

The History of the Catholic Church

The 5th Century: The Trinity

The Events of the 5th Century

406: The eastern front of the Roman empire collapse as waves of Suebi, Alan, and Vandals cross the Rhein and attack the Roman empire.

407: Emperor Constantine III withdraws troops from Britain to attack the Vandals in the east

410: Rome is ransacked by the Visigoths.

431: The 1st Council of Ephesus

439: Vandals conquer Carthage

440: the Anglo-Saxons settle in Britain

451: The Council of Chalcedon

451: The Persians declare war on Armenia

452: The metropolis of Aquileia is destroyed by Atilla the Hun

452: Pope Leo I meets with Atilla

453: Atilla dies and the Hunnic Empires is divided

456: Chichen Itza is founded in Mexico

476: Deposition of Romulus Augustus. Traditional date of the Fall of the Roman Empire

481: Clovis I becomes king of the Western Franks

486: Clovis defeats Syagrius and conquers the last free remnants of the Western Roman Empire

490: Battle of Mount Badon. British forces led by King Arthur defeat the Saxons

493: Theodoric the Great becomes King of Italy

Politics

At the turn of the 4th century Emperor Theodosius died and his two sons divide the empire in half. Arcadius ruled the eastern part of the empire and Honorius ruled the western part of the empire. From this point until the fall of Rome, either 476 or 650, the empire would not be ruled by a single ruler. For the most part these two brothers ruled independent of one another and chose to keep peace. Regardless of their decision to stop any attempts to take over the entire empire, many other problems assaulted the empire leading them to devote time and energy to these other issues.

On the eastern front the Visigoths are back. Although this threat has continued to assault the Roman empire since the 2nd century, political instability within the empire, the death of

Theodosius, pressure by the Huns, and the perishing of necessary resources led the Visigoths to attack the eastern front of the Roman empire. Throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries the Visigoths continually attacked and ransacked parts of the eastern front of the Roman empire. These attacks were largely due to increased pressure by the Huns in the 3rd century. The Huns were moving west and pushing the Visigoths into the eastern parts of the Roman empire putting them in direct contact with many of the cities in the east. Due to this proximity to the Roman Empire, the Visigoths quickly advanced in technology. In 378 the Visigoths established a treaty with Emperor Theodosius after their defeat along the Rhine. Theodosius now dead, the Visigoths understood that the treaty was null. Motivated by a lack of resources including food and noticing the instability of the empire caused by the death of Theodosius, they march on Rome. Over the last century political power moved out of Rome and towards Constantinople. Thus, Rome as a city was significantly weaker during this century. Hence, the Visigoths sacked Rome in one of many sacks that will continue for the next 200 years.

In both the east and the west political power is waning. With wars in the east and west and the lands of the Roman empire splitting between these new rulers, the prevailing question for the common person is, who is my ruler? The ruler is more important than simply stability. The ruler of a region also protects the citizens and allows them to live their daily lives. With the constant threat of war, a solid adherence to a ruler was necessary for survival. Ever since the beginning of the 4th century, political power was moving out of Rome towards Constantinople. No treat will show this change of power greater than the attack by the Visigoths in the middle of the 5th century. With the highest ruling official now in Constantinople and the remainder largely figure heads to keep the peace and send tribute to Constantinople, who will fight against the Hunnic forces? At this moment, the pope steps in. As the highest leading official in Rome and the only one left who cares enough about the city to engage these forces, Pope Leo I steps out onto the battlefield without an army and negotiates a treaty with the Huns. Imagine a man without an army standing up to a full army and winning the fight. A few popes throughout the next several centuries will follow suite.

The history of the eastern part of the Roman empire is not concluded with the Sack of Rome in 410. The driving force behind the Visigoth, the Huns, are just about to enter the sights of the Roman empire. Off in the east Persia has engaged in several wars over the last few centuries largely with Rome. With the rise of Hunnic dynasty, this new threat will take all their strength and power. Persia is now fighting to keep the Huns out of their territory. The Huns have a different strategy compared with the empires we have explored in this series. Most of the empires of the last 1200 years focused on conquest and control. The Huns were a raiding force. Although they did conquer territory and have main cities of operation, they did not rule them. Instead, they kept a sense of fear in every conquered land that would keep them loyal to the Huns for resources and safety. When Persia loses to the Huns, Persia is not defeated allowing Persia to declare war on Armenia. Regardless, throughout these battles and conquests, the Huns appear on the border with the Roman empire around the 440's. Parts of the eastern part of the Roman empire fall to the Huns. These fights continue until the death of Atilla the Hun in 453 dividing the Hunnic dynasty and ending the Hunnic wars. The eastern part of the empire will enjoy some

peace for the remainder of the century excluding the constant skirmishes with the Germanic forces.

