

Significant Dates In Church History

By A Catholic Historian.

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FIRST CENTURY.

30 — Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, birthday of the Catholic Church. St. Peter preached to Jews at Jerusalem; 3,000 became converts.

33 — St. Stephen, deacon, stoned to death at Jerusalem; first martyr of the Church.

35-67 — St. Paul, formerly Saul, persecutor of Christians, converted and baptized, added to company of the Apostles. “The Apostle of the Gentiles” and New Testament author made missionary journeys to Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Corinth, perhaps even to Spain. Beheaded at Rome, circa 67.

39 — Cornelius became the first Gentile convert; baptized by St. Peter.

42 — Herod Agrippa persecuted Christians in the Holy Land. St. James the Greater beheaded, first Apostle to die; St. Peter imprisoned but miraculously released; many Christians fled to Antioch and elsewhere. At Antioch the followers of Christ were first called Christians.

42-67 — St. Peter arrived at Rome, circa 42, established his see there; Rome thus became the seat of the papacy. “The Prince of the Apostles” left Rome for a time, did missionary work in the Holy Land, presided over the Council of Jerusalem; returned to Rome and was martyred there, circa 67.

49 — Christians at Rome, considered members of a Jewish sect, suffered because of the decree of Claudius which forbade Jewish worship there.

51 — The Council of Jerusalem, in which the Apostles participated under the presidency of St. Peter, decreed that circumcision and the observance of various Mosaic prescriptions were not necessary for converts. The decree was issued to oppose the error of Judaizers who contended that observance of the Mosaic Law in its entirety was essential for salvation.

64 — Nero set fire to Rome and accused the Christians there for the crime, thus beginning the era of great Roman persecutions. Sts. Peter and Paul were casualties of this persecution.

70 — Titus destroyed Jerusalem.

88-97 — Pontificate of St. Clement I, first of the Apostolic Fathers, third successor of St. Peter as pope. His letter to the Church at Corinth, concerning a schism there, gave clear evidence of the primacy of the See of Rome.

95 — Domitian persecuted Christians, chiefly at Rome.

Circa 100 — St. John, last of the Apostles, died at Ephesus. With his death, the Deposit of Faith (revelation through the inspired works of the Old and New Testaments and Tradition) was complete.

SECOND CENTURY.

Circa 107 — St. Ignatius of Antioch martyred at Rome. First to use in his writings the expression, “The Catholic Church”.

112 — Rescript to Pliny. The emperor Trajan instructed Pliny, governor of Bithynia, not to search for Christians but to punish them if they were publicly denounced and refused to adore the gods. The rescript set a pattern for Roman magistrates.

117-138 — Persecution under Hadrian. Many Acts of Martyrs date from this period.

Circa 125 — Spread of Gnosticism. (Heresy)

Circa 155 — St. Polycarp martyred; Bishop of Smyrna and disciple of St. John the Evangelist.

Circa 156 — Beginning of Montanism (heresy).

161-180 — Reign of Marcus Aurelius. His persecution more violent than those of his predecessors.

165 — St. Justin martyred at Rome; leading apologist.

Circa 180 — St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, “Father of Catholic Theology”, wrote “Adversus Haereses” (Against the Heresies); stated that the teaching and tradition of the Roman See is the standard for belief. Disciple of St Polycarp.

196 — Easter Controversy. (What date should Catholics celebrate Easter?)

The Didache (The Teachings of the Apostles) was written in the second century; important record of Christian belief, practice and government in first century.

Latin was introduced in the West as a liturgical language.

The Catechetical School of Alexandria increased in importance.

THIRD CENTURY.

202 — Persecution under Septimus Severus, who wanted to establish one common religion in the Empire.

206 — Tertullian, a convert since 197, joined the heretical Montanists; charged that Pope St. Callistus was too lenient in readmitting to the Church persons guilty of certain grave sins. Died in 230. Before joining the Montanists, was the first great ecclesiastical writer in Latin.

215 — Death of Clement of Alexandria; teacher of Origen and a founding father of the School of Alexandria.

217-235 — St. Hippolytus, the first antipope; reconciled to Church while in prison during persecution in 235. (Ecclesiastical writer.)

232 – 254 — Origen established School of Caesarea after being deposed in 231 as head of the School of Alexandria. Died in 254; Voluminous writer and scholar, one of the founders of systematic theology; exerted wide influence for many years.

Circa 242 — The beginning of Manichaeism in Babylonia, Persia.

249-251 — Persecution under Decius. Many of those who denied their Faith (Lapsi) sought readmission to the Church at the end of the persecution In 251. Pope St. Cornelius had important correspondence with Bishop St. Cyprian on the subject: Lapsi were to be readmitted after suitable penance. The letters gave evidence of the primacy of Rome.

250-300 — Neo-Platonism (philosophy) of Plotinus and Porphyry gained followers.

251 — Pope St. Stephen upheld the validity of baptism administered by heretics. Controversy on this subject was a disciplinary matter, and involved St. Cyprian.

257 — Persecution under Valerian, who attempted to destroy the Church as a social structure. St. Cyprian martyred 258. Pope St Stephen martyred.

Circa 260 — St. Lucian founded the exegetical (Bible) School of Antioch.

Circa 260 — Pope St Dionysius joined by Bishop St Dionysius of Alexandria condemned the teachings of Sabellius and the Marcionites.

Circa 260 — St. Paul of Thebes became first Christian hermit.

261 — Gallienus issued an edict of toleration which ended general persecution for nearly 40 years.

Circa 266 — Sabellianism condemned and Paul of Samosata deposed.

