

21 Centuries of Catholic Doctrine: APOSTOLIC TRADITION

As taught in the Church's historical writings, from the time of the Apostles down to today

circa 70 A.D. destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem

ca. 96 Pope Saint Clement I, fourth Bishop of Rome, disciple of the Apostles Peter and Paul, *Letter to the Corinthians*
—*Tradition (preaching) / Apostolic Succession*—

42:3 Receiving their instructions and being full of confidence on account of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and confirmed in faith by the word of God, [the Apostles] went forth in the complete assurance of the Holy Spirit, preaching the good news that the Kingdom of God is coming. 4 Through countryside and city they preached; and they appointed their earliest converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers. ...

44:1 Our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the office of bishop. 2 For this reason, therefore, having received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have already been mentioned, and afterwards added the further provision that, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.

ca. 100 death of Saint John, last of the Apostles

ca. 125 Mathetes, *Letter to Diognetus*
—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers) / (Apostolic Succession)*—

11 I am not speaking of things that are strange to me, nor is my undertaking unreasonable, for I have been a disciple of apostles, and now I am becoming a teacher of the Gentiles. ... [The Logos] is the eternal one, who today is accounted a Son, by whom the Church is made rich and grace is multiplied as it unfolds among the saints—the grace that gives understanding, makes mysteries plain, announces seasons, rejoices in believers, is given freely to seekers,

that is, to such as do not break the pledges of their faith, or go beyond the bounds set by the fathers. Then the reverence taught by the Law is hymned, and the grace given to the Prophets is recognized, and the faith of the Gospels is made secure, and the tradition of the apostles is maintained, and the grace of the Church exults.

ca. 130 Saint Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, disciple of the Apostle John, *Explanation of the Sayings of the Lord*
—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers, preaching)*—

I shall not hesitate to set down for you along with my interpretations whatever I learned well from the presbyters and recall clearly, being thoroughly confident of their truth. Unlike most people, I do not delight in those who talk a great deal, but in those who teach the truth; nor in those who relate the commandments of others, but in those who relate the commandments given by the Lord to the faith, and which are derived from Truth itself. And then too, when anyone came along who had been a follower of the presbyters, I would inquire about the presbyters' discourses: what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples; and what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. It did not seem to me that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from a living and abiding voice (Eusebius Pamphilus, *History of the Church* 3:39:3-4).

ca. 144 Pope Saint Pius I defends inspiration of books of the Bible against Marcion

ca. 156 martyrdom of Saint Polycarp, last of the Apostolic Fathers

ca. 185 Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, student of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna, *Against Heresies*

—*Tradition (preaching) / Apostolic Succession*—

1:10:2 As I said before, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although she is disseminated throughout the whole world, yet guarded it, as if she occupied but one house. She likewise believes these things just as if she had but one soul and one and the same heart; and harmoniously she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down, as if she possessed but one mouth. For, while the languages of the world are diverse, nevertheless, the authority of the tradition is one and the same.

Neither do the Churches among the Germans believe otherwise or have another tradition, nor do those among the Iberians, nor among the Celts, nor away in the East, nor in Egypt, nor in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But just as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere and enlightens all men who desire to come to a knowledge of truth. ... Nor will any of the rulers in the Churches, whatever his power of eloquence, teach otherwise, for no one is above the teacher (Mt 10:24; Lk 6:40); nor will he who is weak in speaking detract from the tradition. For the faith is one and the same, and cannot be amplified by one who is able to say much about it, nor can it be diminished by one who can say but little. ...

—*Apostolic Succession*—

3:3:1 It is possible, then, for everyone in every Church, who may wish to know the truth, to contemplate the tradition of the Apostles which has been made known throughout the whole world. And we are in a position to enumerate those who were instituted bishops by the Apostles, and their successors to our own times: men who neither knew nor taught anything like these heretics rave about. ...

3:3:2 But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the successions of all the Churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient

Church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, that Church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the Apostles. For with this Church, because of its superior origin, all Churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world; and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the Apostolic tradition. ...