In the western part of the empire the situation is quite different. In 406 the Suebi, Alans, and Vandal forces enter the Gaul region and attack the empire. Constantine III, seeing this threat, takes all of his forces out of Britain and engages in war against these forces. This event is seen as the withdrawal from Britain. The final result of these wars is the immense weakening of the Roman forces. Suebi establishes himself as the ruler in Gallaecia and becomes the first Christian ruler. Some point after 440 the Anglo-Saxons return to Britain and reconquer their land which was stolen from them by the Roman empire. Over the next 50 years several developments occur in the west. As Britannia becomes its own independent state, it still relies on the Roman empire to help it against the Visigoths who are threatening their borders. So the Romans help in this common enemy. As Rome engages in more fights and becomes weaker, other nations break off from the empire and establish their own rule. Clovis I establish the land of the Franks. By the end of the century he will conquer the remaining parts of the Roman empire and establish a region consisting of modern day France and Germany. Before his death in 511(513), he called a council of bishops to reform the Church and to establish a strong link between the crown and the episcopate. His reforms would begin two major parts of the medieval world: the divine right of kings and the strong link between rule and religion. By the close of the 5th century the western part of the Roman empire will be divided into three major chunks with independent rulers. Britain will be ruled by an Anglo-Saxon king. France and German rules by a Frankish king. Italy and up to the border with Greece will be ruled by a Roman emperor. All three of these nations are understood to be independent.

Before moving on from the politics of the 5th century I want to mention the Fall of the Roman Empire. Twice now historians have pointed to major events of the previous centuries as moments when Rome was ending. The first was the smallpox pandemic of the 3rd century. The second was the political crisis of the 4th century. In both of these cases the empire survived. Some scholars claim that the breakup of the empire in the 5th century was the moment of collapse. Others turn to the 7th century when the final emperor of the Roman Empire dies. At this moment in history, the 5th century, the Roman empire, although significantly smaller than in previous centuries, continues to have an emperor and those things that culturally defined Rome. By the end of the 7th century, ruling powers will be exclusively regional with no remnant of the original empire, its size, or strength remaining. This moment is the true end of the Roman empire when those things that cause its glory are gone.

Church Developments

Most of the developments of the 5th century follow on the controversies of the 4th century. Following the pronouncements of the Council of Nicaea in 325, many in the church either did not respect the decisions of the bishops or did not understand the consequences of this Council. One of the major developments from the Council of Nicaea, which will greatly affect the 5th century church, is the election of bishops. Nicaea declared that bishops were to be named based on the recommendation of other bishops and ordained in the presence of at least three other bishops. Patriarchs could not nominate bishops to other sees not within their territory and

metropolitans had the authority to approve bishops. As we venture through the 4th century, the populace feels they have the right to nominate, appoint, and depose bishops. Similarly the people want bishops who are politically powerful enough to support them against the effects of government. Hence the people want a say. This desire to nominate and select bishops by the people is severe enough that as John Chrysostom writes, some people would drive their bishops out of their churches and elect their own. Pope Damasus in the mid-4th century, laid down some law regarding the regulation of bishops. His first decree was to require all bishops to be approved by the Holy See and nominated by the church, not the people. Bishops could not be removed by the people but only by the decree from the Holy See. Similarly he decreed the importance of the holiness of bishops and priests mandating celibacy for all priest and bishops throughout the west. The controversies regarding the role and election of bishops will continue into the next several centuries.

As Pope Damasus decrees these changes to church order, the eastern churches are tasked with responding to these new rules. The eastern bishops were given autonomy by the Council of Nicaea. Therefore the rulings of the Bishop of Rome do not carry into the eastern parts of the Christian world. The eastern bishops do not enact these decrees but instead hold an animosity towards Rome over these decrees stating that Rome is overreaching its authority. These disputes begin to divide between the eastern and western churches which will continue to grow throughout the next five centuries and pinnacle in the 11th century.

The 4th century experienced an immense transition of power and the 5th century saw its effects. As the emperor moved east and established his place of power in Constantinople, so did power transition between ruling powers. Theodosius was the last emperor to establish his power in Rome even though his primary place of residence and seat of power was Constantinople. As we move into the 5th century and the decline in Roman authority caused by the disputes among the sons of Theodosius, the Church in Rome begins to grow in authority. The Bishop of Rome is now seen as the highest ruling authority in Rome and the only major power left in the city. This doesn't become a central issue until the reign of Pope Leo I or Pope Leo the Great. When the Huns attacked Rome in 410, everyone was shocked that the Eternal City, the seat of power of the Church, the city that had lasted the centuries could be sacked. This event greatly impacted the people leading to confusion and concern. Who will protect us against the invading forces? Does the Roman emperor care or have concern for our well-being? As the people wonder and ponder their dilemma, the mentality of the people switches to the pope as their leader and guide through the challenges of the 5th century. The prime example of this shift of power comes during the reign of Pope Leo I. As the Huns come for a second round in 452, he marches out into the field as though for a battle armed with nothing but faith, establishes a treaty with the Huns, and effectively saves the people of Rome. This event signals the transition of power from the emperor to the Pope which will last the next 1000 years until the political problems of the 18th century.