292 — Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into East and West. The division emphasized political, cultural and other differences between the two parts of the Empire. Prestige of Rome began to decline.

FOURTH CENTURY.

Circa 303 — The Council of Elvira in Spain legislated regarding clerical celibacy; declared the indissolubility of marriage as the traditional teaching of Christ and his Church.

303 — Persecution under Diocletian, at the urging of Galerius; ended in West in 306, continued for 10 years in East; particularly violent in 304.

305 — St. Anthony of Heracles established an eremitical foundation near the Red Sea, in Egypt.

310 — St. Hilarion made a similar establishment in Palestine.

311 — An edict of toleration issued by Galerius at the urging of Constantine and Licinius officially ended persecution; some persecution continued in the East.

313 — The Edict of Milan issued by Constantine and Licinius recognized Christianity as a lawful religion and the legal freedom of all religions; provided that the Church was to be compensated for losses sustained in the persecutions.

314 — The Council of Arles condemned Donatism in Africa, declared that baptism by heretics is valid.

318 — St. Pachomius established the first foundation of the cenobitic (common) life, as compared with the solitary (eremitical) life of hermits in Upper Egypt

325 — The First General (Ecumenical) Council at Nicaea condemned Arianism and formulated the Nicene Creed.

337 — Baptism and death of Constantine.

Circa 342 — Beginning of 40 years persecution in Persia.

343-4 — Council of Sardica reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, declared that bishops had the right of appeal to Rome as the highest authority in the Church.

361-3 — Emperor Julian the Apostate tried to restore paganism as the state religion campaigned against the Church by persecution, legal and other measures.

Circa 365 — Persecution under Valens in the East.

374 — At the Council of Rome, Pope St. Damasus published the list (Canon) of the inspired works of the Old and New Testaments (confirming some earlier decisions).

Circa 376 — Beginning of barbarian invasions in the West.

379 — Death of St. Basil, the “Father of Monasticism” in the East. His writings contributed greatly to the development of rules for the religious life.

381 — The Second General (Ecumenical) Council of Constantinople condemned Arians, Semi-Arians and Macedonians; reaffirmed the Nicene Creed.

382-circa 406. — St. Jerome translated the Old and New Testaments into Latin; his work is called the Vulgate version of the Scriptures.

396 — St. Augustine became Bishop of Hippo in Africa.

397 — Council of Carthage.

397 — Death of St. Ambrose of Milan.

FIFTH CENTURY.

410 — Visigoths sacked Rome.

411 — Donatism was condemned, again, by a council at Carthage.

415 — St. Augustine refuted the Pelagians, who discounted and denied the necessity of grace for salvation.

430 — St. Augustine died.

431 — The Third General (Ecumenical) Council of Ephesus condemned Nestorius, who denied that Mary was the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity made Man; issued a final condemnation of Pelagianism.

432 — St. Patrick arrived in Ireland. By the time of his death in 461 most of the country had been converted, monasteries founded and the hierarchy established.

438 — The Theodosian Code, a compilation of decrees for the Empire, was issued by the emperor Theodosius. It had great influence on subsequent civil and ecclesiastical law.

444 — St. Cyril of Alexandria died.

449 — The “Robber” Council of Ephesus, which had no ecclesiastical authority, declared itself in favour of the heretical teachings of Eutyches; he contended that Christ had only one nature (Monophysitism).

451 — The Fourth General (Ecumenical) Council of Chalcedon condemned Monophysitism (Eutychianism) — i.e. the error stated in the previous paragraph. Pope St. Leo I, the Great refused to approve Canon 28 issued by the Council; this canon falsely asserted that the primacy of Rome was based on political position.

452 — Pope St. Leo the Great persuaded Attila the Hun to spare Rome.

455 — Vandals sacked Rome. The decline of Imperial Rome, already underway, dates approximately from this time.

494 — Pope St. Gelasius I declared in a letter to Emperor Anastasius that the pope had power and authority over the emperor in spiritual matters. The letter is an important document regarding the concept of papal authority.

496 — Clovis, King of the Franks, was converted, and became the defender of Christianity in the West. The Franks became a Catholic people.

SIXTH CENTURY.

520 and later — Irish monasticism flourished; monasteries were training places for missionaries, and centres of study where scholars were developed and manuscripts of importance preserved and copied for posterity.

529 — The Second Council at Orange condemned Semi-Pelagianism. St. Benedict founded the Monastery of Monte Cassino. A few years before his death in 543 he wrote the monastic rule which exercised tremendous influence on the future of the religious life. He is the “Father of Monasticism” in the West.

533 — John II became the first pope to change his name. The practice of changing the name, however, did not become general until the time of Sergius IV (1009).

533-534 — Emperor Justinian promulgated the “Corpus Juris Civilis” for the Roman world; it influenced subsequent civil and ecclesiastical law.

Circa 545 — Dionysius Exiguus died; he introduced the division of history into periods before and after Christ — B.C., and A.D. His calculations were at least four years in error (late).

553 — The Fifth General (Ecumenical) Council (Constantinople II) condemned the “Three Chapters”, writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyprus and Ibas of Edessa, which contained Nestorian errors.

585 — St. Columban founded the influential monastic school at the Luxeuil Abbey in Frankish territory. He died in 615.

589 — The Council of Toledo was held in Spain. The Visigoths renounced Arianism, and St. Leander successfully began the (re-)organization of the Church in Spain.

590-604 — Pontificate of Pope St. Gregory I, the Great. He initiated liturgical and disciplinary reforms, enforced clerical celibacy, upheld the prerogatives of the Holy See. Gregorian Chant is named in his honour.

