work in Frisia (now part of the Netherlands). However, in A.D. 719, Pope Gregory II commissioned him as a missionary bishop to Germany. He obeyed and worked tirelessly to convert many territories in Germany.



Fig. 4.6 St. Boniface Leaves England to Go to Germany

According to one story, the Germans in a village near Hesse, Germany, used to worship a giant oak tree, known as the Donar Oak. To show that the tree was only a creature and to direct the faith of the people to the true God, St. Boniface took an ax and began to chop the tree down when, suddenly, a powerful wind blew the old tree over but left him unhurt. Amazed at what had happened, the villagers converted to Christianity.



Fig. 4.7 St. Boniface Chops the Donar Oak

Protected by the Frankish commander Charles Martel, he evangelized Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria but failed to convert the Saxons, who continued to worship their idols. The complete conversion of Saxony (Northwest Germany) was not accomplished until the reign of Charlemagne. St. Boniface and his companions suffered martyrdom in A.D. 754 when they returned to Frisia, but his outstanding work in Germany earned him the title *Apostle of Germany*.

4.5 Rome Against the Lombards

In the sixth and seventh centuries, the popes paid a yearly tribute to the Lombards—the barbarians who controlled northern Italy—to keep them from invading Rome. Pope Gregory I (aka Pope Gregory the Great) had to make this treaty with the Lombards because he could not get any assistance from the Byzantine Emperor. This lack of cooperation between the Byzantine Emperor and the papacy persisted during the pontificates of Pope Gregory II and Pope Gregory III. Occasioned by the heresy of **Iconoclasm**, the strained relationship between the papacy and the Byzantine Empire even worsened. Iconoclasm was the heresy that taught that it was sinful to venerate the images of our Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. Leo III the Isaurian, the Byzantine Emperor, supported this heresy by issuing an edict in A.D. 726 that ordered the destruction of all religious images throughout the empire. Pope Gregory II opposed this edict. The emperor sent an army against Rome, but the pope appealed to the Lombards for help. The Lombards repelled the emperor's army. **St. John Damascene** (A.D. 676–750), a Father and Doctor of the Church, was the Church's champion in its defense against this heresy, which the Second Council of Nicaea condemned in A.D. 787.



Fig. 4.8 St. John Damascene

In A.D. 754, the Lombards decided to attack Rome and force the then Pope Stephen II to leave the Eternal City. This time, the pope turned to the French King Pepin (the Short), son of the Frankish military leader Charles Martel, for assistance. King Pepin successfully drove the Lombards out of Rome and even recovered many of the territories they had conquered. Then, by a solemn act, King Pepin donated these territories surrounding Rome, including Ravenna, Bologna, Ferrara, and several other towns, back to the Pope. These recovered territories came to be known as the *Papal States*.



Fig. 4.9 King Pepin the Short

In A.D. 774, the Lombards tried again to attack Rome. This time, Pope Adrian I asked Charles the Great—better known as **Charlemagne** (A.D. 742–814), the son of King Pepin—for help. Charlemagne came to the rescue, defeated the Lombards, and added more territories to the Papal States. The Church owned extensive lands even during the fourth century. These lands were gifts to the pope and were known as the Patrimony of St. Peter. However, even though the Church owned these properties, the pope did not rule over them. However, the Papal States, donated by King Pepin and later by Charlemagne, were different. The pope ruled over these states like a king.



Fig. 4.10 Pope Adrian I Asks Charlemagne for Help

Since that time, the popes, while acting as Supreme Pontiff for the Universal Church, also governed the Papal States as civil rulers. To rule like a temporal king was neither necessary nor the most important function of the pope, but being able to govern the Church as a sovereign also gave the pope a certain advantage. He could make religious decisions without undue pressure or opposition from any king. However, this kind of union of Church and State also had its drawbacks. As a civil ruler, the pope had to be involved with secular affairs and maintain peace with other kingdoms or civil powers in Italy.

But this ended in 1870. King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia, who wanted to have a united Italy, forced the Austrians to withdraw from northern Italy and then invaded the Papal States, including Rome. The pope lost his temporal power to govern the Papal States. However, Pope Pius IX refused to leave the Vatican and, by his choice, became a prisoner there. Sixty years later, under the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, the hostility between the Italian government and the pope was resolved in 1929 with the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the pope and Benito Mussolini, which recognized the Vatican as an independent state.

4.6 Charlemagne and the Conversion of Saxony (Northwest Germany)



Fig. 4.11 Charlemagne

Charlemagne did not merely defeat the Lombards in Italy, but he also invaded the Saxons in Northwestern Germany. He thought the best way to bring peace to the Franks and the Saxons was to convert the pagan Saxons to Christianity. He used his superior military power to quell all Saxon rebellions (A.D. 772–804), but his treatment of the Saxons was severe. Although the Saxons converted to Catholicism after their defeat, it became obvious that true conversion could only occur through faith, not by coercion. A forced conversion frequently led to an insincere conversion and disloyalty. However, many Saxons at that time also converted, not out of fear of punishment or death but through the painstaking work of Benedictine missionaries who illumined and guided their faith.

4.7 Charlemagne, Patron of Learning

Charlemagne was a great warrior, but he was also noted for bringing education to the people. He invited the best European scholars to his palace in Aachen and placed his distinguished friend and adviser, **Alcuin of York** (A.D. 735–804), in charge of the palace school.



Fig. 4.12 Charlemagne and Alcuin

Alcuin was a wonderful teacher. He spoke several languages, including Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. His mastery included philosophy, theology, history, and mathematics. Students from all over Europe came to listen to his lectures.

Charlemagne strived to make education accessible to everyone. Following Alcuin's advice, he ordered the establishment of a primary school in every parish, village, and town. Every church was to have a school, which was to be under the charge of the parish priest. The priests were to provide free education to everyone, and the priests themselves were required to have a certain minimum level of education. The parochial schools that exist today have their roots in Charlemagne's dream to provide free education for all.

CHAPTER 5

THE NINTH, TENTH, AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES: THE DARK AGES

It is best to treat this period in Church history in three parts:

- Part I The Western Church During the Dark Ages*
- Part II The Eastern Church During the Dark Ages*
- Part III The Christianization of New Nations*

PART I – THE WESTERN CHURCH DURING THE DARK AGES

5.1 Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire

On Christmas Day, A.D. 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as the new Western emperor. To distinguish Charlemagne's new empire from the defunct Western Roman Empire, it would later be called the *Holy Roman Empire*. As a result, there were again two emperors in the Roman Empire, one in the east and one in the west (see Fig. 3.3).



Fig. 5.1 The Coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III

The Byzantine Emperor was not too happy about having a second ruler in the empire. At first, he would rather not recognize the new Western Emperor, but he eventually did so in A.D. 812, upon the return of the territories of Venice and Dalmatia.

There was peace in the empire while Charlemagne lived. The pope ruled over the Papal States, while the two emperors governed their respective territories in the Christian Empire, keeping the Muslims in check. The world understood that the pope was supreme in the spiritual order, while the emperors were supreme in the temporal order. Charlemagne protected Rome and the Papal States from their enemies while respecting the pope's temporal power over them.

5.2 Charlemagne's Successors and the Rise of Feudalism

Things changed drastically after Charlemagne died in A.D. 814. At first, the leadership of the Western Empire was passed on to Charlemagne's son, King Louis. Then King Louis divided the empire among his sons—Lothair, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald. Over time, Charlemagne's empire fragmented into several smaller kingdoms in various countries, with each ruler claiming a distant kinship with Charlemagne. Of course, there was always a Holy Roman Emperor, but the office became a position of honor rather than a position of dominance over the kings of smaller kingdoms.

Charlemagne's successors were not the strong military rulers that Charlemagne was. So, the persecution of Christians by Muslims resumed. Furthermore, the divisions in the empire weakened it and made Europe vulnerable to attack by Viking and Norman invaders from the north. This condition continued until the end of the eleventh century. (The Normans were Vikings who mixed with the local Franks and Gauls.)

In the absence of a strong central power that could resist foreign invaders, people often had to defend themselves. Such circumstances gave rise to the so-called *feudal system*, or *feudalism*. Under this system, powerful and wealthy individuals became local leaders in various communities. These leaders built castles that served as military strongholds against foreign invaders. When invaders attacked, farmers from the surrounding countryside supported their local leaders and sought refuge in these castles. In exchange for the local leader's protection, the farmers were required to deed their land, known as a *fief*, to their local leader and render military service during an invasion. The farmers were still allowed to work on the land, but they had to give their leader a portion of the crops they produced each year.



Fig. 5.2 Chester Castle⁶⁷

(A castle built in 1070. The castle is in the city of Chester, Cheshire, England.)

When the invaders were stronger than one local leader could resist, several local leaders banded together under a more powerful leader, called a *duke* or *count*. Just as the farmers were required to surrender their land and render services to their local leader in return for military protection, the local leaders were required to commend their respective territories and swear loyalty and support to the duke to obtain the duke's protection. The promise of loyalty and support is called *fealty*. The duke, who received the allegiance and support of the local leaders, was known as an *overlord* or *feudal lord*, and the vast territory of land he received from the local leaders was known as a *domain*. The duke considered the local leaders who held land under him as his vassals, while he referred to the farmers who worked on the land as *serfs*.⁶⁸

The powerful overlords, in turn, served the king. These noblemen also swore fealty to the king and served as his vassals. As a result, feudalism was a tiered system in which those in the lower tier surrendered lands and swore fealty to the nobles in the upper tier. Those who owned no land but who wanted the overlord's protection had to provide military service in return. They were soldiers on horseback and were known as *knights*. They proved to be invaluable to the king, not only during the Viking and Norman invasions but also during the Crusades.

⁶⁷ See Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chester_Castle

⁶⁸ The serfs are not slaves. Slaves are the property of their masters; the serfs are not.

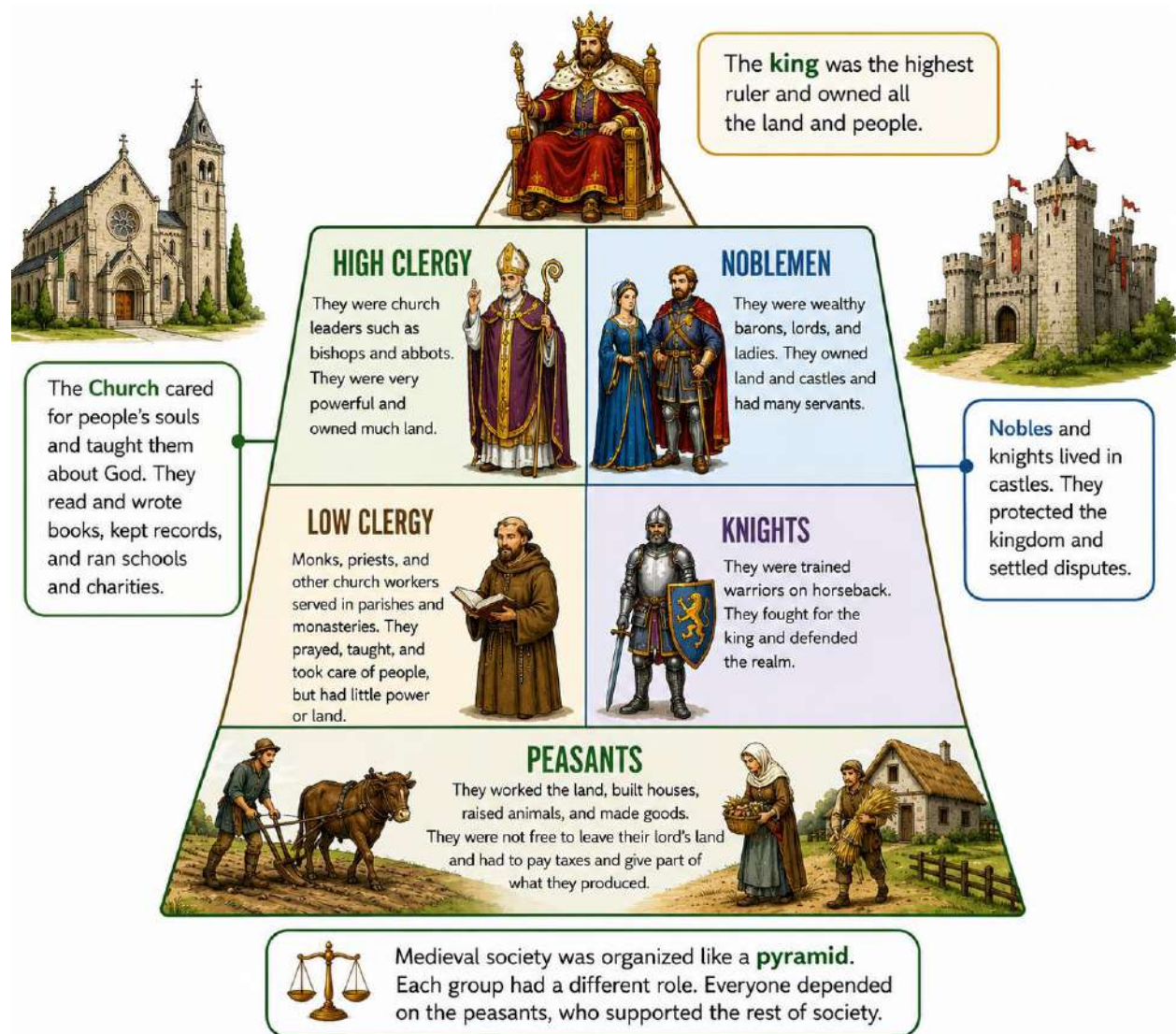


Fig. 5.3 The Feudal System

NOTE:

The “high clergy” consisted mostly of the bishops.

The “low clergy” were priests and monks.

The “barons” were dukes, earls, and counts.

5.3 The Church under the Feudal System

Although feudalism was criticized for being exploitative and unfair, especially to the serfs, it helped Europe repel and survive those devastating Viking raids. However, as far as its effect on the Church is concerned, feudalism did more harm than good. This is because bishops and other clergy became feudal lords. Thus, they had to divide their attention between their duties to God and the feudal services they had to perform for their subjects. Worse, bishops became vassals of greater lords. As a result, they often became involved in disputes and rivalries between various overlords and vassals of the king.



Fig. 5.4 A Viking Warlord

As the king's vassals, bishops also had to promise fealty to the king and other secular lords. This arrangement effectively made them the king's servants. This arrangement also paved the way for frequent interference by civil authorities in church affairs, especially in the election of the pope and bishops and the appointment of the clergy. In their desire to regain control of the Papal States, emperors sometimes interfered with church matters. They believed that, as protectors of the Papal States, they should have a say in choosing the next pope. Thus, they either used their power or nominated candidates for the papacy. Lay rulers, not the clergy, selected and bestowed personnel for ecclesiastical positions, a process known as **lay investiture**. This practice led to the selection of incompetent or unqualified individuals for important Church positions, including the papacy.

5.4 Good Popes and Bad Popes

The ninth century did not merely show a decline among the temporal leaders in the Western Empire. As a result of the feudalistic system shortly after Charlemagne's death, there was also a spiritual decay among the Church's spiritual leaders. Churchmen, including bishops, lived worldly and unchaste lives. Some popes were greedy and immoral, and some were incompetent. It was a terrible time for the Catholic Church. Some historians regard the period from the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the eleventh century as the “**Dark Ages**” in Church history.

However, there were also good popes during this period. In A.D. 858, for example, St. Nicholas I (A.D. 800–867) was elected pope. Unlike most popes during this period, **Pope St. Nicholas I** (aka Pope St. Nicholas the Great) was a God-fearing and righteous man, ready to denounce all wrongdoers.⁶⁹ There was one incident that illustrates his bravery. One of Charlemagne's great-grandsons, Lothair II, wanted to divorce his wife. However, after studying the details of his case, Pope Nicholas found out that his marriage had been valid. Therefore, he courageously refused to grant the divorce and defended the indissolubility of marriage against the king. Disappointed, Lothair sent his army to Rome to frighten the pope, but Pope St. Nicholas heroically held his position and did not yield.



Fig. 5.5 Pope St. Nicholas I

⁶⁹ Historically, Pope St. Nicholas I was not the popular “Santa Claus.” The real Santa Claus was St. Nicholas of Myra, who lived 500 years before him. See [Santa Claus](#).

As stated earlier, some popes of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries were bad or unholy. Some historians aptly referred to this period as the “Dark Ages.” Although the Church in past centuries also faced crises, persecution, and near extinction (during the Roman persecution, the age of heresies, and the barbarian invasions), there was never a time in prior Church history when the hierarchy and the papacy itself were, in a sense, engulfed in darkness, particularly moral and spiritual darkness.

A significant reason for the rise of corrupt and immoral popes in the Church was interference by civil rulers and the emperor in the election of a new pope. It used to be that only the clergy could elect the pope. In the ninth century, however, the feudal system that became prevalent in Europe led to the practice of allowing the nobility to participate in the election. Sometimes, even if the clergy had chosen the new pope, the election was not considered final until the bureaucratic emperor’s representative was satisfied with the result.

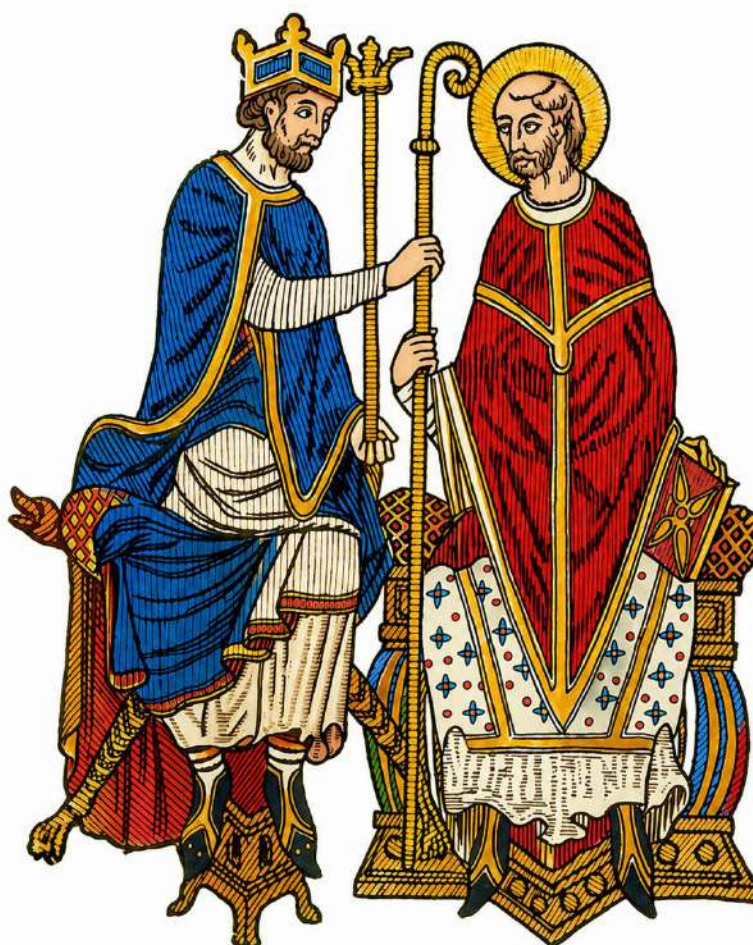


Fig. 5.6 Lay Investiture

(A king investing a bishop with the crozier, a symbol of his episcopate.)

There had also been times when competing political parties caused the election of two different popes! With the pope of their choice in office, civil rulers were able to control the appointment of other members of the hierarchy. They appointed incompetent bishops and priests, bribed them, or had them enact policies dictated by powerful government officials.

One unholy pope during this period was **Pope Stephen VII**. He was so enraged with his predecessor, Pope Formosus, that he exhumed his rotting corpse, propped it up, and gave it a mock trial in the infamous “Cadaver Synod.” The synod found the dead pope guilty, stripped him of his papal garb, de-fingered him, interred him, exhumed him again, and eventually threw him into the Tiber.⁷⁰



Fig. 5.7 The “Cadaver Synod”

There were other unholy popes during this period. **Pope John XII**, who became pope at the age of 18, was caught in bed with another man’s wife shortly before his death. **Pope Benedict IX**, who was rumored to have engaged in sodomy and adultery, sold and resigned his papacy to his godfather (**Pope Gregory VI**) for a large sum of money.

⁷⁰ A monk retrieved the body and reinterred it.

The corruption in the Church was not limited to the papacy. In his book *Liber Gomorrhianus*, **St. Peter Damian** (1007–1072), a Doctor of the Church, wrote about the homosexuality and sexual immorality that he witnessed *among the clergy* during the mid-eleventh century.⁷¹ Sadly, this spiritual disease persists today.



Fig. 5.8 St. Peter Damian

Even after the “Dark Ages,” there had been other bad popes, but these were isolated cases and were due more to the bad practice of nepotism and the personal misbehavior of the individual popes than to the interference in the papal election by the ruling elite. However, it was because of these bad popes that many people mistakenly referred to the entire Middle Ages, which covered the period from 800 to 1500, as the “Dark Ages.” Many people also believed that the misbehavior, extravagance, and corruption began by these popes contributed to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

⁷¹ Some critics blame the Church’s practice of priestly celibacy for the immorality among the clergy. But this is false. It is like blaming the marriage vow for adultery among married couples. Adultery and clerical immorality do not result from the vows but from a failure to observe them.

5.5 Pope St. Gregory VII and the End of Lay-Investiture

Pope St. Gregory VII (1015–1085) was the first person to make an all-out attack on the evil of lay investiture. He was born Hildebrand and studied in a monastery in Rome before becoming secretary to the pope, where he learned firsthand about the problems that were hurting the Church. Because of his intelligence, he became an advisor to other popes before him. When he became pope, he denounced lay investiture, saying that no layman had the authority to give a bishop his ring and crozier (the hooked staff), which were the symbols of his spiritual authority. He deposed all bishops who received their authority at the hands of secular rulers, and he threatened to excommunicate any layperson (including princes and kings) who persisted in the practice of conferring spiritual authority on anyone. One of those who defied him was King Henry IV of Germany. As a result, Pope Gregory excommunicated him. King Henry faced a revolt among his subjects and those loyal to the pope when he tried to depose Gregory, finding himself without supporters. To help himself get out of trouble, King Henry begged Pope Gregory for forgiveness. Although it was winter, King Henry, barefoot and dressed in a penitent's gown, stood for three days outside the Castle of Canossa, waiting for the pope's response. Pope Gregory did forgive him, but King Henry was not sorry. He soon started appointing church officials again in Germany. He tried to depose Pope Gregory and sent his army to Rome. He captured Rome in 1084. Pope Gregory fled first to the Castle of St. Angelo, then to Monte Cassino, and afterward to Salerno, where he died in exile the following year.



Fig. 5.9 King Henry IV Waiting for Three Days Outside the Pope's Palace

Earlier, in 1059, Pope Nicholas II had laid the groundwork for the reforms that Pope Gregory would later champion. In a document, *In nomine Domini*, Pope Nicholas established new laws for the election of a pope and disqualified secular and lay nobles as electors. He designated the “cardinals” (those high members of the Church who work closely with the pope in Rome) as the pope’s sole electors.



Fig. 5.10 Pope Nicholas II

The struggle for lay investiture persisted in France and England, but mostly in Germany. Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II finally resolved the problem in the twelfth century when they signed the *Concordat of Worms* (1122), a treaty that confirmed the Church’s independence from the State and which the First Council of Lateran (1123) in Rome also sanctioned. The treaty permitted the emperor to attend, without voting, the election of popes and bishops and to bestow the scepter, a symbol of *temporal* authority, on the bishop. In turn, the emperor agreed to permit the free election of church officials by giving up the investiture of the ring and the crozier, which are symbols of *religious* authority, to the Church.

PART II – THE EASTERN CHURCH DURING THE DARK AGES

5.6 The Eastern Church During the Dark Ages

Like the Roman Church, which suffered from the interference of the Roman emperors, the Eastern Church in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) also suffered from the interference of the Byzantine emperors during the ninth and tenth centuries. Even in the fourth century, the Byzantine emperors had already shown a tendency to meddle with the Church of Constantinople. They found it difficult to accept that there could be another authority higher than theirs. So, they expected the patriarch and bishops of Constantinople to always comply with their wishes. The Byzantine emperors also expected the pope in Rome to be more submissive, since they now regarded Constantinople, rather than Rome, as the center of Christendom. They often viewed the Roman Pontiff's intransigence as defiance of their authority. In the eighth century, for example, the Byzantine emperor patronized and the Eastern bishops supported the heresy of **Iconoclasm**, but Pope Gregory II opposed it. Needless to say, this episode worsened the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the papacy, as well as between the Church of Constantinople and the Church of Rome.

Another illustration of how the Byzantine emperor meddled with church affairs happened during the pontificate of Pope St. Nicholas I in the ninth century. At this time, the emperor's regent was Bardas, the uncle and tutor of the young Emperor Michael III. When St. Theodora, who was Michael III's mother and Bardas' sister, entered the convent, Bardas succeeded her as regent. When St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, condemned Bardas for divorcing his wife and having an incestuous relationship with his daughter-in-law, Bardas banished the patriarch to the island of Terebinthus. Then the regent selected Photius, who was a learned man but not a priest, to take his place as patriarch. While some bishops supported Photius, other bishops objected, arguing that Photius' election was inappropriate since he was hurriedly ordained priest and bishop within a few days. While Photius' election may have been uncanonical, Ignatius, who was in exile, refused to resign from his position at the time. When Pope St. Nicholas I heard about St. Ignatius' deposition, he investigated the case, and recognizing that Ignatius had not voluntarily vacated the patriarchate during his exile, pronounced him to be the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople. The facts became fully clear later, and the Fourth Council of Constantinople (A.D. 869–870) under Pope Adrian II eventually deposed Photius and reinstated St. Ignatius in the See of Constantinople.



Fig. 5.11 The Fourth Council of Constantinople

5.7 Roots of the Greek Schism

The great split between the Eastern and Roman Churches, known as the *Greek* or *Eastern Schism*, did not happen until the eleventh century. However, this unfortunate split, which has lasted until the present day, had been slowly building up since the time of Photius.

In A.D. 866, while Photius was the Patriarch of Constantinople, Boris, the King of Bulgaria, expelled the Greek missionaries from his country and replaced them with

missionaries from Rome. Photius became angry because he wanted Bulgaria to be under Constantinople's spiritual leadership. In reaction to this event, he issued a letter against the Roman bishops, known today as the *Encyclical of Photius*, in which he exposed what he thought were the Roman missionaries' bad customs and heretical doctrines. The "bad customs" included, among others, the practice of not fasting strictly during Lent. The "heretical doctrines" referred to the Roman Church's addition of the word *Filioque* to the Nicene Creed, which indicated that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. Photius and some Eastern bishops thought the phrase was an unnecessary and heretical addition and that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father alone. After writing his encyclical, Photius called a synod of all the bishops of the Eastern Empire, in which he tried to excommunicate Pope Nicholas for this addition.

In A.D. 867, Pope St. Nicholas died, and Emperor Michael III was assassinated. Pope Adrian II, who succeeded Pope St. Nicholas, called the Fourth Council of Constantinople, which condemned the errors of Photius and reinstated Ignatius as the Patriarch of Constantinople. After Ignatius died, the new Emperor Basil promised Photius that he would be patriarch again. Then, during a synod under Pope John VIII in Constantinople, the hierarchy reached a settlement that led to peace between Constantinople and Rome for approximately 150 years until the final breakup between the East and the West in 1054.

5.8 The Greek (or Eastern) Schism of 1054

After Photius, there had been peace between the Eastern Church and Rome, but ill feelings and jealousy persisted between them. The roots of this ill feeling can be traced back to the fourth century, when ecumenical councils condemned many heresies that had emerged from the East.

In 1053, Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, began criticizing the Latin Rite's use of unleavened bread for Holy Communion, claiming that this was Jewish superstition. Then, he closed all the Latin churches in Constantinople, which caused Pope St. Leo IX to send his delegates to investigate the trouble. The head of the pope's delegation was Cardinal Humbert, who quickly developed an antipathy for the patriarch. The result was an exchange of excommunication between them. In 1054, Cardinal Humbert excommunicated Cerularius and his followers. In return, Cerularius excommunicated Humbert and the other delegates.



Fig. 5.12 Hagia Sophia (or “Holy Wisdom”)

(Now a mosque, but formerly the Eastern Orthodox Cathedral and Seat of Patriarch Cerularius)

The fight resulted more from a clash of personalities than from doctrinal issues. Yet this unfortunate event caused a split between the Eastern and Western Churches that, except for a brief period, lasted for centuries until the present day. That brief period occurred in 1439, when Rome received the Greek bishops back into full union at the Council of Florence (1438–1445). However, this union lasted only a few years, and the schism resumed.

Remarkably, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians have so much in common. They share the same Faith, worship the same God, partake of the same sacraments, have valid holy orders, and are devoted to the Mother of God. However, due to Roman Catholics’ unwavering belief in the pope’s supremacy, they are not in complete communion. On the other hand, the Orthodox Christians are willing to say that the pope is *first among equals* (that is, equal to the patriarchs), but not supreme. Today, both sides are still striving to achieve Christian unity. The cordial meeting and fraternal embrace between Patriarch Athenagoras I and Pope Paul VI in 1964 was a sign of this continuing effort toward Christian unity. On December 7, 1965, in a gesture of goodwill and desire for unity, both Pope Paul VI and the Eastern Patriarch mutually lifted and nullified the excommunications that both Christian bodies hurled against each other in 1054.

PART III – THE CONVERSION OF NEW NATIONS

5.9 The Conversion of Scandinavian Countries

Despite the deplorable state of the Church during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, the Christianization of the northern states in Europe continued. The conversion of the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) began in the ninth century (see Fig. 5.13 for a map of Europe displaying these countries).



Fig. 5.13 Map of Europe

The conversion of **Denmark** began in A.D. 826, when King Harald Klak Halfdansson (A.D. 785–852), King of Jutland and parts of Denmark, sought refuge in the court of King Louis I (aka King Louis the Pious) of France. King Louis, a son of Charlemagne, promised King Harald that he would help him recover his kingdom if he converted to Christianity. King Harald agreed to this condition and received baptism along with four hundred of his attendants. When he returned to Denmark, he took along a pious monk, **St. Ansgar** (A.D. 801–865), to preach Christianity there. St. Ansgar worked tirelessly for forty years as a missionary among the Danes, the Norwegians, and the Swedes. It was a difficult job because, during this time, the Vikings and Norman pirates were marauding Europe's coastlands, destroying churches, and driving the monks and converts out of Scandinavia. His efforts led to the conversion of Denmark, followed by Norway and Sweden. For this reason, St. Ansgar is fittingly called the *Apostle of the North*.



Fig. 5.14 St. Ansgar, Apostle of the North

5.10 The Conversion of Slavic Nations

The Slavic nations include the following countries: In the east: European Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus; in the west: Poland, the Czech Republic (including Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia), Slovakia, and Serbia; in the south: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Montenegro (see Fig. 5.13).

St. Cyril the Philosopher (A.D. 827–869) and **St. Methodius of Thessalonica** (A.D. 815–884) were missionaries who worked in Moravia, which is part of the Czech Republic. They were brothers, and, although born in Thessalonica (in Greece, near the Slav border), they knew the language and customs of the Slavs. St. Cyril invented the Slav alphabet (which the Russians still use today) and used it to write Bible readings and prayers in the Slavonic language. The Frankish king and the bishops objected to the use of the Slavonic language in Mass, but Saints Cyril and Methodius got permission from Pope Adrian II to use the vernacular in the liturgy. St. Cyril died when they were in Rome, but St. Methodius continued the work of evangelizing the Slavs. After St. Methodius' death, Latin replaced the Slavonic liturgy, but some of his disciples introduced it to the Jugo-Slavs, where it remains in limited use. Thanks to Saints Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, the Slavic-speaking nations slowly received the gospel message. Saints Cyril and Methodius became known as the *Apostles of the Slavs*.⁷²



Fig. 5.15 Saints Cyril and Methodius

⁷² In 1985, Pope John Paul II also named them, together with St. Benedict, co-patrons of Europe. See Pope St. John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*.

The conversion of **Poland** began late in the tenth century when Mieszko I, the ruler of Poland, married a Christian Bohemian princess named Doubravka (or Dobrawa) in A.D. 965.



Fig. 5.16 Princess Doubravka Crowns Mieszko I⁷³

Although many believe that Mieszko's conversion to Christianity was due to Doubravka's influence, others believe it was done solely for political reasons. Whatever the true motivation was, it is also true that, through his conversion, Christianity gained a foothold in Poland, albeit not without resistance. With the help of King Henry III, King Casimir I (1040–1058) succeeded in suppressing a strong pagan uprising. Ever since then, Poland has remained a Christian nation.

⁷³ The crowning of Mieszko by Princess Doubravka shows her influence over him.

The conversion of **Russia** began in A.D. 988, when St. Olga's grandson, Vladimir, married the sister of the Greek Emperor Basil II and received baptism on their wedding day.



Fig. 5.17 Princess St. Olga

Because of his influence, most of Russia entered the Christian Church. However, many Russians remained only nominal Christians and practiced paganism due to insufficient or inadequate religious instruction.

The first archbishops of Kyiv were also Greeks. When the Greeks broke with the Roman Catholic Church in the Great Schism of 1054, the Russian Church also broke off with Rome.

5.11 The Conversion of Hungary

Toward the end of the tenth century, the Magyars, who settled in Hungary around A.D. 900, were considered a threat to Christianity due to their constant attacks on their neighbors. In A.D. 955, the future Holy Roman Emperor Otto I put an end to their hostility by defeating their army in a battle at the Lech River. Since then, the Magyars have lived quietly as farmers in Hungary, welcoming missionaries who came to the country. One of these missionaries was Pilgrim of Passau, who converted numerous pagans in Hungary. One of the converts was the holy **King Stephen** (A.D. 997–1038), during whose reign Catholicism flourished in Hungary. The new converts built monasteries and established dioceses. Despite a brief revival of paganism after his death, another holy king, **St. Ladislaus** (1077–1095), once again crushed it.



Fig. 5.18 King St. Stephen of Hungary

5.12 The Revitalization of Monasticism and the Further Spread of Christianity

Although the Benedictine family of monks had existed since the sixth century, many of the older monasteries had grown wealthy and become lax in the observance of their rules. This situation gave rise to the spirit of reform that was to continue its influence into the twelfth century. In the year A.D. 910, the Duke of Aquitaine, William the Pious, founded a new Benedictine abbey in Cluny, France, out of his estate, and named Bermo as its first abbot. The newly established Benedictine **Congregation of Cluny** restored the old observances and later expanded into more than 300 monasteries. The French Revolution destroyed the original abbey in 1790, but a new building replaced it.



Fig. 5.19 The Cluny Abbey in 2004

In 1084, St. Bruno also founded the **Carthusian Order**, which restored the original spirit and fervor of contemplative monasticism. The monks engaged in agriculture and transcribed books, in addition to prayer and contemplation.



Fig. 5.20 St. Bruno Visits Pope Bl. Urban II

In 1098, St. Robert established the **Cistercian Order** in the monastery at Citeaux, France. One saint who gave glory to the Cistercian Order was St. Bernard, the author of the world-famous prayer, the *Memorare*. Because of his wisdom, St. Bernard became an adviser to the popes, settled disputes between warring cities, and preached—by order of Pope Eugene III—for the Second Crusade (1147–1149). However, the Order itself engaged in mostly missionary work. The Cistercians played a significant role in continuing the Christianization of the Germanic and Slavic nations in northern Europe.

St. Norbert of Xanten, a friend of St. Bernard, founded the **Premonstratensians**, a religious order, in 1120. The new order adopted the ascetic ideals of the Cistercian Order while following the Rule of St. Augustine. However, the members were not monks but canons regular, and they worked as preachers and served at parishes near their abbeys. They were also known as **Norbertines**, after their founder's name. Today, members usually have the title "O. Praem." placed after their name.

CHAPTER 6

THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

6.1 The Crusades

The Crusades were a series of eight attempts made by Christians to liberate the Holy Land from the hands of the Muslims. These attempts started late in the eleventh century and continued through most of the thirteenth century.

Since the time of Emperor Constantine, pious Christians, following the example of St. Helena, have been visiting Jerusalem and other places in Palestine to show their devotion to Christ. Things changed in A.D. 1064 when the Seljuk Turks, who were also followers of Mohammed, took control of Asia Minor and the islands in the Aegean Sea. In the year 1071, they captured Jerusalem, desecrated the holy places in Palestine, and made the Holy Land unsafe for Christian pilgrims.

The First Crusade (1096–1099)

Pope Urban II heard of the persecution, oppression, humiliation, and suffering of Christians in Palestine. In 1095, the Byzantine Emperor, Alexios Komnenos (1081–1118), asked the pope for assistance in resisting the Muslim Turks threatening the empire. The pope thought it was good to respond to the emperor's call for help because it would improve the relationship between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, Pope Bl. Urban II made an eloquent speech at a council in Clermont, France, to help Constantinople recapture Jerusalem. The pope appealed to the princes, nobles, counts, and people of Europe to recover the Holy Land from the Turks, promising indulgence and spiritual benefits for those who would sacrifice and fight for devotion and penance rather than just money or honor. The people enthusiastically supported him with the cry, "God wills it!" Immediately, large armies were raised. The first to rise in arms were the peasants, who, through Peter the Hermit's preaching, undertook what would become known as the *People's Crusade*. But this crusade was not very successful. Godfrey of Bouillon, a brave knight, formed another army. His army included knights, nobles, and peasants, which is why the Crusade was also known as the *Knights' Crusade*. Soon, Count Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond of Taranto joined Godfrey. Together, the Crusaders marched into Constantinople, captured Nicaea (A.D. 1097), Antioch (A.D. 1098), and finally, Jerusalem (A.D. 1099).



