

# Byzantium: The Lost Empire

## An historical study of the East-West Christian Split

Session 1: Monday, July 9 / Overview & Intro, Early Mass & Sacramental Development

Session 2: Monday, July 16 / The Dark Ages; the 5 Developing Rites, and Islam 101

Session 3: Monday, July 23 / Icons and Iconoclasm; The Destruction of the Icons

Session 4: Monday, July 30 / Context and Controversies: Crusaders and the Crusades

Session 5: Monday, August 13 / The Faithful Remnant; Seeds of the Reformation

Session 6: Monday, August 20 / Current East-West dialogue and differences

Session 7: Monday, August 27 / Final Quiz followed by prayer service for Reunification

## Early Mass Development

### 1 Cor 11: 23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, **took** bread, and, after he had **given thanks, broke** it and said, “this is my body that is for you, Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

### Mark 14:22-26

While they were eating, he **took** bread, said the **blessing, broke** it, **gave** it to them, and said, “take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

### Matthew 26:26-30

While they were eating, Jesus **took** bread, said the **blessing, broke** it, and **giving** it to his disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink the fruit of the vine until the day I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives.

### Luke 22:14-20

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he **took** the bread, said the **blessing, broke** it, and **gave** it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.

### John 6:52-57

The Jews quarreled among themselves saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats (*literally “chews”*) my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.”

### 33-58 AD

The Mass developed from customary Jewish ritual – mirroring a formal supper held in every pious Jewish household called the “*Chaburah*” (meaning gathering of friends). Although the first Christians were Jews who believed in Christ and “hung out” in the Temple area, there was no need for them to make sacrifices at the Temple because they now had the sacrifice of the Mass – with Jesus offering himself once for all, in and through the Eucharist.

Like the Last Supper – the early Eucharist was initially celebrated in the evening within the context of a supper at a private home. (Acts 20:7-11) Somewhat like an ancient potluck supper, this was known as the “**agape meal**” or “**love feast**”. In Corinth, some agape meals went to excess causing **Saint Paul** great concern. (1 Cor 11) A challenge for Paul was to tame Corinthian merry-making and to realign their thinking to proper Mass etiquette. Sometimes Christians would have only the agape meal. The Eucharistic celebration was attached to and entirely distinct from the agape meal - with participants entering into the Mass ritual under the danger of death, knowing full well that it was a capital crime to do so.

### Early Mass elements:

- [1] The community was encouraged to be patient and wait for everyone to arrive. (1 Cor 11:33-34)  
After grace before the meal no one was allowed to join the gathering.
- [2] Each person had a personal cup but at meal’s end there was a common cup to share in “unity”.
- [3] Like the Jews, there were originally two readings – one selection from the Law and another from the Prophets. Christians added two more readings – one from one of Paul’s letters and eventually, another from one of the emerging Gospels.
- [4] The singing of psalms, attested by St. Paul (1 Cor 14:26) was probably borrowed from morning service in the synagogue.
- [5] Taking the place of the *Midrash* was the Christian sermon or homily (1 Cor 14:26)
- [6] To obey the Lord’s command, four verbs were integral to the Eucharistic prayer: that Jesus “**took**”, “**blessed**”, “**broke**”, and “**gave**”.
- [7] As was custom, men were bareheaded; women were veiled or covered (1 Cor 11:6-7)
- [8] As was custom, women were not permitted to speak in the assemblies (1 Cor 14:34-35)
- [9] There was the pax, or kiss of peace (Romans 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14)
- [10] The people indicated assent to prayer with the old Hebrew *Amen*. To say “*Amen*” was to give complete assent to oneness and unity.
- [11] They prayed with uplifted hands (1 Tim 2:8) as the priest does today.
- [12] An almsgiving or collection for the poor was usually made (1 Cor 16:12; Romans 15:26)
- [13] A catechumen was not to sit at table at the Lord’s Supper, but was dismissed after the homily.  
As catechumens left, guards were posted at the doors when the Liturgy of the Eucharist began.

### 58-60 AD

When the **Temple in Jerusalem** was destroyed around 58AD, it was a significant step for Christians to slowly break away from Jews who failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus had taught that one’s body was the Temple of the Holy Spirit. (John 2:19) The Temple was no longer understood as a building “out there” but one’s body containing the Spirit “within.”

### 65 AD

Let the persecutions begin! **Emperor Nero** cast blame on Christians for burning Rome, beginning two centuries of Christian persecution. Easy targets for blame – Christians were blamed for causing anything from earthquakes, to fires, to floods, to plagues, to economic hard times. Leaders proposed that the “gods” needed to be appeased by those who had rejected them. Rumors developed – such as one saying that Christians killed babies and drank their blood as part of a secret ritual. Outsiders to Christianity were easily swayed to believe rumors and to join in wild anti-Christian persecution.

### 66-79 AD – The Church in Jerusalem

In the year 66AD, civil war broke out in Palestine as a consequence of Jewish opposition to Rome. Christians, divinely warned of the impending destruction by Roman Emperor Vespasian, fled across the Jordan. Led by **Saint Simeon**, they occupied a small city called Pella. After the capture and burning of Jerusalem, they then returned and settled among the ruins of the holy city until the Emperor Hadrian entirely razed it. **Saint Epiphanius** and historian Eusebius report how the Christian community in Jerusalem flourished greatly in these trying times, and that many Jews were converted by the miracles wrought by the saints. When Vespasian and Domitian ordered the death of all who were of the race of David, St. Simeon escaped their search; but when Trajan gave a similar injunction, Simeon was denounced as being not only one of David's descendants, but also a Christian. He was brought before Atticus, the Roman governor, condemned to death, and after being tortured, was crucified. Although he was extremely old - tradition says he was age 120 - Simeon endured his sufferings with a degree of fortitude which roused the admiration of Atticus himself.

