

Ecclesiology

Deacon Gerry Palermo

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Conclusion and a sort of Introduction

Congratulations! You've made it to the end or to a new reader you are starting at the beginning.

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Week Four

Week Four will be for review and overflow from prior three weeks so that what we covered we covered well. Open session to discuss what should be included in the next Ecumenical Council.

Week Three

Diocese and Bishops and the population grows with the faith and with growth comes disputes and misunderstandings.

Early Synods

Councils of note (Synods) prior to the Ecumenical Councils:

At Alexandria	Origen is deposed, degraded, and suffered excommunication for his teachings.
At Carthage	St Cyprian's position on The lapsed that the church should be firmer in its treatment of those who apostatized.
At Elvira	Very strong moral theology presented. Canon #71 Defilers of boys – communion is not to be given even at death.

Why are the formulas of faith important? (CCC)

The formulas of faith are important because they permit one to express, assimilate, celebrate, and share together with others the truths of the faith through a common language.

In what way is the faith of the Church one faith alone? (CCC)

The Church, although made up of persons who have diverse languages, cultures, and rites, nonetheless professes with a united voice the one faith that was received from the one Lord and that was passed on by the one Apostolic Tradition. She confesses one God alone, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and points to one way of salvation. Therefore we believe with one heart and one soul all that is contained in the Word of God, handed down or written, and which is proposed by the Church as divinely revealed.

The Canon of Scripture (CCC)

The Canon of Scripture is the complete list of the sacred writings which the Church has come to recognize through Apostolic Tradition. The Canon consists of 46 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New.

How is Sacred Scripture to be read (CCC)

Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church according to three criteria: 1) it must be read with attention to the

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content and unity of the whole of Scripture; 2) it must be read within the living Tradition of the Church; 3) it must be read with attention to the analogy of faith, that is, the inner harmony which exists among the truths of the faith themselves.

Many Fathers

St Hippolytus of Rome (The Apostolic Tradition) - a hard liner on matters of faith and teaching.

- About CE 222 he also wrote Refutations of All Heresies.
- He went after Pope Callistus I because Callistus I allowed women to marry slaves.
- His writings far expanded the effects to claim it encouraged chemical abortion, manual abortion, and purposeful sterility.

Origen 185-254 CE - Origen exemplified the crossing over social boundaries on an Empire wide basis.

- Soul, Free Will.
- Solid Greek Philosophical background.
- The Fundamental Doctrines (CE 220-230) – **Origen the first manual of dogmatic theology.**
- Homilies
- Commentaries

St Cyprian d 258 CE

- First African Martyr.
- Unity of the Church (the Rock).
- Kept a blind eye to re-baptism.

Athanasius 295-373

- God became man that we might become God.
- Fought Arianism.

Romanization of the Church

- Mirrored the diocese structure.
- Bishops given civil authority (some).
- The Church was initially pacifist but began to accept some war and violence.
- Still....St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, fought with Emperor Theodosius on several occasions: no communion until penance for killing Christians in Greece. Stop funding reconstruction of Synagogue that Christians burnt down.

Ecumenical Councils

Attached here Councils PDF: <https://gerrypalermo.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/Councils-v2.pdf>

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Major Splits in the Church

Council of Ephesus (431) - The Nestorian Schism where Churches followed Nestorius teaching split off.

Council of Chalcedon (451) - Church of Alexandria, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory/chapter/the-great-schism-of-1054/>

The Great Schism of 1054 was when the Christian Church split into the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches due to disputes on who had the most power within the church and whether icons could be used or not (Iconoclasm).

Important Persons

Basil of Caesarea 330-379

- Charity primacy
- Basil established guidelines for monastic life which focus on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual labour.
- Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa are collectively referred to as the Cappadocian Fathers.

Gregory of Nyssa (335-394)

- The image and similitude of God in man.
- Gregory was ever in quest of allegorical interpretations and mystical meanings hidden away beneath the literal sense of texts.

John Chrysostom (354-407)

- Every Christian must be concerned for the salvation of his brothers
- Skilled orator.