The east also felt this transition of power. The eastern churches were still under the authority of the emperor who protected the churches and continues to support the people. The east was not nearly as affected by marauding forces as the west. Therefore the transition of power from the

emperor to the patriarchs never happened. Instead the conflict in the east was two-fold. First, the issue from the Council of Nicaea regarding Constantinople's new seat of authority reaches a climax as Alexandria and Constantinople vie for power. Second, the eastern patriarchs are carefully watching as the Church in Rome, namely the Roman patriarch, continues to grow in power and outmatch the other patriarchs. Tensions brood amongst patriarchs and especially between the east and the west.

No controversy better exemplifies the conflicts in the church than the debates between John Chrysostom and Theophilus, really the entire east. John was one of the most elegant and sought after preachers of the early church giving him the name Chrysostom or golden-tongued. For most of his life as a preacher he was for keeping peace in Antioch. This peace soon ended. Disputes over the bishopric in Antioch led to him speaking out against some of the people of his time. Theophilus, desiring the bishopric and losing to John, bided his time on his revenge against John. A controversy arose amongst the monks and people within Constantinople over Origin. Some sympathized with Origin's theology but many opposed it. Theophilus saw his opportunity for revenge and publicly denounced John as an Originist and a heretic. He gathered 40 bishops who supported his cause and staged a trial in a place called the Oak. Not willing to travel into a different diocese that would result in immediate ecclesiastical issues, these bishops and Theophilus defied John and sentenced him into exile but couldn't depose him. Although John was sent into exile by Theophilus, his people remained loyal to him as their bishop. Eudoxia, the empress of the region, erected a statue of herself in front of St. Sophia. This got John's tongue in motion as he denounced her in biblical terms. Enraged by his denunciation, she signed an order for his banishment. John's career ended with this banishment and he would die in exile. Following John's deposition and banishment, the courts decided to elect a bishop from outside the ranks of the clergy and chose Nestorius.

The election of Nestorius as the bishop of Constantinople would rile the church into a series of new controversies leading to the calling of the Council of Ephesus in 431. Nestorius would follow closely in line with many of the heresies that led up to this century. His first major claim was that Jesus wasn't fully human. This theological point may surprise us considering the Council of Constantinople ended a mere 60 years ago. Nestorius cannot accept the idea that human and divine can coexist in Jesus. The Son of God must inhabit the human body but not assume it. This follows from a controversy called the two-natures controversy. Does Jesus have one nature, divine, or two natures, human and divine. Nestorius will claim that Jesus can only have one nature, divine, and therefore acts completely as God even though he inhabits or dwells within a human body. Following from Nestorius' teaching, he will reject the idea that Mary is the mother of God. To Nestorius, Jesus is divine dwelling in a human body. Mary gave Jesus a body which he inhabits. Therefore Mary only gave birth to the body not to God and should be called mother of Jesus. Nestorius' teaching will continue to rile the Christians of the 5th century leading to the Council of Ephesus in 431.

As the controversy simmered, the Alexandria commission headed by Pope Celestine of Rome delivered a citation to Nestorius regarding the falsehood of his teachings. By this point Emperor Theodosius II already planned to convoke a council in Ephesus set to begin on Pentecost of 431

thus disregarding the decision of Pope Celestine of Rome as definitive. The Council was immensely divided. Cyril of Jerusalem was the main protagonist promoting the stance that Jesus has two natures, human and divine. Nestorius was supporting his position that Jesus only has one nature, divine. As the theologians battled their point, the Council settled on its proclamation. Jesus is fully human and fully divine as stated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. This dual nature in Christ means that he didn't inhabit or simply dwell in a body but his body was fully human and divine. Following from this proclamation, the Council continued by advancing the point on Mary making this the first major council to set a Marian dogma. Since Jesus is fully human and fully divine, then Mary gave birth to not only Jesus, the Son of God, but also the second person of the Trinity, thus she is the Mother of God. The Council deposed Nestorius and the battle came to a close, kind of.

The situation became embroiled by the next series of players, Eutyches, Hilary, and Eusebius. Eutyches petitioned to Pope Leo to settle the Nestorian debate and formally depose Nestorius. He didn't. The Eastern Christians were enraged by the audacity of Eutyches of extending the Pope of Rome's authority to eastern issues. Thus they called a council: "the 2nd council of Ephesus" also known as the "Robber Council." At its beginning, over 40 bishops were silenced and forced to sit outside the debates of the council. The final proclamations, after minor debates, would simply depose a great number of people and lead to several arrests and depositions. Due to the immense chaos and the silencing of many bishops, the council was never considered an ecumenical council like the others we have discussed thus far.

