

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



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- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
 - *The “Dark Ages” Overview*
 - *Flagrant Abuses of Authority: Zeno, Theodoric, and Clovis*
 - *Auctoritas Sacrata Pontificum: Gelasius*
 - *The Rise of the Monk: Benedict, Brendan, and Dennis*
 - *The Politics of Death: Justinian and Columba*
 - *Kingdoms of God*
 - *Streamlining the Church: Battlegrounds*



The Early Middle Ages

- The Church continued streamlining itself
 - 590 Gregory was elected Pope
 - He focused on building up the Roman Catholic Church as a unified, consistent, and strong power in Europe—reinventing the “Christendom” concept of the earlier Constantinian era of the Roman Empire



The Early Middle Ages

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 - 590 Gregory was elected Pope
 - 664 Council of Whitby met in Britain
 - The Gregory-installed Roman Catholic clergy clashed with the locally-grown Celtic Christian clergy (the “harmony vs. unity” question)
 - So the Celtic Christian church and its outreach ministry were officially shut down in Britain



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700±

The “Apostles' Creed” was revisited

- It was officially “tweaked” to reflect a more Roman Catholic doctrine than the original version had, three or four centuries earlier

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth; and in
Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under
Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and
was buried.

He descended into hell; the third day He rose
again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the
right hand of God, the Father Al-
mighty. From thence He shall come
to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Cath-
olic Church, the communion of Saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of
the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.



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- The Church continued streamlining itself
 - 590 Gregory was elected Pope
 - 664 Council of Whitby met in Britain
 - 700± The “Apostles' Creed” was revisited
 - 692 The Quinisext Council was held
 - The Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils hadn't officially drawn up final canons to clarify what they'd decided, so a Quinisext (“*Fifth-Sixth*”) Council was held in Constantinople to finalize everything that the others had discussed
 - [NOTE: the only clergy in attendance were the Eastern, Greek-speaking ones—what does *that* suggest about the tone and purpose of the meeting?]



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 - In the 102 canons, multiple Roman Catholic doctrines were condemned, including:
 - fasting on Saturdays during Lent
 - omitting the "Alleluia" from masses said during Lent
 - depicting Christ as the Lamb instead of as a fully-formed human being
 - denying the right for priests to be married
 - [In fact, they declared that anyone who would try to separate a priest and his wife (or any priest who would abandon his wife) would be excommunicated]



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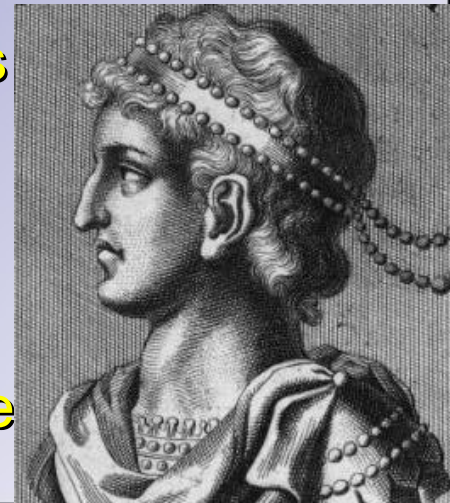
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- **Pope Sergius I refused to accept any of the decisions of the council, calling them "novelties"**
 - So the despotic Emperor Justinian II ordered his arrest

- [NOTE: the next year, he was attacked and exiled by a pair of generals and Patriarch Kallinikos of Constantinople]

- [They chopped off his nose and slit his tongue so that he no longer qualified as God's perfect vicar—and thus, couldn't be emperor]

- [So he had a *fake* nose made returned, and blinded them]



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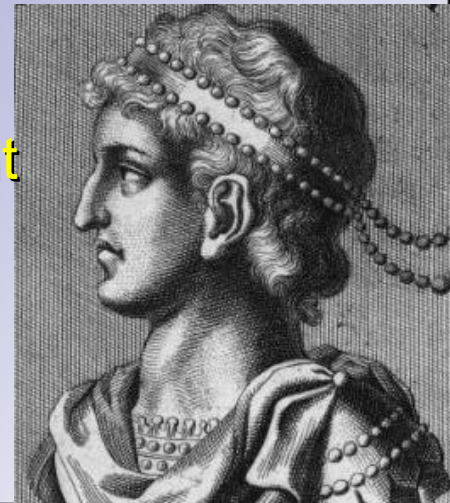
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- The militia in Ravenna fought off the imperial team sent to arrest the Pope

- Fearing (pretty accurately, apparently) that pushing for the Pope's arrest might set off violent reactions against him, Justinian was convinced by the Pope's secretary, Gregory, to declare that a Pope can ignore any part of any council that he wished to ignore—*increasing* papal power



