

Let us, then, give up those empty and futile aspirations and turn to the glorious and venerable rule¹ of our tradition (παράδοσεως).

[Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 7] (95-96 AD)

James A Kleist, trans. in *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch* (Ancient Christian Writers series)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=parado%2Fseis&la=greek#lexicon>

Wherefore let us forsake idle and vain thoughts; and let us conform to the glorious and venerable rule which hath been handed down (παράδοσεως) to us.

[Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 7] J. B. Lightfoot, trans.

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Spirit, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labors], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith."

[Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 42]

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed those [ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry.

[Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 44]

For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist;" and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning . . .

[St. Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, VII]

St. Polycarp (70?-156 AD), Bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor. St. Irenaeus who listened to Polycarp as a boy, spoke "of his relations with John and with others who had seen our Lord, and how he quoted from their language and how much he had learned from them concerning the Lord, his miracles and his teaching." He died a martyr at age 86.

¹ rule [*kanōn*]. "The term 'canon' (Greek *kanōn*; Hebrew *kaneh*) referred originally to a rule or measuring rod, but in time it came to be used of standards, precedents, and guidelines, whether for building a house, writing music, prose, or poetry, or, in the case of the early church, setting forth the essentials of Christian preaching, as in the *Regula fidei*. From the fourth century onward, the term was also regularly used by the church when referring to its collection of sacred writings, or scriptures."

[*The Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, Second Edition, Everett Ferguson, ed., Routledge, 1999, "Canon (of Scripture)" by Lee M. McDonald, p. 205]; see also *TDNT*, III.598, 600-1; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Yale Bible, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 566-7.

See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid.

[St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrnaeans*, 8] ~ 100 AD

For, since you are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order, by believing in His death, you may escape from death. It is therefore necessary that, as you indeed do, so without the bishop you should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery, as to the apostle of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall [at last] be found. It is fitting also that the deacons, as being [the ministers] of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God.

[3] In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church.

[St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Trallians*, 2-3]

Such is their system which neither the prophets preached, nor the Lord taught, nor the apostles handed down. They boast rather loudly of knowing more about it than others do, citing it from non-scriptural works; and, as people would say, they attempt to braid ropes of sand. They try to adapt to their own sayings in a manner worthy of credence, either the Lord's parables, or the prophets sayings, or the apostles' words, so that their fabrication might not appear to be without witness. They disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures and, as much as in them lies, they disjoint the members of the Truth. They transfer passages and rearrange them; and, making one thing out of another, they deceive many by the badly composed fantasy of the Lord's words that they adapt. By way of illustration, suppose someone would take the beautiful image of a king, carefully made out of precious stones by a skillful artist, and would destroy the features of the man on it and change around and rearrange the jewels, and make the form of a dog, or of a fox, out of them, and that a rather bad piece of work. Suppose he would then say with determination that this is the beautiful image of the king that the skillful artist had made, at the same time pointing to the jewels which had been beautifully fitted together by the first artist into the image of the king, but which had been badly changed by the second into the form of a dog. And suppose he would through this fanciful arrangement of the jewels deceive the inexperienced who had no idea of what the king's picture looked like, and would persuade them that this base picture of a fox is that beautiful image of the king. In the same way these people patch together old women's fables, and then pluck words and sayings and parables from here and there and wish to adapt these words of God to their fables.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.8.1] (180-190 AD)

You see, my friend, the method which these men employ to deceive themselves, while they abuse the Scriptures by endeavouring to support their own system out of them.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.9.1]

Learn then, you foolish men, that Jesus who suffered for us, and who dwelt among us, is Himself the Word of God. For if any other of the Æons had become flesh for our salvation, it would have been probable that the apostle spoke of another. But if the Word of the Father who descended is the same also that ascended, He, namely, the Only-begotten Son of the only God, who, according to the good pleasure of the Father, became flesh for the sake of men, the apostle certainly does not speak regarding any other, or concerning any Ogdoad, but respecting our Lord Jesus Christ. For, according to them, the Word did not originally become flesh. For they maintain that the Saviour assumed an animal body, formed in accordance with a special dispensation by an unspeakable providence, so as to become visible and palpable. But flesh is that which was of old formed for Adam by God out of the dust, and it is this that John has declared the Word of God became. Thus is their primary and first-begotten Ogdoad brought to nought. For, since Logos, and Monogenes, and Zoe, and Phōs, and Soter, and Christus, and the Son of God, and He who became incarnate for us, have been proved to be one and the same, the Ogdoad which they have built up at once falls to pieces. And when this is destroyed, their whole system sinks into ruin—a system which they falsely dream into existence, and thus inflict injury on the Scriptures, while they build up their own hypothesis.

4. Then, again, collecting a set of expressions and names scattered here and there [in Scripture], they twist them, as we have already said, from a natural to a non-natural sense.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.9.3-4]

But since what may prove a finishing-stroke to this exhibition is wanting, so that anyone, on following out their farce to the end, may then at once append an argument which shall overthrow it, we have judged it well to point out, first of all, in what respects the very fathers of this fable differ among themselves, as if they were inspired by different spirits of error. For this very fact forms an *a priori* proof that the truth proclaimed by the Church is immoveable, and that the theories of these men are but a tissue of falsehoods.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.9.5]

The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God . . .

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.10.1]

As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but **one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth**. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth. Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master); nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition. For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can say but little diminish it.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.10.2]

But [the superior skill spoken of] is not found in this, that any one should, beyond the Creator and Framer [of the world], conceive of the Enthymesis of an erring Æon, their mother and his, and should thus proceed to such a pitch of blasphemy; nor does it consist in this, that he should again falsely imagine, as being above this [fancied being], a Pleroma at one time supposed to contain thirty, and at another time an innumerable tribe of Æons, as these teachers who are destitute of truly divine wisdom maintain; while the Catholic Church possesses one and the same faith throughout the whole world, as we have already said.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, I.10.3]

In the first book, which immediately precedes this, exposing “knowledge falsely so called,” (1 Tim 6:20) I showed you, my very dear friend, that the whole system devised, in many and opposite ways, by those who are of the school of Valentinus, was false and baseless. I also set forth the tenets of their predecessors, proving that they not only differed among themselves, but had long previously swerved from the truth itself. I further explained, with all diligence, the doctrine as well as practice of Marcus the magician, since he, too, belongs to these persons; and I carefully noticed the passages which they garble from the Scriptures, with the view of adapting them to their own fictions.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, II, Preface]

On completing His thirtieth year He suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age. Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. And he remained among them up to the times of Trajan. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to the [validity of] the statement. Whom then should we rather believe? Whether such men as these, or Ptolemæus, who never saw the apostles, and who never even in his dreams attained to the slightest trace of an apostle?

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, II.22.5]

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.1.1]

When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn around and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *viva voce*.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.2.1]

But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth. For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Savior; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition. [St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.2.2]

It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.

Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.3.1-2]

[3] The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone in this, for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things. To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was

appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Sorer having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.

[4] But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down [paradosin], and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time,--a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles,--that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Dost thou know me?" "I do know thee, the first-born of Satan." Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth. Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.3.3-4]

Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. On this account are we bound to avoid them, but to make choice of the thing pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?

It is precisely to this course that many barbaric nations, who believe in Christ, have given their assent; they possess that salvation written "without ink" or paper "by the Holy Spirit in their hearts" (2 Cor 3:3), carefully preserving the ancient tradition. . . . Thus, by means of that ancient tradition of the apostles, they do not suffer their mind to conceive anything of the [doctrines suggested by the] portentous language of these teachers, among whom neither Church nor doctrine has ever been established.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.4.1-2]

Since, therefore, the tradition from the apostles does thus exist in the Church, and is permanent among us, let us revert to the Scriptural proof furnished by those apostles who did also write the Gospel, in which they recorded the doctrine regarding God, pointing out that our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, (Jn 14:6) and that no lie is in Him.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.5.1]

Thus, then, have all these men been exposed, who bring in impious doctrines regarding our Maker and Framer, who also formed this world. and above whom there is no other God and those have been overthrown by their own arguments who teach falsehoods regarding the substance of our Lord, and the dispensation which He fulfilled for the sake of His own creature man. But [it has, on the other hand, been shown], that the preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples--as I have proved--through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end, and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends to man's salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also.

For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God. "For in the Church," it is said, "God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers," and all the other means through which the Spirit works; of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behavior. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth.

Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III.24.1]

He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, "This is My body." (Mt 26:26ff) And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament,

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, IV.17.5]

Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church--those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift [chrisma] of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God--namely, strange doctrines--shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud. (Lev 10:1-2) But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (*apud inferos*), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron. (Num 16:33) But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as

Jeroboam did. (1 Kings 14:10)

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, IV.26.2]

Where, therefore, the gifts [*chrismata*] of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, IV.26.5]

And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, IV.32.1]

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].

[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, IV.33.8]

Dear Friend, in the four preceding Books that we sent you, we exposed all the heretics and brought to light their doctrines. Likewise, we refuted these men who thought up impious opinions. This we did, both by (exposing) the doctrine peculiar to each one of them, which has been left in their writings; and by reasoning that proceeds from all kinds of illustrations. Thus we have demonstrated the Truth and manifested the Church's teaching, which, as we have shown, the Prophets have heralded, which Christ brought to completion, which the apostles handed down to us, from whom the Church accepted it and alone safeguards it well throughout the whole world and hands it down to her children.

Then also—having disposed of all questions which the heretics propose to us, and having explained the doctrine of the apostles, and clearly set forth many of those things which were said and done by the Lord in parables—I shall endeavour, in this the fifth book of the entire work which treats of the exposure and refutation of knowledge falsely so called, to exhibit proofs from the rest of the Lord's doctrine and the epistles: [thus] complying with your demand, as you requested of me (since indeed I have been assigned a place in the ministry of the word); and, labouring by every means in my power to furnish you with large assistance against the contradictions of the heretics, as also to reclaim the wanderers and convert them to the Church of God, to confirm at the same time the minds of the neophytes, that they may preserve steadfast the faith which they have received, guarded by the Church in its integrity, in order that they be in no way perverted by those who endeavour to teach them false doctrines, and lead them away from the truth. It will be incumbent upon you, however, and all who may happen to read this writing, to peruse with great attention what I have already said, that you may obtain a knowledge of the subjects against which I am contending. For it is thus that you will both controvert them in a legitimate manner, and will be prepared to receive the proofs brought forward against them, casting away their doctrines as filth by means of the celestial faith; but following the only

true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.
[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, V.Preface]

Now all these [heretics] are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches; which fact I have in the third book taken all pains to demonstrate. It follows, then, as a matter of course, that these heretics aforementioned, since they are blind to the truth, and deviate from the [right] way, will walk in various roads; and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection. But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution, and expect the same advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body. And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the “wisdom” of God, by means of which she saves all men, “is declared in [its] going forth; it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city.” For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.
[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, V.20.1]

Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church, call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist
[St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, V.20.2]

For if the God of both is one, the master of both is also one; one church, one temperance, one modesty; their food is common, marriage an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love all alike. And those whose life is common, have common graces and a common salvation; common to them are love and training.
[St. Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, I.4] (150-215 AD)

The mother draws the children to herself; and we seek our mother the Church. . . .
He also, delivered from death, laughed, sporting and rejoicing with his spouse, who was the type of the Helper of our salvation, the Church, to whom the stable name of endurance is given; for this cause surely, because she alone remains to all generations, rejoicing ever, subsisting as she does by the endurance of us believers, who are the members of Christ.
[St. Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, I.5]

For as His will is work, and this is named the world; so also His counsel is the salvation of men, and this has been called the church. . . .
The universal Father is one, and one the universal Word; and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere, and one is the only virgin mother. I love to call her the Church.
[St. Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, I.6]

[1] It is a good thing, I reckon, to leave to posterity good children. This is the case with children of our bodies. But words are the progeny of the soul. Hence we call those who have instructed us, fathers. Wisdom is a communicative and philanthropic thing. Accordingly, Solomon says, “My son, if you receive the saying of my commandment, and hide it with you, your ear shall hear wisdom.” (Prv 2:1-2) He points out that the word that is sown is hidden in the soul of the learner, as in the earth, and

this is spiritual planting. Wherefore also he adds, “And you shall apply your heart to understanding, and apply it for the admonition of your son.” For soul, methinks, joined with soul, and spirit with spirit, in the sowing of the word, will make that which is sown grow and germinate. And every one who is instructed, is in respect of subjection the son of his instructor. “Son,” says he, “forget not my laws.” (Prv 3:1)

[2] And if knowledge belong not to all (set an ass to the lyre, as the proverb goes), yet written compositions are for the many. . . .

[3] If, then, both proclaim the Word--the one by writing, the other by speech--are not both then to be approved, making, as they do, faith active by love? It is by one’s own fault that he does not choose what is best; God is free of blame. . . .

[6] But the husbandry is twofold,--the one unwritten, and the other written. And in whatever way the Lord’s labourer sow the good wheat, and grow and reap the ears, he shall appear a truly divine husbandman. . . .

[8] Now the Scripture kindles the living spark of the soul, and directs the eye suitably for contemplation; perchance inserting something, as the husbandman when he ingrafts, but, according to the opinion of the divine apostle, exciting what is in the soul. . . .

[11] Those masters who preserve the true tradition of the glorious teaching derived in a straight line from the holy apostles Peter, James, John and Paul, transmitted from father to son--though few of the sons are of the stature of the fathers--have come down even to us, by God’s grace, to plant in us these glorious seeds of their forebears and of the apostles. . . . For by teaching, one learns more; and in speaking, one is often a hearer along with his audience. For the teacher of him who speaks and of him who hears is one--who waters both the mind and the word. Thus the Lord did not hinder from doing good while keeping the Sabbath; but allowed us to communicate of those divine mysteries, and of that holy light, to those who are able to receive them. He did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing, as is the case with God.

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* I.1-11] ~ 150-215 AD

I do not think that philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances philosophy attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments; but it assails the sects. Accordingly it is added: For he has forsaken the ways of his own vineyard, and wandered in the tracks of his own husbandry. Such are the sects which deserted the primitive Church. Now he who has fallen into heresy passes through an arid wilderness, abandoning the only true God, destitute of God, seeking waterless water, reaching an uninhabited and thirsty land, collecting sterility with his hands. And those destitute of prudence, that is, those involved in heresies, I enjoin, remarks Wisdom, saying, Touch sweetly stolen bread and the sweet water of theft; (Prv 9:17) the Scripture manifestly applying the terms bread and water to nothing else but to those heresies, which employ bread and water in the oblation, not according to the canon of the Church.

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* I.19]

And if, too, the end of the wise man is contemplation, that of those who are still philosophers aims at it, but never attains it, unless by the process of learning it receives the prophetic utterance which has been made known, by which it grasps both the present, the future, and the past--how they are, were, and shall be.

And the *gnosis* itself is that which has descended by transmission [παράδοθαι] to a few, having been imparted unwritten by the apostles. Hence, then, knowledge or wisdom ought to be exercised up to the eternal and unchangeable habit of contemplation.

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VI.7] *paradotheisa*

The liars, then, in reality are not those who for the sake of the scheme of salvation conform, nor those who err in minute points, but those who are wrong in essentials, and reject the Lord and as far as in them lies deprive the Lord of the true teaching; who do not quote or deliver the Scriptures in a manner worthy of God and of the Lord; for the deposit rendered to God, according to the teaching of the Lord by His apostles, is the understanding and the practice of the godly tradition. “And what ye hear in the ear”-- that is, in a hidden manner, and in a mystery (for such things are figuratively said to be spoken in the ear) --”proclaim,” He says, “on the housetops,” understanding them sublimely, and delivering them in a lofty strain, and according to the canon of the truth explaining the Scriptures; for neither prophecy nor the Savior Himself announced the divine mysteries simply so as to be easily apprehended by all and sundry, but express them in parables. The apostles accordingly say of the Lord, that “He spake all things in parables, and without a parable spake He nothing unto them;” and if “all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made,” consequently also prophecy and the law were by Him, and were spoken by Him in parables. “But all things are right,” says the Scripture, “before those who understand,” that is, those who receive and observe, according to the ecclesiastical rule, the exposition of the Scriptures explained by Him; and the ecclesiastical rule is the concord and harmony of the law and the prophets in the covenant delivered at the coming of the Lord.

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VI.15]

As, then, if a man should, similarly to those drugged by Circe, become a beast; so he, who has spurned the ecclesiastical tradition, and darted off to the opinions of heretical men, has ceased to be a man of God and to remain faithful to the Lord. But he who has returned from this deception, on hearing the Scriptures, and turned his life to the truth, is, as it were, from being a man made a god.

. . . .

For we have, as the source of teaching, the Lord, both by the prophets, the Gospel, and the blessed apostles, in various manners and at sundry times, (Heb 1:1) leading from the beginning of knowledge to the end. But if one should suppose that another origin was required, then no longer truly could an origin be preserved

He, then, who of himself believes the Scripture and voice of the Lord, which by the Lord acts to the benefiting of men, is rightly [regarded] faithful. Certainly we use it as a criterion in the discovery of things. What is subjected to criticism is not believed till it is so subjected; so that what needs criticism cannot be a first principle. Therefore, as is reasonable, grasping by faith the indemonstrable first principle, and receiving in abundance, from the first principle itself, demonstrations in reference to the first principle, we are by the voice of the Lord trained up to the knowledge of the truth.

. . . .

And if those also who follow heresies venture to avail themselves of the prophetic Scriptures; in the first place they will not make use of all the Scriptures, and then they will not quote them entire, nor as the body and texture of prophecy prescribe. But, selecting ambiguous expressions, they wrest them to their own opinions, gathering a few expressions here and there; not looking to the sense, but making use of the mere words. For in almost all the quotations they make, you will find that they attend to the names alone, while they alter the meanings; neither knowing, as they affirm, nor using the quotations they adduce, according to their true nature.

. . . .

For, in consequence of not learning the mysteries of ecclesiastical knowledge, and not having capacity for the grandeur of the truth, too indolent to descend to the bottom of things, reading superficially, they have dismissed the Scriptures.

. . . .

But if one is curable, able to bear (like fire or steel) the outspokenness of the truth, which cuts away and burns their false opinions, let him lend the ears of the soul. And this will be the case, unless, through the propensity to sloth, they push truth away, or through the desire of fame, endeavour to

invent novelties. For those are slothful who, having it in their power to provide themselves with proper proofs for the divine Scriptures from the Scriptures themselves, select only what contributes to their own pleasures. And those have a craving for glory who voluntarily evade, by arguments of a diverse sort, the things delivered by the blessed apostles and teachers, which are wedded to inspired words; opposing the divine tradition by human teachings, in order to establish the heresy. For, in truth, what remained to be said--in ecclesiastical knowledge I mean--by such men, Marcion, for example, or Prodicus, and such like, who did not walk in the right way? For they could not have surpassed their predecessors in wisdom, so as to discover anything in addition to what had been uttered by them; for they would have been satisfied had they been able to learn the things laid down before.

Our gnostic [the orthodox Christian] having grown old in the Scriptures, and maintaining apostolic and ecclesiastic orthodoxy in doctrines, lives most correctly in accordance with the Gospel, and discovers the proofs, for which he may have made search (sent forth as he is by the Lord), from the law and the prophets . . . nothing but deeds and words corresponding to the tradition of the Lord.”

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VII.16]

Those, then, that adhere to impious words, and dictate them to others, inasmuch as they do not make a right but a perverse use of the divine words, neither themselves enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor permit those whom they have deluded to attain the truth. But not having the key of entrance, but a false (and as the common phrase expresses it), a counterfeit key (ἀντικλεις), by which they do not enter in as we enter in, through the tradition of the Lord, by drawing aside the curtain; but bursting through the side-door, and digging clandestinely through the wall of the Church, and stepping over the truth, they constitute themselves the Mystagogues of the soul of the impious.

For that the human assemblies which they held were posterior to the Catholic Church requires not many words to show.

. . . it is evident, from the high antiquity and perfect truth of the Church, that these later heresies, and those yet subsequent to them in time, were new inventions falsified [from the truth].

From what has been said, then, it is my opinion that the true Church, that which is really ancient, is one, and that in it those who according to God's purpose are just, are enrolled. For from the very reason that God is one, and the Lord one, that which is in the highest degree honourable is lauded in consequence of its singleness, being an imitation of the one first principle. In the nature of the One, then, is associated in a joint heritage the one Church, which they strive to cut asunder into many sects.

Therefore in substance and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is alone, collecting as it does into the unity of the one faith--which results from the peculiar Testaments, or rather the one Testament in different times by the will of the one God, through one Lord--those already ordained, whom God predestinated, knowing before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous.

But the pre-eminence of the Church, as the principle of union, is, in its oneness, in this surpassing all things else, and having nothing like or equal to itself. But of this afterwards.

Of the heresies, some receive their appellation from a [person's] name, as that which is called after Valentinus, and that after Marcion, and that after Basilides, although they boast of adducing the opinion of Matthew [without truth]; for as the teaching, so also the tradition of the apostles was one. Some take their designation from a place, as the Peratici; some from a nation, as the [heresy] of the Phrygians; some from an action, as that of the Encratites; and some from peculiar dogmas, as that of the Docetae, and that of the Harmatites; and some from suppositions, and from individuals they have honoured, as those called Cainists, and the Ophians; and some from nefarious practices and enormities, as those of the Simonians called Entychites.

[St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VII.17]

We have set forth as was necessary that part of the discourse which relates to the spiritual gifts, all that God, right from the beginning, granted to people according to his will, bringing back to himself this image which had gone astray. Now, driven by love towards all the saints, we have arrived at the essence of the tradition which is proper for the Churches. This is so that those who are well informed may keep the tradition which has lasted until now, according to the explanation we give of it, and so that others by taking note of it may be strengthened (against the fall or error which has recently occurred because of ignorance and ignorant people), with the Holy Spirit conferring perfect grace on those who have a correct faith, and so that they will know that those who are at the head of the Church must teach and guard all these things.

[St. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 1] ~ 215 AD he was a presbyter in Rome

He who is ordained as a bishop, being chosen by all the people, must be irreproachable.

When his name is announced and approved, the people will gather on the Lord's day with the council of elders and the bishops who are present. With the assent of all, the bishops will place their hands upon him, with the council of elders standing by, quietly. Everyone will keep silent, praying in their hearts for the descent of the Spirit. After this, one of the bishops present, at the request of all, shall lay his hand upon him who is being ordained bishop, and pray, saying,

[3] God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you who live in the highest, but regard the lowest, you who know all things before they are, you who gave the rules of the Church through the word of your grace, who predestined from the beginning the race of the righteous through Abraham, who instituted princes and priests, and did not leave your sanctuary without a minister; who from the beginning of the world has been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen, pour out upon him the power which is from you, the princely Spirit, which you gave to your beloved Son Jesus Christ, which he gave to your holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place as your sanctuary, for the glory and endless praise of your name. Grant, Father who knows the heart, to your servant whom you chose for the episcopate, that he will feed your holy flock, that he will wear your high priesthood without reproach, serving night and day, incessantly making your face favorable, and offering the gifts of your holy church; in the spirit of high priesthood having the power to forgive sins according to your command; to assign lots according to your command; to loose any bond according to the authority which you gave to the apostles; to please you in mildness and a pure heart, offering to you a sweet scent, through your son Jesus Christ, through whom to you be glory, power, and honor, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen.

