

**History of the Catholic Church**  
**The 11<sup>th</sup> Century: The Great Schism**

**Events:**

- 1001: Norsemen start their first settlement in Vinland, North America
- 1003: Robert II of France invades the Duchy of Burgundy which is eventually annexed by papal authority in 1016
- 1004: the library and university Dar Al-Hekma is established in Egypt
- 1018: the First Bulgarian Empire is conquered by the Byzantine Empire
- 1030: Stephen I of the Kingdom of Hungary defeats Conrad II of the Holy Roman Empire and gains the lands between the rivers Leitha and Fischa.
- 1042: The Normans establish Melfi as their capital in southern Italy
- 1043: the Byzantine Empire and the Kievan Rus Empire engage in a naval conflict before signing a peace treaty.
- 1044: Henry III of the Holy Roman Empire defeats the Kingdom of Hungary causing Hungary to be a vassal of the Holy Roman Empire.
- 1054: The Great Schism between East and West caused by the mutual excommunications.
- 1054: Astronomers observe a supernova that formed the Crab Nebula.
- 1056: Ferdinand I of Leon, King of Castille and King of Leon is crowned Imperator totius Hispaniae.
- 1071: The Byzantine Empire is defeated at the Battle of Manzikert ending three centuries of Byzantine military and economic golden age.
- 1074: The Seljuk Turks capture Ankara and Jerusalem
- 1075: Pope Gregory VII sparks the Investiture Conflict with King Henry IV by asserting his rights to name bishops.
- 1077: The Walk of Canossa: Henry IV pleads for forgiveness from Pope Gregory VII.
- 1079: The Franks start the Way of St. James in France and Spain.
- 1087: William II of England, son of William the Conqueror is crowned King of England
- 1088: The University of Bologna is established
- 1094: El Cid, the Spanish hero, conquers the Muslim city of Valencia
- 1095: Pope Urban II calls the First Crusade

1096: The University of Oxford holds its first lectures

1098: The birth of Hildegard of Bingen

1099: Siege of Jerusalem by Crusaders

1100: Henry I is crowned King of England

1100: On December 25, Baldwin of Boulogne is crowned the first king of Jerusalem

### **Politics:**

The 11<sup>th</sup> century is foundational for the Middle Ages and the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium. One of the central developments that will set the stage for the next 1000 years is the rise of the universities. The west is late to the intellectual game. For a few centuries China has been leading the charge in the intellectual realm. As rather peaceful compared to most of the countries of the world, China begins developing and perfecting the use of gunpowder. Similarly the Chinese begin to focus on histories, writing, moral development, and philosophies. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese develop the first astronomical clock. In the Middle East, the 11<sup>th</sup> century begins another intellectual revolution for the Islamic nations. Egypt builds its first university and the center of intellectual development for Islam. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century the great Islamic philosopher Avicenna begins his work and will greatly influence the great thinkers of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. In the west, scholasticism is about to reach its pinnacle. Universities are founded throughout Europe including the great University of Oxford and Bologna. Europe is on the cusp of its intellectual revolution.

In the midst of these great innovations and the rise of intellectualism, most of the world is still at war. The Holy Land is still occupied by Islamic forces who require fees for pilgrims who enter the Holy Land. By the mid-point of the century resentments are building from pilgrims feeling that they should not have to pay fees to enter the Holy Land. These sentiments fuel an anti-Islamic movement that spreads across Europe. New slogans claiming that the Muslims are destroying Christian shrines, defecating on altars, and abusing the dignity of the Holy Land emerge as a catalyst for the Crusades which come at the end of this century.

The Byzantine Empire is caught in many different conflicts. The most prominent of these conflicts is with the Arabs who control Jerusalem and Palestine. Although the Arabs are not directly attacking Byzantium, more forces are on the move to expand the Empire. Two major forces directly affect the Byzantine/Arab relationship. The most prominent is the loss of the territory that once belonged to the Byzantine Empire. The second influence is the advance of Arabic troops into Constantinople and the need for military aid. In addition to conflicts with the Arabs, the Byzantines are also at war with the Bulgarians once again. The peace treaty and the exceptionally bloody war of the 10<sup>th</sup> century didn't curb their expansionist sentiments. Instead, they engage the Bulgarians again in another major war this time successfully conquering the Bulgarians. Following the war with Bulgaria, the Byzantines turn on Kievan Rus in a stalemate naval battle. Basically, the Byzantine Empire is fighting with everyone who shares a border with them. Part of the impetuous for war was that the Byzantine Empire was in the midst of a militaristic and economic golden age. This golden age gave them the strength and courage to

engage with these nations for the hopes of territory expansion and a return to the glorious age when Byzantium controlled the east. By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century that golden age had ended and a new age dawned. The conflicts with the Arabs, mentioned earlier, will pinnacle shortly after the turn of the century leading to one of the most unfortunate ages in church history: the crusades.

