

The History of the Roman Catholic Church

Part I
From Pentecost to the East/West Schism

Deacon Greg Olick
2014

Why Study Church History?

- To learn from the past.
- To better understand Church tradition and teachings.
- To affirm the truth of the Catholic faith.
- “To know history is to cease to be Protestant.”
John Henry Cardinal Newman
- A study of the past may help us appreciate the present.



10 “Peak Moments” of Church History



1) Pentecost

- The Church is born of the Spirit.



“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8)

- The era of the Church began at Pentecost.
- The Spirit was sent to sanctify the Church.
- All believers had access to the **Father** through **Christ** in the one **Spirit**.
- Christians are empowered by the Spirit.
- The “**Era of the Church**” continues through the centuries to our own day.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament & the Early Church

- The promise of the Advocate
- John 14: 16,17; 26; 16:7; 13-14 *
- The Pentecostal coming of the Holy Spirit
- Acts 2: 1-4 *
- The Spirit dwelling within the Christian community
- 1 Cor. 12:4-6 *
- Rom. 8: 14-17 *



2) The Conversion Of Paul

Damascus 40 A.D.

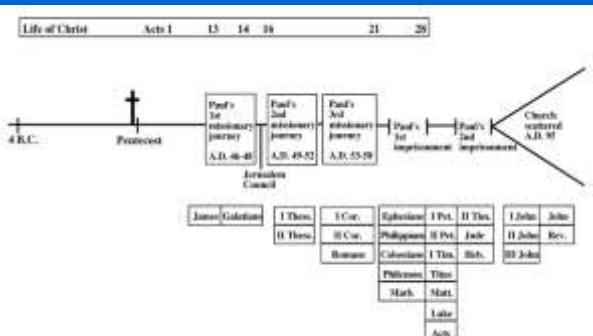


Saint Paul – The Apostle to the Gentiles

- Paul's mission was to bring the Church to the Gentiles.
- Controversies between Jewish and Gentile converts (Judaizers)
- Council of Jerusalem, 49 A.D. (Acts 15: 1-20)
- New Testament Epistles - the foundation of all Catholic theology

Pauline Corpus

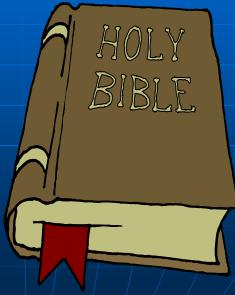
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- Galatians
- Philippians
- 1 & 2 Corinthians
- Romans
- Philemon
- Colossians
- Ephesians
- Titus
- 1 & 2 Timothy



Copyright © 1994 Catechetical NewMedia, Inc.
Last drawing courtesy of Harriett Chase Publishers

Development of the New Testament

- Eyewitness Accounts
- Oral Tradition
- Written Word



The Christian Scriptures

- The New Testament emerged from the Christian **oral tradition** which had been taught, preached, practiced and handed down since the Day of Pentecost. Once the early church began to understand that Jesus' "Second Coming" might not take place in the first century many of the traditions about his life and teachings were written down. These writings were used in liturgy and for instruction and devotion in the churches of the first four centuries long before an "official" canon (list) was developed.

The Christian Scriptures

- Saint Paul and others wrote **letters of instruction, encouragement and admonishment** to many of the early congregations. These were also circulated and used widely for theological reflection and clarification. Unity of doctrine was very important to the early church.

The New Testament - Covenant

- Four Gospels – Mark, Matthew, Luke, John
- Epistles (Letters) of Saint Paul
- Catholic Epistles
- Other Writings – Acts, Hebrews, Revelation



Catholic Epistles & Other Writings

- 1 & 2 Peter
- James
- 1, 2 & 3 John
- Jude
- Acts
- Hebrews
- Revelation



The New Testament

■ Mark	65	58
■ Matthew	80	65
■ Luke	80	60
■ John	90	80
■ Acts	80	62
■ Paul's Epistles	50-60	45-60
■ Revelation	90	90

The Acts of the Apostles - The History of the Very Early Church (33-63 A.D.)

- Preparation for the Christian Message (Ch. 1)
- Pentecost (Ch. 2)
- Saul's Conversion (Ch. 9)
- Council in Jerusalem (Ch. 15)
- Mission in Judah & Samaria (Ch. 8-9)
- Gentile Mission (Ch. 10-15)
- Mission of Paul to the ends of the earth (CH. 16-28)



The Church Persecuted

- Enemies of the State
- Atheists
- Antisocial
- Cannibals
- Blasphemers
- Instigators
- Root cause of all evils

Persecution

- The Romans wished to discourage this subversive religious cult that had grown rapidly out of Judaism, so they would make a sport and a spectacle out of their cruel death sentence for devout Christian adherents.



