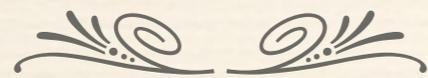


Early Church Fathers



Chapters 1-5

Chapter 1



Church Fathers: Who is included?



Categories of Fathers

- ❖ **Apostolic Fathers** (50-150AD) - testified to what they had heard from the Apostles directly or second hand.
- ❖ **Ante-Nicene** (150-325AD) - began the development of worship and liturgy, as the church grew. Opposed emerging heretical beliefs.
- ❖ **Nicene and Post-Nicene** (313-700s) - testified theologically through ecumenical councils.

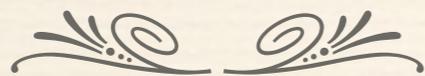
Intention

- ❖ Accurately **communicate** the teachings of Jesus Christ and St Paul.
- ❖ to **avoid divisions** - promote *unity*
- ❖ to **avoid compromise** - promote *fidelity* to the truth

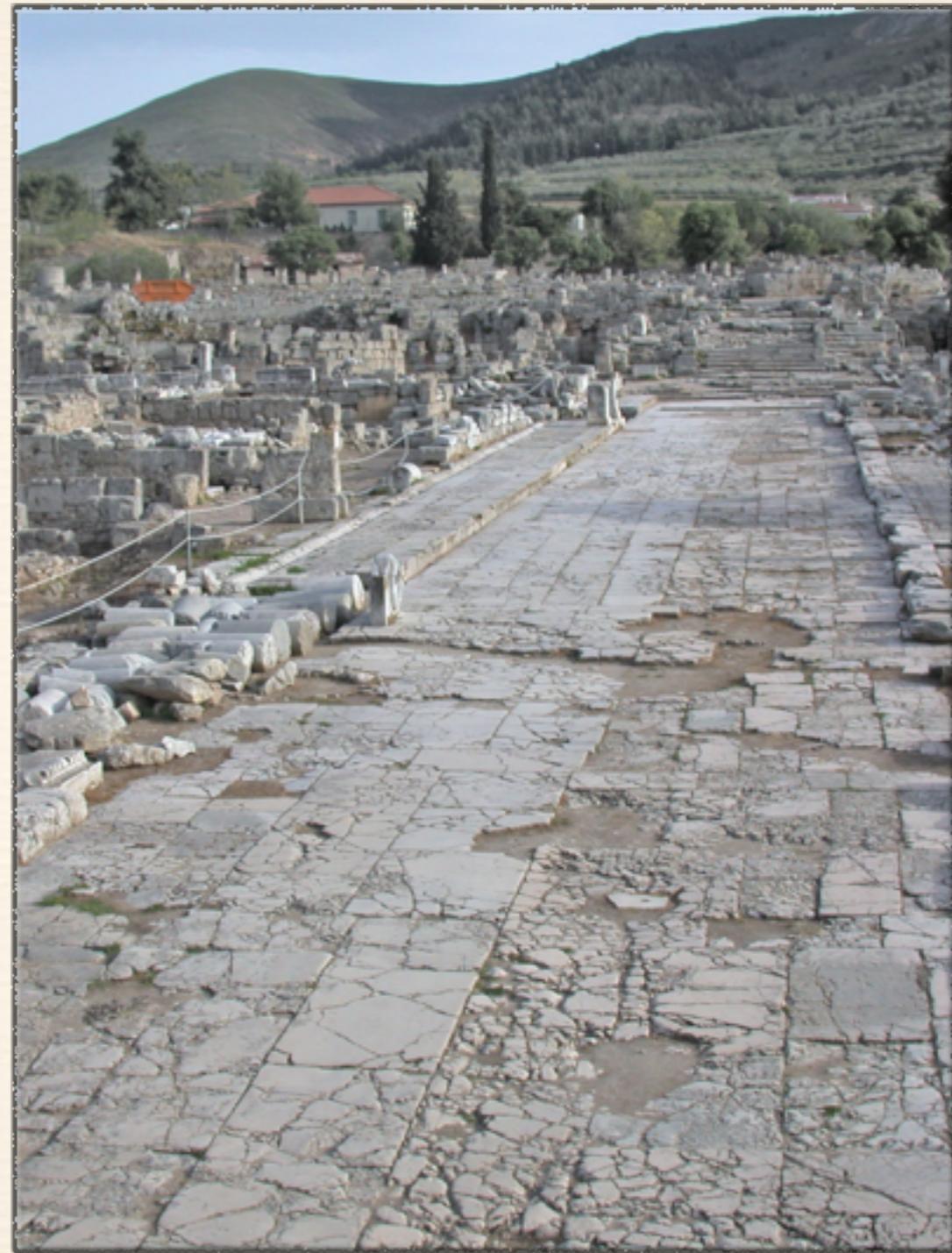
Qualifications

- ❖ Orthodox
 - ❖ Antiquity
 - ❖ Holiness
 - ❖ Church Approval
- ❖ *Yet, there are some Early Church Fathers who do not fit all categories*

