

Sharing Our Story



How we are Christians
throughout history

Introduction



✧ Through the centuries, the image of Christ presented in the Scriptures has been analyzed, imitated, and reflected upon by generations of believers. Every generation heeds the invitation to “*Put on Christ*”. Throughout the history of the Church, this process of reflection, imitation, and action has been a wellspring for those who seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Images of Discipleship in the Scriptures



- ❧ “If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my footsteps. Whoever would preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will preserve it.” Mk 8:34-38.
- ❧ “Who is of the greatest importance in the Kingdom of God? He called a little child over and stood him in their midst and said: I assure you, unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God.” Mt. 18:1-3.

Images of Jesus



Becoming Disciples in the Early Christian Community



- ☞ “They devoted themselves to the apostle’s instructions and the communal life, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers. A reverent fear overtook them all, for many wonders and signs were performed by the apostles. Those who believed shared all things in common; they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one’s need.” Acts 2:42-47.

Becoming a Disciples From Jews to Gentiles



- ✧ Acts of the Martyrs- those who imitate the passion and death of the Lord
- ✧ Ignatius of Antioch
- ✧ “I am writing to all the Churches and I enjoin all, that I am dying willingly for God’s sake, if only you do not prevent it. I beg of you, do not do to me an untimely kindness. Allow me to be eaten by the beasts, which are my way of reaching to God. I am God’s wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become the pure bead of Christ.” *Letter to the Romans*

Dying and Rising with Jesus



✧ Polycarp

✧ “We are sending you, brethren, a written account of the martyrs and, in particular of blessed Polycarp, whose witness to the faith as it were sealed the persecution and put an end to it. By almost every step that led up to it the Lord intended to exhibit to us anew the type of martyrdom narrated in the gospel.

✧ Roman martyrs

✧ Felicity and Perpetua

Age of the Defenders



- ✧ Irenaeus-Tertullian-Origen
- ✧ “Realization that Christians must live in the world and address the wisdom of that age with the revealed Wisdom found in the Christian Scriptures.”
- ✧ Promoted the cause of Christianity as a religious system using human reason.
- ✧ By making the case that Christianity was not only acceptable in the present cultural setting but preferred.
- ✧ Discipleship- blend of reason and ascetism

Formation of the Christian Community

Union and Tension



- ❧ Households of Faith to parish churches
- ❧ Creed- Apostles Creed & Nicaea
 - ❧ formulas for Baptism and declaration of Orthodox belief
- ❧ Cult- Liturgy and worship
 - ❧ Domus ecclesiae- catacombs- basilicas
- ❧ Canon of Scripture
 - ❧ Reaction to Gnosticism and theological issues
- ❧ Community life: Church Discipline
 - ❧ Religious identity: Clash of religious movements (Donatism, Manicheesim, Montanism, Gnosticism...)

Imperial Era: Constantine and State

Age of Monasticism/ Asceticism

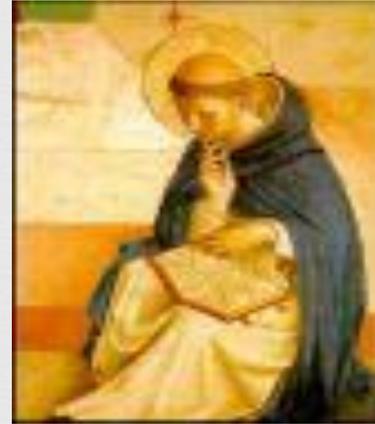
- ❧ What is the true Christian life? Christianity becomes the religion of the empire in 313.
- ❧ The “White Martyrdom” - a life of ascetical practice
- ❧ Advent of the Clerical state- clerical caste system
- ❧ Pachomius and Antony- Desert Fathers
- ❧ Rule of Basil- Rule of Eastern Tradition- brings order to monastic life
- ❧ Rule of Benedict- “Ora et labora”: Authority and Duty
 - ❧ “Let all follow the Rule as master, nor let anyone presume to depart rashly from it. Let no one follow the will of his own heart;”