Fig. 6.1 The Taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders

The Second Crusade (1147–1149)

The Crusaders conquered Edessa during the First Crusade, but in 1144, while its army was away fighting another war against Aleppo, the Muslim Turks laid siege to Edessa and massacred the Christians within the city. When the news of this massacre reached Europe, Pope Eugene III commissioned **St. Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090–1153) to preach and gather support for another crusade to retake Edessa from the Turks. St. Bernard instructed the Crusaders: “The Jews must not be persecuted, slaughtered, nor even driven out.”⁷⁴

King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany, who was also the Holy Roman Emperor at that time, responded to St. Bernard’s call and led the new crusade. King Baldwin III of Jerusalem joined in, too, because he wanted to capture

⁷⁴ St. Bernard, in his *Letter to Eastern France and Bavaria Promoting the Second Crusade, 1146*. Critics of the Catholic Church love to portray her as nurturing hatred for the Jews. And, true enough, there were a few crusaders who had been cruel to the Jews. However, this instruction from St. Bernard clearly shows that the Church did not sanction such cruelty to the Jews.

Damascus from the Turks. However, **the crusade was unsuccessful** due to poor leadership and dissension among the Crusaders. The Crusaders failed to conquer Edessa and Damascus, and only a fraction of their armies returned to their home countries. St. Bernard was very disappointed by the dismal failure of this crusade, which he helped to organize, but he blamed its failure on the “sins of the Crusaders.”



Fig. 6.2 St. Bernard Preaching and Campaigning for the Second Crusade

The Third Crusade (1189–1193)

When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem during the First Crusade, it remained in the Christians' possession for eighty-eight years until the Muslim Turks recaptured it again in 1187. The Christians once again made plans to liberate Jerusalem from the hands of the Turks. This time, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, King Philip of France, and King Richard I (aka Richard the Lionheart or Richard *Coeur-de-Lion*) of England led the crusade, which was better organized and more equipped than the previous ones. The soldiers began their military expedition to Jerusalem in 1189, but Emperor Barbarossa died on the way. After winning Acre, an important city in Israel, King Philip returned to France in 1191, leaving King Richard alone to continue the fight in the Holy Land. In 1192, King Richard succeeded in getting Saladin, the Muslim leader, to sign a treaty permitting the Christians to visit Jerusalem unharmed, but Jerusalem remained under Muslim control.



Fig. 6.3 King Richard the Lionheart on His Way to Jerusalem

The Fourth Crusade (1202–1204)

People sometimes refer to this crusade as a *pseudo-crusade* because the Crusaders, en route to Jerusalem, ended up attacking Constantinople instead. The Byzantine emperor promised to give them financial and military assistance in their fight against the Turks. But in 1204, a popular uprising deposed and murdered the emperor. Unable to get the assistance they needed to fight in the Holy Land, the Crusaders, under Count Baldwin of Flanders, turned against their fellow Christians in Constantinople, attacked and looted the city, and established their own Latin Empire that lasted for fifty-seven years. Eight hundred years later, Pope John Paul II apologized to the Greek Orthodox Church for the massacres and injustices perpetrated by the Western Crusaders against Constantinople. Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, formally accepted the Pope's apology in 2004.



Fig. 6.4 The Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders

The Fifth Crusade (1213–1221)

This crusade was another attempt by Western Christians to win the Holy Land by first conquering the Ayyubid state in Egypt. In April 1213, Pope Innocent III issued the papal bull *Quia maior*, which called for a new crusade. The first to lead the crusade was King Andrew II of Hungary, who later joined John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem. In 1218, King Andrew became sick and returned home, leaving John and other allies to capture Damietta in Egypt.



Fig. 6.5 The Tower of Damietta in Egypt



Fig. 6.6 Pope Honorius III

The Crusaders were able to get the tower outside the city, which allowed them to capture Damietta, but disease and flooding stalled their advance. In 1219, Pope Honorius III sent Pelagius of Albano to continue the crusade. Pelagius captured Damietta and proceeded to advance to Cairo. But when the Nile River flooded, his troops found themselves trapped and unable to withstand enemy raids. Thus, the Crusaders suffered great casualties, and Pelagius relinquished control of Damietta to the Sultan of Egypt in exchange for the safe passage home of his troops. Therefore, the Fifth Crusade was another failure.

The Sixth Crusade (1228–1230)

Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of Germany led the Sixth Crusade, also known as the *German Crusade*. The fact that a monarch undertook this crusade without the pope's prompting was significant. It showed the declining power of the papacy over the crusading movement. Although this crusade enabled the Christian emperor (by a ten-year treaty rather than by war) to gain control of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and other places in Palestine, it was not a significant victory for the Christians because Frederick II had to make a shameful treaty with the Sultan of Egypt (the Ayyubid Empire) permitting the Muslims to worship in Jerusalem and prohibiting the Jews from living in Jerusalem.



Fig. 6.7 Emperor Frederick II with Sultan al-Kāmil⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The caption on Wikipedia says that the two rulers did not really meet but merely exchanged embassies. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jaffa_\(1229\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jaffa_(1229))

The Seventh Crusade (1248–1254)

With the termination of Frederick II's ten-year treaty with the Muslims, Jerusalem fell again into the hands of the Turks in 1244. King St. Louis IX of France led the Seventh Crusade and, in 1248, headed with his army to Egypt. He knew that it would not be possible to capture Jerusalem without defeating the Sultan of Egypt first. He captured Damietta in Egypt, although it was heavily fortified. The flooding of the Nile River stalled his advance toward Cairo. King Louis fled to Damietta due to plague, dwindling supplies, and a battle-weary army, but the Egyptians blocked his retreat and held him captive. A huge ransom set the king and his nobles free. However, King St. Louis did not return to France but stayed in Palestine for four years.



Fig. 6.8 King St. Louis IX of France

The Eighth Crusade (1270–1274)

One could consider the Eighth Crusade as St. Louis' second crusade or his second attempt to reclaim the Holy Land. After years of preparation, he decided to capture the city of Tunis in Africa first, thinking that his success would make it easier to defeat Egypt. However, pestilence and a lack of provisions wiped out half of his army and hampered his advance. Louis himself became a victim and died of a fever. For a while, Edward of England (son of King Henry III) continued the crusade, but pressing problems at home also caused him to withdraw, thus ending the period of the Crusades to the Holy Land.



Fig. 6.9 Battle of Tunis and the Death of King St. Louis IX

Overall, one may judge that the Crusades were a big failure. The Christians lost many lives and did not accomplish their objective of recovering the Holy Land from the Muslims. Although the Christians gained control of Jerusalem after the First Crusade, their victory was short-lived. Thus, it became necessary to launch additional crusades. And, except for another fifteen years following the Sixth Crusade, Jerusalem remained for the most part under Muslim rule. Jerusalem remained in Muslim control until 1917, when the British Army defeated the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Jerusalem during the First World War.

Despite the disappointing results of the Crusades, there were also positive outcomes. Among these are the following:

1. The Crusades halted the advance of Islam in Europe.
2. They revived Christian faith and charity because the Crusaders knew that they were fighting for a spiritual cause.
3. They also fostered the spirit of chivalry and knighthood because the Crusades' leaders relied heavily on the knights' services in their fight against the Muslims.
4. They promoted unity among nations in their common cause, which was to restore peace and protect Christians in the Holy Land.
5. They promoted cooperation between the Byzantine Empire and the West.
6. They provided the occasion for an exchange of commerce and industries, art, and science between the East and the West.

6.2 The Military Orders of Knights

By the eleventh century, with the rise of feudalism, the knights—soldiers on horseback—rendered invaluable services to kings and the nobility in Europe. The nobility trained the knights not only for combat but also to uphold the high principles of *chivalry*. The knights worshiped God, lived honorable lives, and were champions of justice. They protected the poor, innocents, orphans, and widows, and they were known to be loyal to their lords.

The Crusades' leaders relied heavily on these knights' services. To better serve the cause of the Crusades, the knights banded together in the form of military organizations or *orders*. Although the main members of the orders were combatants, there were also non-combatants—priests and lay members who cared for the sick and the wounded. Furthermore, although these orders were military in their purpose and structure, they had the character of *religious institutes*. The members were initiated with religious ceremonies, and their swords were blessed and dedicated to protecting the innocent, the poor, and the Church.



Fig. 6.10 A Knight on Horseback



Fig. 6.11 Knight's Helmet and Shield



Fig. 6.12 A Knight's Sword

During the Crusades, three military orders of knights were formed: the *Knights of St. John the Baptist*, the *Knights Templar*, and the *Teutonic Knights*.

The Knights of St. John the Baptist

This order started only as a hospice for pilgrims in Jerusalem, but it eventually organized a militia of knights from among its members shortly after the First Crusade. Therefore, the order had a mixed membership of combatants (knights) and non-combatant members. The knights actively participated in the Crusades ever since, while the non-combatants cared for the wounded and the sick. The members wore a black mantle with a white cross. Because the order built a hospital in the Holy Land, it came to be known as the *Knights Hospitallers*. Three decades after the end of the Crusades, the Knights of St. John settled in Rhodes (1310) and later on the island of Malta (1530), on account of which they also came to be known as the *Knights of Malta*. Napoleon expelled them from Malta in 1798, but the order still exists today and is known as the *Sovereign Military Order of Malta*. Through an agreement with the Maltese government, the knights today still enjoy exclusive use of Fort St. Angelo in Malta, where they host historical and cultural activities related to the order.



Fig. 6.13 A Non-combatant Member of the Order Removing an Arrow from the Arm of a Wounded Knight

The Knights Templar

Their name derives from the fact that their headquarters were once on what the Crusaders called the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Nine French knights, led by Hugh de Payens, founded the order before the Second Crusade began. St. Bernard, who preached for the Second Crusade's support, wrote the order's rule. To bolster its membership, he also wrote a treatise, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*.

The members of the order, who wore a white coat emblazoned with a red cross, fought valiantly during the Crusades but returned to Europe after the last Crusade. During the Crusades, the order grew tremendously and became very wealthy. It received more than just generous gifts and donations from grateful pilgrims; it also received land, property, special privileges, and favors of every kind from both ecclesiastical and secular authorities. These privileges included being exempt from taxation, having legal jurisdiction, etc.

Early in the fourteenth century, the bankrupt King Philip IV (also known as King Philip the Fair) of France coveted the wealth of the Knights Templar. Thus, in 1307, he commanded the mass arrest of its members and falsely accused them of heresy to confiscate their wealth. He spread lies, used torture to force confessions from the members, and pressed false charges of heresy, devil worship, fraud, financial corruption, and sodomy. In 1310, he prevented 54 knights from retracting their false testimonies in a trial at the papal court by having them burned as heretics outside Paris ahead of the trial.

King Philip asked Pope Clement V to suppress the order by condemning it, but the pope in 1312 decided simply to dissolve the order rather than to condemn it. Following the abolition of the order, several knights who had previously confessed to wrongdoing under torture retracted their confessions, and this led to their execution. Jacques de Molay, the last grand master of the order, was among those executed at the stake in 1314.

Since its abolishment in 1312, the Catholic military order known as the *Knights Templar* no longer exists. Therefore, one should distinguish it from the various Masonic orders today that use the same name, "Knights Templar." The Freemasons falsely insist that the military order continued to exist in secret after its abolition by Pope Clement V and that the Masonic orders today are the present-day forms of that once illustrious order.



Fig. 6.14 The Burning of Jacques de Molay, the Last Grand Master of the Knights Templar

Those who want to paint a different picture of Christianity for unsuspecting Christians continue to spread lies about the Knights Templar. In 2003, for example, Dan Brown made several historically false statements in his pseudo-historical novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. Firstly, we know who founded the Knights Templar, but he reported that the mythical Priory of Sion founded it. Secondly, we know how the Knights Templar became rich, but he asserted that it was because the Knights Templar discovered treasures beneath the ruins of the Temple of Solomon. Finally, we know that the Knights Templar formed their organization to safeguard Christian pilgrims and protect the Holy Land, but he falsely claimed that they established the order to recover the documents that reveal Christ's real bloodline and His relationship with Mary Magdalene.

The Teutonic Knights

This order started in 1190, when German knights joined the members of a German hospital in Jerusalem to form the “Brothers of the German House of St. Mary in Jerusalem,” otherwise known as the *Order of the Teutonic Knights*. The word “Teutonic” simply refers to the Germanic roots of the order. To distinguish themselves from members of other military orders, the Teutonic Knights wore a white cloak with a black cross. Like the Knights Hospitallers, this order fought as well as served in the hospital during the Crusades.



Fig. 6.15 A Teutonic Knight

In 1225, at the invitation of Duke Conrad of Masovia, the Teutonic Knights left the Crusades to assist in defending the Christians against pagan tribes in those areas of Poland that were later to be known as Prussia. They thereafter played a military role in the Christianization of northeastern Europe, and at the same time, they increased their holdings and wealth. They eventually settled in Marienburg, Prussia, in 1309.

During the Protestant Reformation, their grand master, Albert of Brandenburg, converted to Lutheranism and secularized the order's Prussian lands. In 1525, the new grand master fixed his residence at Mergentheim in Wurttemberg, Germany, and the order ceased to be exclusively Catholic and became open to Protestant members.

Napoleon disbanded the order in 1809, but it was re-established in Vienna in 1834. In 1839, however, the order limited its functions to charitable activities and nursing. In 1871, Pope Pius IX approved new rules for the priests of the order. The order still keeps its headquarters in Vienna, although it has branch houses in Bavaria, Hesse, and the Italian Tyrol. A Protestant branch also exists in the Netherlands, known as the Bailiwick of Utrecht.

6.3 The Rise of the Mendicant Religious Orders

In addition to the establishment of military orders during the Crusades, the thirteenth century also witnessed the rise of mendicant religious orders, which played a significant role in the history of the Church during the Middle Ages and beyond.

There were four mendicant orders recognized by the Second Council of Lyons in 1274: the *Franciscans*, the *Dominicans*, the *Carmelites*, and the *Augustinians*. In 1233, the *Servites*, a fifth mendicant religious order, came into existence. However, although the bishop of Florence approved it as a religious order before the Second Council of Lyons, the Holy See didn't definitively approve it until 1304.

The above-cited religious orders were called "mendicant" (which means "beggar") because they refrained from owning property, relying instead on the voluntary offerings and goodwill of the people whom they served for their survival. Today, the members of mendicant orders, except the Franciscans, generally have permission to own property collectively but not individually due to their vow of poverty. The Franciscans have nothing because the Church owns their properties.

The Franciscans

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) founded this order, and Pope Innocent III approved it in 1210. Being the son of a rich cloth merchant, St. Francis was carefree and pleasure-loving in his youth. In his twenties, he became very sick, which gave him some time for serious reflection and prayer. Inspired by the text, “Do not possess gold, silver, or money in your purses” (Matt. 10:9), he decided to embrace *apostolic poverty* and, to his father’s dismay, gave all his possessions to the poor. Then he replaced his expensive garments with a peasant’s garb—a brown robe girded with a knotted cord. His edifying example, which exhibited a stark contrast to the leisurely lifestyle of the clergy at that time, plus his moral preaching, inspired other men to follow him. Due to their humility, these men came to be known as “Little Brethren” or “Friars Minor.” The pope officially approved the order as the Order of Friars Minor (OFM). After the order’s approval, its membership quickly grew to the thousands. **St. Clare of Assisi** (1194–1253), a close friend of St. Francis, joined the ranks of women who wanted to follow St. Francis. St. Francis gave them the rule to follow, and they formed the Second Order of the Franciscans, called the “Poor Clares.” They were cloistered nuns who lived a life of prayer.



Fig. 6.16 St. Clare Receiving the Veil from St. Francis

Years later, a congregation of vowed men and women living in communities formed a Third Order, along with fraternities of laymen and laywomen (formerly known as “tertiaries”) who, despite living in the world, wished to be spiritually affiliated with the order. Over time, the Franciscan Order has produced many illustrious saints and eminent theologians, including St. Anthony of Padua, St. Bonaventure, St. Catherine of Bologna, etc. Important lay tertiary in the Franciscan Order include King St. Louis IX of France (who led the failed Eighth Crusade), Queen St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and, in the early twentieth century, Dr. St. Giuseppe Moscati. Today, the Franciscans continue to contribute greatly to the vitality and growth of the Church.



Fig. 6.17 St. Anthony of Padua and the Miracle of the Mule⁷⁶

One should distinguish the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) from the current Order of Saint Francis (OSF). In 2003, members of the Anglican Church founded the OSF, seeking to live a religious life in the tradition of St. Francis. Therefore, the Order of Saint Francis is an apostolic religious order in the tradition of St. Francis, but it is not a part of the original Order of Friars Minor.

⁷⁶ According to a pious and ancient tradition recorded in the life of St. Anthony, God performed a Eucharistic miracle to convert a heretic who denied the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Despite being very hungry, a mule refused to eat the food offered by its owner until it had first knelt and adored the consecrated Host held by St. Anthony. The picture shown is an illustration from *The Prayer Book of Anne de Bretagne* (Anne of Brittany), ca. 1492–95.

The Dominicans

In 1216, **St. Dominic** (1170–1221) founded the order, whose true name was the Order of Preachers (*Ordo Praedicatorum*), in response to the growing threat of the Albigensian heresy in southern France. Unlike the Franciscans, who merely preached for sinners to do penance, St. Dominic and his companions—known as the “Dominicans” since their order’s foundation—preached, explained, and defended the Faith *for the salvation of souls*. Their preaching was, therefore, more doctrinal than moral. However, since the heretics were averse to the luxurious lifestyle of many of the clergy, the Dominicans, like the Franciscans, adopted a life of apostolic or evangelical poverty to enhance the effectiveness of their preaching. In their efforts to control the spread of heresy, the Dominicans employed a powerful spiritual weapon: they promoted devotion to the Mother of God, which later evolved into the practice of reciting the Holy Rosary. Phenomenal growth accompanied the Dominicans’ success in stopping the spread of heresy. By the time St. Dominic died in 1221, there were already sixty Dominican houses in eight provinces.



Fig. 6.18 St. Dominic
Founder of the Order of Preachers

Like the Franciscans, the Dominicans also had a Second Order, which initially consisted of women converted from the Albigensian heresy. They lived in communities as *cloistered nuns*. The Second Order still exists today, and its members should be distinguished from the many Dominican sisters who are not cloistered nuns. The nuns—or members of the Second Order—live a secluded life of prayer and contemplation.

The Dominican sisters, who are not cloistered nuns, are known as *Regular Tertiaries* and belong to the first division of the Third Order. In addition to their religious vows, regular tertiaries live in communities, wear an external habit, and observe regular, daily observances. However, they also live an *active* life of charity rather than a purely contemplative life of prayer. They mostly work in schools, but they may also work in hospitals, orphanages, or anywhere charity calls them to devote their time. Like the Franciscan Third Order, the Dominican Third Order has a second division, called the *Secular Tertiaries*, who are also associated with the order but who live individually *in the world* as they strive to live the Dominican way of life.⁷⁷

Many saints and theologians have come from the Dominican family, just as in the Franciscan Order. Among them was St. Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church, who contributed greatly to theology. Among the lay Dominicans was St. Catherine of Siena, another Doctor of the Church, who influenced the pope to return to Rome after the papacy had been in exile at Avignon, France, for nearly seventy years. Unlike Saint Martin de Porres, who was a cooperator brother in the First Order, Saint Catherine was truly a lay Dominican. She was a secular tertiary, or member of the Third Order—then called the “Brothers and Sisters of Penance of the Blessed Dominic.”⁷⁸ Unlike today’s lay Dominicans, St. Catherine wore an external habit, just as all the tertiaries at that time did. However, she worked and lived in her own home rather than in a convent, and she followed a rule under the direction of a Dominican priest.

⁷⁷ Since the twentieth century, there has been a preference in the Dominican family to use the terms “lay fraternities” and “lay Dominicans” instead of “secular third order” or “secular tertiaries.” The Dominicans have now abandoned the terms “first,” “second,” and “third” orders, preferring to refer to these communities as “branches” of their larger Dominican family. Lay Dominicans today still pray the Rosary daily and at least the morning and evening prayers from the Divine Office. They also wear a small scapular concealed in their clothing, but this is not a formal religious habit.

⁷⁸ Although the initial inspiration of the Third Order was to assist the friars by doing and preaching penance, the mission of the Third Order today is now both intellectual and penitential and, therefore, more aligned with the mission of St. Dominic himself, which is the salvation of souls through preaching.



Fig. 6.19 St. Catherine of Siena, Lay Dominican

The Carmelites

There is an old tradition that links the history of the Carmelites to a group of Crusaders who lived as hermits on a mountain ridge in Palestine known as Mount Carmel. However, the Carmelites' whereabouts began to appear in historical records, particularly in papal bulls, only in the thirteenth century, when many of them had already left the Holy Land and migrated to Europe and England. **St. Simon Stock** (c. 1165–1265), although not the founder of the Carmelite group, was its first master general in Europe. Under his leadership, the Church began to regard the Carmelites as a *mendicant religious order* rather than simply an order of hermits.



Fig. 6.20 The Virgin Mary Gives a Scapular to Simon Stock

In 1274, the Second Council of Lyons already recognized the order as one of the great mendicant orders. Earlier, however, it was St. Simon Stock who obtained from Pope Innocent IV interim permission for the members to live as a community of friars living in towns and cities rather than as solitary hermits living in the desert. As such, the order became similar to that of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. The order grew rapidly in Europe. By the end of the thirteenth century, it already had 150 religious houses in 12 provinces. Like the Franciscans and the Dominicans, a Second and Third Order also arose in the Carmelite family—the First Order (being the friars), the Second Order (cloistered nuns), and the Third Order (lay men and women). However, the Second and Third Orders were not established until 1452. Late in the sixteenth century, the Carmelite family underwent an important reform, largely due to the work of St. Teresa of Ávila, which led to the establishment of a branch of Carmelites known as the *Discalced Carmelites* that followed a more rigorous rule.



Fig. 6.21 St. Teresa of Ávila

Although the Carmelites express the charism of the Church differently than the Franciscans and the Dominicans, they are known to many Catholics today as the order that promoted devotion to the Scapular of Mount Carmel. It is also the order that gave us such champions of mysticism as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, as well as the leader in the “little way of sanctity,” St. Therese of the Child Jesus, whom the popes have proclaimed as Doctors of the Church.

The Augustinians

This order was also established in the thirteenth century in Italy. Seeking to serve the Church in an urban setting, several hermits from Tuscany together petitioned Pope Innocent IV for permission to unite and live in towns and cities as a mendicant religious order. In 1256, the pope gave his approval, with an injunction to use the Rule of Saint Augustine for their rule. The order grew quickly as a religious presence throughout Italy. Over time, a Second and Third Order of Augustinians were also formed, which had a similar type of membership as the Second and Third Orders of other mendicant religious orders. Some of the well-known Augustinians are St. Rita of Cascia, St. Thomas of Villanova, Bl. Ann Catherine Emmerich, and many more.



Fig. 6.22 St. Rita of Cascia Receives the Stigmata

The Augustinians engaged in various activities not only as priests, teachers, and missionaries, but also as carpenters, farmers, and bakers, as they sought to meet the various needs of the People of God. In these ways, they differed from the Franciscans, who devoted their time exclusively to doing and preaching penance, or the Dominicans, who devoted their energies exclusively to explaining and defending the Faith. The Augustinian vocation was more diverse in scope and function, giving it the advantage of flexibility. During periods of great missionary effort, for example, the Augustinians were able to supply the manpower needed to proclaim the gospel in foreign lands while trying to improve people's lives. As missionaries, they traveled throughout Europe, as well as to North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, China, and Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. Although Christianity first came to the Philippines when the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived on the island of Limasawa in 1521, the Augustinians were the first missionaries to do systematic evangelization in the country. They came in 1565 with the Spanish fleet sent by King Philip II of Spain and became the custodians of the statue of the Child Jesus, known to the Filipinos as the *Santo Niño de Cebu*.



Fig. 6.23 Replica of the Santo Niño de Cebu

Ferdinand Magellan gave this statue to the Filipino chieftain and his wife when they converted to Christianity, and the people have since highly venerated it due to the many miracles attributed to it.

6.4 Medieval Heresies

The primary reason for organizing the Franciscan and Dominican Orders in the thirteenth century was to protect the Faith of the people against heretics and to prevent the spread of heresy in the Church. There were two kinds of heretics who were active during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: the Waldensians and the Albigensians.

The Waldensians

The Waldensians were a group of heretics who followed the radical ideas of Peter Waldo of Lyons (1140–1205). They condemned the sinful and luxurious lifestyle of the clergy, who had become wealthy on account of the feudal system and wanted to see a return to the simple and austere life practiced by the Apostles. In 1176, Peter Waldo gave away his wealth and lived a life of poverty that impressed and attracted the poorer and uneducated classes in France. Waldo's heresy was a moral protest against corruption among the Catholic clergy. It was a valid reaction, but the heresy was based on the error that *a corrupt and sinful priest was not a priest at all* and that the sacraments administered by a sinful priest had no validity. Waldo and his followers rejected the divine institution of the priesthood and began practicing an independent lay ministry, similar to what Protestants do today. Their revolt against the priesthood included rejecting the idea of confessing one's sins to a priest, as well as the priest's power to perform the Sacrifice of the Mass. These views also led them to attack the Church's doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage, the doctrine of indulgences, the existence of purgatory, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and the practice of venerating saints and their relics. The Waldensians eventually spread into Italy and Spain. At first, the Church merely punished them with excommunication (1184), but the secular authorities later arrested and imprisoned them. In 1194, King Alfonso II banished them from Spain. In 1197, the punishment included burning heretics at the stake. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX initiated the **Papal Inquisition** to persuade heretics to abandon their ideas and avoid the death penalty. The word "inquisition" comes from the Latin *inquisitio*, which means an inquiry. The so-called "Papal Inquisition" was an ecclesiastical tribunal for the discovery and trial of heretics. Contrary to popular belief, the Inquisition begun by Pope Gregory IX did not use torture as a tool of inquiry or as a form of penance.

The Papal Inquisition never completely extirpated the Waldensians, who survived as a heretical group throughout the centuries. Today, the Waldensians still exist as a Protestant group in Italy, the United States, and South America.

The Albigensians

The Albigensians, whose name derives from the French town of Albi, were similar to the Waldensians in that they also opposed the corruption of the clergy. However, the Albigensian heresy was more of an *intellectual* than a moral protest. It espoused doctrines reminiscent of fourth-century Manichaeism theology. Thus, people sometimes referred to the Albigensians as the “new Manichaeans,” for they believed, as the Manichaeans did, in the dualist idea that *there were two basic principles or gods in reality—one good and the other evil*.

The Albigensian heresy taught that the spirit is naturally good and has its source in a good god, while matter is intrinsically evil and owes its existence to an evil god. Since the Albigensians believed that the evil god created the world and the flesh, they denied the reality of the Incarnation; they denied that Christ had a body (because the body is evil). They thought that Christ was not a man but an angel in human form. They claimed that Christ was only a creature, not divine. Likewise, they believed that the Holy Spirit was a created being rather than divine. Of course, these beliefs led them to reject the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, or the existence of three Divine Persons in one God.

The Albigensian heresy had other doctrines that were contrary to the Catholic Faith. For example, it rejected the Old Testament because it depicted God as the creator of the world, which it viewed as evil. The belief that anything material is evil and must be avoided also has practical consequences. For example, the Albigensians abstained from meat in their diet and rejected marriage, family, and other material pleasures as sinful. The more experienced members called themselves the *Cathars* (“the pure” or “the perfect”) because they claimed to have attained the purity of soul that comes from dissociating themselves completely from anything material. They viewed death as good in itself because it liberates the soul from the body. They believed that the good god created the human soul, but the evil god imprisoned it in a body. Man liberates his soul from the body by dissociating himself from all material attachments. If he fails to complete this purgation during his lifetime, his soul will *reincarnate* in a different body, possibly an animal one, in the next life. Since the Albigensian heresy believed in reincarnation, it denied the need for the Sacrament of Penance, prayers for the dead, and the resurrection of the body.

The Albigensians repudiated material riches and private property, and they hated the wealthy. They protested against the luxurious life of the clergy, called the Catholic Church the “synagogue of Satan,” and identified her with the “whore of Babylon”

mentioned in the Book of Revelation, chapter 17.⁷⁹ Unlike the Waldensians, however, the Albigensians were not mere intellectual dissenters. They were a violent and fanatical sect whose members at times engaged in acts of violence, not only opposing ecclesiastical authority but also harming the clergy and pillaging churches and monasteries. Their teachings became a menace not only to the Church but also to the state. For this reason, the Second Council of Lateran condemned such heresies in 1139. But the condemnation of heresy was not enough. To effectively stop the heresy, it was also necessary to convert the heretics and win them back to the Faith. At first, it was only the Cistercian monks who, acting as papal delegates, worked to counter and convert the Albigensians. Later, however, Saint Dominic and his bishop, Diego de Acebo, joined them.



Fig. 6.24 St. Dominic and the Albigensians

This painting depicts the ordeal of fire between St. Dominic and the Cathars. According to the story, St. Dominic and the Cathars threw their books into the fire. St. Dominic's books miraculously survived the flames while the Cathars' manuscripts burned, indicating the soundness of St. Dominic's teachings.

⁷⁹ Without any basis, heretics and enemies of the Catholic Church today still maliciously call her the whore or harlot of Babylon.

In 1209, Pope Innocent III asked the Cistercians to preach a crusade against the heretics. French nobleman Simon de Montfort organized an **Albigensian Crusade**, which resulted in a bloody war that lasted twenty years. But the heresy persisted, indicating that force alone could not eradicate it. In 1216, Pope Honorius III confirmed Saint Dominic's new order, the *Order of Preachers*. Thereafter, the Dominicans carried on the fight against heresy. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX initiated the Papal Inquisition, assigning several Dominicans and Franciscans as inquisitors who would prosecute and convert the heretics. It took until the end of the early fourteenth century to eradicate the heresy.



Fig. 6.25 Statue of Simon de Montfort

6.5 The Papal Inquisition

The punishment of heretics was not new in the Church. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the Church excommunicated those who taught doctrines different from the faith. Civil authorities, however, were more severe in their punishments. In the fourth century, when some Roman emperors converted to the Faith, they also imposed civil punishments on heretics. These punishments included property confiscation and banishment from their territories. The State also used the death penalty against heretics when it deemed the heresy harmful. However, the Church and most Fathers did not support it. For example, St. Augustine would admit scourging, fines, or exile but would not admit execution as punishment for heresy.

While some Fathers did not support the death penalty, Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century found justification for the State's execution of heretics:

“For it is a much graver matter to corrupt the faith which quickens the soul, than to forge money, which supports temporal life. Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death. On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but "after the first and second admonition," as the Apostle directs: after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death.” See *Summa Theologiae, II-II, q. 11, art. 3*.

St. Thomas' thoughts reflected the Church's position at the time. In agreement with St. Thomas, the Church insisted on vetting heretics first instead of immediately killing them. If they persisted in their heresy, the Church would deliver them into the hands of the State, which then determined the form of punishment. The punishment could be exile, imprisonment, scourging, obligatory pilgrimages, fines, property confiscation, or death.

Long before the thirteenth century, many emperors and civil societies accepted capital punishment, or the killing of wrongdoers deemed harmful to society. For example, the pagan Germans sent those found guilty of sorcery or witchcraft to the flames. The violent behavior, refusal to take oaths of fealty required by their feudal

lords, antisocial stance against wealth, marriage, and the family, and hostility toward the clergy made the Cathars (or Albigensian heretics) a menace to society, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The common people perceived them as dangerous social agitators and demanded their execution and burning at the stake. The secular authorities in France, England, Germany, and Italy executed the heretics (either by hanging or by burning) to satisfy the demands of the people.

Pope Lucius III, with the concurrence of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I (or Frederick Barbarossa), issued the papal bull *Ad abolendam*, which excommunicated the Cathars, the Patarines, the Arnoldists, and various other heretics but left the punishment of heretics in the hands of secular authorities. However, Pope Gregory IX did not formally create the Papal Inquisition until 1233.



Fig. 6.26 The Burning of a Heretic

Pope Gregory IX established the ecclesiastical tribunal, known as the **Papal Inquisition**, to combat heresy. Although called “Papal,” the Inquisition was not a pontifical court, because it was not run by the pope but by pope-appointed Dominican and Franciscan theologians who acted as inquisitors. These theologians investigated and tried the heretics, persuading them, if possible, to abandon their heresy and thus avoid punishment. However, Pope Lucius III’s earlier decree left the punishment and execution of stubborn heretics in the hands of secular authorities.

At this time, Pope Gregory IX did not object to the State's use of the death penalty as a form of punishment, but he did not approve the use of torture as a tool of inquiry or as a form of punishment.



Fig. 6.27 Pope Gregory IX
(An illustration from a medieval manuscript)

In 1252, Pope Innocent IV, in his papal bull *Ad extirpanda*, approved the use of torture for extracting truth from those suspected of heresy. He permitted it, but “without killing them or breaking their arms or legs” (Law No. 25). This limited use of torture by an ecclesiastical court might seem atrocious today, but it could have been necessary in those days. Anyway, limited torture as a tool of inquiry has been an accepted practice by many secular authorities in the past and even in some places today. Contrary to the exaggerated claims made by the Catholic Church's enemies, modern historians now say that the Papal Inquisition did not apply torture and the death penalty mercilessly to heretics, preferring instead to use threats and imprisonment. It is also important to distinguish the Papal Inquisition from the seemingly cruel Spanish Inquisition that happened during the fifteenth century.⁸⁰ In the Spanish Inquisition, the State controlled the inquisition, and the Spanish monarchs, not the pope, appointed the inquisitors (see [Section 7.7](#)).

⁸⁰ Even during the more severe Spanish Inquisition, the actual number of heretics executed is far less than Church critics had claimed. See Brian Van Hove, S.J., *Beyond the Myth of the Inquisition: Ours is the Golden Age*.

6.6 The Rise of Medieval Universities

Because of the failed Crusades, the proliferation of heresies, and the consequent launching of the much-maligned Papal Inquisition, many people have mistakenly regarded the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as part of the so-called “dark ages” in the history of the Church. The term also implied a period of stagnation in the Church’s intellectual life and retardation in the advancement of science and the arts. But nothing can be further from the truth. This period—especially the thirteenth century—witnessed a tremendous advance in knowledge and skills due partly to the growth of medieval universities. Instead of calling this period the “Dark Ages,” it is more accurate to refer to it as the *Golden Age of Faith*.

Some of the famous medieval universities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The *University of Bologna*, Italy, 1088—recognized for its school of law;
2. The *University of Paris*, France, 1150—noted for philosophy and theology;
3. The *University of Oxford*, England, 1167—a center for training clerics;
4. The *University of Salamanca*, Spain, 1218—an institute of higher education;
5. The *University of Cambridge*, England, 1231—an important center of learning and research;
6. The *Medical School of Salerno*, Italy, founded earlier but flourishing in the medieval period—noted for the study of medicine;
7. The *University of Montpellier*, France, 1289—renowned for its school of medicine;
8. The *University of Coimbra*, Portugal, 1290—praised for research and higher learning.

The medieval universities started simply as groups of students who gathered around a master (usually a scholarly monk) to learn the subjects of the liberal arts: the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), as well as philosophy (which includes the natural sciences) and theology. Initially, there were no school buildings or infrastructure, and the teachers’ scholarship determined the greatness of the “schools.” The majority of the students were men, and Latin was the language of choice for instruction.

In time, the universities became more organized and acquired fixed quarters, usually in cities. They usually had a written endorsement, called a charter, from the pope or the king of the area where the university was located. Graduates of a university with a papal charter would have the right to teach anywhere in the world; those of a

university with a king's charter would have the right to teach only within the king's domain. The lowest degree granted to graduates was the *Bachelor of Arts* degree; the highest was the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*.



Fig. 6.28 Meeting of Doctors at the University of Paris

Enrollment in these early universities was in the tens of thousands, exceeding even some of today's universities. Considering Europe's smaller population at the time, one could see that the people of the Middle Ages were not as illiterate as many history textbooks had portrayed them to be. The Renaissance—or the explosion of knowledge and achievement in the sciences, the arts, literature, and the humanities that happened from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century—had its roots in the vigorous intellectual life of the 13th century.

6.7 Achievements of the Thirteenth Century

In addition to the rise of universities during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there were other notable developments in various areas of human endeavor, which are discussed below.

Science and Technology

Despite the earlier use of the experimental method by the Egyptians, Babylonians, Aristotle, and later Arabian philosophers, it was the Franciscan friar Roger Bacon (1220–1292) who explained and formulated the principles of the **scientific method** in 1266. (See [The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon](#).) In this regard, he preceded Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who frequently receives credit for formalizing the scientific method. The thirteenth century and beyond also saw significant strides in medicine, particularly at the Universities of Salerno, Padua, and Bologna, where scholars studied the dissection of cadavers and the use of various anesthetics to advance the medical arts (see [Medieval Medicine of Western Europe](#) on Wikipedia).

