

A Study in Patristics



Part II

Produced by St. Mina's Coptic Orthodox Church, Holmdel NJ

Patristics / Patrology

- “Pater” → “Father” **ΠΑΤΕΡ**
- The study of the life, acts, writings, sayings, teachings & thoughts of the Orthodox writers

Qualifications to be a “Father”

- Orthodoxy of Doctrine
- Holiness of Life
- Antiquity

Some Guidelines with the Fathers

- 1. We must not rely on the writings of a single Father.
- 2. We must not rely on one separate quote.
- 3. We must study the meaning of the terms which the Father had used.
- 4. We must compare the terms which a Father had used with the same terms used by his contemporary Fathers.

St. Athanasius the Apostolic

- Born 297 AD
- Deacon at age of 15
- Priest at age of 21
- Pope at age of 30
- Lived through the period of severe persecution under Diocletian
- Spent time with St. Anthony the Great in the desert
- Accompanied Pope Alexander to the Council of Nicaea in 325
- Spent most of his life combatting the heresy of Arius
- Arians (follower of Arius) considered St. Athanasius their #1 enemy and continued to fight him all the days of his life
- Exiled 5 Times by the Arians
- Wrote the Nicene Creed



St. Athanasius the Apostolic: Summary

- “Athanasius Contra Mundum”
- Wrote the Creed & Life of St. Anthony
- Defended the Orthodox Faith against Arius
- Defended the Divinity of the ‘Logos’
- 20th Pope of Alexandria
- Key word = Homoosious to Patri” Of one essence with the Father”
- Associated with the Council of Nicaea 325 AD

St. Athanasius the Apostolic

- Writings: Apologetic (Defense)

- ◆ Apologia Contra Arianos (Apology Against the Arians)

- The Son is Equal to the Father
- He is of One-essence (homoousious)

- ◆ Against the Heathen

- A defense of the Christian faith and a refutation of paganism

St. Athanasius the Apostolic

● Writings:

◆ Four Discourses against the Arians

- “the mockeries which he utters... repulsive and unreligious are such as these: ‘ God was not always a Father, but once God was alone and not yet a Father, but afterwards he became a Father’ The Son was not always’...He, as others had an origin of creation... The word is not the true God... even though He is called God, He is not true God, but by participation of Grace”

