

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION

Studies in the Faith

History of the Church - Part I



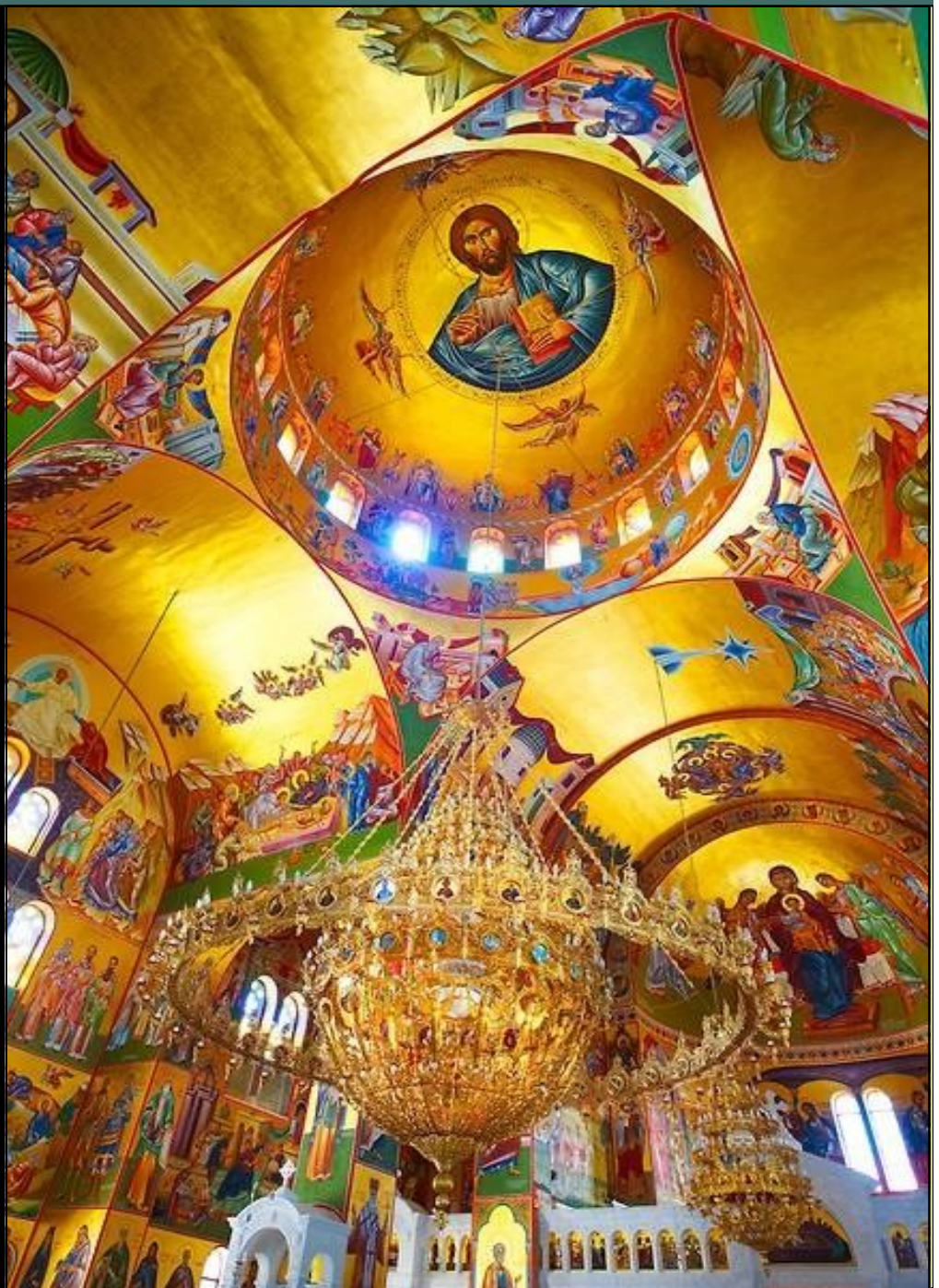
**GREEK ORTHODOX
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OF THE
ASSUMPTION**

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SESSION #1 - HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

"But history likewise lies at the root of Orthodoxy's conviction that it is the true Church of Christ on earth. It is precisely because of its possession of an uninterrupted historical and theological continuity that it is able to make this claim at all."

(History of the Church by Professor Aristeides Papadakis Ph.D.)

READING ASSIGNMENTS

The Orthodox Church (2015 edition), by Timothy Ware, Pages 1 - 16.

Alone in the Desert?, Christian History, Vol. 18, No. 4, Pages 20 - 24.

Acts of the Apostles 1:1 - 12:25

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles 1:1 - 16:8, translated by Robert A. Kraft.

VIDEO

The History and Holy Sacraments of Orthodox Christianity: The Beginnings, Part One.

THE BEGINNINGS: 33 AD

Our Lord and Savior's crucifixion and resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit to His disciples at Pentecost established the Church within which our Lord and Savior dwells (Acts 2:1-4). Hence, with the birth of the Church at Pentecost the Disciples of Christ began to preach the Gospel of God to the world. It was in the city of Jerusalem that the first Christian community was formed with the baptism of 3,000 individuals (Acts 2:14-42). At first, the citizens of the Roman Empire believed Christianity to be a sect of the Jewish faith. This is because, at first, Christianity was preached only to the Jews. With time the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, realized that the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ needed to be preached to all people (Acts 15:1-35).

With the establishment of the Church came the establishment of the three-fold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon. The twelve Apostles were the first Bishops of the Church. The first Christian communities established were under the care of one of the Apostles. With time, as the church continued to grow, the Apostles realized they could not effectively minister to all the communities under their authority. They, therefore, delegated to a group of elders "presbyteroi" in Greek (hence the word priest) the right to celebrate the worship services of these newly established communities in their absence. In addition, others were ordained ("diakonoi" or deacons) to oversee the social ministries and needs of the Christian communities.

This threefold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon was well established in the Christian Church by the beginning of the second century (100AD). The bishops were regarded as the historical successors of the Apostles themselves. Throughout Eastern Orthodoxy today, its bishops can trace their ordination line, in unbroken succession, back to an Apostle. Sources from the second century teach us that these records of apostolic succession were carefully maintained.

With the three-fold structure of Bishop, Priest and Deacon in place, the Church continued to experience growth. Even though Christians were, at times, severely persecuted, by the end of the third century, approximately ten percent of the population of the Roman empire was Christian (300 AD).