Early Middle Ages



- ❧ Age of Scholasticism- Rise of the University
Aristotelian & Neo-platonic philosophy
- ❧ Rise of the Mendicant Orders-shifting social and economic conditions
- ❧ Francis of Assisi-(1182-1226) “Rebuild my Church...” Rule: “to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without property and in chastity.”
- ❧ Dominic-(1170-1221) preaching and teaching against heresy
- ❧ Living the Evangelical Counsels: Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

Medieval religious society



Age of Christendom- Middle Ages

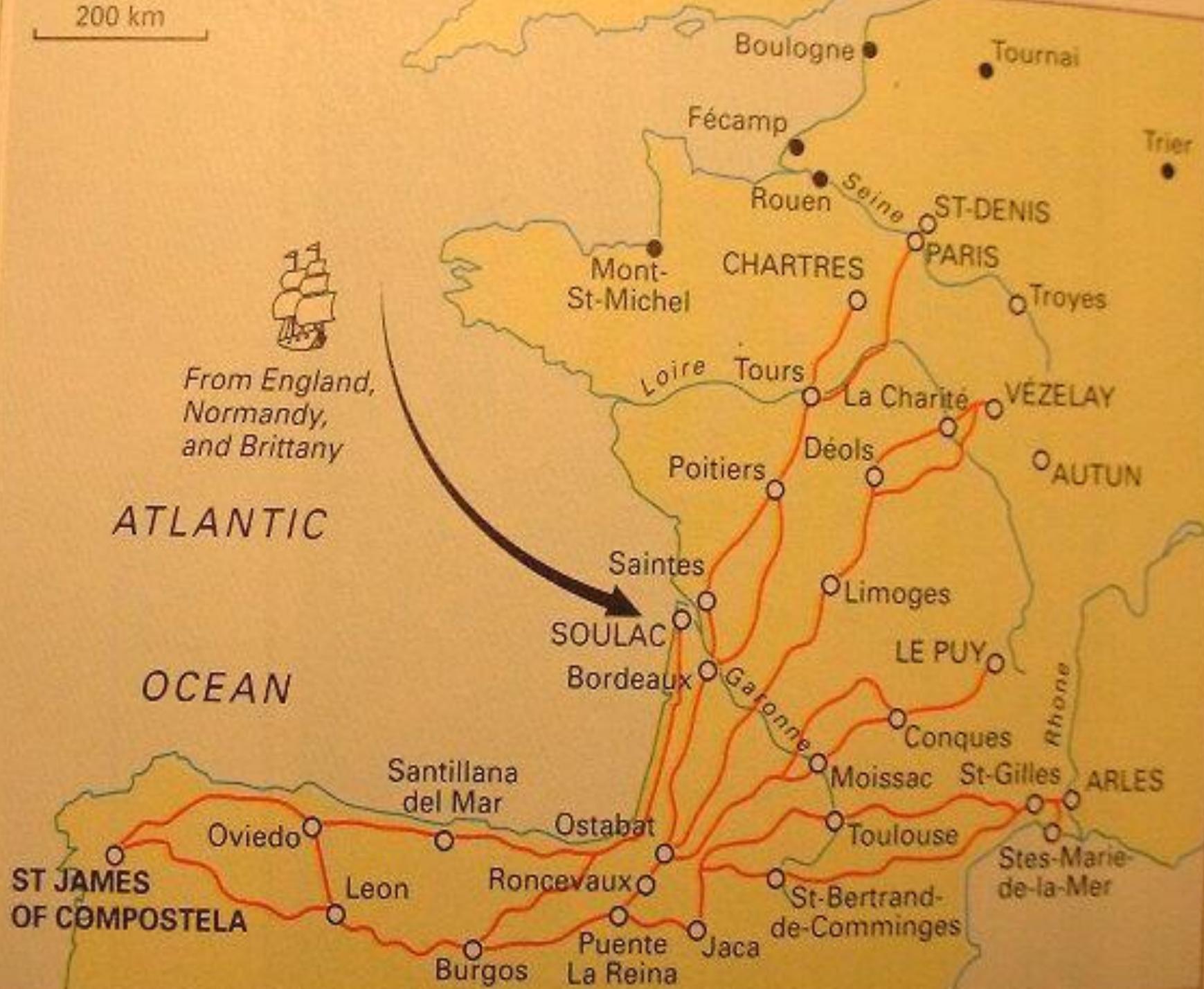
- ❧ Distinguishes the two spheres: Sacred and the Secular
- ❧ The spiritual hierarchy mediated to the laity through the temporal hierarchy
- ❧ Age of the Great Cathedrals- Glory of God by Human Hands
 - ❧ Confraternities and Guilds
- ❧ Age of Chivalry- Feudal period
 - ❧ Defending the spiritual realm by use of force in the name of religious virtue

