

# *History of the Church*

*2008-2009*

*(Pro Manuscripto)*



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## Introduction

At a precise moment in history and in a particular place on earth, the Son of God became man and made his appearance in human history. Jesus' place of birth was Bethlehem, in Judea; he was born when Herod the Great was king of Judea and Quirinius was governor of Syria, in the reign of Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome (cf. Mt 2:1; Lk 2:1-2). Christ lived on earth until another documented moment in time: his passion, death and resurrection took place in Jerusalem, starting on the fourteenth day of Nisan in the year 30. At that time Caiaphas held the position of high priest, the procurator Pontius Pilate ruled Judea and Tiberius was emperor of Rome.

Jesus put himself forward as the Christ, the messiah foretold by the prophets and eagerly expected by the people of Israel. In Caesarea Philippi, against the background of various opinions as to who he was, Jesus asked his Apostles: 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter replied very emphatically: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus accepted this description of himself and confirmed it quite unequivocally: '. . . [ flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven' (cf. Mt 16:13-17). On the night of his passion, before the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin, he openly declared that he was the Son of God, the messiah. In response to the solemn question put to him by the chief priest, the supreme religious authority in Israel, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?', Jesus said 'I am' (Mk 14:61-62).

'He came to his own home, and his own people received him not' (Jn 1: 11). These words of the first chapter of St John's Gospel report the drama of the rejection of the Saviour by the chosen people. At this time most Jews had a political-nationalistic idea of what the messiah would be like: they expected him to be a kind of earthly leader who would free their nation from the oppressive yoke of the Romans and restore the kingdom of Israel in all its splendour. Jesus did not fit this image, for his kingdom was not of this world (Jn 18:36). Therefore, they failed to recognize him; instead, he was rejected by the leaders of the people and condemned to death by crucifixion.

The miracles Jesus performed during his public life were to prove that He is the Messiah, and his way of demonstrating the truth of his teachings. His miracles and teachings, combined with Jesus' unique personality, were what caused people to become his disciples, the first of whom were the twelve Apostles. Initially, their commitment was defective: for they shared many of their contemporaries' prejudices; they found it difficult to grasp exactly what Jesus' redemptive mission was -which explains how terribly disconcerted they were by his passion and death.

The resurrection of Jesus is the central dogma of Christianity and is the decisive proof of the truth of his teaching. 'If Christ has not been raised,' St Paul wrote, 'then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain' (1 Cor 15:14). The fact of the resurrection (nothing was further from the thoughts of the Apostles and disciples) was thrust on them by the sheer force of evidence: 'But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15:20; cf. Lk 24:27-44; Jn 20:24-28).

But Jesus Christ not only founded a religion -Christianity; he established a Church. The Church -the new people of God- was established in the form of a visible community of salvation which people join through baptism. The Church was grounded on the Apostle Peter, to whom Christ promised the primacy -‘and on this rock I will build my Church’ (Mt 16:18); Christ confirmed this after his resurrection and conferred this responsibility on Peter: ‘Feed my lambs,’ ‘Tend my sheep’ (cf. Jo 21:15-17). The Church of Jesus Christ will last until the end of time, as long as the world lasts and there are men on earth: ‘and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’ (Mt 16:18) The final stage in the establishment of the Church occurred on-the day of Pentecost, which is when its history begins.

\* \* \*

In contrast with the national character of the Jewish religion, the universalism of Christianity soon expressed itself. Disciples of Jesus, in flight from Jerusalem, reached Antioch in Syria, one of the great cities of the east. Some of them were Hellenists, with an outlook more open than that of Palestinian Jews, and they began to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. In cosmopolitan Antioch, the universalism of the Church became patent; and it was there, for the first time, that Christ’s followers were called Christians.

The universality of the redemption and of the Church of Jesus Christ was formally confirmed by a miraculous event in which the Apostle Peter was the protagonist. The extraordinary signs surrounding the conversion of Cornelius, a centurion at Caesarea, and his family, cleared up any doubts Peter had on this subject; as he put it, ‘Truly I perceive that God shows no particularity, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him’ (Acts 10:34-35). The news that Peter had given baptism to uncircumcised Gentiles caused consternation in Jerusalem. Peter had to report his experience in great detail before the Jewish Christians in this holy city changed their minds and shed their deeply rooted prejudices. They began to realize that the redemption brought by Christ was universal: the Church was open to everyone: “When they heard this they were silenced. And they glorified God, saying, ‘then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life’” (Acts 11:18).

But one last obstacle remained before Christian universalism won the day. It was difficult for many Jewish Christians, attached as they were to their old traditions, to understand how Gentiles could be members of the Church. They felt that for Gentile converts to have access to salvation they needed at the very least to be circumcised and to keep the regulations of the Law of Moses. This naturally disturbed Christians of Gentile background, so the Church was forced to examine the whole question of the relationship between the old law and the new law, and to affirm unequivocally the Church’s independence of the Synagogue.

To discuss these fundamental problems the ‘council’ of Jerusalem met in the year 49. At this assembly Paul and Barnabas spoke on behalf of the churches of Gentile background and bore witness to the wonders God had worked among them. Peter once again spoke with authority in favour of Christians’ freedom vis-à-vis Jewish legal observances. On the proposal of James, bishop of Jerusalem, the council agreed not to lay any unnecessary burdens on Gentile converts: they should only have to obey a few simple rules: keep away from fornication and, as regard the old law,

abstain from meat which was strangled or had been sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:1-33), thus definitively solving the problem of the relationships between Christianity and Judaism. Jewish Christians in Palestine still followed their own style for a while, but they were a minority within a Christian Church ever more widespread throughout the Gentile world.

The great promoters of the spread of Christianity were the Apostles, acting in obedience to Christ's commandment to proclaim the gospel to all the nations. Due to lack of historical documents it is difficult to find out much about the missionary activity of most of the Apostles. We do know that the Apostle Peter, on leaving Palestine, made Antioch his base (there was an important Christian community there already). It is possible that he also lived for a time in Corinth, but his final base was Rome, the capital of the empire; he was the first bishop of the Roman church. In Rome he underwent martyrdom in the persecution unleashed by Emperor Nero (c. 64). John the Apostle, after staying a long time in Palestine, moved to Ephesus, where he lived for very many years, so much so that the churches of Asia regarded him as their own Apostle. Very early traditions speak of apostolic activities of James the Greater in Spain, of Thomas in India, of Mark the Evangelist in Alexandria, etc.

Information about the apostolic activity of St Paul is by far the most extensive, thanks to the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles and the important corpus of Pauline letters. St Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, par excellence, and his missionary journeys brought the gospel to Asia Minor and Greece, where he founded and directed many churches. Taken prisoner in Jerusalem, his long captivity gave him an opportunity to bear witness to Christ before the Sanhedrin, the Roman governors of Judea and King Agrippa II. After being brought to Rome he was set free by Caesar's courts and probably during this period made a missionary journey to Spain, which he had been planning for some time. Imprisoned for a second time, he was tried again and found guilty and died a martyr in the imperial city.

The work of the Apostles does not complete the picture of the spread of Christianity in the ancient world. For the most part, the bearers of the first tidings of the gospel must have been ordinary, humble people -civil servants, businessmen, soldiers and slaves. As a generalization, it may be said that during these early centuries Christianity was to be found more in the cities than among the rural communities. By the time the Church obtained its freedom, in the fourth century, Christianity was deeply rooted in many parts of the near east, such as Syria, Asia Minor and Armenia; and in the west, in Rome and its surrounding area and in Latin Africa. The gospel also had a considerable presence in the Nile valley and in various parts of Italy, Spain and Gaul.

## 1. The Roman Persecution of Christians

Christianity began and developed within the political and cultural framework of the Roman empire. For three centuries, the pagan empire persecuted the Christians because their religion represented a 'rival' form of universalism and forbade its adherents to offer religious worship to the emperor.



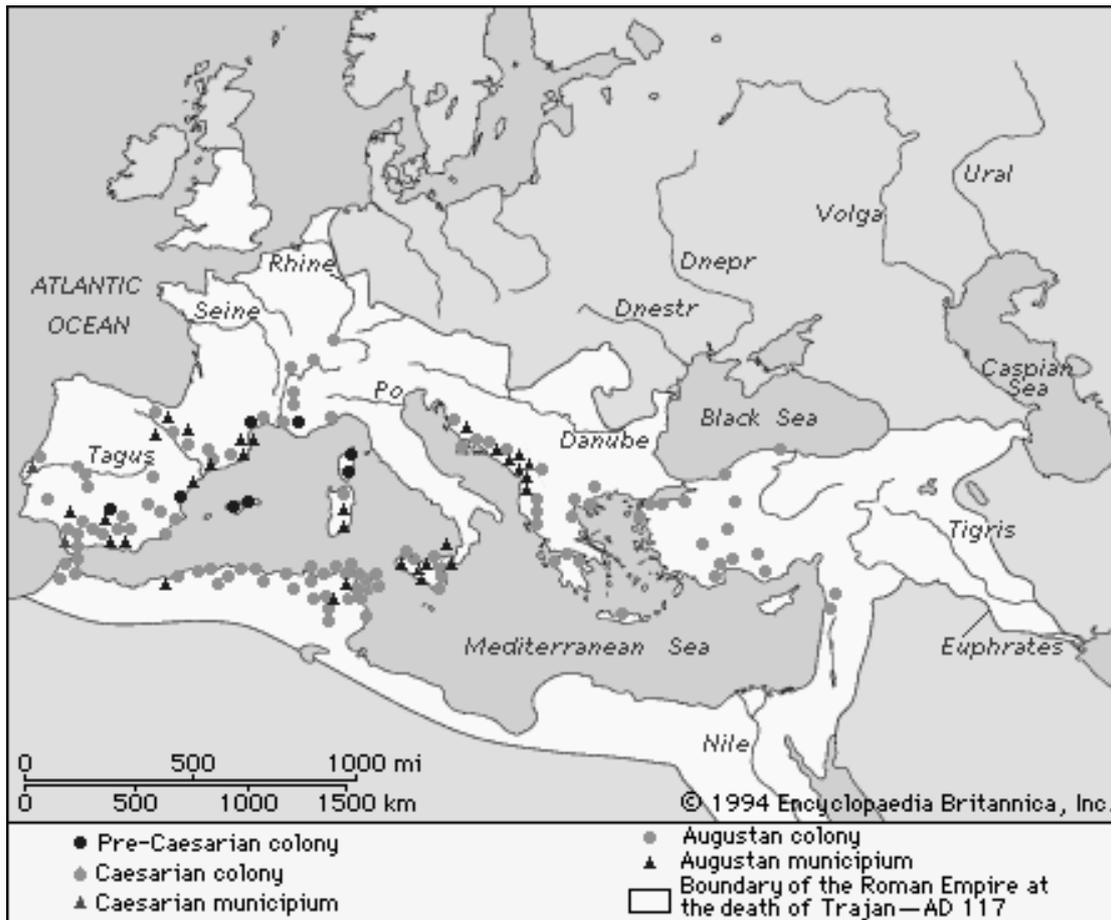
The Roman Empire at its greatest extent in A.D. 116

It is true that pagan Rome persecuted the Christians for three centuries; but it would be wrong to see the empire as only a negative factor in the spread of the gospel. The fact that Rome had imposed unity on the Greco-Latin world meant that over a huge area, under a single supreme authority, peace and order reigned. This situation lasted until well into the third century and good communications among the various parts of the empire made it easy for ideas to circulate. The Roman roads and the sea-routes of the Mediterranean provided channels for the good news of Christianity to spread over the whole Mediterranean area.

A common language —based on Greek, at first, and on Greek and Latin, later —made it easier for people to communicate and understand one another. Paganism was in crisis, very many spiritually sensitive people were searching for religious truth and were predisposed to the gospel. These factors, undoubtedly favoured the spread of Christianity.

But there were also very serious obstacles in the way of people embracing the Christian faith. For Christians of Jewish background it meant breaking with their

community of origin —which now regarded them as deserters and traitors. Gentile converts, especially those belonging to the upper classes, encountered similar difficulties: their faith did not allow them take part in a series of traditional pagan-religious practices involving worship of Rome and the emperor, yet these practices were part and parcel of a citizen’s everyday life and they were a conventional sign of loyalty to the empire. Hence the accusation so often levelled against the Christians that they were ‘atheists.’ This was a reason why they were threatened with persecution and martyrdom —a threat which hung over them for centuries and meant that to become a Christian involved taking risks; and demanded a high degree of moral courage.



It is in and through the Roman Empire that the Church first expanded.

## 1. The foundation for the persecutions

The Roman Empire was a state based on law. If it used force against Christianity, we must assume that it had reasons for doing so. Unfortunately we possess few official legal documents that would provide us with information about the legal foundation for the official persecutions of Christians. Did the State act on the basis of special legislation against the Christians? Or did it simply use its right to police the supervision of religion because in this case it regarded Christianity as a “forbidden religion” (*religio illicita*)? If Tertullian occasionally spoke of an “*institutum*

*Neronianum*”, this must be understood as the simple fact that Nero began the persecutions and not as his basing these persecutions a legal foundation, that is that he promulgated a law against the Christians. For the same Tertullian also accuses the Roman state of proceeding against the Christians inconsequentially and without any legal foundation.

This reproach of “inconsequential action” was chiefly directed at the ordinance which Trajan in a *rescript* directed to Pliny, namely, the Christians should be punished *as Christians (propter nomen ipsum)* if they were accused; but the State should not actively pursue them. If they are criminals, asks Tertullian, why are they not to be pursued? If they are not criminals and need not be hunted, why are they then sentenced and punished? Hadrian also acted according to this legal contradiction. Only Decius (249-251) passed laws which served as the juridical foundation for the state's actions against the Christians.

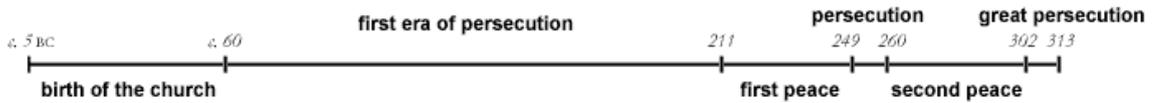
The Christians refusal to participate in the official pagan worship, a necessary consequence of their exclusive monotheism, made the Christians appear as “atheists” (without Gods, not God-less), and thus enemies of the State. The absolute devotion of the Christian religion to Christ as God (= *Kyrios*) and Master meant that the Christians could not participate in the Emperor worship, whose forms had become steadily more bizarre since Domitian. By placing the “*Kyrios*” Christ in opposition to the “*Kyrios*” Emperor, the Christians became, as the religious form of Emperor Worship was made the test of loyalty to the state, even more suspect of being enemies of the State. Even if generally tolerant of alien religions, the Roman State rested on a religious foundation and demanded from everyone that he/she revere the Emperor in suitable fashion and acknowledge the gods of the State. Toward the Jews the state remained tolerant in spite of their monotheism, because the Jews were a minority and as such limited to a particular national group. Christianity was a supra-national and universal religion, and even though, until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, a minority group in the Roman Empire, its universalism challenged, in the minds of the Emperors, the very foundations of the universal empire. Conflict was therefore inevitable and was brought about by the Emperors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries who were able rulers and who attempted to rejuvenate and strengthen the Empire internally on a religious basis.

Christians for their part acknowledged the State as a regulatory power; faithful obeyed its laws of the State, and prayed *for* the emperor, but not *to* him. There is hardly a reason for action against the Christians in normal times. In fact, persecutions occurred only sporadically and varied in extent and duration in the different provinces. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century they were more eruptions of pent-up hate than a systematic State policy. Only with the Emperor Decius did the state begin to act according to a preconceived plan.

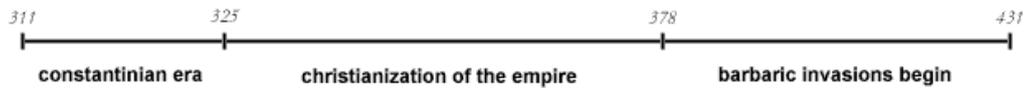
From the beginning, the mob played an active part in the persecutions. But why this hatred of Christians?

The first, and perhaps most important reason, was the instinctive dislike people have for those who are and live differently from the masses and who live a more exacting religious and moral life. Secondly, because of their withdrawn life Christians aroused

## First three centuries of the History of the Church



## Three distinctive periods of the early Church

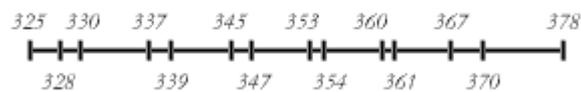


## The Constantinian era



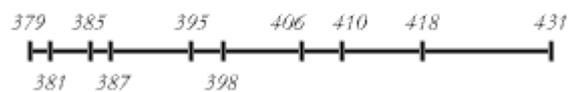
- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 311 Edict of Toleration      | 316 Martin of Tours is born            |
| 311 Donatist schism begins   | 324 Constantine controls entire empire |
| 312 Battle of Milvian Bridge | 324 Pachomius starts commune           |
| 313 Edict of Milan           | 325 Council of Nicea                   |
| 315 Arian controversy begins |  |

## The Christianization of the Empire



- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 325 Council of Nicea                | 353 Constantius' pro-Arian policy     |
| 328 Athanasius is bishop Alexandria | 354 Augustine is born                 |
| 330 Constantinople founded          | 360 John Cassian is born              |
| 337 Constantine's baptism and death | 361 Julian the Apostate gains control |
| 339 Ambrose is born                 | 367 Athanasius defines New Testament  |
| 345 Chrysostom is born              | 370 Basil becomes bishop of Caesarea  |
| 347 Jerome is born                  | 378 Battle of Adrianople              |

## Barbaric invasions begin



- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 379 Theodosius becomes emperor        | 398 Chrysostom bishop of Constantinople |
| 381 Council of Constantinople         | 406 Jeromes completes the Vulgate       |
| 385 Ambrose prevails                  | 410 Fall of Rome                        |
| 387 Augustine's conversion            | 418 Synod of Carthage                   |
| 395 Augustine becomes bishop of Hippo | 431 Council of Ephesus                  |

suspicion and provoked slander. People whispered about criminal activities during their secret meetings, about their theistic meals at which participants ate human flesh (that is, partook of the Body and Blood of Christ), and about incestuous fornication, for which the greeting of “brother” and “sister” among Christians may have been responsible. Natural disasters, public disorders, accidents, and military defeats were all attributed to the Christian's refusal to sacrifice to the gods of the state. In general, they were accused of hating the whole human race (*odium humani generis*). This accusation seems to have been so wide-spread that it permitted Nero to comfortably transfer the suspicion of burning Rome from himself to the Christians as the “scum of humanity”.

## **2. The course of the persecutions**

The persecutions fall into three stages or periods.

### ***First Period.***

Until about 100 AD Christianity was ignored or tolerated by the state. It was regarded as a Jewish sect and shared the official toleration of the Jewish religion “*religio licita*”. The first great persecution by Nero (54-68) was nothing more than the monstrous act of a brutal tyrant who incited it in order to shift the guilt for the burning of Rome in July 64 from himself to the Christians. He had a great number of Roman Christians put to death by torture and made a public spectacle of it in his gardens. Among the victims were Peter and Paul. This persecution was limited to the city and was devoid of any juridical foundation. It was fateful in that through Nero's action the stigma of the “*odium humani generis*” was attached to the Christians and for almost two hundred years provided the permissive basis though not the juridical foundation for action against them. The various measures adopted by Domitian (81-96) were also the acts of a tyrant. In 95 AD the consul Flavius Clemens, a cousin of the emperor, was executed and his wife Flavia Domitilla was sent into exile together with her sons. According to tradition the Apostle John was exiled to Patmos during Domitian's reign and there wrote the Apocalypse.

### ***Second Period.***

From 100 to 250 Christianity was now recognized as a religion in its own right, but was persecuted as a *religio illicita*, hostile to state and man. The foundation for this view was the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (98-117) which, though at first private, was soon circulated by Pliny, regarded as semi-official, and finally became common law. As the new governor of Bithynia in 112, Pliny had asked the Emperor for criterion on how to deal with the Christians, for, he writes, “having never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted with the method and limits to be observed either in examining or punishing them. Also I am not certain whether any difference is to be made on account of age; whether to treat younger people the same as older persons, whether to grant pardon in case of repentance; or whether, if a man has once been a Christian, it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere name, even if no crime be attached, or only the crimes associated with it are punishable; in all these points I am greatly doubtful”. He continues:

In the meanwhile the method I have observed toward those who have been

denounced to me as Christians is the following: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it, I repeated the question for a second and a third time, adding the threat of capital punishment. If they still persevered, I had them executed. For I had no doubt that whatever the nature of their creed might be, their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved punishment in any case. A few Roman citizens who were also obsessed with the same delusion I have directed to be taken to Rome.

These accusations spread (as is usually the case) and several cases came to light. An anonymous informer sent in a list with the names of many persons. Those who denied they were or ever had been Christians I thought it proper to discharge if they repeated after me an invocation to the gods and offered adoration, with wine and incense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the Gods, and finally cursed Christ, acts, to whose performance a real Christian cannot be forced under any circumstances. Others who were named by that informer immediately confessed themselves Christians and then denied it; true, they had been Christians, but were so no longer; some had been Christians three years ago or more, some even twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your image and those of the Gods and cursed Christ. They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt or their error was that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before sunrise when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a God, and did not bind themselves by a solemn oath to commit a crime, but rather not to commit a theft, robbery, or adultery, not to break their word, and not to deny a trust when called upon to return it. Then it was their custom to separate and to meet again later to partake of food - but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. But after my edict in which according to your order I had forbidden associations, they had abandoned even this practice.

I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing more than a depraved and excessive superstition. I therefore adjourned the proceedings and turn to you for advice.

The Emperor answered: "You, my dear Secundus, have pursued the right method. It is not possible to lay down any general rule for the treatment of all cases: No search shall be made for these people; when they are denounced, however, and found guilty, they must be punished. But whoever denies being a Christian and gives proof that he is not by praying to our Gods shall be pardoned on the ground of his repentance, even though he may have incurred suspicion because of his past. Accusations without signature must not be admitted as evidence in any trial: For that would be a bad precedent and not worthy of the spirit of our age".

According to this ordinance, simply to be a Christian was punishable; no further crimes need have been committed by the accused. Only anonymous denunciations should no longer be accepted. The implementation of the *rescript*, which was not a law of the state, was left in the hands of the provincial governors. Indeed, subsequently there occurred numerous territorially limited persecutions whose instigators often were fanaticized mobs. Emperor Hadrian (117-138) in a similar *rescript* in the year 124/125 to C. Minucius Fundanus, governor of Asia, actually forbade him to follow such desires of the mob and anonymous denunciations of

Christians, and the Christians welcomed it as a relief. But also under Antoninus Pius (138-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), and Commodus (180-192) numerous Christians were executed either singly or in groups. Under Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher-emperor, an increase in hostility to Christians is actually noticeable.

Septimius Severus (193-211) in the beginning tolerated the Christians, but suddenly in the year 202 made the conversion to Christianity punishable and thereby started a persecution which raged especially in North Africa, Egypt, and the Near East.

Under Caracalla (211-217), Elagabalus (218-222), and Alexander Severus (222-235) the Christians were, in general, left alone. The mother of Alexander Severus, Julia Mamaea, was kindly disposed toward them and corresponded with Origen and Hippolytus of Rome. Maximin Thrace (235-238) decreed an edict hostile to the Church and chiefly directed against the clergy, while Gordian (238-244) and particularly Philip the Arab (244-249) were friendly to the Christians. The latter may have been inwardly a Christian but could not publicly show this at the time. Then a relapse into fanatical hostility toward Christians occurred. Military defeats and threats on the borders; a rise in the cost of living and famine in the interior of the Empire; and the strong Roman nationalism in relation with the millenary celebration in Rome in 248, all provoked a simultaneous revival of the traditional religion and a renewed hatred of Christians in the population.

### ***Third Period.***

From 250 to 311 Emperor Decius (249-251) aspired to rejuvenation of the Roman state. He saw the religious foundations of the Empire threatened by the Christians who refused to partake in the state religion, and therefore promulgated, for the first time, general laws whose aim it was to destroy Christianity and the return of all the citizens of the Empire to the Roman state religion. The first wave of arrests occurred in December 250. On January 20, 250, Pope Fabian died a martyr in Rome. In the middle of 250 an edict was issued to the effect that all inhabitants of the Empire were to sacrifice to the gods in order to ward off an epidemic. Special commissions were appointed which were to supervise the sacrifice and issue a certificate to those who had complied. By this method the Christians would be discovered when they refused to sacrifice, and those who were the cause of the wrath of the gods, and thus the cause of the epidemic, would be put to death.

The number of those who weakened under the persecution was alarmingly high. The long period of calm was in part responsible for the apostasy: people were no longer used to the dangers inherent in being a Christian. There were those who actually sacrificed (*sacrificati*) and those who simply offered incense before the images of the gods and the Emperor. Another reason why so many Christians did not persevere in their faith was probably the ease with which they could bypass the sacrifices. Faithful Christians considered as apostates those who through bribery of the sacrificial commission obtained certificates stating they had sacrificed when they in fact had not (*libellatici*) and those who somehow managed to have their names inserted into the list of sacrificers (*acta facientes*).

A serious dispute soon broke out among the congregations over the question of the reconciliation of those who had fallen away (*lapsi*). In Rome, the priest Novatian advocated severity in the punishment of the apostates, and came into conflict with

Pope Cornelius (251-253) who advocated mercy. Novatian, a highly respected theologian, went into schism and appointed himself a bishop and founded his own church. He appealed to the strict ideal of sanctity and championed rigoristic attitudes in the practice of penance. The “catholic” church of Pope Cornelius was accused, by him, of laxity and the betrayal of the faith. Novatian's followers called themselves the “pure ones”. Although they were excommunicated in 251 by a Roman synod composed of sixty bishops, they survived into the 4<sup>th</sup> century. As the “Church of the Saints” their later rigorism excluding all mortal sinners.

In Carthage and Alexandria similar controversy arose. The bishops Cyprian and Dionysius made every attempt to find a reasonable solution to the problem (Cyprian wrote his *De lapsis* in 251), but they could not prevent Novatus from founding a schismatic church in Africa. This church established relations with Novatian in Rome. Ever since that time rigorism has been the characteristic of all heresies and sects. These tendencies, which always appeared under the guise of special piety and sanctity, have been combated vigorously and consistently by the Church in order to retain her “catholicity” which, according to Christ's commission, consists of bringing God's salvation to all men and not merely to a small sect (*haeresis*) of the elect and saints.

After the death of Decius, who was killed in 251 in battle against the Goths, his successors Gallus (251-253) and Valerian (253-260) continued the persecutions only mildly. Pope Cornelius was exiled to Centumcellae (Civitavecchia) where he died, and his successor Lucius (253-254) was also exiled. Under the sustained pressure of straitened internal and external circumstances in the empire (border wars, epidemics, the rise of cost of living), renewed hatred of Christians arose and persecution erupted in 257. Emperor Valerian was methodical in his approach. A first edict in 257 only concerned itself with the clergy: all bishops, priest and deacons were obliged to sacrifice to the gods. Whoever among them continued to hold services or secret assemblies in cemeteries or catacombs was to be punished by death. In North Africa and Egypt the prominent bishops, Cyprian of Carthage and Dionysius of Alexandria, were imprisoned, and many Christians were sentenced to hard labor in the mines. A second edict of 258 decreed the immediate execution of all clerics who refused to sacrifice to the gods. Christian senators and members of the nobility were demoted, and if they continued to refuse to sacrifice they were subject to confiscation of estates and finally to execution. Christian court employees and imperial servants, the *Caesariani*, were tortured and sent to hard labor or executed. All Christian churches and cemeteries were confiscated and destroyed. Now blood ran in torrents. In Carthage, Cyprian was martyred. We have the *Acta* of his trial, in which we find his sentence expressed as follows: “Because for a long time you have led the life of a traitor and have started a sinister conspiracy with several others; because you are a declared enemy of the Gods and the laws of the Roman State, and not even the pious and illustrious Emperors Valerian and Gallienus and the supreme Caesar Valerian could induce you to serve again the Gods of the state; and because you are the actual originator of detestable crimes and have seduced others to iniquities; an example shall be made of you as a warning to all those whom you have caused to become your accomplices. At the price of your blood, decency and morals shall be preserved. Thus we order Thascius Cyprian to die by the sword.”

In Rome Pope Sixtus II with his deacons and priests, among them Laurentius, were

martyred. Everywhere men and women, clerics and laymen, were executed in great numbers. The purification under Decius had had the effect that the number of apostates and “weak ones” was now much smaller. The Christian Church offered, as never before, a picture of fortitude. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why after Valerian's defeat in the Persian War and his death in Persian captivity his son and successor, Gallienus (260-268), was persuaded to rescind the edicts of his father.

The Church now enjoyed a forty year respite. It was the lull before the last and most brutal storm.

Emperor Diocletian (284-305), the able and deserving restorer of the Roman Empire, had for a long time tolerated Christianity even in his closest surroundings. His wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria were considered Christians. Then, in the year 303, he suddenly started the bloodiest of all persecutions. A decisive battle between Christianity and the Roman Empire developed which ended in the victory of Christianity with the Edict of Milan.

The persecution began with an imperial edict of February 23, 303, which ordered the destruction of all churches, the surrender and burning of all copies of the Scriptures, and banned all Christian meetings. All Christian officials were dismissed and the Christian employees at the imperial court, the Caesariani, were demoted without consideration of rank and position. Soon after, the latter ones, under the accusation of arson in the imperial palace, were tortured and executed. The priests and deacons of the imperial residence Nicodemia were also executed together with their bishop Anthimus. Two subsequent edicts extended the persecution to all clerics of the Empire and ordered their immediate arrest, torture, and execution. A fourth edict in the spring of 304 contained a strict general order for sacrifice in the whole Empire, and carried the terrors of persecution to the whole Christian population. This last edict, probably instigated by Caesar Galerius, had as its undeniable goal the extermination of Christianity.

The implementation of the edicts, which were decreed for the whole Empire, was different in each of its four regions. In the West, under Augustus Maximian and the Caesar Constantius Chlorus, they were not strictly followed; the persecution was generally completely stopped by 305, after the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian had retired from the government. But in the East, the persecution reached its peak in the years 305-311 under the new Augustus Galerius and his new Caesar Maximinus Daia. Here not only was the number of martyrs very high, but the cruelty during the executions was particularly brutal and inhuman. Finally Galerius had to admit the futility of his campaign, and shaken by a serious illness, he ended the persecution.

In April 313 Galerius issued, from his residence in Sardica, the famous *Edict of Toleration* which finally granted Christianity the right to exist: its most important sentence read: “and may they from now on be Christians (*ut denuo sint christiani*)”. In fact, Maximinus Daia continued the persecution, but the political events of the succeeding years passed him by and brought with them Constantine's victory and with it the victory of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

## **GLOSSARY**

### ***AGAPE***

Literally "love." The *Agape* was an early Christian religious meal that was at first closely related to the celebration of the Eucharist and often preceded this celebration.

### **APOCRYPHAL**

A work of literature with scriptural or quasi-scriptural pretensions which is not genuine, canonical, or inspired by God.

### **APOLOGIST**

Generally, one who writes a work in order to defend and explain the Christian religion. The title also refers specifically to a group of Church fathers who wrote during the second and third centuries in the Roman Empire.

### **APOSTOLIC FATHER**

Saintly writers of the early Church whom the Church recognizes as her special witnesses of faith.

### **APOSTOLIC TRADITION**

Refers to the passing of the faith of the Apostles from generation to generation. Hippolytus' work of the same name illustrated the principle by preserving the rites of ordination, Baptism, and the Eucharist used during the third century. The Eucharistic Prayer found in *The Apostolic Tradition* became the basis for the second Eucharistic Prayer in the 1970 Roman Missal, which was published as part of the intended reforms for the Second Vatican Council.

### **CATECHUMENS**

Literally "the instructed." Those adults seeking admission to the Church after having met over a long period of time for instruction before being baptized.

### **DIASPORA**

Greek for dispersion it refers to the Emigration of the Jews into areas outside the geophysical boundaries of Palestine.

### **THE DIDACHE**

From the Greek meaning "teaching," a first century treatise concerning Christian morals, practices, and ministry. Its sixteen chapters cover Baptism, fasting, prayers, the Eucharist, and the developing Church hierarchy among the early Christians.

### **ESSENES**

A group of Jews that withdrew from the world into the desert in order to live a life of prayer and asceticism. Their name means "the pious ones" or "the healers."

### **HELLENIZATION**

Process by which Greek cultural attributes were transplanted to the East.

### **ICHTHYS**

An acrostic for the Greek phrase *Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter*; which is a declaration of the central tenet of the Christian faith meaning "Jesus Christ, Son of

God, Savior." The acrostic itself spells the word "fish" in Greek.

### **MONOTHEISM**

The belief there is only one true God.

### **PAPACY**

The Vicar of Christ as instituted by Jesus who holds the responsibility and supreme authority for guiding the Church.

### **PHARISEES**

A progressive, reforming group of Jewish lay scholars. Their name comes from the Aramaic *perishaya*, which means "the separated ones."

### **PONTIFEX MAXIMUS**

Title meaning "high priest" of the Roman pagan religion that was taken by Emperor Augustus.

### **PRESBYTER**

From the Greek word *presbyteros* for "priest." which is a contraction of the Greek. In the early Church, the presbyters were the church elders.

### **PUNIC WARS**

Three wars fought by Rome against Carthage, after which the Romans vastly expanded their empire, acquiring Sicily, Spain, and North Africa.

### **SADDUCEES**

Comprised of many wealthy elite, especially in Jerusalem, they exercised considerable religious and political influence among Jews at the time of Christ.

### **SANHEDRIN**

A ruling body among the Jews dominated by the Sadducees.

### **STOICISM**

Borrowing much from the Greek philosophers, this ethical code appealed to the Roman sense of law, order, and virtue. Stoics honored the natural law and one's duty to it, as well as encouraging the practical by perfecting moderation of the passions as a pathway to true freedom.

### **SYNOD**

An assembly of ecclesiastics gathered together under Church authority to discuss and decide on matters pertaining to doctrine liturgy, or discipline.

## 2. The Church Fathers and Heresies

The early internal development and spiritual growth of Christianity corresponded to its rapid extension throughout the world. The “foundational” period of the Church is referred to as the *Apostolic Era* and embraces the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations of Christians. It was followed by the so-called *Post-Apostolic Era*. This era was characterized by having to transmit the *deposit of faith* that had come down from the Apostles to the third and subsequent generations of the faithful. Thus tradition in the strict sense began which constituted the bridge between the Apostles and the Church throughout the ages. The Church had to fight for her place in the world and at the same time defend and maintain herself both internally and externally against her enemies. Finally there also arose the need for the theological development of the *deposit of revelation*; a need that corresponded to the spiritual growth of the Christian communities.

This work was undertaken firstly by the Apostolic Fathers<sup>1</sup>, then by the Christian Apologists, and finally by the Fathers of Church.<sup>2</sup>

The Christian-Roman period was extremely important from the point of view of doctrine. Now that the Church was free, the historic moment came for it to give precise formulation to orthodox teaching on basic questions of Christian faith —the Blessed Trinity, the mystery of Christ, and the question of grace. The definition of catholic dogma occurred in the context of heated theological battles against heresies which led to schisms in the Church, some of which are still with us.

The fourth century saw the formulation of dogma concerning the Trinity, with catholic orthodoxy having to confront Arianism. Arianism can be traced back to certain early doctrines which over emphasized the oneness of God, to the extent of obliterating the distinction of persons in the Blessed Trinity (Sabellianism) or of ‘subordinating’ the Son to the Father, making him inferior to the Father (subordinationism). A radical subordinationism inspired the teaching of Arius, an Alexandrian priest (c. 250-336), who not only held that the Son was inferior to the Father, but went as far as denying that Jesus was God. The absolute oneness of God which Arius proclaimed led him to see the Word as simply the noblest of all created beings, not as the natural Son of God: Christ was God’s adopted son and therefore only in an improper sense could he be called God.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Apostolic Father designates those writers of the immediate post-apostolic era who were either disciples of the Apostles or knew them personally. Among these writers we find Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna. Besides these Apostolic Fathers, there is a number of early Christian writings which are placed here because of their antiquity and closeness to the Apostolic era, namely, by way of example, the Epistle to Diognetus, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and the Pastor of Hermas.

<sup>2</sup> The term *Father of the Church* is given to those theologians who did not stop at the defence of the faith but who aimed at a deeper theological penetration of the articles of faith. Most of them were bishops; thus arose the name *Father* which originally was reserved to the bishop of a community. Some, however, were simple priests, such as Jerome. Theology was later to list among the attributes of the Church Fathers: a) orthodoxy in doctrine; b) saintliness in life; c) ecclesiastical recognition; and d) belonging to Christian antiquity. With the help of the last characteristic, the Church Fathers are distinguished from the Church Doctors who lived and taught during the Middle and Modern Ages.

During the "golden age of the Fathers," (300-600), eight **Doctors of the Church** particularly stand out and are called "Ecumenical Fathers" because of their widespread influence.

Four of these <b>Doctors of the Church</b> hailed from the Western (Latin-speaking) half of the Roman Empire.	Four of the Ecumenical Fathers who were <b>Doctors of the Church</b> came from the Eastern (Greek-speaking) Roman Empire:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Ambrose, 340-397</li> <li>· St. Jerome, 345-420</li> <li>· St. Augustine, 354-430</li> <li>· St. Gregory the Great (Pope), 540-604</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Athanasius, 295-373</li> <li>· St. Basil the Great, 330-379</li> <li>· St. Gregory of Nazianzus 330-390</li> <li>· St. John Chrysostom, 345-407</li> </ul>

There are eight other <b>Doctors of the Church</b> from the patristic period:	There are nine <b>Doctors of the Church</b> during the Latin Middle Ages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Ephraem the Deacon, 306-373 (Syriac)</li> <li>· St. Hilary, 315-368 (Latin)</li> <li>· St. Cyril of Jerusalem, 315-387 (Greek)</li> <li>· St. Cyril of Alexandria, 376-444 (Greek)</li> <li>· St. Leo the Great (Pope), 390-461 (Latin)</li> <li>· St. Peter Chrysologus, 400-450 (Latin)</li> <li>· St. Isidore of Seville (last of the Latin Fathers), 560-636</li> <li>· St. John Damascene (last of the Greek Fathers), 676-749</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Bede "the Venerable," 673-735</li> <li>· St. Peter Damian, 1007-1072</li> <li>· St. Anselm, 1033-1109</li> <li>· St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090-1153</li> <li>· St. Anthony of Padua, 1195-1231</li> <li>· St. Albert the Great, 1200-1280</li> <li>· St. Bonaventure, 1217-1274</li> <li>· St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274</li> <li>· St. Catherine of Siena, 1347-1379</li> </ul>

There are six <b>Doctors of the Church</b> who were prominent in the 16th century Catholic Reformation, all from the Latin Church:	There are two <b>Doctors of the Church</b> in the modern era, both from the Latin Church:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582</li> <li>· St. Peter Canisius, 1521-1597</li> <li>· St. John of the Cross, 1542-1591</li> <li>· St. Robert Bellarmine, 1542-1621</li> <li>· St. Lawrence of Brindisi, 1559-1619</li> <li>· St. Francis de Sales, 1567-1622</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· St. Alphonsus Liguori, 1696-1787</li> <li>· St. Therese of Lisieux, 1873-1897 (proclaimed Doctor of the Church by John Paul II 10/19/97)</li> </ul>

Arian teaching was clearly influenced by Greek philosophy with its notion of the Supreme God —*Summus Deus*—and a concept of the Word very akin to Plato's demiurge, a being intermediate between God and the universe who was the shaper of creation. This connexion between Arianism and Greek philosophy accounts for its rapid spread and for its being welcomed by rationalist intellectuals involved with Hellenism. Arianism had very serious consequences on Christian teaching, affecting as it did the dogma of the redemption:

for if the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, were not God, then redemption would be ineffective. The church of Alexandria realised the seriousness of the problem and, after attempting to dissuade Arius of his error, it proceeded to condemn him at a synod of the bishops of Egypt (318). But Arianism was already a world-wide problem and it led to the convoking of the first ecumenical council in history.

The first council of Nicaea (325) was a clear victory for the defenders of orthodoxy, two of the most outstanding of whom were bishops —Ossius of Cordova (Spain) and a deacon (and later bishop) of Alexandria, Athanasius. The council defined the divinity of the Word, using an unambiguous term to describe his relationship with the Father —*homoousios*, 'consubstantial.' The Nicene symbol or creed proclaimed that the Son, Jesus Christ, 'God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,' is 'consubstantial' with the Father. Orthodoxy's victory at Nicaea was followed, however, by a post-council period of a radically opposed viewpoint, which constituted one of the most surprising episodes in Christian history. The pro-Arian party, led by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, managed to exert a decisive influence at the imperial court and in the last years of Constantine's reign and during the reigns of his successors it looked as if Arianism was going to prevail. The most outstanding of the Nicene bishops were exiled and, as St Jerome graphically put it, 'the whole world groaned and discovered to its surprise that it had become Arian.'

From the middle of the fourth century on, Arianism was divided into three factions: the radical Anomoeans, who laid emphasis on the dissimilarity of the Son with respect to the Father; the Homoeans, who regarded the Son as *homios*—that is, 'like to'—the Father; and what are called semi-Arians—those nearest orthodoxy—for whom the Son was 'substantially like' the Father. The theological work of what are called the Cappadocian Fathers developed the teaching of Nicaea and attracted many supporters of the more moderate tendencies in Arianism, with the result that in a very short time Arianism disappeared from the horizon of the universal Church, surviving only as the form of Christianity possessed by most of the Germanic nations who had invaded the empire. The theology of the Trinity was completed at the first council of Constantinople with the definition of the divinity of the Holy Spirit (in reaction to another heresy—Macedonianism). Thus, by the end of the fourth century, catholic doctrine on the Blessed Trinity had been fixed in the form of Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed. However, there was one aspect of Trinitarian theology not expressly dealt with in the Creed—the relationships between the Holy Spirit and the Son. This would later give rise to the famous Filioque problem, which was to become an apple of discord between the Christian east and the Christian west.

Once the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity had been defined, theology had to deal with the mystery of Christ, not in relation to the other divine persons, but in regard to the nature of Christ himself. The basic problem was this: Christ is perfect God and perfect man; but how do divinity and humanity combine in man? On this question, the two

great theological schools of the east took opposite sides. The Alexandrian school laid emphasis on the perfect divinity of Jesus Christ: his divine nature so penetrates his human nature —like fire heating an iron —that an internal unity results, a kind of ‘mixture’ of natures. The Antiochene school stressed, instead, the perfect humanity of Christ: the unity of the two natures in him is only external or moral in such a way that rather than speak of ‘incarnation’ it would be more correct to speak of the ‘indwelling’ of the Word, who ‘dwells’ in the man Jesus as inside a garment or a tent.

This Christological problem came out in the open when Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople, who belonged to the Antiochene school, preached in public against the divine maternity of Mary, refusing to give her the title of Theotokos, ‘God-bearer,’ Mother of God; she was, he said, only the Christotokos, ‘Mother of Christ.’ This led to popular demonstrations and the denunciation of Nestorius’ doctrine to Rome by St Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria. Pope Celestine I asked Nestorius to retract, which he refused to do. The council of Ephesus (431), now summoned by the emperor, Theodosius II, had a very rough passage due to rivalry between Alexandrine and Antiochene bishops; but eventually agreement was reached and a profession of faith was composed for which was formulated the doctrine of the ‘hypostatic union’ of the two natures in Christ and Mary was acknowledged as Mother of God. Nestorius was deposed and sent into exile; however, groups of his followers continued to exist in the near east forming a Nestorian church which carried out a great deal of missionary work, over a number of centuries, in countries of Asia.

By the first half of the fifth century the patriarchate of Alexandria had grown in power and many of its bishops took an active part in the internal affairs of the church of Constantinople itself. It also happened that after the death of St Cyril extremist tendencies gained the upper hand in Alexandria. The Alexandrian theologians were unhappy about the Ephesus teaching on the two natures in the one person of Christ, due to their understanding two natures as being equivalent to two persons: they claimed that there was only one nature in Christ, because in the incarnation the human nature had been absorbed in the divine. When this doctrine —monophysitism —was preached in Constantinople by the archimandrite Eutyches, Flavian the patriarch deprived Eutyches of his office. The patriarch of Alexandria, Dioscorus, then intervened, with the support of Emperor Theodosius II. An unruly council was held at Ephesus (449) under the presidency of Dioscorus; the patriarch of Constantinople was deposed and exiled; a dogmatic letter sent to Flavian by the pope, by the hand of two papal legates, was prevented from being read, and the doctrine of the two natures in Christ was condemned. The pope, Leo the Great, gave this council a name which was passed into history —the ‘latrocinium of Ephesus.’

As soon as Emperors Pulcheria and Marcian succeeded Theodosius II, Pope Leo asked that a new ecumenical council meet: this was the council of Chalcedon (451). This council adhered unanimously to the Christological teaching contained in Leo the Great’s letter to Flavian: ‘Peter has spoken through the mouth of Leo’, the fathers proclaimed. Chalcedon’s profession of faith recognized that there were two natures in Christ ‘without their being any confusion or division or separation between them.’ But monophysitism, far from disappearing, put down deep roots in various parts of the east, especially in Egypt, where it was used as a secessionist banner against the authority of the empire. The condemnation of monophysitism was taken as an attack on the traditions of Athanasius and Cyril. A monophysite patriarchate grew up in

Alexandria (supported by the monks and the indigenous Coptic population) in opposition to the melchite or imperial patriarchate.