### 70-160 AD

**The Didache** (Διδαχή, Koine Greek for "Teaching" ): the common name of a brief early Christian treatise (c. 70–160), containing instructions for Christian communities. The text was possibly the first written catechism, with three main sections dealing with Christian lessons, rituals such as baptism, Eucharist, and Church organization. Included were strict mandates against abortion. (See Didache handout.) Also called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, it affirmed that the Christian meal was developed along *Chaburah* lines.

### 100 AD

By the turn of the century Christians were moving the Eucharistic celebration from the evening to Sunday morning. According to the Scriptures, Christ was the Sun of Justice, the Sun of Truth. Since Jesus rose from the dead at dawn on the first Easter Sunday, his rising from the grave coincided with the appearance of the natural sun. Sunrise, therefore, became the symbol of the rising Sun of Justice.

Once baptized and accepted into the ecclesia, the Christian had the grave obligation of attending the Eucharist on every Lord's Day. “**Sunday obligation**” began in earnest.

### **How the 12 Apostles Died**

[1] **Saint Simon Peter**, brother of Andrew, was crucified, head downward, in Rome, because he said he was not worthy to die in the same way as Jesus. His remains are interred beneath the main altar at St. Peter's basilica.

[2] **Saint James** the Greater (chosen as the 1<sup>st</sup> James), a son of Zebedee and Salome, was one of the “Sons of Thunder” who preached the Gospel in Samaria and Judea. He may have made a journey to Spain and is honored as the patron saint of that country although his journey in fact remains pure speculation. He was the first of the Apostles to give his life for Christ, having been killed with the sword by King Herod Agrippa in the year 43 AD. The sword traditionally represents his martyrdom for Christ.

[3] **Saint John** the beloved, a son of Zebedee and one of the “Sons of Thunder”, the youngest of all the 12 Apostles, outlived all the Apostles. He settled in Ephesus and cared for the Virgin Mary after the deaths of Peter and Paul; but during later travels he suffered greatly under the persecution of the Emperor Dormitian. According to legend, John was placed in a cauldron of boiling oil outside the Latin gate in Rome but suffered no injury. He was then sent to the mines in Patmos to die but was later freed by the next Emperor. He then returned to Ephesus in 97 AD where he wrote his Gospel before dying, probably of natural causes, around the year 105 AD. He is represented holding a chalice from which issues a dragon, as he is supposed to have been given poison, which was, however, innocuous.

[4] **Saint Andrew**, brother of Simon Peter, preached the Gospel in Greece, Russia and Poland. He was put to death on a cross, made in the form of an X.

[5] **Saint Philip** preached the Gospel in Asia Minor and was crucified there in the year 80 AD.

[6] **Saint Bartholomew** preached the Gospel in Arabia and India. He suffered martyrdom in Armenia when, during torture, his skin was cut from his living body.

[7] **Saint Matthew**, a son of Alphaeus, called Levi, was a converted Roman tax collector. He preached the Gospel among the Hebrews for 15 years and was the Apostle of Ethiopia. He wrote his Gospel in Aramaic. The report of his death never reached the faith community though it is suspected he was martyred.

[8] **Saint Thomas**, called the Apostle of the Indies, was sent to evangelize the Parthians, Medes, and Persians; ultimately reaching India. He carried the Faith to the Malabar coast, which still boasts a large native population calling themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." He was speared to death at a place called Calamine.

[9] **Saint James** the Lesser (chosen as the 2<sup>nd</sup> James), a son of Alphaeus, was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem. At the age of 86 he was flung from the top of a tower built to honor Christ as the Son of God. He was then repeatedly struck on the head as he prayed for his enemies. According to Mark, he stood with the woman Mary and Mary Magdalene at the Crucifixion.

[10 and 11] **Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot** – no historical information exists.

[12] **Judas Iscariot**, the betrayer, despaired and committed suicide.

The New Testament:

**How Saint Paul and the Gospel Writers Died**

**Saint Paul**, formerly Saul before his conversion, was educated in the law in Tarsus and was a leading Jew of the Temple. He persecuted the Church until he was knocked down and temporarily blinded. Known as the Apostle to the Gentiles, he preached the Gospel three times around the Mediterranean. After years of travel and suffering Paul, a Roman citizen, continued to preach while making his appeals for his life all the way from Jerusalem to Rome. He was beheaded in Rome.

**Saint Matthew's** death, as reported above, was not documented though he probably was martyred. The symbol for his Gospel is A YOUNG MAN, because he begins his Gospel with Christ's earthly ancestry and stresses his human and kingly character.

**Saint John Mark**, known more as Mark, was a convert and companion of Peter. He preached in Egypt and founded the Church of Alexandria. There he set up the first Christian school which became very famous. Seized by pagans, he was dragged over stones and thrown into prison where he eventually died. The symbol for his Gospel is A LION because his Gospel begins with St. John the Baptist, "the voice of one crying in the desert."

**Saint Luke the Evangelist** was born a Greek citizen born in Antioch, Syria. He was a physician by profession and a skilled painter. He was a companion of Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys. He stayed 7 years at Phillipi and shared the shipwreck and perils of Paul and Silas's voyage to Rome. He also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. He seems to have avoided martyrdom and to have died of natural causes. The symbol for his Gospel is AN OX, an animal of sacrifice, because he begins his Gospel with the history of Zachary the priest, offering sacrifice to God.

