

Notes for Church History, Part 2

Prepared by Patrick Barnes

Slide 1

In our previous Church history class we learned about the birth of the New Covenant church, the characteristics of the early Church, the Age of the Martyrs, the establishment of monasticism, the gradual emergence of an authoritative Canon of Scripture, and the first seven Ecumenical Councils. In essence, the first 900 years of Church history.

For this second class we'll begin with a look at the historical conditions that led to the so-called Great Schism of 1054, that is, the rupture between Eastern and Western Christendom. We will then cover major events in the history of Church from 1054 to modern times.

Slide 2 – Estrangement from the West

For centuries leading up to 1054 there was a gradual estrangement of the Eastern Byzantine Empire with the Western Byzantine Empire. Here are the main reasons:

1. First, there was a loss of political unity, barbarian invasions, and the rise of Islam:

- In the early 5th century, Barbarian invasions, mainly by Germanic tribes, carved up most of Italy. Rome itself was sacked a couple of times by Alaric's forces in the early 400s, and fell to the Germanic barbarian king Odoacer in 476.

Note: you probably learned in school that this was the “Fall of Rome”. However, this sweeping phrase is from a western point of view. It was more accurately the fall of the *Western* Roman Empire, not the entire Roman Empire. This fall gradually ushered in what historians call “the Dark Ages”. The Roman Empire in the east, however, continued to flourish, and lived on until the Fall of Constantinople in 1459. This empire is commonly known as the “Byzantine Empire” today, but that was a term given by 19th century German historians. The people of that day never called themselves “Byzantines”, but instead called themselves “Romans” and “Roman [Catholic] Orthodox”).

- A couple hundred years after the fall of the Western Roman Empire we have the rise of Islam. The Caliphate expanded in the region from 622-750 AD. Muslims eventually gained control of three-fourths of the Mediterranean region, which put economic pressure on the Empire, and further led to its destabilization.

- Barbarian invasions, the rise of Islam, the resulting isolation and regional destabilization gradually led to a centralization of power around the papacy, which of necessity extended its authority into other spheres. By the time Charlemagne was crowned Emperor by the Pope in 800 AD, the Papacy was firmly established as the leading civic, political, and religious authority in Western Europe. While this was understandable in such dire circumstances, the problem was that the papacy gradually began to think its power and authority extended beyond its historical, ecclesiastical see, i.e., its traditional jurisdictional boundaries. The foundation had been laid for what would eventually turn into the modern, centralized papal state.

2. There was also increasing cultural divisions:

- Communications were becoming increasingly difficult because of the lack of a common language. By 450 few in the West could read Greek; and after 600 it was rare for an eastern to speak Latin, although this was still the official language of the Roman Empire. St. Photios the Great, the most important scholar in the East in the ninth century, could not read Latin.
- The Franks—i.e., the Germanic peoples that had invaded and settled in the Western part of the Empire—had close ties with the Papacy. Their King, Charles the Great, or Charlemagne—who took the throne in 768—and those in his court, wanted to create their own brand of Christianity that reflected their Frankish and Germanic culture. They were largely anti-Hellenic, and their influence was growing. It is fair to say that Charlemagne fostered a true schism of civilization that ultimately led to the Great Schism of the Church. He was coronated by the Pope in 800. This was viewed as an act of schism by the East, and Charlemagne was not recognized by the Eastern Emperor. It is a watershed moment marking the break of Frankish civilization away from the Orthodox Christian Roman Empire.

These philosophical and cultural seeds germinated into what many Orthodox Christians today dub “the Western mindset”.

3. There were also diverging theological mindsets. Bishop Kallistos writes: “From the start Greeks and Latins had each approached the Christian Mystery in their own way.... Like the schools of Antioch and Alexandria within the east, these two distinctive approaches were not in themselves contradictory; each served to supplement the other, and each had its place in the fullness of Catholic tradition. But now that the two sides were becoming strangers to one another—with no political and little cultural unity, with no common language—there was a danger that each side would follow its own approach in isolation and push it to extremes, forgetting the value in the other point of view.” (*The Orthodox Church*, pp. 56-57)

4. I mentioned Charlemagne. It’s noteworthy that his advisors drew heavily from the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo, esp. Augustine’s idea of a theocratic civilization in his book *City of God*. Orthodox author Christos Yannaras, in his book *Orthodoxy and the West*, explains that “Frankish theologians derived from Augustine the

presuppositions for a secularized ‘religionization’ of the Christian life, emphasizing individual conviction against experiential participation in the Church as truth. Intellectualism and individualism afterwards always pervaded the Western religious tradition.” (p. 17)

St. Augustine cannot be blamed for the distortions that grew from some of his ideas, nor have his writings ever been condemned (like Origen’s, and others). Western theologians who were isolated from the Greek fathers developed his views into the characteristic theological differences of Western Christianity, doctrines such as original sin (essentially, original guilt—on this read Fr. John Romanides’ very important work *Ancestral Sin*), Christ as a sacrificial victim who appeases the wrath of the Father, and salvation as mainly juridical, i.e., receiving forgiveness due to imputed righteousness (as an antidote read *On the Incarnation* by St. Athanasios the Great).

Although St. Augustine is honored by the Orthodox Church as a Saint, he is a rather controversial figure because of some errors in his writings—no Father of the Church is infallible—but more because of what others have done *with* his writings, i.e., how they have distorted them. For a proper understanding of St. Augustine I highly recommend the short monograph by Fr. Seraphim Rose entitled *The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church*.

Slide 3 – Map of Christendom in 1054

Here is a map of Christendom from 1054, right at the time of the so-called “Great Schism”, which we will discuss shortly.

The red line down the center, which extends as a dashed line across the Mediterranean Sea, demarcates Western Christian in dark orange, and Eastern Christendom in light orange.

As we have seen, this line is not only geo-political, but also cultural, linguistic and theological.

This map is taken from an encyclopedia, so it labels Western Christendom as the “Holy Roman Empire”, and probably would have labeled the light orange as the “Byzantine Empire”, but did not for some reason. But this entire area—both sides—would have been called the “Roman Empire”, despite their serious divisions.

Slide 4 – Map of Islamic Conquest

Here is another map, this time showing the extent of Islamic conquests up to the 9th century. The areas of conquest are in green.

If you look closely you can see that three of the four Eastern Roman Empire patriarchates—Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria—are all under Islamic rule. Only Constantinople still remains free in the East. They are gradually feeling pressure, not

only from encroaching Islam, but also at times from both the Papacy and the so-called “Holy Roman Emperor” of the West. But it would not be until 1453 that Constantinople finally falls to Islamic invaders. More on that later...

Slide 5 – Timeline of the Great Schism

Now let’s discuss the main events leading up to the so-called “Great Schism”, that is the falling away from the one true Church of the Latin-minded Western church.

The events we will discuss center around doctrinal differences, beginning with the *Filioque*, a Latin term which means “and the Son”.

1. In 589 we find a misguided attempt to combat Arianism when the regional Council of Toledo in Spain both condemned Arianism in the West and added the *Filioque* to the Creed. The Nicene Creed would now read in the West, “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life, Who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*...”

This is not only a theological error, but it also shows a real misunderstanding of the role and authority of an Ecumenical Council, for they unilaterally changed what the Second Ecumenical Council decreed could not be changed. Charlemagne carries this precedent to his new empire by rejecting the Seventh Ecumenical Council and keeping the *Filioque* clause in the Creed.

2. It took a while for these changes in the West to make their way East, but by 867 St. Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, would feel compelled to write an Encyclical Letter to the Patriarchs of the East denouncing the *Filioque*, and explaining in detail that it is heretical.

