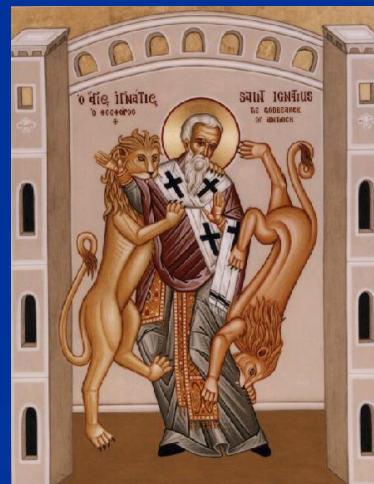
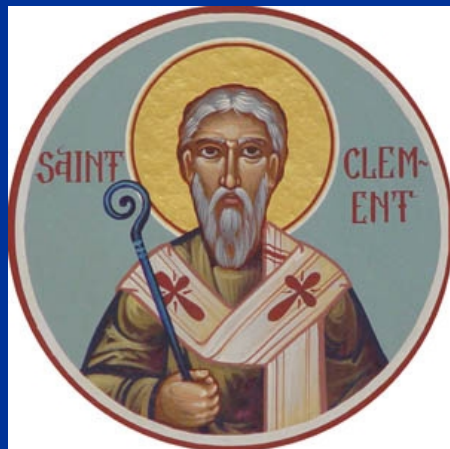
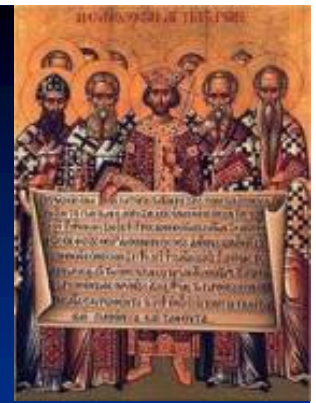


Introduction to Patrology and The Beginnings of Patristic Literature

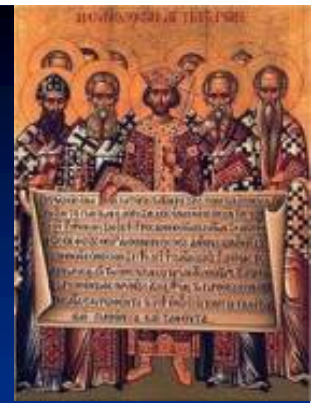


Concept of Patrology



- Definition:
 - Patrology is the study of the lives, acts, writings, sayings, doctrines and thoughts of the Fathers of the church
- A “Church Father” is someone who had a significant influence on the church, guiding Christians in the path of salvation
 - Predominantly bishops and priests, but includes those who wrote Christian literature, as well as leaders of the monastic life

Importance of Patrology



- The “knowledge” of God has not become more “advanced” over time
 - The early church fathers had a profound understanding of Christ that we can learn from
- Lives of the Fathers should affect our inner spiritual life - not a purely academic pursuit
- We are the church of Athanasius, Basil the Great, Augustine and John Chrysostom ...we should know what they said!



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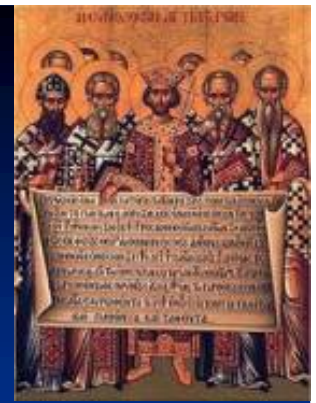
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Patrology Course



■ Pre-Servants 1:

1. Apostolic Fathers
2. School of Alexandria
3. St Athanasius
4. St Cyril

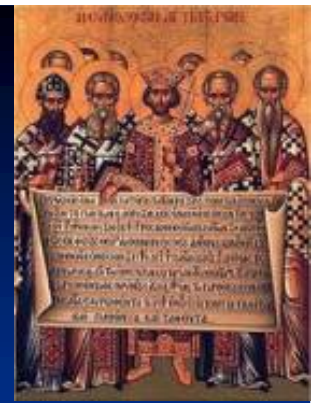
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2. St Augustine
3. St Basil the Great
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Beginnings of Patristic Literature

