



Chapter 2: ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE PATRISTIC AGE

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WHAT IS PATROLOGY?

Patrology is the science which deals with the life, acts, writings, sayings, doctrines and thoughts of the orthodox writers of the early church. The word "Patrology" is derived from the Latin word "Pater" which means "Father."

Patrology is the door through which we can enter into the Church and attain her spirit, which affects our inner life, conduct and behaviour. Through Patrology, the acts of the Fathers are transferred into living thoughts and concepts which are based on a sound foundation, without ignoring the world around us.



A study of Patrology includes the following:



The life of the Fathers: In order to understand their writings and sayings, their lives and the environment in which they lived, must also be considered.

Their acts: The writings, sermons, dialogues, letters, etc. of the Fathers are inseparable from their own lives. Patrology's message is to be sure of the authenticity of these acts scientifically, publishing them and translating them in modern languages.

More importantly is the discovery of the thoughts of the Fathers, their dogma, doctrines and concepts concerning God, man, church, salvation, worship, creation, the body, the heavenly life, etc.

WHO ARE THE "CHURCH FATHERS"?

"Early Church Father" is a title that gradually came to be applied to certain Christian leaders distinguished by four characteristics:

- Antiquity
- Holiness
- Orthodoxy
- Church Approval (Ecclesiastical Recognition)

"Words are the progeny of the soul. Hence we call those that instructed us fathers" (Stromateis 1.1.2-2.1; cf. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.41.2) - St. Clement of Alexandria

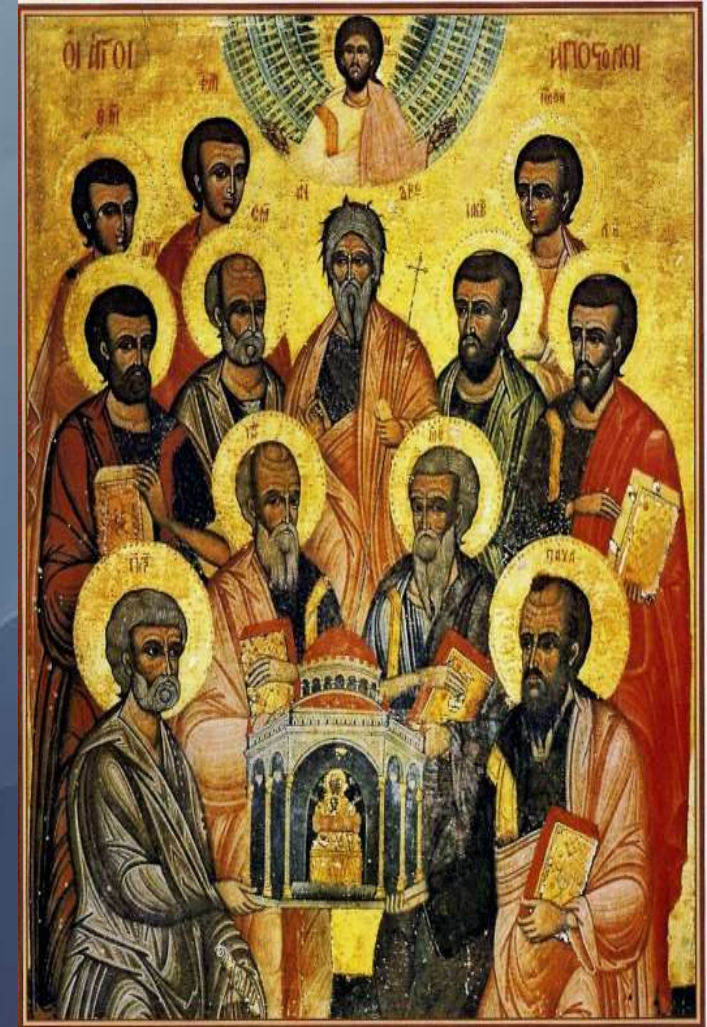
WHO ARE THE "CHURCH FATHERS"?



the term "Father of the Church" also came to refer to important Christian writers after the New Testament era who, because of closeness to that era, witness to the authentically apostolic way of interpreting the Scriptures handed on to them by the Catholic Tradition. These writers played an irreplaceable and unrepeatable role in transmitting Christian doctrine and bringing it to mature expression, at least in its most fundamental features.



It is significant that the age of the Early Church Fathers, commonly regarded as closing with St. John Damascene (d. 749), is roughly co-terminus with the period of the first seven great Ecumenical Councils which defined these two central mysteries of the faith and drew out their most important implications. No Catholic teacher after this time, no matter how stellar, is reckoned among the Church Fathers.



WHO ARE THE "CHURCH FATHERS"?



a succinct definition of the Early Church Fathers would be *those*

Christian writers from approximately AD 100-800 who passed on clarified the apostolic tradition.

The Diversity of the Church Fathers



The first language of the universal Church was Greek, the language of the New Testament. All of the Early Church Fathers, from parts of the Christian world, continued to write in Greek until about 200 when Tertullian, a North African theologian, wrote a treatise in Latin. From then on, Latin gradually became the language of the Western Fathers of the Church.

In the Eastern half of the Mediterranean world, many continued to write in Greek, especially those in the urban areas controlled by the Byzantine Empire.

In rural localities and territory outside the empire, some Christian authors (e.g., St. Ephrem) began to write in local vernaculars such as Syriac-Aramaic, a dialect of the language spoken by Christ.

This wonderful diversity of culture and location makes it that much clearer that, whenever the Fathers teach the same doctrine or describe same liturgical practice, they are witnessing to something that came not from them, but to them—the apostolic Tradition.

The Diversity of the Church Fathers

The men who led God's people from A.D. 90 to 460 are frequently divided into four groups:

Apostolic Fathers (A.D. 90 – 150) who edified the Church

Apologists
(A.D. 130 – 180) who defended the Church against Roman persecution

Polemicists
(A.D. 180 – 225) who led the Church against internal heresy

Theologians
(A.D. 225 – 460) who attempted to harmonize Christianity with popular philosophy

Apostolic Fathers

The leaders of the churches during the first century after the Apostles are called the "Apostolic Fathers" because they effectively continued the work of the Apostles. They too believed that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). By teaching the Scriptures, men like Clement, Hermas of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Barnabas of Alexandria were able to establish others in the doctrines of grace.



St. Clement of Rome



According to Tertullian, The Roman Church claimed that St. Clement was ordained by St. Peter himself. (De Praescript., xxxii)

St. Jerome tells us that in his time "most of the Latins" held that St. Clement was the immediate successor of the Apostle (Illustrious Men 15). St. Jerome himself in several other places follows this opinion, but here he correctly states that Clement was the fourth pope. One story about Clement is that he was put to death by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea. Accordingly, he is often depicted with an anchor, and many churches in port towns intended to minister chiefly to mariners are named for him.

St. Clement of Rome



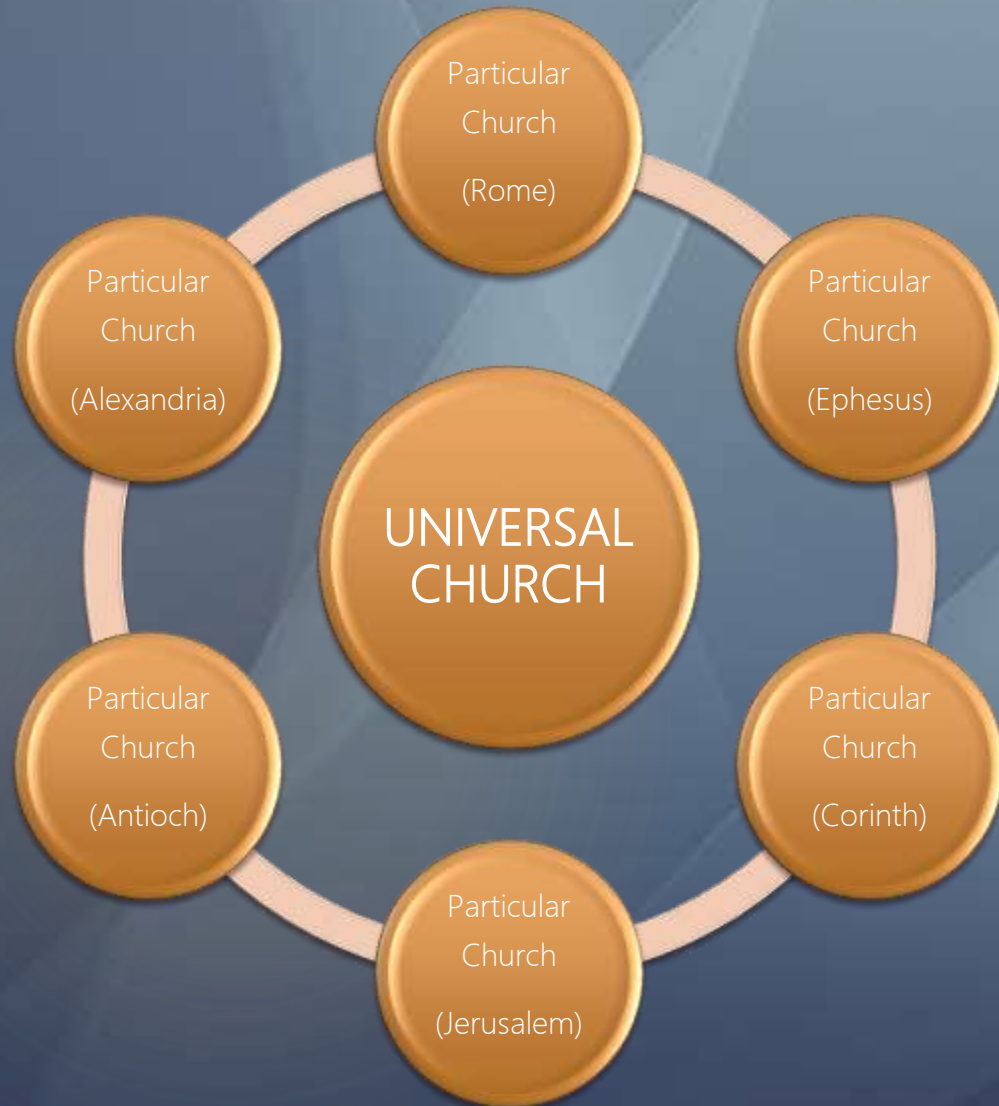
According to St. Irenaeus, St. Clement had conversed with the Apostles (i.e. Peter and Paul), and was bishop of the Church at Rome after St. Linus and St. Cletus. That is also attested to by the liturgy of the Church at Rome, which to this day preserves the name of "Clemens" after the names of 'Linus' and 'Cletus' in the litany of prayers, and these names follow directly after those of the Apostles. The recitation of these names in the Roman liturgy has been in place apparently since the second century.