[St. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 2-3]

Thus, if these things are heard with grace and correct faith, they bestow edification on the Church and eternal life on the believers. I counsel that these things be observed by all with good understanding. For if all who hear the apostolic tradition follow and keep it, no heretic will be able to introduce error, nor will any other person at all. It is in this manner that the many heresies have grown, for those who were leaders did not wish to inform themselves of the opinion of the apostles, but did what they wanted according to their own pleasure, and not what was appropriate. If we have omitted anything, beloved ones, God will reveal it to those who are worthy, steering Holy Church to her mooring in the quiet haven.

[St. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 43]

Since, however, reason compels us to plunge into the very depth of narrative, we conceive we should not be silent, but, expounding the tenets of the several schools with minuteness, we shall evince reserve in nothing. Now it seems expedient, even at the expense of a more protracted investigation, not to shrink from labour; for we shall leave behind us no trifling auxiliary to human life against the

recurrence of error, when all are made to behold, in an obvious light, the clandestine rites of these men, and the secret orgies which, retaining under their management, they deliver to the initiated only. But none will refute these, save the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the Church, which the Apostles, having in the first instance received, have transmitted to those who have rightly believed. But we, as being their successors, and as participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church, must not be found deficient in vigilance, or disposed to suppress correct doctrine.

[St. Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, Preface]

They [The Quartodecimans] attend to this one commandment, and do not look unto what has been spoken by the apostle: For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. (Gal 5:3) In other respects, however, these consent to all the traditions delivered to the Church by the Apostles.

[St. Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, VIII.11]

And how long shall we draw the saw to and fro through this line, when we have an ancient practice, which by anticipation has made for us the state, i.e., of the question? If no passage of Scripture has prescribed it, assuredly custom, which without doubt flowed from tradition, has confirmed it. For how can anything come into use, if it has not first been handed down? Even in pleading tradition, written authority, you say, must be demanded. Let us inquire, therefore, whether tradition, unless it be written, should not be admitted. Certainly we shall say that it ought not to be admitted, if no cases of other practices which, without any written instrument, we maintain on the ground of tradition alone, and the countenance thereafter of custom, affords us any precedent. To deal with this matter briefly, I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel. Then when we are taken up (as new-born children), we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week. We take also, in congregations before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike. As often as the anniversary comes round, we make offerings for the dead as birthday honours. We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Whitsunday. We feel pained should any wine or bread, even though our own, be cast upon the ground. At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign.

If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer. That reason will support tradition, and custom, and faith, you will either yourself perceive, or learn from some one who has. Meanwhile you will believe that there is some reason to which submission is due. I add still one case more, as it will be proper to show you how it was among the ancients also. Among the Jews, so usual is it for their women to have the head veiled, that they may thereby be recognised. I ask in this instance for the law. I put the apostle aside. If Rebecca at once drew down her veil, when in the distance she saw her betrothed, this modesty of a mere private individual could not have made a law, or it will have made it only for those who have the reason which she had. Let virgins alone be veiled, and this when they are coming to be married, and not till they have recognised their destined husband. If Susanna also, who was subjected to unveiling on her trial, furnishes an argument for the veiling of women, I can say here also, the veil was a voluntary thing. She had come accused, ashamed of the disgrace she had brought on herself, properly concealing her beauty, even because now she feared to please. But I should not suppose that, when it was her aim

to please, she took walks with a veil on in her husband's avenue. Grant, now, that she was always veiled. In this particular case, too, or, in fact, in that of any other, I demand the dress-law. If I nowhere find a law, it follows that tradition has given the fashion in question to custom, to find subsequently (its authorization in) the apostle's sanction, from the true interpretation of reason. This instances, therefore, will make it sufficiently plain that you can vindicate the keeping of even unwritten tradition established by custom; the proper witness for tradition when demonstrated by long-continued observance. But even in civil matters custom is accepted as law, when positive legal enactment is wanting; and it is the same thing whether it depends on writing or on reason, since reason is, in fact, the basis of law. But, (you say), if reason is the ground of law, all will now henceforth have to be counted law, whoever brings it forward, which shall have reason as its ground. Or do you think that every believer is entitled to originate and establish a law, if only it be such as is agreeable to God, as is helpful to discipline, as promotes salvation, when the Lord says, But why do you not even of your own selves judge what is right? (Lk 12:27) And not merely in regard to a judicial sentence, but in regard to every decision in matters we are called on to consider, the apostle also says, If of anything you are ignorant, God shall reveal it unto you; (Philip 3:15) he himself, too, being accustomed to afford counsel though he had not the command of the Lord, and to dictate of himself as possessing the Spirit of God who guides into all truth. Therefore his advice has, by the warrant of divine reason, become equivalent to nothing less than a divine command. Earnestly now inquire of this teacher, keeping intact your regard for tradition, from whomsoever it originally sprang; nor have regard to the author, but to the authority, and especially that of custom itself, which on this very account we should revere, that we may not want an interpreter; so that if reason too is God's gift, you may then learn, not whether custom has to be followed by you, but why.

[Tertullian, *De Corona*, 3-4]

We are therefore come to (the gist of) our position; for at this point we were aiming, and for this we were preparing in the preamble of our address (which we have just completed)—so that we may now join issue on the contention to which our adversaries challenge us. They put forward the Scriptures, and by this insolence of theirs they at once influence some. In the encounter itself, however, they weary the strong, they catch the weak, and dismiss waverers with a doubt. Accordingly, we oppose to them this step above all others, of not admitting them to any discussion of the Scriptures. If in these lie their resources, before they can use them, it ought to be clearly seen to whom belongs the possession of the Scriptures, that none may be admitted to the use thereof who has no title at all to the privilege.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 15] = The Demurrer Against The Heretics (~ 200 AD, from his Catholic period before his Montanist phase ~ 208 AD)

Our appeal, therefore, must not be made to the Scriptures; nor must controversy be admitted on points in which victory will either be impossible, or uncertain, or not certain enough. But even if a discussion from the Scriptures should not turn out in such a way as to place both sides on a par, (yet) the natural order of things would require that this point should be first proposed, which is now the only one which we must discuss: "With whom lies that very faith to which the Scriptures belong. From what and through whom, and when, and to whom, has been handed down that rule, by which men become Christians?" For wherever it shall be manifest that the true Christian rule and faith shall be, there will likewise be the true Scriptures and expositions thereof, and all the Christian traditions.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 19]

Immediately, therefore, so did the apostles, whom this designation indicates as "the sent." Having, on the authority of a prophecy, which occurs in a psalm of David, chosen Matthias by lot as the twelfth, into the place of Judas, they obtained the promised power of the Holy Ghost for the gift of miracles and of utterance; and after first bearing witness to the faith in Jesus Christ throughout Judaea, and founding churches (there), they next went forth into the world and preached the same doctrine of the

same faith to the nations. They then in like manner founded churches in every city, from which all the other churches, one after another, derived the tradition of the faith, and the seeds of doctrine, and are every day deriving them, that they may become churches. Indeed, it is on this account only that they will be able to deem themselves apostolic, as being the offspring of apostolic churches. Every sort of thing must necessarily revert to its original for its classification. Therefore the churches, although they are so many and so great, comprise but the one primitive church, founded by the apostles, from which they all spring. In this way all are primitive, and all are apostolic, whilst they are all proved to be one, in unbroken unity, by their peaceful communion, and title of brotherhood, and bond of hospitality,--privileges which no other rule directs than the one tradition of the selfsame mystery.
[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 20]

From this, therefore, do we draw up our demurrer. Since the Lord Jesus Christ sent the apostles to preach, (our rule is) that no others ought to be received as preachers than those whom Christ appointed; for “no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Nor does the Son seem to have revealed Him to any other than the apostles, whom He sent forth to preach--that, of course, which He revealed to them. Now, what that was which they preached--in other words, what it was which Christ revealed to them--can, as I must here likewise prescribe, properly be proved in no other way than by those very churches which the apostles founded in person, by declaring the gospel to them directly themselves, both *viva voce*, as the phrase is, and subsequently by their *epistles*. If, then, these things are so, it is in the same degree manifest that all doctrine which agrees with the apostolic churches--those moulds and original sources of the faith must be reckoned for truth, as undoubtedly containing that which the (said) churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, Christ from God. Whereas all doctrine must be prejudged as false which savors of contrariety to the truth of the churches and apostles of Christ and God. It remains, then, that we demonstrate whether this doctrine of ours, of which we have now given the rule, has its origin in the tradition of the apostles, and whether all other doctrines do not *ipso facto* proceed from falsehood. We hold communion with the apostolic churches because our doctrine is in no respect different from theirs. This is our witness of truth.
[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 21]

Grant, then, that all have erred; that the apostle was mistaken in giving his testimony; that the Holy Ghost had no such respect to any one (church) as to lead it into truth, although sent with this view by Christ, and for this asked of the Father that He might be the teacher of truth; grant, also, that He, the Steward of God, the Vicar of Christ, neglected His office, permitting the churches for a time to understand differently, (and) to believe differently, what He Himself was preaching by the apostles,--is it likely that so many churches, and they so great, should have gone astray into one and the same faith? No casualty distributed among many men issues in one and the same result. Error of doctrine in the churches must necessarily have produced various issues. When, however, that which is deposited among many is found to be one and the same, it is not the result of error, but of tradition. Can anyone, then, be reckless enough to say that they were in error who handed on the tradition?
[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 28]

But if there be any (heresies) which are bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, that they may thereby seem to have been handed down by the apostles, because they existed in the time of the apostles, we can say: Let them produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that [that first bishop of theirs] bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles or of apostolic men,--a man, moreover, who continued steadfast with the apostles. For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter. In exactly the same way the other churches

likewise exhibit (their several worthies), whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed. Let the heretics contrive something of the same kind. For after their blasphemy, what is there that is unlawful for them (to attempt)? But should they even effect the contrivance, they will not advance a step. For their very doctrine, after comparison with that of the apostles, will declare, by its own diversity and contrariety, that it had for its author neither an apostle nor an apostolic man; because, as the apostles would never have taught things which were self-contradictory, so the apostolic men would not have inculcated teaching different from the apostles, unless they who received their instruction from the apostles went and preached in a contrary manner. To this test, therefore will they be submitted for proof by those churches, who, although they derive not their founder from apostles or apostolic men (as being of much later date, for they are in fact being founded daily), yet, since they agree in the same faith, they are accounted as not less apostolic because they are akin in doctrine. Then let all the heresies, when challenged to these two tests by our apostolic church, offer their proof of how they deem themselves to be apostolic. But in truth they neither are so, nor are they able to prove themselves to be what they are not. Nor are they admitted to peaceful relations and communion by such churches as are in any way connected with apostles, inasmuch as they are in no sense themselves apostolic because of their diversity as to the mysteries of the faith.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 32]

Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; (and there too) you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of apostles themselves). How happy is its church, on which apostles poured forth all their doctrine along with their blood! where Peter endures a passion like his Lord's! where Paul wins his crown in a death like John's where the Apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island-exile! See what she has learned, what taught, what fellowship has had with even (our) churches in Africa! One Lord God does she acknowledge, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith. This she seals with the water (of baptism), arrays with the Holy Ghost, feeds with the Eucharist, cheers with martyrdom, and against such a discipline thus (maintained) she admits no gainsayer.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 36]

Since this is the case, in order that the truth may be adjudged to belong to us, "as many as walk according to the rule," which the church has handed down from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, the reason of our position is clear, when it determines that heretics ought not to be allowed to challenge an appeal to the Scriptures, since we, without the Scriptures, prove that they have nothing to do with the Scriptures.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 37]

Where diversity of doctrine is found, there, then, must the corruption both of the Scriptures and the expositions thereof be regarded as existing.

[Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 38]

Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of Churches keep their virgins covered. There are places, too, beneath this (African) sky, where this practice obtains; lest any ascribe

the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood. But I have proposed (as models) those Churches which were founded by apostles or apostolic men; and antecedently, I think, to certain (founders, who shall be nameless). Those Churches therefore, as well (as others), have the self-same authority of custom (to appeal to);

[Tertullian, *On The Veiling of Virgins*, II, 1]

We must follow, then, the clue of our discussion, meeting every effort of our opponents with reciprocal vigor. I say that *my* Gospel is the true one; Marcion, that *his* is. I affirm that Marcion's Gospel is adulterated; Marcion, that mine is. Now what is to settle the point for us, except it be that principle of time, which rules that the authority lies with that which shall be found to be more ancient; and assumes as an elemental truth, that corruption (of doctrine) belongs to the side which shall be convicted of comparative lateness in its origin.

[Tertullian, *Against Marcian*, IV, 4]

On the whole, then, if that is evidently more true which is earlier, if that is earlier which is from the very beginning, if that is from the beginning which has the apostles for its authors, then it will certainly be quite as evident, that that comes down from the apostles, which has been kept as a sacred deposit in the churches of the apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule of faith the Galatians were brought for correction; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians read by it; what utterance also the Romans give, so very near (to the apostles), to whom Peter and Paul conjointly bequeathed the gospel even sealed with their own blood.

We have also the churches fostered by John. For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the orders of the bishops (thereof), when traced up to their origin, will yet rest on John as their author. In the same manner is recognized the excellent source of the other churches. I say, therefore, that in them (and not simply such of them as were founded by apostles, but in all those which are united with them in the fellowship of the mystery of the gospel of Christ that Gospel of Luke which we are defending with all our might has stood its ground from its very first publication; whereas Marcion's Gospel is not known to most people, and to none whatever is it known without being at the same time condemned. It too, of course, has its churches, but specially its own--as late as they are spurious; and should you want to know their original, you will more easily discover apostasy in it than apostolicity, with Marcion forsooth as their founder, or someone of Marcion's swarm. Even wasps make combs; so also these Marcionites make churches. The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence to the other Gospels also, which we possess equally through their means, and according to their usage--I mean the Gospels of John and Matthew--whilst that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form of the Gospel men unusually ascribe to Paul.) And it may well seem that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters. . . . Such are the summary arguments which we use, when we take up arms against heretics for the faith of the gospel, maintaining both that order of periods, which rules that a late date is the mark of forgers, and that authority of churches which lends support to the tradition of the apostles; because truth must needs precede the forgery, and proceed straight from those by whom it has been handed on.

[Tertullian, *Against Marcian*, IV, 5]

Since many, however, of those who profess to believe in Christ differ from each other, not only in small and trifling matters, but also on subjects of the highest importance, as, e.g., regarding God, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit; and not only regarding these, but also regarding others which are created existences, viz., the powers and the holy virtues; it seems on that account necessary first of all to fix a definite limit and to lay down an unmistakable rule regarding each one of these, and then to pass to the investigation of other points. For as we ceased to seek for truth (notwithstanding the professions of many among Greeks and Barbarians to make it known) among all who claimed it for erroneous opinions, after we had come to believe that Christ was the Son of God, and were persuaded that we must learn it from Himself; so, seeing there are many who think they hold the opinions of

Christ, and yet some of these think differently from their predecessors, yet as the teaching of the Church, transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles, and remaining in the Churches to the present day, is still preserved, that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, Preface, 2] 185-254 AD

Now it ought to be known that the holy apostles, in preaching the faith of Christ, delivered themselves with the utmost clearness on certain points which they believed to be necessary to everyone, even to those who seemed somewhat dull in the investigation of divine knowledge; leaving, however, the grounds of their statements to be examined into by those who should deserve the excellent gifts of the Spirit, and who, especially by means of the Holy Spirit Himself, should obtain the gift of language, of wisdom, and of knowledge: while on other subjects they merely stated the fact that things were so, keeping silence as to the manner or origin of their existence; clearly in order that the more zealous of their successors, who should be lovers of wisdom, might have a subject of exercise on which to display the fruit of their talents,—those persons, I mean, who should prepare themselves to be fit and worthy receivers of wisdom.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, Preface, 3]

4. The particular points clearly delivered in the teaching of the apostles are as follow:—

7. This also is a part of the Church's teaching, that the world was made and took its beginning at a certain time, and is to be destroyed on account of its wickedness. But what existed before this world, or what will exist after it, has not become certainly known to the many, for there is no clear statement regarding it in the teaching of the Church.

8. Then, finally, that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, and have a meaning, not such only as is apparent at first sight, but also another, which escapes the notice of most. For those (words) which are written are the forms of certain mysteries, and the images of divine things. Respecting which there is one opinion throughout the whole Church, that the whole law is indeed spiritual; but that the spiritual meaning which the law conveys is not known to all, but to those only on whom the grace of the Holy Spirit is bestowed in the word of wisdom and knowledge.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, Preface, 4, 7-8]

or if his mind be full of preconceptions and prejudices on other points, he may judge these to be heretical and opposed to the faith of the Church, yielding in so doing not so much to the convictions of reason as to the dogmatism of prejudice.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, I.6.1]

But since the discourse has reminded us of the subjects of a future judgment and of retribution, and of the punishments of sinners, according to the threatenings of holy Scripture and the contents of the Church's teaching.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, II.10.1]

And therefore, to those who believe that the sacred books are not the compositions of men, but that they were composed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to the will of the Father of all things through Jesus Christ, and that they have come down to us, we must point out the ways (of interpreting them) which appear (correct) to us, who cling to the standard of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ according to the succession of the apostles.

[Origen, *The First Principles*, IV.9]

The Church received from the Apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants. For the Apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of divine mysteries, knew that there is in everyone the

innate stains of sin, which must be washed away through water and the Holy Spirit.
[Origen, *Commentaries on Romans*, 5.9]

If anyone consider and examine these things, there is no need for lengthened discussion and arguments. There is easy proof for faith in a short summary of the truth. The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, “I say 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 also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” And again to the same He says, after His resurrection, “Feed my sheep.” And although to all the apostles, after His resurrection, He gives an equal power, and says, “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto him; and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained;” yet, that He might set forth unity, He arranged by His authority the origin of that unity, as beginning from one. Assuredly the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honor and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity. Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the faith? Does he who strives against and resists the Church trust that he is in the Church, when moreover the blessed Apostle Paul teaches the same thing, and sets forth the sacrament of unity, saying, “There is one body and one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God?”

And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided. Let no one deceive the brotherhood by a falsehood: let no one corrupt the truth of the faith by perfidious prevarication. The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole. The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of an overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the source. Separate a ray of the sun from its body of light, its unity does not allow a division of light; break a branch from a tree,—when broken, it will not be able to bud; cut off the stream from its fountain, and that which is cut off dries up. Thus also the Church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *The Unity of the Church*, 4-5] = Treatise 1 +258 AD

The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterous; she is uncorrupted and pure. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.

(*Habere non potest deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem.*)

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *The Unity of the Church*, 6]

He cannot possess the garment of Christ who parts and divides the Church of Christ.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Church*, 7]

Let none think that the good can depart from the Church.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Church*, 9]

For this, my brother, we especially both labour after, and ought to labour after, to be careful to maintain as much as we can [the unity delivered by the Lord, and through His apostles to us their successors](#), and, as far as in us lies, to gather into the Church the dispersed and wandering sheep which the wilful faction and heretical temptation of some is separating from their Mother; St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 39,3] [*Letter* 45,3 in Graeme W. Clarke, ed., *Ancient Christian Writers, The Letters of Cyprian*, vol. 3, New York, NY: Newman Press 1984, pp. 68-88.]

But they have gone further than that. They have had heretics set up for them a pseudo bishop, and on top of that they now have the audacity to sail off carrying letters from schismatics and outcasts from religion even to the [chair of Peter, to the primordial church, the very source of episcopal unity; and they do not stop to consider that they are carrying them to those same Romans whose faith was so praised and proclaimed by the Apostle, into whose company men without faith can, therefore, find no entry.](#)

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 59.14.1 in Clarke] or *Letter* 54.14 Sardica

Concerning which matters, since you have desired our advice, know that we do not depart from the traditions of the Gospel and of the apostles, but with constancy and firmness take counsel for our brethren and sisters, and maintain the discipline of the Church by all the ways of usefulness and safety, since the Lord speaks, saying, “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, and they shall feed you with discipline” (Jer 3:15).

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 61.1]

they are cast out of the Church. For they cannot live out of it, since the house of God is one, and there can be no salvation to any except in the Church.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 61.4]

But if not even the baptism of a public confession and blood can profit a heretic [who fails to turn from his error] to salvation, because there is no salvation out of the Church.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 72.21,4]

Cyprian to Caecilius his brother, greeting. Although I know, dearest brother, that very many of the bishops who are set over the churches of the Lord by divine condescension, throughout the whole world, maintain the plan of evangelical truth, and of the tradition of the Lord, and do not by human and novel institution depart from that which Christ our Master both prescribed and did; yet since some, either by ignorance or simplicity in sanctifying the cup of the Lord, and in ministering to the people, do not do that which Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, the founder and teacher of this sacrifice, did and taught, I have thought it as well a religious as a necessary thing to write to you this letter, that, if any one is still kept in this error, he may behold the light of truth, and return to the root and origin of the tradition of the Lord. Nor must you think, dearest brother, that I am writing my own thoughts or man's; or that I am boldly assuming this to myself of my own voluntary will, since I always hold my mediocrity with lowly and modest moderation. But when anything is prescribed by the inspiration and command of God, it is necessary that a faithful servant should obey the Lord, acquitted by all of assuming anything arrogantly to himself, seeing that he is constrained to fear offending the Lord unless he does what he is commanded.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 62.1]

Cyprian to the presbyters, and deacons, and people abiding at Furni, greeting. I and my colleagues who were present with me were greatly disturbed, dearest brethren, as were also our fellow presbyters who sate with us, when we were made aware that Geminus Victor, our brother, when departing this life, had named Geminus Faustinus the presbyter executor to his will, although long since it was decreed, in a council of the bishops, that no one should appoint any of the clergy and the ministers of God executor or guardian by his will, since every one honoured by the divine priesthood, and ordained in the clerical service, ought to serve only the altar and sacrifices, and to have leisure for prayers and supplications. . . . Which plan and rule is now maintained in respect of the clergy, that they who are promoted by **clerical ordination in the Church of the Lord** may be called off in no respect from the divine administration, nor be tied down by worldly anxieties and matters; but in the honour of the brethren who contribute, receiving as it were tenths of the fruits, they may not withdraw from the altars and sacrifices, but may serve day and night in heavenly and spiritual things.

2. **The bishops our predecessors** religiously considering this, and wholesomely providing for it, decided that no brother departing should name a cleric for executor or guardian; and if any one should do this, no offering should be made for him, nor any sacrifice be celebrated for his repose. For he does not deserve to be named at the altar of God in the prayer of the priests, who has wished to call away the priests and ministers from the altar.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 65.1-2]

[1] . . . Nevertheless to this your desire not so much our counsels as the divine precepts reply, in which it is long since bidden by the voice of Heaven and prescribed by the law of God, who and what sort of persons ought to serve the altar and to celebrate the divine sacrifices.