Chapter 2



Clement and the Corinthian Group



Street in ancient Corinth
St Paul walked on this Main Street



Basilica di S Clemente



Main Altar 1100 AD

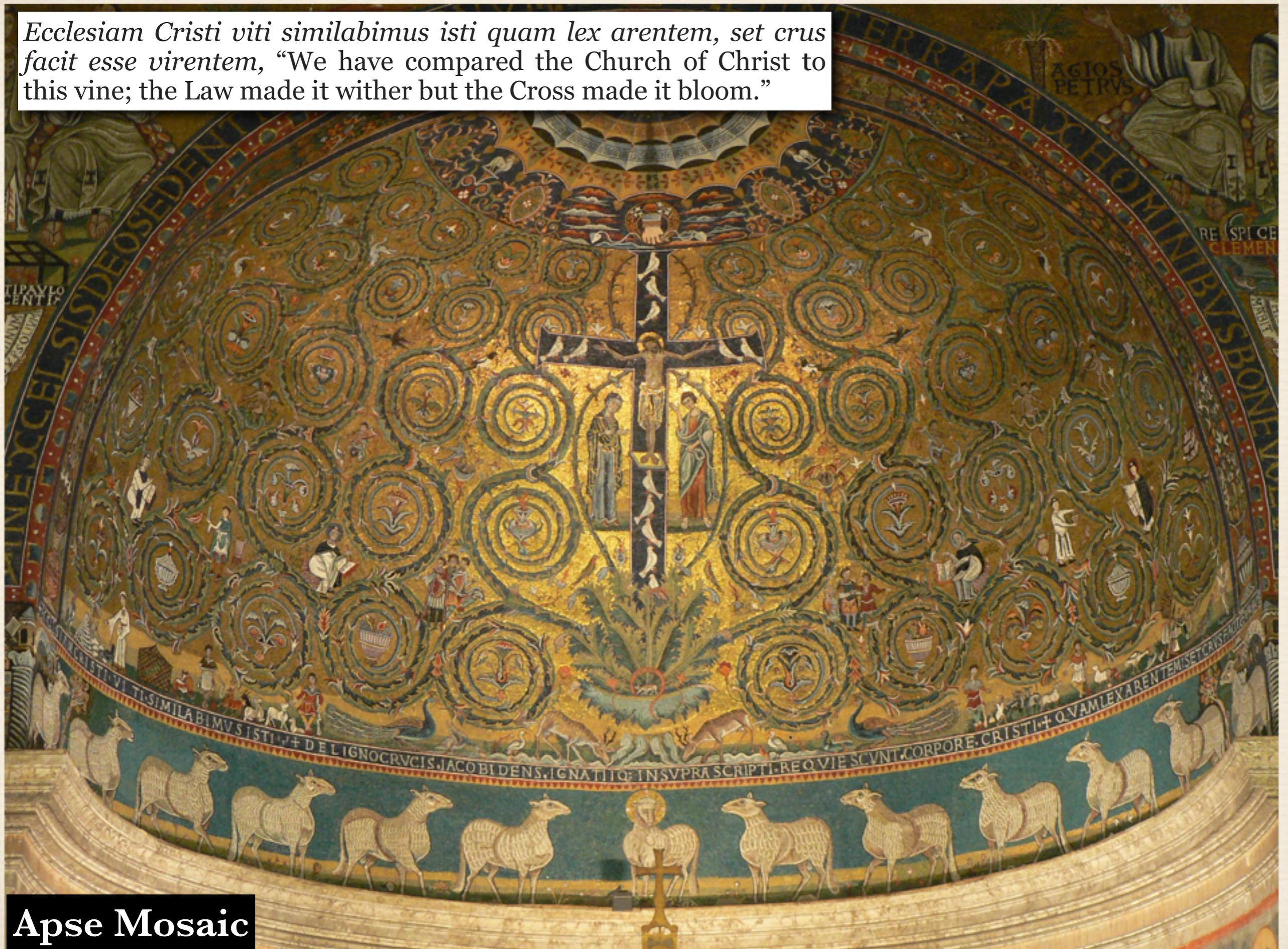


4th century



100 AD

Ecclesiam Christi viti similibimus isti quam lex arentem, set crus facit esse virentem, "We have compared the Church of Christ to this vine; the Law made it wither but the Cross made it bloom."



Apse Mosaic

Themes of 1 Clement

- ❖ Apostolic Succession
- ❖ Unity
- ❖ Primacy of Rome

Context in History

- ❖ Domitian Persecution of 81 AD
 - ❖ Intense Persecution by a megalomaniac
 - ❖ Demanded title “*Dominus et Deus,*” Lord and God (recall Jn 20:28)
 - ❖ Had to burn incense before his Divine image



An Earlier Context

- ❖ **Julius Caesar** (100-44BC) first Caesar. He took for himself the title of **Dei - God**.
- ❖ *Julius Caesar started the idea that caesars ruled by authority of the gods, and therefore were themselves divine.*
- ❖ **Gaius Octavian** - Adopted son of Julius Caesar followed as Caesar under the name of **Augustus Caesar**. He took title of **“Filius Dei” - Son of God** around 25 BC. Was emperor when Jesus was born.

