

1. Sacraments and their meaning in our church
2. reverence and worship of Mary and saints
3. who were the church fathers

Sacraments and their meaning in our church

Please provide your understanding of each of the 7 sacraments.

Baptism is grace from the Lord to cleanse a child of original sin. I think this concept is hoey and archaic and I try very hard to not teach about original sin. To me that is meat-on-Friday. I concentrate on the helping people to receive the grace of the Lord; an action taken by parents to commit themselves to raising the child to walk with Jesus. As for baptism of adults, the same premise applies. God gives an adult grace at Baptism. In doing so it is a sacrament which strengthens faith and leads that person to confirmation of their faith and to demonstrate their intention to live a life with God.

Communion - taking the body and blood of Jesus into your body and heart. You cannot do better than that to become closer to God.

Confirmation - a child at the age of reasoning (or an recently-enlightened adult) promises to stay on the path and to love God.

Matrimony - the sacrament of joining and commitment of two people before God. I wish the rest of the world would get out of the dark ages and recognize same-sex marriages. God loves all of his children and would never deny the sacraments. Why do churches think they can speak for God and change it to suit their own ends? Love and marriage are statements of faith for children to see that love and not hate is a better choice.

Ordination - Priests are ordained to serve God and to serve the people. They bring the sacraments to the faithful as the Apostles were sent to do after the resurrection of Jesus. A priest takes sacred vows and is publicly proclaimed by a bishop. The priest's hands are anointed so she or he may bring the Eucharist to the faithful. Priests teach from the Gospel and give absolution from God. Priests may baptize and also anoint the sick, bringing symbolic grace to those given the sacraments.

Reconciliation - to confess one's sins and be forgiven. Whether by private confession or within Mass, the sacrament is the same. Since few enjoy or subscribe to private confession, I favor the Reconciliation Service. A person may speak out, whisper or speak only in their mind. Absolution is given and the soul is cleansed. A penance may be severe or light but the point should be

dramatic in order to keep one on the path. Confession and forgiveness is re-learned each time and that it should be applied in our life and relationships with others.

Anointing the Sick & Unction (last rite)

Once more to bring God's grace, this sacrament strengthens one's faith in God during a time that life is threatened or when one is preparing for death. Confession and absolution should be part of the sacrament to help the injured one feel that their heart is clean and they are ready for their judgment day. For the family, this sacrament is a reinforcement of faith in God and unites all present in prayer.

reverence and worship of Mary and saints

Mary is the mother of Jesus as we know from the New Testament, and so is the "first of all the blessed." The blessed, or holy ones, are the saints. Mary bore Jesus and was his first follower, as we see at the Wedding Feast at Cana and Jesus' first public miracle. She was with him at the foot of the Cross and with the disciples in the locked Room after His Resurrection. These are all examples that we can follow on our own to Jesus. Mary shows us in her life that following Jesus is not always easy and may include much pain (seeing her son crucified). She was a human being who was born of human parents; she was married (to Joseph, a worker) and had a son, Jesus who is true God and true human. Because of her relationship with her son we believe that she continues to have a special relationship with Jesus and we can call upon her for aid as we do with other saints.

does not declare Mary to be born without sin (the Immaculate Conception), perpetual virgin though with child (the Virgin Mary), to be taken and soul into heaven upon her death (the Assumption, or "Dormition of Mary" to our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters), or to share the redeeming act with her son Jesus the Christ (as Co-Redemptrix). These are later traditions, titles, and honors that developed over the centuries out of great veneration of Mary in the church, but none of them are necessary for redemption and many of them biblically elusive. Belief in Mary's powers through her historical and religious titles is not necessary for salvation, though because of tradition we may dedicate missions to her or use these titles and honoraries on special days called feast days to remind ourselves of Mary as a powerful role model and her position as the Mother of Jesus and therefore Mother of God

there is no tradition in the Eastern Churches for the belief that the Holy Mother was born without original sin, although the Eastern tradition tends to the belief that she committed no voluntary sin during her lifetime.

The bodily assumption of the Blessed Mother is a reverent and pious tradition which many in the orthodox catholic churches respect. However, neither the Immaculate Conception nor the Bodily Assumption are recognized as dogmas, that is, required to be believed for our salvation.