3:3:3 The blessed Apostles [Peter and Paul], having founded and built up the Church [of Rome], they handed over the office of the episcopate to Linus. Paul makes mention of this Linus in the [Second] Epistle to Timothy (4:21). To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the Apostles, Clement was chosen for the episcopate. He had seen the blessed Apostles and was acquainted with them. It might be said that he still heard the echoes of the preaching of the Apostles, and had their traditions before his eyes. And not only he, for there were many still remaining who had been instructed by the Apostles. In the time of Clement, no small dissension having arisen among the brethren in Corinth, the Church in Rome sent a very strong letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace and renewing their faith. ... To this Clement, Evaristus succeeded; and Alexander succeeded Evaristus. Then, sixth after the Apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus, who also was gloriously martyred. Then Hyginus; after him, Pius; and after him, Anicetus. Soter succeeded Anicetus, and now, in the twelfth place after the Apostles, the lot of the episcopate has fallen to Eleutherus. In this order, and by the teaching of the Apostles handed down in the Church, the preaching of the truth has come down to us. ...

—*Scripture & Tradition*—

3:4:1 When, therefore, we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek among others the truth which is easily obtained from the Church. For the Apostles, like a rich man in a bank, deposited with her most copiously everything which pertains to the truth; and everyone whosoever wishes draws from her the drink of life (Rv 22:17). For she is the entrance to life, while all the rest are thieves and robbers. That is why it is surely necessary to avoid them, while cherishing with the utmost diligence the things pertaining to the Church, and to lay hold of the tradition of truth. What then? If there should be a dispute over some kind of question, ought we not have recourse to the

most ancient Churches in which the Apostles were familiar, and draw from them what is clear and certain in regard to that question? What if the Apostles had not in fact left writings to us? Would it not be necessary to follow the order of tradition, which was handed down to those to whom they entrusted the Churches?

...

—*Tradition (preaching)*—

3:24:1 The preaching of the Church truly continues without change and is everywhere the same, and has the testimony of the Prophets and the Apostles and all their disciples. ... In the Church, God has placed apostles, prophets and doctors, and all the other means through which the Spirit works (1 Cor 12:28); in all of which none have any part who do not conform to the Church. ... For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God, there the Church and every grace. The Spirit, however, is Truth. ...

—*Apostolic Succession*—

4:26:2 It is necessary to obey those who are the presbyters in the Church, those who, as we have shown, have succession from the Apostles; those who have received, with the succession of the episcopate, the sure charism of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father. But the rest, who have no part in the primitive succession and assemble wheresoever they will, must be held in suspicion.

ca. 200 **Tertullian, *The Demurrer Against the Heretics***

—*Scripture & Tradition*—

19:3 Wherever it shall be clear that the truth of the Christian discipline and faith are present, there also will be found the truth of the Scriptures and of their explanation, and of all the Christian traditions. ...

—*Scripture & Tradition (preaching) / Apostolic Succession*—

21:1 From this, then, we draw up our demurrer: if the Lord Jesus Christ sent the Apostles to preach, no others ought to be received except those appointed by Christ. 2 For no one knows the Father except the Son, and him to whom the Son gives a revelation (Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22). Nor does it seem that the Son has given revelation to any others than the Apostles, whom He sent forth to preach what He had revealed to them. 3 But what they preached, that is, what Christ had revealed to them—and here again I must enter a demurrer—can be

proved in no other way except through the same Churches which the Apostles founded, preaching in them themselves *viva voce* as they say, and afterwards by their Epistles. 4 If these things are so, then it follows that all doctrine which agrees with the apostolic Churches, those nurseries and original depositories of the faith, must be regarded as truth, and as undoubtedly constituting what the Churches received from God. 5 And indeed, every doctrine must be prejudged as false, if it smells of anything contrary to the truth of the Churches and of the Apostles of Christ and God. 6 It remains, then for us to demonstrate whether this doctrine of ours, of which we gave the rule above, accords with the tradition of the Apostles, in which case all other doctrines proceed from falsehood. 7 We communicate with the apostolic Churches because there is no diversity of doctrine: this is the witness of truth ...

