

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



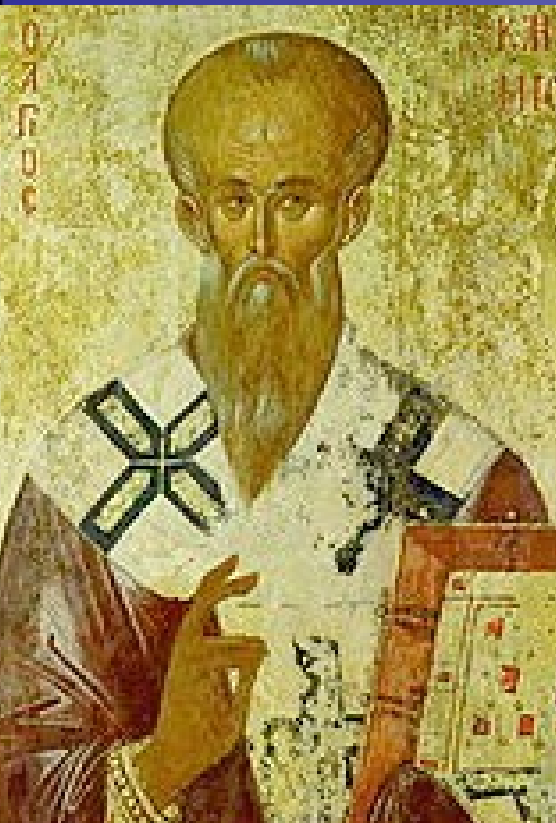
The Ancient Church

- The Second Century saw the beginnings of real power struggles with Rome
 - 192-193 “The Year of Five Emperors”
 - 193 Septimus Severus becomes emperor
 - As part of his imperial house-cleaning, attempting to rebuild a peaceful, stable empire, he begins the most intense persecution of Christians yet—making conversions punishable by torture and public execution
 - As a result, Clement was run out of Alexandria,
 - and Origen's own father was killed,
 - as were Perpetua and Felicity



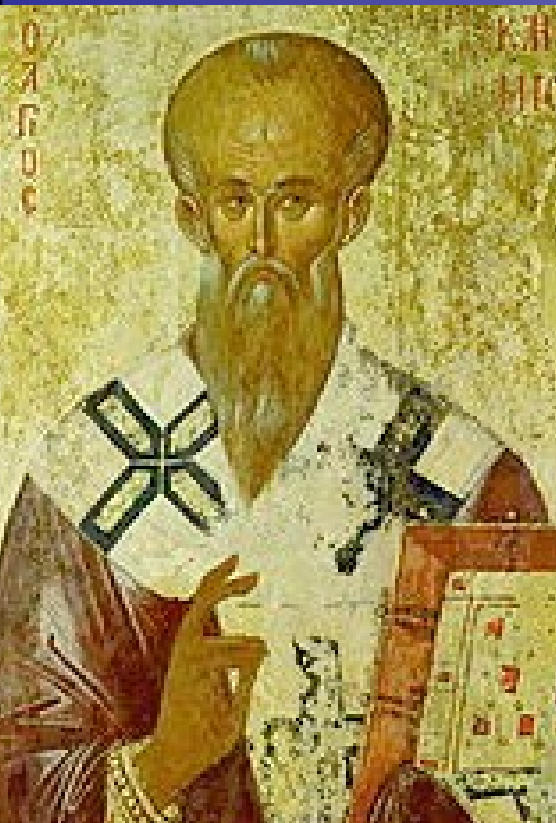
The Ancient Church

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Clement was born into a pagan Greek family, but converted to Christianity because he saw paganism as *essentially* morally corrupt
 - He thus became one of the Church's first pure theologians—not a bishop, but a professional “thinker” and teacher in the classical tradition
 - He wrote several books, the only surviving ones being a trilogy
 - The first book was an evangelistic apologetic, using classical Greek myths and logic to argue for faith in Christ
 - He showed the logical progression from worshipping the celestial bodies, to making idols, to anthropomorphizing the Greek gods—demonstrating that pagan religion was *manufactured*, and thus illogical to put one's faith in
 - Truth and logic are *eternal*, not changing on Man's whims—in fact, they even predate *God*