596 — Pope St. Gregory I, the Great sent St. Augustine of Canterbury and 40 monks as missionaries to England.

597 — St. Columba (Columcille) died. He founded the important monastery at Iona in Scotland, established schools, and did notable missionary work in Scotland. By the end of the century, monasteries of nuns were common; Western monasticism was flourishing, monasticism in the East, under the influence of Monophysitism and other evils, was losing its vigour.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

610-633 — Mohammed, born circa 570, claimed divine delegation to establish a religion for the Arabs. First taught openly in 613; was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina (Hegira) in 622; thereafter spread Mohammedanism (which he called Islam – submission to God) by the sword; died in 632. By the end of the century Mohammedanism claimed almost the entire southern Mediterranean area. Their sacred book is the Koran, substantially the work of Mohammed; 622 is the Year 1 of the Mohammedan or Moslem era.

613 — St. Columban established the influential Monastery of Bobbio in Northern Italy.

629 — Emperor Heraclius recovered the True Cross from the Persians.

636 — St. Isidore of Seville, “the most learned man of his day” died.

649 — A Lateran Council condemned two erroneous formulas (“Ecthesis” and “Type”) issued by emperors Heraclius and Constans II as means of reconciling Monophysites with the Church (but which lead to the heresy of the Monothelites).

664 — Actions of the Synod of Whitby advanced the adoption of Roman usages in England, especially regarding the date for the observance of Easter.

680-681 — The Sixth General (Ecumenical) Council, Constantinople III, condemned the error of the Monothelites, who contended that there was only one will, the divine, in Christ. The Council declared that Christ had a human will and a divine will. During the century, the monastic influence of Ireland and England increased in Western Europe; schools and learning in general declined; regulations regarding clerical celibacy became more strict in the East.

EIGHTH CENTURY.

711 — The Moslems began their conquest of Spain.

723 — St. Winfrid, “Apostle of Germany”, became Bishop (St.) Boniface.

726 — Eastern Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian, issued an edict which declared that the veneration of images, pictures and relics was idolatrous, and ordered their removal from churches. This was the error of Iconoclasm, or image-breaking.

727 — A synod at Rome declared that the veneration of images was in accordance with Catholic tradition. Pope Gregory III condemned Iconoclasm in 731.

731 — Venerable (St.) Bede issued his “Ecclesiastical History of the English People”.

732 — Charles Martel defeated the Moorish Moslems at Poitiers, thus halting any farther advance by them in the West.

744 — The Monastery of Fulda was established by St. Sturm, a disciple of St. Boniface.

Circa 750 — St. John Damascene, last of the Greek Fathers of the Church, died.

754 — A council of bishops at Hieria endorsed Iconoclast errors. This council and its actions were condemned by the Lateran Synod of 769.

754 — Pope Stephen III crowned Pepin ruler of the Franks. Pepin twice invaded Italy, in 754 and 756, to defend the Pope against the Lombards. His land grants to the papacy, called the Donation of Pepin, were later extended by Charlemagne, King of the Franks (773) and formed part of the States of the Church.

Circa 755 — St. Boniface (originally Winfrid) was martyred. Called the “Apostle of Germany” for his missionary work and organization of the hierarchy there.

781 — Alcuin was chosen by Charlemagne to organize the Palace School, which became a centre of intellectual leadership.

787 — The Seventh General (Ecumenical) Council (Nicaea II), condemned Iconoclasm and Adoptionism. Adoptionists contended that Christ was not the Son of God by nature but by adoption; the error was condemned by Pope Adrian I in 785 and again in 794, and by several councils.

792 — A council at Ratisbon condemned Adoptionism. The famous Book of Kells, “The Great Gospel of Columcille”, dates from the early eighth or late seventh century.

NINTH CENTURY.

800 — Charlemagne was crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day.

800 — Egbert became King of West Saxons unified England, strengthened See of Canterbury.

813 — Emperor Leo V, the Armenian, revived the Iconoclast heresy in the East and persecuted Catholics holding to the true belief in reference to the veneration of images. His successor, Michael II (820-829), continued Leo’s policies.

814 — Charlemagne died.

842 — A Synod at Constantinople countered Iconoclasm by asserting the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787).

843 — The Treaty of Verdun split the Frankish kingdom among Charlemagne’s three grandsons.

844 — A Eucharistic controversy involving the works of Paschasius Radbertus, Ratramnus and Rabanus Maurus helped to formulate theological terminology regarding the doctrine of the Real Presence.

846 — The Moslems invaded Italy, attacked Rome.

848 — The Council of Mains condemned Gottschalk for heretical teaching regarding predestination. He was also condemned by the Council of Quierzy in 853.

857 — Photius was illegally appointed Patriarch of Constantinople after the deposition of (St.) Ignatius, the legitimate incumbent. Thus began the Photian Schism, which was condemned by the Roman Synod of 863 and the Eighth General (Ecumenical) Council in 869.

865 — St. Ansgar, (Oscar) “Apostle of Scandinavia,” died.

868 — Sts. Cyril (died 869) and Methodius (died 885) were consecrated bishops. The “Apostles of the Slavs” devised the Slavonic alphabet and translated the Gospels and liturgy.

869 — The Eighth General (Ecumenical) Council (Constantinople IV), condemned Iconoclasm, deposed Photius and restored (St.) Ignatius to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

871-circa 900 — Reign of Alfred the Great the only English king ever anointed by the pope at Rome.

TENTH CENTURY.

910 — William, Duke of Aquitaine, founded the Benedictine Abbey of Cluny, which became a centre of monastic and ecclesiastical reform.

