

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

400s

1. cultural background and Church-state relations

- a. 402: the government of the western Empire moves to Ravenna
- b. barbarian invasions
 - 1) 406-86: the Franks conquer Gaul
 - 2) 402-10: the Visigoths under Alaric invade Italy
 - 3) 410: the Visigoths sack Rome
 - 4) 429-42: the Vandals conquer North Africa
 - 5) 451: Atilla the Hun is defeated, Battle of Châlons
 - 6) 455: the Vandals sack Rome
 - 7) 476: the Roman army acclaims a mercenary general, Odoacer (a Scyrri, c. 434-93), emperor; Odoacer deposes Emperor Romulus Augustulus, aged 14
 - a) the western Roman Empire ends
 - b) the eastern Roman Empire becomes the Byzantine Empire
 - 8) 489-93: the Ostrogoths conquer Italy
 - 9) 496: Clovis (and Franks) convert

2. heresies and councils

- a. 431: Council of Ephesus
 - 1) Nestorianism is condemned
 - a) Nestorius says that Jesus is fully God and fully man, but the two natures remain two separate entities: two natures in two persons
 - b) Nestorius says that Mary is therefore not *Theotokos*, “Mother of God”: she only bore the human Jesus
 - c) Nestorians still exist (c. 250,000); they are headquartered in San Francisco
 - 2) Pelagianism (without grace one can avoid sin) is condemned
 - 3) the Council affirms that Christ is “two natures in one person”
- b. 451: Council of Chalcedon
 - 1) Eutychianism (after the Council, called monophysitism) is condemned (Eutyches says Christ is only one nature, the divine nature, after the moment of incarnation)
 - 2) the Council that there is in Christ a hypostatic union: the hypostasis (i.e., the divine nature) holds the two natures in union

3. religious orders

- a. Augustine has his cathedral clergy live a semi-monastic life, singing the liturgy of the hours in choir; such clergy are later called “canons regular” (“canons secular” are diocesan clergy not living such a regulated life)
- b. 432: Patrick (387-c. 460) reaches Ireland
 - 1) born in Scotland or west England, he is captured by Irish slavers and, while a shepherd in Ireland for 6 years, converts to Christianity
 - 2) he escapes but returns to Ireland to evangelize
- c. 451: the Council of Chalcedon (canon 4) rules that each monastery is under the jurisdiction of the local bishop

- d. c. 430-500: a collection of Augustine's ascetical instructions appears (especially from epistle 211, to the nuns of Hippo); later (600s-800s), it is used as a rule
- 4. **theology**
 - a. Augustine (354-430)
 - b. Jerome (340-420)
 - c. Leo I, the Great (440-61)
- 5. **sacraments: baptism**
 - a. c. 400: Ambrose and Augustine defend baptism of desire (Orthodox today require baptism of blood)
 - b. 400s: few non-Christian adults remain, so the catechumenate disappears, and with it the *disciplina arcani*
 - 1) c. 500: the discipline of the secret disappears in the east
 - 2) c. 550: the discipline of the secret disappears in the west
 - c. 400s: infant baptism becomes general (largely as a reaction to Pelagianism)
 - d. 400s: chapels (small oratories or churches in a church's territory) begin to arise
- 6. **sacraments: Eucharist**
 - a. 400s: the bishop preaches from his chair (*cathedra*); he delegates priests and deacons to rural churches
 - b. 500s: the bishop sometimes ascends the ambo to preach
 - c. each principal church has developed its own liturgy ("rite"):
 - 1) Rome has the Roman rite
 - 2) Alexandria has the rite of St Mark
 - 3) Jerusalem and Antioch have the rite of St James
 - 4) Constantinople has the rite of St John Chrysostom (based on St Clement's liturgy in *Apostolic Constitutions* 8, which in turn was based on Hippolytus' *Traditio apostolica* [c. 220])
 - 5) Constantinople also has a (longer) rite of St Basil the Great, still used for certain feasts
 - 6) Milan has the rite of St Ambrose
 - 7) Gaul has the Gallican rite (developed in 400s-500s)
 - 8) Spain has the Mozarabic rite
 - d. 492-96: from eastern practice Pope Gelasius I imports a litany near the beginning of the service
 - e. 590-604: Gregory the Great shortens the litany to our present-day *Kyrie*
- 7. **feast days**
 - a. feasts of Mary
 - 1) 300s: Jerusalem celebrates the purification (now Feb. 2)
 - 2) c. 430: Constantinople celebrates Mary's conceiving (now Dec. 18)
 - 3) c. 450: Jerusalem celebrates Mary's assumption (now Aug. 15) (by 600s, it is empire-wide)
- 8. **fasts**
 - a. Advent
 - 1) 400s: Gaul fasts on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Nov. 11-Dec. 25
 - 2) c. 550: in Rome preparation for Christmas is the four weeks before the feast
- 9. **devotions: saints**