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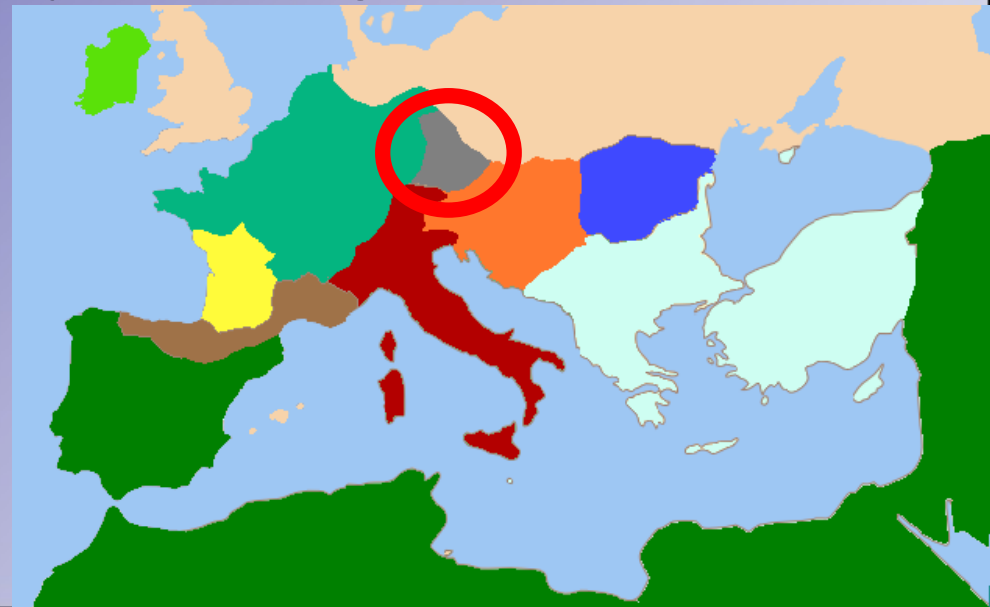
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Gregory became Pope Gregory II

- Within his first year, he sent down workers to rebuild the walls of Rome, and he received a visit from Duke Theodo of Bavaria, asking for help in converting his people

- Gregory sent a small contingent of priests back with Theodo to lay down the groundwork



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718 Winfrið discerned God's call to missions

- Born in southern Britain, Winfrið—like Patrick—had grown up in a wealthy family, but gave all of that up to become a monk
- As "luck" would have it, he had a particular burden for the Germanic people, and so he approached Pope Gregory to ask for the opportunity to be sent to the Frankish lands in Germania or Bavaria
 - Gregory named him the bishop of Germania
 - [which was kinda funny, since at that time, Germania had no churches, as such, to bishop over]



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- Gregory named him the bishop of Germania and renamed him “Boniface”
[from the Latin *bonum* “good” and *fatum* “fate”]



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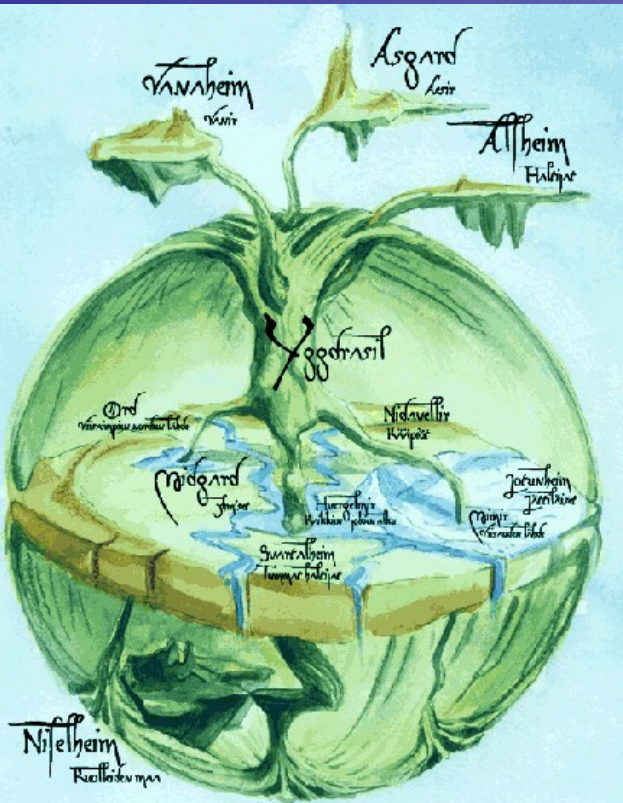
- Gregory named him the bishop of Germania and renamed him “Boniface” after the famous (and completely fictitious) 4th century martyr, Boniface of Tarsus

- Though he never existed, Boniface of Tarsus was revered as a saint with his own feast day until 1969



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Winfrið Boniface was an excellent organizer, who set up multiple churches within his “bishopric”
 - But he was also—like Patrick and Columba—a fierce opponent of paganism
 - The story he's most famous for involved the followers of Donar (the Germanic name for Thor), who worshipped at a holy oak tree
 - The tree itself was intended to point back to the Norse idea of *Yggdrasil*—the cosmic tree that constituted the whole of the universe



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 - The story he's most famous for involved the followers of Donar (the Germanic name for Thor), who worshipped at a holy oak tree
 - **To prove to the people that God was greater than their fictitious Donar, Boniface took an axe and chopped it down in front of the worshippers**
 - He then used the wood from the tree to build a church building on the spot, under the protection of Frankish warlord, Charles (“The Hammer”) Martel
 - Charles was possibly the greatest military strategist since Alexander, and a charismatic leader of men
 - He *also* had the wisdom and foresight to create a *standing army* of Franks (which hadn't been seen in *centuries*)



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 - **All of this is why Boniface is usually depicted as carrying an axe in icons**
 - Speaking of icons...