An Earlier Context

- ❖ 2 AD - around the time Christ was born
- ❖ **Jubilee year** for the Roman empire.
 - ❖ 25th Anniversary of the reign of Augustus
 - ❖ 750th Anniversary of the founding of Rome by Romulus

An Earlier Context

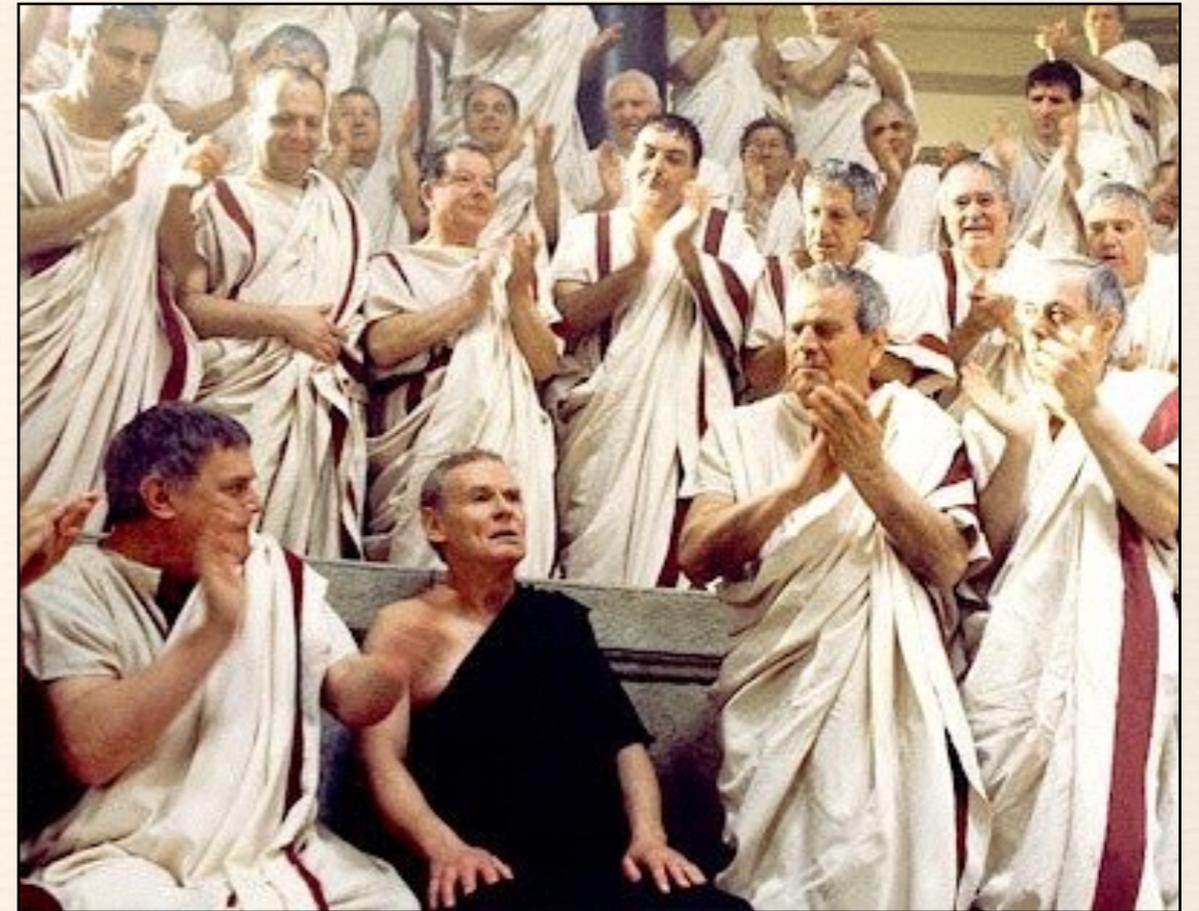
- ❖ 2 AD - also the year that Halley's comet passed by. Augustus declared that the "star" was none other than Julius Caesar, approving of the Jubilee.
- ❖ Thus Dei was showing approval of "Filius Dei"
 - ❖ Jesus, a king was also announced by a 'star.'
Jesus would also be approved by the Father.

An Earlier Context

- ❖ 2 AD - also the year that the **Roman Senate** acknowledged Augustus' successful reign.
- ❖ A great builder and a great keeper of the peace.
- ❖ The **Pax Romana** began with Augustus' reign

Coincidence ?

- ❖ 2 AD Two titles conferred by the Senate: Pater Patria - father of the country, and Princeps Pacis - Prince of Peace.



- ❖ Recall **Is 9:5-6** 'A child is born to us ... He shall be called ... Everlasting father, Prince of Peace ...

Corinth Deposes Bishop

- ❖ Persecution causes **breakdown** of relationships.
- ❖ Corinthian **Bishop** and **elders** deposed by younger people
 - ❖ Was this action **licit**?
 - ❖ Was this action **valid**?
 - ❖ Rome was petitioned for an answer.
St Clement, 4th Pope, responds by letter

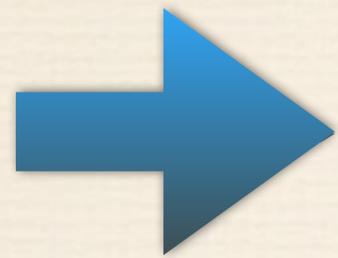
Epistle Content

- ❖ Conclusion: *Illegal*
- ❖ Clement's letter appeals to a line of succession that began with Apostles
- ❖ Apostolic succession to be unbroken line of authority established by St Paul at Corinth
 - ❖ Reminded them that he **knew the Apostles**, and **witnessed the martyrdom** of Sts Paul and Peter, for this same faith

Epistle Content

- ❖ **Apostolic Succession** - visible sign of continuity of the faith, and the **unity of the faith**.
- ❖ He reminds Corinth of St Paul's letter that the Church is the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12)
 - ❖ **To divide the church is to do violence to Christ**
- ❖ Corinthians treat **Clement's letter in equal footing with St Paul's letters**, reading it at Mass for hundreds of years.

