

Church History, Part 1

Fullness of the Faith Catechism Series



Prepared by Patrick Barnes

The “Fullness of Time”

- ◆ Christ comes in the “fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4)
- ◆ Peter’s confession, not Peter himself, is the rock
- ◆ The New Covenant is established
- ◆ Christ gives the Great Commission



The Church is Born

- ◆ The Ekklesia of God
- ◆ Acts 2:2-4 is the fulfillment of Joel 2:28
- ◆ “I will pour out of My Spirit...”
- ◆ Celebrated on the Feast of Pentecost, 50 days after Pascha
- ◆ King Cosmos



Icon of Pentecost, with the tongues of fire above, and “King Cosmos,” below, holding a cloth of many scrolls which represent the many nations.

Conciliar and Martyrical

- ◆ The Church is “conciliar”
- ◆ Saint James, Bishop of Jerusalem (celebrated Oct 23rd)
- ◆ Church issues are first settled by the Synod of Jerusalem in AD 49
- ◆ “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28)
- ◆ The Church is “martyrical”
- ◆ “Age of Martyrs” (martyria = witness [testifier]): began with St. Stephen, but St. James was also stoned to death
- ◆ The Divine Liturgy is always celebrated on the relics of martyrs



Episcopal and Eucharistic

- ◆ The Church is “episcopal”, and the three-fold ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons was well-established by the end of the 1st century
- ◆ St. Paul writes to St. Timothy about the qualifications for Bishops (e.g., Tim. 3:3)
- ◆ Saint Ignatius of Antioch (AD 69) writes:
 - ◆ The Bishop presides in the place of God
 - ◆ Where the Bishop is... there is the Catholic Church
 - ◆ The chief role of a Bishop is to celebrate the Eucharist, and the faithful to gather and partake.
- ◆ The Church is “eucharistic”



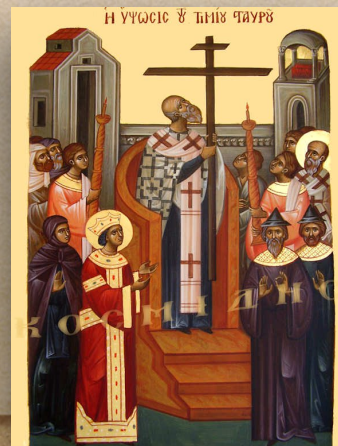
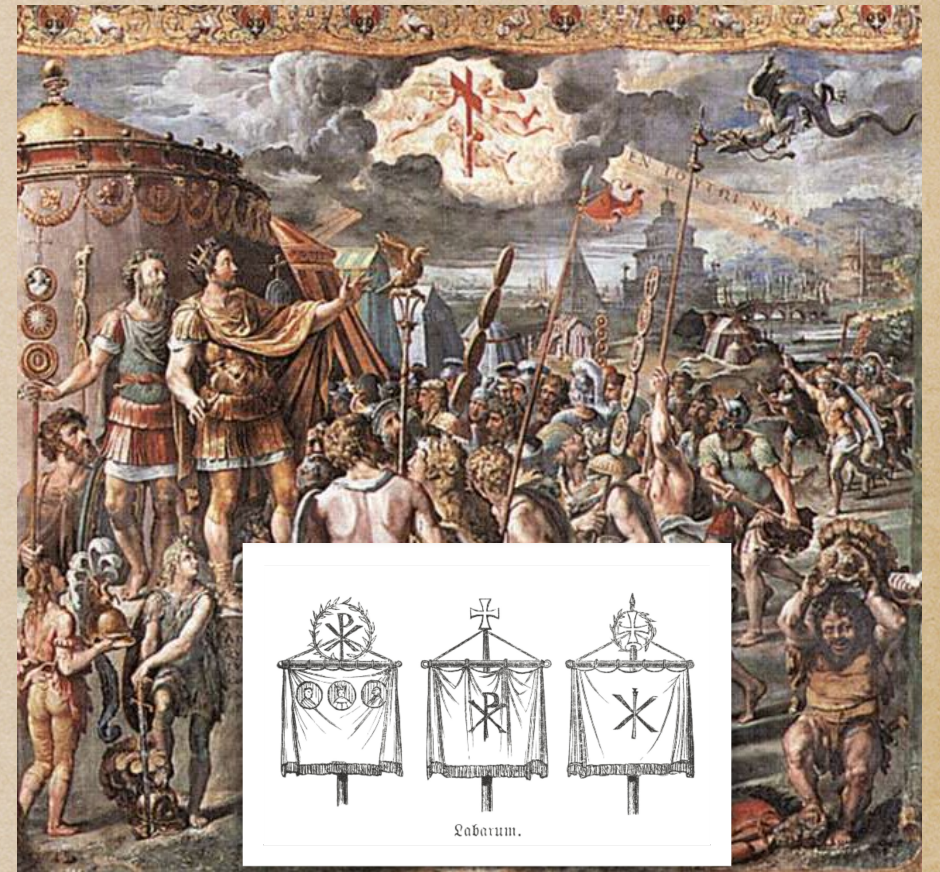
The Early Divine Liturgy