Nevertheless the chaos of the Robber Council would lead to more extreme measures to settle the two natures of Christ controversy which was still embroiling the Christian Church. In 451, merely a decade after the Robber Council, the 350-500 bishops met in Chalcedon for the convening of the Council of Chalcedon. This Council solidified the proclamations of Ephesus and explain the controversy resulting from the Council of Nicaea and its Creed. Much was at stake for this Council. Pope Leo had already begun his papal reforms of the church in the west creating a governmental style unheard of in the church to this day. He would continue to solidify his authority and power causing anxiety with the eastern patriarchs. The eastern patriarchs came to the Council leery of Leo. The Council would conclude with the same proclamations of Ephesus that Jesus was fully human and fully divine thus solidifying the deposition of Nestorius' teachings. The Council would continue by establishing the dogma of the Trinity adding the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity and establishing the basic dogmas associated with it. Following from controversies at Nicaea and Constantinople, the Council would again clarify the prominence of Rome as the 1st among equals in comparison to the other patriarchs and the division and equality amongst patriarchs and dioceses.

Most of us would like to think that the rest of the century was quiet and peaceful for the church. The controversies regarding the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon got confused in their language and presented poorly across the empire. In the west the definitions made sense and were widely accepted. In the east, the difference in translation caused great confusion and a desire to reject the Council with the thought that Leo had controlled its outcomes. Thus the east

and the west were continuing to divide as the east became increasingly leery of papal power and the west become more annoyed with their reluctance to accept the Council proclamations.

In the midst of all these proclamations and councils, the church in the west was developing rapidly. Without the oversight of the emperor, the Pope was now leading western Europe and the strongest force the west has seen since Constantine. Under Leo the Great church governmental structure was established and rules and order were set. Clergy were mandated to celibacy and to follow a code of conduct befitting the status of the clergy. The diocesan structure was set and bishops were in place. By now, with the controversies regarding Judaism settled, the title of priest was exchanged for presbyter and the theology of the “unbloody” sacrifice the priests offer was added to the theology of the church.

Besides the proclamations of the major councils of the 5th century, the only major development within the church is evangelization. With Christianity legalized and the empire opened for travel, people are now moving into new lands and new people are emerging from the hinterlands of Europe on a quest to stake out their own land. Now the Church must address these new people who are appearing on the border with the Roman Empire. The decision, evangelize. The most notable character of the 5th century to focus on evangelization is St. Patrick. He captures this new wave of energy to seek out the lost people and the pagan lands and convert them to Christianity. Thus the Pope begins to send out missions across Europe to convert the pagan lands.

Councils

Council of Ephesus (431)

Beginning on June 7th 431, Emperor Theodosius II called the Council of Ephesus in Ephesus to settle the debate between Cyril of Jerusalem and Nestorius. Nestorius taught that Jesus had one nature, divine, that subsisted or inhabited a human body. Therefore his body was fully human but his being was divine. Concluding that Jesus was truly one nature, divine, and Mary would therefore be called the mother of Jesus. Cyril came to the Council with his own thoughts. Cyril believed that nature referred to what the thing is. How could a body have two natures? Therefore he came assuming that the truth of Jesus was that he had the personality of the Divine Word. The Council became heated as the debates raged. The final conclusion was that Jesus has two nature, divine and human. Just as Nicaea proclaimed that Jesus is fully human and fully divine, then he must have a fully human nature and a fully divine nature. The body of Jesus is a union of the human and divine nature called the hypostatic union. The union of human and divine is without “change, separation, alteration, or division.” The human doesn’t change into being divine, neither are the two separated into different parts of the body, neither are they altered to become one thus losing the dignity of both, and neither are they divided into parts. The two natures are united without losing the dignity of each or the special qualities of each. Following from this proclamation the Council promulgated the first Marian dogma of the Church: Mary as Mother of God. Mary gave birth to Jesus who is God and man. As both God and man she gave birth to the human and divine nature of Jesus, not separated or altered, but united in him making her the Mother of God. This doesn’t mean that Mary gave birth to God the Father but instead the dogma and declaration refers to the united natures in Jesus.

Council of Chalcedon (451)

Twenty years later the debate is not settled. Nestorianism was on the rise even after its condemnation at the Council of Ephesus. Again a council was called to settle these disputes and to work towards peace in the Christian world. Whereas the Council of Ephesus established the dogma regarding the two-natures of Christ, the Council of Chalcedon will give it language. The Council of Ephesus concluded that Jesus has two-natured united in the hypostatic union. The word “hypostatic” has a few implications. In Latin it means the nature that underlies the substance of the being. Such as treeness is the nature that underlies a tree. Thus the nature that underlies the body of Jesus is human and divine. Again not a mixture of human and divine but two separate united natures that are Jesus. Chalcedon will ratify this proclamation and continue with the nature of the Trinity. As Jesus was defined as the Son of God, so the Holy Spirit will be defined as the emanation of the love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father proclaiming the Holy Spirit as divine. In the midst of this debate several theological points were made regarding the dogma of the Trinity. The Trinity is one God in three divine persons. Not people, not gods, not separate beings, not some weird mixture of godliness. Each person is distinct as separate in their relationships within the Godhead but united so completely as to be one God. Each person of the Trinity is full God in their right and has all the powers, privileges, and ability attached to being God. They are however distinct in their relationships where no one person is the same as the other.