Martyrdom and Persecution

- First martyr – Saint Stephen
- The 1st Apostle to be martyred was James (Herod 42-44 A.D.)
- Holy See established in Rome
- Peter and Paul martyred (Nero, 63- 67 A.D.)
- Other Apostles suffered martyrdom: Andrew, Philip, Simon the Zealot and Jude.
- Nine other Roman persecutions followed.
- Emperor Constantine declared complete religious tolerance at Milan, 313 A.D.

3) 313 A.D.

- Constantine wins freedom for the Church



The Early Church

- The nations that made up the Roman Empire conspired against the Church in vain. The Cross had conquered.
- Eventually the Roman Empire abandoned the worship of their pagan gods and became an ally of the Church.
- The Church became influential and powerful and could not be confined within the boundaries of the Empire.
- Christianity spread throughout the ancient world.

The Early Church

- The **emperor Theodosius** declared paganism illegal and made Christianity the official religion of the empire in 380. "It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our clemency and moderation, should continue to the profession of that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity." (Theodosian Code XVI.1.2) Christianity was now not only tolerated but enforced.

Growth of the early Church:

- 500,000 members – first century
- 2,000,000 members – 2nd century
- 5,000,000 members – 3rd century
- 10,000,000 members by the first half of the forth century when the Church became integrated into the Roman Empire.

Growth of the Early Church

- Pax Romana
- Common Laws
- Common Language
- System of roads
- Interest in religion



THE GOSPEL FOR THE WORLD

Jesus, the poor son of a carpenter, never attended a university, never wrote a book and never traveled more than 200 miles from his home town. He never did any of the things that are normally associated with greatness, but this one solitary life, in a dusty corner of the world with a ragtag frightened group of disappointed followers, split time in two and changed the course of human history forever because one glorious event can never be denied – the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.



The Church

- The Christian faith is at its core a radical statement about what the infinite love of God has done in time and space for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



The Church

- After the **Edit of Milan**, as the church came out of hiding and persecutions ended, **Constantine** was seen as a hero. In Fact, "the empire and the emperor were really divinely appointed to rule and render protection for the church. The church knew that it needed the empire and the empire needed the church." The church and the empire were beginning to melt together.

Where does Church Authority come from?

- God the Father sent Jesus among us with full authority. (Mat 28:18,20)
- Jesus chose disciples, especially the 12 apostles, to carry on his mission and act with the same authority. (John 14:16-20) (Luke 10:16)
- The apostles appointed other men to carry on their mission. The apostles called upon the Lord to give these new leaders the same authority to teach and lead that they received from Jesus himself. (Acts 1:15-26) (2 Tim 2:2) (Titus 1:5,7) (1 Tim 1:3) (1 Tim 4:11-14) (2 Tim 1:6)

Church Authority

- The writings of the early church demonstrate conclusively that the bishops led the church and exercised "apostolic authority".
- Didache - 60 A.D.
- Clement - Bishop of Rome 96 A.D.
- Ignatius - Bishop of Antioch 110 A.D.

As the Church began to grow and expand, it was faced with difficulties of ever increasing scope and magnitude.

Many of the problems were caused then, as today, by members within its ranks – rebels who sought to project their own interpretation on doctrine and laws, and placed themselves in opposition to Church authority.

A **heresy** is a belief held by baptized Christians that denies, casts doubt upon or seeks to alter a divinely revealed truth that has been set forth by the teaching authority of the Church. Persons who so act, and do not recant, are called heretics.



Early Heresies

- **Adoptionism** – Maintained that Jesus was human in every way but, because he was more righteous than anyone else, God appointed him to be his Son – adopted him.
- **Docetism** – Jesus wasn't human at all, but only seemed to be. He only seemed to have flesh and blood, human frailties and the ability to suffer and die.
- **Arianism** – Jesus, the Son of God, was and is subservient to God the Father (created) and therefore not fully God himself.

4) The Council of Nicaea

- The first general council of the Church
- 318 bishops attended.
- Condemned Arianism.
- Asserted Christ's divinity.
- Gave birth to the Nicene Creed.

Council of Chalcedon 451 A.D.

- Christ's divine/human natures affirmed
- Condemned simony (the sale of sacred things or appointments)
- Condemned mixed marriages
- Condemned the Baptism of heretics
- Insisted on absolute ordination

Establishing the Government of the Church

- Many early Christians believed that the "Second Coming" was imminent.
- The followers of Jesus would have to receive guidance and direction.
- A formal church government was set up under the leadership of the successors of the apostles.
- All the local churches composed the *Universal Church*.
- Called *Catholic* as early as the second century (110 A.D.) by Saint Ignatius.