St. Clement of Rome

Eusebius (AD 249 – 340 AD), in his *History of the Church* claims that St. Clement of Rome is the same Clement referred to by St. Paul in Philippians 4:3, where St. Paul writes, "I ask you also, who are a true co-worker, to help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." Some have claimed that the Fortunatus referred to at the end of St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians is the same Fortunatus referred to by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:17.



St. Clement of Rome



St. Clement opens his letter with this line:

"The church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the church of God sojourning at Corinth."

St. Clement of Rome

St. Clément's letter is written to communicate the way in which God has set up the Church in an ordered, hierarchical way so that there will be peace and harmony, just as God created nature with an order so that all things move in **harmony**. St. Clement at this point discusses the organizational structure of an army, with its generals, prefects, commanders of a thousand, of a hundred, or of fifty.



He points out that the army's ability to function in an ordered way, and also the well-being of each soldier in the army, depends upon all of its members operating in accordance with their particular rank.



St. Clement of Rome

Likewise, he draws an analogy between **the Church and a living body**. "Let us take our body for an example. The head is nothing without the feet, and the feet are nothing without the head; yea, the very smallest members of our body are necessary and useful to the whole body. But all work harmoniously together, and are under one common rule for the preservation of the whole body."



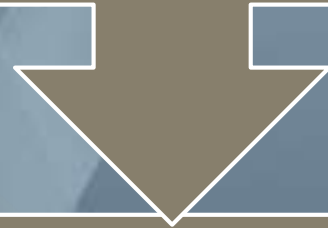
St. Clement of Rome



His point in drawing a comparison between the Church on the one hand, and an army and body on the other is that in the Church we all need each other, and we are part of a divinely ordered whole. For that reason we cannot divide from this whole or arrogate a role or rank within it that has not been given to us by Christ. This then gives us some insight into the relation of the Church sojourning at Rome and the Church sojourning at Corinth. **They are each members of one Body, and one army. They are not a mere plurality or mere collection of independent entities; they are a unity — an organic Body, with different roles and different gifts.**

St. Clement explains:

"It is right and holy therefore, men and brethren, rather to obey God than to follow those who, through pride and sedition, have become the leaders of a detestable emulation."

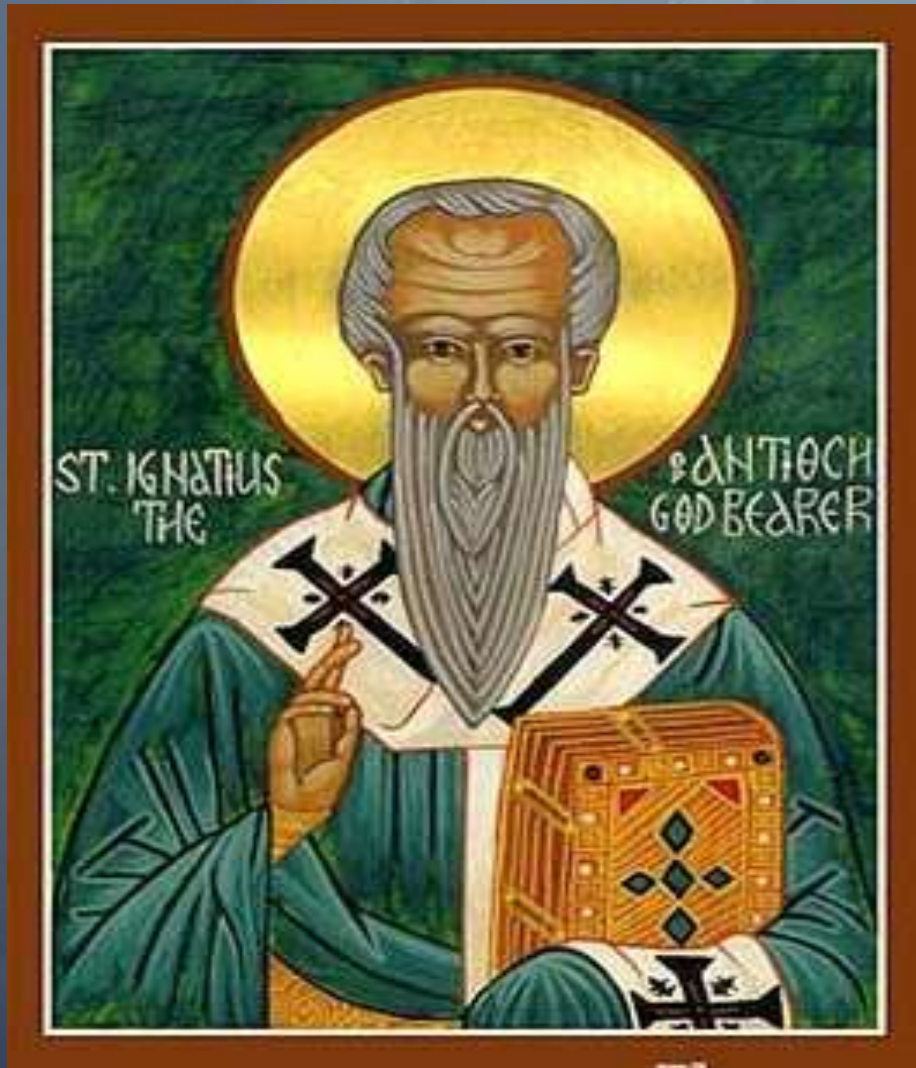


The argument that St. Clement is constructing over the course of the entire epistle is that we follow God by following those authorities whom God has appointed, not those who rise up in sedition. We are not to follow those who make a rebellion, even if they do so claiming to be for peace.

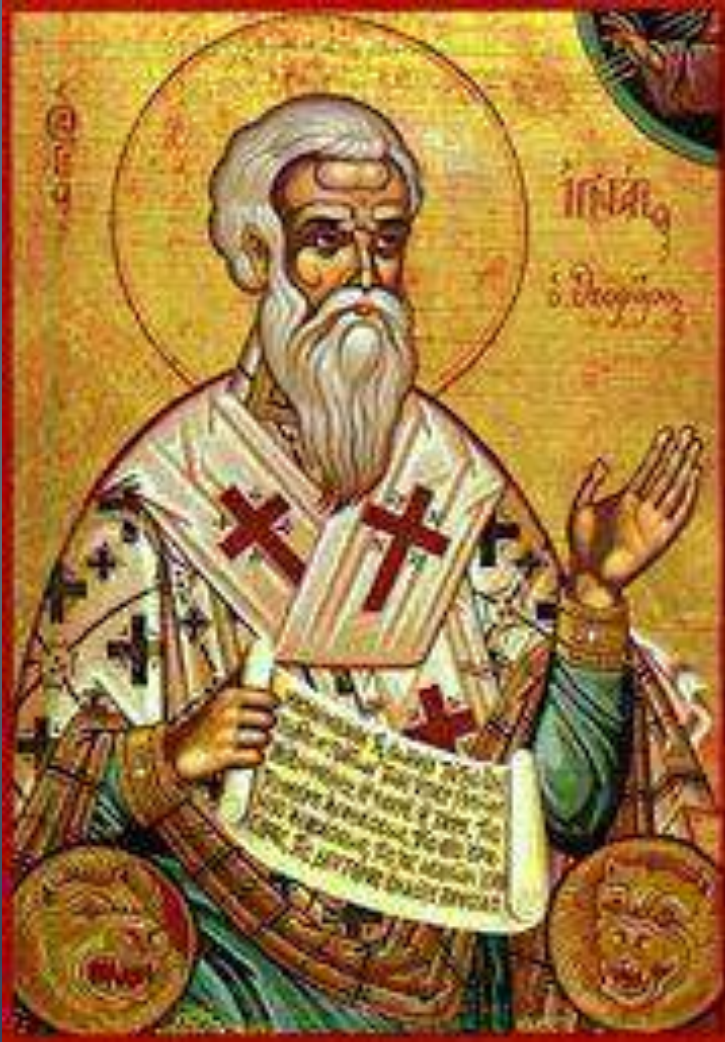
"Let us cleave, therefore, to those who cultivate peace with godliness, and not to those who hypocritically profess to desire it."



ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



Ignatius of Antioch, surnamed Theophorus, which in Greek means "God-Bearer," was probably a convert and disciple of St. John the Evangelist.

The fourth-century Church historian, Eusebius, says that the Apostles Peter and Paul, who planted the faith in Antioch, left directions that Ignatius should succeed Evodius as bishop of that city; he states further that Ignatius retained the office for forty years, proving himself in every way an exemplary pastor.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



During the persecution of the emperor Domitian, whose reign covered the period of 81 to 96, Ignatius kept up the courage of his flock by daily preaching, by prayer and fasting. After Domitian's death there was a cessation of the persecutions during the fifteen months of Nerva's reign, then in Trajan's reign we have records of a number of martyrs, though no general persecution.

In an interesting letter to the younger Pliny, then governor of the Black Sea province of Bithynia, Trajan laid down the principle that Christians should be put to death if formally reported, but not otherwise sought out for punishment. The Emperor was a humane man, yet the gratitude which he felt he owed to his own pagan gods for his victories over the Dacians and the Scythians later led him to authorize the death penalty for those Christians who refused to acknowledge these divinities publicly.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



The key to understanding the ecclesiology of St. Ignatius is clearly his presuppositions concerning salvation. As will be indicated, the Church as the body of Christ exists, according to St. Ignatius, for the sole purpose of salvation in Christ. Thus his ecclesiology without at least a general examination of his Soteriology would be incomprehensible.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

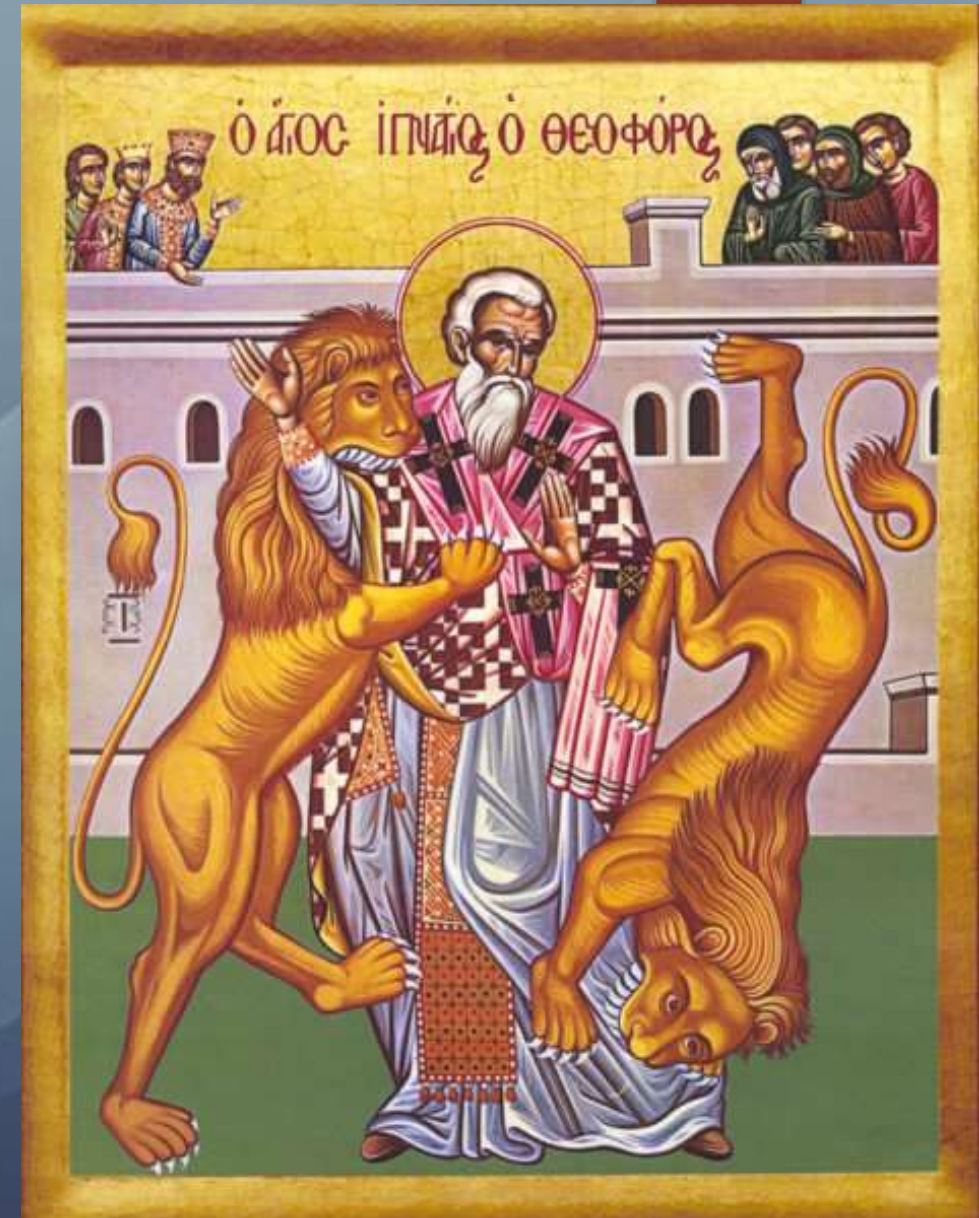
For Ignatius death and corruption is an abnormal condition which God came to destroy by the incarnation of His Son. By means of death and corruption the devil rules a captive humanity. (Heb 2:14-15.) Because of the tyrant death man is unable to live according to his original destiny of selfless love. He now has the instinct of self-preservation firmly rooted within him from birth. Because he lives constantly under the fear of death he continuously seeks bodily and psychological security, and thus becomes individualistically inclined and utilitarian in attitude. Sin is the failure of man to live according to his original destiny of selfless love which seeks not its own and this failure is rooted in the disease of death. Because death in the hands of Satan is the cause of sin, the kingdom of the devil and sin is destroyed by the "abolition of death." (Ign. Eph. 19.)

The world exists now under the power of corruption (Rom. 8:20-22), but in Christ is being cleansed. Our Lord was "born and baptized that by His passion He might purify the water." (Ign. Eph. 18.)

Life and immortality are not proper to man, but to God. "For were He to regard us according to our works we should cease to be." (Ign. Mag. 10.)

God Himself was manifested in the flesh "for the renewal of eternal life." (Ign. Eph. 19.)

Christ is the source of life (Ign. Eph. 3; Mag. 1; Smyr. 4) and "breathes immortality into the Church" (Ign. Eph. 17) "apart from whom we do not possess the true life." (Ign. Tral. 9.)



By the victory of Christ over death and Satan he who believes in the flesh of Christ is restored to the communion of the life and love of God in union with his neighbors and loves "nothing but God only." (Ign. Eph. 9, 11; Mag. 1.) "It is therefore befitting that you should in every way glorify Jesus Christ, who had glorified you, that by a unanimous obedience you may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same opinion, and may all speak the same thing concerning the same thing." (Ign. Eph. 2.)

For St. Ignatius the primary characteristic of Christians is their corporate and selfless of love and their complete unanimity of faith. (Ign. Eph. 20; Tral. 12; Phil. sal.; Pol. 6.)



Faith and love for each other is one identical reality, as well as the beginning and the end of life in Christ. (Ign. Eph. 14.) Unity with each other in love is "a type and evidence (of teaching) of immortality." (Mag. 6.) "All these things together are good if you believe with love." (Ign. Phil. 9.) Faith is to "be gathered together (synaxis) unto God." (Mag. 10. Therefore in your concord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung." (Ign. Eph. 4.) Only in such a harmony of love can we know that we are partakers of God. (Ibid.) Therefore salvation and sanctification can be accomplished only by a unity of love with each other in the life of Christ. (Ign. Eph. 2.)



For Ignatius man does not have life of himself. **Only God is self-life** (autozoe). **Man lives by participation**. Because man is held captive in death by the devil his communion with God is of a distorted nature and ends in the grave. The act of restoration of permanent and normal communion between God and man can be accomplished only by a real resurrection of man by God Himself. (Ezek. 37:12ff.) "Who alone hath immortality." (I Tim. 6:16.) This immortality of God, however, is not to be separated in its bestowal upon creation, from God's energy of love. Therefore, **"the drink of God, namely His Blood, ... is incorruptible love and eternal life."** (Ign. 7.) The love of God is not a relationship (to pros ti) dominated by ulterior motivations. If God were within the realm of happiness and so dominated thereby, then all His relationships, if such could really exist, would be necessary.

ST. PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS



Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia. He was born probably between 70 and 75 A.D., and died, perhaps, A.D. 163. No fact save his episcopacy is definitely known about him, yet he is of great interest from his relation to the apostolic age. He was, according to Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, v. 33, 4), "a hearer" of John the apostle, "a companion of Polycarp," "an ancient man," of the primitive days of Christianity. By "John," Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39) understands the presbyter, not the apostle, of that name, and declares that Papias had no personal acquaintance with any apostles.