The majority of Christian communities were, at first, established in the largest cities of the Greek-Roman empire. The largest cities at the time were Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Due to their size, they were cities where Universities were established. They were main ports of commerce. These cities were also the political centers of the then known world. It is as if Christianity found in the political, intellectual and commerce environment of the day, an already completed structure which the Church utilized to spread the newly found faith.

Because of the importance of these cities, the bishops who oversaw the churches within these cities came to be called Patriarchs. Hence the cities themselves came to be known as Patriarchates. The five ancient Patriarchates and the Apostles who founded them are as follows:

Rome: St. Peter	
Constantinople: St. Andrew	(6 million) *
Alexandria: St. Mark	(350,000)
Antioch: St. Peter	(750,000)
Jerusalem: St. James	(60,000)

* The number of Orthodox Christians who are under the authority of the Bishop presiding over these Christian centers today.

With the growth of the Church came the establishment of the ecclesiastical structure which the Orthodox Church still adheres to. In our contemporary time, many people think of a Church community as a small part of a larger organization. Nearly two thousand years ago, St. Ignatius, the second Bishop of Antioch, believed that each Christian community represents the "whole Church" instead of a smaller part of a larger organization. This is because in each local Church where the Sacrament of the Eucharist is celebrated, the whole Christ is present not just a part of Him. The Orthodox Church still maintains this belief.

As St. Ignatius and the other early Bishops and Saints of the Church began to formulate Church structure and worship, they would meet on a regular basis. These meetings are called councils. The first council to meet was the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). At the council of Jerusalem, the Bishops decided a person did not have to follow the Jewish law to become Christian. They also decided that the Gospel of God would be preached to all in the world not just to the Jews. All the councils that followed were patterned after this Jerusalem Council. All bishops would meet to discuss the issue. The outcome would be determined by vote. All bishops had equal vote. The Patriarch being the bishop of the largest city would be responsible for overseeing the meeting. The Orthodox Church adheres to this same structure today.

When the Church was established another aspect of Church life that began to immediately develop was that of worship and the Liturgical cycle of the Church. When the Church was established at Pentecost, many of the Jews who became Christian continued their synagogue cycle of prayer and worship. Hence much of the Liturgical life of the Orthodox Christian Church has its roots in the Jewish temple synagogue services. Even today, the first half of the Divine Liturgy that we celebrate every Sunday is simply a "Christianized" version of the Jewish Synagogue service.

The above being the case, the Church has always been liturgical. Even from the very beginning! In fact, the word Liturgy is used in Acts of the Apostles. *"While they were engaged in the Liturgy of the Lord and were fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them."* (Acts 13:2 NAB). The first Liturgy was written by St. James the Apostle, the same St. James who wrote the Pastoral epistle that bears his name. At about the same time, St. Paul was writing his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. Hence the development of Liturgical life of the Church and the development of the bible occurred simultaneously.

The Church continued to grow despite the fact that at times, she was severely persecuted. The Church was persecuted because Christians would not recognize the Emperor of Rome as God. During these sporadic, yet intense state sanctioned persecutions, the Church went underground. The worst of the official persecutions was begun by the Emperor Diocletian in 298 AD. This persecution was not regional as so many persecutions of Christians in the past, but rather empire wide. Christians were robbed, tortured and put to death wherever the Roman authorities could find them. This persecution continued until Constantine became emperor.

The Church continued to grow despite these periods of persecution for many reasons: (1) The Church cared for the poor and deprived which helped establish its reputation as a loving institution, (2) The Church preached the message that all were equal in God's eyes at a time when social class was very dominant in the social structure of Rome. The above two factors produced social solidarity and helped strengthen the Church's internal cohesion. The two most important factors however, for the Church's growth were (3) the fact that Christianity took

very popular Greek philosophical ideas such as Socrates' belief in the immortality of the soul and Christianized them and (4) the most important factor, the saving message of the Gospel.

As the fourth century began, the state sponsored persecution of the Christian Church subsided. This is because in the year 312 A.D. St. Constantine declared that Christianity was a legal religion. The recent persecution had made it clear that Christians were far more numerous than anyone had imagined. Christians were usually dedicated and principled people who were bound together by a set of beliefs, by a cohesive ecclesiastical government and their philanthropic service to the community. Constantine realized that no other religion during that period of time could provide so many benefits to a state organization attempting to preserve the integrity of its empire. With Constantine's vision of the Cross on his way to battle and his edict of Milan in the year 313 A.D., Christianity was no longer a persecuted religion. By the year 380 A.D. the Roman Empire prohibited paganism and made Christianity the official state religion.

Remember that throughout this time, the Church lived only by Tradition. The Bible as we know it today simply did not exist. The Bible, as we know it today was developed within the context of the Ecumenical councils four centuries after the Church was established!

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

399 BC:	The death of Socrates, followed by the careers of Plato and then Aristotle.
333 BC:	The Battle of Issus, where Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and spread Greek culture to all the Near and Middle East.
1 AD:	The Birth of Jesus Christ.
33 AD:	The Crucifixion, Resurrection and establishment of the Church at Pentecost (Acts 2).
34 AD:	Martyrdom of the first martyr and first deacon St. Stephen. (Acts 7)
36 AD:	Conversion of St. Paul. (Acts 9)
47-61 AD:	The missionary travels of the Apostle Paul.
52 AD:	The first Apostolic council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)
64 AD:	The persecutions of the Christians begin under emperor Nero in Rome.
67 AD:	St. Paul is martyred in Rome
112 AD:	Persecution under emperor Trajan.
125 AD:	Spread of Gnosticism, one of the earliest Christian heresies.
155 AD:	Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and disciple of St. John.
196 AD:	Controversy over the celebration of Easter. The Didache recorded Christian belief, practice, and government of the early Church.
215 AD:	Death of Clement of Alexandria, teacher of Origen and a founding father of the Christian School of Alexandria,
260 AD:	St. Lucian founded the School of Antioch, in an attempt to interpret Scripture.

292 AD: Diocletian divided the Roman empire into East and West, a division that emphasized the political and cultural differences between the two parts of the Empire and influenced the development of the Church.

298-313 AD: The persecution of Diocletian, terminated by Constantine's Edict of Milan in the year 313 A.D.