While engaged in conflict with Byzantium, both Kievan Rus and Bulgaria were at pinnacles for their empires. Bulgaria saw unprecedented strength and growth in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and was considered the most powerful Empire in Europe. That came to a sudden end with their defeat by the Byzantines. Kievan Rus, modern day Russia, remained peaceful throughout this century and was developing quickly as a nation. They stayed out of most conflicts and become very powerful.

In western Europe different types of conflicts arose. Spain saw the beginning of a unified kingdom and the start of the movement towards a culture and people. For most of European history Spain developed on its own, dealt with conflicts on its own, and was largely not involved in European affairs. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the main conflicts in Spain involved the Spaniards vs. the Muslims. Throughout the century skirmishes and minor battles were common. The main advancement was the unification of Kingdoms of Leon and Castile into the one unified Hispaniola Empire. Off to the east of Spain, Portugal was in formation this century and beginning its movement towards independence.

The Germanic nation controlled the papacy and the church at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Following the work of King Otto I, the German Empire named popes, bishops, and priests, dictated the functioning of the church, and controlled Europe, except France. The German Empire was strong. This all came crashing down with the election of Pope Leo III. Although everyone approved his election as pope, and I mean everyone, he showed his true intentions quickly after his coronation. Pope Leo III wanted the church back and the church to exercise her right authority. With the election and nomination of the pope, bishops, and priest now back in the hands of the church, the Germanic Empire was shocked into acquiescence with Pope Leo. The Frankish Empire was not so complacent. Pope Gregory VII promulgated his famous decree *Dictatus papae*, which reaffirmed the rights of the Pope to name and invest bishops. King Henry IV fought back claiming his historical rights to invest bishops. In response Pope Gregory excommunicated King Henry. Realizing his error and the need for papal approval, King Henry came to the pope walking on his knees in what is called the Walk of Canossa named after the town of Canossa. Through this show of fealty and penance, Pope Gregory lifted the excommunication.

Other notable events of the 11<sup>th</sup> century include. The Norseman (Vikings) reach the Americas and setting at Vinland. The country of England is engaged in many battles leading to some of the greatest kings in English history, William the Conqueror and his son William II. In southern Italy, the Normans conquer Sicily and begin to form their Empire to the south. The Islamic nations are still expanding with hopes of conquering Persia but were unsuccessful. Normandy is in conflict with France, although the conflict remains largely unresolved.

## **The Church:**

The 11<sup>th</sup> century is one of the most dynamic, influential, and devastating centuries in church history. The century begins the century with the horrors of the 10<sup>th</sup> century with fights over who controls the pope, the investiture conflict, and Christianity facing a massive decline in morality and spiritual vigor. We cannot, however, dismiss some of the major innovations and challenges of the 10<sup>th</sup> century as they shape life in the 11<sup>th</sup>.

From the perspective of the average Christian of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the major issues that plagued the common person was largely the same. With bishops and priests enmeshed in the feudal system and lacking religious vigor, the people largely ignored their own calling as Christian people. The main questions that plagued them were not new. Why are we baptizing children when they don't have a choice or say in Christian life? This question was already settled by emphasizing the necessity of baptism and the novel idea of personal holiness which will greatly affect the church of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Following closely with the idea of infant baptism was the issue of adult baptism. With the Germans expanding their lands and Christianity reaching new parts of Europe, other groups of people came in contact with Christianity and wanted to convert. Similarly, some people who were considered heretics of the previous century had changed their ways and came back to the Christian faith. How does the Church respond to adult baptism? Oddly, this issue should have been a non-issue. The idea of adult baptism was the most common form of baptism for many centuries of the Church. Regardless, the advent of adults, in a largely Christian world, who wanted to be baptized began a new wave of fervor to evangelize Europe and bring more people into the Church.