3. In the spirit of Byzantine intrigue, St. Photios’ efforts provoked some Latin sympathizers who were able to eventually oust him in a regional council held in 869-870. This is known by historians as the “Anti-Photian Council”.

Only a small number of Bishops were in attendance. This council condemned and anathematized Photios, sentenced him to seven years in prison. During his time in prison the Saint wrote his famous treatise *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*. Here is an excerpt:

“Who of our sacred and renowned fathers had said that the Spirit proceeds from the Son? Which council, established and made eminent by ecumenical acknowledgment, has proclaimed it? Indeed, which God-called assembly of priests and high priests inspired by the All-holy Spirit has not condemned this notion even before it appeared? For they, having been initiated into the Father's Spirit according to the Master's mystagogy [i.e., St. John 15:26], proclaimed clearly and emphatically that the Spirit proceeds from the Father.

4. The acts of this false council were eventually abrogated at the Eighth Ecumenical Council (as I mentioned in the first class, there have been ecumenical councils since

the “Age of Councils”). This council was held in Constantinople in 879-880. It confirmed St. Photios as Patriarch of Constantinople, anathematized the additions to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and declared that the prerogatives and jurisdiction of the Roman pope and the Constantinopolitan patriarch are essentially equal. The council was reluctantly accepted by Pope John VIII of Rome.

It is noteworthy that this council was held to be ecumenical by both East and West until the 11th century, when Rome repudiated the council of 879-880 and retroactively regarded the council of 869-870 to be the Eighth Ecumenical Council. The Orthodox Church never changed her mind on this.

5. In 1009 Patriarch Sergius II of Constantinople removed the name of Pope Sergius IV of Rome from the diptychs of Constantinople. “Diptych” is a Greek word for “folding board with two panels”, and on them are the official, prioritized list of the hierarchy of Bishops that should be publicly commemorated. For a hierarchy to remove another hierarchy from the diptychs is to signify a rupture in communion between them. In this case it was because the Pope had written a letter to the Patriarch which favorably used the *Filioque*.

6. Finally, in 1054 Cardinal Humbert excommunicated Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. This is the centerpoint, the key date of the Great Schism between East and West. It should, however, be considered mainly a symbolic date because a schism of this nature is not an event marked by a single point in time.

It’s worth mentioning that, for the most part, the Bishops of Rome resisted adding the *Filioque* to the Creed until the 11th century. For example, Pope Leo III forbade the addition of *Filioque* when he was asked to confirm the decision of a Council of Aachen held in 809. Although he approved of the doctrine thus expressed, he also ordered that the Nicene Creed, without *Filioque*, be displayed on silver tablets placed in Saint Peter’s Basilica, adding: “I, Leo, put these here for love and protection of orthodox faith.”). [From *Wikipedia*]

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Due to time constraints we are going to skip the next four slides covering why the *Filioque* clause is a big deal theologically; about the development of the Papacy and why the Orthodox Church considers it a heresy; and about the many other theological differences between the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. Father Matthew will probably cover these in other classes about doctrine. And you can review these slides and notes later if you are interested.

Slide 6 – The *Filioque* (SKIP IN CLASS)

So, why all this fuss about a small phrase like “... and the Son.” Aren’t people overreacting? Isn’t this “just a matter of semantics”?

1. Well, because the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is at the heart of the Christian faith, even slight deviations from the truth can have far-reaching implications. (One is

reminded of the First Ecumenical Council, during which the addition of “one iota”—i.e., the Greek letter by that name—to the word “homoousios” [forming “homoiousios”] was the subject of much heated debate. For “homoousios” meant that Jesus was *consubstantial* with the Father, where “homoiousios” meant Jesus was similar but not of the same substance, which was an Arian belief.)

Back to the *Filioque*: the problem is that this phrase destroys the balance of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, minimizing the divinity of the Holy Spirit by subjugating Him to the Father and the Son. The result is that the Holy Spirit becomes merely a force, a power—something esoteric and thus deemphasized.

This inevitably leads to a false understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in both the world and in the Church. The effects of this have reared their head throughout Western Church history, mainly in various Protestant revivalist groups, but also in the debates between the Monk Barlaam and St. Gregory Palamas during the Hesychast Controversy, which we’ll learn more about shortly.

2. For example, in St. Augustine’s theology the Holy Spirit is easily interpreted as the Person who is merely the result of the relation between the other two Persons, that is, the Holy Spirit is Love, being the procession resulting from the hypostatic union of the Father and the Son.

3. As I mentioned in the first history class, the Orthodox understanding rests squarely upon St. John 15:26: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will *send* unto you *from the Father*, even the Spirit of truth, which *proceedeth from the Father*, he shall testify of me.” In other words, we make a clear distinction between the Spirit’s “sending” and his “procession” or “origination”. Remember, in saying “...the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son” a Western Christian is not affirming that although the Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father, He is *sent by* the Son.” No, he’s affirming that the *eternal procession of the Holy Spirit* is from both the Father and the Son. And this theological idea, which is at the heart of our Faith—for how much more central can the very dogma of the Holy Trinity be?—has tremendous “downstream” ramifications. Does that make sense?

4. As recently as 1848, in a much-promulgated Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs, fifteen criticisms are enumerated concerning the filioque, among them: “It has not yet been even plausibly defended out of the Scriptures, or with the least reason out of the Fathers, from the accusations brought against it, notwithstanding all the zeal and efforts of its supporters. The doctrine bears all the marks of error arising out of its nature and peculiarities. All erroneous doctrine touching the Catholic truth of the Blessed Trinity, and the origin of the divine Persons, and the subsistence of the Holy Ghost, is and is called heresy...”

Slide 7 – Papal Primacy / Supremacy (SKIP IN CLASS)

1. The primacy that the Church of Rome had been afforded since around the end of the first century is a primacy of honor and limited authority, not a primacy of

universal power and total authority over the other local Churches. In other words, Rome was considered “first among equals”.

A proper metaphor for this “primacy of honor” is a college, i.e., a self-governing constituent body where all members have equally authority. This differs from the Western metaphor of the papacy as a “monarchy”, which involves ruling authority.

The Eastern Patriarchs did not mind so much if Rome wanted to exert supremacy only in the west, but when they started claiming it outside of their jurisdiction, there was strong opposition, which continues to this day.

As a later example—approximately 150 years after the Great Schism—Archbishop Nicetas of Nicomedia wrote the Pope these words:

“My dearest brother, we do not deny to the Roman Church the primacy among the five sister patriarchates and we recognize her right to the most honorable seat at the Ecumenical Council. But she has separated herself from us by her own deeds when through pride she assumed a monarchy which does not belong to her office... How shall we accept decrees from her that have been issued without consulting us and even without our knowledge? If the Roman pontiff seated on the lofty throne of his glory wished to thunder at us and, so to speak, hurl his mandates at us from on high and if he wishes to judge us and even to rule us and our churches, not by taking counsel with us but at his own arbitrary pleasure what kind of brotherhood, or even what kind of parenthood can this be? We should be the slaves not the sons, of such a church and the Roman see would not be the pious mother of sons but a hard and imperious mistress of slaves.” (Ware, p. 58)

2. The key passage informing the Orthodox view is St. Matt 16:15-19:

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The phrase “on this rock” uses the feminine demonstrative pronoun and article—in Greek, *taute te petra*. It therefore does not refer to the person of Peter, for Christ would have used the masculine if He were referring to his person.

There is a clear and consistent interpretation of the “upon this rock” passage in Holy Tradition:

In the fourth century Saint Chrysostom wrote: “Upon this rock I will build’; that is, on the faith of the confession.” [Hom. 54, P.G. 58:518 (col. 534).]