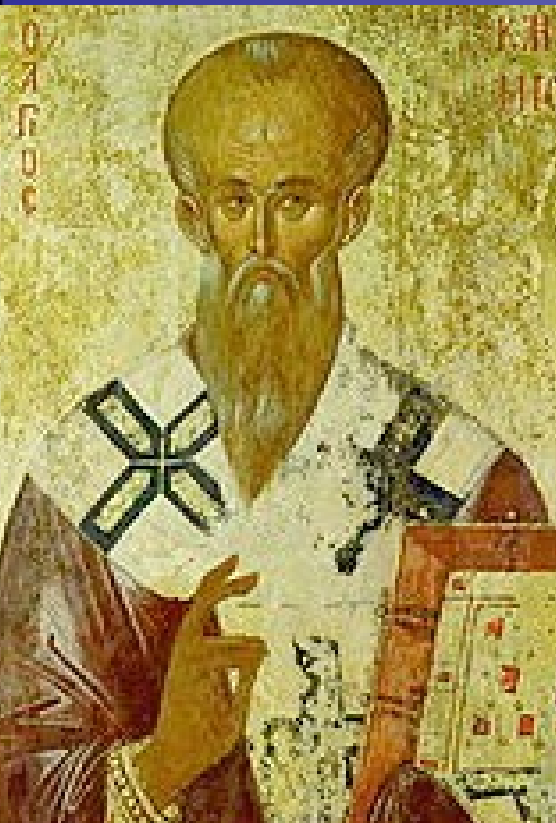
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 - The second book was an extended analogy of Christ as the world's *teacher*
 - He presents Christ as the perfect, idealized representation of God—and thus, neither male nor female, but philosophically *hermaphroditic*
 - Christ also thus had no sins, nor any passions—S/He was *pure*, and thus apathetic to this world (*a la* Stoicism)



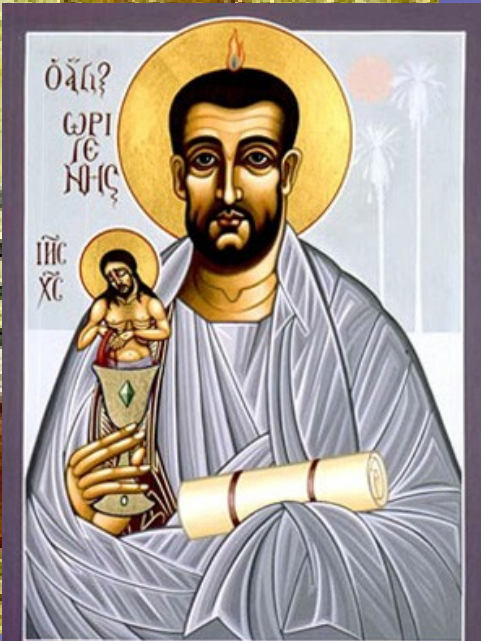
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 - The third book was a collection of miscellaneous thoughts
 - Clement's theology was quirky, but the core of it was solid orthodoxy—and he was an early proponent of *sola fide* (in this case, against the more Gnostic doctrine of salvation by γνῶσις)



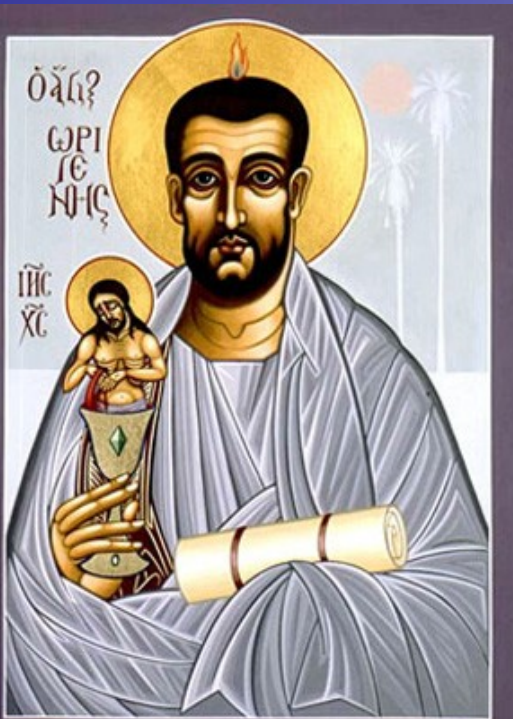
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 - He also taught various students, including a young Origen