This new wave of fervor towards evangelization had serious consequences in Church relations with other societies and religions. From the dawn of Christianity, the people were not keen on foreigners nor had the Church developed any language or concern for interreligious dialogue or the modern word ecumenism. Conversely, the other religions had been at best at odds with Christianity at worse at war with the faith. Therefore the relationship between Christianity and any other religion was one of animosity. This new wave of adults from other faiths or religions seeking baptism sparked a new desire to evangelize non-Christian lands and convert groups of people like the Muslims, which will become more prominent at the end of the century.

The Cluniac reforms that begin in 909 with the foundation of Cluny had massive impacts on the Church. Although the first 50 years of the 11<sup>th</sup> century functioned largely like the 10<sup>th</sup>, one major figure was put on the stage who changed the shape of the Church: Leo IX. When Emperor Otto I returned after being named Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII, he came to reform the papacy. With Pope John XII fleeing into exile, Otto took the opportunity to make the papacy and the Church his possession. For the next 50 years the Germans controlled the papacy, the Church, and the empire. From the German throne, King Otto elected his own priests, bishops, and even popes. He controlled the moral framework and the interworking of the Church. King Otto controlled everything. In the midst of Germanic control, Pope Damasus II died. Bruno, a monk from Cluny, was elected Damasus' successor. Although approved by the Emperor and the Roman delegates, he desired an honest election by the Church. Hence, he went to Rome for a formal election, which elected him Pope. He took the name Leo IX. Pope Leo IX was heavily

involved in the Cluniac reforms and wanted those reforms to become the standard practice of the Church. Pope Leo could have been successful in his reforms. The Emperor backed his election and was tolerant of his reforms, the church was already moving that direction, and he has some level of papal power.

In the midst of Pope Leo's reform movement a series of controversies arose between Constantinople and Rome. These controversies are not new nor are controversies between the two most powerful churches, church leaders, and empires new. Recall the issues of the 9<sup>th</sup> century between Pope Nicholas and Patriarch Photius over the filioque (and the son) addition to the Nicene Creed. Ever since the 4<sup>th</sup> century with the Council of Nicaea issues like the filioque have continually wedged the churches further apart. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century with Nicolas and Photius, these two church were truly independent: independent liturgies, leadership, historical progress, sense of church. The divisions are vast. A new series of controversies arose during the pontificate of Leo IX. For most of us today these issues seem minor like the date of Easter. For the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they were earthshattering. The first major debate centered on the use of leaven in the bread used for the Eucharist. Since at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Latin church has always used unleavened bread with the understanding that Jesus would have used unleavened bread at the Last Supper since it was Passover. The Eastern churches had always used leavened bread to represent resurrection and believed that unleavened bread was not bread. Theologians from both sides chimed on this debate leading to less than stellar theological arguments. The Latin scholars said that leaven was like sin being added to the bread. The Greeks stated the unleavened bread was not truly bread and therefore deviates from Jesus' teaching.

#### The Schism of 1054

If leaven in the bread was the only controversy, the 11<sup>th</sup> century would have ended on a very different note. Instead, the controversies continued with the issue of papal authority. The Greek patriarch and the emperor of the Byzantine Empire were fighting vigorously that the Pope had overextended his authority in church matters and declared himself something he was not. Following from Boniface VIII in 706, the popes have worked to declared themselves universal sovereign of the Church. The arguments between the two church showcase the language and thoughts of this time. Here are a few quotes to emphasize the issues: "If one primate is called 'universal' the honour of the title is diminished for others." The Latin church commenting of the Greek use of the title "Ecumenical Patriarch" said "it [is] a novel form of pride which was disturbing the bowels of the whole church." (The Church in the Middle Ages, Evans 93). Nevertheless the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome became the hot button issue that caused massive issues. Notice, however, that Pope Leo IX is the first pope since Nicolas I in 850 to reclaim the power and authority of the pope. After almost 200 years of decline in papacy authority and respect, the tides are turning.

Furthering the dispute were the individual nations who took sides in this dispute. The Greeks in Constantinople began to refuse the Eucharist to those who were in the Latin church who previous could receive Communion. In response the Norman, who had conquered some Greek lands years before, denied Communion to the Greek churches in their lands and imposed the Latin church on their people. Now both sides are entering the realm of excommunication.