Saint Leo the Great in the fifth century: “Upon this firmness, He says, I shall raise My Temple, and it will rise upon the steadfastness of this faith, and the loftiness of My Church will mingle with the heavens.” [Sermon 83(2), P.L. 54 (col. 429), in FC, 93:357; Toal, 111:267, 268.1

Around the eighth century, across the inhabited world in the English Isles, the Venerable Bede wrote: “Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock from which thou didst receive thy name, that is, upon Me Myself, I will build My Church. Upon this perfection of faith which thou didst confess I will build My Church....” [“Homily 1.16, After Epiphany,” Homilies on the Gospels, Bk. One, 163.]

St. Theophylact of Ochrid wrote similarly in the 11th century: “The Lord is saying, ‘This confession which you have made shall be the foundation of those who believe.’” [P.G. 123:85B (col. 320).]

3. Despite the clear and consistent understanding of this passage, Rome gradually began to centralize for reasons we have already discussed: political disunity, increasing isolation and the threat of barbarian incursions, language issues, and Frankish influence. A desire to centralize power thus led to a reinterpretation of Holy Tradition with respect to St. Peter’s confession and primacy.

4. This resulted in the Papal Bull of 1302, “Unam Sanctum”, issued by Pope Boniface VIII, wherein Papal supremacy was finally and formally declared as a dogma.

Slide 8 – Other Key Differences, Part 1 (SKIP IN CLASS)

We will now briefly survey some of the other things that divide East and West.

1. The Immaculate Conception of the Ever-Virgin Mary—and here I want to make it clear that I this does not refer to *Christ’s* conception, but rather the conception of Mary by her mother Anna—is a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church maintaining that from the moment when she was conceived in the womb, the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free of original sin, and was filled with the sanctifying grace normally conferred during baptism. (Recall that original sin is understood in the West as a sharing of Adam and Eve’s guilt and not merely a sharing in the effects of Adam and Eve’s transgression and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.)

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the Virgin Mary was also placed in a state where it was *impossible* for her to commit personal sins.

The Orthodox view: the only immaculate conception is of our Lord.

St. John Maximovitch wrote an entire chapter on this in his *The Orthodox Veneration of Mary, the Birthgiver of God* (Chapter VI). One of his main points is, and I quote: “None of the ancient Holy Fathers say that God in miraculous fashion purified the

Virgin Mary while yet in the womb; and many directly indicate that the Virgin Mary, just as all men, endured a battle with sinfulness, but was victorious over temptations and was saved by Her Divine Son.”

St. John explains that she was not placed in the state of being *unable* to sin, but rather that she continued to take care for Her salvation and overcame all temptations. God did not preserve her *unwillingly* from personal sins, i.e., He did not provide her so much grace that she *could not* sin (this would be unmerciful and unjust towards everyone else). Rather, she cooperated with God’s grace and kept herself free from personal sins. Grace-given sinlessness provided by God actually denies her of any real virtue, and she cannot thus be held up as the example *par excellence* of a person who conquered sin in their life.

Because Orthodoxy does not see ancestral sin as an inheritance of guilt or a stain, there is no reason for the miraculous removal of either. Nonetheless, Orthodox tradition does hold that the Theotokos remained free of *personal* sin. So Orthodoxy draws a distinction between *original* sin—i.e., inheriting the affects of the Fall—and *personal* sin.

2. Papal Infallibility is a dogma of the Catholic Church which states that, in virtue of the promise of Jesus to Peter, the Pope is preserved from the possibility of error “when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church”.

The Orthodox view: 1 Tim. 3:15 -> the Church is the pillar and ground of Truth. In other words, infallibility lies with the Church, not with one man. The only infallible human is Christ, not the Pope. Even St. Peter denied Christ three times. In Church History Part 1 we learned about the Synod of Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15. “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” The Apostles and other elders came together to consult one another in the Holy Spirit. They didn’t just look to St. James to decide.

3. According to the classic teaching on indulgences, the works of supererogation performed by all the saints—that is, spiritual labors above and beyond what one is required to do—form a treasury with God that the Church can apply to exempt repentant sinners from the works of penitence that would otherwise be required of them to achieve full reconciliation with the Church. As I’m sure you know, firm opposition to this doctrine, and especially the Roman Catholic Church’s selling of indulgences, was a main reason behind the Protestant Reformation.

The Orthodox view: 2 Cor. 5:10 -> “Every man will be judged according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” We are judged alone and do not benefit from the works/merits of others.

4. Purgatory: a place where sinners stay for a time that varies according to the number and gravity of their sins, so that they may be purged and made ready for life in heaven.

The Orthodox view: Our Lord never spoke of a middle state between the final resting places of either “eternal fire” and “eternal life”, nor was this known by the Holy Fathers. The Church has always taught that in anticipation of the Last Judgement and this final state the reposed either suffer in Hades or enjoy Paradise.

Slide 9 - Other Key Differences, Part 2 (SKIP IN CLASS)

1. Concerning the Eucharist:

- Roman Catholics have the doctrine of transubstantiation, which attempts to explain, in ways unacceptable to Orthodox Tradition, how the transformation of the Gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ takes place.
- Roman Catholics believe that the words of Christ (“Take eat..., Drink this...”; St. Matt. 26:26, 28) uttered by the Priest, without the invocation of the Holy Spirit, consecrate the gifts
- Roman Catholics introduced the use of unleavened bread around the 11th century, which was a departure from the ancient tradition of leavened bread. You will sometimes hear this bread called “azymes”, which is an archaic English word for the Jewish matzah, and is derived from the Greek word ázymos (ἄζυμος), “unleavened”.
- Roman Catholics disallow the communing of infants and children prior to “confirmation”.

2. “Baptism” comes from the Greek “baptizo”, which means “to immerse”. We are buried with Christ and rise with Him in the waters of regeneration. Sprinkling is forbidden as it runs counter to the Bible and to the Apostles’ teachings.

3. Chrismation postponed until an “age of reason”

4. The Orthodox Church allows Priests to be married, although they must do so prior to ordination. Priests may not (normally) remarry for any reason. Only Bishops are celibate.

Slide 10 – Post-Schism Encounters

Let’s take a survey of some key encounters between East and West in the centuries following the Great Schism.

1. We begin with the **Fourth Crusade** (1202–1204). This was an armed Latin Christian expedition called by Pope Innocent III. The stated intent of the expedition was to recapture the Muslim-controlled city of Jerusalem. However, a sequence of economic and political events culminated in the Crusader army's eventual sack of Constantinople, rather than the conquest of Egypt as originally planned. This led to the partition of the Eastern Empire by the Crusaders and their Venetian allies leading to an approximate 50-year period known as *Frankokratia*, which is Greek for

"Rule of the Franks". This was a major contributing factor to the eventual fall of Constantinople 250 years later.

They basically laid waste to the city and stealing many relics and other items. The Great Schism is generally regarded as having been "psychologically sealed" by this act.

2. In 1274 the Second Council of Lyons (known as the 14th Ecumenical Council by the Roman Catholics) was convened at the request Emperor Michael VIII. It was motivated by a need for political unity between East and West. The Council's decisions, however, were un-Orthodox. They were rejected by the faithful back home and formally repudiated by the Emperor's successor. This is one of several examples of politically motivated councils, and how weak men can be tempted to compromise the faith in the face of worldly concerns.

3. From 1138-1151 we have what is known as the Hesychast Controversy. This is important enough to warrant its own slide, which we'll see next. So I won't say more here.