911 — Catholicism began in Normandy, following the baptism of the Norman (Viking) leader Rollo.

915 — Pope John X led the expulsion of Moslems from northern Italy.

955 — St. Olga, of the Russian and Ukrainian royal family, was baptized.

962 — Otto I, the Great, crowned by Pope John XII, revived Charlemagne's kingdom, which became the Holy Roman Empire. The sovereignty of Germany and Italy was thus vested in a German prince.

966 — Mieszko, first of a royal line in Poland, was baptized; he brought Latin Christianity to Poland.

989 — (St.) Vladimir, ruler of Russia, was baptized; Russia was subsequently Christianized by Greek missionaries.

993 — John XV was the first pope to decree the official canonization of a saint (St. Ulrich) for the universal Church. (From the very beginning, the Church venerated saints; public official honour always required the recognition of heroic sanctity or martyrdom, and the approval of the bishop of the place.)

997 — St. Stephen became ruler of Hungary. He assisted in organizing the hierarchy and establishing Latin Christianity.

999-1003 — Pontificate of Sylvester II (Gerbert of Aquitaine), a Benedictine monk and the first French pope.

ELEVENTH CENTURY.

1012 — St. Romuald founded the Camaldolese Hermits.

1025 — The Council of Arras, and other councils, later, condemned the Catharists (Neo-Manicheans, Albigenses).

1027 — The Council of Elne (or Toulouges) proclaimed the Truce of God as a means of stemming violence. The Truce involved armistice periods, which were later extended.

1038 — St. John Gualbert founded the Vallumbrosan order.

1047 — Pope Clement II died; the only pope ever buried in Germany.

1049-54 — Pontificate of St. Leo IX, who inaugurated a reform movement of wide and lasting influence. His, and later, reforms of the period centred around papal elections, clerical celibacy, control of ecclesiastical offices, and other matters including lay investiture.

1054 — Michael Caerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, quarreled with the pope, disputed usages of the Latin Church; refused to obey, and led most of the Eastern churches (called Orthodox) into schism.

1059 — The Lateran Council of this year (not a General Council) issued new legislation regarding papal elections. The voting power was entrusted to the Roman cardinals.

1066 — St. Edward the Confessor died; established Westminster Abbey.

1066 — William the Conqueror invaded England; later he opposed the independence of the Church in England from secular control.

1073-85 — Pontificate of St. Gregory VII (Hildebrand, experienced advisor of several popes). He continued programmes of reform and took measures against lay investiture. He opposed Henry IV, the German Emperor, and even absolved Henry's subjects from allegiance to him; this was the first case of the deposition of an emperor by a pope.

1077 — Lay investiture and pope-emperor relations reached a climax when Henry IV (1056-1105) submitted to Gregory VII at Canossa. Henry later repudiated this action and finally abdicated.

1079 — The Council of Rome condemned Eucharistic errors of Berengarius who retracted.

1084 — St. Bruno founded the Carthusians.

1093 — St. Robert founded the Cistercians.

1095-99 — The Council of Clermont inaugurated the First Crusade. The Crusaders took Jerusalem in 1099.

TWELFTH CENTURY.

1103 — Beginnings of the influential abbey and school of St. Victor.

1111 — As a solution to the problem of investiture of prelates, Pope Paschal II proposed that prelates should surrender feudal lord rights and that the emperor should give up rights to investiture.

1115 — St. Bernard established the Abbey of Clairvaux and inaugurated the 'Cistercian reform of Europe'.

1115 — St. Anselm of Canterbury died; an important figure in the development of Scholastic philosophy and theology.

1118 — Christian forces captured Saragossa in Spain; Moslem power began to decline in that country.

Circa 1120 — Pope Callistus II issued the Bull "Sicut Judaeis"; in defence of the rights of Jews. The measure was republished by four other popes during the century.

1120 — Beginnings of the Norbertines or Premonstratensians; the first order was for men, the second for women, the third for lay persons. (St Norbert was the founder.)

The Norbertine Third Order was the first in the history of the Church.

1122 — The Concordat of Worms (Pactum Callixtinum) contained these provisions regarding the investiture of prelates: the emperor could invest prelates with the symbol of temporal authority but had no right to invest them with symbols of spiritual authority (since ecclesiastical jurisdiction was from the Church alone); the emperor was not to interfere in papal elections. This was the first concordat in history. (Pope Callistus II.)

1123 — The Ninth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lateran I) at Rome endorsed provisions of the Concordat of Worms. This was the first General Council in the West.

1139 — The Tenth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lateran II) at Rome adopted measures against the schism organized by anti-pope Anacletus, against the followers of Arnold of Brescia and Peter of Bruys, and issued disciplinary decrees.

1140 — St. Bernard met Abelard in debate at the Council of Sens. Abelard was first condemned in 1121 for rationalistic tendencies. He died in 1142 at the Abbey of Cluny where he had retired after being ordered by Innocent II to stop teaching.

1147 — The Second Crusade, preached by St. Bernard, started for the Holy Land; ended unsuccessfully at Damascus.

1148 — The Synod of Rheims enacted stricter disciplinary decrees for religious communities of women.

1152 — The Synod of Kells reorganized the Church in Ireland.

1153 — St. Bernard died; outstanding figure of the century, founder of mediaeval mysticism.

1154-55 — A community of monks founded by St. Merthold (or Bertold) marked the beginning of the Carmelite Order in its medieval form.

1160 — Gratian died; compiled a Decretum which became a basic text of Canon Law.

Circa 1160 — Peter Lombard died; compiled the “Four Books of Sentences”, a standard text until the time of St. Thomas Aquinas.