[5] . . . For which reason you must diligently observe and keep the practice delivered from divine tradition and apostolic observance, which is also maintained among us, and almost throughout all the provinces; that for the proper celebration of ordinations all the neighbouring bishops of the same province should assemble with that people for which a prelate is ordained. And the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who have most fully known the life of each one, and have looked into the doings of each one as respects his habitual conduct.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 67.1,5]

You ought to know, then, that the bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop; and if someone is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church. . . . For the Church which is One and Catholic, is not split nor divided, but is indeed united and joined by the cement of priests who adhere one to another.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 66.8.3 in Clark] *To Florentius Pupianus*

For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom He built His Church, when Paul disputed with him afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently, nor arrogantly assume anything; so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come. Nor did he despise Paul because he had previously been a persecutor of the Church, but admitted the counsel of truth, and easily yielded to the lawful reason which Paul asserted, furnishing thus an illustration to us both of concord and of patience, that we should not obstinately love our own opinions, but should rather adopt as our own those which at any time are usefully and wholesomely suggested by our brethren and colleagues, if they be true and lawful.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 70.3]

But if not even the baptism of a public confession and blood can profit a heretic to salvation, because there is no salvation out of the Church. (*Salus extra ecclesiam non est.*)

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 72.21]

For if we return to the head and source of divine tradition, human error ceases; and having seen the reason of the heavenly sacraments, whatever lay hid in obscurity under the gloom and cloud of darkness, is opened into the light of the truth.

[St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 73.10]

Now these the divinely-inspired Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament teach us. For the God of the two Testaments is One, Who in the Old Testament foretold the Christ Who appeared in the New; Who by the Law and the Prophets led us to Christ's school. For before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, and, the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ. And if ever thou hear any of the heretics speaking evil of the Law or the Prophets, answer in the sound of the Saviour's voice, saying, Jesus came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Learn also diligently, and from the Church, what are the books of the Old Testament, and what those of the New. And, pray, read none of the apocryphal writings: for why dose thou, who knowest not those which are acknowledged among all, trouble thyself in vain about those which are disputed? Read the Divine Scriptures, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, these that have been translated by the Seventy-two Interpreters.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* IV.33] +313 AD

Study earnestly these [Scriptures] only which we read openly in the Church. Far wiser and more pious than yourself were the Apostles, and the bishops of old time, the presidents of the Church who handed down these books. Being therefore a child of the Church, trench thou not upon its statutes.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* IV.35]

And whatever books are not read in Churches, these read not even by thyself, as thou hast heard me say.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* IV.36]

[His own list \(IV, 35-36\) includes Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah in the OT. He excludes Revelation from the NT!](#)

But in learning the Faith and in professing it, acquire and keep that only, which is now delivered to thee by the Church, **and** which has been built up strongly out of all the Scriptures.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* V.12]

Of these things the Church admonishes and teaches you. . . . Make thou your fold with the sheep: flee from the wolves: depart not from the Church.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* VI.34 & 36] [Concludes a section on heretics & heresies.](#)

Faith therefore in the Resurrection of the dead, is a great commandment and doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, XVIII.2]

It is called Catholic then because it extends over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge, concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and because it brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned; and because it universally treats and heals the whole class of sins, which are committed by soul or body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* XVIII.23]

And if ever you are ever visiting in cities, do not inquire simply where the Lord's House is (for the other sects of the profane also attempt to call their own dens houses of the Lord), nor merely where the

Church is, but where is the Catholic Church. For this is the name peculiar to this Holy Church, the mother of us all, which is the spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. For it is written, As Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, and all the rest; and it is a figure and copy of Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of us all; which before was barren, but now has many children.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* XVIII.26]

In this Holy Catholic Church receiving instruction and behaving ourselves virtuously, we shall attain the kingdom of heaven, and inherit eternal life; for which also we endure all toils, that we may be made partakers thereof from the Lord. For ours is no trifling aim, but our endeavour is for eternal life.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* XVIII.28]

And now, brethren beloved, the word of instruction exhorts you all, to prepare your souls for the reception of the heavenly gifts. As regards the Holy and Apostolic Faith delivered to you to profess, we have spoken through the grace of the Lord as many Lectures, as was possible, in these past days of Lent; not that this is all we ought to have said, for many are the points omitted; and these perchance are thought out better by more excellent teachers.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* XVIII.32]

Irenaeus wrote several letters against those who were disturbing the sound ordinance of the Church at Rome. . . . In the letter to Florinus, of which we have spoken, Irenaeus mentions again his intimacy with Polycarp, saying: ‘These doctrines, O Florinus, to speak mildly, are not of sound judgment.

These doctrines disagree with the Church, and drive into the greatest impiety those who accept them. These doctrines, not even the heretics outside of the Church, have ever dared to publish. These doctrines, the presbyters who were before us, and who were companions of the apostles, did not deliver to you.’

[Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.20.1,4]

Hold fast these traditions undefiled and, keep yourselves free from offense. Sever not yourselves from the Communion; deprive not yourselves, through the pollution of sins, of these Holy and Spiritual Mysteries.

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, XXIII, 23] *On the Mysteries*, V

The confession arrived at at Nicea was, we say once more, sufficient and enough by itself, for the subversion of all irreligious heresy, and for the security and furtherance of the doctrine of the Church.

[St. Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the Bishops of Africa*, 1] 296-373 AD

The word of the Lord which came from the Ecumenical Council at Nicea remains forever.

[St. Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the Bishops of Africa*, 2]

The bishops [at Nicea] wrote as they did, not as men inventing phrases themselves, but as having the witness of the Fathers.

[St. Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the Bishops of Africa*, 6]

For tradition, as we have said, does not declare the Godhead to us by demonstration in words, but by faith and a by pious and reverent use of reason.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter on the Holy Spirit to Serapion of Thumis I*, 20]

But beyond these sayings, let us note that the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, the Apostles preached, and was preserved by the Fathers.

On this was the Church founded; and if anyone departs from this; he is neither nor any longer ought to be called a Christian.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter on the Holy Spirit to Serapion of Thumis I*, 28]

In accordance with the Apostolic faith delivered to us by tradition from the Fathers, I have delivered the tradition, without inventing anything extraneous to it. What I learned, that have I inscribed conformably with the holy Scriptures; for it also conforms with those passages from the holy Scriptures which we have cited above by way of proof. It is no extraneous invention,

[St. Athanasius, *Letter in the Holy Spirit to Serapion of Thumis I*, 33]

In proceeding to make mention of these things, I shall adopt, to commend my undertaking, the pattern of Luke the Evangelist, saying on my own account: Forasmuch as some have taken in hand, to reduce into order for themselves the books termed apocryphal, and to mix them up with the divinely inspired Scripture, concerning which we have been fully persuaded, as they who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, delivered to the fathers; it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that any one who has fallen into error may condemn those who have led him astray; and that he who has continued steadfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter 39*,3] his canon of Scripture follows in 4 & 5.

I thought that all vain talk of all heretics, many as they may be, had been stopped by the Synod which was held at Nicaea. For the Faith there confessed by the Fathers according to the divine Scriptures is enough by itself at once to overthrow all impiety, and to establish the religious belief in Christ.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter 59*.1]

We are content with the fact that this [Arianism] is not **the teaching of the Catholic Church**, nor did the fathers hold this.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter 59*.3]

But our faith is right, and starts from the teaching of the Apostles and tradition of the fathers, being confirmed both by the New Testament and the Old.

[St. Athanasius, *Letter 60*.6]

[The Fathers of Council of Nicaea] wrote concerning Easter: ‘The following has been decided.’ And it was at that time decided that all should comply. **But concerning matters of faith, they did not write: ‘It has been decided,’ but ‘thus the Catholic Church believes.’** And thereupon they confessed how they believed. This they did in order to show that their judgment was not of more recent origin, but was in fact of Apostolic times; and that what they wrote was no discovery of their own, but is simply that which was taught by the Apostles.

[St Athanasius, *De Synodis*, I.5] Letter Concerning the Councils of Arminum and Seleucia

Vainly then do they run about with the pretext that they have demanded Councils for the faith’s sake; for divine Scripture is sufficient above all things; but if a Council be needed on the point, there are the proceedings of the Fathers, for the Nicene Bishops did not neglect this matter, but stated the doctrine so exactly, that persons reading their words honestly, cannot but be reminded by them of the religion towards Christ announced in divine Scripture.

[St Athanasius, *De Synodis*, I.6]

Marvelling then at the deceitfulness of their language and their unprincipled intentions, the Bishops said: . . . let us anathematize the heresies, and preserve the teaching of the Fathers.
[St Athanasius, *De Synodis*, I.9]

The blessed Apostle approves of the Corinthians because, he says, “ye remember me in all things, and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor 11:2); but they [the Arian heretics], as entertaining such views of their predecessors, will have the daring to say just the reverse to their flocks: “We praise you not for remembering your fathers, but rather we make much of you, when you hold not their traditions.” And let them go on to accuse their own unfortunate birth, and say, “We are sprung not of religious men but of heretics.” For such language, as I said before, is consistent in those who barter their Fathers’ fame and their own salvation for Arianism, and fear not the words of the divine proverb, “There is a generation that curseth their father” (Prv 30:11; Ex 21:17), and the threat lying in the Law against such. They then, from zeal for the heresy, are of this obstinate temper; you, however, be not troubled at it, nor take their audacity for truth. For they dissent from each other, and, whereas they have revolted from their Fathers, are not of one and the same mind, but float about with various and discordant changes. And, as quarrelling with the Council of Nicaea, they have held many Councils themselves, and have published a faith in each of them, and have stood to none, nay, they will never do otherwise, for perversely seeking, they will never find that Wisdom which they hate. I have accordingly subjoined portions both of Arius’s writings and of whatever else I could collect, of their publications in different Councils; whereby you will learn to your surprise with what object they stand out against an Ecumenical Council and their own Fathers without blushing.
[St. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, I.14]

For all, I say, are fathers; and yet not even the three hundred laid down nothing new, nor was it in any self-confidence that they became champions of words not in Scripture [i.e., *homoousios*], but they fell back upon fathers, as did the others, and used their words.
[St. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, III.43]

For it is right and meet thus to feel, and to maintain a good conscience toward the Fathers, if we be not spurious children, but have received the traditions from them, and the lessons of religion at their hands.
[St. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, III.47]
We must receive the traditions and the orthodox teaching from the Fathers, unless we wish to become illegitimate sons.

Such then, as we confess and believe, being the sense of the Fathers,
[St. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, III.48]

What then I have learned myself, and have heard men of judgment say, I have written in few words; but do you, remaining on the foundation of the Apostles, and holding fast the traditions of the Fathers, pray that now at length all strife and rivalry may cease, and the futile questions of the heretics may be condemned.
[St Athanasius, *De Synodis*, III.54]

Scarcely, however, did they begin to speak, when they were condemned [i.e. “convicted themselves,” *infr.* §18. *init.* ἐαυτῶν ἀεὶ κατήγοροι, *ad. Ep. Aeg.* §6. i.e. by their variations, *vid. Tit. iii. 11, αὐτοκατάκριτος*] and one differed from another; then perceiving the straits in which their heresy lay, they remained dumb, and by their silence confessed the disgrace which came upon their heterodoxy. On this the Bishops, having negatived the terms they had invented, published against them the sound and ecclesiastical faith; and, as all subscribed it, Eusebius and his fellows subscribed it also in those very words, of which they are now complaining, I mean, “of the essence” and “one in essence,” and that”the Son of God is neither creature or work, nor in the number of things originated [γενητῶν], but

that the Word is an offspring from the substance of the Father.” And what is strange indeed, Eusebius of Cæsarea in Palestine, who had denied the day before, but afterwards subscribed, sent to his Church a letter, saying that this was the Church’s faith, and the tradition of the Fathers; and made a public profession that they were before in error, and were rashly contending against the truth. For though he was ashamed at that time to adopt these phrases, and excused himself to the Church in his own way, yet he certainly means to imply all this in his Epistle, by his not denying the “one in essence,” and “of the essence.”

[St. Athanasius, *De Decretis* 3] *Defense of the Nicene Definition*

For, what our Fathers have delivered, this is truly doctrine; and this is truly the token of doctors: to confess the same thing with each other and to vary neither from themselves nor from their fathers; whereas they who have not this character are to be called not true doctors but evil. Thus the Greeks, as not witnessing to the same doctrines, but quarrelling one with another, have no truth of teaching; but the holy and veritable heralds of the truth agree together, and do not differ. For though they lived in different times, yet they one and all tend the same way, being prophets of the one God, and preaching the same Word harmoniously.

[St. Athanasius, *De Decretis* 4]

See, we are proving that this view has been transmitted from father to father; but you, O modern Jews and disciples of Caiaphas, how many fathers can you assign to your phrases? Not one of the understanding and wise; for all abhor you, but the devil alone; none but he is your father in this apostasy, who both in the beginning sowed you with the seed of this irreligion, and now persuades you to slander the Ecumenical Council, for committing to writing, not your doctrines, but that which from the beginning those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word have handed down to us. For the faith which the Council has confessed in writing, that is the faith of the Catholic Church; to assert this, the blessed Fathers so expressed themselves while condemning the Arian heresy; and this is a chief reason why these apply themselves to calumniate the Council. For it is not the terms which trouble them, but that those terms prove them to be heretics, and presumptuous beyond other heresies.

[St. Athanasius, *De Decretis* 27]

But since they allege the divine oracles and force on them a misinterpretation, according to their private sense, it becomes necessary to meet them just so far as to vindicate these passages, and to show that they bear an orthodox sense, and that our opponents are in error.

[St. Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, I.37]

For if the Lord be God, Son, Word, yet was not all these [divine] before He became man, either He was something else beside these, and afterwards became partaker of them for His virtue’s sake, as we have said; or they must adopt the alternative (may it return upon their heads!) that He was not before that time, but is wholly man by nature and nothing more. But this is no sentiment of the Church. But of the Samosatene and of the present Jews.

[St. Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, I.38]

This then I consider the sense of this passage, and that, a very ecclesiastical sense.

[St. Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, I.44]

However here too they [the Arians] introduce their private fictions, And contend that the Son and the Father are not in such wise ‘one,’ or ‘like,’ as the Church preaches, but as they themselves would have it.

[St. Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, III.10]

Anthony said his brother monks: “This is my last visit to you which I shall make. And I shall be surprised if we see each other again in this life. . . . have nought to do with the Meletian schismatics . . . Nor have any fellowship with the Arians, for their impiety is clear to all. Nor be disturbed if you see the judges protect them, for it shall cease, and their pomp is mortal and of short duration.

Wherefore keep yourselves all the more untainted by them, and observe the traditions of the fathers, and chiefly the holy faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which you have learned from the Scripture, and of which you have often been put in mind by me.”

[St. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, 89]

But after him [the devil] and with him are all inventors of unlawful heresies, who indeed refer to the Scriptures, but do not hold such opinions as the saints have handed down, and receiving them as the traditions of men, err, because they do not rightly know them nor their power. Therefore Paul justly praises the Corinthians, because their opinions were in accordance with his traditions. And the Lord most righteously reproveth the Jews, saying, ‘Wherefore do ye also transgress the commandments of God on account of your traditions.’ For they changed the commandments they received from God after their own understanding, preferring to observe the traditions of men. And about these, a little after, the blessed Paul again gave directions to the Galatians who were in danger thereof, writing to them, “If any man preach to you ought else than that ye have received, let him be accursed.’

[St. Athanasius, *Festal Letter* II.6]

And let us not forget that which Paul delivered, declaring it to the Corinthians; I mean His resurrection, whereby ‘He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;’ and raised us up together with Him, having loosed the bands of death, and vouchsafed a blessing instead of a curse, joy instead of grief, a feast instead of mourning, in this holy joy of Easter, which being continually in our hearts, we always rejoice, as Paul commanded; ‘We pray without ceasing; in everything we give thanks.’ So we are not remiss in giving notice of its seasons, as we have received from the Fathers. Again we write, again keeping to the apostolic traditions, we remind each other when we come together for prayer; and keeping the feast in common, with one mouth we truly give thanks to the Lord.

[St. Athanasius, *Festal Letter* II, 7]

The Lord did not permit it, but both renewed and preserved that which was ordained by Him through the Apostle, so that we may keep the feast together, and together keep holy-day, according to the tradition and commandment of the fathers.

[St. Athanasius, *Festal Letter* X, 11]

1. What was transacted concerning ecclesiastical faith at the Great Council assembled at Nicæa, you have probably learned, Beloved, from other sources, rumour being wont to precede the accurate account of what is doing. But lest in such reports the circumstances of the case have been misrepresented, we have been obliged to transmit to you, first, the formula of faith presented by ourselves, and next, the second, which [the Fathers] put forth with some additions to our words.

[Eusebius of Cæsarea, *Letter to the people of his Diocese on the Council of Nicea*]

And so after the not irreproachable beginning of your ordination, after the consecration of the bishop of Antioch, which you claimed for yourself contrary to the regulations of the canons, I grieve, beloved, that you have fallen into this too, that you should try to break down the most sacred constitutions of the Nicene canons. . . . By which unheard of and never before attempted excesses you went so far beyond yourself as to drag into an occasion of self-seeking, and force connivance from that holy Synod which the zeal of our most Christian prince had convened, solely to extinguish heresy and to confirm the

Catholic Faith: as if the unlawful wishes of a multitude could not be rejected, and that state of things which was truly ordained by the Holy Spirit in the canon of Nicæa could in any part be overruled by any one. Let no synodal councils flatter themselves upon the size of their assemblies, and let not any number of priests, however much larger, dare either to compare or to prefer themselves to those 318 bishops, seeing that the Synod of Nicæa is hallowed by God with such privilege, that whether by fewer or by more ecclesiastical judgments are supported, whatever is opposed to their authority is utterly destitute of all authority.

[Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 106, 2*] *To Anatolius, Bishop of Constantinople, in rebuke of his self-seeking*

I have such great reverence for the canons of Nicea that I have never permitted nor will ever suffer those things that were established by the holy Fathers to be violated by any sort of innovation.

[Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 119, 3*] *to Maximus, Bishop of Antioch*

For there is no new preaching in the letter which I wrote in reply to Flavian of holy memory, when he consulted me about the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in nothing did I depart from that rule of Faith which was outspokenly maintained by your ancestors and ours.

[Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 129, 2*] *To Proterius, Bishop of Alexandria*

Although, therefore, I am very confident of the piety of your heart in all things, and perceive that through the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you are sufficiently instructed, nor can any error delude your faith, yet I will endeavour to follow your bidding so far as to send certain of my brothers to represent my person before you, and to set forth what the Apostolic rule of Faith is, although, as I have said, it is well known to you, in all things making it clear and certain that they are not in any way to be reckoned among Catholics, who do not accept the definitions of the venerable Synod of Nicæa or the ordinances of the holy Council of Chalcedon, inasmuch as it is evident the holy decrees of both proceed from the Evangelical and Apostolical source, and whatever is not of Christ's watering is like a snake-poisoned draught. Your Majesty should understand beforehand, most venerable Emperor, that those whom I undertake to send will come from the Apostolic See, not to fight with the enemies of the Faith nor to strive against any, because of matters already settled as it has pleased God both at Nicæa and at Chalcedon we dare not enter upon any discussion, as if what so great an authority has fixed by the Holy Spirit were doubtful or weak.

[Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 162, 3*] *Leo the Bishop to Leo Augustus*

It was then that the Lord breathed on all his apostles and filled them with the Holy Spirit; and after giving the keys of the kingdom to blessed Peter, whom He had chosen and set above all the others, He entrusted him with the care of His flock.

[Pope St. Leo the Great, *Sermon 1 on the Ascension, 2*]

For in us both there is one mind about the faith, as being heirs of the same Fathers who once at Nicaea promulgated their great decree concerning the faith. Of this, some portions are universally accepted without cavil, but the homoousion, ill received in certain quarters, is still rejected by some. These objectors we may very properly blame, and yet on the contrary deem them deserving of pardon. To refuse to follow the Fathers, not holding their declaration of more authority than one's own opinion, is conduct worthy of blame, as being brimful of self-sufficiency.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 52,1*] *To the Canonicae.*

And if the decay of the Churches seems so pitiful to me, what must— so I have often in my lonely musings reflected— be the feelings of one who has known, by experience, the old tranquillity of the Churches of the Lord, and their one mind about the faith? But as your excellency feels most deeply this distress, it seems to me only becoming that your wisdom should be more strongly moved to interest

itself in the Church's behalf. I for my part have long been aware, so far as my moderate intelligence has been able to judge of current events, that the one way of safety for the Churches of the East lies in their having the sympathy of the bishops of the West. For if only those bishops liked to show the same energy on behalf of the Christians sojourning in our part of the world which they have shown in the case of one or two of the men convicted of breaches of orthodoxy in the West, our common interests would probably reap no small benefit, our sovereigns treating the authority of the people with respect, and the laity in all quarters unhesitatingly following them. . . . Dispatch from the holy Church placed under your care men of ability in sound doctrine to the bishops in the West. Recount to them the troubles whereby we are beset. Suggest some mode of relief. Be a Samuel to the Churches. Share the grief of the beleaguered people. Offer prayers for peace. Ask favour from the Lord, that He will send some memorial of peace to the Churches.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 66*] *To Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.*

1. As time moves on, it continually confirms the opinion which I have long held of your holiness; or rather that opinion is strengthened by the daily course of events. Most men are indeed satisfied with observing, each one, what lies especially within his own province; not thus is it with you, but your anxiety for all the Churches is no less than that which you feel for the Church that has been especially entrusted to you by our common Lord; inasmuch as you leave no interval in speaking, exhorting, writing, and dispatching emissaries, who from time to time give the best advice in each emergency as it arises. Now, from the sacred ranks of your clergy, you have sent forth the venerable brother Peter, whom I have welcomed with great joy. I have also approved of the good object of his journey, which he manifests in accordance with the commands of your excellency, in effecting reconciliation where he finds opposition, and bringing about union instead of division. With the object of offering some contribution to the action which is being taken in this matter, I have thought that I could not make a more fitting beginning than by having recourse to your excellency, as to the head and chief of all, and treating you as alike adviser and commander in the enterprise. I have therefore determined to send to your reverence our brother Dorotheus the deacon, of the Church under the right honourable bishop Meletius, being one who at once is an energetic supporter of the orthodox faith, and is earnestly desirous of seeing the peace of the Churches. The results, I hope, will be, that, following your suggestions (which you are able to make with the less likelihood of failure, both from your age and your experience in affairs, and because you have a greater measure than all others of the aid of the Spirit), he may thus attempt the achievement of our objects. You will welcome him, I am sure, and will look upon him with friendly eyes. You will strengthen him by the help of your prayers; you will give him a letter as provision by the way; you will grant him, as companions, some of the good men and true that you have about you; so you will speed him on the road to what is before him. It has seemed to me to be desirable to send a letter to the bishop of Rome, begging him to examine our condition, and since there are difficulties in the way of representatives being sent from the West by a general synodical decree, to advise him to exercise his own personal authority in the matter by choosing suitable persons to sustain the labours of a journey—suitable, too, by gentleness and firmness of character, to correct the unruly among us here; able to speak with proper reserve and appropriateness, and thoroughly well acquainted with all that has been effected after Ariminum to undo the violent measures adopted there. I should advise that, without any one knowing anything about it, they should travel hither, attracting as little attention as possible, by the sea, with the object of escaping the notice of the enemies of peace.