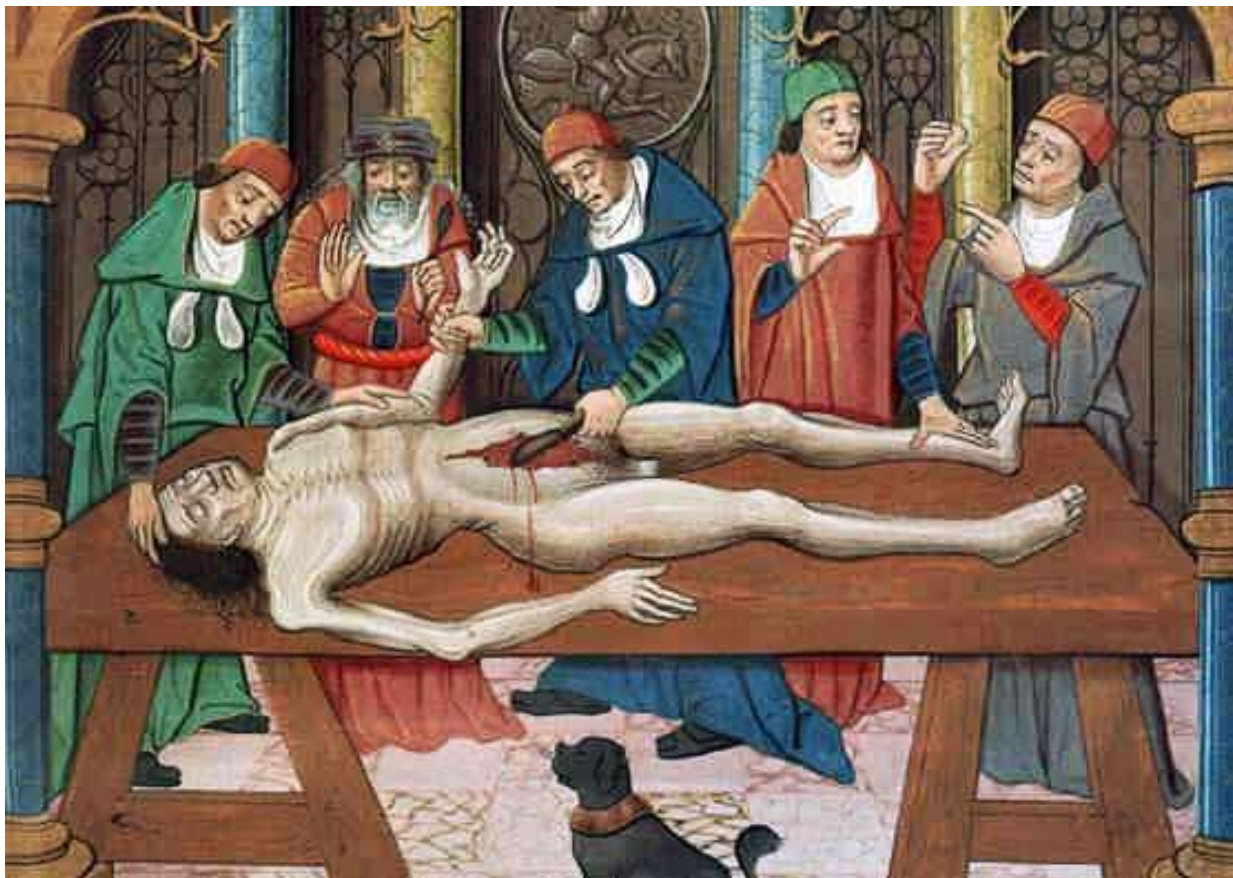


Fig. 6.29 Dissection of a Cadaver

Painting

The late thirteenth century saw painting become more lifelike and expressive. It was a big departure from the iconic Romanesque art of the eleventh century. One painter who brought about this change was the Italian painter Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337), or simply **Giotto**. Renaissance masters like Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo later followed his tradition of making realistic-looking, Christian-inspired paintings.



Fig. 6.30 “The Kiss of Judas,” a Painting by Giotto

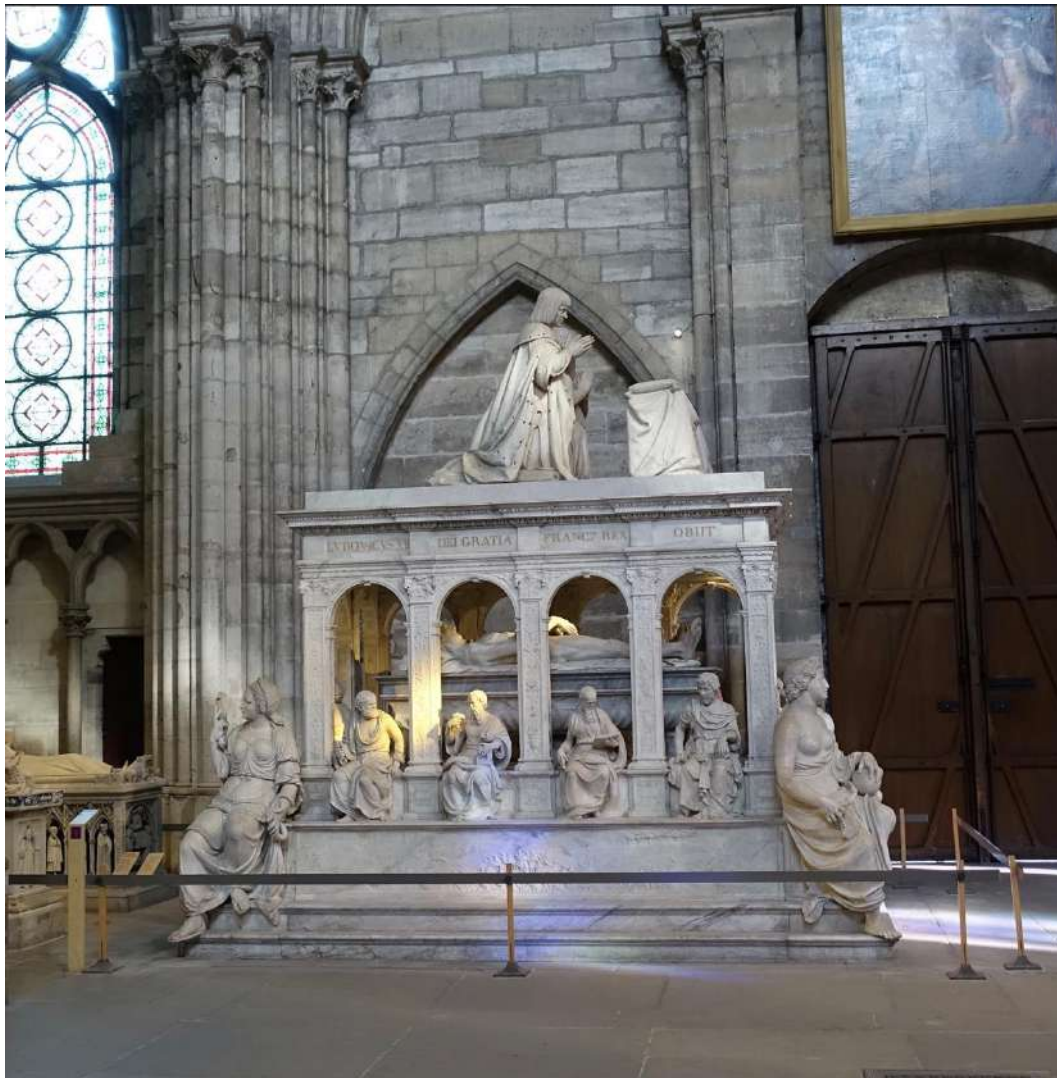
Architecture and Sculpture

The thirteenth century saw the construction of magnificent Gothic cathedrals that even today serve as monuments to our Christian faith. These include the St. Denis and Notre Dame Cathedrals in Paris, the *York Minster and Salisbury* Cathedrals in England, the *Burgos and Toledo* Cathedrals in Spain, as well as the *Cologne and Aachen* Cathedrals in Germany. Even though only two cathedrals were mentioned in each country, these countries continued to build more even after the thirteenth century. France alone built about 80 cathedrals, England built about 20, and Spain and Germany built far more. It would be an eye-opening experience to do a *Google* search and see the awe-inspiring cathedrals inherited from or inspired by medieval architecture. They replaced the sturdy and rugged Romanesque buildings that had been the pride of earlier centuries.



Fig. 6.31 Salisbury Cathedral

The Gothic cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries boasted soaring spires and vaulted ceilings supported by beautiful flying buttresses. Masterpieces of art filled the vaulted ceilings, walls, and stained-glass windows of each cathedral. Innumerable statues of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the angels, the saints, kings, and other dignitaries, as well as Bible and historical scenes, surrounded the interior and exterior structures.



**Fig. 6.32 Tomb of King Louis XII of France
Basilica of Saint Denis**

Gothic architecture is truly Catholic architecture. A whole population, not just a few engineers or skilled craftsmen, proudly built these structures as a living testament to their Catholic faith. The art and sculptures that adorned the buildings so fully illustrated the Scriptures and the Christian faith that people sometimes referred to them as “books in stone.”

Philosophy and Theology

Before the thirteenth century, philosophers and theologians were primarily concerned with reading and publishing the writings of the Fathers but contributed little of their own. In the thirteenth century, however, a new system known as **scholasticism** flourished, which exploited the use of reason in explaining the faith. The scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century—particularly **Saint Thomas Aquinas**—showed that there was no conflict between reason and faith, and that philosophy was, in fact, the “handmaid of theology.” The Scholastics, which included St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, and others, had recourse to the writings of Aristotle (whom St. Thomas called “the philosopher *par excellence*”) to find the philosophical tools necessary for defending and explaining the faith. At the same time, they pointed to *mysticism* and intimate union with God as the best ways to gain a better understanding of Him.



Fig. 6.33 The Virgin and Child with St. Dominic (left) and St. Thomas Aquinas (right)

Music

Before the thirteenth century, people composed music for both worship and entertainment. This tradition continued throughout the Middle Ages. Despite the abundance of religious hymns written during the Patristic era, the Dominican and Franciscan friars in the thirteenth century penned some of the loftiest and most beautiful ones, which are still in use today! The list includes the *Eucharistic Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas* (*Adoro te devote, Pange lingua, Sacris solemniis, Verbum supernum, and Lauda Sion*), as well as the hymn dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, by the Franciscan, Fra. Jacopone da Todi (1230-1306).



Fig. 6.34 Fra. Jacopone da Todi's Tomb Portrait

Literature and Poetry

The clergy introduced the growth and development of a particular literary type, known as **drama**, to enhance the people's understanding of the gospel events. This type was used in the Mass, but it was removed when the vernacular replaced Latin, and new characters and scenes were added to the plays. Despite taking place outside the liturgy, people still use the famous Passion Plays, which depict the sufferings of our Lord, during Holy Week today. In addition to the development of religious drama, the late thirteenth century also opened new horizons in poetry as a medium for explaining the Faith. The Italian poet **Dante Alighieri** (1265–1321) wrote a long poem called *The Divine Comedy*, which discussed a soul that made an imaginary journey through hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. From the beginning of human history to the thirteenth century, the soul met many important and well-known personages on its journey. The work's purpose was to illustrate the destiny of human souls and help us, who are still living on earth, move from a state of wretchedness to a state of blessedness.



Fig. 6.35 Dante Holding His Divine Comedy

The painting depicts Dante standing next to the entrance to hell, Mount Purgatory's seven terraces, and the city of Florence, with the heavenly spheres above.

At the same time, Dante described the Church's theological understanding of hell, Purgatory, and Heaven in poetic language. His eloquent description of hell, Purgatory, and Heaven has earned him the apt title of "Thomas Aquinas in verse." Dante wrote his poem in Italian, but an American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), made an English translation that many people still regard as one of the best.

The influence of Christianity and the Catholic Church greatly contributed to the significant progress in the arts and sciences, philosophy and theology, literature, and the humanities. Instead of identifying the entire Middle Ages with the Dark Ages, it would be more correct to speak of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the *Golden Age of Faith*. Some writers regard the thirteenth century, in particular, as the greatest of centuries because of its achievements.⁸¹

⁸¹ See, for example, James Joseph Walsh, *The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries*.

CHAPTER 7

THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

7.1 The “Babylonian Captivity” of the Popes

While the kings of France had been friendly to the popes since the time of Charlemagne, this relationship changed toward the end of the thirteenth century. In particular, the king of France, Philip IV (1268–1314)—also known as Philip the Fair—began his quarrels with Pope Boniface VIII, who resisted his attempt to levy a tax on the clergy and the Church. Some regard Pope Boniface VIII as a “bad pope” because he practiced nepotism openly. For example, Dante, in the *Divine Comedy*, hinted that Pope Boniface (who was still living when Dante wrote his poem) was destined for hell.⁸² However, when Pope Clement V called the Council of Vienne (France) to investigate Pope Boniface’s actions, it did not condemn him.



Fig. 7.1 Pope Boniface VIII Declaring the Jubilee Year of 1300

⁸² Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Inferno, Canto 19.

Pope Boniface also had some notable accomplishments in addition to defending the Church against unfair taxation. Among his accomplishments were that (a) he successfully promoted peace negotiations between France and England, and (b) he proclaimed the **Great Jubilee of 1300**, an event that delighted many thousands of pilgrims. The Great Jubilee granted an indulgence to repentant sinners who received the Sacrament of Penance and visited the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul a specified number of times.

When Pope Boniface, in his bull *Unam sanctam*, asserted the pope's supremacy in spiritual matters over all temporal rulers, King Philip falsely accused him of heresy and sent his armed agents to seize him in his papal palace in Anagni, Italy. Although Italian noblemen rescued him and brought him back to Rome, Pope Boniface died one month later (in October 1303) after the mistreatment he suffered at the hands of his captors. Pope Benedict XI, who succeeded him, excommunicated those who participated in the sacrilegious capture of Pope Boniface, but he reigned as pope for only nine months. Rumors circulated that his opposition to King Philip led to his poisoning and death.

After the death of Pope Benedict XI, there was no pope permanently residing in Rome for the next seventy-three years. Pope Clement V, who succeeded him, was not a Roman but a Frenchman, elected largely due to King Philip's powerful influence. Under pressure from the king, he took up his residence in Avignon, a city then outside the kingdom of France but strongly within the French sphere of influence. Pope Clement was weak and made many concessions to King Philip. It was during the reign of Pope Clement V that King Philip the Fair suppressed the Knights Templar, confiscated their wealth, and ordered the burning at the stake of 54 Knights Templars whom he charged as heretics.

The next six popes after him were also Frenchmen, who, under pressure from the French monarch, established their residences at Avignon. This is why many historians refer to this period of Church history (1309–1377), characterized by the absence of the pope from Rome, as the “Babylonian Captivity” of the popes. It was analogous to the Jews' seventy-year absence from Jerusalem during the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews.

While the popes were in Avignon, they also achieved great things. For example, they expanded missionary activity in India, China, and Central Asia. However, the fact that the Roman Pontiffs lived in Avignon rather than in Rome was rather odd and had an overall negative effect on the Church. First, it conveyed the impression that France was controlling the pope, and people no longer trusted him to lead the

Church. Second, it necessitated raising additional taxes on the clergy and religious orders to build new buildings and maintain papal operations outside Rome. Third, Rome itself suffered significant losses on account of the pope's absence, including the decline of businesses, the dwindling population, and the neglect and ruin of great basilicas. For these reasons, many wise and saintly people petitioned the popes to return to Rome. Among them were the Italian poet Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) and the visionary St. Bridget of Sweden. However, it was the lay Dominican woman, **St. Catherine of Siena**, who achieved the honor of successfully persuading Pope Gregory XI, the last of the Avignon Popes, to return to Rome. She wrote [letters](#) to the pope, and through her prayers and pleadings, she induced Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome in January 1377.



Fig. 7.2 St. Catherine of Siena Writing

7.2 The Papal (or Western) Schism

Pope Gregory XI died in 1378, a year after he returned to Rome. The people of Rome didn't want the next pope to be a Frenchman again, so they demanded that the cardinals at the papal conclave choose a Roman or at least an Italian for the next pope. However, the newly elected pope, while not a Frenchman, was also not a Roman. The newly elected pope, Pope Urban VI, was from the Kingdom of Naples.



Fig. 7.3 Pope Urban VI

Not only was Pope Urban VI not a Frenchman, but he was also not a cardinal. The cardinals who participated in the election expressed dissatisfaction over the election of someone who did not belong to the College of Cardinals. Besides not being a member of their college, the newly elected Pope Urban VI also had a rather stern personality. Soon after his election, for example, he rebuked the French cardinals for their worldly lives. St. Catherine of Siena warned the new pope not to be too severe with his cardinals, but he did not heed her advice. The sad result was that the French cardinals conspired against him, left Rome, returned to Avignon, and declared his

election invalid. They contended that the mob had forced the cardinals at the papal conclave to elect him. So, they elected “another pope,” who called himself Clement VII. This rival pope, known technically as an “antipope,” established his residence at Avignon.

This was the beginning of the so-called Western Schism (or Papal Schism)—a scandalous situation where more than one man claimed to be the true pope. Of course, St. Catherine of Siena sided with Urban VI, the true pope. She wrote letters and pleaded with rulers and bishops across Europe to support the true pope, but the schism caused confusion not only in Europe but throughout the Church. Even St. Vincent Ferrer, a Dominican, was confused. He initially supported the antipope Benedict XIII in Avignon, France. However, when he finally recognized who the true pope was, he denounced Benedict in a sermon that made the antipope lose his followers.



Fig. 7.4 St. Vincent Ferrer

Pope Urban VI reigned in Rome for eleven years, followed by Pope Boniface IX. The antipope Clement VII reigned at Avignon for sixteen years, followed by another antipope, Benedict XIII. At first, only two men were claiming to be the legitimate pope, but in 1409, some cardinals from both obediences, who wanted to remedy this schism, held an unauthorized council at Pisa in which they deposed the two claimants and elected another claimant, who called himself Alexander V. Both the pope in Rome and the pope at Avignon did not want to give up their claim to the papacy, so there were now three men claiming to be the true pope! The antipope at Pisa reigned for only one year before he died. However, another antipope succeeded him, taking the name John XXIII.



Pope Boniface IX in Rome



Antipope Benedict XIII in Avignon



Antipope John XXIII in Pisa

Fig. 7.5 The True Pope and Two Antipopes

The Western Schism (or the Papal Schism) lasted for nearly forty years, unlike the Eastern Schism (or the Greek Schism), which remains unresolved to this day. The last part of the Papal Schism, when there were three claimants to the throne of Peter, lasted about eight years. The schism ended when the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund persuaded the pope at Pisa, John XXIII, and later the pope at Rome, Gregory XII, to give formal legitimacy to the Council of Constance (1414–1418). In this council, both the Pisan claimant and the Roman pope agreed to resign; the Avignon claimant refused to resign and was deposed. A new pope was elected, who took the name Martin V. With the election of Pope Martin V, the Papal Schism ended. There was great joy throughout Christendom because the Church was again united under one shepherd.

This was not the first time in the history of the Catholic Church that there had been an antipope. Antipopes have existed since at least the third century of the Christian era.⁸³ The existence of antipopes was one reason some bishops had proposed the false idea of *conciliarism*, which stipulates that a general council is above the pope and that even the pope is bound to obey it. Of course, the bishops' intention in formulating this idea was to avoid the unhappy situation of having multiple individuals claiming to be popes with no higher authority to settle it. Notwithstanding the noble intentions of the bishops, conciliarism is a flawed doctrine. The council has authority *only when the pope himself is in charge*. The pope is the head of the Church. He alone can call a general council, and the council itself can only make a binding decree if he approves it.

7.3 St. Joan of Arc, Patroness of France

It was shortly after the Western Schism ended that the beautiful saga of **St. Joan of Arc** (1412–1431) and her valiant campaign to save France took place. The French and the English had been at war since 1337 in what is now known as “The Hundred Years War.” It was a quarrel about who would be the next king of France. At the time, both the French and the English claimed the French throne, and for a while, the English were winning the fight. This was the situation until Joan of Arc, whom God called to lead the French Army, arrived. Guided by heavenly “voices,” Joan obtained permission from Charles VII, the eldest but uncrowned son of the French king, to lead the French army against the English. Under Joan's leadership, the French won the momentous Battle of Orléans, and after other victories, Charles VII, known as the “Dauphin” because of his status as the king's eldest son, assumed the

⁸³ See Appendix 4, [List of Roman Catholic Popes](#).

throne on July 17, 1429. With the crowning of Charles VII, Joan accomplished her mission, but she continued to fight.



Fig. 7.6 St. Joan of Arc at the Coronation of Charles VII

The Burgundians, the French allies of the English, captured Joan the following year. The English then purchased her for a substantial amount of money. To get rid of her, the English secular authorities asked the local bishop, Pierre Cauchon, to try her as a witch (because of her claim that she heard heavenly “voices”). Joan pleaded for the pope to hear her case, but they denied her request. On May 30, 1431, they convicted her of heresy and related charges and burned her at the stake.



Fig. 7.7 St. Joan of Arc’s Death at the Stake

Twenty-five years later, King Charles VII reopened her case, and Pope Calixtus III ordered a retrial. Those who participated in the trial of 1431 and were still living confessed that the English had intimidated them into testifying against her. Therefore, the court, with the Holy See’s approval, annulled and reversed the decision of the earlier trial, and, in 1920, Pope Benedict XV canonized Joan. The Church now considers St. Joan of Arc to be the patron saint of France.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ See the [Trial of St. Joan of Arc](#). For links to documents and other resources, see [Famous Trials](#).

7.4 The Council of Florence (1438–1445)

In addition to the schisms that plagued the Church in the late fourteenth century, it now had to contend with new heresies. For example, **John Wycliffe** (1324–1384), a priest and professor at Oxford University in England, started teaching that the visible institutional Church was not necessary, that the Bible was the sole rule of faith (*sola scriptura*), and that everybody should be able to read and interpret the Holy Scriptures for himself. To this end, he even made his own English translation of the Bible, even though English translations of large portions of it were already available then.⁸⁵ As might be expected, John Wycliffe made his translation, with or without other collaborators, from the Latin Vulgate, the standard biblical text at that time.

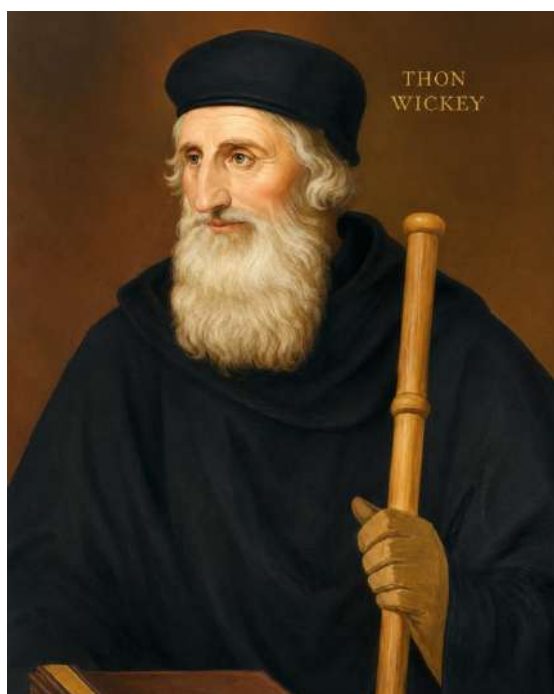


Fig. 7.8 John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe undermined all authority by saying that no one could have any authority unless he was free of sin. Disgruntled by the morally loose and corrupt life of the clergy, he rebelled against Church authority, maintaining that the clergy lost their authority when they fell into mortal sin. Then he also denied the reality of transubstantiation, which refers to the changing of the substance of bread and wine during Mass into the body and blood of Christ.

⁸⁵ The claim that the Catholic Church opposed translating the Bible into the vernacular is false. In the fourth century, Pope Damasus I instructed St. Jerome to translate the Bible from the original languages into Latin, which was the vernacular (or common language of the people) at that time.

Although the Council of London condemned his ideas in 1382, they influenced the thoughts of a Bohemian clergyman, **John Hus** (1375–1415), who taught similar doctrines. John Hus rejected the authority of the pope and attacked the Church's teachings on the Blessed Virgin, indulgences, and communion under one kind. The Council of Constance (1414–1418) condemned his teachings and ordered him to retract. He refused to do so and was burned at the stake, but his followers—the Hussites—persisted in their heresy.



Fig. 7.9 The Execution of John Hus

John Wycliffe's and John Hus' heretical ideas were the same errors that Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century would later teach. Although the Council of Constance condemned these doctrines, the errors had already spread to various countries, creating an intellectual climate that historians now call "the eve of the Protestant Reformation."

A synod, which started in Basel in 1431, aimed to reconcile the Hussite heretics with the Church. However, the synod started badly on the issue of the council's supremacy over the pope (conciliarism). Pope Eugenius IV dissolved the council and opened a new synod in the city of Ferrara. Some of the original members of the Basel Synod, however, continued to believe that the council had a higher authority than the pope. They, therefore, started a new schism, deposed Pope Eugenius, and elected an antipope who called himself Felix V. This schism only lasted about 10 years. The Basel camp did not have a large following because most of Europe remained faithful to Pope Eugenius. When the antipope resigned in 1449, the schism ended, and the rest of the original Basel fathers returned and supported Pope Eugenius' successor, who was Pope Nicholas V.

The outbreak of pestilence in Ferrara forced Pope Eugenius to move the synod from Ferrara to Florence. Unlike the Basel Synod, the Council of Florence was an ecumenical council. One accomplishment of the Council of Florence was that it made the Eastern and Roman Churches sign a Decree of Union that, at least for a short while, put the Greek schism temporarily to a close. The union was short-lived because the Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453, and, to prevent East-West cooperation, they appointed a patriarch who opposed the Decree of Union. The new patriarch rejected the decree, and the Greek schism resumed. However, many of the Slavonic and other churches in Asia Minor and Palestine, which previously accepted the Decree of Union, decided to remain united with the Roman Catholic Church and did not rejoin the schism.

7.5 The Invention of the Printing Press (1445)

Although most people credit **Johannes Gutenberg** (1398–1468) as the inventor of the printing press, Asians had already been using blocks to produce printed characters centuries before he produced his first printed Bible, the Gutenberg Bible. However, we should recognize his contribution to the technology that mechanized the transfer of ink from movable types to paper. With this invention, the mass production of books became possible. For the first time, a higher number of people gained access to Bibles that had previously been copied by hand and typically owned only by monasteries, making them available to even more individuals. The printing press was an important tool for the Church's mission to spread the Faith. It was also an important means for the rapid diffusion of science, art, and literature in the world. Indeed, the invention of the printing press is now considered one of the major factors that contributed to the Renaissance.



Fig. 7.10 Plaque for Johannes Gutenberg in Eltville, Germany

7.6 The Church During the Renaissance

We can view the Renaissance as a transition period from the theocentric (or “God-centered”) attitude of the Middle Ages to the homocentric (or “man-centered”) attitude of the modern era. In terms of human pursuits, people see this phase as a move from the celestial to the secular; in the spiritual sphere, it was a passage from mysticism to naturalism; in the political sphere, it was a shift from theocracy to sovereignty; in economic life, from serfdom to independence; in science, from speculation to experimentation; and in the source of knowledge, from revelation to reason. The new spirit of humanism dominated the Renaissance.

With the invention of the printing press, literature, the arts, and the sciences all flourished under the new spirit of the Renaissance. During this period, the popes were renowned scholars and patrons of learning and the arts. **Pope Nicholas V** hired the Dominican painter Fra Angelico to paint his study in the Vatican Palace. He built the Vatican Library and bought thousands of books by Latin and Greek authors. **Pope Sixtus IV** beautified Rome; he paved and widened the streets and built churches (including the Sistine Chapel), buildings, and bridges. **Pope Julius II** invited Michelangelo to paint the story of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine

Chapel and asked Raphael to decorate the rooms of the Vatican Palace with scenes that depicted important events in Church history. **Pope Leo X**, one of the Renaissance Popes, supported artists, writers, and scholars of all kinds and supported the construction of the Church of St. Peter in Rome.



Fig. 7.11 Self-portrait of Raphael
One of the Great Renaissance Artists

However, while the Renaissance popes were highly cultured, they were also worldly and suffered the same ills that plagued the kings and rulers of the time. As rulers of the Papal States, they started thinking like secular rulers and protected themselves by practicing nepotism, that is, by appointing relatives to fill important Church positions. Most of them had blood ties to one of their predecessors. This includes **Pope Alexander VI**, one of the most notorious men ever to hold the papacy, whose uncle, Pope Calixtus III, made him a cardinal. **Girolamo Savonarola** (1452-1498), a Dominican political reformer, criticized and denounced Pope Alexander's extravagance and scandalous private life (see Horsburgh, [Girolamo Savonarola](#)).

7.7 The Spanish Inquisition

Although the Church had promoted the arts and sciences during the Renaissance, the scandals caused by the frailty and sins of her members, both among the clergy and the laity, overshadowed her contribution to humanity's improvement. In addition to the reign of evil popes, there was also the reign of evil kings and secular rulers who used the arms of the Church, such as the Inquisition, to further their political aims and selfish ambitions.

Overall, the Papal Inquisition in the thirteenth century often served as an instrument of Divine Mercy. It saved many lives and mitigated punishments that would have been more severe in the hands of the State alone. It is easy to see this when one compares the activities of the Papal Inquisition, for example, with those of the **Spanish Inquisition**, established in 1479 by King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile. Although the Spanish Inquisition was also officially an ecclesiastical institution (since it received its authority from a papal bull granted by Pope Sixtus IV), it was largely controlled by the Spanish monarchs, who received the privilege of selecting or appointing the inquisitors. This State-controlled Spanish Inquisition was responsible for the torture and deaths of hundreds of Moors and Jews during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Technically, the Jews and the Muslims were not heretics because they were not Catholics who departed from the Faith. However, they were still targets of the Spanish Inquisition.



Fig. 7.12 An Inquisition Tribunal

Biased critics of the Catholic Church often blamed the atrocities and cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition on the Church, but this was misleading and unfair.⁸⁶ The Church inquisitors were frequently under pressure to make decisions based on evidence presented to them by the State, which sometimes used torture to extract or fabricate evidence from those under trial. Although the Inquisition might have been beneficial in itself, it was abused by State officials who saw it as a tool for eliminating political opponents and confiscating coveted properties from wealthy individuals. Pope Sixtus IV attempted to intervene when the Spanish Inquisition proved too severe. Still, the Spanish Crown did not heed the pope's call for restraint, viewing the Inquisition as a powerful weapon for controlling the Jewish and Moorish communities in Spain. The Spanish Inquisition continued for centuries, even beyond the eighteenth century.⁸⁷ However, the brutality that characterized it during the fifteenth century had significantly decreased by that time.



Fig. 7.13 A Torture Chamber of the Spanish Inquisition

⁸⁶ See Brittney Jackson, *Was the Spanish Inquisition Really That Harsh? (Truths & Myths)*.

⁸⁷ Protestants, who love to cite the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition to discredit the Catholic Church, often forget that, during the Protestant Reformation, Protestants, too, showed even greater violence against Catholics and other fellow Christians who disagreed with their brand of Protestantism (see [Section 8.3](#)).

CHAPTER 8

THE SIXTEENTH, SEVENTEENTH, AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

It is best to treat this period in Church history in three parts:

Part I The Protestant Reformation

Part II The Counter-Reformation

Part III The Enlightenment

PART I – THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517–1550)

8.1 Martin Luther (1483–1546)

Martin Luther was the chief of the Protestant Reformers. Born in Eisleben, Saxony (Germany), he became an Augustinian monk in 1505 and, in 1512, a professor of philosophy and Sacred Scripture at the University of Wittenberg.



Fig. 8.1 Martin Luther

When Pope Julius II decided to rebuild the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, he announced a jubilee, saying that anyone who went to confession, received Holy Communion, and gave a monetary contribution toward the construction of the basilica would receive a plenary indulgence, which is a remission of all the temporary punishments due to sin. After his death, Pope Leo X continued the jubilee and appointed the Dominican friar John Tetzel to preach and promote it in Germany.

However, John employed some exaggerated and high-pressure salesmanship that repelled Martin Luther. Martin believed that it was necessary to correct the Church's sinful and corrupt practice of selling indulgences. However, instead of simply criticizing the practice of selling indulgences, Luther attacked the doctrine of indulgences itself and then asserted that salvation can be attained by grace through faith alone (*sola fide*), thus rendering indulgences and “good works” unnecessary.

Luther created a list of [95 theses](#), which are propositions detailing his position on the efficacy of indulgences. According to an unconfirmed but popular belief, Luther nailed his theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, to challenge John Tetzel to a debate. News of his controversy with John Tetzel soon reached the pope, who then summoned him to Rome. Prince Frederick, who supported Martin Luther, requested that the pope send a representative to Germany instead. The pope, therefore, sent Cardinal Cajetan, a brilliant Dominican theologian, to discuss with Martin Luther the issues concerning faith, grace, and indulgences. Their discussions went beyond the issue of indulgences. They talked about “justification” and “salvation” as well. According to Luther, anyone who had true repentance was already justified, which means he had already received salvation and pardon from God apart from the sacraments. He argued that baptism and communion were the only true sacraments and that all others were unnecessary. Martin Luther remained unconvinced by Cajetan's arguments to the contrary. So, in 1520, Pope Leo X issued the papal bull [Exsurge Domine](#), condemning the errors of Martin Luther, and on January 3, 1521, he excommunicated him in the bull [Decet Romanum pontificem](#).



Fig. 8.2 Martin Luther Posting His 95 Theses at the Door of the Church at Wittenberg

Luther was a scholar. In 1522, wanting to make the Bible accessible to everyone, he began translating it from its original Hebrew and Greek texts into German. He completed the project in 1534. While he greatly encouraged the faithful to read the Holy Scripture, he rejected the need for a Church *Magisterium* to teach the meaning of the sacred texts and advocated instead *free and private interpretation* of the Holy Scripture. He rejected the idea that the Church was the infallible interpreter of the sacred texts and maintained that every man was entitled to read and interpret the Scriptures for himself according to his understanding. Martin Luther taught many other doctrines opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. For example, he denied the need to obey the commandments of the Church, the celibacy of the clergy, the Church's teachings on Purgatory, and the practice of venerating the saints. He also denied the supremacy of the pope and spitefully called him the "Antichrist."⁸⁸

In 1525, Luther married Katharina von Bora, an ex-nun who had fled from the Cistercian convent in Nimbsch (near Grimma). Luther married her against the advice of his friends, saying that "his marriage would please his father, rile the pope, cause the angels to laugh, and the devils to weep."⁸⁹



Fig. 8.3 Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora in 1526

⁸⁸ His response to Pope Leo X's bull *Exsurge Domine* carries the title *Against the Execrable Bull of the Antichrist*.

⁸⁹ See the Wikipedia article, [Katharina von Bora](#).

In 1546, Luther died, regretting the outcome of the Protestant Reformation. He saw Protestantism splintered into various rival sects. But instead of acknowledging this tragedy as the result of his doctrine about the private interpretation of the Holy Scripture, he attributed it to the work of the devil. Thus, in his letter to the Christians at Antwerp (1525), he wrote, “The devil, seeing that this sort of disturbance could not last, has devised a new one; and begins to rage in his members, I mean in the ungodly, through whom he makes his way in all sorts of chimerical follies and extravagant doctrines. This won’t have baptism, that denies the efficacy of the Lord’s supper; a third, puts a world between this and the last judgment; others teach that Jesus Christ is not God; some say this, others that; and there are almost as many sects and beliefs as there are heads.”⁹⁰

8.2 The Spread of Protestantism

Charles V was the Holy Roman Emperor during Luther’s time. In 1521, he summoned the princes and bishops of Germany to Worms, Germany, for a meeting. Luther appeared at this meeting, popularly known as the **Diet of Worms**, but refused to retract his teachings. Therefore, the emperor condemned him and ordered the destruction of his writings.

However, some of Luther’s converts were princes and kings who were greedy to seize the possessions of the Church, and who wanted a religion that justified breaking the authority of Rome. In 1529, another meeting, known as the **Diet of Speyer**, ordered the followers of Luther not to preach any new doctrines until a general church council could be held and that no one should be prevented from attending Mass. Six princes and fourteen city rulers, all of whom were sympathetic to Luther, protested against this decree. This incident led to the designation of Luther’s followers as *Protestants*. Then, in 1530, at the **Diet of Augsburg**, the Protestants drew up a Lutheran creed at the request of the emperor. We now refer to this creed as the [*Augsburg Confession*](#).

Luther’s teachings spread quickly, first in Germany, then into the **Baltic States**—Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. In 1526, Frederick I of Denmark, although a Catholic, permitted Lutheran preachers to preach Luther’s doctrines in the country. In 1536, his successor, Christian III, made Lutheranism the state religion. Note that the country became Protestant, not because the people were convinced that Protestantism was right and that the Catholic Church was wrong, but because it was forced on them by the State. Of course, bloodshed occurred during the process. The

⁹⁰ M. Michelet, [*The Life of Luther Gathered from His Own Writings*](#), “Additions and Illustrations,” (Whittaker and Co., Ave Maria Lane, London), pp. 91–92.

State confiscated church property, closed religious houses and monasteries, imprisoned bishops, and forcibly drove priests, monks, and nuns away.

In **Switzerland**, Protestantism came largely through the work of **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484–1531), an apostate chaplain in the Swiss Army. He worked in Zurich, Switzerland, and began teaching heretical doctrines in 1523, two years after Luther's excommunication. Like Luther, he maintained the Bible's supremacy and denied the Catholic teachings on Purgatory and the veneration of saints, pictures, and images. Contrary to Luther, however, *he claimed that the Bible did not teach the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine during communion* and that the Mass was merely a memorial service of our Lord's death. In Switzerland, some Western Swiss states (called "cantons") accepted the Anabaptist teachings, which denied the validity of infant baptism and rejected the practice of baptizing infants. However, Zwingli and his followers, just like Martin Luther himself, defended the practice.