This historical context explains why the succeeding emperors strove to find compromise formulas which, without contradicting the symbol of Chalcedon, would be more acceptable to the monophysites and would thereby assure the loyalty of the population of these areas to the empire. Examples of this were the Henotikon —an edict of Emperor Zeno (482) —and the famous question of the ‘Three Chapters’, proposed unsuccessfully by Justinian, which produced unfavourable reactions in the west. The most serious effort in this direction was that backed by Emperor Heraclius, an energetic defender of the Christian east against the Persians and Arabs. Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, thought that, without denying Chalcedonian teaching on the two natures, it could be held that, by virtue of the hypostatic union, there was in Christ only one divine- human activity (monoenergism) and that Christ had only one will (monothelitism). Heraclius sanctioned this doctrine by his dogmatic decree Ecthesis (638). But Ecthesis solved nothing, neither in the field of religion nor in that of politics. The monophysites rejected it, and in a very short time Palestine, Syria and Egypt were in the hands of the Arabs. The Christological debate came to an end when the third council of Constantinople (the sixth ecumenical council), on the basis of letters sent by Pope Agatho, completed the symbol of Chalcedon with an express profession of faith in the two activities and two wills of Christ. Monophysite Christianity still lives on in Egypt and Ethiopia.

These Trinitarian and Christological controversies took place mainly in the east. The only major theological question posed in the west was that of grace —centring on the relationships between divine grace and human freedom, and therefore on the parts corresponding to God and to man in personal eternal salvation. Pelagianism —which took its name from Pelagius, a monk —tended to minimize the role of grace and over-optimistically exalted human nature’s capacity for good: human nature was not damaged by original sin; that sin was the personal sin of Adam and had not been transmitted to his descendants. The great adversary of Pelagianism was St Augustine, who in combating it made a decisive contribution to the foundation of catholic teaching on grace. But St Augustine (in the flush of the polemic), in his effort to stress that the grace of salvation was a free gift of God, went as far as saying that God’s salvific will was not general to all but particular to individuals and that the elect obtain salvation not through their personal merits being taken into account but through the irresistible efficacy of grace. These propositions of Augustine are in no way official church teaching. The catholic teaching on this subject was formulated by the second council of Orange (529) and confirmed by Pope Boniface II. The council declared that man by his own efforts alone is incapable of effecting supernatural good; but it rejected the doctrine of God’s particular salvific will and it explicitly condemned so-called ‘predestination to evil.’

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History always has its protagonists and the ecclesiastic history of the Christian-Roman period had outstanding ones. The enormous effort involved in formulating dogma, as described in the last chapter, resulted from the wisdom and work of a series of exceptional personalities, who are described as ‘Fathers of the Church.’ The Fathers combined sacred science with personal holiness publicly recognized by the Church. This differentiates them from plain ‘ecclesiastical writers’, whose holiness or

complete orthodoxy is not guaranteed. The golden age of patristic writing was the fourth and fifth centuries, although the term ‘the age of the Fathers’ extends to the seventh century. The western Fathers wrote in Latin; most of the eastern Fathers wrote in Greek, although others used Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic etc. In this chapter we will refer only to the Greek and Latin Fathers whose reputations spread throughout the universal Church.

The Greek patristic period opens with a writer who must be considered the founder of the science of Church history —Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (+ 339). Eusebius of Caesarea has been immortalized by his book *Ecclesiastical History*, a treasure-trove of information about the first three centuries of Christian history. A younger contemporary of Eusebius, St Athanasius (+ 373) was the main champion of the Nicene profession of faith. He devoted his life to the defence of orthodoxy against Arianism: as far as his writings are concerned, his three Discourses against the Arians deserve special mention, but the best proof of Athanasius’ dedication is the five periods of exile he underwent for his fidelity to catholic orthodoxy.

On the theological plane, victory over Arianism was won mainly by the work of three Fathers who, like Athanasius, belonged to the neo-Alexandrian school, and who are called the Great Cappadocian Fathers. They are Basil of Caesarea (330-79) and his brother Gregory of Nyssa (335-94) and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus (+ 389/390). Basil was outstanding not for his writings alone but also as an administrator and as an organizer of monastic life in the east; Gregory of Nazianzus, the ‘Christian Demosthenes’, is famous for five theological discourses in defence of the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa, the most profound theologian of the three, was one of the fathers of Christian mysticism.

Born and trained in Antioch, St John Chrysostom (344-407) is regarded by the Greek Church as its outstanding preacher and as an eminent exegete who produced commentaries on many books of the Bible. Bishop of Constantinople for six years, his homilies earned him the enmity of Empress Eudoxia and he was deposed and died in exile. The most famous Egyptian Father of the fifth century was undoubtedly St Cyril, bishop of Alexandria (412-44). Cyril upheld orthodox teaching against Nestorius and, for his defence of Mary’s title of Mother of God, he must be regarded as the main mariologist among the Fathers of the Church.

The first of the great Fathers of the west, a man of exceptional historical importance, St Ambrose (c. 339-97), produced much interesting biblical exegesis and was famous for his preaching, but he was also a man at the centre of public affairs during a time of political upheaval. Ambrose was a true Roman: this can be sensed both in his brilliant career and in his pastoral government of the see of Milan, to which he was raised by popular acclaim, when still a catechumen. St Ambrose had the exceptional honour of conferring baptism on one who would become the most outstanding of the Latin Fathers, St Augustine.

It was also his fortune to be friend and adviser to three emperors and to excommunicate one of them, Theodosius the Great, for his massacre at Thessalonica; but at Theodosius’ funeral he spoke a moving eulogy, as impressive as his one for Valentinian II, the previous emperor. Ambrose’s fame spread far beyond Milan and increased the prestige of that see not only in northern Italy but in other parts of the Latin west.

The Roman west also produced the greatest student of sacred scripture: Eusebius Jerome (342-420), a Dalmatian. It should be pointed out that Jerome, like most of the Fathers of the Church, did not live a secluded life of recollection, concentrating on study and uninvolved with what was happening around him. He lived for periods in Antioch, Constantinople, Trier and Rome, and eventually settled in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. Nor was Jerome only a researcher and scholar. He was a passionate polemicist and, through spiritual direction, energetically promoted asceticism among the women of the Roman aristocracy. Jerome is famous as a historian and exegete, but his greatest legacy was the translation of many books of the bible direct from Hebrew or Aramaic into Latin. This version is known as the Vulgate: its authenticity, declared by the council of Trent, means that in matters of faith and morals it is free from error.

But the outstanding Father of the Church and one of the really prominent figures in Christian history and indeed in world history, was Aurelius Augustine (354-430), from North Africa. His *Confessions* —a spiritual autobiography from childhood up to his conversion —is a masterpiece of world literature, which has kept its modernity century through century. St Augustine wrote commentaries on the Old and New Testaments and made significant contributions in all the main areas of theology. A man of his time, Augustine questioned himself about the events taking place before his very eyes, particularly the collapse of the Roman empire in the west, laid waste by barbarian invasions just when it was becoming a Christian empire. Pagans interpreted these misfortunes as a punishment from the gods for abandoning the old religion. In reply, Augustine wrote *'The City of God'*, an essay on the theology of history and a treatise on apologetics in which he tried to discuss the meaning of history and the plan of divine providence. In his old age St Augustine personally experienced the severity of his time and died in his episcopal city of Hippo when it was being besieged by the Vandals.

The Fathers of the western Church also include two popes whom history describes as 'Great': Leo and Gregory. Leo I, as we have seen, played an important part in the formulation of Christological dogma. To him also is attributed much of the theology of the Roman primacy and its scriptural basis in the primacy conferred by Christ on Peter. The other 'great' pope, Gregory (540-604), was a Roman already on the threshold of the middle ages. In a few centuries the world had changed a great deal: if the historical context of the first Father of the Church, Athanasius, was the Constantinian empire, the horizon of Gregory the Great was not so much distant Constantinople as Lombard Italy, Visigoth Spain and Merovingian France. Gregory's works —the *Book of Morals* and the *Dialogues* —were avidly read in the middle ages; and 'Gregorian' chant lasted in the Church up to our own time. A Spaniard —St Isidore of Seville (+ 636) —can be considered the last western Father. His *Etymologiae* constituted the first Christian encyclopedia and his mission can be seen as that of teacher of the medieval west, to which he introduced the riches of the wisdom of the ancient world.

## GLOSSARY

### ANATHEMA

A ban solemnly pronounced by ecclesiastical authority and accompanied by excommunication.

### ANOMOEANS

From the Greek *anhomoios*, meaning “dissimilar.” this sect of Arianism stressed an essential difference between the Father and Son in the Trinity.

### APOLLINARIANISM

Founded by Apollinarius in the fourth century, this heresy denied the existence of a human mind and will in Christ.

### ARIANISM

Third and fourth century heresy founded by the Alexandrian priest Arius. It denied Jesus' divinity, claiming that Jesus is neither God nor equal to the Father, but rather an exceptional creature raised to the level of "Son of God" because of his heroic fidelity to the Father's will and his sublime holiness.

### CAESAROPAPISM

Refers to the dual role of head of State and leader of the Church in which the temporal ruler extends his own powers to ecclesiastical and theological matters. The Church in the East, influenced by the growing power of the patriarch of Constantinople at the hands of the emperor, tended to accept a role for the Church in which it was subservient to the interests of the State.

### CHRYSOSTOM

Moniker of St. John Chrysostom meaning "golden mouthed," it refers to the saint's extraordinary preaching skills.

### CHURCH FATHERS

Great, holy leaders who have come forward to lead the Church, explain the Faith, and meet the unique challenges posed by different heresies.

### DEMIURGE

Gnostic creator god of the material world.

### DOCETISM

Derived from the Greek word *dokesis*, meaning appearance, this Gnostic heresy maintained that Jesus did not die on the cross but was spared by someone else who took his place.

### DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

*Doctores Ecclesiae*, a specific title given by the pope to those whose development of theology and personal sanctity are exemplary.

### DONATISM

Heresy that rejected the sacraments celebrated by clergy who had formerly betrayed their faith.

### *DOKESIS*

Greek word for appearance. Referred to heresy which claimed Jesus only appeared to die on the Cross.

### ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Derived from the Greek word *oikoumene*, meaning "the whole inhabited world," Ecumenical councils bring bishops and others entitled to vote from all over the world to discuss central issues of the Church. They are presided over by the pope and issues decrees which, with the approval of the pope, bind all Christians.

### *FILIOQUE*

Latin word meaning "and the Son" it is used to express the double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. St. Augustine's discussion on the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit laid the essential groundwork for the addition of the *Filioque* clause to the Nicene Creed in the Medieval period.

### GNOSTICISM

Derived from the Greek word *gnosis* ("knowledge"), the name refers to one of the principle tenets of this multifaceted heresy. Namely, that salvation may be achieved through knowledge. In the second century, Gnosticism, which had eastern origins and influences from Persia and India, very successfully perverted the meaning of Christianity and its symbols. To prove its authenticity, Gnosticism co-opted the Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, and erected an entirely new cosmological structure that challenged the intent of Christianity.

### HERESY

The refusal to accept one or more truths of the Faith which are required for Catholic belief. It is a species of unbelief belonging to those who profess the Christian Faith, but corrupt its dogmas.

### HOMOEANS (SABELLIANS)

From Greek *homoios*, meaning "similar" this Scriptural purist party rejected the use of the word *homoousios* at the Council of Nicaea because it was not used in the Bible.

### *HOMOIOUSIOS*

Greek word meaning "of the same substance."

### INFALLIBLE

Free from error. Ecumenical councils' definitions on Faith and morals are considered free from error, or infallible, if that is the intention of the pope and bishops in union.

### *LOGOS*

An ambiguous Greek word with a multitude of meanings that include: word, account, meaning, reason, argument, saying, speech, story and many more. The Gospel of St. John utilizes the word's complex meaning, referring to the Person of Jesus, the Son of God and a member of the Blessed Trinity, as the *logos*.

### MANICHAISM

Heresy founded by Mani in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. An elaborate form of Gnosticism, it involved the relationship between light and darkness, believing that through rituals and sharing their knowledge believers could regain the light stolen by Satan and

hidden in the brains of men, thus freeing the light to return to its original source. Manichaeism heavily borrowed from the Scriptures, especially from the writings of St. Paul. Mani incorporated many of St. Paul's arguments and imagery to support his own teaching concerning the struggle between darkness and light.

#### MARCIONISM

Founded by Marcion in the second century, he borrowed the Gnostic idea of a Demiurge, calling this force the jealous and vengeful God of Law. According to Marcionism, the God of Jesus Christ, the true God, has no law and is sent to bring about the demise of the Demiurge. He renounced all Jewish influence on the Church, believing that the God of the Old Testament was the evil Demiurge.

#### MONTANISM

Founded by Montanus in the second century, he believed that due to an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him, he knew that a new, heavenly kingdom was imminent. One of the first apocalyptic heresies, his followers lived a very austere life rejecting second marriages and flight from persecution.

#### MONOPHYSITISM

From the Greek *monos*, meaning "alone": and *physis*, meaning "nature," this heresy claimed that there is only one nature in Christ and that his human nature is "incorporated" into the Divine Nature.

#### MONOTHELITISM

Heresy claiming that Christ has two natures but only one will.

#### NEO-PLATONISM

School of philosophy which held that the *logos* was a created being, not the Supreme Being. Platonic philosophies, in general, viewed the material world as less perfect than the world of ideas. Thus, besides denying Christ's true divinity, many early Platonic heresies greatly deemphasized Christ's humanity, if not openly denying it.

#### NESTORIANISM

Founded in the fourth century by Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, this heresy maintained that Christ was both human and divine but was not himself fully human or fully divine. Instead, he believed that Christ was a union of two men, one human the other divine.

#### PELAGIANISM

Heresy denying original sin and the need for grace in man's salvation. According to this heresy, the sacraments are superfluous since salvation and holiness can only be achieved through human endeavor.

#### *THEOTOKOS*

Literally "bearer of God," often translated "mother of God" Used since the early centuries of the Church, this title of Mary was defended by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

#### VULGATE

First translation of the Bible from its original languages into Latin by St. Jerome.

### 3. The Collapse of the Roman Empire, rise of Islam and rise of Monasticism

As St. Augustine waited for death in Hippo, Vandals beset the city. The collapse of the Roman Empire during the fifth century inaugurated a period of decline in the West as the old world passed away, and confusion reigned as the basis for a new order had yet to coalesce. Throughout all of the insecurity, one institution remained firm: the Church. She continued to spread the Gospel message while providing continuity in an uncertain time. Regardless of the transitoriness of any age, the Church proclaims a message of trust in the life and light of Christ amid trials and tribulations and promises eternal life after death. Amid the darkness, the Church holds up the powerful light of Christ.

This chapter will look at the repercussions of the fall of Rome, the rise and importance of monasticism, and the rise of Islam.



An overview of the first 15 centuries of the life of the Church

#### The Collapse of the Roman Empire

The collapse of the Roman Empire resulted in a crisis that took the early Church by surprise. The Church now had to dissociate herself from the fallen Empire, which was assumed would last forever. Throughout the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of monasticism, the Holy Spirit inspired and strengthened the Church for the next great wave of evangelizing activity among the German tribes. By the time the different groups in Europe had converted in the eleventh century, Christianity had spread to virtually the entire European continent.

#### The fall of Rome (476)

Historians do not have an official date for the fall of Rome. but sometime during the fifth century, the West collapsed. In 410, Alaric, king of the Visigoths, sacked Rome. Odoacer (sometimes Odovacar), chieftain of the Heruli, who served as a mercenary in Rome, led a revolt and overthrew the last western emperor in 476. Soon after, the Ostrogoths, united under Theodoric, invaded Italy in 489 and overthrew Odoacer by 493. The last ten western emperors rarely sat for more than a few years on the throne before they were deposed by invading barbarians.

The moral situation from the fifth through eighth centuries was grim as the former Roman order crumbled. The Roman Empire was not yet completely Christianized when the barbarian invasions injected a foreign and often violent character into the

culture. The concept of human rights was unfamiliar to many Romans as well as to the invading barbarian tribes. The barbarians brought their own variations of tribal law with them –law that was based on very primitive understandings of justice. For instance, in some tribes, in order to determine guilt or innocence, the accused would be forced to immerse his hand in a pot of boiling hot water. If the burned hand healed, then the accused was understood to be innocent. Two people who sought justice would fight to the death to determine who was right. Adulterous wives were handed over to their husbands, who punished them by whatever means they deemed fit. Barbarian kings had harems, and it was common for a teenage king to have many children with his servants. Their religious practices were both primitive and brutal. The Franks, for example, sacrificed women and children to placate battle spirits.

The absence of academic pursuits among the Germanic franks quickly undermined the great Greco-Roman tradition of learning and culture. Thus, the fall of Rome brought about a dramatic and immediate collapse in intellectual activity throughout the former empire of the West. Classical literature was lost. Latin deteriorated, and illiteracy became the norm. The loss of literacy particularly affected the Church because most people could no longer read the Scriptures. The Church remained the only locus of intellectual activity. Academic training was limited to priests and religious studying the Scriptures and theology. The long Greco-Roman tradition of philosophical inquiry came to a halt.

In addition to the collapse of education, the vibrant economy of the empire entered a period of decline as well. Roads became unsafe. People lived in fear and distress, and crime increased. As production and commercial activity declined, the cities and towns began to shrink. Consequentially, the former empire dissipated into a rural society of isolated towns and villages.

The influence of the Church was not yet sufficiently profound to impact on the daily life of the whole population. Some Christians acted like pagans: they participated in eating and drinking orgies, often on a saint's feast day. If games were held on Sundays, the churches would be empty. Idol worship was still found among Christians, as well as among the invading tribes.

With the disappearance of the Roman Empire, the Church had the important task to adapt herself to a dramatic cultural change. The Church's organization reflected the ways and customs of the Empire. The governing structure of the Church was modeled after the rule and territorial division of the Empire. Christians had assumed, as had the Roman emperors, that the destiny of Christianity was permanently intertwined with the Empire, especially after Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion in 379. The Barbarian invasions helped the Church realize that she was not wedded to the Roman Empire and had to adapt to a significant cultural shift.

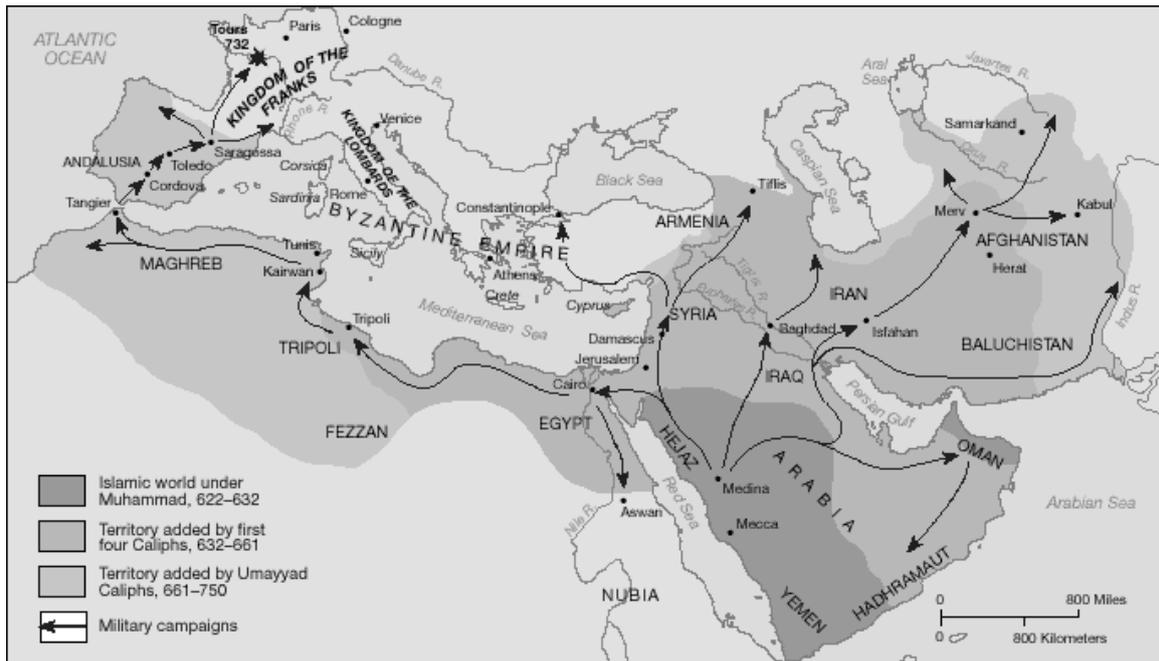
### **The Rise of Islam**

The rise of Islam is important for a number of reasons. It joined Judaism and Christianity as the third great monotheistic religion. Its history is intimately linked to the Arab peoples and, later, the peoples conquered by Islamic invaders in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Islam grew rapidly, and became a threat to the existence of Christianity. This particular religion relates to the history of the Church insofar as wars between Christians and Muslims have unfortunately persisted throughout the

centuries. These religious wars have had a profound impact on Christian history.

## Arabia

The Arabian Peninsula is mostly barren desert and in the sixth century was sparsely populated by Bedouin tribes. These nomadic tribes controlled the few caravan trade routes that crossed the peninsula. A strong and proud people, the Arabs were also fierce warriors. The time at which Islam appeared was a tenuous period in the history of the peninsula: the various tribes were in a state of constant warfare with one another and the economic situation was dire.



Islamic Expansion

The Arabs were pagans who worshiped various local objects of nature. One object in particular commanded a striking following, the *Kaaba*, a large black stone, in Mecca. Folklore dates the *Kaaba* to the time of Abraham, and is supposed to occupy the spot where he worshiped the one true God. The *Kaaba* is an *axis mundi* (turning-point of the world), a connection between Heaven and earth; hence, it is the focal point of prayers in the individual Muslim's life. Christianity and Judaism both had a very small presence among the Arabs. The Arabs were searching for a religion that would give them certainty about this life and the next. In the person of Muhammad, the Jewish, Christian, and pagan traditions were woven into a uniquely new Arabic religious tradition called Islam.

### Muhammad (ca. 570-632) and The *Koran*

Muhammad was born near Mecca around 570. By the age of six he was an orphan, and an uncle took over his upbringing. He worked as a camel driver until he married a wealthy, widowed woman, Kadeejah, when he was twenty-five years old. He had six

children, all of whom died except his daughter Fatima. Shortly thereafter, Muhammad decided to withdraw from the world to pursue a life of mystical prayer.

By the age of 30, Muhammad had become despondent. Pagan worship gave him no spiritual peace. He retired to a cave and around the year 612, he announced to his acquaintances that he had had a vision of the archangel Gabriel that called him to be the herald of Allah, the Jewish God. He said that over a period of time he wrote exactly the words that Gabriel told him, resulting in the *Koran*. Thus, Muslims believe that the *Koran* (Arabic for "recitation") is not Muhammad's work but God's. The *Koran* is comprised of 114 chapters of sayings that Muhammad recorded.

Muhammad continued to suffer a great deal of spiritual anxiety throughout his life. He questioned, at times, whether he was being divinely inspired or if he was suffering delusions. His wife and his cousin gave him constant encouragement, the latter saying that the revelations of the *Koran* were part of the truths of Judaism and Christianity.

The *Koran's* language and revelation have special status in Islam. Because Arabic was the language of revelation, it is considered the only true language in which to read the *Koran*. Though translations are made, Muslims are encouraged to learn Arabic in order to grasp the full nature and power of the *Koran's* revelation. The *Koran* is also written in the form of poetry, and is meant to be read aloud, which aids the goal of memorization. Finally, the *Koran* is considered technically to be "God's Word," perfect and eternal.

### **Islam's biblical reinterpretation**

Islam reinterpreted the Jewish and Christian narratives for its own purposes. Islam traces itself back to Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael in the story from Genesis quoted above. Ishmael is the father of the Arabic people, and Islam became the means for transforming them into a great nation.

Muhammad eventually proclaimed his worship of the one true God a national religion. Islam (Arabic for "submission") borrows from Judaism and Christianity in that it recognizes the Jewish prophets and Christian writings, but it contends that both Jews and Christians have misunderstood the intentions of God. Jesus and Mary are both respected in Islam, but only as a prophet and his holy mother. Islam holds that God's revelation culminated not in the birth, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but in Muhammad's visions recorded in the *Koran*. Muhammad was God's last prophet who brought to the world the perfect religion.

### **"People of the Book"**

The *Koran* teaches that Jews and Christians are "People of the Book," that is, they share with Muslims the great monotheistic tradition and a common religious history. The *Koran* recognizes Jesus saying that Allah "strengthened him with the holy spirit" (*Koran*. verse 87). but Jesus to the *Koran* was only a prophet. According to Muhammad, Christianity failed as a religion by misinterpreting God's intentions as they were communicated through Jesus. Most of the unique mysteries of Faith in Christianity are denied by Islam: the Incarnation, redemption and atonement of the cross, the Resurrection, and the Trinity.

At first Christians were generally tolerated by Muslims. But as the religion became increasingly militant and nationalized in the seventh and eighth centuries, tensions dramatically mounted. Jews and Christians were forced to pay a special tax called the *jizya* in order to retain the right to practice their own religion. This financial burden and the difficulties of trying to live in a Muslim state eventually coerced many Jews and Christians to convert to Islam.

### **Muhammad's preaching**

Muhammad preached monotheism, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, justice to the poor, and a sensual paradise in the next life. When he began his preaching, his critique of the pagan religion in Mecca and call for moral reform among the ruling elite upset many in the city, and Muhammad was forced to flee for his life to Medina (which means "the city of the prophet" in Arabic) with his followers on Friday, July 16, 622. This emigration is known as the *hejira* (Arabic for "flight" or "emigration"), and it marks the year 1 in the Islamic calendar. In the West, the Muslim year is represented by the abbreviation "A.H.," which stands for the Latin *anno hegirce* ("in the year of the *hejira*"). Thus, the Jubilee Year 2000 was the year 1478 A.H. in the Muslim world.

### **In Medina Islam matures**

In Medina, Muhammad was hailed as a religious leader. The leaders of the city invited Muhammad to be the new ruler as a means to avoid further bloodshed among contending parties. Muhammad immediately set about the task of building up Islam. From the beginning of Islam, there was never any separation between the civil powers and religious authority. Islam functions in unity between the temporal and spiritual powers in one organic whole. With Islam rooted in Medina, Muhammad also became the head of the military force, which was used to expand Islam.

There was also a small Jewish population in Medina that numbered at least five hundred men. Upon his arrival Muhammad demanded that this community recognize him as a prophet in line with the Old Testament prophets Moses, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. The Jews refused because they held that the prophetic line had ended over a thousand years before. During a later confrontation with Mecca, the Jewish community appeared to have supported the Meccans against Muhammad, who in turn slaughtered the Jewish men and sold the women and children into slavery.

The year 624 proved to be a key turning point in the development of Islam. After a new inspiration, Muhammad changed the direction of Muslim prayer (*qibla*) one hundred eighty degrees from Jerusalem to Mecca. In 624 Muhammad also led his forces in a *jihad* (holy war) against the Meccans, and he defeated them at Badr. With only three hundred men, Muhammad was able to defeat a much larger Meccan force of about 900, as well as capture an entire caravan as booty. The Battle of Badr (624) has often been interpreted by Muslims as their Exodus story.

This paved the way for Muhammad to take control of Mecca as well, which he purged of all the pagan religions. The *Kaaba*, (Arabic for "square building") alone was spared destruction, though its meaning was transformed. Under Islam, the *Kaaba* became the focus of pilgrimage, which every Muslim is required to visit at least once in his lifetime, means permitting. The *Kaaba* itself is housed inside a square building that

Muslims believe Abraham built. Only Muslims are permitted to see the *Kaaba*, and shoes are removed before entering.

### **Jerusalem, the Holy City**

The capture of Jerusalem in 638 by the Muslims has had historical consequences felt even today. The Muslim caliph Umar cleared the Temple Mount, the site of the two Jewish temples, and built a temporary mosque. In 684 the Dome of the Rock was erected, on the site of the former Temple, as a Muslim shrine to commemorate "the Night Journey" of Muhammad. The Dome of the Rock was intended to surpass the beauty and size of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the church built on the site where Jesus was buried.

According to Muslim beliefs, while sleeping one night near the Kaaba. Muhammad was taken by the angel Gabriel to Jerusalem, where he met the other prophets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, among others, before ascending through seven heavens before he stood in the presence of God. After this direct experience of God, Gabriel returned Muhammad to Mecca. Whether Muhammad's experience was an actual event, a dream or a result of a hallucination is not clear, but the seventeenth verse of the *Koran* describes Muhammad's "Night Journey." For this reason, Jerusalem is reckoned as the third holiest city in Islam after Mecca and Medina.

The "temporary" mosque was eventually replaced by the magnificent Al-Aqsa Mosque (Arabic for "farthest mosque," a reference to the *Koran*) also on the Temple Mount. It was completed around 710, and quickly became an important center of learning. At Friday prayers, the mosque and the area surrounding it often hold four to five thousand people.

The appropriation of the site of the former Temple by the Muslims has caused great tensions through the centuries. Jews were not able to rebuild a third Temple because of the Diaspora after 70, and they have today only the Wailing Wall, an outer wall of the Temple Mount, remaining from the Temple.

### **Conclusion**

In this tumultuous period, the Church made the transition from existing within the Roman Empire to surviving amidst the Germanic invasions. However, the Church did not merely survive. Rather, she set about a proactive mission of the evangelization of Germanic tribes, facilitated largely by the rise of monasticism. The next chapter relates the stories of the men and women who brought the Gospel message to all corners of Europe. Though beset by great challenges, the steadfast labors of these holy monks, nuns, kings, queens, and soldiers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit brought a new unity to the West after the fall of the Empire. The rising specter of Islam, however, would soon pose a severe challenge of its own to the entire Christian world.

### **The Ascetical Life and Monasticism**

Christian ascetical life is coextensive with the Church of Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, some Christians, of both sexes, embraced a way of life aiming at exact imitation of Jesus Christ: they kept virginity or continence, practised prayer and

Christian mortification and engaged in works of mercy. In the first three centuries, ascetics and virgins did not live in common; they stayed in the world. Without any public ceremonies, such as were later introduced, they committed themselves to keep chaste 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 19:12) and lived among the other members of the Christian community, in their own homes, owning property and earning their living by work.

In the Christian-Roman society of the fourth and fifth centuries asceticism flourished even in the ranks of the aristocracy. Married couples of senatorial nobility, like Paulinus of Nola and Therasia or Pinian and Melania divested themselves of vast inheritances and sought to conduct themselves as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in keeping with the teachings of the gospel. St Jerome was spiritual director to various groups of Roman noblewomen, first in Rome and later in Palestine: he took them through sacred scripture and encouraged them in the practice of Christian asceticism. The cultivation of chastity by women increased throughout the fourth century, with widows and young maidens sometimes living common life (in Rome, for example, Paula and Marcella were the focus of this development).

From the early fourth century, this Christian ascetical tradition led to the institution of monasticism, which was to play such an important part in the history of the Church. This new form of ascetical life had one special characteristic —abandonment of the world. Perfect consecration to God's service, it was now thought, could only occur through distancing oneself from the world. Now that the Church enjoyed external peace, the general level of spiritual life was lower than that of earlier Christian communities, due to the influx of large numbers of neophytes who were on the mediocre side and somewhat pagan in their habits.

Egypt used to be regarded as the cradle of monasticism but recent research suggests that monasticism was an indigenous phenomenon in a number of different regions. However, there is no doubt that Egypt had great influence on the development of monasticism everywhere. There, as elsewhere, anchorities retired into the desert, famous spiritual teachers gathered disciples around them, and colonies of solitaries (called 'lauras') grew up with a church building in the centre. Athanasius' *Life of Anthony*, which spread all over the east, is both a biography and an apology for monasticism which did much to extend the fame of Coptic monasticism all over the Christian world.

In Thebaid —Upper Egypt —St Pachomius (286-346) gave monasticism two additional features of enormous importance in the history of asceticism —common life and obedience to a religious superior. Pachomian monks founded numerous monastic communities in which, contrary to the kind of independence typical of the solitaries, the monks' lives were minutely ordered by written regulations —the 'rule' —which was to become an essential element in monasticism. The Rule of St Pachomius was reformed in a stricter sense by Abbot Shenoute. In Asia Minor, where monasticism had made its appearance shortly after it did in Egypt, St Basil of Caesarea was its promoter and organizer. Basil did not write a rule as such, but his ascetical lectures and other writings constituted sets of monastic regulations which were also called rules; these acted as the main basis of Byzantine monasticism and had an influence also in the west.

In the Latin west, monasticism, among men and women, flourished from the fourth century onwards. A famous nun, Etheria (author of the *Itinerarium*, a detailed account of her journeys through the east) was an intrepid pilgrim, who probably came from Galicia. Monasticism sprang up in out-of-the-way places, such as those at Liguge and Marmoutier in Gaul, founded by St Martin of Tours, and often these became centres of rural development. The search for solitude led monks to establish monasteries on offshore islands, like the famous Lérins, near Cannes, or Cabrera in the Balearic islands or the foundations on Scelig off the Irish coast or Iona in Scotland. In contrast to these coenobites who settled in out-of-the-way places, there were others whose monasteries were located within city walls or in the suburbs, where the cloister acted as the wall of separation ensuring the solitude which was an essential part of monastic profession. Some eighty monasteries could be counted in Constantinople in the time of Justinian, among them the famous Studion, whose monks (called Studites) were very influential in the church life of Byzantium. In the west, the foundations of John Cassian, author of two famous books, the *Conferences* and the *Institutes* were located in the city of Marseilles. From Visigoth Spain a homily on ‘perfect monks’ survives, which is an apologia for city-based monasticism.

Many famous bishops, such as St Ambrose of Milan and Eusebius of Vercelli, fostered monastic life among the clergy of their churches. An outstanding example of this was St Augustine who, after becoming bishop of Hippo, brought his clergy together in his home and established a system of life in common. The so-called Rule of St Augustine, devised for this community, was taken as a standard rule in medieval centuries when various attempts were made, by way of reform, to encourage community life —*vita canonica* —among the clergy. The attitude of monks towards culture varied: whereas in Egypt the tone was anti-intellectual, there were monasteries, such as that at Vivarium, founded in Calabria by Cassiodorus (a former minister of Theodoric the Great) where study played a main role —anticipating the contribution which medieval monks made to the conservation of earlier culture.

In the history of western monasticism the place of honour must go to St Benedict (480-547), the father of western monasticism. First at Subiaco and later at Monte Cassino, monasteries were founded and governed by St Benedict. In Monte Cassino, towards the end of his life, he devised the famous rule which bears his name, which was based on a combination of his own experience and elements taken from the great eastern founders, Pachomius and Basil, in an anonymous text, the *Rule of the Master*; this rule constitutes the main source of the Benedictine code. This code, over the years was outstandingly successful and became the typical rule of Western monasticism.

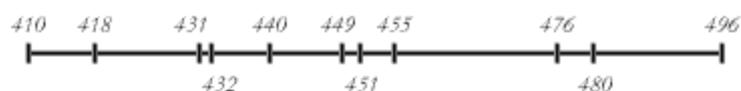
The Benedictine tradition became so widespread in medieval Christianity that it supplanted even the memory of other ancient western traditions. Two of these traditions deserve special mention on account of the considerable influence they had in the history of the Church —Celtic monasticism and Visigoth monasticism. The Irish church, after the death of St Patrick, adopted a marked monastic structure, adapted to the nature of the tribal society which obtained in Ireland at the time. The Rule of St Columbanus was the main Celtic monastic code and missionary monks carried it with them into the heart of continental Europe. In Spain, St Martin of Braga, in the second half of the sixth century, brought to Galicia the teachings of eastern monasticism. In the catholic Visigoth kingdom, Spanish Fathers composed various rules —such as that of St Leander for virgins, dedicated to his sister Florentina; that of

St Isidore for the Honorian monastery in Baetica; that of St Fructuosus of Braga, and what is known as the 'common' rule also associated with his influence. Fructuosus was the most famous of all the Visigoth monks and he gave the impetus to an ascetical movement which survived the Islamic invasion. Pactualism, congregations of monasteries and a trend towards joint monasticism (for men and women) are the characteristic features of Spanish monastic tradition.

#### 4. The conversion of the Barbarian tribes

The barbarian invasions were a very important event in Christian history. Up to this point, the spread of the gospel had virtually been limited to peoples of Mediterranean culture, with a few rare exceptions, such as Armenia. From the close of the fifth century, the huge eastward migrations of peoples which occurred had the virtue of putting the Church into contact with a new cultural and ethnic world. Germans and Slavs, Magyars and Scandinavians espoused Christianity in the course of the following centuries. The invasions opened up whole new horizons for the spread of Christianity. A contemporary —Paul Orosius, a disciple of St Augustine —described how providential these upheavals were, which others saw only as a tragedy: ‘Even if the barbarians had been sent into Roman territory,’ he wrote, ‘with the sole design of filling the Christian churches of east and west with Huns, Suevi, Vandals and Burgundians and countless other multitudes of Christian believers, we would have to praise and exalt the mercy of God for having brought to the knowledge of the truth (though at the cost of our ruin) so many nations which, if they had not come to it by this route, would surely never have reached it.

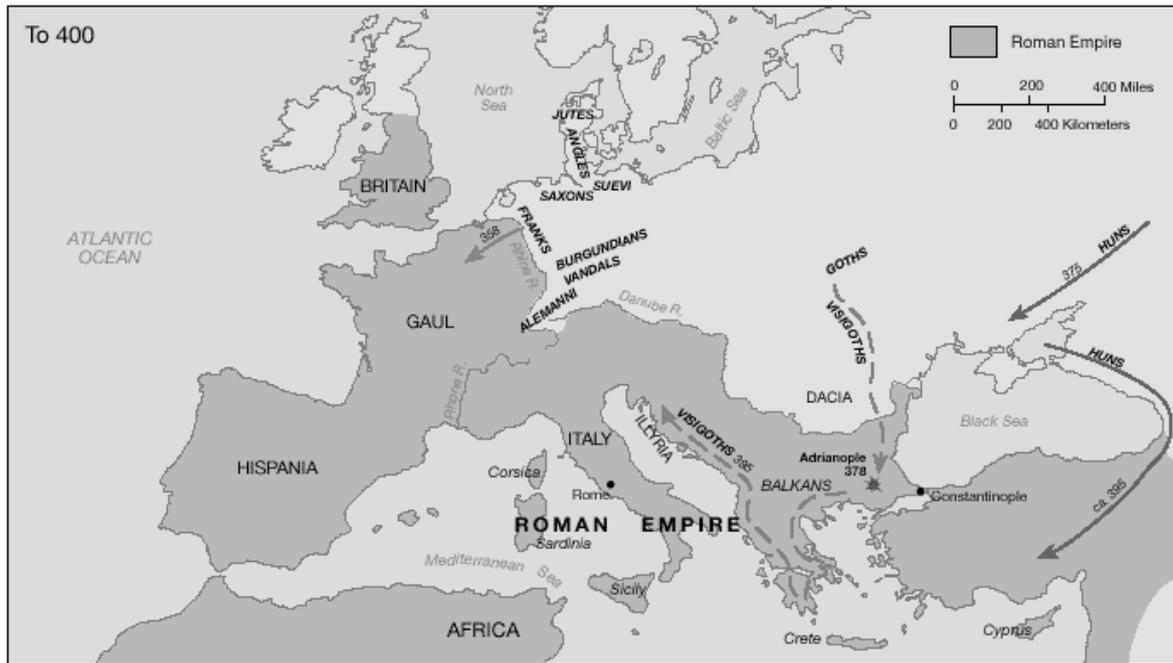
Time of the Barbarian invasions



410 Fall of Rome	451 Council of Chalcedon
418 Synod of Carthage	455 Vandals sack Rome
431 Council of Ephesus	476 Odoacer deposes last Roman emperor
432 Patrick's mission to Ireland	480 Benedict is born
440 Leo the Great becomes pope	496 Clovis is baptized
449 The "Robber Synod"	

Most of the German tribes which invaded the west were not directly converted to Christianity from their ancestral paganism: they passed through an intermediate stage of Arian Christianity. The background to this important page in European religious history was that Arianism found its way into the German world via the Visigoths. In the year 376, this people, who were located in Dacia and were being hard pressed by the Huns, sought permission of Emperor Valens to cross the Danube (the frontier of the empire at that time) and establish themselves on imperial territory. According to the historian Jordanis, the Visigoths offered to recognize Valens' authority and to live peaceably with the Romans; better still, they said, they were ready to become Christians if he sent them missionaries who spoke their language.

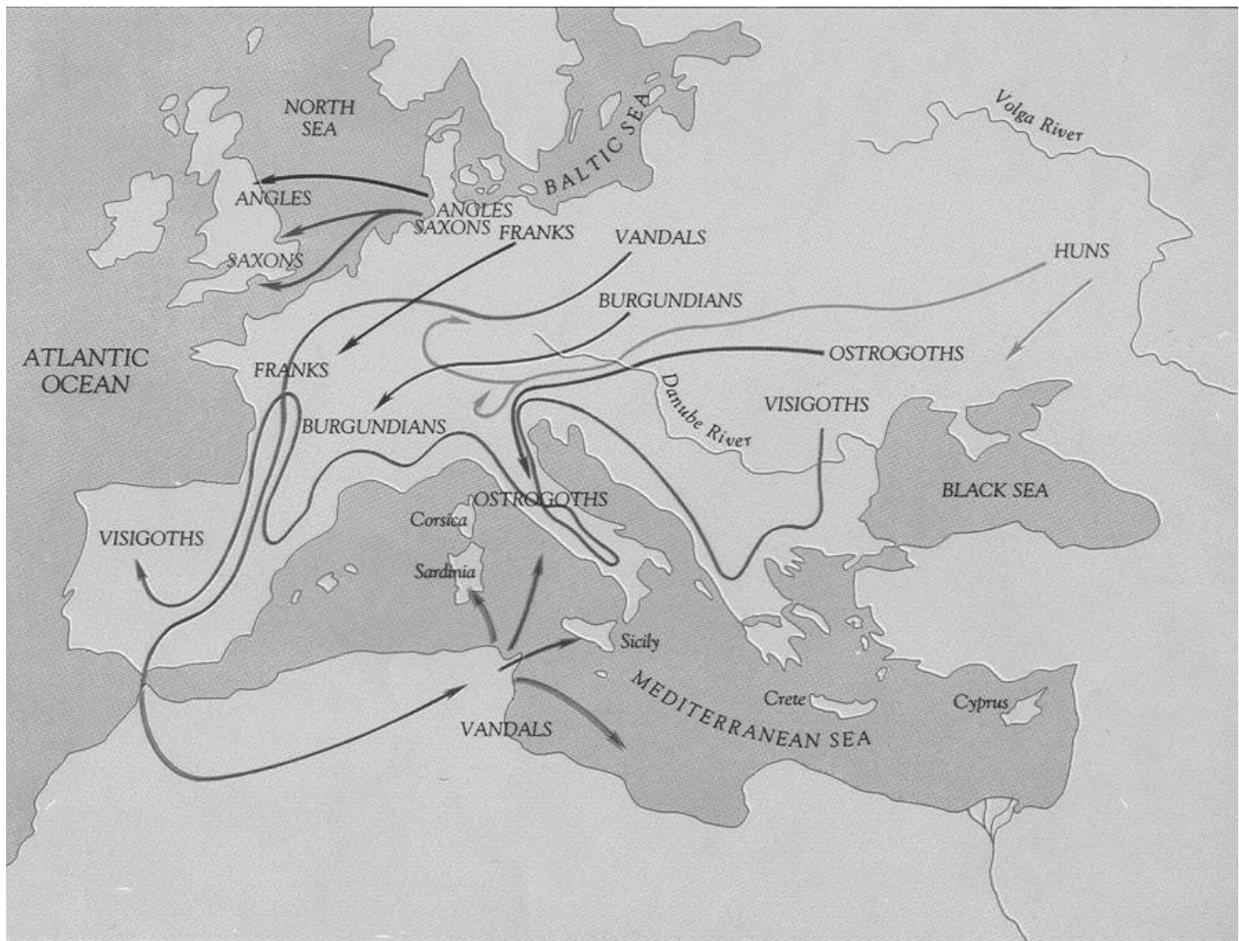
Valens allowed the Visigoths to settle in Thrace and Moesia; and, since he was an Arian, he sent them missionaries from his own sect. The Gothic-Arian community, led by their bishop Ulfilas, were very influential. Ulfilas invented the Gothic alphabet and



 Barbarian Migrations and Invasions. The early cross-border raids of neighboring peoples gave way to migrations of starving and terrified barbarian allies looking for safety in the Empire. By the fifth century, large-scale raids by the Huns and Vandals reached throughout the western Empire, resulting in permanent settlements.

translated the bible into that language, which up to then had not been a written language. Provided with this excellent tool for catechesis, the missionaries from the school of Ulfilas spread their teaching among the Visigoths, with the result that by the end of the fourth century they had been completely Arianized. This was precisely the time when Arianism as a theological problem was disappearing from the scene in the Church as a whole. Paradoxically this fact help Arianism take root among the Germans; it became their national religion —one more factor differentiating the minority German invaders, who had the political upper hand, from the majority indigenous population, who were Roman and catholic. Arianism thus became the religion of almost all the Germanic peoples settled in the lands of the western empire. Some of these —Vandals and Ostrogoths —remained Arians until they were extinguished in the sixth century. Others had enough time to finish their spiritual itinerary, through a second conversion to Catholicism. This was the case with the Suevi of Galicia and with the Burgundians, in the sixth century, and the Visigoths in the time of Recared (589). Arianism persisted among the Italian Lombards until far into the seventh century.