1170 — St. Thomas a’Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had clashed with Henry II regarding clerical immunities, was murdered in his cathedral.

1171 — Pope Alexander III reserved the process of canonization to the Holy See.

1179 — The Eleventh General (Ecumenical) Council (Lateran III) at Rome enacted measures against the Waldenses and Albigensians; provided that popes should be elected by a two-third vote of cardinals present.

1184 — The Waldenses, and others, were excommunicated as heretics by Pope Lucius III.

1192 — The Third Crusade ended in a truce; Moslems held Jerusalem but granted permission for Christian pilgrims to visit the Holy Sepulchre and other Holy Places.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

1204 — Fourth Crusaders sacked Constantinople; Latin Empire of East begun; leaders of the Crusade excommunicated by Pope Innocent III.

1205-13 — Papal struggle with King John of England over the election of the Archbishop of Canterbury; England under Interdict for five years.

1208 — Innocent III called for a crusade against the Albigensians. This was the first crusade in a Christian country.

1209 — Verbal approval given by Innocent III for foundation of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) by St. Francis of Assisi.

1213 — Poor Clares founded - by St Clare and St Francis.

1212 — Children’s Crusade a complete failure.

1215 — The Twelfth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lateran IV) at Rome enacted 70 reform decrees, ordered annual confession to the parish priest and Easter Communion, issued a creed against the Albigensians, made first official use of the term “transubstantiation”.

1216 — Death of Pope Innocent III, who raised the papacy to a new height of prestige.

1216 — St. Dominic received formal papal approval for his new Order of Preachers (Dominicans). The famous Portiuncula Indulgence was granted by the Holy See at the request of St. Francis of Assisi.

1221 — Death of St. Dominic.

1221 — Founding of Third Order of St. Francis, for lay people in the world.

1226 — Death of St. Francis of Assisi, popularizer of the Christmas Crib custom (1223); received the Stigmata in 1224.

1227 — Death of Pope Honorius III, who had exerted great influence in moral reform and education.

1228-29 — Peaceful negotiations during the Fifth Crusade secured possession of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

1231 — Death of St. Anthony of Padua, famous Franciscan preacher and miracle-worker.

1233 — Papal Inquisition instituted to oppose heresy.

1244 — Turks recaptured Jerusalem.

1245 — The Thirteenth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lyons I) considered measures against Frederick II, the German Emperor.

1247 — Carmelite Order received preliminary approval.

1248-54 — Sixth Crusade, (to Egypt) a failure.

1250 — Death of Emperor Frederick II, who had been hostile to the Holy See for many years.

1253 — Death of St. Clare of Assisi.

1261 — End of the Latin Empire in the East.

1264 — St. Thomas Aquinas composed the Mass and Office for the new feast of Corpus Christi.

1270 — Death of St. Louis IX, King of France (while on crusade); France at this time was the strongest nation in Europe.

1270 — Beginning of papal decline. Difficulties with Charles of Anjou.

1274 — Died: St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church; author of the “Summa Theologica”; St. Bonaventure, Doctor of the Church, Franciscan theologian and author.

1274 — Fourteenth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lyons II) effected temporary reunion with the Eastern Church.

1280 — Pope Nicholas III died; made the Breviary official for the Roman Church; it had been edited and published in a single book by Innocent III.

1281 — The excommunication of the Greek Emperor by Pope Martin IV ruptured the union effected with the Eastern Church in 1274.

1296 — Pope Boniface VIII issued the Bull “Clericis Laicos” which forbade the clergy to submit to lay taxation.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

1300 — Jubilee observed at Rome; attended by thousands from all over Christendom.

1301 — Pope Boniface VIII withdrew privileges of the French King, Philip the Fair, who had arrested a bishop and refused his appeal for trial at Rome.

1302 — Boniface VIII issued “Unam Sanctam” which stressed the primacy of the spiritual over temporal power.

1309 — Pope Clement V began the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy, establishing residence at Avignon; beginning of the line of French popes.

1311-12 — Fifteenth General (Ecumenical) Council of Vienne condemned a number of errors, suppressed the Knights Templar, sought aid for the Holy Land.

1321 — Dante died; completed his “Divine Comedy” the previous year.

1323 — Beginning of the struggle between Pope John XXII and the emperor, Louis of Bavaria, during which Louis was excommunicated and the pope called a heretic by Louis’ followers.

1327 — “Defensor Pacis” by Marsilius of Padua was condemned; it upheld the Conciliarist Theory, i.e., that a general council was superior to the pope, thereby threatening the primacy of the pope.

1328 — After invading Italy and being accepted by the people as emperor, Louis deposed John XXII and set up an antipope. Nicholas V. the antipope, later sought reconciliation with the Holy See.

1337 — Beginning of the Hundred Years’ War.

1338 — In the Declaration of Rense, the German electors stated that the pope had only the right to formal coronation of the emperor at Rome.

1348 — The Black Death spread throughout Europe, taking a terrible toll of life; a shortage of priests was one of the effects.

1351-53 — New laws in England were designed to limit papal powers there.

1356 — The “Golden Bull” of Emperor Charles IV renewed the Declaration of Rense, eliminated papal rights in election of the emperor.

1364-65 — Universities of Cracow and Vienna established.

1367 — Pope Urban V, nearly 60 years after the residency of the papacy had begun at Avignon, went to Rome.

1370 — Urban V returned to Avignon; Rome was in a state of anarchy.

1374 — Petrarch died.

1377 — Partly due to the influence of St. Catherine of Siena, Gregory XI ended the Avignon residency of the popes and moved to Rome. Italy was in a disturbed condition; Florence was placed under interdict.