In the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon we see the effects of the divided church. Whereas Ephesus and the beginning of the Robber council caused ill feelings towards Rome, the growing language divide in the church was sharply felt after Chalcedon. The word of hypostasis, describing the nature of Jesus, was translating into Greek as prosopon, which means face or mask. The other way to understand prosopon is as person or in Latin persona indicating that Jesus is two separate persons. Everyone knows this is wrong. The eastern bishops concluded the Council was wrong in that Jesus didn't wear different masks for his identify with a unified underlying nature. He had two separate united natures that make Jesus. This confusion and frustration by the eastern bishops confused the Latin bishops who understood the meaning of the Latin word increasing the divide between east and west.

Heresies:

Nestorianism: Founded by Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, at the beginning of the 5th century challenged the notion that Jesus was fully human. For Nestorius human nature and divine nature are two separate realities and cannot coexist. Therefore Jesus is human and divine in the sense that he has a human body but the underlying nature is divine not human nor human and divine. Therefore Jesus is the Son of God, the Divine Word, who came to inhabit a human body. Thus Mary is the mother of Jesus not the mother of God. God doesn't have a beginning or an end neither was he born therefore Mary cannot be the mother of God.

The Church will condemn Nestorius' teaching as heresy and declare that Jesus has two natures, divine and human, united in the hypostatic union. Thus the nature of Jesus is two, human and divine, not a mixture of the two, not two separate natures inhabiting one body, but two separate

natures untied in one. Jesus is also fully human in his human nature and fully divine in his divine nature. Mary, therefore, the mother of Jesus, is also the mother of God since Jesus is fully God. Not the mother of the Father nor the cause of God's beginning but as a statement about the nature of Jesus and his relationship to his mother.

Docetism: The 4th century saw some major changes in the church. One of the most prominent changes that riled the people and caused great controversy was the degradation in the holiness of the clergy. Many people were upset by the example set by many of the clergy. A group of people began proposing a way to understand the degradation of the clergy. The Sacraments, as holy and dependent on the priest, were only as effective and valid as the holiness of the priest. Therefore the more sinful a priest or bishop, the less effective and less valid the sacraments he celebrates. Before explaining the church's stance on this issue, imagine living this mentality. Every time you go to Mass you must evaluate the holiness of the priest to determine the validity of the Sacraments he celebrates. Imagine the mental exercise and the chaos this causes.

The Church will come down firmly on this issue. The Sacraments, as instituted by Christ, are valid by his will. As long as the priest acts as Jesus did and does what the Church intends with the Sacraments, they are valid. The holiness of disposition of the priest doesn't affect their validity but our holiness can affect our reception of the Sacraments.

Monophysitism: This heresy claims that Jesus had only one nature, divine. Since human and divine cannot exist together nor be mixed into one, Jesus must have only one nature.

The Church will declare dogmatically that Jesus has two natures, human and divine, that are not mixed into one, nor altered to become one, nor separated into two persons, not changed from their nature into something else. The hypostatic union declares that the union of human and divine in Jesus is an anomaly that unites creation to God. This union maintains the uniqueness of each nature and their special qualities while uniting them in Jesus making Jesus both human and divine simultaneously and completely.

Key Figures:

St. Patrick: A 5th century British man who was sent by the Pope to evangelize the people of Ireland. At the age of 15 he was captured by slaves and set to Ireland where he would live for 6 years in slavery. After running away and boarding a ship by God's dictate, he went home to Britain where he was ordained a priest. After being named a bishop, he went to Ireland to help evangelize the people.

Nestorius: A theologian and preacher in Constantinople who was consecrated bishop of Constantinople following the deposition of John Chrysostom. He would then use his status as bishop to promote the heresy that Jesus has only one nature, divine, which inhabits his body creating the incarnation of the Word of God. Nestorius will be adamant about his teaching leading to both the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon to clarify this issue and depose him as a heretic. After being deposed by the Council of Ephesus and condemned by Theodosius II, he went lived the last 20 years of his life in exile.

St. John Chrysostom: The “Golden-Tongued” preacher of Constantinople. He was a notable preacher who captured the hearts of many people throughout his Diocese. After the bishop died, he was named bishop of Constantinople over Theophilus. Theophilus, enraged by being beaten by John, staged a condemnation trial for John naming him an Origenist. This trial succeeded and got him reprimanded by not deposed. Although he was denounced, he was still greatly loved by his people and continued his work as bishop. Empress Eudoxia’s statue of herself in front of St. Sophia got John’s tongue wagging and in his sharp biblical rebuke of this statue enraged the Empress who got him exiled. Although he received support from the throughout the church, he was never reinstated because of the empress and lived the last days of his life in exile.