28:1 Grant, then, that all have erred; that the Apostle was mistaken in bearing witness; that the Holy Spirit had no such consideration for any one Church as to lead it into truth, although He was sent for that purpose by Christ (Jn 14:26), who had asked the Father to make Him the Teacher of truth (Jn 15:26); that the Steward of god and Vicar of Christ [i.e., the Holy Spirit] neglected His office, and permitted the Churches for a time to understand otherwise and to believe otherwise than He Himself had preached through the Apostles: now, is it likely that so many and such great Churches should have gone astray into a unity of faith? ...

—*Apostolic Succession*—

32:1 Moreover, if there by any [heretic] bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, so that they might seem to have been handed down by the Apostles because they were from the time of the Apostles, we can say to them: let them show the origins of their Churches, let them unroll the order of their bishops, running down in succession from the beginning, so that their first bishop shall have for author and predecessor some one of the Apostles or of the apostolic men who continued steadfast with the Apostles. 2 For this is the way in which the apostolic Churches transmit their lists: like the Church of the Smyrnaeans, which records that Polycarp was placed there by John; like the Church of the Romans where Clement was ordained by Peter. In just the same way, the other Churches display those whom they have as sprouts from

the apostolic seed, having been established in the episcopate [i.e., having been given a bishop] by the Apostles.

32:4 Let the heretics invent something like it. After their blasphemies, what could be unlawful for them? 5 But even if they should contrive it, they will accomplish nothing; for their doctrine itself, when compared with that of the Apostles, will show by its own diversity and contrariety that it has for its author neither an Apostle nor an apostolic man. The Apostles would not have differed among themselves in teaching, nor would an apostolic man have taught contrary to the Apostles, unless those who were taught by the Apostles then preached otherwise.

32:6 Therefore, they will be challenged to meet this test even by those Churches which are of much later date—for they are being established daily—and whose founder is not from among the Apostles nor from among the apostolic men; for those which agree in the same faith are reckoned as apostolic on account of the blood ties in their doctrine. 7 Then let all heresies prove how they regard themselves as apostolic, when they are challenged by our Churches to meet either test [i.e., apostolic origin and apostolic doctrine]. 8 But in fact they are not apostolic, nor can they prove themselves to be what they are not. Neither are they received in peace and communion by the Churches which are in any way apostolic, since on account of their diverse belief they are in no way apostolic. ...

—*Scripture & Tradition / Apostolic Succession*—

37:1 These things being so, in order that we may be judged to have the truth,—we who walk in the rule which the Churches have handed down from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God,—admit that the reasonableness of our position is clear, defining as it does that heretics ought not to be allowed to challenge an appeal to the Scriptures, since we, without using Scripture, prove that they have nothing to do with the Scriptures. 2 If they are heretics, they cannot be Christians, because it is not from Christ that they have gotten what they pursue of their own choosing, and from which they incur the name heretic.

ca. 205 Saint Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* or *Miscellanies*

—*Tradition (preaching)*—

1:1 Now this work of mine in writing is not

artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men. ...

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers) / Apostolic Succession*—

Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it. For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from loss the blessed tradition.

ca. 211 *Tertullian falls into the Montanist heresy*

220-230 Origen, student of Clement of Alexandria, *The Fundamental Doctrines*

—*Apostolic Succession*—

1:Preface:2 Although there are many who believe that they themselves hold to the teachings of Christ, there are yet some among them who think differently from their predecessors. The teaching of the Church has indeed been handed down through an order of succession from the Apostles, and remains in the Churches even to the present time. That alone is to be believed as the truth which is in no way at variance with ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition.

300-325 Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, *History of the Church*

—*Apostolic Succession*—

3:2 After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Linus was the first to obtain the episcopate of the church of Rome. Paul mentions him, when writing to Timothy from Rome, in the salutation at the end of the epistle (2 Tm 4:21).

3:13 In the second year of [Vespasian's] reign, Linus, who had been bishop of the church of Rome for twelve years, delivered his office to Anencletus. ...

3:15 In the twelfth year of the [reign of Domitian] Clement succeeded Anencletus after the latter had been bishop of the church of Rome for twelve years. The apostle in his Epistle to the Philippians informs us that this Clement was his fellow-worker (Phil 4:3). ...