**Saint John the Evangelist's** death, as reported above, was probably by natural causes at a very old age. The symbol for his Gospel is AN EAGLE, because his words soar above the things of earth and speak of the divine nature of Christ.

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111-112 AD

**Secular historian Pliny** recorded how Christians in droves denied their faith under threat of death from Roman Emperor Trajan. Early Christian martyrs were buried in caves outside of the walls of the city of Rome. These caves were called the "catacombs" – underground cemeteries for many who suffered and died for Christ.

148-155 AD

**Saint Justin** marked the start of Christian apologetics with his *First Apology*, attempting to convince the general public that the Mass was harmless. He also coined the term "Eucharist" for the consecrated elements. He helped compile the *Didache*, providing an early Mass outline. Except for a few words Mass was primarily in Greek. The Latin Mass was introduced in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century in the West.

189 AD

**Saint Polycarp**, Bishop of Smyrna, was the oldest and wisest Christian leader of his time. He was the last to have actually seen the apostle John and as such, was a living link to the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church. He was identified as a primary target of religious persecution and was eventually burned at the stake.

### 202 AD

**Saint Irenaeus**, one of the greatest early Church Fathers, was born around 125 AD and was most influenced by Saint Polycarp. With the spread of Gnosticism in Gaul (the Germanic states), and the ravages it was making among Christians, he was inspired to expose its errors. He produced a treatise in 5 books in which he set forth fully the inner doctrines of the various sects, and afterwards contrasted them with the teaching of the Apostles and the text of Holy Scripture. His work, written in Greek but quickly translated to Latin, was widely circulated and succeeded in dealing a death-blow to Gnosticism. His most renowned quote was: “The glory of God is a man fully alive.”

### 215 AD

**Hippolytus’ Apostolic Tradition** gave perhaps the best 3<sup>rd</sup> century pre-Nicene Council description of the Mass yet his work was virtually ignored in the West due to his rebellious anti-Pope years. (He had a Church leadership issue!) He later reconciled with the Church and died a martyr in 235 AD.

Differentiating Mass practices began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Slight variations occurred as celebrants were free to extemporize most of the Eucharist prayer as they went along. Exact wording was not required in all the Mass parts but only that the spoken prayers were correct and orthodox.

As communities grew in size no one loaf could accommodate everyone for communion – so the fraction rite had to change. The **commingling rite or “fermentum”** had a piece of consecrated bread from the bishop’s Mass commingle with the consecrated wine in every cup in every local parish. This was begun in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century but by the 5<sup>th</sup> century only the West continued this.

### 252 AD

Until this time there was “no turning back” for apostates and those who had denied the faith or mixed even the slightest of pagan practices with their Christian walk. **Saint Cyprian**, sometimes referred to as the “African pope”, led the Church in issuing an Edict of Tolerance. Cyprian clarified that we were not to “rebaptize” but to allow for repentance with penance and readmission to the ecclesia. This began as a once-in-a-lifetime chance and later shifted into the context of confession. This was a huge move religiously as well as politically. It baffled the government. Christian mercy could now counter the ongoing persecutions!

### 254-259 AD

A 2<sup>nd</sup> broad wave of persecution began under Emperor Valerian to stamp out the Christian revival.

### 258 AD

Elected Pope in 257, **Pope Saint Sixtus** was forbidden to celebrate Mass yet he and his deacons continued to worship in the chapel in the cemetery of Praetextatus. One day in 258 as he preached, soldiers broke into the chapel and beheaded him. Three deacons were also killed. Three days later one more deacon, **Saint Lawrence**, was tied on top of an iron grill and cooked alive. Lawrence was burning with such love of God that he almost did not feel the flames. He even joked, “Turn me over”.

### 270 AD

**Historian Eusebius** tells of thousands of Christians being executed – whole villages at a time – appearing radiant in faith, coming before executioners in such numbers that the executioners themselves became exhausted!

### 303-313 AD

**Emperor Diocletian** carried out a 10-year bitter persecution. “People of both sexes and of all ages were thrown into the fire; not one at a time, but whole groups of them were bound together and burned; slaves were flung into the sea with great stones tied to their necks...the prisons were full to overflowing while new kinds of torture were an hourly invention.” (Written by eyewitness Lactantius)

### 313 AD

**Emperor Constantine** assumed the throne in Rome after his great victory at the Bridge of Malverna. His victory had come after a dream instructing him to carry the Chi-Rho Christian symbol on his flags into battle. He soon issued an **Edict of Tolerance** legalizing Christianity. The Christian Church, now legal, would finally be able to assemble its leaders in peace and to flex its theological muscles.

### 325 AD

The **1st Council of Nicea** invited the bishops to meet under the approval of Emperor Constantine to formalize doctrine on the Holy Trinity and to battle the rising heresy of Arianism – which denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. **Saint Athanasius**, a deacon, was instrumental in developing Church theology.

### 326 AD

**Constantine chose Byzantium as the new capital** of the Empire and renamed it **Constantinopolis**. The city, first reconstructed in the time of Septimius Severus, was modeled on Rome itself having been built on and around seven hills. It remained the capital of the entire Byzantine-Roman Empire only 69 years but remained capital for the eastern Byzantine Empire long after until its fall in 1453 AD.

### 326-395 AD

United Byzantine-Roman rule from Constantinople for 69 years until the West lifted up its own Emperor.