Fig. 8.4 Ulrich Zwingli

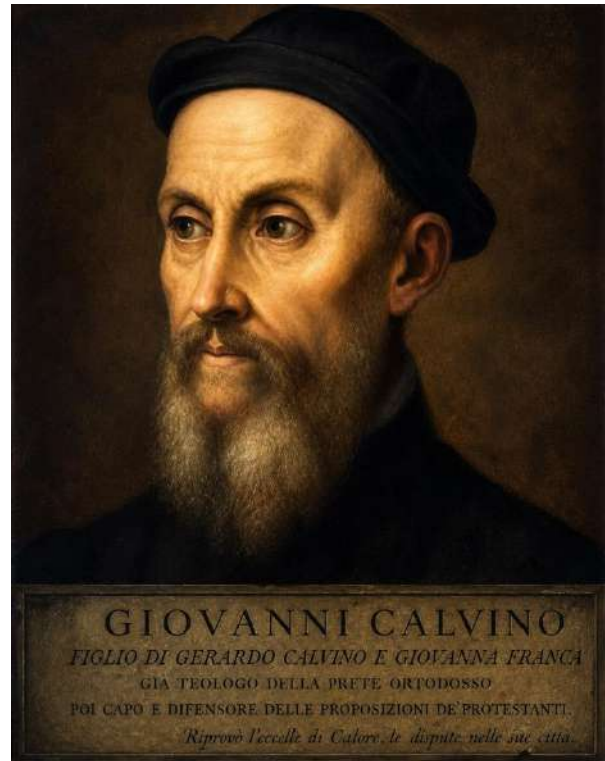


Fig. 8.5 John Calvin

In 1535, the French Reformed theologian **John Calvin** (1509–1564) broke off from Luther regarding predestination. John Calvin's radical religious teachings drove him out of France, prompting him to flee to Switzerland. In his book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he taught that *all men were predestined for heaven or hell*. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) condemned this teaching because it destroys

free will and makes God the author of sin. Besides his erroneous doctrine on predestination, Calvin followed Zwingli in denying the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He forbade all religious ceremonies, such as the Mass or ordinations to the priesthood. Although John Calvin worked in Geneva, Switzerland, his influence extended to France and throughout Europe. The Calvinists in France were known as the *Huguenots*.

In England, Protestantism began with **King Henry VIII** (1491–1547). Initially, Henry VIII opposed the teachings of Martin Luther and even wrote a book against him, for which Pope Leo X honored him with the title “Defender of the Faith.” In 1509, he married Catherine of Aragon. Twenty-four years later, he fell in love with the queen’s attendant, Anne Boleyn. When Pope Clement VII refused to grant a divorce or annulment between him and his lawful wife, he denied papal authority and, with the help of Thomas Cromwell, confiscated all church properties in England and transferred them to the crown. Then he declared himself Head of the Church of England, forced the British Parliament to divorce him, and publicly married Anne Boleyn (whom he had privately married earlier).



Fig. 8.6 Portraits of King Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn

Three years later, King Henry had Anne beheaded and married another woman. He had remarried several times, and he had already married six women when he died. It was a tragic story of passion and failed marriages, but that was how *Anglicanism*, or Protestantism in England, was born. Henry's successors continued the Church of England, now called the Anglican Church, while violently suppressing any opposition.

Even though most people consider the Protestant Reformation to have ended in 1550, Protestantism as a religion has continued to attract followers and break up into various religious sects until today. In Scotland, the apostate Catholic priest John Knox led the *Presbyterian* movement in 1560, which aimed at the destruction of the Catholic Church, while in 1609, John Smyth led the General *Baptist Church* in Holland. In 1650, George Fox founded a new *Religious Society of Friends*, also known as the *Quakers*, in England. In 1739, John Wesley also broke off from Anglicanism and started the *Methodist* revival. The *Episcopal Church* in the United States is a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Because of these divisions, the number of Protestant denominations today likely exceeds several hundred.⁹¹

8.3 Violence During the Protestant Reformation

Protestants often unfairly criticize Catholics for the excesses and cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition. However, if the Inquisition appears cruel to us today, it is not because its activities were Catholic but because they were medieval. It should be kept in mind that torture and the application of the death penalty for convicted heretics and other offenders considered dangerous by the State were the custom of the time and not the result exclusively of Catholic policy. In fact, during the Protestant Reformation, Lutheran leaders inflicted excesses and punishments similar to those that were observed during the Spanish Inquisition on their dissident subjects. In addition to the example of Christian III of Denmark, who violently forced Lutheranism on his subjects, the Lutheran princes and nobles in Germany ruthlessly suppressed the Catholic peasants who, led by Anabaptist reformers, revolted against

⁹¹ The two-volume *World Christian Encyclopedia* by Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson is the source of the often-quoted idea that the total number of Protestant denominations today is upward of 33,000. However, the 33,000 figure is misleading because of its questionable use of the word “denomination,” which includes practically any non-Catholic group that calls itself Christian. Of course, if the word “denomination” includes not merely the Protestants but also all those who follow Christ or who call themselves Christians—even though they do not believe in the Divinity of Christ or the Blessed Trinity (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, etc.)—then the total number of Christian “denominations” could indeed run into the thousands.

their feudal lords. This rebellion, now known as the *German Peasants' War* (1524–1525), did not have a purely economic cause.⁹² Although the peasants were mostly Catholics who merely wanted freedom from serfdom, they were being led and inspired by the Reformation ideas of the Anabaptist leader, **Thomas Muntzer**. The German princes and lords, against whom the peasants revolted, were friends and followers of Martin Luther. These Lutherans hated and condemned the Anabaptists,⁹³ and Martin Luther himself despised the peasants. What is relevant to note here is that Martin Luther admitted that the violent suppression of the revolution, which resulted in the deaths of about 100,000 rebels, was done on account of his bidding: “I, Martin Luther, smote all the peasants in their rebellion. For I commanded them to be slain; all their blood is on my head. But I put the responsibility upon our Lord God, who ordered me to say what I did.”⁹⁴ This example demonstrates that Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, had no qualms about using violence and death, if necessary, to eradicate what he perceived as evil elements in society and enemies of his faith.



Fig. 8.7 The Burning of Little Jack Rohrbach, a Peasant Leader

⁹² See the Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Peasants%27_War.

⁹³ See the *Augsburg Confessions*, Art. 9, 12, 16, and 17.

⁹⁴ See *Conversations with Luther*, p. 95.

In addition to the Lutheran violence described above, the Zwinglians and Anabaptists also persecuted and killed each other for holding opposite views, especially on the issue of infant Baptism. In Switzerland, Calvinists regarded death as a penalty for heresy and blasphemy, and Calvin himself requested the burning of Michael Servetus, a Spanish doctor, for denying the Trinity. In Antwerp (Belgium), Calvinists destroyed the Cathedral of Antwerp and sacked thirty other Catholic churches for teaching “heretical” doctrines. In 1560, the Scottish Parliament, inspired by the Reformation ideas of John Knox, imposed Protestantism as the state religion and threatened exile and death for those who attended Mass. In Ireland, hundreds of Catholic priests were martyred and thousands more were exiled when Queen Elizabeth I of England conquered the country and tried to impose Protestantism on the land. In England, Catholics who refused to acknowledge the English monarch as head of the Church of England faced a series of fines, confiscation, imprisonment, banishment, torture, and death during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Elizabeth I, James I, Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, and their successors. **St. Thomas More** (1478–1535), who served as Chancellor of England from October 1529 to May 1532, was among the individuals beheaded due to their opposition. People still remember St. Thomas More for his famous remark, “I am the king’s good servant, but God’s first.”



Fig. 8.8 The Martyrdom of St. Thomas More

The above examples show that the excesses and hostilities committed against heretics and those who held positions opposed to the State were not exclusively a Catholic phenomenon.

PART II – THE COUNTER- REFORMATION (1550–1650)

8.4 The Council of Trent (1545–1563)

To counter the growing threat of Protestantism in the Church, Pope Paul III opened the important General Council of Trent in 1545. The council had a twofold purpose: (a) to state clearly the doctrines of the Church that the Protestants denied and (b) to get rid of the abuses within the Church. Unfortunately, political reasons disrupted the Council twice, resulting in several years wasted without achieving its goals. But thanks to the efforts of **St. Charles Borromeo** (1538–1584), the council resumed its work for the third time with great success. The council clarified the Church's teachings on divine revelation, original sin, grace, the sacraments, the indissolubility of marriage, the Mass, purgatory, and indulgences. It also defined for perpetuity the canon of Holy Scripture, and at the same time, it declared Sacred Tradition and Holy Scripture to be the two modes by which divine revelation is handed down. A catechism, known as the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, was prepared under the supervision of St. Charles Borromeo.



Fig. 8.9 St. Charles Borromeo

The council passed many laws aimed at correcting the moral blemish caused by the worldly conduct of priests and bishops. It formulated regulations about the appointment of cardinals, stressed the strict obligations of bishops and priests, and mandated requirements for the education of both the clergy and the laity. **Pope St. Pius V** (1504–1572) was an outstanding example of a prelate who conformed to the instructions of the Council of Trent. He did not merely live an austere life personally but also mandated the clergy to do the same. In a papal bull, [*Horrendum illud scelus*](#) (1568), he imposed severe sanctions on any clergy who engaged in sodomy or other homosexual activity.

8.5 The Further Expansion of Christianity to Other Lands

Among the chief results of the Council of Trent, in addition to countering the spread of Protestantism in Europe, were the *revival of spiritual life* in the Church and the consequent *expansion of Christianity* to other lands.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced many outstanding saints, who balanced the sufferings and loss of faith brought about by the Protestant Reformation. Among the saints who resisted Protestantism and spearheaded the revival in the Church were St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552), the Dominican Pope St. Pius V (1504–1572), St. Francis Borgia (1510–1572), St. Louis Bertrand (1526–1581), St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582), St. John of the Cross (1542–1591), St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1568–1591), St. Philip Neri (1515–1595), St. Peter Canisius (1521–1597), St. Rose of Lima (1586–1617), St. John Berchmans (1599–1621), St. Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622), St. Jane Frances de Chantal (1572–1641), St. Isaac Jogues (1607–1646), St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–1690), St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort (1673–1716), St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651–1719), St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787), and many more. They brought about the flowering of sanctity in the Church in the centuries following the close of the Council of Trent. Some of them were also responsible for founding new religious orders and congregations in the Church, such as the Society of Jesus (founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions), the Order of the Visitation (by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal), the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (by St. Alphonsus Liguori), etc. Missionaries from these religious orders, especially the Society of Jesus, along with the missionaries from the old mendicant religious orders, contributed to the expansion of Christianity to lands outside Europe. These missionaries left their homes and traveled to foreign lands not to find wealth or gain honor but to spread the gospel to all nations. Historical records show that many even gave their lives for this purpose.



Fig. 8.10 Pope St. Pius V's Vision of the Battle of Lepanto

The Church did not merely make significant gains in spirituality during this period but also achieved astounding success in military warfare against nations that were hostile to the Catholic religion. In 1571, for example, a Turkish armada⁹⁵ threatened to capture Rome, but Pope St. Pius V called upon all Catholics to pray the Holy Rosary and beg the Mother of God to help their small Christian fleet defend them against the powerful Ottoman navy. The Catholic forces won an astounding victory in the famous *Battle of Lepanto*, because of which the Pope proclaimed a new feast in honor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. An army of about 90,000 Christians (which included German and Polish relief forces) won a similar victory against a much larger Ottoman Turkish army in the *Battle of Vienna* in 1683. Pope Innocent XI called upon all Catholics to pray for Mary's intercession. The greatly outnumbered Christian armies won a stunning victory.

Sadly, it was during this time of the great Catholic revival that the well-publicized confrontation of Galileo with the Inquisition took place. For those interested in reading the details of the Galileo case, see Appendix 5, *The Condemnation of Galileo*.

⁹⁵ The "Turks" were Muslim inhabitants of Turkey.

In South and Central America

When Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, other Spanish explorers came, accompanied by Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian missionaries. The Jesuits also came, with some going to Peru and others to Paraguay. The first canonized saint of the New World was St. Rose of Lima, who became a lay Dominican. The Spanish Dominican missionary, **Bartolomé de las Casas** (1484–1566), defended the American Indians against abusive European colonizers and converted thousands to the Faith in Central America. The Dominican St. Louis Bertrand baptized 25,000 indigenous people in Colombia and Panama.

After Hernando Cortés' conquest of Mexico, the Franciscans also established missions in the land. The missionaries worked hard to bring not only the Catholic Faith but also education, the sciences, and the arts to Mexico. In 1531, the apparition of the Blessed Virgin, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, to the Indian peasant Juan Diego led to the conversion of many natives and profoundly influenced their lives. From Mexico, the missionaries, led by Fr. Junípero Serra (1713–1784), founded missions in California.



Fig. 8.11 Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, O.P.



Fig. 8.12 Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Franciscans, the Dominicans, and other Catholic missionaries also went to Quito, Ecuador, to establish Catholic missions in the land. **Mother Mariana de Jesús Torres** (1563–1635), together with other sisters, also came to establish a convent there. In 1599, the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to Mother Mariana and revealed to her that, after two centuries, Ecuador would cease to be a Spanish colony and become an independent country.⁹⁶ Our Lord is also said to have confirmed this prediction in 1628 when He gave Mother Mariana a vision of the future war of independence.⁹⁷ The prediction eventually happened. The War of Independence began in 1809, and full independence was assured in 1830.

Mother Mariana belonged to a congregation known as the Order of the Immaculate Conception. During her time, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception had not yet been defined. However, she is reported to have received some remarkable revelations that were important for the Church's future history. For example, in 1634, the Divine Infant is said to have told her that the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and her assumption into Heaven would eventually be defined.⁹⁸ Speaking of the pope, the Virgin Mary also said, "His pontifical infallibility will be declared a Dogma of Faith by the same Pope chosen to proclaim the dogma of my Immaculate Conception. He will be persecuted and imprisoned in the Vatican by the unjust usurpation of the Pontifical States through the iniquity, envy, and avarice of an earthly monarch."⁹⁹ These predictions did happen.¹⁰⁰ The remarkable thing is that they made the predictions a few centuries before they came to pass!

Even more remarkable are the predictions that the Virgin Mary is said to have made in 1610 and 1634 for her convent and the Church at large in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She predicted the turbulence that would afflict the Church due

⁹⁶ See Fr. Manuel Sousa Pereira, *The Admirable Life of Mother Mariana*, tr. Marian T. Horvat, Ph.D. (Los Angeles, CA: Tradition in Action, Inc., 1999), Vol. I, Ch. 22, p. 141.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Ch. 8, p. 127. Fr. Pereira wrote his books in 1790, but they appeared in English only in 1999.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Ch. 9, p. 143. In 1854, Pope Bl. Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the Apostolic Constitution, *Ineffabilis Deus*. Then, in 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the Virgin Mary's Assumption into Heaven in the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Ch. 19, p. 288.

¹⁰⁰ Papal infallibility was defined as a dogma of the Faith by the *First Vatican Council* (1869–1870) and approved by Pope Bl. Pius IX, the same pope who defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. In 1870, the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel, attacked Rome and took possession of all the Papal States, leaving nothing to Pope Bl. Pius IX but St. Peter's Basilica and his residence, the Vatican Palace. Thus, the pope and his successors virtually became "prisoners" in his palace.

to Satan's reign, which would come about through the rise of the Masonic sects, the prevalence of heresy and loose morals in the world, the loss of children's innocence, and the corruption of the clergy.¹⁰¹ In the end, however, she would be victorious and dethrone Satan.¹⁰² Earlier, in 1594, 1599, and 1610, she had ordered the making of a statue of herself holding the Child Jesus and naming it the "Queen of Victories and Mother of Good Success," a name she wished to be invoked for the preservation of the convent and its inhabitants.¹⁰³



Fig. 8.13 Ven. Mariana de Jesús Torres.



Fig. 8.14 Mother of Good Success

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Introduction, pp. 21–23; Ch. 14, pp. 207–213. Originally, and even during the time of Mother Mariana, the stonemasons merely had an association or guild that was secretive because they wanted to preserve, protect, and oversee the practice of their trade. Over time, as demand for stonemasonry diminished, the guild became more speculative than operative and, in the late sixteenth century, slowly began to adopt rituals and symbolisms as well as rationalistic and gnostic ideologies that would evolve into what is today known as Freemasonry. Therefore, when Mother Mariana received the prophecy in 1610, she didn't fully understand yet how the Masonic sects would pave the way for Satan's reign, as she was unaware of the evolution of the Masonic sects into what they are today. However, it is now evident that this prophecy, like her other predictions, was accurate. (One may also find a summary of Mother Mariana's prophecies in [Chiesa viva](#), February 2009.)

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Ch. 14, p. 214. We are still hopeful and eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of this prophecy.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Ch. 17, pp. 104–105; Ch. 22, pp. 142–143; Vol. II, Introduction, pp. 24–26.

In Canada and the U.S.

The French Jesuits first came to Canada in 1608. They successfully converted many among the Indian tribes—the Hurons, the Algonquins, and the Montagnais—to the Faith, but they encountered resistance from the Iroquois, who were the Hurons' enemies. The further expansion of Christianity in the United States was the work of French missionaries from Canada. St. Isaac Jogues, S.J. (1607–1646), went to visit the region of the Great Lakes, but the Iroquois captured and martyred him. Fr. Jacques Marquette, S.J. (1637–1675), preached the gospel to the Indians as he explored the Mississippi River. The Belgian Franciscan Fr. Louis Hennepin (1626–1704) was one of the first Europeans to describe Niagara Falls while working among the indigenous peoples of the region. The well-known **St. Kateri Tekakwitha** (1656–1680) was an Algonquin-Mohawk Indian laywoman.



Fig. 8.15 St. Kateri Tekakwitha in Front of Santa Fe Cathedral, New Mexico

In Asia

Among the first major Catholic missionaries to Asia in this period were the Jesuits, who included St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552). However, the Jesuit missionaries brought the Faith not only to India but also to Japan and China. In 1631, the Dominicans joined ranks, came to China, and converted many to the Faith. The Dominican Pope St. Pius V was especially supportive of the Church missions in Asia, although he is better known for his efforts in defeating the Turks in the famous Battle of Lepanto in 1571. In the Philippines, the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan introduced Christianity when he came to the country in 1521. Soon, the Augustinians, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits also came to make the Philippines the foremost Catholic country in Asia.

8.6 Protestantism in the Seventeenth Century

As Catholicism spread abroad, Protestantism also gained ground. In 1611, King James I of England authorized the publication of the *King James Version* of the Bible, which became the most popular version among Protestants for three hundred years. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) also resulted in a series of peace treaties known as the *Peace of Westphalia*. These ended the religious wars that killed about eight million people in Europe and gave Catholics and Protestants legal recognition in the Holy Roman Empire.



Fig. 8.16 Historical Figures, Scenes and Symbols Relating to the Thirty Years' War

PART III – THE ENLIGHTENMENT (1650–1800)

8.7 Jansenism

While the Catholic Church continued progressing beyond Europe, a new heresy arose in France in the middle of the seventeenth century. This was Jansenism, whose doctrine of salvation closely parallels that of Calvinism. Its founder, Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), claimed that grace was so efficacious that the will could not resist it. Hence, the will's cooperation is not required for salvation. However, according to Jansen, grace is not for everyone; it is given only to those who have been predestined to receive it. God bestows grace on some but denies it to others. Since each person is already predestined from birth to go either to heaven or to hell, the Jansenists did not see the need for frequent confession and communion. Through their teachings, the Jesuits tried to combat the errors of Jansenism. But they found a powerful opponent in Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), who wrote a strong polemic against the Jesuits in his *Provincial Letters*. In 1653, Pope Innocent X condemned Jansen's heretical ideas in the papal bull *Cum occasione*.



Fig. 8.17 Pope Innocent X



Fig. 8.18 Cornelius Jansen

8.8 Absolutism: Gallicanism and Josephinism

Other errors exacerbated the problems in France and other European countries. *Gallicanism* (in France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy) promoted the idea that the State has extensive authority over the Church. State rulers used this principle to employ religion and the Church as tools for enriching themselves and eliminating political rivals. In 1673, for example, King Louis XIV (1643–1715) of France assumed for himself the power to appoint bishops and confiscate church revenues. Both Protestants (the Huguenots) and Catholics suffered from the absolutism of King Louis XIV, who forced them to accept the state religion, which aimed to dissociate itself from papal authority and the pope. The German states also suffered a similar error, known as *Josephinism*, named after Emperor Joseph II (1741–1790) of Austria. Joseph II thought that the Church was only a branch of the government, and he would not allow any interference by bishops and the Church in the affairs of the State.



Fig. 8.19 King Louis XIV of France



Fig. 8.20 Emperor Joseph II of Austria

8.9 Rationalism

In Europe, in addition to Jansenism's theological errors, there were also philosophical errors derived from the writings of rationalists and freethinkers who affirmed the sufficiency of human reason and refused to acknowledge a higher authority on intellectual and religious matters. They insisted that neither the Bible nor the Church was a better guide than human reason. François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778), more popularly known as **Voltaire**, and **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712–1778) were the prophets of rationalism in France. These two philosophers ushered in the so-called “Age of Enlightenment” because of their insistence that human reason was supreme and did not need divine revelation or a higher authority to attain truth. Needless to say, rationalism supported the movement to disregard religion, the church, and the papacy.



Fig. 8.21 Voltaire

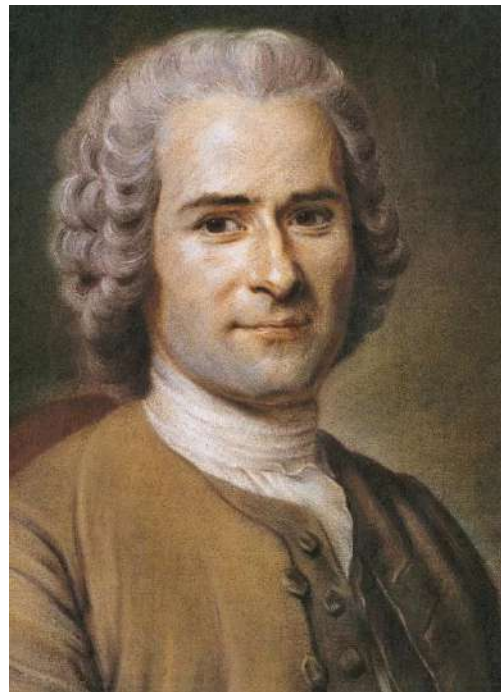


Fig. 8.22 Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Outside of France, of course, there had also been other influential philosophers who supported rationalism and empiricism. One of them was the German philosopher **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804), who, in 1781, wrote a book, *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he expressed his doubts about the ability of human reason to have formal certitude about anything, including God and religion. Another champion of the “Enlightenment” in Germany was **Gotthold Ephraim Lessing** (1729–1781), who questioned the credibility of miracles and other Christian claims.

8.10 Freemasonry

Freemasonry started in London on July 24, 1717, when a group of freethinkers banded together into a society called the *Order of the Freemasons*. Members of this society, bound by oaths of secrecy, aimed to establish an international organization independent of any church or religion. Supported by rationalist ideology, it advocated the complete separation of Church and State and quickly gained political power, especially in France. Pope Clement XII condemned Freemasonry and threatened to excommunicate Catholics who joined it in a papal bull, *In eminenti* (1738), due to its insistence that the Church should have no voice in the affairs of the State.



Fig. 8.23 Pope Clement XII Condemns Freemasonry

8.11 The Suppression of the Jesuits

Among the various religious orders, the Jesuits were among those who fought hard against the prevailing errors of the day. Naturally, they made many political enemies. Since they refused to be used as tools of the State, they were falsely accused of teaching doctrines that were dangerous to the state. In 1762, the Parliament of Paris

suppressed the Society of Jesus in France. The Parliament confiscated their property, imprisoned some Jesuits, and exiled others from France. Other European countries soon followed suit. In Portugal, the prime minister, Pombal, arrested the Jesuits and sent them to the Papal States. The Kingdoms of Spain and Naples joined ranks, and, together with France and Portugal, they petitioned Pope Clement XIV to suppress the Jesuits worldwide. They seized some of the pope's possessions in France and Naples, telling him he could no longer enjoy the cooperation of European nations if he allowed the Jesuits to operate. Seeking peace for the Church, the pope suppressed the Society of Jesus in 1773. However, some non-Catholic royalty, such as Frederick II (aka Frederick the Great) of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia, supported the society. Thus, after the death of Pope Clement XIV, Pope Pius VI allowed the Jesuits to have a novitiate in Lithuania again. His successor, Pope Pius VII, permitted the order to exist in Russia, and in 1814, he re-established the society for the whole world.



Fig. 8.24 Pope Pius VII Restores the Society of Jesus

8.12 The French Revolution

Due to the absolutism and false ideologies that prevailed in France during the Enlightenment, the French nobility pursued an abusive policy of enriching themselves at the expense of the common people. The ambitious King Louis XIV, who made himself the absolute power in both politics and religion, initiated a series of expensive wars aimed at extending his realm outside of France. His actions forced the state to incur huge debts, leading to over-taxation and the unjust confiscation of church revenues. The next king, Louis XV (1715–1774), was even worse, for his reign combined absolutism with wastefulness and corruption. Even during his time, King Louis XV knew that, due to the extravagance and excesses of the royal court, a revolution was inevitable. His successor, **King Louis XVI** (1774–1792), was not personally extravagant, but he was a weak leader and was unable to reduce government debts and prevent France from going into national bankruptcy. In 1789, the French Revolution finally broke out. The common people wanted to overthrow the monarchy. The revolutionists stormed the Bastille (a royal prison in Paris), destroyed properties, and looted monasteries. The revolutionaries' leaders were members of the *Jacobins*, an anti-Catholic group. Among its members were Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. They beheaded many of the aristocrats, including innocent women and children. They sent both the king and his devoutly Catholic wife, **Marie Antoinette**, to the guillotine.



Fig. 8.25 The Execution of King Louis XVI of France

The revolutionaries drafted the so-called “Civil Constitution of the Clergy,” which stated that priests and bishops were to be elected by the people—a matter that was contrary to canon law. The revolutionaries required priests and bishops to take an oath to this constitution. Priests and bishops who refused to take the oath lost their priestly offices and faced banishment to penal colonies in South America or other countries. On the other hand, Pope Pius VI suspended those who took the oath.

After the revolution, the revolutionaries tried to suppress Catholic worship in France. They destroyed images of saints and, instead, placed the image of the “Goddess of Reason” at the altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Worried about their safety, the kings of other countries in Europe declared war on the French Republic. The French Republic, therefore, sent General **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769–1821) into the Papal States to lead the French army in this warfare. Rome, the Eternal City, fell, and Napoleon brought Pope Pius VI to France as a prisoner.



Fig. 8.26 Napoleon Bonaparte



Fig. 8.27 Napoleon Bonaparte Crossing the Alps

The pope died in 1799, but the cardinals elected a new pope—Pope Pius VII—in a conclave near Venice in 1800. Because of his success, Napoleon took control of the affairs of France, replacing the revolutionary leaders. Napoleon knew that the French people were still Catholic at heart and that the way to restore public order was to make peace with the pope. In 1801, he signed a concordat with the Holy See, thereby restoring peace in the country.

8.13 The American Revolution

While France was the world's focus during the Enlightenment, religious development was also happening in Colonial America. One significant development came about as a result of the **American Revolution** (1775–1783), when thirteen colonies under British rule struggled for their independence. The Declaration of Independence, made on July 4, 1776, basically created a new country: the United States of America.



Fig. 8.28 Declaration of Independence

However, the colonies did more than gain political independence from Great Britain; they also gained **religious freedom**. The principle of “freedom of religion” became a part of the amended *Federal Constitution of 1789*. In particular, Amendment 1 of the Constitution states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...” This amendment guarantees religious freedom for all. Waves of immigrants from France and Ireland increased the number of Catholics in the United States.

CHAPTER 9

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

9.1 The Fall of Napoleon and Its Aftermath

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte became emperor of France. Although he invited Pope Pius VII to crown him in Paris, he was discourteous to the Pope. During the coronation, he took the crown from the pope's hand and placed it on his own head, signifying that he did not need God but only the will of the people to sanction his empire.

A few years later, the ambitious Napoleon invaded Rome, incorporated the Papal States of Ancona, Macerata, Fermo, and Urbino into the Kingdom of Italy, and annexed the rest of the Papal States into the French Empire. In 1809, when the pope excommunicated him on account of this, Napoleon brought the pope to France, where he stayed for five years in captivity. Recalling how Mary brought victory for the Christians at the Battle of Lepanto, the pope sent out a message to the bishops of the world to pray to Mary, Help of Christians, for assistance. At this time, the French army was very powerful and had already succeeded in defeating Austria, Prussia, and Portugal. However, the Virgin Mary did send help! Although Napoleon also defeated Spain, the French army lost much of its strength during its fight against the Spaniards and suffered even greater losses against Russia on the snowy Russian battlefields. In 1814, the European nations allied against France and defeated the French troops. Exiled to the island of Elba, Napoleon managed to escape and reorganize his troops in France. However, his power and ambition came to an end in 1815 at the **Battle of Waterloo** in Belgium. His enemies captured him afterward and sent him to St. Helena in the South Atlantic, where he died.



Fig. 9.1 The Battle of Waterloo

When Pope Pius VII returned to Rome in 1814, he proclaimed the feast of Mary, Help of Christians, as a form of thanksgiving for Mary's intercession in bringing about Napoleon's downfall. Louis XVIII (1814–1824) was restored to the French throne, and the Papal States were returned to the pope.

For several decades, there was a friendly relationship between the new Kingdom of Italy's supporters and some Catholics, but in 1870, the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel II, and his general laid siege to Rome. To avoid further bloodshed, Pope Bl. Pius IX surrendered the city. Victor Emmanuel took possession of all the Papal States, leaving the pope nothing but St. Peter's Basilica and his residence, the Vatican Palace. Since then, the pope and his successors were called "prisoners" in the Vatican. Only in 1929 did the Italian government and Pope Pius XI sign a peace treaty known as the **Lateran Treaty**, which recognized Vatican City as an independent state under the sovereignty of the Holy See.

9.2 The Progress of the Church in Europe

In France

Following Napoleon's fall, during the reign of King Louis XVIII, Catholicism became again the religion of the state, though not in the same exclusive way as before the Revolution. The preaching of the Dominican priest, **Fr. Henri-Dominique Lacordaire** (1802–1861), restored Catholic fervor in France after the revolution.



Fig. 9.2 Fr. Henri-Dominique Lacordaire

During this time, Fr. John Vianney (1786–1859), known as the **Curé d'Ars**, also labored as a parish priest in the undesirable village of Ars. Although he was not canonized until 1925, people felt his sanctity and dedication to his ministry during his lifetime, as well as for the rest of the nineteenth century and beyond. Parish priests now honor him as their patron saint.

In 1846, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to two children, Maximin Giraud (age eleven) and Mélanie Calvat (age fourteen), in the town of **La Salette**, France, and gave each child a secret. Coming down from the hills, the children found her sitting on stones with her elbows on her knees and her face in her hands, and weeping bitterly. She wore a white dress ornamented with different roses, a royal diadem on her head, a golden apron, and a gold crucifix hung around her neck. When asked why she was crying, she stood and told them of her sorrow for men's impiety and the sufferings that would afflict the world if people continued to blaspheme God's Holy Name, work on Sundays, and refuse to repent.



Fig. 9.3 Our Lady of La Salette

In 1851, both Maximin and Mélanie wrote down the secrets given to them by Our Lady, and Pope Pius IX read their accounts. The Holy Office in Rome archived these documents but did not publish them. In 1873, Mélanie wrote the full story of the apparition and a longer, more detailed version of her secret. She revealed the secret in a pamphlet published in 1879 with the *imprimatur* of the bishop of Lecce, Italy. The pamphlet bears the title [*Apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the Mountain of La Salette*](#).

Among the things contained in Mélanie's booklet are prophecies that say, "In the year 1864, Lucifer together with a large number of demons will be unloosed from hell; they will put an end to faith little by little, even in those dedicated to God... Rome will lose the faith and become the seat of the Antichrist..., etc."¹⁰⁴ Due to the apocalyptic and alarming nature of the prophecies contained in Mélanie's booklet, the Holy Office in 1880 forbade her to write any more about the apparition or the secret. When the book began to gain more attention and wider circulation, the Holy Office in 1923 placed it on the *Index of Forbidden Books*,¹⁰⁵ even though it carried the *imprimatur* of a Catholic bishop.¹⁰⁶

In 1999, however, a researcher discovered at the Holy Office's archive the shorter version of the secret that Mélanie originally wrote for the pope in 1851. In this secret, the Blessed Virgin revealed to Mélanie that the world's punishments due to man's impiety would include the destruction of Paris and Marseilles, the disorder upon the Earth, and the world's surrender to ungodly passions. Our Lady added that although the world would convert after that, and peace and prosperity would follow, it would eventually revert to its criminal passions, hell would once again reign on Earth, and the Antichrist would come.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ [*Apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the Mountain of La Salette*](#), Part III, pp. 7–10 of the PDF.

¹⁰⁵ The *Index* was decommissioned in 1966 and is, therefore, no longer in effect.

¹⁰⁶ The prophecies of Our Lady of La Salette might have shocked the Holy Office in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but they seem to be unfolding in real-time today. Back then, it seemed incredible that Rome would lose the faith. However, this prophecy did not contradict the Holy Scripture, for Our Lord Himself wondered whether He would still find faith on earth upon His return (Luke 18:8). At one time, St. Peter and the other Apostles also thought that they would always be perfectly loyal to Christ (Matt 26:35). Yet they fled after His arrest, and St. Peter denied Him three times (Matt 14:66–72). If even the Apostles could be unfaithful, how could Rome not be? The action of the Holy Office was understandable because it needed to be cautious. However, the fact that it placed Mélanie's book on the *Index* does not mean that its prophecies are erroneous or will not come true.

¹⁰⁷ You can find the original secrets of Maximin and Mélanie reprinted in [*Michael's Journal*](#). As in other Marian apparitions, the messages were received according to the recipient's understanding

In 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary also appeared to a French peasant girl, **St. Bernadette Soubirous** (1844–1879), at Lourdes, where she identified herself as the Immaculate Conception, thereby confirming the dogma of the *Immaculate Conception*, which **Pope Bl. Pius IX** (1792–1878) had defined four years earlier. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, France was also graced with the extraordinary life of a virtually unknown Carmelite young nun, **St. Thérèse of Lisieux** (1873–1897), now venerated both as a saint and Doctor of the Church. It was also during this time that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to **St. Catherine Labouré** (1806–1876) and requested her to make the *Miraculous Medal of Our Lady of Grace*, now worn by millions worldwide.



Fig. 9.4 St. Bernadette Soubirous



Fig. 9.5 The Immaculate Conception

and should not be taken as the exact intent of the Virgin Mary, who gave them. Furthermore, the threats of punishment are conditional, subject to mitigation, delay, or cancellation based on the world's response to the message and the prayers of the faithful. As predicted by the Lady of La Salette, both Paris and the port of Marseilles suffered massive destruction in 1944 during WWII. And, since the 19th century, the world has shown increasing sinfulness. However, the prophesied worldwide conversion to the Faith and the era of peace and prosperity have yet to happen.

In Italy

While the world witnessed the flowering of saints in nineteenth-century France, Italy could also boast of the outstanding work of **St. John Bosco** (1815–1888), founder of the Salesians and patron of Catholic youth. In 1854, **Pope Bl. Pius IX** (1792–1878) also defined the dogma of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**. But from the standpoint of Church history, the most significant event of the nineteenth century was Pope Pius IX's calling of the First Vatican Council (1869–1870). Besides clarifying the relationship between reason, faith, and revelation, this council defined the **infallibility** of the pope when speaking *ex cathedra* and the **supremacy** of the Roman Pontiff.



Fig. 9.6 The First Vatican Council

Early in the 19th century, a Freemason, who used the pseudonym “Piccolo Tigre” (“Little Tiger”), wrote a secret document entitled *The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita*. Piccolo Tigre hated the Catholic Church but knew that simply assaulting it from without, as previous emperors had done, would not lead to its destruction. Therefore, in this document, he devised a plan to destroy the Catholic

Church, not from without but from within its ranks. He suggested infiltrating the Church (both the laity and the clergy) with people who would promote the ideas of Freemasonry and who would, little by little, sway the world from Christian ideals into its naturalistic and rational worldview. The Church's downfall would be more easily assured, he said, if the Freemasons succeeded in producing clerics imbued with the spirit of Freemasonry and "a Pope according to our needs."¹⁰⁸ Thankfully, Pope Gregory XVI's encyclical *Mirari Vos* (1832) and Pope Bl. Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), which condemned the errors then pervading the minds of Catholics, checked the advance of Freemasonry in the modern world, at least for a while.

Another important event in the nineteenth century, but of a more political nature, was—as stated above—the ending of the Papal States and the confinement of the pope to the Vatican Palace in 1870.

In 1878, **Pope Leo XIII** (1810–1903) became pope. He is probably best known for his social writings, especially the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in which he laid down the principles behind the Church's social teachings. He called for an equitable distribution of property, spelled out the rights of workers, and opposed socialism and laissez-faire capitalism.