Pope Leo I: Also known as Pope Leo the Great. Little is known about his life before he became pope. Pope Leo’s life as pope came during the most politically, socially, and theologically challenging times of the 5th century. At the start of his pontificate was the Nestorian controversy leading to the Council of Ephesus. Following this Council was the Robber Council in 448 during which his delegates died along the way and those who made it were not treated fairly at the council. Following this controversy was the continuation of the Nestorian heresy leading to the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In the midst of all these challenges were the Hunnic invasion of Rome in the 440’s where Pope Leo marched out against the Huns without an army. Even without an army he successfully appeased them, signed a peace treaty, and saved Rome. He is best known for his governmental reforms many of which are still in place today including the establishment of Papal Primacy, the opposition to heresy, and the theological legacy he left in the *Tome of Leo*.

Art and Music

As the church continues to grow and opposition from without and within the church wanes, art



becomes more intense and vivid. Imperial imagery dominates the 5th century. As divide between the east and the west grows and imperial power both weakens and gets challenged by the church, the church will turn to the theme of Jesus as the highest of all emperors. Thus the imagery in churches shows this same trend. Jesus as the ruler of all challenges the civil authorities and reminds church leaders that they are

obedient to a higher power. Although civil authorities see this challenge, they cannot stop or halt

this idea without serious consequences for their leadership. Therefore the church turns towards Jesus as the greatest of all emperors.

Another new development in art, following the proclamations of the Councils, is to depict their promulgations in art. The image below illustrates the proclamation of Mary as Mother of God using both imagery, words, and artistic style to depict orthodox theology. Notice in this painting the use of vivid colors and an incredible advance in detail and color compared to the art of previous centuries.

A few new elements are added to sacred art. The first is the halo around the heads of those who are considered holy. This artistic development helps the people know the good and holy people from those who are not. Similarly, the addition of the Book of Scripture, the staff showing Jesus' power, and the throne are all biblical images that now depict Jesus as sovereign ruler as opposed to the imagery of Jesus as shepherd and healer. The transition in style is representative of the people's view of Jesus and the Church. No longer are they worried about persecution from the evil Rome emperors but instead they are focused on putting the emperors in their place underneath the rule of Jesus. No longer are Christians seeking healing but the truth about Jesus and orthodox beliefs. They stray from biblical imagery to focus on preaching the newest proclamation of the faith and expressing right belief.



23rd Sermon of St. Leo the Great

Let us be glad in the Lord, dearly-beloved, and rejoice with spiritual joy that there has dawned for us the day of ever-new redemption, of ancient preparation, of eternal bliss. For as the year rolls round, there recurs for us the commemoration of our salvation, which promised from the beginning, accomplished in the fullness of time will endure for ever; on which we are bound with hearts up-lifted to adore the divine mystery: so that what is the effect of God's great gift may be celebrated by the Church's great rejoicings. For God the almighty and merciful, Whose nature as goodness, Whose will is power, Whose work is mercy: as soon as the devil's malignity killed us by the poison of his hatred, foretold at the very beginning of the world the remedy His piety had prepared for the restoration of us mortals: proclaiming to the serpent that the seed of the woman should come to crush the lifting of his baneful head by its power, signifying no doubt that Christ would come in the flesh, God and man, Who born of a Virgin should by His uncorrupt birth condemn the despoiler of the human stock. Thus in the whole and perfect nature of true man was true God born, complete in what was His own, complete in what was ours. And ours we call what the Creator formed in us from the beginning and what He undertook to repair. For what the deceiver brought in and the deceived admitted had no trace in the Saviour. Nor because He partook of man's weaknesses, did He therefore share our faults. He took the form of a slave without stain of sin, increasing the human and not diminishing the Divine: because that emptying of Himself whereby the Invisible made Himself visible and Creator and Lord of all things as He was, wished to be mortal, was the condescension of Pity not the failing of Power.

Therefore, when the time came, dearly beloved, which had been fore-ordained for men's redemption, there enters these lower parts of the world, the Son of God, descending from His heavenly throne and yet not quitting His Father's glory, begotten in a new order, by a new nativity. In a new order, because being invisible in His own nature He became visible in ours, and He whom nothing could contain, was content to be contained: abiding before all time He began to be in time: the Lord of all things, He obscured His immeasurable majesty and took on Him the form of a servant: being God, that cannot suffer, He did not disdain to be man that can, and immortal as He is, to subject Himself to the laws of death. And by a new nativity He was begotten, conceived by a Virgin, born of a Virgin, without paternal desire, without injury to the mother's chastity: because such a birth as knew no taint of human flesh, became One who was to be the Saviour of men, while it possessed in itself the nature of human substance. For when God was born in the flesh, God Himself was the Father, as the archangel witnessed to the Blessed Virgin Mary: because the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the most High shall overshadow you: and therefore, that which shall be born of you shall be called holy,