God

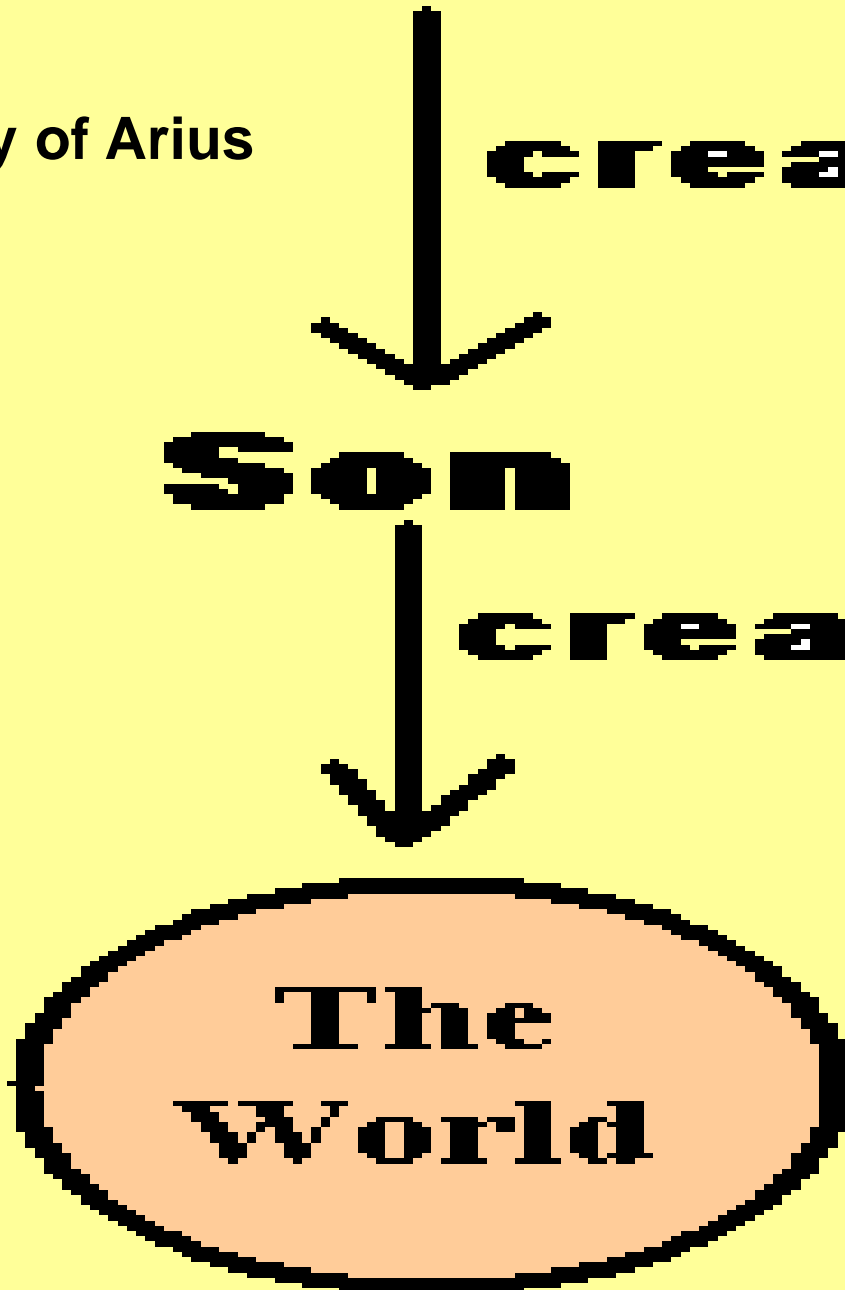
Theology of Arius

created

Son

created

**The
World**



Theology of St. Athanasius

God the Father (uncreated and one essence)

God the Son

(uncreated and one
essence)

God the Holy Spirit

(uncreated and one essence)

Created

The World

**God the Father, God the
Son, God the Holy Spirit
Of one essence
Equal in Divinity**



St. Athanasius the Apostolic

- Writings: Exegetical (Biblical)

- ◆ On the Interpretation of the Psalms
- ◆ Commentary on Songs of Songs, Genesis and St. Luke
- ◆ On the Incarnation 'De Incarnatione'

- Writings: Ascetic (Monastic)

- ◆ The Life of St. Anthony (Vita Antoni)
- ◆ Letters on Virginit

St. Cyril of Alexandria

- Born 375 AD
- Pope in 412
- Uncle was Pope Theophilus
- He studied all the works of the Fathers before him, St. Athanasius, St. Didymus the Blind, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus
- Spent 5 years in St. Macarius Monastery as a disciple of St. Serapion
- 24th pope of Alexandria
- Opponent of Nestorianism



St. Cyril of Alexandria: Pillar of Faith

● Writings: Biblical

◆ Commentaries on the Old Testament

- Commentary on Isaiah, the Minor Prophets
- 'Glaphyra' – 13 books explaining the first 5 books of Moses (the Pentateuch)

◆ Commentaries on the New Testament

- St. John, St. Luke, St. Matthew

St. Cyril of Alexandria: Pillar of Faith

● Writings: Apologetic (Defense)

- ◆ Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias (Against the Blasphemies of Nestorius)
 - The Son is Equal to the Father
 - He is of One-essence (homoousious)
- ◆ De Recta fide (On the True Faith)
- ◆ 12 Anathemas Against Nestorius
 - A defense of the Nature of Christ as the Incarnate Son of God

Nestorius

- He drew a plain distinction between the man Jesus, Born of Mary and the Son of God who dwelt in Him.
- There were 2 distinct persons in Christ, who were united to one morally
- Christ should not be called God, but God-bearer (Theophoron)
- Subsequently, St. Mary was not the mother of God, but the mother of the man in whom the Godhead dwelt