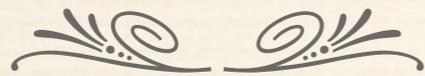
Primacy of Roman Pontiff



Corinth is close to Ephesus, where **St John the Apostle** was still alive.

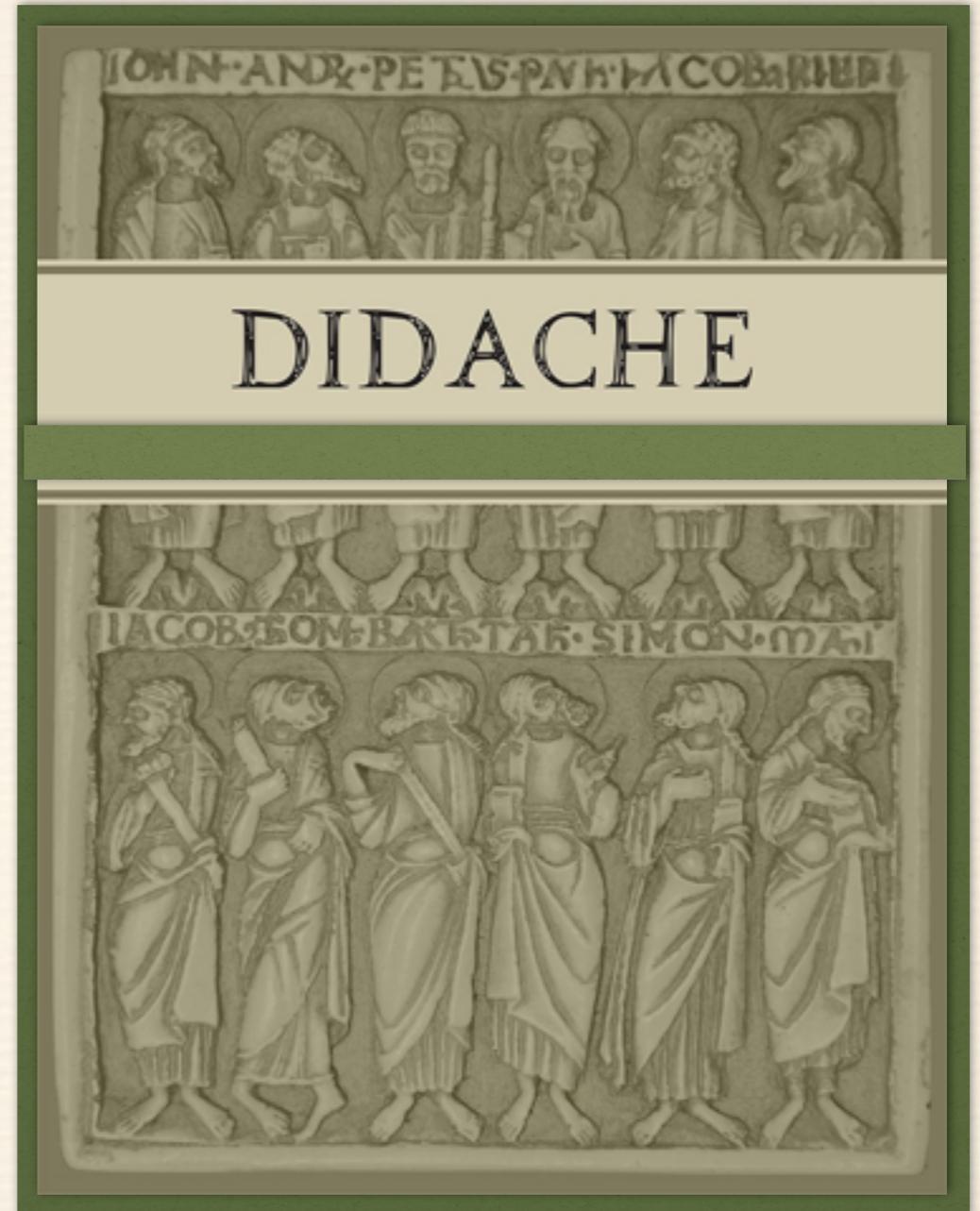
- ❖ First historical acknowledgment of Papal primacy, by another church
- ❖ Clement as Pope, speaks with authority to bind / loose the action of Corinthians.
(cf. 1 Cor 5: 1-5)

Chapter 3



The Didache:

*The teaching of the Lord according to
the Twelve Apostles*



The Didache is Apostolic

- ❖ an 1873 find of a 1053 compilation of ancient writings by Leo the Scribe.
- ❖ **Didache** is a redaction of two documents:
 - ❖ a Catechism and
 - ❖ a How To document.
 - ❖ *Available on line on the internet.*
 - ❖ **Author** - Jesus and the Apostolic Tradition

Catechism

- ❖ An authentic peek into the Early Church and the teachings of the Apostles.
- ❖ Abortion
- ❖ contraception and abortifacients
- ❖ Improper sexual conduct - pedophilia, heterosexual and homosexual fornication.