### 360 AD

Baptized at age 29 by Pope Liberius, Jerome’s intellectual curiosity led him to copy many religious books and to consume their contents with his mind. Known as the “Patron of Librarians”, **Saint Jerome** spent several years in Aquileia (a NE Italy port city) and then headed east to find greater solitude, becoming an ordained desert monk and recluse. In 380 he went to Constantinople to study Scriptures where it was noted how he might be a perfect East-West arbitrator. In 384 he rejected Roman clericalism. He was entrusted to translate from Hebrew and Aramaic the scriptures into Latin, forming the first compendium of the scriptures known as the **Latin Vulgate** (382-405).

### 390 AD

**Aegeria’s** Travel Diary was written when Aegeria made a pilgrimage to attend Easter celebrations in Jerusalem. Her impressions during a *peregrinatio* have long provided liturgists with insight into early Christian rituals.

### 395 AD

With the death of Emperor Theodosius, the empire split once again back to East and West. Arcadius succeeded as emperor of Byzantium in the East and Honorius as emperor of Rome in the West. But the West remained in a very fragile position.

When one says “Empire” between 395 AD and 476 AD one must be clear whether or not he or she is talking about the Byzantine Empire in the East or the Roman Empire in the West. Roman influence certainly abounded in the East and the Byzantine influence affected the West; but there was a clear separation of powers until the West fell in 476 AD.

By the late 4<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries:  
Increasing cultures of compromise required a flight to the “Truth”

Clusters of Saints lives may tell the story...

In the West:

*St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Monica, St. Scholastica, St. Pope John I*

**Saint Augustine** (354-430) spent his youth as an unbridled pagan. He lived his own way despite the unwavering dedication of his mother **Saint Monica**, who prayed daily for his conversion. In the *Confessions of Saint Augustine*, he would admit to drinking in excess, to having a mistress for 15 years and an illegitimate child, and to rejecting the Christian life until he traveled to Rome and then to Milan to study to be a teacher. There as a man approaching 30 (mid-life in those days) he was converted under the inspiration of another great saint, Ambrose.

**Saint Ambrose** (340-397), a renowned orator, scholar, and writer of many early Christian hymns, was the regional governor who reluctantly but faithfully became bishop of Milan, taking his vows with utmost seriousness. He won two harsh battles of intellect and spiritual will - one over the Arian heresy and another over Augustine, baptizing him in the presence of his mother Monica at the Duomo in Milan.

After his baptism, Augustine spent time in the desert to empty himself of his old ways and to gain the wisdom sought by Anthony and the early desert Fathers. During the remainder of his 76 years, he would witness the emergence of the Church as a powerful force in society. He would see the decline of Roman political power with waves of barbarian invasions coming from the North. He would see the Church and the office of the Pope dabbling with power, trying to fill the power vacuum left when the government had moved to the East. More and more in his latter years, Augustine was to dwell on the otherworldly “city of God” as he would observe the collapse of the “city of man.” The new and eternal Jerusalem, not Rome, was to truly be the apple of one’s eye. Augustine was named Bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa by Pope Siricius in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Trained as a classical scholar, he spent over 13 years writing *The City of God*. Eventually after his death, the forces that had created the catastrophic decline of Western civilization succeeded in 476, the date historians assign to the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of what some call “The Dark Ages”.

**Saint Benedict** (480-540) belonged to a noble family in Rome. He went to a town called Subiaco, set on a mountain 40 miles from Rome where he lived in a cave in the side of a cliff for three years. Sometimes a raven brought him food. Men began flocking to Benedict, with more than 140 monks soon living in a monastery in Subiaco. They busied themselves praying, clearing land, planting crops, teaching school, and feeding the poor. Their motto was: “Pray and work.”

Benedict and his monks built a large monastery on Monte Cassino, on the top of a mountain. It became the home of thousands of monks called Benedictines who set out from where they were to convert the world. They and others who followed written disciplines became known as Order Priests; for they followed divine orders and had their lives ordered with structured times of prayer and work. In an age of disorder, one could also find a sense of order and right by encountering one of these monks. Benedict’s twin sister, **Saint Scholastica**, founded the Benedictine sisters.

**John I, Pope and Martyr**, rejected the growing surge of Arianism which insisted that Jesus was merely a superhero who became God. Arianism was attractive to the Byzantine Emperor who understood, that if he was to lower Jesus’ position from God to human, this would allow him, a human, to claim that he had now been elevated like Jesus to be God. He could claim he was the

absolute representation of God sitting in his throne. When Pope John I travelled to Constantinople to kindly convince the Emperor otherwise, he was kidnapped by the Emperor's forces during his return trip to Rome and taken to prison where he was tortured and died.

In the East:

*St. Anthony and the Desert Fathers, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Maron*

After Christianity became legal some Christians proposed that serious compromises were working their way into the lifeblood of the Church. The "**Desert Fathers**" fled the world (cultural Christianity) in order to rediscover the true faith (committed Christianity) in the desert. Like today's Christians in Haiti and other Latin American nations, Christians at that time were mixing old pagan practices with their newfound Christian religion. The purity of the faith was falling into question. Henri J. M. Nouwen writes in *The Way of the Heart; Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry (1981)*:

The **Desert Fathers**, who lived in the Egyptian desert during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, can offer us a very important perspective on our lives. The Desert Fathers – and there were Mothers, too – were Christians who searched for a new form of martyrdom. Once the persecutions had ceased, it was no longer possible to witness for Christ by following him as a blood witness. Yet the end of persecutions did not mean that the world had accepted the ideals of Christ and altered its ways; the world continued to prefer darkness to light (John 3:19). But if the world was no longer the enemy of the Christian, then the Christian had to become the enemy of the dark world. The flight to the desert was the way to escape a tempting conformity to the world. **Saint Anthony of Egypt** (251-356) founded a group of monks who lived the "desert experience". Anthony, Agathon, Macarius, Poemen, Theodora, Sarah, and Syncletica became spiritual leaders in the desert. They became new kinds of martyr: witnesses against the destructive powers of evil, witnesses for Jesus Christ. (pp. 13-14)

**Saint Basil the Great** (329-379) was born at Caesarea, in Asia Minor, the son of nobles and saints. He went to school in Constantinople and then in Athens where he lived with his friend, **Saint Gregory Nazianzen**. The two friends became scholars. Basil opened a school of oratory and practiced law in Caesarea. So many people wished to hear him speak in public that he was tempted by thoughts of pride. So he sold all his goods, gave the money to the poor, and became a monk. He consecrated to God all his knowledge and eloquence. Basil visited monks who lived in the desert and then founded several monasteries and drew up monastic rules. Although Basil was in poor health, he performed many penances.

The Desert Fathers found real spiritual power in: [1] **silence**, [2] **solitude**, and [3] **prayer**.

Thomas Merton writes in *The Wisdom of the Desert (1960)*:

Society...was regarded (by the Desert Fathers) as a shipwreck from which each single individual man had to swim for his life...These were men who believed that to let oneself drift along, passively accepting the tenets and values of what they knew as society, was purely and simply a disaster. (p. 3)

They knew that they were helpless to do any good for others as long as they floundered about in the wreckage. But once they got a foothold on solid ground, things were different. They had not only the power but even the obligation to pull the whole world to safety after them. (p. 23)

The Maronite Rite in Lebanon developed from an ascetical monk named **Saint Maron** (350-410): "Coming to this mountain, he was to be seen by all who would come; for this monk had neither cave nor tent, nor cabin nor wall nor even a circle of stones on the ground for his cloister, he was seen by all, in prayer, in

repose, standing, sitting whether he was well or suffering from illness. All spectators could see him continually leading his life of combat. He had no other roof but heaven, and dwelt exposed to the elements. One day he would be drenched by the rain, another day frozen by the ice and snow; yet another day burnt and devoured by the rays of the sun." To choose Saint Maron's open air monasticism was, according to Theodoret of Cyr, to opt for the most rigorous way to heaven, the most heroic way of detachment, sacrifice and mortification.

Monastic life, with its discipline and order, was instrumental to the survival of Christianity while living in hostile territories and remains strong in the Eastern Church today. One of the largest Catholic pilgrimages in North America takes place every year over Labor Day weekend at Mount Saint Macrina, an Eastern Catholic monastery for women near Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

As Rome and the West fell into the Dark Ages, the East maintained its borders and prosperity. During the early centuries of Byzantium when times were rough or leaders were weak, the East, unlike the West, had the luxury of paying "subsidies" in gold to enemies in order to purchase their security.

#### 431 AD

***Ecumenical Council of Ephesus:*** During the co-reign of the virgin Empress Valkaria in Constantinople, the Council met to clarify the importance of virginity and purity, declaring the Blessed Virgin Mary as ***Theotokos***: meaning "She who has given birth to God"

Also the Catholic theological position regarding Jesus humanity and divinity was clarified. The Nestorians and Monophysites were refuted in a debate that today many people might want to chalk up to mystery.

***Nestorians: One person, two hypostases, two natures.***

***Catholics: One person, one hypostasis, two natures.***

***Monophysites: One person, one hypostasis, one nature.***

#### 434 AD

Rugila, King of the Huns unexpectedly died. Attila, visiting Rome, returned north to battle and kill his elder brother to become king. For the next 19 years **Attila the Hun**, a tribal warrior, became the greatest threat to both Constantinople and Rome. If not for Constantinople's 20-foot thick walls and gold subsidies to Attila, the city might have fallen. Fortunately for both Constantinople and Rome, Attila died in 453 AD after being poisoned as an act of tribal revenge by his twelfth and final wife on their wedding night.

#### 451 AD

***Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon:*** Called by Pope Leo the Great, this council reaffirmed devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Around this time, Eastern devotion inspired the "**Akathistos Hymn**", a chant to the Mother of God. The hymn combined two lengthy poetic hymns to Our Lady and was chanted by the clergy and the people as they stood in front of a large icon of the Blessed Mother. This devotion continues today.

Two stirring examples of East-West disposition during mid-5<sup>th</sup> century  
Two men openly demonstrating the “radical” nature of Christian faith....

In the East:

***St. Simeon of the Pillar*** (XXX-459 AD)

As a 13-year-old shepherd of Sisan, Turkey, Simeon heard a Gospel reading of the Beatitudes that greatly affected him. Entering a nearby monastery, he learned all the Psalms by heart and began to manifest the extraordinary spirit of self-denial that was to become a hallmark of his spirituality. Thereafter Simeon lived as a hermit. In the year 423 he imposed on himself the unusual mortification of living atop a pillar only a few feet in diameter and about 10 feet high. Later a much taller pillar over 65 feet high was built for him. The local bishops and abbots tested his virtue by commanding him to come down from the pillar, a command they immediately rescinded after the hermit demonstrated his humble willingness to obey them. One bishop even regularly brought him Holy Communion. Simeon devoted himself to prayer, but also gave exhortations twice daily to those who gathered around the pillar to hear him. His words won the conversion of pagans in the audience. Simeon would urge his listeners to pray for the salvations of souls.