Nestorius

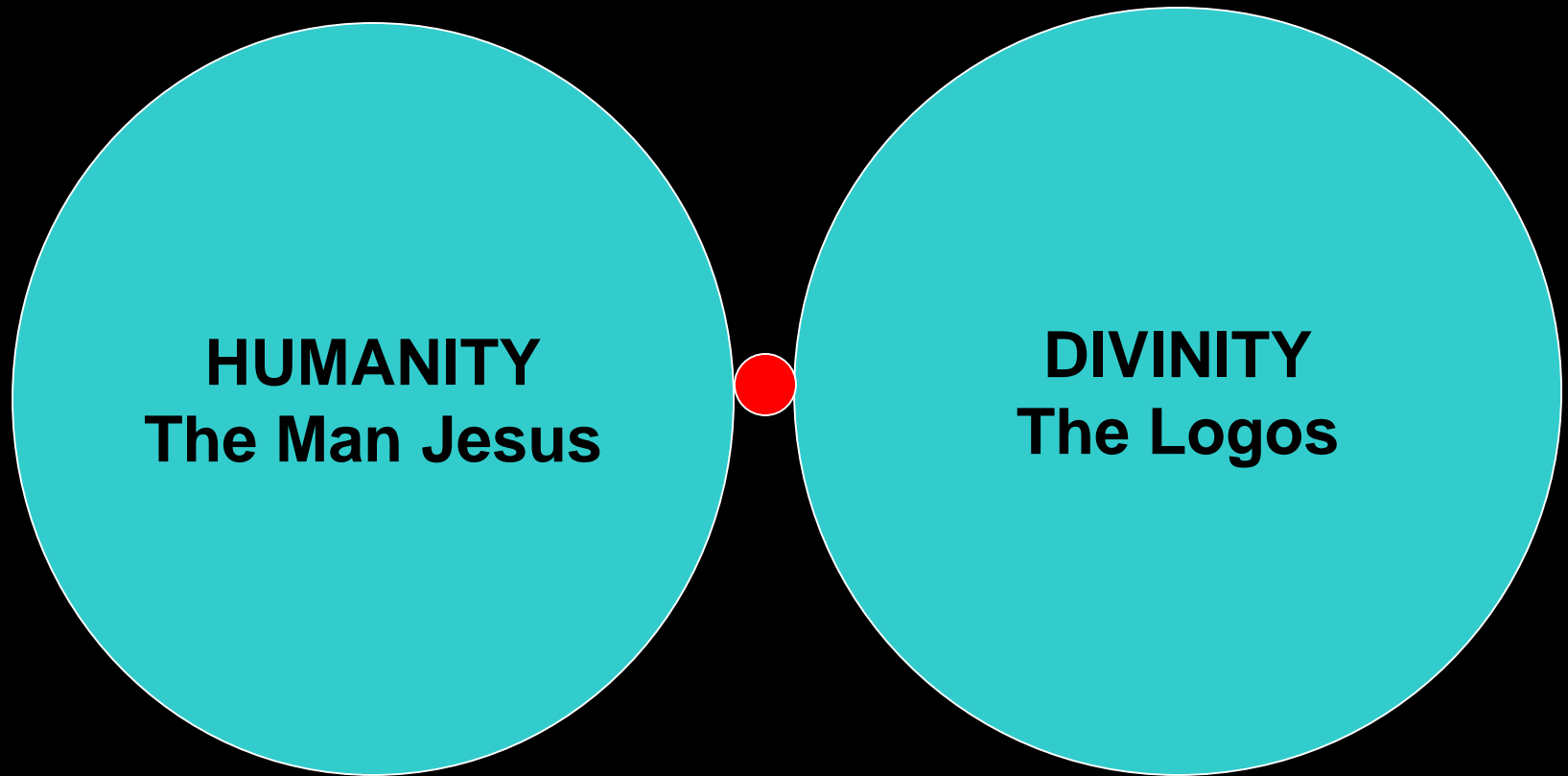
- Would not call Virgin St. Mary – the Mother of God, just Mother of Christ
- Implies that the Virgin St. Mary gave birth to a man who then became God
- Implies separation of divinity and humanity of the Lord
- Result = Jeopardizes Salvation

Nestorius

- “That which was formed in the womb of Mary is not God himself..... therefore it is not God who has suffered, but God was conjoined with the crucified flesh... therefore we will call the Holy Virgin Theodokos (Vessel of God), not Theotokos (God bearer)

Nestorius' Theology

2 separate entities joined together loosely



Result → Salvation is Jeopardized

St. Cyril of Alexandria's Theology



Complete and
Perfect Union of
Humanity and
Divinity
Without Mingling
Without Confusion
Without Alteration