4. In 1438-9 another reunion attempt was made, this time at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Sadly, although hundreds of Orthodox Bishops were in attendance, only St. Mark of Ephesus refused to capitulate to the demands of the delegates from Rome. One article of the statement that this Council presented, and which was signed by all Orthodox attendees *except* St. Mark of Ephesus, reads:

"We decree that the Holy Apostolic Throne and Roman Pontiff possess a primacy over the whole earth, and that this Roman Pontiff is the Successor of the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is the true Vicar of Christ, the Head of the whole Church, Pastor and Teacher of all Christians; and that our Lord Jesus Christ in the person of St. Peter has given him full authority to shepherd, direct and rule the whole Church, as is likewise contained in the acts of the Ecumenical Councils and in the holy canons."

For not agreeing with the Council, nor signing its documents, St. Mark is honored as one of the "Three Pillars of Orthodoxy", along with St. Gregory Palamas and St. Photios the Great.

5. In 1596 we have the Union of Brest-Litovsk, whereby several million Ukrainian and Byelorussian Orthodox Christians, living under Polish rule, left the Church of Constantinople under duress, and were recognized by the Pope of Rome. This formed what call "the Byzantine Catholic" or "Uniate" Church. They look Orthodox but commemorate the Pope. This is a real sore spot for the Orthodox, even to this day.

6. Finally, we've had numerous encounters during the Modern Ecumenical Movement, e.g., in 1964 the lifting of the anathemas from 1054 by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, occasional Papal visits, etc. These are often a source of debate and dissension in the Orthodox Church.

Slide 11 – The Hesychast Controversy

Now let's look at the aforementioned Hesychast Controversy.

1. It's called the "Hesychast Controversy" because Orthodox Christians who practice *hesychia* (which literally means "quiet" or "silence") are called "hesychasts".

Hesychasm is a pathway of union with God, which involves living an ascetic life in a quiet setting (as much as in your control), striving for purity of heart, and practicing the Jesus Prayer. Doing this can result in a very real experiences of God culminating in what is called *theoria*, the experience of the divine (Uncreated) Light. Moses is a prototype of this experience. The Orthodox Church strongly encourages the practice of the Jesus Prayer, and there have been innumerable hesychasts throughout the history of the Church.

2. The controversy was instigated by a Greek monk from Italy, Barlaam the Calabrian, who was largely unfamiliar with Orthodox theology, having been educated in the West. He was scandalized when he heard that certain Orthodox Christians—mainly Athonite monks who practiced the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me"—were claiming direct experience with God—mainly in the form of the divine, Uncreated Light. (This is the same fiery light referred to in Scripture, such as the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites by day in the wilderness; the burning bush which was not consumed; Moses' face when he came down Mount Sinai; the transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor; the fiery tongues that descended on the Apostles at Pentecost; and in more recent centuries, the famous encounter of the layman Motovilov with his spiritual father St. Seraphim of Sarov, in which they were outside in the snow, and Motovilov experienced a supernatural warmth and the Uncreated Light in the presence of the Saint, who told him that the goal of the spiritual life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.)

Barlaam was also scandalized by what he saw as gross materialism in the way these monks practiced Jesus Prayer, with their emphasis on certain types of bodily postures and ways of breathing to facilitate prayer.

Thus, he set out to discredit and ridicule them. His arguments overemphasized the *unknowability* of God and insisted that the light they saw was a temporary, conjured creation. He and his disciples also stated that *we really can't know what the Holy Spirit is*, especially His procession from the Father and His being sent by the Son.

The problem with his line of thinking is that it ultimately leads to agnosticism and loss of authentic spiritual life in Christ.

Barlaam essentially attacked a theology and practice that had been well established in the Church for centuries, even if it was little known to Westernized Christians of his day.

3. Hesychasm is at the very heart of Orthodoxy and our relationship with God, i.e., the question "Can we *really* know God?". The correct answer to this question had to be defended. Thus in 1338 St. Gregory Palamas, a very learned Athonite monk, wrote

Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts. In it he articulated the distinction between God's "Essence" and His "Energies", giving hesychasm a firm *dogmatic* footing.

The word "essence" denotes the eternal Procession of the Holy Spirit. It is thus unknowable, and we cannot participate in it, lest the ontological distinction between Creator and creature be blurred. The Father's *sending* of the Holy Spirit (St. John 14:26), however, pertains to God's "Energies"—that is, the radiant, healing and transforming Light of His Divinity. These divine Energies we also call *Grace*.

At the heart of the correct answer to the question "Can we *really* know God?" is the answer to another question: "Is God's grace... God?" The Orthodox answer is "Yes!"

Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos writes in his book *St. Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*:

"In the face of the danger of agnosticism St. Gregory Palamas taught that the actual *procession* of the Holy Spirit from the Father is a different thing from *His being sent by* the Son. Thus while we do not know the essence of the Holy Spirit, we do know His energy. All spiritual life is a result and fruit of the energy of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the saint taught, we cannot participate in God's essence, but we can know and participate in His energies.

Bishop Kallistos Ware put it this way:

"It is through these energies that God enters into a direct and Immediate relationship with mankind. In relation to man, the divine energy is in fact nothing else than the *grace of God*; grace is not just a 'gift' of God, not just an object which God bestows on men, but a direct manifestation of the living God Himself, a personal confrontation between creature and Creator." (pp. 77-78)

In short, Grace is not a created gift from God—like communing God through nature might be—but is in fact the revelation of God Himself, but in His divine energies and not His essence (which is truly unknowable). That distinction is key to our salvation, and is the answer to agnosticism. In the West, however, Grace is still understood as a created gift of God, i.e., *something other than God that may just help us draw closer to Him*.

It's important to realize that St. Gregory Palamas did not *invent* this theology. Thus it cannot be called "Palamism", as some say. It reflects the Mind of the Church in her experience of God, one that had not yet been fully articulated until controversy about it arose. As with much of the Church's doctrine, it was formulated out of necessity to defend what She already believed and practiced, and this belief and practice has nothing to do with intellectual capacity, reason, theological training, etc., and everything to do with prayer and the practice of *hesychia*. This is why the illiterate fisherman among the Apostles could preach and teach with such power. This is why a true theologian is one who prays and has union with God.

4. The teachings of St. Gregory Palamas were formally upheld during the three sessions of the Ninth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople during the period 1341-1351. They also condemned the rationalistic philosophy of Barlaam of Calabria. This is why we celebrate this great Saint on both the Second Sunday of Great Lent and on November 14.

5. Roman Catholicism began to reconsider its stance on the Saint in the early-to-mid 20th century when patristic-minded Roman Catholic scholars rediscovered him. He is no longer dogmatically condemned, or viewed as a heretic, and his sanctity is generally recognized.

Slide 12 – Conversion of the Slavs

We now turn to the history of Russian Orthodoxy. Recall that the Iconoclastic Controversy was finally resolved in the early ninth century, culminating in the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which is celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. Well, with iconoclasm over and relative peace ensuing, the Church turned to missionary work to the Slavs.

The Slavs were pagan at the time, and consisted of the Moravians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Russians who were beyond the northern frontier of the Byzantine Empire.

1. In 863 Saint Photios the Great sends two missionaries named Cyril and Methodius—young, learned Greeks from Thessalonica, who were also brothers and monks—to Moravia, which is roughly equivalent to the Czech Republic and Slovakia today. They had been invited by the Prince of that land, Ratislav, who had asked that missionaries come who could preach and hold services in their native, Slavonic tongue.