In the West:

**Pope St. Leo the Great** (XXX-461 AD)

Born in Tuscany, Italy, as deacon he was dispatched to Gaul to serve as a mediator by Emperor Valentinian III. His intellect and negotiating skills were revered well before his very difficult reign as Pope from 440-461 AD. The doctrine of the Incarnation was formed by him in a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople. All religious leaders eulogized his efforts during the upheaval in the West culminating with the 5<sup>th</sup> century barbarian invasion. Having conquered the city of Aquileia after a 3-year siege, **Attila the Hun** marched toward Rome. Moved with pity for the suffering people, Leo went out to the gates of Rome to meet him. He persuaded the invader to leave Rome untouched. This purchased time for many of the written and historical treasures to be hidden and preserved. Later, the Vandals under Genseric, were persuaded by Leo to desist from entirely pillaging the city and harming its inhabitants. Leo died in 461, leaving many letters and writings of historical value.

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476 AD

**By 476 AD and the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, all Christians continued to look to the Pope for spiritual leadership; yet communication from the West diminished as the papacy needed to focus more on local problems – essentially ones of survival! For a short time, the East tried to reestablish a foothold in the Italian peninsula in Ravenna, yet they failed to hold the line.**

540 AD

The fall of Ravenna marked the end of a resurgence of the old Empire’s power, beauty, and influence on the Italian peninsula. The Byzantine Emperor, yet unwelcome in Rome, had tried to make a stronghold in Ravenna to the northeast of Rome. Historians may perceive this as an attempt by the East to rescue the West from its spiral into the Dark Ages; an attempt that met with failure. If “divide and conquer” was true to its meaning, then the division of the ancient Empire into East and West had foretold its own demise.

### 541-543 AD

The great plague brought turmoil to a climax, especially in the West, causing general paralysis. Arriving in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Justinian's reign, it was referred to as Justinian's plague. First noticed in Pelusium, an Egyptian harbor town, the bacterial disease was spread by rats that would infect drinking and eating sources. It caused high fever, delirium, and extreme body swelling; and was highly fatal in crowded places – such as Constantinople. Some people would die excruciating deaths, while others would somehow regain perfect health. Those regaining health were believed to be immune and ordered to bury the dead – until they themselves died of plague. When mass-graves were filled, bodies were placed in towers, on roofs, in water, burned, or simply left to rot. Constantinople lost 40% of its population with nearly 10,000 people dying a day at its peak. The plague would reappear in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and be called “The Black Plague”.

### 569 AD

The birth of **Muhammad**, a man who would unite the Arab tribes in the religious/political fraternity known as Islam, brought changes to the entire landscape of the known world. His influence spread among the Saracens (independent Arabian tribes) through military victory, through marriage (he had 11 wives), and through negotiation.

### 590-604 AD

**Pope Saint Gregory the Great**, a Doctor of the Church, was the son of a wealthy Roman senator, he was well taught yet remained very humble. After one year in government he had a spiritual conversion, sold all his property, and built 7 monasteries, intending to live as a monk. He made missionary journeys to England but was called back to Rome and elevated as Pope in 590 AD. Later in 597, he sent St. Augustine and his company of monks to England. He died in 604 AD after writing many books on the liturgy of the Mass and the Divine Office.

### 630 AD

Muhammad captured Mecca; agreeing to leave the city intact so long as all converted to Islam.

### 632 AD

Muhammad died; leaving the once divided tribes unified. The Sunni-Shia Islamic split would not occur until generations later.

### 635-641 AD

Islam was on the move and the Byzantine Empire was in rapid decline. Once Islam took hold Arab tribes could no longer be bought with gold. The tide quickly turned as Byzantine defense forces suddenly became enemies along Byzantium's eastern and southern borders. In 636 and 637 AD, two great battles overturned 1000 years of rule by the Christian west in the eastern Mediterranean. Damascus fell in 635, Antioch in 636, Jerusalem in 637, and Alexandria in 641. The quick decline in Byzantine-controlled cities meant a quick drop in tax revenues and an age of continued decline.

Arab victories mounted despite usually being outnumbered. Why? [1] The Byzantine and Persian Empires had weakened one another after constant battles; [2] The Arabs had mastered cavalry for desert battle; [3] The Arabs used camels to have quick access to supplies (while the Byzantines required long supply lines; and [4] The Arabs were enjoying the “honeymoon” phase of Islam, overjoyed at finding tribal unity, and ready to be martyrs. This was their opportunity to finally have what the others Empires had: their own religion, their own religious book, and their own Empire.

### 732 AD

In roughly 75 years Arab victories had circled the southern Mediterranean and looped around Gibraltar and into Western Europe. If not for the victory of **Frankish General Charles Martel** at the battle of Poitiers in 732 AD, Islam would have circled the entire Mediterranean and established mosques in Paris, London, and Rome. With Martel's victory, Islam began to backpedal from Europe, leaving the entire continent except for the city of Cordova in Spain which, due to circumstances, remained as an Islamic stronghold. Today, Cordova remains as a city with great Islamic influence. From the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it was the richest and most civilized city in Europe.

### 753 AD

The **Iconoclast Council of Constantinople** under soldier Emperor Constantine V outlawed icons in the Byzantine Empire with widespread persecution of the monks climaxing in 761 AD.

### 797 AD

Irene deposed and blinded the emperor child Constantine VI in an effort to restore the icons.