Ambrose of Milan (333-397)

- Prayer
- When you are at Rome live in the Roman style; when you are elsewhere live as they live elsewhere.
- In some causes silence is dangerous.
- When I am at Rome, I fast on a Saturday: when I am at Milan I do not. Do the same. Follow the custom of the church where you are.

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Week Two

Early Monastics

Monasticism was tried in many different formulas in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Arabia. The sayings of the desert fathers inspire. They were not usually teachers but the role was thrust upon them. Their mode of living:

- Uncompromising obedience to the word and spirit of the Gospel.
- Ascetic focused. Renounce yourself. Take up your cross and follow me.
- Experience focused is considered Sacrilegious.
- Enthroned God in the temple of the Holy Spirit within the heart.

Silence

If we are to understand we must silence ourselves. 'If a man cannot understand my silence, he will never understand my words.' Anthony of Surozh

Egypt

By 400 CE Egypt was the land of hermits and monks.

Lower Egypt – Hermit Life. St. Anthony the Great, Coptic and layman about 269 CE and started by the invitation of Jesus (251 – 356).

Upper Egypt – Coenobitic monasticism (lavra life). Greek-influenced monasticism. Lived in very small communities with an 'abba' to lead them. Alexandria nearby. (286-346).

Syrian and Asia Minor

Syria. Near Edessa and Antioch. They went about naked and in chains, ate food from the forest. The Stylite group lived their life atop a pole.

Asia Minor. Cappadocia. Learned and liturgical (theologians and writers). Saint Basil was from among this group. (330-379).

Palestine. Judean wilderness and the desert of Gaza.

Monasticism – Virginitiy and Chastity

This ancient practice took on new meanings in the Christian era.

Scriptural references:

Matt 19:22,30; 1 Cor 7, 1 Tim 5 and Acts 21:8-9.

Charity – a central theme to live out the Beatitudes, Hospitals, Hostels.

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Western Monasticism

Western monasticism started after the Edict of Milan and more perfectly after the declaration of Christianity as a state religion:

- St Athanasius and St Jerome (347-419) both promoted monastic life.
- St Augustine (354-430) chose the life of a monk.
- John Cassian (360-435) wrote The Monastic Institutions which helped form new Western monastic life.
- Rule of Saint Benedict (480-547) was the inspiration of all western monasteries. A cenobitic structure of life.

When the Empire failed, the monasteries helped keep society functioning.

Rule of Saint Benedict outlined. As divide day into two parts:

- Opus Dei – work of God (prayer and worship).
- Manual work and Rest.

Desert Fathers

Abba Lot came to Abba Joseph and said: Father, according as I am able, I keep my little rule, and my little fast, my prayer, meditation and contemplative silence; and, according as I am able, I strive to cleanse my heart of thoughts: now what more should I do? The elder rose up in reply and stretched out his hands to heaven, and his fingers became like ten lamps of fire. He said: Why not become fire?

The story of Abba Abraham and his niece Mary is very moving.

The aim of the monks' lives was not asceticism, but God, and the way to God was charity. The gentle charity of the desert was the pivot of all their work and the test of their way of life. Charity was to be total and complete. To quote from a Life, rather than a Saying:

Abba Abraham had a niece, Mary, who became a harlot in Alexandria: ... and he dressed himself as a soldier and went to find her ... they feasted together at the inn and he took her to his room to lie with her. 'Come close to me, Mary,' he said and took her in his arms to kiss her ... but she recognised him and wept and she said, 'Go before me and I will follow ... for you have so loved me and grieved for me that you have come even into this cess-pit to find me'; and so they went home.

Martyrs

The root of the word Martyria is an architectural term. The term specifically refers to the architectural structure and ornamentation used for the remains of martyrs. The word in literal terms means 'witness'. Thus the expanded understanding of the word is the very architecture of the Church is witness.

How did people come to be martyrs? Who were the persecutors and why did they occur?

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Early Jewish Leadership Rejection

Christianity is based on upsetting the leadership of the time and of this current age as well. Jesus, after all, was subject to capital punishment for his teachings that upended the power and thoughts of the leadership (See Gospel of John program). We know this tiny group started in fear:

- The trial of Peter before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17ff).
- The establishment of The Name (v41) is now clearly established in opposition to the leadership.
- In the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7 Stephen (Deacon) witnesses and is martyred for his faith.
- Chapter 8 describes the Diaspora and Saul's involvement in the persecutions.
- Chapter 12 recalls King Herod had James, brother of John, beheaded which was pleasing to the leadership.