ST. PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS



Papias, who was certainly acquainted with the present New Testament, wrote in Greek, about A.D. 130, *An Interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord*, in five books. His work appears to have been a collection of the words and works of the Master and his disciples, with explanatory matter derived from oral testimony. It has entirely perished, with the exception of a few small fragments preserved by Irenæus and Eusebius.

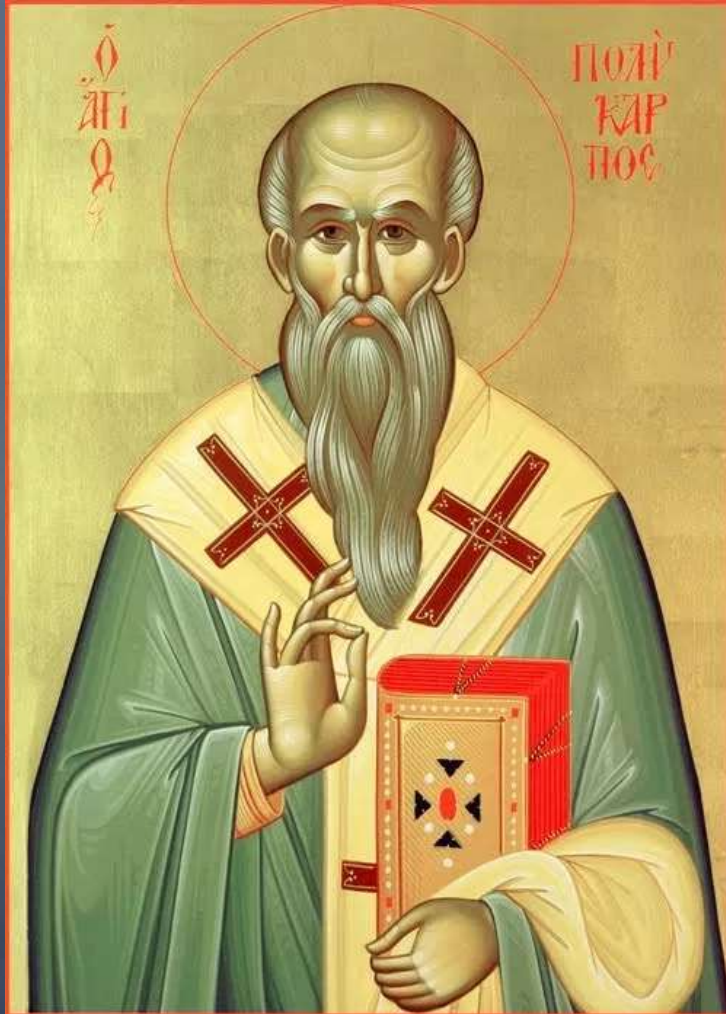
ST. PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS

This work contained the recollections of the Christian elders Papias had known or from whom he had heard at second hand. From the fragments of this work that have survived we can deduce that his life overlapped with two direct disciples of Jesus, John the Elder and Ariston. It is possible that he heard these men speak when he was a young man, but if he did not actually hear them himself, he heard reports of what they had said. This places him only one step away from eyewitness testimony to Jesus' life.



As the presbyters say, then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of Paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour will be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see Him. But that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold; for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second class will dwell in Paradise, and the last will inhabit the city; and that on this account the Lord said, In my Father's house are many mansions: John 14:2 for all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place, even as His word says, that a share is given to all by the Father, according as each one is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch Matthew 22:10 in which they shall recline who feast, being invited to the wedding. *(From the exposition of the oracles of the Lord)*

ST. POLYCARP OF SMYRNA



This saint was respected by the faithful to a degree of veneration. He formed many holy disciples, among whom were St. Irenaeus and Papias.

ST. POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

St Polycarp was one of the most illustrious of the apostolic fathers, who, being the immediate disciples of the apostles, received instructions from their mouths, and inherited of them the spirit of Christ in a degree so much the more eminent as they lived nearer the fountain head. He embraced Christianity very young, about the year 80, was a disciple of the apostles, in particular of St. John the Evangelist, and was constituted by him Bishop of Smyrna, probably before his banishment to Patmos in 96, so that he governed that important see seventy years.

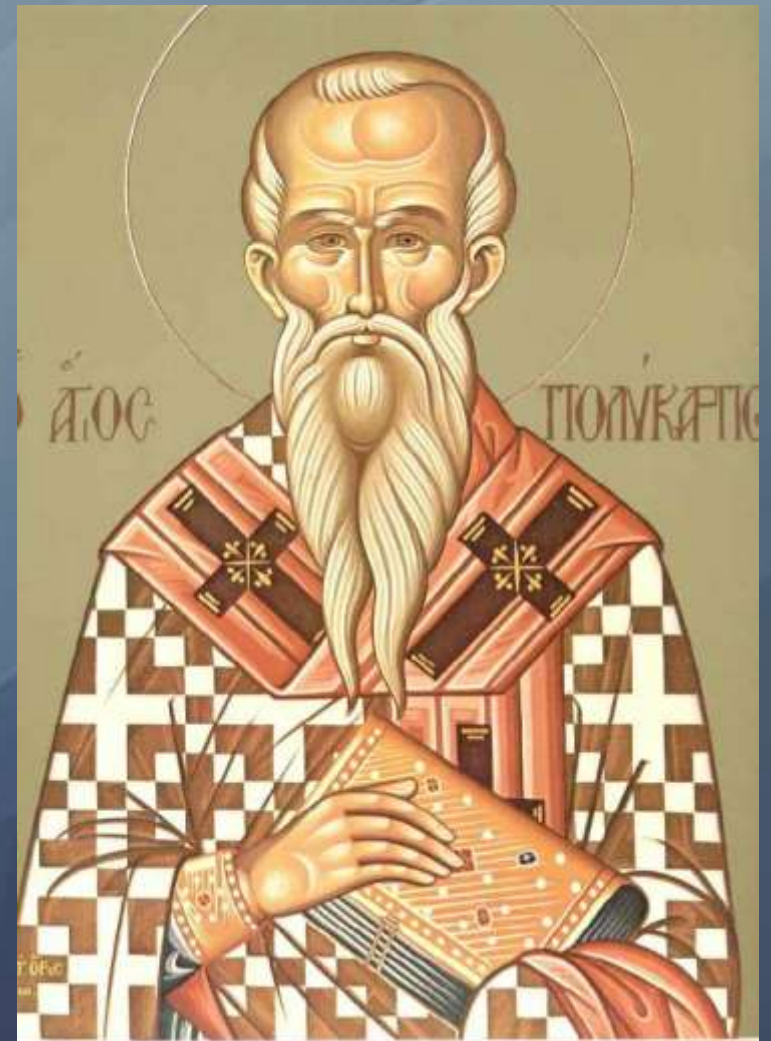


St. Polycarp opens his letter to the Philippians with the following line: "**Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi ...**". He writes as a bishop in union with his presbyters. In chapter five of his letter he speaks of the duties of deacons. Then he writes to the laity, "**Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from these things, being subject to the and deacons, as unto God and Christ.**"



In chapter six he describes the way presbyters should behave:

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the the orphan, or the poor, but always providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man; (Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:31) from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin.



The account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, written by eyewitnesses of this event, opens with an explicit reference to the "Catholic Church":

"The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic Church in every place: Mercy, peace, and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied."

Each particular Church is conceived as part of the "Holy and Catholic Church". The Holy and Catholic Church is made up of congregations in all the various cities. This of course would not include the 'congregations' of the heretics (e.g. Marcionites, gnostics, Valentinians, etc.) This conception of the Catholic Church can be seen again in chapter eight of the account of St. Polycarp's martyrdom:



In chapter nineteen, Jesus Christ is described as the Shepherd of the Catholic Church:

For, having through patience overcome the unjust governor, and thus acquired the crown of immortality, he now, with the apostles and all the righteous [in heaven], rejoicingly glorifies God, even the Father, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls, the Governor of our bodies, and the Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.





THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

The early Christian document *Hermas*, or *Shepherd of Hermas*, was known to the early Church Fathers. The Muratorian canon, a list of canonical books about the 3rd century, says *Hermas* was written by the brother of Pius, of Rome, about 140-154. Despite much speculation, the author remains unknown. It was written in Rome and involves the Roman church. The document was composed over a longer period of time.

The book consists of five visions, twelve mandates (commandments), and ten similitudes (parables) that were granted to Hermas, a former slave. The text makes use of allegorical language to present its religious themes and teachings.

THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

The Shepherd of Hermas was a very popular Christian writing of the second century C.E., considered to be canonical by some of the early Church Fathers. Cited as Scripture by Irenaeus (second century C.E.) and Tertullian (ca. 155–230 C.E.), the text was bound with the New Testament in the Codex Sinaiticus. Additionally, the work was listed between the Acts of the Apostles and the Acts of Paul in the stichometrical list of the Codex Claromontanus. The text had great authority in the second and third centuries C.E. and was seen as a valuable resource for the instruction of new catechumens.



THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

The *Shepherd of Hermas*, also called the *Pastor*, is a very early Christian tract that portrays the Church as a body of living stones that fit together to construct the Tower of God. Its composition is dated between 85-150, and some Fathers (Irenaeus, Origen) call it "scripture." It is largely hortatory in nature, utilizing the vision of the Church as a tower to exhort believers to a life of piety and penance in order that they might maintain their place within the edifice.