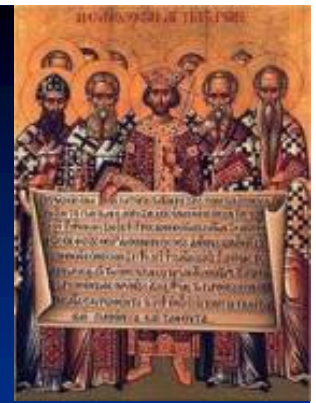
1. Early liturgical formulas and canons
 - The Apostles' creed
 - The Didache
2. Apostolic Fathers
 - Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Irenaeus of Lyons
3. Other Writings
 - “The Shepherd” of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Letter to Diognetus

Apostolic Fathers



- Definition - The disciples of the Apostles
- First generation to preach the Gospel of Christ without any having seen Jesus
- The Fathers of the 1st and 2nd century
- Their writings represent the faith they received through their direct contact with the disciples

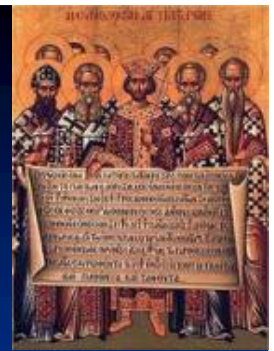
Apostolic Fathers



- Crucial moment in Church history:
 - the living links with Jesus were passing
 - Christianity was illegal and persecuted
 - no Bible

- Schisms and heresies were very quick to arise....

Apostolic Fathers



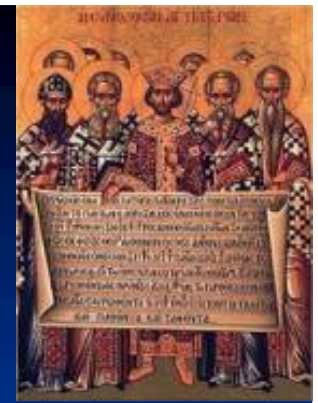
- “But when the sacred band of the apostles.... had reached the end of their life, and most of the generation of those privileged to listen with their own ears to the divine wisdom had passed on, then godless error began to take shape, through the deceit of false teachers, who now that none of the apostles was left...attempted to counter the teaching of the truth...”
 - Eusebius, *History of the Church*
- **Hence, critical time for the church!**