In this historical context we should notice the importance of the conversion of the Franks. At the same time as all the Germanic kingdoms of the west were embracing Arianism a young and vigorous people burst on to the religio-political scene in the person of the Franks. These were pagans who, in the second half of the fifth century, spread over the north of Gaul where through their victory over Burgundians and Visigoths they established what was to be the kingdom of Franks, France. But they opted for Catholicism, not Arianism. At Christmas around the year 500, Clovis, the king of the Franks, received catholic baptism. This event had tremendous repercussions among the indigenous population of these old Roman territories: *'fides*



### The Invasions

*vestra, nostra victoria est* (your faith is our victory),’ Avitus, bishop of Vienne, wrote exultantly to Clovis. Avitus, who enjoyed great prestige and was a member of the senatorial aristocracy of Gaul, had made a very acute observation; for the conversion of Clovis had very important subsequent effects: from now on, no longer would there be only one catholic monarch in the world, the emperor in the east; the west would have its own —the king of the Franks.

In some places the barbarian invasions pushed back Christianity —for example, in Roman Britain, which was overrun in the fifth century by the Anglo-Saxons, who were pagans and whose conversion was undertaken much later, on the initiative of Pope Gregory the Great. But the same fifth century saw the evangelization of Ireland and this injected new life into the Christianity of Celts elsewhere. This time also marked the spread of the gospel beyond the frontiers of the old empire of the west into territories which had never been ruled by Rome and among the peoples that occupied them. In the seventh century the initiative came from Irish and Scottish missionaries, with St Columbanus the most outstanding figure. In the eighth century, Anglo-Saxon missionaries took over from the Celts and spread Christianity in those parts of Germany which were still pagan. An English monk, Winfrid —who changed his name to Boniface —was the great apostle of Germany, whose patron he still is.

Christianity continued to spread in the centuries that followed, reaching peoples in central and Eastern Europe. Normally —as was the case with Clovis and the Franks

—the conversion of a nation coincided with the baptism of its leader, whose example very many would follow. Thus, the conversion of the Magyars came about with that of their king, St Stephen; that of the Bohemians with St Wenceslaus; and of the Poles with their leader, Mieszko. However, the Christianization, properly speaking, of such peoples was a lengthy process, helped by the conversion of the leader, but really taking centuries. Both the Latin Church and the Church of Byzantium strove to evangelize the Slav nations —sometimes clashing, as was the case with the Bulgars; but there were some truly admirable figures, such as the brothers Cyril and Methodius, whose apostolic work was solemnly confirmed by papal authority. By and large, it can be said that the western Slavs adhered to the Latin Church, while the eastern Slavs, evangelised by Byzantine missionaries, stayed within the ambit of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The main Christian conquest of the Greek Church was that of Russia, and the baptism of Grand Duke Vladimir (972-1015) can be taken as the point when the people of Russia were converted.

The Christianization of Scandinavia and the Baltic countries marks the last chapter in the conversion of Europe. Early missionary endeavour in the ninth century by the French Emperor Louis the Pious was frustrated by the Vikings, or Norsemen, who harassed the coasts of the west. Viking paganism was not of the traditional kind; it took the form of a vigorous and virulent attack on Christianity, with the hammer of Thor as the counter-standard of the cross. The Vikings who settled in the British Isles or in French Normandy were the first to be Christianised. And these produced a native clergy which proved the best way to begin the evangelization of their country of origin. However, significant pagan outposts survived in Sweden until the twelfth century and in eastern Prussia and the Baltic countries until perhaps the fourteenth century.

The Mediterranean countries suffered a very different religious onslaught in the seventh century —the Islamic invasion. Islam, spread with amazing speed. The Mohammedans overpowered most of the Christian east, dominated North Africa from Suez to the Atlantic, and then overwhelmed Visigoth Spain. Poitiers in central France, where they were defeated by Charles Martel, marks the furthest point of their penetration into Western Europe. But, although Europe north of the Pyrenees managed to stem the tide, the Moorish presence in the Iberian peninsula lasted nearly eight centuries and both the near east and northern Africa still form part of the Islamic world. For the most part the spread of Islam occurred in Christian countries. The various churches coped unequally with the test of Islamic domination, which became more severe as hopes of a Christian restoration receded and more and more people conformed to Islam. The churches of the east —especially the Coptic or Monophysite church which was deeply rooted among the indigenous population of Egypt —has managed to survive to the present day. But the saddest story is that of Christianity in Latin Africa —that of St Cyprian and St Augustine —which faded out after an agony which lasted centuries.

### **The First Encounter of the Germans with the Church**

The external encounter with, and the conversion of a peoples is relatively easy to describe, but it is much more difficult understand the interior development of the Christian life and the momentous nature of this process.

The first mission centers were the old Roman Episcopal towns. They had largely survived the Germanic conquest and remained focal points of ecclesiastical life even under the new rulers. The strong personalities of the bishops were able to command the respect of the conquerors and to give the native population protection and security. Thus, for instance, almost all of the approximately 125 Gallic Episcopal Sees survived the Germanic flood during the fourth and fifth centuries. Among these prominent bishops were Martin of Tours (+ 397), Liborius of Le Mans (+ 397), Severinus of Cologne (+ 400), and later Avitus of Vienne (+ 518), Remigius of Reims (d. c. 533), and Caesarius of Arles (+ 542). Because of them the Roman population was able to survive for a long time, even though the country-side had long been settled by Germans. The old Roman cities of around 400 stood like oases of Roman civilization and Christianity in the midst of an area occupied by pagan Germanic settlers. The *Iex Ripuaria* (633/634) of the Franks in the 7<sup>th</sup> century was considerate of the *cives Romani* in the cities and permitted them to live according to their traditional Roman law, which remained in force in the Frankish empire as the civil law of the Roman population.

The Church also lived according to Roman law and until the 6<sup>th</sup> century almost all Episcopal Sees in Gaul and Germany were occupied by bishops of Roman descent. At the synod of Paris in 614 we encounter, for the first time, German names and by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century most names were of German origin. The fusion of Roman and German was complete.

Avitus of Vienne worked zealously for the conversion of the Burgundians, and Remigius of Reims devoted himself to the conversion of the Franks (baptism of Clovis in 496<sup>3</sup> and the establishment of additional Episcopal Sees<sup>4</sup>). The conversion of the Frankish people not only laid the foundation for the fusion of the native and Roman populations, but was also decisive in winning the other Germanic tribes to the Catholic faith. The subjugation of the Alemanni (496) and their incorporation into the Frankish kingdom (506); the conquest of the Thuringians (531) by the sons of Clovis (d. 511); and the incorporation of the kingdom of the Burgundians (523-534) as well as the Provence, which was taken from the Ostrogoths (537), opened the road to Catholicism among the other Germanic peoples.

The Catholic faith provided the Frankish empire, which was to become the most uniform and most powerful of all German kingdoms, with both internal stability and external prestige. In contrast to the Arian Germanic states, Clovis had the native Catholic population on his side, including the highly respected Catholic episcopate, and even enjoyed the attention of the Byzantine Emperor. When Emperor Anastasius (491-518) pitted Clovis against the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great and awarded him the rank of a Roman Honorary Consul, Clovis became, in the eyes of the Roman-Gallic population, the legitimate governor of the *Imperium Romanum*. Clovis, therefore, felt himself obliged to exercise the supreme *Auctoritas Romana* to protect the native Catholic population of Gaul and within the limits of the Frankish sphere of influence.

With naive pride the Franks expressed their joy over the new situation and their Christian duty. They praised their Catholic faith as the source of their power and

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3 Or 498/499.

4 Arras, Laon, Therouanne, Tournai, Cambrai.

regarded themselves as special protégés of Christ who, since they had turned to him, had granted them victory and power. The *Lex Salica*, drafted in the last years of Clovis' life (c. 510), recorded the old Salic-Frankish code of law and began with the words: "Long live Christ, who loves the Franks! May he guard their kingdom, fill their rulers with the light of his grace, protect their army, provide the supports of faith, and grant peace, joy and happiness, he, the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ".

Here is the seed of the idea that Charlemagne later zealously defended: the Franks are the new imperial people, called upon to represent and bear the *Regnum Christi* in western society after the fall of Old Rome.

Unfortunately, the ideal picture did not correspond to the harsh reality. Gregory of Tours (538-594) in the ten books of his *Historia Francorum* (completed in 591) left us a rather sad picture of the religious and ethical conditions in the Frankish empire of his time. These people had become Christians not so much from conviction than because of the example of their king and the pageantry of the Christian liturgy. Baptism had been preceded by scarcely any instruction in the faith and no catechumenate. The mass conversion of whole peoples had only superficial effects, and was not followed up by any instruction. As a result, Christianity with its high ethical demands and its spiritual concept of God could establish itself only slowly and with difficulty. The Merovingian royal house and the aristocracy provided a bad example as is evident from the Frankish history of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is characterized by murder, fraternal quarrels within the royal family, war and rapacity among the leaders, moral degeneration, and a poor general level of education.

The Frankish Church was almost fatally hampered in its effectiveness by the king and the aristocracy which interfered ruthlessly, and relentlessly, in ecclesiastical affairs. The king made himself lord of the church, appointed bishops, convoked synods, and determined all affairs. While at this time in the Eastern Church subtle theological problems were discussed by theologians and councils, theological thought in the Frankish kingdom stopped completely and religious life reverted to its rudimentary forms, permeated by many pagan customs. However what was most fatal for the Frankish Church was its gradual slide into an internal torpor, and, externally it's becoming a national isolated institution, which led to its loss of contact with the Universal Church. Its relations to Rome, the center of the Western Church, died completely even though no formal separation occurred.

## Chapter 4; Annex 1

### The Irish-Scottish Church and its Continental Mission

Until the tenth century Ireland, also called *Scotia maior* in contrast to *Scotia minor*, the present Scotland, was never conquered by the Romans. Christianity seems to have reached Ireland from Britain sometime before 400, but it is possible that it was Martin of Tours' monks who planted the first seeds of the faith there.

#### 1. The conversion of Ireland

According to Prosper of Aquitaine, in 431 Pope Celestine I sent Palladius as first bishop to the Irish Christians. It is however the historical figure of the Briton, Patrick (c. 385-461), who provides us with a better understanding of Irish Christianity, and he may be considered to be the actual missionary of Ireland.

Around 401 Patrick was captured and taken as a slave to Ireland by looting Irishmen. There he learnt the language and became acquainted with both the country and its customs. He returned to England in 407. Patrick probably became a monk in the monastery of Lerins (southern Gaul), and a cleric in Auxerre, before beginning his mission as a bishop in Ireland in 432 succeeding the recently deceased Palladius. When Patrick died in 461, Ireland was not only Christianized, but it was also ecclesiastically organized. Armagh in the north was the Metropolitan See and, after 444, the ecclesiastical center.

Monasticism characterised the ecclesial life of this nation. The external organization of the Church was tied to the numerous monasteries which dotted the country. The large monastic communities represented the real ecclesiastical and religious center for each of the tribes. The founders of monasteries (Finnian, Columban the Elder of Hy, Comgall of Bangor, Brendan, Kevin, Columban the Younger) enjoyed the respect of all, and the abbots, not the bishops, were the responsible leaders of the Irish Church. These abbots also possessed ecclesiastical jurisdiction and they usually consecrated one of their subordinate monks as a suffragan bishop to attend to the purely Episcopal functions of ordination and consecration.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century monasticism was very popular among the people of Ireland. The monasteries grew and flourished and became schools of intellectual life and piety. They produced countless saints and scholars, and the island became known as the *Insula Sanctorum* and *Insula Doctorum*. This Golden Age of the Irish Church lasted until about 740.

The strong influence of monasticism naturally affected the religious life of the people. The tribal monasteries attended to the spiritual needs of the tribe (Clan); its monks ministered to the people, conducted school, and celebrated Mass. The monks, therefore, had to be priests, and the monk-priest became, in Ireland, the very ideal of the pastoral priest. The image of the priest was therefore influenced by the monks way of life and by monastic forms which characteristics were transmitted to the European peoples with the Irish-Scottish continental mission. Celibacy and hourly prayer, the foundations of monastic communal life, which at first were peculiar only to the Irish monk-priests, in the course of history became the norm for all priests in the West.

The ascetic exercises of monasticism, above all, strongly influenced the priests and the laity at the time, firstly in Ireland and then on the continent, and the harsh penitential discipline and corporal mortification were also imitated. The monk-priests who served as pastors and spiritual directors transferred the private, secret, and voluntary penitence and private confession, which was customary in monasteries both in and outside of Ireland, to the laity. The laity itself may have taken the initiative here by asking for it, since the traditional Christian penance, which included public penance for public sinners, was no longer sufficient for them. The individual spiritual direction, which the monks received in the monastery and which extended to secret and internal sins, permitted a more vigorous ascetical struggle and pursuit of sanctity. And this the monks recommended to laymen when asked for advice in spiritual matters.

The confession of serious sins, even when they remained hidden, had been a common practice within the framework of Christian penance. The bishop would impose a penance on the penitent, who was normally given this opportunity only once in his life, and absolved him on the completion of that penance. The new private confession, which included internal and hidden sins, incorporated immediate absolution; it was made verbally to the confessor and could be frequented at any time. The laity asked, within increasing frequency, for this means of sanctification and spiritual direction. During the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries this practice became common throughout the West and transformed the ideal of piety in the Western Church. Soon regular confession before communion was also introduced. In order to provide the confessor with a guide for determining the penance books called *Penitentials* were circulated, first in Ireland, and later, after the 7<sup>th</sup> century, throughout the Western Church, where they formed part of a priest's library. These books consisted of a classification of sins with their corresponding penance.

The beneficial results of private confession for the faithful soon became evident in the higher standards of religious and moral conduct of all, as is evident from a comparison of the Irish Church with the Continental Church, especially the Church in the Merovingian Frankish kingdom.

## **2. Irish monasticism**

In spite of its strongly anchoritic character Irish monasticism was not opposed to the world as such but was strongly apostolic as may be seen from its missionary zeal. The desire for solitude and separation scattered the monks far wide. Homeless for the sake of Christ, yet everywhere at home, they crisscrossed Gaul, Italy, and Germany even reaching Pannonia. The holy pilgrimage, the *Perigrinatio pro Christo*, was their ascetic ideal. These bearded monks with their tonsured heads, long flowing hair and tall traveling staffs offered a strange spectacle. Slung over their shoulders, on a strap, they carried a water bottle and a leather bag containing their books, and around their necks they wore a capsule with relics and a vessel containing Consecrated Bread. Their ascetic drive for sanctity never left them, and even on their journeys they prayed and studied, while with a burning zeal they used every opportunity to win souls for Christ.

In all the countries of Europe these zealous, itinerate Irish missionaries witnessed to Christ by their example and by their preaching. They generally did not stay in one

place for a long time hence their missionary work did not, and could not, achieve the same results as the subsequent systematic missionary activity of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries. Nonetheless, the Irish mission was not without results, and the monasteries founded by the monks became centers of Christian life in a semi-pagan environment whose conversion was yet to come.

Columban the Younger (530-615) was the most important of the Irish-Scottish missionaries and founders of monasteries on the continent, and his effectiveness was the most enduring. In 590 he started on a holy pilgrimage to the continent together with twelve companions, somewhat like Christ with his twelve apostles. In Brittany, Gaul, and Burgundy he worked with missionary zeal and attempted to promote a religious and ecclesiastical reformation, principally among the nobility and the clergy. Columban finally settled in the Vosges Mountains and founded the monasteries of Anegrey, Luxeuil, and Fontaine, for which he drew up a rigorous rule. His ascetic personality not only impressed the native population but also attracted many young men in whom he inspired a love for the ideal of monasticism. The monastery at Fontaine alone was later responsible for establishing another fifty monasteries, all of which lived according to Columban's rule.

Around 610, Columban boldly and energetically criticized the amoral life at the court of the Merovingian king Theuderich II and of his feared grandmother Brunhilde, as a result of which he was forced to flee from Luxeuil. From Burgundy he travelled to the still largely pagan Alemanni. For a time he worked near Lake Constance settling for a time in Bregenz. In 613 he moved on to upper Italy where he founded the abbey of Bobbio, and there he died in 615.

Columban's influence on the religious life of the Frankish kingdom was great, particularly with respect to confession and penitential practices. His disciples, were not all Irish but also came from the native population. Only a few of them are known to us by name; most of them lived as unknown hermits somewhere in the wilderness, their cells and monastic settlements becoming missionary centers for the population living in their vicinity.

The Irish monks were especially active in north-western Germany, in Franconia, and in Thuringia, but also travelled to Alemannia, Swabia, and Bavaria. Among the better known among the missionary monks were St. Kilian of Wurzburg (martyred in 689 with his companions Colonatus and Totnanus), Pirminius (+753) who in 724 founded a monastery at Reichenau, Corbinianus of Freising (+725; he probably was a Gallo-Roman), Fridolin of Sackingen (c. 600), Trudpert of the Untermunster valley near Freiburg im Breisgau (+607 or 643), Rupertus of Worms, the apostle of the Bavarians (+718 in Salzburg), Emmeranus of Regensburg (d. 715); also Findan of Rheinau (+878), Furseus (+ between 647 and 653) and his brothers Fullanus (+655) and Ultan (+686), as well as Eligius (+660), Amandus, Lambert, and Hubertus.

## Chapter 4; Annex 2

### Christianity in Britain and the Anglo-Saxon World

An ecclesiastical organization existed in Britain as early as the time of the Romans. The bishops of York, London, and Lincoln participated in the council of Arles in 314. When the Roman legions were recalled from Britain in 407, the pagan Picts from the north and the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from across the sea invaded the country, drove the Christian population into the western areas (Wales) or to the continent (Brittany). By about 450 they had founded seven kingdoms; the Angles: Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria; the Saxons: Essex, Sussex, and Wessex; the Jutes: Kent. In these kingdoms every trace of Christianity completely disappeared.

#### 1. The Christianisation of England

At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the mission to the Anglo-Saxons began simultaneously from Rome and from the Irish-Scottish Church. In 596 Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) sent Augustine, the prior of the Roman monastery of St. Andrew, to England together with forty monks. King Ethelbert of Kent received them kindly, and at Christmas 597 Augustine baptized Ethelbert and 10,000 of his people. Augustine made his residence at Canterbury. Pope Gregory continued to send more monks to England and took a great interest in the mission. Gregory was the first Pope who consciously paid attention to the Germanic peoples and was able to empathize with them. The letter which he sent to Augustine and Mellitus in England in 601 testifies to his sense of realism and his shrewd gift for adaptation. Gregory recommended that the missionaries use as much as possible the existing pre-Christian religious customs and fill them with Christian spirit and content. He also advised them to let the people keep their harmless joys: "For if one does not begrudge the people these external enjoyments, it is easier for them to find the inner joy as well. It is, after all, not possible to take away everything at the same time from still unopened hearts. Whoever wants to climb a high mountain does not do so in jumps, but step by step and slowly"<sup>5</sup>.

The success of the mission was surprising. The kingdom of Kent adopted Christianity first and between 624 and 633 Wessex and Northumbria followed. The pagan reaction in Northumbria after the death of King Edwin (+633) did not last long, and kings Oswald and Oswin renewed the mission. Oswald asked for reinforcements of the Irish monks from the monastery of Hy, which occasioned some temporary tensions between the Irish and the Roman missionaries, but the differences were addressed at the synod of Streaneshalch in 664. The conversion of the whole Anglo-Saxon people was soon completed. In 680-690 Sussex was converted. Bishop Theodore of Tarsus (ca. 668-690), archbishop of Canterbury, oversaw the amazing flourishing of the Anglo-Saxon Church and of Christian civilization in England. Theodore was highly educated, having acquired his education in Athens, and was gifted with excellent organizational talent and was unswervingly loyal to Rome.

The combination of Irish piety and Roman spirit proved to be extraordinarily fruitful. The uncompromising asceticism and penitential discipline of the Irish helped the

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<sup>5</sup> *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Epistola* II, 1899, 331.

establishment, in the numerous new monasteries, of a flourishing spiritual and intellectual life. The Anglo-Saxon monastic schools, including those in the nunneries, developed an equally high intellectual, religious, and theological culture which lasted well into the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Thirty-three Anglo-Saxon kings and queens ended their lives in monasteries, and twenty-three kings and sixty queens are venerated as saints. The Anglo-Saxon monk and theologian Bede the Venerable (672-735) showed in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* how complete the assimilation of a Germanic people by Christian thought and civilization had been and to what successes it had led.

## **2. Anglo-Saxon Continental Mission.**

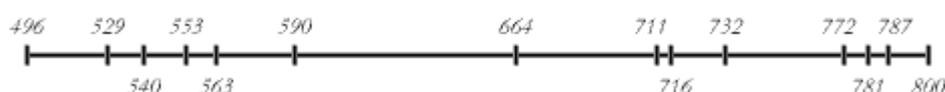
From the Irish, the Anglo-Saxon monks also inherited the *perigrinatio pro Christo*. The missionary zeal imbibed from the Irish became the foundation for the continental mission that the Anglo-Saxon monks soon undertook with zest among the Saxons and Frisians, but their missionary work contrasts with that of the Irish. While the Irish-Scottish missionaries worked without a plan and concentrated on winning individual converts, the Anglo-Saxons followed a totally different path. Firstly they sought the approval of Rome, that is the Pope, secondly they sought the approval of the Frankish rulers and only then, equipped with Papal letters of commendation and royal guarantees of protection, they, in the third place, tried to convert the leaders of the people, the tribal dukes, because they knew that the people would be prepared to follow them. By emphasizing authority and ecclesiastical organization in their missionary work, they represented the Roman heritage. Missionary work only made sense if its success was maintained through subsequent care and ecclesiastical organization. The relation with the Papacy gave their missions breadth and autonomy and safeguarded them against regional parochialism.

The first Anglo-Saxon missionary of note was Bishop Wilfrid of York. In 678/679 while in Rome, where he had gone to honor the “prince of the apostles and door-keeper of heaven”, Peter, and his successor, the Pope, Wilfrid obtained the authority to preach among the Frisians. Two of his pupils, Egbert and Wigbert, followed him in 689. A year later (690) Willibrord, together with twelve companions, came to Frisia after having obtained permission to do so in Rome. The Frankish mayor of the palace, Pippin (688-714), assigned Willibrord and his companions the lower Scheldt as their mission area. A second journey to Rome (695) gave Willibrord renewed authority and also saw him consecrated as a bishop. He chose Utrecht as his Episcopal See and in 697 founded the monastery at Echternach, where he died in 735, as spiritual support for the mission. Under Willibrord’s experienced guidance Winfrid Boniface began his missionary work.

## 5. Iconoclasm, the Carolingian Renaissance and the Great Schism

In the seventh century, as a consequence of the spread of Islam, three of the four eastern patriarchates fell into the power of the Muhammadan empire —Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. The loss of Egypt and Syria meant that the monophysite and Nestorian confessions were further distanced from contact with the universal Church. These communities, situated in lands which formed part of the Islamic world, now lived an almost completely separate existence. Therefore, the Christian east from this time forward became synonymous with the Byzantine or Greek Church, that is to say, the patriarchate of Constantinople and the churches which derived from its monastery activity, which recognized in it a primacy of jurisdiction or at least of honour. It is this eastern, Greek Church whose relations with Rome up to the schism of Cerularius we shall now discuss.

### Frankish Empire



496 Clovis is baptized	716 Boniface's mission to the Germans
529 Synod of Orange	731 Bede writes Church History
540 Benedict writes his Rule	732 Battle of Tours
553 Second Council of Constantinople	772 Charlemagne attacks the Saxons
563 Columba's mission to Iona	781 Alcuin becomes royal advisor
590 Gregory the Great becomes pope	787 Second Council of Nicea
664 Synod of Whitby	800 Charlemagne becomes emperor
711 Moors control Spain	

The classical Roman empire was able to envisage the world as a united whole, based on the countries and peoples of the Mediterranean area. But underneath this unity there lay profound differences between the cultures of the Latin west and the Hellenic east. In the interests of more effective government, Diocletian's administrative reform at the end of the third century officially recognized two parts to the empire, one eastern, one western, coincidental with these two cultural areas. This division, to which we have already referred elsewhere, ended up in the creation of two empires, whose historical destinies would later prove so different from one another.

Christianity also suffered the effect of this counter position of east and west, of Greek culture and Latin culture. At the basis of these divergences we can notice the marked contrast between the pragmatic temperament of the Latin's and the speculative turn of mind of the Greeks. Another disturbing factor exacerbated this dialectic —a growing failure in communications due to language difficulties. For the first three centuries of Christianity Greek had been the language of the Church; but from the end of the third century —and beginning in Carthaginian Africa —Latin was introduced into the

literature and language of the Church, and in the fourth century all western liturgy was conducted in Latin. The lack of a common language not only created a spiritual distance between Christian east and west but also gave rise to an atmosphere of suspicion and resentment between the two, in a period fraught with heresy and theological controversy. Differences in discipline and in rites, very obvious to the people, also contributed to accentuate this dualism and mutual distrust.

But the main factors responsible for tension —and for discord —between Christian east and Christian west was the exaltation of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The famous canon 28 of the council of Chalcedon (which was not accepted by Pope Leo the Great) gave the see of Constantinople authority and jurisdiction over all the territories of the Byzantine Empire not dependent on the other three eastern patriarchates, on the grounds that Constantinople was the ‘New Rome’, capital of the empire and residence of the emperor. Thus, Constantinople became the principal patriarchate of the Christian east, emulator of the Roman papacy, closely bound to the empire of Byzantium, while Rome became more and more separated from that empire and looked to French or German emperors for protection. In this context of increasing coldness between the two churches, frictions and confrontations marked the stages of a long process of weakening of ecclesiastical communion.

A first break in relations between Rome and Constantinople came in the fifth century —the schism of Acacius, which was motivated by the Monophysite proclivities of that patriarch (482) and lasted thirty years. The repercussions of the iconoclastic controversy were more prolonged. As is known, Leo III the Syrian or Isaurian —a great emperor who saved Byzantium from the Arab threat —caused a grave religious crisis which affected the life of the Christian east for more than a century. In 726 he prohibited the veneration of sacred images and soon afterwards ordered their destruction. Byzantine Christendom was torn into two irreconcilable groups, the iconodulists and the iconoclasts, venerators and destroyers of images. Leo II tried to get the pope to sanction the iconoclastic edicts and when he received an unambiguous refusal he took reprisals against the Roman church. However, the battles over images had not unfavourable results on relationships between eastern Christians and Rome: the defenders of images —who included the monks and the great mass of people looked to the papacy for support, and their most distinguished defenders —St Theodore the Studite and the patriarch Nicephorus —and the second council of Nicaea itself (787) —the seventh ecumenical council —recognized the primordial role of the pope as teacher of faith to the whole Church. But understanding between Rome and Constantinople was decidedly not helped by the Bulgar question.

The Bulgar question arose in the context of rivalry over the see of Constantinople between two patriarchs, Ignatius and Photius. The prince of the Bulgars, Boris, was converted to Christianity in the year 864 and he sought the despatch of missionaries to work to convert his people. Boris turned first to Constantinople, and then he changed his mind and offered, to Pope Nicholas I, to incorporate his people into the Latin Church, under the jurisdiction of Rome. A later misunderstanding led the rather fickle Boris to dismiss the Latin missionaries and turn once more —this time definitively —to union with the patriarchate of Constantinople, whom Bulgaria would later follow at the time of the schism. Naturally enough these events further strained relations between Rome and Constantinople.

Although they were marginal to the Bulgar question the confrontation between the patriarchs Ignatius and Photius contributed to the worsening of Rome-Constantinople relations. Ignatius and Photius succeeded each other twice in the see of Constantinople, following swings in eastern politics. Pope Nicholas I's support of the legitimate rights of Ignatius provoked a violent reaction on Photius' part—a veritable declaration of war against the Latin Church. In recent years Catholic studies of Photius have vindicated his orthodoxy. However, even admitting that the relationships of the Byzantine Church with the papacy were not formally broken during Photius's second patriarchate, it is not possible to exonerate him from responsibility for distancing the Christian east from Rome. Photius, knowing that it would drive a deep wedge between Greeks and Latins, chose as his weapon the question of the Filioque, condemned its inclusion in the Creed used by western Christendom and accused the west of heresy. The result was that no longer would differences between Greeks and Latins be limited to matters of discipline and liturgy: they would also cover matters of dogma, with the net result that the unity of the Church was permanently compromised. It is right to say that Photius, an eminent savant who personified the true ecclesiastical spirit of Constantinople, contributed more than anyone else to preparing the minds of people for the future eastern schism.

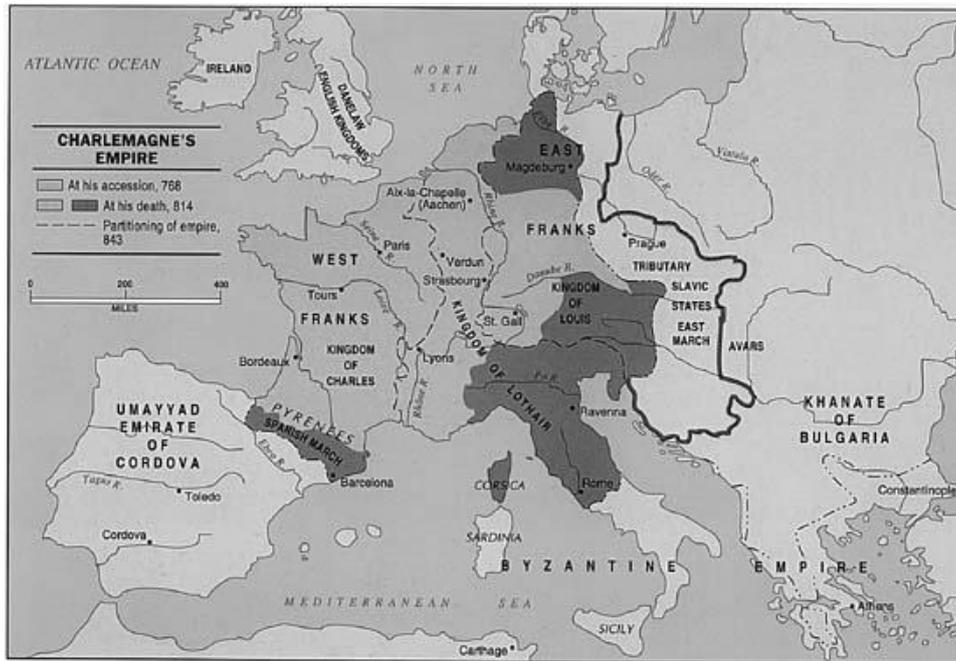
The split eventually came about, not very dramatically, at the beginning of the Gregorian era. The pronounced anti-Latin outlook of the patriarch of Constantinople Michael Cerularius and the failure to understand the Byzantine mentality on the part of the papal legates (Humbert of Silva Candida and Frederick of Lorraine), sent to negotiate ecclesiastical peace, were the immediate causes of the break. On 16 July 1054, Humbert placed a bull of excommunication on the altar of the church of Santa Sophia; eight days later Cerularius and his patriarchal synod replied by excommunicating the legates and those who had sent them. The schism was now out in the open, although it may well be that many people at the time—and perhaps even the protagonists themselves—thought that this was just one more in the long series of previous instances of troubled relationships between Rome and Constantinople. Certainly, for the great mass of Christians, both Greek and Latin, the start of the eastern schism passed quite unnoticed.

As time went by, Christians discovered that a genuine schism had taken place, breaking the ecclesiastical communion between the Roman papacy and the Greek Church. From that time forward the restoration of unity was a permanent objective of Christendom. It was fostered by popes, desired in Constantinople by emperors and men of the Church; councils met to negotiate union; and there were moments—the second council of Lyons (1274) and the council of Florence (1439) when it seemed as though the long-sought union had been attained. It never really happened, but it was not until Constantinople fell to the Turks and the empire of Byzantium disappeared (1453) that the desire—and hope of—terminating the eastern schism and rebuilding Christian unity came to an end.

### **Carolingian Renaissance**

The eighth century witnessed a profound change in the history of western Christianity, caused primarily by new relationships established between the Holy See and the Frankish kingdom. The eastern empire, which still had important dominions in Italy, had for centuries been the secular protector of the papacy and of its territories—the so-called 'patrimony of St Peter',—which had always been under threat from restless

neighbours, in the form of the Lombards. But this protection became more and more ineffective as the empire, growing every more easternised and worn out by constant pressure from Islam, paid less and less attention to the west. In need of a new ‘secular arm’, the papacy turned its eyes towards the only western kingdom —after the collapse of Visigoth Spain —capable of performing this function: the kingdom of the Franks, whose leader Avitus of Vienne foresaw, after the baptism of Clovis, as being the catholic monarch of the west.



Charlemagne's Empire

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Circumstances were just right for this development. Pepin the Short, the powerful major domus of the French court, in the year 750 approached Pope Zachary on a matter of doctrine fraught with political implications: who, he asked, was the more worthy to be called king: he who was king only in name [ last of the Merovingians] or he who effectively held power [ is to say, Pepin himself]? The pope's reply brought the reign of the Merovingians to an end and marked the birth of Carolingian France. In 753, Pope Stephen II gave kingly anointment to Pepin and his two sons, Carloman and Charles, the latter two receiving the title of ‘Patrician of the Romans’ which gave them the power to play a part in the government of Rome and to watch over the states of the Church, the territory covered by the temporal power of the popes.

The process begun in this way peaked during the reign of Pepin's son, Charlemagne, one of the great shapers of medieval Christianity. On Christmas day 800, Charles was crowned emperor in St Peter's by Pope Leo III. The coronation of Charles was an event of immense significance: after a lapse of three centuries the western empire was born again, facing the Greek empire of the basileus of Constantinople. The new empire, whose capital was at Aachen, was Latin-Germanic but above all it was a Christian empire, with the emperor having, as his principal mission, the protection of the Church and the Roman see.

Charlemagne's empire suffered from a congenital weakness due precisely to its being the brain-child of such a remarkable personality. Very soon after his death it began to

decay due to territorial distributions, a weakening of central authority and a crisis in society: imperial order gave way to feudal disintegration, for which the Church also paid the price. As sovereign authority evaporated, the dangers of anarchy increased and threats from Norsemen, Saracens and Magyars multiplied. The ordinary people, unable to defend themselves, sought protection from the only source available, the class of armed nobility which had monopolized real, effective power. A tightly knit system of vassaldom grew up, with patronage exacting the price of service, creating the structure of feudal society.

Ecclesiastical structures also suffered the impact of feudalism. The nobles sought to nominate rectors and to benefit financially from their 'own churches' which they had built in their domains for the religious service of the rural population; and they also tried to exercise similar rights over other churches and monasteries to which they gave patronage and protection. The larger magnates wanted to have control of ecclesiastical revenues to use them to reward their soldiers, or to be able to appoint relatives and favourites as holders of bishoprics and abbeys, positions much sought after by the nobility because of the social influence they involved. These repeated abuses were not anti-Christian in intention; those responsible for them were sincere, if uneducated, Christians; but they did lead to a noticeable secularization of ecclesiastical life and a general moral impoverishment.

The most typical example of the impact of feudalism on the Church and on Christian society was the so-called 'Iron Age' of the papacy. This lasted from the beginning of the tenth century to the middle of the eleventh, with a temporary improvement in the second half of the tenth century. The eclipse of imperial authority left the Roman see without a protector and allowed it to fall victim to the dominant feudal factions in Rome. Powerful noble families —the family of Theophylact, the Crescentii, the Tusculani —exercised a tyrannical oppression over the papal see, in an attempt to control it in the same manner as the feudal lords controlled their 'own churches.' The 'patrician' Theophylact, the 'senators' Theodora and Marozia, the 'prince of all Romans' Alberic, disposed of the pontificate as their whims took them: even adolescents and people of utter incompetence and unsuitability occupied the papal chair. The fact that the papacy survived this test and even in its worst moments did not deviate on doctrine of faith and morals must be seen as a clear indication of divine assistance to the Church.

But all was not disorder and darkness in these difficult times of the genesis of feudalism which are also known as the Dark Ages. A number of historical developments were in fact germinating at this time which would combine to produce the religious and cultural splendour of medieval Christendom. One of these factors was the foundation of a monastery destined to have enormous influence over the social and spiritual life of the west —Cluny. Monastic renewal in the Carolingian era, fostered by a Visigoth, Benedict of Aniane, had sunk without trace in the violence of the feudal abuses, when the secularization of the monasteries made it impossible for genuine religious life to survive. Cluny was founded in 909 by Duke William of Aquitaine; it depended directly on the pope, being 'exempt' from any lesser authority, ecclesiastical or lay. Cluny was very successful and many other monasteries submitted to the authority of this abbey or were founded from it. The so-called 'Order of Cluny' spread all over the west until it counted over 1,200 monasteries and a whole army of monks, so much so that the order has been described as a 'monastic empire'.

The Cluniac monks —the ‘black monks’ —were an essential factor in the movement of Christian renewal which began towards the end of the eleventh century.

Another development destined to have a deep influence on the history of European Christianity had begun in Germany, also at the beginning of the tenth century. When the last traces of the Carolingian past had disappeared, the German dukes, in 919, re-established the kingship, choosing Henry I, duke of Saxony, as king; his son, Otto I (936-73), a great monarch, must, like his predecessor Charlemagne a century and a half before, be considered one of the great builders of Christian Europe. Otto waged successful military campaigns against Slavs and Magyars, who became his vassals, and established his authority in the heartland of his kingdom. As a climax to his career he was crowned emperor in Rome, in February 962, and thus a German empire succeeded the Carolingian as the Christian empire of the west. Otto I assumed the mission of protecting the papal states and he also took control of elections to the papacy, thereby protecting them from interference from the Roman nobles. This situation obtained also during the reigns of Otto II (973-83) and Otto III (983-1002); and although the premature death of the latter allowed the Roman factions to interfere once again, the rights of the emperor were claimed forty years later by the energetic Henry III, allowing him to bring to an end once and for all feudal control of the papal see.

### **The Great Eastern Schism of 1054**

The Eastern and Western Church had developed along diverging lines for some time. Many contrasts were found in the liturgy, discipline, politics, and dogma. The establishment of the Western Empire under Charlemagne and Otto the Great, the iconoclast controversy, the territorial claims of the Byzantium in Italy (Ravenna and Southern Italy), and the expansion of the Frank into Italy all heightened this tension. Finally, the new confidence and sense of self-awareness of the Western Church, as a result of the reforms, contributed to a further factor to the intensification of ill feeling.

A crisis was reached when the German Pope Leo IX (1049-1054) extended his political power into southern Italy just as the Normans were robbing it from Byzantium. This added further points of contact and friction between the two. The Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX and his governor in Southern Italy, Argyros, favoured an alliance with the Pope so that the two might present a united front against the Normans. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius (1043-1058) feared an expansion of the Pope’s power into his area of jurisdiction and obstructed the alliance emphasizing the ecclesiastical conflicts (real or imaginary) between East and West. Michael Cerularius did this by closing Latin churches and monasteries in Constantinople, and condemning the Latin use of unleavened bread for the celebration of Mass, clerical celibacy, and the inclusion of the *filioque* in the Creed.

In an attempt to foster the negotiations for such an alliance and to answer the criticism of the Patriarch, Pope Leo sent three legates, Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, the Papal Chancellor Frederick of Lorraine, and Archbishop Peter of Amalfi to Constantinople. The first two, Lotharingian nobles, were particularly ardent defenders of reform.

From the beginning, the negotiations in Constantinople took an unfortunate turn. The legates faced the Patriarch confidently relying on the Donation of Constantine - which was thought to be genuine not only in the West but also in the East, and invoking the primacy of the Pope as successor of Peter, they *demand*ed the recognition of the Pope's primacy of jurisdiction, designated Western customs as the only valid ones and therefore as the only ones corresponding to tradition. Michael Cerularius was a vain, ambitious and calculating man and permitted the negotiations to flounder and finally refused to receive the Legates. At this point Humbert, rather imprudently delivered a passionate polemic against the Patriarch and made out a bull of excommunication which, on July 16, 1054, he placed on the altar of the Hagia Sophia. In the presence of the clergy and the populace who had assembled for the service, he protested against the Patriarch's conduct and exclaimed: "*Videat Deus et judicet*".

The bull of excommunication shows clearly how much the Western Church had developed in a new and independent direction and how little the reformers understood the mentality of the Greek Church. The whole occurrence is so much more tragic because in great part it was based on nothing but misunderstanding, human weakness, and questions of discipline. The controversy over the *filioque* was certainly not of central importance. It is controverted to this day whether Cardinal Humbert was empowered to take the step he took. When the excommunication of the Eastern Patriarch occurred, Pope Leo had already died (April 19, 1054) and his successor, Hadrian IV (1054-1059), was not elected until December 4, 1054. The fact that the papal chair was vacant explains why Cerularius only excommunicated the legates and not the Pope or the Roman Church. The rift, however, was never mended, and in spite of often renewed attempts at reunification, the schism has continued to this day.

## GLOSSARY

### CAESAROPAPISM

System in which the temporal ruler extends his own powers to ecclesiastical and theological matters. Such emperors appointed bishops and the Eastern Patriarch, directed the development of liturgical practices, and even aided the recruitment of monks.

### CODEX JUSTINIANUS

Compiled under Emperor Justinian I, the codex was the collection and systemization of all Roman law as it had developed from his predecessors put together for the purpose of legal uniformity throughout the empire. It is the basis for canon law as well as the civil law throughout Europe.

### COUNCIL OF HIEREIA

A local (non-ecumenical) council convened by Constantine V to condemn the use of icons.

### DULIA AND LATRIA

Two types of adoration whose distinction was drawn at the seventh Council of Nicaea. An icon may be venerated through acts of respect and honor, called *dulia*, but God alone is worth of absolute adoration, known in Greek as *latria*.

### FILIOQUE

Latin meaning "and the Son," this was first added at the Third Council of Toledo (589) to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed to clarify that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son. Later, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the bishops of the East refused the addition, thus contributing to the Great Schism.

### GREAT SCHISM

The final split between the eastern and western Churches in the year 1054.

### HAGIA SOPHIA

Most famous example of Byzantine architecture, it was built under Justinian I and is considered one of the most perfect buildings in the world.

### ICONOCLASM

Thoughts or deeds of an iconoclast. Refers to periods in history when a large number of iconoclasts were present.

### ICON

A flat, two-dimensional picture of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or one of the saints which is used as an aid for Christian acts of piety. The general artistic style of icons reflects a certain mystical beauty of Christ the Savior and the saints. When rightly understood, the icon, by virtue of what is represented, is seen as an invitation to prayer.

### ICONOCLAST

From the Greek word *eikonoklastés* meaning "image breaker" iconoclasts saw icons as occasions of idolatry and sought to destroy them and purify the practice of the Christian religion. They were condemned at the second council of Nicaea in 787.

### ICONOPHILE

Greek for "lover of icons," this term refers to those who defend and promote the proper use of icons in Christian worship.

### MONOPHYSITISM

Heresy claiming that there is only one nature in Christ and that His human nature is "incorporated" into the Divine Nature.

### PAPAL STATES

Lands around Rome, Italy, won by Pepin on behalf and given to the papacy, making the pope a sovereign as well as spiritual leader. The Papal States were ruled by the pope from 754 to 1870.

## 6. The Gregorian Reform and the Investiture Struggle. Cluny and the Monastic Reform Movement

### The Gregorian Reform and the Investiture Struggle

#### 1. The *Libertas ecclesiae*

Initially, the *Libertas ecclesiae*, which became the goal of the Gregorian reform, was also the liberation of the church from coercion by the lords temporal. The movement, which received its name and impetus from Gregory VII, attacked the way in which bishoprics and abbeys were bestowed by kings, princes, and noblemen (lay investiture) and often flagrantly exploited financially (simony). It demanded the restoration of the free, ecclesiastical right of election, in order to safeguard religious and ecclesiastical independence and, at the same time demanded that the Church be permitted the unhindered exercise of her positive rights. Since universally valid criteria in this field of law did not yet exist, it was the task of the reform movement to devise and implement them. As a consequence dissension broke out between the Church and the political powers.

Meanwhile the Cluniac reform had reawakened awareness of the spiritual life and the Church's dignity and independence. The emphasis given to the political element during the last centuries was seen to be a reversal of the correct order. The Gregorians argued that the Church is superior to the state just as the mind is superior to the body. In this way the Church's political reform arose out of monastic reform. Actually the new spirit had been brought to Rome by the German Emperors themselves. The Popes who were placed in office by Henry III conceived the idea of Papal reform. Specifically Leo IX (1049 to 1054) worked for such reform as would return to the Papacy both its universal role and defend her rights of primacy. In 1059 Nicholas II, by Papal decree, withdrew the election of the Pope, the most important act in the hierarchical Church, from the influence of laymen and transferred it to the cardinal bishops. The decree was principally directed at the Roman nobility, but it equally affected the German Emperor. Imperial intervention at Sutri in 1046 had been well received by Abbot Cdiolo of Cluny and Peter Damian, the most zealous fighter for reform, but from the standpoint of a reformed Church the idea was totally unacceptable. In his decree on the election of the Pope Nicholas II (1058-1061), in an ambiguous clause, granted the German King, Henry IV (1056-1106), the *honorary* right to confirm the Papal election, a privilege so imprecisely defined that would be certain to give rise to confusion at a future date.

