

Important Creeds and Councils of the Christian Church

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Class VIII: The Development of the Episcopacy, Gregory the Great, and an Introduction to Medieval Roman Catholic Theology

Read Romans 8:18-34

Development of the Episcopacy

Period	Sources	Description
1 st Century	New Testament	Elder-bishops and deacons in each church were under the supervision of the apostles
Early 2 nd century	Ignatius	Elders and bishops were differentiated. Each congregation was governed by bishop, elders and deacons.
Late 2 nd century	Irenaeus Tertullian	Diocesan bishops – a bishop now oversaw a group of congregations in a geographical area; they were thought to be successors of the apostles
Mid – 3 rd century	Cyprian	Priesthood and sacrifice. Elders (presbyters) come to be seen as sacrificing priests. Primacy of Rome asserted.
Early 4 th century	Council of Nicea	Metropolitan bishops (archbishops) by virtue of their location in population centers gained ascendancy over chorepiscopi (country bishops).
Late 4 th century	Council of Constantinople	Patriarchs. Special honor was given the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Patriarch of Constantinople was given primacy next to the bishop of Rome.
Mid-5 th century	Leo I Council of Chalcedon	The supremacy of Rome-Leo I claimed authority over the whole church on the basis of succession from Peter.

Gregory I (the Great) (c.540-604)

Gregory the Great- The interpreter of Augustine to the Middle Ages. He is called one of the Doctors of the Latin Church along with Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. In administrative abilities and achievements, he is considered one of the greatest of the popes. Born in Rome of a senatorial Christian family c. 540. By 574, he had devoted his wealth to the founding of monasteries and to the poor. He became a member of the monastery of St. Andrew. In 590, he was chosen Pope, being the first monk to attain the office. He died on March 12, 604. He exercised full authority over the Church as Peter's successor. Tradition has ascribed to Gregory a great work in the reformation of church music- - the "Gregorian chants"- - and in the development of the Roman liturgy.

Gregory's Theology- Augustinian by profession, but with another emphasis than that of Augustine, although the Medieval church would have this teaching interpreted to them as Augustinian. He developed Augustine's ecclesiastical teaching. He held that the number of the elect is fixed, and depends upon God, he had no such interest in predestination

as had Augustine. He speaks of predestination as simply divine foreknowledge (prescience). "Man is fettered in Original Sin, the evidence of which is his birth through lust...Man is rescued from this condition by the work of Christ, received in baptism...but sins after baptism must be satisfied...works of merit wrought by God's assisting grace make satisfaction...The good that we do is both of God and of ourselves; of God by prevenient grace, our own by good will following." Penance becomes the cure for sins after baptism (or in the words of Aquinas: "the second plank of salvation for those who have shipwrecked in their faith"). "The church has many helps for him who would seek merit or exercise penance...the greatest is the Lord's Supper, which Gregory viewed as a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, available for the living and the dead (Fourth Lateran Council-1215: The doctrine of transubstantiation is officially accepted by the Roman Church)...there is also the aid of the saints...Those who trust in no works of their own should run to the protection of the holy martyrs...for those who, while really disciples of Christ, make an insufficient use of these opportunities to achieve works of merit, fail to do penance, or avail themselves inadequately of the helps offered in the church, there remain the purifying fires of purgatory."

Important Leaders and Theologians during the Medieval Period (c.590-c.1517)

Charles the Great (Charlemagne)(742-814)-

creation of papal states made pope a temporal ruler. Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as the "Sword" of the Holy Roman Empire and set stage for power struggle between church and state.

Hildebrand (Gregory VII) (c.1021-1085)-

His reform of the papacy enhanced his power as pope. He used excommunication and interdict as weapons against the ruling state (temporal ruler).

Innocent III (1161-1216)-

Papal power reaches ultimate power. He claims absolute spiritual and temporal authority over the Holy Roman Empire.

Paschasius Radbertus (c.785-865)-

A proponent of transubstantiation.

Gottschalk (805-868)-

Defended Augustinian doctrine of predestination for which he was condemned and imprisoned. Treated brutally because of this, died after 20 years in prison and was denied Christian burial.

Anselm (1033-1109)-

wrote Cur Deus Homo? (why the God-Man?). Developed the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Devised ontological argument for the existence of God.

Peter Lombard (1095-c.1159)-

Wrote Sentences, which became the first standard medieval systematic theology. Emphasized seven sacraments.

Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274)-

Dominican monk. Studied under Albertus Magnus. Wrote based on his influences from Aristotle and Augustine. The most influential theologian in the Roman Catholic Church during the second millennium A.D. Wrote a systematic theology called Summa Theologica.

Benedictines (529)-

Order founded by Benedict of Nursia in Monte Cassino, Italy. Bede and Boniface were significant members. This became first monastic order based on the Benedictine Rule.

Augustinians (date and place of origin unknown)-

Followed rule of St. Augustine. Thomas Kempis, Martin Luther and Gregory of Rimini are significant members.

Dominicans (1216)-

Order founded by Dominic Guzman in Spain. Used rule of St. Augustine. Used by popes to root out heresy. Conducted Inquisition. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Girolama Savonarola are significant members.