Catechism

- ❖ Love and give cheerfully
- ❖ Don't receive gladly but close your hands when it comes time to give.
- ❖ Help the needy
- ❖ Two ways to live, one of life and one of death.
Love God and love neighbor. Follow Golden Rule

Catechism

- ❖ Receive accidents that befall you as good, knowing nothing is done without God.
- ❖ Thou shall not make a schism
- ❖ Teach youth to fear the Lord
- ❖ Hate hypocrisy

Catechism

- ❖ Do not lead others astray, do not be led astray
- ❖ If you cant bear the whole yoke of the Lord, bear what you are able.
- ❖ The Didache restates the continuing vitality of 10 commmandments, describing each one.

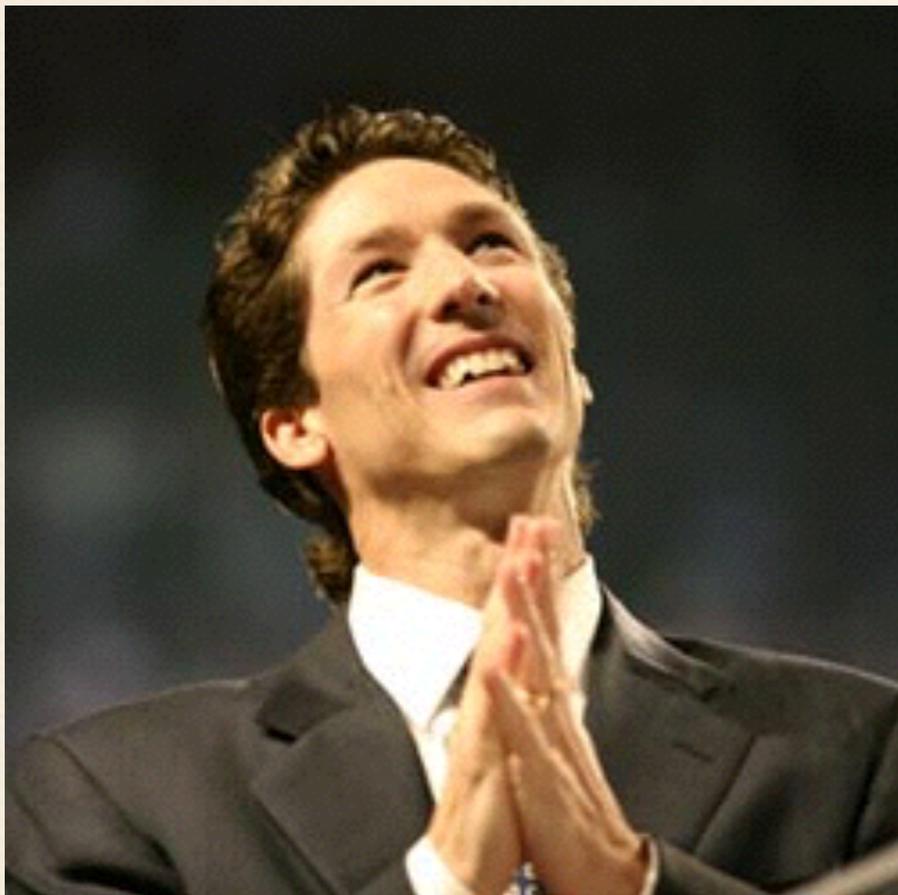
How To

- ❖ Baptizing - living water preference (p.14)
- ❖ Fasting Days (Wednesday and Friday)
- ❖ Pray Three times a day, using Lord's prayer
- ❖ Mass on Sunday, not Saturday (Malichi 1:11), described as a sacrifice

How To

- ❖ Reconcile with your brother prior to Eucharist (Confiteor and Kiss of Peace)
- ❖ Do not eat or drink of the Eucharistic thanksgiving unless first Baptized in the name of the Lord. (9.5)
- ❖ Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (7.3)
- ❖ Hear not a teacher of a different doctrine (11.2)

Appropriate to Our Times



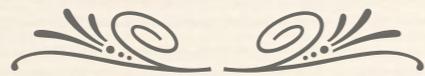
- ❖ Whoever shall say in the Spirit, **Give me silver or anything else, ye shall not listen to him** (11.12)
- ❖ This is the Anti TV Evangelist command!

A Compliant Saint



- ❖ **Saint Monica** fasted as described in the **Didache**
- ❖ **every** Wednesday and on Friday.
- ❖ ... but did Rome?