The decree was subsequently amended several times, and, after 1100, all cardinals participated in the election of the Pope. The Third Lateran Council of 1179 stipulated that a two-thirds majority was required for a candidate to be elected, and in 1274 Pope Gregory X introduced the conclave, whereby the electing cardinals separated from all outside contacts until the completion of the election. The regulations concerning Papal elections were codified in the Code of Canon Law of 1917, and added to by Pius XII in 1945.

## 2. The Struggle between Henry IV and Gregory VII

With Henry IV (1056-1106) and Gregory VII (1073-1085) two men appeared on the stage of history who subscribed to two opposed views and who were eventually responsible for resolving the investiture controversy.

The young king subscribed to the sacred, almost clerical, concept of kingship that had been developed by the Ottoman imperial theology. In this the king not only had a place in the hierarchical structure of the Church, but actually was the head of the Church. Henry firmly and sincerely considered himself as *Rex et Sacerdos*.

As a young deacon Gregory VII had accompanied the deposed Gregory VI into exile at Cologne in 1046. After Gregory's VI death Hildebrand, became a monk at Cluny. Leo IX had recalled him to Rome in 1050, and from then on he became active in pursuit of reform. After the death of Cardinal Humbert (1061), Gregory became the unchallenged leader of the reform party at the Papal court. The main points of his program were the fight against clerical marriages, simony, and, principally, the abolition of lay investiture. In relation to the investiture question the king was for Gregory a layman among laymen in the Church, and as a Christian subject to the Church and bound to obey her. In the spirit of the age this meant stripping the kingship of its sacral character. Upon becoming Pope Gregory formulated his tenets in his *Dictatus Papae* (1075): The Pope is the supreme head of Christianity. Not only can he limit the rights of bishops, but on the basis of his spiritual supremacy he also stands above kings and emperors whom he can depose if it appears necessary for moral or religious reason. Even if these principles had been intended to apply only to the ecclesiastical and religious life, their political significance would not have been long in becoming apparent.

The investiture controversy provided the occasion and the opportunity to test the fundamental principles of the opposing powers, the Papacy and the Empire. Contrary to the Papal prohibition, Henry IV had used his royal prerogatives to intervene in the Episcopal election (1072) at Milan. At the Lenten Council of 1075 Gregory increased the severity of sanctions attached to the prohibition against lay investiture more severe and let the Emperor know that he would incur excommunication for non-compliance and was stripped of all privileges relating to appointments to bishoprics. Since this meant dismantling the Ottonian imperial church system, on which the order of the Empire rested, and Henry paid no attention to the Papal decree. At the synod (Diet) of Worms in January 1076 Henry roused the imperial bishops, who were concerned at Gregory's revolutionary demands, against the Pope and Gregory VII was deposed.

Gregory's response was swift; he excommunicated Henry and releasing his subjects from their oath of fealty. The ban, which placed the king outside the church community, evidently stripped the kingship of sacred character. Henry's support quickly melted away, and in October 1076 the princes gathered at Tribur and presented the king with an ultimatum: either he obtained the lifting of the ban (excommunication) within one year or he would be deposed and a new king chosen.

Faced with this ultimatum, Henry began his penitential journey to Canossa in the winter of 1076-1077. Accompanied by wife and child and a small escort, he completed a perilous crossing of the Alps. The Pope, meanwhile, had left Rome for Germany. Gregory had arrived at the stronghold of margravine<sup>6</sup> Mathilda, when Henry appeared in Canossa on the north side of the Apennines. Dressed in penitential garb, he waited three days before being admitted to see the Pope (January 26-28, 1077). Through the intercession of his godfather Hugh of Cluny and the margravine, Henry received absolution from Gregory on the condition that he would accept Papal arbitration in his quarrel with the German princes.

For the moment, Henry was victorious and in control again, but Canossa was a heavy blow for German kingship, and one from which it never wholly recovered. The leadership of the West had passed from the Emperor to the Pope. Gregory had shown himself to be the more powerful of the two.

The German princes elected Rudolf of Swabia (d. 1080) as anti-king in March 1077 in spite of Henry's absolution, and this both forced Henry to fight for his crown, and plunged Germany into civil war. Soon Henry's relations with Gregory worsened again, and in March 1080 he was excommunicated and deposed for a second time. Now Henry took the initiative: he appointed an anti-pope, Wibert of Ravenna, who called himself Clement III (1084-1100), advanced on Rome. Gregory fled to the protection of the Normans in southern Italy. On March 25, 1085, Gregory died at Salerno, outwardly defeated but in fact the victor.

The principles troubling the relationship between the Church and the state could not be readily reconciled and the struggle continued after Gregory's death. What in fact was at issue was the very structure of the Empire and society. Much was written concerning the question of what could replace the hitherto existing religious and political unity of Church and state which had culminated in the sacred kingship. A separation of Church and state seemed impossible. This was seen when Paschal II (1099-1108) agreed with Henry V (1106-1125) in the concordat of Sutri (February 1111) to reverse the feudalization of the Church and with this its internal links to the Empire. Under the terms of the concordat the German imperial church was to return to the king all fiefs and privileges which it had received from him and in return Henry was to stop the practice of investiture which then would be superfluous. The vehement opposition of both the German princes and bishops to this solution, which they regarded as completely out of touch with reality, shows how difficult it was to restore her freedom to the Church. The wheel of history could not be turned back, and the suggestion was rejected.

The only solution that was feasible was compromise. In long discussions, distinctions were formulated between the spiritual office and the external secular administration (temporalities), without separating the two entirely. In the concordat of Worms in 1122 a solution of the investiture problem was attempted

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<sup>6</sup> Margravine: the wife or widow of a margrave. Margrave: the lord or military governor of a medieval German border province. Used as a hereditary title for certain princes in the Holy Roman Empire.

by providing for a double investiture: the king retained the civil investiture which included the conferring of fiefs and rights (*regalia* and *temporalities*) and which was symbolized by the scepter, while the spiritual investiture was to be left to the Church. The king was to respect the canonical right of election which was to be reserved to the clerics and nobility of the episcopal churches. After the 13<sup>th</sup> century the election was reserved exclusively to the cathedral chapters. Only after the canonical election and spiritual investiture with ring and staff would the king confer the civil investiture. In Germany this was done even before the episcopal consecration, and Italy and Burgundy following Germany's example.

### **3. The two sword theory of power**

A real solution to the central problem of Church and state had not yet been found. The feudal ties of the imperial church to the state continued to exist throughout the Middle Ages and up to the time of the French Revolution and subsequent secularization of 1803. Hence there continued to exist points of friction that would enkindle new controversies and struggles.

The Cluny reform had sought the Church's freedom and independence within the state, while the Gregorian reform placed Church and state on equal footing. Gregory VII, as monk, ruler and statesman, continued to develop this concept. From the idea of the general supremacy of the spiritual over the physical, Gregory derived the supremacy of the Church over the state, and in his famous *Dictatus Papae* (1075) laid down in twenty-seven guiding principles which formed the political program for future Popes. Relying on the Donation of Constantine, which he like so many others of the period considered to be genuine, Gregory established the claim of the Papacy to world dominion. The question of power increasingly governed the clashes between Church and state. Although the aims of Gregory VII were deeply religious and free from any trace of selfishness, and even though, in the case of Innocent III (1198-1216) papal dominion was still the consequence of purely religious aims, there nevertheless existed the danger of an abuse of power from which the Church was not always immune.

When Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1152-1190) tried to put into practice the idea of the universal empire the struggle between *imperium* and *sacerdotium* was renewed. Frederick found his antagonist in Alexander III (1159-1181), and their bitter struggle lasted some twenty years, from the Diet at Besancon in 1157 to the Peace of Venice in 1177. This unfortunate controversy brought four imperial anti-Popes, wars, bloodshed, and inflicted much suffering on Christian West before peace was finally restored and the Emperor was freed from the excommunication which Alexander had imposed on him in 1160.

For the contemporary mind these power struggles remain incomprehensible unless we make the effort to understand them in terms of the mentality of the times. To them, Christ alone was the Lord of Christianity. From Luke 22:38 they concluded that he had appointed two powers to govern the world, symbolized by two swords (Two-Sword Theory). One sword, the secular one, rested in the hands of the Emperor; the other sword, the spiritual one, was in the hands of the Pope. The canonicists and theologians of the Gregorian age interpreted this

theory in favor of the Pope; they claimed that both swords reposed solely and exclusively in the Church; the Church wielded the spiritual one, and delegated the secular one to the Emperor who held it for and in the name of the Church.

From this ecclesiastical concept to the attempt to reorganize the order of the Christian West under the supreme dominion of the Pope over all the European states was one small step. Taking this step necessarily led to a conflict between the ecclesiastical and imperial powers. Even though Frederick Barbarossa revived the concept of Empire and successfully defended himself against Papal domination, the powerful Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) succeeded in erecting a kind of Papal world dominion over all of Europe on the basis of a Papal system of liege states. Although the Staufen House lost the battle, not long after the collapse of the house of Staufen the universal Papacy also declined. In retrospect we could say that Gregorian reform did not benefit the Church's spiritual mission.

### **Cluny and the Monastic Reform Movement**

The synod of Sutri saw both the height and the turning point of imperial power in the Church. Western dualism in terms of empire-Church in the second period of Church history had developed biased to favor of the Emperor, and the balance between the two was thereby disturbed. If, in the future, dangerous or permanent threat was to arise for the *Libertas Ecclesiae*, with the consequent subordination of religious and spiritual life to the power of the state, then the existing relationship between Pope and Emperor had to be altered and the relation of the Church to the world had to be re-examined.

This is the crux of the meaning underlying the struggle between the two powers that was soon to occur. The first signs of the ecclesiastical reform movement had its origin in the monastic life. This reform movement aimed at a new attitude toward religious, political, and cultural questions. It was not satisfied with isolated reforms but extended to all spheres of religious and moral life and, consequently affected life outside of the monastery. It became evident that it was necessary to rethink the relationship between Church and state and to delineate the rightful sphere of competence of each. In the investiture struggle the political emphasis within the church was principally the result of the aims of the Gregorian reform party. But the ramifications of the reform movement were not limited to the controversy between Church and state, but changed all forms of spiritual life.

The most important monastic reform movement of the Middle Ages began in the monastery of Cluny. Duke William of Aquitaine founded the monastery in Burgundy between 908-910. William recognized that one of the chief reasons for the ecclesiastical decline in the 9<sup>th</sup> century had been the failure to protect the independence of the monasteries both from the lords temporal and spiritual. The duke assured Cluny of both its internal and external freedom. Free election of abbots and exemption from the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop both in virtue of its founding charter and special protection in virtue of Papal privilege. The spirit of the monastery was characterized by strict adherence to the Benedictine Rule, rigorous asceticism, absolute obedience to the abbot, and special attention to liturgical worship. Under its abbots Berno (909-927), Odo

(927-942), Aymard (since 942/948, who when he went blind in 954, he took Majolus as coadjutor), Majolus (954-994), Odilo (994-1048), Hugh (1049-1109), and Peter the Venerable (1122-1156), Cluny grew into the religious force in the Church.

Just as monasticism served as a counterweight for the superficial attitude toward the world during the secularization of the late Carolingian period, it now fulfilled the same role in the time of the Ottonians. Christianity must maintain its distance from the world or suffer the danger of secularization. Through its religious dynamism monasticism had the strength to effect the reform of the Church from within the Church and renew the spiritual freedom necessary for her to fulfill her essentially religious duties. In this sense, western monasticism in contrast to the mystically inclined eastern monasticism was always concerned to discharge its responsibility for all of Christianity. This explains why the Cluniac movement did not remain a purely monastic phenomenon but was a decisive influence on the course of western history.

The Cluniac reform movement owed its origin and influence during the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries to both its dynamism and its internal stability. Undisturbed by outside forces, the monastic life was able to develop depth and meaning within the walls of the monastery. The monks, who lived exclusively for divine service, were known in the western community for being men of prayer. Prayers common to other monasteries and a real concern for all of Christianity, which is the main feature of the liturgy, safeguarded the Cluniacs against all self-centeredness. The strength of the movement resided not in any pessimistic negation of life, but in the quiet assumption of the spiritual and intellectual task of praying for all of Christianity. Recent studies have shown that the Cluniacs, although contemplatives and imbued with a fervent of reform, preserved an openness to the world. The monks pursued scientific studies, were interested in political developments, and maintained contacts with emperors and kings. Abbot Majolus was held in high regard by Otto I, Odilo was a friend of Henry II, and Hugh became godfather to Henry IV and later mediated between the Emperor and the Popes.

The second abbot of Cluny, Odo, began to expand the reform movement. Monasteries either affiliated with Cluny or were reorganized according to the rule lived at Cluny. Thus an extensive association of monasteries arose which retained close ties with the mother house from which they received directives and encouragement. The Cluny reached its apogee in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and during the 12<sup>th</sup> century when approximately three thousand houses (monasteries) belonged to the association. The monastery at Cluny became the religious heart of the West, and in France, Burgundy, Italy, Spain, England, as well as in parts of Germany the movement exerted a deep influence on the spiritual and intellectual life of the people.

In addition to the Cluny, there were other monasteries working to deepen Christian life and make it more contemplative. The monastery of Gorze in Lorraine, founded in 933 by John of Vendiere, was particularly effective in Germany where 150 monasteries affiliated with it. Brogne, Hirsau, Siegburg, and Einsiedeln also became independent centers of reform movements. The German monasteries remained within the existing framework of the feudal order to a

much greater degree than Cluny and its daughter monasteries. The old, and important, imperial monasteries viewed the centrally directed, anti-feudal (“modern”) Cluny reform with reserve and, in some cases, open opposition. These monasteries felt committed to the Ottonian imperial Church and in the coming struggle between Emperor and Pope remained, in great part, on the Emperor’s side.

It seems that historically no direct influence can be established between the influence of Cluniac reform and the Gregorian reform. The Cluniacs did not start the investiture controversy, nor did they take an extreme stand on the controversial points of reform -investiture, clerical, etc.- nor did they have a political agenda. The defence of the Papal claim to leadership was as alien to Cluny as the idea of the crusades or the spreading of the Church’s mission. The Cluniacs were solely a monastic and ecclesiastical reform movement.

By deepening Christian life, however, the movement necessarily turned men’s thoughts to the importance of religion in public life, the position of the Church and the Pope on the world stage, the existing problems, and the other serious ecclesiastical tasks. It was in this way that, historically, the Cluniacs prepared the way for the future reform movements.

### **By way of summary**

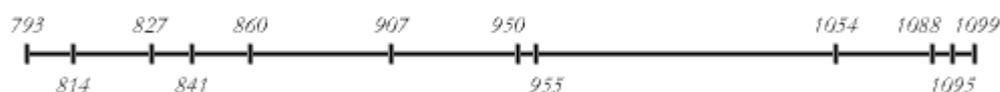
The Gregorian reform of the Church’s internal life emphasized the primatial role of the Pope within the Church. Following Leo IX the Popes firmly seized the reins of Church government. Their influence and will prevailed with the help of reforming synods. The implementation of a system of legates permitted the implementation of the reforms while at the same time establishing Papal authority everywhere. Appeals to the Holy See increased, especially in the case of contested episcopal elections, and supplied the Pope with the opportunity to intervene directly in the dioceses. In the event that the electors were unable to agree, the Pope simply exercised his right to appoint a bishop to the See. The Papal court also proceeded with penalties and deposition against bishops guilty of abuses. After the 11<sup>th</sup> century the Metropolitans had to go to Rome personally to obtain their crosier, and after the 12<sup>th</sup> century they had to swear an oath of obedience and appear periodically in Rome (every four years) for the *visitatio liminum apostolorum*. The desacralization of the political elements of the Papacy resulted in a sharper division between clerics and laymen. The clergy, now removed from the direct jurisdiction of princes and kings, formed a supranational corporation which was governed directly by the universal Church. Moreover the Papacy received invaluable support for its power in the 13<sup>th</sup> century from the mendicant orders, while the remaining clergy also transcended national borders. The universal Church thus provided the Christian West with a new consciousness of community.

## 7. The Crusades and the Inquisition

### The Crusades

Modern literature has applied the word *crusade* to all wars of a religious character. However, in the Middle Ages, the word *crusade* referred specifically to a series of eight expansive military expeditions that the Christian people undertook roughly between the years of 1096 and 1270 as an action in the Holy Land and against continued Muslim expansion. These efforts were not only directed against the Turks in the Holy Land and the Muslims in Spain, but also against heretics, like the Albigensians, whose teachings violated the most fundamental principles of Christianity. The word *crusade* itself may be traced to the cross, or *crux*, made of cloth and worn as a badge on the crusading knight's outer garments. After pronouncing a solemn vow, each warrior received a cross from the hands of the pope or his legates. He was thenceforth considered a soldier of the Church.

#### Raiders and Crusades



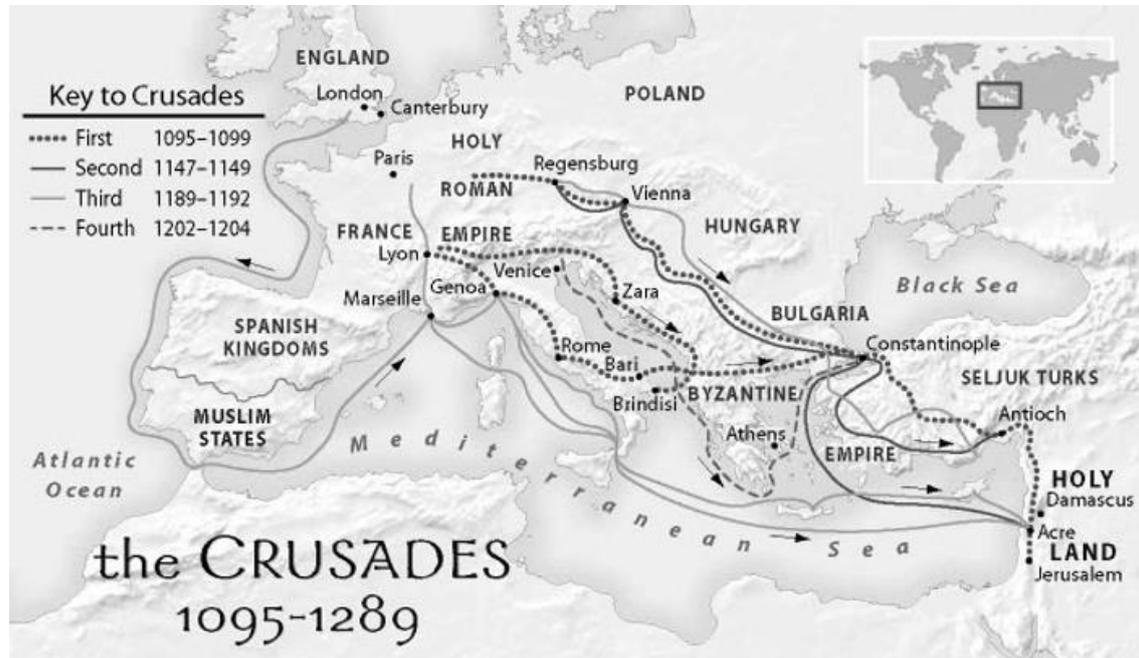
793 Vikings raid Lindisfarne	1054 East and West split
827 Saracens raid Sicily	1088 Christianization of Russia
841 Vikings establish base in Dublin	1093 Anselm becomes archbishop of Canterbury
860 Cyril & Methodius' missions to Germany	1095 Council of Clermont
907 Magyars destroy Bavarian army	1095 Crusades begin
950 Conversion of Olga of Russia	1099 Crusaders take Jerusalem
955 Otto I defeats Magyars	

Uniting themselves under the popes and the Christian rulers, the Crusaders fought these wars against Muslim expansion, which in part avoided infighting among European rulers, and offered a chance to embark upon an authentic religious pilgrimage.

### The fall of the Holy Land

Within one hundred years of the death of Muhammad, Islam spread throughout much of the Christian world. As discussed previously, this had as much to do with the success of militant Muslim expansion as it did with authentic religious conversion. Quickly after the birth of the religion, Islamic forces seized most of the Christian world. Palestine, the Holy Land and home of Jesus; Egypt, the birthplace of monasticism; Asia Minor, where St. Paul preached and planted the seeds of early Christian communities; and North Africa had all fallen to Muslim forces. Muslim expansion was finally brought to a halt by Charles Martel's defence of Western

Europe in France and the Byzantine Empire's defense in the East. With these new borders established, Muslim and Christian lands remained more or less stable.



After a long period of tolerance, the rise of the Fatimite Muslims in Egypt during the first decades of the eleventh century led to a renewed Christian persecution. In the second half of the century, a new militant Islamic nation, the Seljuk Turks, persecuted Christians, especially in Palestine and Syria, and expanded westwards into lands previously protected by Byzantium. In 1071, in the Battle of Manzikert, the Turks annihilated the Byzantine army and were on the verge of taking Constantinople. By this time, two-thirds of the Christian world had been taken by Muslim forces and now the last vestiges of the Roman Empire were threatened. The Eastern emperor looked West for assistance, in desperation, asking them to aid their brothers and sisters in the East.

The Western Christians were concerned with their Eastern brethren. Despite the schism of 1054 many (including both Pope Bl. Urban II and the Eastern emperor) hoped that the split could be healed. In 1095, Bl. Urban II held a council in Clermont in central France to try to rouse support from Westerners to aid the Eastern Christians. At Clermont, Bl. Urban II appealed for help:

For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them, for, as most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and conquered the territory of Romania (the Greek empire) as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont. They have occupied more and more lands of those Christians and have overcome them in seven battles... On this account I, or

rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians.<sup>7</sup>

Pope Bl Urban II began the crusades by proclaiming an organized assault in defence of Christian Europe. Rather than a Christian offensive, the crusades were a desperate attempt to fend off Islamic expansion. Islam was the strongest power of the Medieval world, and it now threatened to overrun the entire West. At some point, Christianity had to defend itself or be taken over by Islam. Islam was born in war and grew the same way. Muslim thought at this time divided the world into two spheres: the abode of Islam and the abode of war. Christianity or any other non-Muslim religion has no abode. Pope Bl. Urban II's crusade was the first of a series of military expeditions meant to ward off the very probable fall of the Christian world to the Muslims.

For Christians, the Muslim threat was no better realized than through the plight of pilgrims in the Holy Land. Pilgrims faced an increasingly hard journey to the Holy Land. They were often robbed, beaten, or killed. Pope St. Gregory VII (1073-1085) was ready to invade the Holy Land with 50,000 crusaders nearly two decades before Bl. Urban II's call to arms, but the lay investiture controversy made his crusade impossible. By 1095 Muslim expansion meant, above all, the hostile occupation of the Holy Land, the very ground upon which Jesus walked. As Crusaders set out to the east, they had two objectives: to fend off Turkish (Muslim) expansion into Byzantium and to free the Holy Land for safe pilgrimage and worship of sacred sites. Both objectives had as an end the avoidance of the further killing of Christians.

### **Motivation for the Crusaders**

There is no doubt that religion was a major motivation for soldiers who went on a crusade. The crusades combined the concept of a defensive war with religious pilgrimage and were primarily viewed as acts of religious devotion by the Christians who participated in them. Even before the First Crusade, the concept was understood in the West that God would reward those who fought for the good cause of defending Christendom. In addition, many of the popes, clerics, and bishops who preached the crusades offered religious indulgences to the soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Volunteering for a crusade became a way of earning an indulgence and a prolonged time of penance to make reparation for personal sins.

In addition to spiritual motivations, the Church offered other incentives including the reduction of taxes, dissolving of debt payments, and the protection of the crusaders' families. Crusaders took the vow of the Cross, expressing sentiments of piety, self-sacrifice, and love for God. The Christian world was a prime target for the earliest caliphs, and it would remain so for Muslim leaders for the next thousand years.

### **Preaching the Crusades**

Pope Bl. Urban II's call to arms found enormous appeal among the lower classes. The pope specifically appealed to sinners to join the crusade as a means of reconciliation

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Thatcher and McNeal, *A Source Book for Medieval History*, 1905, p. 514.

<sup>8</sup> An indulgence is a remission before God of temporal punishment due to sins, the guilt of which has already been forgiven through the sacrament of Penance.

with God:

You, oppressors of orphans and widows; you, murderers and violators of churches; you, robbers of the property of others; you, who, like vultures are drawn to the scent of the battlefield, hasten, as you love your souls, under your Captain Christ to the rescue of Jerusalem. All you who are guilty of such sins as exclude you from the kingdom of God, ransom yourselves at this price, for such is the will of God.<sup>9</sup>

Although the popes were primarily instrumental in unifying the armies bound for the Holy Land, other clerics preached the Crusades as well.

Bl. Peter the Hermit of Amiens traveled from city to city preaching for a crusade. According to the chronicler Alber of Aix-la-Chapelle, Bl. Peter led the rigorous life of a hermit for a number of years before undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. During his journey, the hermit was harassed and beaten by the Turks. One day when he was asleep in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Jesus appeared to him and ordered him to go to Europe proclaiming the miseries that had befallen the Christians in Palestine. Though many scholars now discount the magnitude of the effect Bl. Peter the Hermit's experience had on inciting the First Crusade, his story is typical of the dangers that befell pilgrims of that time.

The spellbinding preaching of St. Bernard of Clairvaux inspired thousands to join the Second Crusade in the twelfth century. St. Bernard traveled all across Europe, sometimes convincing entire parishes to set out to the east the next day. St. Bernard later frankly affirmed that all but a few of the knights on the crusades were "criminals and sinners, ravishers and the sacrilegious, murderers, perjurers, and adulterers".<sup>10</sup> St. Bernard observed the double benefit of having the crusaders out of Europe: "Their departure makes their own people happy, and their arrival cheers those whom they are hastening to help. They aid both groups, not only by protecting the one but also by not oppressing the other." The crusades were, in one respect, an effective means of draining so much of the violence from Medieval life. In reality, the ranks of Muslim soldiers were filled with the same sorts of individuals from their society (conscripts).

Kings in Western Europe often participated in leading the Crusades or offering financial support at the request of the papacy. Most famously, Richard the Lionheart of England led an army to Jerusalem along with Philip II of France in the Third Crusade.

### **Outcome of the Crusades**

The main objectives of the Crusades - the deliverance of the Holy Land and the rescue of the Christians in the East were ultimately frustrated. Nonetheless, the sacrifice of so many lives was non entirely in vain. The Crusades held back Turkish expansion into Europe for four hundred years and gave Christians a more acute consciousness of their Christian unity, which transcended nationality and race. Contact with Eastern Christian culture through the exchange of people, goods, and ideas had an enormous

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Laux. *Church History: A Complete History of the Catholic Church to the Present Day*, 1992. p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Chambers, *et al.*, *The Western Experience*, 2002, p. 267.

influence on the intellectual life of Europe. The Crusades made pilgrimages to the Holy Land easier, and the Muslims eventually entrusted Christian Holy Places in Palestine to the Franciscans due to St. Francis of Assisi's friendship with Muslim leaders.

The Crusades also had a powerful influence on military technology. After initial invasions, Crusaders largely waged a defensive war, becoming skilled in constructing castles. Along with castles, there were improvements in siege engines to break down walls and gates including battering rams, towers, and catapults.

The Crusades encouraged travel and fostered a new curiosity for foreign culture among the Latin Christians. Missionaries and merchants set out deep into central Asia, and by the thirteenth century had reached China. The reports from those expeditions (from explorers such as Marco Polo) gave Western Europe abundant information about Asia and fed the desire to explore and evangelize new territories. As a result, the world in many ways became more open for Westerners, and consequently the technological and academic achievements of the Arabic world and the Greek writings on medicine and mathematics facilitated a flowering of Western culture.

## **Poverty, Heresies and the Inquisition**

As early as the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, monastic reformers had called for a return to the apostolic poverty of the Infant Church, and the *vita apostolica* had been closely related with the ideal of leading a simple life following the example of Christ and the Apostles. Under the influence of the crusades this desire developed into a mass movement throughout the West. Not only the soldiers returning from the Holy Land but also those who had stayed at home had before their eyes the image of the poor Saviour and were inspired to live in the imitation of Christ. People became interested in the Gospels. Monks and clerics devoted themselves to the study of the Scriptures, and the laity formed small circles in which the Scriptures were read and explained to them. The laymen wanted to learn about the life of Christ and the Apostles directly from Sacred Scripture and were hungry for the word of God. Great preachers like Bernard of Clairvaux and Norbert of Xanten gathered congregations from far and wide.

### **1. The attraction of poverty**

When Christ's life of poverty was contrasted with the existing conditions, it was easy for opposition to the institutional Church to develop. The medieval (feudal) Church was wealthy, not only in Germany, where the bishops were also princes, but also in France, England, and Italy. Everywhere bishoprics and abbeys were in the hands of the nobility and the wealthy. The clergy who determined spiritual life were also intimately connected with the feudal lords. A self-confident citizenry was developing in the cities which no longer let itself be guided solely by the spiritual leaders. The laity was awakened and wanted to make up their own minds on religious matters by referring to the Bible. As long as this desire was carried out *ad mentem ecclesiae* and was used to foster the interior life, its results could not be but beneficial, but there was also the danger erroneous concepts and interpretation detrimental to souls could arise. The question was,

therefore, whether the Church could channel the movement or whether the movement would turn against the Church.

The zealous Dutch reformer Tanchelm not only criticised the temporal possessions of clerics but also the secular life of the clergy. His stance culminated in his opposition to the hierarchy, the sacramental church and a rejection of the Eucharist. In 1115 he was killed by the people, but his heresies did not die with him, and in 1124 Norbert preached against them near Antwerp. The radical Italian penitential preacher Arnold of Brescia also called for a church without property and roundly criticized the papacy. By permitting himself to be used in the Roman municipal struggles he became enmeshed in politics, and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa had him executed in 1155. His followers, the “Arnoldists”, later joined the Waldensians and the Cathari.

## **2. The Waldensians**

The Waldensians take their origin from the wealthy merchant Peter Waldes of Lyons. Around 1173/1176 Peter Waldes discovered the ideal of poverty during the reading of Mt., 10:5 ff and gave away his fortune to devote himself to strict apostolic poverty and the preaching of penance. His followers called themselves *pauperes Christi* or the “poor men of Lyon”. These men certainly meant well, but their criticism was often exaggerated and also contained dangers for the faith. The bishop of Lyons expelled them, because, as laymen, they were not qualified to speak on questions of faith. Waldes turned to the Pope and appeared at the Third Lateran Council in 1179. Alexander III applauded Waldes’s ideal of poverty and permitted him to preach penance as long as he did not become involved in questions of faith. This regulation was both vague and flexible, and under the pretext that Waldes had not kept it, the bishop again denied him permission to preach. Once more Waldes appealed directly to Rome, but this time Lucius III reacted sharply. In 1184 the Pope forbade Waldes any activity as preacher and censured the whole movement which had, in the mean time, become more radical.

Now Waldes resisted; he justified his position by reference to his inner call and personal mission by Christ and asserted that only persons who had given away everything and lived in poverty were entitled to preach Christianity. The Pope excommunicated Waldes, and persecution drove the movement underground. Waldensians became increasingly hostile to the Church and adopted heretical doctrines of faith. Waldes died around 1217, and the remainders of his following later joined the Italian Protestants.

## **3. The Beghines and the *Humiliati***

Around 1170 the Beghines appeared for the first time in Belgium and the Netherlands. These pious women dedicated themselves to prayer, reading of Scripture, manual labour, care of the sick, and the religious instruction of girls. They lived together without monastic vows and were totally dedicated to active works of charity for Christ’s sake. In the Milan area the cloth weavers united into similar religious communities, the *Humiliati*. In imitation of the early Christian community (Acts 2:44) they formed production co-operatives and renounced private property. When the *Humiliati* began to show signs of

becoming increasingly radical, Innocent III brought the movement, in 1201, under ecclesiastical control and spiritual leadership. Some of the *Humiliati* elected to live together in monastic communities under the Augustinian rule, others chose to remain in the world, but participated in the religious exercises of these monasteries. They were affiliated with them in communities of prayer and were the forerunners of the “Third Orders”. In 1216 the diocese of Milan had 150 such *Humiliati* monasteries and the order existed until 1571.

#### **4. Cathari**

While all of these groups had a common Christian basis, the Cathari were based on a Manichaean dualism. Armenian Paulicians, who in the 9<sup>th</sup> century had been resettled in the Balkans by Byzantium, had brought with them Gnostic ideas. These ideas were summarized in Macedonia by the village priest Bogomil in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century: The world was created and ruled by the devil, i. e. by the evil God of the Old Testament, and in the process of creation, the pure souls of men had been enclosed in evil matter. Then the good God of the New Testament had sent one of his angels, Jesus Christ, to teach men how to liberate themselves from matter and to enter their real home, heaven, as the “pure ones” (katharoi = Cathari = Ketzer = heretics). To accomplish this end, asceticism and complete separation from the world were necessary; any contact with matter made a person unclean, as the whole of creation was sinful. The “Perfect Ones” were expected to avoid marriage, sexual intercourse, and the eating of meat, as well as any kind of manual labour, material possessions, and wealth.

Travelling merchants and returning crusaders brought these ideas to the West in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and they quickly spread to Germany, England, France, and Italy, where they were associated with the Christian thoughts of various individuals. The followers of the movement organized themselves along the lines of the Catholic Church, established a hierarchy and divided themselves according to bishoprics. In 1167 a large council of the Cathari took place near Toulouse, which contrasted the wealth of the Catholic Church with the poverty of their church which renounced all possessions. This comparison played into the hands of many radical reformers who dreamed of a “Gospel poor” Church, and the Cathari succeeded in presenting to the simple people their dualistic rejection of the world as the ideal picture of Christian asceticism. The movement presented its members as ideal Christians who led exemplary lives, while designating the Catholic Church as the synagogue of Satan, stigmatizing priests as hypocritical sinners, and declaring the sacraments to be the work of the devil.

With the same unwillingness to compromise, the Cathari also opposed the state and called the Emperor the governor of Satan and his princes Satan’s helpers. Their strong following in the south of France, particularly in the area of Albi (hence Albigenses), soon allied them with the French barons who were preparing for war against the king of France. The resulting tension spilled over into the bloody, semi-religious and semipolitical Albigensian war (1209-1229).

#### **5. The Inquisition**

The fight against the Cathari and the Inquisition must be seen in the light of the dual position of the Cathari as enemies of both the church and the state. Because

the Cathari attacked the political and social as well as the religious foundations of the Christian community, state and church acted together. Peter II of Aragon denounced the Cathari as enemies of the state as early as 1197 and ordered their burning. In 1179 King Louis VII of France and King Henry II of England put pressure on the Third Lateran Council to pass severe ordinances against the heretics who were to be punished by the confiscation of their property and imprisonment. If necessary, force should be used against them to crush the movement. Lucius III, therefore, in 1183 concluded an agreement with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, according to which the heretics immediately after their excommunication should be put under the imperial ban and the agents of the state were to search them out and turn them over to secular courts. It is idle to speculate to what extent religious or political motives were decisive; a world which saw itself as a religious-political unit could only act as a unit when it saw its uniform Christian foundations attacked.

After attempts at conversion among the Albigenses had failed and the papal legate was murdered (1208) Innocent III called a crusade against them. The killing went on for twenty years and much blood shed on both sides. In the process, whole cities were depopulated, broad regions of the area were devastated, and the culture of the Provence was destroyed. Outwardly the heresy could be regarded as exterminated. But the Inquisition had to work for many years in order to master the situation. Victory, in more ways than military, went to the French crown, which was able to settle its political and dynastic problems under the guise of religion.

The procedures of ecclesiastical trial law for the Inquisition were perfected under Innocent III. According to it, the government in certain cases had to proceed officially against a sinner or criminal, i. e. it must not wait until someone had preferred charges against him, but *ex officio* had to search for him and put him on trial. The application of this procedure to heretics in 1231 led to the appointment of special papal inquisitors to pursue those suspected of heresy. In 1224, Gregory IX and Emperor Frederick II jointly passed a law against the heretics of Lombardy which required the secular power to arrest a heretic who had been convicted by the bishop and to execute him if he remained obstinate. The arrest by the secular arm thus automatically was followed by punishment. If, during the surrender of the convict by the ecclesiastical power to the secular power, the wish was expressed to see the life of the condemned man spared it was a simple formality and juridical fiction. If the secular court refused to execute the heretic, the court itself was suspected of heresy. In 1252 Innocent IV authorised the inquisitors to employ torture if necessary to obtain a confession.

Nevertheless, we must again see this in its historical context. Medieval man regarded the religious heretic also as a political revolutionary, who through his attack on the foundation of western Christian society threatened the existence of both church and state. Theologians, especially Thomas Aquinas, rejected outright the use of force in matters of faith, but medieval man regarded truth, particularly the truth of faith, as one only: the Christian truth. Hence the question arose of what to do with those who denied the Christian faith (truth) is cast in a totally different context from today. Since there is only one objective truth, is it better served through severity or indulgent love? The medieval believer was convinced

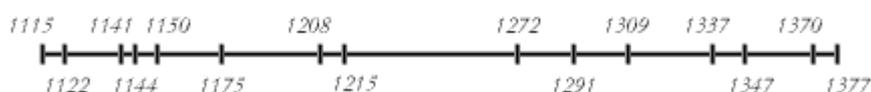
that severity served best. The Reformers Luther, Melanchthon, and particularly Calvin thought and acted in the same way. Trials of heretics and the persecution of witches occurred as frequently in Wittenberg as in Geneva, Cologne or Paris. Only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the Enlightenment was an end put to this type of persecution.

## 8. The High middle ages (universities, scholasticism, mendicant orders)

### Theology and the Universities

Although the early Middle Ages had been satisfied to continue theological studies in the spirit of Fathers, the intensification of ecclesiastical life in the 11<sup>th</sup> century led to a differentiation of theological thought in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The more the Christian West developed unity under papal leadership, the more active became the spiritual inter-relationship of the people. This exchange of ideas stimulated a many-sided concern with tradition. Europe's horizons were also widened by the crusaders and questions and problems arose. At the same time the centers of learning moved from the monasteries to the developing universities.

#### Scholastics and Mystics



1115 Bernard founds monastery at Clairvaux	1215 Fourth Lateran Council
1122 Concordat of Worms	1272 Thomas completes Summa
1141 Abelard is condemned	1291 End of crusader presence in Holy Land
1144 Fall of Edessa	1309 'Babylon captivity' begins
1150 Universities at Paris and Oxford	1337 The Hundred Years War begins
1175 Waldensian movement begins	1370 Catherine of Sienna writes Letters
1208 Francis renounces wealth	1377 'Babylon captivity' ends

### 1. Scholasticism

The Benedictine Ruprecht of Deutz (d. 1135) still moved within the confines of the old tradition, but Berengar of Tours (d. 1088) opened up new areas of thought. In the doctrine of the Eucharist, Berengar denied the Real Presence. He held that the bread and wine were mere symbols which were not changed in the consecration, but only received supernatural strength. When his doctrine was censured in Rome in 1079, Berengar submitted to the decision of the Church. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 taught that the consecration effected a real change of the essence, and termed this change "transubstantiation".

Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) is considered to be the "Father of Scholasticism". Using traditional concepts he attempted to penetrate matters of faith by the use of reason and so arrive at new conclusions. Faith could be supported by reason, in fact required it: *fides quaerens intellectum*. The existence of God, for example, could be demonstrated not only by revelation but also by reason. Anselm introduced the so-called ontological argument for the existence

of God. In him we first glimpse the problem of “faith and reason”, “revelation and natural knowledge”. In the doctrine of redemption and in Christology Anselm also opened up new paths with his doctrine of satisfaction. The most important theologian of early scholasticism was the brilliant but unpredictable Peter Abelard (1079-1142). His dialectical and critical method of *Sic et non* (Yes and No) strove to penetrate into the depth of being and truth. However in this process he occasionally blurred the lines between faith and reason. He was opposed by Bernard of Clairvaux at the synod of Sens (1141), and a number of his propositions were censured.

Around 1140, the Camaldolese monk Gratian (d. 1158), a professor at Bologna, made the attempt to compile and codify the diverse Church laws (= canones). His *Concordantia discordantium canonum*, later simply called *Decretum Gratiani*, became the heart of the *Corpus Juris Canonici* which remained the authoritative code of law of the Church until 1918. In the course of the Middle Ages several legal collections were added to the *Decretum Gratiani*: the *Liber extra decretum* of Gregory IX (1234), the *Liber sextus decretalium* of Boniface VIII (1298), the *Constitutiones Clementinae* (1317), and the so-called *Extravagantes*, i.e. the papal decrees of later times. Gratian is called the “Father of Canon law”.

Peter Lombard (d. 1160), a lecturer at the University of Paris and a future bishop, wrote the definitive textbook, *Liber Sententiarum Libri IV*, of the Middle Ages.

Theology reached the apogee of its development in the so-called High Scholasticism of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Through the works of Arab and Jewish thinkers (Avicenna, d. 1037, in the East; Averroes, d. 1198, in Spain; Maimonides, d. 1204, a Jew), the West learned more about the Greek philosopher Aristotle (d. 322 BC) than it had hitherto known. Aristotle’s logic and methods were stripped of their pagan elements and used for the theological research. Aristotle’s terminology was well-suited for the task and a “modern” philosophical and theological method was created which had great appeal for the mendicant Orders. The Dominicans Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Meister Eckhard (d. 1328), and the Franciscans Bonaventure (d. 1274) and Duns Scotus (d. 1308) were the most prominent representatives of High Scholasticism.

Albert, a Swabian, who had entered the Dominican order in 1223, and a scholar of universal erudition (he was called *doctor universalis*, the Great), taught in Cologne and in Paris. Thomas Aquinas was a student of his in Paris (1243-1247) and later accompanied him to Cologne (1248-1252), where Albert had been sent to found a new school of the Order (*studium generale*). Albert was probably the first systematically to apply the Aristotelian philosophical and theological method to Christian theology, but he was far surpassed in this by his pupil Thomas. Thomas Aquinas was born in Roccasicca near Naples in 1221/1227 and in 1244 entered the order of the Dominicans against the vigorous opposition of his parents. Thomas attended Albert’s lectures (1245-1252) and was deeply impressed by them. Thomas also taught in Paris (1252-1259, and from 1256 as a lecturer = Magister), in Rome (1259-1269), again in Paris (1269-1272), and in Naples (1272-1274). In addition to his *Summa Theologiae*, an unsurpassed comprehensive presentation of the Christian religion based on Aristotelian

philosophical categories, Thomas Aquinas wrote numerous other works, for example *Summa contra gentiles* (1264), *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, *Quaestiones Disputatae*, commentaries on Sacred Scripture and Aristotle's works, and so on. Although he was the most gifted theologian of the Middle Ages, he was also a great mystic and saint (*doctor angelicus*).

The Franciscan Bonaventure, born in 1217/1218 near Viterbo and a member of the Order from 1243, studied and taught together with Thomas Aquinas in Paris (1253, resp. 1257-1274). His theology was strongly influenced by mysticism (*doctor seraphicus*) and Augustinian and Platonic thought, particularly his compendium of dogma (*Breviloquium*, 1257) and his much read devotional and mystical *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* (1259). While Thomas Aquinas worked principally with the intellect, Bonaventure was more influenced by the will; if knowledge of God was the goal of Thomas, love of God concerned Bonaventure. He gave this spirit to the theology of the Order, and as General of the Order (1257-1274) was also concerned with the practical problems of its pastoral work, over and above his teaching at Paris. To relieve the tension between the conventuals and the spirituals in the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure wrote the *Vita maior S. Francisci*. Another Franciscan, Duns Scotus, continued Bonaventure's theological line of thought. Born around 1265 in Scotland, Duns Scotus strongly influenced theology during his short but prolific teaching career in Paris (1305-1307) and later, until his death, in Cologne (1307-1308) through his incisive critical method and through his Christocentric and Marian thought<sup>11</sup>. He too emphasized the primacy of the will, of freedom, and of love. Duns Scotus has been called the "last great figure of High Scholasticism".

## 2. The Universities

The centers of theological studies and of science in general at the time were the newly founded universities. Around 1200, the professors of various schools in Paris formed themselves into a corporation, the *Universitas Magistorum*, which obtained ecclesiastical and royal recognition as an independent organization. Gregory IX also gave the corporation independence from the bishop in 1231 and granted it numerous privileges. A University also developed in Bologna, but here the students conducted the incorporation (*universitas scholarum*). Subsequently many such corporations were formed, and these were simply called universities. Among the more famous were Padua (1222) and Naples (1224) in Italy; Montpellier and others in addition to Paris in France; Oxford and Cambridge in England, and Valencia and Salamanca (1220) in Spain. Germany followed this trend only in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century with universities in Prague (1348), Vienna (1365), Heidelberg (1386), and Cologne (1388). Paris, the "Mother of Sciences", had the greatest prestige and the largest number of students. In 1258 Robert de Sorbon founded a college for poor students of theology, and even though numerous other foundations were added in the course of time, the name Sorbonne became attached to the entire University of Paris. Paris specialized, if one might use the term, in philosophy and theology, while law was the specialty of Bologna. All students, some of whom were still quite young, were required to study philosophy (*facultas artium*) and only then were they permitted to choose a specialty from one of the three higher faculties, theology, law, or medicine.

