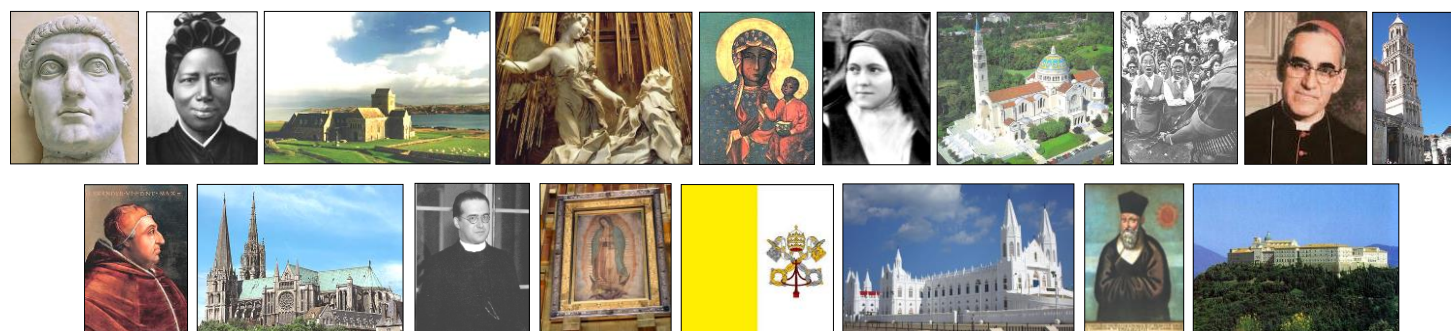




## RETRACING THE HISTORY OF OUR FAITH



## A TIMELINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



# RETRACING THE HISTORY OF OUR FAITH

## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

*'One thing that will be of decisive importance in this Year  
is retracing the history of our faith, marked as it is by the  
unfathomable mystery of the interweaving of holiness and sin.'*

Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter for the Year of Faith *Porta Fidei* (11<sup>th</sup> October 2011)

The following chronology of the history of the Catholic Church drew its inspiration from the above words of Pope Benedict XVI as he announced the 'Year of Faith' commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Reading his words, my thought was that if this decisively important 'retracing the history of our faith' was not done at the parish level, it would hardly be done at all. So through the course of the Year of Faith, I prepared a century-by-century timeline for placement in the weekly newsletter at Ascot Vale Parish on twenty Sundays scattered over 2012-13.

When it was finished, there was a substantial body of material that it seemed worthwhile to compile into a single document. To the chronology, I added some theological sections, partly to give some useful principles in interpreting this mass of historical information. Also added were the concluding quotes in each section highlighting some important feature of that century's events; other quotes accompanying the list of popes were especially to illustrate some truth about the papacy, above all the continuity from the earliest Christian centuries of the belief in that institution.

Since this is not an academic work, I have not included footnotes, and my use of scripture in the theological sections does not go into deep historical-critical analysis of the texts. In presenting the various shadows of Church history – in Pope Benedict's words, 'the unfathomable mystery of the interweaving of holiness and sin' – I have generally refrained from offering moral commentary, preferring to leave the facts to speak for themselves.

The intended readership being in the first place my own parishioners, the presentation accepts, as a given, basic truths of the Christian faith such as the authority and divinity of Christ; the place to defend those fundamental convictions is elsewhere. Again, given this intended readership, I state various facts in a straightforwardly 'Catholic' manner. (To take a simple instance, in my account of the second century, Marcionism, Montanism and Gnosticism are referred to as 'heresies', as the Catholic Church believes them to be; and there are various other examples.)

Still, although the chronology was written primarily with Catholic readers in mind, it is my hope that any reader, Catholic or not, surveying the whole vista of the Catholic Church over two millennia, will have some experience of the reality that 'the Church by herself, with her marvellous propagation, eminent holiness, and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything that is good, with her catholic unity and invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable testimony of her divine mission.' (First Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*) Amidst the dramas of history, even the chaos and sin often in evidence, one discerns in the end the divine light shining through the human limitations, and the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as the heart of Christ's ongoing presence in our world.

*Fr Justin Ford*

*November 2014*

## **JESUS ESTABLISHES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** **AS TEACHER OF TRUTH**

### **JESUS WANTS HIS DISCIPLES TO KNOW THE TRUTH**

Teaching us the truth about God, about right and wrong, about how to attain heaven, were of great importance for Jesus, as we see from his whole teaching ministry through the four gospels. His words to the disciples at his Last Supper bring this into sharp focus: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me.” (Jn 14:6) And to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, he says, “For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.” (Jn 18:37) He wants his disciples to know God’s truth: “All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (Jn 15:15) “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (Jn 8:31-32) And his disciples are to pass on his truth to all the world: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19-20)

### **JESUS WANTS HIS DISCIPLES TO BE UNITED IN THE TRUTH**

Jesus only ever speaks of one Church, “my Church” (Mt 16:18), since he wishes for his followers “that they may all be one”, even as he and the Father are one (Jn 17:21, 22). As St Paul explains, all who are united in him are one body with one Spirit (Eph 4:4), with “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:5). Since there is only one faith, and one truth cannot go against another truth, all Jesus’ followers must “be united in the same mind” (cf. 1 Cor 1:10). Yet it seems hard for this to happen, because when people read the teachings of Jesus and of the whole Bible, they have often disagreed about the right meaning, and have separated into many different groups.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT KEEPS THE DISCIPLES IN THE UNITY OF TRUTH**

Jesus didn’t leave us without an answer to this problem. One reason he sent the Holy Spirit was to guide the disciples into always giving the right explanation about what he had taught them: “But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (Jn 14:26). “I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth” (Jn 14:16-17). “I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now; but when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth” (Jn 16:13). And Jesus tells us that he himself will never leave us, till his final coming in glory: “I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.” (Mt 28:20)

So the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit of Truth unites the disciples into “the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Because of all these promises of Jesus, we believe that the Church he started with the Twelve Apostles always gives us the truth, ‘infallibly’.

All this means that to go against the infallible teachings of his Church, is to distrust the promises Jesus made that the Holy Spirit would be with his people for ever, and guide them into all truth. So Jesus even told his disciples, “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk 10:16; cf. Mt 10:40). Especially in the light of his promise of the Holy Spirit, this means we must give the same trust to the teachings of his Church as we would give to the teachings of Jesus himself.

## **ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

If Jesus' promises have any power, his one infallible Church must still exist in the world today, just as the same Church must have existed in all the centuries since the time of Jesus. Among the disciples, Jesus specially chose 'the Twelve' (Mt 10:1-4; Mk 3:13-19; cf. Acts 1:13, 26; 1 Cor 15:5) whom he called 'Apostles' (Lk 6:13), and whom he instructed (Mt 11:1; Mk 4:34; etc.) so as to pass on his teachings (Mt 28:16-20). The Apostles were the leaders of the early Church (Acts 2:42), with St Peter at their head (Acts 1:15, 2:14).

We read in the New Testament how the authority to teach was to be passed down to generation after generation: in St Paul's letters we read: "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2); "Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." (Titus 2:15). So the Church of Christ, teaching the One Faith, visibly and authoritatively, will go all the way back to the Twelve Apostles.

Of all Christian groups, only the Catholic Church has this full continuity back to the Church of the Apostles. In particular, it is only in the Catholic Church that there is preserved the ministry of the Pope, Bishop of Rome and Successor of St Peter, whom Christ made the 'Rock' on which his one Church is built (Mt 16:18). Anyone who separated from the full faith of the Catholic Church lost this essential link with the Rock foundation, the centre of unity, and so ceased to be in full union with the infallible apostolic Church. Unity with the Bishop of Rome is the decisive mark of being in full union with Christ's Church, "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

## **PETER, ROCK AND SHEPHERD, AND HIS SUCCESSORS, THE POPES**

### **'YOU ARE PETER, AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH'**

Looking in more detail at the role of St Peter, we see that among the Apostles, Jesus gave Simon Peter a special position. 'Simon' was Peter's original name; Jesus was the one who gave him the name 'Peter', which means 'Rock': "Jesus looked at him and said 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)." (Jn 1:42)

Only much later does Jesus explain why he has changed Simon's name: "You are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt 16:18-19)

In the original Greek of the New Testament, we see the close connection between the words for 'Peter' [Greek: Petros] and 'Rock' [Greek: Petra. 'Petra' is feminine, so Simon Peter gets named in a masculine form, 'petros'.] Indeed, in his own language, Aramaic, Jesus would have said, "You are *kepha*, and on this *kepha* I will build my Church": the very same word for 'Peter' and 'Rock'. So Simon Peter himself is the Rock. If a building is to stand up, it must be built on a solid foundation. Jesus is saying that he will make Peter the rock solid foundation supporting and uniting his people. In himself, Peter is a weak and sinful man, but Jesus will share his own strength with Peter – Jesus is the 'deeper' rock on whom Peter himself depends. (cf. 1 Cor 10:4) We might also say Peter's faith is the rock (which leads us to the same conclusion in the end). Thus Jesus tells Simon Peter at the Last Supper, "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." (Lk 22:32)



‘The gates of hell’ means the forces of death and evil. Jesus promises that these forces will never defeat his Church which he builds on Peter: it will last continuously till Jesus returns in glory. Christ will be with her ‘to the end of time’ (Mt 28:20). As for the ‘keys of the kingdom’, we know from other teachings of Jesus that the ‘kingdom of heaven’ begins even here on this earth, in the Church – which is the seed of the Heavenly Kingdom. In the Bible the ‘keys’ are a symbol of having control and authority (see e.g. Is 22:22; Rev 3:7). So by saying he will give Peter the ‘keys of the kingdom of heaven’, Jesus is making Peter the governor and leader of the Church on earth.

Finally, among the Jewish teachers of that time, ‘binding’ and ‘loosing’ meant forbidding and permitting – that is, making laws. So when Jesus says ‘whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’, he means that the laws Peter makes for the Church on earth, God will ‘agree with’ in heaven. So if the followers of Jesus disobey these laws, by implication they are also disobeying God.

### **‘FEED MY SHEEP’: JESUS MAKES PETER SHEPHERD OF HIS FLOCK**

There are many other signs suggesting Peter’s special role: in lists of Apostles, he is always mentioned first; in the Gospels and Acts, he is named 195 times [among the Twelve, John is next with only 29 references]; he has pre-eminence in various incidents – e.g. the miraculous catch of fish, the walking on water, the Transfiguration, the washing of the feet.

Then after his Resurrection, Jesus specially speaks to Peter, who is ashamed of how he denied three times he even knew Jesus. So now Jesus asks Peter a question three times: “Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He then said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter felt hurt because he said to him a third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’” (Jn 21:15-19) In this gentle way, Jesus not only shows Peter he is forgiven, but he gives him the great mission of ‘feeding the sheep’ – making him Shepherd of the whole Flock of disciples (‘my sheep’), an image of Jesus himself, the Good Shepherd.

### **THE POPES FOLLOW PETER AS BISHOPS OF ROME AND LEADERS OF CHRIST’S CHURCH**

And so the great adventure of the Catholic Church begins... From early Christian writings we learn that St Peter went to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, and became its Bishop (alongside St Paul). In the end, like many Christians, he was put to death by the Empire. Now, one would hardly expect Jesus to set up such an imposing authority as he gave Peter only to let it lapse with his death – especially in view of the need (as we’ve seen) for an infallible guide to unite Christians in the truth of the one apostolic Faith.

So we find the early Church, guided by the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised, understanding that those succeeding St Peter as Bishop of Rome – the Popes – also inherit, by God’s law, his leadership over the whole Church. (Some examples of the testimony of the early Church to papal authority are seen in our ‘Chronology’). And so Catholics believe that following the teaching and governance of Peter’s Successors is essential to the plan of Jesus for his disciples – not as restricting us, but as uniting us in the fullness of Christ’s liberating truth.

# **RETRACING THE HISTORY OF OUR FAITH**

## **2 BC – AD 500: The Church in the Age of Antiquity**

*Before his Ascension, Jesus Christ commissioned his Apostles to 'make disciples of all nations'. The first 500 years of the history of the Catholic Church saw the spread of the Faith across Roman civilisation and beyond. For 300 years, the Roman Empire persecuted and martyred Christians, until Emperor Constantine the Great himself converted, and declared toleration. This ushered in the great age of the Creeds and the first Ecumenical Councils. It was a time when the Church was wracked by heresies concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, as the Empire in the West itself crumbled and fell under the barbarian invasions. Yet it was also the golden age of the Fathers of the Church, of heroic saints and doctors who consolidated the great Catholic Tradition.*

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**1<sup>st</sup> Century – Ministry, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord – Pentecost – The Apostolic Age – St Paul – St Peter in Rome – Spread of the Church in the Roman Empire and Western Asia – The first persecutions – Writing of the New Testament – Fall of Jerusalem**

**c. 2 BC    *Birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.***

**c. AD 30-33    *Public ministry of Christ.***

**c. 33    *Death and Resurrection of Christ. Christ commissions his Church, led by St Peter and the Apostles, to make disciples of all nations. Pentecost: 3000 baptised.***

**c. 35**    Conversion of St Paul. He changes from persecutor of the Church to its greatest missionary. He writes many letters of the New Testament and does much to spread the Gospel, especially in Greece and Asia Minor [modern-day Turkey].

**c. 39**    St Peter baptises Cornelius: the mission to the gentiles begins.

**c. 42**    St Peter goes to Rome and becomes its bishop.

**50's**    Many of St Paul's letters written.

**c. 51**    Council of Jerusalem rules that gentile converts do not need to keep Jewish Law.

**c. 52**    St Thomas is said to have reached India, establishing churches there, after preaching in Syria and Parthia.

**64**    Fire of Rome blamed on Christians by Emperor Nero; many are martyred.

**66**    Start of Jewish uprising against the Roman Empire. Christians leave Jerusalem.

**c. 67**    St Peter and St Paul martyred in Rome.

**70**    Siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

**c. 90's**    First recorded exercise of papal authority by a successor of St Peter as Bishop of Rome, with St Clement I claiming the authority of the Holy Spirit for his commands to the Church in Corinth (*Letter to the Corinthians*).

**c. 95**    Persecution by Emperor Domitian.

**c. 100**    Death of St John, the last Apostle. End of the era of 'public revelation'.

## **SAINTS**

Mary, Mother of God; St Joseph; St John the Baptist; St Peter & St Paul; the Apostles (St Andrew, St James, St John, St Philip, St Thomas, St Matthew, St Bartholomew, St James, St Simon, St Jude, St Matthias); St Stephen; St Martha; St Mary Magdalene; St Mark; St Luke; St Barnabas; St Timothy; St Titus; St Clement I.

## THE POPES

1. St. Peter, Apostle (33-67)
2. St. Linus (67-76)
3. St. Anacletus (Cletus) (76-88)
4. St. Clement I (88-97)
5. St. Evaristus (97-105)

‘You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.’ (*Jesus to St Peter, Mt 16:18-19*)

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*‘I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day...’*

St Paul, *First Letter to the Corinthians* 15:3

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## **2<sup>nd</sup> Century – Persecutions continue – the Early Fathers – Golden Age of the Roman Empire – the early heresies and the crisis of Gnosticism**

- c. 110** Martyrdom in Rome of St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. His 7 letters to local churches tell us much about the early Church, including first recorded use of the term, ‘the Catholic Church’.
- 132-35** 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewish Revolt under Bar-Kokhba defeated by the Romans, leading to the banning of Jews from Jerusalem, and the Jewish Diaspora.
- 144** Excommunication of Marcion. The heresy of Marcionism rejected the Old Testament as being from a lesser god, overcome by the God of love of the New Testament.
- c. 156** Rise of the Montanist heresy. Montanus believed he was the beginning of a new ‘Age of the Holy Spirit’ replacing the ‘Age of the Son’, and charismatic prophecy by every believer would replace the role of the bishops. (Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, eventually became a Montanist.)
- c. 165** Martyrdom in Rome of St Justin, convert philosopher who pioneered the engagement of faith and reason. His writings contain a detailed description of the Mass.
- c. 177** St Irenaeus of Lyons writes *Against all Heresies* refuting Gnostic beliefs. Gnosticism was the main heresy of this time, believing in salvation through secret knowledge; various spurious ‘gospels’ date from this era. St Irenaeus appealed instead to the public visible succession and tradition of Catholic Bishops going back to St Peter, St Paul and the Apostles. Gnostics often denied the goodness of the material world and the reality of Christ’s humanity.

## SAINTS

St Ignatius of Antioch; St Polycarp; St Justin Martyr; St Irenaeus of Lyons.