305 AD: The beginning of Monasticism by St. Anthony.

313 AD: The Edict of Milan by Constantine the Great makes Christianity a legal religion.

325 AD: Constantinople becomes the capital of the Byzantine empire.

326 AD: The discovery of the Cross on which Christ was crucified by St. Helen.

330 AD: The capital of the Roman Empire is moved to Byzantium, later renamed Constantinople.

337 AD: The Baptism and death of Constantine.

380 AD: Pagan religion prohibited in the Roman Empire.

SESSION ONE - CHECK LIST

- ☐ Attended class session #1
- ☐ Viewed the video on "The History and Holy Sacraments of Orthodox Christianity: The Beginnings, Part one.
- ☐ Read pages 1-16 of The Orthodox Church (2015 edition), by Timothy Ware.
- ☐ Read the article Alone in the Desert? In Christian History, Vol. 18, No. 4, Pages 20-24
- ☐ Read Acts of the Apostles 1:1 - 12:25
- ☐ Read The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles 1:1 - 16:8, translated by Robert A. Kraft





Alone in the Desert?

Why thousands of early Christians took up the monastic way, and what their life was really like.

James E. Goehring

In October 346, Alexandria was abuzz with word of Archbishop Athanasius's return from six years of exile. In that city, his Arian opponents were in retreat, and his followers were aflame with heightened zeal for their faith. Wives and husbands heeded Paul's advice (1 Cor. 7:5) to refrain from sexual relations and turn instead to prayer. Fathers persuaded children to renounce the world, and children encouraged parents in their asceticism. Young women who had looked forward to marriage chose instead to remain virgins for Christ, and young men followed the example of others and became monks. The laity's zeal had found embodiment in the renunciation of the world.

By the middle of the fourth century, asceticism was in the air and spreading, especially in Egypt. But what exactly did this life entail? And why were so many suddenly attracted to it?

MONASTIC GROWTH MOVEMENT

Renunciation of the world, an orientation so at odds with our modern culture, had in fact nourished the growth of Christianity from the start, and by 346, persons who wished to embark on an ascetic life had many exemplars from which to choose.

Within cities, Christian philosophers and teachers learned from the ascetic lifestyles of their non-Christian counterparts. As young people had in the past pursued wisdom by going to the philosopher Antoninus, who according to an ancient account, "despised his body and freed himself from its pleasures," so now Christian youth sought out Christian ascetics under whom they might learn the new Christian philosophy.

In Alexandria, the theologian Origen (who lived in the early third century) had taught new converts about Christianity and amazed them with his renunciations, including sleeping on the floor, going barefoot, extreme fasting, and abstaining completely from wine.

In fourth-century Leontopolis (in the Egyptian delta), one Hieracas formed an ascetic association of single persons who came together for study and worship. These Christians rejected traditional marriage and advocated instead a form of ascetic companionship, in which the partners renounced sexual activity.

More traditional Christian leaders, however, abhorred the practice. Athanasius, for example, wrote letters to virgins warning them that to live celibately with a man was to pour fuel on the flame of passion. "For does a person tie up a fire in his bosom and not burn his clothes? Or does a man walk on a fire's burning coals and not burn his feet?"

Still, Athanasius encouraged young women to become "brides of Christ" within their parents' home or in a house of virgins. Male ascetics too lived in the cities in their parents' homes, alone (this is called "anchoritic" monasticism), or in small ascetic houses.

By 325, a more elaborate form of village asceticism had also emerged. In Upper Egypt, Pachomius brought ascetics together within a walled community to practice a common life under a shared rule ("cenobitic" monasticism). Priests and deacons in Alexandria sent ascetically minded youth tip river to join the Pachomian community. Within the cities, towns, and villages of Egypt, ascetic Christians had become so commonplace that the author of the *Historia Monachorum en Aegypto* (a late-fourth-century travel journal) ventured to suggest that monks and virgins almost outnumbered the secular inhabitants in the town of Oxyrhynchus (on the Nile, about 100 miles south of modern Cairo). "The city," he asserted, "was so full of monasteries that its walls resounded with the monks' voices."

Gradually, the withdrawal from the world evident in these lifestyles, practiced often in the towns and villages of Egypt, became separate spatially as more and more ascetics withdrew into the desert. When Antony embarked on the ascetic life around A.D. 271, he first apprenticed himself with an old ascetic in a neighboring village. From there he moved into deserted tombs located some distance from the village, and then even farther away to a deserted fortress across the river. He eventually established a monastery at the inner mountain by the Red Sea.

Amoun, a contemporary of Antony, lived in an ascetic marriage in the Delta for 18 years before he withdrew alone (about 330) to Nitria, at the edge of the western desert beside the village of Pernoudj. By 338 so many ascetics had joined Amoun in Nitria that he withdrew six miles further into the desert to a place that became known as the Cells (Kellia). Here the monks lived in a colony of isolated cells (called "semianchoritic" monasticism), each located out of earshot of its nearest neighbor.

Initially cells must have been small, though archaeological excavations reveal that in later times some came to include a courtyard, a vestibule, an oratory, two bedrooms (one for the ascetic and one for his disciple), an office, a kitchen, and a latrine.

In this setting, less advanced monks practiced the ascetic life under the tutelage of a more experienced master. Thus when a novice asked Abba Paisios what he should do to fear God, he was told, "Go, and join a man who fears God, and live near him; he will teach you, too, to fear God."

FEATS OF SPIRITUAL ATHLETES

In spite of the severe demands, communal asceticism proved increasingly attractive through the fourth century. Palladius reported that eventually 600 monks lived at the Cells and that they had their own church and priest. Even further into the desert beyond the Cells lay Scetis, which had been founded at about the same time by Macarius the Egyptian. Distant enough to satisfy the desire for solitude, yet close enough to meet transportation and economic needs, it became famous and attracted many ascetics.

Palladius, who visited Egypt toward the end of the fourth century, reported 2,000 monks living in the monasteries around Alexandria and 5,000 in Nitria. (The population of Alexandria has been estimated at about 180,000 in the fourth century.) In Athanasius's famous words, "The desert was made a city by monks who left their own people and enrolled for citizenship in heaven."

The sayings and stories of these desert ascetics are filled with accounts of amazing trials and extraordinary feats. One hears of monks who walked on hot coals or scorpions or asps with their bare feet, of others whose unshaven hair alone served as their clothes, and still others who grazed with the antelope for food. Some monks wore chains and let their hair grow long, much to the dismay of others. Women shaved their heads and passed as male ascetics, their ruse discovered only in their death.

Onnophrius withdrew so far into the desert that Paphnutius had to walk over eight days and receive miraculous aid to reach him. Abba Bessarion avoided sleep for 14 days and nights by standing upright in the midst of thorn bushes, and Eulogius often fasted an entire week, eating only bread and salt. Pachomius bound ashes against his loins so that they ate away at him, and another monk's body became so irritated through his ascetic practices that he was infested with vermin. A solitary, or hermit, in Lower Egypt avoided the temptation of a woman by shutting himself in his cell and dousing the flame of lust by thrusting his fingers one by one into the flame of his lamp.