A predominant image in the visions is that of the Tower, which represents the Church. The individual stones in the tower represent the individual believers who make up the Church, calling to mind St. Peter's reference to Christians as "living stones"



Many of the visions concern the various sorts of stones that compose this tower, their characteristics, and whether or not

stones that are rejected or cast out for various reasons can be reintegrated into the structure - i.e., the question of repentance and full restoration after serious sin, which was a matter of intense debate in the early Church.

The response of the angel demonstrates a clear belief in a purgatorial process, or at least in the atoning nature of penitential acts:



"Is repentance possible for all those stones which have been cast away and did not fit into the building of the tower, and will they yet have a place in this tower? **Repentance, said [the angel], is yet possible,** but in this tower they cannot find a suitable place. **But in another and much inferior place they will be laid, and that, too, only when they have been tortured and completed days of their sins.** And on this account will they be transferred, because they have partaken of the righteous Word. And then only will they be removed from their punishments when the thought of repenting of the evil deeds which they have done has come into their hearts. But if it does not come into their hearts, they will not be saved, on account of the hardness of their heart." (I.3.7)

THE CHURCH'S COMPOSITION

SAINTS

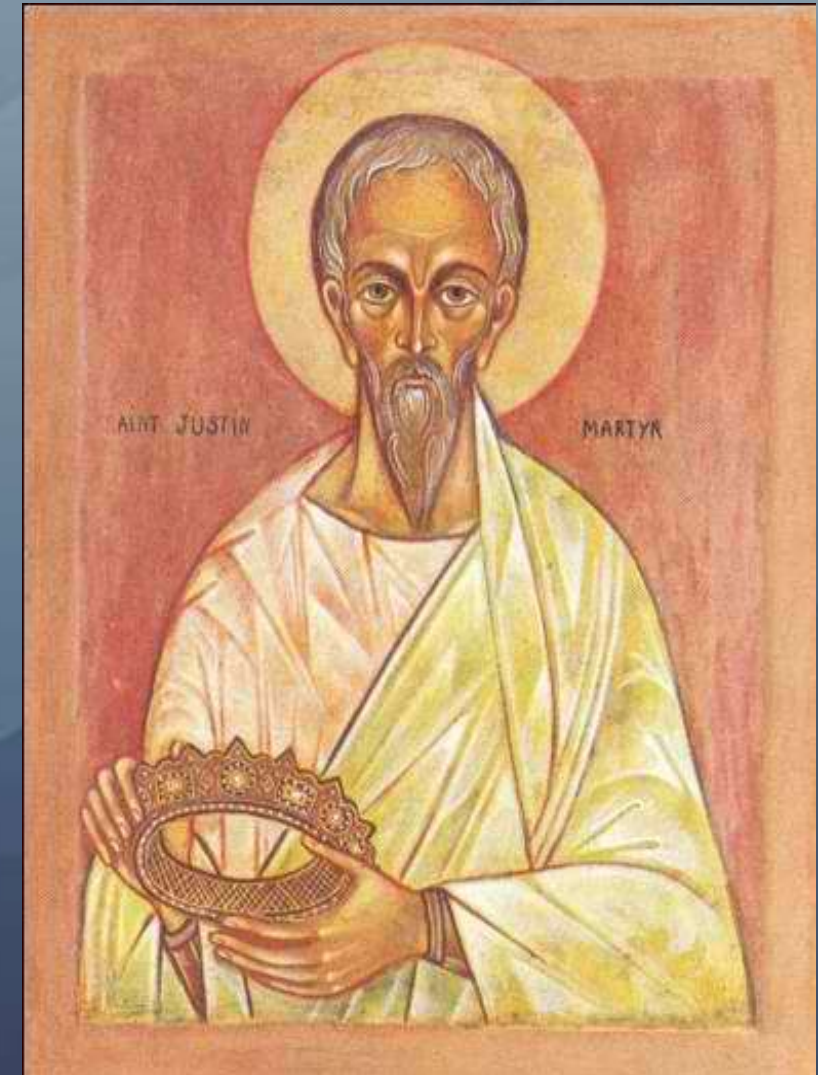


SINNERS

NEEDS REPENTANCE

ST. JUSTIN, Martyr

Justin was born around 100 (both his birth and death dates are approximate) at Flavia Neapolis (ancient Shechem, modern Nablus) in Samaria (the middle portion of Israel, between Galilee and Judea) of pagan Greek parents. He was brought up with a good education in rhetoric, poetry, and history. He studied various schools of philosophy in Alexandria and Ephesus, joining himself first to Stoicism, then Pythagoreanism, then Platonism, looking for answers to his questions.



ST. JUSTIN, Martyr

He was probably the most dramatic defender of the faith. He was a prolific writer. Around the year A.D. 153, while in Rome, Justin wrote his famous *Apology*, whereby he tried to defend Christianity against the charges of atheism and immorality. He tried to prove that Christians were loyal citizens by teaching that the Lord's kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, the Roman Empire had no reason to fear a social insurrection from the Christian community. In the midst of his many literary efforts and his faithfulness to sound doctrine, Justin was beheaded for his faith in A.D. 165.



He wrote two apologies to the emperor Antonius Pius (A.D. 138-161) and to his adopted son Marcus Aurelius, who would one day reign from A.D. 161 to 180. He also wrote a dialogue with Trypho the Jew, in which Justin contended that Jesus was the Messiah.

On his second stay in the city of Rome, Justin engaged in a public debate with a philosopher by the name of Crescens. Shortly thereafter, about A.D. 166, he was put to death by Marcus Aurelius, who was probably influenced by pagan philosophies. Justin's last words were, "We desire nothing more than to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ, for this gives us salvation and joyfulness before His dreadful judgment seat."

Through the writings of St. Justin, we have records and have learned of the early Christian practices especially that of the celebration of the Eucharist.



ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS



Born sometime between A.D. 115 and 142, Irenaeus, was reared in Smyrna. While there he saw Polycarp and heard him preach. Moving to Lyons in Gaul (France), Irenaeus became a bishop in the Church. In the year A.D. 200 he suffered a martyr's death, having defended the faith in such works as *Against Heresies*.

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS



Firmly rooted in the biblical doctrine of creation, Irenaeus refuted the Gnostic dualism and pessimism which debased corporeal realities. He decisively claimed the original holiness of matter, of the body, of the flesh no less than of the spirit. But his work went far beyond the confutation of heresy: in fact, one can say that he emerges as the first great Church theologian who created systematic theology; he himself speaks of the system of theology, that is, of the internal coherence of all faith. At the heart of his doctrine is the question of the "rule of faith" and its transmission.

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

The true teaching, therefore, is not that invented by intellectuals which goes beyond the Church's simple faith. The true Gospel is the one imparted by the Bishops who received it in an uninterrupted line from the Apostles. They taught nothing except this simple faith, which is also the true depth of God's revelation. Thus, Irenaeus tells us, there is no secret doctrine concealed in the Church's common Creed. There is no superior Christianity for intellectuals. The faith publicly confessed by the Church is the common faith of all. This faith alone is apostolic, it is handed down from the Apostles, that is, from Jesus and from God. In adhering to this faith, publicly transmitted by the Apostles to their successors, Christians must observe what their Bishops say and must give special consideration to the teaching of the Church of Rome, pre-eminent and very ancient. It is because of her antiquity that this Church has the greatest apostolicity; in fact, she originated in Peter and Paul, pillars of the Apostolic College. All Churches must agree with the Church of Rome, recognizing in her the measure of the true Apostolic Tradition, the Church's one common faith.

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

With these arguments, summed up very briefly here, Irenaeus refuted the claims of these Gnostics, these intellectuals, from the start. First of all, they possessed no truth superior to that of the ordinary faith, because what they said was not of apostolic origin, it was invented by them. Secondly, truth and salvation are not the privilege or monopoly of the few, but are available to all through the preaching of the Successors of the Apostles, especially of the Bishop of Rome.



TERTULLIAN

Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus was born sometime between the years A.D. 150 and 155 in North Africa in the city of Carthage. After studying law, he practiced in Rome where he was converted to Christ. After his salvation, Tertullian returned to Carthage and became a in the Church.



TERTULLIAN



Tertullian is the first to call the church 'our mother'. In some of his works he describes the church as the repository of true faith and doctrine. But later he seems to have come into conflict with persons in authority in the church who he perceived to be abandoning the apostolic teaching, and moved more to a view of the church as the gathering of spiritual men, and that the church, properly, is simply the Holy Spirit himself. For this reason he is often regarded as the father of Protestantism.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Cyprian was born of well-to-do pagan parents shortly before 200 and was well educated. He became a Christian about 246 and in 248 became the bishop of Carthage, which he held until his martyrdom in 258.



ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

He viewed Tertullian as his master. He was a calm man, where Tertullian was more fiery, according to Jerome.

His most important work was *De Unitate Catholicae Ecclesiae*, which was directed against the schismatic followers of Novatian.

