

Patristics

The Apostolic Fathers

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

Basis of our Faith

- The Holy Tradition
 - Holy Bible
 - The Ecumenical Councils
 - Nicaea
 - Constantinople
 - Ephesus
- The Sayings of the Early Fathers (Patristic)
- The Sacraments

Definition

- “Pater” → “Father.” from the apostolic ERA to the 7th century
- The study of the life, acts, writings, sayings, doctrines and thoughts of the Orthodox writers of the early Church
- Why “Fathers”..it means Teacher or experienced one, like O.T.Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

- When a man learns from the mouth of another , it is said the son of the person who teaches him, the latter is called his Father” St. Iraneus”
- The speech is the son of the soul , therefore we call those who teach us our Fathers” St.Clement of Alexandria
- So they were disciples of the Apostles

- “remember those who rule over you , who spoken the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct”(Hebrew 13:7)
- (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- **How patristic work was preserved:**
- Each one had also disciples who wrote everything from their masters in their diaries.

- Some believers recorded their sermons
- School of Alexandria attracted many church leaders who transferred their literature to their churches.
- Papyrus paper found in the National library of Berlin.
- Translation from Greek to Latin, Syrian and Ethiopian , spread it and saved it

- The Apostolic Fathers and their disciples were not concern about researches , or scholars works, or Theological studies ..but about living the Holy Gospel through a strong simple faith as it was lived during the early church and that preserved our faith and the unity of the church according to what they learned from eye witnesses , who received everything from the Lord himself.
- St. Jerome was the 1st writer of Patrology
- St. Athanasius wrote" the life of St.Anthony"

Qualifications of “Father”

- Participated in Christian Literature
 - discourses, dialogues, letters, sermons, commentaries on some books of the Scripture
- Orthodoxy of doctrine
- Holiness of Life
- Antiquity
 - Stopped at the 8th Century

- Categories of Fathers
- ***1-apostolic fathers*** (chosen by the apostles ,including:
 - -St.CLEMENT OF ROME
 - -ST.IGNATIUS
 - -ST.POLYCARP

- **2-DEFENDERS:**(THEY DEFENDED CHRISTIANITY AGAINST pagans IDOLATRY,JEWS,...)
- -ST.Athenagoras
- ST.IRANEOS
- **3-WORLD'S TEACHERS:**(INCLUDE)
- ST.ATHANASIUS ST.BASIL THE GREAT
- ST.CYRIL ST.GREGORY ST.JEROME
ST.JOHN(DAMASCUS) ST.AUGUSTINE

- **4-CONFESSORS** (DEFENDED CHRISIANITY AGAINST HERESIES WITHOUT SHADING BLOOD) INCLUDE
 - ST.DIOSCOROUS ST.SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH
- **5-MONASTIC Fathers**(established monasticism) st-Anthony
- St.Pachoum st.Macarius the great
- St.Shenouda the archimandrite

Classification of the Patristic writing

- TIME
- LANGUAGES
- PLACE
- THE MATERIAL

Classification of the Patristic writing Time

- 1-The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Their literature is very simple., from the disciples to 3rd century.
- 2-The Nicene :from 300 AD to 480 AD
- 3-The post Nicene:from 430 AD to 7th century.

Classification of the Patristic writing Language

- *The Greek* (Eastern) Fathers: the majority
 - Besides Coptic, Syriac, and Armenian
- ***1-from the East.*** (written in Greek)
- St.Basil st.Athanasius
- St.Gregory the theologian st.Cyril the great
- St.Dioscorus st.Sergerius of antioch
- St.John chrysostom

2-From the west(written in Latin)

St.Cyabrianous

St.Ambrose

st.Jerome

Classification of the Patristic writing Place

1. *The Egyptian Fathers*

1. School of Alexandria
2. Desert Fathers

2. The Antiochenes

3. The Cappadocian Fathers

4. The Latin Fathers

Classification of the Patristic writing Material

- Apologetic writings
- Biblical-exegetical writings
- Homilies and sermons
- Letters
- Liturgical works
- Christian poetry and songs
- Dialogues
- Ascetic writings
- Church canons
- Church history

Importance of Patrology

As Eastern church , we don't canonize saints or patristic fathers, but we study their work ,because of its spiritual benefits, rich in deep relation with God, defend our faith.

- Studying the Bible
- Dogmatic Life
- Comparative Theology
- Ecclesiastical Theology
- Sacramental Theology
- Church History
- Mariology (St. Mary's position in Church)
- Ascetic Writings
- Spiritual Theology
- Theology of Evangelism and Pastoral theology
- Ecumenism

Fathers' Writings in the First Three Centuries:

A) Apostolic Fathers

- 1) St Clement of Rome (102 AD) Letter to Corinthians (90 AD) Second Letter to Corinthians Two Letters to Virgins
- 2) St Ignatius of Antioch (107 AD) Seven Letters
- 3) St Polycarp, the Martyr (70-156 AD) Letter to Philippians
- 4) Papias Bishop of Hierapolis (130 AD) Explanation of our Lord's Sayings
- 5) Letter of Barnabas Anti-Jewish Epistle, "The End of First Century"
- 6) Didache "The End of the First Century"
- 7) The Shepherd of Hermas "The Second Century"