1378 — Wycliff denied the doctrine of transubstantiation.

1378 — Beginning of the Western Schism (more than one claimant to the Papal throne).

1397 — The Turks besieged Constantinople.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

1409 — The Council of Pisa, which had no authority for its action, chose a third claimant to the papacy after stating that Gregory XII and Benedict XIII were schismatics, thus complicating the Western Schism. The seeds of the Conciliar Movement began to develop from such action on the part of the cardinals.

1414-18 — The Sixteenth General (Ecumenical) Council of Constance marked the end of the Western Schism, condemned Wycliff and Hus, issued decrees for ecclesiastical reform. Martin V began an era of concordats made necessary by the rise of nationalism, which opposed the supernational character and mission of the Church. Agreements with states were necessary to safeguard the Church's rights and those of the faithful.

1431 — St. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

1431 — The Council of Basle was called. The supreme power of the pope, which had previously been questioned by such writers as Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham, was challenged; such an attitude had grown as a result of the Great Schism. Extreme advocates of the Consular Theory argued that, when the need arose, a general council could depose the pope.

1438 — The French National Council at Bourges issued the Pragmatic Sanctions which affirmed Gallican liberties and limited the rights and powers of the Holy See.

1438-43 — The Seventeenth General (Ecumenical) Council of Florence reaffirmed the primacy of the pope, thus dealing a death blow to the Conciliar Movement; attempted to effect union with the Greeks and other Oriental sects, and to establish peace among Christian princes.

1453 — Fall of Constantinople and the renewal of schism on the part of the Orthodox churches of the East. Henceforth the popes concentrated on stopping the Turkish menace from the East; their pleas for crusades by the West generally had disappointing results.

1456 — First printed edition of the Bible by movable type.

1476 — Permission was granted for establishment of the Inquisition in Spain. Sixtus IV proclaimed that the feast of the Immaculate Conception should be observed by the universal Church on December 8.

1492 — Discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus.

1493 — Alexander VI issued a "Bull of Demarcation" which determined what might be called spheres of influence for the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World; it provided for the propagation of the Christian Faith in the newly discovered territories.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

1512-17 — The Eighteenth General (Ecumenical) Council (Lateran V) defined the relation of the pope to general councils, condemned errors regarding the nature of the human soul, called for a crusade against the Turks.

1517 — Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses at Wittenberg; among other things they contained an attack on the doctrine of indulgences.

1520 — Luther published his “Address of the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate”.

The papal Bull “Exsurge Domine” demanded his recantation. Luther burned the Bull publicly at Wittenberg in December; he was formally excommunicated the following month.

1524 — Beginning of the Peasant Wars. Lutheranism became associated with strong German princes, from whom it gained political support.

1528 — The Capuchin Order, a branch of the Franciscans, became leaders in the Counter-Reformation.

1529 — The Catholic Church was abolished in Sweden by royal decree. State Lutheran Church replaces it.

1531 — Protestant princes formed the Schmalkaldic League; soon all of Northern Germany was united in Lutheranism.

1531 — Zwingli died; leader of Reformation in Switzerland.

1535 — Henry VIII, excommunicated in 1533, proclaimed the Act of Supremacy and the Oath of Succession. St. John Fisher of Rochester and St. Thomas More refused to recognize the claims of Henry VIII and were martyred. The confiscation of monasteries in England followed.

1536 — John Calvin published “Institutes of the Christian Religion”, and took up the work started by Zwingli in Switzerland.

1546 — The constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) were approved; St. Ignatius Loyola was their founder.

1541 — Geneva became the Protestant Rome, the stronghold of Protestant thought.

1542 — The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office was established and became a leading agency in the Counter-Reformation.

1545-63 — The Nineteenth General (Ecumenical) Council of Trent issued canons and decrees which stated Catholic belief on matters of faith and practice which were under attack by the “Reformers”, and mobilized the Counter-Reformation.

1546 — Legal Measures in Denmark virtually crushed Catholicism there; Norway and Iceland were gradually forced to adopt Lutheranism.

1546 — Martin Luther died.

1549 — First “Book of Common Prayer” published in England; substituted Communion Service in English for the Mass, included errors about the Holy Eucharist.

1552 — St. Francis Xavier, Jesuit, died; one of the greatest missionaries in Church history.

1553-58 — During her reign as Queen of England, Mary Tudor took counter-measures against the actions of Henry VIII.

1555 — Provisions of the Treaty of Augsburg stated that rulers of the German states had the right to decide what religion should be professed in their territories.

1558 — Matthew Parker was invalidly “consecrated” Archbishop of Canterbury; all Anglican orders thereafter were invalid.

1560 — Legal measures in Scotland destroyed the Catholic Church there; John Knox was a leading organizer of the Presbyterian Church there.

1563 — Adoption of the 39 Articles and re-passage of the Act of Supremacy and the Oath of Succession during the reign of Elizabeth, Queen of England; the Church of England came into full being as an heretical body.

1564 — John Calvin died.

1567 — The errors of Baius were condemned; his teaching would have compromised with Lutheranism on the nature of original sin, grace and freedom of will.

1570 — Queen Elizabeth of England was excommunicated.

1571 — Defeat of the Turkish Armada at Lepanto staved off invasion in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

1571 — The Sacred Congregation of the Index was established to combat anti-Catholic writings.

1572 — ‘St. Bartholomew’s Eve massacre’ of Huguenots (Protestants) in various places in France was a political manoeuvre of Catherine of Medici.