2. A point also that is insisted upon by some of those in these parts, very necessarily, as is plain even to myself, is that they should drive away the heresy of Marcellus, as grievous and injurious and opposed to the sound faith. For up to this time, in all the letters which they write, they are constant in thoroughly anathematizing the ill-famed Arius and in repudiating him from the Churches. But they attach no blame to Marcellus, who propounded a heresy diametrically opposite to that of Arius, and impiously attacked the very existence of the Only begotten Godhead, and erroneously understood the

term Word. He grants indeed that the Only begotten was called Word, on coming forth at need and in season, but states that He returned again to Him whence He had come forth, and had no existence before His coming forth, nor hypostasis after His return. The books in my possession which contain his unrighteous writings exist as a proof of what I say. Nevertheless they nowhere openly condemned him, and are to this extent culpable that, being from the first in ignorance of the truth, they received him into the communion of the Church. The present state of affairs makes it specially necessary that attention should be called to him, so that those who seek for their opportunity, may be prevented from getting it, from the fact of sound men being united to your holiness, and all who are lame in the true faith may be openly known; that so we may know who are on our side, and may not struggle, as in a night battle, without being able to distinguish between friends and foes. Only I do beseech you that the deacon, whom I have mentioned, be dispatched by the earliest possible packet, that at least some of the ends which we pray for may be accomplished during the ensuing year. One thing, however, even before I mention it, you quite understand and I am sure will give heed to, that, when they come, if God will, they must not let loose schisms among the Churches; and, even though they find some who have personal reasons for mutual differences, they must leave no means untried to unite all who are of the same way of thinking. For we are bound to regard the interests of peace as paramount, and that first of all attention be paid to the Church at Antioch, lest the sound portion of it grow diseased through division on personal grounds. But you will yourself give more complete attention to all these matters, so soon as, by the blessing of God, you find every one entrusting to you the responsibility of securing the peace of the Church.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 69*, 1-2] *To Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.*

Nearly all the East (I include under this name all the regions from Illyricum to Egypt) is being agitated, right honourable father, by a terrible storm and tempest. The old heresy, sown by Arius the enemy of the truth, has now boldly and unblushingly reappeared. Like some sour root, it is producing its deadly fruit and is prevailing. The reason of this is, that in every district the champions of right doctrine have been exiled from their Churches by calumny and outrage, and the control of affairs has been handed over to men who are leading captive the souls of the simpler brethren. I have looked upon the visit of your mercifulness as the only possible solution of our difficulties. Ever in the past I have been consoled by your extraordinary affection; and for a short time my heart was cheered by the gratifying report that we shall be visited by you. But, as I was disappointed, I have been constrained to beseech you by letter to be moved to help us, and to send some of those, who are like minded with us, either to conciliate the dissentient and bring back the Churches of God into friendly union, or at all events to make you see more plainly who are responsible for the unsettled state in which we are, that it may be obvious to you for the future with whom it befits you to be in communion. In this I am by no means making any novel request, but am only asking what has been customary in the case of men who, before our own day, were blessed and dear to God, and conspicuously in your own case. For I well remember learning from the answers made by our fathers when asked, and from documents still preserved among us, that the illustrious and blessed bishop Dionysius, conspicuous in your see as well for soundness of faith as for all other virtues, visited by letter my Church of Cæsarea, and by letter exhorted our fathers, and sent men to ransom our brethren from captivity. But now our condition is yet more painful and gloomy and needs more careful treatment. We are lamenting no mere overthrow of earthly buildings, but the capture of Churches; what we see before us is no mere bodily slavery, but a carrying away of souls into captivity, perpetrated day by day by the champions of heresy. Should you not, even now, be moved to succour us, ere long all will have fallen under the dominion of the heresy, and you will find none left to whom you may hold out your hand.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 70*] *without address, but usually held to be to Pope Damasus*

Our distresses are notorious, even though we leave them untold, for now their sound has gone out into all the world. The doctrines of the Fathers are despised; apostolic traditions are set at nought; the devices of innovators are in vogue in the Churches; now men are rather contrivers of cunning systems

than theologians; the wisdom of this world wins the highest prizes and has rejected the glory of the cross.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 90, 2]

For all these reasons we do indeed desire your help, that, for the future all who confess the apostolic faith may put an end to the schisms which they have unhappily devised, and be reduced for the future to the authority of the Church; that so, once more, the body of Christ may be complete, restored to integrity with all its members. Thus we shall not only praise the blessings of others, which is all we can do now, but see our own Churches once more restored to their pristine boast of orthodoxy. For, truly, the boon given you by the Lord is fit subject for the highest congratulation, your power of discernment between the spurious and the genuine and pure, and your preaching the faith of the Fathers without any dissimulation. That faith we have received; that faith we know is stamped with the marks of the Apostles; to that faith we assent, as well as to all that was canonically and lawfully promulgated in the Synodical Letter.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 92, 3] *To the Italians and Gauls.*

Both men whose minds have been preoccupied by a heterodox creed and now wish to change over to the congregation of the orthodox, and also those who are now for the first time desirous of being instructed in the doctrine of truth, must be taught the creed drawn up by the blessed fathers in the Council which met at Nicæa. The same training would also be exceedingly useful in the case of all who are under suspicion of being in a state of hostility to sound doctrine, and who by ingenious and plausible excuses keep the depravity of their sentiments out of view. For these too this creed is all that is needed. Some, moreover, of the impious following of the Libyan Sabellius, who understand hypostasis and substance to be identical, derive ground for the establishment of their blasphemy from the same source, because of its having been written in the creed “if any one says that the Son is of a different substance or hypostasis, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes him.” But they did not there state hypostasis and substance to be identical. Had the words expressed one and the same meaning, what need of both? It is on the contrary clear that while by some it was denied that the Son was of the same substance with the Father, and some asserted that He was not of the substance and was of some other hypostasis, they thus condemned both opinions as outside that held by the Church.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 125, 1]

Our not separating Him from Father and Son is a proof of our right mind, for we are bound to be baptized in the terms we have received by tradition and to profess belief in the terms in which we are baptized, and as we have professed belief in, so to give glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to hold aloof from the communion of all who call Him creature, as from open blasphemers.

One point must be regarded as settled; and the remark is necessary because of our slanderers; we do not speak of the Holy Ghost as unbegotten, for we recognize one Unbegotten and one Origin of all things, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: nor do we speak of the Holy Ghost as begotten, for by the tradition of the faith we have been taught one Only-begotten: the Spirit of truth we have been taught to proceed from the Father, and we confess Him to be of God without creation.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 125, 3]

Now I accept no newer creed written for me by other men, nor do I venture to propound the outcome of my own intelligence, lest I make the words of true religion merely human words; but what I have been taught by the holy Fathers, that I announce to all who question me. In my Church the creed written by the holy Fathers in synod at Nicaea is in use. I believe that it is also repeated among you; but I do not refuse to write its exact terms in my letter, lest I be accused of taking too little trouble. It is as follows: This is our faith.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 140, 2]

How comes it to pass then that we have received nothing of what is due to us by the law of love; no letter of consolation, no visit from brethren? This is now the thirteenth year since the war of heresy began against us. In this the Churches have suffered more tribulations than all those which are on record since Christ's gospel was first preached. . . . All this they are suffering because they refuse to have anything to do with the wicked leaven of Arius.

. . . We implore you, therefore, to stretch out a helping hand to those that have already been stricken to the ground, and to send messengers to remind us of the prizes in store for the reward of all who patiently suffer for Christ. A voice that we are used to is naturally less able to comfort us than one which sounds from afar, and that one coming from men who over all the world are known by God's grace to be among the noblest; for common report everywhere represents you as having remained steadfast, without suffering a wound in your faith, and as having kept the deposit of the apostles inviolate. This is not our case. There are among us some who, through lust of glory and that puffing up which is especially wont to destroy the souls of Christian men, have audaciously uttered certain novelties of expression with the result that the Churches have become like cracked pots and pans and have let in the inrush of heretical impurity. But do you, whom we love and long for, be to us as surgeons for the wounded, as trainers for the whole, healing the limb that is diseased, and anointing the limb that is sound for the service of the true religion.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 242*] *To the Westerns.*

Persecution has come upon us, right honourable brethren, and persecution in the severest form. Shepherds are persecuted that their flocks may be scattered. And the worst of all is that those who are being treated ill cannot accept their sufferings in proof of their testimony, nor can the people reverence the athletes as in the army of martyrs, because the name of Christians is applied to the persecutors. The one charge which is now sure to secure severe punishment is the careful keeping of the traditions of the Fathers. For this the pious are exiled from their homes, and are sent away to dwell in distant regions.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 243*, 3]

Look over all the world, and see how small the part is which is unsound. All the rest of the Church which has received the Gospel, from one end of the world to the other, abides in this sound and unperverted doctrine.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 251*, 4]

These, brethren, are the mysteries of the Church; these are the traditions of the Fathers. Every man who fears the Lord, and is awaiting God's judgment, I charge not to be carried away by various doctrines. If any one teaches a different doctrine, and refuses to accede to the sound words of the faith, rejecting the oracles of the Spirit, and making his own teaching of more authority than the lessons of the Gospels, of such an one beware.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 261*, 3]

I acknowledge also the holy apostles, prophets, and martyrs; and I invoke them to supplication to God, that through them, that is, through their mediation, the merciful God may be propitious to me, and that a ransom may be made and given me for my sins. Wherefore also I honour and kiss the features of their images, inasmuch as they have been handed down from the holy apostles, and are not forbidden, but are in all our churches.

[St. Basil the Great, *Letter 360*]

It follows that the one phrase "with whom" is the proper one to be used in the ascription of glory, while the other, "*through* whom," is specially appropriate in giving of thanks. It is also quite untrue to allege that the phrase "*with* whom" is unfamiliar in the usage of the devout. All those whose

soundness of character leads them to hold the dignity of antiquity to be more honorable than mere new-fangled novelty, and who have preserved the tradition of their fathers unadulterated, alike in town and in country, have employed this phrase.

[St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 7.16]

22. Let us now investigate what are our common conceptions concerning the Spirit, as well those which have been gathered by us from Holy Scripture concerning It as those which we have received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers. First of all we ask, who on hearing the titles of the Spirit is not lifted up in soul, who does not raise his conception to the supreme nature? It is called “Spirit of God,” “Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father,” (Jn 15:26) “right Spirit,” “a leading Spirit.” Its proper and peculiar title is “Holy Spirit;” which is a name specially appropriate to everything that is incorporeal, purely immaterial, and indivisible. So our Lord, when teaching the woman who thought God to be an object of local worship that the incorporeal is incomprehensible, said “God is a spirit.” (Jn 4:24) On our hearing, then, of a spirit, it is impossible to form the idea of a nature circumscribed, subject to change and variation, or at all like the creature. We are compelled to advance in our conceptions to the highest, and to think of an intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by times or ages, generous of Its good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end; perfecting all other things, but Itself in nothing lacking; living not as needing restoration, but as Supplier of life; not growing by additions; but straightway full, self-established, omnipresent, origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Itself, illumination to every faculty in the search for truth; by nature unapproachable, apprehended by reason of goodness, filling all things with Its power, but communicated only to the worthy; not shared in one measure, but distributing Its energy according to “the proportion of faith;” (Rm 12:6) in essence simple, in powers various, wholly present in each and being wholly everywhere; impassively divided, shared without loss of ceasing to be entire, after the likeness of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it as though it shone for him alone, yet illumines land and sea and mingles with the air. So, too, is the Spirit to every one who receives it, as though given to him alone, and yet It sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share It, according to the capacity, not of Its power, but of their nature.

[St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 9.22]

But the object of attack is faith. The one aim of the whole band of opponents and enemies of “sound doctrine” (1 Tim 1:10) is to shake down the foundation of the faith of Christ by levelling apostolic tradition with the ground, and utterly destroying it. So like the debtors--of course bona fide debtors--they clamour for written proof and reject as worthless **the unwritten tradition of the Fathers**. But we will not slacken in our defence of the truth. We will not cowardly abandon the cause. The Lord has delivered to us as a necessary and saving doctrine that the Holy Spirit is to be ranked with the Father.

[St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 10.25]

Of the dogmas and kerygmas preserved in the Church, some we possess from written teaching and others we receive from the tradition of the Apostles, handed on to us in mystery. In respect to piety both are of the same force. No one will contradict any of these, no one, at any rate, who is even moderately versed in matters ecclesiastical. Indeed were we to try to reject unwritten customs as having no great authority, we would unwittingly injure the Gospel in its vitals; or rather, we would reduce kerygma to a mere term. For instance, to take the first and most general example, who is thence who has taught us in writing to **sign with the sign of the cross** those who have trusted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? What writing has taught us to **turn to the East at the prayer**? Which of the saints has left us in writing the words of the **epiclesis at the consecration of the bread of the Eucharist and the cup of blessing**? For we are not, as is well known, content with what the apostle or the Gospel has recorded, but both in preface and conclusion we add other words as being of great

importance to the validity of the ministry, and these we derive from unwritten teaching. Moreover we bless the water of baptism and the oil of the chrism, and besides this the catechumen who is being baptized. On what written authority do we do this? Is not our authority silent and mystical tradition? Nay, by what written word is the anointing of oil itself taught? And whence comes the custom of baptizing thrice? And as to the other customs of baptism from what Scripture do we derive the renunciation of Satan and his angels? Does not this come from that unpublished and secret teaching which our fathers guarded in a silence out of the reach of curious meddling and inquisitive investigation? Well had they learnt the lesson that the awful dignity of the mysteries is best preserved by silence. What the uninitiated are not even allowed: to look at was hardly likely to be publicly paraded about in written documents. . . . In the same manner the Apostles and Fathers who laid down laws for the Church from the beginning thus guarded the awful dignity of the mysteries in secrecy and silence, for what is bruited abroad random among the common folk is no mystery at all. This is the reason for our tradition of unwritten precepts and practices, that the knowledge of our dogmas may not become neglected and contemned by the multitude through familiarity. “Dogma” and “Kerugma” are two distinct things; the former is observed in silence; the latter is proclaimed to all the world. [St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 27.66]

Time will fail me if I attempt to recount the unwritten mysteries of the Church. Of the rest I say nothing; but of the very confession of our faith in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what is the written source? If it be granted that, as we are baptized, so also under the obligation to believe, we make our confession in like terms as our baptism, in accordance with the tradition of our baptism and in conformity with the principles of true religion, let our opponents grant us too the right to be as consistent in our ascription of glory as in our confession of faith. If they deprecate our doxology on the ground that it lacks written authority, let them give us the written evidence for the confession of our faith and the other matters which we have enumerated. While the unwritten traditions are so many, and their bearing on “the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim 3:16) is so important, can they refuse to allow us a single word which has come down to us from the Fathers; --which we found, derived from untutored custom, abiding in unperverted churches; --a word for which the arguments are strong, and which contributes in no small degree to the completeness of the force of the mystery? [St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 27.67]

Is answer to the objection that the doxology in the form “with the Spirit” has no written authority, we maintain that if there is no other instance of that which is unwritten, then this must not be received. But if the greater number of our mysteries are admitted into our constitution without written authority, then, in company with the many others, let us receive this one. For I hold it apostolic to abide also by the unwritten traditions. “I praise you,” it is said, “that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you;” and “Hold fast the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word, or our Epistle.” One of these traditions is the practice which is now before us, which they who ordained from the beginning, rooted firmly in the churches, delivering it to their successors, and its use through long custom advances pace by pace with time. [St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 29.71]

Wherefore we too are undismayed at the cloud of our enemies, and, resting our hope on the aid of the Spirit, have, with all boldness, proclaimed the truth. Had I not so done, it would truly have been terrible that the blasphemers of the Spirit should so easily be emboldened in their attack upon true religion, and that we, with so mighty an ally and supporter at our side, should shrink from the service of that doctrine, which by the tradition of the Fathers has been preserved by an unbroken sequence of memory to our own day. [St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 30.79]

Well, the Divine books are full of such instruction for our guidance; and besides that many of the Saints cast the refulgence of their own lives, like lamps, upon the path for those who are “walking with God. But each may gather in abundance for himself suggestions towards this end out of either Covenant in the inspired writings; the Prophets and the Law are full of them; and also the Gospel and the Traditions of the Apostles.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity*, XI]

And yet if those had been the more appropriate names, the Truth Himself would not have been at a loss to discover them, nor those men either, on whom successively devolved the preaching of the mystery, whether they were from the first eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, or, as successors to these, filled the whole world with the Evangelical doctrines, and again at various periods after this defined in a common assembly the ambiguities raised about the doctrine; whose traditions are constantly preserved in writing in the churches.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, 13]

The whole controversy, then, between the Church and the Anomœans turns on this: Are we to regard the Son and the Holy Spirit as belonging to created or uncreated existence?

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, 18]

While the Church teaches that we must not divide our faith among a plurality of beings, but must recognize no difference of being in three Subjects or Persons, whereas our opponents posit a variety and unlikeness among them as Beings,

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, 19]

But let us assume that this is not so: for they allow, forsooth, in theoretic kindness towards humanity, that the Only-begotten and the Holy Spirit have some personal existence: and if, in allowing this, they had granted too the consequent conceptions about them, they would not have been waging battle about the doctrine of the Church, nor cut themselves off from the hope of Christians.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, 21]

In the tradition of the faith delivered by the Truth we are taught to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, II, 9]

Now seeing that the Church, according to the Divine teaching, believes the Only-begotten to be verily God, and abhors the superstition of polytheism, and for this cause does not admit the difference of essences, in order that the Godheads may not, by divergence of essence, fall under the conception of number (for this is nothing else than to introduce polytheism into our life)—seeing, I say, that the Church teaches this in plain language, that the Only-begotten is essentially God, very God of the essence of the very God, how ought one who opposes her decisions to overthrow the preconceived opinion? Should he not do so by establishing the opposing statement, demonstrating the disputed point from some acknowledged principle? I think no sensible man would look for anything else than this. . . . Let our author, then, show this to begin with, that it is in vain that the Church has believed that the Only-begotten Son truly exists, not adopted by a Father falsely so called, but existing according to nature, by generation from Him Who is, not alienated from the essence of Him that begot Him. But so long as his primary proposition remains unproved, it is idle to dwell on those which are secondary.

And let no one interrupt me, by saying that what we confess should also be confirmed by constructive reasoning: for it is enough for proof of our statement, that the tradition has come down to us from our fathers, handed on, like some inheritance, by succession from the apostles and the saints who came after them. They, on the other hand, who change their doctrines to this novelty, would need the support of arguments in abundance, if they were about to bring over to their views, not men light as

dust, and unstable, but men of weight and steadiness: but so long as their statement is advanced without being established, and without being proved, who is so foolish and so brutish as to account the teaching of the evangelists and apostles, and of those who have successively shone like lights in the churches, of less force than this undemonstrated nonsense?

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, IV, 6]

But as much as comes within our compass we will set down in few words, following the guidance of the Fathers.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, XII, 1]

Therefore, that falsehood may not overpower the truth, in another letter we made a sufficient defence against the charges levelled at us, and before the Lord we protested that we had neither departed from the faith of the Holy Fathers, nor had we done anything without due discrimination and inquiry in the case of those who came over from the communion of Marcellus to that of the Church: but all that we did we did only after the orthodox in the East, and our brethren in the ministry had entrusted to us the consideration of the case of these persons, and had approved our action. But inasmuch as, since we composed that written defence of our conduct, again some of the brethren who are of one mind with us begged us to make separately with our own lips a profession of our faith, which we entertain with full conviction, following as we do the utterances of inspiration and the tradition of the Fathers, we deemed it necessary to discourse briefly of these heads as well. We confess that the doctrine of the Lord, which He taught His disciples, when He delivered to them the mystery of godliness, is the foundation and root of right and sound faith, nor do we believe that there is anything else loftier or safer than that tradition.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter 2, To the City of Sebasteia*]

But though we had made that written defence, again some of the brothers of one mind with us begged that there come privately in our own utterance an exposition of the faith in which is our full conviction, following as we do the God-inspired utterances and the tradition of the Fathers.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Epistle 5,3*]

For by distinguishing two elements in the way of life of Christians, one the moral part and the other the accuracy of the dogmas, he firmly established the saving dogma in the tradition of baptism on the one hand, and commanded that our life be remedied through the keeping of his commandments on the other.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Epistle 24,1*]

Hence we are baptized as it has been handed down to us, into Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and we believe as we are baptized—for it is fitting that our confession be of one voice with our faith—and we give glory as we believe, for it is not natural that worship make war against faith, but as we believe, so also we give glory.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Epistle 24,8*]

But since such cases have been passed over by our Fathers, we deem it sufficient on the principle of public teaching, that in purifying the infirmities of avarice through the word we treat them, as far as possible, as a kind of compound condition, and consider only theft, grave-robbing and sacrilege as morbid conditions, for such is the tradition that has come down to us from the succession of the Fathers.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter 31, Canonical Letter of the holy Gregory to Letoius among the saints, bishop of Melitene*, 6]

[“Gregory’s authorship of the letter to Letoius has always been acknowledged. It was due to a decision by Pasquali (ix) and by other editors following him, that it was not included in recent editions of his letters, a decision based on a narrow conception of the epistolary genre. Because the letter was taken up so soon into the body of Eastern church canons, Pasquali and others left it to editors of canonical literature. However it is clear that it was originally a genuine letter, called forth in the same sort of circumstances as Basil’s letters 188, 199 and 217 to Amphilochius, i.e. it is the considered response of an authoritative senior bishop to the questions of a new and inexperienced bishop on the Church’s administration of penance. It has as much right to be included here among Gregory’s letters as Basil’s ‘canonical’ letters have been among his. Moreover, this important letter has never appeared before in English.”

Anna M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters--Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Leiden: The Netherlands, 2007, p. 211]

The question [regarding the Holy Trinity] is, as I said, very difficult to deal with: yet, if we should be able to find anything that may give support to the uncertainty of our mind, so that it may no longer totter and waver in this monstrous dilemma, it would be well: on the other hand, even if our reasoning be found unequal to the problem, we must keep forever, firm and unmoved, the tradition which we received by succession from the fathers, and seek from the Lord the reason which is the advocate of our faith: and if this be found by any of those endowed with grace, we must give thanks to Him who bestowed the grace; but if not, we shall none the less, on those points which have been determined, hold our faith unchangeably.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To Ablabius: On Not Three Gods*]

Accordingly I supported the first encounter in the discussion with good courage, discharging from my shepherd’s scrip, i.e. from the teaching of the Church, my natural and unpremeditated arguments for the subversion of this blasphemy, needing not at all the equipment of arguments from profane sources to qualify me for the contest;

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Answer to Eunomius Second Book*, XII, 1]

What then is the charge they bring against us? They accuse us of profanity for entertaining lofty conceptions about the Holy Spirit. All that we, in following the teachings of the Fathers, confess as to the Spirit, they take in a sense of their own, and make it a handle against us, to denounce us for profanity.

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against the Followers of Macedonius*]

As for ourselves, we take our stand upon the tenets of the Church

[St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*]

I desire to learn what is the fashion of innovation in things concerning the church. But since our faith has been proclaimed both in writing and without writing, here and in distant parts, in times of danger and of safety, how is it that some make such attempts and others keep silent?