He clearly distinguished Bishop and Elder and held to supremacy of the Bishop, emphasizing apostolic succession to Peter.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE



At the onset of the Decian persecution, 249-250, the Church was defined by a strict penitential system and a strong network of leadership. Although the Church had endured and triumphed over numerous persecutions, the Decian persecution came at a time when the Church was vulnerable. The weakness of the Church was in its numbers.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

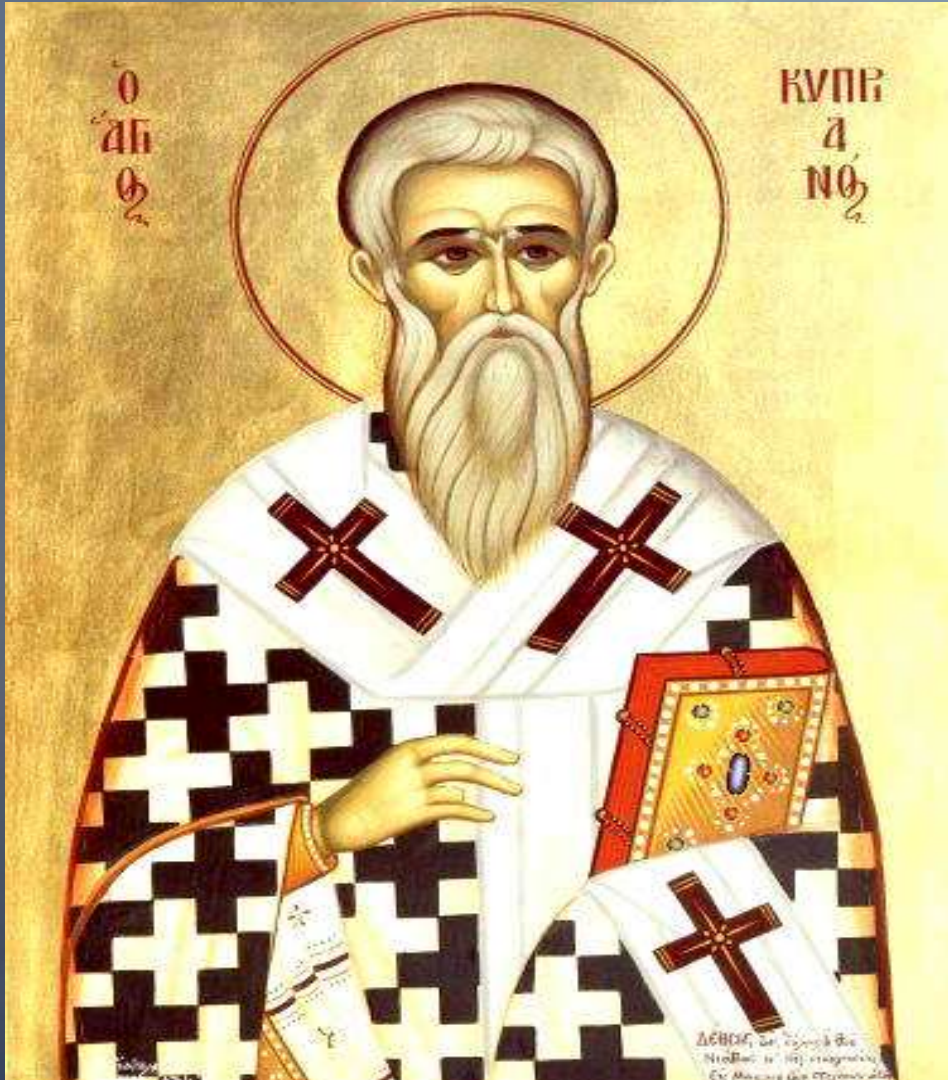
The dominating concern in both Rome and Carthage was the growing number of lapsed Christians (*lapsi*) seeking restoration to Church fellowship. The interim decision developed in several letters between the Roman clergy and Cyprian determined that all who lapsed were in a state of sin beyond what even a bishop could affect. They were dead in their sin and were to remain outside of the Church. Initially no distinction was made between the *libellatici*, those who had purchased a false certificate of sacrifice, and the *sacrificati*, those who had physically sacrificed by either eating the idolatrous meat or pouring a libation to the emperor and his unnamed gods. Another *lapsi* were the *thurificati* who offered incense to the gods and exercising the emperor worship.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

He refers to them as unconscious or half-dead, *semianimus*, meaning they are capable of being revived.¹²¹ The *libellatici and thurificati*, after individual examination, are to be restored to full fellowship. The *sacrificati* are only to be restored *in exitu*, directly before death. In the summer of 251, Cyprian still believed that idolatry and apostasy are sins that only God can forgive, and yet he made concessions to allow a large portion of the *lapsi* back into the Church.



ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE



Cyprian felt a genuine obligation to these people to accurately judge their situation while preserving the Church as a whole. Cyprian believed he acted out of necessity. There are three clear bases of authority from which Cyprian was operating.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

The first is his divinely appointed responsibility as the leader of the Church. He was Christ's priest, meant to intercede for the fallen and petition for their re-admittance. He was their shepherd, and as such he was unwilling to leave them vulnerable.

Cyprian utilized the scriptures to support his conclusions in his strict view expressed in *De Lapsis*.

Cyprian's declaration "*ecclesia super episcopos constituatur*" (the authority derived from episcopal consensus) left no doubt concerning who would resolve this controversy and on whose word the lapsed were to depend. The bishops were the only ones invested with the authority to administer and regulate penitential discipline.

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Cyprian had repeatedly been praised for his dutiful protection of the strictness of gospel discipline, yet he recognized the need to shelter the *lapsi* currently outside of the grace and security of the Church. Truly these sins are for God alone to judge, but now upon His return, God will find these souls safety inside the Church. If they were to remain unsheltered, Cyprian argues, their only option would be to seek fellowship with heretics or convert to paganism. He believes he is now able to offer hope without disregarding gospel discipline.



ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



Titus Flavius Clemens (150-215) was a very able instructor in the theological school in Egypt. During his years as a teacher (A.D. 190-202), Clement wrote the majority of his works, in which he covered almost every aspect of Christian conduct. Later, when religious persecution broke out under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus about A.D. 202, Clement fled Alexandria. He died in Asia Minor.

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

As a Churchman he loved the church, her tradition and laws. The sign of our membership of the Church is our spiritual knowledge of God. Its unity is based on the oneness of faith. Her (the Church) motherhood is correlated to the fatherhood of God.



ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

I. THE VIRGIN MOTHER

St. Clement of Alexandria speaks of the Church as the Virgin Mother of the Christians, her motherhood is correlated to God's fatherhood, through her loving kindness she feeds her children on the Logos as holy milk . She asserts Him as the Educator (*Paidagogue*) and as the "Subject of teaching."

"O wondrous mystery! One is the Father of all, one also the Logos of all, and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere and there in only Virgin Mother; I love to call her the Church. This mother alone had no milk, because she alone did not become woman, but she is both virgin and mother, being undefiled as a virgin and loving as a mother; and calling her children to her she nurses them with holy milk, the Logos for the children."

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

In the final chapter of the Paidagogos Clement calls the Church the spouse and mother of the Tutor. She is the school in which her spouse Jesus is the Teacher. He then continues:

"O graduates of His blessed tutorship! Let us [by our presence] make complete the fair countenance of the Church, and let us as children run to our good Mother. And when we have become hearers of the Word, let us extol the blessed dispensation by which man is brought up and sanctified as a child of God, and being trained on earth attains to citizenship in heaven and there receives his Father, whom he learns to know on earth."

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

II. A COMMUNITY OF JOY

The Alexandrians often look to the Church as the "Community of Joy." According to St. Clement, the Church was symbolized by Rebecca which - in his opinion - means "laughter." He says: "*The Spirit of those that are children in Christ, whose lives are ordered in endurance, rejoice.*"

III. THE BODY OF CHRIST

St. Clement of Alexandria clearly teaches that the Church is the body of Christ, nourished on His Body and Blood.

IV. A NEW CREATION

St. Clement of Alexandria states that the Church is the holy vine, or the holy tree, where the saints, who became a new creation in Christ, together with the heavenly creatures, dwell on its branches. He comments on the parable of the mustard seed (Matt. 13: 31,32), saying:

"To such increased size did the growth of the Word come, that the tree which sprung from it (that is the Church of Christ, established over the whole earth) filled the world so that the fowls of the air, that is, the divine angels and lofty souls, dwelt in its branches."

V. THE FIRST- BORN CHURCH

For this is the first-born Church (Heb. 12: 23), composed of many good children; these are the first born enrolled in Heaven, and hold high festival with so many myriads of angels. We too are first-born sons, who are reared by God, who are genuine friends of the first-born, who first and foremost attained to the knowledge of God.

VI. THE CHURCH, Old and New

St. Clement of Alexandria who proclaims the Church as a continuation of the old one, confirms that she is new in Christ. He asserts that she never become old, for the Holy Spirit always renews her youthfulness.

The new people, in contrast to the older people, are young, because they have heard the new good things.

We are always young, always new: for those must necessarily be new, who become partakers of the new Word.

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



VII. THE HEAVENLY CHURCH

- The earthly Church is usually as the image of the heavenly one, and that it is this ideal Church, "the church on high," which is more often the subject of Clement's thought in the *Stromata*.