Jewish Rebellions and Jewish Civil War

- 66 CE to 73 CE – Jewish Rebellion, High Priest Ananius killed.
- Jew against Romans, Jews against Christians, Romans against Christians and Jews.

Early Roman Rejection

The Romans had different reasons to be alarmed by / disdainful of Christians. The major reasons were:

- Atheists – (no imperial worship).
- Incest – (misuse of Brothers and Sisters).
- Cannibals – eat the Eucharist.
- Pretentious poor! (social class uprising).
- Bad Citizens (no military service).
- Unreasonable (you guys are nuts).
- Tertullian advocated otherwise with Roman officials.

The Christian practice itself chose to distance itself from the Roman culture. Early church practice did not allow baptism for:

- Keeper of Idols
- Soldier (already) cannot execute anyone
- Soldier (recruit) cannot be baptized
- Military governor or magistrate.

Nero

The first prosecution was by Emperor Nero 64 CE in the city of Rome. It was not a widespread persecution. Nero wanted to expand his imperial palaces and gardens so decided to have a portion of Rome burned out to allow for this expansion. The fire quickly grew out of control and about 2/3 of the city was destroyed. Nero blamed the 'fire starter' Christians for the conflagration. Christians were

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rounded up and killed. Some in quite gruesome manner. Tradition holds Peter was crucified 'outside the camp', and Paul beheaded as Roman.

Tacitus

Tacitus (Roman Historian tells the Nero persecutions) noted that although the people of Rome accepted the guilt of the Christians but their death was 'not for the good of the state but to the ferocity of a single man' (Tacitus, Annals XV, 44m c 115).

During the reign of Trajan, Pliny (governor of Bithynia) also provides details by way of questions. In the Letter from Pliny to Emperor Trajan (111 CE), he questioned the purpose of executing these peaceful people.

The Martyrs of Lyons (177 CE) – Eusebius – gives a moving account of the martyrdom of the deacon Sanctus, the bishop Pothinus and the slave woman Blandina.

Trajan

Saint Ignatius of Antioch (d ca 110 CE) the third bishop of Antioch succeeding St Evodius who was an immediate successor of Peter was sentenced to death by beasts of the arena. On his way there he wrote several letters to the communities he is responsible for. These letters show the hierarchical and monarchical Church. Two samples below.

To the Ephesians ... beware of heresies.

To the Magnesians ... Bishop, Presbyters and deacons... the deacons who are most dear (had to add that one).

And so forth.

Diocletian

This was the final and most severe persecution beginning late in his rule about 303 CE. Interestingly his wife and daughter were both catechumens. It was a countless martyrdom, many slaughtered.

Saint Agnes - Virgin and Martyr, -c. 304

SAINT AGNES bears the distinction of being the only child saint mentioned in the Holy Sacrifice. Yet there is nothing about her that suggests the childish or the immature.

Early records are scanty, but Saint Ambrose tells the story of this saint in a sermon he preached on her feast day about the year 375. When the persecution in Rome was at its height, about the year 304, a beautiful twelve-year-old girl named Agnes vowed her virginity to Christ. Angered by her rejection of him, a jealous suitor, the son of a prefect, accused Agnes of being a Christian and brought her before his father's court. The prefect demanded that she sacrifice to the gods and tempted her with promises of

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wealth and position; but Agnes refused to listen to him, saying that Christ was her life and that He alone would be her spouse. Hoping to frighten her into compliance, the prefect threatened her with torture, but to no avail. Then, knowing that she treasured her purity, he sent her to a house of prostitution, but the first man who dared approach her was struck blind. It was only through Agnes' prayers that his sight was restored. She was condemned to death and, after saying a short prayer, she bowed her head to receive the death stroke. She was buried near the Gate of Numa, just outside the city. In 324, some twenty years after her death, one of the first basilicas was erected on the site of her tomb.