[St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Letter 101*]

26. To this I may compare the case of Theology except that it proceeds the reverse way. For in the case by which I have illustrated it the change is made by successive subtractions; whereas here perfection is reached by additions. For the matter stands thus. The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Ghost; lest perhaps people might, like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes as yet too weak to bear it to the sun’s light, risk the loss even of that

which was within the reach of their powers; but that by **gradual additions**, and, as David says, Goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory, the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason it was, I think, that He gradually came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him, at the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues. And indeed it is little by little that He is declared by Jesus, as you will learn for yourself if you will read more carefully. I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth. This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send, then again, I will send,—His own dignity. Then shall come, the authority of the Spirit.

27. You see lights breaking upon us, **gradually**; and the order of Theology, which it is better for us to keep, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end. For the former course would be unscientific, the latter atheistical; and the former would be calculated to startle outsiders, the latter to alienate our own people. I will add another point to what I have said; one which may readily have come into the mind of some others, but which I think a fruit of my own thought. Our Saviour had some things which, He said, could not be borne at that time by His disciples (though they were filled with many teachings), perhaps for the reasons I have mentioned; and therefore they were hidden. And again He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit when He should come to dwell amongst us. Of these things one, I take it, was the Deity of the Spirit Himself, made clear later on when such knowledge should be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration, when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach. If indeed anything is to be considered great and worthy of the Majesty of God, which was either promised or taught. [St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 31,26-27] *development of doctrine*

My sheep hear my voice, which I have heard from the oracles of God, which I have been taught by the Holy Fathers, which I have taught alike on all occasions, not conforming myself to the fortune, and which I will never cease to teach; in which I was born, and in which I will depart. [St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 33, 15]

Even if the languages of the world are different, the meaning of the tradition is one and the same. The churches founded in Germany have not believed differently or transmitted the tradition differently--or the ones found among the Iberians, the Celts, in the east, in Libya, or in the center of the Earth. [St. Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion*, II.31.2] *Against All Heresies*, 31, 31 310-403 AD

It is needful also to make use of tradition, for not everything can be gotten from sacred scripture. Thus the holy apostles handed down some things in scriptures but some in traditions. [St. Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion*, IV.6.5] *Against All Heresies*, 61, 6 in some cases

But who has better knowledge of these things? The deluded man who has just arrived and is still alive today, or those who were witnesses before us, who have had the tradition in the church before us and received it in this form from their fathers--and their fathers in their turn, who learned it from those before them, just as the church possesses the true faith and the traditions to this day because she has received them from her fathers?

[St. Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion*, VI.6.3] *Against All Heresies*, 75, 6 in some cases

Now Luke tells us also the cause wherefore he proceeds to write: “that you may hold,” says he, “the certainty of the words wherein you have been instructed;” (Lk 1:4) that is, that being continually reminded you may hold to the certainty, and abide in certainty.

But as to John, he has himself kept silence touching the cause; yet, (as a tradition says, which has come down to us from the first, even from the Fathers) neither did he come to write without purpose; but forasmuch as it had been the care of the three to dwell upon the account of the dispensation, and the doctrines of the Godhead were near being left in silence, he, moved by Christ, then and not till then set himself to compose his Gospel. And this is manifest both from the history itself, and from the opening of his Gospel. For he does not begin like the rest from beneath, but from above, from the same point, at which he was aiming, and it was with a view to this that he composed the whole book. And not in the beginning only, but throughout all the Gospel, he is more lofty than the rest.

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 1, 7]

We may answer, that what is here written, was sufficient for those who would attend, and that the sacred writers ever addressed themselves to the matter of immediate importance, whatever it might be at that time: it was no object with them to be writers of books: in fact, there are many things which have been delivered by unwritten tradition. Now while all that is contained in this Book is worthy of admiration, so is especially the way the Apostles have of coming down to the wants of their hearers: a condescension suggested by the Spirit who has so ordered it, that the subject on which they chiefly dwell is that pertains to Christ as man. For so it is, that while they discourse so much about Christ, they have spoke little concerning His Godhead: it was mostly of the manhood that they discoursed, and of the Passion, and the Resurrection, and the Ascension.

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts* 1, 1]

“Stand firm and hold fast to the traditions you were taught, whether by an oral statement or by a letter”(2 *Thess* 2:15). Hence it is manifest that they did not deliver all things by epistle, but many things unwritten, and in like manner both the one and the other are worthy of credit. Therefore, let us regard the tradition of the church also worthy of belief. Is it a tradition? Seek no farther.

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 2nd Thessalonians* 4, 2]

Not in vain did the Apostles order that remembrance should be made of the dead in the awesome Mysteries. They know that great gain results to them, great benefit; for when the whole people stands with uplifted hands, a priestly assembly, and that awesome Sacrifice lies displayed, how shall we not prevail with God by our entreaties for them? And this we do for those who have departed in faith.

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Philippians* 3, 4]

Since then he had already admonished them concerning these things when present, and some perhaps listened to him and others disobeyed; therefore in his letter also again, he foment the place, like a physician, by his mode of addressing them, and so corrects the offence. For that he had heretofore admonished them in person is evident from what he begins with. Why else, having said nothing of this matter any where in the Epistle before, but passing on from other accusations, doth he straightway say, “Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you?”

“That ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you.” (1 Cor 11:2) It appears then that he used at that time to deliver many things also not in writing, which he shows too in many other places. But at that time he only delivered them, whereas now he adds an explanation of their reason: thus both rendering the one sort, the obedient, more steadfast, and pulling down the others’ pride, who oppose themselves.

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homily XXVI on 1 Corinthians*, 2]

Not by letters alone did Paul instruct his disciple in his duty, but before by words also which he shows, both in many other passages, as where he says, “whether by word or our Epistle” (2 Thess 2:15), and especially here. Let us not therefore suppose that anything relating to doctrine was spoken imperfectly. For many things he delivered to him without writing. Of these therefore he reminds him, when he says, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.” After the manner of artists, I have impressed on you the image of virtue, fixing in your soul a sort of rule, and model, and outline of all things pleasing to God. These things then hold fast, and whether you are meditating any matter of faith or love, or of a sound mind, form from hence your ideas of them. It will not be necessary to have recourse to others for examples, when all has been deposited within yourself.
[St. John Chrysostom, *Homily III on 2 Timothy*] commenting on 2 Tim 2:13

We may answer, that what is here written, was sufficient for those who would attend, and that the sacred writers ever addressed themselves to the matter of immediate importance, whatever it might be at the time: it was no object with them [the sacred writers of Scripture] to be writers of books: in fact, there are many things which they have delivered by unwritten tradition. Now while all that is contained in this Book is worthy of admiration, so is especially the way the Apostles have of coming down to the wants of their hearers: a condescension suggested by the Spirit who has so ordered it, that the subject on which they chiefly dwell is that which pertains to Christ as man.\

[St. John Chrysostom, *Homily I on The Acts of the Apostles*]

Since the East, shattered as it is by the long-standing feuds, subsisting between its peoples, is bit by bit tearing into shreds the seamless vest of the Lord, “woven from the top throughout,” (Jn 19:23) since the foxes are destroying the vineyard of Christ (Cant 2:15), and since among the broken cisterns that hold no water it is hard to discover “the sealed fountain” and “the garden inclosed,” (Cant 4:12) I think it my duty to consult the chair of Peter, and to turn to a church whose faith has been praised by Paul. I appeal for spiritual food to the church whence I have received the garb of Christ. The wide space of sea and land that lies between us cannot deter me from searching for “the pearl of great price.” (Mt 13:46) “Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” (Mt 24:28) Evil children have squandered their patrimony; you alone keep your heritage intact. The fruitful soil of Rome, when it receives the pure seed of the Lord, bears fruit an hundredfold; but here the seed corn is choked in the furrows and nothing grows but darnel or oats. (Mt 13:22-23) In the West the Sun of righteousness (Mal 4:12) is even now rising; in the East, Lucifer, who fell from heaven (Lk 10:18), has once more set his throne above the stars. (Is 14:12) “Ye are the light of the world,” “ye are the salt of the earth,” (Mt 5:14, 13) ye are “vessels of gold and of silver.” Here are vessels of wood or of earth (2 Tm 2:20), which wait for the rod of iron (Rev 2:27), and eternal fire.

Yet, though your greatness terrifies me, your kindness attracts me. From the priest I demand the safe-keeping of the victim, from the shepherd the protection due to the sheep. Away with all that is overweening; let the state of Roman majesty withdraw. My words are spoken to the successor of the fisherman, to the disciple of the cross. As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the church is built! (Mt 16:18) This is the house where alone the paschal lamb can be rightly eaten. (Ex 12:22) This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails (Gn 7:23). But since by reason of my sins I have betaken myself to this desert which lies between Syria and the uncivilized waste, I cannot, owing to the great distance between us, always ask of your sanctity the holy thing of the Lord. Consequently I here follow the Egyptian confessors who share your faith, and anchor my frail craft under the shadow of their great argosies. I know nothing of Vitalis; I reject Meletius; I have nothing to do with Paulinus. He that gathers not with you scatters (Mt 12:30); he that is not of Christ is of Antichrist.

[St. Jerome, *Letter 15*, 1-2] to Pope Damasus

Don't you know that the laying on of hands after baptism and then the invocation of the Holy Spirit is a custom of the Churches? Do you demand Scripture proof? You may find it in the Acts of the Apostles. And even if it did not rest on the authority of Scripture the consensus of the whole world [totius orbis] in this respect would have the force of a command. For many other observances of the Churches, which are due to tradition, have acquired the authority of the written law.

[St. Jerome, *Dialogue Against the Luciferians*, 8]

I might spend the day in speaking to the same effect, and dry up all the streams of argument with the single Sun of the Church. But as we have already had a long discussion and the protracted controversy has wearied out the attention of our audience, I will tell you my opinion briefly and without reserve. We ought to remain in that Church which was founded by the Apostles and continues to this day. If ever you hear of any that are called Christians taking their name not from the Lord Jesus Christ, but from some other, for instance, Marcionites, Valentinians, Men of the mountain or the plain, you may be sure that you have there not the Church of Christ, but the synagogue of Antichrist. For the fact that they took their rise after the foundation of the Church is proof that they are those whose coming the Apostle foretold. And let them not flatter themselves if they think they have Scripture authority for their assertions, since the devil himself quoted Scripture, and the essence of the Scriptures is not the letter, but the meaning [*Scripturis non in legendo consistant, sed in intellegendo*]. Otherwise, if we follow the letter, we too can concoct a new dogma and assert that such persons as wear shoes and have two coats must not be received into the Church.

[St. Jerome, *Dialogue Against the Luciferians*, 28]

We, according to the apostolic tradition (in which the whole world is at one with us), fast through one Lent yearly; whereas they [the Montanists] keep three in the year as though three saviors had suffered. I do not mean, of course, that it is unlawful to fast at other times through the year--always excepting Pentecost--only that while in Lent it is a duty of obligation, at other seasons it is a matter of choice.

[St. Jerome, *Letter XLI*, 3] *To Marcella*

Of the names presbyter and bishop the first denotes age, the second rank. In writing both to Titus and to Timothy the apostle speaks of the ordination of bishops and of deacons, but says not a word of the ordination of presbyters; for the fact is that the word bishops includes presbyters also. Again when a man is promoted it is from a lower place to a higher. Either then a presbyter should be ordained a deacon, from the lesser office, that is, to the more important, to prove that a presbyter is inferior to a deacon; or if on the other hand it is the deacon that is ordained presbyter, this latter should recognize that, although he may be less highly paid than a deacon, he is superior to him in virtue of his priesthood. In fact as if to tell us that the traditions handed down by the apostles were taken by them from the old testament, bishops, presbyters and deacons occupy in the church the same positions as those which were occupied by Aaron, his sons, and the Levites in the temple.

[St. Jerome, *Letter CXLVI*, 2] *To Evangelus*

We have reviewed, beloved brethren, all the definitions of faith made by the Eastern bishops which they formulated in their assembly against the recently emerging heresy. And we, as far as we have been able, have adapted the wording of our exposition to express their meaning, following their diction rather than desiring to be thought the originators of new phrases. In these words they decree the principles of their conscience and a long maintained doctrine against a new and profane impiety

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Councils*, 27] 358 AD

We believe in accordance with evangelical and apostolic tradition in one God the Father Almighty, the Creator, Maker and Disposer of all things that are, and from whom are all things.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Councils*, 29]

For all those things which were written in the divine Scriptures by Prophets and by Apostles we believe and follow truly and with fear.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Councils*, 30]

But those who say that the Son is sprung from things non-existent, or from another substance and not from God, and that there was a time or age when He was not, the holy Catholic Church regards as aliens.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Councils*, 38,I]

But those who say, There was when He was not, And before He was born He was not, And that He was made of things that existed not, or of another substance and essence, saying that God was able to change and alter, to these the Catholic Church says anathema.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Councils*, 84]

Accordingly, we will enquire first what are the dangers of their teaching, the risks involved by such irreverence; next, what principles they hold, and what arguments they advance against the apostolic faith to which we adhere, and by what sleight of language they impose upon the candour of their hearers; and lastly, by what method of comment they disarm the words of Scripture of their force and meaning.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, IV,1]

But if that faith which confesses Christ as the Son of God, and that faith only, received in Peter's person every accumulated blessing, then perforce the faith which proclaims Him a creature, made out of nothing, holds not the keys of the Church and is a stranger to the apostolic faith and power. It is neither the Church's faith, nor is it Christ's.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, VI,38]

I need mention no other heresies save one; all the world knows that they are alien from the Church.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, VII,3]

The Church, ordained by the Lord and established by His Apostles, is one for all; but the frantic folly of discordant sects has severed them from her. And it is obvious that these dissensions concerning the faith result from a distorted mind, which twists the words of Scripture into conformity with its opinion, instead of adjusting that opinion to the words of Scripture.

[St. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, VII,4]

But undoubtedly, whether we go through the series of the holy Scriptures, or the times of old, who is there who can deny that, in a matter of faith,--in a matter I say of faith,--bishops are wont to judge of Christian emperors, not emperors of bishops.

[St. Ambrose, *Letter 21*, 4] *To the Emperor Valentinian I.*

This [that Christ is a creature] was decreed at the Synod of Ariminum, and rightly do I detest that council, following the rule of the Nicene Council, from which neither death nor the sword can detach me, which faith the father of your Clemency also, Theodosius, the most blessed Emperor, both approved and follows. The Gauls hold this faith, and Spain, and keep it with the pious confession of the Divine Spirit.

If anything has to be discussed I have learned to discuss it in church as those before me did. If a conference is to be held concerning the faith, there ought to be a gathering of Bishops, as was done under Constantine, the Prince of august memory, who did not promulgate any laws beforehand, but left the decision to the Bishops.

[St. Ambrose, *Letter 21*, 14-15] *To the Emperor Valentinian I.*

But I ask what it is that they do not believe; is it whether any one can be aided by the martyrs? This is the same thing as not to believe Christ, for He Himself said: “You shall do greater things than these.” (Jn 14:12) How? By those martyrs whose merits have been long efficacious, whose bodies were long since found? Here I ask, do they bear a grudge against me, or against the holy martyrs? If against me, are any miracles wrought by me? By my means or in my name? Why, then, grudge me what is not mine? If it be against the martyrs (for if they bear no grudge against me, it can only be against them), they show that the martyrs were of another faith than that which they believe. For otherwise they would not have any feeling against their works, did they not judge that they have not the faith which was in them, that faith established by the tradition of our forefathers, which the devils themselves cannot deny but the Arians do.

[St. Ambrose, *Letter 22*, 19]

That to settle the day of the celebration of the Passover requires more than ordinary wisdom, we are taught both by the Holy Scripture and by the tradition of the Fathers, who, when assembled at the Nicene Synod, in addition to their true and admirable decrees concerning the Faith, formed also for the above-mentioned celebration a plan for nineteen years with the aid of the most skilful calculators, and constituted a sort of cycle to serve as a pattern for subsequent years.

[St. Ambrose, *Letter 23*, 1]

But if they will not believe the doctrines of the Clergy, let them believe the oracles of Christ, let them believe the admonitions of Angels who say, *For with God nothing shall be impossible*. Let them give believe the Apostles’ Creed, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled.

[St. Ambrose, *Letter 42*, 5] *To Siricius*

Those, runs the decree, who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that before He was born He was not, and who say that he was made out of nothing, or is of another substance or οὐσία, or that He is capable of changing, or that with Him is any shadow of turning--them the Catholic and Apostolic Church declares accursed.

[St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, I, 120]

First of all, let them understand that if they make the words that which has been made to refer to the Godhead, they entangle themselves in the difficulties raised by the Manichæans, for these people argue: If that which has been made in Him is life, then there is something which has not been made in Him, and is death, so that they may impiously bring in two principles. But this teaching the Church condemns.

[St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, III, 42]

Moreover, that you may know that it is after His Manhood that He entreats, and in virtue of His Godhead that He commands, it is written for you in the Gospel that He said to Peter: I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. (Lk 22:32) To the same Apostle, again, when on a former occasion he said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, He made answer: You are Peter, and upon this Rock will I build My Church, and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 16:18) *Could He not, then, strengthen the faith of the man to whom, acting on His own authority, He gave the kingdom, whom He called the Rock, thereby declaring him to be the foundation of the Church?*

[St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, IV, 57]

For if, in truth, regard for peace had any place in his heart, he would not afterwards at Carthage have joined those traditors whom he had left to the judgment of God when they were present, and confessed their fault, in passing sentence for the same crime upon others who were absent, and against whom no

one had proved the charge. He was bound, moreover, to be the more afraid on that occasion of disturbing the peace, inasmuch as Carthage was a great and famous city, from which any evil originating there might extend, as from the head of the body, throughout all Africa. Carthage was also near to the countries beyond the sea, and distinguished by illustrious renown, so that it had a bishop of more than ordinary influence, who could afford to disregard even a number of enemies conspiring against him, *because he saw himself united by letters of communion both to the Roman Church, in which the supremacy of an apostolic chair has always flourished, and to all other lands from which Africa itself received the gospel*, and was prepared to defend himself before these Churches if his adversaries attempted to cause an alienation of them from him. Seeing, therefore, that Cæcilianus declined to come before his colleagues, whom he perceived or suspected (or, as they affirm, pretended to suspect) to be biassed by his enemies against the real merits of his case, it was all the more the duty of Secundus, if he wished to be the guardian of true peace, to prevent the condemnation in their absence of those who had wholly declined to compear at their bar. For it was not a matter concerning presbyters or deacons or clergy of inferior order, but concerning colleagues who might refer their case wholly to the judgment of other bishops, especially of apostolical churches, in which the sentence passed against them in their absence would have no weight, since they had not deserted their tribunal after having compeared before it, but had always declined compearance because of the suspicions which they entertained.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter 43.7*] *To Glorius, Eleusius, etc*

But in regard to those observances which we carefully attend and which the whole world keeps, and which derive not from Scripture but from Tradition, we are given to understand that they are recommended and ordained to be kept, either by the Apostles themselves or by plenary councils, the authority of which is quite vital in the Church.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter 54.1.1*] *to Januarius*

As to the first man, the father of mankind, it is agreed by almost the entire Church that the Lord loosed him from that prison; a tenet which must be believed to have been accepted not without reason,—from whatever source it was handed down [traditum sit] to the Church—although the authority of the canonical Scriptures cannot be brought forward as speaking expressly in its support, though this seems to be the opinion which is more than any other borne out by these words in the book of Wisdom (10:1-2). ‘She preserved him that was first formed by God, the father of the world, when he was created alone. And she brought him out of his sin and gave him power to govern all things,’ Some add to this [tradition] that the same favour was bestowed on the holy men of antiquity—on Abel, Seth, Noah and his house, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other patriarchs and prophets, they also being loosed from those pains at the time when the Lord descended into hell.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter 164, 6*] *to Evodius*

For now about this case, two councils were sent to the *Apostolic See*: *whence also responses came. The case is finished [Causa finita est]*: if only the error were at some point finished! Therefore we warn that they may turn, we teach that they may be instructed, let us pray that they may be changed. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon 131.10*]

For in the Catholic Church, not to speak of the purest wisdom, to the knowledge of which a few spiritual men attain in this life, so as to know it, in the scantiest measure, indeed, because they are but men, still without any uncertainty (since the rest of the multitude derive their entire security not from acuteness of intellect, but from simplicity of faith,)—not to speak of this wisdom, which you do not believe to be in the Catholic Church, there are many other things which most justly keep me in her bosom. The consent of peoples and nations keeps me in the Church; so does her authority, inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age. *The succession of priests keeps me, beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His resurrection, gave*

it in charge to feed His sheep, down to the present episcopate. And so, lastly, does the name itself of Catholic, which, not without reason, amid so many heresies, the Church has thus retained; so that, though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet when a stranger asks where the Catholic Church meets, no heretic will venture to point to his own chapel or house.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra epistulam Manichaei*, 4, 5] = *Against the Letter of Mani Called "The Foundation"*

But if he has happened upon the volumes of some heretic and, unwittingly perhaps, and has held and considers to be Catholic [*catholicum*] what the true church condemns, we must earnestly instruct him, setting before him the authority of the universal [*universalis*] Church, and that of other most learned men renowned for their disputations and for their writings concerning the truth of her teachings.