The issues between the east and the west were heating up to a feverous pitch. Pope Leo IX sent a delegation to Constantinople with hopes of resolving this dispute. Cardinal Humbert is the primary man of the delegation sent from Rome. Humbert was a man of law. He took a hardline stance on anything to do with church practice, law, and theology. Later, during the reforms of the next papacy, he will advise the pope to laicize any priest or bishop who is morally compromised by their actions. A stance the pope did not approve. Nevertheless, the delegation was sent with a very authoritarian, strict, and legal man. From here the whole attempt at reconciliation only got worse. The delegation first met with the emperor who didn't inform the patriarch that the delegation arrived. Now determined to make their points, the theological arguments began, got mistranslated and confused by language, and tensions continued to rise. By the time the delegation reached the patriarch, arguments and issues were flaring. The Patriarch was convinced that the papal decree was a forgery that was edited along route. The central problem, Pope Leo had died while the delegation was in route. Now with the pope dead, his delegated on their own in Constantinople, and tensions flaring to a feverous pitch, the final nail was pounded into the coffin. In 1054 Cardinal Humbert wrote a decree of excommunication for the Greek church and put it on the altar in Hagia Sofia. Let the battle begin. Now both sides were embroiled in a theological battle to prove their points. Anathemas were sent from the Greek church against the Latin church condemning them of heresies and providing the second excommunication from the Greek church to the Latin church. The tensions finally ebbed when the Roman delegation left having completed their work and successfully divided the two churches until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Over 1000 years will pass before reconciliation becomes possible again.

### The Gregorian Reforms

The next pope to take the throne is Pope Gregory VII, hailed as one of the greatest popes in history. He was the secretary for the last five popes and a close advisor to Pope Leo IX. Formerly a monk of Cluny and one of those priests tasked with advancing the reforms of Pope Leo IX, he was ready to see those reforms take effect in the Church. Pope Gregory saw the church as a monastery with the pope as the abbot and the people as the dutiful and obedient monks. This image would dominate his reform efforts, later called the Gregorian Reform.

The most significant part of the Gregorian reforms is the restating of the sole right of the Church to invest the pope, bishops, and priests. To emphasize his point, Pope Gregory promulgated the papal bull *Dictatus papae* to emphasize the right of the church in investing bishops. The kings of Europe were not pleased by this decree. King Henry IV tried to fight against it and received an excommunication. King Henry appealed to Pope Gregory by coming to him to beg forgiveness. This will be the last time in church history that a king will beg the pope for forgiveness. This example shows the incredible amount of change that the church experienced over this century. From completely losing all authority or naming and investing bishops to the submission of a king to church authority.

The second part of the Gregorian reform, which is often overlooked, is the formation of the College of Cardinals. When Pope Gregory took command of the Church, he did so in a way completely different from his predecessors. Following from his role model and the instigators of these reforms, Pope Leo IX, he called three bishops who were close friends and instrumental in

the reforms. From these three bishops, he would continue to name bishops as advisors. By the end of his pontificate, Pope Gregory would require that the election of the next pope be confined to the this group of bishops, later called Cardinals. Thus Pope Gregory took the election of the pope out of the scheming of the aristocratic families of Italy, out of the hands of the kings of Europe, and put squarely in the hands of the Church. In addition to clarifying the leadership of Rome, Pope Gregory called for the creation of a code of laws for the church known as the Code of Canon Law. The full code would not be completed for another century but the preliminary work would be completed in this century.

Pope Gregory envisioned the Church as a monastery with the pope as abbot and the people as the monks. With this image in mind, he reformed the moral life of the clergy and the spiritual life of the people. He standardized the form of the Mass and required that one form of the Mass to be celebrated across the church. He then imposed penalties as well as encouraged the moral life and the spiritual life of clergy trying to remove them from the clutches of feudalism. His main proponent, Cardinal Humbert, had his own way of dealing with these wayward bishops and priests. Humbert recommended to Pope Gregory that he remove from the clerical state any bishop or priest found in immoral living. Pope Gregory worked to soften Humbert from such a harsh stance and worked to reform the clergy.

#### The Crusades:

One of the most devastating events in Church history begins to unfold at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century: the Crusades. Largely we understand the Crusades as isolated events or an event caused by great fervor. Neither is entirely true. The Crusades are a complex series of many events that span several centuries and involved hundreds of pivotal players. The beginning of the movement towards the Crusades begun about half way through this century. Pilgrims headed to the Holy Land were grieved by the fees they had to pay to see their holy sites. Their grievances led to an anti-Muslim sentiment that grew throughout the century. By the end of the century this sentiment had grown enough that people were willing to fight and reclaim the holy land as their own and to take it from the heathens. Remember: the people of Europe are largely xenophobic. Anyone who is not Christian was considered a threat to the good of the Church or a source for missionary work and conversion. Even the Muslims were not immune from these sentiments.