## THE POPES

6. St. Alexander I (105-115)
7. St. Sixtus I (115-125)
8. St. Telesphorus (125-136)
9. St. Hyginus (136-140)
10. St. Pius I (140-155)
11. St. Anicetus (155-166)
12. St. Soter (166-175)
13. St. Eleutherius (175-189)
14. St. Victor I (189-199)
15. St. Zephyrinus (199-217)

‘We do put to confusion all those who...assemble in unauthorised meetings...by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organised at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul...For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church [of Rome], on account of its pre-eminent authority...’ (*St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, ‘Against All Heresies’, late 2<sup>nd</sup> cent.*)

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*‘Fire, cross, beast-fighting, hacking and quartering, splintering of bone and mangling of limb, even the pulverising of my entire body – let every horrid and diabolical torment come upon me, provided only that I can win my way to Jesus Christ!’*

St Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*

## THE EUCHARIST IN SCRIPTURE

The Catholic Church has always believed that in the Eucharist, the bread and wine mysteriously but truly become the Body and Blood of Christ. The principal scriptural foundation for this comes from the accounts of the Last Supper given in the New Testament, and the words of Jesus over the bread and wine: 'This is my Body...This is my Blood' (Mt 26:26, 28; Mk 14:22, 24; see Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-29). He told his disciples, 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:25). The 'Bread of Life' discourse in John 6 helps us understand the inner meaning of the Last Supper:

'Jesus answered them...“I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.” (Jn 6:51-58)

The words of Jesus could hardly be more explicit, and indeed, his hearers take them at face value. So they ask each other, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' (Jn 6:52) And Jesus doesn't make things any easier: he doesn't tell them they've misunderstood, but he reiterates, 'My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed'. (Jn 6:55)

If he only meant his words symbolically, then he was the worst teacher in history. But what he could hardly explain to them at that point was the mysterious sacramental way that we would receive his flesh and blood, not the natural physical way his hearers assumed, but still a completely real way. (Christ is not present in a spatially extended way such that, for example, breaking the consecrated Bread would 'divide' Christ. Thus Christ's Body is not at all affected by what physically happens to the consecrated species: the Eucharist is not cannibalism! However, God's power and Christ's word change the *inner reality* (substance) of the bread and wine, leaving their outward appearances unchanged.)

Some of Jesus' disciples leave him at this point, so hard is this teaching for them to accept – the only time we read of disciples leaving Jesus for doctrinal reasons. Yet rather than change his teaching, Jesus lets them go (Jn 6:66). But we also hear how Peter, despite not understanding, despite being just as bewildered by it all as the disciples who walked away, is able to believe (Jn 6:68-69): he had the complete trust, that somehow what the Master was saying had to be true. And so the Catholic Church, for two thousand years, has continued to proclaim the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as an absolutely essential truth of faith.



## **THE EUCHARISTIC FAITH OF THE EARLY FATHERS**

A very early statement of the Church's Eucharistic faith comes from St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, c. AD 110). He condemns those who '...abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again.'

'See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.'

## **AN EARLY DESCRIPTION OF THE MASS**

'On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves ... and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.

'Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks [in Greek: *eucharistian*] that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.' When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.

'And this food is called among us Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me. This is My body'; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood'; and gave it to them alone...'

*St Justin Martyr, c. AD 155*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Century, to 313 – Growth of the Church – Imperial persecution continues – Crisis in the Roman Empire – The Great Persecution – Conversion of Emperor Constantine, and official toleration of Christianity**

- c. 200 Increased persecution under Emperor Septimius Severus.
- c. 210 Rise of the Sabellian heresy, according to which Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three distinct persons in God from eternity, but merely the one God acting in different roles.
- 250 Renewed persecution under Emperor Decius. Later controversy over whether Christians who lapsed could be absolved led to the heresy of Novatianism, which took a strict view that grave sinners were permanently excluded from the Church.
- 254 Death of Origen, highly influential Egyptian theologian (though some of his views would later be seen as unorthodox).
- c. 270 St Anthony of Egypt, pioneer of monasticism, goes into the Egyptian desert as a hermit, inspiring many monks and nuns to imitate him (the Desert Fathers and Mothers).
- 301 Armenia becomes the first country to adopt Christianity as its religion with the conversion of King Tiridates III; the Church in Armenia will take part in the first Ecumenical Council.
- 303-313 The Great Persecution. The largest and final Imperial persecution martyrs thousands under Emperor Diocletian. Scriptures and places of worship destroyed, all bishops and priests ordered imprisoned, and all Christians ordered to sacrifice to the pagan gods under pain of death.
- 312 Battle of the Milvian Bridge gives Constantine the Great control of the Empire. Before the battle, Constantine sees a vision of the Cross above the sun and the words, 'In this sign you shall conquer', marking the beginning of his conversion; his soldiers place the chi-rho symbol ☩ (CH-R) on their shields, symbolising Christ.
- 313 In the Edict of Milan Emperor Constantine declares official toleration of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

**SAINTS**

Sts Perpetua and Felicity; St Cecilia; St Barbara; St Gregory Thaumaturgus; St Christopher; St Agatha; St Lawrence; St Cyprian; Sts Cosmas and Damian; St Sebastian; St Lucy; St George; St Valentine; St Catherine of Alexandria; St Agnes; St Dorothy; St Januarius; St Anastasia.

**THE POPES**

16. St. Callistus I (217-22)
17. St. Urban I (222-30)
18. St. Pontian (230-35)
19. St. Anterus (235-36)
20. St. Fabian (236-50)
21. St. Cornelius (251-53)
22. St. Lucius I (253-54)
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. Eutychian (275-283)
28. St. Caius (283-296)

29. St. Marcellinus (296-304)
30. St. Marcellus I (308-309)
31. St. Eusebius (309 or 310)
32. St. Miltiades (311-14)

'On him He builds the Church, and to him He gives the command to feed the sheep ... If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?' (*St Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, 'The Unity of the Catholic Church', 251-256*)

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*'The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow;  
the blood of Christians is seed.'*

Tertullian, *The Apology*

**4<sup>th</sup> Century, 313 - 400 – 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Nicaea and the Arian Crisis – the Golden Age of the Fathers of the Church – The Faith spreads through the Empire – the Church a pioneer in developing hospitals – 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Constantinople – Canon of Scripture takes firm shape**

- 325** The first Ecumenical Council meets at Nicaea to deal with the Arian heresy. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, had taught that the Son was lesser than the Father and not co-eternal with him – meaning, he was not God in the true sense. The Council condemns his teaching and proclaims its Creed (with its crucial assertion against Arius that the Son is ‘consubstantial’ [Greek: *homoousios*] with the Father). In the following decades numerous bishops, supported by the emperors, would compromise on the controversial ‘*homoousios*’, and defenders of the full Nicene Creed such as St Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, would be persecuted.
- 326** According to tradition, St Helena, mother of Constantine, finds the True Cross in Jerusalem; She has the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built on the site (335), as well as other shrines.
- 330** Emperor Constantine transfers the Imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople [Istanbul].
- 337** Baptism and death of Constantine.
- 337** Conversion of King Mirian III of Kartli (Georgia), a milestone in Georgian Christianity.
- 361-63** Emperor Julian the Apostate attempts to revive paganism at the expense of Christianity.
- 380** Emperor Theodosius declares the Catholic Church the religion of the Empire, eventually also prohibiting pagan worship (391).
- 381** The 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Constantinople (2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Council) reaffirms the teaching of Nicaea and defines (against the Macedonian heresy) the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed is expanded into the form in which we proclaim it today (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed).
- 382** Pope Damasus I asks St Jerome to revise the Latin translation of the Gospels; this grows into virtually a complete new Bible translation, the authoritative Latin text known as the ‘Vulgate’.
- 387** After a wayward youth, turned in faith and morals against his Christian upbringing (described in his *Confessions*), St Augustine is converted, and baptised by St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.
- 390** St Ambrose compels Emperor Theodosius to do penance after he has had several thousand massacred – a significant early sign of absolute state power being limited by spiritual authority.

**SAINTS**

St Blaise; 40 Martyrs of Sebaste; St Helena; St Nicholas; St Anthony of Egypt; St Hilary of Poitiers; St Sabas the Goth; St Athanasius; St Basil; St Cyril of Jerusalem; St Monica; St Gregory Nazianzen; St Gregory of Nyssa; St Ambrose; St Martin of Tours.

**THE POPES**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 33. St. Sylvester I (314-35)   | ‘As I follow no leader save Christ,                              |
| 34. St. Marcus (336)           | so I communicate with none but your blessedness,                 |
| 35. St. Julius I (337-52)      | that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know,               |
| 36. Liberius (352-66)          | is the rock on which the Church is built! ...                    |
| 37. St. Damasus I (366-83)     | ‘This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found                |
| 38. St. Siricius (384-99)      | in it shall perish when the flood prevails.’ ( <i>St Jerome,</i> |
| 39. St. Anastasius I (399-401) | <i>Doctor of the Church – Letter to Pope Damasus, c. 375</i> )   |
|                                | ‘Where Peter is, there is the Church.’                           |
|                                | ( <i>St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, c. 385</i> )                   |

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*‘How, without the Hand of God, could a new idea, one and the same,  
enter at once into myriads of men, women, and children of all ranks...  
and to nerve them against the most cruel tortures, and to last in vigour  
as a sustaining influence for seven or eight generations, till it founded an extended polity,  
broke the obstinacy of the strongest and wisest government which the world has ever seen,  
and forced its way from its first caves and catacombs to the fullness of imperial power?’*

St John Henry Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*

## THE CHURCH, TRADITION AND THE BIBLE

We receive our knowledge of what God has told the human race in written form (Sacred Scripture – the Bible), and by the Church handing on in each generation all that she received from the Apostles (Tradition).

‘Apostolic Tradition is the transmission of the message of Christ, brought about from the very beginnings of Christianity by means of preaching, bearing witness, institutions, worship, and inspired writings. The apostles transmitted all they received from Christ and learned from the Holy Spirit to their successors, the bishops, and through them to all generations until the end of the world. Apostolic Tradition occurs in two ways: through the living transmission of the word of God (also simply called Tradition) and through Sacred Scripture which is the same proclamation of salvation in written form.’  
(*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 12-13)

The Bible itself tells us the importance of believing, not mere *human* traditions, (*Mk* 7:8) but the Tradition coming from God, through the apostles. So St Paul writes, ‘Stand firm and hold fast to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter’ (*2 Thess* 2:15). This tradition of teaching, Paul said, was to be handed on to each generation: ‘What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also’ (*2 Tim* 2:2).

Scripture does not stand alone, separate from the Church, her preaching and teaching. It is within God’s People, guided by the Holy Spirit, that the books of the Bible were written, accepted as the Word of God, and are given their right meaning. The claim that we must go by Scripture *alone* is contradictory, since Scripture itself nowhere teaches this – so believing this is itself not scriptural (and even against Scripture (cf. e.g. *2 Thess* 2:15)).

It is only from the teaching of the Catholic Church that we can be sure which books are truly the written ‘Word of God’ inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so rightly belong in the Bible. The books of the Bible were gathered together by the Catholic Church, so if we don’t accept the Catholic Church as infallibly guided by God, we have no way of being sure which books should even be included in the ‘Canon’ (the correct list of inspired books that make up the Bible).

There were many books from the early days of the Church that today are not considered to be part of the Bible. For the first four centuries of the Church, there was uncertainty on this question – some left out books that all would now consider part of the Bible, and included other books that all would now reject as part of the Bible. So the first believers did not have a complete Bible to work from. Local councils of Catholic bishops (Rome, 382; Carthage, 419) eventually decided on this question, and their decision was confirmed by the Pope; this became the standard Catholic understanding through the Middle Ages, and the Church finally defined the Canon infallibly at the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1546).

**‘I would not believe in the Gospel,  
had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me.’**

(*St Augustine, AD 397*)

**5<sup>th</sup> Century – St Augustine – The barbarian invasions – St Patrick – St Leo the Great – The heresies against the Incarnation – The fall of the Roman Empire in the West – The baptism of Clovis and conversion of the Franks**

- 410 The barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire reach Rome itself when the city is sacked by Alaric the Goth. St Augustine, most influential of Church Fathers, writes *The City of God* in response to the calamity.
- 412-415 St Augustine writes against the Pelagian heresy. Pelagius, a British monk, denied our need of God's grace for salvation.
- 430 Death of St Augustine during the Vandals' siege of Hippo, his North African see. His writings lay an intellectual foundation for the medieval Catholic civilisation which will rise from the ruins of the Empire.
- 431 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ecumenical Council, the Council of Ephesus, guided by St Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, teaches against Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, that Jesus and the divine Word are not two separate persons but one, and that therefore Mary is truly *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, not simply the mother of a human person, 'since she begot, according to the flesh, the Word of God made flesh'. (The Church in the Persian Empire rejects the Council, separating from the Catholic Church; today this is the Assyrian Church of the East.)
- c. 433 Beginning of the mission of St Patrick converting Ireland, lasting until his death in c. 461.
- 449 A new Council at Ephesus supports the Monophysite heresy that (in reaction to Nestorianism) overemphasises Christ's unity, holding that after the Incarnation, Christ's human nature no longer exists as such, but only one nature, the divine. However, the council has no binding force since Pope St Leo the Great rejects it, calling it a 'Robber Council'.
- 451 The 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council, the Council of Chalcedon, largest of the ancient Councils, guided by St Leo through his legates, then defines against the Monophysite heresy that Christ is one person with two distinct and complete natures, perfectly God and perfectly man. (The Council is rejected by the Church in Egypt, giving rise to the separated Oriental Orthodox Churches – today the Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Eritrean Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Malankara Orthodox Syrian, and Armenian Apostolic Churches.)
- 451 St Genevieve leads the people of Paris in prayer when the Huns approach the city.
- 452 St Leo the Great persuades Attila the Hun not to attack Rome.
- 455 Rome is sacked by the Vandals (who thus give their name to wanton destruction of property).
- 464 St Genevieve negotiates with the Franks when they besiege Paris.
- 476 Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, with the deposition of the last emperor in Rome. (The Eastern Empire, ruled from Constantinople, continues for another thousand years.)
- 484-519 Schism of eastern churches from Rome when the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Eastern Emperor compromise with Monophysitism.
- c. 495 Battle of Mt Badon in Britain marks a brief victory of the Catholic Britons against the pagan Anglo-Saxon invaders. (The record is dim but later histories associate the real 'King Arthur' with this final Catholic resistance.)
- 496 Baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks (France), and beginning of the conversion of the barbarians to the Catholic Faith. France thus becomes known as 'the eldest daughter of the Church'.

## SAINTS

St John Chrysostom; St Jerome; St Augustine of Hippo; St Cyril of Alexandria; St Patrick; St Vincent of Lerins; St Peter Chrysologus; St Simeon Stylites; St Leo the Great; St Genevieve; St Brigid.

## THE POPE

40. St. Innocent I (401-17)
41. St. Zosimus (417-18)
42. St. Boniface I (418-22)
43. St. Celestine I (422-32)
44. St. Sixtus III (432-40)
45. St. Leo I the Great (440-61)
46. St. Hilarius (461-68)
47. St. Simplicius (468-83)
48. St. Felix III (II) (483-92)
49. St. Gelasius I (492-96)
50. Anastasius II (496-98)
51. St. Symmachus (498-514)

‘We exhort you in every respect to heed obediently what has been written by the Most Blessed Pope of the City of Rome; for Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, provides the truth of faith to those who seek it.’ (*St Peter Chrysologus, Bishop, Doctor, 449*)

‘Peter has spoken through Leo!’  
(*Bishops at the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon hail the teaching of Pope St Leo the Great defending the true faith, 451.*)

‘We entreat you, honour our decision by your assent, and as we have yielded to the head our agreement on things honourable, so may the head also fulfil for the children what is fitting.’ (*Council of Chalcedon to Pope St. Leo*)

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*“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”  
The civilisation of antiquity was the whole world:  
and men no more dreamed of its ending than of the ending of daylight.  
They could not imagine another order unless it were in another world.  
The civilisation of the world has passed away and those words have not passed away.’*

English author and convert G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*

## **THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS**

*The Catholic Church is governed by the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him (Successors of Peter and the Apostles). The College of Bishops, always necessarily including the Pope himself as head, solemnly exercises authority over the Church in an Ecumenical (or General) Council, of which there have been 21. An Ecumenical Council is infallible in the dogmas it defines, and in fact Councils have defined numerous dogmas. To be Ecumenical, a Council must be confirmed or at least recognised as such by the Pope.*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Nicaea (325)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Constantinople (381)
- Council of Ephesus (431)
- Council of Chalcedon (451)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Constantinople (553)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Council of Constantinople (680-81)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Nicaea (787)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Constantinople (869-70)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Lateran Council (1123)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lateran Council (1139)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lateran Council (1179)

- 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council (1215)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Lyon (1245)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Lyon (1274)
- Council of Vienne (1311-12)
- Council of Constance (1414-18)
- Council of Florence (1431-45)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council (1512-17)
- Council of Trent (1545-63)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vatican Council (1870)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council (1962-65)



## **AD 500 – AD 1054: The Church in the Early Middle Ages**

*We turn to the history of the Church in the 'Early Middle Ages' between the years 500 and 1054. The Roman Empire in the West had fallen, though the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire centred on Constantinople would continue until 1453. These centuries saw the gradual conversion of the barbarian kingdoms in western, eastern and northern Europe. Sometimes thought of (not that accurately) as the 'Dark Ages', faith, culture and order were preserved and fostered especially by the Benedictine monasteries. There were times of recovery, and the beginnings of the thousand-year 'Holy Roman Empire' under Charlemagne, but also renewed crisis and chaos with invasions of Vikings and Hungarians. The Greek-speaking Eastern Churches, still in Catholic union with the Pope but falling gradually into estrangement, saw new heresies concerning the Incarnation, and from the 600's both East and West would face for centuries the huge challenge of Muslim military advance.*