[St. Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 8, 12] *The First Catechetical Instruction*

If you should find someone who does not yet believe in the Gospel, what should you answer him when he says: "I do not believe?" Indeed, I would not believe in the Gospel myself if the authority of the Catholic Church did not influence me to do so.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra epistulam Manichaei*, 5, 6]

he, I say, abundantly shows that he was most willing to correct his own opinion, if any one should prove to him that it is as certain that the baptism of Christ can be given by those who have strayed from the fold, as that it could not be lost when they strayed; on which subject we have already said much. Nor should we ourselves venture to assert anything of the kind, were we not supported by the unanimous authority of the whole Church, to which he himself would unquestionably have yielded, if at that time the truth of this question had been placed beyond dispute by the investigation and decree of a plenary Council.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Baptismo*, 2.4.5]

I believe that this practice [of infant baptism] comes from apostolic tradition, just as so many other practices not found in their writings nor in the councils of their successors, but which, because they are kept by the whole church everywhere, are believed to be commended and handed down by the Apostles themselves.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Baptismo*, 2.7.12] re infant baptism

And this is the firm tradition of the universal Church, in respect of the baptism of infants, . . . What the universal Church holds, not as instituted by councils but as something always held, is most correctly believed to have been handed down by apostolic authority.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Baptismo*, 4.23.31, 4.24.32] re infant baptism

39. . . . Now, seeing that they admit the necessity of baptizing infants — finding themselves unable to contravene that authority of the universal Church, which has been unquestionably handed down by the Lord and His apostles — they cannot avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefits of the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament and charity of the faithful, and thereby incorporated into the body of Christ, which is the Church, they may be reconciled to God, and so live in Him, and be saved, and delivered, and redeemed, and enlightened.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Baptism of Infants*, I, 39]

For it was not to heretics, but to Catholics, that the apostle was speaking when he said, "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phil 3:15) This was thought to have been the case in him when he replied that he consented to the letters of Pope Innocent of blessed memory, in which all doubt about this matter was removed. . . . afterwards, by the same priesthood, Cœlestius and Pelagius were

condemned by repeated authority, was the proof of a severity, for a little while intermitted, at length of necessity to be carried out, not a denial of a previously-known truth or a new acknowledgment of truth.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*, I, 5]
see whole section for a discussion of papal authority

The Fathers taught the church that which they learned in the church.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum*, 1.117]

Thus, there is no reason why you should appeal to the Eastern bishop, because they themselves are also Christians and in both parts of the world this faith is one faith, for this faith is Christian; and certainly the Western land brought you forth and the Western Church regenerated you. What do you wish to bring to it which you did not find in it when you came among its members? Or, rather, what do you seek to take away from it, which you yourself also received in it?
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, I.4.14]

You are convicted on every side. The numerous testimonies of the saints are clearer than daylight. See into what assembly I have introduced you. Here is **Ambrose of Milan**, whom your teacher Pelagius praised so highly that he said: 'In his books the Roman faith shone out most clearly, who bloomed as a beautiful flower among the Latin writers, so that not even his enemy would dare censure his faith and his most pure interpretation of the Scriptures. Here is **John of Constantinople**, whom you quoted as outstanding among the learned and holy men in this very work which I am re-futing. Here is **Basil**, whose words, which do not have anything to do with the matter in hand, you thought gave you support. Here are others whose general agreement ought to move you. This is not, as you write with an evil pen, a conspiracy of the wicked. **They were famous in the Catholic Church for their pursuit of sound doctrine**; . . . But see to what I have introduced you: the assembly of these saints is not a popular multitude; **they are not only sons but also fathers of the Church**. They are of that number of whom it is prophesied: 'In the place of thy fathers sons are born to thee, thou shalt set them as princes over all the earth.' **From her, sons are born to learn these things; they became her fathers that they might teach**.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, 1.7.30-31]

Holy and blessed priests, widely renowned for their diligence and divine eloquence, Ireneaus, Cyprian, . . . Hilary, . . . Ambrose, . . . Gregory, . . . Basil, . . . Jerome . . . **What they found in the Church, they kept; what they learned, they taught; what they received from the fathers, they handed on to the sons**.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, 2.10.33-34]

I declare that, **according to the Catholic faith which the Fathers most openly defended against you** before you were born, we assert that, no matter whence born, a man is innocent because there is no personal sin, and he is guilty through original sin.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, 3.23.52]

I was not as leaned in Sacred Scripture as later on, yet I held and also said, when there was need to speak, nothing on this matter except what the **whole church from earliest times has leaned and taught**.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, 6.12.39]

Indeed, you have not overcome even the Manichaeans, whom you help more than hinder; you first, and also all the followers of the common Pelagian innovation and error. In Book 1 of this work I gave an abundant and more certain answer from the testimonies of the Catholic treatises of St. Basil of Caesarea and St. John of Constantinople, although you say these are in accord with your opinion.' I showed how by failing to understand some of their words you, with remarkable blindness, **attack their teaching, which is the Catholic teaching**. And in Book 2 I said enough to show it is no 'conspiracy of

lost men,' but the pious and faithful consensus of the holy and learned fathers of the Catholic Church which resists your heretical novelties, for the ancient Catholic truth. You say we offer 'the people's muttering alone' against you; but it is not alone, since it rests on the authority of very great teachers, and it is also just, because it does not wish you, who also know this very well, to destroy the salvation of infants, which is in Christ.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorum*, 6.22.69]

Number the bishops from the see of Peter itself.

And in that order of Fathers see who succeeded whom,

That is the rock against which the gates of hell do not prevail.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, strophe 18, lines 238-240] A poem against the Donatists.

Let us not heed those who deny that the Church of God can remit all sins. Failing to recognize in Peter the 'rock,' these unhappy souls have accordingly lost possession of the keys; they are unwilling to believe that the keys of the kingdom of heaven have been given to the Church.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Combat*, 31, 33]

The whole world judges securely that they are not good who separate themselves from the whole world.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, III, iv, 24] *securus iudicat orbis terrarum*

Follow the pathway of Catholic teaching, which has flowed down from Christ Himself through the Apostles even unto us, and will hereafter flow down to posterity.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Utilitate Credendi*, 20]

Over the entire face of the earth such men love earthly things; moreover such straying sheep are to be found over the entire face of the earth. They dwell in different places, but one mother, pride, has given birth to them all, just as one mother, our Catholic Church, has given birth to all faithful Christians scattered over the entire world.

[St. Augustine, *Sermon on Pastors* 46,18] CCL 41,544

It is obvious; the faith allows it; the Catholic Church approves; it is true.

[St. Augustine, *Sermon* 117,6]

To Peter did Christ commend His lambs to be fed, who fed even Peter himself.

[St. Augustine, *Sermon* 146,1]

As you are aware, Jesus chose his disciples before his passion and called them apostles; and among these almost everywhere Peter alone deserved to represent the entire Church. And because of that role which he alone had, he merited to hear the words: *To you I shall give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* For it was not one man who received the keys, but the entire Church considered as one. Now insofar as he represented the unity and universality of the Church, Peter's preeminence is clear from the words: *To you I give*, for what was given was given to all. For the fact that it was the Church that received the keys of the kingdom of God is clear from what the Lord says elsewhere to all the apostles: *Receive the Holy Spirit, adding immediately, whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you retain, they are retained.*

[St. Augustine, *Sermon* 295.4]

And the Lord, to him to whom a little before He had said, Blessed you are, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, says, Go back behind, Satan, an offense you are to Me. Why therefore Satan is he, that a little before was blessed, and a Rock?
[St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 56,14]

For as some things are said which seem peculiarly to apply to the Apostle Peter, and yet are not clear in their meaning, unless when referred to the Church, whom he is acknowledged to have figuratively represented, on account of the primacy which he bore among the Disciples; as it is written, “I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”
[St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 109,1]

One Rock is heard: for the Rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:4) Let them therefore be willingly heard, giving their voice from the midst of the rocks. Nothing is sweeter than such a voice of birds. They sound, and the rocks resound: they sound; spiritual men discuss: the rocks resound, testimonies of Scripture give answer. Lo! Thence the fowls give their voice from the midst of the rocks, for they dwell on the mountains.

16. Watering the mountains from the higher places. (Ps 103:13) Now if a Gentile uncircumcised man comes to us, about to believe in Christ, we give him baptism, and do not call him back to those works of the Law. And if a Jew asks us why we do that, we sound from the rock, we say, This Peter did, this Paul did: from the midst of the rocks we give our voice. But that rock, Peter himself, that great mountain, when he prayed and saw that vision, was watered from above....
[St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 104,15-16]

There are likewise other heretics who are called Arians. They indeed confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Son of the Father; the one, Father of the Son; the other, Son of the Father; that He who is Father is not Son, nor He who is Son is Father; they confess that the Son was begotten, but deny His equality. We, namely, the catholic faith, coming from the doctrine of the apostles planted in us, received by a line of succession, to be transmitted sound to posterity,--the catholic faith, I say, has, between both those parties, that is, between both errors, held the truth. In the error of the Sabellians, He is only one; the Father and Son is the same person: in the error of the Arians, the Father and the Son are indeed different persons; but the Son is not only a different person, but different in nature.
[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 37.6]

So does the Church act in blessed hope through this troublous life; and this Church symbolized in its generality, was personified in the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship. For, as regards his proper personality, he was by nature one man, by grace one Christian, by still more abounding grace one, and yet also, the first apostle; but when it was said to him, “I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,” he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by various temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falls not, because it is founded upon a rock (*petra*), from which Peter received his name. For *petra* (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from *petra*; just as Christ is not called so from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, “On this rock will I build my Church,” because Peter had said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mt 16:16-19) On this rock, therefore, He said, which you have confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (*Petra*) was Christ; (1 Cor 10:4) and on this foundation was Peter himself also built. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. (1 Cor 3:11) The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins. For what the

Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (petra); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church. This Church, accordingly, which Peter represented, so long as it lives amidst evil, by loving and following Christ is delivered from evil.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 124.5]

For all the testimony you can bring in favor of your book from antiquity or tradition will avail nothing. In this respect the testimony of the Catholic Church is conspicuous, as supported by a succession of bishops from the original seats of the apostles up to the present time, and by the consent of so many nations.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Faustus*, 11, 2]

In order to leave room for such profitable discussions of difficult questions, there is a distinct boundary line separating all productions subsequent to apostolic times from the authoritative canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. The authority of these books has come down to us from the apostles through the successions of bishops and the extension of the Church, and, from a position of lofty supremacy, claims the submission of every faithful and pious mind.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Faustus*, 11, 5]

What we say is, Christ was born, because this is said not by this or that heretic, but in the holy Gospel; and He died, for this too is written, not in some heretical production, but in the holy Gospel. You set aside argument on the question of the true account to be given of Jesus, and refer to what He says of Himself, and what His apostles say of Him; and yet, when I begin to quote the Gospel of His apostle Matthew, where we have the whole narrative of Christ's birth, you forthwith deny that Matthew wrote the narrative, though this is affirmed by the continuous testimony of the whole Church, from the days of apostolic presidency to the bishops of our own time. What authority will you quote against this? Perhaps some book of Manichaeus, where it is denied that Jesus was born of a virgin. As, then, I believe your book to be the production of Manichaeus, since it has been kept and handed down among the disciples of Manichaeus, from the time when he lived to the present time, by a regular succession of your presidents, so I ask you to believe the book which I quote to have been written by Matthew, since it has been handed down from the days of Matthew in the Church, without any break in the connection between that time and the present. The question then is, whether we are to believe the statements of an apostle who was in the company of Christ while He was on earth, or of a man away in Persia, born long after Christ. But perhaps you will quote some other book bearing the name of an apostle known to have been chosen by Christ; and you will find there that Christ was not born of Mary. Since, then, one of the books must be false, the question in this case is, whether we are to yield our belief to a book acknowledged and approved as handed down from the beginning in the Church founded by Christ Himself, and maintained through the apostles and their successors in an unbroken connection all over the world to the present day; or to a book which this Church condemns as unknown, and which, moreover, is brought forward by men who prove their veracity by praising Christ for falsehood. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Faustus*, 28, 2]

If, however, perchance it has been from a desire not to enlarge that volume unduly that you refrained from adding to a notice of heretics, the statement of the things in which the Catholic Church has authoritatively condemned them, I beg you not to grudge bestowing on this subject, to which with humility and brotherly love I direct your attention, a portion of that literary labour

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter 40*, 9] to Jerome

1. . . . Having then such promises, if an angel from heaven were to say to you, "Let go the Christianity of the whole earth, and cling to the faction of Donatus, the episcopal succession of which

is set forth in a letter of their bishop in your town,” he ought to be accursed in your estimation; because he would be endeavouring to cut you off from the whole Church, and thrust you into a small party, and make you forfeit your interest in the promises of God.

2. For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: “Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” The successor of Peter was Linus, and his successors in unbroken continuity were these:—Clement, Anacletus, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Iginus, Anicetus, Pius, Soter, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephirinus, Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Antherus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Xystus, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Marcellinus, Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Marcus, Julius, Liberius, Damasus, and Siricius, whose successor is the present Bishop Anastasius. In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter* 53, 1, 2] *Letter to Generosus*

Concerning the first man, the father of the human race, it is agreed upon by almost the entire Church that the Lord loosed him from that prison. Wherever this tradition comes from, we must believe that the Church has not believed in vain, even though the express authority of the canonical scriptures is not brought forward for it.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter* 164, 3, 6] *Letter to Evodius*

De illo quidem primo homine patre generis humani, quod eum inde solverit Ecclesia fere tota consentit: quod eam non inaniter credidisse credendum est, undecumque hoc traditum sit, etiamsi canonicarum Scripturarum hinc expressa non proferatur auctoritas.

But those reasons which I have here given, I have either gathered from the authority of the church, according to the tradition of our forefathers, or from the testimony of the divine Scriptures, or from the nature itself of numbers and of similitudes. No sober person will decide against reason, no Christian against the Scriptures, no peaceable person against the church.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate* 4, 6, 10]

But by the prayers of the Holy Church, and by the salvific sacrifice, and by the alms which are given for their spirits, there is no doubt that the dead are aided that the Lord might deal more mercifully with them than their sins would deserve. For the whole church observes this practice which was handed down by the fathers that it prays for those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when they are commemorated in their own place in the Sacrifice itself; and the Sacrifice is offered also in memory of them, on their behalf.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon* 172, 2]

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt 10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: “I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt.16:19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these “keys” and the right “to bind and loosen.” And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” and further after this, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained” (Jn 20:22-23); or: “whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven” (Mt 18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ

Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore “Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins,” says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. “Simon of John” -- says the Lord to Peter -- “lovest thou Me?” “And sayeth Jesus to him” all three times “Feed My sheep” (John 20:15-17). [St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon* 295.2-4]

And thus a man who is resting upon faith, hope and love, and who keeps a firm hold upon these, does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others. Accordingly, many live without copies of the Scriptures, even in solitude, on the strength of these three graces. So that in their case, I think, the saying is already fulfilled: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” (1 Cor 13:8) Yet by means of these instruments (as they may be called), so great an edifice of faith and love has been built up in them, that, holding to what is perfect, they do not seek for what is only in part perfect— of course, I mean, so far as is possible in this life; for, in comparison with the future life, the life of no just and holy man is perfect here. Therefore the apostle says: “Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor 13:13) because, when a man shall have reached the eternal world, while the other two graces will fail, love will remain greater and more assured. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, I, 39, 43]

Now, in regard to the canonical Scriptures, he must follow the judgment of the greater number of catholic churches; and among these, of course, a high place must be given to such as have been thought worthy to be the seat of an apostle and to receive epistles. Accordingly, among the canonical Scriptures he will judge according to the following standard: to prefer those that are received by all the catholic churches to those which some do not receive. Among those, again, which are not received by all, he will prefer such as have the sanction of the greater number and those of greater authority, to such as are held by the smaller number and those of less authority. If, however, he shall find that some books are held by the greater number of churches, and others by the churches of greater authority (though this is not a very likely thing to happen), I think that in such a case the authority on the two sides is to be looked upon as equal.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, II, 8, 12]

But when proper words make Scripture ambiguous, we must see in the first place that there is nothing wrong in our punctuation or pronunciation. Accordingly, if, when attention is given to the passage, it shall appear to be uncertain in what way it ought to be punctuated or pronounced, **let the reader consult the rule of faith which he has gathered from the plainer passages of Scripture, and from the authority of the Church.**

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, III, 2, 2]

Consider now the following examples. The well-known heretical punctuation ‘In the beginnind was the Word, and teh Word was with God, and there was God’ (Jn 1:1-2), giving a different sense in what follows (‘This Word was in the beginning with God.’) refuses to acknowledge that the Word was God. This is to be refuted by the **rule of faith** which lays down for us the equality of the members of the Trinity, and so we should say ‘The Word was God’ and go on, ‘This was in the beginning with God.’ [St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, III.2.3]

Our Catholic faith declares, and right reason teaches, that there could not have existed any matter of anything unless it came from God. [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 1.14.28]

In matters that are obscure and far beyond our vision, even in such as we may find treated in Holy Scripture, different interpretations are sometimes possible without prejudice to the faith we have received. [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 1.18.37]

Someone will say: “what have you brought out with all the threshing of this treatise? What kernel have you revealed? What have you winnowed? Why does everything seem to lie hidden under questions? Adapt one of the many interpretations which you maintained are possible.” To such a one my answer is that I have arrived at a nourishing kernel in that I have learnt that a man is not in any difficulty in making a reply according to his faith which he ought to make to those [pagan scientific detractors] who try to defame our Holy Scripture. When they are able, from reliable evidence, to prove some fact of physical science, we shall show that it is not contrary to our Scripture. But when they produce from any of their books a theory contrary to Scripture, and therefore contrary to the Catholic faith, either we shall have some ability to demonstrate that it is absolutely false, or at least we ourselves will hold it so without any shadow of a doubt. And we will so cling to our Mediator, ‘in whom are bidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,’ that we will not be led astray by the glib talk of false philosophy or frightened by the superstition of false religion. When we read the inspired books in the light of this wide variety of true doctrines which are drawn from a few words and founded on the firm basis of Catholic belief, let us choose that one which appears as certainly the meaning intended by the author. But if this is not clear, then at least we should choose an interpretation in keeping with the context of Scripture and in harmony with our faith. But if the meaning cannot be studied and judged by the context of Scripture, at least we should choose only that which our faith demands. For it is one thing to fail to recognize the primary meaning of the writer, and another to depart from the norms of religious belief. If both these difficulties are avoided, the reader gets full profit from his reading. Failing that, even though the writer’s intention is uncertain, one will find it useful to extract an interpretation in harmony with our faith. [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 1.21.41]

But this is against our Catholic faith. [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 2.6.11]

But for this reason we should be cautioned to reject this opinion as opposed to the Catholic faith. [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 7.2.3]

We must be on guard against the danger of believing that there is the possibility of a transmigration of souls from beasts to men (that flatly contradicts the truth and the Catholic faith. . . . [St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 7.9.13]

The custom of Mother Church in baptizing infants is certainly not to be scorned, nor is it to be regarded in any way as superfluous, nor is it to be believed that its tradition is anything but Apostolic. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 10.23.39]

We read in the books of the Maccabees (2 Macc 12:43) that sacrifice was offered for the dead. But even if it were found nowhere in the Old Testament writings, the authority of the Catholic Church which is clear on this point is of no small weight, where in the prayers of the priest poured forth to the Lord God at his altar the commendation of the dead has its place. [St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Care to be Had for the Dead*, 1:3]

1. The Gospel which has just been read touching the Lord Christ, who walked on the waters of the sea; and the Apostle Peter, who as he was walking, tottered through fear, and sinking in distrust, rose again

by confession, gives us to understand that the sea is the present world, and the Apostle Peter the type of the One Church. For Peter in the order of Apostles first, and in the love of Christ most forward, answers oftentimes alone for all the rest. Again, when the Lord Jesus Christ asked, whom men said that He was, and when the disciples gave the various opinions of men, and the Lord asked again and said, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” One for many gave the answer, unity in many. Then said the Lord to Him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” Then He added, “and I say unto thee.” As if He had said, “Because thou hast said unto Me, ‘Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;’ I also say unto thee, ‘Thou art Peter.’” For before he was called Simon. Now this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that in a figure, that he should signify the Church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (*Petra*), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (*Petra*) is the original name. Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. “Therefore,” he saith, “Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock” which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, will I build My Church;” that is upon Myself, the Son of the living God, “will I build My Church.” I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee.

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 3. This same Peter therefore who had been by the Rock pronounced blessed, bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship, a very little while after that he had heard that he was blessed, a very little while after that he had heard that he was Peter, a very little while after that he had heard that he was to be built upon the Rock, displeased the Lord when He had heard of His future Passion, for He had foretold His disciples that it was soon to be.
 [St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon 26 on the New Testament*, 1 & 3]

And since these things are so, the judgment of the book of Wisdom ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ, and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority.
 [St. Augustine of Hippo, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, XIV, 27]

Such are the particulars which, to the best of my ability, I have succeeded in obtaining from the writings of Pelagius, whenever he makes mention of grace. You perceive, however, that men who entertain such opinions as we have reviewed are “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and desire to establish their own,” (Rm 10:3) and are far off from the “righteousness which we have of God” (Phil 3:9) and not of ourselves; and this they ought to have discovered and recognised in the very holy canonical Scriptures. Forasmuch, however, as they read these Scriptures in a sense of their own, they of course fail to observe even the most obvious truths therein. Would that they would but turn their attention in no careless mood to what might be learned concerning the help of God’s grace in the writings, at all events, of catholic authors; for they freely allow that the Scriptures were correctly understood by these, and that they would not pass them by in neglect, out of an overweening fondness for their own opinions.
 [St. Augustine, *On the Grace of Christ*, I, 46]

That, therefore, which the whole Church of the true God holds and professes as its creed, that Christ shall come from heaven to judge quick and dead, this we call the last day, or last time, of the divine judgment.
 [St. Augustine, *City of God*, XX,1]

"The apostles," indeed, "gave no injunctions on the point;" [baptism of unrepentant heretics] but the custom . . . may be supposed to have had its origin in apostolic tradition, just as **there are many things which are observed by the whole Church, and therefore are fairly held to have been enjoined by the apostles, which yet are not mentioned in their writings.**

[St. Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, V.23.31]

Certainly it is clear that, when we speak of within and without in relation to the Church, it is the position of the heart that we must consider, not that of the body, since all who are within in heart are saved in the unity of the ark through the same water, through which all who are in heart without, whether they are also in body without or not, die as enemies of unity. As therefore it was not another but the same water that saved those who were placed within the ark, and destroyed those who were left without the ark, so it is not by different baptisms, but by the same, that good Catholics are saved, and bad Catholics or heretics perish.

[St. Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, V.28.39]

In a passage in this book [against Donatus], I said about the Apostle Peter: "On him as on a rock the Church was built." This idea is also expressed in song by the voice of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose where he says about the crowing of the cock: "At its crowing he, this rock of the Church, washed away his guilt." (*Hymn 1*) But I know that very frequently at a later time, I so explained what the Lord said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," that it be understood as built upon Him whom Peter confessed saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and so Peter, called after this rock, represented the person of the Church which is built upon this rock, and has received "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." For, "Thou art Peter" and not "Thou art the rock" was said to him. But "the rock was Christ," in confessing whom, as also the whole Church confesses, Simon was called Peter. But let the reader decide which of these two opinions is the more probable.

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Retractions*, 20.1]

. . . and your **scriptures commended by the authority of the Catholic Church.**

[St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, VII.7.11]

Moreover, in addition to these inviolable determinations made by the most blessed Apostolic See, by means of which **the very devout Fathers have taught us**, in casting aside the arrogance of pernicious innovation, to attribute to the grace of Christ the beginnings of good will and progress in praiseworthy endeavors and perseverance in them all the way to the end, let us also consider the **sacred rites of (liturgical) prayer** offered by priests, **rites that, having been handed down from the apostles, are celebrated in a uniform manner in the entire world and in every Catholic church, so that the rule of prayer determines the rule of belief** [*legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*].

[*Indiculus*, Chap 8; (~ 440 AD) DS 246]

That anyone could doubt the right of the holy Virgin to be called the Mother of God fills me with astonishment. Surely she must be the Mother of God if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and she gave birth to him! Our Lord's disciples may not have used those exact words, but they delivered to us the belief those words enshrine, and this has also been taught us by the holy fathers.

In the third book of his work on the holy and consubstantial Trinity, our father Athanasius, of glorious memory, several times refers to the holy Virgin as "Mother of God." I cannot resist quoting his own words: "As I have often told you, the distinctive mark of holy Scripture is that it was written to make a

twofold declaration concerning our Savior; namely, that he is and has always been God, and that for our sake in these latter days he took flesh from the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and became man.” Again further on he says: “There have been many holy men, free from all sin. Jeremiah was sanctified in his mother’s womb, and John while still in the womb leaped for joy at the voice of Mary, the Mother of God.” Athanasius is a man we can trust, one who deserves our complete confidence, for he taught nothing contrary to the sacred books.

