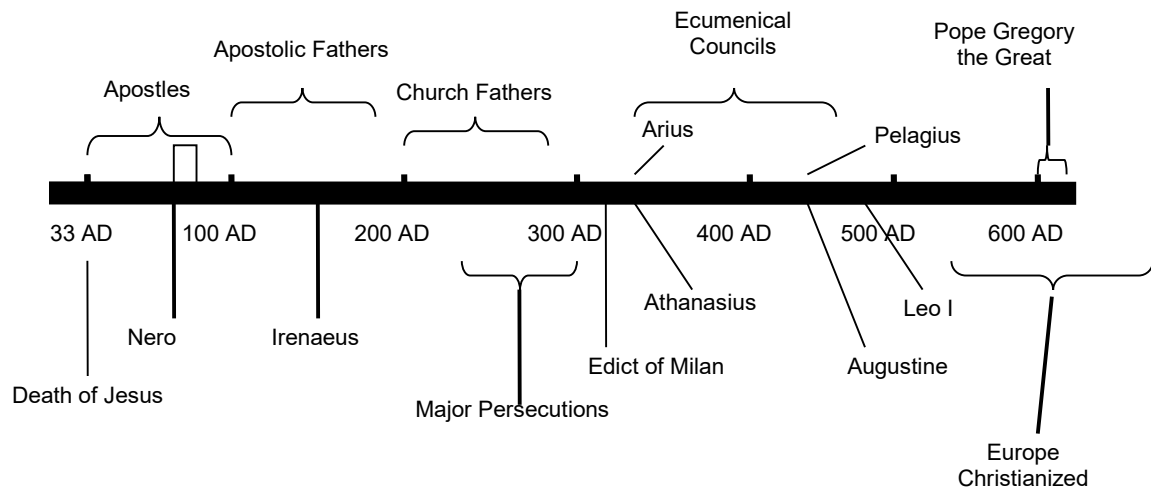


# Church History

The Roman Bishop becomes  
*Pontifex Maximus*  
Early Church Timeline



## Development of Papacy

- ✧ 1870 – First Vatican Council
  - ✧ Jesus Christ established the Papacy
  - ✧ Peter was the first Bishop of Rome
  - ✧ Peter's successor(s) bear spiritual authority (primacy) over the whole church
  - ✧ Denied by Eastern Orthodox, Protestants
- ✧ History
  - ✧ Indicates that concept was established by slow and painful stages
  - ✧ Leo was 1<sup>st</sup> to claim primacy based on biblical and theological reasons

## Terms

- ✧ **Pope** – (*papa*) – not a bad term
  - ✧ Expresses fatherly care that every Bishop is to make for his flock
- ✧ “Overseers” or “Bishops” - (*episkopos*)
  - ✧ elders ordained to serve as leaders in the various churches
- ✧ Priests – (from *presbyter*)
  - ✧ Usually served in smaller “country churches”
  - ✧ Supervised by the Bishops

- ✧ *Could administer the sacraments*

## Pope in Rome

- ✧ “Pope” became reserved for the Bishop of Rome in 6<sup>th</sup> Century
- ✧ **Early Church**
  - ✧ Always gave prominence to Rome
  - ✧ Capitol of Empire
  - ✧ Church was the largest and wealthiest
- ✧ **Mid 3<sup>rd</sup> Century -**
  - ✧ 30,000 members of church with 150 clerics
- ✧ **Ireanaeus-**
  - ✧ Emphasized Peter and Paul as founders
  - ✧ Important to refute Gnostics who claimed to get their doctrine straight from Jesus Christ

## Historical Development

- ✧ **Ireanaeus and Cyprian**
  - ✧ Acknowledged Bishop at Rome to be important
  - ✧ Felt free to disagree
- ✧ **3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Centuries – Development of Church Organization**
  - ✧ Authority of Church Councils
  - ✧ Authority of certain bishops above others
- ✧ Bishops of churches started by apostles
- ✧ Churches in larger city supervised churches in area around the large city

## Historical Development

- ✧ Church adopted the structure of the Empire
- ✧ Provincial capitol became the episcopal town (*see*)
- ✧ *Metropolitan bishops supervised bishops in the provinces*
- ✧ *Major regions had primary metropolitan city*
  - ✧ *Italy – Rome*
  - ✧ *North Africa – Carthage*
  - ✧ *Egypt – Alexandria*
  - ✧ *Syria – Antioch*

## 4<sup>th</sup> Century

- ✧ Local Councils began to convene to discuss issues

- ✧ Later General Councils began to determine the “Law of the Church”
- ✧ Rome's importance began to soar
- ✧ Nicaea
  - ✧ Recognized Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch as pre-eminant
  - ✧ Jerusalem was given honorary primacy
  - ✧ Policy of patriarchal administration was confirmed by the council

## Constantine

- ✧ 330 – A new factor
- ✧ Constantine moved his imperial residence to the ancient city of Byzantium
- ✧ Constantine's city (*polis*)
- ✧ *The importance of Rome began to decline*
- ✧ *Churches began to look to the Bishop of Constantinople for spiritual/doctrinal leadership*