Franciscans (1223)-

Order founded by Francis of Assisi in Italy. Their original rule was taken from Scripture alone. Mendicant (begging) preachers who took vows of absolute poverty. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham are significant members.

Medieval Roman Catholic Theology

The Roman Catholic theological confusion of Justification and Sanctification: The sacraments work *ex opere operato*, by the power of the completed act, and their validity does not depend on the orthodoxy of the minister or his state of grace. Grace is infused into the sinner, through the Sacraments making the sinner righteous, thereby God will then justify the sinner.

The Roman Catholic Sacramental Means of Grace

Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony. The following definitions taken from: *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* by Ludwig Ott, approved with the Papal *Imprimatur*.

Baptism:

The means of the remission of the guilt of original sin. In the case of adults, baptism also is the means of the eradication of all personal, mortal, or venial sins. Even when unworthily received, baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the Baptismal Character, and cannot be repeated. The Council of Trent, Chap. Condemned the denier of this doctrine.

Confirmation:

In this sacrament by the imposition of hands, unction, and prayer, a baptized person is filled with the Holy Spirit for the inner strengthening of the supernatural life and for courageous outward testimony. By this sacrament baptismal grace is perfected.

The Eucharist:

(the Greek word means "thanksgiving") It is an early name for the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion. The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, first propounded by Paschasius Radbertus (ca. 785-860), was defined as dogma by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The eucharistic sacrifice was first defined as dogma by the Council of Trent in 1562. The Council stated that the "Same Christ" is sacrificed in an "unbloody manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross." The effects of the Eucharist are unification with Christ and the preservation and increase of supernatural life, and it is a pledge of heavenly bliss and future resurrection. As a sacrament Christ is partaken as nourishment for the soul. As a sacrifice He is offered as a sacrificial gift to God. Ludwig Ott writes, "The purpose of the sacrifice is the same in the sacrifice of the Mass as in the Sacrifice of the Cross; primarily the glorification of God, secondarily atonement, thanksgiving, and appeal." The Eucharist is atoning... a sacrifice of propitiation and can be offered "not only for the living, but also for the poor souls in Purgatory."

Extreme Unction:

Ott writes: "It is a Sacrament of the Living. It presupposes in general the remission of grievous sins. But if a person in mortal sin is seriously ill and can no longer receive the Sacrament of Penance, or if he erroneously believes that he is free from grievous sin, Extreme Unction eradicates the grievous sins *per accidens*, but still by reason of Christ's institution." Only Bishops and Priests can administer the sacrament.

Penance:

The act of confession on the part of the penitent, together with the priest's pronouncement of absolution and his assigning of certain works to be done by the penitent. In a Roman Catholic training book called *Instructions for Non-Catholics* we read: "In the Sacrament of Penance, God gives the priest the power to bring sinners back into the state of grace and to prevent them from falling into the abyss of hell. Moreover, after confession some temporal punishment due to sin generally remains, and some of this punishment is taken away in the penance (prayers) the priest gives you to say. You should perform other acts of penance also so that you can make up for the temporal punishment due to sin and to avoid a long stay in purgatory. The Church suggests to us these forms of penance: prayer, fasting, giving alms in the name of Christ, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the patient sufferings of the ills of life, and the gaining of indulgences." (Pg 95)

The Church of Rome demands acts of Penance before she grants forgiveness, inferring that the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient to atone fully for sin and that it must be supplemented to some extent by these good works (faith + works --> Justification). God demands repentance, which means turning from sin, vices, injustice and all wickedness in whatever form: Isaiah 55:7- "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." From the Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus, Luther discovered that Jesus did not say "Do Penance," as interpreted by Rome because of the Vulgate translation, but "Repent."

Rome teaches that salvation depends ultimately upon ourselves, upon what we do, that one can "earn" salvation by obedience to the laws of the church, indeed that the saints can even store up excess merits in heaven beyond the requirements of duty, through such things as regular attendance at church, masses, rosary prayers, fastings, wearing of crucifixes etc. These excess merits are called "works of supererogation." Mary and the saints are said to have stored up

vast treasures of merit, from which the pope can draw and dispense to the faithful as they perform the works assigned by the priests.

Treasury of Merit

During the Medieval period after Gregory I (the Great), Rome spoke of merit in several ways: 1) Condign Merit (meritum de condigno) and 2) Congruous Merit (meritum de congruo). In addition, Rome spoke of a treasury of merit that accrues from the merit of Christ and the supererogatory merit of Mary and the saints. The concept of merit was tied closely to the sacrament of penance, and the indulgence controversy focused heavily on this concept. The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares: "The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance." Rome defines an indulgence as:

"An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of satisfactions of Christ and the saints... An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin, and may be applied to the living or the dead." {Pope Paul VI, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5 }

"This Treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary... also are the prayers and good works of the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by His grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them. In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body." {Pope Paul VI, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5 }

Development of Episcopacy Graph Taken from the book: *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, by Robert C. Walton, Copyright 1986 Zondervan Publishing

Next Class: The Council of Chalcedon II: The Biblical References.