

Intro to Patrology

Study of the Church Fathers

Their lives, their sayings, their writings about the
Christian Faith

Pater = Father , Ology = the study of



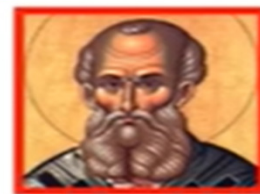
Gregory
of Nyssa



Basil



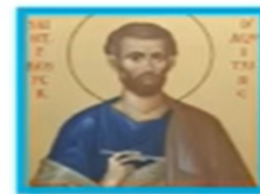
Gregory of
Nazianzus



Athanasius



Cyril of
Alexandria



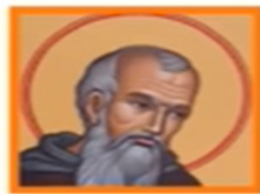
Prosper of
Aqutaine



Tertullian



Ambrose



Jerome



Augustine



Irenaeus



Severus



Ignatius



Polycarp



Clement
of Rome



Clement of
Alexandria



Justin
Martyr



John
Chrysostom

When a man learns from the mouth of another, it is said that he is the son of the person who teaches him, and the latter is called his father.

*~St. Irenaeus
(c. 120 – c. 202)*

Who are those fathers?

- ❖ Those who defended or explained the Christian faith, particularly in the first few centuries.
- ❖ Some were hermits or monks who were teachers by their life or words
- ❖ Example: St. Athanasius learned from St. Anthony the Great (a “Dessert Father”)
- ❖ Includes Mothers as well E.g. Amma Syncletica of Alexandria (270 to 350 AD) St. Athanasius told her story along with that of Anthony of the Desert. She was a revered spiritual director. Twenty-seven sayings are recorded in the Sayings of the Desert Fathers
- ❖ Not only bishops or priests
- ❖ Not necessarily canonized saints, e.g. Origen, Tertullian

They help us to have a more complete understanding of

- ❖ Theology
- ❖ Apologetics
- ❖ The Holy Bible- not only to understand it but to live it
- ❖ Church History
- ❖ Spirituality of the Church
- ❖ Efforts to promote unity among the world's Christian Churches (with focus on a return to Orthodoxy)

How do we receive the writings of the earliest Fathers

- ❖ Eusebius of Caesarea, 3rd & 4th century Roman historian
 - “The Ecclesiastical History”, 326AD
 - Lists writers and their works

- ❖ St. Jerome, a Roman priest
 - Translated the Bible to Latin, the “Vulgate”
 - “The Illustrious Men”, 392AD
 - Biographies of 135 fathers, from the Apostolic fathers till 379AD

Classifications

By Time

- ❖ Apostolic
- ❖ Ante-Nicene
- ❖ Post-Nicene

By Language or Region

- ❖ Greek
- ❖ Latin
- ❖ Coptic
- ❖ Syrian
- ❖ Armenian
- ❖ Cappadocian

By Function

- ❖ Apologetic
- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ Confessors
- ❖ Desert/Monastic