Apostolic Fathers



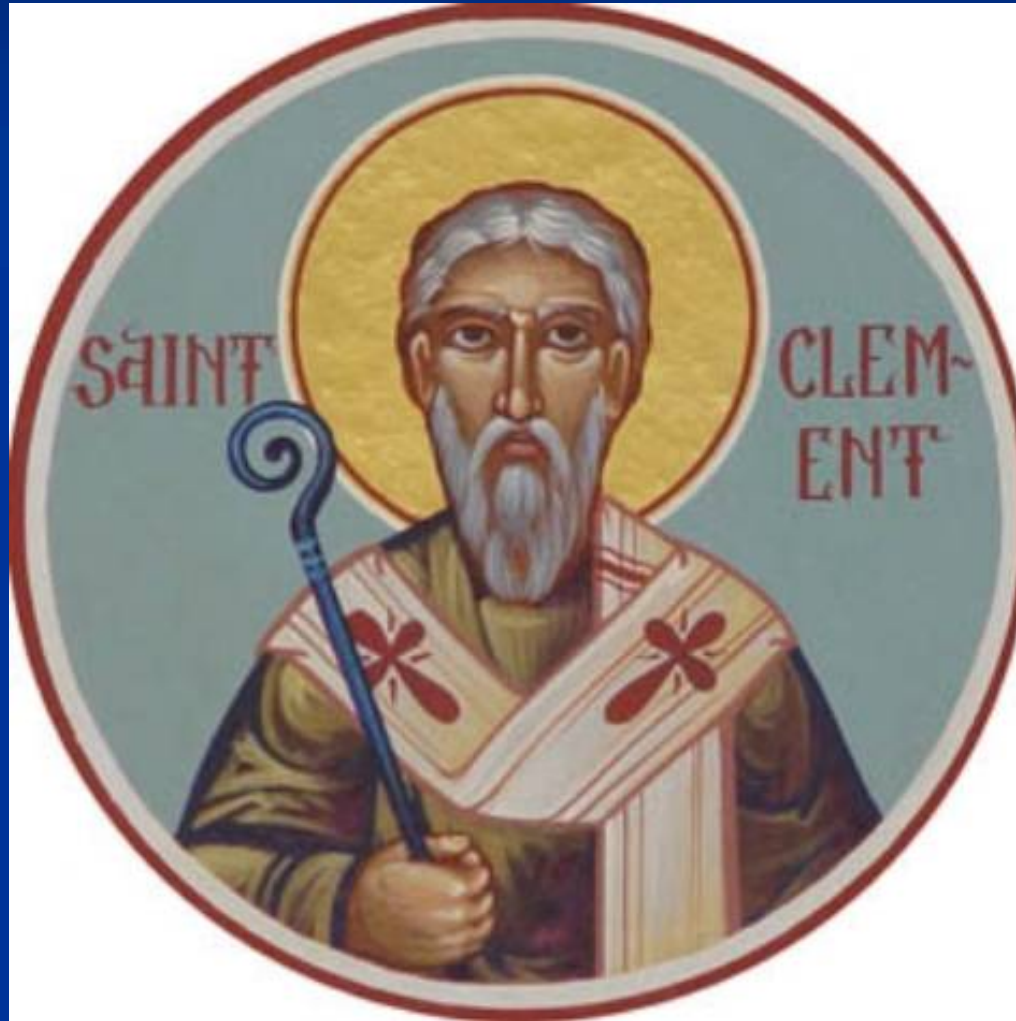
- Writings of the Apostolic Fathers:
 - Mostly the letters arose out of “pastoral concerns”. i.e. they were practical letters
 - They were not the highly intellectual theological writings of the 4th/5th century fathers
 - Writings often dealt with two main issues:
 1. Unity of the church
 2. Preservation of the pure faith (anti-heretical)

Apostolic Fathers

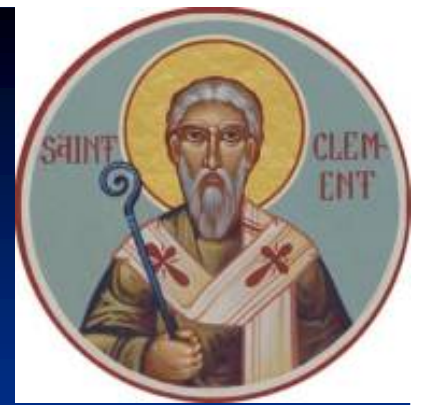


- We will cover:
 - St Clement of Rome
 - St Ignatius of Antioch
 - St Polycarp of Smyrna
- We will discuss their:
 - Life
 - Issues facing the church at the time
 - Writings

St Clement of Rome



St Clement of Rome



- Little known about his early life:
 - born approx 30 AD
 - searched for truth as a youth in pagan Rome
- Disciple of St Peter and Paul
- Possibly mentioned in Phil 4:3:

“...help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers...”
- Fourth Bishop of Rome from 92-101 AD

St Clement of Rome



■ St Irenaeus on St Clement:

“Clement 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.....[so] he sent a very strong letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace and renewing their faith”

■ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*

St Clement of Rome



- Main problem of the time?
 - Schism in the church of Corinth, with some rejecting the authority of the priests/elders of the church
 - Young church members believed they were wiser than the church leaders
 - *How do you resolve this problem?*

St Clement of Rome



■ Problems:

- *Who has the right to rule the church?*
- *How will Christ's work be continued after He and His Apostles have departed?*

NOTE - There is NO New Testament!

- Not all of the NT had even been written, certainly not widely distributed
- Another 250 years before it was canonised

St Clement of Rome



- What would keep the body of Christ from collapsing into chaos?
- What was Christ's plan?
 - He did not leave a theory or philosophy, or His own writings
- What happens when different people claim to be preaching the “true Christianity”?