Fantastic tales such as these, however, only tell part of the story. While the tales emphasize the remoteness of the desert, most early ascetics dwelled near towns and villages or within relatively easy reach of them. Contact among monks was frequent, and the necessities of life required at least minimal contact with the world. The monks' handiwork required markets, and food and other necessities required an income.

John the Dwarf wove baskets that a camel driver picked up from his cell in Scetis, and Isidore went to the local market to sell his goods. Esias worked in the local harvest, and Lucius purchased his food with money earned

plaiting ropes. Poemen interceded on a villager's behalf with a local magistrate, and in a letter, one writer appeals to the hermit John to obtain his release from military service. The "remoteness" of the desert was, in fact, not that remote. In the stories, it serves as a description of the monks' "otherness."

Yet even the near desert proved a difficult abode. If monks fled the city to avoid its temptations, they found in the desert the home of the demons. If they sought in the desert a place to avoid contact with the opposite sex, they found the desires and images of the flesh ever present in their minds. Theirs became a psychological battle, and ascetic techniques were aimed to conquer the mind as well as the body. Work and fasting became essential tools. Solitude and silence curtailed careless chatter. Hands busy weaving mats kept the mind occupied.

A carefully controlled diet helped. Monks recognized, along with medical writers of the day, that certain foods lowered one's sexual drive. Wine, meat, and rich foods, which had the opposite effect, were of course avoided. Jerome, citing the physician Galen, states that "bodies of young men ... and women glow with innate warmth" and that "all food is harmful which tends to increase that heat." He advised them, "Drink only water... avoid all hot dishes... With vegetables also avoid anything that creates wind or lies heavy on the stomach...Nothing is so good for young Christians as a diet of herbs... By cold food the heat of the body should be tempered." Monastic diets varied, but bread, lentils, and vegetables were among the staples.

LIVING BIBLES

Scripture served as the ultimate guide book for these men and women. They read it carefully and committed large portions of it to memory. Antony paid such close attention when he heard the Scriptures read that his memory served him in place of books. Pachomian monks memorized large portions of Scripture, especially the Psalms, and meditated upon them. In an ancient rock-cut tomb used by a monk as a cell, the owner painted the first line of each Psalm on the wall to aid him in his recitation of the entire text. The memorized text was then embodied in the ascetic's life.

The tales of the desert monks are replete with examples of such "lived" Scripture. When Abba Macarius returned to his cell one day, he found a man stealing his belongings. He reacted calmly and helped the thief load his donkey with the objects from his cell. As the man departed, Macarius recited the words from Job, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Sarapion loved his copy of one of the Gospels and read it often. Yet he sold it and gave to the poor, following its advice to "sell what you have and give to the poor."

Theodore refused a visit from his mother, citing Matthew 10:37: "He who loves his father or his mother more than me is not worthy of me."

The radical Christians who responded to the ascetic call embarked on a path of personal change. They sought to embody the teachings of Scripture, to live as angels on earth by imitating Elijah, Christ, and the ascetic heroes about whom they heard. As angels were not bound by family and belongings, they sought to free themselves of such encumbrances. As angels were passionless, they sought to control the passions. As angels were asexual, they sought to overcome sexuality.

Late fourth-century monk and spiritual writer John Cassian wrote, "To pray 'thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven' is to pray that men be like angels, that as angels fulfill God's will in heaven, men may fulfill his will, instead of their own, on earth." Ascetic practices tore down the old self as defined by "the world" and fashioned a new self defined in terms of radical Christian spirituality. Arsenius, a man of senatorial rank who served as tutor to the Roman princes Arcadius and Honorius, prayed to God to lead him in the way of salvation. "And a voice came saying to him, 'Arsenius, flee from men and you will be saved.' " Arsenius renounced his rank and wealth and became a monk in Scetis.

When later a relative, a senator, left him a large inheritance, he returned it saying, "I was dead [to the world]"

long before this senator who has just died." Arsenius had become a new man in Christ. His transformation is described more mystically in reports that "a brother came to Arsenius's cell at Scetis, and waiting outside the door, he saw the man entirely like a flame" (symbolizing the monk's ascetic perfection). Heaven and earth met in the successful ascetic.

The stories and sayings of the desert monks served as spiritual guidebooks for those who would embark on an ascetic life. Novices in the ascetic life strove to imitate the great ascetic heroes of the past. The sayings and stories, however, served not only future monks, but other Christians as well. Stories like that of Macarius related above, after all, convey their moral within an idealized story. The reader need not help a thief plunder his home in order to recognize in Marcarius's detachment a challenge to his own attachment to the things of the world. ■

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DYNAMIC DUO

Though this meeting with Antony is considered fiction, Paul of Thebes (right in the picture) may have nonetheless been the first Christian hermit. The famous Jerome (who wrote Paul's "biography") presented Paul (like Antony) as one born of wealthy parents. But Paul retreated to the desert in 249 to avoid persecution, and only after spending some time there, "what had been his necessity became his free choice." He lived in solitude for some 90 years. →



CAVE-SWEET HOME

← Though Egyptian monastic communities are the most well known, monastic communities also flourished in Palestine and Cappadocia (in modern Turkey), where monks took up "the discipline" in the many caves carved into Cappadocian mountainsides.

NO IDLE HANDS FOR THE DEVIL TO PLAY WITH



Monks working with their hands, an essential element of monasticism from the beginning. Early monks chanted prayers to the rhythm of their work, so that, as Lucius of Enna put it, "Working with my hands, I pray without ceasing." A desert fathers saying recorded by Cassian went, "A busy monk is besieged by a single devil, but an idle one destroyed by spirits innumerable."



The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

Translated from the Didache
By Robert A. Kraft

I. The two ways* (1:1-6:2)

- 1** There are two ways—one of life, and one of death. And there is a great difference between the two ways [cf. Jer. 21:8; Matt. 7:13ff].

A. The Way of Life

On the one hand, then, the way of Life is this:

1. First, you shall love the God who made you. Second, your neighbor as yourself [Lev. 19:18b; Matt 22:37-39]. And whatever you do not want done to you, do not do to anyone else [Matt 7:121].

2. Now this is the teaching of these words:

Bless those who curse you [cf. Luke 6:28a; Matt. 5:44 var.] and pray for your enemies but fast for those who persecute you [cf. Luke 6:27, 28b; Matt. 5:44]; For wherein do you excel if you love those who love you? [cf. Luke 6:32a] don't the Gentiles also do likewise? [cf. Luke 6:33b; Matt. 5:46b,47b]

But you should love those who hate you [cf. Luke 6:27; Matt. 5:44], and you will not have an enemy [cf. I Pet. 3:13].