The first attempt for a crusade came during the pontificate of Pope Gregory VII. The Patriarch of Constantinople had requested aid in fighting the Arabic forces and working to reclaim Jerusalem. Being already in a conflict with King Henry over the issue of investiture, Pope Gregory was largely unsuccessful at gaining the necessary support for the crusade. His successor, Urban II, was highly encouraged by both the Patriarch of Constantinople as well as King Henry to support this campaign. Pope Urban went throughout the European world preaching the necessity and importance of the Crusade. His main logic focused on reclaiming the Holy Land and making it safe for pilgrims. Within this noble cause was many less noble methods of influencing the people. One of the main methods the pope used for encouraging people to rise to this occasion and take back the Holy Land was indulgences.

The Church has always understood the role of the Pope to be both spiritual and temporal. The temporal authority of the pope related to his ability to rule and his status as king. We have seen throughout the centuries that the pope gives the temporal rule of a king to the king showing that the ability to rule temporal affairs comes from God. The spiritual realm was best understood as the right to govern the Church. This governance includes liturgy, prayer, governance over bishops, priests, religious, and the people. The more accurate understanding of the spiritual rule of the power relates to his ability to open the gates of heaven and to call down graces from Heaven. As Jesus' vicar on earth, the pope has the ability to declare actions sinful, pronounce penalties for sin, teach on morality, and to govern over the graces God gives to the world. The main form of these graces governed by the pope are indulgences. Indulgences are actions performed by the people and approved by the pope that remit the temporal punishment due to sin. During Pope Urban's preaching on the crusade, he opened a new avenue for indulgences to those who would fight in the crusade. Namely, anyone who took up arms and fought in the crusade would be freed from the punishment due to the sins they have committed and if they died in combat while reclaiming the Holy Land, then they would go to Heaven. Although this greatly encouraged huge numbers of men to take up the call to fight in the crusade, it was not their only motivating factor. Other factors lingered in the darkness of their conscience. One of the largest contributing factors to people taking up the call was the promise of riches and land. Whenever someone conquers a land, they can take back the spoils as bounty. Thus many people were lured by the riches promised in reclaiming the Holy Land. Another common reason was the hope of gaining a chunk of land. As poor peasant farmers, the lure of luxury, land, and knighthood greatly impacted their desire to fight. Although we may like to think of the Crusades as a noble cause, many still fought for ulterior motives.

Nevertheless, Pope Urban II was successful in creating a large army to send to Constantinople to help fight the war against the Arabs and take back the Holy Land. About 60,000 troops marched across Europe with the hopes of glory and honor for the Christian faith. Keep in mind this band of men was not well organized neither was their journey. Poorly provisioned for their route, they would buy from local towns or steal if necessary. Despite such a large group of soldiers, few major skirmishes broke out as they traveled east. Eventually they arrived in Constantinople in 1096. Emperor Alexius required the crusaders to swear an oath of allegiance to the emperor that they would return any reclaimed lands and goods. Reluctantly and with a great bribe by the emperor, they took the oaths. Marching east and south, the crusading army began to reclaim land from Nicaea, Antioch, and then Jerusalem. Stories of the time relate that the crusaders didn't care who they killed, Jews and Muslims alike, and walked into the Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher covered in blood. Instead of fully returning these lands to the emperor as they had sworn, the crusaders made these lands into crusader city states. Thus Jerusalem came under western rule for the first time in its history and would remain under western rule for 100 years. The rest of the chronicles of the crusades are coming in the next two centuries.

### **Key Figures:**

St Anselm:



Anselm was born in 1033 and grew up rather indifferent towards religion. At the age of 15 he desired to enter the monastery. Since his father refused to let him enter the monastery, he waited 12 years while exploring earthly goods. Eventually God won out and he entered the monastery. He was elected prior 3 years later and abbot 15 years after that. Anselm was a gifted thinker and created some of the most influential texts of the scholastic era giving him the title "Father of Scholasticism." His major work focused on the nature of God and his most prominent proof for the existence of God called the Ontological Proof: "God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived." He was later named Archbishop of Canterbury at the age of 60. Since the reforms of the pope did not sit well with the king, he was exiled until the death of King Rufus. Anselm was called to Rome during the pontificate of Gregory VII to write a treatise on the theology of the western church to be sent to Constantinople during the feuds of the 1050's.