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

Apostolic Fathers

Apostles

- Paul 5 BC - 67
- Peter 8 - 67
- John 15 - 100

- Clement of Rome 30 - 99
- Ignatius of Antioch 30 - 108

Jerusalem Council 49

John's Writings 90-95

1 Clement 95

Didache 101

Ignatius' Letters 110-115

- Epistle of Barnabas 70-135
- Shepherd of Hermas 140-145

Marcion 160

Montanus 177

Justin Martyr 100 - 162

Theophilus of Antioch 120 - 183

Athenagorus 133 - 190

Irenaeus Lyons 120 - 202

Clement of Alexandria 150 - 215

Origen of Alexandria 185 - 254

Tertullian of Carth. 160 - 225

Cyprian of Carthage 200 - 258

Apologies & Dialogue With Trypho 155-160

Martyrdom of Polycarp 150-160

Against Heresies 180

Ante-Nicene

200

300

400

Decian & Valarian Persecutions 249-260

Diocletian & Maximian Persecutions 303-311

Constantine Converts 312

Council of Nicea 325

Canon Closed 365

Council of Constantinople 381

- Relative Peace
- Church Building
- Monastic Movement

Sts. Athony, Makarius, Pachomius

Athanasius of Alexandria 298 - 374

Pelagius 411

Basil of Caesarea 330 - 379

Gregory of Nazianzus 329 - 389

Gregory of Nyssa 330 - 395

Ambrose of Milan 340 - 397

Chrysostom 347 - 407

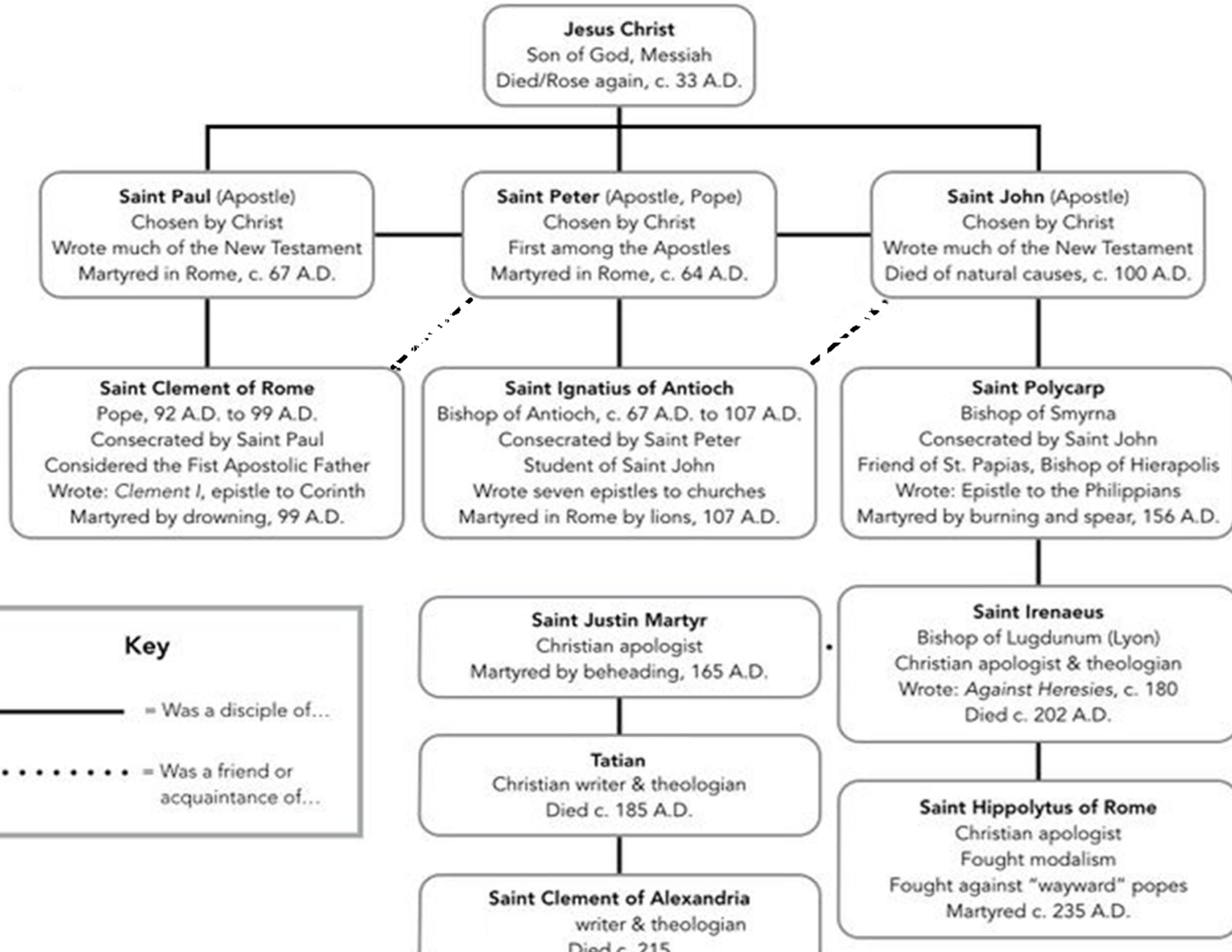
Augustine of Hyppo 354 - 430

Desert/ Monastic Fathers

Post-Nicene

Apostolic

- ❖ within two generations of the Twelve Apostles
- ❖ taught by the Twelve or close to their time
 - ❖ e.g.: St. Clement of Rome (c. 35 – c. 101)
 - St. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35 – c. 108)
 - St. Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 69 – c. 155)
 - Didache (Collected Teachings of the Apostles)
- Wrote in Greek.



Jesus Christ
Son of God, Messiah
Died/Rose again, c. 33 A.D.

Saint Paul (Apostle)
Chosen by Christ
Wrote much of the New Testament
Martyred in Rome, c. 67 A.D.

Saint Peter (Apostle, Pope)
Chosen by Christ
First among the Apostles
Martyred in Rome, c. 64 A.D.