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

4:21:1 At that time [ca. 150] there flourished in the Church Hegesippus, whom we know from what has gone before, and Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, and another bishop, Pinytus of Crete, and besides these, Philip, and Apolinarius, and Melito, and Musanus, and Modestus, and finally, Irenaeus. From them has come down to us in writing, the sound and orthodox faith received from apostolic tradition.

ca. 307 Lactantius, *The Divine Institutions*
—*(Tradition)*—

4:30:11 It is, therefore, the Catholic Church alone which retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth; this, the domicile of faith; this, the temple of God.

313 *Edict of Milan, legalization of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire*

325 *Council of Nicaea formally defines the divinity of Christ*

341 Pope Saint Julius, 35th Bishop of Rome, *Letter to the Antiochians*

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

22 If, then, any such suspicion rested upon the bishop [Athanasius in Alexandria], notice of it ought to have been written to the Church [in Rome]. But now, after they have done as they pleased, they want to obtain our concurrence, although we never condemned [Athanasius]. Not thus are the constitutions of Paul, not thus the traditions of the Fathers. This is another form of procedure, and a novel practice. I beseech you, bear with me willingly; what I write about this is for the common good. For what we have received from the blessed Apostle Peter, these things I signify to you.

359-360 Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Doctor of the Church, *Four Letters to Serapion of Thmuis*

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers) / Apostolic Succession*—

1:28 But what is also to the point, let us note that the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, was preached by the Apostles, and was preserved by the Fathers. On this was the Church founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is nor any longer ought to be called a Christian.

374-377 Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia (Salamis), *Panárion or Panacea Against All Heresies*

—*Scripture & Tradition*—

61:6 It is not necessary that all the divine words

have an allegorical meaning. Consideration and perception is needed in order to know the meaning of the argument of each. It is needful also to make use of Tradition; for not everything can be gotten from Sacred Scripture. The holy Apostles handed down some things in the Scriptures, other things in Tradition.

375 Saint Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea, Doctor of the Church, *The Holy Spirit*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

27:66 Of the dogmas and kerygmas preserved in the Church, some we possess from written teaching and others we receive from the tradition of the Apostles, handed on to us in mystery. ... [T]he Apostles and Fathers who, in the beginning, prescribed the Church's rites, guarded in secrecy and silence the dignity of the mysteries; for that which is blabbed at random and in the public ear is no mystery at all. This is the reason for our handing on of unwritten precepts and practices: that the knowledge of our dogmas may not be neglected and held in contempt by the multitude through too great a familiarity. Dogma and kerygma are two distinct things. Dogma is observed in silence; kerygma is proclaimed to all the world.

382 Pope Saint Damasus, 37th Bishop of Rome, presiding over the Synod of Rome, *Decree of Damasus*

—*Tradition, first declaration of the complete canon of the Bible*—

2 It is likewise decreed: Now, indeed, we must treat of the divine Scriptures: what the universal Catholic Church accepts and what she must shun.

The list of the Old Testament begins Genesis, one book; Exodus, one book; Leviticus, one book; Numbers, one book; Deuteronomy, one book; Jesus Nave [i.e., Joshua], one book; of Judges, one book; Ruth, one book; of Kings, four books [i.e., 1, 2 Samuel; 1, 2 Kings]; Paralipomenon [i.e., Chronicles], two books; Psalms, one book; Solomon, three books; Proverbs, one book; Ecclesiastes, one book; Canticle of Canticles, one book; likewise Wisdom, one book; Ecclesiasticus [i.e., Sirach], one book.

Likewise, the list of the Prophets: Isaias, one book; Jeremias, one book [include Baruch], along with Cinoth [Baruch], that is, his Lamentations; Ezechiel, one book; Daniel, one book; Osee [Hosea], one book; Amos, one

book; Micheas [Micah], one book; Joel, one book; Abdias [Obadiah], one book; Jonas, one book; Nahum, one book; Habacuc, one book; Sophonias [Zephaniah], one book; Aggeus [Haggai], one book; Zacharias [Zechariah], one book; Malachias, one book.