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- 730± Emperor Leo III began an iconoclasm

- Derived from the Greek (εἰκονομαχία or "eikonomachía"), "iconoclasm" essentially means, "icon-clashing" or "icon-breaking"

- Thus, an "iconoclast" is someone who consciously sets out to destroy icons
 - This could be because they wish to destroy the focus of worship of a group (like Boniface did with the Donar Oak)
 - Or it could be because they want to stir up and destroy staid conventions (as we tend to use the term in a modern sense)
 - Even the Muslims decried the use of icons in any form, since they considered them tantamount to idolatry
 - But none of that is why Leo had a problem with the use of icons...



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - An icon in the Church was a depiction of Christ or a famous Christian, used in a worship capacity
 - So does that make them idols that are *themselves* to be worshipped?
 - Or does that make them visual *cues* for worship, like our cross in the sanctuary?
 - Pope Gregory I once wrote this as a rule of thumb:
 - “It is one thing to adore a picture, another through a picture’s story to learn what must be adored. For what writing offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the illiterate who look at it, since in it, the ignorant see what they ought to follow; in it they read who do not know letters; whence especially for gentiles, a picture stands in place of reading.”



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - An icon in the Church was a depiction of Christ or a famous Christian, used in a worship capacity
 - Having said that, when a church is dealing with “ignorant” people—and especially, when a church is actively trying to keep them ignorant—it’s not uncommon for them to confuse that subtle theological distinction and begin worshipping the picture rather than what the picture is intended to point them to
 - For instance, it’s not only common for people to pray to and kiss the icons of various patron saints, but there are also countless stories about how the *icon itself* has supernatural powers, and is worth kissing in order to receive its magic, such as the icon of Tsar Nicholas in St. Petersburg
 - You can see why some theologians had concerns about the continued use of icons in worship
 - Even an icon of *Christ Himself* could still draw people’s worship away from actually worshipping *Christ*



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - An icon in the Church was a depiction of Christ or a famous Christian, used in a worship capacity
 - But one of the biggest theological problems that people had with icons of *Christ* at that time was *Christological* in nature
 - Just exactly *how* do you depict Jesus Christ?
 - If you depict only His *humanity*, then are you being Ebionite or Arian?
 - If you depict only His *divinity*, then are you being Docetist or Apollinarian?
 - If you try to depict them *both* at the *same time*, are you being a Monophysite?
 - If you try to depict *one* nature on *one* side of a coin and the *other* on the *flipside*, are you being a Dyophysite?
 - For that matter, *should* you even *try* to depict Him?



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 - The second of the Ten Commandments says,
 - “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them”
 - [NOTE: The Roman Catholic Church officially *skips* this Commandment altogether, and then breaks up the tenth Commandment into “You shall not covet your neighbor’s *wife*” and “You shall not covet your neighbor’s *goods*” as two *separate* commands in order to retain a total of Ten Commandments overall]



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 - The second of the Ten Commandments
 - As one Greek professor taught,
 - There's an *icon* (εἰκών or “eikōn”) and there's an *idol* (εἰδωλον or “eidōlon”)
 - The Bible uses the term “*icon*” to talk about a likeness, an expression of something that is itself inexpressible
 - For instance, in Colossians 1:15, Jesus is the “εἰκών of the invisible God”



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 - The Bible uses the term “*idol*” to talk about a depiction of something that is itself non-depictable
 - For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, Paul talks about turning away from “εἰδωλών to serve a living and true God”



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 - Thus, the problem isn't the *picture*, but the *point*
 - An εἰδωλον is essentially an idea (Plato's εἶδος or “*eidos*”) that you can actually see
 - But you can *never* truly “see” an idea
 - Any attempt to *concretize* the idea actually serves to *encapsulate* and *limit* the idea



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 - So the moment that you think that you've nailed it down—that you've truly εἰκώved your εἶδος—all you've really done is to create a finite, static εἰδωλον, and *that* mental picture becomes a functional reality to you
 - Have you ever enjoyed a good book or movie, only to find that *that* becomes your go-to mental picture of the thing?



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- 700± The "Apostles' Creed" was revisited
- 693 The Quinisext Council was held
- 715 Gregory became Pope Gregory II
- 718 Winfrið discerned God's call to missions
- 730± **Emperor Leo III began an iconoclasm**

- **So Leo made the use of all icons illegal**
 - Patriarch Germanos of Constantiople resigned rather than submit, and a new one was installed
 - Pope Gregory II fought against the edict as well, inciting an armed rebellion against the Empire
 - He also excommunicated all iconoclasts so Leo declared that Italy now fell under the bishopric of Constantinople—and thus, under the Patriarch rather than the Pope



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 - Gregory's rebellion grew in strength, and Leo was forced to send an armada to Italy to put it down by force
 - But the fleet was sunk in a storm (like the later Spanish Armada), and the Italian church officially declared themselves independent of the Empire