Saint John (Apostle)
Chosen by Christ
Wrote much of the New Testament
Died of natural causes, c. 100 A.D.

Saint Clement of Rome
Pope, 92 A.D. to 99 A.D.
Consecrated by Saint Paul
Considered the First Apostolic Father
Wrote: *Clement I*, epistle to Corinth
Martyred by drowning, 99 A.D.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch
Bishop of Antioch, c. 67 A.D. to 107 A.D.
Consecrated by Saint Peter
Student of Saint John
Wrote seven epistles to churches
Martyred in Rome by lions, 107 A.D.

Saint Polycarp
Bishop of Smyrna
Consecrated by Saint John
Friend of St. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis
Wrote: *Epistle to the Philippians*
Martyred by burning and spear, 156 A.D.

Saint Justin Martyr
Christian apologist
Martyred by beheading, 165 A.D.

Saint Irenaeus
Bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon)
Christian apologist & theologian
Wrote: *Against Heresies*, c. 180
Died c. 202 A.D.

Tatian
Christian writer & theologian
Died c. 185 A.D.

Saint Hippolytus of Rome
Christian apologist
Fought modalism
Fought against "wayward" popes
Martyred c. 235 A.D.

Saint Clement of Alexandria
writer & theologian
Died c. 215

Key

———— = Was a disciple of...

..... = Was a friend or acquaintance of...

Apostolic Fathers

- ❖ Dealt with Schisms in the Church
- ❖ St. Clement of Rome taught Church at Corinth to submit to those with Apostolic Succession.
- ❖ Taught early Christians to recognize Church authority, obey the Church

Ante-Nicene Fathers

- ❖ Dealt with Heresies, such as
- ❖ Gnosticism- material world was evil. They also believed that Jesus was a human who became divine through special, secret knowledge.
- ❖ Docetism- believed that Jesus was a pure spirit and that his physical body was an illusion.
- ❖ Marcionism- believed that the God of Jesus was different from the God of the Old Testament.

Example: St. Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*

Post Nicene

Focus on Christology and additional precise terminology about the Holy Trinity

The Cappadocian Fathers (Sts. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa (brother), and their friend, Gregory the Theologian (between 330-390 AD))

- Continued to stamp out Arianism and Apollinarianism
- Showed that Christians can speak very intelligently to explain and defend the faith against educated Greek philosophers.

“Whatever is not assumed is not saved” -St. Gregory the Theologian

St Cyril I of Alexandria (375 -444 AD)
against Nestorianism

CONFESSORS:

- ❖ St. Dioscorus (444 to 454 AD)
- ❖ St. Severus of Antioch (465 to 538 AD)

Apologetic

❖ Defenders of the Faith against heathenism, critics, philosophers, early Jewish scholars.

❖ Examples

- St. Justine Martyr
- St. Athenagoros
- St. Ireneus.

Teachers (also called :Doctors in the West)

- St Athanasius of Alexandria,
 - St Cyril the Great
 - St Basil the Great
 - St Gregory the Theologian
 - St John Chrysostom
-
- St Cyprian, St Jerome, St Augustine (from the west).

Apologetics

- What did the Disciples and Early Fathers believe?
- If I want to be a Christian shouldn't I believe what they believed?
- How can I know if my faith is correct? How can I know if "my church's" understanding of the Bible is correct?
- Confess to a Priest? Communion really Blood of Christ? Do we need priests? Is Jesus really God?

e.g. on the Divinity of Christ
contrary to Islam and Jehovah's Witnesses

•
108 A.D. - *Ignatius of Antioch (108 AD)*: "For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit" (*Letter to the Ephesians 18:2 [A.D. 110]*).

•
170 A.D. - *Tatian the Syrian (170 AD)*: "We are not playing the fool, you Greeks, nor do we talk nonsense, when we report that God was born in the form of a man" (*Address to the Greeks 21*).

- 190 A.D. -Clement of Alexandria (190AD): "The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning-for he was in God- and of our well-being. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things" (*Exhortation to the Greeks 1:7:1* [A.D. 190]).
- 210 A.D. -Tertullian: "God alone is without sin. The only man who is without sin is Christ; for Christ is also God" (*The Soul 41:3* [A.D. 210]).
- 225 A.D. -Origen: "Although he was God, he took flesh; and having been made man, he remained what he was: God" (*The Fundamental Doctrines 1:0:4* [A.D. 225]).