(from an online resource)

Constantine/Licinius

The letter to the Governor of Bithynia now known as the Edict of Milan, 313 brought religious freedom to the Christians. It wasn't until the year 380 did Christianity become the official empire religion and the only licit religion (Theodosius/ Valentinian II).

During this time religious temples were repurposed for Christian worship, new churches built specifically for Christians, and the open celebration of the Sacraments began. Here is when we begin to think of the five Patriarchates: Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Alexandria.

The Cult of Martyrs flourished at the same time: relics, food at graveside, etc.

Pilgrimages began too. People wanted to see and touch the origins of the faith in Jerusalem.

Christianity must have been very popular right away as the last of the pagan temples were destroyed in Alexandria 389 and Carthage in 399. Pretty quick after formal state religion established.

Constantine

- Tradition of the "sign" difficult.
- He was not baptized until 337 just before death. He never received Eucharist (AFAWK).
- He did give the Church his Rome palace (the Lateran palace) before he left for the new Rome - Constantinople.
- He was ambivalent about Arianism (even as he signed off on the Nicaea creed). Arian baptism. Arian eulogy.
- He did fight the Donatist heresy (sanctity is essential for the administration of sacraments).
- The Church teaches Ex opere operato.

Emperor Grid with persecution notes

Vespasian	Persecuted the Jews mostly.
Titus	70 CE Destroyed temple in Jerusalem.
Domitian	Dubious proof of specific persecution, simply a cruel man.
Trajan	Tells Pliny to persecute, Ignatius of Antioch

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Hadrian	Tolerated mostly, need to be more than a believer.
Marcus Aurelius	Martyrs Justin, Polycarp giving us evidence of the cult of relics and martyrs.
Septimius Severus	Felicity and Perpetua, martyrs.
Decius	Loyalty oaths and Roman Sacrifice, Apostasy.
Valerian	Prohibits worship in cemeteries.
Aurelian	Apostasy as a tool.
Diocletian	Christian soldiers refuse ceremony. Last major and severe persecutions.

A Few Early Popes of the Church

#7 - Pope St. Sixtus I	Pope 115-125 A.D.	Three disciplines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That only the ordained (bishops, priests, deacons) were allowed to touch the sacred vessels (i.e. the paten and chalice containing the Eucharist) • That bishops, when they were summoned to Rome, could only continue ruling their dioceses after presenting a letter from the pope saying so . • That the priest and the people recite/chant the Sanctus (aka, the Holy, Holy) at Mass, taken from Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8
#10 - Pope St. Pius I	Pope 140-154 A.D.	Early heretical battles.
#14 - Pope St. Victor I	Pope 189-199 A.D.	First African Pope.

Week One

Key Concepts Inherited and to be Worked Out

1. Man is a physical being (physical integrity, freedom, eats, grows, mates, community, dies).
2. Man is a spiritual being (possesses love, attains wisdom).
3. Man is independent of his being appreciated or the lack thereof.
4. All human values are found anthropologically. We learn from others.

Diaspora & Difficulty

- Persecutions started right away from Pharisees before Sanhedrin (Acts 4) and Acts 11:19. Insincere members: Ananias and Sapphira - Acts of the Apostles Chapter 5.
- Martyrdom of Stephen - Acts of the Apostles Chapter 6.
- Poor motives of Simon the Magician - Acts of the Apostles Chapter 8.
- King Herod has James, brother of John martyred - Acts of the Apostles Chapter 12.
- Letters of Peter place Peter in Rome during Nero's time.
- Acts 11:19 Church at Antioch - Christians.
- Pauline mission trips began. Acts of the Apostles Chapter 13 Challenges:

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Theological Issues

- Emperor worship
- Local deity worship.
- Jewish disintegration.
- Pagan resistance.
- Gentile membership.
- Jewish practices come into question (dietary, circumcision, blood).
- Baptism
- Earliest Heresies: Gnosticism and early forms of Donatism.

Leadership Issues

Growth path:

- More than the Apostles, Acts 1:13.
- More than the original Apostles, Acts 1:15ff
- More than the Disciples, Acts 1:5
- More than Jerusalem, Acts 2:14ff
- More than Jews alone, Acts 10 and 11.