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**6<sup>th</sup> Century – St Benedict, pioneer of western monasticism – Emperor Justinian – Second Council of Constantinople – Rise of Irish monasticism – Lombard invasion of Italy – Conversion of Visigothic Spain – St Gregory the Great – Mission of St Augustine of Canterbury to pagan England**

- 519** Reunion of eastern bishops with the Pope after decades of separation, with renewed recognition of papal authority by the Byzantine Emperors and bishops.
- 525** Dionysius Exiguus invents the dating of years from the birth of Christ (BC/AD).
- 527** 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Toledo establishes first known of the cathedral schools.
- 527-65** Justinian I (the Great), Byzantine Emperor, who accepts the papacy in principle, but tries to dominate the pope. Reconquest of part of the western empire.
- 529** St Benedict establishes the great abbey at Monte Cassino in Italy. His *Rule* (influenced by earlier 'Rules' such as that of St Basil in the Eastern Church) becomes the standard of monasticism in Western Europe, where Benedictine monasteries become oases of culture. From about the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the *Rule* is also used by female communities in convents.
- 529** 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Orange affirms much of St Augustine of Hippo's teaching on grace.
- 537** Justinian builds the great domed cathedral of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Constantinople (for almost a thousand years the world's largest church).
- 537** Vigilius becomes pope through the connivance of the Empress Theodora, whose plan is that he will introduce heretical Monophysite doctrine. On his accession, however, he repudiates his former position in defiance of his benefactress.
- 553** 5<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) reinforces (against Nestorian currents) Christ's full unity as one divine person. Called by Justinian, the Council originally meets in opposition to Vigilius, who is imprisoned by Justinian. In the end, the Pope accepts the Council.
- 563** Irish monk St Columba makes Iona his base for evangelisation in Scotland.
- 587** Reccared I, King of Visigothic Spain, converts to Catholicism from Arianism; start of Catholic Spanish monarchy.
- 590-604** Pope St Gregory the Great. He strengthens papal rule, promotes Benedictine monasticism, and strongly influences liturgical and musical development (Gregorian chant).
- 597** Sent by Pope Gregory, the monk Augustine lands in England on mission to the pagan Angles and Saxons. King Aethelbert of Kent converts, and St Augustine becomes first Archbishop of Canterbury. (He establishes there the world's oldest extant school.)

## SAINTS

St David; St Scholastica; St Benedict; St Cloud; St Finian; St Brendan; St Columba.

## THE POPES

- 52. St. Hormisdas (514-23)
- 53. St. John I (523-26)
- 54. St. Felix IV (III) (526-30)
- 55. Boniface II (530-32)
- 56. John II (533-35)
- 57. St. Agapetus I (535-36)
- 58. St. Silverius (536-37)
- 59. Vigilius (537-55)
- 60. Pelagius I (556-61)
- 61. John III (561-74)
- 62. Benedict I (575-79)
- 63. Pelagius II (579-90)
- 64. St. Gregory I the Great (590-604)

'We cannot pass over the statement of our Lord Jesus Christ who said: 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church'...these [words] which were spoken, are proved by the effects of the deeds, because in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been preserved without stain...I hope that I may merit to be in the one communion with you, which the Apostolic See proclaims, in which there is the whole and the true and the perfect solidity of the Christian religion.' (*Rule of faith of Pope Hormisdas, 517, subscribed to by the eastern bishops, by Emperor Justinian, and by the Patriarchs of Constantinople Epiphanius, John and Menna*)

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*'To the Catholic they are not dark ages so much as ages of dawn, for they witnessed the conversion of the West, the foundation of Christian civilisation, and the creation of Christian art and Catholic liturgy. Above all, they were the Age of the Monks... and it is to the monks that the great cultural achievements of the age are due...'*

British convert and historian, Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe*

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## **7<sup>th</sup> Century – Muhammad and Islam – the Monothelite crisis – the Arab conquests begin – the Third Council of Constantinople**

- 614** Persian Empire captures Jerusalem, and the True Cross (restored by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, 630).
- 615** Death of Irish missionary monk St Columban; he and his followers founded monasteries in France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.
- 620s** Rise of the Monothelite heresy in the Byzantine Empire. A compromise with Monophysitism (that denied Christ's human nature), it said Christ had only a divine will, and not also a human will.
- 622** Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina; start of the Islamic calendar. In the following years he and his followers conquer most of Arabia. His claimed revelations recorded in the Quran (Koran) are the basis of Islam.
- 632** Death of Muhammad. Muslim conquest follows of Damascus (634); Jerusalem (637); Egypt (641); Persia (644). By the end of the century, the Islamic caliphate spans from Morocco to Central Asia, ruling over formerly Christian lands in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.
- 649** Lateran Council under Pope Martin I condemns Monothelitism in defiance of the Byzantine Emperor; Pope Martin and St Maximus the Confessor later die in exile.
- 664** Synod of Whitby in the Kingdom of Northumbria in England decides that Easter be dated by the practice of Rome rather than of Iona, helping unify the English Church. (King Oswiu makes his decision once both sides state their agreement that Christ made Peter the rock and gave him the keys of the kingdom.)
- 674-78** First Arab siege of Constantinople.
- 680-81** 6<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) condemns Monothelitism, and also Pope Honorius I (625-38) for having failed to curb it. (Pope St Leo II, in confirming the Council, clarifies that Honorius was condemned for negligence rather than for personal heresy.)

## SAINTS

St Mungo; St Augustine of Canterbury; St Gregory the Great; St Columban; St Kevin; St Aidan; St Finbar; St Isidore of Seville; St Carthage; St Gondulf; St Frodobert; St Merry; Bl. Pippin; St Gall; St Dymphna; St Martin I; St Winifred; St Maximus the Confessor; St Patricia of Naples; St Conan; St Cuthbert.

## THE POPE

- 65. Sabinian (604-606)
- 66. Boniface III (607)
- 67. St. Boniface IV (608-15)
- 68. St. Deusdedit (615-18)
- 69. Boniface V (619-25)
- 70. Honorius I (625-38)
- 71. Severinus (640)
- 72. John IV (640-42)
- 73. Theodore I (642-49)
- 74. St. Martin I (649-55)
- 75. St. Eugene I (655-57)
- 76. St. Vitalian (657-72)
- 77. Adeodatus (II) (672-76)
- 78. Donus (676-78)
- 79. St. Agatho (678-81)
- 80. St. Leo II (682-83)
- 81. St. Benedict II (684-85)

- 82. John V (685-86)
- 83. Conon (686-87)
- 84. St. Sergius I (687-701)

‘The extremities of the earth, and everyone in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the Most Holy Roman Church and her confession and faith, as to a sun of unfailing light... From the descent of the Incarnate Word amongst us, all the churches in every part of the world have held the greatest Church alone to be their base and foundation, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ Our Saviour, the gates of hell have never prevailed against her, that she has the keys of the orthodox confession and right faith in Him...’  
(Leading Byzantine theologian, St Maximus the Confessor, c. 650)

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*‘Submit to Islam and be safe. Or agree to the payment of the Jizya (tax), and you and your people will be under our protection, else you will have only yourself to blame for the consequences, for I bring the men who desire death as ardently as you desire life.’*

Khalid ibn al-Walid, greatest Muslim general of the early conquests, called by Muhammad ‘the Sword of Allah’

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## **8<sup>th</sup> Century – Muslim invasion of Spain and France – St Boniface and the evangelisation of Germany – the iconoclast heresy – the Papal States – Second Council of Nicaea – Charlemagne crowned Emperor by the Pope**

**711-18** Muslim invasion and conquest of Spain, destroying the Catholic Visigothic kingdom. A remnant in the far north under Pelayo begins eight centuries of Christian re-conquest (the ‘Reconquista’) (722-1492).

**717-18** Second Arab siege of Constantinople.

**718** Pope St Gregory II sends the English monk Boniface on mission to Germany. The ‘Apostle of Germany’, St Boniface baptises thousands, organises the German Church and combats pagan worship.

**726-29** Byzantine Emperor Leo III begins the iconoclast (‘image-breaking’) heresy that forbids the use of religious images as idolatrous. The controversy divides the Empire for decades, with many images destroyed. The Popes support the tradition of venerating images.

**732** Frankish armies under Charles Martel defeat the Muslims at the Battle of Tours (Poitiers) in France, halting the Muslim advance in western Europe.

**735** Death of the Venerable Bede, English scholar and historian. A monk at Jarrow in the Kingdom of Northumbria, St Bede’s works popularised BC/AD dating.

**739** Death of English monk St Willibrord, apostle of the Netherlands, first Bishop of Utrecht.

754 Martyrdom of St Boniface.

754-756 Pepin, son of Charles Martel, having protected the Pope from the Lombards, grants lands in central Italy to the papacy, formalising the Papal States.

768-814 Charles the Great ('Charlemagne'), King of the Franks (France), son of Pepin, adds much of Germany and Italy to his kingdom. Culture flowers under his rule (the 'Carolingian Renaissance').

787 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II) condemns the iconoclast heresy and re-affirms the legitimacy of using religious images (for honour and veneration, not worship as divine): 'He who venerates an image venerates in it the person whom the image represents.'

793 Raid of the monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria by pagan Vikings shocks Europe; beginning of the 'Viking Age'.

800 On Christmas Day, Pope St Leo III crowns Charlemagne as Emperor in Rome, a 'renewal' of the Roman Empire in western Europe that later became the central European 'Holy Roman Empire', lasting till 1806. The alliance of Pope and Emperor would often turn to conflict in succeeding centuries.

### SAINTS

St Bede; St Willibrord; St Boniface; St Andrew of Crete; St John Damascene.

### THE POPES

85. John VI (701-05)

86. John VII (705-07)

87. Sisinnius (708)

88. Constantine (708-15)

89. St. Gregory II (715-31)

90. St. Gregory III (731-41)

91. St. Zachary (741-52)

92. Stephen II (752)

93. Stephen III (752-57)

94. St. Paul I (757-67)

95. Stephen IV (767-72)

96. Adrian I (772-95)

97. St. Leo III (795-816)

'Without whom [the Romans presiding in the 2nd Council of Nicaea, 787] a doctrine brought forward in the Church could not, even though confirmed by canonical decrees and by ecclesiastical usage, ever obtain full approval or currency. For it is they [the Roman Pontiffs] who have had assigned to them the rule in sacred things, and who have received into their hands the dignity of headship among the Apostles.'

(St Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople)

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*'In art and religion, in scholarship and literature, the Anglo-Saxons of the eighth century were the leaders of their age. At the time when continental civilisation was at its lowest ebb, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons marked the turn of the tide. The Saxon pilgrims flocked to Rome as the centre of the Christian world, and the Papacy found its most devoted allies and servants in the Anglo-Saxon monks and missionaries.'*

British convert and historian, Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe*

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**9<sup>th</sup> Century – Emperor Charlemagne and his successors – Viking invasions and raids across Europe – Early mission work in Denmark and Sweden – Mission of St Cyril and St Methodius to the Slavs – The schism of Photius and the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Constantinople – Descent into chaos**

814 Death of Charlemagne; he is succeeded by his son Louis the Pious. After Louis' death (840) the Empire enters division and decline.

830 Mission of St Ansgar to Sweden at the invitation of King Bjorn. Ansgar, a Frankish monk, had earlier done mission work in Denmark. However, there is little success. Viking raids ravage Europe throughout the century.

- 846** Sack of Rome (including the old St Peter's Basilica) by Arab (Saracen) forces. In the following years Pope Leo IV strengthens the city's defences.
- 858-67** Pope Nicholas I (the Great).
- 862** Greek brothers Sts Cyril and Methodius, 'Apostles to the Slavs', begin mission work in Moravia (present-day Czech Republic). They create the first Slavic alphabet (Glagolitic, ancestor of present-day Cyrillic script).
- 864** Baptism of Khan Boris I of Bulgaria, leading to the conversion of the nation.
- 867-79** Schism from Rome of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople.
- 868** St Cyril and St Methodius visit Rome, where Pope Adrian II approves their Slavonic liturgy. Cyril dies in Rome in 869.
- 869-70** 8<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council (Constantinople IV) deposes Patriarch Photius. A later Council (879) reinstates him. From this time on there is an anti-Roman party in Constantinople, until the formal split of the Orthodox Church from Rome in 1054. (The Eastern Orthodox Church today accepts the first seven Ecumenical Councils but not those from Constantinople IV on.)
- 871-99** Reign of Alfred the Great in Wessex; he defends the kingdom against Danish invasion, and supports learning and the Church.
- 897** Bizarre posthumous trial of Pope Formosus by Pope Stephen VII is a sign of the descent into the chaos of the tenth century, when the papacy is dominated by corrupt local nobility.

## SAINTS

St Theodore the Studite; St Flora; St Swithun; St Laura; St Ansgar; St Nicholas I; St Cyril & St Methodius; St Edmund Martyr.

## THE POPES

- 98. Stephen V (816-17)
- 99. St. Paschal I (817-24)
- 100. Eugene II (824-27)
- 101. Valentine (827)
- 102. Gregory IV (827-44)
- 103. Sergius II (844-47)
- 104. St. Leo IV (847-55)
- 105. Benedict III (855-58)
- 106. St. Nicholas I the Great (858-67)
- 107. Adrian II (867-72)
- 108. John VIII (872-82)
- 109. Marinus I (882-84)
- 110. St. Adrian III (884-85)
- 111. Stephen VI (885-91)
- 112. Formosus (891-96)
- 113. Boniface VI (896)

- 114. Stephen VII (896-97)
- 115. Romanus (897)
- 116. Theodore II (897)
- 117. John IX (898-900)
- 118. Benedict IV (900-03)

'The privileges of the Roman Church, built on Blessed Peter by the word of Christ, deposited in the Church herself, observed in ancient times and celebrated by the sacred universal councils and venerated jointly by the entire Church, can by no means be diminished...for the foundation that God has established, no human effort has the power to destroy, and what God has determined remains firm and strong.'

*(Pope St Nicholas I, Letter to Emperor Michael)*

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*'The apostolic and missionary activity of Saints Cyril and Methodius can be considered the first effective evangelisation of the Slavs. Their work is an outstanding contribution to the formation of the common Christian roots of Europe. Cyril and Methodius are as it were the connecting links or spiritual bridge between the Eastern and Western traditions, which both come together in the one great Tradition of the universal Church.'*

St John Paul II, Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*

**10<sup>th</sup> Century – An age of violence and feudal anarchy – Viking, Hungarian and Moorish raids – The founding of Cluny Abbey and the seed of reform – Lay dominance and corruption in the papacy – The Holy Roman Empire renewed – Conversion of Denmark, Poland, Russia, Norway, Iceland and Hungary**

- 903** Pope Leo V imprisoned; the tenth century is the papacy's lowest ebb.
- 910** The founding of Cluny Abbey in Burgundy, with St Berno as first abbot. Its renewed Benedictine spirit plants a seed of reform, slowly spreading through new Cluniac foundations, eventually revitalising the Church and the papacy itself in the following century.
- 928** Pope John X imprisoned by Marozia Theophylact, who eventually has her son installed as Pope John XI.
- 933** Pope John XI and his mother imprisoned by her son Duke Alberic II.
- 935** St Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia ('Good King Wenceslas' in the Christmas carol) murdered on orders of his brother, Boleslav the Cruel. St Wenceslas, raised in the faith under the influence of his grandmother St Ludmilla, established on a firm basis the Church in Bohemia (modern day Czech Republic).
- 955-63** A low point for the papacy with the immoral John XII, nominated to become (still the youngest) Pope at 18 by his father Duke Alberic II.
- 962** Renewal of the Holy Roman Empire when Pope John XII crowns Otto the Great as Emperor.
- c. 965** Baptism of Harald I Bluetooth of Denmark (after whom the Bluetooth wireless technology standard is named) – one of a series of conversions of kings, marking the entry of their nations into the Catholic Church at this time.
- 966** Baptism of Mieszko I, first king of a united Poland.
- 974** Pope Benedict VI imprisoned and murdered.
- 984** Pope John XIV imprisoned and murdered.
- 988** Baptism of St Vladimir the Great of Russia (into the Catholic Church, in the Byzantine rite) as the eastern churches are still in union with the Pope at this point).
- 993** First official papal canonisation of a saint (St Ulrich). (Before this, recognition of saints occurred on a local basis.)
- 995-1000** Olaf I of Norway, baptised in 994, imposes baptism on pagan Norway and Iceland. Among the baptised is Leif Eriksson, who will soon establish Norse settlements in Canada – the first arrival of Christianity in the Americas.
- 997** St Stephen I, recently converted and baptised by St Adalbert, becomes Prince of Hungary; in 1000, Pope Sylvester II gives him the royal crown as first king.