Fig. 9.7 Pope Leo XIII

¹⁰⁸ *Alta Vendita*, p. 6. According to Piccolo Tigre, it is not necessary to have clerics who are actual members of a Masonic lodge to cause the downfall of the Church. It is enough to produce clerics who believe in, subscribe to, and promote the teachings and ideals of Freemasonry.

The breadth and depth of Pope Leo XIII's erudition were outstanding. In his encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, he encouraged the assiduous study of Holy Scripture as a source of divine truth. He was also behind the revival of *Thomism*—a renewed interest in philosophy and theology based on the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas—which gave future scholars the intellectual tools needed to combat the errors of modern rationalism and naturalism. In the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (“Eternal Father”), he established norms for training the clergy and the laity.

Pope Leo XIII is well known for his intellectualism, but so are his piety and devotion to the Virgin Mary. Today, people still remember him as the “Rosary Pope” due to his twelve encyclicals on the Rosary. He is also the author of the famous “Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel,” which the Church today in some areas prays at Holy Mass, but in abbreviated form.¹⁰⁹ Pope Leo XIII reportedly composed this prayer when, after celebrating Mass one day, he saw a frightening vision of the Church's future, in which Satan and his demons would invade the Church.¹¹⁰ According to another source, Pope Leo also overheard, in a vision, a conversation in which Satan challenged God and said that he could destroy the Church if only he had the time and power to do so. God reportedly accepted the challenge and gave him 100 years to destroy the Church.¹¹¹ Seeing the grave peril that the Church would soon face, Pope Leo, in 1886, composed the prayer to St. Michael and ordered its recitation along with the “Hail, Holy Queen” at all Low Masses throughout the Church.

Revelations derived from visions and apparitions do not have the same weight of credibility as Holy Scripture. However, it is remarkable that Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824) also had a vision in which she prophesied the unchaining of Satan and a certain number of demons “to tempt men and to serve as instruments of divine vengeance” fifty or sixty years before the year 2000.¹¹² In another vision, she also spoke of enemies of the Church destroying St. Peter's Basilica:

¹⁰⁹ You can find the original, longer “Prayer to St. Michael” in the *Raccolta* (Benziger Bros., N.Y., 1910) No. 292, pp. 125–126. It contains a prophecy about the future turbulence in Rome, which the abbreviated version of the prayer omitted.

¹¹⁰ Msgr. Carl Vogl's account from 1891 served as the basis for this report. See *St. Michael, His Prayer, and the Version You've Never Seen*.

¹¹¹ See *The Vision of Pope Leo XIII*. Four years earlier, on August 30, 1880, the Breton stigmatist Marie-Julie Jahenny also recounted a conversation between Christ and Satan, in which the Lord permitted him to use his power to conquer the world for a space of time. See E.A. Bucchianeri, *We Are Warned: The Prophecies of Marie-Julie Jahenny*, Aug. 30, 1880, pp. 240–243. These alleged conversations between God and Satan do not appear too far-fetched if we recall that the Book of Job records a similar conversation between God and Satan.

¹¹² Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (London, 1862), Ch. LIX, p. 325.

“I saw St. Peter's. A great crowd of men was trying to pull it down whilst others constantly built it up again. Lines connected these men one with another and with others throughout the whole world. I was amazed at their perfect understanding. The demolishers, mostly apostates and members of different sects, broke off whole pieces and worked according to rules and instructions. They wore **white aprons** bound with blue riband. In them were pockets and they had **trowels** stuck in their belts. The costumes of the others were various. There were among the demolishers **distinguished men wearing uniforms and crosses**. They did not work themselves but they marked out on the wall with a **trowel** where and how it should be torn down. To my horror, I saw among them Catholic Priests. Whenever the workmen did not know how to go on, they went to a certain one in their party. He had a large book which seemed to contain the whole plan of the building and the way to destroy it. They marked out exactly with a **trowel** the parts to be attacked, and they soon came down. They worked quietly and confidently, but slyly, furtively and warily. **I saw the Pope praying, surrounded by false friends** who often did the very opposite to what he had ordered, and **I saw a little black fellow (a laic) laboring actively against the Church**. Whilst it was thus being pulled down on one side, it was rebuilt on the other, but not very zealously.”¹¹³

In this vision, the Papal Basilica of St. Peter represents the Catholic Church. A crowd of men is trying to destroy it, while others constantly build it up. Although Bl. Catherine Emmerich did not use the word “Freemason” to describe those who are trying to demolish the Church, her frequent use of the word “trowel” and her description of the demolishers wearing white aprons remind us of a Freemasonic image released early in the twentieth century by the Grand Orient of France (see Fig. 9.8). This may suggest that her vision refers to Freemasons working against the Church and attempting to destroy it. She described “some” (not all) of the demolishers as “wearing uniforms and crosses,” indicating possibly cardinals, bishops, or prelates in their clerical habits.¹¹⁴ They surround the pope as false friends and advisers. In the vision, the “little black fellow” is often interpreted as the devil, who is also actively working against the Church. There are, however, some men in the crowd trying to repair and rebuild the Church, “but not very zealously.”

¹¹³ K. E. Schmöger, *The Life and Revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich*, Vol I, Ch. XLI, p. 565. (I added the highlights.)

¹¹⁴ Her use of the word “some” and her remark that “the costumes of the others were various” indicate that not all members of the demolition crew were prelates, but destroyers nonetheless.

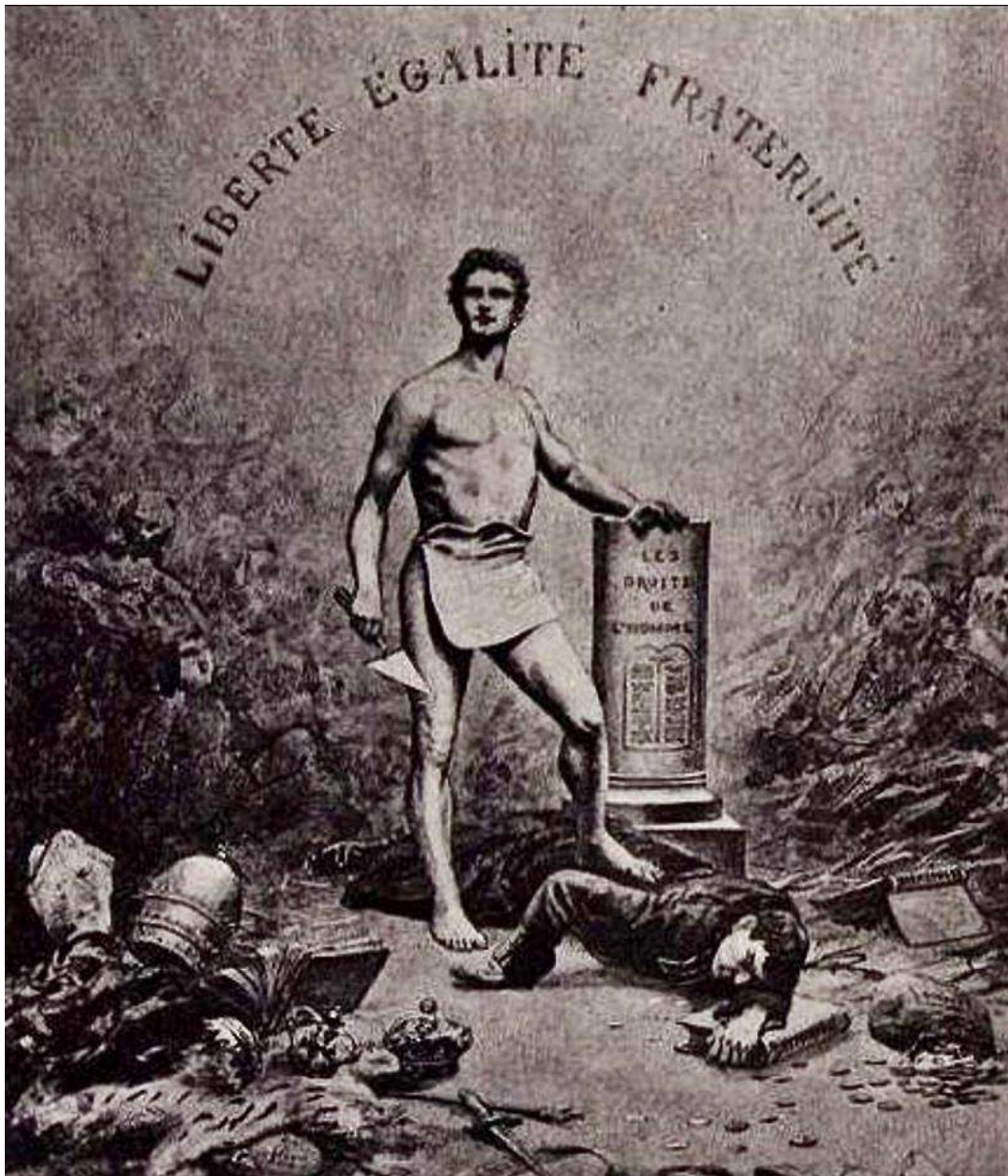


Fig. 9.8 “The Newborn Man of the French Revolution”

The picture above came from the *Internet Archive* and shows a mason—which represents a Freemason—wearing an apron, holding a trowel in his hand, and leaning on a column that has the picture of the new tables of the law, which are the “human rights” that replace the Ten Commandments of God. A priest lies on the ground under his feet with a Bible in his hand. On the ground are the papal tiara and miter of bishops, as well as the crowns of Christian monarchs, indicating that the Freemasons will conquer both the Church and the state. Above the man are French words that mean “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”—the motto associated with the French Revolution and later with many Masonic and revolutionary movements.

Early in the seventeenth century, **Mariana Francisca de Jesús Torres** (1563–1635), a Conceptionist sister in Ecuador, is said to have received a revelation from Our Lady of Good Success that, at the end of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth century, Satan would rule over the Church in Ecuador through the Masonic sects.¹¹⁵ However, many people also interpret this prophecy as applicable to the Church as a whole. Since Mother Mariana's prophecy, the vision of Pope Leo XIII, and the prophecies of Anne Catherine Emmerich and Mélanie Calvat (in the La Salette apparition) were independent prophecies made at different times and places, their agreement gives us some confidence that they are worthy of belief.

It has now been over a hundred years since the reported conversation between God and Satan took place. Many people believe that the corruption in the Church today is the work of Satan and the fulfillment of Mother Mariana's, Mélanie Calvat's, Catherine Emmerich's, and Pope Leo's prophetic visions. After all, even St. Paul said that our battle is with principalities and the powers of darkness (Eph 6:12).

However, Satan and his demons do not work alone but are trying to overthrow the Church with the help of their human collaborators, particularly the Freemasons, the communists, the greedy bankers, the modernists, the sexual revolutionaries, and the wicked clergy.¹¹⁶ Pope Bl. Pius IX warned us about this in 1864 when he published the *Syllabus of Errors*, in which he called out the pernicious doctrines that would poison the minds of the clergy and educated Catholics.

In 1884, near the time when he reportedly received his vision of the horrible future of the Church, Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical, *Humanum genus*, which also warned of the threat of Freemasons and their wicked plan to infiltrate the Church and secretly destroy the faith of Christians everywhere.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ See Fr. Manuel Sousa Pereira, *The Admirable Life of Mother Mariana* (Los Angeles, CA: Tradition in Action, Inc., 1999), Vol. II, Introduction, pp. 21–23; Ch. 14, pp. 207–213.

¹¹⁶ The Freemasons, the communists, the Mafia bankers, and the wicked clergy do not conspire to destroy the Church, for they are working independently. But they all work as tools of Satan, who coordinates their work and ultimately masterminds the destruction of the Catholic Church.

¹¹⁷ Pope Leo XIII wrote three other encyclicals on Freemasonry: *Dall'alto dell'Apostolico seggio* (1890), *Custodi di quella fede* (1892), and *Inimica vis* (1892). In *Dall'alto*, par. 2, he wrote, "It is needless now to put the Masonic sects upon their trial. They are already judged; their ends, their means, their doctrines, and their actions, are all known with indisputable certainty. Possessed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they burn like him with a deadly and implacable hatred of Jesus Christ and of His work; and they endeavour by every means to overthrow and fetter it. This war is at present waged more than elsewhere in Italy, in which the Catholic religion has taken deeper root; and above all in Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and the See of the Universal Pastor and Teacher of the Church."

In Germany

The Catholic revival against Josephinism began through the work of the Redemptorist priest **St. Clement Mary Hofbauer** (1751–1820), who is now honored as the *Apostle of Vienna*. Prof. Joseph von Görres (1776–1848), who wrote the book *Athanasius against the Government*, followed him in this cause. Bishop Wilhelm Emanuel von Ketteler (1811–1877), a great preacher and writer, successfully defended von Görres' views and became the leader of Christian social reform in Germany. However, when **Otto von Bismarck** (1815–1898) became the Chancellor of the German Empire in 1871, he again regarded the Church merely as a branch of the State. He began a persecution of the Church, known in history as *Kulturkampf* (or struggle for culture), by passing laws directed against Catholic bishops and priests. These anti-Catholic laws, known as the “May Laws,” put all seminaries under the State’s supervision and prohibited anyone from becoming a priest who did not study in a German school. However, the May Laws also caused conflicts and divisions among the German people and served only to weaken Bismarck’s power. Thus, by 1886, most of the May Laws had been repealed.

In Spain

Although the Freemasons and the liberals during the nineteenth century were actively combating the Church in the fields of education, marriage, etc., King Alfonso XII (1875–1885)—also known as the Peacemaker—effectively halted their efforts in Spain when he declared Catholicism the state religion.

In Belgium

After the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the Congress of Vienna assigned Belgium, a predominantly Catholic country, to the Netherlands, which was overwhelmingly Protestant. This did not sit well with the Catholics in Belgium. In a revolution that broke out in 1830, Belgium gained its independence from the Netherlands, and, in 1839, the major powers of the world recognized Belgium as a *neutral state*. This means that they agreed never to attack or make war with Belgium. However, the liberals and Freemasons, who took control of the new Belgian government, persecuted the Church by imposing taxes on parents who wanted their children to have religious education. In 1884, more conservative Catholics gained ascendancy in the government, which then revised the Constitution to be more favorable to the Church. In 1893, Belgium adopted *universal manhood suffrage*, which gave voting rights to all adult males regardless of income, religion, race, etc.

In Portugal

Although Catholicism was the predominant religion, anti-clericalism became forceful in the country. It banned religious orders, secularized education, and persecuted the Church for most of the nineteenth century.

In the Netherlands

Protestants comprised much of the population of the Netherlands, especially in the north. Thus, anti-Catholic discrimination and persecution of the Church continued during the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the *Constitutional Reform of 1848* gave Catholics more favorable treatment, which allowed Pope Bl. Pius IX to reorganize the Catholic hierarchy in the Netherlands in 1853. Since then, Catholics have enjoyed more freedom and full civil and religious rights in the country.

In the United Kingdom

Despite Ireland's unification with England in 1801, an Irish Catholic could only become a member of Parliament by taking an oath denying the Eucharist, veneration of the saints, etc. This changed when **Daniel O'Connell** (1775–1847), a great statesman and orator, fought for equal rights for Catholics in Ireland and England.



Fig. 9.9 Daniel O'Connell

Fearing that a revolution would break out in Ireland if Catholics continued to be forced to sign the anti-Catholic oath, King George IV of the U.K. signed the *Act of Catholic Emancipation*, which allowed Catholics to sit in Parliament without taking the anti-Catholic oath. It also allowed Catholics to worship publicly in England, a practice restricted since the reign of King Henry VIII.

In 1850, Pope Bl. Pius IX—the predecessor of Pope Leo XIII—re-established the Catholic Hierarchy in England and made **Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman** (1802–1865) the first Archbishop of Westminster. When the famine broke out in Ireland in 1846, many Irish residents moved to England for relief. Edified by the piety of the Irish Catholics, many English members of the Anglican Church converted back to Catholicism. One such convert was **St. John Henry Newman** (1801–1890), whom Pope Leo XIII elevated to the rank of cardinal in 1879. Cardinal St. Newman was an excellent writer. We will remember him for his thoughts on *The Idea of a University* and his autobiography, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*.



Fig. 9.10 Cardinal St. John Henry Newman

Notwithstanding the progress that the Church was making in nineteenth-century England, another pernicious error was brewing at the heart of England, occasioned by the rise of the Industrial Revolution and the exploitation of labor by capitalists and the ruling elite. In 1848, the German philosopher **Karl Marx** (1818–1883), together with **Friedrich Engels** (1820–1895), published *The Communist Manifesto* in London, which called for the abolition of private property and the overthrow of the ruling elite by the *proletariat*, or the working class. Although the revolutions encouraged by *The Communist Manifesto* did not occur until the twentieth century, it was also to counteract the rise of socialism and communism that Pope Leo XIII wrote his encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, in 1891.

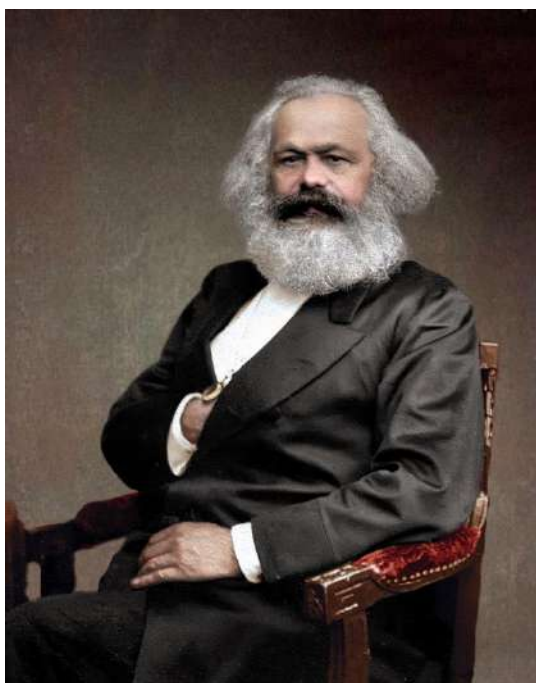


Fig. 9.11 Karl Marx

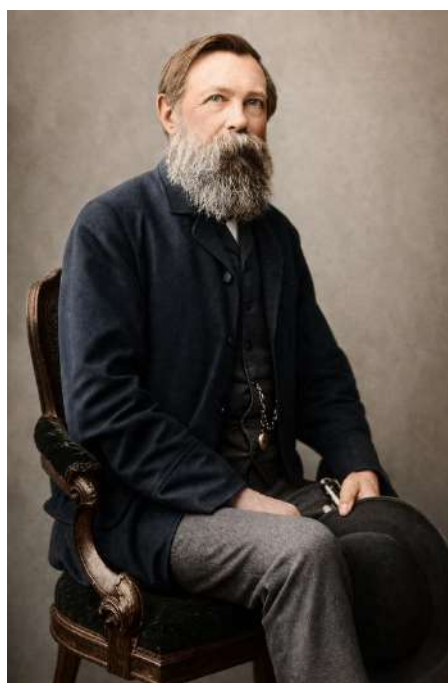


Fig. 9.12 Friedrich Engels

9.3 The Progress of the Church in America

In the United States

Catholic life in the United States flourished as a result of the new religious freedom gained after the American Revolution. Due to the influx of Catholic immigrants from various countries, particularly Ireland, the number of Catholics increased. In 1809, **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** (1774–1821) founded the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg, Maryland. The Holy See made Baltimore, Maryland, an archdiocese. Subsequent Provincial Councils in Baltimore erected new dioceses. Several religious orders and communities helped to establish a considerable number of

schools. In 1846, the Fathers of the Sixth Provincial Council declared “the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without sin” to be the *Patroness of the Catholic Church in the United States*. Note that the declaration of the U.S. bishops predated the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854.



Fig. 9.13 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



Fig. 9.14 Mother St. Frances Xavier Cabrini

The rapid increase in the number of Catholics in the United States caused the jealousy of Protestants and non-believers. However, this did not stop the growth of Catholicism in the country. More bishoprics were established, and in 1875, Pope Bl. Pius IX made Archbishop McCloskey of New York the first American cardinal. Various religious orders engaged themselves not only in education but also in charity. In 1884, Pope Leo XIII appointed another cardinal, the Rev. James Gibbons of Baltimore, who presided over the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. This council called for harmonious cooperation between Church and State and the establishment of parochial schools. It also initiated the series of *Baltimore Catechisms* used in the United States before Vatican II. With the encouragement of Pope Leo XIII, **St. Frances Xavier Cabrini** (1850–1917) immigrated to the United States from Italy to establish many schools, hospitals, and orphanages. She became the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.

In Canada

The first French settlers in Canada remained faithful to their religion. But in the nineteenth century, British immigrants also brought Anglican and other Protestant religions to the country.

In Central and South American Countries

In Mexico, Catholicism flourished from the time the first Franciscan missionaries brought the Faith to the Aztecs in the country. In 1824, Mexico became a republic, but Freemasons and liberal anticlericals controlled much of the government and persecuted the Church. They passed laws that allowed the State to confiscate church properties and close Catholic schools. A series of revolutions and civil wars led to the enactment of a constitution in 1857, which declared a more peaceful separation of Church and State, but some anticlerical articles remained.

In the nineteenth century, most of the population in the various states of Central and South America was Catholic, thanks to the work of Spanish and Portuguese missionaries. However, similar to Mexico, the countries across Central and South America began waging wars of independence against their colonizers, Spain and Portugal. Unfortunately, some leaders of the revolution were men who were also deeply opposed to the Church. Once they achieved independence, they persecuted the Church, except in Brazil. The separation of Church and State guaranteed freedom of religion when Brazil became an independent republic in 1889.

9.4 The Progress of the Church in Australia

Australia was known to the world even at the time of Ptolemy, but it remained unexplored by European explorers until the seventeenth century. It became a British penal colony in the late eighteenth century when the British government began transporting convicts (men and women) to the land. As a result, the first Catholics on the continent were Irish prisoners and convicts brought by a British fleet in 1788. Other immigrants also came to the new colony in the nineteenth century, including priests and missionaries who served the spiritual needs of the growing Christian population. The first Catholic church was the Chapel of St. Mary's in Sydney, Australia. In 1835, the church of St. Mary's became a cathedral. Catholicism in the country continued to flourish with the establishment of more schools. The Irish Archbishop Patrick Francis Moran (1830–1911) became the first cardinal from Australia in 1885.

CHAPTER 10

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The last pope of the nineteenth century was Pope Leo XIII, who died in 1903. Therefore, the discussion of the history of the Church in the twentieth century will continue with his successor, Pope St. Pius X.

10.1 Pope St. Pius X (1835–1914, pope from 1903–1914)



Fig. 10.1 Pope St. Pius X

During his papacy, Pope Pius X initiated some of the most important reforms that influenced the life of the Catholic Church during the twentieth century. First was his concern about sacred music. In the motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903), he encouraged the use of Gregorian chant and recommended the organ as the preferred musical instrument in liturgical services. He also forbade the use of the piano and loud percussion instruments such as drums and cymbals.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ In a document celebrating Pope St. Pius X's motu proprio on sacred music, Pope St. John Paul II maintained the preeminence of the organ for sacred music but did not prohibit the use of other instruments if they were helpful to the prayer of the Church. See [chirograph](#).

Pope Pius X also undertook legal reforms within the Church. He created a commission to codify Canon Law in the motu proprio *Arduum sane munus* (1904), although the code was completed only in 1917 by his successor, Pope Benedict XV.

On account of his devotion to the Holy Eucharist, he encouraged Catholics to receive Holy Communion frequently in the decree *Sacra tridentina synodus* (1905). Five years later, he permitted children (about age 7 or older, once they had reached the age of reason) to receive Holy Communion in the decree *Quam singulari* (1910). Although he had already been considering early Communion for children years before he wrote this decree, the intense devotion to the Eucharist shown by the 4-year-old Irish child Ellen Organ (1903–1908), affectionately known as “Little Nellie of Holy God,” deeply inspired him. After hearing about her, he said, “There, there it is, that is the sign for which I have been waiting.” Two years later, he issued his decree.¹¹⁹ Catholics today remember Pope St. Pius X as the “Pope of the Eucharist.”



Fig. 10.2 Little Nellie on Her First Communion Day

¹¹⁹ See *The Story of Little Nellie*. Before Pope St. Pius X, children had to wait until around 12 or 14 before receiving First Communion. Little Nellie received special permission from her bishop to receive Holy Communion early, and the Catholic world still remembers her for her extraordinary devotion to the Eucharist despite intense illness.

To enhance the spiritual life of the Church, Pope Pius X introduced reforms to the breviary in the apostolic constitution *Divino afflatu* (1911). It was one of the most important reforms of the Roman Breviary since the time of Pope Pius V. The changes included a complete reorganization of the Psalter and a reduction of saints' feast days. The new breviary influenced the broader liturgical reforms of the twentieth century, including the reforms of the Liturgy of the Hours under Pope Paul VI.

Pope St. Pius X also ordered reforms in the area of religious education. He advocated the zealous teaching of the catechism in *Acerbo nimis* (1905), urging priests and school teachers to provide sound and adequate religious education to the faithful. In 1912, he even published a catechism for the laity known today as the *Catechism of Pope Saint Pius X*. Then, toward the end of his pontificate, he insisted that Thomistic philosophy be the foundation of theological studies in his *motu proprio Doctoris angelici* (1914). This document contributed to the flowering of Thomism in Catholic universities and schools. Prominent Thomists during the twentieth century were the Dominican theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877–1964), the French philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), the famous historian Étienne Gilson (1884–1978), and many others.

In his apostolic letter *Quoniam in re biblica* (1906), he advocated a systematic study of Sacred Scripture in seminaries. Three years later, he established the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome to further advance Catholic biblical scholarship.

Another concern of Pope St. Pius X's pontificate was the rise of modernism, which he considered a grave threat to the faith and an error that shared certain naturalistic tendencies with movements such as Freemasonry. In the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (1907), he opposed modernism and called it "the synthesis of all heresies" (par. 39). He also approved the decree *Lamentabili sane* (1907), otherwise known as the "Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists." The decree condemned sixty-five errors of modernist theologians, particularly those associated with Fr. George Tyrrell (1861–1909) and Fr. Alfred Firmin Loisy (1857–1940), both of whom eventually faced excommunication. Then, through the *motu proprio Sacrorum antistitum* (1910), he required all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious superiors, and seminary professors to take the *Oath Against Modernism*.

Pope St. Pius X's charity was noteworthy. After the 1908 Messina earthquake, for example, he filled the Apostolic Palace with refugees.¹²⁰ He died on August 20, 1914, heartbroken due to the outbreak of World War I, which he tried to prevent.

¹²⁰ See *Pope Pius X and the Earthquake of 1908–1910*.

10.2 Modernism and Its Strategies

Understanding the events of the twentieth-century Church requires a clear review of the principal teachings of modernism that previous popes, particularly Pope Blessed Pius IX, Pope Leo XIII, and Pope St. Pius X, had called the laity and the clergy to guard against.

According to modernism:

1. Exegesis and critical analysis should replace Church authority in interpreting Holy Scripture. Like Freemasonry, modernism often denies anything supernatural and proposes the use of science and natural explanations, rather than an appeal to miracles, in understanding biblical events. For example, it regards cases of demonic possession in the gospels as simply instances of mental illness. It asserts that Christ did not really exorcise any demons but merely gave sick people the needed psychological healing. It interprets biblical stories that defy natural explanation as merely figurative.
2. The supernatural is unreal, and the secular world is more important than the spiritual world. Modernism teaches that the Church, conceived as a single institution that leads to the true God, is unnecessary and asserts that the various religions and Christian denominations only tend to cause divisions among people. All that is necessary, it says, is a natural society where everybody can live peacefully as brothers. Under this concept, one's religious affiliation becomes irrelevant.¹²¹
3. Truth is not immutable; it evolves with man. Modernists believe that the passage of time and progress in modern science can alter or modify our dogmas and beliefs about God, creation, the sacraments, the priesthood, etc.¹²²
4. Morality, likewise, changes with time. What was morally unacceptable in the past might be acceptable in today's culture.¹²³

¹²¹ This is modernism, the philosophy of Freemasonry. The modernists in the Church clamor for a false ecumenism that regards all religions as equally valid. The Freemasons, likewise, welcome everyone regardless of his or her religious affiliation or even if one does not believe in any god. For them, unity is more important than the diversity of religions.

¹²² This explains why modernists often disregard the teachings of the Magisterium and disciplines that Sacred Tradition has upheld. For them, times have changed, and Church teachings and disciplines must change likewise. For example, they propose to remove celibacy from the priesthood and advocate the ordination of women to the priesthood; they also want to change our understanding of the Eucharist.

¹²³ This is known as *moral relativism*, which tends to disregard the objective goodness or evil of human acts and views their moral worth as relative only to the circumstances of the individuals involved in the act. Modernists, for example, do not see homosexuality as objectively disordered and advocate to change the Church's teachings on homosexuality.

As instruments of Satan, modernists employ several techniques to bring about confusion, uncertainty, divisions, and the weakening of the Catholic Church. They use these techniques throughout the period before, during, and after Vatican II. Here are some of their strategies:

1. *They use ambiguous language.* After Vatican II, for example, they exploited some ambiguous statements from the council documents and misinterpreted them in an attempt to change the orthodox teachings of the Church.
2. *They promote forms of ecumenism that blur the distinction between various religions and Christian denominations.* They make every effort to show that all religions are equally good and that their differences are inconsequential.
3. *They talk more about human dignity and less about God's majesty.* They emphasize fraternity and brotherly love more than the love of God. They aim to liberate the faithful from poverty more than to free them from sin.
4. *They present heretical ideas as progressive, scientific, flexible, and relevant while portraying traditional Church teachings as bigoted, superstitious, rigid, and "behind the times."* They emphasize the importance of change and the benefits of an evolving dogma that keeps up with modern times.
5. *They hide their errors by mixing them with the truth.* They figure that both clergy and laity become less vigilant when they hear lectures that contain Catholic terms and quotes from saints, while they feed them modernist ideas.
6. *They "water down" the catechism taught in schools and replace the study of Thomism in seminaries with the study of contemporary theologians with liberal views.* In churches and in their homilies, modernist priests talk about kindness and the truths of natural morality and avoid talking about supernatural mysteries and the reality of demons and hell.
7. *They support State policies even when they contradict Church teachings.* Like hirelings, they hesitate to contradict the Church's opponents.
8. *They ignore Sacred Tradition and rely primarily on literary criticism and rational analysis in interpreting the Bible.* They use scientific theories, such as the theory of evolution, to cast doubt on Church teachings on the origin of man and the reality of original sin. As a result, some non-literal Bible translations with modernist interpretations failed to receive ecclesiastical approval.
9. *They aspire to high positions in the Church and the State.* By gaining a higher position in the Church or State, they can promote their followers and allies, influencing a greater number of people.
10. *They sow the seeds of rivalry, jealousy, and division within the Church or State to weaken its structure.* The Church's Magisterium becomes less credible when bishops fight against bishops and cardinals against the pope.

10.3 Pope Benedict XV (1854–1922, pope from 1914–1922)



Fig. 10.3 Pope Benedict XV

Pope Benedict XV maintained a position of neutrality during World War I. Because he was the pope of combatants on both sides of the war, he offered to mediate between the warring nations in an effort to end the war. However, the nations refused, and the war continued. During the war, he worked tirelessly to alleviate hunger among the German people when the Allies blockaded their country. He helped relocate wounded soldiers to neutral countries and provided civilian refugees with the necessities of life. He prayed to the Virgin Mary for peace. Then, on May 13, 1917, the Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children in Fátima, Portugal, and asked for prayers, particularly the Rosary. She gave the children three secrets and promised that God would perform a miracle to confirm the truth of her message. On October 13, God performed the famous “Miracle of the Sun.”

As part of his campaign for peace, Pope Benedict XV wrote two encyclicals on world peace, *Ad beatissimi apostolorum* (1914) and *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum* (1920). In the first encyclical (par. 25), he condemned modernism and, borrowing a phrase from Pope St. Pius X, also called it “the synthesis of all heresies.” During his pontificate, he promulgated the *1917 Code of Canon Law* begun by Pope St. Pius X and, in 1920, canonized Saints Joan of Arc (patroness of France) and Margaret Mary Alacoque (promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart).

10.4 The Fátima Apparitions

Among the many miracles attributed to the Virgin Mary, the one that happened in Fátima, Portugal, on October 13, 1917, is among the most spectacular. Unlike other miracles witnessed only by a few individuals, approximately 50,000 to 70,000 people saw the miracle at Fátima, and the event was documented with photographs and eyewitness accounts published in newspapers and journals following the event.¹²⁴ The reason so many people witnessed the event was its announcement days before its actual occurrence. It is one of the famous miracles in the world that was pre-announced! The Blessed Virgin did not announce the nature of the miracle itself, but she promised that God would give a great sign on that day to confirm her message. At noon, the miracle began: the sun appeared to spin around in a whirl, throwing rays of different colors across the sky; then it approached the earth as if falling from the sky. The rain had soaked many people's clothes as they watched the sun. While many were terrified, staring at the sun did not harm anyone's eyes; some even experienced healing, and their wet clothes dried. The whole miracle, which lasted ten minutes, was just an apparition, not observed or reported by any astronomical observatory, but witnessed by many people, even from miles away. For this reason, some skeptics claim that this was just a case of "mass hallucination." But how can mass hallucination dry wet clothes in ten minutes?



Fig. 10.4 People Looking at the Miracle of the Sun

¹²⁴ See *Our Lady of Fátima: Queen of the Heavens*.

The Virgin Mary's message was very simple. She asked the faithful to do penance and stop offending God. The Virgin Mary also revealed *three secrets* to Lúcia, Jacinta, and Francisco, the three young shepherds to whom she originally appeared.

- The **first secret** was a vision of hell, the place where unrepentant sinners go.
- The **second secret** included a request for the Church to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart and to practice the *First Saturday Devotion*; otherwise, Russia would spread its errors, and the world would suffer wars, famines, and religious persecution.
- The **third secret** remained hidden for a while and has been the subject of much speculation. In 2000, the Vatican finally published the third secret.¹²⁵



Fig. 10.5 The Virgin of Fatima Appears to Three Children

¹²⁵ See the text with Cardinal Ratzinger's commentary here: *The Message of Fátima*.

10.5 Pope Pius XI (1857–1939, pope from 1922–1939)



Fig. 10.6 Pope Pius XI

Pope Pius XI succeeded Pope Benedict XV to the papacy. In his encyclical *Studiorum ducem* (1923), Pope Pius XI insisted that those studying for the priesthood should use St. Thomas Aquinas as their principal guide in philosophy and theology. For young people and families in general, he issued an important encyclical on the Christian education of youth, *Divini illius magistri* (1929), as well as an encyclical on Christian marriage, *Casti connubii* (1930), in which he condemned artificial contraception.

In 1925, through his encyclical *Quas primas*, he established the feast of Christ the King to remind the world that Christ is King not only of individuals and families but also of states and nations. He also canonized several important saints during his pontificate. The first ones were St. Therese of Lisieux (1925) and St. Bernadette Soubirous (1933), to whom the Blessed Virgin revealed her name as “The Immaculate Conception.” He also canonized St. Thomas More and other English martyrs in 1935. He conferred the title of Doctor of the Church on St. Peter Canisius (1925), St. John of the Cross (1926), St. Robert Bellarmine (1931), and St. Albert the Great (1931). In 1937, he wrote an encyclical on the Rosary, *Ingravescentibus malis*.

Pope Pius XI was a great promoter of missionary efforts around the world. He permitted the training of native clergy and the formation of native hierarchies in the Far East. For this, he was known as the “Pope of the Foreign Missions.” He wrote the encyclical on Catholic missions, *Rerum ecclesiae*, ordered the annual celebration

of Mission Sunday, and named St. Thérèse of Lisieux to be co-patroness with St. Francis Xavier of all foreign missions in the apostolic letter *Apostolicorum in missionibus* (1927).

Concerned about the dangers of false ecumenism, he issued the encyclical *Mortalium animos* (1928), which aimed to foster true religious unity by forbidding dangerous ecumenical approaches.

One of the most important political achievements of his pontificate was the **Lateran Treaty** of 1929. Through this agreement, the Vatican relinquished its claims to the Papal States. In return, the Kingdom of Italy, under Benito Mussolini, agreed to compensate the Vatican financially for the loss of the Papal States by recognizing Vatican City as an independent state under the sovereignty of the Holy See. Vatican City included 108 acres of land, the Vatican Palace, the Vatican Gardens, Castel Gandolfo (the summer residence of the popes), the Basilica of Saint Peter, and three other great churches: St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul Outside-the-Walls.

In response to the growing social and economic problems of the world, Pope Pius XI wrote the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). In it, he condemned socialism as well as the excesses of capitalism and addressed common social evils such as unemployment and industrial disputes.

Deeply concerned about the persecution of the Church in various countries, he issued the encyclical *Dilectissima nobis* (1933), in which he protested the persecution of the Church in Spain by the anti-clerical Republican government, which prohibited religious education and confiscated Church buildings, parish houses, schools, seminaries, convents, and monasteries. In response, the Nationalists under Gen. Francisco Franco, supported by many Catholics, opposed the Republican government militarily. The Spanish Civil War that followed resulted in the murder of about 7,000 clergy and consecrated religious.¹²⁶ Although Francisco Franco eventually gained control of the government, his dictatorship led to the repression and execution of political opponents, causing an additional 30,000 to 50,000 deaths. Some people criticize the Catholic Church for supporting Francisco Franco, who became a fascist dictator. Clearly, however, the Church joined the fight not to support fascism but to protect the free exercise of religion. In his encyclical *Dilectissima nobis* (No. 3), Pope Pius XI explained that “the Catholic Church is never bound to one form of government more than to another, provided the Divine rights of God and of Christian consciences are safe.”