The divinely inspired Scriptures affirm that the Word of God was made flesh, that is to say, he was united to a human body endowed with a rational soul. He undertook to help the descendants of Abraham, fashioning a body for himself from a woman and sharing our flesh and blood, to enable us to see in him not only God, but also, by reason of this union, a man like ourselves.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 1:5ff] 376-444 AD

Let us show as far as possible in what way the mystery of the economy of salvation devised by Christ has been announced to us by Holy Scripture. Then, also, what the Fathers themselves have spoken who have set forth the standard of blameless faith, since the Holy Spirit taught them the truth.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 1:10]

But we into whose minds the light of God has shown, having chosen to think what is incomparably better than their nonsense, and following the faith of the holy fathers, say that the Son, in a divine and ineffable manner, was truly begotten of the substance of God the Father,

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 1:14]

But he made haste to say some extraordinary things quite beyond understanding, and such as are quite far from the faith of the apostles an the Gospels which the Fathers have protected above all and transmitted to us a precious pearl.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 11:3]

But those who say: there was a time when He was not, . . . and say the Son of God was mutable or subject to change, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes. Following in every way the confessions of the holy Fathers, which they made by the Holy Spirit speaking in them, and following the meaning of the thoughts in them, and, as it were, going along a royal road, we say that he, the only begotten Word of God, begotten of the very substance of the Father . . .

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 17:7]

But those who pay no heed to the apostolic and evangelical tradition and honor the newer, useless and truly ridiculous invention of their own mind, let them hear from all, “Pass not beyond the ancient bounds which your fathers have set.” (Prv 22:28)

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 31: 3]

Adding nothing whatsoever to the faith of the holy Fathers set forth at Nicea we shall speak in a few words, which are necessarily not an addition but in the fullness of conviction, as we have received the faith both from the beginning from the divine Scriptures and from the tradition of the holy Fathers, as to think and speak concerning the Virgin Mary and concerning the manner of the Incarnation of the only begotten Son of God.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 38: 2]

But we were taught according to the divine Scripture and the holy Fathers and we confess that one Son and Christ and Lord, that, is the Word of God the Father, was begotten of Him before ages in a divinely fitting and ineffable manner and that in recent ages of time the same Son was begotten for us

according to the flesh from the Holy Virgin, and since she gave birth to God made man and made flesh, for this reason we also call her Mother of God.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 45: 4]

Since therefore the apostle says “the faith is one” (Eph 4:5), which has prevailed victoriously, let us believe what must be stated and let us state what we must maintain. Let nothing further be allowed for novelty because it is proper that nothing be added to our ancient tradition. Let the lucid and clear faith of our ancestors be disturbed by no admixture of uncleanness.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 52: 8]

This is the upright and most exact faith of the holy Fathers, that is, the confession of faith. . . .

Accordingly let us flee the destructive innovations of those who have chosen to think thus because we consider them enemies of the truth, and let us rather follow the doctrines of the holy Fathers and the tradition of the holy apostles and evangelists.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 55: 41, 43]

He not only said this, namely that the Holy Virgin was not the Mother of God, but added other defenses to the lie besides these words in opposition to the true and apostolic tradition.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 57: 4] maybe *Epistle* 58 or 59

He [Nestorius] not only said this, namely, that the Holy Virgin was not the Mother of God, but added other defenses of the lie besides these words in opposition to the true and apostolic tradition.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 60: 4]

I have often written about Nestorius that he confuses everything and greatly confounds the tranquility of the churches by debasing the account of the apostolic and evangelical tradition, which is rightly and truly inviolable, by certain foreign and novel inventions of reasoning.

[Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 92: 2]

To this then I think it right to say to those who overturn the holy doctrines of the Church, and pervert the truth of the Scriptures: *Awake, ye drunkards, from your wine*, that viewing the clear beauty of the truth, ye may be able with us to cry to the Son: *Of a truth Thou art the Son of God*.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, II, 1]

He commands them to gather together the fragments, and *twelve baskets* are filled, one (it seems) for each of the disciples: for so many were they too. What then shall we understand from thence, save surely this, and truly, that Christ is the President of them that believe on Him, and nourishes them that come to Him with Divine and heavenly food? doctrines plainly of the Law and Prophets, Evangelic and Apostolic. But He does not altogether Himself appear as the Worker of these things, but the disciples minister to us the grace from above (for it is not they *that speak*, as it is written, *but the Spirit of the Father which speaketh in them*) yet not without reward to the holy Apostles shall be their labour therein. For they having dispensed to us the spiritual food, and ministered the good things of our Saviour, will receive richest recompense and obtain the fullest grace of bounty from God. For this and nothing else, I think, is the meaning of the gathering together of a basketful by each at the commandment of Christ, after their toils and the service expended upon the feasters. But there is no doubt, that after them the things typically signified will pass also to the rulers of the holy Churches.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, III, 4, 13]

“Doth then,” will haply one say of those who think contrary to the doctrines of the Church, “the Son know how to judge aright, only for this reason, that the Father is with Him when He does so?”

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, V, 2]

These errors not only used to exist among the Jews, but are also advocated now by some who are insufferably conceited in their knowledge of inspired Scripture and seem to pass for Christians. Such persons of a truth delight too much in their own sophistries, indulging their private fancies, and not fearing to mingle Greek error with the doctrines of the Church.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, VI, 1]

We consider that the Son, being of the Father, that is, of His essence, proceeded forth from Him in a manner ineffable, and yet abides in Him. Likewise also concerning the Holy Spirit: He proceeds in very truth from God as He is by nature, and yet is in no wise severed from His essence; but rather proceeds forth from Him, still abiding ever in Him, and is supplied to the saints through Christ; for all things come through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Such is the true and upright teaching that the wisdom of the holy fathers has taught us: thus we have been trained also by the Holy Scriptures themselves to speak and to think.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, IX, 1]

On the contrary, following the opinions of the holy fathers, we believe that we shall be well-pleasing unto God.

[St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, IX, 1]

I have often then inquired earnestly and attentively of very many men eminent for sanctity and learning, how and by what sure and so to speak universal rule I may be able to distinguish the truth of Catholic faith from the falsehood of heretical depravity; and I have always, and in almost every instance, received an answer to this effect: That whether I or anyone else should wish to detect the frauds and avoid the snares of heretics as they rise, and to continue sound and complete in the Catholic faith, we must, the Lord helping, fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law, and then, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

But here someone perhaps will ask, "If the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church's interpretation?" For this reason,--because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters. For Novatian expounds it one way, Sabellius another, Donatus another, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, another, Photinus, Apollinaris, Priscillian, another, Iovinian, Pelagius, Celestius, another, lastly, Nestorius another. Therefore, it is very necessary, on account of so great intricacies of such various error, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.

Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all [*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*]. For that is truly and in the strictest sense "Catholic," which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.

[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 2.4-6] +445 AD

But in this divine virtue, as we may call it, exhibited by these Confessors, we must note especially that the defence which they then undertook in appealing to the Ancient Church, was the defence, not of a part, but of the whole body. For it was not right that men of such eminence should uphold with so

huge an effort the vague and conflicting notions of one or two men, or should exert themselves in the defence of some ill-advised combination of some petty province; but adhering to the decrees and definitions of the universal priesthood of Holy Church, the heirs of Apostolic and Catholic truth, they chose rather to deliver up themselves than to betray the faith of universality and antiquity. For which cause they were deemed worthy of so great glory as not only to be accounted Confessors, but rightly, and deservedly to be accounted foremost among Confessors.
[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 5.14]

Nor is there anything new in this? For it has always been the case in the Church, that the more a man is under the influence of religion, so much the more prompt is he to oppose innovations. Examples there are without number: but to be brief, we will take one, and that, in preference to others, from the Apostolic See, so that it may be clearer than day to every one with how great energy, with how great zeal, with how great earnestness, the blessed successors of the blessed apostles have constantly defended the integrity of the religion which they have once received.
[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 6.15]

Hence it came to pass, that this Origen, such and so great as he was, wantonly abusing the grace of God, rashly following the bent of his own genius, and placing overmuch confidence in himself, making light account of the ancient simplicity of the Christian religion, presuming that he knew more than all the world besides, despising the traditions of the Church and the determinations of the ancients, and interpreting certain passages of Scripture in a novel way, deserved for himself the warning given to the Church of God, as applicable in his case as in that of others, “If there arise a prophet in the midst of thee,”... “thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet,”... “because the Lord your God doth make trial of you, whether you love Him or not.” (Dt 18:15-6)
[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 17.44]

This being the case, he is the true and genuine Catholic who loves the truth of God, who loves the Church, who loves the Body of Christ, who esteems divine religion and the Catholic Faith above everything, above the authority, above the regard, above the genius, above the eloquence, above the philosophy, of every man whatsoever; who sets light by all of these, and continuing steadfast and established in the faith, resolves that he will believe that, and that only, which he is sure the Catholic Church has held universally and from ancient times; but that whatsoever new and unheard-of doctrine he shall find to have been furtively introduced by some one or another, besides that of all, or contrary to that of all the saints, this, he will under, stand, does not pertain to religion, but is permitted as a trial, being instructed especially by the words of the blessed Apostle Paul, who writes thus in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, “There must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you:” as though he should say, This is the reason why the authors of Heresies are not forthwith rooted up by God, namely, that they who are approved may be made manifest that is, that it may be apparent of each individual, how tenacious and faithful and steadfast he is in his love of the Catholic faith.
[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 20.48]

But it is worth while to expound the whole of that passage of the apostle more fully, “O Timothy, keep the **deposit**, avoiding profane novelties of words.”
O! The exclamation implies fore-knowledge as well as charity. For he mourned in anticipation over the errors which he foresaw. Who is the Timothy of today, but either generally the Universal Church, or in particular, the whole body of The Prelacy, whom it behooves either themselves to possess or to communicate to others a complete knowledge of religion? What is “Keep the deposit?” “Keep it,” because of thieves, because of adversaries, lest, while men sleep, they sow tares over that good wheat which the Son of Man had sown in his field. “Keep the deposit.” What is “The deposit?” That which

has been entrusted to you, not that which you have yourself devised: a matter not of wit, but of learning; not of private adoption, but of public tradition; a matter brought to you, not put forth by you, wherein you are bound to be not an author but a keeper, not a teacher but a disciple, not a leader but a follower. “Keep the deposit.” Preserve the talent of Catholic Faith inviolate, unadulterate. That which has been entrusted to you, let it continue in your possession, let it be handed on by you. You have received gold; give gold in turn. Do not substitute one thing for another. Do not for gold impudently substitute lead or brass. Give real gold, not counterfeit.

[St. Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitory* 22.53]

[54.] But some one will say, perhaps, Shall there, then, be no progress in Christ’s Church? Certainly; all possible progress. For what being is there, so envious of men, so full of hatred to God, who would seek to forbid it? Yet on condition that it be real progress, not alteration of the faith. For progress requires that the subject be enlarged in itself, alteration, that it be transformed into something else. The intelligence, then, the knowledge, the wisdom, as well of individuals as of all, as well of one man as of the whole Church, ought, in the course of ages and centuries, to increase and make much and vigorous progress; but yet only in its own kind; that is to say, in the same doctrine, in the same sense, and in the same meaning.

[55.] The growth of religion in the soul must be analogous to the growth of the body, which, though in process of years it is developed and attains its full size, yet remains still the same. There is a wide difference between the flower of youth and the maturity of age; yet they who were once young are still the same now that they have become old, insomuch that though the stature and outward form of the individual are changed, yet his nature is one and the same, his person is one and the same. An infant’s limbs are small, a young man’s large, yet the infant and the young man are the same. Men when full grown have the same number of joints that they had when children; and if there be any to which maturer age has given birth these were already present in embryo, so that nothing new is produced in them when old which was not already latent in them when children. This, then, is undoubtedly the true and legitimate rule of progress, this the established and most beautiful order of growth, that mature age ever develops in the man those parts and forms which the wisdom of the Creator had already framed beforehand in the infant. Whereas, if the human form were changed into some shape belonging to another kind, or at any rate, if the number of its limbs were increased or diminished, the result would be that the whole body would become either a wreck or a monster, or, at the least, would be impaired and enfeebled.

[56.] In like manner, it behoves Christian doctrine to follow the same laws of progress, so as to be consolidated by years, enlarged by time, refined by age, and yet, withal, to continue uncorrupt and unadulterate, complete and perfect in all the measurement of its parts, and, so to speak, in all its proper members and senses, admitting no change, no waste of its distinctive property, no variation in its limits.

[57.] For example: Our forefathers in the old time sowed wheat in the Church’s field. It would be most unmeet and iniquitous if we, their descendants, instead of the genuine truth of corn, should reap the counterfeit error of tares. This rather should be the result,—there should be no discrepancy between the first and the last. From doctrine which was sown as wheat, we should reap, in the increase, doctrine of the same kind—wheat also; so that when in process of time any of the original seed is developed, and now flourishes under cultivation, no change may ensue in the character of the plant. There may supervene shape, form, variation in outward appearance, but the nature of each kind must remain the same. God forbid that those rose-beds of Catholic interpretation should be converted into thorns and thistles. God forbid that in that spiritual paradise from plants of cinnamon and balsam, darnel and wolfsbane should of a sudden shoot forth.

Therefore, whatever has been sown by the fidelity of the Fathers in this husbandry of God’s Church, the same ought to be cultivated and taken care of by the industry of their children, the same ought to flourish and ripen, the same ought to advance and go forward to perfection. For it is right that

those ancient doctrines of heavenly philosophy should, as time goes on, be cared for, smoothed, polished; but not that they should be changed, not that they should be maimed, not that they should be mutilated. **They may receive proof, illustration, definiteness; but they must retain withal their completeness, their integrity, their characteristic properties.**

[58.] For if once this license of impious fraud be admitted, I dread to say in how great danger religion will be of being utterly destroyed and annihilated. **For if any one part of Catholic truth be given up, another, and another, and another will thenceforward be given up as a matter of course, and the several individual portions having been rejected, what will follow in the end but the rejection of the whole?** On the other hand, if what is new begins to be mingled with what is old, foreign with domestic, profane with sacred, the custom will of necessity creep on universally, till at last the Church will have nothing left untampered with, nothing unadulterated, nothing sound, nothing pure; but where formerly there was a sanctuary of chaste and undefiled truth, thenceforward there will be a brothel of impious and base errors. May God's mercy avert this wickedness from the minds of his servants; be it rather the frenzy of the ungodly.

[59.] **But the Church of Christ, the careful and watchful guardian of the doctrines deposited in her charge, never changes anything in them, never diminishes, never adds, does not cut off what is necessary, does not add what is superfluous, does not lose her own, does not appropriate what is another's, but while dealing faithfully and judiciously with ancient doctrine, keeps this one object carefully in view,—if there be anything which antiquity has left shapeless and rudimentary, to fashion and polish it, if anything already reduced to shape and developed, to consolidate and strengthen it, if any already ratified and defined, to keep and guard it. Finally, what other object have Councils ever aimed at in their decrees, than to provide that what was before believed in simplicity should in future be believed intelligently, that what was before preached coldly should in future be preached earnestly, that what was before practised negligently should thenceforward be practised with double solicitude? This, I say, is what the Catholic Church, roused by the novelties of heretics, has accomplished by the decrees of her Councils,—this, and nothing else,—she has thenceforward consigned to posterity in writing what she had received from those of olden times only by tradition, comprising a great amount of matter in a few words, and often, for the better understanding, designating an old article of the faith by the characteristic of a new name.**

[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 23.54-59] *development of doctrine (54-57)*

[71.] And here I perceive that, as a necessary sequel to the foregoing, I ought to show by examples in what way, by collating the consentient opinions of the ancient masters, the profane novelties of heretics may be detected and condemned. Yet in the investigation of this ancient consent of the holy Fathers we are to bestow our pains not on every minor question of the Divine Law, but only, at all events especially, where the Rule of Faith is concerned. Nor is this way of dealing with heresy to be resorted to always, or in every instance, but only in the case of those heresies which are new and recent, and that on their first arising, before they have had time to deprave the Rules of the Ancient Faith, and before they endeavour, while the poison spreads and diffuses itself, to corrupt the writings of the ancients. But heresies already widely diffused and of old standing are by no means to be thus dealt with, seeing that through lapse of time they have long had opportunity of corrupting the truth. And therefore, as to the more ancient schisms or heresies, we ought either to confute them, if need be, by the sole authority of the Scriptures, or at any rate, to shun them as having been already of old convicted and condemned by universal councils of the Catholic Priesthood.

[72.] Therefore, as soon as the corruption of each mischievous error begins to break forth, and to defend itself by filching certain passages of Scripture, and expounding them fraudulently and deceitfully, immediately, the opinions of the ancients in the interpretation of the Canon are to be collected, whereby the novelty, and consequently the profaneness, whatever it may be, that arises, may both without any doubt be exposed, and without any tergiversation be condemned. But the opinions of those Fathers only are to be used for comparison, who living and teaching, holily, wisely, and with

constancy, in the Catholic faith and communion, were counted worthy either to die in the faith of Christ, or to suffer death happily for Christ. Whom yet we are to believe in this condition, that that only is to be accounted indubitable, certain, established, which either all, or the more part, have supported and confirmed manifestly, frequently, persistently, in one and the same sense, forming, as it were, a consentient council of doctors, all receiving, holding, handing on the same doctrine. But whatsoever a teacher holds, other than all, or contrary to all, be he holy and learned, be he a bishop, be he a Confessor, be he a martyr, let that be regarded as a private fancy of his own, and be separated from the authority of common, public, general persuasion, lest, after the sacrilegious custom of heretics and schismatics, rejecting the ancient truth of the universal Creed, we follow, at the utmost peril of our eternal salvation, the newly devised error of one man.

[73.] Lest any one perchance should rashly think the holy and Catholic consent of these blessed fathers to be despised, the Apostle says, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (12:27-28), “God has placed some in the Church, first Apostles,” of whom himself was one; “secondly Prophets,” such as Agabus, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles (11:28) “then doctors,” who are now called Homilists, Expositors, whom the same apostle sometimes calls also “Prophets,” because by them the mysteries of the Prophets are opened to the people. Whosoever, therefore, shall despise these, who had their appointment of God in His Church in their several times and places, when they are unanimous in Christ, in the interpretation of some one point of Catholic doctrine, despises not man, but God, from whose unity in the truth, lest any one should vary, the same Apostle earnestly protests, “I beseech you, brethren, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Cor 1:10) But if any one dissent from their unanimous decision, let him listen to the words of the same apostle, “God is not the God of dissension but of peace;” (1 Cor 14:33) that is, not of him who departs from the unity of consent, but of those who remain steadfast in the peace of consent: “as,” he continues, “I teach in all Churches of the saints,” that is, of Catholics, which churches are therefore churches of the saints, because they continue steadfast in the communion of the faith.

[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 28.71-73]

[76.] This being the case, it is now time that we should recapitulate, at the close of this second Commonitory, what was said in that and in the preceding.

We said above, that it has always been the custom of Catholics, and still is, to prove the true faith in these two ways; first by the authority of the Divine Canon, and next by the tradition of the Catholic Church. Not that the Canon alone does not of itself suffice for every question, but seeing that the more part, interpreting the divine words according to their own persuasion, take up various erroneous opinions, it is therefore necessary that the interpretation of divine Scripture should be ruled according to the one standard of the Church’s belief, especially in those articles on which the foundations of all Catholic doctrine rest.

[77.] We said likewise, that in the Church itself regard must be had to the consentient voice of universality equally with that of antiquity, lest we either be torn from the integrity of unity and carried away to schism, or be precipitated from the religion of antiquity into heretical novelties. We said, further, that in this same ecclesiastical antiquity two points are very carefully and earnestly to be held in view by those who would keep clear of heresy: first, they should ascertain whether any decision has been given in ancient times as to the matter in question by the whole priesthood of the Catholic Church, with the authority of a General Council: and, secondly, if some new question should arise on which no such decision has been given, they should then have recourse to the opinions of the holy Fathers, of those at least, who, each in his own time and place, remaining in the unity of communion and of the faith, were accepted as approved masters; and whatsoever these may be found to have held, with one mind and with one consent, this ought to be accounted the true and Catholic doctrine of the Church, without any doubt or scruple.

[78.] Which lest we should seem to allege presumptuously on our own warrant rather than on the authority of the Church, we appealed to the example of the holy council which some three years ago was held at Ephesus in Asia, in the consulship of Bassus and Antiochus, where, when question was raised as to the authoritative determining of rules of faith, lest, perchance, any profane novelty should creep in, as did the perversion of the truth at Ariminum, the whole body of priests there assembled, nearly two hundred in number, approved of this as the most Catholic, the most trustworthy, and the best course, viz., to bring forth into the midst the sentiments of the holy Fathers, some of whom it was well known had been martyrs, some Confessors, but all had been, and continued to the end to be, Catholic priests, in order that by their consentient determination the reverence due to ancient truth might be duly and solemnly confirmed, and the blasphemy of profane novelty condemned. Which having been done, that impious Nestorius was lawfully and deservedly adjudged to be opposed to Catholic antiquity, and contrariwise blessed Cyril to be in agreement with it. And that nothing might be wanting to the credibility of the matter, we recorded the names and the number (though we had forgotten the order) of the Fathers, according to whose consentient and unanimous judgment, both the sacred preliminaries of judicial procedure were expounded, and the rule of divine truth established. Whom, that we may strengthen our memory, it will be no superfluous labor to mention again here also. [St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 29.76-78]

Whoever then gainsays these Apostolic and Catholic determinations, first of all necessarily insults the memory of holy Celestine, who decreed that novelty should cease to assail antiquity; and in the next place sets at naught the decision of holy Sixtus, whose sentence was, "Let no license be allowed to novelty, since it is not fit that any addition be made to antiquity;" moreover, he condemns the determination of blessed Cyril, who extolled with high praise the zeal of the venerable Capreolus, in that he would fain have the ancient doctrines of the faith confirmed, and novel inventions condemned; yet more, he tramples upon the Council of Ephesus, that is, on the decisions of the holy bishops of almost the whole East, who decreed, under divine guidance, that nothing ought to be believed by posterity save what the sacred antiquity of the holy Fathers, consentient in Christ, had held, who with one voice, and with loud acclaim, testified that these were the words of all, this was the wish of all, this was the sentence of all, that as almost all heretics before Nestorius, despising antiquity and upholding novelty, had been condemned, so Nestorius, the author of novelty and the assailant of antiquity, should be condemned also. Whose consentient determination, inspired by the gift of sacred and celestial grace, whoever disapproves must needs hold the profaneness of Nestorius to have been condemned unjustly; finally, he despises as vile and worthless the whole Church of Christ, and its doctors, apostles, and prophets, and especially the blessed Apostle Paul: he despises the Church, in that she hath never failed in loyalty to the duty of cherishing and preserving the faith once for all delivered to her; he despises St. Paul, who wrote, "O Timothy, guard the deposit intrusted to thee, shunning profane novelties of words;" and again, "if any man preach unto you other than ye have received, let him be accursed." But if neither apostolical injunctions nor ecclesiastical decrees may be violated, by which, in accordance with the sacred consent of universality and antiquity, all heretics always, and, last of all, Pelagius, Coelestius, and Nestorius have been rightly and deservedly condemned, then assuredly it is incumbent on all Catholics who are anxious to approve themselves genuine sons of Mother Church, to adhere henceforward to the holy faith of the holy Fathers, to be wedded to it, to die in it; but as to the profane novelties of profane men-- to detest them, abhor them, oppose them, give them no quarter.