Likewise, the order of the histories: Job, one book; Tobit, one book; Esdras, two books [Ezra and Nehemiah]; Esther, one book; Judith, one book; Maccabees, two books.

Likewise, the list of the Scriptures of the New and Eternal Testament, which the holy and Catholic Church receives: of the Gospels, one book according to Matthew, one book according to Mark, one book according to Luke, one book according to John. The Epistles of the Apostle Paul, fourteen in number: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Ephesians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the Galatians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, one to the Hebrews.

Likewise, one book of the Apocalypse of John. And the Acts of the Apostles, one book.

Likewise, the canonical Epistles, seven in number: of the Apostle Peter, two Epistles; of the Apostle James, one Epistle; of the Apostle John, one Epistle; of the other John, a Presbyter, two Epistles; of the Apostle Jude the Zealot, one Epistle. Thus concludes the canon of the New Testament.

ca. 400 Saint Augustine, *Letter to Januarius*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

54:1:1 But in regard to those observances which we carefully attend and which the whole world keeps, and which derive not from Scripture but from Tradition, we are given to understand that they are recommended and ordained to be kept, either by the Apostles themselves or by plenary councils, the authority of which is quite vital in the Church.

401 Saint Jerome, Doctor of the Church, *Apology Against the Books of Rufinus*

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

What sin have I committed in following the judgment of the churches? But when I repeat what the Jews say against the Story of Susanna (Dan 13) and the Hymn of the Three Children (Dan 3:24-90), and the fables of Bel and the Dragon (Dan 14), which are not contained in the Hebrew Bible, the man who makes this a charge against me proves himself to be a fool and a slanderer; for I explained not what I

thought but what they commonly say against us.

ca. 402 Saint John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Doctor of the Church, *Homilies on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*

—*Scripture & Tradition*—

4:2 [Paul commands:] “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our letter” (2 Thes 2:15). From this it is clear that they did not hand down everything by letter, but there is much also that was not written. Like that which was written, the unwritten too is worthy of belief. So let us regard the tradition of the Church also as worthy of belief. Is it a tradition? Seek no further.

431 Council of Ephesus formally defines Christ, one divine Person with two natures (divine and human); sanctions Marian title “Mother of God”

ca. 434 Saint Vincent of Lérins, *The Notebooks*

—*Scripture & Tradition*—

2:1 With great zeal and closest attention, therefore, I frequently inquired of many men, eminent for their holiness and doctrine, how I might, in a concise and, so to speak, general and ordinary way, distinguish the truth of the Catholic faith from the falsehood of heretical depravity. I received almost always the same answer from all of them, that if I or anyone else wanted to expose the frauds and escape the snares of the heretics who rise up, and to remain intact and in sound faith, it would be necessary, with the help of the Lord, to fortify that faith in a twofold manner: first, of course, by the authority of divine law [i.e., Scripture]; and then by the Tradition of the Catholic Church. 2 Here, perhaps, someone may ask: ‘If the canon of the Scriptures be perfect and in itself more than suffices for everything, why is it necessary that the authority of ecclesiastical interpretation be joined to it?’ Because, quite plainly, Sacred Scripture, by reason of its own depth, is not accepted by everyone as having one and the same meaning. The same passage is interpreted in one way by some, in another by others, so that it can almost appear as if there are as many opinions as there are men. Novatian explains a passage one way, Savellius in another, Donatus in another; Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius in another; Photinus, Apollinaris, Priscillian in another; Jovian, Pelagius, Caelestius in another; and afterwards in still another, Nestorius. And thus, because of so many distortions of such various errors, it is

highly necessary that the line of prophetic and apostolic interpretation be directed in accord with the norm of the ecclesiastical and Catholic meaning. 3 In the Catholic Church herself every care must be taken that we may hold fast to that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all. For this is, then, truly and properly Catholic. That is what the force and meaning of the name itself declares, a name that embraces all almost universally. This general rule will be correctly applied if we pursue universality, antiquity, and agreement. And we follow universality in this way, if we confess this one faith to be true, which is confessed by the whole Church throughout the whole world; antiquity, however, if we in no way depart from those interpretations which, it is clear, our holy predecessors and fathers solemnized; and likewise agreement, if, in this very antiquity, we adopt the definitions and theses of all or certainly of almost all priests and teachers. ...