- a. c. 410-751 (Merovingian Dynasty, France): devotion to saints increases: their feasts are multiplied, their tombs are honored and places of pilgrimage
10. **devotions: Mary**
- a. pre-375: some women in Arabia (Collyridians) sacrificed cakes (κολλυρίς, kollyris) to Mary as goddess
 - b. c. 400: theologians distinguish *douleia* (veneration) and *latreia* (worship, of God)
 - c. 431: Council of Ephesus' recognition of Mary as *Theotokos* ("God bearer") much increases devotion
 - d. 400s: Marian devotion increases as monks and nuns see Mary as the sinless Second Eve
 - e. 400s-500s: the east celebrates a feast of All Martyrs on the octave (seventh day after) of Pentecost
 - f. c. 610: Pope Boniface dedicates the Pantheon in Rome to Mary and all martyrs, which leads eventually to the feast of All Saints
11. **devotions: relics** (bodies or body parts, or objects that touched bodies before or after death)
- a. c. 31: Acts 5:15, "they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by"
 - b. 300s: Mass at martyrs' graves led to basilicas with altars over martyrs' graves; soon relics are put on altars of churches elsewhere
 - c. c. 330s: Eusebius reports that Jerusalem is venerating the true cross
 - d. 348: Cyril of Jerusalem says that pieces have been disbursed throughout the world
 - e. c. 395: Ambrose says that Constantine's mother, Helena, found the true cross in Jerusalem
12. **devotions: pilgrimages**
- a. 300s on: favorite martyrs' tombs for pilgrimage: Peter, Paul, and Hippolytus (Rome); Cyprian (Carthage); Sergius (Syrian desert); Martin of Tours (not martyr); Felix of Nola (not martyr); Thecla (Seleucia); Menas (soldier martyr, desert west of Alexandria)
 - b. 300s on: but Holy Land pilgrimages are far more popular
13. **art: painting and sculpture**
- a. 30-300: because of the Old Testament prohibition of idols, some Christian leaders disapprove of images
 - b. 313 on: in Rome, Peter is often carved on sarcophagi
 - c. 300s: theologians justify images because veneration or adoration is to the person, not the image; and in churches they instruct and edify the faithful
 - d. 400s on: eastern churches are profusely decorated, western churches somewhat less so
 - e. c. 600: Gregory the Great defends images but warns against abuses (miraculous powers, etc.)
14. **arts: vestments: the pallium**
- a. 300s: eastern bishops begin to wear the *omophorion* (probably derived from the Roman civil shawl); the *omophorion* is a broad band ornamented with crosses and draped loosely over the shoulders; it is a symbol of their duties as shepherds
 - b. c. 400: first mention of the *omophorion* (Isidore of Pelusium); (today eastern bishops wear the *omophorion*)
 - c. c. 400-50: the pope begins to wear the pallium, probably derived from the eastern *omophorion* (the original pallium is also a broad band with crosses draped loosely on the shoulders); by 500 it is customary for popes but is worn only during Mass
 - d. c. 500: popes begin to confer the pallium on metropolitans (later, archbishops too)

- e. the modern pallium is a two-inch-wide band of white wool worn around the shoulders, with two foot-long pendants (one in front and one behind) and six small black crosses; it is worn over the chasuble (a priest's outermost "poncho")

15. morals of the clergy

- a. c. 400-1000: the canon law that "obliged all clerics to abstain from marriage after receiving subdeaconship" is very difficult to enforce; even many bishops ignore it (Bihlmeyer)

500s

1. cultural background and Church-state relations

- a. 500s: the pope becomes a temporal ruler
 - 1) 546: the Gothic king Totila sacks Rome and empties it of inhabitants
 - 2) the eastern emperor Justinian I attempts to reconquer and hold Italy but fails
 - 3) the pope becomes sovereign of a small Italian kingdom that is mostly independent of the Eastern Empire