the Son of God Luke 1:35 . The origin is different but the nature like: not by intercourse with man but by the power of God was it brought about: for a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bare, and a Virgin she remained. Consider here not the condition of her that bare but the will of Him that was born; for He was born Man as He willed and was able. If you inquire into the truth of His nature, you must acknowledge the matter to be human: if you search for the mode of His birth, you must confess the power to be of God. For the Lord Jesus Christ came to do away with not to endure our pollutions: not to succumb to our faults but to heal them. He came that He might cure every weakness of our corruptness and all the sores of our defiled souls: for which reason it behooved Him to be born by a new order, who brought to men's bodies the new gift of unsullied purity. For the uncorrupt nature of Him that was born had to guard the primal virginity of the Mother, and the infused power of the Divine Spirit had to preserve in spotlessness and holiness that sanctuary which He had chosen for Himself: that Spirit (I say) who had determined to raise the fallen, to restore the broken, and by overcoming the allurements of the flesh to bestow on us in abundant measure the power of chastity: in order that the virginity which in others cannot be retained in child-bearing, might be attained by them at their second birth.

And, dearly beloved, this very fact that Christ chose to be born of a Virgin does it not appear to be part of the deepest design? I mean, that the devil should not be aware that Salvation had been born for the human race, and through the obscurity of that spiritual conception, when he saw Him no different to others, should believe Him born in no different way to others. For when he observed that His nature was like that of all others, he thought that He had the same origin as all had: and did not understand that He was free from the bonds of transgression because he did not find Him a stranger to the weakness of mortality. For though the true mercy of God had infinitely many schemes to hand for the restoration of mankind, it chose that particular design which put in force for destroying the devil's work, not the efficacy of might but the dictates of justice. For the pride of the ancient foe not undeservedly made good its despotic rights over all men, and with no unwarrantable supremacy tyrannized over those who had been of their own accord lured away from God's commands to be the slaves of his will. And so there would be no justice in his losing the immemorial slavery of the human race, were he not conquered by that which he had subjugated. And to this end, without male seed Christ was conceived of a Virgin, who was fecundated not by human intercourse but by the Holy Spirit. And whereas in all mothers conception does not take place without stain of sin, this one received purification from the Source of her conception. For no taint of sin penetrated, where no intercourse occurred. Her unsullied virginity knew no lust when it ministered the substance. The Lord took from His mother our nature, not our fault. The slave's form is created without the

slave's estate, because the New Man is so commingled with the old, as both to assume the reality of our race and to remove its ancient flaw.

When, therefore, the merciful and almighty Saviour so arranged the commencement of His human course as to hide the power of His Godhead which was inseparable from His manhood under the veil of our weakness, the crafty foe was taken off his guard and he thought that the nativity of the Child, Who was born for the salvation of mankind, was as much subject to himself as all others are at their birth. For he saw Him crying and weeping, he saw Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, subjected to circumcision, offering the sacrifice which the law required. And then he perceived in Him the usual growth of boyhood, and could have had no doubt of His reaching man's estate by natural steps. Meanwhile, he inflicted insults, multiplied injuries, made use of curses, affronts, blasphemies, abuse, in a word, poured upon Him all the force of his fury and exhausted all the varieties of trial: and knowing how he had poisoned man's nature, had no conception that He had no share in the first transgression Whose mortality he had ascertained by so many proofs. The unscrupulous thief and greedy robber persisted in assaulting Him Who had nothing of His own, and in carrying out the general sentence on original sin, went beyond the bond on which he rested, and required the punishment of iniquity from Him in Whom he found no fault. And thus the malevolent terms of the deadly compact are annulled, and through the injustice of an overcharge the whole debt is cancelled. The strong one is bound by his own chains, and every device of the evil one recoils on his own head. When the prince of the world is bound, all that he held in captivity is released. Our nature cleansed from its old contagion regains its honourable estate, death is destroyed by death, nativity is restored by nativity: since at one and the same time redemption does away with slavery, regeneration changes our origin, and faith justifies the sinner.

Whoever then you are that devoutly and faithfully boastest of the Christian name, estimate this atonement at its right worth. For to you who wast a castaway, banished from the realms of paradise, dying of your weary exile, reduced to dust and ashes, without further hope of living, by the Incarnation of the Word was given the power to return from afar to your Maker, to recognize your parentage, to become free after slavery, to be promoted from being an outcast to sonship: so that, you who were born of corruptible flesh, may be reborn by the Spirit of God, and obtain through grace what you had not by nature, and, if you acknowledge yourself the son of God by the spirit of adoption, dare to call God Father. Freed from the accusings of a bad conscience, aspire to the kingdom of heaven, do God's will supported by the Divine help, imitate the angels upon earth, feed on the strength of immortal sustenance, fight fearlessly on the side of piety against hostile temptations, and if you keep your allegiance in the heavenly

warfare, doubt not that you will be crowned for your victory in the triumphant camp of the Eternal King, when the resurrection that is prepared for the faithful has raised you to participate in the heavenly Kingdom.