### St. Gregory VII

Although we know little of his earlier life, Hildebrand (the name he was given before becoming pope) was a monk who was called to Rome to help Pope Leo IX initiate his reforms. He grew up in Tuscany, Italy where he was the son of a blacksmith. Following the death of Alexander II, as the church was mourning the death of the pope, a loud cry arose saying "Hildebrand for pope!" Fearing for himself and the unorthodox way of electing a pope, he fled to a monastery. Later he was acclaimed pope by acclamation, one of the few popes in history to have this type of election. Hildebrand was named pope and continued to advance the reforms of Leo IX which eventually took his name and were called the Gregorian Reforms. Pope Gregory is named one of the greatest popes in history for his work reforming the church. Including: helping end the investiture conflict, establishing east-west relations again, moral and spiritual reform of the church, and liturgical and legal reform. He began the Code of Canon Law, established the College of Cardinals, took the papacy out of the hands of the ruling authorities in Rome and put it back in the hands of the Church.

### St. Hildegard of Bingen

Although technically a saint of the 12<sup>th</sup> century since she was born in 1098, she spans both centuries. Hildegard was born into a noble family who put her into the care of Blessed Jutta. At the age of 18, she joined the Benedictine monastery. At the command of her spiritual director, she wrote down the visions she had been receiving since the age of 3. Inspired by her work, Pope Eugene III encouraged her to keep writing. Over her lifetime she would write books on music, plants, animals, medicine, theology, and spirituality. Her music has been persevered as well as most of her writings. Few understand the influence of this woman. During her lifetime, she advised at least three popes on issues of the church, became a major force in influencing a different type of spirituality, and showed the abilities of women even in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. As a feminist of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, she was criticized for her feast day parties and for allowing the nuns of her monastery to dress up on major feasts. She had a celebratory sense of her. Pope Francis named her a saint and doctor of the Church (the 4<sup>th</sup> woman with that title) in 2012.

Art:



St. Hildegard of Bingen

“Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of earth’s greenings. Now, think. What delight God gives to humankind with all these things . All nature is at the disposal of humankind. We are to work with it. For without we cannot survive.” – *Hildegard of Bingen*

“The earth which sustains humanity must not be injured. It must not be destroyed!” – *Hildegard of Bingen*

“You are the mountain and the valley.” – *Hildegard of Bingen*

”Holy Wisdom, Soaring Power, encompass us with wings unfurled, and carry us, encircling all, above, below, and through the world.“ – *Hildegard of Bingen*

“All living creatures are sparks from the radiation of God’s brilliance, emerging from God like the rays of the sun.“ – *Hildegard of Bingen*

“Love abounds in all things, excels from the depths to beyond the stars, is lovingly disposed to all things. She has given the king on high the kiss of peace.” – *Hildegard of Bingen*

“Like billowing clouds, Like the incessant gurgle of the brook The longing of the spirit can never be stilled.” – *Hildegard of Bingen*

St. Anselm of Cantuburry

“I do not endeavor, O Lord, to penetrate thy sublimity, for in no wise do I compare my understanding with that; but I long to understand in some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand.”

— Anselm of Canterbury, Proslogion

“For we affirm that the Divine nature is beyond doubt impassible, and that God cannot at all be brought down from his exaltation, nor toil in anything which he wishes to effect. But we say that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very man, one person in two natures, and two natures in one person. When, therefore, we speak of God as enduring any humiliation or infirmity, we do not refer to the majesty of that nature, which cannot suffer; but to the feebleness of the human constitution which he assumed. And so there remains no ground of objection against our faith. For in this way we intend no debasement of the Divine nature, but we teach that one person is both Divine and human. In the incarnation of God there is no lowering of the Deity; but the nature of man we believe to be exalted.”

— Anselm of Canterbury, Cur Deus Homo

“Teach me to seek You, and reveal Yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek You if You do not teach me how, nor find You unless You reveal Yourself.”  
— Anselm of Canterbury, The Major Works

## **The First Week of Lent**

*That one should not embrace and zealously observe the benefit of the fast only in the first week of Lent, but that the zealous must continue the same zeal in all the weeks of Lent.*

Brethren and fathers,

What we are about to say we ought to have addressed to your charity last Sunday. I was aware, however, that every one of us believers, together with the whole Christian people, both monks and laity, with fervent zeal accepts the blessing of fasting in the holy first week of Lent, and that each one of us willingly puts its yoke upon our neck (Sir. 51:26). Even among those who greatly despair of their own salvation and live their lives without fear and reverence for God there is no one who rejects the law of fasting in that week. Rather, as far as he is able, he joins with all in observing abstinence. So I come today to speak a few short words to you about the present season.