St Clement of Rome



- Christ selected, taught, and anointed apostles
- system of discipleship
- In professions and trades, the identity of your master was critical
- So, of the true Apostles it would be said:
“This man was with Jesus of Nazareth” Mt 26:71
- Teachings were committed to disciples who
“witnessed” His acts and teachings

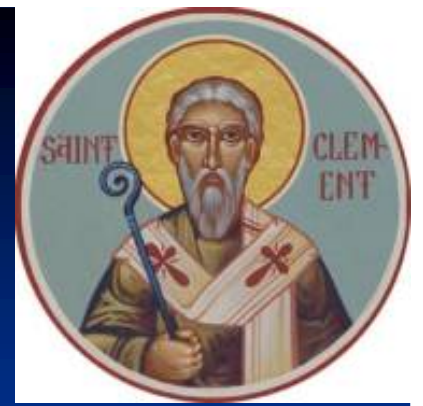
St Clement of Rome



- So what of the next generation?
- The same principle:

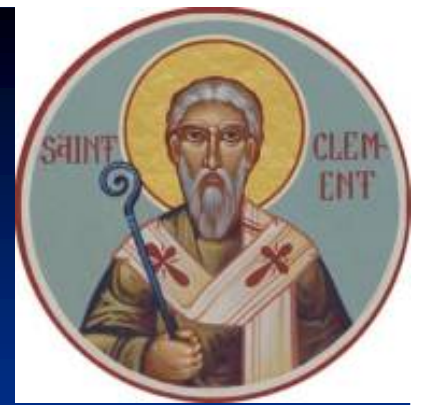
“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 2 Tim 2:2
- Hence, principle of Apostolic Succession - the faith is “handed” from generation to generation

St Clement of Rome



- Writings: Letter to the Corinthians
 - 96 AD
 - Sections are:
 1. Beauty of church before division
 2. Features of church after division
 3. The cause of division
 4. The remedy

St Clement of Rome



■ Intro:

- “The Church of God which resides as a stranger at Rome to the Church of God which is a stranger at Corinth...May grace and peace from Almighty God flow to you in rich profusion through Jesus Christ”

St Clement of Rome



■ The Problem:

- “...the godless schism so utterly foreign to the elect of God. And it is only a few rash and headstrong individuals that have inflamed it to such a degree of madness...”
- “[Now] everyone has abandoned the fear of God and lost the clear vision....everyone follows the appetite of his depraved heart”

St Clement of Rome



■ The Problem:

- “Why are these quarrels and...divisions and schisms and war in your midst? Or do we not have one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace..? And is there not one calling in Christ?”
- “Your schism has perverted many, many it has thrown into discouragement...and to all of us it has brought sorrow. And your schism persists!”

St Clement of Rome



- Discusses OT examples of schism and disharmony and the result:
 - Korah's rebellion

- Discusses the schism in Corinth that St Paul wrote to them about:
 - ...each of you says "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas"...Is Christ divided?
 - 1 Cor 1:12

St Clement of Rome



- Solution:
 - The members of the church should submit
 - But to whom?
 - And why?

- Explains the principle of Apostolic Succession and its critical importance to the life of the church

St Clement of Rome



- “The Apostles preached to us the Gospel received from Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was God’s Ambassador. Christ, in other words, comes with a message from God and the Apostles with a message from Christ.
- Both these orderly arrangements, therefore, originate from the will of God.”

St Clement of Rome



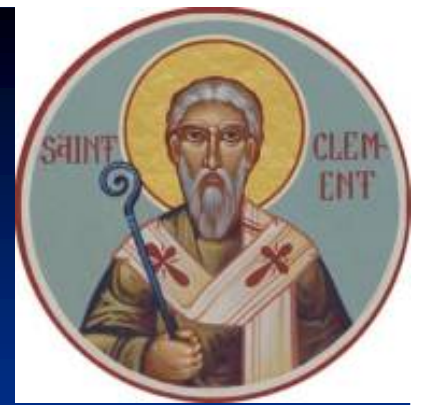
- ...accordingly from city to city they preached and...appointed men whom they had tested by the Spirit to act as bishops and deacons for future believers...
- ...when these men die, other approved men shall succeed to their sacred ministry.
- Consequently we deem it an injustice to eject from the sacred ministry the persons who were appointed....