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<sup>11</sup> He defended Our Lady's Immaculate Conception.

In contrast to local schools (*studium particulare*), the universities were characterized by accepting students and tutors from everywhere, and their degrees were universally recognized in the Christian West (*studium universale*)<sup>12</sup>. The universities testified to the universality and unity of the western spirit, and university studies were considered to constitute an independent (third) power to the *sacerdotium* and *imperium*. The acquisition of a doctoral degree from one of these universities meant equality with the nobility. Learning truly ennobled a person.

## **The Mendicant Orders**

Great saints are always God's answer to the particular needs and the difficulties of an age. Francis of Assisi and Dominic showed the way out of the dilemma in which both Church and society were caught: A wealthy and powerful church and an increasingly wealthy Christian society were in danger of becoming victims of their possessions and losing touch with the poorer elements of the population. Power and force could not save the unity; this tension could only be overcome through the spirit of the Gospels. By perfectly living the ideal of poverty in imitation of Christ and at the same time refraining from blindly scolding others for their wealth or calling property "evil", these saints taught mankind the way to simultaneously possess and to renounce material goods. They were, as Paul said: "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things (2 Cor., 6:10)".

### **1. The Franciscans**

Francis was born in Assisi in 1181/1182. After a carefree youth, full of ambitious plans, in the spring of 1205 he was captured by the ideal of poverty while on the way to a military campaign in Apulia, where he wanted to earn a knighthood for himself. Now Francis completely renounced the world and dedicated himself to works of penance and charity. When in 1206 his father expelled him from his house, Francis wandered happily through the country, singing and begging for his bread. In the spring of 1208/1209 while in the chapel of Portiuncula near Assisi the words of Mt., 10:5ff gave him the pattern for his future life: to preach the glad tidings of the merciful love of the Saviour to all men and all creation, and to lead them to a change and turn to God. With a few disciples he went to Rome in 1209/1210 to obtain from Innocent III approval for his way of life and the authorization to preach. The Pope granted both, and Francis seems to have received his ordination as deacon at this time. He began his work, and his ideas spread with unprecedented rapidity. Preaching penance and God's love, Francis travelled through Italy, southern France, and Spain (1214-1215). He wanted to convert the Cathari and the Moors, not through power and armed force, but as an insignificant friar -he wanted himself and his companions to be known as *fratres minores*, through love, humility, and joy. Illness prevented him from crossing over to Morocco, and in 1215 he returned to Assisi.

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<sup>12</sup> The Cologne canon Alexander of Roes, in his parable of the Pavo in 1284, attributed the *sacerdotium* to the Italians, the *imperium* to the Germans, and the *studium* to the French, as the particular contribution of these peoples to the service of the western society.

The order quickly became popular, and Francis's appearance caused a deep impression on the people of all levels of society. The young people thronged towards Francis, and he enjoyed the confidence of the simple people as well as that of the Pope and the bishops. Francis exerted a peculiar attraction; when in 1219 he accompanied the crusading army to Egypt, he could in safety make his way through the battling warriors near Damietta to the sultan to tell him of the love of the Saviour. Thus Francis showed a new way for the mission of the Cross; instead of conquering with weapons, it was to achieve conquest through love.

In 1221, Francis gave a rule to his order which sprang entirely from his spirit and the Gospels. In order to meet the needs of a religious Order which was already active throughout most of Europe a rule was drawn up with the help of Cardinal Ugolino, the future Pope Gregory IX, and was confirmed in 1223. Francis himself withdrew completely from the administration of the Order so as to be able to live entirely according to his ideal. After 1224 he suffered from serious illnesses of the eyes and stomach. On Mount Alverno, in September 1224, while gazing up at the Cross in mystical union with Christ, he received the stigmata. Thus Francis, a most Christ-like Christian, became one with the crucified Christ. In the midst of his suffering, Francis composed the beautiful song to the sun which overflows with love and gratitude to God, whom all of creation praises. Lying on the bare floor, poor and naked, Francis died on October 3, 1226, while singing the *Te Deum* with his brethren.

The ties which Francis had established with the people were maintained by the members of his Order, and they remained the most popular missionaries of the Middle Ages. Closely related to the Franciscans was the order of St. Clare, who, in 1212, had put herself under the spiritual guidance of Francis and had settled in S. Damiano near Assisi. In 1221 the so-called Third Order (Tertiaries) was added to the Order; its members remained in the world and at the same time participated in the ideals of the Franciscans and their spirituality. Francis gave to the Church a love for poverty and made it credible in the eyes of those who had taken offence at her wealth. His disciples have preserved the ideal of poverty to this day.

## **2. The Dominicans**

Dominic, born c. 1170 in Castile, had a personality which was quite different from that of Francis, but he was of a similar spirit to Francis. Dominic was a canon regular who, on a trip to Rome in 1204, became acquainted with the destructive effects of the movement of the Cathari in southern France. He therefore decided to devote himself to their conversion by becoming an itinerant preacher and living in apostolic poverty. He accepted the strict Franciscan rule of poverty, but he felt the necessity to add something: A well-prepared sermon required a good theological training, and this Dominic wanted to emphasize. When, in Rome in 1215, he asked for approval of his new priestly Order, Innocent III imposed on him Augustine's rule, and in 1216 Honorius III confirmed the new Order. As early as 1217 the first convent of nuns existed at Prouille in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The convent had grown out of an association of pious women who had come together to support Dominic's

mission to the Albigenses. Later a Third Order for lay people, similar to that of the Franciscans, was added to the Order.

The ideal of unconditional poverty was also adopted by two other orders; the Hermits of St. Augustine, who received papal approval in 1256, and the Carmelites, who had relocated to Europe from the Holy Land in 1228 and who in 1247 had become a mendicant order. The Carmelites also established an order for women after 1452.

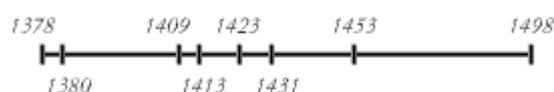
These four mendicant orders acquired great importance in the life of the Church, because they not only provided the best-loved preachers, but also the most important theologians of the High Middle Ages.

## 9. The Crisis of Christendom. The Western Schism and Conciliarism

### The Crisis of Christendom

The political and doctrinal system of Christendom suffered a crisis in the thirteenth century with the appearance of a new ideological and spiritual outlook in the Europe of the later middle ages. A main factor in this crisis was heated confrontation between papacy and empire, represented respectively by the popes who succeeded Innocent III, and the Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II. Frederick had assumed the imperial crown without relinquishing his sovereignty over Naples and Sicily, which made the pope very uneasy because it meant that the Papal States were surrounded by German dominions. The personality of Frederick, which was closer to that of a renaissance prince than to that of a Christian emperor, and his suspect religious faith only increased the pope's apprehension. Gregory IX (1227-41) and Innocent IV (1243-54) were the great adversaries of Frederick II (+1250) in a war of unusual violence which divided Italy into two factions —the Guelphs, on the pope's side, and the Ghibellines, who supported the emperor. The popes gave the kingdom of Naples and Sicily to Charles of Anjou, who murdered the last members of the male line of the Staufen dynasty. A woman, Constance, transmitted the family's rights to her husband, Peter III of Aragon, and the Sicilian Vespers gave him the island of Sicily, which marked the beginning of Spanish presence in the south of Italy.

#### Change on the horizon



1378 The Great Schism	1414 Council of Constance begins
1380 Wycliffe condemned	1423 The Great Schism ends
1409 Council of Pisa	1431 Joan of Arc martyred
1413 Jon Huss burned at stake	1453 Fall of Constantinople
1413 Lollard rebellion	1498 Savonarola dies

The violence of these struggles between papacy and empire dealt a mortal blow to the whole system of medieval Christendom. Other historical factors helped to hasten the process, for the decline of the empire coincided with the rise of other states, especially France, which became the secular power on whose support the papacy now had to rely. In these new circumstances, the self-assertion of the larger western kingdoms and the ecclesiastical nationalism that went with it undermined the necessary sense of unity which had inspired the political thinking behind Christendom. The crisis in the empire went so deep that on the death of Conrad IV (1254) the throne remained vacant for seventeen years —the so-called 'long interregnum'. But the papacy also suffered the consequences of the breakdown of the Christian ethnarchy: among the Germanic peoples resentment against Rome began to develop —distant rumbling of the Lutheran revolution; and in the Church itself an ardent desire could be felt for a more spiritual papacy and one less involved in worldly affairs.

The prophecies of the Cistercian abbot Joachim of Fiore, forecasting a new age of the Church, which would be ushered in by the election of an angelic pope, nourished these hopes for renewal. This climate of opinion, which obtained at the end of the thirteenth century, was reflected in the election to the papacy of Peter of Morrone, who took the name of Celestine V. But Celestine, conscious of his inability to govern the Church, resigned after five months. Benedict Gaetani, who succeeded him as Boniface VIII, was not so much an evangelical pastor as a jurist in love with the principle of papal supremacy. His pontificate marked the start of a series of crises, as dramatic and prolonged as any the Church has experienced in the twenty centuries of its history.

This era of crisis began with a clash between Boniface and the king of France, Philip the Fair. The pope was completely involved with the idea of the superiority of his apostolic authority, even in the temporal sphere, and he tried to behave like a latter-day Innocent III, but in very different historical circumstances. Philip the Fair was an able and unscrupulous politician, the first 'modern' king of the French monarchy. Boniface VIII issued the famous bull *Unam Sanctam* (18 November 1302) —the most complete exposition ever of pontifical theocracy —and demanded that the king accept this teaching. The conflict reached its climax when Guillaume of Nogaret, counsellor to the king, stormed Anagni, made the pope his prisoner and publicly confronted him. One month later Boniface died and the papacy, transplanted by Clement V from Rome to Avignon, became virtually under the control of France, for a long period, which came to be known as the Babylonian captivity.

In Avignon, the papacy became a French thing and lost its universality: the next seven popes were French, and so were ninety per cent. of the cardinals. The Avignon popes had a good reputation as administrators and they pursued the policy of centralisation of church government begun by the Gregorian reform; there was a steady growth in papal reserves, that is, appointments, grants, dispensations etc reserved to the pope. This centralisation increased the costs of running the Apostolic See, just at a time when income from the church states in Italy was decreasing alarmingly due to anarchy. These popes —especially John XXII (1316-34) —created the most advanced fiscal system of the time, seeking to maximise revenue from every possible source. The exchequer at Avignon was very successful in its efforts to exact tribute but at the cost of lowering the prestige of the papacy among those who paid this tribute. This unpopularity of the papacy would prove very harmful in the long run.

The Avignon period saw the emergence of famous anti-papal agitators, many of whom gathered at the court of the Emperor Louis IV of Bavaria during his long conflict with John XXII and his successors. At this court also, the leader of the 'Spiritualist' branch of the Franciscans sought asylum (these were at odds with the popes on the question of poverty); they included Michael of Cesena and the Englishman William of Ockham, who in his writings argued strongly in support of the role of the empire in the Christian world and proposed a democratic system of government for the Church. The most notorious member of Louis IV's entourage was Marsilius of Padua, previously rector of the University of Paris and author of *Defensor Pacis*, a work in which he openly broke with Christian doctrinal tradition. For Marsilius, the pope enjoyed no special power and had only a priestly function; the hierarchy of the Church was a human creation; the Church had no power of

jurisdiction and priests could receive such power only from princes; the Church, in other words, was absolutely dependent on the state.

*Defensor Pacis* represents the quintessence of doctrinaire anti papalism. Without going to that extreme, a new secular spirit spread widely in the course of the fourteenth century. The reception of Roman law had the effect of strengthening kings' power and of preparing the way for the consolidation of national kingdoms. The agents of this policy were lay jurists, counsellors to kings, like the famous legists in the service of Philip the Fair of France. This new policy proclaimed the absolute sovereignty of the state, which in no way was dependent on the papacy; furthermore, the king's absolute power also extended to ecclesiastical affairs, favouring the nationalization of the Church in each kingdom. In England, the laws of provisors (1351) and of praemunire (1353, 1365 and 1393) helped decisively to create an Anglican church, well subject to the king long before Henry VIII and the reformation. In France, the secular spirit and the increase in the power of the monarchy were the source of the Gallicanism which culminated eventually in the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438); this formalized a particularism in the Church in France which endured until the French Revolution in the eighteenth century.

All the finer spirits of the time —from St Catherine of Siena or St Brigit to Petrarch —yearned for the return of the popes to Rome. The ground was prepared for this by the pacification of the Papal States by Cardinal Gil de Albornoz. At last, Gregory XI (1370—8) resolved to leave Avignon and made his entry into Rome, in January 1377, to scenes of popular jubilation. It looked as if a sorry time was drawing to a close. But the time of testing was far from over: fourteen months later Gregory XI died and a new chapter began in the long crisis of the Church —the western schism.

### **The Western Schism and Conciliarism**

In the castle of Peniscola, in Spain, which was the residence of Peter de Luna — Benedict XIII, as he is called in the list of Avignon popes during the schism —there is a stone inscription which leaves to the day of judgment the solution of the puzzle of the legitimacy or not of this man whose own firm belief was that he was pope. How could such uncertainty arise, which had such a dramatic impact on the Church? First we shall try to identify the facts, before any attempt to interpret them.

Two great protagonists played key roles in the origin of the western schism —the College of Cardinals and the people of Rome. When it was called to elect in Rome a successor to Gregory XI, who had died shortly after his return from Avignon, the Sacred College had a majority of French members, as had been the case throughout the Avignon period. The people of Rome fervently desired the election of an Italian pope, to avoid the danger of any new transfer of the papacy to Avignon. In an atmosphere of popular passion and riots in the streets, the conclave, on 8 April 1378, elected an Italian, Bartolomeo Prignano, archbishop of Bari, who took the name of Urban VI (1378-89). A few months later, the French majority in the Sacred College left Rome and declared the papal election invalid on the grounds it had not been free because of the pressures exerted by the people of Rome. This majority group of cardinals met in Fondi in September of the same year and elected as pope one of their number, Cardinal Robert of Geneva, who took the name of Clement VII (1378—94). Clement established himself at Avignon, the two elected popes excommunicated each other, and the Church was in open schism.

The great problem was that the key to the legitimacy of one or other pope depended on something as difficult to assess as the validity of the election of Urban VI: did popular pressure so frighten the cardinals as to deprive them of freedom of choice and, therefore, render the election invalid? In other words, if the first election were valid, then Urban VI was the lawful pope; if not, then Clement VII was. It all depended on something as difficult to establish, with certainty, from outside, as the extent to which fear governed the voting of the Sacred College. The confusion caused by the schism meant that Christendom was divided into two, with the kingdoms adhering to one or other 'obedience' —to the extent that even saints were divided, with St Catherine of Siena standing for Urban VI and St Vincent Ferrer promoting the obedience of Avignon.

The schism lasted a long time, with papal successions at both Rome and Avignon making it even more difficult to get a solution despite the strong desire for unity felt by the Christian people at large. In 1408, after thirty years had gone by, Gregory XII was pope in Rome and Benedict XIII —Peter de Luna —was at the head of the Avignon obedience. A group of Roman cardinals and another of Avignon's decided to hold a council in order in this way to bring the schism to an end. The council, which met in Pisa in 1409, declared deposed the two reigning popes and elected a new pope, Alexander V. But this election, far from solving anything, only added a new element of confusion: the popes at Rome and Avignon refused to abdicate, with the result that Christendom was now divided into not two but three obediences. A limit had been reached, and the idea grew that only a council of the whole Church could solve the crisis. This idea was taken up enthusiastically by the recently elected German emperor, Sigismund, whom the Pisa pope, John XXIII —the successor of Alexander V —authorized to call the ecumenical council of Constance.

Constance was a peculiar council, a sort of assembly of the Christian nations of Europe. Even its voting system was strange; there was not the normal counting of heads; instead a vote was assigned to each 'nation' —French, English, German, Italian and Spanish —and a further vote was given to the college of cardinals. But the most important step taken by this council occurred when Pope John XXIII —the first pope to bear this name —, on being invited to abdicate, refused to do so and fled from the city. The council then issued the decree *Sacrosancta* (6 April 1415) proclaiming itself the supreme arbiter of the catholic Church, with an authority received directly from Christ, and claiming that every authority, including that of the pope, was subject to it, in matters to do with faith, the schism or the reform of the Church. In this way, Constance made its own that conciliarist doctrine which affirmed that ecumenical councils were superior to the pope, thus changing the very foundations of the constitution of the Church.

The *Sacrosancta* decree can only be properly evaluated within the historical context in which it was issued: that is, after a century of crisis in the Church, and forty years of schism. It is true that conciliarist theories had been professed by arch anti-papalists like Ockham and Marsilius; but the conciliarist arguments also drew support from the great masses of texts assembled in the codexes of collections of the *Corpus juris canonici*, the 'decretists' and 'decretalists' echoed the thousands of hypotheses based on all possible suppositions which had been debated in the schools —naturally, on the level of pure theory. The novelty lay in the fact that it was not a matter now of academic *questiones disputatae*: serious concrete problems needed to be solved. This

explains why the conciliarist doctrine got such a good reception, especially among French and German academics, with the chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson, to the fore.

The conciliarist doctrine of the *Sacrosancta* decree established the superior authority of ecumenical councils in the Church. But the council of Constance was not satisfied with formulating this doctrine on the level of principles; it tried to establish a permanent system whereby it would be normal for synods to take part in the supreme government of the Church. This was the purpose of its *Frequens* decree (9 October 1417) which made the ecumenical council a permanent institution in the Church: another council would be held in five years' time, another seven years later and then others every ten years —automatically, without any need of being convoked by the pope. Having thus topped out the conciliarist restructuring of the Church, the council then proceeded to the election of a pope by the cardinals present at Constance, with six additional electors, one from each of the conciliar 'nations.' Cardinal Oddo Colonna was elected with the name of Martin V (11 November 1417) and was recognized by all Christendom: the western schism had come to an end.

The council of Constance had succeeded in putting an end to the schism; but its conciliarist decrees were justly suspect and the new pope, Martin V, did not confirm them. It was inevitable that sooner or later there would be a confrontation between the papacy and doctrinaire conciliarism, to decide on whether pope or council was supreme. The clash took place during the pontificate of Eugene IV (1431-47), at the council of Basle. This council, which began with total legality, was radicalized to the point of becoming an assembly of clergy, with only a minimum representation of bishops. Those present at the council eventually broke with the pope, declared him deposed, and elected as anti-pope Duke Amadeus of Savoy, a peculiar individual, who took the name of Felix V. Eugene IV replied by condemning the 'conventicle' of Basle and its conciliarist doctrine. Abandoned by all the Christian kingdoms, the schismatic group which formed the rump of the council fell apart. And so the crisis of conciliarism came to an end with a clear reaffirmation of the Roman primacy.

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## **Resuming**

The universal disorder in the Church, the Black Death, the Hundred Years War between France and England, and French ascendancy in European affairs all favoured the papal exile, if it can be called such, to Avignon, which was based on the following, apparently solid, reasons

- a) The rivalry of the Roman nobility prevented many of Clements' predecessors from residing permanently in Rome
- b) The Pope wished to maintain peace between France and England
- c) Clement was French in nationality and sympathy

Of the sixteen Cardinals who entered the conclave to elect a successor to Gregory XI, ten were French, four were Italians, one was Spanish [Pedro de Luna], and one was Swiss, [Robert of Geneva]. The people of Rome were determined to have an Italian

Pope who would remain in the Eternal City. When the Cardinals gave their vote to the Neapolitan Archbishop of Bari - who became Pope Urban VI (1378-1389) - they pretended, in order to avoid trouble, that they had elected the only Roman present, Cardinal Tebaldeschi.

The new Pontiff proved stern and unfortunately provoked intense ill feeling by his harsh manner and cutting speech. Angered by their humiliation the French Cardinals retired from Rome and questioned the lawfulness of the Pope's election. Eventually they elected Robert of Geneva as anti-pope, Clement VII (1378-1394). Clement withdrew to Avignon and the Great Schism began. France, Scotland and Spain gave their allegiance to Clement. England, Italy, Flanders, Hungary, Poland and the greater part of Germany remained loyal to Pope Urban VI, who died, almost abandoned by his court, in 1389.

There then followed a series of lawful Popes in Rome and schismatic Popes at Avignon, with mutual denunciations and excommunications. Clergy and laity appealed to both courts to come to some agreement. A leading part in the negotiations was taken by the Universities of Paris, Oxford and Prague. Some suggested the Pontiffs should abdicate, others that the dispute should be submitted to arbitration, others that a general council should decide. Finally both Pope and anti-pope were invited to attend the Council of Pisa (1409): both declined and were deposed by the Council which proceeded to elect yet another Pope, Alexander V (1409-1410). Both acts were without any ecclesiastical authority and were never subsequently ratified by any Pope.

We thus have the following sequence of Popes and anti-popes.

Popes		Anti-popes
Rome	Avignon	Pisa
Urban VI (1378-1389)	Clement VII (1378-1394)	Alexander V (1409-1410)
Boniface IX (1389-1404)	Benedict XIII (1394-1415)	John XXIII (1410-1415)
Innocent VII (1404-1406)		
Gregory XII (1406-1415)		

The consequences of the schism were devastating; all Christianity was split into opposing obediences, and, as each Pope excommunicated the followers of the other, no one could remain unaffected. *De facto* all of Christianity found itself excommunicated. The influence of the schism extended to all countries, dioceses, and parishes and caused discord and conflict, as both Popes appointed their own candidates and all offices and emoluments were filled doubly. The result was the most difficult constitutional crisis which the church has ever experienced. In 1394, the University of Paris finally suggested three alternatives for overcoming the schism: the *via cessionis* (voluntary resignation), the *via compromissi* (submission of the popes to arbitration), and the *via concilii* (decision by a general council).

## GLOSSARY

### BLACK PLAGUE

Known commonly as "The Black Death," this deadly epidemic broke out in Europe around the year 1347, decimating the population. The disease took on three forms: The bubonic plague, carried by fleas which had bitten infested rats. was characterized by swelling lymph glands and black patches on the skin; the pneumonic plague spread quickly through coughing and sneezing and was more deadly than the bubonic; the septicemic plague was the deadliest form, infecting the blood stream and killing its victims the most quickly.

### *CLERICIS LAICOS*

Written by Pope Boniface VIII to King Philip the Fair in 1296. this letter asserted that kings did not have the right to tax clergy without permission from the pope. Philip responded by cutting off all French shipments of gold, silver, and jewels to Italy. The loss of Church revenues from this action forced Boniface to back down.

### CONCILIARISM

Movement which supported the power of a council to appoint a candidate for the papacy, thus placing a council's authority over that of the pope.

### GALLICANISM

The idea that the French Roman Catholic clergy favored the restriction of papal control and the achievement by each nation of individual administrative autonomy.

### HUSITISM

Movement started by Jan Hus which denied the authority of tradition, the existence of Purgatory. Transubstantiation, and the necessity of good works in salvation. It was especially popular in Bohemia.

### *JACQUERIE*

Rebellion of French peasants who opposed the taxes forced upon them during the Hundred Years War. The name comes from the traditional name of a French peasant.

### NOMINALISM

Put forth by William of Ockham, this theory taught that the human mind can only know individual. sensible objects, and that universal ideas, like truth, goodness, and humanity are only names *-nomina*. Only God guarantees that individual experiences properly and consistently correspond to the *nomina*, which people have falsely assumed to be self-generated concepts. From this way of thinking it follows that moral and religious truths are inaccessible through mere human reason, and can only be known through revelation.

### SICILIAN VESPERS

The Sicilian Vespers is the name given to a rebellion in Sicily in 1282 against the rule of the Angevin king Charles I of Naples, who had taken control of the island with Papal support in 1266. It was the beginning of the eponymous War of the Sicilian Vespers.

The rising had its origin in the struggle between the Hohenstaufen-ruled Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy for control over Italy. When Hohenstaufen Manfred of Sicily was defeated in 1266, the Kingdom of Sicily was entrusted to Charles of Anjou by Pope Urban IV.

#### WYCLIFFEISM

Heretical movement founded by John Wycliffe which held that authority to rule depends on moral virtue; the Bible alone contained all divine revelation, preaching is more important than the sacraments or the Mass, and the pope has no primacy of jurisdiction.

## 10. Renaissance. The fall of Constantinople. Humanism

The 15<sup>th</sup> century had to solve two problems: internal reform and the support of the Greek Church in its struggle for existence against Islam. It failed in both.

Light and shadow, hopes and failures —a whole cumulation of contradictory factors seemed to flow together during the period of transition between the middle ages and the modern period. An ambiguity hung over this period, a question mark about the future and about the meaning of the new age which, according to all the indications, was about to begin. The fifteenth century and the dawn of the sixteenth form the gateway to the modern age, and they produced two phenomena whose immense importance would condition all future history —the invention of printing, an incomparable instrument for the spread of ideas, and the discovery of America, which opened up a new continent to the gospel.

The period between the middle of the fifteenth century and the year 1517 —covering approximately two generations —saw a change, from well-founded hopes of a full restoration of Christian unity, to the drama of religious division running right through western Christendom. The popes of the fifteenth century aspired to bring the eastern schism to an end, and the finest men in the Greek Church felt this same desire. The Turkish menace threatening Constantinople inclined the rulers of the Byzantine empire to draw closer to the Christian west.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council was transferred from Basle (1431 -1437) to Ferrara (1438) and finally to Florence (1439 -1442). Its main aim was to achieve reunion with the Eastern Church. The Greek Emperor John VIII Paleologus (1425-1448) arrived in Ferrara in March 1438 with a delegation of some seven hundred; among them the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Metropolitan Bessarion of Nicaea. The Pope also attended the Council. What prompted the Greeks to work for reunion with the western Church was the hope of receiving military help against the advancing Turks; only a crusade could save Byzantium from falling. After protracted negotiations an agreement was finally reached and the Greeks and the Pope signed the decree of union *Laetentur Coeli* (July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1439). Agreement was also reached on the primacy of the Roman Church and the *filioque*.

But the triumph of Christianity was more apparent than real and it soon ended in tragedy. When John VIII returned to Constantinople he did not dare make the union public, out of fear of the people's reaction, and Russia openly withdrew from the Florence agreement. Eventually, on 12 December 1452, Constantine XI, John VIII's successor, decided to proclaim the union of the Churches, despite violent hostility from anti-Latin fanatics. But the days of Byzantium were numbered. Six months later, on 29 May 1453, Constantinople fell to the Turks and the Christian empire of the east perished. With it disappeared that goal, so long desired, of the unity of the eastern churches with Rome, just when it seemed to have been reached. The east having been lost, the other great drama of modern Christendom began to unfold at the beginning of the sixteenth century and the Church would lose half of the peoples of the European west.

The fact is that the West was no longer a unit. A crusade was not conducted, because the national states were motivated by selfish interests. Constantine XI (1448-1453) sent another call for help to Rome, but in vain. The Turks encircled Constantinople, and on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1453, after a valiant defence the city fell to the Turks. Constantine himself died in battle. The terrible blood bath perpetrated by the conquerors and the enslavement of many thousands of citizens stirred the West, but now it was too late. In 1459 the heritage of Constantinople was assumed by Moscow, which was soon called the “Third Rome”, and with that union between eastern and western church was formally retracted in 1472.

The fifteenth century witnessed some events which promised much for the future of Christianity: the popes were living at Rome once more, the eastern schism was at an end, the fog of conciliarism had cleared. But the impulse was lacking for that spiritual renewal essential for the ‘reform of the Church in its head and in its members’ which people everywhere were calling for. Some partial efforts were made, such as the ecclesiastical reform brought about in Spain by the catholic monarchs. But there was no general movement of this type, which explains why the catholic reformation came after the protestant reformation. An impetus for general renewal could only come from its supreme authority, the Roman papacy, but unfortunately the renaissance popes from the 1450’s onwards —magnificent patrons of the arts —were more temporal princes than pastors devoted to the care of the faithful, who so needed that care in view of the culture in which they lived, at the beginning of the modern age.

In the inventory of lights and shadows which formed a sequence during this transition period, one indubitable fact is that the people continued to be deeply religious and Christian. The lower middle ages did not have that creativity of the great age of Christendom, but that is not to say that they had nothing of spiritual value. Mysticism flourished —especially in the German countries of the Rhine —with such great names as Eckhart and Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck. At a popular level, the *devotio moderna* nourished a more personal and more interior type of piety, whose spirit reflects Thomas a Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*. But even spiritual life showed signs of dangerous imbalance: for example, there was an obsession with death, an aftermath of the Black Death of 1347-52 and other later epidemics. This subject inspired the painting of the dance of death, and the liturgy of the dead gained the beautiful *Dies irae* sequence. Even the reformist enthusiasm of Savonarola suffered from this terribly sombre note.

The theology of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did little for intellectual life. Traditional theology, in the form of decadent scholasticism, seemed empty and unoriginal. It was the ‘old way’ and, in successful opposition to it, there arose the ‘modern way’, represented especially by the nominalism of William of Ockham. For nominalism, the inner mind can reach only what is individual and visible to the senses, so that universal concepts are nothing but words —nomina. Nominalism was fideistic, for according to it revelation is the only route to knowing the more essential religious truths, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Its exaggerated divine voluntarism endangered the basis of morality: actions were not good or bad by their very nature: it was just that God commanded them or prohibited them. Thus, nominalist theology offered a very unsure foundation for the doctrinal and religious turmoil which was in the offing.

But the transition from the middle ages to the modern ages was dominated, above all, by two great cultural phenomena which really shaped the spirit of the period —the renaissance and humanism. They were, naturally, minority movements, the preserve of select groups, but they were to exercise an enduring influence on the history of the European west. The renaissance, filled with enthusiasm for Greek and Roman antiquity, also adopted the ideas of that culture, and this had a strong paganizing effect on people's outlook. A sense of worldliness meant that earthly life was given pride of place. Instead of God being seen as the centre of things, now man was the leading actor, the measure of all things.

Humanism consisted in passionate cultivation of the Greek and Latin classics as a source of the culture and wisdom of the ancient world. The humanists rejected what they called the barbarism of medieval scholasticism and proposed a learned piety, largely the fruit of combining Christianity with the best elements of antiquity. *The Academia Platonica*, created in the Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent by Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) aimed at a Christian renaissance based on Plato and Cicero, the sermon on the mount and St Paul. The most outstanding of the humanists was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) who did so much for biblical studies and historical criticism. But his 'philosophy of Christ' was a non-dogmatic Christianity, barely anything more than a moral system. Erasmus was zealous, after his fashion, for the reform of the Church, but his was a bitter zeal, given to destructive criticism, which did more harm than good. However, outside of Spain, where the humanism shaped by Cardinal Cisneros was sincerely Christian, the religious legacy of the humanists, made no great contribution to the hoped-for reform of the Church.

## Chapter 10; Annex 1 Alexander VI and Savonarola

Alexander VI (1492-1503) represented the absolute nadir of the Renaissance papacy. Elected by a worldly College of Cardinals as a result of simoniacal machinations, he abused his office with such impudence that even his contemporaries speculated as to whether or not he was a Christian or whether he was a disguised Mohammedan. Even though some modern researchers judge his administrative activity more favourably today than in the past, there remains his immoral and unscrupulous life during which he subordinated everything to his nepotism and political goals. He used his position to provide principalities for his illegitimate children, four of whom resulted from adulterous relations with Vannozza de Cataneis, a member of a noble Roman family. Pedro Luis Borgia (1458-1488), the oldest, became duke of Gandia in 1485; then, when he died, his brother Juan Borgia, born in 1474, became his successor in Gandia; and finally Juan was assassinated (by Cesare?) in Rome in 1497<sup>13</sup>. The notorious Cesare Borgia (1475-1507) became protonotary at age seven, bishop of Pamplona at age sixteen, archbishop of Valencia at age seventeen, and cardinal (1493) at age eighteen. Cesare was never ordained as either priest or bishop, but was ordained to the sub-diaconate from which he had himself dispensed in 1498 when he resigned his cardinalate. Morally uninhibited and driven by political ambition, Cesare tried to build his own empire in central Italy through force, cunning, and trickery. The Pope, who after 1498 was completely under Cesare's influence, became an accessory to these plans. Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519), who wrongly has become the embodiment of the moral degeneracy of the Renaissance, was the victim of the marriage policy of her father; after two unhappy marriages she married Alfons d'Este of Ferrara in 1501 and lived with him happily and piously as a member of the Third Order of St. Francis until her death. Jofre Borgia (1481 to 1533), the youngest son of Alexander VI, became prince of Squillace through his marriage to an illegitimate daughter of king Alfons II of Naples.

Alexander's clash with Savonarola reveals his own failings and at the same time shows that the Church can be holy even when the Chair of St. Peter is occupied by a less than holy Pope. The failure of the Popes awakened the desire for reform on the part of the faithful. It is the particular duty of monasticism to lead the Church to repentance, contemplation, and Christian detachment from the world. In times of extreme secularization the monk is the visible expression of what God wants from each person - to live in the world without being of the world. It is his task to give testimony, in season and out of season, to man's supernatural destiny, even at the price of his life.

As a Dominican, Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) dedicated himself to a life of penance and reform. A powerful preacher he succeeded, after 1490, in reforming Florence. As prior of San Marco he founded a reformed congregation within his own order. Untiringly he applied the ideal of reform to himself and to others, and his criticism stopped short neither of the court of the Medici nor of Alexander VI. After the overthrow of the Medici in 1494, he ruled the city and effected a complete moral reversal. He believed that he knew, through an inner voice, that the French king, Charles III, had been chosen to lead mankind to repentance.

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<sup>13</sup> His grandson was St. Francis Borgia, 1510-1572, a general of the Jesuits.

This peculiar combination of the religious with the political proved fatal for him because his prophecies ran counter to Alexander's political plans and caused him to try and rid himself of the troublesome friar. Savonarola was forbidden to preach, cited to Rome (1495), and excommunicated in 1497. At first Savonarola hesitated; then he concluded that since Alexander came to be Pope through simony he could not possibly be the true Pope. Just as he was about to ask the Emperor and the kings to call a general council to determine Alexander's illegality, the Pope struck. Alexander threatened Florence with the interdict unless the city silenced the Dominican immediately. Savonarola's opponents gained the upper hand, stormed San Marco (April 8, 1498), and put the prior, together with two brethren, on trial. The dungeon, torture, interrogations without pause, lying prosecutors, and falsified minutes led to his conviction and, ultimately, judicial murder. As heretic, schismatic, and scorner of the Holy See, Savonarola was condemned to death. His last notes, written in his cell, show him to be anything but a heretic and schismatic. He anxiously, and repeatedly, questioned himself as to whether he had acted correctly. Savonarola never attacked the Church or Christianity; on the contrary, he sacrificed his life for them. By always keeping the person and the office separate, the friar of Florence differed essentially from the friar of Wittenberg. He recognized that the Church was suffering because of Alexander, and to save her he and two brethren died on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1498, on the pyre which his enemies and Alexander VI had prepared for him. Before, his execution he devoutly confessed and received Holy Communion<sup>14</sup>.

### **The failure of the Renaissance papacy**

Unfortunately, Alexander VI did not change his way of life. He was followed Pius III (1503) whose pontificate lasted twenty-three days, who in turn was followed by Julius II (1503-1513), the nephew of Sixtus IV. Simony, politics, and force ruled during his pontificate. Even though Julius was free of nepotism and moral transgressions, he devoted his entire pontificate to enlarging Rome and the Papal States, beautifying them, and winning glory for himself. He commissioned Michelangelo to design his tomb and instructed him to personify him as Moses. He conducted war without interruption, leading Luther to call him, in 1520, a blood-sucker. Bramante was commissioned by Julius to submit a design for the reconstruction of St. Peter's (1506). He also commissioned Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and Raffael to paint the frescoes in the state apartments in the Vatican. The peak of Renaissance art had been reached, but the Mystical Body of Christ was bleeding from its wounds and the Reformation was imminent.

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<sup>14</sup> There are those who argue he is a saint and not a heretic and the Dominicans have been pressing for his beatification since 1955.

## Chapter 10; Annex 2 The Background of the Reformation

The history of the Reformation is a complex question which may not be reduced to the equation: *because* there were many grievances in the Medieval Church, the Reformation *had* to occur. Certainly *reform* had to come, but not the *Reformation*. Instead of a movement *against* the Church, a reform movement *in* the Church could and should have developed and effected the internal recovery. That this did not happen was not the product of a logical necessity but the result of the concurrence of many isolated facts which, in their totality, may be broadly designated as causal prerequisites.

Modern scholarship has corrected the previous black and white portrayal of this period and adjusted the former, frequently distorted, picture of the absolute corruption of the late Medieval Church. The result has not softened of the outcome but has given a better understanding of the circumstances involved. The Church certainly stood of need of reform, but its condition was not so hapless as to warrant the Reformation.

### 1. Abuses in the late Medieval Church

Grievance had become widespread, and excesses in the religious life of the period were reflected in a frequently unhealthy veneration of saints and relics, in disorganised pilgrimages, and in a multiplicity of peripheral forms of worship. Extreme credulity, a mania for miracles, superstition, fear of hell and the devil [in itself healthy], and a pathological obsession with witchcraft resulted in a severe distortion of piety. Reform was also needed in the ecclesiastical administration, which was fossilised in formalities and seemed to find its reason of be in a wholly materialistic system of taxes and fees. The abuse of excommunication for non-spiritual purposes, simony connected with the awarding of benefices, and nepotism existed not only in Rome but also at the level of episcopal and archidiaconal administrations of the dioceses. Serious moral grievances and transgression were committed by both clerics and laity, and numerous complaints have come down to us about the immoral life of priests, monks and nuns. The worst aspect of all was that whole classes, communities, and institutions, such as convents, were corrupted.

This last aspect, the corruption of convents, was the most alarming. There have always been, and always will be, individual human failings, but here the evil seemed to have been institutionalised. The Papacy itself was affected by it: bad Cardinals elected inferior Popes and these, in turn, appointed bad Cardinals. Furthermore, the Papacy was a prisoner of the Papal States in so far as these called for secular attention. Thus Popes wiling to alter the situation often found themselves submerged, as did for example the well-meaning Adrian VI (1522-1523), in a sea of secularism.

The episcopate was also enmeshed in feudal ties from which it was incapable of freeing itself. The Cathedral Chapters were staffed by selfish aristocrats; the Chapter members then selected bishops from their midst, who in turn belonged to the nobility and were obligated to it. It was impossible to break the sacrosanct monopoly of the nobility in the Church. This monopoly also entailed political ties: Geneva, for example became Protestant because its bishop belonged to the dynasty of princes of Savoy. Political opposition, therefore, also necessarily involved ecclesiastical opposition. The higher Cathedral clergy and Collegiate Chapters were also subject to

similar conditions and became harnessed to the dynastic policies of the neighbouring noble families, and the collegiate foundations degenerated into welfare institutions for the nobility. The life of the Chapters was almost entirely governed by the spirit of the nobility and only incidentally religiously orientated.

The lower clergy was held in bondage to poverty and misery. The ill-paid vicars, beneficed clergy and altar prebendaries often lived from hand to mouth. All in all, the situation, taken as a whole, seemed to reflect the weakened structure of society rather than individual responsibility.

## **2. Positive values**

It would however be wrong to overlook the deeply religious ethos of the times manifesting itself in donations, active church construction, religious art and the countless new brotherhoods and charitable institutions such as hospitals, alms-houses and old-age homes. All these activities were closely associated with the Church and there were no indicators to suggest any widespread hostility to the Church. Nowhere in the 15<sup>th</sup> century are mass defections from the Church in evidence. Even the Hussites had become less active when concessions were made to the Bohemians in the treaty of Prague (1433) and the peace of Kuttenberg (1485), removed much of their residual bitterness. In fact an increased religiosity can be noted in the later Middle Ages during which piety showed itself in an active participation in the celebration of feast days and good attendance at religious services and sermons.

The Church herself was by no means idle and she showed her concern for the religious education of the people. The concern for eternal salvation, a consciousness of sin and a serious desire for reconciliation were present among the people.

The religious basis of the age may be best seen in the art of the period as expressed in the Gothic cathedrals and the works of Grunwald (+1528) and Holbein the Elder (+1524) and the masters of the Cologne School (1450-1550).

## **3. Symbiosis of life and religion**

Nonetheless this religious concern was frequently mingled with other interests. At a time when religion and life were still unified, it is not surprising that existing social, political and economical concerns affected religious thought. The reformation was more than a purely religious and ecclesiastical affair. Luther did not become a reformer by means of theological theses on indulgences, but by utilising in his three great reform polemics of 1520 all the current demands for reform. These pamphlets appealed to everyone who was dissatisfied with the ecclesiastical, political and social order. His religious formulations were used to express these demands. The “prophets” Karlstadt, Munzer, and Storch in 1527, Sickingen and the Imperial Knights in 1523, the peasants in 1524-1525, and finally the princes and authorities who combined rather worldly interests of an economical, political or dynastic kind with their conversion to the Reformation, all made use of Luther’s polemics.

## **4. Demands for reform**

The universal call for reform in the Church was certainly due in large measure to the long delay in addressing the evils of the times, but it also showed to what extent the

Church was still the leading spiritual force and permeated the whole fabric of society. The *Gravamina nationis Germanicae* which since the Libel of Mainz (1451) had been presented again and again were compiled into 100 complaints at the Diet of Worms (1521) which criticised most vehemently the administrative and tax practices of the curia as well as the ecclesiastical juridical system. Since the High Middle ages the Church had come to govern increasingly through rules and laws, and discontent with this institutionalised aspect of her life had grown. Many turned away from the “visible” Church to the “spiritual” Church, a concept developed by Joachim of Fiore (+1202) and widely disseminated by the Spiritual Franciscans of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. This concept became linked with the apocalyptic expectations of the later Middle Ages and created a new subjective piety which frequently sought its religious satisfaction outside of the Church.

The new piety was not *per se* opposed to the Church and often ran parallel to it. The *devotio moderna* founded by the Dutchman Gerard Grotto (1340-1384) remained totally loyal to the Church. It emphasised interior and personal piety and received its strength not so much from participation in the liturgy and sacraments as from the silent meditation on the Passion of Christ and the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. This may be seen from the *Imitation of Christ*, written by Thomas a Kempis(+1471). Individual reading of the Scriptures became central to this devotion, and the sacraments, particularly the Sacrifice of the Mass, were no longer experienced as a realisation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but were viewed as occasions for the private performance of devotions.

## 5. Nominalism

The nominalism of the English Franciscan William of Ockham (1290-1349) contributed in large measure to the undermining of the concept of the Church. Ockham’s *via moderna* not only rejected the *via antiqua* of Aquinas, but fought strongly against it. The inner connection which Thomism sees everywhere by way of the *analogia entis* permits it to infer God from nature [natural proofs of God’s existence]. Ockham denied that this is possible. He argued that no bridge existed between the natural and supernatural; God and man are separated from human reason by an unbridgeable gap, and only when God reveals himself can man know him. Occam’s scepticism toward human reason was proportionate to his trust in revelation. Only revelation constitutes a foundation and source for faith. Luther’s principle of *sola scriptura* is intimated in this view. Furthermore, Ockham regarded reason as powerless; only faith can lead man to knowledge of God and to salvation. Luther’s principle of *sola fide* is recognisable here. Finally Ockham asserted human nature is capable of nothing on its own; everything is based on grace. St. Thomas’ doctrine on grace presupposes nature and builds upon it but Ockham rejected this relationship. Luther was to grasp this principle, *sola gratia*, and further develop it. Luther’s heresy lies in giving absolute value to these three principles.

In the measure that nominalism puts its faith exclusively in faith and revelation; it reduced the importance of the role of the sacraments and of the Church in the process of salvation. If necessary man can get along without them. Luther expressly accepted Ockham’s doctrine, and the significance of his acceptance for the development of the Reformation is evident.

## 6. Humanism and biblical scholarship

The final pre-requisite for the Reformation was the pair humanism and the biblical movement. Luther did not bring Scripture out of hiding. Rather he grew out of the evangelisation of his times. The *devotio moderna*, Occamism and Christian humanism were the wellsprings of the concern with the bible. The Biblical movement would, probably, have remained stronger in its native Catholic Church if the Reformers had not gone too far in emphasising it [*sola scriptura*] and claiming it for themselves. It is at this point that we must consider the role of Erasmus in the Reformation.

## 7. Erasmus of Rotterdam and humanism

Erasmus was born in Rotterdam in 1496. His father was a cleric and his mother a physician's daughter. He received his education at Deventer (1474-1484) and there became acquainted with the *devotio moderna* of the Brethren of the Common Life. In 1486 Erasmus entered the monastery of the Augustinian Canons and was ordained a priest in 1492. As secretary to the bishop of Cambrai (1493-1495) and as a student in Paris (1495-1499) he pursued humanistic studies. Erasmus spoke Latin better than his native tongue, and his Latin grammars and exercise books established his reputation as a humanist and contributed to making Latin the language of scholars.

In England (1499-1500) he encountered a deep and pious Christian humanism through his companionship with Sir Thomas More, John Fisher and John Colet, whom he knew particularly well. His knowledge of Greek and Hebrew enabled him to issue, in 1516, the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament, an event which at once established him as one of the most important exponents of humanism and Biblical scholarship. The New Testament was prefaced by a long introduction in which he outlined his ideas concerning the reform of the Church and theology, ideas which had been influenced by Sacred Scripture.