- ◆ St. Justin Martyr describes the Liturgy in his First Apology (155 AD)
- ◆ Ordered, not “free form”
 - ◆ Writings and prayers are read
 - ◆ Homily is given
 - ◆ The Eucharist is celebrated
 - ◆ Offering is taken up
- ◆ Truly the Body and Blood of Christ
- ◆ Church’s worship grew organically out of the Old Testament liturgical rites, which were types and shadows



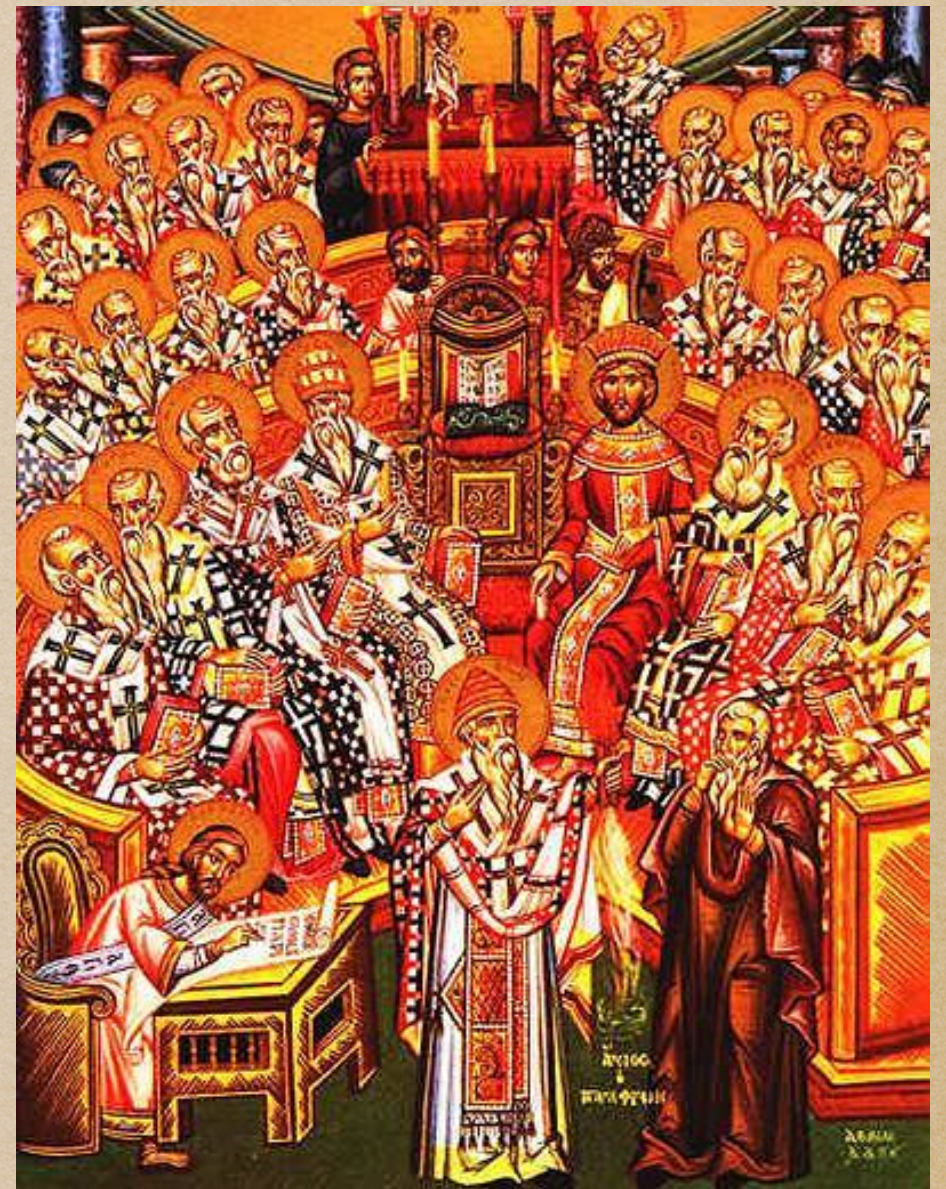
Christianity Legalized & the Cross Found