1579 — The Union of Utrecht formed the alliance of the northern provinces of the Netherlands, which became the Dutch Republic (in opposition to the Spanish throne), and made Protestantism the state religion.

1582 — The Gregorian Calendar was put into effect and was eventually adopted by most countries of the world.

1583 — Death of St. Teresa of Avila.

1587 — St. Robert Bellarmine published “De Controversiis”, the greatest literary defence of the Faith issued during the Counter-Reformation period.

1593 — Catholics were banished from England.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

1601 — Matteo Ricci (died 1610), Jesuit missionary, settled at Peking, China.

1605 — A few Catholic fanatics conspired in the Gunpowder Plot to blow up King James I of England and the houses of Parliament. The plot was discovered and the conspirators condemned to death. One of the results was the Oath of Allegiance, which was condemned by Pope Paul V in 1606 as violating Catholic consciences.

1610 — St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal founded the first community of Visitation Nuns.

1611 — Founding of the Oratorians by St. Philip Neri.

1613-42 — The Galileo Controversy; Galileo died at peace with the Church.

1618-48 — Thirty Years War; ended by the Treaty of Westphalia, which confirmed the Peace of Augsburg, of 1555 which stated that rulers of the German states had the right to decide what religion should be professed in their territories.

1625 — Founding of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) by St. Vincent de Paul. He founded the Sisters of Charity in 1633.

1642 — Sulpicians founded by Jacques Olier.

1648 — Bolland, a Belgian Jesuit, began publication of the “Acta Sanctorum”, a critical work on lives of the saints; continued after his death by the Society of the Bollandists.

1649 — Oliver Cromwell, effective ruler of England, invaded Ireland and began a severe persecution of Catholics.

1653 — Pope Innocent X condemned the errors of Jansen. Jansen’s “Augustinus”, published in 1640, imputed erroneous ideas on grace to St. Augustine.

1657 — Blaise Pascal’s “Provincial Letters” in favour of Jansenism, were condemned.

1668 — The “Clementine Peace” of Pope Clement IX quieted the Jansenist controversy for 30 years.

1673 — The Test Act in England barred all Catholics from public office if they would not deny the doctrine of transubstantiation and receive Communion in the Anglican Church.

1678 — The “Popish Plot” resulted in the deaths of many English Catholics; Titus Oates, a discredited Anglican minister, falsely claimed that Catholics planned to assassinate King Charles II, land a French army, burn London, and place the government in the hands of the Jesuits.

1683 — Bossuet drew up the “Four Articles of 1682” which expressed fundamental ideas of Gallicanism: the pope had no authority over princes in temporal affairs, the power of the pope was limited by general councils, the power of the pope was limited by customs and practices of the Gallican (French) Church, decisions of the pope were infallible only with consent of the Church. The tenets were condemned in 1690.

1687 — Quietism of Molinos was condemned by Pope Innocent XI; Molinos died repentant in 1696.

1688 — The Toleration Act granted a certain amount of freedom of worship to English dissenters, but intentionally excluded Catholics.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

1718 — Pope Clement XI issued the Bull “Unigenitus”, in which he condemned 101 Jansenistic propositions of Quesnel.

1713-74 — Catholics in Canada. The Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, ceded Newfoundland, Acadia and the Hudson Bay Territory to Great Britain and guaranteed freedom of religion to the almost entirely Catholic populations. In 1752, 7,000 Acadians were driven from their homes. In 1774 the Quebec Act gave legal rights to the Church in Canada.

1724 — Catholics persecuted in China.

1733 — St. Alphonsus Liguori founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists).

1738 — Pope Clement XII condemned Freemasonry in the bull “In Eminenti” forbidding Catholics to join the Freemasons under pain of excommunication. The condemnation and prohibition were repeated by Benedict XIV in 1751, and by later popes.

1741 — Papal approval was given to the Clerics Regular of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord (Passionists); the founder was St. Paul of the Cross.

1743 — Febronianism began in Germany with the publication of a book by John Nicholas von Hontheim, under the pseudonym Febronius, which was directed against papal authority. Febronianism was condemned in 1764, 1769 and 1775.

1759-73 — Suppression of the Jesuits. They were expelled from Portugal in 1759, from France in 1764, from Spain in 1767; false accusations and political intrigue were principal factors in these developments. Clement XIV in 1773 issued a “Brief of Suppression” which contained no criticism of the Society nor of its members. The Society was restored in 1814.

1778 — The Catholic Relief Act in England permitted Catholics to buy and inherit land, and abolished the penalty of life imprisonment for priests.

1780 — The beginnings of Josephism in Austria under Emperor Joseph II; an attempt to make the Church in Austria almost independent of the pope.

1788 — Proclamation of religious liberty in the United States.

1789-98 — The Church in France. French Revolution, 1789; secularization of Church property and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, 1790; persecution of priests, religious and laity who remained loyal to papal authority; Napoleon invaded the Papal States, 1796; persecution renewed from 1797-1799, and attempts were made to de-Christianize France and establish a new religion; in 1798 French troops occupied Rome and carried the pope away to France; Pius VI died at Valence in 1799.

1794 — Pope Pius VI condemned decrees of the Synod of Pistola, 1786, which favoured Jansenism and Gallicanism.

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

1802 — Concordat with France re-establishing and giving legal rights to the Church.

1808 — Papal States incorporated in Napoleonic Empire.

1809-14 — Exile and captivity of Pope Pius VII.

1814 — Fall of Napoleon; return of Pius VII to Rome. Restoration of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).

1817 — Concordats signed with German states, granting limited freedom of action to the Church.

1822 — Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith established.

1826 — Catholic Relief Act in England and Ireland removed some legal disabilities of Catholics.