They were not the first missionary to the Slavic lands, but rather St. Andrew the “first-called” disciple of Christ, the *Prōtoklētos*. He worked in Scythia and along the Black Sea coast. He erected a cross in Kiev upon which now stands the church in his name.

2. The two brothers began translation work immediately, using the Macedonian Slavic dialect with which they were familiar since childhood, as a basis. This involved creating an alphabet and translating numerous texts, which are still used in the Slavic churches today. The language is used only in the services and service books and is known as “Church Slavonic”.

It’s important to note that the Orthodox Church has almost always endeavored to do missionary work in the native tongue of the people. This is contrary to later Roman Catholic efforts, which insisted on the use of Latin, whether the people understood it or not.

3. Although the specific mission to Moravia ultimately failed, these two brothers laid a firm foundation of Orthodoxy in the slavic lands. The disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius continued to spread the Christian faith, which led to the conversion of the

Bulgars, the Serbs, and eventually the Russians. These two missionaries have thus been named the “Apostles to the Slavs”.

Concerning the conversion of the people of Rus, Orthodox missionaries from Byzantium, Bulgaria and Scandinavia continued steadily to make inroads in the late 9th century, so that by 945 there was even a church as far north as Kiev. However, no Russian ruler had yet converted; and persecution of Christians in this still-pagan land sometimes occurred.

4. Missionary presence in Kiev led to the conversion of the first ruler of Kievan Rus, Princess Olga. However, it was not until her grandson Prince Vladimir that the Russian people would convert *en masse*.

5. Prince Vladimir was originally a practitioner of pagan rites, including human sacrifice; but he sincerely wanted to find out which religion was best for his kingdom. He dispatched envoys who were tasked with studying the faith of various cultures, including that of Byzantium.

6. Many reports were sent back. Of note is that in the churches of the Germans his emissaries saw no beauty; but at Constantinople they experienced the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of the Hagia Sophia. This impressed them so much that they reported back to the Prince: “We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth, nor such beauty, and we know not how to tell of it.” Thus Prince Vladimir converted to Christianity, made Orthodoxy the religion of his empire, and had the nation baptized, thus completing the conversion of the Slavs.

* * *

Again, due to time constraints we are going to skip the next slide covering Part 1 of key Church history events in Russia. Feel free to review this on your own.

Slide 13 –Orthodoxy in Russia, I (SKIP IN CLASS)

1. The Kievan church was originally a Metropolitanate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Byzantine patriarch appointed the metropolitan who governed the Church of Rus'. The Metropolitan's residence was originally located in Kiev.

2. Metropolitan's residence was moved to Moscow in 1325 because Kiev was losing its political, cultural, and economical significance due to the Mongol invasion.

3-4. Tatar invasions and subsequent oppression of the Russian peoples began in the early 14th century. During this time St. Sergius of Radonezh provided spiritual leadership. The monastic reform of St. Sergius, which culminated in the foundation of the monastery known as Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra near Moscow, was one of the defining events of medieval Russian history. The monastery became the setting for the unprecedented flourishing of the spiritual arts, exemplified by the work of St. Andrei Rublev, among others. The followers of St. Sergius founded *four hundred*

monasteries, thus greatly extending the geographical extent of his influence and authority.

You are probably familiar with St. Andrei Rublev (1360?-1430?), among whose works is the famous Icon of the Hospitality of the Abraham, which prototypically represents the Holy Trinity.

5. In 1448, Moscow became a Metropolitanate and achieved independence from Constantinople, its ancient mother church. This was just five years before the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. Many in Russia after that came to see Moscow as the “Third Rome”. Although this has never been widely accepted in the Orthodox Church, support for this idea has been growing since the demise of the Soviet Union, the revitalization of Orthodoxy in Russia, and the overall decline in influence of the Patriarch of Constantinople over the past century.

6. During the 15th century Russia had what is known as the “Possessor / Non-Possessor Controversy”. The “Possessors” followed St. Joseph Volotsky, taught that the Church should hold on to her vast estates as this was the only way (amongst other things) to maintain a reasonable standard of living for the rural poor.

The “Non-Possessors,” led by St. Nilus of Sora, adhered to a more strict renunciation of the world, preaching that the Church should not involve herself in worldly affairs.

St. Joseph won the argument, but here it’s worth noting that there were Saints on both sides of the controversy. This has happened in Church history before, such as during the Antiochian Schism of the fourth-century, during which you had Saint Meletius of Antioch and his protégé Saint John Chrysostom—whom he had ordained—on one side, and St. Athanasius and other Saints on the other.

Slide 14 – Orthodoxy in Russia, 2

1. In 1652, Patriarch Nikon began a process of reform that simultaneously tried to turn Russia into a theocratic state. Although his political efforts failed—and he was subsequently deposed and exiled—his reform efforts concerning Russian liturgical practice and other traditions were upheld by Tsar Aleksey. Unfortunately these forcible changes led in 1667 to a schism by those who maintained the old Russian traditions. Thus was formed a faction known as the “Old Believers”. These schismatics were bitterly persecuted until more modern times, when the Moscow Patriarchate made formal provision for priests to serve their communities.

(There is an Old Believer community nearby in Woodburn.)

2. Peter the Great expanded the Tsardom, through numerous successful wars, into a huge empire, fashioning Russia into a major European power. He essentially led a cultural revolution that replaced the traditionalist and medieval social and political system with a modern, scientific, Europe-oriented, and rationalist system.

However, his church reforms proved disastrous from an Orthodox point of view: he abolished the Patriarchate, made the Church effectively a department of State, and facilitated the influence of some Western theological ideas on Russian Orthodoxy. These tragic changes took a long time to recover from.

Catherine the Great (1762-1796) extended his policies by nationalizing monastic assets and making the clergy state employees.

The Patriarchate and the independence of the Church were not restored until 1917, on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution.

3. Despite the erosion of the Russian Church's independence in the 18th century—owing to Peter the Great's reforms—her vitality remained evident in missionary endeavors that extended well into the 19th century. Notable amongst these were:

- The missions to Siberia and Alaska pioneered by St. Innocent (1797-1879) and St. Herman (1756-1837). A truly indigenous church of aboriginal peoples was created, and the monks vigorously defended them against exploitative Russian merchants who would have otherwise subjugated them. When Alaska was later sold to the US in 1867, this would contribute greatly to the development of Orthodoxy in North America.
- A mission to Japan started by St. Nicholas (Kasatkin; 1836-1912) was highly and even surprisingly successful, resulting in an indigenous Japanese Orthodox Church which endures to this day. Other missions opened up China and the Far East to the Orthodox Church.

4. The late 18th century also saw the beginning of a spiritual revitalization of the Russian Church, with Athonite hesychastic prayer being introduced to the monasteries by St. Paisiy Velichkovsky, who translated the *Philokalia* into Church Slavonic from the Greek. You'll learn more about him and the *Philokalia* in a few minutes.

St. Paisiy's disciples, especially the Fathers of the famous Optina Monastery in the Moldovan region of Romania, were in continual demand for their spiritual counsel.

(The Lives of these Optina Elders have been translated into English and published by St. Herman Press. They are highly recommended! See especially the Life of St. Barsanuphous, which contains many letters and counsels to laypeople near the turn of the 20th century.)

5. Three notable spiritual giants in this renewal period were St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), St Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894), and St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1908).

- St. Seraphim was a humble monk who even in this life through his ascetic labours and prayers experienced the transfiguring Light of the Mt. Tabor (Luke 9:28-36). He was a guide to countless people. His famous "Conversation with Nicholas Motovilov" (which I mentioned earlier) can be

found on the Web. It emphasizes that the goal of the Christian life is the ever-increasing acquisition of the Holy Spirit. It is also an inspiring example of two people experiencing the uncreated energies of God, as we've discussed in relation to the Hesychastic Controversy.

