

Early Church

From Apostolic Times through early 7th c.

Early Christian Community

Pentecost

- 50th day after Passover
- birthday of the Church



Martyrdom of Stephen by stoning, 35 AD

Conversion of Saul, 35 AD

“new name for a new man”

Writing of the Gospels and Letters to the Christians 45 – 100 AD

Christian Persecutions

Circa 60-313 AD

Anarchists of the Roman Empire

- *Refuse to worship the Emperor and Roman gods*
- *Live and dress simply*

Crown of martyrdom

Wrath of Nero, 64 AD

- *sets Rome on fire*
- *blames the Christians*
- *condemns Christians to death*

Worship in the Early Church

Breaking of the Bread, early 1st century
“house liturgy”

- *assembly of the Faithful*
- *the meal*
- *blessing of the bread & wine*
- *prayer of thanksgiving*



*Swelling number of Christians and abuses force the community
to move from the upper room to the foyer.*

The Eucharist, middle 1st century

eu (well) & kharizesthia (gratitude)

atrium of the home

- *all standing around a wooden table*
- *blessing of bread and wine*
- *prayer of thanksgiving by the presbyter*

Liturgy, late First and Second Centuries

Account of Eucharist by Justin the Martyr, late 1st century

- *gathering of the community on the morning of the first day of the week to greet the rising “Son”*
- *kiss of peace*
- *prayer with extended arms*
- *reading of the “Memoirs of the Apostles”*
- *sermon*
- *offering of gifts for Eucharist and the poor*
- *Eucharistic Prayer composed by presbyter*
- *community responds “Amen”*
- *distribution of Eucharist*

Church recognizes 23 New Testament books as canonical.

*197 AD - The “Apostles Creed” becomes the profession of Faith for Christians.
Hierarchy of ministers called forth by the community to serve the community.*

Desert Solitaries

Mid 3rd c.

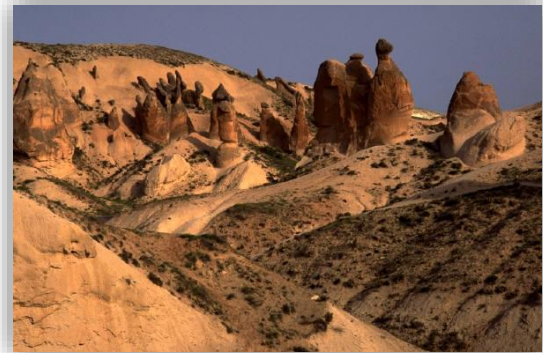
Living Martyrdom

Antony of Egypt

Father of Desert Solitaries, circa 251-356 AD

Austere Lifestyle of Desert Hermits

- unceasing prayer
- fasting
- labor



295 AD – “Catholic” is adopted by all churches that agree with apostolic teaching.

Era of Constantine

4th c.

“Defender of the Faith,” circa 278-337 AD

- son of St. Helena
- Roman Emperor, 312 AD

Edit of Milan, 313 AD

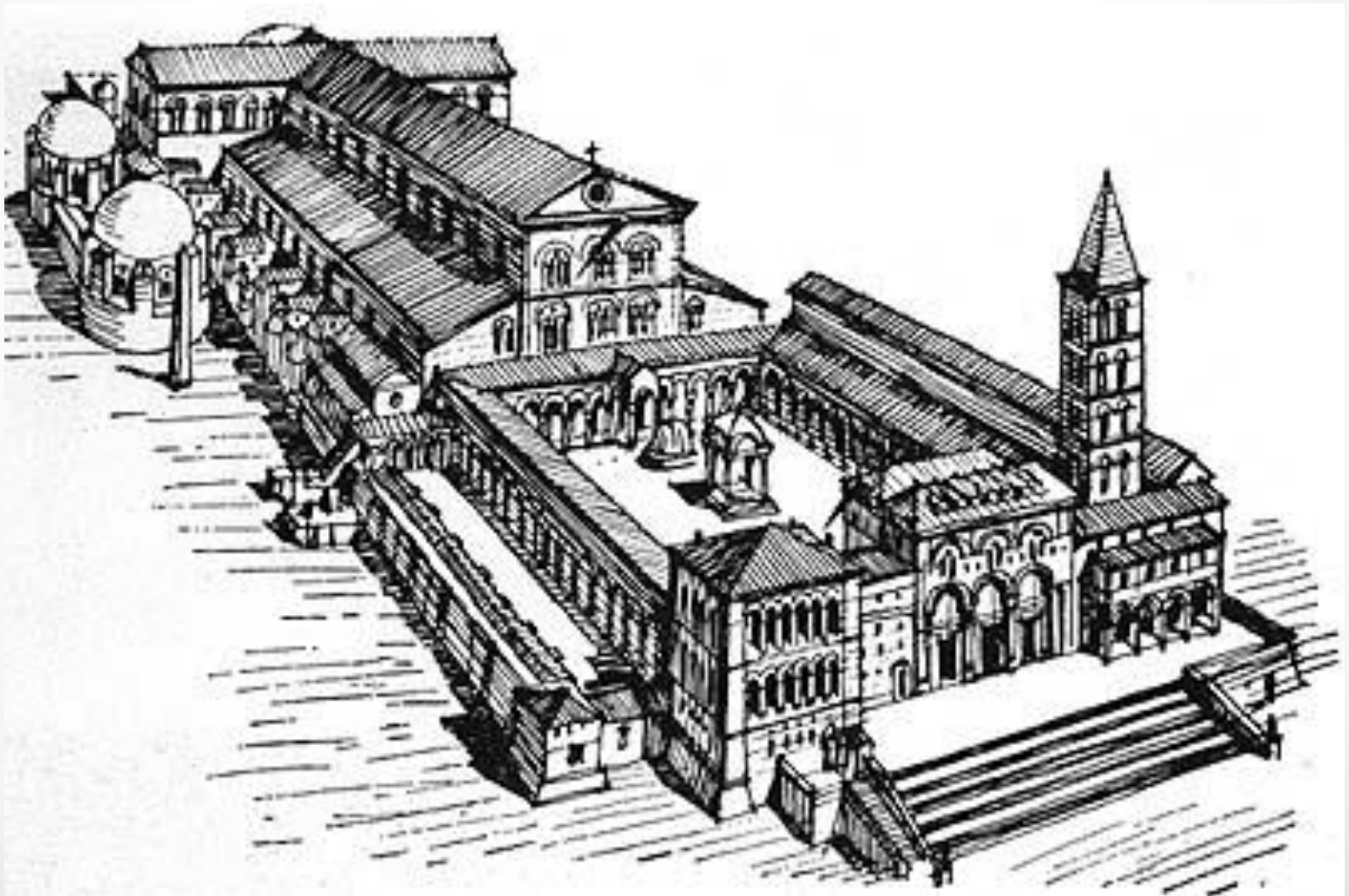
- end of three centuries of Christian persecution
- official tolerance of Christianity and other religions
- worship of the Christians moves to the basilica
ancient Roman forum, town hall