- ◆ Conversion of the Emperor Constantine (312 AD).
“In this sign conquer.”
- ◆ Edict of Milan (313) makes Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire
- ◆ Moves the capitol to Byzantium
- ◆ He begins to stabilize and organize the “oikoumene” around the Church
- ◆ His mother, the Empress St. Helen, builds many churches throughout the empire and finds the True Cross
- ◆ Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Feast of the Exaltation (aka, Elevation) of the Cross (Sept 14).



First Ecumenical Council

- ◆ Convened in Nícea (325) to combat Arianism and to settle the date of Pascha (Easter)
- ◆ 318 Bishops in attendance, and St. Constantine exhibited a very pious attitude
- ◆ Key figures: St. Athanasius the Great, St. Nicholas of Myra and Lycia, and St. Spyridon
- ◆ Produced the first version of the Nicene Creed
- ◆ Set the date for Pascha so as not to celebrate it “with the Jews” (settling the Quartodeciman Controversy)



Icon of the First Ecumenical Council,
with Arius in black and St. Constantine in red

Combating Arianism

τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν
Μονογενῆ,
τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα
πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων,
Φῶς ἐκ Φωτός,
Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ
Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ,
γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα,
ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί,
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.

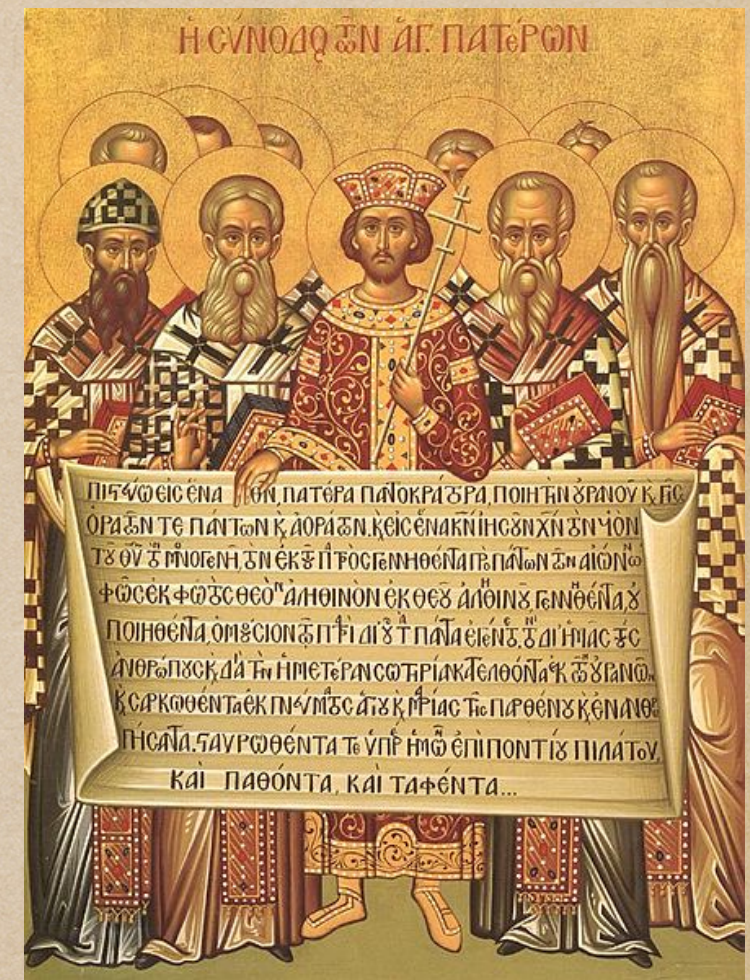
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten from the Father
before all ages,
light from light,
true God
from true God,
begotten not made,
of one essence with the Father,
through Whom all things were made,