3. Abstain from fleshly and bodily desires [cf. I Pet. 2:111].

If someone hits you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also [see Matt. 5:39b; Luke 6:29a] and you will be perfect [cf. Matt. 5:48; 19:21].

If someone compels you to go one mile, go with him for two [cf. Matt. 5:41].

If someone takes your coat, give him your shirt too [cf. Luke 6:29b; Matt. 5:40].

If someone takes from you what is yours [cf. Matt. 5:42b; Luke 6:30b] don't demand its return [cf. Luke 6:30b] for you cannot [cf. Matt. 5:39a].

4. Give to all who ask you, and don't ask for it back [cf. Luke 6:30; Matt. 5:42]; for the Father wishes that all men should receive from his own gifts.

Blessed is he who gives according to the command, for he is blameless.

Woe to him who receives;

For if someone who is in need receives, he is blameless, but he who is not in need will be called to account as to why he received and with what results, and when he has been imprisoned, he will be interrogated concerning his actions, and he will not be released from there until he repays the last penny [cf. Matt. 5:25ff. 18:34; Luke 12:58ff].

5. But it has also been said concerning this matter:

Let your alms sweat in your hands until you know to what end you are giving.

* This section, live vs. death, is paralleled by Barnabas 18:1-21:9, light vs. darkness.

2 And the second commandment of the teaching is:

1. Do not murder [cf. Exod. 20:15(13)].
Do not commit adultery [Exod. 20:13 (14)].
Do not be sexually perverted.
Do not be sexually promiscuous [cf. Deut. 23:17ff.].
Do not steal [cf. Exod. 20:14(15)].
Do not practice magic [see Deut. 18:10f.].
Do not engage in sorceries [see Deut. 18:10f.].
Do not murder a child by abortion, nor kill it at birth.
Do not desire your neighbor's things [see Exod. 20:17].
2. Do not be an oath breaker [see LXX Zech. 5:3b].
Do not give false testimony [cf. Exod. 20:16; Matt. 5:33].
Do not speak evilly [see LXX Prov. 20:13(16)].
Do not bear a grudge [see Prov. 12:28; Zech. 7:10].
3. Do not be double-minded nor double-tongued, for the double tongue is a snare of death [cf. Prov. 21:6; James 3:5ff.]:
4. Let your word be neither empty nor false but fulfilled in practice.
5. Be not greedy [cf. Exod. 20:17], nor a swindler, nor a hypocrite, nor spiteful, nor conceited. Do not plot wickedly against your neighbor.
6. Do not hate any man, but reprove some-and pray for them-and some love more than yourself [cf. Jude 22ff.].

The "Fences" (3:1-6)

3 My child, flee from every evil thing and from everything that is like it:

1. Be not prone to anger, for the path of anger leads to murder; neither be excitable nor quarrelsome nor hot-tempered, for from all these are born murders.
2. My child, be not lustful, for the path of lust leads to sexual promiscuity; neither be obscene in speech nor have roving eyes, for from all of these are born adulteries.
3. My child, be not a diviner of omens since its path leads to idolatry; neither be an enchanter, nor astrologer, nor magician nor even wish to see' or to hear such things for from all these is born idolatry.
4. My child, be not a liar, since the path of lying leads to theft; neither be fond of money, nor vainglorious, for from these all are born thefts.
5. My child, be not one who complains, since its path leads to blasphemy; neither be stubborn nor evil-minded, for from all these are born blasphemies.
6. But be meek, since "the meek will inherit the earth" [cf. Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5].
7. Be patient and merciful and without guile and quiet and good and always fearing the words which you have heard [cf. Isa. 66:2].

8. Exalt not yourself nor allow your soul to become arrogant. Let not your soul be yoked with the haughty [cf. Rom. 12:16; James 2:2,3], but associate with the righteous and lowly.
9. Whatever befalls you, receive these experiences as good, knowing that nothing happens without God.
- 4** My child [cf. 3:1–6], him who proclaims to you the word of God, remember day and night [cf. Heb 13:7], and honor him as the Lord. For wherever the kingship is proclaimed, the Lord is there.
1. And seek out daily the company of the saints so that you might find refreshment in their words.
2. Do not cause divisions, but make peace between disputants. Judge justly [cf. Deut. 1:16,17; Prov. 31:9]. Do not show partiality in reproving transgressions.
3. Do not be of two minds whether or not something should be.
4. Do not be one who stretches out his hands to receive, but holds them back when it comes to giving.
5. If you have acquired something through the work of your hands, give it as a ransom for your sins.
6. Do not hesitate to give nor grumble when you give, for you know who is the good paymaster of the reward.
7. Do not turn away from the needy man, but share everything with your brother, and do not claim that anything is exclusively your own [cf. Acts 4:32]; for if you are sharers in the immortal, how much more in the mortal things?
8. Do not relax control over your son or daughter, but from youth onward, teach them the fear of God.
9. Do not give a command in your anger to your slave or maidservant, who trust in the same God, lest they fear not the God who is over you both; for he comes not to call men according to worldly prestige, but those on whom he prepared the spirit.
10. And you slaves, be subject to your masters as if to God, in respect and fear [cf. Eph 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-4:1].
11. Hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.
12. Forsake not the Lord's commands, but guard what you received - neither adding nor subtracting anything [cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32].
13. In church, confess your transgressions, and do not go to prayer with an evil conscience.

This is the Way of Life.

B. The Way of Death

- 5** But the Way of Death is this:

First of all, it is wicked and full of cursing-murders, adulteries, lusts, sexual promiscuities, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisies, duplicities, guile, conceit, malice, stubbornness, greediness, foul speech, jealousy, arrogance, pride, boastfulness [cf. Matt. 15:19; Rom. 1: 29ff.; Gal. 5:20].

1. Without fear, persecutors of the good; hating truth, loving a lie; not knowing the reward of righteousness; not

associating with what is good [cf. Rom. 12:9], nor judging justly; being alert not with respect to what is good, but to that which is wicked from whom courtesy and patience are far off; loving what is worthless [cf. Ps. 4:2; Isa. 1:23], pursuing reward; not showing mercy toward the poor, not laboring on behalf of the downtrodden; not knowing him who made them; Murderers of children, corrupters of God's creation; turning away from the needy, afflicting the oppressed; advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor-sinful through and through! May you be delivered, children, from all these.

C. Conclusion (6:1-2)

- 6** Beware lest anyone cause you to wander from this way of teaching, since such a one teaches without regard to God.
1. For if you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you cannot, do what you can [cf. Barn. 19:8c].