¹²⁶ See “Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic” in *Wikipedia*.

Pope Pius XI also worked to alleviate the persecution of the Church in Mexico and Russia and, in 1937, he rallied (though without much success) to prevent the spread of atheistic communism in his encyclical *Divini redemptoris*. That same year, he condemned the Nazi regime in Germany in his encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937). In 1938, the German Reich forcibly annexed Austria to Nazi Germany and took over a portion of Czechoslovakia. These, plus the religious hostility toward Catholics, distressed Pope Pius XI and hastened his death in 1939. He was highly esteemed and widely mourned upon his death by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike.

10.6 Pope Pius XII (1876–1958, pope from 1939–1958)



Fig. 10.7 Pope Pius XII

Pope Pius XII, who succeeded Pope Pius XI, consistently prayed and worked for peace among nations. However, world leaders failed to heed his appeals, and World War II eventually erupted. During the conflict, the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini sent Italian troops into Albania, while Adolf Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia and, in 1939, invaded Poland.

In his encyclical *Summi pontificatus* (1939), Pope Pius XII urged the Catholic faithful to pray for peace. He denounced the deification of the state and pleaded for generosity toward nations such as Poland, which were suffering terribly from the

atrocities of war. In response, Catholics in the United States provided relief aid to nations devastated by the conflict.

Pope Pius XII faced severe criticism for his public silence during the Holocaust. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that he quietly assisted the underground movement that helped many Jews escape Nazi persecution. Defenders of Pope Pius, including some Jewish scholars, argued that his silence had been more beneficial to the Jews than if he had explicitly condemned the Nazis.¹²⁷

Despite the turmoil of the war, Pope Pius XII provided doctrinal and spiritual guidance through several major encyclicals. In 1943, he published *Divino afflante Spiritu*, which spurred biblical scholarship in the Church, and *Mystici Corporis Christi*, which explained the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. After the war, he issued *Mediator Dei* (1947), an encyclical on the sacred liturgy, and *Sacra virginitas* (1954), which discussed total consecration to Christ through the vow of chastity. In 1956, he also promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the encyclical *Haurietis aquas*.

Pope Pius XII strongly opposed communism and warned the world of its threat to both religion and society. In 1949, he approved a decree, issued by the Holy Office, excommunicating any Catholic who held formal allegiance to the Communist Party. Nonetheless, communism continued to spread. In the United States, some people claimed that communist ideology had infiltrated schools, seminaries, and even some of the clergy.¹²⁸

In October and November of 1950, Pope Pius XII claimed that he saw the “Miracle of the Sun” while walking in the Vatican Gardens. It was a spectacle similar to that which happened in Fátima, Portugal, in 1917.¹²⁹ That same year, he defined the dogma of the **Assumption of Mary** in the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. In his encyclical *Humani generis* (1950), Pope Pius XII clarified the Church’s position regarding the theory of evolution and reaffirmed the need of human beings and angels for supernatural grace to attain eternal beatitude.

¹²⁷ See, for example, *Rabbi defends Pope Pius XII’s actions*. Oddly, the Church’s critics often accuse her of anti-Semitism when, in fact, she also has had a long history of defending and protecting the Jews. See Anthony Gonzales, *The Catholic Church and the Jews*.

¹²⁸ We learned this from Bella Dodd (1904–1969), a former lawyer and communist agent who defected from the Communist Party. See her book, *School of Darkness*, in which she documented communist efforts to infiltrate and subvert schools and labor unions.

¹²⁹ See *Pius XII Saw “Miracle of the Sun.”*

During his pontificate, Pope Pius XII canonized several saints. In 1946, he canonized Mother Frances Cabrini, the first naturalized U.S. citizen to be canonized. He raised Catherine Labouré to the altars in 1947, and Pope Pius X in 1954. In *Doctor mellifluus* (1953), he also commemorated St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a Doctor of the Church.

Deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Pius XII promoted the recitation of the Holy Rosary through his 1951 encyclical *Ingruentium malorum*. In 1953, he elevated the church at Cova da Iria, where the Blessed Virgin appeared to the children of Fátima, to the status of a basilica via the apostolic letter *Luce superna* (AAS Vol. 46, 1954). The following year, he proclaimed Mary “Queen of Heaven” in the encyclical *Ad caeli reginam*.

10.7 Pope St. John XXIII (1881–1963, pope from 1958–1963)



Fig. 10.8 Pope St. John XXIII

Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli succeeded Pope Pius XII as pope and took the name Pope John XXIII. His pontificate would become one of the most influential in modern Church history because of his pastoral vision and his decision to convene the Second Vatican Council.

In 1959, Pope St. John XXIII appealed to all Christians to return to unity with the Catholic Church in his encyclical *Ad Petri cathedram*. In 1960, he convened the Synod of Rome, which promulgated 756 statutes intended to restore the pristine spirituality of the Catholic Church. Pope St. John hoped that the Synod would serve as a preparation for and a forerunner to the much larger Second Vatican Council that would soon follow.

In 1961, he issued a lengthy and important encyclical about the Church as Mother and Teacher, *Mater et magistra*, which confirmed the social teachings of Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII. In this encyclical, Pope St. John XXIII also appealed to affluent countries to aid the world's underdeveloped nations. Altogether, he issued eight encyclicals. Among them was *Pacem in terris* ("Peace on Earth," 1963), which urged all nations to strive for peace and the betterment of humanity.

Pope John XXIII strongly encouraged the continued use and study of Latin within the Church. In 1962, he published the apostolic constitution *Veterum sapientia*, which recommended the study of Latin for the clergy. Sadly, many bishops and clergy later ignored or minimally implemented this apostolic constitution.

One of the defining events of his pontificate occurred in October 1962, when he convened and formally opened the **Second Vatican Council**. One of the major aims of the council was to encourage unity among separated Christians. For this reason, he invited leaders from Protestant and Orthodox Churches to attend the council as observers, although they were not granted voting rights.

During his pontificate, he canonized ten saints, including the Dominican cooperator Brother Martin de Porres. He also beatified Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton and proclaimed St. Lawrence of Brindisi a Doctor of the Church.

On June 3, 1963, Pope St. John XXIII died of cancer while the Second Vatican Council was still in session. Because of his notable holiness and sincere pastoral concern for the entire Church, the world mourned his death.

10.8 The Second Vatican Council

When Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Ecumenical Council (1962–1965), his intention was to revitalize the Church and assist Catholics in addressing contemporary problems more effectively. He remarked that the council would “open the windows of the Church and let some fresh air in.”¹³⁰ He believed that, through

¹³⁰ See *John XXIII 'Opens the Windows.'*

the council, the Church would adapt itself to the contemporary world, reconsider outdated ideas and practices, foster greater involvement of the laity in the liturgy, advance Christian unity, and communicate Catholic doctrine more effectively.

Before the council began, Pope John XXIII had asked some cardinals of the Roman Curia¹³¹ to produce documents that would outline the topics to be discussed and direct the progress of the council.¹³² During the council, however, many of the preparatory schemas created by members of the Roman Curia were altered during the deliberations and debates among the bishops. Hans Küng, Karl Rahner, and Edward Schillebeeckx were among the influential theologians and advisers (*periti*) who contributed significantly to these changes. Some of these theologians later became controversial because of their theological views.

At the council, attended by 2,860 cardinals and bishops, observers from Protestant and Orthodox churches were also invited to attend the sessions without voting rights as a gesture of dialogue and goodwill.



Fig. 10.9 Vatican II in Session

¹³¹ The *Roman Curia* is the governing body of the Catholic Church and includes the various secretariats, congregations and pontifical councils (now called “Dicasteries”), and tribunals.

¹³² See *The Antepreparatory and Preparatory Documents of Vatican II*.

The council produced 4 constitutions, 9 decrees, and 3 declarations, for a total of 16 documents.¹³³ Unlike other ecumenical councils, the Second Vatican Council did not define new dogmas but reaffirmed many traditional Catholic teachings while encouraging renewal in the Church's pastoral practices and in her interaction with the contemporary world.

The four constitutions were:

1. *Dei verbum* – dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation
2. *Lumen gentium* – dogmatic constitution on the Church
3. *Sacrosanctum concilium* – constitution on Sacred Liturgy
4. *Gaudium et spes* – pastoral constitution on the Church in the Modern World

The three declarations were:

1. *Gravissimum educationis* – on Christian education
2. *Nostra aetate* – on the relation of the Church with non-Christian religions
3. *Dignitatis humanae* – on religious freedom

The nine decrees were:

1. *Ad gentes* – missionary activity
2. *Presbyterorum ordinis* – priestly ministry
3. *Apostolicam actuositatem* – apostolate of the laity
4. *Optatam totius* – priestly training
5. *Perfectae caritatis* – religious life
6. *Christus Dominus* – bishops
7. *Unitatis redintegratio* – ecumenism
8. *Orientalium ecclesiarum* – Eastern Catholic Churches
9. *Inter mirifica* — social communications and media

Here is a quick summary of each document:

Dei verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) presents the Church's understanding of how God reveals Himself through Scripture and Tradition and encourages the use of modern scholarship in translating and interpreting the Bible.

Lumen gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) presents the Church as a mystery and a communion of baptized believers ("the People of God") who are all

¹³³ On the Vatican's website, see the sixteen [Documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council](#).

called to holiness, not only the clergy and those in the religious life. It also highlights the role of the laity in the missionary life of the Church.

Sacrosanctum concilium (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy) calls for a reform of the sacred liturgy, especially the Holy Mass, to encourage the active participation of the faithful and make the liturgy more understandable to contemporary Catholics. It permits the use of the vernacular and emphasizes the importance of communal worship in addition to the private prayers of the faithful.

Gaudium et spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) encourages dialogue with scientists, atheists, and people of different cultures and background. It discusses the need to correct social injustices, promote peace, and bring the hope of the Gospel to a world beset by injustice, hatred, and war.

Gravissimum educationis (Declaration on Christian Education) affirms education as a universal human right and emphasizes a holistic approach to education, which aims at the physical, intellectual, moral, and religious development of the young. It affirms that parents are the primary educators of their children, but it also encourages the Church to promote education at every level, including catechetical instruction.



**Fig. 10.10 The Parents Are the Primary Educators of Their Children
(*Gravissimum educationis*)**

Nostra aetate (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions) condemns anti-Semitism and acknowledges the truths shared by the Catholic Church with Judaism, Islam, and other religions. It rejects discrimination based solely on race, color, or creed as contrary to the mind of Christ.

Dignitatis humanae (Declaration on Religious Freedom) asserts that all human beings have a basic right and duty to seek religious truth, worship God, and exercise their faith free of external interference and coercion. The document does not say that all religions are equal or that our faith is completely arbitrary.

Ad gentes (Decree on Missionary Activity) teaches that the Church is, by its very nature, missionary. Hence, it calls all baptized Christians, not just the clergy, to spread the Gospel message to all people through preaching or, at least, by charity or personal example. In the work of evangelization, missionaries (lay and clergy) are called to engage in dialogue and respect local cultural and religious traditions.

Presbyterorum ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) clarifies the role of the *ministerial priesthood*, not the priesthood of all believers. As co-workers with bishops, priests share in the important work of teaching, sanctifying (through the administration of the sacraments), and governing the faithful.

Apostolicam actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) explains the role of laypeople in the Catholic Church. While the clergy are focused on church ministry, lay Catholics are uniquely positioned to bring the gospel message to their families, their workplaces, and their secular communities.

Optatam totius (Decree on Priestly Formation) gives specific instructions regarding the training of priests and calls for deepening spiritual formation alongside their intellectual and pastoral studies. It recommends strict physical, spiritual, and psychological screening to ensure that candidates have the maturity required to carry out a celibate, priestly life. While some modernist professors claimed the council abandoned St. Thomas Aquinas as a guide in theological studies, the document explicitly stated that theological subjects should be taught “with St. Thomas as teacher” (Par. 16). Although it did not require Thomism exclusively, it continued the long-standing preference—especially after Pope Leo XIII’s *Aeterni Patris*—for seminarians to learn and present Catholic teaching systematically, while relying heavily on Scripture, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, liturgy, and the scholastic methods exemplified by St. Thomas.

Perfectae caritatis (Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life) provides the principles for adapting and updating religious life in convents and monasteries to better serve the needs of the modern Church while keeping the members faithful to the specific mission, spirit and roots of their respective orders. It directs *active communities* to adapt their work to contemporary pastoral and social needs, while reaffirming that the primary mission of *contemplative* and strictly cloistered orders remains prayer and penance.



Fig. 10.11 Prayer and Penance Remain the Primary Mission of Contemplative Orders (*Perfectae caritatis*)

Christus Dominus (Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church) explains the role, authority, and pastoral responsibilities of Catholic bishops, as well as their duty to shepherd their dioceses while sharing responsibility for the global Church. Bishops do not work in isolation. They form a “college” with the pope as their head. Each bishop has a threefold office: to teach, to sanctify, and to govern his diocese. While each bishop is the spiritual leader in his diocese, the document mandates the formation of episcopal conferences to allow local bishops to collaborate on regional issues and standardize their policies.

Unitatis redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism) changes the Church's approach toward other Christian denominations, shifting her position from a state of isolation to one of cooperation. The document seeks to restore unity among all Christians and encourages dialogue with Christians who have been historically and doctrinally separated from the Catholic Church.

Orientalium ecclesiarum (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches) recognizes the dignity and equal rights of Eastern Catholic Churches—the Byzantine, Maronite, and Melkite Churches—within the global Church and mandates them to preserve their ancient liturgical traditions.



**Fig. 10.12 Eastern Catholic Churches Must Preserve Their Liturgy
(*Orientalium ecclesiarum*)**

Inter mirifica (Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication) describes the ethical and responsible use of mass media to serve the common good and advance the Gospel. The document urges moral responsibility of both producers and consumers to engage critically with media content.

As can be seen from the above summary, the Second Vatican Council produced many valuable documents. People often blame the council for the appalling state of the Church today, but the problem is due largely to poor interpretation and implementation of the council's recommendations rather than to any inherent flaw in its teachings. Sadly, some modernists within the hierarchy exploited and reinterpreted certain statements in the council documents to promote liberal ideas and practices that do not align with Church teachings, customs, and tradition, presenting them as "in the spirit of Vatican II." For example, some reinterpreted the Decree on Ecumenism as a call simply to embrace people of other faiths without engaging in dialogue (as called for by the council) to clarify the doctrinal issues that separate them from the Church. Such misinterpretations of the council documents, which often result in religious indifferentism and syncretism, caused many Catholics to view the council with alarm and suspicion.

10.9 Pope St. Paul VI (1897–1978, pope from 1963–1978)

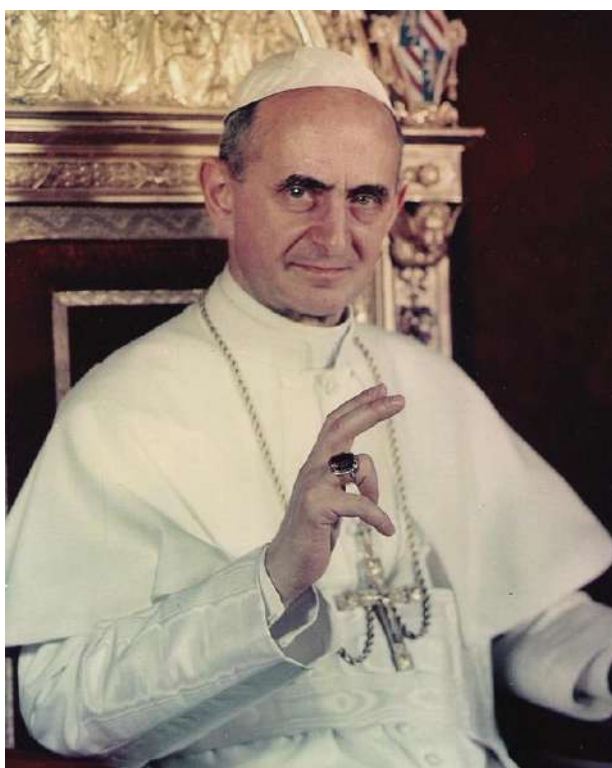


Fig. 10.14 Pope St. Paul VI

After his election to the papacy in June 1963, Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini took the name Pope Paul VI and reopened the Second Vatican Council, which had been temporarily suspended following the death of Pope John XXIII. During his pontificate, he visited various places around the world in imitation

of St. Paul, the great *Apostle of the Gentiles*. He visited the United States in 1965 and the Philippines in 1970.¹³⁴ In 1964, he met with Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, and in the following year, the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches lifted and nullified the excommunications they had hurled against each other during the East-West Schism. Pope Paul VI formally closed the Second Vatican Council on December 8, 1965, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In 1966, Pope Paul VI required the formation of episcopal conferences in various countries or territories in the *motu proprio* *Ecclesiae sanctae*. The following year, he promulgated the Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, as well as the *motu proprio* *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*, which permitted the ordination of married men to the diaconate. In the same year, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith rescinded the *Oath against Modernism* contained in Pope St. Pius X's *motu proprio* *Sacrorum antistitum* and replaced it with a *Profession of Faith*. Although the word “modernism” no longer explicitly appeared in the formula, the understanding remained that the clergy were still obligated to oppose modernist errors through their profession of faith.

Pope Paul VI also endeavored to reaffirm Catholic doctrine during a period of theological debate and confusion following the council. In 1968, he published the *motu proprio* *Credo of the People of God*, which reaffirmed fundamental Church teachings. In the same year, he promulgated the encyclical *Humanae vitae*, which banned artificial contraception and reaffirmed the Church's teaching on birth control despite widespread expectations of change. Disillusioned by the encyclical, some clergy publicly dissented and left the ministry, claiming that it ignored the recommendations of theologians and advisory papal commissions. Theological divisions intensified and many Catholics became confused and discouraged.

Pope Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* was a courageous defense of traditional Catholic morality. While it may have played a role in the departure of some clergy from the ministry, the dramatic exodus of priests and nuns and the sharp decline in priestly and religious vocations—which actually started around the time of the Second Vatican Council—had many other causes unrelated to contraception and doctrinal disagreement. Among the causes of this phenomenon were the sexual revolution from the 1950s to the 1970s, the changing views about authority and celibacy, experimentation in seminaries and convents, the abandonment of clerical and religious habits, the alteration of prayer life and discipline, and more.

¹³⁴ See *Places Visited by Pope St. Paul VI*.

In 1969, Pope Paul VI promulgated the new Roman Missal in the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*. This missal introduced the “Ordinary Rite” of the Holy Mass, also known as the *Novus Ordo*, which Catholics worldwide now celebrate every day. Archbishop Annibale Bugnini (1912–1982), Secretary of the Consilium and, later, of the Congregation for Divine Worship, played a major role in making the liturgical reforms for the Holy Mass and the seven sacraments. Two years later, in 1971, Pope Paul VI also promulgated the new *Liturgy of the Hours*, also known as the Divine Office, which revised Pope Pius V’s Roman Breviary. This revision spread the Psalms over a four-week cycle rather than a single week.

During his pontificate, Pope Paul VI canonized eighty-four saints, including the American saints Elizabeth Ann Seton and John Nepomucene Neumann. In 1970, he also proclaimed two women saints—Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena—Doctors of the Church.

On June 29, 1972, he delivered a homily in which he lamented the state of the Church, which was characterized by doubt, uncertainty, and the faithful’s lack of trust in the Church, saying that the “smoke of Satan” (*il fumo di Satana*) had entered the Church.¹³⁵ In the same year, he suppressed the first tonsure and orders of porter, exorcist and subdeacon, while reconstituting acolyte and lector as lay ministries in the *motu proprio* *Ministeria quaedam*. In 1973, Pope Paul VI also approved the Instruction *Immensae caritatis*, issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, which permitted laypeople to serve as extraordinary ministers for distributing Holy Communion when there was a genuine shortage of ministers. The following year, he issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus* on the right devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1975, Pope Paul VI wrote the Apostolic Exhortations *Gaudete in Domino*, concerning Christian joy, and *Evangelii nuntiandi*, on evangelization in the modern world. During the same period, he approved the Church document *Persona humana* (*Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*), which reaffirmed the Church’s constant teaching on the sinfulness of premarital and extramarital sex, sodomy, and masturbation.

The pontificate of Pope Paul VI witnessed the **rise of liberation theology** in Latin America. Although he expressed serious concerns about certain forms of liberation

¹³⁵ See *Pope Paul VI’s Homily, June 29, 1972*. The rise of modernism pervading the Church at this time occasioned his remark. Although Pope St. Pius X condemned modernism in 1907, it did not die and has become more widespread over the years.

theology influenced by Marxist principles, he strongly supported social justice, assistance to the poor, workers' rights, and economic reform, especially in documents such as *Populorum progressio* (1967) and *Octogesima adveniens* (1971).

In 1975, allegations circulated that Archbishop Annibale Bugnini and other members of the Roman Curia had connections to Freemasonry. Bugnini denied the accusations against him. Shortly after the completion of Bugnini's work as secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship, Pope Paul assigned him to be the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Iran. In 1977, upon the suggestion of Archbishop Giovanni Benelli, Pope Paul VI ordered an in-depth investigation of the Roman Curia through apostolic visitations and commissioned Archbishop Édouard Gagnon (1918–2007), then President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, to carry out the inquiry.¹³⁶ The following year, Archbishop Gagnon submitted a dossier to the pope, which contained the results of his investigation. However, Pope Paul VI, perhaps sensing that his life was nearing its end, declined to look at the dossier and decided to leave the matter to his successor.¹³⁷

Pope Paul VI passed away on August 6, 1978.

10.10 The New Missal of Pope St. Paul VI

The *Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was responsible for producing the revised Roman Missal, which Pope Paul VI promulgated in 1969. The liturgical revisions were a response to the Second Vatican Council's call: (a) to make the Holy Mass simpler and more understandable for modern man and (b) to invite the laity to a more active participation in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.¹³⁸

Under the leadership of Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, the Consilium produced a revised form of the Mass (the *Novus Ordo*), which introduced several changes. Among the revisions were the wider use of the vernacular, revisions to certain prayers, additional Eucharistic Prayers, and greater participation of the laity in the liturgy. In the years following Vatican II, other developments followed, including the celebration of Mass facing the people, the dismantling of communion rails, the

¹³⁶ We learn this from an interview with Fr. Charles Theodore Murr, who was Edouard Gagnon's former secretary. The *Inside the Vatican* website records the interview in two parts: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#). Part 2 provides details about Bishop Édouard Gagnon's assignment as apostolic visitor.

¹³⁷ Fr. Charles Murr revealed this information in his book, *Murder in the 33rd Degree*, and in an interview with Robert Nugent on [Decrevi](#).

¹³⁸ See *Sacrosanctum concilium*, No. 50.

employment of female lectors and servers, the reception of Holy Communion in the hand while standing, the use of lay extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and the extensive use of contemporary songs in place of the Gregorian chant. Many Catholics see these changes as pastorally beneficial; others view them as contributing significantly to the loss of reverence for the Eucharist. After witnessing the liturgical abuses that coincided with the implementation of the *Novus Ordo*, some faithful Catholics clamored for the return of the Tridentine Mass, which was granted by indult in 1984.

The Roman Mass: Then and Now <i>Two Forms of the One Eucharistic Sacrifice</i>	
The Traditional Latin Mass (Tridentine Mass)	The Mass of Paul VI (Novus Ordo Missae)
• Priest offers the Mass <i>ad orientem</i> (facing east, toward God) • Latin is the primary language • Altar rail emphasizes the sacred separation of the sanctuary • Gregorian chant and sacred music • Rich liturgical tradition developed over centuries • Strong sense of the transcendent and the sacred	• Priest faces the people (<i>versus populum</i>) • Vernacular language is widely used • Open sanctuary encourages the assembly's participation • Use of hymns and congregational responses • Renewal of the liturgy as envisioned by Vatican II • Emphasis on the active participation of the faithful
The Church has two forms of the Roman Rite: the Ordinary Form (<i>Novus Ordo Missae</i>) and the Extraordinary Form (Traditional Latin Mass). Both are valid expressions of the Catholic faith and lead the faithful to the same Holy Eucharist, the perfect offering of Christ to the Father.	

Fig. 10.15 A Comparison Between the Tridentine Mass and the New Mass

Supporters of the Mass claim that the new liturgy has many significant advantages. It is shorter, simpler, and easier for the faithful to follow and understand. The new positioning of the altar and the dismantling of the communion rails were introduced to make the Mass a communal prayer, where the faithful are participants in the liturgy rather than mere spectators. The new songs are contemporary because they express more truly the spirit of the modern age, while the gestures for receiving Holy Communion—receiving in the hand while standing—were adopted to recover ancient practices of the early Church. In the early Church, indeed, the standing posture was preferred because it symbolized Christ's resurrection and the joyful spirit that comes with it, whereas kneeling was associated more with penance and

sorrow for sin. Hence, even Canon 20 of the First Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) prohibited kneeling during Sunday liturgies and during Easter because of the joyful nature of these celebrations.

On the other hand, supporters of the Tridentine Mass defend the practice of kneeling for Holy Communion by saying that, *as a gesture of reverence and adoration*, it is even more ancient than the practice of standing or bowing, for it dates back to Old Testament times. They recall that even Moses knelt in worship (Ex 34:8). In the New Testament, St. Paul also says, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bend” (Phil 2:10). If we bend our knee *at the name of Jesus*, should we not, with greater reason, kneel *at the Real Presence of Jesus* in the Holy Eucharist?

Having said this, it is important for Catholics to know that, although almost everybody in the U.S. now receives Holy Communion while standing, both the Vatican and the USCCB have never prohibited receiving Holy Communion while kneeling. Even during the celebration of the Mass, Holy Communion may not be denied to anyone who prefers to receive the Eucharist kneeling.¹³⁹ Finally, the reception of Holy Communion while standing is an *indult* (a permission) granted by the Holy See and not an absolute requirement imposed on all Catholics everywhere. It is not a teaching of the Magisterium but a regional practice promulgated as a norm by bishops’ conferences in the U.S. and other countries.

Like the practice of receiving Holy Communion while standing, the practice of receiving Communion in the hand is an indult and not an absolute requirement of the Magisterium. In fact, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI showed special preference for the practice of communion on the tongue in their papal Masses. Beginning around 2008, communicants at Pope Benedict XVI’s Masses commonly knelt at a kneeler and received the sacred Host from him directly on their tongues.

The Church has the right to make changes to the liturgy. Throughout history, the Church has been making liturgical changes. And, as Pope John XXIII correctly observed, the Church needed both updating (*aggiornamento*) and the recognition of ancient traditions (*ressourcement*.) The Tridentine Mass, referred to by some as the “Traditional Latin Mass”, dates from 1570. Before then, there had been many different versions of the Mass being celebrated. Today’s *Novus Ordo* is the most recent revision to the Catholic Mass.

¹³⁹ See [Redemptionis sacramentum](#), No. 91.

10.11 Pope Blessed John Paul I (1912–1978, pope only in 1978)**Fig. 10.16 Pope Blessed John Paul I**

Albino Luciani succeeded Pope Paul VI and chose the name “John Paul.” His papacy was brief, lasting only 33 days due to his sudden death on September 28, 1978.

Despite this brief duration, Pope John Paul I was not the pope with the shortest reign. According to records, the pope with the shortest tenure was Pope Urban VII, who ruled for only 13 days. In fact, He died before he could even be formally crowned.

The pope with the longest pontificate was St. Peter, who reigned for 35 years. However, while St. Peter is traditionally regarded as the longest-reigning pope, the longest historically verified reign belongs to Pope Pius IX, who reigned for 31 years, 7 months, and 23 days.

10.12 Pope St. John Paul II (1920–2005, pope from 1978–2005)

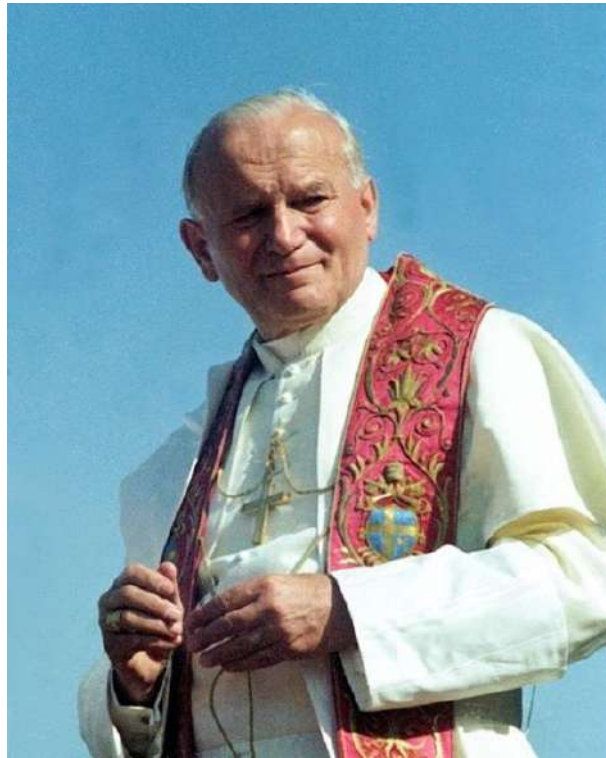


Fig. 10.17 Pope St. John Paul II

Karol Józef Wojtyła, the Polish cardinal who succeeded Pope John Paul I in 1978, took the name Pope John Paul II. On February 6, 1979, Archbishop Édouard Gagnon met with Pope John Paul II to present the results of the canonical visitations he had conducted throughout the Roman Curia. However, Pope John Paul II, who was then occupied with plans to visit other countries, may not have fully appreciated the significance of Gagnon's investigations and did not make any changes to the Curia. Greatly disappointed, Archbishop Gagnon left the Vatican, but before departing for Colombia, he warned the pope of a possible plot against his life.

Pope John Paul II, who knew twelve languages, visited 129 countries during his papacy.¹⁴⁰ Through his extensive writings, he explained the deposit of faith and safeguarded the Church's tradition from errors. He wrote 14 encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, and 45 apostolic letters.¹⁴¹ In 1979, he visited his native Poland, which helped to invigorate the Solidarity movement that later contributed to the collapse of communism in Europe. In September of the same year, he began giving catechetical lectures on human love,

¹⁴⁰ See the [List of pastoral visits of Pope John Paul II](#).

¹⁴¹ See [Encyclicals and Other Writings of Pope St. John Paul II](#).

sexuality, and marriage during his weekly General Audiences. These lectures, delivered until November 1984, were later compiled into a book called *Theology of the Body*.

In his 1980 letter *Dominicae cenae*, Pope John Paul II warned against abuses and irreverence connected with the Eucharistic liturgy. The following year, on May 13, 1981—the feast of Our Lady of Fatima—he survived an assassination attempt in St. Peter’s Square but later forgave his Turkish assailant. Remembering Édouard Gagnon’s earlier warning about a possible assassination plot, the pope invited him back to the Vatican. Gagnon agreed to return on the condition that Cardinal Baggio and Archbishop Marcinkus be removed from their posts. Baggio was relieved from his position in 1984, while Marcinkus stepped aside as head of the Vatican Bank in 1989 after being implicated in financial scandals.



Fig. 10.18 The Bullet that Struck Pope John Paul II in 1981

The bullet is now encased in the crown of the image of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

In 1981, Pope John Paul II appointed Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In the same year, he issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* on the role of the Christian family. Two years later, he approved the revised *Code of Canon Law*, replacing the *1917 Code*. The new code imposed less explicit penalties for priests guilty of sexual

abuse involving minors and used broader language concerning Catholics who joined Freemasonry.

In 1984, Pope John Paul II granted priests, through a special indult, permission to celebrate Mass according to Pope John XXIII's 1962 Roman Missal. Then, in 1988, he issued the *motu proprio* *Ecclesia Dei*, encouraging bishops to make generous use of this faculty for Catholics attached to the Tridentine liturgy. In this same document, he declared that Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the four bishops he consecrated without papal approval had incurred automatic excommunication.

In 1985, Pope John Paul II elevated Édouard Gagnon to the cardinalate, though the contents of Gagnon's dossier have never been publicly disclosed. The following year, he invited religious leaders from around the world to Assisi, Italy, for a Day of Prayer for Peace, an initiative repeated in 1993 during the Bosnian conflict and again in 2002 after the September 11 attacks. Although critics accused the gatherings of encouraging religious syncretism, the pope clarified that "coming together to pray" was not the same as "praying together," since each religion prayed separately according to its own tradition.

Pope John Paul II continued to shape the life of the Church through numerous teachings and initiatives. Under his pontificate, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clarified the Church's teaching on homosexuality in its *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (1986). In 1992, through the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei depositum*, he authorized the publication of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, an updated catechism based on the Second Vatican Council. He also issued several influential writings. In *Veritatis splendor* (1993), he defended the objectivity of moral truth and man's ability to know it. He affirmed that Christ is the source of all truth, and he clarified the relationship between truth and freedom. In *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (1994), he reaffirmed that priestly ordination is reserved to men. In *Evangelium vitae* (1995), he strongly defended the dignity and inviolability of human life from conception to death, while in *Ut unum sint*, he promoted Christian unity and emphasized the importance of prayer in ecumenical efforts. The pope continued his doctrinal teaching in *Fides et ratio* (1998) where he described faith and reason as "two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." He emphasized that faith and reason complement each other and that divine revelation helps guide human reason, which is prone to error.

During his 26-year pontificate, he canonized 482 saints, which exceeds the number of saints canonized by his predecessors. He also recognized the holiness of figures

such as St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897), whom he declared a Doctor of the Church in 1997, and St. Faustina Kowalska (1905–1938), who is now widely known as the “Apostle of Divine Mercy.”

In his *homily*, March 12, 2000, Pope John Paul II publicly asked forgiveness for sins committed by members of the Church throughout history. In 2001, he likewise asked forgiveness for the sexual abuse committed by clergy.¹⁴² The following year, in his apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, he added the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. In 2003, he issued his final but thought-provoking encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, in which he stressed the importance and centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church. In this encyclical, he also strongly criticized the many abuses and innovations being introduced in the liturgy and called for strict adherence to liturgical norms to protect the sacredness of the Mass.

Suffering from Parkinson’s disease during his final years, Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005. Approximately 3 million pilgrims traveled to Rome to pay their respects.

10.13 Advances in Biblical Scholarship

The promulgation of Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* in 1943 marked the beginning of a new renaissance in Catholic biblical scholarship. The encyclical provided strong impetus to the advance of biblical studies in both method and scope. It encouraged biblical scholars to study the various books of the Bible in their original languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—rather than relying mainly on the Latin Vulgate. In addition, it recommended using historical and literary methods and taking advantage of archaeological findings in analyzing the meaning of the sacred texts. The Vatican II document *Dei verbum* provided additional criteria for the correct interpretation of scriptural passages to ensure fidelity to Church teaching and continuity with Sacred Tradition, while keeping the unity of Holy Scripture.

The progress in biblical research that began in 1943 with Pope Pius XII’s encyclical continues to the present day. While the Church has promoted the historical-critical method in studying the historical context, sources, literary forms, and composition of the sacred books, she has also repeatedly warned against a purely naturalistic, rationalistic, or skeptical approach that denies the possibility of divine intervention, miracles, prophecy, and divine inspiration itself. Great progress in archaeology and

¹⁴² See *Pope sends first e-mail apology*.

textual criticism, including the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, has shed light on the Jewish background of our Faith and contributed greatly to our present understanding of the way the sacred books were handed down to us. The Pontifical Biblical Commission and recent popes urged Catholic scholars to balance their scientific research and investigation with fidelity to Church teaching and tradition. Their work opened new avenues of specialized study regarding the culture of ancient Israel and early Christianity.

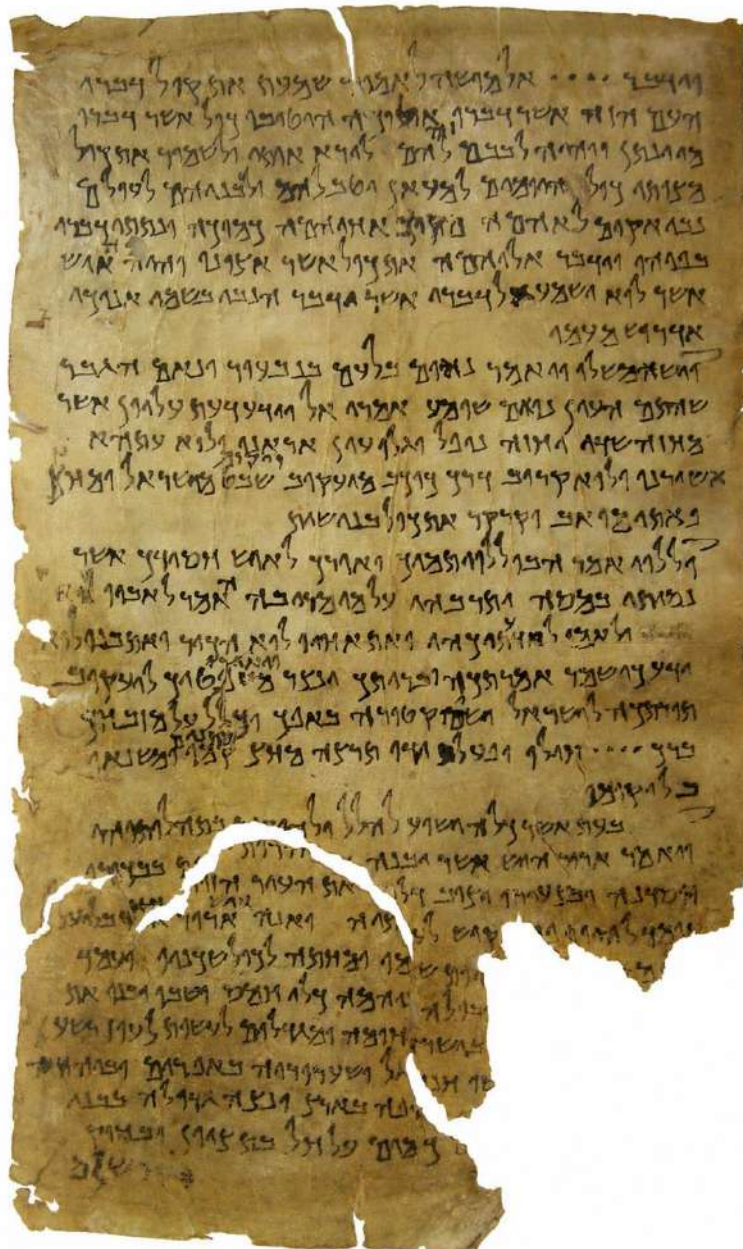


Fig. 10.19 Fragments of a Dead Sea Scroll Manuscript

In their work, Catholic scholars cooperated with Protestant and Orthodox biblical scholars to arrive at a common understanding of God's message. Due to their work, we now have modern Bible translations that students of theology use in seminaries, priests use in preaching, and the faithful use in their public and private prayers and meditation.