As we have said, all the faithful people spend the first week of Lent, which is now past, in a strenuous manner. But now that it has passed and Saturday has arrived, it falls to the lot of the Church of God to celebrate, in accordance with tradition, the feast of the great martyr Saint Theodore, or rather, the extraordinary act of salvation that God wrought through him for His most faithful people. Likewise on Sunday we all make commemoration of the Orthodox Faith and sing hymns of thanksgiving to God, who is all-good. But the evil one, who is always envious of goodness, secretly steals up on each of the faithful and invisibly puts on him the chains of slackness and carelessness. He persuades him to despise and reject the salutary yoke of fasting (*cf.* Ps. 2:3) and to return to his former habits. Therefore I remind you today and make my appeal to your charity, your paternity, that you do not in any way obey him who wills you ill. Do not be led astray by the bad habit of insatiable gluttony, nor turn back to the old habit of satisfaction of evil desires. Rather, let us keep this second week of Lent like the first, and likewise the remainder of the season.

## **Fasting as the Healer of the Soul**

Indeed, my fathers and brethren, let us act for our own good by so doing, and let us not allow ourselves to lose what we have gathered together in the past, but rather let us strive to add to it and increase it. Let us not miserably allow what we have built up in times past to be destroyed (*cf.* Gal. 2:18). Let each one of us keep in mind the benefit of fasting and what gifts from God he has enjoyed in these few days and so become more eager for the days to come. For this healer of our soul is effective, in the case of one to quieten the fevers and impulses of the flesh, in another to assuage bad temper, in yet another to drive away sleep, in another to stir up zeal, and in yet another to restore purity of mind and to set him free from evil thoughts. In one it will control his unbridled tongue and, as it were by a bit (Jas. 3:3, 8), restrain it by the fear of God and prevent it from uttering idle or corrupt words (Eph. 4:29; Mt. 12:36). In another it will invisibly guard his eyes and fix them on high instead of allowing them to roam hither and thither, and thus cause him to look on himself and teach him to be mindful of his own faults and shortcomings. Fasting gradually disperses and drives away spiritual darkness and the veil of sin that lies on the soul,

just as the sun dispels the mist. Fasting enables us spiritually to see that spiritual air in which Christ, the Sun who knows no setting, does not rise, but shines without ceasing. Fasting, aided by vigil, penetrates and softens hardness of heart. Where once were the vapors of drunkenness it causes fountains of compunction to spring forth. I beseech you, brethren, let each of us strive that this may happen in us! Once this happens we shall readily, with God's help, cleave through the whole sea of passions and pass through the waves of the temptations inflicted by the cruel tyrant, and so come to anchor in the port of impassibility.

### **Fasting as the Foundation of All Spiritual Activity**

My brethren, it is not possible for these things to come about in one day or one week! They will take much time, labor, and pain, in accordance with each man's attitude and willingness, according to the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3, 6) and one's contempt for the objects of sight and thought. In addition, it is also in accordance with the fervor of his ceaseless penitence and its constant working in the secret chamber of his heart (Mt. 6:6) that this is accomplished more quickly or more slowly by the gift and grace of God. But without fasting no one is was ever able to achieve any of these virtues or any others, for fasting is the beginning and foundation of every spiritual activity. Whatever you will build on this foundation cannot collapse or be destroyed, because they are built on solid rock. But if you remove this foundation and substitute for it a full stomach and improper desires, they will be undermined like sand by evil thoughts, and the whole structure of virtues will be destroyed (*cf.* Mt. 7:26; Lk. 6:49). To prevent this from happening in our case, my brethren, let us gladly stand on the solid foundation of fasting. Let us stand firmly, let us stand willingly! He who is compelled to climb the rock of fasting against his will cannot fail to be dragged down by his desire and thrown headlong into eating in secret. And so, as he nibbles, he becomes, I think, food for the evil one, for fasting is a divine law and those who presume to transgress it are seized by the devil, who flogs them like an executioner. If this does not happen immediately or quickly it is because God is patient with us and accepts our penitence. Yet we shall not altogether "escape His hand" (Tb. 13:12) either in this life or the world to come, if we persist in sin without repenting thereof. If we act in this way we shall share in the devil's condemnation, and at His hand and together with him we shall receive eternal punishments by the just judgment of God. We may be hidden from our superiors, yet we cannot be hidden from the Master and God of our superiors.