- Justin Martyr (100-166 AD) the teachings of the Logos, because he is divine." In reference to the Logos, he writes, "It is only reasonable that we worship him"
- Irenaeus (120-203 AD) was a pupil of Polycarp; Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle John (In his book, *Against False Gnosis*, Irenaeus asserts that the Church believes ". . . in one Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Son of God, was incarnate for our salvation. . . that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and GOD and Savior and King, every knee should bow". . . (Fremantle, p. 338).
- Tertullian (160-220 AD) His major work was *The Apology*. In Tertullian's day, Christians were being charged with being ". . . worshippers of a mere human being." Tertullian responded, "We must make, therefore, a remark or two about Christ's divinity." He continues, "He is the Son of God and is called GOD from unity of substance with God. For God, too, is a Spirit . . . Thus Christ is Spirit of Spirit and GOD OF GOD... in His birth GOD AND MAN united". . ., "Surely Christ has a right to reveal Deity, which was in fact His own essential possession"

How did the Orthodox Church understand the words of Christ about eating and drinking His Body and Blood?

- **St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 350 A.D.)**
- *Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and the Wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but -- be fully assured by the faith, not doubting ... (22 [Mystagogic 4], 6)*
- Having learned these things, and being fully convinced that *the apparent bread is not bread, even though it is sensible to the taste, but the Body of Christ; and that the apparent Wine is not wine, even though the taste would have it so...*

St. Justin the Martyr (c. 100 - 165 A.D.)

....as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which ... I eat both the Flesh and the Blood of that incarnated Jesus. (*First Apology, 66*)

St. John Chrysostom (c. 344 - 407 A.D.)

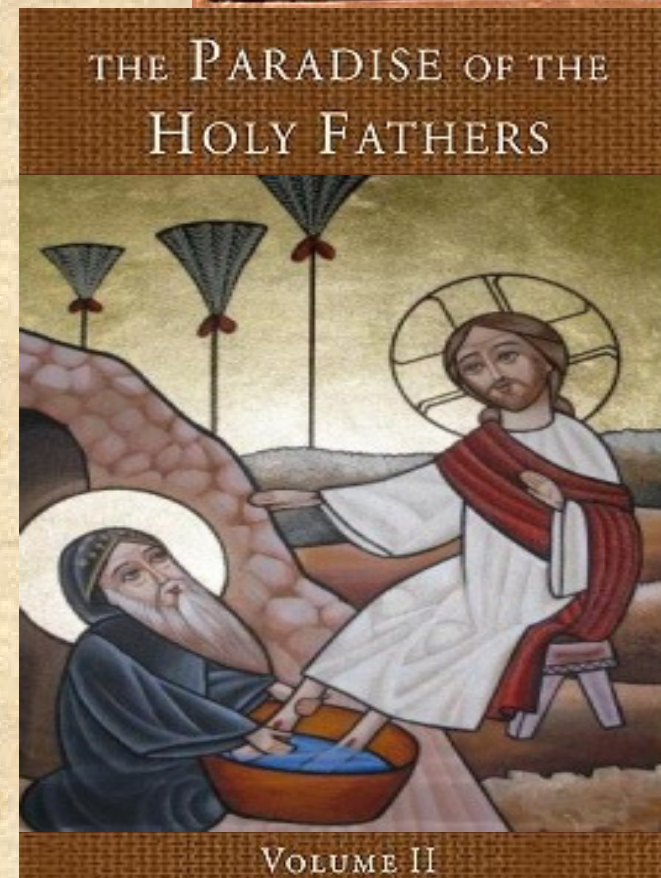
How many now say, "I wish I could see his shape, His appearance, His garments, His sandals." ONLY LOOK! YOU SEE HIM! YOU TOUCH HIM! YOU EAT HIM! (*Homilies on Matthew 82:4*)



Desert/Monastic



- ❖ St. Antony (251-356)
- ❖ St. Pachomius (290-348)
- ❖ St. Makarius (300-391)
- ❖ St. Pishoy (320-417)





- Abba Poemen said to Abba Joseph, ‘Tell me how to become a monk.’ He said, ‘If you want to find rest here below all circumstances say, ‘Who am I? and do not judge anyone.’
- Abba Theophilus, the archbishop, came to Scetis one day. The brethren who were assembled said to Abba Pambo, ‘Say something to the archbishop, so that he may be edified.’ The old man said to them, ‘If he is not edified by my silence, he will not be edified by my speech.’
- Abba Zeno said, ‘If a man wants God to hear his prayer quickly, then before he prays for anything else, even his own soul, when he stands and stretches out his hands towards God, he must pray with all his heart for his enemies. Through this action God will hear everything that he asks.’