St Clement of Rome



- “Let us then quickly blot out this blemish and fall on our knees before the Master, and with tears implore Him to have mercy on us...”
- St Clement instructs the rebellious to be humble and to submit to the elders.
 - “Accept our counsel, and you shall have nothing to regret. For, as truly as God lives...you will be...on the way to salvation through Jesus Christ..to Him is the glory forever and evermore. Amen.

St Clement of Rome



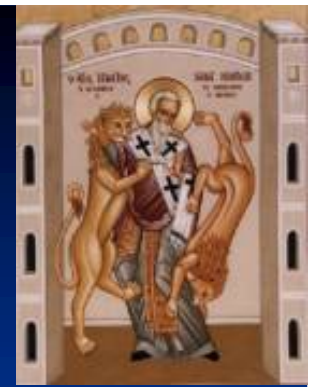
■ Result?

- Clement departed approx 101 AD
- It is uncertain whether he lived to see the resolution of the Corinthian schism
- A travelling scholar wrote in 170AD:
 - “The Church of the Corinthians has continued in the correct doctrine to the time of Primus, who has become bishop in Corinth, and with whom....we were mutually refreshed in the correct doctrine.”

St Ignatius of Antioch

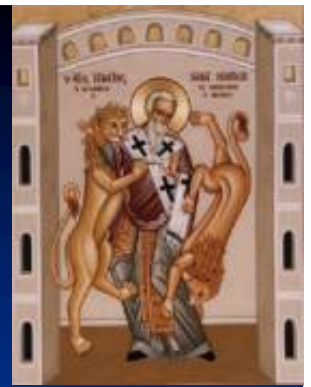


St Ignatius of Antioch



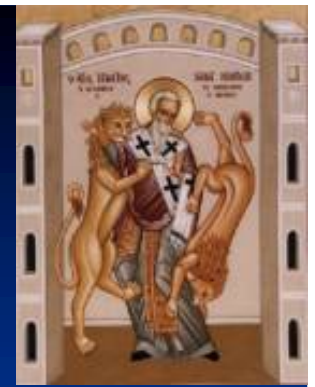
- Little known about his life
- Most details known relate to his martyrdom
- Born approx. 35 AD (did not see Christ)
- Likely Syrian origin, born a pagan
- Disciple of St Peter, John, and Paul
- 2nd Bishop of Antioch in 69AD to 107AD
- Aka - “Theophorus” - “Bearer of God”

St Ignatius of Antioch



- Ignatius guided the church of Antioch through the persecutions of Emperor Domitian
- New persecution arose under Emperor Trajan
- 106 AD - when Emperor Trajan was in Antioch, Ignatius asked to meet with him:
 - Uncertain whether to persuade the Emperor, or to offer himself a ransom for the flock

St Ignatius of Antioch



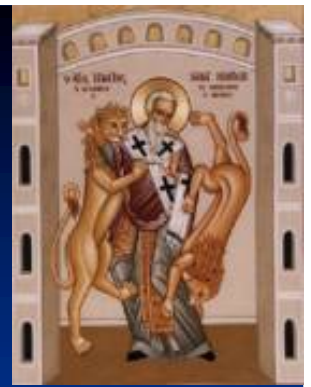
- Trajan :
 - “We command that Ignatius ... be bound by soldiers, and carried to ... Rome, there to be devoured by the beasts for the gratification of the people”

St Ignatius of Antioch



- Ignatius dropped to his knees and said:
 - “I thank You Lord that You honour me with a perfect love towards You and have made me bound with iron chains like Your Apostle Paul”
 - He held and kissed his chains, and begged for the protection of the Church

St Ignatius of Antioch



- Journey:
 - Began long journey to Rome with 10 guards
 - Passed through Asia Minor, and had long stay at Smyrna (up to 6 months)
 - Met with St Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and other bishops of the churches in Asia came to meet him there.
 - Wrote 4 letters in Smyrna:
 - Three letters to go back with the Bishops to their flock - Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles

St Ignatius of Antioch



- A central theme in these letters is the unity of the church in submission to the bishop:
 - “Surely when you submit to the bishop as representing Jesus Christ, it is clear to me that you are not living the life of men, but that of Jesus Christ, who died for us, that through faith in His death you might escape dying. It is needful then that you do nothing without your bishop but be subject also to the presbytery as representing the Apostles of Jesus Christ....”
 - Letter to the Trallians.