II. Instruction and Reception of Catechumens (6:3-11:2)

A. Concerning Food (6:3)

2. Now concerning food, observe the traditions as best you can. But be sure to refrain completely from meat which has been sanctified before idols, for it represents the worship of dead gods [cf. Acts 15:29].

B. Concerning Baptism, Fasting, and Prayer (7:1-8:3)

- 7** Now concerning baptism. Baptize as follows, when you have rehearsed the aforesaid teaching: Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water [cf. Matt. 28:19].
1. But if you do not have running water, use whatever is available. And if you cannot do it in cold water, use warm.
2. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times-in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. And prior to baptism, both he who is baptizing and he who is being baptized should fast, along with any others who can. And be sure that the one who is to be baptized fasts for one or two days beforehand.
- 8** But do not let your fasts fall on the same days as "the hypocrites" [see Matt. 6:16ff.], who fast on Monday and Thursday. Rather, you should fast on Wednesday and Friday.
1. Nor should you pray as "the hypocrites" do [see Matt. 6:5 ff.], but pray as the Lord commanded in his gospel, thus:

Our Father who is in heaven, may your name be revered. May your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Let us partake today of our heavenly fare [cf. 10:3]. And forgive what we owe accordingly as we forgive those who are in debt to us. And do not bring us into testing, but rescue us from evil [cf. 10:3]. For power and glory are yours forever [Matt. 6:9ff.].

2. Thrice daily you should pray in that manner.

C. Concerning the Giving of Thanks - In Connection with the Eucharist (9:1-10:8)

9 Now concerning the giving of thanks [cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-25]. Give thanks in the following manner.

1. First, concerning the cup:

We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant [cf. John 15:1], which you have made known to us through Jesus your Servant [cf. Acts 3:13, 26].

Glory to you forever!

2. And concerning the broken loaf:

We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge, [cf. John 3:15; 5:26; 6:68ff.] which you have made known to us through Jesus your Servant.

Glory to you forever!

3. Just as this loaf previously was scattered on the mountains and when it was gathered together it became a unity, So may your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. For glory and power are yours forever, through Jesus Christ!

4. But let no one eat or drink from your Eucharist except those who are baptized [7:1-4] in the Lord's Name. For the Lord also has spoken concerning this:

Do not give what is holy to dogs [Matt. 7:6].

10 And after you have been filled, give thanks as follows:

1. We thank you, Holy Father, for your holy Name; which you have made to dwell in our hearts [cf. John 1:14; 6:56,57]; and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus your Servant.

Glory to you forever!

2. You, Almighty Master, created everything "[cf. Rev. 4:11] for your Name's sake; you have given food and drink to men for their pleasure, so that they might give you thanks. And to us you have graciously given spiritual food and drink [see 8:2], and life eternal through Jesus your Servant [cf. John 6:27].

3. Most of all, we thank you because you are mighty.

Glory to you forever!

4. Lord, remember your Church [cf. Matt. 16:18]. - rescue it from all evil [cf. John 17:15] and perfect it in your love - and gather it, the sanctified one, from the four winds [cf. Matt. 24:31] into your kingdom which you have prepared for it.

For power and glory are yours forever!

5. Let grace come, and this world pass away [cf. Rev. 22:20]. Hosanna to the God of David [cf. Matt. 21:9,15]. If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent [see 15:3].

Marana Tha (Our Lord, Come) [cf. 1 Cor. 16:22]. Amen.

6. But permit the prophets [11:3-12] to give thanks as they see fit.
7. And concerning the ointment, give thanks as follows:

We thank you, (our) Father, for the fragrant ointment which you have made known to us through Jesus your Servant.

Glory to you forever! Amen.

D. The Approved Teacher (11:1-2)

11 Thus, whoever comes and teaches you all the aforesaid things [see 7:1], receive him.

1. And if the teacher himself turns aside and teaches another *Didache* (doctrine) which undermines the aforesaid, do not listen to him [cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9, 10]. But if his teaching fosters righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord [cf. 4:1 a; 11:4; Matt. 10:40; John 13:20].

III. Intra-Community Relationships (11:3-15:4)

A. Concerning Apostles and Prophets (11:3-12)

2. Now concerning the apostles and prophets [cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 3:5]. Act in accordance with the precept of the gospel [cf. Matt. 7:15ff; 10:40,41; Luke 10:4ff].
 3. Every apostle who comes to you should be received as the Lord [see 11:2; 12:1].
 4. But he should not remain more than one day, and if there is some necessity a second as well; but if he should remain for three, he is a false prophet.
 5. And when the apostle departs, he should receive nothing but bread until he finds his next lodging. But if he requests money, he is a false prophet [cf. Matt. 10:9,10].
 6. And you must neither make trial of nor pass judgment on any prophet who speaks forth in the spirit. For every (other) sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven [see Matt. 12:31].
 7. And not everyone who speaks forth in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he has the kind of behavior which the Lord approves. From his behavior, then, will the false prophet and the true prophet be known [cf. 2 Pet. 2:1; John 4:1].
 8. And every prophet who, in the spirit, orders a table to be spread shall not eat therefrom; but if he does, he is a false prophet.
- 19 And every prophet who teaches the truth, but does not do the things he teaches, is a false prophet.
10. And every prophet who has met the test—who is genuine—and who performs a worldly mystery of the church but does not teach others to do what he is doing, he shall not be judged by you. For he has his judgment with God—for the ancient prophets also did similarly.
 11. And whoever says in the spirit, "Give me money," or anything else, do not listen to him [cf. Matt 10:8]. But if he says that it should be given for others who are in need, let no one judge him.

B. Hospitality Toward Traveling Christians (12:1-5)

- 12** But let everyone who comes to you in the Lord's Name [Ps. 118:26; Matt. 21:9; etc.] be received, and then when you have examined him you will know - for you have insight - the nature of the situation. If, on the one hand, he is simply passing through, help him as much as you can.
1. But he must not remain with you except for two or three days if some necessity arises.
 2. On the other hand, if he wants to settle among you and knows a trade, let him work and eat [cf. 2 Thess. 3:10; Acts 18:3].
 3. But if he does not know a trade, use your own judgment to determine how he should live with you as a Christian without being idle.
 4. But if he does not wish to cooperate, he is a Christ-peddler [cf. 1 Tim. 6:5]. Beware of such!