## SAINTS

St Ludmilla; St Berno; St Wenceslaus; St Odo of Cluny; St Matilda; St Adalbert of Prague; St Adelaide; St Vladimir; St Stephen I.

## THE POPES

- 119. Leo V (903)
- 120. Sergius III (904-11)
- 121. Anastasius III (911-13)
- 122. Lando (913-14)
- 123. John X (914-28)
- 124. Leo VI (928)
- 125. Stephen VIII (929-31)
- 126. John XI (931-35)
- 127. Leo VII (936-39)
- 128. Stephen IX (939-42)
- 129. Marinus II (942-46)
- 130. Agapetus II (946-55)
- 131. John XII (955-63)
- 132. Leo VIII (963-64)
- 133. Benedict V (964)
- 134. John XIII (965-72)
- 135. Benedict VI (973-74)
- 136. Benedict VII (974-83)
- 137. John XIV (983-84)

- 138. John XV (985-96)
- 139. Gregory V (996-99)
- 140. Sylvester II (999-1003)

‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?” He said to them, “An enemy has done this.” The servants said to him, “Then do you want us to go and gather them?” But he said, “No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.”’ (*Jesus to his disciples, Mt 13:24-30, speaking of the presence in his Church of both good and evil.*)

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*‘[The Catholic Church] inherits the promise made to the disciples, that they should take up serpents, and, if they drank any deadly thing, it should not hurt them. When evil has clung to her, and the barbarian people have looked on with curiosity or in malice, till she should have swollen or fallen down suddenly, she has shaken the venomous beast into the fire, and felt no harm.’*

St John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*

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*Our reflections on the Church in the early middle ages, starting with the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476, conclude in the year 1054. That year saw the separation of Constantinople from Rome – the split of the Eastern Orthodox Church from the Catholic Church which has lasted, apart from two short-lived reunions, to the present day. 1054 is also the death of the first great reforming pope of the time, St Leo IX, with whom the papacy firmly put behind it the corruption of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and stepped forward to lead the Church into the glory of the high middle ages.*

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**11<sup>th</sup> Century, to 1054** – Feudal warfare limited by the ‘Peace of God’ (protecting peasants and clergy) and the ‘Truce of God’ (limiting times of warfare) – The Catholic Faith grows in Sweden, begins in Finland – The reforms of Cluny Abbey spread through the Church – St Leo IX and the reform of the papacy – The ‘Great Schism’ splits the Orthodox Churches from the Catholic Church

- 1009** Al-Hakim, Fatimid Caliph in Egypt, destroys Christian shrines in the Holy Land, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (which is later rebuilt by the Byzantines and Crusaders).
- 1016-28** St Olaf II consolidates Christianity in Norway, a key development in the taming of Viking attacks.
- 1045** Pope Benedict IX, after an immoral reign, abdicates, ‘selling’ the papacy to Gregory VI, seemingly in order to marry.

**1046** Pope Gregory VI abdicates under pressure from Emperor Henry III.

**1049-54** Pope St Leo IX (Bruno of Alsace) begins a reform of papacy and clergy, enforcing through regional councils strict discipline against widespread simony [buying spiritual office], clerical concubinage and marriage.

**1053** Pope Leo IX imprisoned by the Normans.

**1054** For centuries, the Greek and Latin (western) Churches had gradually become distant – culturally, linguistically, theologically. In 1054 Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, writes a letter attacking various practices of the Latin Church.

This culminates in the papal legate Cardinal Humbert and Cerularius excommunicating each other, which in turn develops into the full division from the Catholic Church of what is now the Eastern Orthodox Church. The massacre of Latins in Constantinople in 1182 and the sack of Constantinople by the 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade in 1204, harden feelings.

There would be official reunions at the Ecumenical Councils of Lyon (1274) and Florence (1439) with Eastern Orthodox Bishops accepting Catholic teaching – but these reunions each lasted only a few years, being rejected by Orthodox clergy and laity.

Some of the main points of dispute were over whether the Pope has a mere primacy of honour (Eastern Orthodox) or actual authority over the whole Church (Catholic); and the Latin addition to the Nicene Creed of the phrase ‘Filioque’ (‘and the Son’) [‘I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*’].

Catholics would maintain that actual Petrine authority over the whole Church is clearly contained in Christ’s promises to St Peter: ‘I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ (Mt 16:19) Without this authority, the Pope’s divinely instituted role as ‘rock foundation’ of the Church’s unity in faith cannot attain its purpose, as a ‘primacy of honour’ achieves nothing.

The headship of the Bishops of Rome over the Church as Successors of Peter did have general acceptance in East and West in the first millennium (as illustrated in various quotes above), even if, as with all doctrines, the full *understanding and expression* of this authority and its extent (as intended by Christ from the start), only developed gradually over time under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (and continued to develop in the second millennium). (This is an example of the ‘development of doctrine’ – see below, p. 44.) The Catholic Church has continued to draw out the deeper implications of the ancient belief in papal authority, while the Orthodox retreated from that ancient belief.

As for the Filioque, it was taught by Popes (such as St Leo I the Great (440-61), venerated as a saint also by the Orthodox) and by Latin Fathers centuries before the split, without the Eastern churches considering that this divided its proponents from the true faith. Eventually the Popes, by their supreme authority, legitimately approved the addition of the Filioque to the Creed. At the Council of Florence, the Bishops of East and West affirmed the doctrine as infallible dogma, expounding it in such a way as to show its complementarity to the formulation of Greek Fathers that the Holy Spirit ‘proceeds from the Father *through* the Son’.

## **AD 1054 – AD 1517: The Church in the High and Late Middle Ages**

*The history of the Church in the 'High' and 'Late' Middle Ages from the years 1054 to 1517 takes us from the separation of the Eastern Orthodox Church from the Catholic Church, until the eve of the Reformation. In various aspects these were times of glory and strength for the Church, with the flourishing of Catholic civilisation in Western Europe from the seeds planted in earlier centuries. (In many ways this forms the basis of Western civilisation to this day). This was expressed for example in the Gothic cathedrals and the rise of the universities. At the same time, the very dominance of the Church was the occasion for problems of corruption and intolerance. The Church and secular society were completely intertwined, and often worked in harmony, but there was also conflict, typified in the pivotal struggle between the Popes and the Holy Roman Emperors. After centuries of Muslim advance, Europe for a time took the offensive with the Crusades. The crises of the Black Death, the Avignon papacy and the Great Western Schism, and the corruptions in the Church during the Renaissance, set the way towards the Protestant Reformation.*

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### **11<sup>th</sup> Century, 1054 - 1100 – St Gregory VII and papal reform – Universities begin – the First Crusade and the Crusader Kingdoms**

- 1066** Death of St Edward the Confessor, King of England. Following the Norman Conquest of England later that year, Edward's great-niece, St Margaret, flees with her family to Scotland, where she marries King Malcolm III (1070); as queen she is a powerful civilising influence.
- 1071** Seljuk Turks defeat the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert, breaking Byzantine power in Asia Minor, and a crucial turning point beginning centuries of Byzantine decline.
- 1073** Hildebrand is elected Pope Gregory VII, one of the great reforming popes and champions of papal authority.
- 1077** In one of the most famous confrontations of Church and State, Emperor Henry IV does penance in the snow at Canossa to receive the lifting of his excommunication by St Gregory VII. The main dispute was over 'investiture' – whether the Pope or lay rulers had the right to nominate bishops.
- 1084** St Bruno of Cologne founds the Carthusian Order, dedicated to prayer and silence.
- 1088** Founding of the University of Bologna, the world's first university. (Other institutes of higher learning had existed from ancient times, but universities in the form and structure they now possess come entirely from medieval Europe, fostered by the Catholic Church.) Over the Middle Ages 81 universities would be established (53 with a papal charter), in which the foundations would be laid for the beginnings of modern science.
- 1095** Byzantine Emperor Alexius I requests western help against the advancing Seljuk Turks. In response, at the Council of Clermont Pope Urban II preaches the need to also protect the Holy Places in Jerusalem, beginning the Crusading movement.
- 1096** Rhineland massacres of Jews by crusader mobs, despite protests from bishops and priests. Persecution of Jews is a recurring theme in Christian history; Church authority on occasions protects Jews, but on other occasions itself acts repressively.
- 1098** Foundation of Citeaux Abbey in France by St Robert of Molesmes marks the beginning of the Cistercian order of monks, a return to the original strictness of St Benedict's Rule after the Cluniac reform movement had itself grown wealthy and lax.
- 1099** The First Crusade, after defeating the Seljuks in Asia Minor and restoring Byzantine lands, sacks Jerusalem, massacring inhabitants; beginning of the Crusader Kingdoms in the Levant.

## SAINTS

St Henry II, emperor; St Romuald; St Olaf II of Norway; St Odilo of Cluny; St Leo IX; St Edward the Confessor; St Peter Damian; St Bernard of Menthon; St Gregory VII; St Margaret of Scotland.

## THE POPE

- 141. John XVII (1003)
- 142. John XVIII (1003-09)
- 143. Sergius IV (1009-12)
- 144. Benedict VIII (1012-24)
- 145. John XIX (1024-32)
- 146. Benedict IX (1032-45, 47-48)
- 147. Sylvester III (1045)
- 148. Gregory VI (1045-46)
- 149. Clement II (1046-47)
- 150. Damasus II (1048)
- 151. St. Leo IX (1049-54)
- 152. Victor II (1055-57)
- 153. Stephen X (1057-58)
- 154. Nicholas II (1058-61)

- 155. Alexander II (1061-73)
- 156. St. Gregory VII (1073-85)
- 157. Blessed Victor III (1086-87)
- 158. Blessed Urban II (1088-99)
- 159. Paschal II (1099-1118)

‘It is the custom of the Roman Church which I unworthily serve with the help of God, to tolerate some things, to turn a blind eye to some, following the spirit of discretion rather than the rigid letter of the law.’ (*Pope St Gregory VII*)

‘The Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity.’ (*11<sup>th</sup> century compilation ‘Dictatus Papae’*)

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*‘The eleventh century, the years between 1000 and 1100, may be called the awakening of Europe. Our civilisation had just passed through fearful trials...One of those periods had begun which appear from time to time in the story of our race, when there is, so to speak, ‘spring in the air’. Philosophy grew more vigorous, architecture enlarged, society began to be more organised and the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to extend and codify their powers.’*

Hilaire Belloc, *The Great Heresies*

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## **12<sup>th</sup> Century – Rise of scholasticism – Three Ecumenical Councils at the Lateran – Gothic architecture – The Age of St Bernard – The Second Crusade – Rise of the Catharist heresy – The Third Crusade**

- 1109** Death of St Anselm of Canterbury, pioneer of scholasticism. Fostered by the universities, scholastic method in philosophy and theology aimed to proceed by precise reasoning. 12<sup>th</sup> century figures were Abelard and Peter Lombard.
- 1113** Pope Paschal II formally approves the military religious order of the Knights Hospitaller (Knights of St John of Jerusalem) (today the Knights of Malta). The Hospitallers, along with the Knights Templar (Templars, founded 1119), were the most famous of a number of military orders that grew up in the context of the Crusades.
- 1123** 1<sup>st</sup> Lateran Council, the first Ecumenical Council held in western Europe (held at the Pope’s Lateran Palace in Rome), aimed to settle the ‘Investiture Question’ by limiting the power of monarchs and nobles to name bishops.
- 1139** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lateran Ecumenical Council reformed discipline, again condemning clerical marriages, also declaring them invalid.
- 1144** Completion by Abbot Suger of the Basilica of St Denis in Paris, the first building in Gothic architectural style. Gothic would replace Romanesque as the main church architecture. (As examples, St Patrick’s Cathedral Melbourne is ‘neo-Gothic’; St Mary’s Ascot Vale is ‘neo-Romanesque’.)
- 1145-49** 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade fails to reverse Muslim reconquests in the East; however, Lisbon is taken back from the Muslims (1147) and in 1255 becomes the capital of Christian Portugal.
- 1153** Death of St Bernard of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church and ‘Last of the Fathers’, prominent for his Mariology. A French monk of the new Cistercian order, as abbot he established dozens of new monasteries. The dominant figure of his time, he advised popes and monarchs and supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade.

- 1170** Murder of St Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in Canterbury Cathedral, by knights of Henry II. He is canonised and Canterbury becomes a great pilgrimage centre.
- 1179** 3<sup>rd</sup> Lateran Ecumenical Council restricts papal election to cardinals (with a two-thirds majority required); deposes immoral clerics; condemns simony and usury; sets the minimum age for parish priests at 25 and bishops at 30; and organises homes for lepers. It also establishes that all cathedrals must have schools (some of which later evolve into universities); like many parishes and monasteries, these provide free education for poor boys.
- 1182** Maronite Church in Lebanon, isolated for centuries, reaffirms its communion with Rome.
- 1187** Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, recaptures Jerusalem from the Crusader Kingdoms. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusade (1189-92) under Richard the Lionheart of England and Philip II of France takes back some of Saladin's conquests, but not Jerusalem.

## SAINTS

St Bruno; St Anselm; St Canute; St Isidore the Farmer; St Norbert; St Stephen Harding; St Malachy; St Bernard; St William of York; St Ronald of Orkney; St Thomas Becket; St Rosalia; St Hildegard of Bingen; St Laurence O'Toole; St Thorlak Thorhallsson.

## THE POPE

- 160. Gelasius II (1118-19)
- 161. Callistus II (1119-24)
- 162. Honorius II (1124-30)
- 163. Innocent II (1130-43)
- 164. Celestine II (1143-44)
- 165. Lucius II (1144-45)
- 166. Blessed Eugene III (1145-53)
- 167. Anastasius IV (1153-54)
- 168. Adrian IV (1154-59)
- 169. Alexander III (1159-81)
- 170. Lucius III (1181-85)
- 171. Urban III (1185-87)
- 172. Gregory VIII (1187)
- 173. Clement III (1187-91)
- 174. Celestine III (1191-98)
- 175. Innocent III (1198-1216)

'Peter...never, so far as can be ascertained, paraded himself decked with gems, or robed in silks; he was not covered with gold, he did not ride on a white steed, he was not surrounded by soldiers, nor fenced off from his flock by noisy attendants. He thought that without all this he could amply fulfil the salutary command, "If you love me, feed my sheep". In all this painted pomp you are not Peter's successor, but Constantine's. What I insist on is that while you may tolerate such pomp and glory to suit the time, you must not claim it as a debt due to you.'  
(St Bernard gives advice to his disciple who has become pope (Bl. Eugene III) (Treatise 'De Consideratione'))

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*'It is difficult now to look back across the centuries and appreciate the tremendous impact of St Bernard's personality on all who knew him ... From the day in 1115 when, at the age of twenty-five, he was appointed Abbot of Clairvaux, till his death nearly forty years later he was the dominant influence in the religious and political life of western Europe.'*

Stephen Runciman, *The History of the Crusades*

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## **13<sup>th</sup> Century – The Fourth Crusade – Pope Innocent III – Flowering of the High Middle Ages – St Francis and St Dominic – The Albigensian Crusade – Fourth Lateran Council – The Inquisition – Mongol invasions – Frederick II and the showdown of Empire and Papacy – St Thomas Aquinas – Fall of the Crusader Kingdoms.**

- 1204** The 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade, diverted to Constantinople, sacks the city (establishing the 'Latin Empire' there till 1261), embittering Catholic-Orthodox relations for centuries. Pope Innocent III condemns the sacking.
- 1209** St Francis of Assisi establishes the 'Order of Friars Minor' (the Franciscans) who along with the Dominicans revolutionise religious life. These 'mendicant orders' of 'friars' live in the cities, not monasteries, and beg for alms. In 1212, St Francis founds with St Clare the Second Order, known as the 'Poor Clares'.