Whereas previously, in his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (1503) and *Laus Stultitiae* (1509), he had criticised the Church he now, in the introduction to the New Testament, developed his *Philosophiae Christi* based on the Sermon on the Mount. His guiding principle was "*Tollantur abusus, non substantia*".

Erasmus had taken up the most burning questions of his day when he combined the need for reform with the Gospel. All eyes turned to him: would he be the man to initiate the longed for reforms? Both his principle for a genuine reform and his simple biblical theology, together with his practical suggestions struck a deep cord in the mind of the people and were favourably received.

At this point Martin Luther made his appearance. Erasmus noticed him only after the Leipzig disputations, and he saw in Luther a humanist to be encouraged. Soon, Luther's fate was placed in his hands; in November 1520, Erasmus conferred in Cologne with Luther's sovereign, Frederick the Wise, who asked his opinion of Luther. Erasmus confirmed the Elector in his support for Luther, but soon after he dissociated himself from the impetuous monk. The sensitive scholar whose humanistic optimism detected good in nature and, in the *libertas spiritus*, the necessary pre-condition of all human training and true piety, saw through Luther's nominalism and scepticism. In his essay *On Free Will* (1524) Erasmus criticised Luther on these points. Luther immediately and violently responded with his tract *On Unfree Will* (1525). Later

Luther remarked that Erasmus alone, among all his opponents, understood the essential point of his doctrine. Erasmus politicised against Luther once more in 1526-1527: from this time on he sharply opposed Luther, and his example was followed by most older humanists.

In 1521 Erasmus lived in Basle and there published texts on the Church Fathers. When in 1529, the Reformation was violently introduced into Basle he fled to Freiburg im Brassage. While living there Erasmus influenced the discussion of the Diet of Augsburg (1530) where he unceasingly pleaded for peace. He rejected any use of force against the new faith; it would be better, he thought, to tolerate Lutheranism than have a religious war break out. Time would heal; in the meantime the best course to follow would be to isolate Luther and other fanatics for a time; then knowledge and man's gentle nature would point the way back to unity. "Through freedom of spirit to true piety", was his motto. Not knowledge, but ignorance, threatened the true faith. It was ignorance which made men intolerant, fanatical and quarrelsome. The tumultuous, fanatical and ruthless behaviour of the Reformers was an abomination to him, but he also untiringly warned the narrow-minded, obstinate clinging to old traditions on the part of Catholic orthodoxy. Erasmus always strove to find the *via media*.

Erasmus died in 1536 at Basle, where he had returned shortly before his death. His last writings were devoted to reunification (*De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia*, 1533). Through these writings he founded the so called *theology of mediation* which, particularly among Catholics, had many adherents for a long time, but which was also accepted by such Protestants as Melanchthon and Butzer. In some areas, especially in the lower Rhine, Erasmianism remained strong and effected a peaceful co-existence between Lutherans and Catholics until it was finally ground to bits in the 1560's by the hardening lines of denominationalism.

Erasmus has been variously evaluated. Some regret that his system of moderation did not prevail and considered it to be viable force had it been pursued. Others consider that Erasmianism did irreparable damage to the Church, especially in the field of dogma. Still others consider that Erasmus alone was on the right track. Among more recent opinions he is considered to be a convinced and loyal Catholic, a theologian who became concerned with revelation.

## GLOSSARY

### HIGH RENAISSANCE

Period beginning in the late fifteenth century, it produced some of the most well-known religious and secular artwork of the period from such figures as Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo.

### HUMANISM

An intellectual and literary movement that began in the city-states of Italy during the late fourteenth century. Moving away from the scholastic education of the Medieval era, the humanists thought that education had a moral purpose, the end of which was to make the individual a better, wiser, and more virtuous human being. To achieve this, they aimed to base every branch of learning on classical Greek and Roman culture.

### MACHIAVELLIANISM

A political philosophy that developed from Machiavelli's works, most notably *The Prince*, most simply understood as "the ends justify the means".

### MARRANOS

Jews who converted to Catholicism after the *Reconquista* to avoid being exiled.

### MORISCOS

Muslims who converted to Catholicism after the conquest of Granada to avoid being exiled.

### NORTHERN HUMANISM

Humanism had a different effect in Northern Europe where there were not the same economic and social changes as there were in Italy. Life was much like it was during the Medieval age, and rather than redirecting study to classical, pagan culture, those in the North sought to reconcile humanism with Christianity.

### RENAISSANCE

French for "re-birth," this period is characterized by the popular desire to return to the civilization of the Greco-Roman world and re-awaken a sense of human beauty and personal achievement.

### TAILLE

Perpetual tax instituted by the French king Louis VI which made it possible for him to rule his domain without the need to call upon the Estates General for more funds.

### UTOPIA

Meaning "no place," this term was coined by St. Thomas More who, in his book by that name, describes a religious society, heavily influenced by divine revelation, in which goods were held in common and the state regulated business.

## 11. The Reformation (Protestants, English reformation, Catholic revival; Trent)

### The Reformation in Germany: Luther and Lutheranism

Martin Luther was the author of the protestant reformation; however, although this former Augustinian friar had a remarkable personality and great leadership qualities, his success as a reformer was also due, to a considerable degree, to a combination of opportune circumstances. Luther had a great ability to interpret ideas and feelings widespread in the Germany of his time and to deliver answers which satisfied the religious aspirations of some and the political ambitions of others. The sheer speed with which the flame of the reformation spread is a good indication that the wind was blowing in its favour, that time was ripe. Therefore, to understand the origin and development of Lutheranism we must first look at the historical background.

Many of the germs which helped spread the Lutheran revolution had been in the air for some time past. The whole process of the breakdown of the principles and attitudes on which medieval Christendom was based was at the same time a preparation for the reformation —the conciliarist doctrines, the movement for democracy in the Church, nominalist philosophy, the pressures exerted on its tributaries by the Avignon exchequer, the western schism. Political factors, also, played their part—for example, the clashes between popes and emperors and the rise of ecclesiastical nationalism. And there were other causes, to do with specifically German circumstances —moral decadence of the clergy and especially of the episcopacy, which was the virtual monopoly of the nobility; the weakness of sovereign power in an empire fragmented into innumerable principalities and cities, and especially resentment towards Rome, which in the previous century had taken the concrete form in *Gravamina Germanicae nationis*, a catalogue of grievances of the German nations against the Roman curia. All these factors combined to create a climate ripe for a deep religious crisis.

Martin Luther, as we were saying, was able to personify the feelings of many Germans of his time. But that does not mean that he had not a religious motivation which had a strong influence on his mental itinerary and his external activity. From the time he became a friar, Luther worried anxiously over how to be sure of being saved. The Ockhamist theology in which he had been trained, while proclaiming the arbitrary voluntarism of God, held that man's free will alone was all that was needed for fulfilling God's law and reaching heaven. Father Martin felt that this doctrine was quite at odds with his own experience: he felt incapable of overcoming concupiscence by his own efforts alone, and of achieving through his own efforts the assurance of salvation he so yearned for. Meditation on verse 17 of the first chapter of the Letter to the Romans —'He who through faith is righteous shall live'—was how Luther found a way out of his acute anxiety. He believed he understood that merciful God justifies man through faith ('fiducial faith') and in the light of this principle it seemed to him that all scripture took on a new meaning.

On this foundation —the real axiom of his 'theology of consolation'—Luther built a doctrinal system in open contradiction to the tradition of the Church. Human nature, according to him, has been completely corrupted by sin. Justification is something

which springs from man's 'fiducial', trusting, faith: it is not an interior healing of man but a declaration by God graciously clothing him with the merits of Christ's death. A man's works are of no avail for his salvation: the ministerial priesthood does not have any reason for being, nor do the majority of the sacraments, or monastic vows, or, especially, the papacy, the worst invention of Antichrist. Luther devised a purely interior conception of the Church and rejected any constitutional element in the Church—particularly, canon law. The Church, therefore, does not hold the deposit, is not the interpreter of, revelation: 'scripture alone' is, according to Luther, the only source of revelation, and it is up to each Christian to interpret it, inspired directly by God.

Luther did not formulate this doctrine overnight; he did it gradually, becoming ever bolder, and getting further and further away from catholic orthodoxy. His immense success can be partly attributed to the favourable combination of circumstances to which we have referred; but there were other more immediate factors. First among these was the extraordinary personality of the reformer himself—full of contradictions, yet quite overpowering—which combined obsessive religiosity and tender piety towards Jesus Christ with an earthiness which took its coarsest form in his diatribes against the pope.

Luther's teachings were accepted by different people for different reasons. His suppression of celibacy was welcomed by many priests, at a time when the moral level of the clergy was quite low; and his suppression of monastic vows sounded a liberty bell for monks and nuns whose fervour had grown cold. His 'theology of consolation', according to which faith without works brought justification, made Christian life easier and tranquilized people who though conscious of their sins nevertheless had religious feelings and were anxious to save their souls. Lutheran anti-Romanism pleased humanists like Ulrich von Hutten; and, particularly, the chance of taking over ecclesiastical property enticed the greed of the princes and even of the holders of authority in certain imperial cities. It must be added that Luther had a marvellous flair for propaganda; he took maximum advantage of the printing press and flooded Germany with booklets, hymnbooks and broadsheets which gave everyone access to his teaching.

We should trace, very briefly, the main lines of the German reformation process starting with the year 1517. The Dominicans were preaching indulgences to raise funds for the building of St Peter's; Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar and teacher at Wittenberg, reacted against this, publishing ninety-seven theses against scholastic theology (4 September 1517) and sending on 31 October 1517 to the archbishop of Mainz ninety-five theses on indulgences. In the years that followed Luther's became a household name. When called to Rome he refused to go and instead attended the imperial diets at Augsburg (1518) and Leipzig (1519), each time adopting a more critical attitude to the Church. Rome took no decisive action against him, mainly for reasons of political opportunism: the empire was vacant and the candidate preferred by Pope Leo was Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, in whose territory Luther lived and who was Luther's great patron. When Charles V was elected emperor (1519) Luther published three famous items, which implied his open break with the Church—An appeal to the nobility of the German nation, On the Babylonian captivity of the Church, and his *Liberty of a Christian man*. He was eventually excommunicated in 1521.

At the Diet of Worms, Charles V and Martin Luther met face to face. 'I neither can nor will recant anything', declared the former friar. The insight of that young emperor (he was only twenty-one) was quite remarkable; in one day he sized up the situation and realized the seriousness of the religious revolt (the Roman curia took ages to come to the same conclusion). That very night Charles produced in his own handwriting a document which on the following day, 19 April 1521, he presented to the diet, proclaiming his resolve 'to employ my kingdom and my lordships, my friends, my body, my blood, my life and my soul' to fight heresy and to defend the catholic faith. Only death brought an end to this struggle between the author of the reformation and the last great Christian emperor of Europe.

Lutheranism took over principalities and cities with great speed. In the social upheaval of the Peasants' War Luther took the side of the princes and exhorted them to assume ecclesiastical authority in their territories. Lutheranism consolidated its position in the political as well as in the theological sphere: the princes and cities of the reform formed a confessional league, and Melancthon fixed Lutheran doctrine in the Confession of Augsburg (1530). A year earlier, the diet of Speyer granted toleration to the reform in those territories where it was already established, but prohibited its spread to new territories. The protest of five states and fourteen cities coined a new name: Protestants, Protestantism.

When Luther died in 1546, the reformation had spread over more than half of Germany. In 1545 the council of Trent began, fifteen years after Charles V had called for it. In 1547, the conflict between the emperor and the protestant princes degenerated into armed warfare and Charles obtained a complete victory over the Schmalkaldic league at Muhlberg. But later the treachery of Maurice of Saxony obliged the emperor to grant religious freedom to the Lutherans (the treaty of Passau, 1552). In 1555, Charles, now tired and aged, and on the point of retiring, had to sanction the peace of Augsburg, which gave equal rights to Catholics and Lutherans, with it being left to each prince to decide which confession should be followed in his territory: *cujus regio ejus religio*. The religious division of Germany was now an accomplished and irreversible fact.

### **The Protestant Reformation in Europe**

Germany was the first scenario of the religious revolution begun by Luther, but it did not stay within the frontiers of the empire. The seeds of the reformation were soon blown over the greater part of the European west. The rapid spread of Protestantism was quite remarkable, whether it happened in the form of Lutheranism or in other, different forms, all of which involved breaking with catholic orthodoxy. After dominating more than half of Germany, the protestant revolt separated from the trunk of the Church half of the peoples who had made up medieval Christendom. We will now look at the more salient features of this phenomenon which changed the face of continental Europe.

Lutheranism took over the Scandinavian countries fairly easily; their rulers quickly broke with Rome, confiscated the Church's property and created their national churches. In German Switzerland, Zwingli (1484—1531), a priest at Galrus, in 1518 started his own religious revolt, whose radicalism enraged Luther himself. He regarded Zwingli as an 'unchristian man', particularly because of his doctrine that Christ was only symbolically present in the Eucharist. But in terms of importance, the

second great figure in the reformation, for both his doctrinal contribution and his influence on the progress of Protestantism, was John Calvin.

Calvin (1509-64), who was born in Noyon in France and embraced Protestantism from his early years, opened up new avenues for Protestantism. Endowed with a more logical and rigorous mind than Luther's, Calvin brought the basic premises of Protestantism to their logical limits. In his judgment, Luther's theology of consolation was quite inadequate. Man's utter corruption and God's absolute voluntarism led inevitably to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. God —transcendent and incomprehensible —by his inscrutable decision predestines people to heaven or hell, extending salvation to some, damnation to others. The true church is the congregation of the predestined —*coetus praedestinorum*; from which it followed that it is interior and invisible. But there is also a visible church, composed of the assembly of the faithful incorporated into it by baptism and sharing in the eucharistic supper, the only two sacraments which Calvin admitted. However, the very corruption of human nature demands that man be subjected to a life of strict morality, sobriety and hard work. This kind of life God will bless with prosperity in temporal affairs, a sign of God's favour and of predestination. Calvin's doctrine had a marked influence on the rise of modern capitalism.

Calvin spelt out his doctrine in his treatise *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which he wrote first in Latin and then expanded in a French version published in 1539. In Geneva, where he settled, Calvin established a quasi-theocratic régime and an austere form of social life, inspired by the laws of the Bible. Calvin was the religious autocrat governing the community, with the backing of a consistory made up of pastors and elders. The Theological Academy of Geneva was the seminary where he trained pastors to be sent to the various Calvinist communities of Europe. Geneva was vigilant in maintaining the purity of the reformed Christianity and the celebrated Spanish doctor Michael Servetus was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake for denying the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Calvinist Protestantism spread much farther a field than Lutheranism (which was almost confined to Germany and the Scandinavian countries) and it had a decisive influence on the Christian destinies of Europe. In the centre and east of the continent, it put down deep roots in Hungary and Bohemia and won over part of the Polish aristocracy. In the Low Countries, William the Silent, Prince of Orange, became the protestant leader in the struggle against Philip II and the Catholics, and succeeded in establishing a sort of Calvinist fortress in the United Provinces of the north —the future Holland. In Scotland, Calvinism took the form of Presbyterianism: John Knox became the effective ruler of the country, from which the luckless Queen Mary Stuart fled to seek refuge in England. Calvinism was also the dominant form of Protestantism in Calvin's own country of origin, France.

During the early stages of the reformation the French kings followed a religious policy of their own. From the time of Francis I, France was the constant ally of the German princes in their struggle against Charles V, and also of the Turks, who were threatening the eastern frontiers of the empire. It kept to the same line in the next century, in the decisive test of the Thirty Years War. But in internal politics, the French kings normally conducted themselves as faithful Catholics, and both Francis I and Henry II acted with severity towards their protestant subjects. But Calvinism did make its way in France, counting many aristocrats among its number, and it was not

long before two major factions emerged, one Catholic, led by the Guises, and the other protestant, whose most famous leaders were Admiral de Coligny and the Bourbon prince, Henry of Navarre. The regent, Catherine de Médici, the widow of Henry II, tried to remain neutral and cool the situation. But she failed, and France was plunged into wars of religion for almost three decades. The St Bartholomew's Day massacre and the assassination of the duke de Guise and of Henry II were the most outstanding events in this anguished period of civil war.

The history of the reformation in England followed a course of its own and, perhaps more than in any other country, went where the monarchy led it. As we have said already, Anglicanism was not an invention of Henry VIII. In the fifteenth century the Church in England was already in a certain sense an Anglican Church and Henry VIII found in the ecclesiastical legislation of his predecessors devices suitable to his policy of subjection of Church to state. In his youth this prince had been the champion of Catholicism at the dawn of the reformation; he wrote a *Defence of the seven sacraments* against Luther, for which Leo X conferred on him the title of Defender of the Faith, *Defensor fidei*. It was the Pope's refusal to allow him to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn that provoked Henry to reject the Roman primacy and enter into schism. But schism —not Protestantism —was as far as the reformation went in England while Henry lived. He proclaimed himself 'supreme head of the Church of England' and required sworn recognition of his ecclesiastical supremacy. The great majority of churchmen timidly submitted to the king's will. But there were admirable exceptions, such as the Carthusian martyrs and especially two outstanding personalities who refused to conform and died for the faith —St John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and St Thomas More, lord chancellor of the kingdom and the finest humanist in England, an exemplary family man, a Christian who is attractive and modern even today.

A Calvinistic Protestantism was introduced into England during the reign of Edward VI (1547-53). His successor Mary Tudor, the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, repressed the heresy and tried to restore Catholicism. But this restoration lasted only the few short years of her reign (1553-58). When she died childless, the crown passed to Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth's long reign decided the fate of English Christianity. The external forms of the catholic tradition were kept, such as the hierarchy with its bishops and cathedral chapters, although without clerical celibacy or monastic life. The celebration of Mass was outlawed and a protestantized Anglicanism, containing Lutheran and Calvinist elements, was imposed as the official teaching of the Church of England.

### **The Catholic Reformation**

The Catholic reformation, as a movement of renewal in the universal Church fostered by the papacy, began later than the protestant reformation. But the desire for reform was there much earlier and already had produced some important results, though they did not affect the whole Church. The forerunner of the catholic reformation was the Spain of the catholic kings. Ferdinand and Isabella regarded Church reform as an essential part of their own primary objective, the restoration of the Spanish state. The right of presentation which they obtained, first for the bishoprics of the reconquered kingdom of Granada and later for almost all the sees in the country, enabled them to take the episcopate out of the hands of the nobility and choose as bishops, men eminent for their religious spirit and education, many of them drawn from the regular

clergy. Cardinal Cisneros reformed the Franciscan convents and monastic life; the University of Alcalá, founded by him, was a great centre of theological studies (which published the famous Complutensian Polyglot Bible), and an active focus of Christian humanism. The Spanish church in the first third of the sixteenth century was undoubtedly the best in Europe in terms of scientific and spiritual level, which explains the predominant role played by Spanish theologians at the council of Trent.

In Italy also there was in the same period a strong desire for Christian renewal. The Oratory of Divine Love began there, as a fraternity of enlightened and pious clergy and laity. Some of its members (Cajetan of Thiene and Giovanni Paolo Caraffa), convinced that a raising of the spiritual level was a pre-requisite to genuine reform, fostered the idea of regular clerics, that is, priests who would live in community and take the three religious vows, but without wearing a habit or attending choir, as was the case with monks and friars. This was the origin of the Theatines (1524), the first of these new bodies, who were followed by the Barnabites (1530), the Somaschi and others. The work of spiritual renewal of clergy and of people spearheaded in Spain by St John of Avila was another important chapter in the religious history of the sixteenth century.

The most important religious foundation of the sixteenth century was undoubtedly that of the Society of Jesus by St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556). Ignatius, along with five companions, took religious vows in Paris, and all six committed themselves to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to consecrate their lives to the service of souls (1534). Finding it impossible to get to the Holy Land, they agreed to stay together and to place themselves, through a fourth vow, at the complete disposition of the pope. In 1540, Paul III approved the Society of Jesus as an order of regular clerics whose primary purpose was to spread catholic faith and teaching. The society developed rapidly: by the time its founder died it had a thousand members, and 13,000 half a century later. The Jesuits —as they came to be called —rendered great service to the papacy in its work of catholic reform, especially through training of the clergy, education of youth, and missions abroad.

This impulse of spiritual renewal, which continued right through the sixteenth century, also affected the old religious orders. In Spain, the reform of the Franciscans was led by St Peter of Alcántara, and that of the Benedictines by Abbot Garcia de Cisneros. The reform of the Carmelites was brought about by St Teresa of Avila (1515-82), and St John of the Cross extended it to the monks of that order. In Italy the Capuchins arose, as a new branch of the Franciscans, achieving great popularity on account of their austerity of life and dedication to the ministry.

The central event of the catholic reformation was, however, the council of Trent and its meeting marks the point at which the papacy at last took charge of the whole process of church renewal. To get the council going was itself no small task: a pre-conciliar period lasting fifteen long years was marked by vacillation, hopes and jealousy. The first voices calling for a council were raised in Germany, when the Lutheran revolt, already in full swing, had opened the seam of religious division. Protestants as well as Catholics clamoured for a ‘free, Christian council, on German soil.’ Naturally, demands of this kind made Rome apprehensive: that sort of council sounded ambiguous, and the papacy feared a new growth of conciliarism, with its pretensions to make the council superior to the pope. Charles V was very anxious to see the council meet, hoping that it would help re-establish religious unity in the

empire. But this perspective and the implications of any strengthening of Charles' power were enough to make the other great catholic king, Francis I of France, who was almost continuously at war with the emperor, not in the least enthusiastic about the convoking of the council.

The pope, Paul III (1534-49), knew very well that an ecumenical council was the only way to advance reform of the Church. And gradually all the many obstacles in the way of holding it were overcome. The choice of Trent as the location of the council was one of the compromises arrived at: Trent was in the north of Italy; but it was an imperial city and there was room for hope that the Protestants would agree to go there, whereas they would never take part in a council held on papal soil. Even the agenda for the council gave rise to differences of opinion: the pope wanted dogmatic questions to be dealt with first, in order to establish catholic dogma on the questions controverted by the Protestants; whereas the emperor wanted to see matters of church discipline dealt with first, hoping that this would satisfy his Lutheran subjects and help restore Christian unity. The compromise arrived at on this subject was that both matters would be dealt with at the same time, alternating dogmatic decrees with disciplinary ones. But the difficulties did not end with the opening of the council; in fact so many serious incidents arose in the course of its meeting that it was feared it would founder.

We cannot detail here all these incidents; we will simply mark the main chapters in the council's career. It was inaugurated on 13 December 1545, too late, of course, for there to be any real chance of its being a unionist council, with Protestants involved. On 11 March 1547, the papal legates, ostensibly out of fear of an epidemic, decided to transfer the council to Bologna, but their real reason was that they wanted to move the assembly out of reach of the emperor's influence, who was no longer on good terms with the pope; it is enough to recall that Charles's victory over the Lutherans at Muhlberg was received more with fear than with joy at the Roman curia. During the Bologna stage those bishops who were Charles' subjects did not attend but stayed at Trent. Finally, in January 1548, Charles made a formal protest which caused the council sessions at Bologna to cease and then led to the suspension of the council in September 1549.

The second stage of the council opened in Trent on 1 May 1551, under the new pope, Julius III (1550-5). The emperor now managed to get a certain number of delegations from protestant cities and princes to attend. The presence of the reformers made it clear how difficult restoration of unity would be, after more than thirty years of religious division. In any event, the treachery of Elector Maurice of Saxony against Charles caused the council to be suspended once more (28 April 1552). This interruption lasted ten years, which covered the entire pontificate of Paul IV (1555-9), a zealous reformer, but in other ways than through the council. The third stage lasted only two years, which was enough to bring this great undertaking to a happy conclusion: on 4 December 1563 the council of Trent was closed and the pope confirmed all its decrees in his bull *Benedictus Deus*, 26 January 1564.

Trent was unable to be a unionist council; but it was the great council of the catholic reformation. It did an extraordinary amount of work, in the fields of both dogma and discipline. In dogma, it declared, above all, that divine revelation has been transmitted by sacred scripture —interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church

—and Apostolic tradition. The council tackled the key question of justification and, against the Calvinist and Lutheran theologies, declared that divine grace and the free and meritorious cooperation of the human will work together in the justification of man. The other subject of a dogmatic character dealt with by the council was that of the sacraments, where so much confusion had been sown by the Protestants: the doctrine of the seven sacraments was defined and the characteristics proper to each specified.

In the area of discipline the council also did important work. It made every effort to suppress the abuses that existed in the life of the Church, with the aim of ensuring the most effective pastoral care of the Christian people. An episcopacy fully dedicated to its ministry and a well-trained clergy with a high standard of morality were goals of tridentine legislation. Bishops and parish priests were required to reside where their work placed them; the accumulation of benefices were prohibited; it was laid down that provincial councils and diocesan synods should meet periodically; and pastoral visitation was urged. The training —both intellectual and spiritual —of the clergy would take place in a seminary, which each diocese must have; and priests in their respective parishes had to catechise the children and give religious instruction to the faithful. This, in broad outline, was the reforming work of the council of Trent, which is even impressive to look at from this distance; but what is perhaps more remarkable still is the fact that this great movement of Christian renewal did not remain a dead letter but was put into practice in the period that followed the council.

## **Chapter 11; Annex 1 Luther.**

### **Martin Luther his Development as a Reformer**

Seldom has an individual person exerted such influence as to radically transform the *iter* of history as radically as did Martin Luther. Although he never uttered a thought that had not been uttered before, he was not an original thinker in this sense; his ideas were, however, received as new by his contemporaries. The Reformation was very much Luther's personal achievement.

This does not mean, however, that he intentionally started the movement; he was simply the spark that ignited the religious, intellectual, political, and social unrest of his time. Nonetheless, it was his personality that became the driving force of the Reformation.

#### **1. The background of the tragedy**

A closer examination of the situation of the Church shows that Luther was representative of a growing body of opinion calling for reform within the Church. The tragedy is that he, with his powerful personality, did not remain within the Church but chose to work against the Church.

When in 1517 Luther challenged Tetzel's trade in Indulgences, Luther thought he was defending the Church's teaching against a disgraceful trade in sacred things. Furthermore at the time many problems of pre-Reformation theology had not yet been officially defined and consequently they could be freely debated among theologians. These uncertainties were not removed until the Council of Trent either defined them or clarified them. Because Tetzel claimed his opinion to be Church doctrine and made himself a judge, he provoked Luther's response, a response which because of Luther's temperament was one-sided and coarse. Thus what should have been a scholastic dispute turned into a controversy.

Many of the Lutheran attacks on Church doctrine would have been irrelevant if pre-Reformation Catholic theology had been more clearly enunciated, as may be seen in regard to such questions as indulgences, the doctrine of justification, the meaning of the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments, and the doctrine of the Church and papal primacy, to mention only a few. Many theologians of the time if not outright nominalists were strongly influenced by nominalism, so that a faulty metaphysics may be said to be the cause of obscurity and confusion in theology. Since Luther had been educated in the nominalist tradition, having not even a passing knowledge of Thomism and Scholasticism, he accepted the views propounded by his professors.

As a result, his inner struggles were directed at concepts that were actually not Catholicism, and later, because of his erroneous presentation of Catholic doctrine were distorted, he contributed substantially to the confusion that was to arise.

#### **2. Luther's life**

Luther was born on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1483, at Eisleben, and he grew up at Mansfeld, where his father Hans Luder (Lothar) had become a miner. The piety

to which the young Martin was exposed was that of the late medieval period, which was tainted by an obsession with witches, devils and many other superstitious elements. However, life in these times was tied to the Church; one lived in and with the Church, just as the church lived in and with the people

The University of Erfurt became the greatest influence upon Luther's theological development. Philosophy and theology were taught there in the form of the *via moderna*, that is, under the inspiration of nominalism and Ockhamism, and Luther began to feel tension between God and man in matters religious. He experienced the omnipotence and majesty of God's will before whom man pales into insignificance and, indeed, nothingness, and learned to understand everything as the will and judgment of God. Sin and grace, good and evil, depend not on man but on God; if God looks upon man graciously, man is good; if God looks upon man with anger, man is bad. If he so wished, God could look on a sinner graciously and then the sinner would be justified; he remains the same sinner as before, but God views him as just (*simul iustus – simul peccator*). God is absolutely free in the distribution of grace, indeed even arbitrary. Man can do nothing; he can only hope and trust that God will be gracious and he must turn to God in unconditional surrender. Neither the sacraments nor the Church as an institution of salvation can help him; everything depends on man's subjective attitude.

Luther's father had wished for Martin to study law, but it was not to be. In the summer of 1505 he was returning to Erfurt when a violent storm surprised him. Lightning struck close to him and believing his life to be in danger he made a vow on July 2, 1505, to enter a monastery. Fifteen days later, on July 17<sup>th</sup>, he entered the strict Augustinian Eremites at Erfurt. After his novitiate he was ordained a priest, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1507, and began his theological studies in Erfurt. These studies were based on the strictly nominalistic theology of Gabriel Biehl. Later Luther frequently spoke of the terrible inner struggle he underwent during his monastic period. Studying St. Augustine's doctrines of grace and predestination intensified his personal sense of sinfulness, while the voluntarism of Ockhamism and nominalism combined to bring him to the brink of a religious and theological disaster. Fear of predestination overcame him; he sensed his failure and believed himself to be deserted and damned by God. He became deeply depressed, and neither frequently repeated confessions nor the other sacramental aids of the Church were able to help him. His nominalism never permitted Luther to find comfort in the sacraments; he only found consolation in the reassuring words of the vicar of the order, Johann von Staupitz, who told him not to brood about whether or not he was predestined, but simply meditate on the wounds of Christ who sacrificed himself to God for us.

Meanwhile Luther continued his theological studies at the University of Wittenberg (1508-1509) and, after an intervening journey to Rome (1510-1511), received the degree of doctor of theology. In 1512 he was appointed to the chair of Scripture, which Staupitz had held previously, and lectured on the Psalms (1513-1515), the Epistle to the Romans (1515-1516), Epistle to the Galatians (1516-1517), Epistle to the Hebrews (1517-1518), and once again on the Psalms (1518-1519). These initial lectures, which are extant partly in his own manuscripts and partly in the notes of his students, provide some information on

Luther's interior life and development. For this development, the "experience in the tower" of the monastery of Wittenberg played a decisive role. Here he gained a new understanding of the "justice of God" according to Romans 1:17. During his religious quest Luther was constantly occupied by one question, "How do I find a merciful God?" This problem was less an auto psychological question than a theological one; Luther had begun to doubt God and was struggling to find a new understanding of him. He discovered that the "justice of God" mentioned Romans 1:17 did not mean the harsh justice by which God judges a culprit vindictively, but rather the justice of mercy by which God for the sake of the sufferings of his Son looks with pure compassion upon the faithful sinner and thereby makes him "just".

According to Thomism and Scholasticism the sacraments are a sign instituted by Christ which *ex opere operato* contain and give grace so long as one receives them in good faith and does not put an obstacle in the way of grace; faith is required for their reception; but the sacramental symbol confers grace. Luther emptied the sign of its content and saw the bestowal of grace through *faith alone* (*sola fide*). This transformed the nature of faith. Thomas Aquinas had related faith with the intellect; for him, faith meant above all that one must regard the truths of revelation as true and accept them. That this acceptance was also a matter of the heart had receded into the background during late scholastic period. Luther rediscovered it during the tower experience and drew consequences from it. "*Corde enim creditur ad justitiam* (Romans 10:10)." Faith becomes a matter of trust once more and Luther discovers something which has only been obscured and faded into the background. Luther, however, took this partial truth and made of it an absolute truth and, by absolutising it, recognizes only this new fiduciary faith in the process of salvation (*fides* = *fiducia*, trust). From Romans 1:17 Luther concludes that God gives his grace to him who approaches him with faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and that God "imputes" to the sinner the merits of his son.

The result of the experience in the tower is not only that Luther has a new concept of God but also that Luther's has a new inner attitude to God: faith, which is based on the assurance of salvation in the word of God, that is, Sacred Scripture alone decides the issue; *sola fides* and *sola scriptura* belong together. The Church as an institution of salvation and the sacraments as conveyors of grace fade into the background. Only faith, built on the special assurance of salvation in the word of God, determines eternal salvation. From Holy Scripture alone man receives faith and grace: *sola scriptura* is designated as the formal principle of Protestantism; *sola fides* and *sola gratia* become its material principles.

Luther's now became the Reformer, and the principles of his Reformation originated from his subjective experience. He became a Reformer not because he criticized ecclesiastical abuses, but because he found a new religious and theological understanding of the faith that fell outside of the sacramental Church and was irreconcilable with the ecclesiastical life of the Catholic Church. In contrast to Erasmus and other reformers, Luther called the Church itself into question; it was no longer a matter of reform in the sense of an internal renewal, it was a Rebellion

## Chapter 11; Annex 2 The Inquisition and Witch hunts

The Holy Office, which was responsible to watch over the purity of doctrine and morals became active again after its reorganization by Paul III (1542) and under Paul IV (1555-1559) displayed a new effectiveness. Even cardinals were not immune, and Sadoletto, Pole, Carranza and Morone were indicted and persecuted on suspicion of heresy. Morone languished in the prison of the inquisition for two years (1557-1559) and Ignatius of Loyola was also brought before it. The inquisition was most feared wherever the Spanish ruled. In June 1561, the Waldensians were persecuted in Calabria. The Spanish inquisition should be distinguished from the Roman Inquisition; it was established by the state in 1481 to protect Christian Spain in its struggle against the Mohammedans. After Christian baptism had been made compulsory, many Jews and Moors nominally converted to Christianity and were respectively called Marranos and Moriscos.

These groups were considered to be politically unreliable and in fact often served as spies against the state. They were treated like traitors. In order to further deter these groups, executions included a solemn ceremony and were designated as Autos da Fe (= *actus fidei*). At a time such as this when life was regarded as a homogenous unit, it is difficult to know to what extent religious, political, economic or human interests played a role in the executions. It is equally difficult to know how many people lost their lives<sup>15</sup>.

In Germany, the persecutions were mainly directed against the Anabaptists; and here the social background is known. After the excesses of Munster (1534-1535) the Anabaptists were feared as social revolutionary agitators. But here again one must carefully discern between fact and fiction, or worse historical prejudice. For centuries the Catholic imperial city of Cologne was known to be particularly hostile to heretics, and yet a recent critical study of legal procedures by H. Stiasny (Munster, 1962), in which he examined the trials and transcripts of all Anabaptist trials in the city between 1529-1618, revealed that although 170 Anabaptists were arrested in Cologne during that time, the majority were expelled from the city or punished with a "rather short incarcerations on water and bread". Only nine of those arrested were executed; four between 1534-1535, and the other five between 1558-1565, and in all cases the decisive cause of execution was related to the politics of the times. In Protestant countries the persecution of the Anabaptists was much harsher and the number of executions greater.

### Witch hunts

What is difficult to understand is not that the Inquisition persecuted heretics, but that it also engaged in the trials of witches. Today we lack any means of comparison for these mass neuroses and their connection with religion and the inquisitional procedures. On this score there was no difference between Catholic and Protestants; both persecuted witches and burnt them if convicted. In fact they egged each other on because neither side wanted to be surpassed by the other in the pursuit of what they imagined to be a manifestation of the devil. When the

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<sup>15</sup> The figures which are often mentioned need to be viewed critically.

*Hammer of Witches* (1487), which had been written by the Dominicans Institoris and Sprenger, was prefaced by Pope Innocent VIII with a Bull against witches, belief in witchcraft spread very rapidly. Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers also believed in the existence of witches and fought them with trials and burnings. The superstition reached its peak between 1590 and 1630, and only began to decrease, and finally stopped, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (the last recorded burnings of witches: Kempten, 1775; Glarus, 1782; Posen, 1793). It seems that mountainous areas were more prone to witch mania which would net anyone regardless of age or rank. Among those more commonly cited where the superstition exerted its presence in varying degrees of intensity are Savoy, Switzerland, Tyrol, Lorraine, and the Scottish Highland. Focal points of this superstition were the French court (1400), Arras (1461), England (after 1576), Franconia (1623-1630), Luxeuil (1628-1660), Vaduz (1634-1680), Scotland, Scandinavia, and North America (1645-1693)<sup>16</sup>.

The first opponents of witchcraft were the physician John Weyer, an Erasmian at the court of duke William of Julich-Cleve and the Jesuits Adam Tanner (1627) and Friedrich von Spee. In Paderborn in 1630-1631 Spee wrote his famous pamphlet *Cautio criminalis* (i.e. Caution in the trials of criminals!), and was almost was burned himself because of his courageous stand on behalf of the innocence of witches and protest against the absurd criminal trials<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> F. Merzbacher, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., vol. V, 318.

<sup>17</sup> The whole hysteria regarding witchcraft with its complex roots can only be called an aberration. What is being referred to here is, of course, not intended to imply that some persons, males and female may dedicate themselves to the worship of Satan and pass themselves off as witches and warlocks. That is neither a mania or superstition but a sad fact of moral theology.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **ACT OF SUPREMACY**

Proclaimed King Henry VIII the supreme leader of the Church in England, which meant that the pope was no longer recognized as having any authority within the country, and all matters of faith, ecclesiastical appointment, and maintenance of ecclesiastical properties were in the hands of the king.

### **CONSUBSTANTIATION**

A term describing Christ's co-existence in the Eucharist. Luther taught that the Eucharist was not truly Christ, but that He was present in it as heat is in a hot iron. Accordingly, the substance of Christ's body co-exists with the substance of the bread and his blood with the wine.

### *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*

Written by John Calvin, it contained four books which codified Protestant theology. Among these beliefs were the ultimate authority of the word of God, the depravity of man, and his belief that the Bible is the only source of Revelation.

### **PREDESTINATION**

A doctrine of Calvin which taught that salvation' depended solely on God's pre-determined decision. According to this principle, those who are saved (the elect) are chosen by God through no effort of their own. God also chooses others to be damned. This damnation is necessary to show God's great justice.

### *SOLA SCRIPTURA*

"Scripture alone." It is the belief that all man needs for salvation is the Bible. This is a tenet for most Protestants.

### **THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES**

Issued by Elizabeth I, these provided for the foundation of the Anglican Church, maintaining all the outward appearances of Catholicism, but implanting Protestant doctrine into the Church of England.

### **TRANSUBSTANTIATION**

The change of the substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ with only the accidents (properties) of bread and wine remaining.

## 12. Missionary movements (America and Asia).

The Church by nature is missionary<sup>18</sup>. The first missions were those from Jerusalem to the Jews of the Diaspora and, later, to the Gentiles. Subsequently we have the missionary activity in Gaul and to the Germanic people, which was followed by the Irish and Anglo-Saxon continental missions. The second age of world missionary activity was directed to the western hemisphere and was followed by what could be called the mission *ad gentes*.

While Europe was divided along religious and political lines in the sixteenth century, the Church embarked upon the greatest missionary expansion of her history, reaching out to millions of new faithful around the world. This remarkable period of evangelization came about through the efforts of a relatively small number of holy missionaries who truly believed that "God desires the salvation of everyone." Through their courageous travels, the good news of Christians was being preached in Asia, Africa, and the New World.

These missionary expeditions followed in the wake of new explorations throughout the world. The curiosity for discovery so characteristic of the Renaissance together with new navigational advancements helped to open trade routes to the Orient and lead to monumental achievements in exploration. In 1487, the Portuguese sailor Bartholomew Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa opening a new way to India. Five years later another ambitious explorer set off westwards to find an alternative route to India. That explorer, the Italian Christopher Columbus, discovered a New World in the Western hemisphere. For the Church, the "opening of the New World" would provide a new opportunity for evangelization. a chance to help people from every corner of the globe find, as John Paul II said, "fullness of life in God."

### Opening the Atlantic

Before the sixteenth century, the predominant avenue of trade for Europe was the Mediterranean Sea. Attempts to traverse other seas to the west of the Mediterranean were hindered by disputes about the size of the earth and claims that the ocean southwest of Gibraltar was unnavigable. In addition, stories of sea monsters and boiling waters in the popular mind further deterred the exploration of the western seas. Although no educated man of the Renaissance truly believed these stories, for many, the world was filled with superstition and fairy tales –stories that discouraged venturing beyond one's own feudal village, much less into the wide, open sea.

A number of factors began to change in the late fifteenth century. During the Middle Ages, the Italian city-states dominated trade in the Mediterranean, bringing back exotic goods to Medieval Europe from the Crusader Kingdoms in Palestine. In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Turks conquered the last of these Crusader Kingdoms, and when Byzantium fell in 1453, trade with the East became increasingly more difficult and costly. Trade continued, but the Ottomans exacted a heavy toll. The cost of silks and spices increased dramatically, and the farther West one went the higher

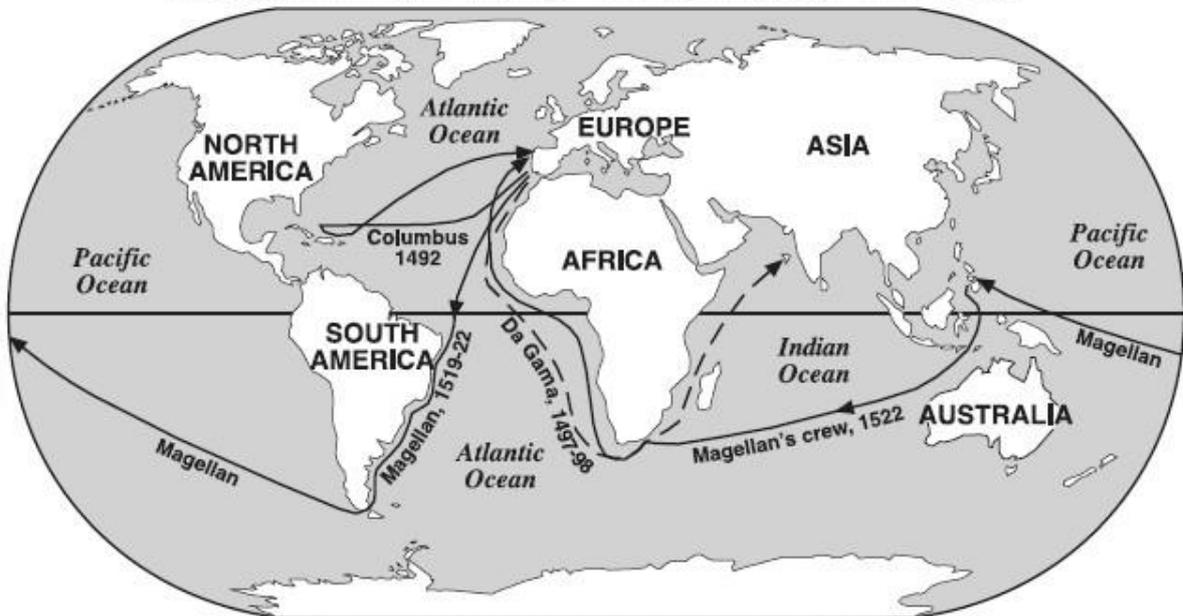
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<sup>18</sup> cf. Jn., 17:18; 20:21; Mt., 28:18; Lk., 24:47; Acts, 1:8.

the prices rose. High prices did not quell the steady demand for these goods, and sea bound western states such as Portugal and Spain began to look for alternative ways to bypass Turkish and Italian middlemen.

Beginning in the Renaissance, the power of monarchs was becoming centralized, and as modern nation-states slowly took shape, princes began to accumulate the resources necessary to fund new exploratory voyages. Encouraging merchant trade also increased tax revenue, which allowed nations to sponsor even more explorations. All these nations were looking for brave men ready to risk their lives for adventure and the glory of discovery. The Renaissance culture stimulated that spirit and provided new ideas, eagerness for experimentation, and the technology that allowed seafarers to undertake bolder expeditions.

### Voyages of Early European Explorers (1492–1522)



Source: James Killoran et al., *The Key to Understanding Global History*, Jarrett Publishing (adapted)

### Missionary Apostolate

Settlement into the New World opened new apostolic opportunities just as the Church was undergoing a renewal. The Catholic Reformation helped enthuse dedicated missionaries who ardently desired to spread the Good News of Christ into these newly-founded territories. Older orders were refilled with zealous and disciplined monks and friars, and newer religious orders, such as the Jesuits, Capuchins, and Vincentians, turned out many priests eager to evangelize the indigenous peoples of the New World. The popes encouraged these missions and often helped finance these apostolic ventures. In 1622, Pope Gregory XV founded the congregation *De propaganda Fide* to promote and establish apostolic missions, and in 1627, the Urbanian University was established in Rome to help educate missionary priests.

## The New World

The history of the Church in Latin America can only be understood from the standpoint of the close relationship that existed between the Crown and the Church during the period of discovery and exploration. The Spanish Popes, Alexander VI and Julius II, gave the Spanish kings what amounted to complete control over the Church in South America. Under Phillip II, who governed the colonies through the Council of the Indies, almost every activity of the Church in South America was controlled by the government. No missionary could leave for America without government approval. The creation of new dioceses and the appointment of bishops came from Madrid rather than from Rome; all ordinations and decrees of local councils and synods were reviewed by the Spanish Crown.