C. Material Support for God's Ministers (13:1-7)

- 13** And every true prophet who wishes to settle among you deserves his food.
1. Similarly, a true teacher also deserves, like the laborer, his food [cf. Matt. 10:10b; 1 Tim. 5:18].
 2. Take, therefore, every first fruit-of the produce of wine press and threshing floor, and of cattle and sheep- and give it to the prophets. For they are your high priests [cf. Deut. 18:1-5].
 3. But if you have no prophet, give to the poor.
 4. If you make a batch of dough, take the "first fruit" and give it in accord with the commandment.
 5. Similarly with a jug of wine or of oil, take the "first fruit" and give to the prophets.
 6. And so with money, and clothing, and every possession-take whatever "first fruit" seems appropriate to you and give it in accord with the commandment.

D. The Community "Sacrifice" (14:1-3)

- 14** And when you gather together each Lord's Day [cf. Rev. 1:10], break bread and give thanks. But first confess your transgressions so that your "sacrifice" may be pure [see 4:14].
1. And let no one who has a quarrel with his friend join you until they are reconciled, lest your "sacrifice" be profaned [see Matt. 5:23].
 2. For this is what the Lord was referring to: In every place and at all times offer a pure sacrifice to me [Mal. 1:11]. For I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is marvelous among the nations [Mal. 1:14b].

E. Respect for Local Leaders (15:1-2)

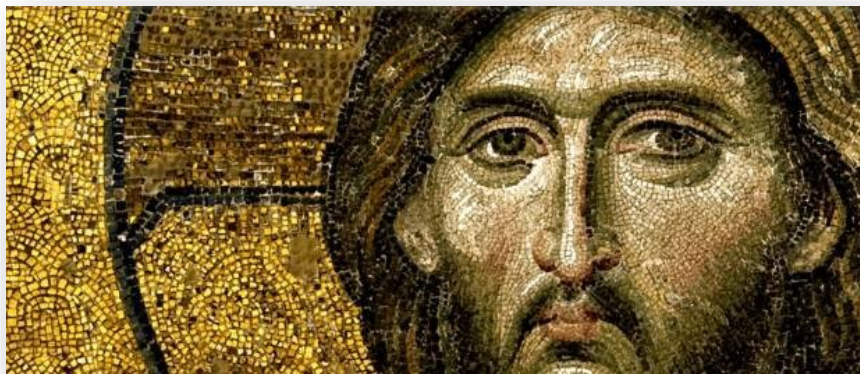
- 15** Appoint for yourselves, then, bishops and deacons who are worthy of the Lord - men who are unassum-

ing and not greedy, who are honest [cf. 1 Tim. 3:2-13; Tit. 1:5-9) and have been proved. For they also are performing for you the task of the prophets and teachers [cf. Eph. 4:11,12]

1. Therefore, do not hold them in contempt, for they are honorable men among you, along with the prophets and teachers.

F. Community Discipline and Conduct (15:3-4)

2. And reprove one another [see 2:7], not irately but peaceably, as you have it in the gospel. And let no one speak to any person who has wronged another, nor let him hear what is said among you until he repents [cf. Matt. 5:22-26; 18:15-35].
3. But perform your prayers and your acts of charity and all your actions as you have it in the gospel of the Lord [cf. Matt. 6:1-15].



IV. The Lord is Coming: Behave Accordingly (16:1-8)

- 15** Watch over your life-do not let your lamps be extinguished, nor your waist be ungirded [cf. Luke 12:35]. But be ready, for you do not know when our Lord is coming [see Matt. 24:42,44; Mark 13:35; Luke 12:40].
1. And be gathered together frequently, seeking out the things which are necessary for your souls. For the whole time of your faith will be of no use to you unless you are perfected in the last time [cf. Barn. 4:9b].
 2. For in the last days, false prophets and corrupters will abound [cf. Matt. 24:11], and they will turn the "sheep" into "wolves" and love will be changed to hate [see Matt. 24:12].
 3. For as lawlessness increases, men will hate one another, and persecute and betray [cf. Matt. 24:10; 2 Pet. 3:3], and then the world-deceiver will appear as a son of God and will do signs and wonders [cf. Mark 13:22, paraphrased; 2 Thess. 2:4,9], and the earth will be given into his hands and he will commit such abominations as have never been done before [see Dan. 12:1; Mark 13:19, paraphrased; 2 John 7; Rev. 12:9; 13:2, 13f; 19:20].
 4. Then the creation of men will come to the fire which tests [1 Pet. 4:12] and many will fail and will perish [cf. Matt. 24:10,13]. But those who endure in their faith will be saved [cf. Mark 13:13, paraphrased] by him who was accursed [cf. Gal. 3:13].
 5. And then the signs of the truth will appear: first the sign spread out in heaven [cf. Matt. 24:30], then the sign of a sound of a trumpet [cf. Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16], and thirdly, the resurrection of the dead [cf. 1 Cor. 15:52].

The Roman Persecutions

1. The LEGAL GROUNDS for Christian persecutions:

- a) Refusal to participate in the pagan-emperor cult, by:
 - ⇒ Burning incense in front of the emperor's statue
 - ⇒ Bowing and praying to the emperor's statue
- b) The false accusation of cannibalism and incest resulting from:
 - ⇒ The Christian language about the Eucharist: Eating the Body and Blood of the Lord: Cannibalism
 - ⇒ The Christian language about AGAPE: Universal love was misunderstood as incest

2. The MAJOR PERSECUTIONS:

I) The persecution during NERO: A.D. 54-68:

- ⇒ It started in A.D. 64, when Christians were made the scapegoats of the great fire in Rome
- ⇒ According to Church tradition, as well as parallel Roman history, thousands of people died refusing to give up Christ. Among them: Peter and Paul; a very inspiring martyrdom is that of Photine, the converted Samaritan woman

II) The persecution during DOMITIAN: A.D. 81-96:

- ⇒ The emperor was determined to enforce the law which proclaimed him "Master and God"
- ⇒ The great "thirst for the blood of the Saints" alluded to in the book of Revelation, which was written around that time, is pointing out to this fierce persecution
- ⇒ Among the many martyrs, the Church recorded: Aquilla and Priscilla

III) The persecution during TRAJAN: A.D. 98-117:

- ⇒ Ancient Roman history has preserved for us a letter addressed to Trajan by Pliny the Younger, governor of the Roman province of Bithynia, in Asia Minor. The letter was written around A. D. 112, and it describes the state of Christianity in that area, as well as accounts of many executions of Christians
- ⇒ Among the many martyrs recorded by the Church: Ignatius of Antioch (he was a personal disciple of John the Evangelist and the Bishop of Antioch beginning in year 67; his writings are preserved and available in English now)

IV) The persecution during ANTONIUS PIUS: A.D. 138-161 and MARCUS AURELIUS: A.D. 161-180:

- ⇒ Among the many martyrs recorded by the Church: Polycarp of Smyrna; the details of his martyrdom are now available in English; Justin the Martyr, the great Christian defender against pagan accusations; his writings are also now available in English

V) The persecution during SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS: A.D. 193-211:

- ⇒ Among the many martyrs recorded by the Church: Perpetua and Felicitas, who died in a packed amphitheater at Carthage (Perpetua's diary is preserved); Irenaeus the bishop of Lugdunum (today's Lyons in France) also died during this time; his writings against the Gnostic heresies are preserved and available in English today
- ⇒ The Christian writer Tertullian would observe about that time: "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"

VI) The persecution during MAXIMINUS: A.D. 235-238 and DECIUS: A.D. 249-251:

- ⇒ In A. D. 250, Decius ordered a systematic persecution requiring that everyone had to possess a certificate (libellus) showing that he or she had sacrificed to the pagan gods

before special commissioners. Many copies of such certificates have been found in the sands of Egypt

VII) The persecution during VALERIAN: A.D. 253-260:

- ⇒ Valerian forbade meetings for worship and ordered the arrest and systematic elimination of bishops and presbyters
- ⇒ Among the many martyrs recorded by the Church: Cyprian, a bishop in Northern Africa; his writings about the unity of the Church have been preserved and are now available in English

VIII) The sporadic persecution during AURELIAN: A.D. 270-275:

- ⇒ Aurelian revived the ancient Sun-god cult and was a fervent worshipper himself; he tried to force his subjects to follow him and punished the Christians who refused to worship with him

IX) The great persecution during DIOCLETIAN: A.D. 284-305:

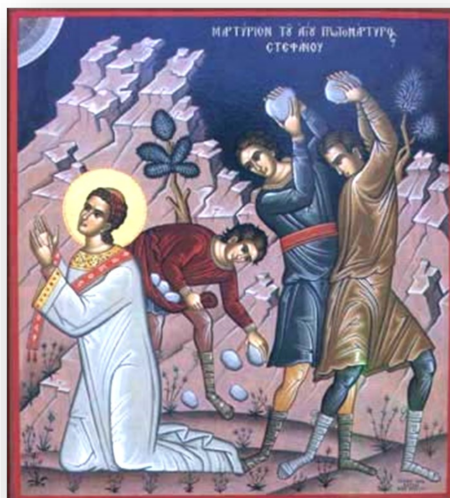
- ⇒ Diocletian posted an edict on February 24, 303, in which he declared that all biblical material, all Christian liturgical books, and sacred vessels were to be surrendered and destroyed; all meetings for worship were forbidden; a few months later, he ordered the arrest of so many clergy that the prisons could not accommodate them; amnesty was granted to those who publicly sacrificed to the pagan gods; thousands who refused to comply were publicly executed in what it is often referred to as "the blood bath"

X) The persecution during GALERIUS and MAXIMIN DAIA: A.D. 305-313:

- ⇒ These short lived persecutions were inspired by many pagan petitions asking for the suppression of "the novelty of the disloyal Christians"; such a petition has been preserved in Arycanda in-Lycia and was

3. The EDICT OF MEDIOLANUM given in A.D. 313:

- a) The edict was issued at Mediolanum (today's Milan) by Constantine in the West, and by Licinius in the East
- b) It expressed a new imperial policy of religious freedom for all, and the restoration of all properties



Apostolic Succession & Sinodality

A. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION; SAFEGUARD OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

1. Succession as a safeguard in the Old Testament

- a) The “partially restored way of life” in Abraham is passed on in succession to:
 - ⇒ Isaac
 - ⇒ Jacob
- b) The “more guided” “way of life” at Moses’ time is passed on in succession to:
 - ⇒ Joshua (see Numbers 27:18 & Deuteronomy 34:9)
 - ⇒ Judges
- c) It was done through:
 - ⇒ Imitation in discipleship
 - ◆ Life itself is passed through imitation
 - ◆ Children imitate their parents
 - ◆ One civilization imitates another
 - ◆ Innovation undermines imitation by: affecting it’s essence
 - ⇒ The laying on of hands

2. Apostolic Succession: A Safeguard in the New Testament

- a) Father, Son and Holy Spirit eternally share Godly life
 - ⇒ The Son is sent and lives a Godly life as a man
 - ⇒ The 12 + 70
 - ◆ Saw the Lord
 - ◆ Heard the Lord
 - ◆ Touched the Lord
 - ◆ Lived with the Lord
 - ⇒ They were given the Holy Spirit to imitate His Godly way of life and passed it down to others, as we can see from:
 - ◆ I Corinthians 4:15-16
 - ◆ I Corinthians 11:1
 - ◆ Hebrews 6:12
 - ⇒ Acts 13,3 shows Paul being:
 - ◆ Sent for a mission
 - ◆ By the Church in Antioch
 - ⇒ Acts 14,26-27 shows Paul as he:
 - ◆ Came back to Antioch
 - ◆ To report to the Church
- b) The Apostles as members of the Body establish Successors from within the Body and for the body
 - ⇒ After building the community to a point, the Apostles established successors who continued their work of:
 - ◆ Teaching
 - ◆ Worship
 - ◆ Leadership
 - ◆ See the following passages:
 - Acts 14:23
 - 2 Timothy 1:6
 - Titus 1:5

⇒ The Apostles passed on authority to their successors through the laying on of hands, as we can see from:

- ◆ 1 Timothy 5:17
- ◆ 2 Timothy 2:15
- ◆ Titus 2:15
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 5:4-5

c) The Apostolic Fathers confirm Apostolic Succession as a key safeguard

⇒ Clement of Rome confirms it in his Letter to the Corinthians

- ◆ Chapter 42:1-2
- ◆ Chapter 42:4
- ◆ Chapter 44:1-6

⇒ Irenaeus of Lugdunum confirms it in his book entitled “Against the Heresies”

- ◆ Book III
 - Chapter 2:2
 - Chapter 3:1-2
 - Chapter 3:3

⇒ The Invocation of the Holy Spirit

⇒ The Decision

⇒ The Communication of the decision and the acceptance of the decision by the Church (the Amen)

3. Types of councils:

a) Local councils, which dealt with:

- ⇒ Local issues
- ⇒ Issues that did not spread
- ⇒ Were eventually approved by Ecumenical Councils

b) Ecumenical councils, which dealt with:

- ⇒ Church-wide issues
- ⇒ Issues that were threatening the unity of the Church
- ⇒ One Ecumenical council confirmed another





Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption
Seattle, Washington