- 1209-29** Albigensian Crusade suppresses the Albigensian (Catharist) heretics in southern France. The Cathars believed the physical world was evil and created by an evil god, so that marriage and reproduction were sinful. They also rejected oath-taking and the Church's Sacraments.
- c. 1214** The Carmelite Order, started by hermits on Mt Carmel in the Holy Land, is formalised. (Its *Rule* is approved by Pope Innocent IV in 1247.)
- 1215** 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Ecumenical Council, greatest of the Medieval Councils, proclaims its Creed that includes reaffirmation of the Trinity; creation of the angels (of whom some sin and become demons); transubstantiation, performed only by a priest; and everlasting heaven and hell.
- 1216** St Dominic's 'Order of Preachers', (the Dominicans) founded to convert the Albigensians, is officially approved. (By tradition, St Dominic received the Rosary from Mary (1214).)
- 1216** Death of Pope Innocent III; his pontificate is the highpoint of medieval papal power.
- 1223** At Greccio in Italy, St Francis arranges the first 'Nativity Scene', with live actors and animals.
- 1231** Start of the medieval Papal Inquisition, one of several tribunals against heresy in Church history, such as the Spanish Inquisition (1481-1834) and the Roman Inquisition (1542- ).
- 1233** Servite Order established by the Seven Holy Founders.
- 1241** Mongol forces, having conquered much of Asia, devastate central Europe (Poland, Silesia, Moravia, Hungary and Croatia). They advance on Vienna, but withdraw with the news of the death of the Great Khan in Mongolia, and the threat to western Europe is averted.
- 1245** 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council of Lyon proclaims the deposition of Emperor Frederick II, part of the final struggle for supremacy of Papacy and Empire, with the Papacy emerging victorious.
- 1256** Coming together of the Augustinian Order.
- 1264** Pope Urban IV establishes the Feast of Corpus Christi.
- 1268-71** Papal interregnum of nearly three years leads to strict rules of 'conclave' – cardinals are not to leave until a pope is elected.
- 1270** St Louis IX of France, a model of medieval kingship, dies on crusade in Tunis.
- 1274** Death of the Italian Dominican priest and professor, St Thomas Aquinas, even today the pre-eminent theologian and philosopher of the Catholic Church. His masterpiece, the *Summa Theologiae*, the pinnacle of scholasticism, most famous for its proofs of God's existence, has a permanent impact on all parts of theology.
- 1274** 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Council of Lyon temporarily reunites the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, with the Orthodox acceptance of papal primacy and the filioque; but in 1282 the new Byzantine Emperor rejects the union.
- 1291** Fall of Acre to the Muslims (Mamluks of Egypt), last major Crusader possession in Palestine; end of the Crusader 'Kingdom of Jerusalem'.
- 1294** The Franciscan John of Montecorvino, commissioned by the Pope, reaches the Mongol capital Khanbaliq (Beijing) as first Catholic missionary in China; he is made archbishop (1308) and makes many converts. The mission flourishes until the Ming dynasty replaces Mongol rule in 1368, and expels all foreign Christians (Catholics and Nestorians).
- 1294** Unable to cope with its demands, the holy hermit St Celestine V abdicates the papacy.
- 1300** Boniface VIII proclaims the first Jubilee Year.

## SAINTS

St Julian; St William of Bourges; St Felix of Valois; St Franca Visalta; St Dominic; St Francis of Assisi; St Anthony of Padua; St Edmund Rich; St Elizabeth of Hungary; St Hedwig; St Alice; St Rose of Viterbo; St Richard of Chichester; St Clare; St Juliana of Liege; St Simon Stock; St Louis IX; St Bonaventure; St Zita; St Thomas Aquinas; St Albert the Great; St Raymond of Penyafort; St Agnes of Bohemia; St Kinga of Poland; St Celestine V; St Mechtilde; St Margaret of Cortona.



## THE POPES

- 176. Honorius III (1216-27)
- 177. Gregory IX (1227-41)
- 178. Celestine IV (1241)
- 179. Innocent IV (1243-54)
- 180. Alexander IV (1254-61)
- 181. Urban IV (1261-64)
- 182. Clement IV (1265-68)
- 183. Blessed Gregory X (1271-76)
- 184. Blessed Innocent V (1276)
- 185. Adrian V (1276)
- 186. John XXI (1276-77)
- 187. Nicholas III (1277-80)

- 188. Martin IV (1281-85)
- 189. Honorius IV (1285-87)
- 190. Nicholas IV (1288-92)
- 191. St. Celestine V (1294)
- 192. Boniface VIII (1294-1303)

“I adore you my God, and my Redeemer...I hope I never advanced any tenet as your word, which I had not learned from you. If through ignorance I have done otherwise, I revoke everything of that kind, and submit all my writings to the judgment of the holy Roman Church.” (*St Thomas Aquinas professes his faith before his last Communion*)

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*‘Among the Scholastic Doctors, the chief and master of all towers Thomas Aquinas, ... rightly and deservedly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith ... Reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas.’*

Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris*

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## **14<sup>th</sup> Century – A time of upheaval and reversal – The Council of Vienne and the suppression of the Templars – Dante – The Avignon Papacy – the Black Death – St Catherine of Siena – The Great Western Schism**

- 1302** Boniface VIII issues *Unam Sanctam*, one of the strongest statements of papal authority.
- 1307** King Philip IV of France has many Knights Templar arrested on outrageous charges (very likely false); under pressure, the French Pope Clement V orders all Templars arrested.
- 1308-21** Dante Alighieri writes the *Divine Comedy*, his epic poem of hell, purgatory and heaven.
- 1309** Influenced by instability and danger in Rome, Clement V sets up the papal court in Avignon in southern France, where it would remain until 1377. Seen as being under French influence, the papacy declines in prestige.
- 1311-12** Pressured by Philip IV, Clement V disbands the Knights Templar at the Ecumenical Council of Vienne. (Teaching is given that the soul is the ‘form’ of the body – what makes it human.)
- 1331** Pope John XXII establishes Trinity Sunday as a feast of the universal Church.
- 1336** Pope Benedict XII defines as dogma that souls can enjoy the beatific vision immediately after death, not having to wait for the Last Judgement at the end of time.
- 1342** The Franciscan Order is granted custody over shrines in the Holy Land by Pope Clement VI.
- 1348-50** Peak of the Black Death (bubonic plague) in Europe, killing maybe half the population; return to former levels would take 150 years. The resultant social, economic and religious upheaval changes the course of history.
- 1377** Urged by St Catherine of Siena, Gregory XI brings the papacy back to Rome from Avignon.
- 1378-1417** A disputed papal election leads to the Great Western Schism, when for four decades there are two (and then three) claimants to the papacy, a ‘Roman’ line and an ‘Avignon’ line. The true popes were those of the Roman line, but this was difficult to tell at the time, and the nations of Europe divided in their allegiance along political lines.
- 1384** Death of John Wycliffe, English dissident and forerunner of the Reformation; his followers, the Lollards, preach anti-clerical reforms.
- 1387** Conversion of Lithuania, Europe’s last pagan nation, under Jogaila (Wladyslaw II Jagiello).

## SAINTS

Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order; St Gertrude the Great; St Ives; St Nicholas of Tolentino; St Clare of Montefalco; St Agnes of Montepulciano; St Roch; St Elizabeth of Portugal; St Catherine of Siena; St Juliana Falconieri; St Peregrine; St Bridget of Sweden; St John Nepomucene; St Jadwiga of Poland.

## THE POPE

- 193. Bl Benedict XI (1303-04)
- 194. Clement V (1305-14)
- 195. John XXII (1316-34)
- 196. Benedict XII (1334-42)
- 197. Clement VI (1342-52)
- 198. Innocent VI (1352-62)
- 199. Bl Urban V (1362-70)
- 200. Gregory XI (1370-78)
- 201. Urban VI (1378-89)

- 202. Boniface IX (1389-1404)

‘Come, come, and resist no more the will of God that calls you; the hungry sheep await your coming to hold and possess the place of your predecessor and Champion, Apostle Peter. For you, as the Vicar of Christ, should abide in your own place.’  
(*St Catherine of Siena exhorts Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon*)

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*‘The mechanics and physics of which modern times are justifiably proud proceed, by an uninterrupted series of scarcely perceptible improvements, from doctrines professed in the heart of the mediæval schools.’*

Pierre Duhem, French physicist, historian and philosopher of science, on the origins in 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> century universities of the ‘Scientific Revolution’, (*The Origins of Statics*)

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## **15<sup>th</sup> Century, to 1517 – Council of Constance ends the ‘Great Western Schism’ – St Joan of Arc – Fall of Constantinople – The Renaissance – Spanish discovery of the Americas – Eve of the Reformation**

- 1409** Council of Pisa elects a new ‘pope’ to resolve the Great Western Schism, but neither of the existing claimants to the papacy recognises the Council, so there are now three claimants.
- 1414-18** Ecumenical Council of Constance (on the German-Swiss border) obtains the abdication of Gregory XII (today considered to have been the true pope), deposes the other two claimants and elects Pope Martin V, ending the 39-year dispute over who was the true pope.
- 1415** Czech reformer priest Jan Hus condemned by the Council of Constance and burned at the stake for heresy. The Hussite Wars (1419-34) follow in Bohemia between his followers and supporters of the Church.
- 1429** St Joan of Arc, claiming divine guidance, turns the tide of the Hundred Years’ War in France’s favour, saving it from English domination. In 1431, now a captive of the English, Joan is burnt at the stake aged 19. In 1456 a papal tribunal declares her innocence.
- 1439** The Ecumenical Council of Florence (transferred from Basel and Ferrara) temporarily reunites the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, with the Bishops proclaiming together papal primacy, the filioque, and purgatory. But the Orthodox clergy and people do not accept the union, which collapses after the fall of Constantinople.
- 1450** Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press with movable type, revolutionising communications by making books readily available. The Bible is soon printed in Latin (1455) German (1466) and Italian (1471).
- 1453** Fall of Constantinople to the Turks under Mehmed the Conqueror, and final end of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, 977 years after the fall of the Western Empire; Hagia Sophia is turned into a mosque. The last emperor, Constantine XI, lost in the battle, is true to the reunion with the Catholic Church to the end, and the night before the fall of the city the Greeks and Latins pray together in Hagia Sophia.
- 1456** Turkish siege of Belgrade lifted by John Hunyadi and St John of Capistrano; Pope Calixtus III, in commemoration, establishes the Transfiguration as a universal feast (6 August).

- 1478** King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella establish the Spanish Inquisition. Over the centuries until its abolition in 1834 (more commonly in its early decades), several thousand are handed over to the state to be executed for heresy or various other religious charges. Its initial focus is on Jewish and Muslim converts suspected of insincerity.
- 1480** In another sign of surging Ottoman power, the Turks occupy Otranto in southern Italy for a year, killing the 813 'Martyrs of Otranto' who refuse to convert to Islam.
- 1492** The fall of Granada to Catholic Spain completes the 'Reconquista' and ends Muslim rule in Spain, 781 years after the Muslim conquest.
- 1492** Jews in Spain are forced to choose between conversion or expulsion (one of a number of such expulsions from European countries across the centuries).
- 1492-1503** Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), most notorious of the worldly Renaissance popes.
- 1492** Christopher Columbus lands in the New World, beginning European colonisation and evangelisation of the Americas.
- 1499** Completion of Michelangelo Buonarroti's sculpture, the 'Pietà'.
- 1506** Foundation stone laid for the new St Peter's Basilica in Rome to replace the previous church dating from Constantine the Great. With Bramante, Michelangelo and Bernini as principal architects, it becomes Christendom's greatest church (dedicated 1626).
- 1508-12** Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, a classic of the High Renaissance.
- 1512-17** 5<sup>th</sup> Lateran Ecumenical Council gives teaching on the soul's immortality, and its individuality in each human body. Rulings are made on much-needed Church reform, but have little effect.

## SAINTS

St Vincent Ferrer; St Joan of Arc; St Nuno; St Frances of Rome; St Bernadine of Siena; St Colette; St Lawrence Justinian; St Rita of Cascia; St John of Capistrano; St Antoninus; St Catherine of Bologna; St Diego; St John of Kanty; Martyrs of Otranto; St Casimir; St Nicholas of Flüe; St Beatrice of Silva; St Jeanne de Valois; St Francis of Paola; St Catherine of Genoa.

## THE POPES

- 203. Innocent VII (1404-06)
- 204. Gregory XII (1406-15)
- 205. Martin V (1417-31)
- 206. Eugene IV (1431-47)
- 207. Nicholas V (1447-55)
- 208. Callistus III (1455-58)
- 209. Pius II (1458-64)
- 210. Paul II (1464-71)
- 211. Sixtus IV (1471-84)
- 212. Innocent VIII (1484-92)
- 213. Alexander VI (1492-1503)
- 214. Pius III (1503)
- 215. Julius II (1503-13)
- 216. Leo X (1513-21)

'We define that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman pontiff have the primacy over the whole world and that the same Roman pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles and the true vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and teacher of all Christians; and that to him, in the person of blessed Peter, was given by our Lord Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole Church...' (*Ecumenical Council of Florence, 1439: the Eastern Orthodox Bishops and the Catholic Bishops express their faith as they re-unite.*)

'Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?...If that servant says to himself, "My master is delayed in coming," and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know...Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required.' (*Jesus to his disciples, Lk 12:42, 45-46, 48, warning of unfaithful Church leaders*)

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*'A temporal kingdom would have come to grief, but so extraordinary was the organisation of the spiritual kingdom, so indestructible was the papal idea, that this rift, though the deepest of all, only helped to demonstrate its indivisibility.'*

German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius on the Great Western Schism (*The History of Rome in the Middle Ages*)

## **THE BATTLE FOR THE CHURCH**

**‘You are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church,  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’**

These words of Jesus give us the certainty that the Catholic Church will be upheld in truth and grace until he returns in glory at the end of time. But they also warn us that the gates of hell – the forces of evil – will battle with great fury until the end of time to try to destroy his Church.

### **PERSECUTION, HERESY AND SCHISM**

So from the very beginning, the Church was attacked with great persecution. For 300 years the Church was illegal in the Roman Empire, and very many Christians suffered martyrdom. Persecution would keep returning, even to the present day.

Another way evil attacked the Church was through false teaching, which would change the true meaning of Christ’s saving teaching. Many times there have been great divisions in the Church because of this. In the end, the Pope and the Bishops proclaim the correct meaning, but often there are those who break away from the Church rather than accept their teaching.

### **A CHURCH OF SINNERS**

Sin within the Church, whether of popes, bishops, priests, religious or laypeople, has also caused great wounds in Christ’s Body over two thousand years. Even though the Church’s teachings are holy, and Christ gives grace through her Sacraments, each of us still has free will, and so can sin. Many leaders in the Church have been saints, but others have been unworthy, even as one of the Twelve Apostles was himself a traitor.

We do not judge a medicine by those who buy it but never use it, but by those who actually take it. The power of the Church to produce holiness must be judged by looking at those who actually believe and obey her teachings, who pray, and who make prayerful use of her sacraments, not by looking at those members of the Church through history who have neglected these things. (And indeed, to use the sacraments themselves while deliberately remaining in a state of grave sin actually makes one spiritually worse off, not better, since it is itself the grave sin of sacrilege. Thus, we can easily see how even those who are often receiving the sacraments might not necessarily become holy.)

The free will of every individual always leaves open the possibility that any person will choose evil rather than good. This has no effect on the promises of Christ. The truth of the Church’s official teaching is necessary if Christians are to have sure access to God’s revealed truth, so the Holy Spirit ensures at least this. The holiness of Catholics and Church leaders on the other hand, while very beneficial to the Church, is not essential in the same way and we find no indication that God has guaranteed this.

## **WEEDS AND WHEAT**

Jesus warned that the 'kingdom of heaven', in the form it takes in this present world as the Church on earth, would be like a net, containing good fish and bad (Mt 13:47-50), or a field where the enemy has sown weeds among the wheat (Mt 13:24-30). As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit of Truth never leaves the Church, so we always trust her teachings, even if given by sinful leaders – but we do not follow the example of the sinful leaders themselves. As Jesus told his disciples about the Jewish religious leaders, 'The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.' (Mt 23:2-3)

A false idea that keeps recurring in Church history is that the Church's members only include the 'perfect'. According to this sinners couldn't be considered as true Catholics. The parable Jesus tells of the weeds sown amongst the good wheat of the kingdom shows us how God views this. To the servants in the parable who want to get rid of all the weeds, the owner of the field (who represents Jesus himself) replies, '...you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest...' In truth, every person is a mixture of both weed and wheat, so we are thankful that we are given until 'the harvest' to let God nurture us into being true wheat for the kingdom. This should help keep us humble when we're tempted to pass judgment on other members of the Church and think what hypocrites they are, or even to think that we're too good for such a crowd, and to walk away from God's Church in pious disgust.

## **LIGHT AND SHADOW**

The parable also casts a light on the objection to the Faith based on the sinfulness of Catholics over the centuries. In the end, it is exactly what Jesus predicted – a mix of weeds and wheat. Faced with various scandals from Church history, how should we respond? First, we need to have an accurate picture of the real history. Mixed in with valid charges are all sorts of legends and false accusations. Often too, perspective is lacking. So, the huge benefits the Church has brought to the world are sidelined; conversely, it is neglected that the sins of Christians are often the very same sins present, maybe to an even greater degree, in non-Christians. In other words the problem isn't with the Faith as such, but with the human race.

We should also distinguish between sins committed in full knowledge and guilt, and mistakes made in good faith in cases where the implications of the Gospel have not yet fully permeated people's thinking. The Holy Spirit works gently and gradually with the whole human race, and that includes Catholics. The Gospel comes to a person, to a society, already influenced in all sorts of ways, positive and negative, by their culture and history, and that has an impact on how completely they receive the Gospel. So it is only step-by-step that the Church has fully applied Gospel principles to matters like e.g. slavery or religious freedom. No false teachings on such matters have ever been proclaimed as dogmas of faith, and yet on the other hand the full truth does not get understood and proclaimed all at once either.