St. Clement of Rome

- Disciple of the Apostles St. Paul and St. Peter, big celebrity in early church
- Person, who was mentioned by St. Paul, as one of his faithful fellow workers in Philippi (Phil. 4:3).
- Was a Jewish slave, or a son of a Jewish slave, owned by Clemens, who freed him
- Was the 3rd bishop of Rome (92-101 AD)
- Martyred while in exile

St. Clement of Rome

THE LETTER OF ST. CLEMENT OF ROME

- The letter of St. Clement of Rome was the first writing of the Apostolic Fathers. Used O.T. a lot in his letters.
- It had a special position among the writings, life and worship of the early church.
- According to St. Irenaeus, it is a considerable epistle.
- In 170 A.D Dionysius of Corinth referred to an ancient tradition that for many years this epistle was read in the church, on the Lord's Day.
- Eusebius also states that it was common for it to be read in many churches.

there was a group of people against the clergy and thinking they are wiser than them and mislead many others , so he wrote his letters to them to talk about authority, humility , respect , and love

- He mentioned the Holy Trinity
- Necessity of faith for our salvation
- The unity of the church, based on mutual respect.
- The necessity of good deeds.
- The church loyalty to pray for those who lead us and asking God to guide them .

First Letter to the Corinthians

Written By St. Clement

■ **The Need of repentance:**

- *[Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God (the Father), which having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance for the whole world.] 7:4.*

■ **Confidence in God's promise:**

- *[Desiring, therefore that all His beloved should be partakers of repentance. He has, by His almighty will, established (these declarations concerning the benefits of repentance).] 8:5.*

■ **Confidence in God's gifts:**

- *[How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God!] 35:1.*

■ **Waiting for the promise of resurrection from the dead:**

- *[Having then this hope, let our souls be bound to him who is faithful in His promises, and just in His judgments.] 27:1.*

First Letter to the Corinthians

Written By St. Clement

- **Witness to God by our behavior:**

- *[Let testimony to our good deeds be borne by others, as it was in the case of our righteous forefathers] 30:7.*

- **Taking care of sinners:**

- *[Let us then also pray for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be given to them, so that they may submit, not unto us, but to the will of God. For in this way they shall secure a fruitful and perfect remembrance from us, with sympathy for them, both in our prayers to God, and our mention of them to the saints.] 56:1.*

- **Escaping from pride:**

- *[It is better for you that you should be found small and in an honorable place in the flock of Christ, rather than being highly exalted, and be casted out from His people.] 57:2.*

- **Offering unceasing thanksgiving to God:**

- *[Since we receive all these things from Him, we ought to give Him thanks for everything.] 38:4.*

St. Ignatius of Antioch

- 1- called "Theophoras"...bearer of God
- 2- born in Syria
- 3- the child that the Lord carried and offered him as an example of humility (matt.18:2-4)
- 4- he was a pagan and converted to christianity
- 5- became the 2nd Bishop of Antioch
- 6- the successor of St. Peter's follower
- Got Martyr in Rome, on his way he arrived at Smyrna and met with St. Polycarp who wanted to get his blessings and he gave him letters, and letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia. He went to Rome and lions attacked him alive and believers collected his relics and send them

St. Ignatius

- CHRIST THE SAVIOR :imp.of Eucharist , wrote 7 letters.
- SALVATION: feeling presence of the lord to live a Christian life.
- DEATH
 - Fear of death is a bondage to Satan. He who is united with Christ and becomes His disciple never fears death, but enjoys unity with life, immortality and incorruption
- THE CHURCH
 - The place of sacrifice
 - Community of love
 - Community of Singers of Hymns
- The Unity Of The Church
- Being in Christ ,everlasting life.
- Eucharist, the bread of life
- Baptism
- Martyrdom
- Witnesses to Christ
- Clergymen
- Primacy of Rome
- The Catholicity or Universality of the Church

- *St. POLYCARP of Smyrna*
- seems to have been the angel or Bishop of Smyrna who was commended above all the bishops of Asia by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Apocalypse, and the only one without a reproach. Our Savior encouraged him under his poverty, tribulation, and persecutions, especially the calumnies of the Jews, called him rich in grace, and promised him the crown of life by martyrdom (Revelation 2:8-10)
- Was a deacon...priest...bishop

- 1-He was born in 70 AD, from christian family
- 2-He was a disciple of the apostles ,st.John the Evangelist , who ordained him the Bishop of Smyrna before his exile to Patmos
- His letters to Phillipians, he complimented them on their strong faith that they received from St.Paul
- He warned them from the priest Valens and his wife,who acted like Ananias and Sapphira(greedy,fraud dishonest)

St. Polycarp

Bishop of Smyrna

- The practical faith, salvation
- Charity, clergy, duties of youth, virgins ,priests, couples, divinty nature and humanity nature of Christ.
- Taking care of the salvation of others
- He saw his pillow was on a fire ,so he knew he will be burn alive
- *"I have served Him eight-six years, and in no way He dealt unjustly with me; so how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"*