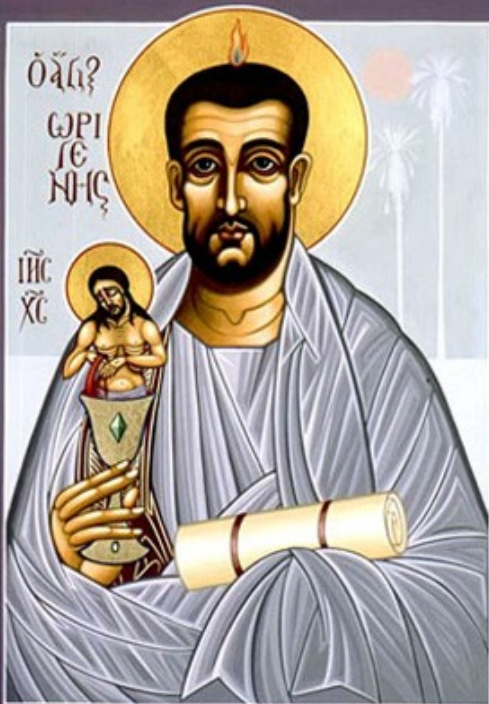
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- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Origen was born in Alexandria to a Christian family, and was taught by Clement until Severus' persecution made the city too unbearable for overtly Christian activity
 - Origen's own father, Leonidas, was beheaded as part of the mass purge
 - Origen—age 17 at the time—apparently wanted to join his father in martyrdom, but his mother hid his clothes, and he wasn't willing to go to his death *naked*



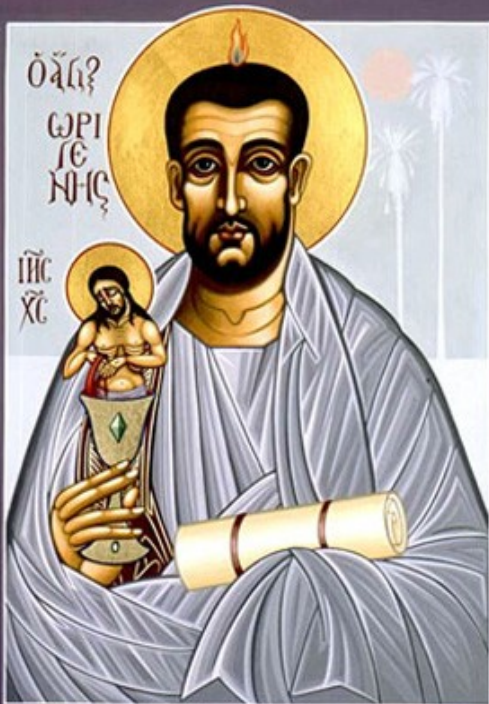
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 - Origen survived to be another great teacher, literally picking up in Alexandria where Clement left off
 - He would teach all day and study all night, living off of a tiny allowance that he allotted himself, based on the income from selling off his personal property
 - He even castrated himself after reading Matthew 19:12 to avoid any distractions to his ministry
 - Unfortunately, this was a capital offence under Roman law, and he was forced to leave Alexandria once news got out



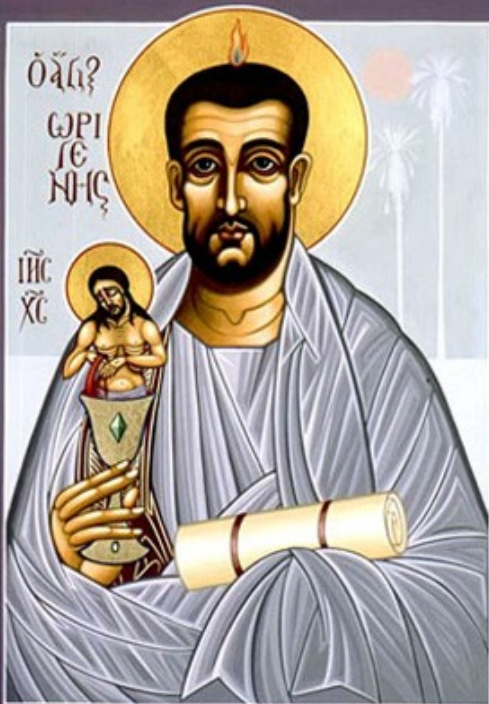
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 - He became a combination of Billy Graham and R.C. Sproul for his day—famous for evangelism to famous people, using apologetics to defeat heretical ideas
 - In fact, his famous *Contra Celsum* argued against a well-known critic of Christianity so comprehensively that we've been able to reconstruct Celsus' original book, just from Origen's copious *citations* from it