2. heresies and councils

- a. 529: Council of Orange (not ecumenical)
 - 1) semi-Pelagianism condemned (without grace one can initially turn to God)
 - 2) God does not will anyone to hell
- b. 553: Council of Constantinople II
 - 1) monophysitism is condemned (the divine nature absorbs the human nature at incarnation)
 - 2) monotheletism is condemned (*theletos* is Greek for "will": Christ had all of a divine nature, and all of a human nature except for a human will)
 - 3) Origenism is condemned (Origen, † 254, had speculated that before creation, pre-existent souls fell and became angels, men, and demons; also, the Son is subordinate to Father)
- c. after 553: the churches in several nations remain monophysite (to this day): the Armenian, Jacobite (Syrian), Coptic (Egyptian), and Abyssinian (Ethiopian) churches
- d. 589: a council of Toledo III adds *filioque* ("and the Son") to the creed

3. clergy

- a. pope is now: bishop of Rome, metropolitan of the Roman Province, primate of Italy, first of patriarchs

4. territorial organization: benefices

- a. 30-c. 500: all offerings by laity are transmitted to the bishop, who usually divides them into four parts: "one went to the support of the bishop, another to the maintenance of the clergy, a third to the repair and construction of churches, and a fourth to the relief of the needy and afflicted." But as country parishes increased (they often received in-kind offerings), and as the Church gained land holdings, the system became unworkable. (Creagh)
- b. c. 500 on: so the practice grows of allowing some clergy to hold benefices, i.e., "retain for themselves ... the gifts which they had received ..." (Creagh)

5. religious orders

- a. 529: Benedict founds Monte Cassino (*ora et labora*, pray and work)
 - 1) important innovations
 - a) "a full year's probation, followed by a solemn vow of obedience to the Rule as mediated by the abbot" ("Benedict of Nursia")

- b) a vow of *stabilitas loci* (stability of place, lifelong residence in only one monastery)
 - c) a spirit of moderation (working days balance prayer, work, and study: 5-6 hours of liturgy and prayer, 5 hours of manual work, and 4 hours of reading the Bible and spiritual works)
- b. Gregory the Great (590-604) is “Father of the West” because he sends Benedictine missionaries into Europe
- 6. **sacraments: Eucharist**
 - a. Gregorian Masses
 - 1) 590-604: Gregory the Great (590-604) relates in his *Dialogues* that, after saying 30 Masses in 30 days for a deceased monk, the monk appeared and told him he had gained entry into heaven for completing the series
 - 2) so Gregorian Masses are 30 Masses, 1 a day without interruption, and intended for the benefit a single individual (not a family or group)
 - 3) the Roman Congregation on Indulgences has called Gregorian Masses “a pious and reasonable belief”
 - 4) since few diocesan priests can offer an uninterrupted series of 30 Masses, mission priests usually do them
- 7. **sacraments: reconciliation**
 - a. 500s-600s: Irish, Scotch, and British monks practice private confession, voluntary penance, and unlimited repetition; because the Irish, Scotch, and British peoples resist public penance, Columbanus and other missionaries to them promote the monks’ practice for the laity
 - b. c. 584-615: Columbanus’ († 615) missionary journeys
 - 1) c. 584: Columbanus and twelve companions travel from Ireland to Scotland
 - 2) 585: they reach France and establish the abbeys of Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaines (Columbanus becomes abbot of Luxeuil)
 - 3) 611: Columbanus preaches to the Suevi and Alamanni (German tribes) along the Rhine; he founds the monastery of St Aurelia in Switzerland
 - 4) 612: he founds Bobbio between Milan and Genoa
 - 5) from Luxeuil Columbanus sends disciples (tradition says 63) into France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, carrying the gospel and his rule; these found over 100 monasteries
 - 6) Columbanus becomes the prototype imitated by other Irish, Scotch, and British missionaries (Killian, Wilfrid, Willibrord, Swithbert, Boniface, etc.)
 - c. penitential books
 - 1) 500s-600s: to help confessors choose penances, penitential books appear
 - 2) 500s: the oldest known penitential book is by the Irish monk Finnian
 - 3) 500s: a much-used penitential book is by Columbanus
 - 4) 600s: the one best known is collected disciplinary decisions of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury († 690)
 - d. 500s-1400s: but public and scandalous sins still require public penance; and such a penance no longer depends on the free will of the offender but is enforced by civil authority
 - e. commonly penance is imposed on Ash Wednesday and absolution given on Holy Thursday