Having therefore so confident a hope, dearly beloved, abide firm in the Faith in which you are built: lest that same tempter whose tyranny over you Christ has already destroyed, win you back again with any of his wiles, and mar even the joys of the present festival by his deceitful art, misleading simpler souls with the pestilential notion of some to whom this our solemn feast day seems to derive its honour, not so much from the nativity of Christ as, according to them, from the rising of the new sun. Such men's hearts are wrapped in total darkness, and have no growing perception of the true Light: for they are still drawn away by the foolish errors of heathendom, and because they cannot lift the eyes of their mind above that which their carnal sight beholds, they pay divine honour to the luminaries that minister to the world. Let not Christian souls entertain any such wicked superstition and portentous lie. Beyond all measure are things temporal removed from the Eternal, things corporeal from the Incorporeal, things governed from the Governor. For though they possess a wondrous beauty, yet they have no Godhead to be worshipped. That power then, that wisdom, that majesty is to be adored which created the universe out of nothing, and framed by His almighty methods the substance of the earth and sky into what forms and dimensions He willed. Sun, moon, and stars may be most useful to us, most fair to look upon; but only if we render thanks to their Maker for them and worship God who made them, not the creation which does Him service. Then praise God, dearly beloved, in all His works and judgments. Cherish an undoubting belief in the Virgin's pure conception. Honour the sacred and Divine mystery of man's restoration with holy and sincere service. Embrace Christ born in our flesh, that you may deserve to see Him also as the God of glory reigning in His majesty, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit remains in the unity of the Godhead for ever and ever. Amen.

For the account of such things, it is necessary to recall what has previously been said, that you may be able to know the cause of the manifestation in the body of such and so great Paternal Word, and not think that the Savior has worn a body as a consequence of nature, but that, being by nature bodiless and existing as the Word, by the love for humankind and goodness of his own Father he appeared to us in a human body for our salvation. As we give an account of this, it is first necessary to speak about the creation of the universe and its maker, God, so that one may thus worthily reflect that its recreation was accomplished by the Word who created it in the beginning. For it will appear not at all contradictory if the Father works its salvation in the same one by whom he created it.

The Divine Dilemma regarding Life and Death

2 The making of the world and the creation of all things have been taken differently by many, and each has propounded as each has wished. Some say that all things have come into being spontaneously and as by chance, such as the Epicureans who, according to themselves, fantasize that there is no providence over the universe, speaking in the face of the clear and apparent facts. For if all things came into being spontaneously without providence, as they claim, all things would necessarily have simply come into being and be identical and without difference. Everything would have been as a single body, sun or moon, and regarding human beings, the whole would have been a hand or eye or foot. But, now, this is not the case: we see, here, the sun, there the moon, there the earth; and again regarding human bodies, here a foot, there a hand, and there a head. Such order indicates that they did not come into being spontaneously, but shows that a cause preceded them, from which one can apprehend the God who ordered and created all things.

Others, amongst whom is Plato, that giant among the Greeks, declare that God made the universe from preexistent and uncreated

matter, as God is not able to make anything unless matter preexisted, just as a carpenter must already have wood so that it may be used. They do not realize that saying such things is to impute weakness to God: for if he is not himself the cause of matter, but simply makes things from pre-existent matter, then he is weak, not being able without matter to fashion any of the things that exist, just as the weakness of the carpenter is certainly his inability to make any required thing without wood. According to the argument, unless there were matter, God would not have made anything. How would he then still be called "Maker" and "Creator," if he had his ability to make from something else, I mean from the matter? And if this is so, as they thus have it, according to them God is only a craftsman and not the Creator of being, if he fashions underlying matter but is not himself the cause of matter. He could in no way be called "Creator," if he does not create matter, from which created things come into being.

Others, again, from the heretics fabricate for themselves another creator of all things besides the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, being greatly blinded even in what they say. For the Lord said to the Jews, "*Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and will cleave to his wife, and the two will be one flesh.'*" Then, referring to the Creator, he says, "*What God has put together, let not man put asunder*" (Matt 19:4-6). How then do they introduce a creation alien to the Father? For if, according to John, encompassing all things in saying, "*all things were made by him and without him was nothing made*" (In 1:3), how could there be another creator besides the Father of Christ?

3 These things, then, they fantasize. But the inspired teaching and faith according to Christ casts out their vain talk as godlessness. For it knows that neither spontaneously, as it is not without providence, nor from pre-existent matter, as God is not weak, but from nothing and having absolutely no existence God brought the universe into being through the Word, which it says through Moses, "*In the begin-*