Chapter 4

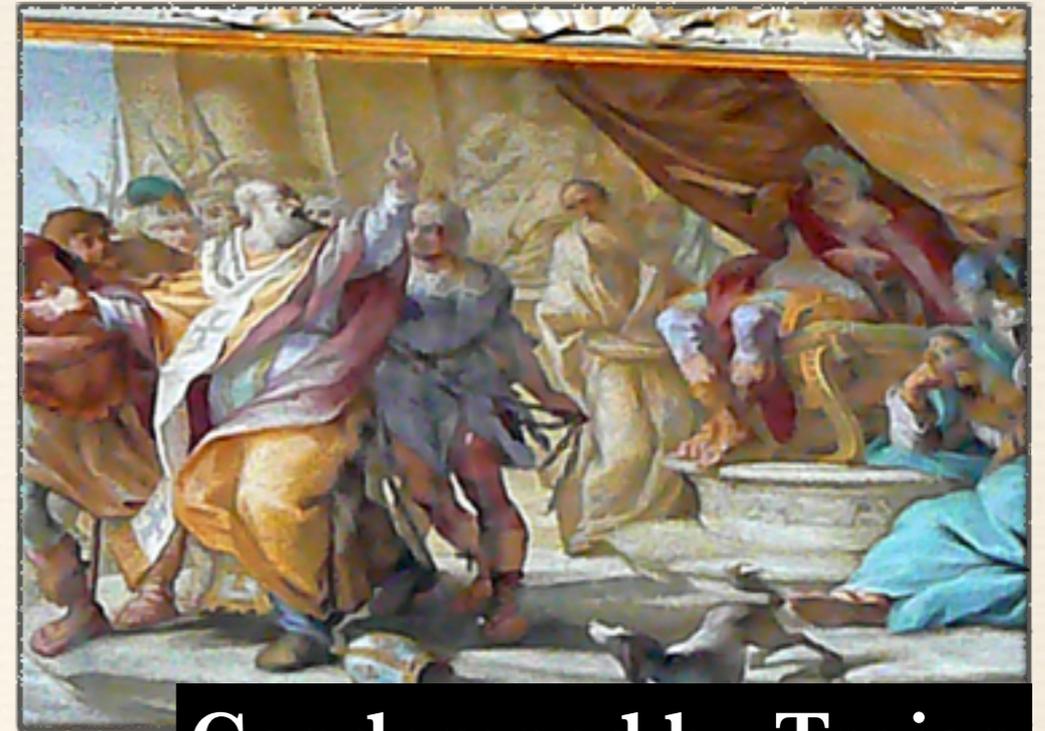


*Ignatius of Antioch:
Prophet, Pastor and Witness*

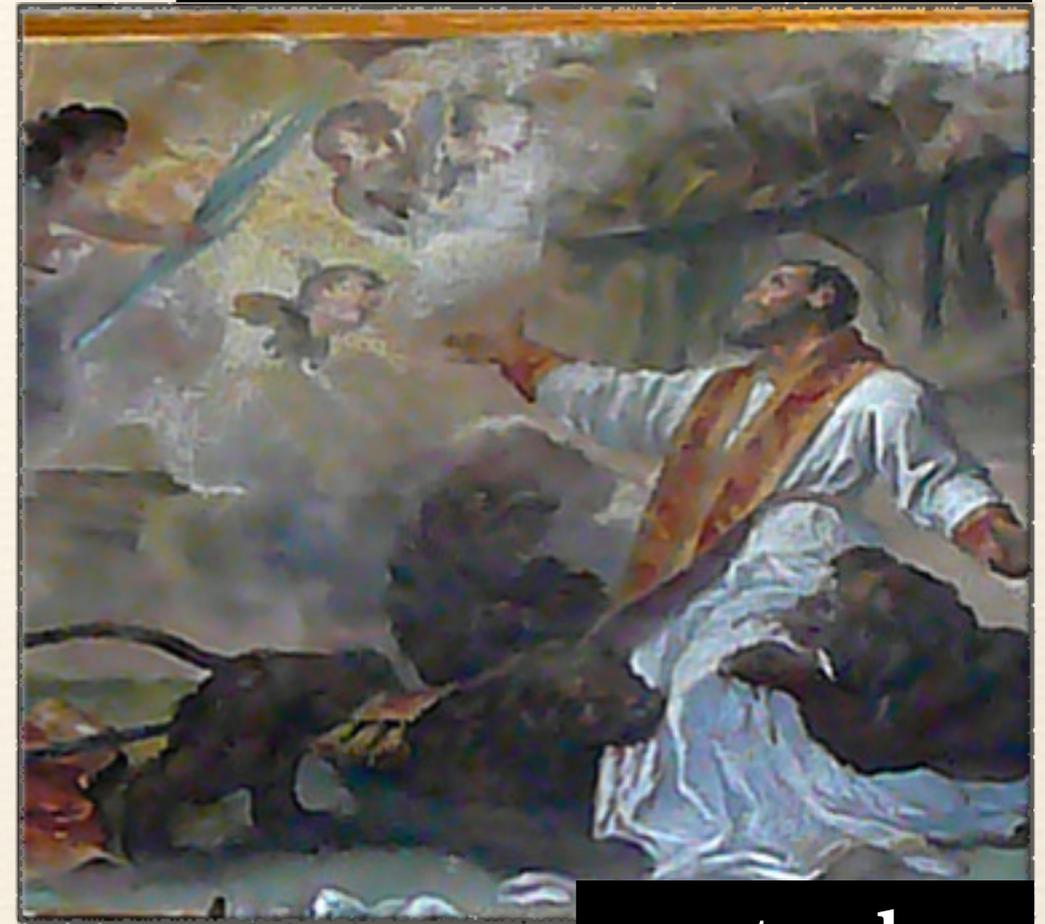




Tomb: Sts Ignatius & Clement



Condemned by Trajan



martyrdom

St Ignatius of Antioch

- ❖ Antioch - An important episcopate
- ❖ Third Bishop of Antioch, St Peter being first
- ❖ Died for a person, not an ideology
 - ❖ wrote of laying down his life as a sacrifice.
- ❖ Wrote Seven Letters on his way to Martyrdom, 6 to churches, and one to Polycarp.