9:14 To announce, therefore, to Catholic Christians something other than that which they have received has never been permitted, is nowhere permitted, and never will be permitted. And to anathematize those who announce anything other than that which has been received once and for all has never been unnecessary, is nowhere unnecessary, and never will be unnecessary.

529 Second Synod of Orange, *Canons*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

Conclusion. [T]hus according to the passages of holy scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows.

ca. 540 Saint Benedict of Nursia, *Rule*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

73 For what page, or what discourse, of Divine authority in the Old or the New Testament does not contain a most perfect rule for human life? Or what book of the holy Catholic Fathers does not tell us with the voice of a trumpet how by the right path we may come to our Creator?

636 death of Saint Isidore of Seville, last of the Western Fathers

680 Pope Saint Agatho, 79th Bishop of Rome, *Letter to the Emperor*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers) / Apostolic Succession*—

[H]ow could a knowledge of the Scriptures, in its fulness, be found unless what has been canonically defined by our holy and apostolic predecessors, and by the venerable five councils, we preserve in simplicity of heart, and without any distorting keep the faith come to us from the Fathers, always desirous and endeavouring to possess that one and chiefest good, viz.: that nothing be diminished from the things canonically defined, and that nothing be changed nor added thereto, but that those same things, both in words and sense, be guarded untouched? ...

And briefly we shall intimate to your divinely instructed Piety, what the strength of our Apostolic faith contains, which we have received through Apostolic tradition and through the tradition of the Apostolical pontiffs, and that of the five holy general synods, through which the foundations of Christ's Catholic Church have been strengthened and established ...

For this is the rule of the true faith, which this spiritual mother of your most tranquil empire, the Apostolic Church of Christ, has both in prosperity and in adversity always held and defended with energy; which, it will be proved, by the grace of Almighty God, has never erred from the path of the apostolic tradition, nor has she been depraved by yielding to heretical innovations, but from the beginning she has received the Christian faith from her founders, the princes of the Apostles of Christ, and remains undefiled unto the end, according to the divine promise of the Lord and Saviour himself, which he uttered in the holy Gospels to the prince of his disciples: saying, "Peter, Peter, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that (thy) faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Lk 22:31-32). Let your tranquil Clemency therefore consider, since it is the Lord and Saviour of all, whose faith it is, that promised that Peter's faith should not fail and exhorted him to strengthen his brethren, how it is known to all that the Apostolic pontiffs, the predecessors of my littleness, have always confidently done this very thing.

739 Pope Saint Gregory III, 90th Bishop of Rome, Letter to Boniface about the Organization of the Church in Bavaria
—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers) | Apostolic Succession*—

Bishop Vivilo was consecrated by us. If, however, he has deviated from orthodox teaching in any point, correct and instruct him according to the traditions of the Church of Rome, as you have learned from us.

ca. 749 *death of Saint John Damascene, last of the Eastern Fathers*

869-870 Fourth Council of Constantinople, eighth ecumenical council, Canons
—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

1 Therefore we declare that we are preserving and maintaining the canons which have been entrusted to the holy, catholic and apostolic church by the holy and renowned apostles, and by universal as well as local councils of orthodox [bishops], and even by any inspired father or teacher of the church. Consequently, we rule our own life and conduct by these canons and we decree that all those who have the rank of priests and all those who are described by the name of Christian are, by ecclesiastical law, included under the penalties and condemnations as well as, on the other hand, the absolutions and acquittals which have been imposed and defined by them. For Paul, the great apostle, openly urges us to preserve *the traditions* which we have received, *either by word or by letter*, of the saints who were famous in times past (2 Thes 2:15).