The Church begins at Pentecost: 3,000 Diaspora Jews baptized.

Primacy of Peter – instances mentioned, speeches given, miracles attested, arguments raised with him within sacred Scripture itself outlined below:

- Peter was the leading member of the Twelve (Act 1:13,15).
- A miracle worker like Jesus in the gospel (Act 3:1-10; 5:1-11,15; 9:32-35,36-42).
- The object of divine care (Act 5:17-21; 12:6-11).
- The spokesman Christian community (Act 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 15:7-11).
- Was largely responsible for the growth of the community in the early days (Act 2:4; 4: 4).

Categorical Reference of Church History

Leitourgia	Liturgy	How to worship.
Koinonia	Fellowship	How to live together.
Kerygma	Preaching	How to speak of Jesus.
Canon	Oral tradition/emergent practices	How to manage.
Diakonia	Rule of Life	How to behave, support and promote the Church and her people.
Doxologia/Heresies	Theology/Variations of theology	How to understand Christ.
Martyria	Communion of Saints	How to ultimate imitation of Christ.

Selection of writings and their impacts:

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- Teaching of the 12 Apostles (Didache) CE 140 – Liturgy/Theology.
- St Clement of Rome, Pope 80 CE – Letter to the Corinthians 80 CE – Koinonia, Canon, Diakonia.
- St Ignatius of Antioch 110 CE. – Letter to the Ephesians (110 CE) – Koinonia, Leitourgia, Canon.
- Other letters followed same intent (priesthood).
- St Polycarp of Smyrna (69 CE 155 CE) – Letter to the Philipppians (135 CE) – Heresies (incarnation opposition started), Canon.
- St Justin, the Martyr 100-165 CE – First Apology – Koinonia, Kerygma, Canon, Diakonia, Leitourgia including Eucharist.
- Dialog with Trypho the Jew - Koinonia, Kerygma, Canon.
- Exhortation to the Greeks – Canon, Philosophy.
- St Irenaeus (140 – 202 CE). Against Heresies the Gnosis fallacy. All categories.
- Tertullian (155 – 240 CE) prolific writer also:
 - Apology. All categories.
 - ... Against Heretics, ... Against Jews, ... Against Hermogenes, ... Against Marcion, ... Against Praxeas
 - ... On Baptism, ... On Repentance, ... On Prayer, ... On Patience, ... On the Soul, ... On the Flesh of Christ

Heresies

Heresies are contrary doctrines and useful for clarifications.

- **Docetism** - Christ's body was not human but either a phantasm or of real but celestial substance, and that therefore his sufferings were only apparent.
- **Marcionism** - This is a Gnostic idea where lesser gods are involved in the world, and the true supreme God is far above, inaccessible.
- **Cainianism** – the way of Cain is the path.
- **Gnostics** - gnosis (a Koine Greek word meaning "secret knowledge") arrived at by way of internal, intuitive means.
- **Arianism** – It is named after Arius, whose main concern was that it did not seem fitting that God should have a son.
- **Nestorianism** – the doctrine that Jesus existed as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God, rather than as a unified person.
- **Monophysite** - holds that in the person of Jesus Christ there is only one nature (wholly divine or only subordinately human), not two.

Blog Entries

Welcome to the Winter Series - Ecclesiology.

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Bibliographic Resources

1. Saint Joseph's New American Bible including Introduction
2. The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Cistercian Publications
3. The Faith of the Early Fathers, William A. Jurgens
4. How to Read Church History Volume I, Jean Comby
5. Doctrinal Elements Curriculum Framework for Development of Catechetical Materials, USCCB.
6. Synopsis of the Four Gospels (RSV) American Bible Society
7. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Geoffrey Chapman
8. The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus by William Whiston
9. Catechism of the Catholic Church
10. US Council of Catholic Bishops web site: <http://usccb.org/>
11. The New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV (ecumenical Study Bible).
12. All Papal Encyclicals on the website.
13. Decrees of the First Vatican Council. <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum20.htm>
14. Welcome to the Catholic Church, Interactive Guide, Harmony Media, Inc.