- St Theophan is arguably the most noteworthy Russian Orthodox bishop and spiritual writer of the mid-late nineteenth century, renowned for making the profound wisdom of the ancient Church Fathers accessible to the ordinary people of his time. After serving as a bishop, rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, and editor of the *Christian Reading* journal, he spent his last 28 years in voluntary seclusion (reclusion), primarily engaged in prolific writing, translation, and correspondence. His most significant contributions include translating the *Philokalia* from Greek into Slavonic, a massive work of mystical texts focusing on the Jesus Prayer and Hesychasm (we'll talk more about the *Philokalia* in a bit). He is also known for his vast correspondence offering practical spiritual guidance on everyday life, and for works like *The Path to Salvation* and *What is the Spiritual Life?*, which emphasized the necessity of inner spiritual warfare and the practice of the Prayer of the Heart for all Christians.
- St. John was a married parish priest whose ministry had a similar impact and who became an exemplar for many who followed. Toward the end of the 19th century the Orthodox Church in Russia was very far from being the moribund corrupt Tsarist entity that later Soviet propaganda tried to make it out to be. His diary entitled *My Life in Christ* is treasured by innumerable Orthodox Christians.

Slide 15 – The Ottoman Yoke

We now turn to a very sad chapter in the history of the Orthodox Church: the fall of Constantinople and the Ottoman Yoke.

1. Constantinople fell to the Muslims on May 29, 1453. The Orthodox were outnumbered 20:1. On that day the last service was held in the most glorious cathedral in Christendom, Hagia Sophia. The Emperor died fighting on the walls after receiving communion.
2. Islamic rule in Constantinople, and to this day, involves the concept of *D'himmitude*. The term *Dhimmi* is the name applied by the Arab-Muslim conquerors to indigenous non-Muslim populations who surrender by a treaty (called a *dhimma*) to Muslim domination. *Dhimmitude* is thus the Islamic system of governing populations conquered by jihad wars, encompassing all of the demographic, ethnic, and religious aspects of their political system. It is based on the shari'a, the Islamic body of religious laws.

What this meant in reality is that Christians under Turkish rule were second-class citizens—a confessional enclave—with very limited rights, privileges and

opportunities. They paid heavy taxes, had to wear distinctive dress, and their liberties were greatly restricted overall. The Church could undertake no missionary work, and it was a crime punishable by death to convert a Muslim to Christianity. This was a slow, cultural martyrdom, with lots of enticements to apostatize to Islam.

3. During this period of Ottoman subjugation the Patriarchate decayed internally, but expanded externally. It decayed due to simony, corruption, and involvement in too many worldly affairs. It expanded because the Turks used the Patriarchate politically to run and keep order in the other Orthodox regions that were under Ottoman rule.

Despite this sad state of affairs, the Orthodox Church never ceased being the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Although some of her leaders and clergy capitulated to the pressures of their times, compromising themselves, the Church did not head down aberrant theological paths, nor cease celebrating the Sacraments, nor cease producing Saints. Although her external appearance may have been shabby, at her heart she was still the Body of Christ, just as during other challenging periods of human history.

4. The motto for Orthodox Christians of that time was taken from 1 Tim. 6:20: “Guard the deposit.” And this they did, though understandably, not without a degree of ossification and nationalistic conservatism.

5. Orthodox scholarship was difficult to maintain, most studied abroad, and were influenced by the West. Greek students were only familiar with those works that were also favored by their non-Orthodox professors. It’s telling that St. Gregory Palamas’ aforementioned book *Triads* was unknown except on Mount Athos, where it was still read by the Hesychasts. It was not even formally published until 1959, and the 20th century saw a rebirth of “Palamite studies”.

Religious thinkers of the day were either “Latinizers” or “Protestantizers”, and thus their expression of Orthodoxy—their terminology and forms of argument—were foreign to the Orthodox mindset. This led to what the famous theologian of the 20th century, Fr George Florovsky, called a pseudomorphosis of Orthodox theology. He adopted a mineralogical term for theological use in order to label a process whereby the original expressions of Orthodoxy—which were faithful to the consensus or mindset of the Holy Fathers—began to take on new forms that were alien to it, expressing theology in a language, and with categories and symbols that were alien to its original forms. In essence, there was a loss of the Patristic mindset in the Greek Church.

The Patristic mindset began to recover mainly in the 20th century, with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars discovering and writing about St. Gregory Palamas, St. Maximos the Confessor, and other important Church Fathers.

Key authors to read in this area are Fr. George Florovsky and Fr. John Romanides, the latter who was a very strong critic of Greek theological practice in the sixties, and who led a patristic revival of sorts in Greece and America.

6. By way of summing up this period in history, Bishop Kallistos Ware wrote: “It has been rightly said that if there is much to pity in the state of Orthodoxy during the Turkish period, there is also much to admire. Despite innumerable discouragements, the Orthodox Church under Ottoman rule never lost heart. There were of course many cases of apostasy to Islam, but in Europe at any rate they were not as frequent as might have been expected. Orthodoxy in these centuries was not lacking in martyrs, who are honored in the Church’s calendar with the special title of *New Martyrs*: many of them were Greeks who [converted to Islam] and then repented, returning to Christianity once more—for which the penalty was death. The corruption in the higher administration of the Church, shocking though it was, had very little effect on the daily life of the ordinary Christian, who was still able to worship Sunday by Sunday in his parish church. More than anything else it was the Holy Liturgy that kept Orthodoxy alive in those dark days.” (*The Orthodox Church*, p. 111)

Slide 16 - Encounters with Protestantism

We now turn to Protestantism’s interaction with Orthodoxy. You may be surprised to learn there was a quite a lot!

1. In the latter part of the 16th century, Lutheran scholars from Tübingen, Germany wanted to spread Protestantism to the East, so they visited the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremias II and gave him a copy of the Augsburg Confession. They corresponded three times, and the Patriarch answered thoroughly and in a very Orthodox manner on a variety of subjects, but chiefly on the topics of free will and grace, Scripture and Tradition, the sacraments, prayers for the dead and praying to the Saints. These answers are important as the first thorough critique of Protestant doctrine.

This correspondence has been translated into English and published as *Augsburg and Constantinople*, by Fr. George Mastrantonis. It was a very helpful book for me when I was learning about the Orthodox Church. I recommend it to anyone who wants to read it as an Orthodox commentary on Protestant theology.

2. In 1629, a Confession of Faith allegedly written by Ecumenical Patriarch Cyril Loukaris was published in Geneva. I say “allegedly” because there is strong evidence he did not write the Confession, but that it was the product of Calvinist scholars with whom he was allied in his fight against the Roman Church, mainly regarding the Unia, which he had witnessed first-hand as a Priest in attendance at the Brest-Litovsk council. Western scholars have called him a “crypto-Protestant”, but this is most certainly false.

3. Regardless of who wrote it, in 1672 Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem convened a Council to address the Confession and to formulate an Orthodox response both to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. It also clarified the Orthodox Canon of Scripture. Although this was a local, and not an ecumenical, council, its acts were later signed by all five patriarchates (including Russia), and its decrees carry

dogmatic weight. The acts of this Council are a great read for all Protestants coming to Orthodoxy. You can find it online at <http://bit.ly/synod1672>.

4. I also highly recommend the definitive Orthodox critique of Protestant by Fr Josiah Trenham entitled *Rock and Sand*. You can find it in the Logos Bookstore. The website TrisagionFilms.com also has a 1 hr 20 min video entitled “The Protestant Reformation and the Orthodox Christian East” which is worth watching.