968 Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona, Report of His Mission to Constantinople
—*Scripture & Tradition*—

There was present also, with many bishops, the patriarch [of Constantinople]; in whose presence [Emperor Nicephorus] asked me many questions concerning the Holy Scriptures; which, the divine Spirit inspiring me, I expounded with elegance. And at last ... he asked me what synods we [the Western nations] recognized. ... I ... mentioned to him Nicea, Chalcedon, Ephesus, Carthage, Ancyra, Constantinople [T]he universal pope Gregory ... freed Eutychius the heretical patriarch of Constantinople from this heresy. This same Eutychius said, nor did he only say but taught, proclaimed and kept writing, that we would assume at the Resurrection not the true flesh which we have here, but a certain

fantastic flesh. The book containing this error was, in an orthodox manner, burned by Gregory. Ennodius, moreover, bishop of Pavia, was, on account of a certain other heresy, sent here, that is to Constantinople, by the Roman patriarch. He repressed it, and restored the orthodox catholic teaching.

1054 *Eastern Schism*

1075 Pope Saint Gregory VII, 157th Bishop of Rome, Letter to Emperor Henry IV
—*Tradition (teaching of the Fathers) | Apostolic Succession*—

[I]n those things through which the Christian faith and the state of the church chiefly progress towards eternal salvation, thou should'st not have denied the reverence due, not to us, but to God Almighty—disregarding the fact that the Lord saw fit to say to the apostles and their successors: “Who hears you, hears me; and who scorns you, scorns me” (Lk 10:16). For we know that he who does not refuse to show faithful obedience to God, does not scorn to observe our commands—even as if he had heard them from the lips of the apostle himself—and the things which, following the decrees of the holy fathers, we may have said. For if, out of reverence for the chair of Moses, the Lord ordered the apostles to observe whatever the scribes and Pharisees sitting above them should say (Mt 23:2-3): it is not to be doubted but that the apostolic and evangelic teaching, the seat and foundation of which is Christ, should be received—and observed—by the faithful with all veneration from the lips of those who have been chosen for the service of preaching.

1140 Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church, Letters

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

60:6 Similarly, God puts His grace before the eyes of all, and advises them in the Scriptures and by eminent doctors to avail themselves of their freedom of will to embrace this offered grace; certainly he who is prudent and provident for his future, acts according to his free will, in which he can embrace this grace.

1266-1272 Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, Summa Theologica

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

III: Q. 60: Art. 8: Reply to Obj. 1. It is not lawful to add anything to the words of Holy Scripture as regards the sense; but many words are added by Doctors by way of explanation of the

Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, it is not lawful to add even words to Holy Scripture as though such words were a part thereof, for this would amount to forgery.

1377-1378 Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, *Dialogue*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

85 [*God the Father*.:] By this light set in the mind's eye Thomas [Aquinas] saw me and there gained the light of great learning. Augustine, Jerome, and my other holy doctors, enlightened by Truth, understood and knew my Truth in the midst of darkness. I am referring to Holy Scripture, which seemed darksome because it was not understood. This was no fault of Scripture, but of the listener who failed to understand. So I sent these lamps so to enlighten the blind and dense understandings. They raised their mind's eye to know the truth in the midst of darkness, and I the fire ... carried them off and gave them light, not naturally but beyond all nature, and in the midst of darkness they received the light and so came to know the truth. ...

So you see, the eye of understanding has received a light beyond any natural light, infused by grace, and in this light the doctors and the other saints came to know the truth in the midst of darkness, and from the darkness light was made. For understanding existed before Scripture was formed; so learning came from understanding, for in seeing is discernment.

1442 Council of Florence, 17th ecumenical council, *Bull of Union with the Copts*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

[The holy Roman church] professes that one and the same God is the author of the old and the new Testament—that is, the law and the prophets, and the gospel—since the saints of both testaments spoke under the inspiration of the same Spirit. It accepts and venerates their books, whose titles are as follows.

Five books of Moses, namely Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, Esdras, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job, Psalms of David, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel; the twelve minor prophets, namely Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,

Zechariah, Malachi; two books of Maccabees; the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; fourteen letters of Paul, to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, two to the Thessalonians, to the Colossians, two to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two letters of Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Jude; Acts of the Apostles; Apocalypse of John. ...