One Incarnate
Nature of God
The Word

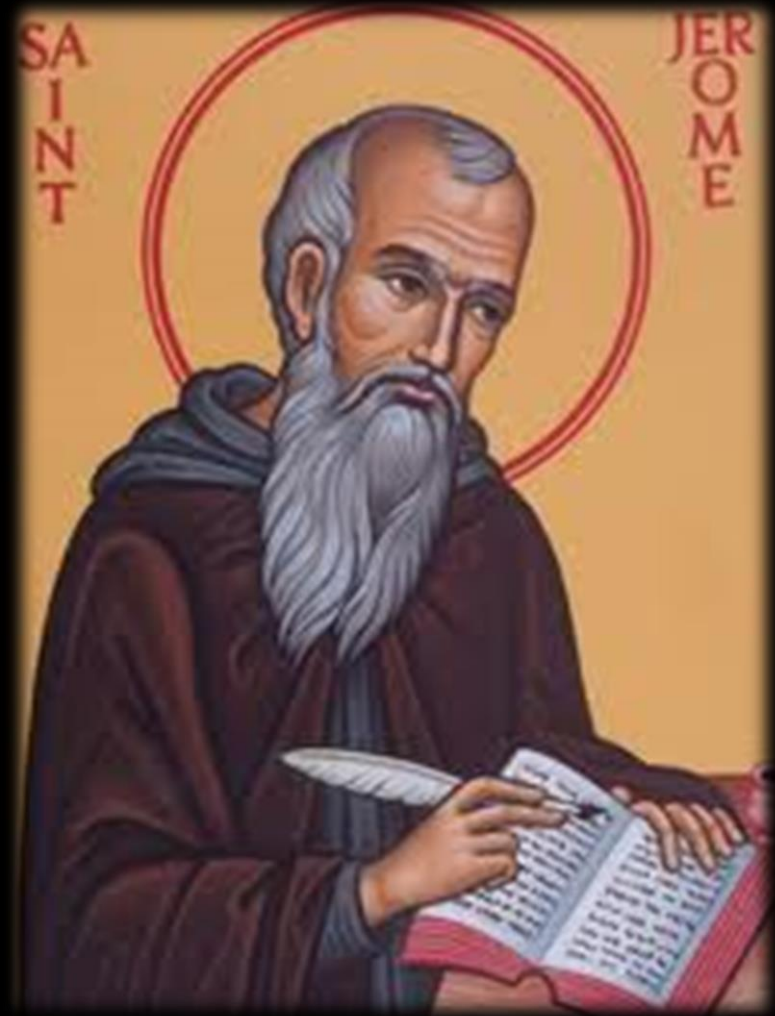
Result → Salvation is not Jeopardized

St. Cyril of Alexandria: Pillar of Faith **SUMMARY**

- 24th Pope of Alexandria
- Upheld and defended the Title of Theotokos (God – Bearer) for the Virgin St. Mary.
- Coined the phrase “ one incarnate nature of God the Word (Mia physis tou theoo logou sesarkomeni)
- Attended the Council of Ephesus in 431AD
- Defended the unity of the Divinity and Humanity