Mission of the Church

- The purpose of the teachings of the Church is to prepare the soul for eternal life by disposing it for the reception of the divine life of **sanctifying grace**.
- That divine life of sanctifying grace is dispensed primarily through the sacraments.
- Even in the ancient church the sacraments were used and venerated.

5) Monte Cassino 520 A.D.

- The Roman empire fell in 476 A.D.
- Barbarian armies swept into Europe.
- Something was needed to stabilize and evangelize these new hordes of people.
- St. Benedict established the Benedictine order at Monte Cassino in 520 A.D.
- Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.)

The Church & the Empire

- With the fall of Rome around 410 and the progressive crumbling of the Roman Empire in the West, a kind of "vacuum" of essential leadership was created. Eventually the church, and therefore the Bishop of Rome, would step in to fill the vacuum. After all, it was the one stable and generally respected institution capable of leadership.

Saint Gregory:

- Strengthened papal primacy and left behind a body of writings that strongly influenced the medieval church.
- Upheld the primacy in the East.
- Converted the Barbarians in the West.
- Introduced liturgical reform.
- Reconstructed the church's interior life.

By the end of the fifth century the entire Western Empire had been broken up and was ruled by various Barbarian tribes.

Yet amidst the universal ruin, that very often lead to persecution and exile of some church leaders, the Church stood firm providing both spiritual and temporal aid to its members.

Its survival in the midst of such hardships gave further proof of its divine institution and the Barbarians began to seek admission into its fold.

Through the centuries that followed the Church grew by leaps and bounds. Many great saints and men of God contributed to the golden age of Christianity.

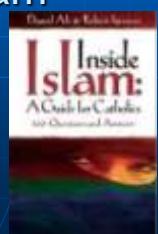
- St. Theodore
- St. Columban
- St. Boniface
- St. Cyril
- St. Stephen the Apostle of Hungary
- St. Leo III
- St. Thomas Aquinas
- St. Alfred the Great
- St. Louis IX
- St. Bernard



The Rise of Islam



661 – 1571 A.D.



The Crusades

- Pope Urban II called the first Crusade in 1095.
- A late response to Islamic aggression
- Many Crusaders acted in a cruel non-Christian manner.
- This Crusade and the ones that followed foundered due to brutality and greed.
- While the Crusaders may have fought with the cross on their shields, they did not and could not cite words of Jesus to justify their slaughters.



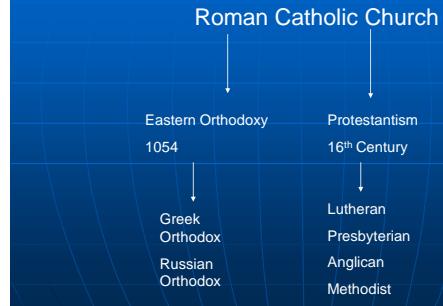
Schism

- A division of a church into two factions
- The offence of causing such divisions
- A group separated from the larger body
- Schismatic – one who makes or participates in such a schism

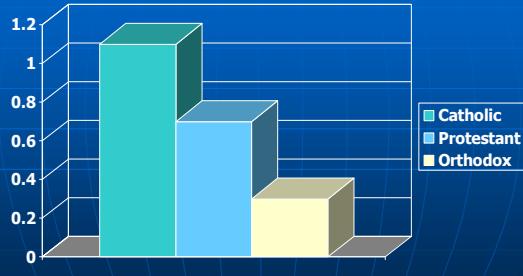
The Schism of the Eastern Church (1054 A.D.)

- The Church of Constantinople and the other Eastern Churches banded together into a group known as the "Orthodox Eastern Church".
- Grave consequences followed this schism and gave rise to splintered churches.
- Missionary development came to a standstill.
- The Church was confined to Europe until the 16th century.

Schism



Christianity Today



Eastern Orthodoxy

- Separated from the Catholic Church in the East/West schism of 1054.
- Reject papal authority.
- Reject teaching about purgatory.
- Do not confirm doctrine of Papal Infallibility or the Immaculate Conception.



Filioque

- The difference between the Catholic Church's teaching on filioque and that of the Orthodox Churches is rooted in large part in the ways the Greeks (East) and Latins (West) approach the Tri-unity of the Godhead.
- **Catholic (Latin) theology** of the Blessed Trinity begins by describing the *three persons in one God*. Orthodox theology (Greek) begins with *one God in three persons*. Catholics begin by emphasizing the *unity* of the divine nature; then they struggle to explain how the three persons differ among themselves (*uniqueness*). The Orthodox begin by emphasizing how the three persons differ (*uniqueness*) and then struggle to explain how they function together (*unity*) in a perfect unison.