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

VII. THE HEAVENLY CHURCH



St. Clement of Alexandria states that the earthly Church is a copy of the heavenly one, that is why we pray that God's will may be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven . He also says that the perfect Gnostic, i.e., the believer practices heavenly life while he is on earth, for he "*will rest on God's holy mountain, the Church on high, in which are assembled the of God, the authentic Israelites who are pure in heart ... giving themselves over to the pure intuition of unending contemplation.*" He also says: "*If you enroll yourself as one of God's people, heaven is your country, God your legislation.*"

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

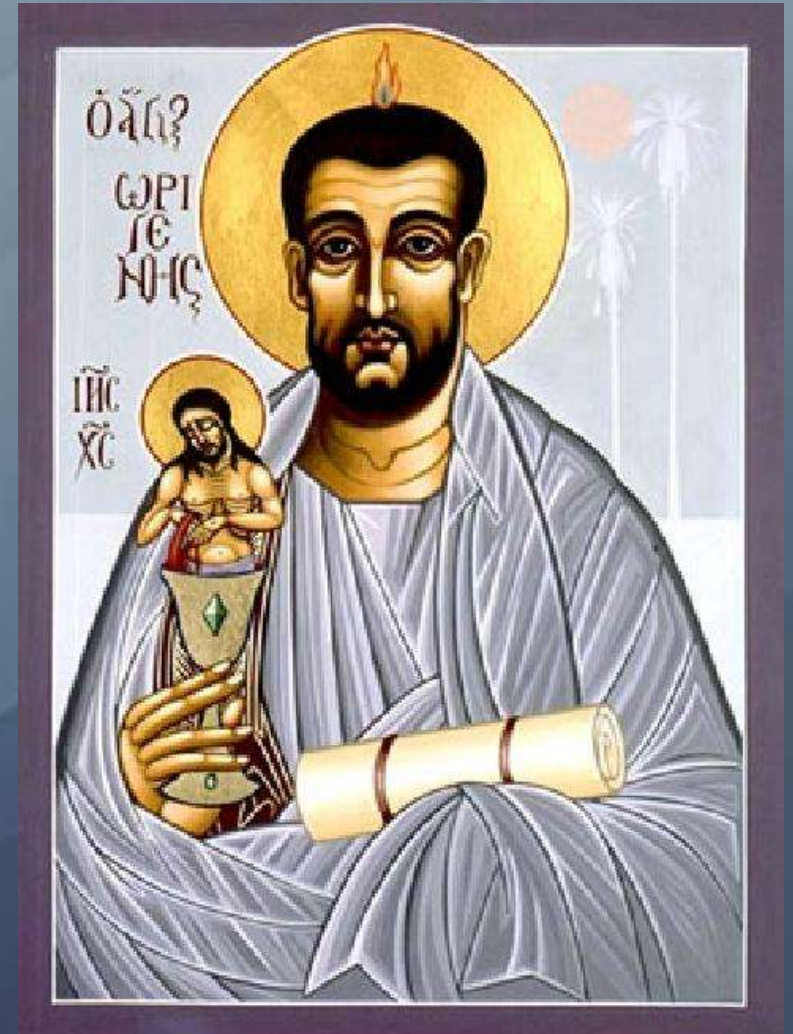
VIII. ONE CHURCH AND ONE FAITH

St. Clement, as a churchman, looks at unity as a natural characteristic of the Church, who is united with one God, has one Bible and one Faith. He stresses on the Church unity based on the "One Faith," asking us to avoid the heretics for they cause schism.

Like God Himself the **Church is one**. St. Clement is firmly that there is only one universal Church as there is only one God Father, one divine Word and one Holy Spirit.

ORIGEN

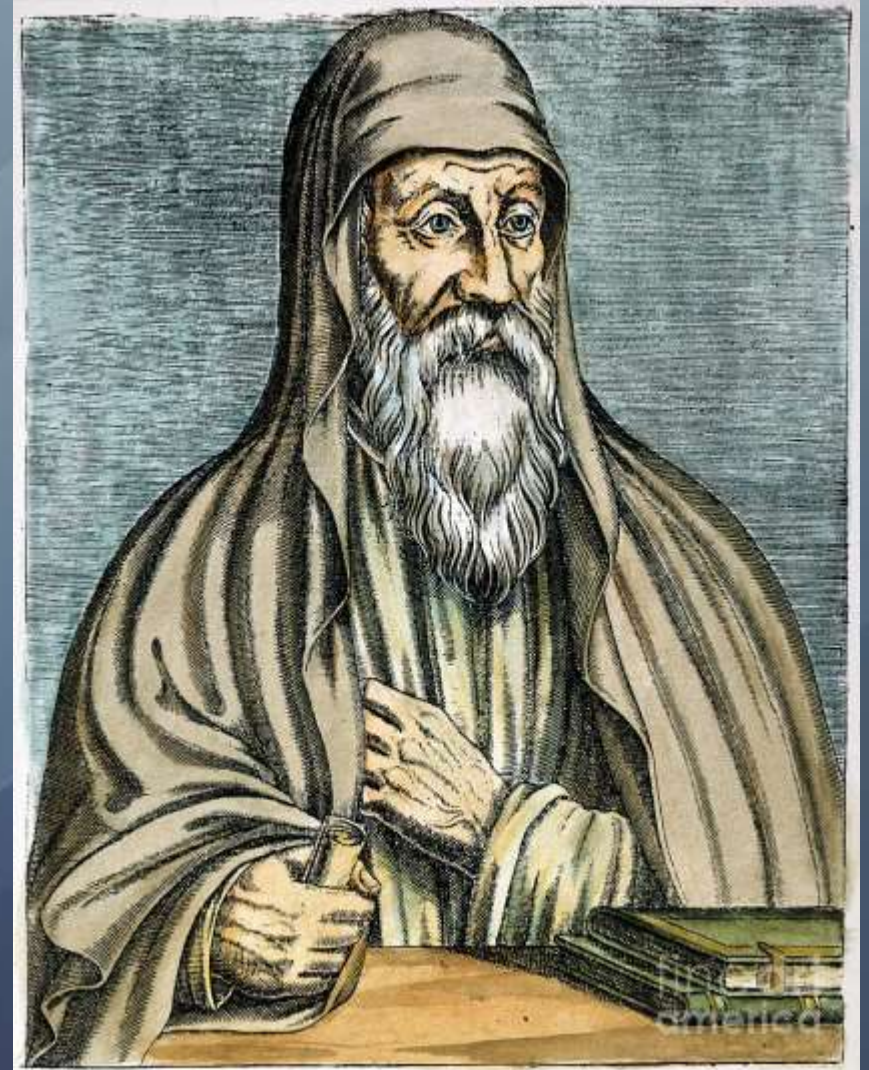
He was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, was a great scholar in the Church. As a prolific writer he wrote many books in defense of Christianity including *Against Celsus*. One of his monumental works was the *Hexapla*, an enormous edition of the Bible arranged in six columns. It contained the text from the Hebrew scriptures, a Greek translation of the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Greek versions by Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotian. His life ended as a teacher in Caesarea.



ORIGEN

He referred to the Church mostly in his exegetical writings. He built his ecclesiological concept on the insights of Irenaeus and Clement. He particularly reflected on Irenaeus' idea of apostolic succession as a uniting agent that preserves the Church's integrity.

He also carried further Clement's distinction between **the true church** and the **church as an empirical institution**.



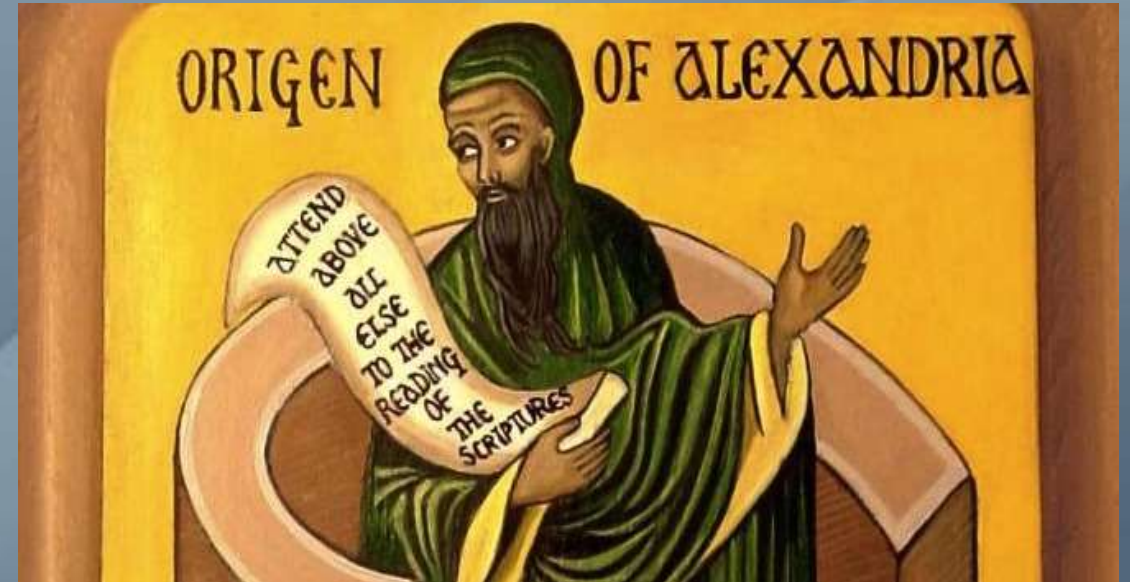
ORIGEN

The former, for Origen, is the Church, which Paul in his letter to the Ephesians called "not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless." It embraces only those who are perfect. It is heavenly and exists from the beginning of the world.