The greater part of the missionary work in South America was carried out by the Franciscans and Dominicans, and later by the Jesuits. The first bishopric was that of San Domingo, created in 1511. In 1522 the ecclesiastical organisation of the Antilles, comprising eight bishoprics, was completed. Ten years after the conquest of Mexico by Cortes in 1515, the diocese of Tlaxcala was established, followed by that of Mexico City in 1526. By 1548 Mexico City had become a Metropolitan See with seven suffragan dioceses. Although Caracas was the first diocese established in South America, Lima soon became the most flourishing ecclesiastical center in that continent. Created in 1541, it was, by 1575, the Metropolitan See of a province that included what are now Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru and Chile. Brazil's first diocese was that of San Salvador de Bahia, established in 1552. In the La Plata area four bishoprics were created, the most important of which was that of Buenos Aires, established in 1582.

One of the chief obstacles to the introduction of Christianity among the native Indians was the cruelty with which they were treated by the colonists. A system was established, known as *encomienda*, whereby natives were handed over to the colonists with the right to exact work and tribute from them; they also provided for their instruction in the Catholic faith. Serious attempts were made to learn the native dialects and to produce at least an elementary Christian literature. A notable example of this effort was the case of the first bishop of Mexico City, Juan de Zumarraga (1468-1548). The college of Tlaltelolco was established with the purpose of producing an indigenous clergy and education of the Indian elite for service of both Church and State. It was the bishop's aim, in the Erasmian tradition, to translate and disseminate the Scriptures in the native tongues.

The great champion of the Indians was the Bartholomew de Las Casas (1474-1566). Largely at his urging the Emperor, Charles V, promulgated a series of new laws which mitigated some of the severity of the *encomienda* system. In a famous debate held at Valladolid in 1550, Las Casas argued for the equality and freedom of the native Indians, opposing the view of the theologian Juan Gines de Sepulveda. The latter used the arguments of Aristotle to justify his view, and that held by much of the hierarchy, that certain peoples are by nature born to be slaves. Because of the new type of plantation agriculture developed in the New World, both the Portuguese and Spanish became strong defenders of slavery. It was not until 1888 that slavery in the New World was abolished. On the occasion of the abolition of slavery in Brasil, Pope Leo XIII, in the encyclical *In plurimis*, proclaimed that slavery was "entirely in opposition to that which was originally ordained by God and nature".

One of the difficulties facing the Church in Latin America was that of integrating the native population into full membership of the Church. The first synod, held in Lima in 1552, limited the participation of the Indians in the reception of the sacraments. In 1555, the first council of Mexico forbade the ordination to the priesthood of *mestizos*, those of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, and of *mulatos*, those of Spanish and Negro origin. Most of the religious orders excluded those not of European stock. It was not until 1772, at the third Council of Lima, that the ban against ordaining Indians as priests was lifted.

The first Spanish missionaries to the Philippine Islands were Augustinians, who arrived in 1565. When the Diocese of Manila was established in 1579, it was a suffragan see of Mexico. It was raised to an archbishopric in 1595. The Jesuits opened a number of schools in the islands in 1601 and the famous Dominican university of Santo Tomaso was established in 1611. The Philippines remain to this day the only Christian nation in Asia.

As the fortunes of Spain and Portugal declined in Europe, so did conditions in their vast overseas empire. The revolutionary wars of independence which swept Latin America during the early 19th century had a drastic effect on the Church in these areas. The removal of Charles IV from the throne of Spain in 1808 brought the repudiation of the new government by the criollos of the colonies. After Napoleon's defeat and the restoration of Ferdinand VII, the colonies continued to revolt, defeating the Royal Armies in the Peruvian battles of Junin and Ayacucho in 1824. Most of the royally-appointed hierarchy fled to Spain. By 1825 there were eleven vacant sees in Greater Colombia. In Mexico the hierarchy was all but extinct.

The Spanish king refused to admit the loss of the American colonies and continued to appoint bishops, who were automatically rejected by the new republics. The Papacy, on the other hand, aggravated the situation by urging the bishops to disavow the revolutionary governments. Meanwhile, the new governments assumed the prerogatives of royal patronage. *Patronato real* now gave way to *patronato nacional*. In 1824, Greater Colombia passed a Church State law called the *Ley de Patronato*, according to which the State governed the Church. The Congress was empowered to reorganise dioceses and summon ecclesiastical councils. In the United Provinces of La Plata (Argentina), similar laws were put into effect by the Memorial Ajustado. The liberator, Bernardo O'Higgins, President of Chile (1818-1832), exiled the bishop of Santiago.

Free Masonry played an important role in the anti-clericalism of the 19th century in Latin America. In Venezuela, the *caudillo* Blanco, a high ranking Mason dealt the Church blow after blow from which she has only slowly recovered. In Ecuador, the leader Garcia Moreno (1860-1875) established a virtual theocracy, infuriating the liberals, thus bringing about his assassination. The tendency of the hierarchy to side with less than popular governments in Latin America has not favoured the cause of Catholicism. Two important Concordats with the Holy See in Ecuador (1862) and Colombia (1887) set the precedent for subsequent agreements with the governments of Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Although Mexico has a long history of anti-clericalism, intensified in the 1920's, the present policy is one of a more liberal attitude towards the Church.

An interesting chapter in the history of the Church in Latin America is the story of Jesuit missions, or *Reduccionces*, in Paraguay, the so-called “Republic of the Guarianis”. Here the practice of bringing natives into Christian villages for protection and instruction in the Catholic faith achieved its greatest success. The first settlement was founded at Loretto in 1610, and by 1623 there were more than 23 Christian villages with a population of 100.000. To protect these settlements from marauders and a hostile colonial population, the king of Portugal, in 1641, forbade his subjects to enter the region under Jesuit control and allowed the missionaries to arm the natives.

Within the *Reduccionces*, the Indians were lodged in well-constructed houses, given sections of arable land to cultivate and were provided with an elementary education. Certain industries were also introduced. The system was somewhat akin to that employed in Viet Nam in the early twentieth century. The weakness of the system, like so much else in past Catholic missionary endeavours, was that it failed to give responsibility to the natives. Authority rested firmly in the hands of the Jesuits, who did little to develop a sense of initiative among their subjects. Paternalism and a refusal to view the natives as adults were policies that remained unaltered for more than a century. No Indian was ever ordained, nor were religious orders for women introduced. By the end of the eighteenth century, and with the suppression of the Jesuits, the entire venture collapsed.

## **India**

When missionaries landed in a new area of India, they would encounter a complex multiplicity of cultures. Missionaries had to work at winning acceptance from tightly closed communities and adapt the practice of Christianity to the particular cultural traditions of the people. To achieve this, missionaries dedicated a huge part of their efforts to assimilating local customs, learning dialects, and earning the trust of the locals by integrating themselves into the community. By understanding the culture thoroughly, missionaries could tailor the teachings of Christ in a more effective and convincing way.

In India, the missionary Robert de Nobili exemplified the effectiveness of this "inculturation." Catholic missionaries had difficulties reaching India's intellectual class, the Brahmins. The Portuguese missionaries who preceded de Nobili won over many converts among the lower classes. However, the Brahmins rejected Christianity since it was perceived as unfit for the upper class. De Nobili realized that in Indian society divisions were so strong that Christianity had to be presented differently to each caste. He took a year to master Hindi, Sanskrit, and the local dialects. He studied the Brahmin caste and learned about what they held sacred and worthy of reverence. De Nobili then asked permission from his archbishop to present himself as a Christian Brahmin holy man as a way of showing Christian virtue in a form understandable to the Indian Brahmin. He followed the Brahmins' rigorous traditions of fasting and abstaining from foods considered unclean. The leaders of the Brahmin class were also impressed by de Nobili's goodness and kindness. Gradually, de Nobili showed how Christianity could be adapted to their philosophical and religious ideas. Some estimate that around 150,000 Brahmin converted through de Nobili's work.

Maintaining a vibrant and active church in India proved difficult in subsequent centuries. The strong divisions between upper- and lower-class Christians in India was criticized by many Westerners. In 1742, Pope Benedict XIV, insisting that

missions publicly admit members of the lower classes into full communion with the Church, condemned some Indian Christian rites. These changes were not welcomed by local Indians, and after the suppression of the Jesuit order during the eighteenth century, the Christian population in India shrank.

## China

St. Francis Xavier was not the only missionary who could not penetrate China's closed borders. Despite the flourishing missions in the surrounding lands, China resisted Christian and European visitors for years. In 1583 (thirty years after St. Francis Xavier's death), an Italian Jesuit named Matteo Ricci was finally able to set up a permanent residence in China. Like de Nobili in India, Ricci understood that the best way to reach the Chinese people was to adopt their local customs and traditions. However, China posed particular problems for Catholic missionaries. The Chinese culture prided themselves on adherence to traditions of family worship and philosophical principles of truth and justice. These traditions were old and deep-rooted, and they had produced many centuries of sophisticated and refined civilization. The Chinese were satisfied with their ways and proud of their culture, with no inclination to embrace a new one.

Ricci understood this and recognized the beauty and richness of the Chinese culture. Rather than preach in opposition to these traditions, Ricci blended the Eastern and Western worlds in an attractive and compatible way. He dressed as a Mandarin scholar but filled his residence in Canton with western works of art and scientific instruments. Ricci lived as a public witness to the Christian Faith, and he offered a moving example of charity and patience that won the admiration of the Chinese. Through his exemplary virtue, as well as exposing them to the fruits of Western civilization, he won the respect of the local people. Eventually, the emperor summoned Ricci to his court, and the two developed a friendship. While in the emperor's court, Ricci gave lectures on science and astronomy, translated Christian principles into Chinese, and developed a Chinese liturgical rite that used the Chinese language, not Latin, in the Mass. Ricci wrote a treatise on the Catholic Faith in Chinese called *The True Doctrine of God*, in which he was able to express the complex theological dogmas and concepts of Catholicism in a language that had never before conveyed Christian ideas. By his death in 1610, Ricci had established five residences in China and brought two thousand converts to the Faith.

Father Johann Adam Schall succeeded Ricci in China, and the number of converted Chinese Christians rose to over 237,000 by 1664. Father Schall continued to expose the Chinese to Western culture. He held the presidency of the Mathematical Tribunal in the Imperial City and was made a first class citizen by the emperor. In many ways, the success of his missionary activity depended upon the support and good graces of the emperor. In 1692, the emperor issued an edict giving complete toleration to the Church, and by 1724, the number of Chinese Catholics rose to 800,000.

Nonetheless, the Church did not remain in good graces with the emperors of China for long. As western nations expanded their trading empires in the East, the Chinese became wary of Western domination, and Western Christian missionaries began to lose favor. In 1724 persecutions of Christians in China resumed and missionary activity quickly declined. The suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 also diminished the number of available missionary priests. By the end of the eighteenth

century, China's faithful numbered around 300,000, less than half the number at the beginning the century.

## **Japan**

Persecution posed a difficult obstacle for Christian missionaries in Japan as well. Within thirty years of St. Francis Xavier's work in Japan, Japanese converts numbered over 200,000. However the success of the Church in Japan was at the mercy of the whims of the strong feudal warlords that dominated Japanese society. As long as the leading warlord, the Shogun, permitted missionary activity, Christianity thrived. In 1587 power shifted, and the Shogun Hideyoshi began a new era of persecution.

This persecution was largely the result of paranoia affecting many Asian countries at that time. Western expansion made many ancient civilizations fearful of invasion and suppression. In Japan, a ship captain suggested that the missionaries were preparing for a larger European invasion, and Japanese authorities responded by arresting the missionaries. Twenty-six of them were martyred by crucifixion in Nagasaki on February 5, 1597 (canonized by Pope Bl. Pius IX in 1862). Persecution intensified in 1614 after the Shogun officially outlawed the practice of Christianity in Japan. In 1622 fifty-two Christians were killed, and the faithful were driven underground.

Japanese martyrs came from all classes of society. Clergy and laity, Europeans and Japanese, men and women, elderly and children were all subject to persecution, and the punishments were especially cruel.

Years later, in 1865, Japan was reopened to the West, and French missionaries returned to the Islands. To their surprise, the French discovered over 50,000 Japanese Christians in hiding. Despite persecutions, these Christians had kept the Faith alive, passing it down from generation to generation for nearly three centuries. Remarkably, these Japanese Christians retained their orthodoxy, finding solidarity with the French missionaries in their mutual obedience to the pope in Rome, veneration of the Blessed Virgin, and practice of celibacy by the clergy.

## **The Philippines and Africa**

By far the most successful missionary effort in the East occurred in the Philippines. Various religious, including the Augustinians, Dominicans, and Franciscans, flocked to the Spanish colony, teaching the natives, among other skills, new farming techniques and textile manufacturing. These missionaries also helped build roads and bridges throughout the islands, and in 1611, the University of Santo Tomas was established.

The missionary efforts gave rise to an improved capacity to work efficiently and a higher standard of living. These advances had a positive impact on the general moral character of the people. These long-lasting effects of these missionary achievements in the Philippines is still strongly reflected in the deep faith of the Filipino people.

During this period of great missionary activity, Africa showed the least results. Disease proved to be the harshest opponent to opening the vast interior of the African Continent to the Christian Faith. Nearly every missionary who entered the Dark Continent before the middle of the nineteenth century would succumb to a variety of

lethal tropical diseases. In addition, hostile Muslims, reprisals over the slave trade, and jealous pagan priests took a great toll on the missionaries. During this time, many lost their lives to persecution, and since it was nearly impossible to maintain a steady missionary presence, only a few would convert to the Catholic Faith. But the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw new and effective inroads in the evangelization of Africa where now the Church in a number of countries is thriving.

## Chapter 12; Annex Our Lady of Guadalupe

The early missionaries had a difficult time eradicating the superstition of the Indian people. Initially the cessation of human sacrifices and the destruction of the pagan temples by the Spanish hindered the missionaries' efforts to win converts to Christ. However, a spectacular intervention of Mary would help remedy this lackluster interest in Christianity by occasioning a staggering number of converts to the Church. Within ten years, nine million Indians would receive Baptism.

On December 9, 1531, ten years after the conquest of Mexico, a new convert to the faith, St. Juan Diego, was walking his usual six miles to attend Holy Mass, when he heard angelic voices and saw a rainbow of dazzling colors. Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego and asked him to go to the Bishop to ask that a temple be erected in her name. St. Juan Diego obeyed and informed the bishop of the apparition. Bishop Juan de Zumarraga listened patiently to St. Juan Diego's account, but was skeptical. He told St. Juan Diego to return another day.

St. Juan Diego returned to his home feeling he had failed Mary. As the sun set, she appeared again to St. Juan Diego and encouraged him to return the next day to the bishop to again make her request. Upon his return the next day, the bishop asked that she give a sign to prove the veracity of her visitation. St. Juan Diego returned home, once again disappointed.

On December 12, St. Juan Diego's uncle became very ill, and fearing that his uncle might die, he summoned a priest to give his uncle the last rites. Because of the urgency to attend to his uncle, he tried to detour away from the hill where Mary had first appeared to him, but it made no difference. She appeared to St. Juan Diego again, and asked him about her request for the church. When St. Juan Diego spoke about his sick uncle, she reassured him that she had already seen to his uncle's recovery. As for the bishop's request for a sign, she directed St. Juan Diego to a nearby hill to collect the roses he found there and deliver them to the bishop. It was not the season for roses; nonetheless, St. Juan Diego discovered a large patch of roses in full bloom. He filled his *tilma* (cloak) with the flowers and rushed to the bishop's residence. When Bishop Zumarraga received St. Juan Diego, he asked about the sign. He opened his cloak and dozens of red roses fell to the floor. The bishop immediately fell to his knees, and St. Juan Diego eventually realized that Mary's image was imprinted on his *tilma* (cloak made of cactus fibers). This miracle prompted Bishop Zumarraga to build her church.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was a message to all the people of America. In the image, Mary appeared greater than the sun, moon, stars, and all the pagan deities. Yet Mary was bowing in submission. She herself was not a god, the image seemed to say, but she prayed to the one God. The cross around her neck was the same that flew on Cortes' flag, and through this image, Indians began to embrace the Catholic Faith. For over four hundred thirty years, the image that first appeared on St. Juan Diego's cloak has expressed the protection of Our Lady for the Americas. She is the patroness of the Americas. Her feast day is celebrated on December 12 in the universal Church.

## Recent investigation of the Image

Modern science has recently revealed some extraordinary characteristics of the apparition of our Lady of Guadalupe. The *tilma*, upon which the image of Mary was received, was examined in 1977 with infrared photography and digital enhancement techniques. This study concluded that the method employed to create this image is unknown. The *tilma* shows absolutely no sketching or outline normally used by an artist to create such a painting. The image has retained its original colors despite having no protective covering for the first one hundred years of its existence (*a tilma* usually lasts no more than sixty) and having been exposed to a wide variety of environmental hazards, including floods and smoke. In addition, the scientists could not find any residue of dye or paint on the cloak.

In 1921, a bomb placed by a Freemason factory worker exploded right in front of the *tilma*. While the explosion severely twisted a cast-iron cross directly next to the *tilma* and damaged the marble altar rail, the *tilma* remained miraculously untouched.

Possibly even more miraculous was the discovery of images reflected in both eyes. First identified using photography in the 1920s, the image found in the right eye of the Virgin looks like that of a bearded man. In the 1950s, the same image, from a slightly different angle was found in the Virgin's left eye. Since, this discovery, many ophthalmologists have studied the Virgin's eyes, verifying the presence of the "triple reflection" phenomenon (also called the Samson Purkinje effect). Discovered in the nineteenth century, the "triple reflection" phenomenon is caused by the reflection of an object on the surface of the cornea and the anterior and posterior surfaces of the eye lens. In addition, ophthalmologists discovered that the distortions of the images reflected in the eyes are consistent with the curvature of the cornea. In 1979 Dr. Jose Aste Tonsmann took high resolution photographs from the original image, and, after filtering and processing the digitized image, not only saw with astonishing clarity the same human image in both eyes, but also a group of Indians and Franciscans.

### **13. The Anti-Christian Enlightenment, the French Revolution. Restoration and Liberalism.**

*La crise de la conscience européenne*, 1680—1715: this was the title of a book by Paul Hazard, which is still perfectly valid today, sixty years after it was published. Hazard concentrated on the thirty-five years of the reign of Louis XIV of France, crucial years which saw the crystallization of ideas and attitudes that created the anti-Christian enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Two hundred years earlier, the protestant crisis had broken the spiritual unity of Europe; but for all that it was a Christian and religious revolt. Now it was Christianity itself and in fact all positive religion that was going to be outlawed. Looking at France, the epicentre of this cataclysm, Hazard summed up in these words the enormous change which occurred between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: ‘most Frenchmen thought like Bossuet; and, suddenly, they began to think like Voltaire.’ We shall now look at how this change came about and what effects it had.

Christianity is a revealed religion; it contains truths of a supernatural order which the believer gets access to not by way of direct experience, but through faith. Cartesian rationalism—which played a key part in the shaping of the modern outlook—proclaimed methodical doubt as the basis of human discourse and rejected everything which does not present itself with absolute clarity to human reason. It is true that Descartes (1596-1650) was a Catholic and that he would not have methodical doubt applied to religious faith, for he thought that man has absolute and immediate certainty regarding God. But, later rationalism—quite logically—gave religion no such special treatment and it ended up denying any value to knowledge based on faith or to revealed truths or the supernatural order.

Unbridled rationalism, once it rejects revelation, quickly leads to religious scepticism. Nothing is sure, nothing is certain; everything one formerly believed so firmly is wrong or questionable: this was the conclusion arrived at by Pierre Bayle in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. A hedonistic current of thought, led by Saint-Evremond, drew the same conclusion as his predecessors in the times of Isaiah and St Paul: ‘let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’ (Is 22:13; 1 Cor 15:32). The libertines adopted an attitude of evident distaste for religion: they were epicureans; this life and its pleasures was all that mattered. They were as far away from Christianity as it was possible to be.

Divine revelation has been transmitted through the valid channel of sacred scripture. Spinoza’s radical critique of the Bible used the demolition of certain traditional interpretations (such as that about the age of the world) to put a question-mark over the historical value of all the revealed books. He went further: he even rejected miracles and the supernatural order, putting them on the same plane as legends and superstition. Thus, the replacing of revealed religion with a merely natural religion was what deism aimed at; it originated in England and spread to France and Germany. Unlike atheism, deism did not deny God existed, but it pushed him away into the background. The God of the deists was something invented by reason; often he was pantheistic; there was no such thing as revelation. Deism gave rise to Freemasonry, whose first lodges were founded in Britain in the early eighteenth century; this was a

secret society, which rejected all positive religion —especially Christianity —and encouraged brotherhood and philanthropy among its members. Freemasonry was condemned by Clement XII in 1738 and had an undoubted influence on the development of the enlightenment.

The year 1715 —the year Louis XIV died —saw the opening of the floodgates of irreligion. In the decades that followed, the philosophes literally imposed themselves on the cultural life of France and elsewhere. They were in fact a kind of sect, in which Voltaire performed the role of high priest. Voltaire (1694-1778) was not an original thinker; he drew most of his ideas from the English deists or from Bayle and Spinoza. Nor was he very deep: but he was a brilliant purveyor of ideas, thanks to the clarity of his style and to his skill as a satirist. Hatred of positive religion and especially of Christianity was an obsession with Voltaire; for him the catholic Church was infamous; it must be trodden into the ground. Voltaire's great ambition was to eliminate the Christian religion. 'Jesus Christ', he went so far as to write, 'needed twelve Apostles to spread the gospel; I am going to show that one is enough to destroy it'.

The entire core philosophy of the enlightenment was also anti- Christian in its rejection of all dogmatic truth; dogma it regarded a priori as an expression of intolerance and fanaticism. Orthodoxy, for the enlightenment, was something fit only for ridicule; it was an expression of the intellectual limitations of retarded minds and enemies of progress. The enlightened, the 'brave spirits', prided themselves on their free-thinking and in the political sphere they advocated indiscriminate toleration of all confessions. The American revolution, therefore, had a great impact on France, and the solution adopted by the United States (where the constitution proclaimed separation of Church and state, and freedom of worship) seemed to the enlightened to be an example which all Europe should imitate. However, it should be pointed out that the motivations behind tolerance were not at all the same in America as in the ideology of the philosophes. American tolerance was based on the pluralism of American society, where there was a whole constellation of religious creeds and confessions. The toleration the philosophes wanted to install in countries where the whole ethos was Catholic was based on the ideological principle of dogmatic relativism.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Catholic unity was still very much a fact over very broad sectors of society in the Latin countries of Europe. Spain and Italy were not greatly influenced by the enlightenment. But in France it was different: there the new philosophy flourished among the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie, affecting even the urban middle class. A very effective tool to popularize this enlightenment ideology was the *Encyclopédie*, the first work of its kind, planned by Diderot and D'Alembert and written in 1751-72 by a team of editors who came to be called the encyclopaedists. The *Encyclopédie* adopted an intellectually hostile attitude to Christianity, whose 'incompatibility' with the experimental sciences or the demands of reason it sought to refer to at every opportunity. The naturalistic rationalism of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) —whose deism was clear from his *Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar* —had a big influence on the religious ideology of the *Encyclopédie*.

In protestant Germany, the enlightenment took its own form as the Aufklärung. It outlined a 'reasonable' Christianity, without dogmas or miracles, something similar to

the later liberal Protestantism. But Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the leading German thinker of the period, exposed a dilemma by considering religion from the distinct points of view of pure and practical reason. On the speculative level Kant tried to refute the reason-based arguments for the existence of God: 'I have therefore found it necessary,' he wrote, 'to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.' The practical reason, on the other hand, allows man to reach absolute certainty of God's existence and of the immortality of the soul. Kant had a great influence on nineteenth century European thought.

In conclusion, it can be said that rationalism, religious naturalism (no mystery, no supernatural order), negative criticism of positive religions and especially of Christianity, and a general attitude of intellectual rebellion were what shaped the 'enlightened' outlook of the eighteenth century. Even in France, this philosophical spirit was limited to a small minority—but they were influential people; the people at large kept to their religious faith and practice. But it was this minority which was going to decide which intellectual banner would fly over the new era starting with the outbreak of the French revolution.

### **From Revolution to Restoration**

During the quarter century from 1789 to 1815 France occupied the centre of the world stage. This period, which ran from the opening of the Estates General to the fall of the Napoleonic empire, was also of transcendental importance for the destinies of Christianity and the Church. We shall look at the main lines of this period from the Christian point of view, which is what interests us.

It is well known—though it sounds like a paradox—that the French revolution began with a solemn procession, presided over by King Louis XVI, with the representatives of the three estates, holding candles, devoutly following the blessed sacrament. This happened on 4 May 1789, at the opening of the estates general; but within a few weeks the whole scene had changed and the revolutionary process advanced at breakneck speed, in both the political and religious sphere. On 4 August 1789, in a memorable 'patriotic session' of the national assembly, the clergy and the nobility renounced their traditional privileges. On 10 October, on the proposal of Talleyrand, then bishop of Autun, the constituent assembly decreed the secularization of all church property—which soon found its way into private hands and formed the financial base of the new French bourgeoisie.

From 1790, the revolutionary process adopted an ever more aggressive attitude towards the Church. On 13 February 1790 a decision was taken to suppress monastic vows, and on 12 July 1790 the assembly approved the 'civil constitution of the clergy', which totally undermined the Church's administrative system. A Gallican church arose, already independent of papal authority, episcopalian and Presbyterian in structure, with the bishops and clergy being elected by the people and Rome simply being notified of appointments. The assembly required priests to swear fidelity to the political constitution, within which was included this 'constitution of the clergy.' Pope Pius VI forbade them to do so and excommunicated those priests who disobeyed (13 March 1791). A schism was thus created between the 'juring' and the 'non-juring' priests, the latter becoming suspect in the eyes of the law. The legislative assembly which followed on the constituent assembly, decreed on 27 May 1792 the deportation of the non-juring priests; in September the convention took over from the legislative

assembly and started to execute priests. The monarchy was abolished, a republic was declared and Louis XVI was executed on 21 January 1793.

The years 1793-4 were the most tragic of the revolutionary period. Under the Terror, anti-catholic persecution reached its climax. Thousands of victims died on the scaffold and an effort was made to blot out every trace of Christianity from the life of society. Even the calendar was replaced with a republican calendar. The enthronement of the Goddess of Reason in the cathedral of Notre Dame (10 November 1793) and the institution by Robespierre of the cult of the Supreme Being were other episodes in this dechristianization attempt, which also took the form of iconoclasm —the mark of which can be seen in old French cathedrals and churches even today. The following years were marked by lulls and then renewed persecution. One of the worst points was under the Jacobin directory (1795-9), when the French occupied Rome and proclaimed the Roman republic. Pope Pius VI, old and infirm, was deported to Siena, Florence and finally France. On 29 August 1799 in the fortress of Valence-sur-Rhône he died, at the age of eighty- one. Some fanatical revolutionaries boasted that the last pope had died.

On 9 November of the same year, the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire brought Napoleon Bonaparte to the position of first consul; four months later —14 March 1800 —the conclave met in Venice and elected Cardinal Chiaramonti as Pope Pius VII: two great personalities thus appeared on the scene of history. Napoleon, pragmatic and realistic, was conscious of how deeply rooted the Christian religion was among the French people, despite what happened during the revolution. Pius VII, for his part, ardently wanted to see the life of the Church return to normal in France. A concordat was devised between the papacy and the republic (which soon would become an empire); it was signed on 15 July 1801 and one of its results was the creation of a new episcopacy, both 'constitutional' bishops and 'legitimate' bishops (*émigrés*) resigning. Unilaterally and without consulting the Holy See, Napoleon promulgated, along with the text of the concordat, seventy-seven Organic Articles which contained the spirit and sometimes even the letter of the old Gallican Articles imposed by Louis XIV in 1682.

The concordat had certainly some favourable results for the Church: it allowed Christian life in France to be rebuilt (this was helped also by a renewal of religious feeling that came with early romanticism, in reaction against the dry rationalism of the enlightenment). Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme* faithfully reflects this kind of feeling. The concordat made it possible to open seminaries (maintained with state funds) and therefore the training of a new clergy, but Napoleon was very restrictive with regard to religious orders. It should, however, be pointed out that during the Napoleonic period a body of opinion grew up in France which was clearly opposed to Christianity and to the Church; it was made up of people with different backgrounds —people who owned confiscated church property, public officials, professional soldiers, intellectuals of the Institute of France and workers of the new urban proletariat which was just beginning to emerge. These sectors of opinion would be opposed to the Church right through the nineteenth century.

The time soon arrived when Napoleon tried to use the Church and the papacy itself to promote his own political interests; but he met serene but resolute resistance from the popes. The clash with the pope arose when the emperor wanted him to join in the continental blockade against England, decreed in November 1806. Napoleon reacted

violently to the pope's refusal: he annexed the papal states and declared Rome the second capital of the empire. Pius VII was imprisoned and deported to Savona (6 July 1809) and, when he refused to confirm the decrees of a pseudo-council held in Paris (1811), Napoleon ordered his transfer to France where he assigned him the palace of Fontainebleau as his residence (June 1812). In 1814 Pius was set free and on 7 June 1815 he returned definitively to Rome. Eleven days later —on 18 June 1815 —a new name became part of world history —Waterloo.

The restoration tried to roll back the map of Europe as if nothing had happened in the previous twenty-five years. Christianity and the Church had been severely tested and bore the marks of wounds inflicted by the revolution. Is it surprising that the Church regarded the end of the revolutionary period like the end of a nightmare, and saluted the return of the 'good old times' as a liberation? The 'alliance of throne and altar', created in the belief that by each supporting the other both would be secure, was the ideal many Catholics dreamed of at this time. But, for good or ill, the restoration did not last long, and after unsuccessful attempts in 1820 to set it aside in Spain, Portugal, Naples and Piedmont, from 1830 onwards the dynamism of the bourgeoisie set the revolutionary process in motion again.

### **Catholicism and Liberalism**

The restoration ended in failure and the nineteenth century passed into history as the century of liberalism. The revolution of 1830 put an end to the Old Régime in France; in Spain it disappeared after the death of Ferdinand VII, in the reign of Isabella II. The revolution of 1848 was an earthquake which affected most of Europe and led eventually to important social and political changes. The victory of liberalism was felt in all aspects of life. Here we will look at its effects on Christianity and the Church.

Liberalism had a political and an economic doctrine; but it was based on an ideology closely connected with the 'enlightened' thought of the eighteenth century. At the basis of this liberal theology is an anthropocentric view of the world and of existence. For liberalism, men are not only free and equal: they are autonomous, that is to say, they are bound by no law given by God: society does not recognize God's law as the supreme norm. Freedom of conscience and of thought, of association and of the press, are people's inalienable rights; and in reply to the traditional Christian teaching that power derives from God, for liberalism it comes from the people; the people are the only source of legitimate government. Liberal doctrine made no distinction between the true religion (Christianity) and other religions. Religion, for liberalism, is a private matter, to do with the intimacy of conscience, and the Church, separate from the state ('a free Church in a free state') is something on the fringe of public life and is subject to state law, as is every other association.

Liberal ideology certainly contained elements of genuine Christian provenance, but mixed in with others of very different origin which favoured the secularization of social life, religious naturalism and, ultimately, atheism or indifference. It is easy to understand why many Christians rejected such an ideology out of hand and, having learned their lessons in their recent experience with the revolutions, were inclined to favour traditionalist positions, which called for respect for the rights of God and of the Church in the life of society. These anti-liberal Catholics were sympathetic towards the counter revolutionary governments which still existed in Europe —governments

which to some degree, at least, kept the Old Régime going and recognized the Church as having a position of privilege in society.

Around the year 1830 a group of liberal Catholics gathered around the *L'Avenir*, a journal edited by Félicité de Lamennais. In opposition to the traditionalist position which most Catholics held to, these favoured a reconciliation, not so much theoretical as practical, of the Church with liberalism; they were convinced that liberalism was there to stay and that the Church could not fulfil its specific mission without being in harmony with it. 'God and liberty' was the motto of liberal Catholicism —meaning that acceptance and defence of liberty for all and in all its forms were the best credentials for ensuring that modern society would show respect for God's authority and for the Church's rights.

Initially 'liberal Catholics' were 'ultramontanes', and in France rejected Gallicanism; they looked 'beyond the mountains', towards Rome, and showed reverence to the papacy, the cornerstone of the universal Church. But Rome's reply did not meet with their expectations. Gregory XVI's encyclical *Mirari vos* (15 August 1832) condemned a number of basic points of the programme of the *L'Avenir* group —equality of treatment for all beliefs which, the pope said, led to indifferentism; complete separation between Church and state; freedom of conscience; unlimited freedom of opinion and of the press. This papal rebuff was followed immediately by Lamennais' defection; he left the priesthood and the Church. But his principal colleagues reacted otherwise: they stayed faithful to the Church; Lacordaire restored the Dominican Order in France; others, like Montalembert and Falloux, professed a less radical liberalism and campaigned in favour of freedom of education from state control.

Catholic Christianity and liberalism met also in another area. The explosion of nationalism, much favoured by liberal policies, led to the emancipation of catholic populations which had been under the dominion of rulers of a different confession. The liberals applauded the repeated uprisings of Catholic Poland against oppression by Czarist Russia. The revolution of 1830 led to an alliance between Belgian Catholics and liberals, who managed to withdraw Belgium from the control of the Calvinist monarchy of Holland and gave the new kingdom a liberal constitution. Daniel O'Connell, in the name of civil and religious liberty, obtained substantial emancipation for the Irish people, and in Britain liberal reforms improved the position of Catholics by getting rid of many old laws which discriminated on grounds of religion. All these helpful results of liberal nationalist movements should not make us forget the dangers those same movements implied in one area very particularly connected with the Apostolic See —the Italian peninsula, where the Risorgimento was all the rage; the route of this movement to national unity lay through the disappearance of the papal states and the turning of papal Rome into the capital of the kingdom of Savoy.

This survey of the encounter between Christianity and liberalism would be incomplete if it does not refer to anti-religious intellectual attitudes at the root of attacks against the Christian view of man and the world: these attitudes developed in virulence in the nineteenth century. The positivism of Auguste Comte argued that, in the new era of human history, now that the theological and metaphysical stages had been superseded, man was interested mainly in phenomena, in the 'how' of things and events and not in the barren 'whys' of other ages. Positivism led to scientism —really religion without any supernatural dimension —which must supplant Christianity, exposing every

mystery, 'explaining' reality and bringing happiness and unlimited progress to mankind. Positivism and the idealism of the great German philosopher Hegel were at the basis of Feuerbach's materialism, which is very close to Marxism.

All these doctrines acted as a base for a generalized offensive against Christianity, in the field of science, particularly the natural sciences. But even the sacred sciences became the cockpit of this anti-Christian struggle. The critique of the historicity of sacred scripture (emptying it of supernatural content) led Strauss to deny that Christ ever existed and moved Ernest Renan (who was less daring but more subtle) to write a famous *Life of Jesus*, of a Jesus who is no longer God, though he is the noblest of the sons of men. It is clear that the intellectual and political climate of Pius IX's time was fraught with threats, sometimes provoking the Church to interfere —with unhappy results —in temporal affairs. But the renewed Christian vitality which can also be noticed in this period is a good indication that all times are God's times, in spite of men and in spite of how things look on the surface.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

Intellectual movement which sprang up from a whole-hearted enthusiasm for, and faith in, man's use of reason and scientific progress. Enlightened man believed that the study of science and nature could help correct all the problems of society, including poverty, disease, and war.

### **DEISM**

Rationalist philosophy which accepted the principle of a first cause, but denied Divine intervention or Providence in the world. Deism understood God as a great watchmaker who created the universe with laws and guiding principles, but then left the world to man's discovery and domination.

### **ENCYCLOPEDIA**

Seventeen-volume work which sought to offer general principles of description for virtually every known subject. Conceived and supervised by Diderot in 1772, the authors of this popular publication presented the world in materialistic terms and dismissed anything supernatural. The majority of its contributors were atheists or Deists.

### **FEBRONIANISM**

"Gallican" movement that influenced the Church in Germany. It argued that the pope was merely an administrative head of the Church who did not have the power to legislate. According to this, ultimate authority of the Church is found in the national leader. It further denied the primacy of the pope with over bishops and the pope's authority to speak definitely on matters of Faith and morals.

### **FOUR GALLICAN ARTICLES**

Declaration that asserted the authority of the Gallican Church under Louis XIV. It attempted to resurrect the heresies that claimed the King of France was independent of the pope in temporal matters and that a general council enjoyed higher authority than that of the pope.

### **FREEMASONRY**

A major vehicle in the spreading of rationalist ideas, this secret, fraternal organization bases all its practices, rules, and organization on Enlightenment philosophy and reason. Many eighteenth-century European and American leaders were members of this organization that sought (and still seeks) to destroy the influence of the Church.

### **JANSENISM**

Developed by Cornelius Jansen, erroneous belief that man was entirely free in the state of innocence and his will tended to do what was right. According to him, original sin made man a slave to sin and all his actions corrupted him. His only hope was God's grace, which could save him. Jansen taught that God only granted salvific grace to a small number of "predestined" people.

### **QUIETISM**

Movement founded by Miguel Molinos which advocated absolute passivity during

prayers and contemplation. The soul, according to Molinos, should be indifferent to everything, including temptation, and should simply rest perpetually in God. Asceticism was not necessary, since it was sufficient for the soul to humble itself in order for God to accept someone with sins. Quietists taught people to make no effort to avoid sin nor cooperate with God's grace for his salvation.

#### SYSTEMATIC DOUBT

Principle developed by Descartes that asked whether, if people have a subjective existence, it was possible to have absolute certainty about anything. This principle implicitly denies divine revelation and ultimate truth (God).

## 14. Pius IX and the rise of Nationalism.

### The Era of Pius IX

The pontificate of Pius IX lasted thirty-two years —from 1846 to 1878, the longest in the history of the papacy. The story is told that, during the ceremony of his coronation, when the cardinal protodeacon said the traditional words, ‘Holy Father, you will not attain the days of Peter’, Pius IX replied brightly, ‘That is not a matter of faith.’ And as it turned out Pius IX’s papacy lasted almost as long as St Peter’s; so long in fact that one can speak of the era of Pius IX as a well-defined chapter in Christian history. It is a chapter which also takes in the transition from the last days of the Old Régime to the consolidation of the liberal world.

‘We had foreseen everything, except a liberal pope’. This was how Prince Metternich, chancellor of the Austro-Hungarian empire and creator of the Holy Alliance, greeted the election of Pius IX. But the ‘liberalism’ of Pius IX was just one more indication of how ambiguous the word ‘liberal’ is. The new pope was indeed a liberal man —but in the sense of someone who practises the virtue of liberality, not in that he was a follower of the doctrines of liberalism. Pius IX was a cordial, generous, magnanimous person who did not hesitate to introduce a series of progressive reforms in the papal states immediately he was elected —political amnesty, improvements in public administration, and even a constitution and a government with a civil prime minister. These reforms made the pope enormously popular. He was everywhere acclaimed and the neo-Guelphs, such as Gioberti or D’Azeglio (Catholic nationalist liberals), even thought under his aegis to achieve that Italian unity sought by the Risorgimento.

But as might have been foreseen, it soon became clear that this was a mistake. Pius IX —an Italian at heart —refused to head up a national league to fight a ‘holy war’ against the Austrians who controlled the north of the peninsula. As quickly as he had acquired it, the pope lost his popularity and soon became the subject of abuse. In November 1848, Pellegrino Rossi, the prime minister of the papal states, was stabbed to death at the door of parliament by the zealots of Young Italy. In February 1849 Mazzini proclaimed the Roman republic and the pope had to flee in disguise to Gaeta, a military stronghold in the neighbouring kingdom of Naples. When he returned to Rome, in April 1850, under the protection of French troops, he carried deep impressions of his bitter experiences. From then on, he saw liberalism as a movement which he had a sacred duty to oppose, because the ideal it pursued was not Christian —and because in Italy it was trying to wrest the papal states from the Holy See.

The defence of the temporal power of the popes lasted twenty years —from 1850 to 1870. Bit by bit pieces of the papal states fell to the Piedmontese kingdom, soon to be the kingdom of Italy. In 1870, the start of the Franco-Prussian War meant that the French garrison at Rome had to be withdrawn; the city was then taken by the soldiers of Victor Emmanuel II, who made it the capital of the new Italy. Meanwhile, the pope withdrew into the Vatican, as a voluntary prisoner, rejecting the Law of Guarantees which he was offered, and the ‘Roman question’ began, which took sixty years to solve.

Perhaps it is difficult for many people nowadays, in view of the present position of the pope in the world, to understand why Pius IX put so much effort into trying to hold on to his temporal power. But history does not yield up the truth unless it is seen through the eyes of the people who actually made it. Pius IX defended his rights to the very end because these rights were a precious legacy he had received from his predecessors in the papacy. And, what was more, because those states, which had existed for over one thousand years, were regarded at the time as an essential guarantee of the independence of the popes in the government of the universal Church.

The Church's position on the principles of liberalism was spelt out by Pius IX in his encyclical *Quanta cura* (8 December 1864). This encyclical carried, as an appendix, a 'syllabus', a list of eighty propositions summing up 'modern errors', each of which was the subject of an express condemnation. The document did not contain anything substantially new, for all the errors had been condemned in earlier texts of the magisterium. What was new was the form and the uncompromising accent these propositions seemed to contain now that they were taken and put side by side, now that it was all being spelt out in one document. The 'syllabus' anathematized the absolute autonomy of reason, religious naturalism, indifferentism, materialism, attacks on the family, the defence of divorce, etc. The last proposition in the document, which rejected what some people claimed was the pope's duty to come to terms with progress and 'modern civilization', made liberal critics really tear their garments—and went down very well with traditionalist Catholics.

Leaving aside the political upheavals of the time, Pius IX's pontificate was one of great vitality in the life of the Church. The old religious orders—like the Benedictines of Dom Gueranger; the Dominicans, invigorated by Lacordaire, and the Jesuits, restored by Pius VII—grew and spread quite considerably; and new religious congregations arose, one of the more important of which was the Salesians, of Don Bosco. The clergy generally improved—more vocations and a higher level of observance (also to be seen in a return to a generalized use of ecclesiastical dress). For these secular clergy, the Curé d'Ars, St Jean Marie Vianney, was an example of heroic sanctity in the person of a humble country parish priest. The ordinary faithful, similarly, became actively involved in new apostolic and social welfare initiatives, among the most outstanding of which were the Conferences of St Vincent de Paul, created by Frederic Ozanam.

At the very same time as the waves of anti-religion were lashing the Church, a powerful spiritual impulse was animating nineteenth century Christianity. In the heart of Anglicanism it produced the Oxford movement, which led the finest spirits, eagerly searching for Christian authenticity, to their genuine roots, that is, to the gates of the Church. Some went no further; but others took the decisive step and crossed the threshold of the Church: John Henry Newman was received into the Church (1845), and both he and his fellow Anglican Manning—later on in their lives—were made cardinals. Two other factors which point up the deep religious dimension of Pius IX's pontificate are the definition of the dogma of the immaculate conception (8 December 1854), followed four years later by appearances of the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes, and the holding of the first Vatican council (1869-70). This council, despite its short life (due to political events), approved two very important resolutions: the dogma of papal infallibility, and the constitution *Dei Filius*, which formulated the teaching of the

Church on the central religious question of the nineteenth century —the problem of the relationship between faith and reason.

When it comes to assessing the era of Pius IX, an observer who focuses only on temporal aspects and on political events must surely decide that the Church came out losing: the pope lost the papal states, the Catholic cantons of Switzerland lost out to the Protestants in the Sonderbund war (1847) and the last years of Pius IX were overshadowed by anti-clerical violence and the attacks of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* against the German Catholics. Yet, if one looks at it with supernatural outlook, Pius IX's reign was a very positive one for Christianity and the Church, and it opened the way to the modern papacy. A very important development was the entirely new phenomenon of pope and people of God coming together —something made possible by the development of communications (railways, steamships) which made it much easier for Catholics to make the journey to Rome. Thanks to this and to the speed of communication by telegraph, the pope ceased to be someone remote and distant: he became accessible, and even his misfortunes endeared him to the faithful. It has been said, with good reason, that Pius IX was the first 'loved' pope in modern history. For the first time Catholics looked to and loved the pope as a father, and his lithograph presided, like a family portrait, over Catholic homes around the world.

### **Christianity in a New Kind of Society**

Nineteenth-century liberalism had a political ideology and an economic doctrine. But it had no social conscience, no sense of social responsibility: yet the 'social question' was an obvious fact and one of the new phenomena of the period. The industrial revolution had led to the creation of a new working class —a proletariat — concentrated in industrial areas of large cities. In the heyday of capitalism the conditions of the working class were deplorable: long working hours, low wages, child labour, bad living conditions were some of the many injustices which workers suffered.

Naturally, various different attempts were made to deal with the injustices of the social question. Anarchism, one of whose main authors was the Russian Mikhail Bakunin, proposed it be solved by violence —putting an end to the state and unjust social structures. Various socialist systems, thought up by Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon and others, were soon eclipsed by the 'scientific' socialism of Karl Marx — Marxism —, whose ideological content we cannot discuss here. From the Christian point of view (which is what concerns us), we must remember that Marxism, based on historical materialism and the dialectic of the class struggle, showed itself to be opposed to all religions which it considered to be a cause of alienation ('the opium of the people'), and Marxism was particularly hostile towards the Catholic religion. Atheism or, rather, Marxist anti-theism has done much to dechristianize the working classes —and even society as a whole —in many countries of the world.