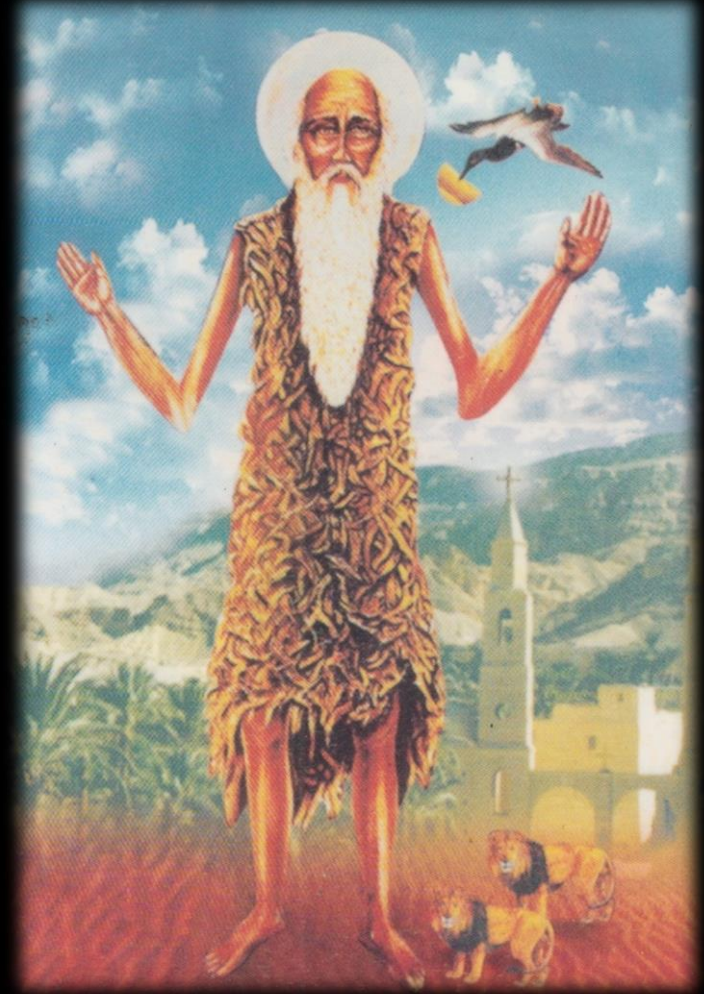
St. Jerome

- Born 347 AD
- Born in Stridon- City in Croatia
- Considered a Latin Father
- Studied in Rome 360-366AD, mastered the Hebrew Language
- Lived as Hermit from 375-377AD in Syria
- Attended the Second Ecumenical Council
- Pope Damasus' Secretary
- Revised the Gospels in Latin 383AD
- Founded a Monastery for both Men & Women in Bethlehem 386AD- there he lived a strict monastic life for 30 years