St Ignatius of Antioch

❖ Letter Themes:

❖ Divinity of Jesus

❖ Reality of the Incarnation - not emanation

❖ Reality of Eucharist

❖ Catholic unity - real due to hierarchical church; not just a collection of disconnected congregations.

St Ignatius of Antioch

- ❖ Also testifies to Sts Peter and Paul being martyred in Rome.
- ❖ **Ordained** a bishop by **St John the Apostle** as was Polycarp. For sure, studied under St John.
- ❖ Some traditions indicate that both St Peter and St John laid hands on St Ignatius, to ordain him.

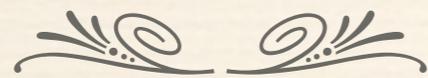
Letter to Smyrnaeans

- ❖ **Important themes:**

- ❖ Passion real - Resurrection real
- ❖ Eucharist is real body and blood
- ❖ Do nothing without the Bishop

Let us read this Letter

Chapter 5



The Martyrdom of Polycarp



Polycarp

- ❖ Appointed Bishop of Smyrna by St John the Apostle.
- ❖ Met Ignatius of Antioch, when in his 40s (115 AD)
- ❖ Martyred 40 years later at age 86 in 155 AD
- ❖ Pionus account shows analogy to Good Friday

Herod - chief of Police

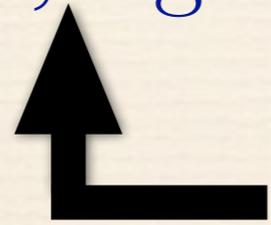
- ❖ Regarding offering incense to the Emperor, Herod proposes to Polycarp, the following:
 - ❖ “What harm is there to say ‘Lord Caesar’ and to offer incense and that sort of thing, to save yourself?”
 - ❖ At the martyr’s death - by fire, Polycarp’s body gave off the sweet aroma of incense.

Martyrdom

- ❖ Martyrdom is a grace.
- ❖ “I bless thee, because thou has deemed me worthy of this day and hour, to take my part in the number of the martyrs.” (p. 33)
- ❖ “For this and for everything, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee ...”