10.14 The Saint Gallen Mafia

In 1996, a group of high-ranking prelates (cardinals and bishops) began holding private annual meetings at a Benedictine abbey in St. Gallen, Switzerland. Their goal was to explore possible reforms within the Church. Because their meetings were casual and private, they later became the subject of public discussion and controversy. One member of the group, Cardinal Godfried Danneels of Belgium, jokingly referred to the group as a “mafia,” which is how it got its name: the *Saint Gallen Mafia*. Ivo Fürer, the bishop of St. Gallen, hosted the meetings, but the group's leader was the Italian Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J. (1927–2012).

The other members of the group were the Belgian Cardinal Godfried Danneels, the German Cardinal Walter Kasper, the British Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Italian Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, and many others who were known for their liberal or progressive theological views. Critics of the group claim that the members wanted to shift the Church's long-standing teachings toward more progressive positions regarding homosexuality, discarding priestly celibacy, ordaining women to the priesthood, decentralizing Church authority, permitting contraception, and promoting abortion “rights” among other reforms.¹⁴³ However, supporters of the group say that the meetings were simply informal discussions among prelates who shared similar pastoral concerns.

At present, most of the original members of the Saint Gallen Mafia have already died, but progressive theologians and churchmen inside and outside the Vatican continue to promote their ideas, goals, and aspirations, which many Catholics regard as spiritually and doctrinally dangerous. However, Catholics also believe that the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church despite the weaknesses and failings of her leadership.

¹⁴³ See Julia Meloni, *The St. Gallen Mafia: Exposing the Secret Reformist Group Within the Church*, published by TAN Books, 2021. Or, watch her *interview with Jim Haven*.

10.15 Clerical Abuse and Corruption in Modern Times

In recent times, the Catholic Church has suffered greatly from child sexual abuse scandals involving the clergy and failures by Church leadership to address these problems adequately. However, sexual abuse scandals among the clergy are not unique to the Catholic Church. Protestant and other Christian denominations have suffered similar problems.¹⁴⁴ Nor are these scandals limited to church organizations. Similar cases have been reported in secular institutions such as public schools, youth organizations, and sports programs not only in the United States but also abroad.¹⁴⁵

Cases involving same-sex abuse of minors (many of whom were adolescent boys) by the clergy have also been reported both inside and outside the Catholic Church. Many people have suffered greatly as a result of these scandals, which have also undermined faith and trust in the Church. Since the time of Pope St. John Paul II, however, the Church has implemented stricter procedures for reporting sexual abuse, removing guilty clergy from positions of authority, and protecting children and minors.

The increasing size of LGBT groups and their ongoing campaign to promote broader social acceptance of same-sex relationships and LGBT identities are events that many Christians view as evidence of ongoing moral decline in contemporary society. Sadly, certain members of the Catholic clergy have also become staunch supporters of these movements. Although the homosexual act itself is not a civil criminal offense in most modern civil legal systems, it is against the moral law and an offense against God. Thus, while same-sex-attracted *individuals* are still welcome in the Church, the Church—despite support from some members of the clergy—has refused to recognize the status of homosexual couples as valid unions or marriages.

The Church has gone through times of corruption and reform throughout history, and the present Church is no exception. Recent popes—Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis—have called for prayer, repentance, purification, justice for victims, and moral renewal within the Church.

¹⁴⁴ See *Child Sex Abusers in Protestant Christian Churches: An Offender Typology*.

¹⁴⁵ See *Child Sexual Abuse in Religiously Affiliated and Secular institutions*

CHAPTER 11

THE PRESENT CENTURY

11.1 Pope Benedict XVI (1927–2022, pope from 2005–2013)



Fig. 11.1 Pope Benedict XVI

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, assumed the office of prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on November 25, 1981, following his appointment by Pope John Paul II. In 1986, under his prefectship, the CDF issued a letter to all bishops entitled *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. Among other things, the letter clarified that homosexual inclinations are an objective disorder even though they are not sins in themselves.

Following his election as pope in 2005, Cardinal Ratzinger adopted the name “Benedict XVI” in honor of Pope Benedict XV and St. Benedict of Nursia. During his pontificate, he canonized 45 saints, among them St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656–1680), the first Native American saint. In 2012, he also declared St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and St. John of Ávila (1499–1569) Doctors of the Church. During his papacy, he wrote three encyclicals—*Deus caritas est* (2005), *Spe salvi* (2007), and *Caritas in veritate* (2009)—as well as the apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum caritatis* (2007).

Pope Benedict XVI strongly promoted the “**hermeneutic of continuity**,” according to which the Second Vatican Council should be interpreted in continuity with previous Church tradition rather than as a rupture with the past.

In 2007, he issued the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, which made the celebration of the Tridentine Mass more accessible to the faithful. He clarified that the Tridentine Mass “was never juridically abrogated and, consequently, in principle, was always permitted.” Therefore, any priest could offer it to the faithful without requiring the bishop’s approval. At the same time, he affirmed that Pope St. Paul VI’s New Mass, or the *Novus Ordo*, remained the norm of the Roman Rite. He referred to the *Novus Ordo* as the “ordinary form” and the Tridentine Mass as the “extraordinary form” of the Mass. In the same motu proprio, he also permitted pastors and bishops to use the old Roman Ritual in administering the sacraments.

In 2009, he lifted the excommunication incurred by the four bishops who had been validly but illicitly consecrated by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.¹⁴⁶ Even before becoming pope, while serving as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he had already endeavored to address the sexual abuse scandal afflicting the Church. In 2010, he issued revised norms and guidelines intended to address and prevent sexual abuse by clergy.¹⁴⁷

Pope Benedict XVI also wrote the influential three-volume *Jesus of Nazareth* series (2007–2012), which reflected both his deep theological scholarship and his devotion to Christ. On February 11, 2013, he announced his intention to resign from the papacy, and his resignation took effect on February 28 of that year. He explained that his age and declining health no longer allowed him to fulfill adequately the demanding duties of the papal office. There has been speculation that machinations within the Vatican, the money-laundering scandals involving the Vatican Bank, and the public exposure of the “Vatileaks” scandal may also have weighed heavily upon him. Although Pope Benedict himself was widely regarded as personally honest and uninvolved in Vatican corruption, he may have felt that, at his advanced age, the problems confronting the Church had become too burdensome for him to manage effectively.

¹⁴⁶ Later, in the apostolic letter *Misericordia et misera* (20 November 2016), Pope Francis also gave all SSPX priests who were validly but illicitly ordained by their bishops the faculty to hear confessions, despite their irregular canonical status.

¹⁴⁷ See the *Norms on delicta graviora* approved by Pope Benedict, which revised some of the norms outlined in Pope John Paul II’s motu proprio *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (2001).

11.2 Pope Francis (1936–2025; pope from 2013–2025)



Fig. 11.2 Pope Francis

Pope Francis, formerly Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., succeeded Pope Benedict XVI and chose the name “Francis” in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. In 2013, he published the encyclical *Lumen fidei*, which was largely a work of Pope Benedict XVI, as well as the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*.

In 2014, he canonized both Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II. In the same year, he replaced four of the five cardinal overseers at the Vatican Bank in an effort to address financial irregularities and money laundering, and he appointed a commission to study reforms intended to increase financial transparency. Also in the same year, he established the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors to help safeguard children and young teenagers from sexual abuse committed by clergy and members of religious institutes. Since June 2022, however, this commission has functioned under the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In 2015, Pope Francis published his first original encyclical, *Laudato si*, which focused on care for the environment and the Earth. The following year, he issued the apostolic exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, which became controversial because it

implicitly permitted, in certain cases and after adequate discernment, the giving of Holy Communion to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics.

Pope Francis canonized numerous saints during his pontificate. In 2016, he canonized St. Teresa of Kolkata (1910–1997) and St. Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880–1906), among many others. The following year, he canonized St. Francisco Marto (1908–1919) and St. Jacinta Marto (1910–1920), two of the three children who witnessed the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fátima, Portugal, in 1917. In 2018 and 2019, he canonized Pope Paul VI (1897–1978) and Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890), respectively. In 2020, he beatified Carlo Acutis, a fifteen-year-old web designer known for documenting Eucharistic miracles and Church-approved Marian apparitions. During his pontificate, he also named St. Gregory of Narek (in 2015) and St. Irenaeus of Lyons (in 2022) as Doctors of the Church.

In 2018, Pope Francis supported the Vatican-China agreement, according to which the pope could appoint bishops in China from candidates recommended by the Chinese government while retaining the authority to veto those recommendations. The following year, during his trip to the United Arab Emirates, he and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar signed a joint declaration that was meant to advance inter-religious dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*. The document pointed out many commonalities between the traditions, but one statement in the document said that “the pluralism and the diversity of religions, color, sex, race, and language are willed by God in His wisdom.” This statement was misunderstood by some who thought that it appeared to suggest that God positively wills the existence of diverse religions than merely permitting them through His permissive will. Critics also pointed to later public, ambiguous remarks by Pope Francis concerning religious diversity that generated controversy among clergy and lay faithful.

Also in 2019, Pope Francis dismissed former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick from public ministry following credible allegations of sexual misconduct involving a minor and seminarians.¹⁴⁸ In the same year, he also issued the *motu proprio* *Vos*

¹⁴⁸ Although it is now known that Theodore McCarrick’s sexual misconduct started in the 1970s, the previous popes (Pope St. Paul VI, Pope St. John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI) did not punish him and even promoted him to higher positions in the Church because they were unaware of any credible and substantial allegations against McCarrick. It was not until June 2017 that the Church received proper documentation regarding McCarrick’s sexual misconduct involving minors. See *Report on the Holy See’s Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick*, November 10, 2020.

estis lux mundi, which established reporting procedures and responsibilities concerning sexual abuse committed by clergy and members of religious institutes. Later that year, controversy again arose when Pope Francis hosted a ceremony in the Vatican Gardens involving Pachamama statues venerated by indigenous people of the Andes and the Amazon. Some Catholics regarded the event, especially the bowing and prostration before the statues, as scandalous or even idolatrous. Pope Francis, however, disagreed and cautioned Catholics not to be so quick in judging the event as pagan worship.

In 2021, Pope Francis issued the motu proprio *Traditionis Custodes*, which reversed Pope Benedict XVI's broader permission for the celebration of the Tridentine Mass. The document imposed restrictions on the use of the older liturgy. Pope Francis' reasoning was that rather than fostering unity among Catholics, as Pope Benedict had hoped when he promulgated *Summorum Pontificum*, the increased use of the older liturgy was instead fostering dissent and rejection of many of the teachings of Vatican II. Several cardinals, including Cardinals Raymond Burke, Gerhard Müller, and Joseph Zen, criticized the measures as unnecessarily severe. A 2020 report prepared by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and later leaked to the public in July 2025,¹⁴⁹ suggested that many bishops believed the permissions granted by *Summorum Pontificum* had generally produced positive results in their dioceses. For this reason, many observers considered the report to weaken the rationale behind *Traditionis Custodes*.

On September 4, 2022, he beatified Pope John Paul I in St. Peter's Square. The following year, in the apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum*, he again urged action against human-caused climate change, echoing similar concerns previously expressed by Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II concerning ecological responsibility and care for God's creation.

In December 2023, Pope Francis approved the declaration *Fiducia supplicans*, prepared by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. The document permitted priests to give a "pastoral" blessing to *couples* in irregular situations, including same-sex couples, without intending to approve their union itself or alter the Catholic teaching on marriage. Nevertheless, many lay faithful, priests, bishops, and even entire episcopal conferences regarded the blessing of couples in irregular unions as imprudent and confusing because the concept of a "couple" ordinarily implies the existence of a relationship or union between the individuals involved.

¹⁴⁹ Diane Montagna, a Vatican correspondent, gave a [summary of the CDF report](#) together with the [evidence of its authenticity](#) in two *Substack* articles published on July 1 and 10, 2025.

Critics argued that, even if the blessing were directed toward the individuals rather than their union, the public perception created by such blessings would still give the appearance of approving the relationship itself.

On April 21, 2025, Pope Francis suffered a stroke and died.

11.3 The Synod on Synodality

The Vatican defines “synodality” as “the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.”¹⁵⁰ In October 2021, Pope Francis launched the Synod on Synodality, a multi-year series of meetings attended by bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, and laymen and laywomen. In this synod, unlike other synods, even some laymen and laywomen had voting rights. Many synod participants—such as Cardinal Mario Grech, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, Cardinal Robert McElroy, Fr. James Martin, and Sr. Maria Ignazia Angelini—are known to have liberal and progressive views, and this made many Catholics uncomfortable about the synod’s potential outcome.

After three years of discussion and deliberation, the synod ended. Then, on October 26, 2024, the synod approved and Pope Francis accepted the synod’s *final document*, which contained, among others, the following proposals:

- The Synod calls on the Church to recognize the diversity of cultures and traditions in its liturgy. It proposes “to adopt celebratory styles that make visible the face of a synodal Church” (Par. No. 27).
- The Synod calls for the Church to be more welcoming and inclusive. However, the final document prudently refrains from using the term “LGBTQ” and simply proposes that the Church be considerate toward those who “experience the pain of feeling excluded or judged because of their marital situation, identity or sexuality” (Par. No. 50).
- The Synod proposes to expand women’s leadership roles in the Church, including their involvement in the formation of priests and deacons (Par. No. 148). However, it did not propose the ordination of women to the diaconate and left the matter open for further study and discernment (Par. No. 60).
- The Synod calls for increased participation of the laity (both men and women) in decision-making, accountability, and evaluation processes through the diocesan and parish Councils (Par. Nos. 103–108) and reminds bishops and pastors of their obligation to listen to the faithful (Par. No. 91). However, the

¹⁵⁰ See the Vatican document *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, Par. 7.

Synod maintains that the authority of the bishop, the episcopal college, and the pope in regard to decision-making is inviolable (Par. No. 92).

- The Synod affirms that episcopal conferences should express the collegiality of the bishops and serve as a tool for expressing Faith in different cultures. However, it proposes to define the doctrinal and disciplinary competence of episcopal conferences without compromising the authority of the bishops in their respective dioceses or the unity of the Church (Par. No. 125b).

11.4 The State of the Catholic Church Today

Vatican II has changed the Catholic Church greatly, not so much in the realm of dogma as in her atmosphere and attitudes. She is now more open to dialogue and more proactive in pursuing Christian unity. She calls Protestants and Orthodox Christians “separated brethren” rather than “heretics.” She has a renewed interest in biblical studies and encouraged the participation of the laity not only in the liturgy but also in religious education and catechetics.

However, the Church also suffered a steep decline after Vatican II but not solely because of Vatican II. The causes are actually numerous, stemming from a climate of materialism, an overemphasis on secular values, and a decline in personal prayer and holiness among the faithful. However, the Holy Spirit is still in the Church and guiding her, and there is also the Virgin of Fátima’s promise: “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph ... and a period of peace will be given to mankind.”¹⁵¹ Satan may be a strong enemy that can severely weaken the Catholic Church, but he cannot destroy it. This, then, is our earnest hope: that through the mercy of God, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the perseverance and prayers of faithful Catholics, bishops, and priests, the Church will continue, as she has always done, to endure her present ordeal.

Ending Note

When this book was written, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost (b. 1955) had been elected pope (on May 8, 2025). He explained that he took the name **Pope Leo XIV** because, as Pope Leo XIII was the pope during the Industrial Revolution, his papacy occurs during the Technological Revolution occasioned by the rise of artificial intelligence. A future edition of this book will provide a more comprehensive description of his contributions to church history.

¹⁵¹ From *Fátima in Lucia’s Own Words*, Fourth Memoir, Part II, July 13, 1917, p. 179.

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Appendix 1

List of Notable Church Fathers¹⁵²

APOSTOLIC FATHERS		
Name of Church Father	Birth	Death
Pope St. Clement I of Rome	?	97
St. Papias of Hierapolis	60	130
St. Polycarp of Smyrna	69	155

FATHERS OF THE EAST			FATHERS OF THE WEST		
Name of Church Father	Birth	Death	Name of Church Father	Birth	Death
St. Justin Martyr	100	165	St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Doctor	125	200
St. Dionysius the Great	190	268	St. Cyprian of Carthage	c. 200	258
St. Gregory Thaumaturgus	213	270	Pope St. Dionysius of Rome	?	268
St. Anthony the Great	251	356	St. Hilary of Poitiers, Doctor	315	367
St. Athanasius of Alexandria, Doctor	296	373	Pope St. Damasus I	304	384
St. Ephrem the Syrian, Doctor	306	373	St. Pacian of Barcelona	310	391
St. Basil the Great, Doctor	329	379	St. Ambrose of Milan, Doctor	340	397
St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Doctor	315	386	St. Jerome of Stridonium, Doctor	347	420
St. Gregory of Nyssa	331	395	St. Augustine of Hippo, Doctor	354	430
St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Doctor	329	389	St. Peter Chrysologus, Doctor	400	454
St. John Chrysostom, Doctor	347	407	Pope St. Leo the Great, Doctor	395	461
St. Cyril of Alexandria, Doctor	376	444	Pope St. Gregory the Great, Doctor	540	604
St. Maximus the Confessor	580	662	St. Isidore of Seville, Doctor	560	636
St. John Damascene, Doctor	676	750	St. Bede the Venerable, Doctor	672	735

¹⁵² The list is not exhaustive and includes only some notable Church Fathers. The Fathers' designation as "of the East" or "of the West" refers to their geographical location around the Mediterranean in the old Roman Empire. Greece is east, and Italy is west relative to a vertical line between them. Most Eastern Fathers wrote in Greek, while Western Fathers wrote in Latin. This explains why the Fathers were previously classified as "Greek fathers" and "Latin fathers." However, the resulting classification was misleading because some Fathers of the East also wrote in other languages besides Greek, such as Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, and Ethiopian. St. Irenaeus of Lyons, France, was also technically a Father of the West, but he wrote mostly in Greek, although his extant works are available only in Latin translations.

Appendix 2

List of Doctors of the Church

PATRISTIC ERA				
No.	Name of Doctor	Birth	Death	Proclamation
1	St. Irenaeus of Lyons	125	200	January 21, 2022 by Pope Francis
2	St. Hilary of Poitiers	315	367	May 13, 1851 by Pope Pius IX
3	St. Athanasius of Alexandria	296	373	July 9, 1568 by Pope St. Pius V
4	St. Ephrem the Syrian	306	373	October 5, 1920 by Pope Benedict XV
5	St. Basil the Great	329	379	July 9, 1568 by Pope St. Pius V
6	St. Cyril of Jerusalem	315	386	July 28, 1882 by Pope Leo XIII
7	St. Gregory of Nazianzus	329	389	July 9, 1568 by Pope St. Pius V
8	St. Ambrose of Milan	340	397	March 3, 1298 by Pope Boniface VIII
9	St. John Chrysostom	347	407	July 9, 1568 by Pope St. Pius V
10	St. Jerome of Stridonium	347	420	March 3, 1298 by Pope Boniface VIII
11	St. Augustine of Hippo	354	430	March 3, 1298 by Pope Boniface VIII
12	St. Cyril of Alexandria	376	444	July 28, 1882 by Pope Leo XIII
13	St. Peter Chrysologus	400	454	February 10, 1729 by Pope Benedict XIII
14	Pope St. Leo the Great	395	461	October 15, 1754 by Pope Benedict XIV
15	Pope St. Gregory the Great	540	604	September 20, 1295 by Pope Boniface VIII
16	St. Isidore of Seville	560	636	April 25, 1722 by Pope Innocent XIII
17	St. Bede the Venerable	672	735	November 13, 1899 by Pope Leo XIII
18	St. John Damascene	676	750	August 19, 1890 by Pope Leo XIII

MIDDLE AGES				
No.	Name of Doctor	Birth	Death	Proclaimed Doctor
19	St. Gregory of Narek, the Marginal Doctor	950	1003	April 12, 2015 by Pope Francis
20	St. Peter Damian, Doctor of Reform and Renewal	1007	1072	September 27, 1828 by Pope Leo XII
21	St. Anselm of Canterbury, Doctor of Scholasticism, Magnificent Doctor (<i>Doctor magnificus</i>), and Marian Doctor (<i>Doctor Marianus</i>)	1033	1109	February 3, 1720 by Pope Clement XI
22	St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Devotional and Eloquent Doctor, and Mellifluous Doctor (<i>Doctor mellifluus</i>)	1090	1153	August 20, 1830 by Pope Pius VIII
23	St. Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of Vision (<i>Doctor visionis</i>), Doctor of Greenness (<i>Doctor viriditatis</i>), Doctor of Symphony (<i>Doctor symphoniae</i>), and Doctor of Divine Works (<i>Doctor divini operis</i>)	1098	1179	October 7, 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI
24	St. Anthony of Lisbon and Padua, Evangelical Doctor (<i>Doctor evangelicus</i>)	1195	1231	January 16, 1946 by Pope Pius XII
25	St. Thomas Aquinas, The Angelic Doctor (<i>Doctor angelicus</i>), and Common Doctor (<i>Doctor communis</i>)	c. 1225	1274	April 11, 1567 by Pope Pius V
26	Cardinal St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, The Seraphic Doctor (<i>Doctor seraphicus</i>)	1221	1274	March 14, 1588 by Pope Sixtus V
27	St. Albert the Great, Doctor of Science, Universal Doctor (<i>Doctor universalis</i>), and Expert Doctor (<i>Doctor expertus</i>)	1200	1280	December 16, 1931 by Pope Pius XI
28	St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of Unity	1347	1380	October 4, 1970 by Pope St. Paul VI

NOTE

The following medieval scholars are NOT Doctors of the Church, although they have traditionally been honored with the title “Doctor”:

Alexander of Hales (1185–1245)	Irrefutable Doctor (<i>Doctor irrefragabilis</i>)
Roger Bacon (1214–1292)	Wondrous Doctor (<i>Doctor mirabilis</i>)
Blessed John Duns Scotus (1266–1308)	Subtle Doctor (<i>Doctor subtilis</i>)
Blessed Raymond Lull (1232–1315)	Illuminated Doctor (<i>Doctor illuminatus</i>)
Gregory of Rimini (1300–1358)	Authentic Doctor (<i>Doctor authenticus</i>)
Blessed John of Ruysbroeck (1293–1381)	Ecstatic Doctor (<i>Doctor divinus ecstaticus</i>)
John Gerson (1363–1429)	Most Christian Doctor (<i>Doctor christianissimus</i>)
Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464)	Christian Doctor (<i>Doctor christianus</i>)
Francisco Suarez (1548–1617)	Exceptional Doctor (<i>Doctor eximius</i>)

CATHOLIC REFORMATION				
No.	Name of Doctor	Birth	Death	Proclaimed Doctor
29	St. John of Avila, the Spiritual Doctor (<i>Doctor spiritualis</i>)	1499	1569	October 7, 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI
30	St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of Prayer	1515	1582	September 27, 1979 by Pope St. Paul VI
31	St. John of the Cross, Mystical Doctor (<i>Doctor mysticus</i>)	1542	1591	August 24, 1926 by Pope Pius XI
32	St. Peter Canisius, Doctor of Catechetical Studies	1521	1597	May 21, 1925 by Pope Pius XI
33	St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Doctor of Conversions and Missions, and Apostolic Doctor (<i>Doctor apostolicus</i>)	1559	1619	March 19, 1959 by Pope St. John XXIII
34	Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of Church-State Relations	1542	1621	September 17, 1931 by Pope Pius XI
35	St. Francis de Sales, Doctor of Authors and the Press, and Doctor of Charity (<i>Doctor caritatis</i>)	1567	1622	November 16, 1877 by Pope Pius IX
MODERN ERA				
No.	Name of Doctor	Birth	Death	Proclaimed Doctor
36	St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Most Zealous Doctor (<i>Doctor zelantissimus</i>)	1696	1787	July 7, 1871 by Pope Pius IX
37	St. John Henry Newman, Doctor of Conscience (<i>Doctor conscientiae</i>)	1801	1890	November 1, 2025 by Pope Leo XIV
38	St. Therese of Lisieux, Doctor of Love (<i>Doctor amoris</i>) and Doctor of Confidence and Missionaries	1873	1897	October 19, 1997 by Pope St. John Paul II

Appendix 3

List of Ecumenical Councils

	COUNCIL	DATE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	POPES GIVING APPROVAL
1	<i>First Council of Nicaea</i>	325	Condemned the heresy of Arius , which denied the divinity of Christ; promulgated the Nicene Creed; fixed the date of Easter; passed regulations concerning clerical discipline.	St. Sylvester I
2	<i>First Council of Constantinople</i>	381	Condemned various brands of Arianism and the heresy of Macedonius , which denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit; approved a canon that made the bishop of Constantinople the ranking prelate in the East, with primacy next to the pope.	St. Damasus I
3	<i>Council of Ephesus</i>	431	Condemned the heresy of Nestorius , which denied the union of the human and divine nature in the Person of Christ; defined <i>Theotokos</i> ("Bearer of God") as Mary's title; condemned the error of Pelagius which reduced the supernatural to the natural order of things.	St. Celestine I
4	<i>Council of Chalcedon</i>	451	Condemned the errors of Eutyches and Dioscorus , which denied the humanity of Christ by holding that Christ had only one nature—the Divine nature; acknowledged papal supremacy.	St. Leo the Great
5	<i>Second Council of Constantinople</i>	553	Condemned the <i>Three Chapters</i> (by Nestorian sympathizers—viz., Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyprus and Ibas of Edessa); and renewed Nestorian condemnation.	Vigilius
6	<i>Third Council of Constantinople</i>	680-681	Condemned Monothelitism , which held that there was only one will—the Divine Will—in Christ	St. Agatho and his successor, St. Leo II
7	<i>Second Council of Nicaea, ended at Constantinople</i> [This was the last council that the Orthodox Churches regard as Ecumenical.]	787	Condemned Iconoclasm , which held that the use of images was idolatry. Also condemned Adoptionism , which held that Christ was not the Son of God by nature but only by adoption.	St. Adrian I

	COUNCIL	DATE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	POPES GIVING APPROVAL
8	<i>Fourth Council of Constantinople</i>	869-870	Condemned the errors of Photius and deposed him; reinstated Ignatius in the See of Constantinople.	Adrian II
9	<i>First Council of Lateran (at Rome)</i>	1123	Regulated the rights of the Church and the Roman Emperor in the election of bishops and abbots.	Calixtus II
10	<i>Second Council of Lateran (at Rome)</i>	1139	Condemned Albigensianism; repressed the schism of Peter Leo.	Innocent II
11	<i>Third Council of Lateran (at Rome)</i>	1179	Condemned Waldensianism; regulated the election of popes and bishops.	Alexander III
12	<i>Fourth Council of Lateran (at Rome)</i>	1215	Made annual Confession and Holy Communion during Easter time obligatory; enacted 70 canons, of which the first was directed against the Waldensian and Albigensian heretics; also authorized a Crusade to the Holy Land.	Innocent III
13	<i>First Council of Lyons</i>	1245	Excommunicated and deposed Emperor Frederick II.	Innocent IV
14	<i>Second Council of Lyons</i>	1274	Attempted to unite Greek schismatics to the Church.	Bl. Gregory X
15	<i>Council of Vienne (France)</i>	1311-1312	Suppressed Knights Templars; condemned Beghards and Beguines.	Clement V
16	<i>Council of Constance</i>	1414-1418	Condemned the Western Schism resulting from three candidates to the papacy; recognized Martin V as lawful Pope.	Martin V
17	<i>Council of Basel—Ferrara—Florence</i>	1431-1445	Declared the supremacy of the pope over the whole Church; received the submission of Eastern and Russian schismatic bishops.	Eugenius IV

	COUNCIL	DATE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	POPES GIVING APPROVAL
18	<i>Fifth Council of Lateran</i> (at Rome)	1512-1517	Abolished the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (France) and restored peace among Christian rulers; defined the dogma of the immortality of the soul.	Julius II; Leo X
19	<i>Council of Trent</i>	1545-1563	Explained Catholic doctrines opposed by the Reformers (see Note 1); condemned contrary errors; initiated reforms in liturgy, general discipline in the Church, the promotion of religious instruction, and the education of the clergy.	Paul III, Julius III, Pius IV
20	<i>First Vatican Council</i>	1869-1870	Defined the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors; defined Papal Infallibility ; regulated discipline and covered natural religion, revelation, faith, and the relation between faith and reason .	Bl. Pius IX
21	<i>Second Vatican Council</i>	1962-1965	Promulgated 16 documents—all reflecting a pastoral orientation toward renewal and reform in the Church (see Note 2).	St. Paul VI

NOTES

- The Council of Trent defines the following matters: the rule of faith, the canon of Holy Scripture, the nature of justification, grace, faith, original sin and its effects, the seven sacraments, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the veneration of saints, the use of sacred images, belief in purgatory, the doctrine of indulgences, and the jurisdiction of the pope over the whole Church.
- The 16 documents of the Second Vatican Council (or Vatican II) are the following:
 - Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei verbum*)
 - Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*)
 - Dogmatic Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*)
 - Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*)
 - Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum educationis*)
 - Declaration on the Relationship of the Church with non-Christian Religions (*Nostra aetate*)
 - Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis humanae*)
 - Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad gentes*)
 - Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*)
 - Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*)
 - Decree on Formation of Priests (*Optatam totius*)
 - Decree on the Renewal and Adaptation of the Religious Life (*Perfectae caritatis*)
 - Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops (*Christus Dominus*)
 - Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*)
 - Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium ecclesiarum*)
 - Decree on the Means of Social Communication (*Inter mirifica*)

Appendix 4

List of Roman Catholic Popes

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
FIRST CENTURY				
1	St. Peter (Note 1)		32	67
2	St. Linus (Note 2)		67	76
3	St. Anacletus		76	88
4	St. Clement I of Rome		88	97
5	St. Evaristus (Note 3)		97	105
SECOND CENTURY				
6	St. Alexander I (Note 4)		105	115
7	St. Sixtus I (Note 5)		115	125
8	St. Telesphorus (Note 6)		125	136
9	St. Hyginus		136	140
10	St. Pius I (Note 7)		140	155
11	St. Anicetus		155	166
12	St. Soterus		166	175
13	St. Eleutherius		175	189
14	St. Victor I		189	199
15	St. Zephyrinus		199	217

NOTES

- 1 Appointed by Christ, St. Peter was the first pope of the Catholic Church.
- 2 Besides St. Peter, St. Linus was the only other pope cited in Holy Scripture (2 Tim 4:21). He decreed that women must wear a veil in church.
- 3 St. Evaristus divided Rome into 7 parishes, with a priest assigned to each parish. He started the tradition of dividing a bishop's jurisdiction into parishes.
- 4 St. Alexander I started the custom of blessing houses with holy water.
- 5 Also called Xystus I, St. Sixtus decreed that sacred ministers alone may touch sacred vessels.
- 6 St. Telesphorus witnessed the persecution of Christians by Emperor Hadrian and was himself a "great martyr," according to St. Irenaeus.
- 7 St. Pius I opposed Gnosticism and excommunicated the Gnostic Marcion.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
THIRD CENTURY				
16	St. Callixtus I	St. Hippolytus (217-236)	217	222
17	St. Urban I		222	230
18	St. Pontianus		230	235
19	St. Anterus		235	236
20	St. Fabian		236	250
21	St. Cornelius	Novatian (251–258)	251	253
22	St Lucius I		253	254
23	St. Stephen I		254	257
24	St. Sixtus II		257	258
25	St. Dionysius		260	268
26	St. Felix I		269	274
27	St. Eutychianus		275	283
28	St. Caius		283	296
29	St. Marcellinus		296	304
FOURTH CENTURY				
30	St. Marcellus I		308	309
31	St. Eusebius		309	310
32	St. Miltiades		311	314
33	St. Sylvester I		314	335
34	St. Marcus		336	336
35	St. Julius I (Note 8)		337	352
36	Liberius	Felix II (355-365)	352	366
37	St. Damasus I (Note 9)	Ursinus (366-367)	366	384
38	St. Siricius (Note 10)		384	399
39	St. Anastasius I		399	401

NOTES (Continued)

- 8 St. Julius I fixed the celebration of the Nativity of Christ to December 25 and separated the celebration of the Epiphany from Christmas.
- 9 St. Damasus I commissioned St. Jerome to translate the entire Bible into Latin.
- 10 St. Siricius commanded celibacy for priests.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
FIFTH CENTURY				
40	St. Innocent I		401	417
41	St. Zosimus		417	418
42	St. Boniface I	Eulalius (418–419)	418	422
43	St. Celestine I		422	432
44	St. Sixtus III		432	440
45	St. Leo I (Note 11)		440	461
46	St. Hilarius		461	468
47	St. Simplicius		468	483
48	St. Felix III		483	492
49	St. Gelasius I (Note 12)		492	496
50	Anastasius II		496	498
51	St. Symmachus	Laurentius (498–499; 501–506)	498	514
SIXTH CENTURY				
52	St. Hormisdas		514	523
53	St. John I		523	526
54	St. Felix IV		526	530
55	Boniface II	Dioscorus (530)	530	532
56	John II (Note 13)		533	535
57	St. Agapetus I		535	536
58	St. Silverius		536	537
59	Vigilius		537	555
60	Pelagius I		556	561
61	John III		561	574
62	Benedict I		575	579
63	Pelagius II		579	590
64	St. Gregory I (or the Great)		590	604

NOTES (Continued)

- 11 More popularly known as St. Leo the Great, St. Leo I, a Doctor of the Church, wrote a doctrinal letter used by the Council of Chalcedon to define the hypostatic union.
- 12 St. Gelasius I was the first pope to receive the title “Vicar of Christ.”
- 13 John II was the first pope not to use his real name because his birth name, Mercurius, belonged to a Roman god.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
SEVENTH CENTURY				
65	Sabinian		604	606
66	Boniface III		607	607
67	Boniface IV		608	615
68	St. Adeodatus I (Note 14)		615	618
69	Boniface V		619	625
70	Honorius I		625	638
71	Severinus		640	640
72	John IV		640	642
73	Theodore I		642	649
74	St. Martin I		649	655
75	St. Eugene I		655	657
76	St. Vitalian		657	672
77	Adeodatus II		672	676
78	Donus		676	678
79	St. Agatho		678	681
80	St. Leo II		682	683
81	St. Benedict II		684	685
82	John V		685	686
83	Conon		686	687
84	St. Sergius I (Note 15)	Theodore and Paschal (687)	687	701
EIGHTH CENTURY				
85	John VI		701	705
86	John VII		705	707
87	Sisinnius		708	708
88	Constantine		708	715
89	St. Gregory II		715	731
90	St. Gregory III		731	741
91	St. Zachary		741	752

NOTES (Continued)

14 St. Adeodatus I was sometimes called St. Deusdedit.

15 St. Sergius I introduced the singing of the *Lamb of God* at Mass.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
EIGHTH CENTURY (Continued)				
92	St. Stephen III (Note 16)		752	757
93	St. Paul I		757	767
94	Stephen IV	Constantine II (767–768) and Philip (768)	767	772
95	Adrian I		772	795
96	St. Leo III		795	816
NINTH CENTURY				
97	Stephen V		816	817
98	St. Paschal I		817	824
99	Eugene II		824	827
100	Valentine		827	827
101	Gregory IV		827	844
102	Sergius II	John VIII (844)	844	847
103	St. Leo IV		847	855
104	Benedict III	Anastasius the Librarian (855)	855	858
105	St. Nicholas I (or the Great)		858	867
106	Adrian II		867	872
107	John VIII		872	882
108	Marinus I		882	884
109	St. Adrian III		884	885
110	Stephen VI		885	891
111	Formosus		891	896
112	Boniface VI		896	896
113	Stephen VII (Note 17)		896	897
114	Romanus		897	897
115	Theodore II		897	897
116	John IX		898	900

NOTES (Continued)

16 Stephen II died before being consecrated, so his name is omitted from the list. This list calls the 92nd pope of the Catholic Church “St. Stephen III,” but other listings prefer to call him “Stephen II” because he was the second reigning pope to bear that name.