It is when we have cleared away all these matters that we are faced with the real sinfulness of Catholics. It is then we can say – again, leaving final judgment of individuals to God himself – 'Guilty as charged!' Christ has promised us the truth of the Church's teachings, and the grace of the Sacraments, but these don't guarantee that we will live accordingly. Free will can always reject grace and truth. Yet when we look at the lives of those who fully devote themselves to following the way of life set forth by the Church's faith, then we receive a vision not just of the universality of sin, but of the universality of grace, through which Christ will keep bringing forth saints in his Church until the end of the world.

## **AD 1517 – AD 2013: The Church in Modern Times**

*The modern era of the Church begins with the Protestant Reformation, and the Catholic Church's response in the Council of Trent. It was a time of religious war and persecution. The work of the Jesuits helped reclaim some of Europe for the Church; they were also prominent in the vast mission territories opened by the age of exploration and European colonisation, as the Church spread to all continents. From the 1600's, elements of secularisation in Europe became clearer, culminating in the 18<sup>th</sup> century 'Enlightenment' and French Revolution. Meanwhile the scientific and industrial revolutions were also changing the face of the world.*

*The nineteenth century saw the upheaval of the Napoleonic Wars, and the Church consolidating her teaching in the First Vatican Council. Finally the twentieth century brought the horror of the two World Wars, and the great totalitarian systems with their countless martyrs. At Vatican II, the Catholic Church addressed herself to modern conditions, with the hope of bringing Christ to the world with a new missionary spirit. In the West, secularisation still continued its inroads in the years that followed, but among other signs of hope in times of difficulty, great growth in Africa and Asia showed the power of the Holy Spirit still with the Church, until the end of time as Jesus promised.*

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**16<sup>th</sup> Century, 1517 - 1600 – Protestant Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, England, Scotland, Netherlands – Colonisation and evangelisation in the Americas – The Jesuits – Council of Trent and Catholic reform (sometimes called 'Counter-Reformation') – Turkish expansion halted – Wars of religion – Persecution on both sides – Catholic revival turns back Protestant tide in France, Poland, Bohemia, Austria, Bavaria**

- 1517** Protestant Reformation is sparked when German priest Martin Luther posts '95 Theses' on the church door in Wittenberg, protesting the Church's practice of indulgences. Soon Catholic teachings on justification, Scripture, the Eucharist and Sacraments are challenged.
- 1519-56** Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor, King of Spain & Archduke of Austria) is the dominant ruler of his time; he tries to combat the Reformation.
- 1519-21** Conquistadors in Mexico overthrow the Aztec Empire with its religion of human sacrifice. Spanish and Portuguese colonisation of the Americas in this era starts evangelisation there.
- 1521** Condemnation of Luther at the Diet of Worms. Protected by German princes, Luther promotes his doctrine in Germany till his death (1546).
- 1525** Influenced by Swiss reformer priest Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, a more radical Protestantism begins, with Anabaptists in Switzerland rejecting infant baptism.
- 1527** Sack of Rome by Imperial forces ends the Renaissance glory of the city.
- 1527** Gustav I of Sweden breaks with the Catholic Church, establishes Lutheranism.
- 1529** Ottoman Turks, at the peak of their power, defeated at the Siege of Vienna.
- 1530** 'Augsburg Confession' sets forth Lutheran belief.
- 1531** Native Mexican St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin has visions of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (Her shrine in Mexico City, preserving St Juan Diego's cloak with the miraculous image of Our Lady, is today the most visited Catholic pilgrimage site.) The next several years see millions of baptisms in Mexico.
- 1534** The Spaniard St Ignatius of Loyola founds the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). The Jesuits play a central role in combating the Reformation and in missionary work.
- 1534** Henry VIII of England, refused an annulment of his marriage by the Pope, proclaims himself Supreme Head of the Church in England, beginning the history of Anglicanism. Suppression of the monasteries follows (1536-41).



- 1535** Renowned scholar and former Lord Chancellor St Thomas More and the bishop St John Fisher are executed by Henry VIII for holding to the Pope as Head of the Church.
- 1535** St Angela Merici establishes the Ursulines, pioneers of female education. They educate girls at parish churches, taking up traditions of female education at some medieval convents.
- 1536** French reformer priest John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* sets forth a more radical Protestantism than Luther in doctrines such as predestination. Calvin promoted his teachings especially in Geneva till his death (1564); Calvinism is the basis of the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions, and Puritanism in England.
- 1536** Christian III introduces Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway; all Catholic Bishops arrested, monasteries suppressed.
- 1537** Pope Paul III condemns enslavement and robbery of native Americans by Spanish colonists.
- 1542** Henry VIII has himself proclaimed King of Ireland, beginning increasing English domination there; religious conflict ensues for centuries.
- 1542** Jesuit missionary St Francis Xavier arrives in Goa; he evangelises in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Japan. (Indian Catholics today are grouped in the Latin (western) Church planted there under the Portuguese at this time, and the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Catholic Churches descending from the St Thomas Christians in Kerala that trace their origins to St Thomas the Apostle.)
- 1542** Roman Inquisition established (today the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith).
- 1543** Polish Catholic cleric Nicolaus Copernicus publishes his theory that the earth revolves around the sun.
- 1545-63** At long last the Bishops of the Catholic Church meet in Ecumenical Council at Trent in northern Italy, and the Church gives her response to the Reformation. Catholic teachings are re-affirmed, clarified and defined – on Scripture & Tradition; original sin; justification; the Sacraments; Baptism; Christ's real presence in the Eucharist; the Mass as a true sacrifice; Reconciliation; Priesthood; Marriage; veneration of the saints; purgatory; indulgences. Seminary system for the training of priests established. Many abuses in Church life are addressed (absentee bishops, nepotism, laxity) and discipline reasserted.
- 1553-58** Mary I re-establishes Catholicism in England; Protestants persecuted.
- 1558-1603** Elizabeth I re-establishes Church of England, enforcing the Anglican 'middle way' between Protestant and Catholic.
- 1560** Scottish Reformation led by priest John Knox outlaws the Mass and establishes Presbyterianism.
- 1562** *Missa Papae Marcellae*, most famous composition of Palestrina, master of Catholic polyphony.
- 1562-98** French Wars of Religion between Catholics and Protestants re-establish Catholic ascendancy.
- 1563** The '39 Articles' define Anglicanism.
- 1565** Evangelisation of the Philippines begins with Spanish colonisation; (first baptisms 1521).
- 1565** 'Great Siege of Malta' by the Turks, defeated by the Knights of Malta (Hospitallers), the last great battle of the crusader knights. (The Knights rule Malta till removed by Napoleon in 1798; today, based in Rome, they do charitable works internationally.)
- 1566** Publication by Pope St Pius V of the *Roman Catechism* (Catechism of the Council of Trent), the only universal Catholic Catechism until the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992.
- 1570** St Pius V excommunicates Elizabeth I and releases her subjects from obedience to her. Many Catholics are martyred in England in the following years.
- 1570** St Pius V standardises the Liturgy of the Mass in the form it takes until Vatican II.

- 1571 Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church.
- 1571 The Turks are defeated in the naval battle of Lepanto by the 'Holy League' of Catholic states organised by St Pius V. The decisive blow to Turkish expansion is commemorated in the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (7 October).
- 1572 St Bartholomew's Day massacre of thousands of Huguenots (French Calvinists) in Paris and elsewhere; (it is unclear how this was instigated).
- 1575 St Philip Neri founds the Oratorian Fathers in Rome. The 'Second Apostle of Rome', St Philip plays a key role in Catholic reform by helping convert the very heart of the Church.
- 1577 Spanish reformer of the Carmelites St Teresa of Avila writes the spiritual masterpiece *The Interior Castle*. In the following years her colleague in the reform, St John of the Cross, is writing classics of mysticism such as *Dark Night of the Soul* and *Spiritual Canticle*.
- 1582 Pope Gregory XIII authorises the 'Gregorian Calendar'. Reforming the 'Julian Calendar' established by Julius Caesar, it is today used almost worldwide.
- 1584 Death of St Charles Borromeo, Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, a driving force in Catholic reform, seeing the Council of Trent to its conclusion and implementing its decrees.
- 1587 The Catholic Mary Queen of Scots is executed by Elizabeth I. Spanish Armada sent by Philip II the following year fails to overthrow Protestant rule in England.
- 1595 Union of Brest brings Orthodox Bishops of the Ruthenian Church into communion with Rome, forming what is now the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, largest of the 22 Eastern Catholic Churches (that with the Latin Church make up the universal Catholic Church).
- 1597 Jesuit St Paul Miki is crucified in Japan with 25 companions. Decades of bitter persecution drive the thriving Japanese Church underground for 200 years.

#### SAINTS

St John Fisher; St Thomas More; St Angela Merici; Bl. Lucy of Narnia; St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin; St John of God; St Francis Xavier; St Ignatius Loyola; St Stanislaus Kostka; St John of Avila; St Francis Borgia; St Pius V; 40 Martyrs of England & Wales (incl. Carthusian Martyrs; St Cuthbert Mayne; St Edmund Campion; St Ralph Sherwin; St Margaret Ward); St Teresa of Avila; St Charles Borromeo; St Benedict the Moor; St Aloysius Gonzaga; St John of the Cross; St Paschal Baylon; St Philip Neri; St Paul Miki & Companions; St Peter Canisius.

#### THE POPE

217. Adrian VI (1522-23)  
 218. Clement VII (1523-34)  
 219. Paul III (1534-49)  
 220. Julius III (1550-55)  
 221. Marcellus II (1555)  
 222. Paul IV (1555-59)  
 223. Pius IV (1559-65)  
 224. St. Pius V (1566-72)  
 225. Gregory XIII (1572-85)

226. Sixtus V (1585-90)  
 227. Urban VII (1590)  
 228. Gregory XIV (1590-91)  
 229. Innocent IX (1591)  
 230. Clement VIII (1592-1605)

'I perceived that the papacy upholdeth all.'  
*(St Thomas More, martyred for his refusal to accept Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church in England)*

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*'In the sixteenth century the Pontificate, exposed to new dangers more formidable than had ever before threatened it, was saved by a new religious Order, which was animated by intense enthusiasm and organised with exquisite skill. When the Jesuits came to the rescue, they found the Papacy in extreme peril; but from that moment the tide of battle turned... Before the Order had existed a hundred years, it had filled the whole world with memorials of great things done and suffered for the Faith.'*

British Protestant historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*

## **GOD'S FREE GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION, MERITED BY CHRIST, ACCEPTED BY LIVING FAITH**

A central issue of the Reformation was the nature of justification and salvation. How are we sinners made just and righteous, and set on the path to heaven? Catholic teaching is that by God's merciful act, justification was merited for human beings by Christ's Passion and Death and is conferred on individuals by the Holy Spirit as a free gift, cleansing them from sin and sanctifying them within (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). With this abiding supernatural grace that conforms us to Christ and to God's righteousness, faith, hope and love are granted.

A person freely accepts justification by repentance and by faith in Christ, these being themselves gifts of grace. Merely intellectual faith is insufficient for justification and salvation: it must be living faith that works by love (James 2:14, 17, 24; Gal 5:6). God's normal instrument in conferring justification is the Sacrament of Baptism (1 Pet 3:21) that makes us members of Christ's Body (1 Cor 12:13).

Justification cannot be merited by the sinner (Eph 2:8-10), yet Scripture speaks of heavenly reward (e.g. Mt 5:12; Col 3:24; 2 Tim 4:8). This is because those in whom Christ *already* dwells by faith and grace can truly merit reward as it is primarily Christ who acts within them (Gal 2:20).

The grace of justification can be later rejected by mortal sin. If this happens, God may again confer it on a repentant sinner, normally in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) (cf. Jn 20:23). Those who will be saved are those who die with this sanctifying grace of the Spirit within them, as this grace, a sharing in God's own life, wells up into life eternal (cf. Jn 4:14; Jn 7:37-39).

### **CATHOLIC TEACHING ON JUSTIFICATION IN SCRIPTURE**

Catholic teaching makes what can seem like a jigsaw of Scriptural teachings on justification and salvation all fall into place. Here are a few relevant quotes:

- On salvation as God's free gift, obtained for us by the Death and Resurrection of Christ: 'Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.' (Rom 3:23-24)
- On our spiritual transformation by God's grace: 'If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come.' (2 Cor 5:17)
- On being justified by faith, and the need of faith for salvation: 'Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Rom 5:1) 'He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.' (Mk 16:16)
- On the necessity of love for salvation: 'If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.' (1 Cor 13:2-3)
- On the necessity of good works: 'What does it profit if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him?...So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead...You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.' (James 2:14, 17, 24; see also Mt 25:31-46)
- On the connection of faith, love and good works: 'In Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith working through love.' (Gal 5:6)

- On love as the gift of the Holy Spirit: ‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.’ (Rom 5:5)
  
- On Baptism as God’s instrument in giving us the grace of salvation: ‘Baptism now saves you...as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ (1 Pet 3:21) ‘Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?’ (Rom 6:3)
  
- A summary of how God’s mercy saves us, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, by the free gift of grace given in the washing of Baptismal rebirth: ‘He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might become justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.’ (Titus 3:5-7)
  
- On the importance of the Eucharist as nourishment for salvation: ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you...For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed...This is the bread which came down from heaven...anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.’ (Jn 6:53, 55, 58)
  
- On the need to keep the Commandments to hold on to the grace of salvation we have received: ‘If you would enter life, keep the Commandments.’ (Mt 19:17; see also Gal 5:19-21)
  
- On the reason for this, in the connection between keeping the Commandments, and true love: ‘If you love me you will keep my commandments.’ (Jn 14:15)
  
- On the difference between mortal and venial sin: ‘There is sin that is mortal...All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not mortal.’ (1 Jn 5:16-17)
  
- On the possibility of falling away from goodness into sin, and of repenting of sin and returning to goodness: ‘When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity they shall die for it...When the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.’ (Ezek 18:26-27; see also 1 Tim 1:19)
  
- On the possibility of losing salvation: ‘If we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire... how much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified...?’ (Heb 10:26-31; see also 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21; 2 Pet 2:20-22)
  
- On the element of uncertainty in one’s personal salvation: ‘I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.’ (1 Cor 9:27) ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.’ (Phil 2:12; see also 1 Cor 10:12; 1 Cor 4:4)
  
- On the forgiveness of sins through the Apostles (and their successors) in Reconciliation: ‘If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ (Jn 20:23)
  
- On the need to stay firm in love till death: ‘The love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved.’ (Mt 24:12-13)

**17<sup>th</sup> Century – Jesuit missions – Thirty Years War – Galileo – Scientific Revolution – Jansenism, Laxism, Quietism, Gallicanism – Catholic vs Protestant in Stuart England – St Francis de Sales, St Vincent de Paul, St Margaret Mary**

- 1601** Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci is the first Westerner admitted to the Forbidden City by the Chinese Emperor; Ricci inculturates the faith in the Chinese context, gaining influence and converts.
- 1605** Catholic conspirator Guy Fawkes plots to blow up the English Parliament.
- 1609** *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, sets forth paths to holiness for those in all states of life.
- 1609** First Baptist Church founded in Amsterdam by John Smyth, a separatist from the Church of England.
- 1609-1767** Jesuit 'Reduction' settlements centred in Paraguay give autonomy and cultural respect to indigenous peoples.
- 1618-48** Thirty Years War, last of the 'wars of religion' between Catholic and Protestant forces, involves many European powers and devastates Germany. Catholic France under Cardinal Richelieu intervenes on the Protestant side.
- 1620** Fr Alexandre de Rhodes arrives in Hanoi to join the Jesuit mission there. He invents modern Vietnamese script.
- 1632** Colony of Maryland founded in America as a haven for persecuted Catholics; it is a pioneer in religious toleration.
- 1633** Papal recognition of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers) established by French priest St Vincent de Paul. Establishment of the Daughters of Charity by St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac.
- 1633** Condemnation of Galileo by the Holy Office for promoting Copernicus' theory. (It seems the Holy See's error never reached the level of formal papal teaching; certainly, it was never infallibly defined.)
- 1638** Death of Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres. His writings begin Calvinist-leaning 'Jansenism' within the Church.
- 1641** Rene Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* sets the direction for modern philosophy. Though intended to prove the existence of God and the immaterial human mind, in the long term its underlying errors help lead the western intellect astray.
- 1643-1715** Reign in France of the absolutist 'Sun King', Louis XIV. His religious policy is touched by 'Gallicanism' that asserts the autonomy of the French Church from the papacy.
- 1648** Treaty of Westphalia concludes the Thirty Years War; the Holy Roman Empire declines in significance and the Holy See is politically sidelined.
- 1653** Pope Innocent X condemns Jansenism, affirming against it that the human will is free to resist grace, and that Christ died for all, not just the predestined.
- 1654** Queen Christina of Sweden abdicates to become Catholic.
- 1665-66** The Holy See condemns 'laxist' teachings that had rationalised various sins.
- 1673-75** Visions of Jesus by French Visitation nun, St Margaret Mary Alacoque, found modern devotion to the Sacred Heart.