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I adore you

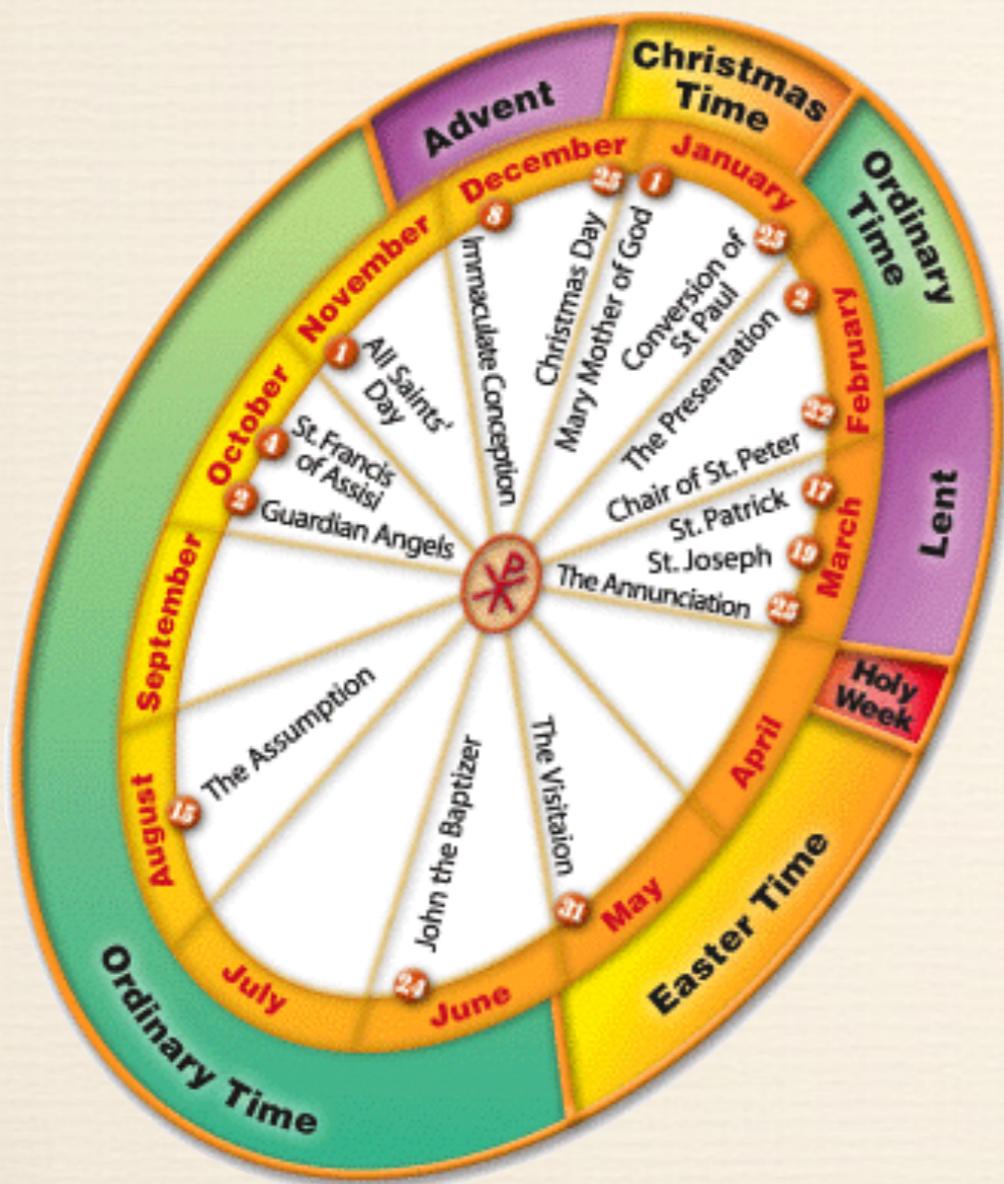
The Gloria

Veneration of Saints

- ❖ **Relics** - evidence of **veneration** of the martyrs.
- ❖ Altars constructed over their relics (catacombs)
- ❖ In Orthodox and Catholic **altars**, the relics of martyrs and saints are imbedded.
- ❖ The ignorant pagans, commingled the idea of veneration and worship - thus preventing retrieval of Polycarp's body fearing a possible new cult. (p. 35-36)

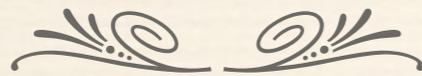


Liturgical Calendar



- ❖ Feast day of Saint Polycarp is February 23, the date of his martyrdom
- ❖ **Feast of saints** in Liturgical Calendar of the Church, tied to **date of death**.
- ❖ Why?

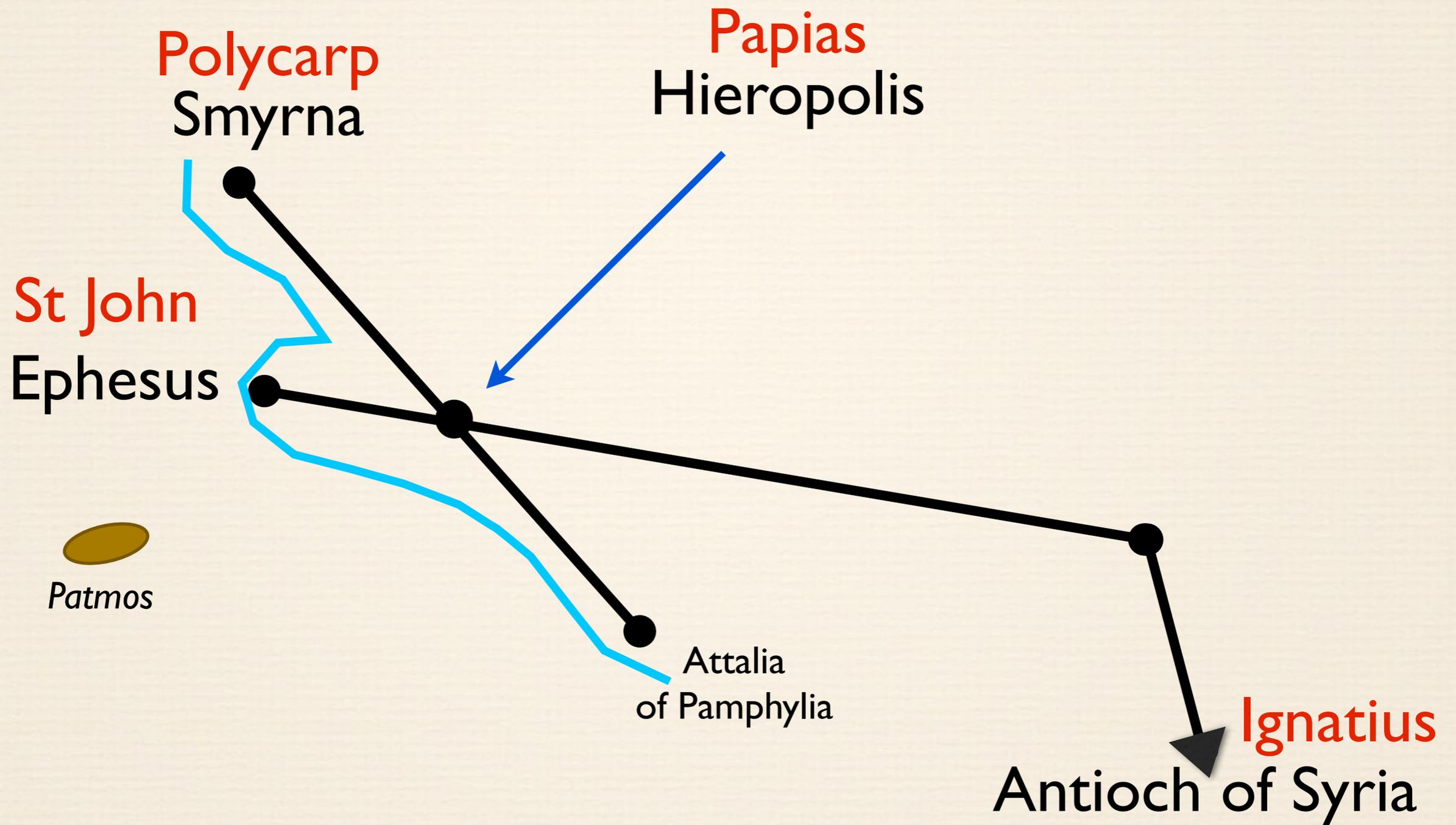
Geography



Antioch and Smyrna



ASIA - 100 AD



Early Church Fathers



Chapters 1-5