After all these explanations the aforesaid abbot Andrew, in the name of the aforesaid patriarch and of himself and of all the Jacobites, receives and accepts with all devotion and reverence this most salutary synodal decree with all its chapters, declarations, definitions, traditions, precepts and statutes and all the doctrine contained therein, and also whatever the holy apostolic see and the Roman church holds and teaches. He also reverently accepts those doctors and holy fathers whom the Roman church approves, and he holds as rejected and condemned whatever persons and things the Roman church rejects and condemns, promising as a son of true obedience, in the name of the above persons, faithfully and always to obey the regulations and commands of the said apostolic see.

1517 *Martin Luther posts Ninety-five Theses at Wittenberg*

1538 *King Henry VIII breaks England away from the Church*

1545-1563 *Council of Trent formally defines various doctrines rejected by Luther*

1546 Council of Trent, 19th ecumenical council, fourth session, *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures*

—*Scripture & Tradition (preaching, teaching of the fathers)*—

The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of Trent,—lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the Same three legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein,—keeping this always in view, that, errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel), before promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the

unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety, and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. And it has thought it meet that a list of the sacred books be inserted in this decree, lest a doubt may arise in any one's mind, which are the books that are received by this Synod. They are as set down here below: of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses, to wit, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Josue, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, the first book of Esdras, and the second which is entitled Nehemias; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidical Psalter, consisting of a hundred and fifty psalms; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Jeremias, with Baruch; Ezechiel, Daniel; the twelve minor prophets, to wit, Osee [Hosea], Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas [Micah], Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias [Zephaniah], Aggaeus [Haggai], Zacharias, Malachias; two books of the Machabees, the first and the second. Of the New Testament: the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of Paul the apostle, (one) to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, (one) to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, (one) to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two of Peter the apostle, three of John the apostle, one of the apostle James, one of Jude the apostle, and the Apocalypse of John the apostle. But if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin vulgate edition; and knowingly and deliberately condemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema. Let all, therefore, understand, in what order, and in what manner, the said Synod, after having laid the foundation of the Confession of faith, will

proceed, and what testimonies and authorities it will mainly use in confirming dogmas, and in restoring morals in the Church.

1660 Saint Maria de Agreda, *The City of God: The Transfixion*

—*Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

1:9 The unshakable foundation of our justification, and the beginning of all holiness in men, is the belief in the truths, which have been revealed by God in his holy Church. Like a most skillful architect, the Lord has built his Church on a firm rock, in order that the storms and floods of her earthly course of existence might find Her altogether immovable (Lk 6:48). Thus wisely provided with a firm foundation in her articles of faith, the evangelical Church is invincibly established as the only true one, the Roman Catholic Church.

1758 Pope Clement XIII, 248th Bishop of Rome, *A Quo Die*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

12 [The clergymen] should have a knowledge of the Scriptures: "All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tm 3:16-17). They should go to both testaments of the Bible, to the traditions of the Church, and to the writings of the holy fathers, as if they were going to springs from which pours forth a pure and undefiled teaching of faith and character.

1854 Venerable Pope Pius IX, 255th Bishop of Rome, *Ineffabilis Deus*

—*Scripture & Tradition (teaching of the fathers)*—

[The Fathers of the Council of Trent] clearly signified that nothing could be reasonably cited from the Sacred Scriptures, from Tradition, or from the authority of the Fathers, which would in any way be opposed to so great a prerogative [i.e., the Immaculate Conception] of the Blessed Virgin.

1962-1965 Second Vatican Council defines the nature of the Church

1965 Second Vatican Council, 21st ecumenical council, *Dei Verbum*

—*Scripture & Tradition / Apostolic Succession*—

9 Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing

from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.

2003 Pope Saint John Paul the Great, 264th

Bishop of Rome, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*
—*Scripture & Tradition*—

60 At the dawn of this third millennium, we, the children of the Church, are called to undertake with renewed enthusiasm the journey of Christian living. As I wrote in my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, “it is not a matter of inventing a ‘new programme’. The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition; it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself

61 We are urged to [give the Eucharist the prominence it deserves] by an uninterrupted tradition, which from the first centuries on has found the Christian community ever vigilant in guarding this “treasure.” Inspired by love, the Church is anxious to hand on to future generations of Christians, without loss, her faith and teaching with regard to the mystery of the Eucharist.