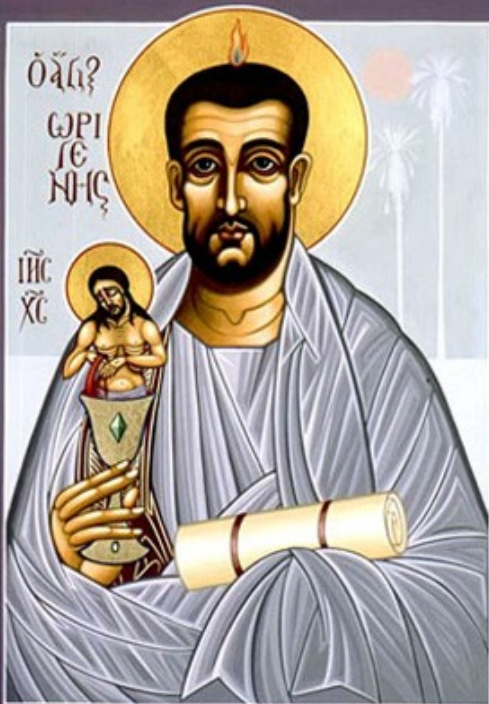
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 - Though he attacked Gnostics and other heretics well, his own theology was... odd...
 - For example—before Time, God created a pool of souls. Those who lost their focus on God became demons, those who were lukewarm became humans, and those who loved God became angels
 - God thus created the Cosmos to provide souls the opportunity to work toward rising to a higher level by emulating God in their lives



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 - That's why we each have guardian angels, who watch over us and help us to work toward transcending *back* toward what we were to begin with—*perfect*
 - Even Satan and his demons can thus have the opportunity to repent and rise to a higher level of perfection
 - This concept has been picked up by the modern “New Age” movement



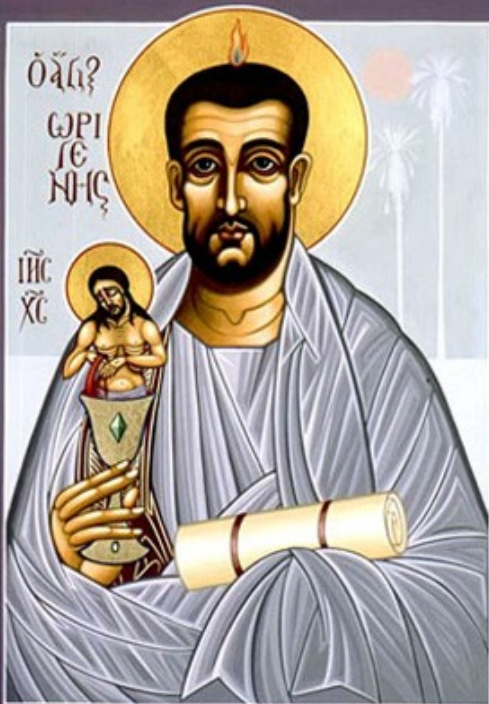
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 - That's why we each have guardian angels, who watch over us and help us to work toward transcending *back* toward what we were to begin with—*perfect*
 - That's also why Christ came in material, human form—to show us how to be the perfect souls that we were created to be in the first place, including dying in order to show selflessness as a virtue



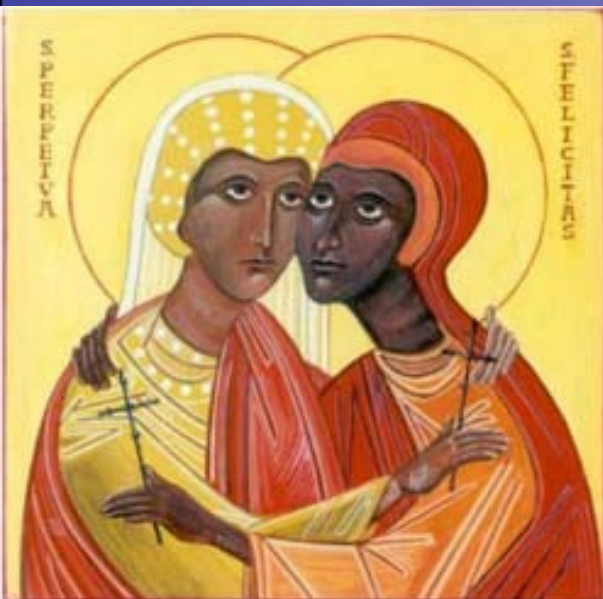
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 - Interestingly, though a theologian and leader in the early Church, Origen was condemned by the Synod of Constantinople in 543
 - The official wording was, “We declare him excommunicated and anathematized, and we judge him condemned to eternal fire with Satan and his angels and all the reprobate, so long as he will not burst the fetters of the demon, do penance and satisfy the Church”