What role does Mary have in the life of the Church? In your answer reflect upon the teaching of Mary's perpetual virginity.

My answer is philosophical but contrary to previous Roman Catholic teaching. Certainly the mother of Jesus is important beyond words. As the mother who bore Jesus and watched him die, she exhibited enormous strength. I think if you asked her she would agree that God is the one to pray to; pray to the Father for all the things you may pray for. She would likely have prayed as Jesus did, to God. Bless, honor and venerate the saints and the martyrs through the centuries; and bless Mother Mary. I do not concur that so much emphasis and worship should be given to Mary and so many other saints. I believe that too much focus elsewhere detracts from the message I preach; that the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and we the Holy Spirit are united by so much, does not include saints and the mother of Christ. We should follow the light of Jesus who prayed to God. We should honor his mother and respect the teachings of the church fathers and the Gospels regarding her immaculate conception and the virgin birth as miracles.

Who were the Church Fathers?

I mentioned Origen but there are hundreds of them and the various catholic sister churches do not all agree, the same as they do not agree on theology and doctrine. So this questions cannot be answered exactly.

The Fathers of the Church are so called because of their leadership in the early Church, especially in defending, expounding, and developing Catholic doctrines. For the first two centuries, most of these men were bishops, although in later years certain priests and deacons were also recognized as Fathers. Why are there no Church Mothers?

The list includes such notables as: Clement of Rome (d. A.D. 97), Ignatius (d. 110), Polycarp (d. 155), Justin Martyr (the Church's first major lay apologist; d. 165), Irenaeus (d. 202), Cyprian (d. 258), Athanasius (d. 373), Basil (d. 379), Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), Ambrose (d. 397), John Chrysostom (d. 407), Jerome (d. 420), Augustine (d. 430), Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), Pope Leo the Great (d. 461), and Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604). These royals and notables likely signed on to the movement or the group as they observed the popularity of ministers with "boots on the ground," to use a popular phrase.

The Church demands four major characteristics to be exhibited in the life and works of an early Church leader if he is to be considered a Father of the Church. These are antiquity, meaning that he lived before the eighth century (the death of St. John Damascene [cir. A.D. 750] is generally regarded as the close of the age of the Fathers); doctrinal orthodoxy; personal sanctity; and approval by the Church.

x.

Great Fathers[edit]

In each of Western and Eastern Christianity, four Fathers are called the "Great Church Fathers" as follows

Western Church: Ambrose (340-397), Jerome (347-420), Augustine (354-430) and Saint Gregory the Great (540-604)

Eastern Church: Basil (c.329-379), Athanasius (c.296-373), Gregory of Nazianzus (329-c.389) and John Chrysostom (347-407)

In the Roman Catholic Church these are also called the "Eight Doctors of the Church".

more:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/fathers/>

Here is the good stuff

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It is more important to know what proceeded the formation of the Church Fathers

It was British-born Flavius Constantinus (Constantine, originally (272-337) who authorized the compilation of the writings now called the New Testament. After the death of his father in 306, Constantine became King of Britain, Gaul and Spain, and then, after a series of victorious battles, Emperor of the Roman Empire. Christian historians give little or no hint of the turmoil of the times and suspend Constantine in the air, free of all human events happening around him. In truth, one of Constantine's main problems was the uncontrollable disorder amongst presbyters and their belief in numerous gods.

The majority of modern-day Christian writers suppress the truth about the development of their religion and conceal Constantine's efforts to curb the disreputable character of the presbyters who are now called "Church Fathers" (Catholic Encyclopedia, Farley ed., vol. xiv, pp. 370-1). They were "maddened", he said (Life of Constantine, attributed to Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea, c. 335, vol. iii, p. 171; The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, cited as N&PNF, attributed to St Ambrose, Rev. Prof. Roberts, DD, and Principal James Donaldson, LLD, editors, 1891, vol. iv, p. 467).

Constantine saw in this confused system of fragmented dogmas the opportunity to create a new and combined State religion, neutral in concept, and to protect it by law. When he conquered the East in 324 he sent his Spanish religious adviser, Osius of Córdoba, to Alexandria with letters to several bishops exhorting them to make peace among themselves. The mission failed and Constantine, probably at the suggestion of Osius, then issued a decree commanding all presbyters and their subordinates "be mounted on asses, mules and horses belonging to the public, and travel to the city of Nicaea" in the Roman province of Bithynia in Asia Minor.