Stichera of the Praises for Orthros

Plagal of Second Tone. "Having laid up all their hope"

Having brought together all * knowledge of things of the spirit * and made careful inquiry * by the divine Spirit's grace, * lo, like godly scribes * the august Fathers wrote * the celestial Symbol, * the august Creed of our holy Faith, * wherein they clearly teach * that, like God the Father, the Word of God * is also unoriginate * and is consubstantial with Him in truth. * Thus did these all-blest and * renowned and godly-minded ones indeed * follow in manifest manner in * that which the Apostles taught.

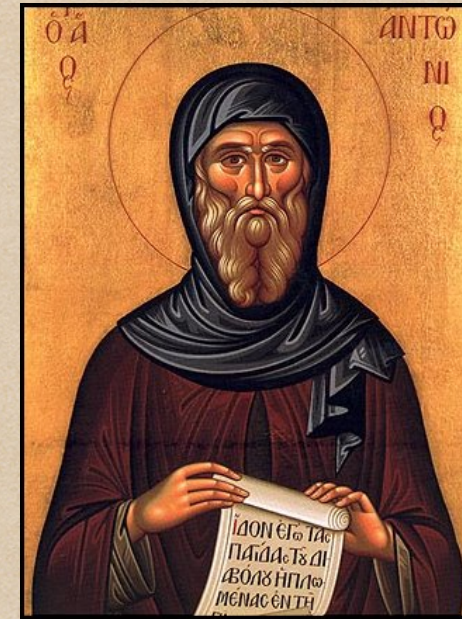
When those blest defenders of * the Gospel's doctrines, Christ's heralds, * had received the fulness of * noetic enlightenment * through the Spirit's grace, * they proclaimed the august * oracle to all men * under inspiration from our God, * that most transcendent truth * which, though few in words, is sublimely wise. * These champions of piety * and pious traditions and teachings thus * received revelation * of piety and dogma from on high * and were enlightened and then set forth * that faith which was taught of God.



The Holy Fathers holding the Symbol of Faith

Birth of Monasticism

- ◆ Late 3rd to mid 4th century
- ◆ Monastics became a new type of martyr
- ◆ Emerges as persecution ends and Orthodoxy becomes mainstream and at times “worldly” or less fervent
- ◆ Three forms, all established in Egypt by 350 AD
 - ◆ Eremitic (“hermits”) — St. Anthony the Great
 - ◆ Coenobitic (“community”) — St. Pachomius the Great (his rule adopted by St. Benedict in the West)
 - ◆ Semi-eremitic (sketes) — St. Macarius of Egypt, St. Arsenius the Great
- ◆ Played a key role in the religious life of Byzantium, and in all Orthodox countries since
- ◆ Monasticism is both a deeper experience of life in Christ and a barometer of Church health
- ◆ Elder Ephraim and the 20 monasteries in North America today



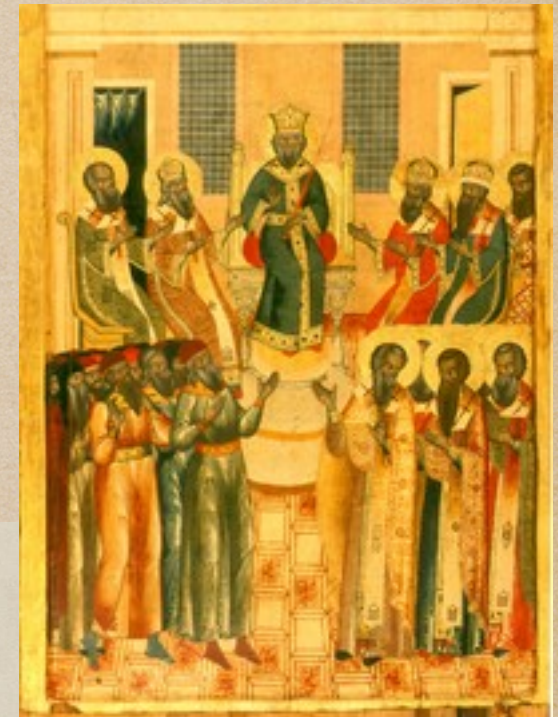
Simonos Petras Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece

Second Ecumenical Council

- ◆ Convened in Constantinople (381) to condemn Macedonianism and (again) Arianism
- ◆ Macedonius taught that the Holy Spirit was inferior to the Father and the Son, that He was simply a “power” of God.
- ◆ In response: the key Trinitarian formula “One Ousia (Essence or Nature) in Three Hypostases (Persons)”
- ◆ Revised the Creed mainly concerning the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Added an important article about the Church: “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”
- ◆ Read St. Basil the Great’s “On the Holy Spirit”, esp. Chapters 66-67



St. Gregory the Theologian



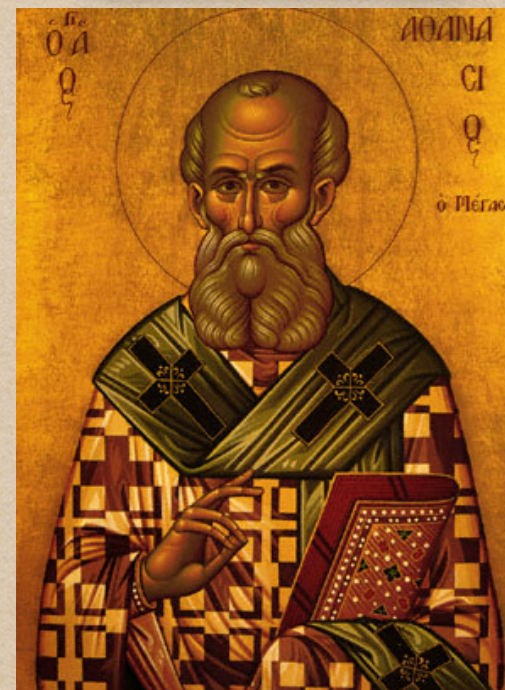
Icon of the Holy Fathers of the 2nd Ecumenical Council



The Church of St. Irene, where the Council Met

“The Book of the Church”

- ◆ No “canonical” Bible for the first 400 years or so; few people were literate: Scriptures mostly heard, not read.
- ◆ Earliest known authoritative collection is called the Muratorian Canon (~170). It was a response to Marcionism.
- ◆ Montanism forced Church to articulate attitude about “new revelation”
- ◆ Council of Laodicea (364) lists all but the Book of Revelation (not “Revelations”) in its Canon 59.
- ◆ 39th Festal (Paschal) Letter of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (367) lists all as we know it today
- ◆ Synod of Carthage (397)
- ◆ Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681)
- ◆ Book of Revelation was controversial, but ultimately listed in the Canon and not in doubt today.



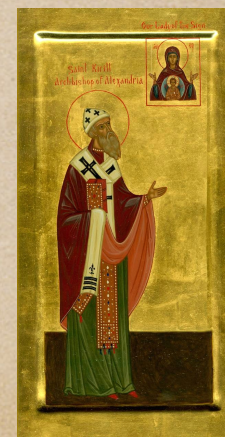
St. Athanasios the Great



St. Augustine of Hippo

Third Ecumenical Council

- ◆ Convened in Ephesus (431) mainly to condemn Nestorianism, but also Pelagianism
- ◆ Nestorius insisted on “Christotokos” instead of “Theotokos”, a term in use for a long time
- ◆ He taught that no true union between the human and the divine is possible
- ◆ St. Cyril of Alexandria at the Council: “Mary is God’s mother, for she bore the Word of God made flesh.” Safeguards the Incarnation.
- ◆ She is not simply “Mary”, and she is to be highly honored



Fourth Ecumenical Council

- ◆ Convened in Chalcedon (451) to condemn Monophysitism
- ◆ Eutyches' defense against Nestorianism went too far the other way, leading to the heretical idea that Christ was of "one nature after the union": one ("mono") nature ("physis")
- ◆ St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome wrote the "Tome of Leo"
- ◆ Council affirmed the Tome and decreed that Christ is one Person in two Natures "unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably"
- ◆ St. Euphemia's miracle had a lot to do with it
- ◆ The last council which many Anglicans and most Protestants consider ecumenical and authoritative



THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

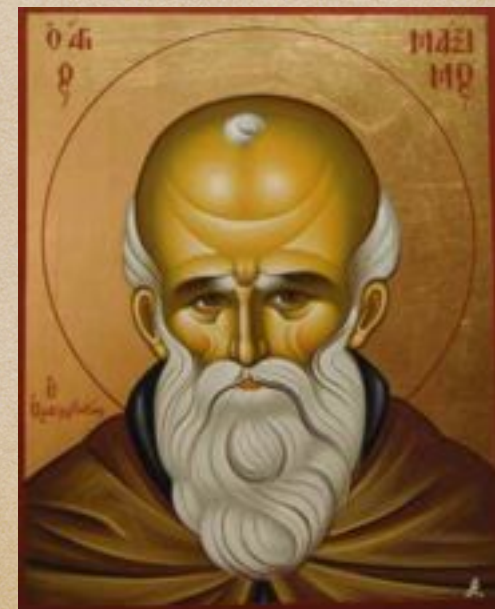


Fifth & Sixth Ecumenical Councils

- ◆ Fifth Council (553) upheld and clarified the Fourth Council against a resurgence of Nestorianism and a misunderstanding of Chalcedon's decisions, seeking to unify those who had difficulty simultaneously holding doctrines against both Monophysitism and Nestorianism
- ◆ Sixth Council (680-681) defended Chalcedon against new variants of Monophysitism, which impaired the fullness of Christ's humanity: Monoenergism and Monothelitism
- ◆ Politically motivated doctrinal looseness and equivocation
- ◆ St. Maximos the Confessor led the fight in the East
- ◆ In short, these councils reinterpreted and further explained the hypostatic union of Christ, affirming that to be fully human, Christ must have a complete human nature.



St. Maximus amidst his persecutors



Seventh Ecumenical Council

- ◆ Convened in Nicaea in 787 to refute the heresy of iconoclasm (“icon smashing”) and to restore the display and veneration of icons
- ◆ Veneration != Idolatry
- ◆ The heart of the dispute is Christological: Icons safeguard the Incarnation
- ◆ Council rules, but another attack in 815. “Triumph of Orthodoxy” in 843.
- ◆ “Age of the Councils” ends



St. John of Damascus



Empress Theodora

First seven, major...

Summary of the^V Councils, Part 1

1st	325	Arianism	Was Jesus God?	Produced the first version of the Nicene Creed
2nd	381	Macedonianism	Is the Holy Spirit a personal and equal part of the Godhead?	Produced the final version of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
3rd	431	Nestorianism	Is Jesus Christ both God and man in one person?	Affirmed Christ as the Incarnate Logos and Mary as Theotokos
4th	451	Monophysitism	How is Jesus both God and man?	Clarified the relation between the human and Divine Natures
5th	553	Nestorianism & Origenism	How can we clarify the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ to unify all?	Clarified and affirmed previous Councils and condemned errors
6th	680	Monothenergism & Monotheletism	Can Christ have two Natures but one Operation or Will?	Proclaimed that each Nature has its own Operation and Will
7th	787	Iconoclasm	Can Christ be depicted and venerated in the form of images?	Affirmed that Icons safeguard the Incarnation and salvation in general

First seven, major...

Summary of the^VCouncils, Part 2

- ◆ At the heart of each Council is some key Trinitarian or Christological issue that must be defended or the Gospel is in jeopardy
- ◆ Established the five great sees or Patriarchates
- ◆ Produced numerous canons, both of a dogmatic and a very practical nature
- ◆ “The teaching authority of the Ecumenical Councils is grounded in the infallibility of the Church.” ~GF
- ◆ “The Church’s infallibility is expressed chiefly through Ecumenical Councils.” ~KW
- ◆ To be considered valid, councils must be accepted by the Faithful over a period of time. Many councils have been held that were not (e.g., Ferrara-Florence in 1439).
- ◆ Question: Why do Protestants only accept the first four Ecumenical Councils? On what basis? How does the Holy Spirit guide the Church into all truth?



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- ◆ The Faith of the Early Fathers, 3 vol. set, by Jurgens