Slide 17 – The *Kollyvades* Movement

This lecture would be incomplete without discussing the Kollyvades Movement during the second half of the eighteenth century. It is very important for us to know about it, and the worldwide revival it inspired.

1. The movement arose in 1754 out of a dispute within the Skete of St. Anna on Mount Athos. The initial conflict was over the “untraditional practice of transferring the memorial services for the deceased from Saturday to Sunday”. This argument over the *kóllyva* (the boiled wheat we prepare for memorials) gave the movement its name (by its detractors), though it quickly revealed a much deeper tension between the ascetic and liturgical practice of traditional Athonite monks and those seeking to accommodate contemporary rationalism. You may be surprised to learn that the movement came under assault by many on Mount Athos and elsewhere, involving attacks that were at times vicious and beyond what one would expect from monastics and clergy of any rank.

The subsequent debates and writings led to what can properly be called The Philokalic Revival, named after the Greek work *philokalia*, which means “love of beauty or goodness”. In a spiritual context, this beauty refers to the spiritual and moral goodness that leads to union with God.

2. This movement was aimed at a large, diverse audience of laymen, monks, priests, and bishops. It was and is very important because it arose after centuries of Ottoman oppression, which had obscured many aspects of deeper Orthodox spirituality, and was a much needed antidote to the poison of the neopagan Western Enlightenment—the so-called “Age of Reason”—, which was strongly anti-Christian.

The Enlightenment was characterized by rationalism, the elevation of intellect above revelation, materialism, and atheism. The main uniting idea among its extreme proponents was a hatred for the Church—“organized religion”—and Christianity in general. It was closely tied to the French Revolution, and agents of the revolution were fomenting in Orthodox lands.

3. The leaders of the movement included, but are not limited to, the following Saints:

- St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1749–1809) was primary scholar, editor, and theologian of the movement. He was the chief editor and synthesizer who selected, organized, and provided theological footnotes for the texts in the *Philokalia*. He

also compiled other monumental works, including *The Rudder (Pedalion)*, a collection of canonical law).

- St. Makarios of Corinth (1731–1805) was the spiritual inspiration and driving force behind the *Philokalia* project. As an archbishop, he recognized the spiritual decline of the faithful and partnered with St. Nikodemos to publish ancient texts to combat it.
- St. Athanasios Parios (1722–1813) was the author of several works against the Western Enlightenment movement within Greece, and in favor of frequent communion. As an example of how this controversial movement got pretty ugly, in 1776 the Saint was condemned as a heretic, defrocked and excommunicated by Patriarch Sophronius II and the Holy Synod of Constantinople, before another Patriarch and the Holy Synod, in 1781, found the charges against him absurd and unfounded, and lifted his suspension. He was then restored to his priestly rank.
- St. Paisios Velichkovsky (1722–1794): Although he worked in Romania and Russia, his role was parallel and equally critical. He was the first to translate the *Philokalia* into Church Slavonic. His work led to a major monastic and spiritual renewal in the Slavic Orthodox world.

All of these men were dedicated to reviving the legacy of St. Gregory Palamas, whom you will recall lived and wrote four centuries earlier. They endeavored mainly to resurrect his writings, the Hesychastic way of life he championed, and the idea that all Christians—of whatever station in life—should devote themselves to practicing the Jesus Prayer.

St. Gregory’s writings, especially his book *Triads*, stand in direct opposition to tenets of the Enlightenment. Here are a few choice quotes, which were addressed to those of his day who, like the Monk Barlaam, relied on Aristotelian philosophy and other ideas of the Renaissance concerning the intellect:

The soul that possesses the knowledge of secular wisdom is in no way brought to the Truth Itself [i.e., Christ, the *Logos*], or even to the truth [small “t”], which is why those who boast about it do so in vain. Let them listen to Paul, who calls secular wisdom “fleshly wisdom” (2 Cor 1:12), just as he calls “the knowledge that makes one arrogant” (1 Cor 8:1) the “mind of the flesh” (Col 2:18)....

Why did Christ call as His disciples men who were illiterates, fishermen, and rustics, but not the wise? [Recall the Apolytikion for the Feast of Pentecost: “... Who has shown forth the fishermen as *supremely wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit...*” —PB] Was it not so that He might “confound the wise”, just as Paul says? (1 Cor 1:27). Why did God “make their wisdom foolish”? (1 Cor 1:20). Why was God pleased to “save believers by the folly of Paul’s preaching”? (cf. 1 Cor 1:21). Was it not because “the world did not know God through wisdom”? (1 Cor 1:21).

And what did those, who *you* say are wise, do when the Word of God, “who became our Wisdom” (1 Cor 1:30), and who is “the light of the World” (Jn 1:9), was manifested bodily to the world? They replaced the Light with a tiny lamp and now encourage others to abandon the way of inner purification and take up secular studies instead....

[The Saint continues:] This is confirmed by the Lord Himself, who did *not* say, “If you would be perfect, occupy yourself with secular education”, but [rather] “deny yourself, give to the poor, and take up your cross” (cf. Matthew 19:21, 16:24). If what my opponents say is correct, why did Christ not teach geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and the natural sciences, if such things indeed had the power to banish the darkness of ignorance from the soul?

Juxtaposing the writings of the Enlightenment with those of St Gregory Palamas show just how diametrically opposed they were to each other.

4. The Philokalic Revival had these main goals:

- Help the faithful return to the liturgical and sacramental foundations of the Orthodox Church, and especially receive Holy Communion more frequently.
- Awaken Orthodox Christians to the value and beauty of the spiritual life.
- Spread the Orthodox tradition through the publication of theological and spiritual books, which countered the Enlightenment—a “new [secular] illumination”—with that of the *true spiritual* enlightenment in the Church that begins with Baptism.

Their central achievement was the publication of the *Philokalia* in Venice in 1782. This collection is an extensive compilation of mystical and ascetic texts written by thirty-six Church Fathers, spanning the 4th to 15th centuries. These texts focus on sobriety (Greek: *nēpsis*), spiritual vigilance, and the practice of the Jesus Prayer to achieve the vision of the Uncreated Light (Hesychasm).

The translation and dissemination of the *Philokalia* created a worldwide revival, due to a large degree by the efforts of St. Paisios Velichkovsky, who started the first translation into Slavonic. This led to revivals in Orthodox lands that used the language Church Slavonic. Interestingly, a translation was eventually sent to St. Herman of Alaska by St. Seraphim of Sarov, who had been a novice with St. Herman at Sarov Monastery in Russia.

In addition to the *Philokalia*, St. Nikodemos compiled and published other important works, including:

- *The Evergetinos*: A collection of ascetic sayings from the Fathers. This was finally translated into English in the past 25 years or so.
- *On Frequent Communion*: A highly influential work arguing for a return to the early Church practice of frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist.

5. While the spiritual revival continues to this day—and we are all encouraged to drink from its wellsprings, and practice its teachings—the controversy that started the movement was largely resolved by a Council at Constantinople in 1819. This council endorsed the views of the Kollyvades fathers, especially that Holy Communion should be partaken of regularly by clergy and faithful alike.

6. Hopefully you will now see the Second Sunday of Lent—the “Second Triumph of Orthodoxy” (following the first, concerning the *restoration* of the Icons)—in a new light, because in celebrating St Gregory Palamas on that Sunday (in addition to his regular feast day on November 14), we honor not just his life and writings, but also the choir of so-called “Kollyvades Fathers”, who *restored*—like the Icons—his legacy four hundred years later.