St Ignatius of Antioch



- Sailed from Smyrna to Troas and wrote three letters - To Philadelphia, Smyrna and Polycarp.

Again, similar themes:

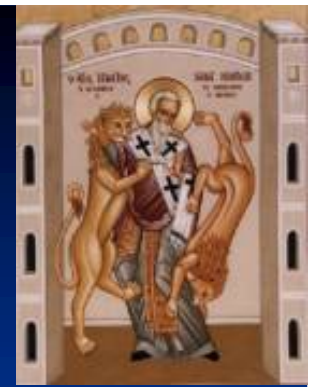
- Being born, then, of the light of truth, shun division and bad doctrines. Where the shepherd is, there you, being sheep, must follow. For many wolves there are ... but if you stand united they will have no success. Surely all those that belong to God and Jesus Christ are the very ones that side with the bishop. (Letter to Phil.)

St Ignatius of Antioch



- Fourth letter from Smyrna was to go ahead of him to Rome
- He heard that prominent Christians in Rome may try to have him pardoned and saved from death
- So St Ignatius wrote a letter to the Romans pleading them not to prevent his martyrdom

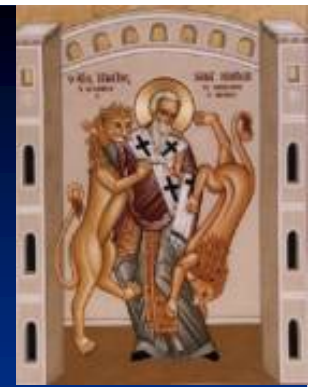
St Ignatius of Antioch



■ Letter to Romans:

- I hope to obtain the grace of taking possession of my inheritance [in Rome]. The truth is, I am afraid it is your love that will do me wrong...
- Surely, I do not want you to court the good pleasure of men, but to please God....I shall never again have such an opportunity of winning my way to God...

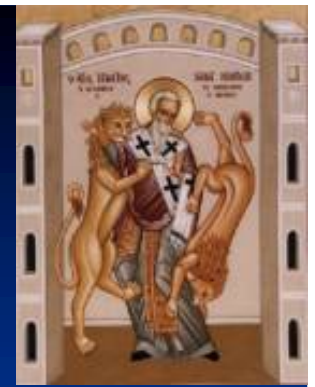
St Ignatius of Antioch



■ Letter to Romans:

- I am writing to all the churches and state emphatically to all that I die willingly for God, provided you do not interfere. I beg you, do not show me unseasonable kindness. Allow me to be the food of wild beasts, which are the means of making my way to God.
- God's wheat I am, and by the teeth of wild beasts I am to be ground, that I may become Christ's pure bread.

St Ignatius of Antioch



■ Letter to Romans:

- ...encourage the wild beasts to be my tomb, to leave no part of my body behind, so that when I am fallen asleep, I may not be burdensome to any.
- May I have joy of the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they will exercise all their ferocity on me. I will entice them to devour me promptly, not as they have done to some, refusing to touch them through fear. If they do not do it willingly, I will force them to it.

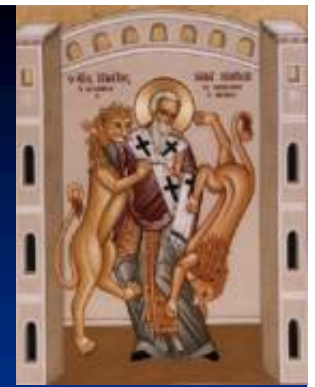
St Ignatius of Antioch



■ Letter to Romans:

- Pray for me that I may succeed. What I write to you does not please the appetites of the flesh, but it pleases the mind of God. If I suffer you have loved me; if I am rejected you have hated me....
- Farewell to the end in the patient endurance of Jesus Christ.