- f. penances are either “fasting, almsgiving, banishment to a foreign country, pilgrimages, scourging, or entrance into a monastery” (Bihlmeyer)

8. sacraments: Eucharist

- a. 500s-600s: the Roman service is similar to today’s
- b. some parts are permanent (the “ordinary” of the Mass, e.g., *Agnus Dei*, Eucharistic prayers)
- c. other parts are variable (the “proper” of the Mass, e.g., scripture readings, offertory)
- d. fitting the variable into the ordinary creates each particular Mass
- e. private Masses
 - 1) up to 500s: the Eucharist is always celebrated with the participation of the congregation
 - 2) 500s on: private Masses are offered
 - a) a server or assistant represents the congregation
 - b) multiple Masses require multiple altars, eventually (1100s) creating the side chapels of Gothic architecture
 - c) 932: the synod of Dingolfing prescribes three Masses per day during Lent
 - d) 1022: the Synod of Seligenstadt restricts priests to three Masses per day

9. fasts

- a. 500-1000: every Friday is a day of abstinence (unless a great feast falls on it)
- b. 500-1000: previously (313-500) there were fasts on the vigils of great feasts; now, as new feasts are introduced, vigils with fasts become numerous

10. devotions: liturgy of the hours

- a. pre-30: times for daily holocausts in the temple become times for daily prayer in the synagogues (Ps 55:17, Dan 6:10)
- b. 30-300: the Church retains the synagogue times: *terce* (third hour, 9 A.M., Acts 2:15); *sext* (sixth hour, 12 P.M., Acts 10:9); and *none* (ninth hour, 3 P.M., Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30) and adds morning and evening
- c. c. 100: *Didache* 8.3 says to pray the Lord’s Prayer three times daily
- d. c. 200: times for prayers at home are: before meals; before bathing; at cockcrow, morning, third hour (9 A.M.), sixth hour (12 P.M.), ninth hour (3 P.M.), evening, and midnight (Tertullian; Hippolytus)
- e. c. 200: Tertullian also mentions rising in the night to pray (*matins*, midnight, now “office of readings”)
- f. c. 400s: *prime* (first hour, 6 A.M.) and *compline* (bedtime) appear
- g. 529: Benedict counts *matins* and *prime* as one, resulting in the traditional seven canonical hours
- h. 600s: the hymn *Te Deum*
- i. 1963: Vatican II eliminates *prime* and gives official names: morning prayer, *terce*, *sext*, *none*, evening prayer, *compline*, and office of readings

11. devotions: relics: 500-1000

- a. 500-1000: people are very eager to obtain relics
- b. popular feasts with relics were:
 - 1) the enthronization (*elevatio*) of relics on the altar of a church before consecration
 - 2) the translation of relics (movement from one place to another)
 - 3) the exposition of relics on certain days
- c. most relics came from Italy (Rome), France, or the east

- d. abuses
 - 1) some trafficked in relics (simony), circulating false or impossible relics
 - 2) some were so eager they resorted to theft and violence
 - 3) causes
 - a) at first the masses of people were ignorant about relics, seeing them as talismans, with powers in the relics themselves
 - b) but even later (1000-1500), though people were much better instructed, veneration of relics was often excessive
- e. 550-650: the first translation over the Alps is of Benedict (from Monte Cassino to Fleury)
- f. 672: Roman martyrs are translated

12. devotions: pilgrimages

- a. 500-1000: favorite sites are the tombs of Peter and Paul (Rome), the tomb of James (Compostela, Spain), and the tomb of Martin of Tours (Tours, France)

13. arts: music

- a. chant
 - 1) c. 330: Pope Sylvester establishes a school for chanters
 - 2) c. 350s-80s: Ambrose at Milan creates a chant based on Greek music (*cantus Ambrosianus*)
 - 3) 590-604: Gregory the Great founds a chant school (*schola cantorum*) often imitated; he writes many melodies, and a form of notation is invented to preserve them
 - 4) c. 500: Romanos the Melodist is the great Orthodox composer of hymns
- b. 500s: bells are first used in North Africa (probably)