A few sayings of

Abba Anthony

- He also said, 'Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.'
- It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was **his equal** in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels.
- Abba Anthony said to Abba Poemen, 'This is the great work of a man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.'
- Ammonas, disciple and successor to St. Antony, teaches us that *"he who anticipates that death is near will not sin much."* Certainly, the saint had heard from St. Antony the Great the advice: *"Quickly bring death before your eyes, and you will never have a desire for any evil or wordly object."*



A few sayings of

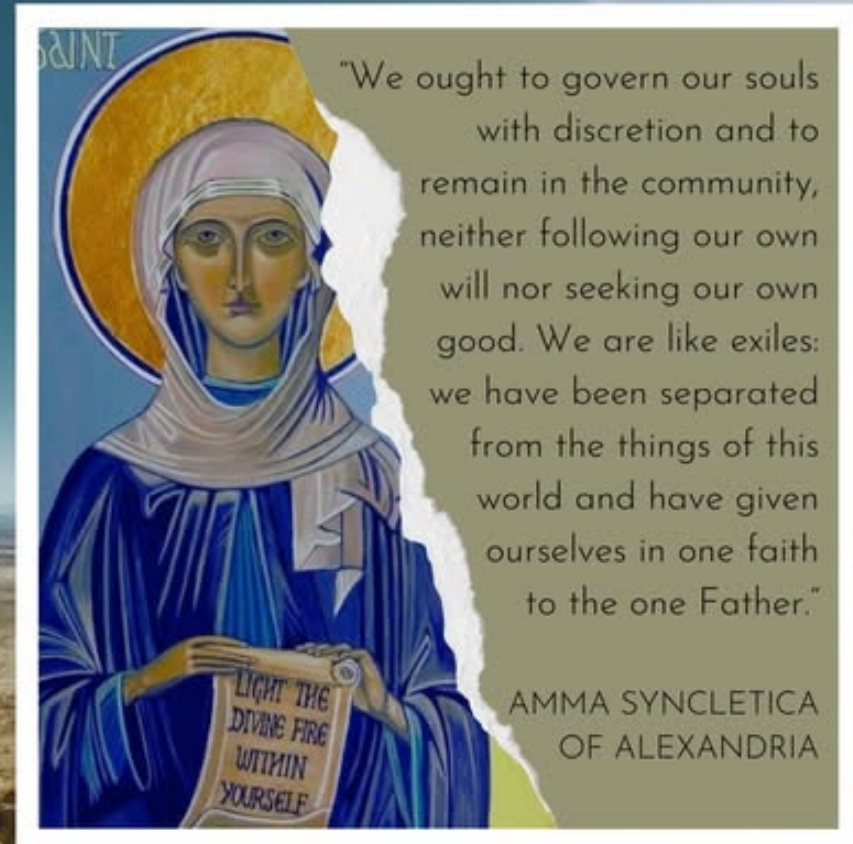
Amma Syncletica

“Why do you hate the person who has [bothered] you? He/she was not the one who wronged you, but the Devil. Hate the disease and not the one who is sick.”

“...It is possible to be a solitary in one’s mind while living in a crowd, and it is possible for one who is a solitary to live in the crowd of his/her own thoughts.”

Wherever you are, city or desert, you can be alone in your thoughts and near to Jesus in your heart.

Wisdom from the Desert



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Early Church Fathers



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See also Roger Pearse, [More Fathers](#)

HOW CAN WE USE THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS?

1) We Can refer to the Church Fathers when engaging in apologetics with others or for ourselves to reassure ourselves, here is what the Church has always taught. This increases our Faith that our faith is correct, Orthodox. The Church universally believes a certain doctrine. We have quotes to prove this. If I want to be an Orthodox Christian, I will believe what they believed.

Refer to ***Consensus of the Fathers*** NOT one single Father or taking a quote out of context when trying to understand a verse or a doctrine. We only accept the opinion of a Father, if it is in harmony with the Bible and Church Tradition.

2) We can learn many spiritual lessons from the Desert Fathers as they lived the Bible as they struggled to unite fully to Christ. We can apply their techniques and their struggles in our own lives.

3) We can learn from the thought processes of Saints like St. Athanasius who argued logically that there was no time when God had no Logos, otherwise He would have been a God without wisdom, which is not God, therefore the Logos is eternal with the Father.

4) We can learn from the steadfastness of the Fathers. “Athanasius Contra Mundum” to hold on to the Faith handed down to us despite the whole world being against Christ.