### 800 AD

Charlemagne (742-813 AD), son of Pepin the Short, began a series of battles (in what is now primarily France) and in 12 years defeated the Saxons. After delegating much of his time and effort to help Pope Leo gain respect after a scandal, he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor (though he preferred to be called King of the Franks) at the old St. Peter's Basilica in 800 AD. This day remains the only day in history when a Pope bowed to an earthly king. By 802 AD the West began its climb out of the Dark Ages with the rise of the university system and a huge increase in trade and development.

### 842 AD

Empress Theodora, a fervent image worshipper, persecuted the Byzantine iconoclasts.

### 863 AD

East-West relations were severely strained as Emperor Michael III, a drunkard, appointed his own Patriarch Photius in 858 AD, casting aside the austere Patriarch Ignatius appointed by Pope Nicholas I. Pope Benedict III excommunicated the Patriarch Photius in 863 AD and the East reciprocated in 866 AD when a Synod of bishops at Constantinople condemned heresies of the Latin Church. Thus, in the Eastern mind, permanent severance of the Latin and Greek churches occurred in 866 AD. Most Orthodox Christians look back not to 1054 AD (as does the West) but to 866 AD as the year of separation. The Greeks, not inside Constantinople's high protective walls, were especially non-sympathetic to West, having been abandoned, suffering defeat long before the ancient city had fallen.

### 988 AD

The Russian Rite developed its characteristics after the baptism of **Saint Vladimir** and the people of Kiev-Rus in 988 AD. Two Apostles of the Slavs, **Saints Cyril (869 AD) and Methodius (885 AD)**, brothers of Greek origin, are credited for missionary work that brought the Russian peoples to Christ. Born to a senatorial family in Thessalonica, Cyril went to Constantinople, where he was ordained a priest. The elder Methodius, after being a regional governor, became a monk and abbot of a monastery in Greece. In 862 AD they were sent by the Pope as a missionary team to Ratislav, the Prince of Moravia, with holy relics and papal permission to celebrate the Mass in the Slavonic Tongue. They won over Moravia, Bohemia, Poland and neighboring countries. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 AD, Moscow, with its rich Byzantine-designed buildings, would be hailed as the "Third Rome". Today, the Russian Mass is still celebrated in Old Church Slavonic.

1073 AD

Sulayman overran and conquered Nicaea.

1076 AD

Seljuk Turks seized Jerusalem

1096 AD

After part of their group as members of the Peasants Crusade were annihilated in Anatolia by the Turks, the 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade with its knights assembled at Constantinople and received a blessing before leaving for the Holy Land. Little did the Byzantine Emperor know that in less than 7 years the idea of having Crusades for the greater glory of God would come back to haunt all of Constantinople.

1098-1099 AD

The 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade captured Antioch, then moved onward towards Jerusalem. The crusaders surprisingly received free passage from Shia Muslims to march forward to Jerusalem where they could conquer the Sunni Muslims. On arrival at Jerusalem, the Sunni Muslims and resident Jews fought to the death to try and hold the city. The crusaders overran the city; calling it the beginning of the "Latin Kingdom."

1146-1148 AD

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade ended in collapse in 1148.

1187 AD

Saladin won a giant battle in the desert and soon captured Jerusalem, ending 88 years of Christian occupation. This battle was depicted in the 2003 movie *The Kingdom of Heaven*.

1189-1192 AD

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusade ended with a treaty between King Richard of England and Saladin.

1202-1204 AD

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade**, sanctioned by Pope Innocent III, was planned to set out in conquest of Egypt, a Muslim stronghold. Needing a fleet, Venice's political leader **Enrico Dandolo**, the Doge of Venice, agreed to build the fleet while the financially sponsored crusaders (sponsored by their village or church or local family) gathered. But the crusaders were short in number and the operation fell into debt. Under Dandolo's direction, the crusade diverted to regain one of Dandolo's old possessions, the Hungarian city Zara. But Zara was a Christian city and the Pope threatened excommunication to all who attacked it. Nevertheless, 480 ships sailed out of Venice and the crusaders took Zara on 11 Nov 1202 and excommunication ensued. But hearing of their financial excuses, Innocent then removed the excommunication that winter, hoping that the Crusade would turn towards Egypt. But two things happened: [1] Dandolo had signed a huge trade agreement with Egypt and its great port city of Alexandria, and preferred now to take down his chief rival Constantinople. [2] Boniface of Monferrat, another opportunist, wanted to claim his bloodline and assert himself as King Alexius IV of Constantinople. Dandolo then worked the situation; having Boniface pledge to pay the crusaders huge sums of money when he gained the throne in Constantinople. This time the crusaders made an excuse to the Pope that in Constantinople they would crush the Orthodox heresy. But until this time the East and West had been more like sparring kinfolk than real enemies.

By land Constantinople was impenetrable, but by sea it was very vulnerable. First the crusaders overran Chalcedon. Then, after holding their forces outside Constantinople for over a year, they took the Tower of

Galata which controlled the huge chains protecting the port. They lowered the chains and their 480 ships sailed into the harbor. Fearing for his life, Alexius III fled the city. He was dubbed a coward and Isaac II was taken from the dungeon and made king. Thus; Boniface could no longer promise to be king and to bathe the crusaders in riches. They turned on him and imprisoned him; but the crusaders still wanted 200,000 marks to pay their debts. During the next year both sides tried for a compromise as the city was held captive; but murder, a great fire, a melting of church treasures and multiple kings vying for one throne made for a mess. Running out of time, money, and patience the Crusaders crashed the thinnest portion of the city walls on 12 April 1204 AD. Once the walls were breached, the people of the ancient city felt doomed and fled. A battle that might have continued was over within hours. The city was sacked, pillaged, and plundered with women raped and many spoils divided. But it was the Doge of Venice who took the lion's share. Today, many of these treasures can still be seen in visits to Saint Mark's Cathedral and the Doge's palace in ancient Venice.