1829 — Catholic Emancipation in Great Britain and Ireland.

1832 — Pope Gregory XVI issued the encyclical “Mirari Vos”, condemning the movement known as Catholic liberalism.

1833-45 — Development of the Oxford Movement which resulted in notable conversions in England, e.g. John Henry, later Cardinal, Newman in 1845 [now Blessed].

1833 — Founding of the Catholic University of Louvain.

1848 — Flight of Pope [Blessed] Pius IX from Rome to Gaeta. Communist “Manifesto” issued by Karl Marx.

1850 — Catholic hierarchy re-established in England.

1852 — Catholic universities founded at Dublin and Quebec (Laval – named after Blessed Francois de Laval who died in 1708, Canada’s first bishop).

1853 — Hierarchy re-established in Holland.

1854 — Proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

1858 — Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin to St. Bernadette at Lourdes.

1860 — Piedmontese began to occupy parts of the Papal States.

1864 — Pope [Blessed] Pius IX issued the “Syllabus” a systematic condemnation of modernistic errors.

1867 — Publication of the first volume of “Das Kapital” by Karl Marx; organization of the (Communist) First International.

1867 — Expropriation of Papal States completed.

1868 — Disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland.

1870 — The Twentieth General (Ecumenical) Council of the Vatican, opened the previous year, defined the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope. Formation of the “Old Catholics” who opposed the dogma of infallibility.

1871 — Establishment of the new German Empire and the beginning of the Kulturkampf, the persecution of Catholics in Germany. Development of anti-clericalism in France. Pope [Blessed] Pius IX made himself a virtual prisoner in the Vatican when recognition was not given to temporal possessions and papal sovereignty in Italy.

1873 — May Laws in Germany (anti-Catholic).

1878-1903 — Pontificate of Pope Leo XIII; promoted a revival of Scholastic philosophy; indicated proper approach to Scriptural study. Perhaps his best known encyclical is “Rerum Novarum”, dealing with conditions of the working classes and opposed to deceptive Communistic and Socialistic developments.

1881 — The first International Eucharistic Congress was held at Lille, France.

1889 — Catholic University of America founded at Washington, D.C.

TWENTIETH CENTURY.

1903-14 — Pontificate of St. Pius X. He began the codification of Canon Law, 1904; removed the ban against participation by Catholics in Italian national elections, 1905; issued decrees calling upon the faithful to receive Holy Communion frequently and daily, and stating that children should receive First Communion at the age of seven, 1905 and 1910, respectively; ordered the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for religious instruction in all parishes throughout the world, 1905; condemned Modernism in the decree “Lamentabili” and encyclical “Pascendi” 1907.

1903 — Expulsion of religious orders and congregations from France; confiscation of Church property, 1906.

1910 — Laws of separation in Portugal. Breaking of diplomatic relations between Spain and the Holy See.

1914-18 — World War I.

1914-23 — Pontificate of Benedict XV, who was concerned with minimizing the material and spiritual havoc of World War I; in 1917 he offered to act as mediator between the belligerent nations, but his pleas for settlement of the conflict went unheeded. In 1919 he issued the decree “Maximum Illud”, in which he urged the recruiting and training of native clergy in missionary lands.

1917 — Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima. Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the subsequent rise of Communism. New constitution in Mexico approved, giving the state control over religious worship; anti –Catholic persecution under way.

1918 — The new Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1917, became effective.

1922-38 — Pontificate of Pius XI. Concluded the Lateran Treaty, 1929, which settled the Roman Question and ended the voluntary imprisonment of popes in the Vatican since 1870; maintained the freedom and independence of Catholic Action in Italy, in the encyclical “Non Abbiamo Bisogno”, 1931 (and condemning Fascism); issued the encyclicals “Quadragesimo Anno”, developing the social teachings of Leo XIII in “Rerum Novarum”, and “Divini Redemptoris”, calling for social justice and condemning Communism, 1931 and 1937, respectively; condemned anti-Semitism, 1937 in encyclical Mit Brennender Sorge which condemns Nazi-ism.

1931 — Proclamation of the Spanish Republic and anti-Church measures by the government.

1933 — Rise of Hitler in Germany and subsequent persecution of Catholic opposition to racist and eugenic policies which reached a peak in 1940.

1936-38 — Persecution during the Spanish Civil War, in which some 30,000 priests and religious, and numerous lay persons, lost their lives.

1939-58 — Pontificate of [Venerable] Pius XII.

1939-45 — World War II.

1940-50 — Decade of Communist conquest in 13 countries resulting in conditions of persecution for a minimum of 60 million Catholics — as well as members of other faiths.

1940 — Mitigation of persecution in Mexico through non-enforcement of still existing laws.

1954 — Canonization of St. Pius X.

1957 — Attempt to begin national schismatic church in Red-controlled China.

1958-63 — Pontificate of [Blessed] John XXIII.

1959-61 — Fidel Castro's overthrow of Batista government in Cuba and campaign against the Church.

1962 — Opening on October 11 of the Second Vatican Council, the twenty-first such council in the history of the Church. [Council concluded in 1965. 16 documents were issued by this Council.]

1963 — Election and beginning of the reign of [Servant of God] Paul VI, 26th June, 1963, second session of Vatican Council is held. Constitution of Liturgy drawn up.

[1963-1978 — Pontificate of Servant of God Paul VI.

1978 — Pontificate of Servant of God John Paul I.

1978-2005 — Pontificate of Blessed John Paul II.

1983 — The new Code of Canon Law promulgated.

2005 — Election and beginning of the reign of Benedict XVI.]