The empirical church is comprised of both the pure and sinful members. Origen demonstrated the ecclesial perfectionists, saying that: "it is impossible for the Church to be entirely purified while it is on earth." Until the last judgment, the church will have both righteous and sinners: "I can confidently say that the treasury of the Lord is his Church, and in that treasury...there often lurk men who are vessels of wrath...chaff with the grain, and fish which have to be thrown out and destroyed together with good fish which have all come into the net."

ORIGEN

Origen contemplated not only the differences, but also convergence between the two parts of the Church – earthly and heavenly. The imperfect members need to grow to perfection.



The perfect and imperfect sides of the Church, therefore, are not irreconcilable that endanger the church's integrity. They give the members of the church an opportunity to grow and to improve. They make the church dynamic and

ORIGEN

At the same time, Origen did not fall into star struck dreams about the church. He was realistic about the need for hierarchical structures and accepted that they play an important role in preserving the church's integrity.



ST. JEROME



Jerome was a native of Venetia and was baptized in 360 and then became a wandering student. A decade later, he followed a monastic life while he was learning Hebrew.

He became secretary to Damasus, the bishop of Rome in 382, who suggested that he might profitably make a new translation of the Bible.



ST. JEROME

In 386 he went to Palestine where he lived in a monastic retreat in Bethlehem for 35 years.

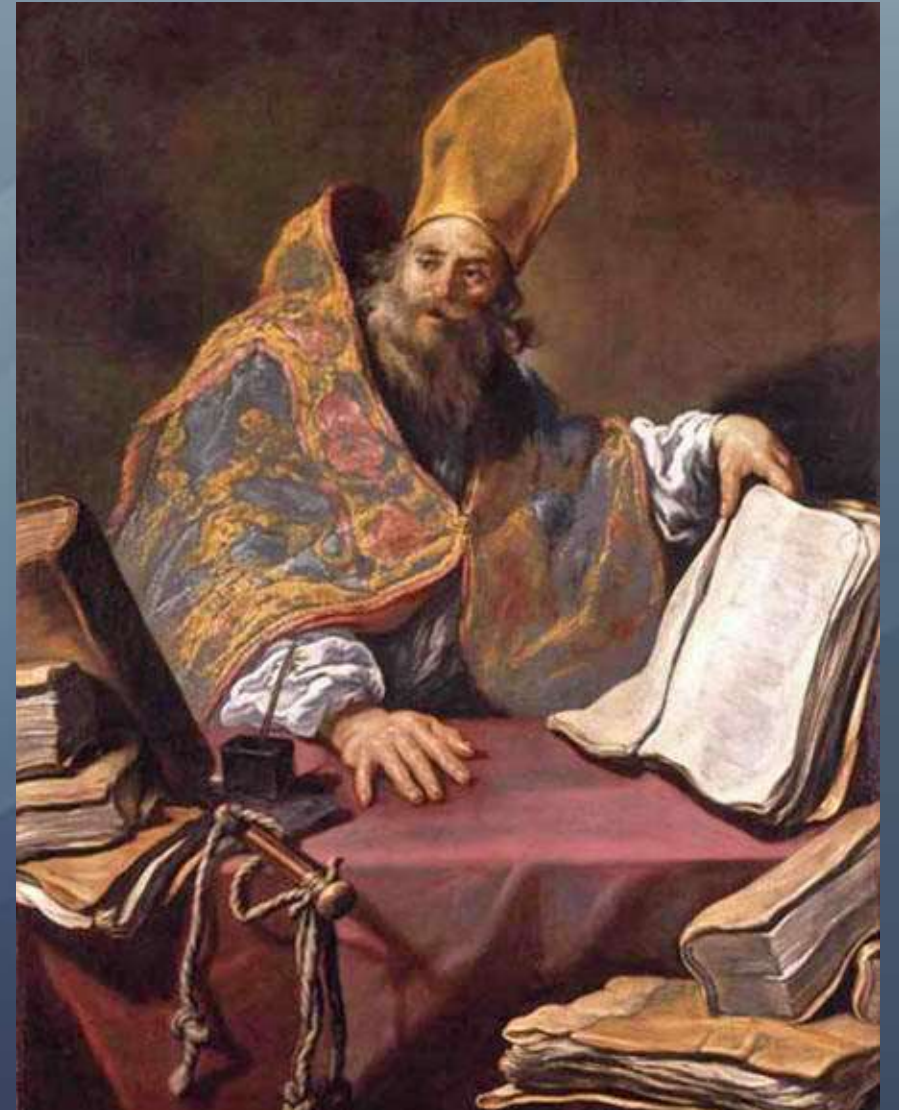
His translation of the Scriptures was in Latin and is known as the Vulgate. He went beyond the Greek of the Septuagint to make Latin translation from the Hebrew Old Testament. He finished his work around 405 and it became the only official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church from the Council of Trent until recent times.

He wrote many commentaries on the Bible and biographies of the leading Christian writers and their works.



ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

His abilities covered church administration, preaching and theology. His father held the position of "prefect of Gaul" and thus was high in imperial circles in Rome. He was educated in law for a political career. He in fact soon rose to the position of imperial governor of the area around Milan.



ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN



When the bishop of Milan died in 374, the people wanted him to take that position, so he gave up his political position to become bishop, giving away his money to the poor and began an intensive study of scripture and theology.

Ambrose was a fearless and able administrator. He spoke against the powerful Arian groups. Once he even opposed Emperor Theodosius.

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN



In 390, Emperor Theodosius gathered the people of Thessalonica, whose governor had been slain and ordered their massacre. The emperor then came to church to participate in the Lord's Table. Ambrose refused him admission until he humbly and publicly repented of this deed, which he did.

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

Although he used the allegorical method of interpretation, he was an able preacher and was instrumental in bringing Augustine to salvation.

He introduced congregational singing of hymns and antiphonal psalmody to the Western church.



MYSTERIUM LUNAE

Saint Ambrose expresses this nicely by presenting the moon as a metaphor for the Church:

"The moon is in fact the Church... [she] shines not with her own light, but with the light of Christ. She draws her brightness from the Sun of Justice, and so she can say: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'" (*Hexaemeron*, IV, 8, 32).



ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



He was an able polemicist, a good preacher, a fine administrator, a superb theologian, and the creator of a Christian philosophy of history that is still valid in its essentials.

He was born in 354 into the home of a Roman official in the North African town of Thagaste. His mother, Monica, prayed for his conversion.

He was educated at the local school where he learned Latin but hated Greek. After he went to Carthage to study rhetoric, he indulged his passions and fathered a son, Adeodatus with a concubine in 372.

In 373 he adopted Manichean teaching, but then turned to philosophy after reading Cicero and the Neoplatonic teachings. He stayed in Carthage until he went to Milan in 384.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

He converted to Christianity, dismissed his concubine, and gave up his profession of rhetoric. His mother died shortly after his conversion. In 391 he was ordained priest in Carthage and in 396 he was made bishop of Hippo where he remained until his death in 430.

He left over 100 books, 500 sermons and 200 letters. *The Confessions* was his autobiography, which is viewed as one of the great ones of all times.

- a. It describes his life before conversion.
- b. The events surrounding his conversion.
- c. The events after his conversion.
- d. He also includes a commentary on the first chapters of Genesis which he often allegorized.



ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

His understanding and appreciation of grace is one of his greatest contributions.

Retractationes or *Revisions* discusses his works in chronological order and points out the changes he had through the years.

Contra Academicos is a philosophical work that tried to demonstrate that probably truth through philosophical study may be achieved, but that certainty comes only through Biblical revelation.

De Doctrina Christiana is the most important exegetical work. It deals with hermeneutics.

a. In it he develops the principle of the "analogy of faith."

b. This means that no teaching contrary to general tenor of scripture should be developed from any particular passage.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



De Trinitate is the most significant theological work.

De Haeresibus is a history of heresies.

He also wrote many letters which deal with the practical problems a pastor will face in his ministry.

He viewed his greatest work to be *De Civitate Dei (The City of God)* which is an apologetic work designed to refute the idea that disaster had come to Rome because they had forsaken the old classical Roman ways.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



In his discussion of how man is saved, he so emphasized the importance of a visible institution, with a true creed, sacraments and ministry that the Roman church considers him their father.



His philosophy of history is to be found in this work.

a. He viewed history as linear and not cyclical.

b. He saw God as sovereign-in time, but not bound.

c. He saw the difference between the earthly and heavenly.

d. He saw the battle between God and evil.

e. He saw true progress as being along moral lines.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



What is this one bread? Is it not the "one body," formed from many? Remember: bread doesn't come from a single grain, but from many. When you received exorcism, you were "ground." When you were baptized, you were "leavened." When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were "baked." Be what you see; receive what you are. This is what Paul is saying about the bread. So too, what we are to understand about the cup is similar and requires little explanation. In the visible object of bread, many grains are gathered into one just as the faithful (so Scripture says) form "a single heart and mind in God" [Acts 4.32]. And thus it is with the wine. Remember, friends, how wine is made. Individual grapes hang together in a bunch, but the juice from them all is mingled to become a single brew. This is the image chosen by Christ our Lord to show how, at his own table, the mystery of our unity and peace is solemnly consecrated. All who fail to keep the bond of peace after entering this mystery receive not a sacrament that benefits them, but an indictment that condemns them. (Excerpts from Sermon 272 of St. Augustine, 408 AD)