#### 1217 AD

The 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade included the conquest of Damietta. Damietta was important in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the time of the Crusades. In 1169 a fleet from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, with support from the Byzantine Empire, had attacked the port but lost to Saladin. During preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade it was determined that control of Damietta meant control of the Nile, and from there all of Egypt could be conquered. From there crusaders could attack Palestine and recapture Jerusalem. In 1219 AD the port was briefly occupied. Saint Francis of Assisi, before his conversion, was one of the occupying forces who was later imprisoned. The Crusade eventually turned back in defeat.

#### 1228-1229 AD

The 6<sup>th</sup> Crusade

#### 1248-1254 AD

The 7<sup>th</sup> Crusade was led by **Saint Louis** (1214-1270) the King of France. At age 12 he had lost his mother and father to become regent of the kingdom. From infancy his mother had inspired him with a love for all things holy. In 1248, he headed a crusade. He was taken prisoner by the followers of Mohammed when a truce was concluded. He was set free and returned to France in 1254 AD.

#### 1261 AD

Emperor Michael VIII captured a virtually abandoned Constantinople, restoring Greek and ending the Latin Kingdom which Westerners claimed to have begun in 1099 AD.

#### 1270 AD

The 8<sup>th</sup> Crusade, traditionally considered by historians as the last of the Crusades, came to a quick end when King Louis died of the pestilence at the siege of Tunis.

#### 1448 AD

Constantine XI was crowned as king of Byzantium.

#### 1451 AD

Accession of Mohammed the Conqueror in the east

#### 1453 AD

The fall of Constantinople to Mohammed the Conqueror and the death of Constantine XI marked the end of the Byzantine Empire.

There are 5 Major Rites in the Catholic Church. Most Westerners are familiar only with the Latin Rite.

**The 5 Major Rites: [1] Alexandrian, [2] Antiochian, [3] Armenian, [4] Byzantine, and [5] Latin.**

[1] **The Alexandrian Rite** – Saint Mark the Evangelist founded the Church of Alexandria in N. Africa.

<u>Branches:</u> <u>Under Rome's authority</u> (200,000)	<u>Not under Rome's authority</u> (29,000,000)
Coptic The <b>Coptic</b> Catholic Church (100,000)	The Coptic Orthodox Church (9,000,000)
Ethiopian The <b>Ethiopian</b> Catholic Church (100,000)	The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (20,000,000)
-Rejected 4 <sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council	
-Rejected Chalcedon Council's refutation of	Monophysite Christology.

[2] **The Antiochian Rite** – Antioch as a city was destroyed by the Crusades forcing the Christians to move to Damascus. Today Lebanon has a Christian majority, while Syria, Jordan, and Palestine each have substantial Christian minorities.

<u>Branches:</u> <u>Under Rome's authority</u> (8,050,000)	<u>Not under Rome's authority:</u> (1,800,000)
Syrian <b>Syriac</b> Catholic Church (300,000)	Syriac Orthodox Church (300,000)
-Speak Aramaic – Jesus' original language	
Iraqi <b>Chaldean</b> Catholic Church (750,000)	Assyrian Apostolic Church of the East (500,000)
-Speak Aramaic – Jesus' original language	
Indian/Far East <b>Syro-Malabar</b> Catholic Church (4,000,000)	Syro-Malabar Orthodox Church (1,000,000)
Lebanese <b>Maronite</b> Catholic Church (3,000,000)	
-The Maronite Rite uses Aramaic – Jesus' original language	
-Descendants of ancient Syria, formed entirely from monasticism.	

[3] **The Armenian Rite**

<u>Branch:</u> <u>Under Rome's authority</u>	<u>Not under Rome's authority</u>
Armenian Armenian Catholic Church (100,000)	Armenian Orthodox Church (3,000,000)

[4] **The Byzantine Rite**

<u>Branches:</u> <u>Under Rome's authority</u>	<u>Not under Rome's authority</u>
All over Byzantine Catholic Church (12,000,000)	Byzantine Orthodox Church (200,000,000)
to include:	-Includes the entire Greek Orthodox Church
Albanian, Belarusan, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Greek, Greek-Melkite, Hungarian, Italo-Greek, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Slovak, and Ukrainian.	

[5] **The Latin Rite**

<u>Branch:</u> <u>Under Rome's authority:</u> (1,098,300,000)	<u>Not under Rome's authority</u>
Universal Roman Catholic Church	None – officially speaking!

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- Language shifts occurred in both Latin & Byzantine Rites; shifting the past 50 years in most instances to the vernacular.

- Eastern non-Catholics (Orthodox) who have been baptized in an Orthodox Church, received baptism, chrismation (confirmation), and eucharist at the time of their baptism. Thus, they are not to be “re-confirmed.” All that is necessary is that they make a profession of faith in the Catholic Church (CCEO c. 897).

- Eastern non-Catholics received into full communion with the Catholic Church are automatically, by law (CCEO c.35), ascribed to the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. They do not become Latin Rite or Roman Catholics, even though a Latin Rite priest may be receiving the person into the Church. (see: InterNos, Vol I, No 1, pp 4-5)