- 1678-81** The fictitious 'Popish Plot' in England triggers anti-Catholic hysteria and executions of Catholics.
- 1681** Establishment of the Chaldean Catholic Church, with the reunion with Rome of part of the Assyrian Church of the East. (An earlier union had occurred from 1553, but petered out.)
- 1683** Vienna besieged by the Turks; its relief by Polish and Imperial forces under King John Sobieski marks the long decline of Turkish power and the rise of Austria. Feast of the Holy Name of Mary (12 September) commemorates the victory.
- 1685** Charles II of England converts to Catholicism on his deathbed; his Catholic brother succeeds to the throne as James II.
- 1685** Louis XIV revokes the 1598 'Edict of Nantes' that had given toleration to French Protestants.
- 1687** Pope Innocent XI condemns the 'Quietism' of Miguel de Molinos, which had overemphasised human passivity in the path to virtue and holiness.
- 1688** The 'Glorious Revolution': James II flees England after his moves to gain religious toleration for Catholics and others arouse Anglican fears. From 1689 Catholics are excluded from the throne, to the present day; but the Catholic 'Jacobite' line continues its claim until 1807, with uprisings in 1715 by James' son, 'James III', and in 1745, by his son, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'.
- 1690** Defeat of James II at the Battle of the Boyne confirms Protestant domination over Ireland.
- 1690** The Holy See condemns Jansenist 'rigorist' teachings at the opposite extreme from laxism.

#### SAINTS

St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi; St Rose of Lima; St John Berchmans; St Robert Bellarmine; St Francis de Sales; St Fidelis of Sigmaringen; St Lorenzo Ruiz; St Martin de Porres; St Jane Frances de Chantal; St Joseph Calasanz; St Bernard of Corleone; North American Martyrs; St Peter Claver; St Andrew Bobola; St Louise de Marillac; St Vincent de Paul; St Joseph of Cupertino; St John Eudes; St Kateri Tekakwitha; St Oliver Plunkett; St Claude de la Colombiere; St Margaret Mary Alacoque; St John de Brito.

#### THE POPES

- 231. Leo XI (1605)
- 232. Paul V (1605-21)
- 233. Gregory XV (1621-23)
- 234. Urban VIII (1623-44)
- 235. Innocent X (1644-55)
- 236. Alexander VII (1655-67)
- 237. Clement IX (1667-69)
- 238. Clement X (1670-76)
- 239. Blessed Innocent XI (1676-89)
- 240. Alexander VIII (1689-91)
- 241. Innocent XII (1691-1700)

"The treaties of 1648 really mark the end of an epoch; or rather, they are a definite sign that the ages in which the Catholic Church, through its head the Pope, was a recognised force in the public life of Europe, had finally come to an end. After more than a thousand years the State was once more to transact its business as though the Church did not exist, and the Church would now, increasingly, be considered – by Catholic powers too – as simply a collective association of those who held like beliefs in religious matters..." (Philip Hughes, *A Popular History of the Catholic Church*)

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*'There was no region of the globe, no walk of speculative or of active life, in which the Jesuits were not to be found. They guided the counsels of kings. They deciphered Latin inscriptions. They observed the motions of Jupiter's satellites. They published whole libraries... They glided from one Protestant country to another under innumerable disguises... They were to be found in the garb of Mandarins superintending the observatory at Pekin. They were to be found, spade in hand, teaching the rudiments of agriculture to the savages of Paraguay. Yet, whatever might be their residence, whatever might be their employment, their spirit was the same...'*

British Protestant historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCIENCE

*The Catholic Church has long defended the full validity of reason as a way of finding truth. Faith and reason, the Church teaches, cannot conflict, since both come from God. The 'Scientific Revolution' did not appear out of nowhere in the 1600s. Historians of science find its roots in the universities of medieval Europe, which were fostered by the Catholic Church, and indeed had numerous clergy as professors. The Church over the centuries gave massive patronage not only to the arts but to the sciences. As a simple internet search reveals, numerous Catholic clergy and religious have themselves made important contributions to science. Only a few are 'household names', but we can mention the following as standing out for pioneering and original discoveries:*

**Bishop Robert Grosseteste** (c. 1175-1253) English bishop, founder of scientific thought at Oxford University and first promoter in medieval Europe of scientific method.

**Roger Bacon** (c. 1214-1292?) English friar who further developed the idea of scientific method and wrote in optics, mathematics and astronomy.

**Jean Buridan** (c. 1295-1363) French priest at the University of Paris whose idea of impetus in physics began the path that eventually led to the 'Scientific Revolution' (especially the ideas of Isaac Newton). Buridan's ideas were carried forward by Albert of Saxony (bishop) (1320-90), Nicolas Oresme (bishop) (1325-82) and St John Cantius (priest) (1390-1473).

**Nicolaus Copernicus** (1473-1543) Polish cleric (not a priest but a canon in 'minor orders') who put forward the theory that the earth revolved around the sun rather than vice-versa – the 'Copernican Revolution', a great leap forward for science. (His theory met no real opposition in the Church until the Galileo affair.)

**Marin Mersenne** (1588-1648) French priest, founder of the science of acoustics.

**Francesco Lana de Terzi** (1631-87) Italian priest, founder of aeronautics.

**Jean Mabillon** (1632-1707) French Benedictine monk, founder of palaeography, the study and dating of manuscripts.

**Blessed Nicolas Steno** (1638-86) Danish priest and bishop, convert to the Catholic faith, one of the founders of geology, of the study of fossils, and of the study of crystals.

**Roger Boscovich** (1711-87) Croatian/Italian priest who made important discoveries in astronomy and physics.

**Andrew Gordon** (1712-51) Scottish priest, inventor of the first electric motor.

**Gregor Mendel** (1822-84) Austrian priest, founder of modern genetics.

**Georges Lemaître** (1894-1966) Belgian priest who first put forward the 'Big Bang Theory' of the origin of the universe; president of the Holy See's Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

*If we add other Catholics besides clergy, we would have a huge list. This is hardly surprising considering the great number of Catholics overall in the world, now and in the past. However, it is worth mentioning the following as committed Catholic believers among the most prominent scientists:*

**Georgius Agricola** (1494-1555): father of mineralogy. **Galileo Galilei** (1564-1642): physicist, astronomer and mathematician (despite his conflict with Church authorities, he lived and died a believing Catholic). **René Descartes** (1596-1650): great influence in philosophy, mathematics. **Pierre de Fermat** (1601-65): mathematics. **Blaise Pascal** (1623-62): central work in mathematics (probability) and physics (hydraulics). **Antoine Laurent Lavoisier** (1743-94): father of modern chemistry. **Alessandro Volta** (1745-1827): inventor of the battery; the 'volt' is named after him. **André-Marie Ampère** (1775-1836): pioneer in electromagnetism; the 'amp' is named after him. **Augustin-Louis Cauchy** (1789-1857): mathematics, mathematical physics. **Jean-Baptiste Dumas** (1800-84): chemistry. **Pierre Duhem** (1861-1916): physicist, historian of science.

**18<sup>th</sup> century, to 1815 – The ‘Enlightenment’: faith challenged as being against reason and science – Protestant Revivalism in America – Industrial Revolution begins in England – Suppression of the Jesuits – French Revolution and the Terror – The Napoleonic Wars – Popes in captivity – Defeat of Napoleon**

- 1704 Pope Clement XI, rejecting Jesuit practice, prohibits Chinese Catholics from paying honours to ancestors and to Confucius, as being compromised by paganism. This ban, which greatly affects missionary work, is removed by Pius XII in 1939.
- 1713 Clement XI issues final condemnation against continuing Jansenist currents.
- 1724 St John Baptist de la Salle’s ‘Brothers of the Christian Schools’ approved by Benedict XIII.
- 1724 Melkite Church in Syria affirms union with Rome, forming Melkite Greek Catholic Church.
- 1732 St Alphonsus Liguori establishes the Redemptorist Order.
- 1738 Clement XII gives the first of many papal condemnations of freemasonry.
- 1738 John Wesley begins an evangelical movement in the Church of England which eventually breaks away as Methodism. (In Australia, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists unite in 1977 to form the Uniting Church.)
- 1740-58 Intellectual reforming pope, Benedict XIV.
- 1741 The Passionists, founded by St Paul of the Cross, approved by Benedict XIV.
- 1769 Franciscan priest St Junipero Serra begins his work in California; the missions the Franciscans establish become the major Californian cities (Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc.).
- 1773 After a series of suppressions of the Jesuits by Catholic states fearful of their influence, Pope Clement XIV under pressure suppresses the entire order.
- 1788 Catholicism arrives in Australia with the First Fleet’s landing in Sydney.
- 1789 French Revolution overthrows the monarchy. Church lands confiscated.
- 1790 ‘Civil Constitution of the Clergy’ in France puts clergy under state control. Religious orders dissolved. In 1791 Pius VI condemns the Constitution, and a majority of clergy resist it; many imprisoned.
- 1793-94 Louis XVI guillotined. Churches closed. Catholic uprising in the Vendée. ‘Reign of Terror’: revolutionaries execute tens of thousands. Priests liable to death on sight. ‘Goddess of Reason’ enthroned in Notre Dame.
- 1798 French troops occupy Rome. Pope Pius VI taken captive.
- 1799 Pius VI dies in captivity in France; many assume the papacy is finished. Unable to meet in Rome, following instructions left by Pius VI for emergency conditions the cardinals meet in Venice, and elect Pius VII.
- 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte takes power in France.
- 1801 Concordat (Treaty) of Pius VII with Napoleon regularises the Church’s situation in France.
- 1802 Bl. Edmund Rice establishes the first Christian Brothers school in Waterford, Ireland.
- 1804 Napoleon crowns himself emperor in Notre Dame in the Pope’s presence.
- 1806 Holy Roman Empire dissolved after France’s defeat of Austria, 1006 years from the papal coronation of Charlemagne.
- 1807 Bishop Daniel Delany founds the Brigidine Sisters in Ireland.



- 1809** France occupies the Papal States. Napoleon excommunicated. Pius VII captive of the French at Savona and Fontainebleau.
- 1814** Pius VII is freed and returns to Rome on 24 May. Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians commemorates this.
- 1814** Pius VII restores the Jesuits.
- 1815** The Congress of Vienna, establishing the new order in Europe, restores the Papal States. Final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo.

### SAINTS

St Louis de Montfort; St John Baptist de La Salle; St Veronica Giuliani; St Lucy Filippini; St Gerard Majella; St Teresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart; St Vincent Liem; St Paul of the Cross; St Benedict Joseph Labre; St Junipero Serra; St Alphonsus Liguori.

### THE POPES

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|------------------------------|---|
| 242. Clement XI (1700-21)    | <p>‘The whole course of Christianity from the first ... is but one series of troubles and disorders. Every century is like every other, and to those who live in it seems worse than all times before it. The Church is ever ailing ... Religion seems ever expiring, schisms dominant, the light of Truth dim, its adherents scattered. The cause of Christ is ever in its last agony, as though it were but a question of time whether it fails finally this day or another.’ <i>St John Henry Newman</i></p> |
| 243. Innocent XIII (1721-24) |   |
| 244. Benedict XIII (1724-30) |   |
| 245. Clement XII (1730-40)   |   |
| 246. Benedict XIV (1740-58)  |   |
| 247. Clement XIII (1758-69)  |   |
| 248. Clement XIV (1769-74)   |   |
| 249. Pius VI (1775-99)       |   |
| 250. Pius VII (1800-23)      |   |

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*‘Such has been the slumber and such the restoration of the Church. She pauses in her course, and almost suspends her functions; she rises again, and she is herself once more; all things are in their place and ready for action. Doctrine is where it was, and usage, and precedence, and principle, and policy; there may be changes, but they are consolidations and adaptations; all is unequivocal and determinate, with an identity which there is no disputing.’*

St John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*

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**19<sup>th</sup> Century, 1815 - 1914 – Missionaries & martyrs – battle against slavery – Victorian era – Karl Marx – Marian visions and dogma – Charles Darwin – Protestant revivalism – Vatican I and papal infallibility – Modernist theological errors downplay the supernatural – Catholic social doctrine – St Pius X – World War I**

- 1816** St Eugene de Mazenod founds the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.
- 1816-17** Ven. Jean-Claude Colin and St Marcellin Champagnat found the Marist Fathers and Brothers.
- 1820** Marie Madeleine de Bonnault d’Hoüet founds the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Amiens.
- 1829** ‘Catholic Emancipation’: many legal restrictions on British and Irish Catholics lifted.
- 1830** Joseph Smith begins the Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) in New York state, based on his claimed new revelations.
- 1830** French Daughter of Charity St Catherine Labouré receives the revelation of the Miraculous Medal from Our Lady.

- 1831 Ven. Catherine McAuley establishes the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin to help the needy.
- 1831-41 Catholicism prohibited in Vietnam under Confucian Emperor Minh Mang; numerous martyrdoms follow.
- 1833 Bl. Frederic Ozanam establishes the Society of St Vincent de Paul to help the poor in Paris.
- 1839 Pope Gregory XVI reinforces earlier papal condemnations of the slave trade.
- 1845 St John Henry Newman, leading light of the 'Oxford Movement' that seeks to recapture Catholic traditions within the Church of England, becomes a Catholic, paving the way for many others since.
- 1846 Appearance of Our Lady at La Salette.
- 1848 Revolutions across Europe; Bl. Pius IX flees Rome in disguise. He returns in 1850 with French support.
- 1848 James Goold installed in St Francis Church as first Bishop of Melbourne.
- 1850 Catholic hierarchy re-established in England, provoking opposition.
- 1854 St Jeanne Jugan's Little Sisters of the Poor approved by Pius IX.
- 1854 Pius IX defines the Immaculate Conception of Mary as infallible dogma.
- 1856 Feast of the Sacred Heart extended by Pius IX to the universal Church.
- 1856 St Peter Julian Eymard founds the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Paris.
- 1858 Appearances of Our Lady to St Bernadette at Lourdes, France; numerous scientifically-validated miraculous cures follow, with Lourdes becoming a major shrine.
- 1859 Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* on evolutionary theory, challenging literalist view of Genesis. [Catholics, the Church has explained, may believe in the evolution of the human body, but must affirm that the soul is directly created by God.]
- 1860 Newly-united Italy occupies much of the Papal States.
- 1863 Establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- 1864 In the *Syllabus of Errors* the Church denounces many trends of the modern world.
- 1865 William Booth founds the Salvation Army in London.
- 1866 Thousands of Catholics martyred in Korea, the culmination of long persecution.
- 1866 St Mary MacKillop founds the Sisters of St Joseph in Penola, South Australia.
- 1870 1<sup>st</sup> Vatican Council gives infallible teachings on the divine attributes and on creation; on the nature and relationship of faith and reason; and on papal authority as God's law. The dogma is proclaimed that the pope's definitions are infallible even apart from an Ecumenical Council. 'Old Catholics' splinter from the Church.

- 1870** Kingdom of Italy captures Rome; end of the Papal States. Pius IX is left in the Vatican with no civil power (Vatican City State is not established until 1929). Ecumenical Council suspended indefinitely.
- 1873** St John Bosco's Salesian Order approved by Pius IX.
- 1879** Pope Leo XIII gives new impetus to the unique position of St Thomas Aquinas in Catholic theology and philosophy, spurring the 'Thomist revival' that comes to dominate Catholic thought.
- 1891** Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* pioneers Catholic social doctrine, promoting workers' rights and rejecting socialism.
- 1900** Boxer Rebellion in China; numerous Catholics martyred.
- 1905** St Pius X encourages frequent Communion, greatly changing typical Catholic practice.
- 1907** Pius X condemns modernism as 'the synthesis of all heresies'. Central to modernism is the view that the meaning of Church dogmas can change over time. From 1910 until 1967 all clergy must take the 'anti-modernist oath'.
- 1910** Pope Pius X calls for First Communion for younger children.
- 1914** Establishment in America of the Assemblies of God, growing out of the Pentecostal revival that began in 1901. Pentecostalism spreads internationally through the century, influencing also the development of the charismatic movement in other Christian groups (including from 1967 the Catholic Church).
- 1914** Outbreak of First World War. Pius X fails in his attempt to turn Austria-Hungary back from war; he dies soon after.

## SAINTS

Chinese Martyrs; St Elizabeth Ann Seton; Vietnamese Martyrs; St Marcellin Champagnat; St Peter Chanel; Korean Martyrs; St Vincent Pallotti; St Dominic Savio; St John Vianney; St Eugene de Mazenod; St Peter Julian Eymard; St Anthony Mary Claret; St Catherine Labouré; St Bernadette Soubirous; St Jeanne Jugan; Ugandan Martyrs; St John Bosco; St Damian of Molokai; St John Henry Newman; St Therese of Lisieux; St Sharbel Makhluf; St Maria Goretti; St Gemma Galgani; St Mary MacKillop; St Pius X.