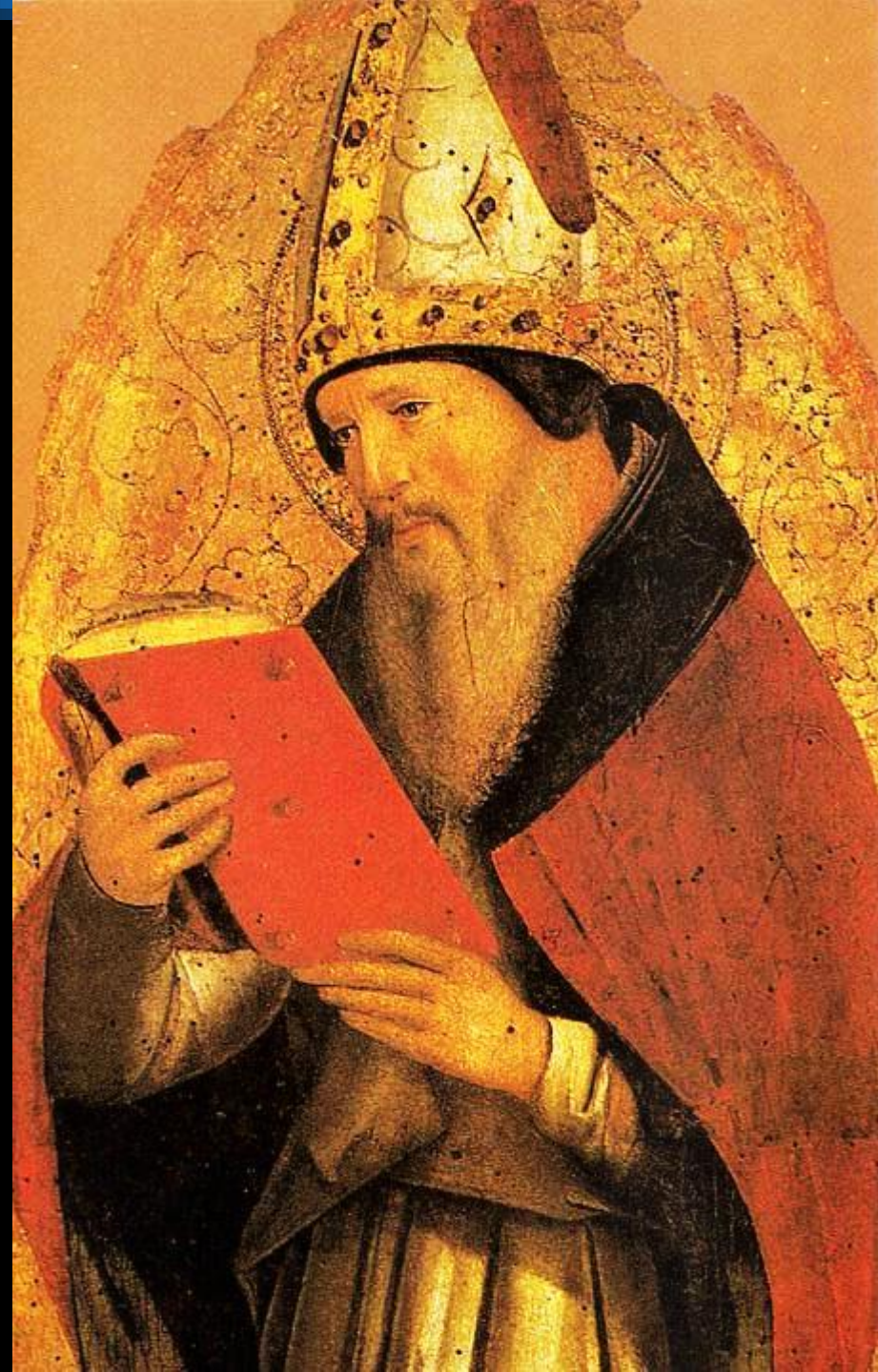
St. Jerome – His Works

- Wrote “On Famous Men”
 - ◆ The first systematic attempt at writing a manual of Patristics.
- Wrote “The Life of St. Paul”
- Translated the HB into Latin in 391AD, known as the Vulgate
- Wrote against those who belittled Monasticism & Virginity
 - ◆ Wrote “Against Helvidius”
 - ◆ St. Mary had other children



St. Augustine

- Born 354
- Born in Thagaste (Algeria)
- Son of St Monica
- Became a Manichaest in search of the “Truth”
- Led a promiscuous life and had a son from a youthful affair. (Adeodatus)
- Baptized by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan 387AD
- Turning Point
 - ◆ Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans
 - ◆ The Life of St. Anthony
- Lived a monastic life
- Became Bishop of Hippo 396AD
- Died 430AD



St. Augustine – His Works

- Wrote “Confessions”
 - ◆ Spiritual Autobiography that contained his personal struggle of conversion and anguish to find God
- Major works
 - ◆ On Grace
 - ◆ On The Holy Trinity
 - ◆ The City of God
 - Written because of the Sack of Rome by the Visigoths
 - Defense of the Christian Faith



St. Augustine – Famous Quotes

- “The earthly city is founded on love of the self, while the city of God is founded on the Love of God”
 - ◆ Contemplating God’s divine plan of salvation despite persecution
- “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You.”

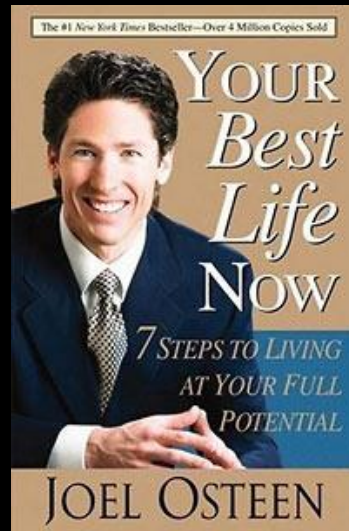
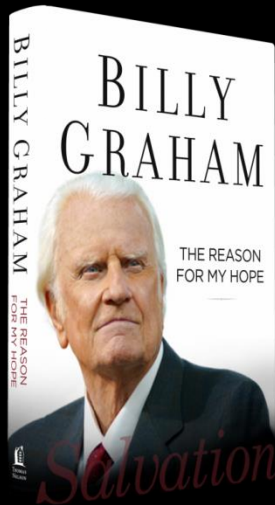


Why Study the Fathers ?

- It is one of the Pillars of our Orthodox Faith.
 - ◆ Holy Bible, Sacred Tradition, Ecumenical Councils, Patristics
- To understand the `Orthodox Faith, Belief and Spirit of the Ancient Orthodox Church.
- St Jude Verse 3
- **“I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

Temptation

- 1. Google Search
- 2. Non-Orthodox Sources & References
- 3. Copy & Paste
- 4. Procrastination





Questions