## Emperor Theodosius

- ✧ Declared Christianity to be the religion of the state
- ✧ Paganism was forbidden
- ✧ 381 – Theodosius called a general Council
  - ✧ Made a personal appearance
  - ✧ Invited Eastern Bishops
  - ✧ Rome (Pope Damasus) did not send a representative
- ✧ Council of Constantinople
  - ✧ Purpose was to re-affirm the Nicene Creed
  - ✧ Also declared Bishop of Constantinople to be second only to Rome in pre-eminence)

## Aftermath from Constantinople

- ✧ Alexandria and Antioch objected
  - ✧ Lowered their historical importance
- ✧ Rome objected – Synod of Rome (382)
  - ✧ Rome's preeminence does not depend on a city of the Empire
  - ✧ It depends on Christ's commission (Matt 16:18-19)
- ✧ East – Importance grew with political influence
  - ✧ more “Church & State” became intertwined
- ✧ West

- ✧ The weaker the Roman Empire became – the more independent the Pope became
- ✧ more Rome's importance was argued from Scripture

## Damasus of Rome (366 - 384)

- ✧ Transition to a New Day for Old Rome
- ✧ Able to fuse old Roman civic and imperial pride with Christianity
- ✧ Noble basilicas dedicated to Peter and Paul
  - ✧ Built by Constantine to dedicate graves of the two saints
- ✧ Damasus –
  - ✧ “Although the East sent the apostles, yet because of the merit of their martyrdom, Rome has acquired a superior right to claim them as citizens.”

## Leo of Rome

- ✧ Nobleman from a region north of Rome
  - ✧ Sent to Gaul by Emperor to arbitrate a dispute
- ✧ Sermon on day of entrance to office
  - ✧ Extolled the “Glory of the blessed Apostle Peter. . . in whose chair his power lives on and his authority shines forth”
- ✧ Laid theoretical foundation for Papacy
  - ✧ Mt 16: 13 – 19 – “Upon this Rock. . . the keys to the kingdom. . .”
  - ✧ Lk 22: 31-32 – “Satan has demanded to sift you (Ya'll) as wheat, but I have prayed for you that you may . . . strengthen your brothers”
  - ✧ Jo 21: 15-17 – “Tend my sheep. . . Shepherd my flock”

## Leo of Rome

- ✧ Peter was the Rock for all Ages
- ✧ Christ promised to build his church upon Peter
- ✧ Therefore, the bishops of Rome are his successors in that authority
- ✧ Reversal of Constantine
  - ✧ Political pressure on Church to unify at the Council of Nicaea
- ✧ Leo establishes “Dynasty of Peter”

## Theological Difficulties

- ✧ Gospels make it clear that preeminence among Christ's followers
  - ✧ not according to the pattern of the princes of the world who exercise lordship and authority
- ✧ Peter was notoriously unstable

- ✧ Mt 16 – Get behind me, Satan
- ✧ Denial of Peter
- ✧ No scriptural linkage of Peter to Rome
  - ✧ Theory assumes that authority was granted to the Bishop of Rome, not to Peter personally

## **Historical Developments**

- ✧ Barbarian Attacks out of Gaul
- ✧ Imperial court looking for any authority to hold the Empire together
- ✧ Valentinian III
  - ✧ Issued an edict for Roman commander to compel attendance at papal court for any who refused to attend voluntarily
- ✧ Council of Chalcedon
  - ✧ Leo's Tome became the basis for the understanding of the dual-nature of Christ
  - ✧ “that was the faith of the Fathers, that was the faith of the Apostles. . . Peter has spoken through Leo”

## **Further Developments**

- ✧ Council of Chalcedon
  - ✧ Gave Bishop of Constantinople equal authority as the Bishop of Rome
  - ✧ Sole and independent leadership of the Eastern church by patriarch of Constantinople was confirmed
- ✧ Leo's representative protested
- ✧ The council would not alter its decision

## **Rome to Ruins**

- ✧ 452 – Attila the Hun advanced on Rome
- ✧ Leo was commissioned to plea for Rome
  - ✧ Attila agreed not to sack Rome
  - ✧ Even left Italy
- ✧ 455 – Vandals (Scandinavians who had settled in No Africa)
  - ✧ Roman troops mutinied, Emperor slain by own bodyguards
  - ✧ Leo again pleaded: Don't burn city, Have mercy, Restrain troops
- ✧ Gaiseric agreed to “only 14 days of looting”
  - ✧ Vandals systematically plundered Rome

## Rome to Ruins

- ✧ Thanksgiving
  - ✧ Rome not burned to the ground
  - ✧ Massacre avoided
  - ✧ Only a few Christian churches plundered
- ✧ Leo credited for saving Rome a 2<sup>nd</sup> time
- ✧ Had already assumed the old pagan title
- ✧ *Pontifex Maximus*
  - ✧ *The high priest of religion throughout the empire*
- ✧ *Leo, not the emperor, had shouldered responsibility for the Eternal City*