St Ignatius of Antioch



- In 107 AD arrived in Rome
- Last sacrifice for the day in the Coliseum
- Raging crowd goes quiet when they see the peaceful old man
- Ignatius prays on his knees while two lions are released into the arena
- Finally - victory at last!



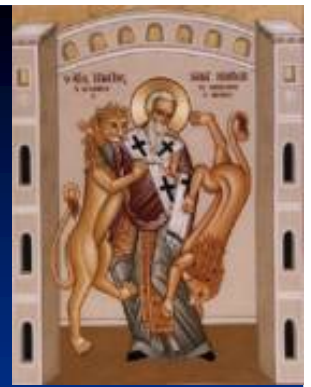


St Ignatius of Antioch



- His last written words were to go back to the flock of his church in Antioch:
 - My life is a ransom for those who are obedient to the bishop, presbyters and deacons...Toil together, wrestle together, run together, suffer together, rest together, rise together ... may you be my joy always.

St Ignatius of Antioch



- St John Chrysostom wrote:
 - God permitted Ignatius there to end his life so that this man's death might be instructive to all who dwell in Rome.....
 - For in reality it is the greatest proof of the resurrection that Christ shows such great power after death as to persuade living men to despise both country and home and friends....and life itself for the sake of confessing Him.

St Polycarp of Smyrna



St Polycarp of Smyrna



- Lived approx 69 - 155 AD
- Sat at the feet of the Apostle St John
- Appointed as the Bishop of Smyrna (Izmir in modern Turkey)
- Likely “the angel of the Church in Smyrna” mentioned in Rev. 2:8
- Met St Ignatius on his route to Rome

St Polycarp of Smyrna



■ Writings:

- Wrote epistle to the Philipians

- Story of martyrdom recorded in an encyclical that was circulated to the churches – “The encyclical epistle of the church at Smyrna”

St Polycarp of Smyrna



- He was captured by the authorities and was asked to deny Christ. His response:
 - “I have served Him eighty-six years and in no way has He dealt unjustly with me; so how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”
- Proconsul:
 - “I have wild beasts; I will throw you to them unless you change your mind”
- Polycarp:
 - “Call for them; for a change from better to worse is impossible for us; but it is laudable to change from evil to good”

St Polycarp of Smyrna



- Proconsul:
 - “I will have you consumed by fire if you despise wild beasts, unless you change your mind”
- Polycarp:
 - “You threaten fire which burns for an hour and is soon quenched; for you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment reserved for the wicked. But why do you wait? Come, do what you will!”

St Polycarp of Smyrna



- People prepared a pyre to burn him, and as the soldiers were about to nail him to a pole...
- He said:
 - “Let me be as I am; for He who makes it possible for me to endure the fire will also make it possible for me to remain on the pyre unmoved without the security of nails”
- When the fire was lit, the flames formed an arch like the sail of a ship filled by wind and encircled Polycarp

St Polycarp of Smyrna



- He was in the centre and was not burning, but rather appeared like “baking bread”
- When the soldiers saw he could not be consumed by fire, he was pierced and killed with a spear
- His body was then burned and his bones taken by the believers as relics - this is one of the earliest evidences for the preservation of the relics of the martyrs and the celebration of the anniversary of their departure

St Polycarp of Smyrna



■ Letter to the Philippians:

- Practical pastoral letter speaking of day to day ways of practicing the Christian faith
- Warns repeatedly against greed - as there had been an incident of greed by one of the priests there
- Stresses duties of married people, widows, deacons, youth, virgins, clergy
- Warns of the dangers of heresy
- Importance of alms giving

Summary

- Concept and importance of patrology
- Apostolic fathers:
 - Who they were
 - Their importance
 - St Clement of Rome
 - St Ignatius of Antioch
 - St Polycarp of Smyrna