Transfer of Roman capital from Rome to Byzantium

- loss of central authority in the Roman Empire
 - + civil capital in Constantinople
 - + religious capital in Rome

First Basilica of St. Peter

Constructed between 315-349 AD



Liturgy in the Basilica

4th & 5th c.

The Church

- façade faces the east; sanctuary faces the west
- façade faces the west; sanctuary faces the east
- built-in altar replaces simple wooden table
- relics of martyrs placed concealed in the altar

The Eucharist

- procession into sanctuary: candlebearers, presider
- use of incense beginning of service and before proclamation of the Gospel
- fixed formula for Eucharistic Prayer
- doxology
- kissing of altar of sacrifice

347 AD – Books of the New Testament put into one volume.

Age of the Councils

4th & 5th C.

Legacy of the East

councils convened by Emperors

Theological dilemmas of the church

- Council of Nicea, 325 AD

equality of Jesus with Father (Nicene Creed)

- Council of Constantinople, 381 AD

equality of Father, Son, Spirit

- Council of Ephesus, 431 AD

unity of human and divine natures of Jesus

- Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD

affirmation of unity of two natures in Jesus

404 AD – Jerome translates the Old and New Testaments from Greek into Latin

476 AD, fall of the Roman Empire

Rise of Western Monasticism

6th C.

Founder of Western Monasticism

Benedict of Norcia, circa 480 – 543 AD

From Hermit to Founder

- Subiaco
- Monte Casino, circa 520 AD

Rule of Benedict

- most influential rule for religious communities
- moderation of monastic life
 - + *prayer, work, study*
- “Lectio Divina”

Liturgy in the Sixth Century

From “Breaking of the Bread” to “Eucharist” to “Mass”

“*Ita Missa est.*” “*Go, this is a dismissal.*”

Liturgy and the Christian Community

- decrease in reception of Holy Communion
- diversification of liturgical rites: East and West
- designation of Latin as official liturgical language
vernacular of Rome



Structure of Liturgical Worship

Late 6th c. – 7th c.

Fixed Structure of the Mass

- solemn entrance of presider
- Gloria during Introductory Rite
- Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament

Gradual (Responsorial Psalm)

Epistle (Letters to the Christians)

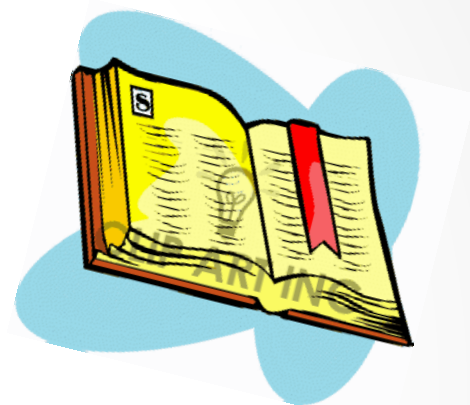
Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Sermon (Homily)

Offertory

Presentation of gifts & preparation of altar



Structure in Liturgical Worship

Late 6th c. - 7th c.

Fixed Structure of the Mass, continued

- Preface, solemn hymn of thanksgiving
- Sanctus (Holy Holy, Holy...)
- Benedictus (Blessed is He...)
- Words of Consecration (Gospel text)
embellished
extended
- Eucharistic Acclamation
- Memento of the Dead
- Doxology
- Kiss of Peace (among presider and servers only)
- Holy Communion
- Dismissal *“Ita Missa est.”*



Western Church as Servant

Until the 7th c.

Responsible for Political and Religious Leadership

providing basic human needs

- public safety
- price of food
- complaints of citizens
- tax evasion
- subsidies for farmers
- wills
- disputes among the people



In the Meantime

Until 7th c.

Church in the East

- focus of bishops
 - + their pastoral role
 - + sacramental life, spirituality, theology
- leisure to develop deeper understanding of doctrines
Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, Chalcedon
- time to develop defenses against heretical teachings
- rich development of spirituality and mysticism
- opportunity to embellish liturgy

NEXT STOP

THE MIDDLE AGES