Pilgrimage and Crusade



- ✧ Rise of the major and minor pilgrimage sites: Santiago de Compostela, Jerusalem, Rome...
- ✧ Lay Confraternities and processions
- ✧ The Crusades- expel pagans from the holy sites
- ✧ Religious/Military Orders- to aid and protect pilgrims, release of captives, and care of the sick... Hospitalers, Trinitarians, Knights of Malta, Knights Templars

200 km



From England,
Normandy,
and Brittany

ATLANTIC

OCEAN

ST JAMES
OF COMPOSTELA

Disciples in the Age of Reform

❧ Italian Renaissance- recovery of classical learning and life

❧ Age of Humanism- patrons of Religion

❧ Age of Discovery- European expansion

Missionary Activity- Americas, Asia

❧ Ignatius of Loyola- Society of Jesus

❧ Teresa of Avila- Carmelite Reform

❧ Martin Luther/ John Calvin- Religious reforms=*Sola Scriptura, Sola Fidei*

Contrast of sources of Authority and ways of expression

Reformation Era



- ❧ Age of Reason- How we see ourselves in relation to God. As individuals or as a Community
- ❧ Christian Churches- “Priesthood of all Believers” - Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists, Methodists, Anabaptists, Mennonites... many expressions of Protestant Christianity- pluralism of spiritualities
- ❧ New Religious Orders- Call to be teachers, missionaries, servants to the poor
 - ❧ Francis de Sales-Vincent de Paul
 - ❧ Capuchins- Redemptorists- Jesuits

Discipleship in the Age of the Enlightenment



- ❧ Devotional Life- Disconnect between Faith & Reason
 - ❧ Pietism- highly personal and Spirit-led
 - ❧ Pilgrimages to Marian shrines and Devotions
 - ❧ Rise of strict observance- Jansenism
 - ❧ Age of Revolution and Democracy: Rights of Man
- ❧ Industrial Revolution-
 - ❧ Socialism and the Social Encyclicals
 - ❧ Lay Activism- meet the challenges of workers
 - ❧ Missionary movements- Africa and Asia

Disciples in the Modern Age

- ❧ Industrial Age, Human Progress, One World
- ❧ Biblical Movement- Social Gospel
- ❧ Liturgical Movement- Liturgy reflects lay action
- ❧ Social Activism- Lay Action
 - ❧ “Catholic Action” - Pius X and Pius XI
 - ❧ Jocist Movement- Observe, Reflect, Act
 - ❧ Catholic Worker and Dorothy Day
 - ❧ Holy Name Society
 - ❧ Knights of Columbus

Disciples Today



- ❧ “the People of God share the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.” *Lumen Gentium*
- ❧ Universal Call to Holiness- Chapter V
“all Christians are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love...” (LG #40)

Role of Jesus' Disciples in the World Today



✧ “the laity are called to participate actively in the whole life of the Church; not only are they to animate the world with the spirit of Christianity, but they are to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind.”
Gaudium et spes, #43.

Living the Christian Life



- ❧ “The Church was founded to spread the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth for the glory of God, to make all partakers in redemption and salvation...
- ❧ The apostolate is lived in faith, hope, and love poured out by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all the members of the Church. And the precept of charity, which is the Lord’s greatest commandment, urges all Christians to work for the glory of God...(AA. 2-3)

What do we believe today?



- ❧ Respect for all people, cultures, and ways of life.
How does this reveal the mystery of God?
- ❧ What can the Church or being a Christian mean for you today?
 - ❧ Challenge of Fundamentalism/Liberal extremism?
- ❧ How do I or we continue to live and share this story?
 - ❧ How does a modern Christian live in light of the tradition? What values continue to hold truth?