


# Church History: Biblical Foundations

A decorative flourish consisting of a central gold-colored cross-like symbol with four points, flanked by two horizontal lines that taper to points.

Ministry Formation - Diocese of Rockford

# A Prayer Before Study

St. Thomas Aquinas



O God, Creator of all things, true source of light and wisdom, graciously let a ray of your light penetrate the darkness of my understanding. Give me a keen intellect, a retentive memory, and the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally. Give me the talent of being exact in my explanations and the ability to express myself with thoroughness and charm. Point out the beginning, direct the progress, and perfect my work. We ask you this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1



“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man **to make him share in his own blessed life**. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He **calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him** with all his strength. He **calls together all men**, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, **when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior**. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the **Holy Spirit**, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.”



# The Great Story - Salvation History

## *Creation and The Fall*

- ☞ The story of history is the story of **God's revelation of himself** in his creation
- ☞ **Our first parents** were created by God in a state of blessedness, sustained in goodness and in a right relationship with God
- ☞ When humans began to multiply on the earth and sin was rampant, God flooded the world and started over with a single family, that of **Noah**



## *The Divine Plan and Human Rebellion*



- ☞ God chose to create a universe, rooted in him and yet distinct from him, through which he could manifest his own perfections and glory
- ☞ They chose to rebel against God and declare independence.
- ☞ Would this solve the problem of sin? **No.** Noah and his family brought the problem with them.

# The Great Story, contd.



God chose a man named **Abraham** and promised to bring salvation to the earth through him and his descendants



A promise arises of a kingly line stemming from **David**



In the New Testament, we read the story of the coming of this promised



God gave them his moral law through **Moses**, and brought them into their own land. But they continually slid back into sin, and their sin led to terrible consequences



This line would culminate in a **King** who would be “God with us”, who would save us from our enemies by suffering for our sins, who would save his people Israel but would also be a light to the Gentiles and bring peace to all the earth



God himself became man, taking upon himself a human nature in addition to his divine nature—one Person with two natures. As both fully human and fully divine, **Jesus Christ** could do something no one else could do.

# The Church and Her Authority

## Christ's Foundation



Jesus came to earth to live, die, and rise for our salvation, but also to found a community. His influence continues through the people who are called the **Body of Christ**.



## Dual Nature

This Church has both a spiritual/invisible component and a temporal/tangible one. It is an “organic union” of grace and a “formal community”.



## Ecclesia – The Called-Out Ones

As an extension of His incarnation, the community is the “**Ecclesia**” (Greek for “**Church**”), meaning the “called-out ones”.



## Locus of Salvation & Hospital

It is the locus of salvation, possessing grace and the gospel, but it is also a “**hospital for sinners**”.

# The Church and Her Authority, Contd.

## The Apostles' Commission



Jesus appointed men to lead the Church under him, after his resurrection and ascension. The apostles were not to let the Church die with them.



## Apostolic Authority

He called these men “apostles”—“those who are sent.” He gave them authority to shepherd the people in his name—to teach, to rule, and to guide.



They were to form local churches as the gospel spread and appoint elders or bishops to rule over those churches.



She was given the authority and ability to do these things through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.



## Mission of the Body

The Church, as the Body of Christ on earth, was commissioned to be the means of conveying God’s grace and divine life to the world, as well as the official guardian, interpreter, transmitter, and applier of God’s revelation.

# The Transmission of Divine Revelation

## Revelation from God



God had given revelation to his people from the beginning. The culmination of revelation came in Jesus Christ.

## Scripture: The Written Word



This revelation came down through the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) and was written in the Scriptures. The priests were the authoritative interpreters.

## Tradition: The Lived Faith

The Word of God has also been passed down through the Church's teaching, preaching, liturgy and worship, actions, and in everything else the Church does and teaches. This second way is called Tradition, meaning "something handed down."



## The Church's Charge

Jesus revealed the fullness of the Word of God and gave it into the charge of the Church to convey down through the centuries.



# The Council of Jerusalem

Acts 15



## The Gentile Question

Should not the Gentiles be circumcised first according to the Law of Moses so they could be properly integrated into the Christian community by becoming Jews?



## The Apostolic Council

The Church called a council of Church leaders, consisting of the apostles and the elders/bishops.



## A Binding Conclusion

Guided by the Holy Spirit, they came to a conclusion which was then binding on the churches.

# The Role of St. Peter and his Successors in the Bishops of Rome:

When Jesus gave authority to the apostles, he singled out Peter to give him a **special authority**.

All the apostles were given the authority to bind and to loose, but to Peter in a singular and special way the **keys of the kingdom of heaven** were given.

Peter became the **guarantor of the unity and orthodoxy** of the Church.





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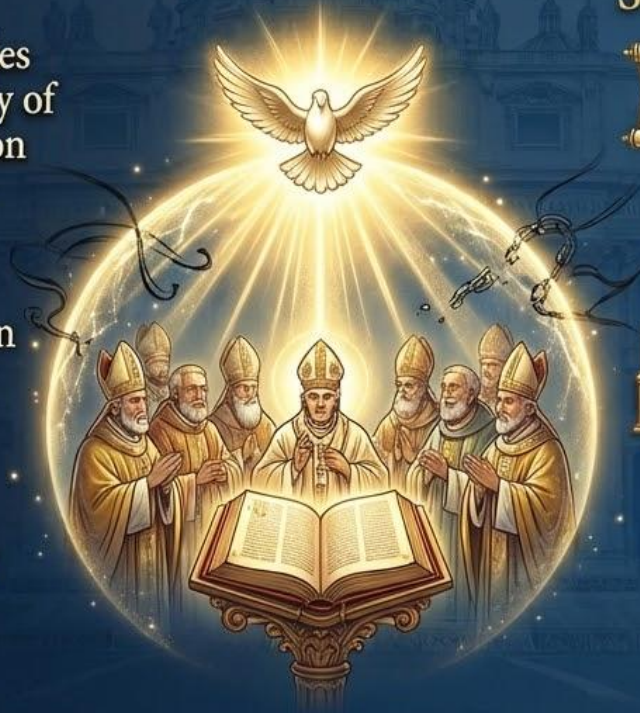


# Infallibility of the Church - protection from error in her teaching


## The Teaching Authority

 The teaching authority resides in the Magisterium: the body of bishops acting in communion with the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

 This gift of reliability is given to the body of bishops as a whole, and uniquely to the Pope as head of the Church, preventing them from teaching error in their official capacity.



## Scope & Exercise of the Gift

 God's gift ensures that doctrine on 'faith' or 'morals' is accurate. While individuals may err, the body of bishops as a whole cannot.



The Pope teaches definitively when formally defining a doctrine as dogma (*ex cathedra*) or affirming a doctrine as the definitive teaching of the Church.

# The Roman World



## Conquest & Empire

The Church was born into a world that was a mix of many different cultures.

- During the hundred years preceding the birth of Christ, the Romans had conquered the land of the Jews, and they had created a **Roman Empire cosmopolitan empire**.
- The Church grew immediately out of Judaism, but the Jews at this time were not independent. They had been conquered by the Greeks (**Hellenism**).



## Opportunity for the Gospel

The unity of the Roman Empire also created an opportunity for the spread of the gospel that was unique in the ancient world.

The unity brought by the Roman Empire created an international, pluralistic society.

- The Church would be influenced and challenged by all three of these cultures: Jewish, Greek, and Roman.



The sort of missionary journeys we read about in the **Book of Acts** would have been very different and much harder without the international infrastructure in place due to the Roman Empire.