## THE POPES

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 251. Leo XII (1823-29)         | ‘We teach and define that it is a dogma revealed by God: That the Roman pontiff, when he speaks <i>ex cathedra</i> , that is, when, acting in the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, possesses through the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter the infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed in defining the doctrine concerning faith or morals...’ (1 <sup>st</sup> Vatican Council) |
| 252. Pius VIII (1829-30)       |   |
| 253. Gregory XVI (1831-46)     |   |
| 254. Blessed Pius IX (1846-78) |   |
| 255. Leo XIII (1878-1903)      |   |
| 256. St. Pius X (1903-14)      |   |

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*‘The most obvious answer, then, to the question, why we yield to the authority of the Church in the questions and developments of faith, is, that some authority there must be if there is a revelation given, and other authority there is none but she. A revelation is not given if there be no authority to decide what it is that is given.’*

St John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE**

‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth.’ (Jn 16:13) This promise of Jesus to the disciples gives us confidence that his Church will always possess ‘the complete truth’. Yet his words also suggest that there is an ongoing ‘leading’ by the Spirit into deeper understanding of this truth already possessed. This is the ‘development of doctrine’, a key concept in understanding Church history. Although the fullness of truth is given in Christ, and Revelation is complete with the death of the last Apostle, the Church only gradually understands this Revelation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God’s Revelation is always interacting with our human reason and with different cultures, and our minds can never exhaust God’s Word. As new questions are asked, the Church must express an authoritative judgement, or the true interpretation of Revelation on these points will become diluted with the false.

A simple example is the teaching on Christ’s human nature. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) clarified that Christ was fully human, fully divine, in one divine Person. Two centuries later, some denied that Christ had a human will (which had not been explicitly taught by Chalcedon). The Third Council of Constantinople (680), against this, ‘added’ the ‘new teaching’ that Christ did truly have a human will. Obviously, this ‘new teaching’ only stated what was already implied in Chalcedon’s teaching. But if the new teaching had not been given, Chalcedon’s teaching on Christ’s full human nature would itself have been compromised. By rejecting the new, we can end by losing what we already had.

Many groups breaking away from the Catholic Church through history justify their position by saying that the Church has ‘added’ to the original doctrine, and even compromised it. Each such group thus claims to be protecting and continuing the true tradition. Chalcedon’s teaching that Christ was one person with two full natures was rejected by the Monophysites as something new; Protestants see the medieval Church as having added to and compromised the teachings of Scripture; and after Vatican II, some Catholics broke away because they thought the Council had compromised traditional Catholic beliefs. The Catholic Church would see all this as a false conservatism. To truly conserve the original doctrine, often a more precise and developed expression of it is needed, crystallising what was earlier expressed maybe only in an implicit or scattered way in Scripture and the continuing Tradition.

So we must be both conservative – conserving all the teachings of Scripture and Tradition with their meanings unchanged – and progressive, not in the sense of abandoning the truth we already have (which is hardly progress), but in the sense of always coming to a deeper understanding and clearer expression. ‘Conservative’ and ‘progressive’ really go together. As with so many things, we do not choose one extreme or the other (or even some halfway compromise), but both apparent ‘extremes’ at once, and to the full. In other words, our belief is catholic (all-inclusive, like Christ himself).

But to distinguish true developments from false ones, a visible authority is required which can infallibly judge this. Otherwise, individual believers would have to make the final decision themselves for every single doctrine (which is impossible for even scholars to do with certainty and unanimity, let alone believers in general). So it is by accepting the ongoing Spirit-guided teachings of Christ’s Church that Christians are led, as Christ promised, always deeper into that one ‘complete truth’ given from the start. The development of doctrine was especially taught by St Vincent of Lerins in the ancient Church. St John Henry Newman wrote the classic treatment, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, during his conversion to the Catholic Faith in 1845; understanding development was what led him to recognise the Catholic Church as being the Church in full continuity with the Apostles.

**20<sup>th</sup> Century, 1914 - 2013 – Century of martyrs – World War I – Communism, Fascism, Nazism – World War II – nuclear age – Cold War – space age – Vatican II: liturgical reform, ecumenism – ‘sexual revolution’ – St John Paul II – digital age – huge growth of the Church in Africa, decline in Europe – fall of Soviet communism – resurgent Islam**

- 1914-18** World War I. Pope Benedict XV repeatedly attempts to negotiate peace, and initiates humanitarian action.
- 1917** Church Law first fully codified (*Code of Canon Law*).
- 1917** Appearances of Our Lady at Fatima, Portugal, to three shepherd children, culminating in the Miracle of the Sun, with 70,000 witnessing the sun seeming to spin in the sky and fall towards the earth, at the very time the children had predicted a miracle would occur.
- 1917** Russian Revolution, leading to the establishment of the Soviet Union. The atheist Communist regime kills millions and persecutes religious believers for 70 years.
- 1921** Legion of Mary founded in Dublin by Frank Duff.
- 1925** Pope Pius XI establishes Feast of Christ the King.
- 1926** Calles government in Mexico enforces harsh laws against the Church. Catholics rebel in the Cristero War (1927-29). By 1934 few priests are left in the country.
- 1928** Opus Dei founded in Madrid by St Josemaria Escrivá.
- 1929** Lateran Treaty with Italy establishes the Vatican City as an independent state.
- 1931** ‘Big Bang theory’ of the origin of the universe first proposed by Belgian Catholic priest-physicist Fr Georges Lemaître. (Today the accepted scientific view, it went against the assumption by scientists of the time that the universe was eternal, but harmonised with the Catholic dogma of divine creation at the beginning of time.)
- 1931-38** Revelations of Divine Mercy to Polish nun St Faustina Kowalska.
- 1936-39** Spanish Civil War. Amongst atrocities on both sides, about 7000 clergy and religious and 3000 laity are killed for their faith by the Republicans.
- 1937** Pope Pius XI condemns Nazism in the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, smuggled into Germany to be read from all Catholic pulpits. (Under the Nazis 2600 priests go to Dachau Prison Camp; 1000 die there.)
- 1939-45** World War II. Nazi genocide of Jews. Some Catholics help Jews but many do not. Pope Pius XII orders extensive protection for Jews, including in the Vatican, saving (by a Jewish scholar’s estimate) at least 700,000 lives; he keeps a (partial, not total) diplomatic reserve so as not to provoke reprisals, a proven threat. After the war he is widely honoured by Jewish groups. (From 1963 some critics claim with hindsight he should have spoken out more strongly.) The Holy See also organises extensive humanitarian aid for other refugees.
- 1945** Beginning of nuclear age with atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The decades of the ‘Cold War’ between Soviet Russia and the West see communist expansion, and persecution of numerous religious believers in Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos.
- 1948** World Council of Churches, part of growing ecumenism among non-Catholic Christians.
- 1949** Communists take power in China. In the following years, millions killed; Christians persecuted until the present. Government sets up ‘Patriotic Catholic Association’ independent of Rome (1957).
- 1950** Pope Pius XII defines as dogma the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven.

- 1962-65** 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council opened by St John XXIII and seen through by St Paul VI. It reforms liturgy including permission for local languages; image of the Church as People of God, all called to holiness and mission; affirmation of positive aspects of modern world and other religions; ecumenism endorsed and friendly dialogue begun with other Christians; right of freedom from coercion in religious matters affirmed; lay apostolate encouraged; religious life reformed; teaching on collegiality of Bishops; Synod of Bishops established to meet regularly.
- 1968** Pope Paul VI reaffirms Church teaching against contraception in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*; dissent follows from many Catholics on this and other teachings. Following decades see tension between the Church and western society on sexual morality and bioethics.
- 1970** Revised liturgy called for by Vatican II is introduced with the new Roman Missal.
- 1978** Election of St John Paul II, first non-Italian pope since 1523.
- 1979** John Paul II visits Poland, inspiring the Solidarity trade union that becomes a catalyst for fall of European communism.
- 1981** Assassination attempt on John Paul II by Turkish terrorist leaves him close to death.
- 1983** New *Code of Canon Law* replaces Code of 1917.
- 1985** John Paul II inaugurates regular international youth gathering 'World Youth Day'.
- 1986** Development in bioethical teaching with the Church rejecting IVF, surrogacy.
- 1988** Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of traditionalist Society of St Pius X that opposes aspects of Vatican II, excommunicated for illicitly consecrating four bishops.
- 1989** Fall of Berlin Wall; communist regimes in Eastern Europe relinquish power. Freedom of religion restored. Soviet Union dissolved in 1991.
- 1992** *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, first universal catechism since 1566.
- 1993** John Paul II affirms moral absolutes and condemns relativistic morality in encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 'The Splendour of Truth'.
- 1995** John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, 'The Gospel of Life', confronting 40-50 million abortions around the world annually, calls for a new 'culture of life' to oppose the 'culture of death'.
- 1997** Death of St Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa), founder of Missionaries of Charity.
- 2000** Year of Great Jubilee celebrates two millennia since the Incarnation. John Paul II establishes Divine Mercy Sunday.
- 2002** Revelation of clerical sexual abuse from previous decades reaches critical mass, leading to an ongoing crisis and successive reform measures in the following years.
- 2005** Death of St John Paul II. His re-affirmation of all Catholic teaching in a modern key, and his travels to all parts of the world, strengthened Catholic identity. Funeral attended by millions.
- 2007** Pope Benedict XVI in *Summorum Pontificum* clarifies rights to use the older ('extraordinary') form of the Roman Liturgy from before Vatican II.
- 2011** Ordinariates for former Anglicans begin, bringing Anglican traditions into Catholic unity.
- 2013** Abdication of Benedict XVI; election of Pope Francis, first pope from the Americas.

## SAINTS

St Frances Xavier Cabrini; St Francisco Marto & St Jacinta Marto; St Teresa of the Andes; St Giuseppe Moscati; St Christopher Magallanes & Companions; Martyrs of Turon; St André of Montreal; St Faustina Kowalska; St Luigi Orione; St Maximilian Kolbe; St Leopold Mandić; St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein); St Pauline; St Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception; St Josephine Bakhita; St Alberto Hurtado; St Katharine Drexel; St Gianna Beretta Molla; St John XXIII; St (Padre) Pio of Pietrelcina; St Josemaria Escrivá; St Paul VI; St Oscar Romero; St Teresa of Calcutta; St John Paul II

## THE POPES

- 257. Benedict XV (1914-22)
- 258. Pius XI (1922-39)
- 259. Pius XII (1939-58)
- 260. St John XXIII (1958-63)
- 261. St Paul VI (1963-78)
- 262. John Paul I (1978)
- 263. St John Paul II (1978-2005)
- 264. Benedict XVI (2005-13)
- 265. Francis (2013 –)

‘This Sacred Council, following closely in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council, with that Council teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church ... He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion. And all this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the meaning and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and of his infallible magisterium, this Sacred Council again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful.’  
(*Vatican II, ‘Lumen Gentium’*)

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*‘With the feelings of a father We are moved and suffer profoundly with those who have paid such a price for their fidelity to Christ and to the Church; but the point has been reached where it is a question of the last and ultimate end, salvation or perdition, and here the only way of salvation for the believer lies in heroic fortitude.’*

Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Mit Brennender Sorge*

*‘And we saw in an immense light that is God ... there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels each with a crystal aspersorium in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God.’*

Sr Lucia of Fatima, the ‘Third Secret of Fatima’  
(the 1917 vision of the martyrdoms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their spiritual meaning).

## VATICAN II ON THE CHURCH AND THE PAPACY

*There have been 21 Ecumenical (General) Councils of Bishops in the history of the Catholic Church, the most recent being the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) from 1962 to 1965. Among other things, it gave important teachings about the nature of the Church. The Church is far more than the papacy, yet the papacy is what distinguishes the Catholic Church from every other Christian community, so a certain focus on it is essential for a correct understanding. Here are a few of the teachings of Vatican II especially to do with the Church and the papacy.*

‘God Himself has made known to mankind the way in which men are to serve Him, and thus be saved in Christ and come to blessedness. We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all men.’  
(‘Declaration on Religious Liberty’ *Dignitatis Humanae* 1)

‘This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after His Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and him and the other apostles to extend and direct with authority, which He erected for all ages as “the pillar and mainstay of the truth”. This Church constituted and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.’  
(‘Dogmatic Constitution on the Church’ *Lumen Gentium* 8)

‘In order to establish this His holy Church everywhere in the world till the end of time, Christ entrusted to the College of the Twelve the task of teaching, ruling and sanctifying. Among their number He selected Peter, and after his confession of faith determined that on him He would build His Church. Also to Peter He promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and after his profession of love, entrusted all His sheep to him to be confirmed in faith and shepherded in perfect unity. Christ Jesus Himself was forever to remain the chief cornerstone and shepherd of our souls.’  
(‘Decree on Ecumenism’ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 2)

‘For it is through Christ’s Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God.’ (‘Decree on Ecumenism’ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 3)

‘...the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation...Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it. They are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. The bonds which bind men to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion.’ (*Lumen Gentium* 14)

‘Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation...But more often men...have become vain in their reasonings and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie...[So, to procure the salvation of all of these, the Church fosters the missions.]’ (*Lumen Gentium* 16)

‘This is the infallibility which the Roman Pontiff, the head of the college of bishops, enjoys in virtue of his office, when, as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all Christ’s faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith, by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith or morals. And therefore his definitions, of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, are justly styled irreformable, since they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised to him in blessed Peter, and therefore they need no approval of others, nor do they allow an appeal to any other judgment.’ (*Lumen Gentium* 25)

‘Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they nevertheless proclaim Christ’s doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed through the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter, and authentically teaching matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as definitively to be held. This is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an ecumenical council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, whose definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith.’ (*Lumen Gentium* 25)

‘But the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head. The pope’s power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful, remains whole and intact. In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church.’ (*Lumen Gentium* 22)

‘...religious submission of will and intellect must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will.’ (*Lumen Gentium* 25)

‘In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. For the Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origins in human nature itself.’ (*Dignitatis Humanae* 14)

‘When the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.’ (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 4)



*'There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre.*

*'The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable.*

*'The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains.*

*'The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated for what she has lost in the Old ...*

*'Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all.*

*'She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's.'*

*British Protestant historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay*

*'To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom – that would indeed have been simple. It is always simple to fall: there are an infinity of angles at which one falls: only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect.'*

*English author and convert, G.K. Chesterton*

***‘You are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church,  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’***

***(Matthew 16:18)***

***‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.  
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you;  
and know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’***

***(Matthew 28:18-20)***

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#### **Cover Pictures by row**

- Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem; Statue of the Good Shepherd, Catacombs of Domitilla, Rome; ‘Madonna and Child’ by Murillo; Statue of St Peter, St Peter’s Square, Rome; Icon of Christ Pantocrator (this style of icon goes back to 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> cent or earlier); Pope Francis; ‘Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram...’ (You are Peter and upon this rock), Dome of St Peter’s Basilica, Rome; Second Vatican Council, St Peter’s, Rome.
- Charlemagne, Emperor of the Romans; Monastery on Skellig Michael, Ireland; St Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa); Krak des Chevaliers, Crusader castle in Syria; St John Henry Newman; Westminster Abbey, London (built as a Catholic Church by St Edward the Confessor); Servant of God Dorothy Day (American convert and pioneer of the Catholic Worker Movement).
- St Mary MacKillop; Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (built by the Catholic Emperor Justinian I); St Augustine of Hippo and his mother, St Monica; ‘Creation of Adam’, Michelangelo (Sistine Chapel); St Francis of Assisi; Celebration of Holy Mass; ‘Pietà’, Michelangelo, St Peter’s, Rome; Sistine Chapel, Rome; St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein, Jewish philosopher convert and nun, martyred in Auschwitz); St Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne; Servant of God Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, Vietnamese prisoner of the communist regime.
- Mediaeval manuscript; St Thomas More; Cluny Abbey, France; Servant of God Lucia dos Santos, St Francisco Marto and St Jacinta Marto, seers of Fatima; La Sainte-Chapelle, Paris; St Thomas Aquinas; Pope St John Paul II greets crowds in Warsaw, 1979; St Bernadette Soubirous, seer of Lourdes; Roman Catacombs.
- St Peter’s Basilica, St Peter’s Square, Vatican City; Dove of the Holy Spirit and Chair of St Peter, St Peter’s Basilica, Bernini; ‘The Giving of the Keys to St Peter’, Perugino (Sistine Chapel); Statue of St Peter, St Peter’s Basilica, Arnolfo di Cambio; Dome of St Peter’s Basilica.
- Roman Emperor Constantine the Great; St Josephine Bakhita (Sudanese slave, later convert and nun in Italy); Iona Abbey, Scotland; Ecstasy of St Teresa, Bernini (from St Teresa of Avila’s description of the angel piercing her heart with a dart), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome; Black Madonna of Czestochowa, Poland; St Therese of Lisieux, the ‘Little Flower’; Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington DC, U.S.A.; Nuns stop tanks, ‘People Power Revolution’, Manila 1986; St Oscar Romero (archbishop martyred in El Salvador); Cathedral of St Domnius, Split, Croatia (world’s oldest Catholic Cathedral remaining in use in its original structure – formerly Mausoleum of Emperor Diocletian).
- Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia); Chartres Cathedral, France; Fr Georges Lemaitre (Belgian priest-physicist who first proposed the Big Bang Theory); Miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City, Mexico; Flag of Vatican City State; Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Health, Vailankanni, India; Servant of God Fr Matteo Ricci (Italian Jesuit missionary in China); Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino, Italy.