The proletariat, living on the outskirts of the larger cities, often included a high proportion of immigrants from rural areas, who had drifted from the farms to work in the new industries. This meant that they left the towns and villages where their roots were and became part of the depersonalized mass of the new working class. This often had negative effects from the religious point of view. For centuries the rural population and the artisans in the cities had been part of the Church's pastoral structures and the traditions of Christian society had imbued their lives. But in the

industrial suburbs where the new proletariat was crowded on top of itself, things were quite different. The industrial workers felt the impact of Marxist and anarchist doctrines which used them as the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle and in some countries filled them with hostility towards the Church and Christianity.

Even from early on in the nineteenth century, some Catholics, concerned about the social question, made various efforts to assuage its effects through charitable and welfare activities. But, in general, Christians were slow to take the problem to heart. It was in some non-Latin countries, less affected by anti-clericalism, that we find the Church getting actively involved in the world of work. Thus, in the United States and in Britain, where there were large numbers of Catholics in the working-class population, the roots of trade unionism were not Marxist but Christian, if anything. It is significant, for example, that Cardinal Manning helped resolve the London dock strike of 1889. In 1864, Von Ketteler, the bishop of Mainz, was already pressing the urgent need ‘to solve the great problem of our time, the social question.’

A large amount of documentation on the social question was assembled by the first Vatican council but the abrupt end of the council prevented it from dealing with this matter. Some years later Pope Leo XIII did tackle it, in his encyclical *Rerum novarum*. The pope was well aware of the gravity of the problem and of the need for effective action by Christians. Trade unions were the best way of going about the protection of workers’ rights. In 1889, Leo had written to Cardinal Manning: ‘Oppose socialist associations with popular Christian ones... Leave the sacristies, go out to the people’. Two years later (15 May 1891) he published his famous encyclical, which rejected on principle the dialectic of class struggle and asked owners and workers to work together in harmony to develop a new society. The pope proclaimed the social responsibility attaching to property, and the just wage, and appealed to the state to stop being a mere spectator (that was the state’s role, as preached by liberalism) and to take control of economic relationships, without going as far as the socialist planned economy. *Rerum novarum* concluded by calling for the creation of Christian-inspired trade unions. Leo XIII’s pontificate marks the beginning of social Catholicism, within which it would soon be possible to identify a corporativist tendency and a (more politicized) progressive democratic tendency.

Leo XIII held to Pius IX’s *non expedit* policy which forbade Italian Catholics to have any involvement in political life. But in other countries the pope tried to shed defensive positions and pursue an intelligent diplomatic policy—which increased the Holy See’s prestige and meant that many old *casus belli* became forgotten. Thus in Germany, for example, the empire called off its *Kulturkampf* and even submitted to the Holy See’s arbitration in its dispute with Spain over the Caroline and Marshall Islands. But it was in French papal relations that Leo’s directive led to important changes in policy.

After the fall of the second empire, an attempt to restore the Bourbons failed; gradually, the Third Republic stabilized, under the control of a republican party which dominated political life from 1877 onwards. French republicanism was deeply hostile to the Church: ‘Clericalism, that is the enemy’ was Gambetta’s war-cry. French republicans, very influenced by the ideology of the Education League, had as prime objectives the fight against religious congregations and the establishment of the ‘lay’ schools (which came in 1882) by Jules Ferry, minister for public education, who on some occasion called his ministry ‘the ministry of souls’. The French Catholics were

almost all of them monarchists, and this republican sectarianism only served to increase their opposition to a régime which they regarded as an enemy of the Church. Leo XIII stepped in to try to solve this problem threatening religious life in France.

Leo first encouraged Catholics to take part in public life. In his encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1 November 1885) he had shown the Church's readiness to be on good terms with any system of government, including republican democratic government. Applying these directives, Leo invited French Catholics to cooperate with the Republic: this was the policy of *ralliement*, announced in a famous toast given by Cardinal Lavigerie in Algeria in 1890. In Spain, also, the integration of Pidal's Catholic Union into the political system there was at one with what Leo XIII was saying about Catholics taking part in political life.

The beginning of the twentieth century coincided with the end of Leo XIII's pontificate, which had lasted so long that it too could be considered as another whole chapter in church history. The elderly pope had gained the respect of the whole world, even though in some quarters, such as France, his efforts at conciliation obtained little response. His encyclicals constituted an important body of church teaching; and his solemn restoration of Thomistic philosophy had a particularly valuable effect of the renewal of Christian thought. But the presence of Catholics in politico-social life also had its risks; and inside the Church itself a new doctrinal crisis was incubating.

## 15. Pius X, Modernist crisis and Vatican Council I

### St Pius X and the Modernist Crisis

The first years of the twentieth century, up to the start of the first world war, will always be remembered as a brilliant and happy period in European history, which was brought to an end by the most useless and absurd of wars. But from the Christian point of view it was not at all without its problems —some due to the hostility of enemies outside; others originating within the Church itself, a Church ruled by the last pope to merit canonization, St Pius X (1903-14).

During those years, anticlericalism was really making itself felt, especially in the Latin countries of Europe —all of which had Catholic majority populations. Portugal, after its proclamation of a republic (1910), expelled religious from the country, separated the Church from the state and confiscated the Church's property. But France was the scene of the most violent attack on the Church.

Radical French governments flaunted their laicism, causing a confrontation with Pius X (aided by his faithful secretary of state Merry del Val). France broke off relations with the Holy See and abrogated its concordat (1905); religious lost the right to teach and many were expelled from the country. Church property was also confiscated which meant that the French church, for the second time in a century, was despoiled of its patrimony and deprived of the state help it had been receiving, since Napoleon's time, in compensation for the previous confiscation. From now on priests and churches were dependent on contribution from church members and the Church's title to ownership of church buildings was no stronger than the fact it occupied them.

But difficulties of this kind, which the Church and Catholics encountered in a number of European countries in the early years of the twentieth century were nothing in comparison with the doctrinal problems which arose inside the Church itself. Already, at the end of the nineteenth century, Leo XIII had denounced 'Americanism', which proposed that, in the light of Catholicism's experience in the United States, the Church in Europe, to be more effective, should adapt itself to the new times and give greater importance to the natural virtues and the active life. But the great doctrinal crisis which hit the Church —it was probably the event of the Pius X period —was the modernist crisis.

Modernism in its origins may have stemmed from the desire of some Catholics to prevent what they saw as the Church's backwardness in the area of historical studies, philosophy and biblical exegesis. Modernism, which was much influenced by liberal Protestantism, tried to rationalize the Christian faith, in order to make it acceptable to the modern mind, freeing it of its deadweight of dogma and even of all supernatural content. The modernists did not try to leave the Church; they wanted to reform it from within, and the positions they took up contained a deliberate ambiguity —in keeping with Tyrrell's saying that Christ had not left men a doctrine but a spirit. Modernism's philosophy was immanentism, which erected 'religious consciousness' as the supreme norm of Christian life. The modernists even designed their own model of a saint, which Fogazzaro used as the hero of his novel *The Saint*.

Biblical exegesis, the favourite ground of the modernists, was cultivated by Alfred Loisy, the most outstanding figure in the movement. As if he were dealing with mere historical texts, Loisy applied to the sacred books the rules of rationalist criticism, not taking account of their being inspired books and not listening to the Church's teaching on interpretation of the Bible, repeated by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*. Among the conclusions Loisy arrived at was that the kingdom which is constantly referred to in the gospel was in Christ's mind a purely eschatological one and that the Church was an unforeseen consequence of the fact that the end of the times, which Jesus mistakenly thought imminent, failed to materialize. Therefore, Jesus Christ was not God nor was his resurrection an historical fact: it was the product of the enthusiasm of the first Christian community.

Modernist doctrines were never presented as an organic whole. Indeed it was not until the encyclical *Pascendi* (which defined Modernism as 'the crossroads of all heresies') that any attempt was made to present it systematically. As far as its spread is concerned, the modernist movement had a considerable following in certain ecclesiastical and intellectual circles in France, Italy and Britain. Pius X closed the door on Modernism. His decree *Lamentabili* and encyclical *Pascendi* (1907) denounced and condemned these doctrines. Teachers in ecclesiastical institutions and many other clerics were required to take an 'anti-modernist' oath—and this certainly had some effect. So, the modernist crisis was contained by the pope's decisive action. That is not to say that Modernism was overpowered; for it appeared again as a very vigorous growth in the middle of the century.

St Pius X also had to deal with some problems arising out of Catholics' involvement in public life. He dissolved the '*Opera dei Congressi*,' then very linked with Romolo Murri, on the grounds of its over-involvement in temporal affairs, and put a stop to the activities of the 'democratic priests' in France, where he also condemned Marc Sagnier's *Sillon* movement. But this did not mean that the Church did not still encourage Catholics to engage in politics—as can be seen from the fact that in Italy the *non expedit* was virtually lifted when Catholics were allowed to vote in elections from 1913 forward.

The pre-war world received, above all, great spiritual benefit from Pius X's pontificate. The interests of God was the supreme criterion that guided his action in all spheres. It led him to be courageous in his relationships with France and his struggle with Modernism—though some people felt he was not humanly prudent enough. His concern for the holiness of priests, the issuing of a new catechism, the granting of holy communion to children once they had reached the age of reason: these were other signs of his pastoral zeal. It was a zeal which led him to try to improve the life of the Church by reforming its canon law. Under Pius X, the Church adopted the modern practice of codification of law, and it was on his authority that Cardinal Gasparri began the work which was completed by Benedict XV's promulgation of the first Code of Canon Law (1917).

### **The Age of Totalitarianism**

The first world war started on 4 August 1914. Two weeks later Pope Pius X died (20 August)—a death symbolic of the millions of men who were to die during the four years of the war. The new pope, Benedict XV (3 September 1914–22 January 1922) could do little more during those years than try to conciliate the belligerent parties.

The fighting came to an end in November 1918, thanks to Allied victory over the central empires. The Holy See was excluded from the conference table at Versailles. A century earlier, when Europe was being sorted out after the Napoleonic wars, the Holy See, which still had the papal states, had been present at the Congress of Vienna.

The treaty of Versailles did not bring peace: it simply arranged a truce which lasted twenty years. Ignorance of European affairs on the part of the US President, Woodrow Wilson, and France's ancestral resentment of the Habsburgs (now combined, in Clemenceau, with his personal anti-Catholicism) led, in my view, to the grave political mistake of dismembering the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thus, while allowing northern Germany to survive, centred on protestant Prussia, catholic Germany was dismantled —the Danubian state, the European centre of gravity comprising Germans, Magyars and Slavs. A catholic nation, Poland, was reborn out of its ashes, while another catholic people, Ireland, also achieved a substantial degree of independence at around this time. But the most important event of all, destined to condition the whole history of the world in the twentieth century, was the Russian revolution of 1917. After a Bolshevik victory in the civil war, the USSR burst onto the world stage as the first Marxist state ever, officially atheistic, doctrinally anti-Christian and based on a materialistic view of man and of life.

The inter-war years practically coincided with the pontificate of Pius XI. It was quite a well-defined period of Christianity. The prestige of the Holy See grew enormously and its international personality was strengthened by the signing of many concordats, some with countries created after the first world war. Shortly after 1918 relations between France and the Holy See were normalized (not that there would be no further trouble in the future). But the main event in the area of relations between the Holy See and states was the signing of the Lateran treaty, which brought the Roman question to an end. The realism of Benito Mussolini, the head of the Italian government, and the good will of Pius XI, managed to solve this problem once and for all, to the relief of the very many who were both Italian patriots and faithful Catholics. The agreement, signed on 11 February 1929, created the Vatican City State, the minimum territory necessary for ensuring the independence of the Holy See. It also included a concordat which, like that made in 1933 with Hitler's Germany, survived the disappearance, in the second world war, of the political régime which subscribed to it.

There were other good signs. The missions in Asia and Africa made great progress; there were many conversions and the new Christian communities were maturing fast: a good indication of this was the growth of a native clergy which steadily took over from missionaries. An important date in the history of the missions was 28 October 1926, when Pius XI ordained six Chinese bishops in St Peter's.

The inter-war years were the hey-day of Catholic Action. Pius XI gave great importance to the lay apostolate and strove to fit it inside a revamped Catholic Action. As a multi-form apostolic movement Catholic Action had been in existence for some time and had been keenly supported by St Pius X. Pius XI now gave it a centralized and hierarchical structure, with a view to its acting as a Christianizing influence in a society which was becoming more and more secularized. He conceived Catholic Action as 'the participation of the organized laity in the hierarchical apostolate of the Church . . . to bring about the universal kingdom of Christ.'

The institution of the feast of Christ the King in the encyclical *Quas primas* (1925) was an expression of this ideal of the social kingship of Jesus Christ, a core element in Pius X teaching. His encyclical on marriage *Casti connubii* (30 December 1930) and *Quadragesimo anno* (15 May 1931), updating church teaching on social matters, must both be seen in this light.

Although this was a period of great Christian development, a whole wave of bloody persecution affected the Church in a number of countries. In Russia, the implantation of communism led to all sorts of anti-religious violence, affecting mainly the Orthodox Church. But even countries with catholic majorities saw persecutions far worse than that produced by the anticlericalism of the nineteenth century: what happened in Mexico and especially in Spain during its civil war (1936-9) was on a scale unheard of before in modern times. The seven thousand Spanish priests liquidated out of hatred of religion —that is, for the simple fact of being priests —fill an unforgettable page of Christian history, independent of the political rights and wrongs of the Spanish situation.

In the third decade of the century the threat from pagan or atheist totalitarianism grew ever greater. Two documents of Pius XI's magisterium show quite clearly what the catholic Church's attitude was to the great totalitarian ideologies of the time —in March 1937 the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, against national socialism and its racist doctrines, and, a few days later, *Divini Redemptoris*, which condemned atheistic Marxism, the official creed of communist Russia. These two totalitarianisms brought the world to the second world war, whose outcome still painfully affects the Christian destinies of people in our own time.

### **The Politico-Religious Consequences of the Second World War**

The second world war (1939-45) lasted longer and was on a greater scale than the first. It extended from one end of the globe to the other, and advances in technology increased the destructive power of armaments and caused millions of deaths. And far from the battlefields, millions more lost their lives in aerial bombardments or underwent tremendous suffering and death in concentration camps or the forced labour camps invented by the totalitarian regimes, a phenomenon without precedent in countries with a Christian civilization.

Peace did not bring the sufferings of civil populations to an end —particularly in central Europe. The new political frontiers and the division of the old continent into zones of influence obliged huge numbers of families to leave their homelands and to emigrate, penniless, in search of a new country which would take them in. Migration within Europe or from Europe to America reached a scale never before known: one would have to go back to the barbarian invasions to find anything like it —but with this difference: that the barbarians migrated of their own free will.

The fascist totalitarian regimes were defeated in the second world war; but communist totalitarianism was not: due to a curious inversion of the original line-up of the conflict, the USSR, from 1941, fought on the side which won —that of the western democracies. The partition of the world agreed on at Yalta by the Allied leaders meant that half of eastern Europe was placed under the control of the Soviet Union. The result was, very soon, communist regimes were forcibly imposed on a number of European countries, while others —this happened to the Baltic countries —simply

ceased to exist as nations, being integrated into the USSR as constituent republics. Eastern Europe after world war two was a land without liberty where Christianity and the Church lived in a state of oppression. Cardinals Mindszenty, Stepinac, Wyszynski and Tomasek symbolized in the modern world the heroism of the great defenders of the faith.

The spread of communism also affected Asia and Africa. In China, where Christianity had been flourishing, Catholics were forbidden all communication with the Holy See and a schismatic church was imposed on them. Other Marxist states placed similar obstacles in the way of freedom of action of the catholic Church. But Christianity experienced a huge growth in the countries of the Third World, free from Marxist control. A native episcopacy and native clergy is now the rule in most of the new countries and this has meant that the inevitable tensions created by the de-colonization process did not adversely effect the Catholic Church: it is regarded by the peoples of these countries as being theirs and not something foreign.

This advance towards greater real universality of the Church was particularly noticeable during Pius XII's pontificate (2 March 1939 - 9 October 1958). Pius took a particularly important step when in 1946 he made his first appointments of cardinals. Since his election, and due to the war, he had not appointed a single new cardinal; now there were thirty-five vacancies in a college of cardinals which then had seventy places. In his first appointments Pius XII created four Italian cardinals, and twenty-eight from other countries, thus bringing to an end a period of centuries during which Italians had always been in an absolute majority in the sacred college.

Pius XII was an indefatigable teacher; in his many addresses he dealt with all aspects of Christian life and morality in the new circumstances of the world. From the doctrinal point of view his encyclical *Humani generis* (12 August 1950) was particularly interesting; it echoed the teaching of St Pius X at a time when the first symptoms of neo-Modernism were beginning to be noticed. Pius XII was succeeded by John XXIII (28 October 1958 - June 1963), whose pontificate, though short, was important: within three months of his election, on the feast of the conversion of St Paul, 1959, he announced his intention of holding an ecumenical council. On 25 December 1961 the bull *Humanae salutis* officially convoked the Second Vatican Council. On the same day he also announced the revision of the Code of Canon Law.

## 16. Vatican II and the Church in the Modern World

‘To foster the spread of the catholic faith and a healthy renewal of the customs of the Christian people, and to adapt church discipline to the circumstances of our time’: these were, in the words of the bull of convocation, the goals the second Vatican council would pursue. Opened by John XXIII on 11 October 1962, only the first sessions were held in the lifetime of this pope. His successor, Paul VI (21 June 1963 - 6 August 1978), governed the Church during the three later stages held in the following three years, up to the closure of the council on 8 December 1965. The council did an enormous amount of work on a wide range of documents —dogmatic constitutions, decrees, declarations and a pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world. The second Vatican council did not make any dogmatic definitions, so therefore its decrees do not have the prerogative of infallibility; but they do form acts of the solemn magisterium of the Church and they require external and internal obedience of the faithful.

The council outlined an important programme for Christian renewal, which can bring great good to the Church. But the period within which it was held also witnessed the effects of a deep crisis in ecclesiastical life which took the form of abuses committed in the name of what was claimed to be ‘the spirit of the council’ but which had nothing to do with the genuine spirit of the council or with the letter of its documents. Without going into details about the recent past, it may be said that there was a violent neo-modernist explosion in the life of the Church, not limited as earlier Modernism was to a relatively few clerical sectors in Europe, but affecting almost the whole world. An eclipse of the theological virtue of faith and a loss of the eternal meaning of man’s life seem to be at the root of this crisis, which tends to distort the nature of redemption and, therefore, of the Church’s mission in the world. For neo-modernist innovators, the redemption does not have as its main purpose the eternal salvation of man, by breaking the bonds of sin, but rather the liberation of mankind from earthly oppressions and enslavements. Therefore, the Church’s primary role is in the temporal sphere —to fight against the unjust structures of society and the inequalities which exist among people and nations and social classes (this is the basic thesis of ‘liberation theology’).

In the so-called ‘free world’, economic development after the second world war has seen the growth in the richer countries of a new consumer society which has shown a remarkable capacity to undermine the Christian spirit. The thrill of consumerism has sent a wave of practical materialism over people in all levels of society, a pleasure-seeking urge to enjoy earthly things in an unlimited way, forgetting all about eternal realities —in other words a materialistic view of human life, which sees nothing further than this present life. Among the more characteristic expressions of this phenomenon are a decrease in religious practice in traditionally Christian countries; many marriages in crisis and a crisis in the very institution of the family, with it becoming more and more the victim of divorce; attacks on the right to life of the more defenceless; and increasing violence in society.

The supreme magisterium of the Church has untiringly proclaimed catholic teaching in all its integrity. Among the more important documents of Paul VI special mention

should be made of his encyclical *Humanae vitae* (25 July 1968) on problems of marriage and the family, and the ‘Credo’ of the people of God (30 June 1968), where the basic propositions of the Catholic faith are re-stated, with special emphasis on those truths which recent errors have tended to cloud.

But in the ups and downs of these new times, the Holy Spirit continues to direct the history of mankind, which will end with the second coming of Jesus Christ. A clear instance of this action of the Spirit who renews the face of the earth of the birth of Opus Dei, a remarkable pastoral and ascetical phenomenon raised up by God to serve the Church and contribute to the eternal and temporal good of mankind. Opus Dei was founded by Saint Josemaria Escrivá de Balaguer on 2 October 1928. Today it is to be found on all five continents. The universal call to holiness and personal sanctification through ordinary work form the core of Opus Dei’s message; and this good news of the universality of the Christian vocation, which so surprised many people when its founder was spreading his message, has become, after Vatican II, part of the general teaching of the catholic Church. Precisely in application of the conciliar documents, the Holy See established Opus Dei as a personal prelature (28 November 1982).

In the closing years of the twentieth century, Christianity is reasserting its universality more and more. Today the majority of Catholics are not to be found in the old Europe and North America but in the young nations of the Third World. To the astonishment of all, there occurred on 16 October 1978 an event of enormous significance: following on the brief pontificate of John Paul I, Cardinal Wojtyła, archbishop of Cracow, was elected pope. For the first time in over four and a half centuries, the new pope was not an Italian; for the first time in the history of the Church a Slav, John Paul II, occupied the See of Peter. This historic event has had immense consequences, easy to discern now that he held his office for almost fifteen years. Starting in 1989 a dramatic series of developments (impossible to foresee even a few years earlier) led to the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, and the citizens of those nations (and of all the countries which made up the Soviet Union) have begun in fact and in law to enjoy religious freedom. That extensive part of Christian Europe can now look to the future with immense hope, despite the serious economic problems it is experiencing. John Paul II has played a leading role in this great process of liberation; moreover, his ‘care for all the churches’ has led him to undertake countless pastoral journeys to the five continents, proclaiming the Gospel message to all the peoples of the contemporary world.

The Catholic Church —towards which all Christians and all men of good will look in hope —is like that lamp described in the Gospel, set on high, spreading its light of Truth and fulfilling the mission of salvation given it by its divine Founder. Now that freedom has returned to many places where Christians of this century underwent persecution, the Church has to meet new challenges from other enemies already mentioned —practical materialism, hedonism, and the pursuit of material well-being as the supreme goal of life. The Church today is seen as the great defender of human life, of man’s dignity as a son of God, of human freedom, and of marriage and the family. In the world as it approaches the twenty-first century, Christianity looks —as it looked in its very earliest years —like the religion of the disciples of Jesus Christ who, with the help of grace, strive to respond to their Christian vocation and to spend their life faithfully following their Lord and Master.

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*In its documents the second Vatican council outlined an important programme for Christian renewal:, which has nothing to do with the abuses committed in the name of a so-called 'conciliar spirit.' The world today suffers from a deep crisis in spiritual values, partly due to the consumer society's demands for higher standards of living and the loss of the supernatural meaning of life, and a trend which sees Christianity and the Church as having a primordially earthly role. The Church has to be, at this time, the defender of such essential values as the right to life, the dignity of the human person and the unity of the family. In the human society at the end of the twentieth century, the Church looks —as it looked in its very earliest times —like the religion of the disciples of Jesus Christ who, with the help of grace, strive to respond to the calling they have received from him.*

## List of Ecumenical Councils.

1. Council of Nicaea (325) lasted two months and twelve days. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were present. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, assisted as legate of Pope Sylvester. The Emperor Constantine was also present. To this council we owe The Creed (*Symbolum*) Of Nicaea, defining against Arius the true Divinity of the Son of God (*homoousios*), and the fixing of the date for keeping Easter (against the Quartodecimans).
2. First Council of Constantinople (381), under Pope Damasus and the Emperor Theodosius I, was attended by 150 bishops. It was directed against the followers of Macedonius, who impugned the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. To the above-mentioned Nicene creed it added the clauses referring to the Holy Spirit (*qui simul adoratur*) and all that follows to the end.
3. Council of Ephesus (431), of more than 200 bishops, presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria representing Pope Celestine I, defined the true personal unity of Christ, declared Mary the Mother of God (*theotokos*) against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and renewed the condemnation of Pelagius.
4. Council of Chalcedon (451), 150 bishops under Pope Leo the Great and the Emperor Marcian defined the two natures (Divine and human) in Christ against Eutyches, who was excommunicated.
5. Second Council of Constantinople (553), of 165 bishops under Pope Vigilius and Emperor Justinian I, condemned the errors of Origen and certain writings (The Three Chapters) of Theodoret, of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia and of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa; it further confirmed the first four general councils, especially that of Chalcedon whose authority was contested by some heretics.
6. Third Council of Constantinople (680-681), under Pope Agatho and the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, was attended by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and of Antioch, 174 bishops, and the emperor. It put an end to Monothelism by defining two wills in Christ, the Divine and the human, as two distinct principles of operation. It anathematized Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, Macarius, and all their followers.
7. Second Council of Nicaea (787) was convoked by Emperor Constantine VI and his mother Irene, under Pope Adrian I, and was presided over by the legates of Pope Adrian; it regulated the veneration of holy images. Between 300 and 367 bishops assisted.
8. Fourth Council of Constantinople (869), under Pope Adrian II and Emperor Basil numbering 102 bishops, 3 papal legates, and 4 patriarchs, consigned to the flames the Acts of an irregular council (*conciliabulum*) brought together by Photius against Pope Nicholas and Ignatius the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople; it condemned Photius who had unlawfully seized the patriarchal dignity. The Photian Schism, however, triumphed in the Greek Church, and no other general council took place in the East.

9 First Lateran Council (1123) held at Rome under Pope Callistus II. About 900 bishops and abbots assisted. It abolished the right claimed by lay princes, of investiture with ring and crosier to ecclesiastical benefices and dealt with church discipline and the recovery of the Holy Land from the infidels

10 Second Lateran Council (1139) held at Rome under Pope Innocent II with an attendance of about 1000 prelates and the Emperor Conrad. Its object was to put an end to the errors of Arnold of Brescia

11. Third Lateran Council (1179) took place under Pope Alexander III, Frederick I being emperor. There were 302 bishops present. It condemned the Albigenses and Waldenses and issued numerous decrees for the reformation of morals.

12. Fourth Lateran Council (1215), under Innocent III. There were present the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, 71 archbishops, 412 bishops, and 800 abbots the Primate of the Maronites, and St. Dominic. It issued an enlarged creed (symbol) against the Albigenses (*Firmiter credimus*), condemned the Trinitarian errors of Abbot Joachim, and published 70 important reformatory decrees. This is the most important council of the Middle Ages, it marks the culminating point of ecclesiastical life and papal power.

13. First Council of Lyons (1245). Innocent IV presided the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Aquileia (Venice), 140 bishops, Baldwin II, Emperor of the East, and St. Louis, King of France, assisted. It excommunicated and deposed Emperor Frederick II and directed a new crusade, under the command of St. Louis, against the Saracens and Mongols.

14. Council of Lyons (1274) with Pope Gregory X, the Patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople, 15 cardinals, 500 bishops, and more than 1000 other dignitaries. It effected a temporary reunion of the Greek Church with Rome. The word *filioque* was added to the symbol of Constantinople and means were sought for recovering Palestine from the Turks. It also laid down the rules for papal elections.

15. Council of Vienne in France (1311-1313) by order of Clement V, the first of the Avignon popes. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, 300 bishops (114 according to some authorities), and 3 kings -- Philip IV of France, Edward II of England, and James II of Aragon -- were present. The synod dealt with the crimes and errors imputed to the Knights Templars, the Fraticelli, the Beghards, and the Beguines, with projects of a new crusade, the reformation of the clergy, and the teaching of Oriental languages in the universities.

16. Council of Constance (1414-1418), was held during the great Schism of the West, with the object of ending the divisions in the Church. It only became legitimate when Gregory XI had formally convoked it. Owing to this circumstance it succeeded in putting an end to the schism by the election of Pope Martin V, which the Council of Pisa (1403) had failed to accomplish on account of its illegality. The rightful pope confirmed the former decrees of the synod against Wyclif and Hus. This council is thus only ecumenical in its last sessions (XLII-XLV inclusive) and with respect to the decrees of earlier sessions approved by Martin V.

17. Council of Basle (1431), Eugene IV being pope, and Sigismund Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Its object was the religious pacification of Bohemia. Quarrels with the pope having arisen, the council was transferred first to Ferrara (1438), then to Florence (1439), where a short-lived union with the Greek Church was effected, the Greeks accepting the council's definition of controverted points. The Council of Basle is only ecumenical till the end of the twenty-fifth session, and of its decrees Eugene IV approved only such as dealt with the extirpation of heresy, the peace of Christendom, and the reform of the Church, and which at the same time did not derogate from the rights of the Holy See.

18. Fifth Lateran Council, sat from 1512 to 1517 under Popes Julius II and Leo X, the emperor being Maximilian I. Fifteen cardinals and about eighty archbishops and bishops took part in it. Its decrees are chiefly disciplinary. A new crusade against the Turks was also planned, but came to naught, owing to the religious upheaval in Germany caused by Luther.

19. Council of Trent, lasted eighteen years (1545-1563) under five popes: Paul III, Julius III, Marcellus II, Paul IV and Pius IV, and under the Emperors Charles V and Ferdinand. There were present 5 cardinal legates of the Holy See, 3 patriarchs, 33 archbishops, 235 bishops, 7 abbots, 7 generals of monastic orders, 160 doctors of divinity. It was convoked to examine and condemn the errors promulgated by Luther and other Reformers, and to reform the discipline of the Church. Of all councils it lasted longest, issued the largest number of dogmatic and reformatory decrees, and produced the most beneficial results.

20. First Vatican Council, was summoned to the Vatican by Pius IX. It met 8 December, 1869, and lasted till 18 July, 1870, when it was adjourned; it is still (1908) unfinished. There were present 6 archbishop-princes, 49 cardinals, 11 patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, 28 abbots, 29 generals of orders, in all 803. Besides important canons relating to the Faith and the constitution of the Church, the council decreed the infallibility of the pope when speaking *ex cathedra*, i.e. when as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.

21. Second Vatican Council, Opened by John XXIII on 11 October 1962, only the first sessions were held in the lifetime of this pope. His successor, Paul VI (21 June 1963 - 6 August 1978), governed the Church during the three later stages held in the following three years, up to the closure of the council on 8 December 1965. The second Vatican council did not make any dogmatic definitions.

## Chronological Table

Dates	Events
<b>1<sup>st</sup> century</b>	
8-4 B.C.	Birth of Christ.
14 A.D.	Death of Augustus.
14-37	Tiberius, emperor.
April 30	Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
34	Martyrdom of St Stephen.
34	Conversion of St Paul.
44	Martyrdom of Apostle James the Greater.
c.50	Council of Jerusalem.
54-68	Nero, emperor.
58	Imprisonment of St Paul in Jerusalem.
58-60	St Paul's captivity in Caesarea.
61-3	St Paul's captivity and release in Rome.
63-5	St Paul's last apostolic journey to Spain and the east.
64	Burning of Rome, persecution of the Christians and probable martyrdom of St Peter.
66-7	Second trial and martyrdom of St Paul in Rome.
70	Siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.
95	Domitian's persecution; St John exiled on the island of Patmos, writes the Apocalypse.
98-100	St John, the last Apostle, dies in Ephesus.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> century</b>	
98-117	Trajan, emperor.
110(?)	Martyrdom in Rome of St Ignatius of Antioch.
117-38	Hadrian, emperor.
140	The beginning of the crisis of Christian Gnosticism.
138-61	Antoninus Pius, emperor.
155(?)	Martyrdom of St Polycarp, disciple of St John.
161-80	Marcus Aurelius, emperor.
180(?)	Foundation of the catechetical school of Alexandria.
c.185	St Irenaeus' <i>Against Heresies</i> .
193-211	Septimus Severus, emperor.
197	Tertullian's <i>Apology</i> .
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> century</b>	
203	Origen begins to direct the school of Alexandria.
212	Caracalla grants Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire, with the exception of the <i>dediticii</i> , people who have surrendered unconditionally.
222-35	Alexander Severus, emperor.
c.232	Origen, expelled from Alexandria, founds the school of Caesarea in Palestine.
235-84	The period of 'military anarchy' in the Roman empire.
250	Decius' persecution: the <i>lapsi</i>

257-9 Valerian's persecution: the martyrdom of Pope Sixtus II and Lawrence the Deacon, in Rome; and of Bishop Cyrian of Carthage and Bishop Fructuosus of Tarragona.

284-305 Diocletian, emperor: the tetrarchy.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> century**

303-05 The great persecution by Diocletian.

306-37 Constantine, emperor (total sovereignty from 324).

311 Galerius' edict of toleration of Christians.

313 Edict of Milan granting religious freedom.

325 The first council of Nicaea (first ecumenical council) condemns Arianism.

328-73 Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.

330 Constantinople, the new capital of the empire.

337-79 Pro-Arian emperors, successors of Constantine.

378-95 Theodosius, emperor.

380-400 Conversion of the Visigoths and other Germanic peoples to Arianism.

381 First council of Constantinople (second ecumenical council).

395 Arcadius and Honorius, emperors: division of the empire into east and west.

397 Death of St Ambrose, bishop of Milan.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> century**

406 The barbarians cross the Rhine and invade Gaul.

413-27 St Augustine writes *The City of God*.

419-507 Tolosanian Visigoth kingdom in Gaul and Iberia.

420 Death of St Jerome, in Bethelhem.

430 Death of St Augustine, in Hippo.

431 Council of Ephesus (third ecumenical): definition of Mary's divine maternity, and condemnation of Nestorius.

440-61 Pontificate of St Leo I, the Great.

451 Council of Chalcedon (fourth ecumenical): definition of the two natures of Christ and condemnation of Monophysitism.

457/61 Death of St Patrick: Ireland: Christian.

493 Ostrogoth kingdom of Italy.

497-8 Baptism of Clovis and conversion of the Franks to Christianity.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> century**

507 Victory of the Franks over the Visigoths: the end of the Tolosanian kingdom.

527-65 Justinian, emperor of the east.

535-54 Gothic war in Italy.

553 Second council of Constantinople (fifth ecumenical): the condemnation of the Three Chapters.

560-70 The conversion to Catholicism of the Suevian kingdom of Galicia: St Martin of Braga.

568-774 The Lombard kingdom of Italy

589 The third council of Toledo: conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism.

590-604 Pontificate of St Gregory the Great.

597 Start of the evangelization of Anglo-Saxon England.

### **7<sup>th</sup> century**

610-41	Heraclius, emperor of the east.
622	The <i>Hegira</i> , the beginning of the Islamic era.
632	Death of Muhammad.
633-702	The fourth to the eighteenth councils of Toledo.
638	Jerusalem taken by the Arabs.
642	Alexandria taken by the Arabs.
680-1	Third council of Constantinople (sixth ecumenical): doctrine of the two wills of Christ and condemnation of monothelitism.
698	Carthage is taken by the Arabs.

### **8<sup>th</sup> century**

711-12	Conquest of Spain by the Arabs; destruction of the Visigoth kingdom.
717-18	Leo III the Syrian defeats the Arabs at Constantinople and saves the Byzantine empire.
726-80	First period of iconoclasm.
732	Victory of Charles Martel over the Arabs in Poitiers.
751	Start of the Carolingian monarchy in France.
752-7	Beginning of the states of the Church.
754	Martyrdom of St Boniface, apostle of Germany.
768-814	Kingdom of Charlemagne.
774	Suppression of the Lombard kingdom in Italy.
787	Second council of Nicaea (seventh ecumenical): doctrine about the veneration of sacred images.
800	Charlemagne is crowned emperor in Rome.

### **9<sup>th</sup> century**

815-43	Second period of iconoclasm.
814-40	Reign of Louis the Pious.
840-77	Reign of Charles the Bald.
843	Treaty of Verdun: division of the Carolingian empire.
847-86	Patriarchs Ignatius and Photius twice in sequence occupy the see of Constantinople.
858-67	Pontificate of Nicholas I.
863-85	Missionary work of St Cyril (+ 869) and Methodius.
864	Baptism of Prince Boris and the Bulgar problem.
869-70	Fourth council of Constantinople (eight ecumenical).
891-96	Pope Formosus: state of the Iron Age of the papacy.

### **10<sup>th</sup> century**

904-54	Rome dominated by the Tusculani family.
909	Foundation of Cluny monastery.
929	Martyrdom of St Wenceslaus, duke of Bohemia.
936-73	Otto I, king of Germany.
962	Otto I crowned by Pope John XII: restoration of the western Christian empire.
966	Baptism of Prince Mieszko and conversion of Poland.
985	Baptism of Gézo, duke of the Hungarians.
988	Baptism of Prince Vladimir and Christianization of Russia.
1000	St Stephen, crowned king of Hungary.

## 11<sup>th</sup> century

1002	Death of emperor Otto III; a new period of Iron Age of the papacy.
1039-56	Henry III, German emperor, takes control of papal elections.
1046-57	The German popes, forerunners of the Gregorian reform.
1054	Michael Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople: start of the eastern schism.
1056-1106	Henry IV, German emperor.
1073-85	Pontificate of St Gregory VII, which gives its name to the Gregorian reform.
c. 1075	The investiture struggle begins.
1095	In Clermont Urban II preaches the first crusade.
1099	The crusaders take Jerusalem.

## 12<sup>th</sup> century

1115-53	St Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux.
1119	Foundation of the Templars.
c. 1120	The Hospitallers become a military order.
1122	Concordat of Worms: the end of the investiture struggle.
1123	First council of the Lateran (ninth ecumenical).
1139	Second council of the Lateran (tenth ecumenical).
c. 1140	<i>Decretum</i> of Gratian.
1152-90	Frederick Barbarossa, emperor.
1159-81	Pontificate of Alexander III.
1159(?)	Peter Lombard's <i>Book of Sentences</i> .
1179	Third council of the Lateran (eleventh ecumenical).
1187	Jerusalem falls again into Islamic hands.
1198-1216	Pontificate of Innocent III.

## 13<sup>th</sup> century

1204	Fourth crusade: Constantinople is taken and a Latin empire is created.
1209-29	Crusade against the Albigenses.
1215	Fourth council of the Lateran (twelfth ecumenical).
1215	Innocent III gives papal sanction to the University of Paris.
1216	Honorius III approves the Order of Preachers (Dominicans).
1223	Solemn approval by Honorius III of the Franciscan order.
1226	Death of St Francis of Assisi.
1226-70	St Louis, king of France.
1229	Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1220-50) regains Jerusalem.
1234	The <i>Decretales</i> of Gregory IX.
1244	Jerusalem is finally lost.
1245	First council of Lyons (thirteenth ecumenical).
1261	The end of the Latin empire of Constantinople.
1266-73	St Thomas Aquinas writes the <i>Summa Theologiae</i> .
1274	Second council of Lyons (fourteenth ecumenical).
1285-1314	Philip the Fair, king of France.
1294-1303	Pontificate of Boniface VIII.

## 14<sup>th</sup> century

1309	The popes establish themselves at Avignon.
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1311-12	Council of Vienne (fifteenth ecumenical): the Templars are suppressed.
1324	Marsilius of Padua publishes his <i>Defensor pacis</i> .
1347-53	The Black Death.
1347	Death of William of Ockham.
1377	Pope Gregory XI returns from Avignon to Rome.
1378-1417	The western schism: Christendom divided in two obediences.
1382	Condemnation of Wyclif.

### **15<sup>th</sup> century**

1409	Council of Pisa: election of a third pope.
1414-18	Council of Constance (sixteenth ecumenical).
1415	Death of John Huss at the stake.
1417	The end of the western schism: Martin V, the only pope.
1431-49	Council of Basle-Ferrara-Florence (seventeenth ecumenical).
1439	Union of the Greeks with the catholic Church at the council of Florence.
1453	Constantinople falls to the Turks: the end of the Christian empire of the east.
c. 1455	Invention of printing.
1474-1516	Reign of the catholic monarchs Isabella (+ 1504) and Ferdinand.
1492	The end of the Spanish reconquest and the discovery of America.

### **16<sup>th</sup> century**

1509-47	Henry VIII, king of England.
1512-17	Fifth council of the Lateran (eighteenth ecumenical).
1515-47	Francis I, king of France.
1516-56	Charles I of Spain and (from 1519) V of Germany.
1517	Start of the Lutheran revolt.
1520	Excommunication of Luther.
1524	Foundation of the Theatines.
1530	The Confession of Augsburg, composed by Melanchthon.
1533	The English schism.
1536	Death of Erasmus of Rotterdam.
1537	Foundation of the Society of Jesus.
1538	Foundation of the University of Santo Domingo, the first in the new world.
1541-64	Calvin's theocratic government of Geneva.
1545-63	Council of Trent (nineteenth ecumenical).
1546	Death of Luther.
1555	The peace of Augsburg sanctions religious division in Germany.
1556-98	Philip II, king of Spain.
1558-1603	Elizabeth I consolidates the reformation in England.
1562-98	Wars of religion in France.
1566-72	Pontificate of St Pius V.
1571	Battle of Lepanto.
1582	Death of St Teresa of Jesus.
1595	Death of St Philip Neri.
1598	Henry IV of France guarantees toleration to the Huguenots (edict of Nantes).

### 17<sup>th</sup> century

1618-48	The Thirty Years War.
1619	The Pilgrim Fathers arrive in America.
1622	Death of St Francis de Sales.
1624-42	Richelieu's government of France.
1633	Trial of Galileo.
1643-1715	Louis XIV, king of France.
1648	The treaty of Westphalia confirms the religious division of Europe.
1649-58	Cromwell in power in England.
1653-1713	The Janisnist crisis – from the condemnation of the five propositions to the bull <i>Unigenitus Dei filius</i> .
1660-89	The Stuart restoration in England and Ireland: Charles II and James II.
1682	Gallicanism: the four Organic Articles.
1682-1725	Peter the Great, czar of Russia.
1683	John III Sobieski, king of Poland, defeats the Turks and saves Vienna.
1685	Revocation of the edict of Nantes.
1688-9	The 'glorious revolution' in England: William of Orange, William III.

### 18<sup>th</sup> century

1702-13	The war of the Spanish succession.
1715-74	Louis XV, king of France.
1738	Pope Clement XII condemns Freemasonry.
1740-58	Pontificate of Benedict XIV.
1740-80	Maria Theresa, ruler of the Augsburg dominions.
1740-86	Frederick II, king of Prussia.
1751-72	Publication of the <i>Encyclopédie</i> .
1762-96	Catherine II, empress of Russia.
1765-90	Joseph II of Austria: Josephinism.
1772-95	The first, second and third partitions of Poland.
1773	Pope Clement XIV suppresses the Society of Jesus.
1776	Declaration of independence of the United States of America.
1778	Death of Voltaire and Rousseau.
1781	Kant publishes his <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> .
1786	Absolutism: the synod of Pistoia.
1789	Start of the French revolution.
1790	The 'civil constitution of the clergy.'
1792-4	Abolition of the monarchy in France; execution of Louis XVI; the Terror.
1799	Pope Pius VI (1775-99) dies a prisoner in France.
1800-23	Pontificate of Pius VII.
1799-1804	Napoleon, first consul.

### 19<sup>th</sup> century

1801	Concordat between the Holy See and France.
1804-14	The Napoleonic empire.
1810-25	Spanish colonies on the continent of south and central America gain independence.
1814-15	The congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance.

1814-30	Restoration of the Bourbons in France.
1829	Roman Catholic Relief Act, in United Kingdom – ‘Catholic emancipation’ – won by Daniel O’Connell.
1830	The July revolutions: Louis-Philippe, king of the French (1830-48); Belgium becomes independent of Holland.
1831-46	Pontificate of Gregory XVI.
1832	Encyclical <i>Mirari vos</i> against liberalism.
1837-1901	Victoria, queen of the United Kingdom.
1833-45	The Oxford movement: conversion of Newman to Catholicism (1845).
1846-78	Pontificate of Pius IX.
1848	The revolution of 1848. The exile of Pius IX. Karl Marx publishes the <i>Communist Manifesto</i> .
1848-1916	Francis Joseph, emperor of Austria.
1849	The Roman republic.
1852-70	Second French empire: Napoleon III.
1859	Foundation of the Salesians by St John Bosco.
1864	The ‘Syllabus of Errors.’
1869-70	First council of the Vatican (twentieth ecumenical): definition of papal infallibility.
1870	Rome captured and becomes capital of the kingdom of Italy. The end of the papal states.
1870-71	Franco-Prussian war: the new German empire.
1871-79	The <i>Kulturkampf</i> in Germany.
1878-1903	Pontificate of Leo XIII.
1880-82	Secularization of French education system.
1883	Death of Karl Marx.
1888-1918	Kaiser William II.
1891	Encyclical <i>Rerum novarum</i> , on the social question.
<b>20<sup>th</sup> century</b>	
1903-14	Pontificate of St Pius X.
c. 1903-07	Modernism and its condemnation.
1904-05	France breaks with the Holy See; Church and state are separated.
1914-18	First world war.
1914-22	Pontificate of Benedict XV.
1917	Russian revolution: Lenin.
1919	Treaty of Versailles: a new map of Europe.
1922-39	Pontificate of Pius XI.
1922-43	Fascism in Italy: Mussolini.
1928	Foundation of Opus Dei.
1929	The Lateran treaty brings the Roman question to an end.
1937	Encyclicals condemning racist national socialism and atheistic communism.
1939-45	Second world war: defeat of fascist regimes and subsequent division of the world into two, the western democracies and the communist block.
1939-58	Pontificate of Pius XII.
1949	The People’s Republic of China.
1958-63	Pontificate of John XXIII.
1960	High point of decolonization process in Africa.
1962-65	Second council of the Vatican (twenty-first ecumenical).

1963-78	Pontificate of Paul VI.
1978	Pontificate of John Paul I (26 August-28 September).
1978	Start of Pontificate of John Paul II (16 October)
1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall: Collapse of Communism