They were instructed to bring with them the testimonies they orated to the rabble, "bound in leather" for protection during the long journey, and surrender them to Constantine upon arrival in Nicaea.

Thus, the first ecclesiastical gathering in history was summoned and is today known as the Council of Nicaea. It was a bizarre event that provided many details of early clerical thinking and presents a clear picture of the intellectual climate prevailing at the time. It was at this gathering that Christianity was born, and the ramifications of decisions made at the time are difficult to calculate.

About four years prior to chairing the Council, Constantine had been initiated into the religious order of Sol Invictus, one of the two thriving cults that regarded the Sun as the one and only Supreme God (the other was Mithraism). Because of his Sun worship, he instructed Eusebius to convene the first of three sittings on the summer solstice, 21 June 325 (and it was "held in a hall in Osius's palace")

In an account of the proceedings of the conclave of presbyters gathered at Nicaea, Sabinus, Bishop of Hereclea, who was in attendance, said, "Excepting Constantine himself and Eusebius Pamphilius, they were a set of illiterate, simple creatures who understood nothing"

Oriental Orthodox - In 451 a number of the faithful rejected dogma adopted by the Council of Chalcedon, choosing another path. The churches within the Oriental Orthodox include six churches: Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Eritrean Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Indian Orthodox Church) and the Armenian Apostolic churches.

The Second Council of Nicaea in 786-87 denounced the First Council of Nicaea as,

"a synod of fools and madmen" and sought to annul "decisions passed by men with troubled brains"

(History of the Christian Church, H. H. Milman, DD, 1871).

If one chooses to read the records of the Second Nicaean Council and notes references to "affrighted bishops" and the "soldiery" needed to "quell proceedings", the "fools and madmen" declaration is surely an example of the pot calling the kettle black.

Constantine died in 337 and his outgrowth of many now-called pagan beliefs into a new religious system brought many converts. Later Church writers made him "the great champion of Christianity" which he gave, "legal status as the religion of the Roman Empire"

NEXT WEEK

1. Definition of ESOTERIC
2. was Mary Magdalene the wife of Jesus?
3. why no more married priests?
4. historic purging of women from responsibilities and positions of leadership
5. Denigration of DOMINUS IESUS (JESUS) on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church

Definition of ESOTERIC

1 a : designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone <a body of esoteric legal doctrine — B. N. Cardozo> b : requiring or exhibiting knowledge that is restricted to a small group <esoteric terminology>; broadly : difficult to understand <esoteric subjects>

2

a : limited to a small circle <engaging in esoteric pursuits> b : private, confidential <an esoteric purpose>

3

: of special, rare, or unusual interest <esoteric building materials>

— es·o·ter·i·cal·ly adverb

See esoteric defined for English-language learners »

See esoteric defined for kids »

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es·o·ter·ic (s-trk)

adj.

1.

a. Intended for or understood by only a particular group: an esoteric cult. See Synonyms at mysterious.

b. Of or relating to that which is known by a restricted number of people.

2.

a. Confined to a small group: esoteric interests.

b. Not publicly disclosed; confidential.

[Greek esterikos, from ester, comparative of es, within; see en in Indo-European roots.]

eso·teri·cal·ly adv.

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esoteric [??s??t?r?k]

adj

1. restricted to or intended for an enlightened or initiated minority, esp because of abstruseness or obscurity an esoteric cult Compare exoteric
 2. difficult to understand; abstruse an esoteric statement
 3. not openly admitted; private esoteric aims
- [from Greek esterikos, from es?ter? inner]
esoterically adv
esotericism n

Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003

esoteric - Its root sense is "for the initiates of a religious mystery," and it means "confined to or understood by just a few people."

See also related terms for understood.

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ThesaurusLegend: Synonyms Related Words Antonyms

Adj. 1. esoteric - confined to and understandable by only an enlightened inner circle; "a compilation of esoteric philosophical theories"

private - confined to particular persons or groups or providing privacy; "a private place";

"private discussions"; "private lessons"; "a private club"; "a private secretary"; "private property"; "the former President is now a private citizen"; "public figures struggle to maintain a private life"

exoteric - suitable for the general public; "writings of an exoteric nature"