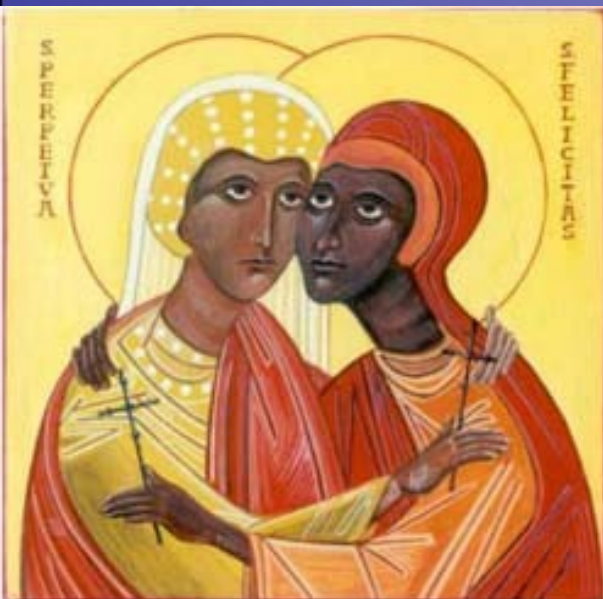
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- Funky little teaching moment³—
 - The most infamous of the persecutions under Septimus Severus was of two women, named Perpetua and Felicity, killed in the Games
 - Perpetua was a noblewoman who had just given birth, and Felicity was her slave, who was *about* to give birth
 - They were arrested for their conversion to Christianity in 203, and even Perpetua's *father*—who brought her newborn son to prison for her each day to nurse—didn't understand why she wouldn't recant
 - *Daily*, he pressured her to give up her faith, even telling her that he was disgusted with her as a daughter, and that she was a bad mother to her child for *shaming* the whole family in this way, but she still refused to surrender her Christianity



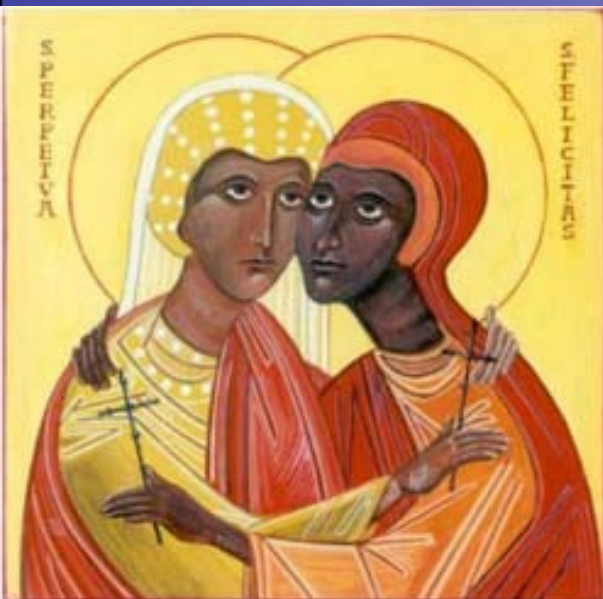
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 - They were arrested for their conversion to Christianity in 203
 - Felicity was afraid that she would not be executed with the other Christians, since it was against Roman law to execute a pregnant woman (since it wrongly kills an innocent in the process—i.e.; the baby)
 - She praised God that, two days before the Games were to begin, she gave birth to a baby girl, who was then adopted by a local Christian couple—and that meant that she was thus able to join her brothers and sisters in death



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 - In the arena, all of the Christians were scourged, to the great enjoyment of the crowd
 - They were then attacked by wild beasts—the men by a wild boar, a leopard, and a bear, and the women by a wild bull
 - Finally, they were finished off by the sword (but the guy killing Perpetua was inexperienced, so she finally had to guide his thrust for her own kill-stroke)



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 - Throughout the whole ordeal, they continued to sing hymns and praise God
 - And after the attack from the animals, as the swordsmen were coming out to them, Perpetua and Felicity exchanged one last, holy kiss... which has led several modern scholars to assume that they must, in fact, have been lesbians



The Ancient Church

- The Second Century saw the beginnings of real power struggles with Rome

192-193 “The Year of Five Emperors”

193

Septimus Severus becomes emperor

- He begins the most intense persecution of Christians yet—making conversions punishable by torture and public execution
- Interestingly, though his rule is fairly “successful,” Severus dies trying to outdo Hadrian—he tries invading Scotland
 - He spends three years killing whole villages—men, women, infants—but is ultimately forced to pull back to York
 - He dies in 211, and Rome never went north of the wall again
 - Tellingly, his final words to his sons were, “Be harmonious, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all other men”