### **Fasting and Devotion**

Let us then beware, brethren, not only of eating in secret, but also of eating our fill from the dishes set before us on the table. Indeed I entreat you without ceasing to call to mind this sacred week that has passed. Take into account, as I have said, not only the benefit you have derived from fasting and vigil, from prayer and psalmody, but also your sorrow, your devotion, and your silence. At the time the monastery seemed to me to be uninhabited by man and inhabited only by angels, since I heard no worldly word but only the glorification we offered to God, which is also the work of angels. I believe that just as you fulfilled the function of the angels, so also the angels took their part with you and sang with you. Do not then allow yourselves to be separated from their company by much and idle talking, nor by disorderly voices or loud shouts, so that you cause the demons to come near you as in times past. Rather, let each man take heed to himself and carefully work at his handiwork and his appointed service, as rendering service to

the Lord and not to men (Eph. 6:8). For it is written, "Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness" (Jer. 48:10).

### **Mutual Invitation to the Spiritual Feast**

Brethren, fail not to encourage one another during the offices to listen carefully to the sacred readings. At a physical gathering we encourage and invite our neighbors to eat of it, and those whom we like best we constrain to eat. So at this banquet, which nourishes the soul, we have the obligation to encourage our neighbors to pay attention, lest we be condemned for failing in mutual love and lose our right to be Christ's disciples. For he says, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:35). At the physical banquet he who does not compel his friend to feast of it often does him the greatest service. At the spiritual feast, by which I mean the hearing of the oracles of God, he who acts in this way causes untold harm to those who are his neighbors. To fill oneself with physical food often causes harm and damage to both body and soul. On the contrary, the words spoken by the saints both enlighten the mind and sanctify the soul, and thereby impart sanctification even to the body itself and make it healthier and more vigorous.

### **How to Feed on the Words of Life**

Let everyone then pay attention to the reading (*cf.* 1 Tim. 4:13)! The words of the saints are words of God and not of men. Let him put them in his heart and keep them securely (*cf.* Lk. 2:19), since God's words are words of life (*cf.* Jn. 6:68) and he who has them within himself and keeps them has eternal life (Jn. 5:24). Were you often guests at a sumptuous banquet I doubt that any of you would be so indifferent that he would fall asleep and only take from it for his own need, and not be anxious before departing to take with him something for the morrow that he would eagerly share with some of his friends or even with the poor. But here the words of life are offered to you, which make those who feed on them immortal! Tell me, is it right for anyone to be inattentive or to fall asleep and snore as if he were a living corpse? How great the loss! How great the insensitivity and sluggishness! He who sits at table and has no desire for the food set before him is clearly lacking in physical health. So he who sits at the divine reading without unspeakable pleasure and spiritual desire, and fails to take immaterial and spiritual delight in the immaterial oracles of God and intellectually fill all his senses with their sweetness, is weak in the faith (*cf.* Rom. 4:19). He has never tasted the spiritual gifts; for in the midst of many good gifts he wastes away with hunger and thirst. Just as a corpse, when it is being washed with water, cannot feel it, so this man feels nothing when God's life-giving streams of His word flow over him.

You have the word of life in yourselves (*cf.* Phil. 2:16). You have come to be fed with this bread of the word (*cf.* Jn. 6:27); you are not dead, but have become living instead of dead. You have tasted of the true life and have obtained compassion for your neighbors (*cf.* Phil. 2:1; Col. 3:12) from God who is compassionate. Therefore do not fail to stir up, to encourage, to instruct your neighbors and all others, as best as you are able, as your own members, or rather, as those who are members of Christ and sons of God. Be anxious to educate them, reprove them, rebuke them (*cf.* 2 Tim. 4:2), not in order to cause them pain, but rather to deliver them from the Father's wrath and indignation. Your purpose is not to harm them, but rather to confer on them the

greatest benefits by preparing them to accomplish the things that their God and Father wills. If you act in this way and each of you stirs up his brother to increased effort of love and good works (Heb. 10:24). we shall quickly be lifted up to the summit of virtues and show ourselves to be fulfillers of the commandments of God. So shall we all together attain to the kingdom of heaven in Christ Himself, our God, to whom is due all glory forever and ever. Amen.

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