Slide 18 – Major “Branches” of Christianity (SKIP IN CLASS)

This rather simple diagram shows branches of Christianity, not branches of the Church (we do not subscribe to any sort of “branch theory” of the *Church*, which is One... this is not a diagram made by Orthodox Christians).

We are not in communion with any of these other churches, for we cannot be united in the one Body of Christ if we hold different beliefs about such essentials as the role of the Theotokos, the hypostatic union of God and Man in the Person of Jesus Christ, etc.

Not shown is a church you may have heard of: Melkite Greek [Roman] Catholic Church. It’s another type of “Byzantine Rite” church that is in communion with the Pope.

Slide 19 – The Soviet Yoke (SKIP IN CLASS)

And now, a brief look at a very dark period in Church history: the Russian Revolution and subsequent Soviet Yoke. This period is the most bitter and continuous persecution since the early church era of Nero and Diocletian.

1. It began with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

2. On the night of 16/17 July 1918, Tsar Nicholas II—who represented the old regime, the Russian monarchy, and the Slavic Christianity hated by the Bolsheviks—along with his wife the Empress Alexandra, his son, his four daughters, the family's medical doctor, the Emperor's footman, the Empress' maidservant, and the family's cook were executed in Yekaterinburg by the Bolsheviks.

On 15 August 2000 the Russian Orthodox Church canonized Nicholas II and his family as passion bearers, a category used to identify believers who, in imitation of Christ, endured suffering and death at the hands of political enemies.

3. In the first five years alone after the Bolshevik revolution, 28 bishops and over 1200 priests were summarily executed. The State then embarked on a campaign of

persecution, torture, execution and exile in order to eliminate all forms and traces of religion.

St. Patriarch Tikhon was “deposed” in 1923.

Between 1927 and 1940, the number of Orthodox Churches in the Russian Republic fell from 29,584 to less than 500. Between 1917 and 1935, 130,000 Orthodox priests were arrested. Of these, 95,000 were put to death.

After the War the persecutions returned with a vengeance especially under Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

4. During this 70-year period untold numbers of martyrs and confessors graced the Russian Church and Christianity was by no means vanquished. In 1987, between 40-50% of babies were still baptised and 60% of those who died received a Christian funeral service. When Marxism collapsed under Gorbachev, the Church was poised to make its recovery. The people had kept the faith.

5. During the reign of Patriarch Alexy II (1990–2008) over 15,000 churches were rebuilt or restored, and the Russian Orthodox Church really seemed to be putting her house in order, although many still complained that KGB agents who had infiltrated the Church under Communism were largely still permitted to serve. Despite that, strong evidence of a reflowering and revitalization of Orthodoxy in Russia did seem apparent during this period.

Also during this time, in 2007, that part of the Russian Church known as the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia—which had fled to lands outside of Russia, and had been out of communion with their mother church, the Russian Church of the Moscow Patriarchate—was finally reunited, and communion restored. This was a very important step in the healing of the Russian church.

6. However, since Patriarch Alexy’s successor, the current Patriarch Kyrill—himself a former KGB agent, classified as such by the federal police of Switzerland since 1970—has been the source of tremendous controversy, calling into question much of what outsiders had viewed as a reflowering of a Russian Orthodox Church that was free from state control. His close alliance with Vladimir Putin, and his justification of the invasion of their sister country, Ukraine, as a “holy war”, is a serious problem for the Russian Church. It calls into question the nature of this “reflowering”, especially when the church aligns with Putin’s desire to create a cult of war that finds such manifestations as the so-called Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, built in 2020. There is also estrangement between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, especially after Patriarch Bartholomew, in 2019, recognized the autocephaly of that portion of the church in Ukraine that broke away from the Moscow Patriarchate and formed the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (the other body being the original Ukrainian Orthodox Church).

This is not to call into question the piety of the rank-and-file Russian Orthodox Christian. It’s merely to raise awareness that the Russian Church leadership—under

the aegis of a ruthless autocrat like Putin—appears to be highly compromised, and the church there certainly suffers for it.

Slide 20 – Orthodoxy in America, 1

We now arrive at the history of Orthodoxy in America. Let's briefly cover some key events:

1. In 1794 Russian Orthodox missionaries—among whom was St. Herman of Alaska—arrived at Kodiak Island.

2. 1824 Fr. John Veniaminov, the future St. Innocent of Alaska, arrived in Unalaska. He is consecrated as Bishop Innocent in 1840.

3. In 1864, just one year before the end of the Civil War, Holy Trinity Church is established by Greek immigrants in New Orleans as the first parish church on continental U.S. soil.

4. **1880-1920** was a period of massive immigration to America. Especially between 1890 and 1917 widespread unemployment and economic problems led to migrations to the US of 450,000 Greeks. At the time this was one-fifth of Greece's population, so it was quite an exodus. Another 70,000 would arrive between 1918 and 1924.

- Immigrants would want to establish a church. They would often get funds from their homeland. They would establish close-knit ethnic communities that rarely ventured to Orthodox communities of different ethnic backgrounds.
- These communities grew to needing a Bishop, which meant that the Bishop needed to have a *jurisdiction*, i.e., an ecclesiastical entity in a geographical region that included the parishes over which he is the Archpastor. This is similar to a *see*. The main difference is that, due to pastoral necessity, these jurisdictions overlap regionally, which violates the Canons. It is a messy canonical and pastoral problem that still needs to be worked out in America. It will take time, as things often do in Orthodoxy. The Bolshevik Revolution really dealt a blow to this because it fractured the Russian Orthodox Church, which was the main presence in America, and which early on was trying to move towards a unified Orthodoxy.

5. In 1904 Raphael Hawaweeny, an Arab who had Slavic Orthodox training, was consecrated as the Bishop of Brooklyn, becoming the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in America.

6. 1906 saw the blessing of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery, founded a year earlier, by the hierarchs St. Tikhon, St. Raphael and St. Innocent. The first translation of the Orthodox Service Book into English, by Isabel Hapgood, also appeared in 1906. This service book would be a mainstay of English-speaking parishes for many decades.

7. In 1922 the Church of Greece transferred control of its parishes to the Church of Constantinople, that is, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which subsequently established the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. It's worth mentioning that the GOA is not a self-ruled or autonomous church at this time, but rather what is called and "exarchate" of Constantinople. But this will likely change in the future.

8. In 1938 St. Vladimir's Seminary and St. Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary were founded.

9. And in 1946 the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology was founded in Brookline, MA.

Slide 21 – Orthodoxy in America, 2

1. In 1970, a splinter group from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia known as the "Russian Metropolia" was granted autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate and renamed the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

2. In 1985 the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) was founded, followed by the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in 1992.

3. 1987 brought a rather historic event when the majority of parishes of the Evangelical Orthodox Church—a group of Protestant evangelicals that had discovered the Holy Fathers and the ancient church, and wanted to find a home in the Orthodox Church—were received into the Antiochian Archdiocese by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba), becoming the Antiochian Evangelical Orthodox Mission (AEOM).

4. The Blessed Elder Ephraim of Arizona—a disciple of St Joseph the Hesychast on Mount Athos—came to America and started building monasteries in 1989. He reposed in 2019, leaving 17 monasteries for men and women in North America. One day the Church will glorify him as a Saint.

5. In 2000, the aforementioned Bishop of Brooklyn, Raphael, was glorified as a Saint by the Antiochian Archdiocese. This was followed in 2003 by their receiving autocephaly from the Patriarch of Antioch.

Slide 22 – Things We Didn't Discuss

No additional notes.

Slide 23 - Bibliography

No additional notes.