17 A name highlighted in red indicates a pope with a moral blemish in his papacy. (See [Stephen VII](#).)

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
TENTH CENTURY				
117	Benedict IV		900	903
118	Leo V	Christopher (903-904)	903	903
119	Sergius III (Note 18)		904	911
120	Anastasius III		911	913
121	Lando		913	914
122	John X		914	928
123	Leo VI		928	928
124	Stephen VIII		929	931
125	John XI		931	935
126	Leo VII		936	939
127	Stephen IX		939	942
128	Marinus II		942	946
129	Agapetus II		946	955
130	John XII (Note 19)		955	963
131	Leo VIII		963	964
132	Benedict V		964	964
133	John XIII		965	972
134	Benedict VI		973	974
135	Benedict VII	Boniface VII (974; 984-985)	974	983
136	John XIV		983	984
137	John XV (Note 20)		985	996
138	Gregory V	John XVI (997-998)	996	999
139	Sylvester II		999	1003

NOTES (Continued)

- 18** Sergius III was the first pope to wear a tiara. Although many people regard him as a bad pope, much of what we know about his wrongdoings came from his enemies. The accusations that he had two of his predecessors murdered and that he fathered an illegitimate child who later became Pope John XI are unproven.
- 19** John XII became pope at age 18 due to the influence of his father, Alberic II, a ruler of Rome. Emperor Otto deposed him in December 963, but he regained his position as pope from February 964 to May 964. John was a promiscuous pope and was caught in bed with another man's wife shortly before his death.
- 20** John XV was the first pope to formally canonize a saint.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
ELEVENTH CENTURY				
140	John XVII		1003	1003
141	John XVIII		1003	1009
142	Sergius IV		1009	1012
143	Benedict VIII	Gregory (1012)	1012	1024
144	John XIX		1024	1032
145	Benedict IX (Note 21)		1032	1045
146	Sylvester III		1045	1045
147	Benedict IX		1045	1045
148	Gregory VI		1045	1046
149	Clement II		1046	1047
150	Benedict IX		1047	1048
151	Damasus II		1048	1048
152	St. Leo IX (Note 22)		1049	1054
153	Victor II		1055	1057
154	Stephen X		1057	1058
155	Nicholas II (Note 23)	Benedict X (1058–1059)	1058	1061
156	Alexander II	Honorius II (1061-1072)	1061	1073
157	St. Gregory VII (Note 24)	Clement III(1080-1100)	1073	1085
158	Bl. Victor III		1086	1087
159	Bl. Urban II		1088	1099
160	Paschal II	Theodoric (1100–1101), Adalbert (1101), and Sylvester IV (1105–1111)	1099	1118

NOTES (Continued)

- 21 Benedict IX appears on this list three times (Nos. 145, 147, and 150) because he was deposed, then resigned, and was later restored. He became pope at age 20 due to the influence of his father, Alberic III, the Count of Tusculum. As soon as he became pope, he handed favors to his family and took several mistresses. See also [Benedict IX](#).
- 22 The [Greek Schism](#) began in 1054, during his pontificate.
- 23 Nicholas II designated the College of Cardinals as the sole electors for the pope.
- 24 Formerly known as Hildebrand, St. Gregory VII denounced the practice of lay investiture and threatened to excommunicate princes who persisted in the practice. He restricted the use of the title “Papa” to the bishop of Rome.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
TWELFTH CENTURY				
161	Gelasius II	Gregory VIII (1118–1121)	1118	1119
162	Callixtus II		1119	1124
163	Honorius II (Note 25)	Celestine II (1124)	1124	1130
164	Innocent II	Anacletus II (1130-1138) and Victor IV (1138) (Note 26)	1130	1143
165	Celestine II		1143	1144
166	Lucius II		1144	1145
167	Bl. Eugene III		1145	1153
168	Anastasius IV		1153	1154
169	Adrian IV		1154	1159
170	Alexander III	Victor IV (1159-1164), Paschal III (1164-1168), Callistus III (1168-1178) and Innocent III (1179-1180)	1159	1181
171	Lucius III (Note 27)	W	1181	1185
172	Urban III		1185	1187
173	Gregory VIII		1187	1187
174	Clement III		1187	1191
175	Celestine III		1191	1198
176	Innocent III (Note 28)		1198	1216

NOTES (Continued)

25 Honorius II approved the new military order of the Knights Templar in 1128.

26 This Victor IV is not the same person as Victor IV who appears in line 170 of this chart. Victor IV in line 164 is Gregorio Conti; the other one in line 170 is Octavian of Monticelli.

27 Lucius III excommunicated the *Cathari* and other heretics in France.

28 Innocent III approved the Franciscan Order in 1210.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
THIRTEENTH CENTURY				
177	Honorius III (Note 29)		1216	1227
178	Gregory IX		1227	1241
179	Celestine IV		1241	1241
180	Innocent IV (Note 30)		1243	1254
181	Alexander IV		1254	1261
182	Urban IV (Note 31)		1261	1264
183	Clement IV		1265	1268
	No pope was elected during this period due to a deadlock among cardinals.		1268	1271
184	Bl. Gregory X		1271	1276
185	Bl. Innocent V		1276	1276
186	Adrian V		1276	1276
187	John XXI (Note 32)		1276	1277
188	Nicholas III		1277	1280
189	Martin IV		1281	1285
190	Honorius IV		1285	1287
191	Nicholas IV		1288	1292
	No pope was elected during this period due to a deadlock among cardinals.		1292	1294
192	St. Celestine V (Note 33)		1294	1294
193	Boniface VIII (Note 34)		1294	1303

NOTES (Continued)

- 29 Honorius III approved the Dominican Order in 1216.
- 30 In 1252, Innocent IV issued the Bull *Ad extirpanda*, which permitted the torture of heretics.
- 31 In 1264, Urban IV instituted the *Feast of Corpus Christi*.
- 32 John XXI decided to skip the name John XX. Therefore, there was never a John XX.
- 33 St. Celestine V was a Benedictine pope who resigned and was later put under comfortable house arrest by Boniface VIII to prevent rivals from using him as a puppet anti-pope.
- 34 Boniface VIII issued *Unam Sanctam* (1302), which proclaimed papal supremacy over all earthly kings. Many, including the poet Dante Alighieri, regarded him as a “bad pope” because he practiced nepotism openly. Dante placed Boniface in the Eighth Circle of Hell in the *Inferno* for the sin of simony and nepotism.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
FOURTEENTH CENTURY				
194	Bl. Benedict XI		1303	1304
195	Clement V (Note 34)		1305	1314
	No pope was elected during this period due to a deadlock among cardinals.		1314	1316
196	John XXII	Nicholas V (1328-1330)	1316	1334
197	Benedict XII		1334	1342
198	Clement VI (Note 35)		1342	1352
199	Innocent VI		1352	1362
200	Bl. Urban V (Note 36)		1362	1370
201	Gregory XI (Note 37)		1370	1378
202	Urban VI (Note 38)	Clement VII (1378-1394)	1378	1389
203	Boniface IX	Benedict XIII (1394-1417)	1389	1404

NOTES (Continued)

- 35 Clement V was the first pope to reside in Avignon. Under pressure from King Philip IV of France, he persecuted the Knights Templar.
- 36 Clement VI absolved those who died of the Black Death (the bubonic plague) of their sins.
- 37 Bl. Urban V was a patron of learning and a friend of the poor. He initiated missionary movements across Europe and Asia.
- 38 Gregory XI was the last pope at Avignon. He returned to Rome through the prayers and pleadings of St. Catherine of Siena.
- 39 Urban VI was the last pope elected outside of the College of Cardinals. It was during his papacy that the Papal Schism—which eventually saw three men claiming to be the true pontiff—started.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
FIFTEENTH CENTURY				
204	Innocent VII	Benedict XIII (1394–1417) and John XXIII (1410-1415)	1404	1406
205	Gregory XII (resigned)	Benedict XIII (1394–1417), John XXIII (1410–1415), and Alexander V (1409-1410)	1406	1415
	No pope was elected during this period due to a deadlock among cardinals.		1415	1417
206	Martin V		1417	1431
207	Eugenius IV	Felix V (1439-1449)	1431	1447
208	Nicholas V (Note 40)		1447	1455
209	Callixtus III (Note 41)		1455	1458
210	Pius II (Note 42)		1458	1464
211	Paul II		1464	1471
212	Sixtus IV (Note 43)		1471	1484
213	Innocent VIII (Note 44)		1484	1492
214	Alexander VI (Note 45)		1492	1503

NOTES (Continued)

- 40** Nicholas V created the Vatican Library and commissioned a Dominican friar, Fra Angelico, to paint his study in the Vatican Palace
- 41** Callixtus III ordered the retrial of St. Joan of Arc, in which she was vindicated.
- 42** Pius II was a great humanist and patron of the arts.
- 43** Sixtus IV authorized the Inquisition in Spain at the request of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile. Sixtus built the Sistine Chapel and employed master artists to paint its side walls.
- 44** Innocent VIII appointed **Tomas de Torquemada** as Grand Inquisitor in Spain and authorized the prosecution of witchcraft in the Bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* (1484).
- 45** Alexander VI was born Rodrigo de Borgia. He divided the New World between Spain and Portugal. He fathered several children by his mistress before becoming pope. Libertinism and nepotism characterized his reign, and his immoral and lavish lifestyle was a possible trigger for the Protestant Reformation. See also [Pope Alexander VI](#).

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
SIXTEENTH CENTURY				
215	Pius III		1503	1503
216	Julius II (Note 46)		1503	1513
217	Leo X (Note 47)		1513	1521
218	Adrian VI		1522	1523
219	Clement VII (Note 48)		1523	1534
220	Paul III (Note 49)		1534	1549
221	Julius III (Note 50)		1550	1555
222	Marcellus II		1555	1555
223	Paul IV (Note 51)		1555	1559
224	Pius IV		1559	1565
225	St. Pius V		1566	1572
226	Gregory XIII		1572	1585
227	Sixtus V		1585	1590
228	Urban VII		1590	1590
229	Gregory XIV		1590	1591
230	Innocent IX		1591	1591
231	Clement VIII		1592	1605

NOTES (Continued)

- 46 Julius II hired Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael to decorate the rooms of the Vatican Palace with paintings that depict Church history.
- 47 Leo X extended the Spanish Inquisition into Portugal. Although he supported great artists, including Michelangelo and Raphael, he was a worldly pope. His extravagant expenditures and sales of indulgences angered Martin Luther and even caused a group of cardinals to plot his assassination. He excommunicated Martin Luther in 1521.
- 48 Clement VII forbade Henry VIII's divorce. He ordered Michelangelo's famous painting of *The Last Judgment* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel. He was a politician first, and a spiritual leader only secondarily. He was a member of the Medici family.
- 49 Paul III opened the Council of Trent in 1545. He decreed the second and final excommunication of Henry VIII. He appointed Michelangelo to supervise the construction of St. Peter's Basilica.
- 50 Julius III appointed an incompetent lad, Innocenzo—the adopted son of his brother—to the rank of cardinal provost and lavishly gave him gifts. His nepotism led to the rumor that he was infatuated with the boy and even shared a bed with him.
- 51 Paul IV established the Index of Forbidden Books. He instructed Michelangelo to repaint the nude figures of *The Last Judgment* modestly.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY				
232	Leo XI (Note 52)		1605	1605
233	Paul V		1605	1621
234	Gregory XV (Note 53)		1621	1623
235	Urban VIII		1623	1644
236	Innocent X (Note 54)		1644	1655
237	Alexander VII		1655	1667
238	Clement IX		1667	1669
239	Clement X (Note 55)		1670	1676
240	Bl. Innocent XI		1676	1689
241	Alexander VIII		1689	1691
242	Innocent XII		1691	1700
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY				
243	Clement XI		1700	1721
244	Innocent XIII		1721	1724
245	Benedict XIII		1724	1730
246	Clement XII (Note 56)		1730	1740
247	Benedict XIV (Note 57)		1740	1758
248	Clement XIII (Note 58)		1758	1769
249	Clement XIV		1769	1774
250	Pius VI (Note 59)		1775	1799

NOTES (Continued)

- 52 Leo XI held the papacy for only 26 days.
- 53 Gregory XV established the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622.
- 54 Innocent X promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Cum occasione* (1653), which condemned five doctrines of Jansenism as heresy.
- 55 Clement X canonized St. Rose of Lima and established regulations for removing the relics of saints from cemeteries.
- 56 Clement XII condemned Freemasonry in *In eminenti apostolatus* (1738).
- 57 Benedict XIV reformed the education of priests and affirmed the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. He completed the Trevi Fountain in Rome and founded academies of art, science, and religion.
- 58 Clement XIII ordered the placement of fig leaves over the genitalia of classical statues in the Vatican collection.
- 59 Pius VI was a patron of classical art. He condemned the French Revolution, and from 1798 until his death, French troops expelled him from the Papal States.

ROMAN CATHOLIC POPES (Continued)				
No.	NAME	Competing Anti-pope	PAPACY	
			Start	End
NINETEENTH CENTURY				
251	Pius VII		1800	1823
252	Leo XII		1823	1829
253	Pius VIII (Note 60)		1829	1830
254	Gregory XVI (Note 61)		1831	1846
255	Bl. Pius IX (Note 62)		1846	1878
256	Leo XIII		1878	1903
TWENTIETH CENTURY				
257	St. Pius X		1903	1914
258	Benedict XV		1914	1922
259	Pius XI		1922	1939
260	Ven. Pius XII (Note 63)		1939	1958
261	St. John XXIII (Note 64)		1958	1963
262	St. Paul VI (Note 65)		1963	1978
263	Bl. John Paul I		1978	1978
264	St. John Paul II		1978	2005
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY				
265	Benedict XVI (Note 66)		2005	2013
266	Francis		2013	2025
267	Leo XIV		2025	Present

NOTES (Continued)

- 60** Pius VIII condemned Masonic secret societies and modernist biblical translations in the brief *Litteris altero* (1830).
- 61** Gregory XVI was a member of the Camaldolese Order, founded by St. Romuald. He condemned the slave trade in his Apostolic Letter *In supremo apostolatus* (1839).
- 62** Bl. Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and issued the *Syllabus of Errors*.
- 63** Ven. Pius XII was controversial for his silence during the Holocaust, but he assisted the underground movement to help the Jews escape the Nazis.
- 64** St. John XXIII opened Vatican II and intervened for peace during the Cuban missile crisis. He issued the encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963) on peace and nuclear disarmament.
- 65** St. Paul VI promulgated the *Novus Ordo Mass*.
- 66** Benedict XVI elevated the Tridentine Mass to a more prominent position and promoted the use of Latin in the document *Summorum pontificum*. He resigned from the papacy and kept the title “Pope Emeritus.”

Appendix 5

The Condemnation of Galileo

The case of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) is probably of no interest anymore except to the seasoned historian. There is no reason to bring up the subject again, if not for the fact that now and then, the enemies of the Catholic Church still cite the Church’s condemnation of Galileo as evidence for the Church’s alleged “anti-science” attitude or as a case against the Church’s doctrine of papal infallibility. According to a popular but grossly exaggerated report, the Inquisition, by order of the pope, tortured Galileo for teaching that it was not the sun that moved, but the earth that moved around the sun. Church critics also claimed that the Church’s hostility to science hindered the progress of science through the Renaissance and that the wrongful condemnation of Galileo was proof that the pope was not infallible.

To see the flaws behind these claims, observe first that the idea that the sun was the center of the universe and that the earth was merely one of the planets that moved around it was not Galileo’s original invention. The hypothesis was known to Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543) long before Galileo was born.

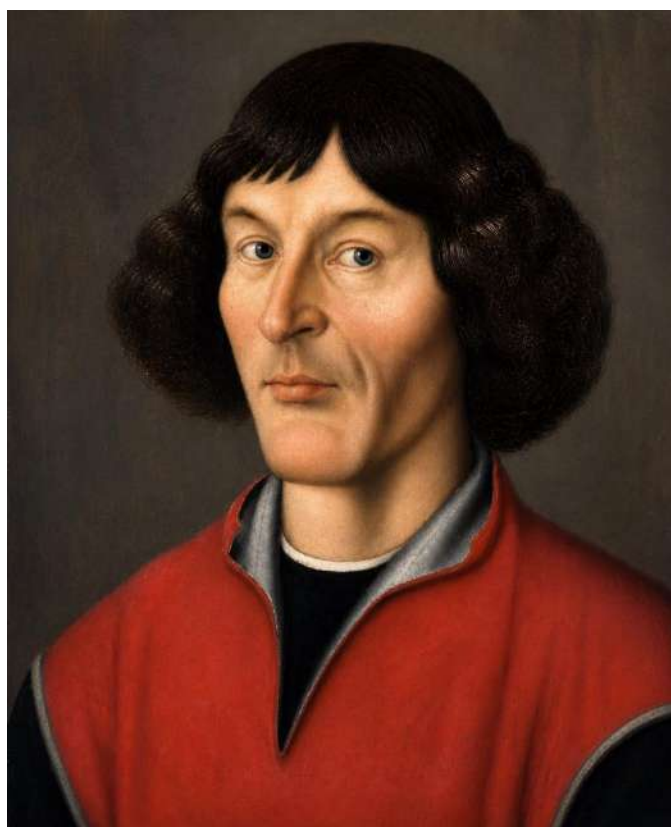


Fig. A1 Nicholas Copernicus

Copernicus' theory, known today as the *heliocentric theory*, was not widely accepted during his time because it contradicted Aristotle's *geocentric theory*, which was the accepted theory at the time. According to the geocentric theory, the Earth is the center of the universe, and all heavenly bodies, including the sun, move around it. Many scientists accepted this idea as a plausible theory because, with it, mariners could navigate the seas and astronomers could predict eclipses. The common folk also welcomed the theory because it was everyone's observation. Catholic and non-Catholic theologians were comfortable with it because it gave due importance to the Earth, where the Son of God became man.

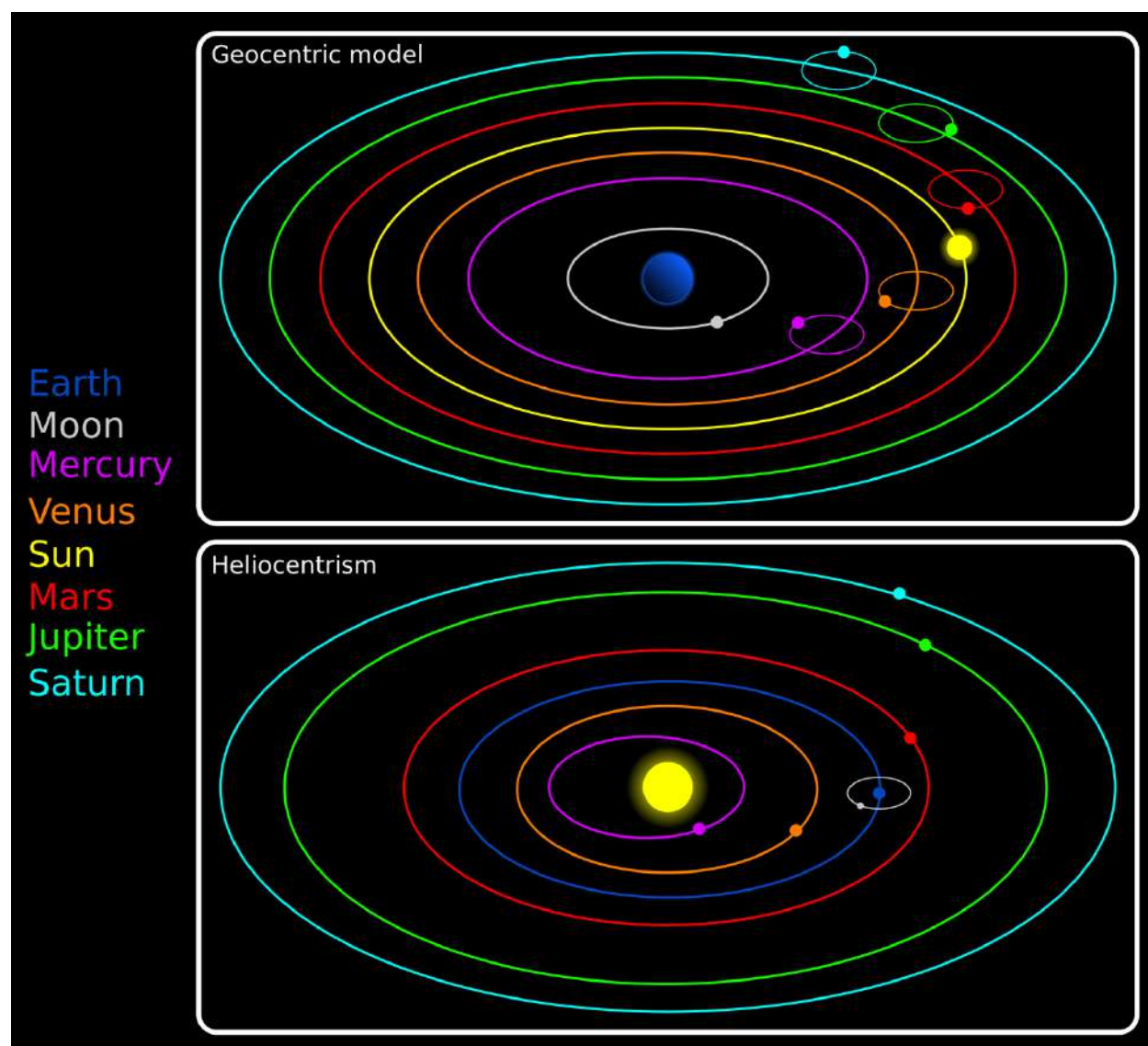


Fig. A2 The Geocentric and Heliocentric Models

However, the Catholic Church was not inherently hostile to scientific investigation or to the study of heliocentrism itself. Copernicus was a Catholic cleric and cathedral canon, though historians debate whether he was ordained beyond minor orders. He dedicated his book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres*), to Pope Paul III, who received it respectfully. If some Catholic theologians spoke against the Copernican theory, it was simply because the heliocentric model was not the accepted scientific view at that time. Scientists, as well as Catholic and Protestant theologians, also rejected the heliocentric theory for the same reason. For example, Martin Luther condemned it in his “Table Talk,” saying:

“Men pay heed to an astrologer who contends that it is the earth that moves, and not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. If a man yearns for a reputation as a profound scientist, he should invent some new system. This madman would subvert the whole science of astronomy; but Scripture tells us that Joshua bade the sun, and not the earth, to stand still.”¹⁵³

Why, then, did Galileo get into trouble with the Inquisition but not Copernicus? The reason is that Copernicus was more tactful and less audacious than Galileo. He presented his theory not as a replacement for the well-accepted geocentric model but only as a method for charting the motion of the planets, as Ptolemy’s system was. Furthermore, he did not get his theory published until 15 years later, when he was already on his deathbed in 1543. Galileo, on the other hand, wanted to overturn the geocentric model of the universe. He campaigned against popular belief to convince the world that the geocentric model was wrong and the heliocentric model was right.

Galileo’s fascination with the heliocentric theory began when, using his improved telescope, he discovered the motion of Jupiter’s moons, which revolved around it rather than around the Earth as the geocentric theory expected. He also discovered that Mercury and Venus had phases like the moon, a fact that was difficult to reconcile with the geocentric theory but was quite consistent with the heliocentric model of Copernicus. With full exuberance, Galileo published his discoveries. When he went to Rome in 1611, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine prudently warned him of the disturbance that his writings might cause, especially because Galileo tended to exaggerate his case and ridicule his adversaries.

¹⁵³ Quoted by Reuben Parsons in *Some Lies and Errors of History*, p. 82. The reference to Joshua is from Jos 10:12–13.



Fig. A3 Galileo Showing the Doge of Venice How to use the Telescope

However, the Vatican did not condemn heliocentrism or the Copernican theory. It even allowed Galileo to teach heliocentrism as a hypothesis, not a fact. However, Galileo continued to proclaim his observations as indisputable evidence of his theory and stubbornly refused to recognize the hypothetical character of his views. In a letter to Paolo Foscarini (a supporter of Galileo) on April 12, 1615, Cardinal Bellarmine made the point that if only he and Galileo were to teach heliocentrism as a hypothesis rather than a fact, then there should be no problem. If heliocentrism turns out to be a fact in the future, then he would rather acknowledge a misinterpretation of the Holy Scripture than insist that the heliocentric model was false.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ See Cardinal Robert Bellarmine's 1615 [Letter to Foscarini](#).



Fig. A4 Galileo Galilei

Galileo had not yet fully demonstrated the Copernican theory when he was already teaching it as fact. He brought three arguments forward based on the phenomena of the tides, the movement of the solar spots, and the apparent movement of the planets. But, as Laplace noted, they were merely proofs by analogy and did not amount to an incontrovertible demonstration. Furthermore, Kepler's observations contradicted his assumption that the planets' orbits were perfectly circular. However, Galileo found it difficult to see that his empirical verification of the heliocentric model did not yet guarantee its absolute truth.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Incidentally, this is the same mistake that many scientists today commit when they teach Darwinian evolution as if it were an indubitable fact rather than simply a scientific hypothesis.

On February 19, 1616, the Inquisition submitted Galileo's teachings to the Congregation of the Holy Office for advice. The theologians in the Holy Office mistakenly found the heliocentric theory "foolish and absurd in philosophy" contrary to Scripture as then commonly interpreted. Pope Paul V, upon learning the theologians' opinion, asked Cardinal Bellarmine to inform Galileo that the Holy Office would initiate legal proceedings against him if he persisted in teaching his theory. Cardinal Bellarmine clarified on May 26, 1616, that Galileo was not required to change his opinion regarding the theory, but he needed to be silent about it rather than defend or teach it.¹⁵⁶

Galileo was quiet for a while. But in 1632, Galileo published his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, which featured a discussion between the advocates of the geocentric theory and the defenders of the Copernican theory, with the Copernicans winning all the issues and the advocates of the geocentric theory looking like fools. The derisive dialogue, which even used the silly Simplicio as a spokesman for the pope, brought Galileo again before the Inquisition.



Fig. A5 Galileo Before the Holy Office (1633 Trial)

¹⁵⁶ See [Galileo Trial 1616 Documents](#).

Galileo was correct in insisting that, in astronomy, direct observation of nature must take the place of reliance on Aristotle's authority. He was also right, not merely in defending the Copernican theory but also in his claim against the theologians that the theory did not contradict Holy Scripture. But his audacity antagonized the churchmen. On June 22, 1633, the Holy Office decreed that Galileo, by his disobedience and by his teachings, had rendered himself "vehemently suspected of heresy." The Vatican subsequently detained him and sentenced him to remain silent about the heliocentric theory for the rest of his life.¹⁵⁷

The Holy Office was wrong and unfair in accusing Galileo of heresy. However, in fairness to the Holy Office, the Church authorities did not torture Galileo, as the enemies of the Catholic Church claimed. Neither the trial documents nor the letters he wrote to his friends mentioned any torture. Although Galileo was placed under house arrest, the conditions were comparatively mild. Instead of being imprisoned in a detestable dungeon, he was permitted to reside in the lovely Villa Medici of his friend, the Tuscan Ambassador Niccolini, and later, in the residence of another friend, the Archbishop Ascanio Piccolomini in Siena. Galileo's supposed "arrest" was so comfortable that he was able to continue his research on mechanics. In December 1633, he returned to his villa at Arcetri, near Florence, where he completed his book, *Dialogues Concerning the Two New Sciences*.

Regarding papal infallibility, there can be no doubt that it was never truly an issue. It was the Congregation of the Holy Office, appointed by the pope, that condemned Galileo. However, neither Pope Paul V in 1616 nor Pope Urban VIII in 1633 issued an *ex cathedra* definition concerning heliocentrism. The decisions regarding Galileo involved disciplinary and prudential judgments of the Holy Office rather than an infallible definition of faith or morals binding upon the whole Church.

The other claim that the Catholic Church has been hostile to science is nothing less than preposterous. Have we forgotten the many contributions made to science by thousands of Catholics, many of whom were learned churchmen? Have we forgotten the name of **Roger Bacon** (1220–1292), the Franciscan friar who antedated Francis Bacon in precisely formulating the principles of the scientific method? Have we forgotten **Theodoric of Frieberg** (1250–1310), the Dominican friar who made the first geometrical analysis of the rainbow; **Guy De Chauliac** (1300–1368), the Papal physician who was the father of modern surgery; **Johannes Gutenberg** (1398–1468), who invented the printing press; **Andreas Vesalius** (1514–1564), the founder of modern anatomy; **Antoine Lavoisier** (1743–1794), the father of modern

¹⁵⁷ See [Documents in the Galileo Case 1633](#).

chemistry; **Alessandro Volta** (1745–1827), the inventor of the first electric battery; **Augustin-Jean Fresnel** (1788–1827), a pioneer of the science of optics, which led to the wide acceptance of the wave theory of light; **André-Marie Ampère** (1775–1836), the father of electrodynamics; **Gregor Mendel** (1822–1884), Augustinian priest and founder of modern genetics; **Henri Becquerel** (1852–1908), who discovered radioactivity; **Guglielmo Marconi** (1874–1937), the father of wireless communications, **Georges Lemaître** (1894–1966), a Belgian Catholic priest and father of the Big Bang theory, and the numerous other scientists who were also children of the Church?¹⁵⁸

To this day, some critics of the Catholic Church continue to discredit her by presenting an inaccurate narrative of her historical past. Long ago, Pope Leo XIII warned us to be on guard against those who spread lies and errors based on the Church's history.¹⁵⁹ However, Galileo's confrontation with the Inquisition taught the Church some very valuable lessons. Among other things, it emphasized the importance of maintaining a distinct sphere for religion and empirical science, as well as the danger of linking the doctrines of our faith to a particular philosophy, scientific theory, or worldview.

¹⁵⁸ For a longer list, see [List of Catholic Clergy Scientists](#) and [List of Lay Catholic Scientists](#).

¹⁵⁹ Pope Leo XIII, *Often Considering* (*Saepenumero considerantes*), ASS, vol. XVI (1883-4), pp. 49-57

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Fig. 1.5 The Stoning of St. Stephen

Oil painting attributed to Orazio Samacchini (1532–1577)

Courtesy of Wellcome Images, CC BY-4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_stoning_of_St_Stephen._Oil_painting_attributed_to_Orazio_Wellcome_V0017355.jpg

Fig. 1.11 Saint Paul's First Missionary Voyage

Picture 119 from *Bible Atlas* by Access Foundation:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/f4555e_141313e3acbe481f8ff54bbfb05cd9e7.pdf

Fig. 1.12 Saint Paul's Second Missionary Voyage

Picture 120 from *Bible Atlas* by Access Foundation. See Fig. 1.11 above for link

Fig. 1.13 Saint Paul's Third Missionary Voyage

Picture 121 from *Bible Atlas* by Access Foundation. See Fig. 1.11 above for link

Fig. 1.14 Saint Paul's Voyage to Rome

Picture 123 from *Bible Atlas* by Access Foundation. See Fig. 1.11 above for link

Fig. 2.5 The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia

This statue is in the Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome

Sculptor: Stefano Maderno (1576–1636)

Photo credit: Alvesgaspar, CC BY-SA 4.0 International

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Santa_Cecilia_in_Trastevere_September_2015-5a.jpg

Fig. 2.6 Emperor Nero

Photo courtesy of Shakko; licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nero_pushkin.jpg

Fig. 2.13 St. Polycarp and Pope St. Anicetus

St. Polycarp: An illustration from the Nuremberg Chronicles

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_f_114r_1.png

Pope St. Anicetus: Photo credit: Mattana, CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wolnzach,_St_Laurentius_017.JPG

Fig. 3.14 Map of the Barbarian Invasions

Map author: MapMaster, CC BY-SA 2.5

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Invasions_of_the_Roman_Empire_1.png

Fig. 3.17 The Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes Sailing to England

An illustration (ca. 1130) from the *Miscellany on the Life of St. Edmund*, MS M.736 fol. 7r

<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/Life-and-Miracles-of-St-Edmund/13>

Fig. 3.19 St. Patrick Evangelizing the King of Ireland

A painting in the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna near Buffalo, N.Y.

Photo courtesy of Lawrence OP, CC BY-SA-NC-ND 2.0

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/paullew/25831057556>

Fig. 3.20 Map of the United Kingdom

Original File by Cnrb: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Isles_all.svg

Derivative File by Rob984, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:United_Kingdom_countries.svg

Derivative file by Offnfopt, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:United_Kingdom_labelled_map7_vector.svg

Fig. 3.24 St. Gregory the Illuminator

By Studio Ashnag.

Originally posted on *Flickr* as “St Gregory the Illuminator” (Krikor Lusavoric), CC BY-SA 2.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6829827>

Fig. 3.26 Greek Icon of St. Thomas the Apostle

Artist: Unknown

This eighteenth-century painting is part of the iconostasis of the Greek Catholic Cathedral of Hajdúdorog, Hungary.

Courtesy of Jojojoe, CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Apostle_Hajdudorog.JPG

Fig. 5.12 Hagia Sophia (or “Holy Wisdom”)

Photo courtesy of Arild Vâgen, CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hagia_Sophia_Mars_2013.jpg

Fig. 5.19 The Cluny Abbey in 2004

Photo courtesy of Marc Tobias Wenzel, licensed under GFDL, CC BY-SA 3.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cluny-Abtei-Ostfluegel-mtob.jpg>

Fig. 5.20 St. Bruno Visits Pope Bl. Urban II

Artist: Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664)

Photo courtesy of <https://artealasocho.com/2015/08/25/san-hugo-en-el-refectorio/> Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zurbar%C3%A1n_-_La_visita_de_San_Bruno_a_Urbano_II,_h._1655.png

Fig. 6.13 A Non-combatant Member of the Order Removing an Arrow from the Arm of a Wounded Knight

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https://global-geography.org/af/Geography/Europe/Malta/Pictures/La_Valetta/Sacra_Infermeria_7

Fig. 6.25 Statue of Simon de Montfort

A statue of Simon de Montfort on the Haymarket Memorial Clock Tower in Leicester, England

Photo courtesy of NotFromUtrecht, Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leicester_Clock_Tower_Simon_de_Montfort_2.jpg

Fig. 6.32 Tomb of King Louis XII of France, Basilica of Saint Denis (cropped)

Photo courtesy of Guilhem Vellut, CC BY 2.0 DEED / Attribution 2.0 Generic

https://www.flickr.com/photos/o_0/30080636074/in/photostream/

Fig. 6.34 Fra. Jacopone da Todi's Tomb Portrait

Carved stone in the crypt of San Fortunato Church, Umbria, Italy

Photo courtesy of Georges Jansoone, CC BY 3.0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacopone_da_Todi,_tomb_portrait_v2.jpg

Fig. 7.10 Plaque for Johannes Gutenberg in Eltville, Germany

Photo courtesy of Palauenc05, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eltville_gutenberg.jpg

Fig. 7.13 A Torture Chamber of the Spanish Inquisition

Artist: B. Picart, 1722.

Courtesy of Welcome Images, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_torture_chamber_of_the_Spanish_Inquisition_with_suspe_Welcome_V0041643.jpg

Fig. 8.6 Portraits of King Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn

Portrait artist of King Henry VIII: Hans Holbein the Younger (c.1497–1543)

Portrait artist of Anne Boleyn: English School.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Holbein,_the_Younger,_Around_1497-1543_-_Portrait_of_Henry_VIII_of_England_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AnneBoleynHever.jpg>

Double portrait photo courtesy of Dancingtudorqueen, CC BY-SA 4.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HenryAndAnneBoleynPortraits.jpg>

Fig. 8.14 Our Lady of Good Success

Photo courtesy of Michel Deziderio, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nossa_Senhora_do_Bom_Sucesso.jpg

Fig. 8.15 St. Kateri Tekakwitha in Front of Santa Fe Cathedral, New Mexico

Artist: unidentified

Photo courtesy of Raymond Bucko, SJ, CC BY 2.0 DEED

https://www.flickr.com/photos/kishka_king/7177754277

Fig. 8.18 Cornelius Jansen

Artist: Unidentified

Photo courtesy of Michiel Van Mulders, CC BY-SA 4.0

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cornelius_Jansenius_\(bisschop_van_Ieper,_1636-1638\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cornelius_Jansenius_(bisschop_van_Ieper,_1636-1638).jpg)

Fig. 9.3 Our Lady of La Salette

Statue of Our Lady of La Salette in the church of Monestier-d'Ambel

Photo courtesy of Fr. Latreille, CC BY-SA 4.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monestier-Vierge.jpg>

Fig. 9.11 Karl Marx

Photo courtesy of John Jabez Edwin Mayall, colored by Olga Shirnina, CC BY-SA 2.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karl_Marx,_1875.jpg

Fig. 10.18 The Bullet that Struck Pope John Paul II in 1981

Photo courtesy of Centro Televisivo Vaticano, CC BY 3.0

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coroa_de_Nossa_Senhora_de_F%C3%A1tima_\(12_de_Maio_de_2017\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coroa_de_Nossa_Senhora_de_F%C3%A1tima_(12_de_Maio_de_2017).png)

Fig. 10.19 Fragments of a Dead Sea Scroll Manuscript

Photo courtesy of Berthold Werner, CC BY-SA 3.0

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Fig. 11.1 Pope Benedict XVI

Photo courtesy of Peter Nguyen, CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benedict_xvi.png

Fig. 11.2 Pope Francis

Photo courtesy of Korea.net / Korean Culture and Information, CC BY-SA 2.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Francis_Korea_Haemi_Castle_19.jpg

Fig. A2 The Geocentric and Heliocentric Models

Original image by Niko Lang; SVG version by Booyabazooka

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