[St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitory* 33, 86]

While he [Maximus] was saying this, Menas shouted, "By making these statements you have split the church."

And he [Maximus] said to him: "If the one who states what is in Scripture and the holy Fathers splits the church, what will the person who annuls the teachings of saints be shown to do to the church, without which [teachings] the church's very existence is impossible?"

[Anastasius Apocrisiarius, *Trial of Maximus the Confessor*, 5] (PG 90, 109-129) *Some translations number it 4 not 5.

He [Maximus] affirmed: “I have no private opinion, just the common dogma of the Catholic Church.”
[Anastasius Apocrisiarius, *Trial of Maximus the Confessor*, 6] (PG 90, 109-129)

I confess that I receive and revere, like the four books of the holy Gospel, four Councils, to wit: that of Nicea, in which the perverse doctrine of the Arians is destroyed; that of Constantinople, also, in which the error of Eunomius and Macedonius is overthrown; the first also at Ephesus, in which the impiety of Nestorius is judged; and that too of Chalcedon, in which the wickedness of Eutyches and Dioscurus is reproved. These Councils I embrace with full devotion and I keep them with fullest approval; for on them as on a cornerstone rises the structure of the holy faith, and whoever does not hold fast to their solidarity, whatever else his life and conduct may be, even if he is seen to be a stone, still, he lies outside the building.

[Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Letter of Pope Gregory I to John, Patriarch of Constantinople*, 1, 24]

But in the second meaning of the word “corruption,” we confess that our Lord’s body is incorruptible, that is, indestructible, for such is the tradition of the inspired Fathers.

[St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, III,28]

Moreover, faith is twofold. For faith cometh by hearing (Rm 10:17). For by hearing the divine Scriptures we believe in the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The same is perfected by all the things enjoined by Christ, believing in work, cultivating piety, and doing the command of Him Who restored us. For he who does not believe according to the tradition of the Catholic Church, or who has intercourse with the devil through strange works, is an unbeliever.

[St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV,10]

So, then, in expectation of His coming we worship towards the East. But this tradition of the apostles is unwritten. For much that has been handed down to us by tradition is unwritten.

[St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV,12]

Moreover that the Apostles handed down much that was unwritten, Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, tells us in these words: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught of us, whether by word or epistle.” And to the Corinthians he writes, “Now I praise your brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the traditions as I have delivered them to you.”

[St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV,16]

A small thing is not small when it leads to something great, nor indeed is it a thing of no matter to give up the ancient tradition of the Church held by our forefathers, whose conduct we should observe, and whose faith we should imitate.

[St. John Damascene, *On Icons*, I,3]

It is not in writing only that they have bequeathed to us the tradition of the Church, but also in certain unwritten examples. In the twenty-seventh book of his work, in thirty chapters addressed to Amphilochios concerning the Holy Spirit, St Basil says, “In the cherished teaching and dogmas of the Church, we hold some things by written documents; others we have received in mystery from the apostolical tradition.”

[St. John Damascene, *On Icons*, I,27]

Thirdly, the exception is not a law to the Church, neither does one swallow make summer, as it seems to Gregory the theologian, and to the truth. Neither can one expression overturn the tradition of the whole Church which is spread throughout the world.

[St. John Damascene, *On Icons*, I, 30]

We do not change the boundaries marked out by our fathers (Prov. 22.28): we keep the tradition we have received. If we begin to lay down the law to the Church, even in the smallest thing, the whole edifice will fall to the ground in no short time.

[St. John Damascene, *On Icons*, II, 71]

The eye-witnesses and ministers of the word handed down the teaching of the Church, not only by writing, but also by unwritten tradition. . . . Therefore the holy apostle says: “Brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle.” (II Thess. 2.15) Many things, therefore, being handed down to the Church by unwritten tradition and kept up to the present day, why do you speak slightly of images?

[St. John Damascene, *On Icons*, II, 75, 76]

Whether the articles of faith are suitably formulated?

Objection 1. It would seem that the articles of faith are unsuitably formulated. . . .

On the contrary stands the authority of the Church who formulates the articles thus.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 1, 8]

Whether it is suitable for the articles of faith to be embodied in a symbol?

On the contrary, The universal Church cannot err, since she is governed by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of truth: for such was Our Lord’s promise to His disciples (John 16:13): “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth.” Now the symbol is published by the authority of the universal Church. Therefore it contains nothing defective.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 1, 9]

I answer that, Neither living nor lifeless faith remains in a heretic who disbelieves one article of faith.

The reason of this is that the species of every habit depends on the formal aspect of the object, without which the species of the habit cannot remain. Now the formal object of faith is the First Truth, as manifested in Holy Writ and the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth.

Consequently whoever does not adhere, as to an infallible and Divine rule, to the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Holy Writ, has not the habit of faith, but holds that which is of faith otherwise than by faith. Even so, it is evident that a man whose mind holds a conclusion without knowing how it is proved, has not scientific knowledge, but merely an opinion about it. Now it is manifest that he who adheres to the teaching of the Church, as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches; otherwise, if, of the things taught by the Church, he holds what he chooses to hold, and rejects what he chooses to reject, he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will. Hence it is evident that a heretic who obstinately disbelieves one article of faith, is not prepared to follow the teaching of the Church in all things; but if he is not obstinate, he is no longer in heresy but only in error. Therefore it is clear that such a heretic with regard to one article has no faith in the other articles, but only a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will.

Reply to Objection 1. A heretic does not hold the other articles of faith, about which he does not err, in the same way as one of the faithful does, namely by adhering simply to the Divine Truth, because in order to do so, a man needs the help of the habit of faith; but he holds the things that are of faith, by his own will and judgment.

Reply to Objection 2. The various conclusions of a science have their respective means of demonstration, one of which may be known without another, so that we may know some conclusions of a science without knowing the others. On the other hand faith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in Scriptures, according to the teaching of the Church who has the right understanding of them. Hence whoever abandons this mean is altogether lacking in faith.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II,5,3]

The Apostles, led by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost, handed down to the churches certain instructions which they did not put in writing, but which have been ordained, in accordance with the observance of the Church as practiced by the faithful as time went on. Wherefore the Apostle says (2 Thessalonians 2:14): “Stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word”—that is by word of mouth—“or by our epistle”—that is by word put into writing. Among these traditions is the worship of Christ’s image. Wherefore it is said that Blessed Luke painted the image of Christ, which is in Rome.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, 25, 3 ad 4]

Human institutions observed in the sacraments are not essential to the sacrament; but belong to the solemnity which is added to the sacraments in order to arouse devotion and reverence in the recipients. But those things that are essential to the sacrament, are instituted by Christ Himself, Who is God and man. And though they are not all handed down by the Scriptures, yet the Church holds them from the intimate tradition of the apostles, according to the saying of the Apostle (1 Corinthians 11:34): “The rest I will set in order when I come.”

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, 64, 2 ad 1]

3. Now, although the people are distributed among various dioceses and cities, nevertheless there is but one Church, and therefore only one Christian people. Consequently, just as a bishop is appointed as the head of a certain people and a particular church, so must the whole Christian people be subject to one who is the head of the whole Church.

4. The unity of the Church requires that all the faithful be of one faith. Now, questions tend to arise about matters of faith, and the Church would be divided by differences of opinion unless its unity were safeguarded by the pronouncement of one. Therefore, in order to safeguard the unity of the Church, it is necessary that there be one who presides over the whole Church. Now Christ loved the Church and shed his blood for her; therefore, he did not fail her in her needs, seeing that it is said even of the Synagogue: *What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?* (Isa 5:4) There can be no doubt, therefore, that Christ provided his Church with a head.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV.76.3-4]

680. But it should be noted that the same words the Apostle gives here are found in Luke, except that Luke adds: *which shall be shed for you* (Luke 22:20). For Luke was a disciple of Paul and followed him in writing his Gospel. But it is also said: *this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins* (Matt 26:28). The same words appear in Mark (Mark 14:24). Therefore, some say that whichever forms of these words written in the canon are said, they suffice for consecration.

But it seems more probable to say that consecration is accomplished only by those words which the Church structured on the apostles' uses [*ex traditione apostolorum structa*]. For the evangelists intended to recite the Lord's words as part of his history, but not as they are ordained to consecration of the sacrament, which they held in secret in the early Church on account of unbelievers. Hence Dionysius says in *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*: *it is not permitted to explain openly in writing the perfective invocations in the Scriptures or to bring to light their secret meaning*. [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 11.6.680] on 1 Cor 11:25

682. . . . Second, its power is considered with respect to the life of justice it effects through faith: *they are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood to be received by faith* (Rom 3:24). As to this he says: *the mystery*, i.e., the sacrament of faith, namely, because faith in the passion of Christ was hidden in all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, as the truth in a figure. *But the Church has this from the tradition of the apostles, since it is not found in the canon of Scripture*. [*Ecclesia habet ex traditione apostolorum, cum in canone Scripturae non inveniatur.*] [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 11.6.682] re 1 Cor 11:25-26

708. Then a promise is made when he says: *and the rest*, namely, which are not so perilous, *when I come* very soon, *I will set in order*, namely, how to conserve them. *From this it is clear that the Church has many things arranged by the Apostle that are not contained in Sacred Scripture: the cities will be inhabited*, i.e., the churches will be set in order *by the sense of prudent men*, namely, of the apostles (Sir 10:3). [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 11.7.708] on 1 Cor 11:34

60. And first he admonishes them to stand fast, when he says *stand fast* in the truth. *Stand, and do not be held again under yoke of slavery* (Gal 5:1).

Second, he teaches them how to stand, there at *and hold the traditions*, i.e., the instructions which have been handed down by the elders. For the instructions given by the younger should sometimes not be followed, namely when they are contrary to the instructions of the faith. *You have made void the commandment of God for your tradition* (Matt 15:6). But those which are ordered to the commands of God should be kept. *Which you have learned*. *Paul was teaching that they should hold fast the traditions and instructions which were decreed by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem* (Acts 16:4).

And they delivered these traditions in two ways. Some they delivered by words, and so he says, by word. Others they delivered in writing, and so he adds, or by our epistle. Hence it is clear that there are many things in the church which were not written and yet were taught by the apostles and so must be followed. For there were many things which the apostles judged were best hidden, as Dionysius says. Hence the Apostle says: the rest I will arrange when I come (1 Cor 11:34).

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 2 Thessalonians*, 2.3.59-60] re 2:15

Now John states that his Gospel is true, and he speaks in the person of the entire Church which received it: "My mouth will utter truth." (Prv 8:7) We should note that although many have written about Catholic truth, there is a difference among them: those who wrote the canonical scriptures, such as the evangelists and apostles and the like, so constantly and firmly affirm this truth that it cannot be doubted. Thus John says, "we know that his testimony is true": "If any one is preaching to you a

gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.” (Gal 1:9) The reason for this is that **only the canonical scriptures are the standard of faith** [*quia sola canonica scriptura est regula fidei*]. The others have set forth this truth but in such a way that they do not want to be believed except in those things in which they say what is true.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John 9-21*, 21.6.2656] on Jn 21:24-25

see also

For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors. Hence Augustine says (*Epis. ad Hieron.* xix, 1): “Only those books of Scripture which are called canonical have I learned to hold in such honor as to believe their authors have not erred in any way in writing them. But other authors I so read as not to deem everything in their works to be true, merely on account of their having so thought and written, whatever may have been their holiness and learning.”

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 1, 8, ad 2]

Augustine’s Letter to Jerome may be (*Letter 82,3*): “For I confess to your Charity that I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. . . .

As to all other writings, in reading them, however great the superiority of the authors to myself in sanctity and learning, I do not accept their teaching as true on the mere ground of the opinion being held by them; but only because they have succeeded in convincing my judgment of its truth either by means of these canonical writings themselves, or by arguments addressed to my reason.”

(82, 24) “At the same time, as I have said already, it is to the canonical Scriptures alone that I am bound to yield such implicit subjection as to follow their teaching, without admitting the slightest suspicion that in them any mistake or any statement intended to mislead could find a place.”

The error of those who say that the Vicar of Christ, the Pontiff of the Roman Church, does not have a primacy over the universal Church is similar to the error of those who say that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son. For Christ himself, the Son of God, consecrates and marks her as his own with the Holy Spirit, as it were with his own character and seal, as the authorities already cited make abundantly clear. **And in like manner the Vicar of Christ by his primacy and foresight as a faithful servant keeps the Church Universal subject to Christ.** It must, then, be shown from texts of the aforesaid Greek Doctors that the Vicar of Christ holds the fullness of power over the whole Church of Christ.

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, II.32]

It is also shown that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is necessary for salvation. For Cyril says in his Thesaurus: “Therefore, brethren, if we imitate Christ so as to hear his voice remaining in the Church of Peter and so as not be puffed up by the wind of pride, lest perhaps because of our quarrelling the wily serpent drive us from paradise as once he did Eve.” And Maximus in the letter addressed to the Orientals says: “The Church united and established upon the rock of Peter’s confession we call according to the decree of the Savior the universal Church, wherein we must remain for the salvation of our souls and wherein loyal to his faith and confession we must obey him.”

[St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, II.38]

16. How is divine revelation spread among men and preserved in the true Church?

By two channels--holy tradition and holy Scripture.

17. What is meant by the name *holy tradition*?

By the name holy tradition is meant the doctrine of the faith, the law of God, the sacraments, and the ritual as handed down by the true believers and worshipers of God by word and example from one to another, and from generation to generation.

18. Is there any sure repository of holy tradition?

All true believers united by the holy tradition of the faith, collectively and successively, by the will of God, compose the Church; and she is the sure repository of holy tradition, or, as St. Paul expresses it, *The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

St. Irenæus writes thus:

We ought not to seek among others the truth, which we may have for asking from the Church; for in her, as in a rich treasure-house, the Apostles have laid up in its fullness all that pertains to the truth, so that whosoever seeketh may receive from her the food of life. She is the door of life. (Adv. Hæres. lib. iii. c. 4.)

...

21. Which is the more ancient, holy tradition or holy Scripture?

The most ancient and original instrument for spreading divine revelation is holy tradition. From Adam to Moses there were no sacred books. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself delivered his divine doctrine and ordinances to his Disciples by word and example, but not by writing. The same method was followed by the Apostles also at first, when they spread abroad the faith and established the Church of Christ. The necessity of tradition is further evident from this, that books can be available only to a small part of mankind, but tradition to all.

22. Why, then, was holy Scripture given?

To this end, that divine revelation might be preserved more exactly and unchangeably. In holy Scripture we read the words of the Prophets and Apostles precisely as if we were living with them and listening to them, although the latest of the sacred books were written a thousand and some hundred years before our time.

23. Must we follow holy tradition, even when we possess holy Scripture?

We must follow that tradition which agrees with the divine revelation and with holy Scripture, as is taught us by holy Scripture itself. The Apostle Paul writes: *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.* 2 Thess. ii. 15.

24. Why is tradition necessary even now?

As a guide to the right understanding of holy Scripture, for the right ministration of the sacraments, and the preservation of sacred rites and ceremonies in the purity of their original institution.

St. Basil the Great says of this as follows:

“Of the doctrines and injunctions kept by the Church, some we have from written instruction. but some we have received from, apostolical tradition, by succession in private. Both the former and the latter have one and the same force for piety, and this will be contradicted by no one who has ever so little knowledge in the ordinances of the Church; for were we to dare to reject unwritten customs, as if they had no great importance, we should insensibly mutilate the Gospel, even in the most essential points, or, rather, for the teaching of the Apostles leave but an empty name. For instance, let us mention before all else the very first and commonest act of Christians, that they who trust in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ should sign themselves with the sign of the cross--who hath taught this by writing? To turn to the east in prayer--what Scripture have we for this? The words of invocation in the change of the Eucharistic bread and of the Cup of blessing--by which of the Saints have they been left us in writing? for we are not content with those words which the Apostle or the Gospel records, but both before them and after them, we pronounce others also, which we hold to be of great force for the sacrament, though we have received them from unwritten teaching. By what Scripture is it, in like

manner, that we bless the water of baptism, the oil of unction, and the person himself who is baptized? Is it not by a silent and secret tradition? What more? The very practice itself of anointing with oil--what written word have we for it? Whence is the rule of trine immersion? and the rest of the ceremonies at baptism, the renunciation of Satan and his angels?--from what Scripture are they taken? Are they not all from this unpublished and private teaching, which our Fathers kept under a reserve inaccessible to curiosity and profane disquisition, having been taught as a first principle to guard by silence the sanctity of the mysteries? for how were it fit to publish in writing the doctrine of those things, on which the unbaptized may not so much as look?" (Can. xcvi. De Spir. Sanct. c. xxvii.)
 [The Longer Catechism of The Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church, 1830 AD]

Ecumenical Councils

And those who say "there once was when he was not," and "before he was begotten he was not," and that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis [*hypostaseos*] or substance [*ousias*], affirming that the Son of God is subject to change or alteration these the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

[Council of Nicea, Profession of Faith §2]

Concerning those who have given themselves the name of Cathars, and who from time to time come over publicly to the catholic and apostolic church, this holy and great synod decrees that they may remain among the clergy after receiving an imposition of hands. But before all this it is fitting that they give a written undertaking that they will accept and follow the decrees of the catholic church, namely that they will be in communion with those who have entered into a second marriage and with those who have lapsed in time of persecution and for whom a period [of penance] has been fixed and an occasion [for reconciliation] allotted, so as in all things to follow the decrees of the catholic and apostolic church.

[Council of Nicea, canon 8]

The most effective way to achieve this end [rightly expounding the doctrine of the faith to those seeking the truth] will be zealously to occupy ourselves with the words of the holy fathers, to esteem their words, to examine our words to see if we are holding to their faith as it is written (2 Cor 13:5), to conform our thoughts to their correct and irreproachable teaching. . . .

This is the account of the true faith everywhere professed. So shall we find that the holy fathers believed. So have they dared to call the holy virgin, mother of God, not as though the nature of the Word or his godhead received the origin of their being from the holy virgin, but because there was born from her his holy body rationally ensouled, with which the Word was hypostatically united and is said to have been begotten in the flesh.

[Second letter of Cyril to Nestorius] *accepted by the Council of Ephesus as doctrinally correct. Acceptance of the letter of Cyril reaffirmed at the Council of Chalcedon and the Third Council of Constantinople -- see below.

"Certain of the letters [of Cyril] are famed for their doctrinal content and accuracy. Letter 4 [Letter 2 in the Council of Ephesus], addressed to Nestorius, has been called the dogmatic letter and was solemnly approved by the Council of Ephesus as maintaining the teaching of Nicaea. The Councils of Chalcedon in 451 and of Constantinople in 553 did the same. Letter 17, sent to Nestorius by Cyril in the name of the synod which he held at Alexandria in late 430, has twelve anathemas at the end. It was added to the Acts of the Council of Ephesus, although it was not formally approved by the council. These three, namely Letters 4, 17, and 39 have been called ecumenical."

[John L. McEnerny, trans., *The Fathers of the Church: St. Cyril of Alexandria Letters 1-50*. Catholic University Press, 1987, p. 2]

Concerning the Virgin Mother of God, we thus think and speak; and of the manner of the Incarnation of the Only Begotten Son of God, necessarily, not by way of addition but for the sake of certainty, as we have received from the beginning from the divine Scriptures and from the tradition of the holy fathers, we will speak briefly, adding nothing whatever to the Faith set forth by the holy Fathers in Nicea. For, as we said before, it suffices for all knowledge of piety and the refutation of all false doctrine of heretics. But we speak, not presuming on the impossible; but with the confession of our own weakness, excluding those who wish us to cling to those things which transcend human consideration.

Having read these holy phrases and finding ourselves in agreement (for “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism”), we have given glory to God and rejoice together that our churches and yours are at one in professing the same faith as the inspired scriptures and the tradition of our holy fathers. [St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to John of Antioch regarding peace*, including the “Formula of union” (first paragraph)]

Written in 433, this letter represents the restoration of communion with certain Eastern churches after a schism which had arisen following the Council of Ephesus.

Philip the presbyter and legate of the Apostolic See said: There is no doubt, and in fact it has been known in all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince (ἑξάρχος) and head of the Apostles, pillar of the faith, and foundation (θεμέλιος) of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, and that to him was given the power of loosing and binding sins: who down even to today and forever both lives and judges in his successors. The holy and most blessed pope Cœlestine, according to due order, is his successor and holds his place, and us he sent to supply his place in this holy synod, which the most humane and Christian Emperors have commanded to assemble, bearing in mind and continually watching over the Catholic faith. For they both have kept and are now keeping intact the apostolic doctrine handed down to them from their most pious and humane grandfathers and fathers of holy memory down to the present time, etc.

[Council of Ephesus, *Acts*, Third Session]

After the reading of the foregoing epistle, the most reverend bishops cried out: This is the faith of the fathers, this is the faith of the Apostles. So we all believe, thus the orthodox believe. Anathema to him who does not thus believe. Peter has spoken thus through Leo. So taught the Apostles. Piously and truly did Leo teach, so taught Cyril. Everlasting be the memory of Cyril. Leo and Cyril taught the same thing, anathema to him who does not so believe. This is the true faith. Those of us who are orthodox thus believe. This is the faith of the fathers.

[Council of Chalcedon, *Acts*, Second Session. after “Tome of Leo” read]

Acceptance of the Letter of Leo reaffirmed at the Third Council of Constantinople -- see below.

And because of those who are attempting to corrupt the mystery of the economy and are shamelessly and foolishly asserting that he who was born of the holy virgin Mary was a mere man, it has accepted the synodical letters of the blessed Cyril, [already accepted by the Council of Ephesus] pastor of the church in Alexandria, to Nestorius[†] and to the Orientals[‡], as being well-suited to refuting Nestorius’s mad folly and to providing an interpretation for those who in their religious zeal might desire understanding of the saving creed.

[Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD, *Definition of the Faith*, Tanner I:85] DS 300

[†]Second Letter of Cyril of Jerusalem

[‡]Letter to John of Antioch about peace

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul [meaning human soul] and a body.
[Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD, *Definition of the Faith concerning the two natures of Christ*] DS 301

The holy fathers, who have gathered at intervals in the four holy councils, have followed the examples of antiquity. They dealt with heresies and current problems by debate in common, since it is established as certain that when the disputed question is set out by each side in communal discussions, the light of truth drives out the shadows of lying.

The truth cannot be made clear in any other way when there are debates about questions of faith, since everyone requires the assistance of his neighbor. As Solomon says in his proverbs (18:19): A brother who helps a brother shall be exalted like a strong city; he shall be as strong as a well-established kingdom. Again in Ecclesiastes he says (4:9): Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their toil. And the Lord himself says (Mt 18:19-20): Amen I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

.....
When we met together, therefore, we first of all briefly made a confession of the faith which our Lord Jesus Christ, true God, handed down [tradidit] to his holy apostles and by means of them to the holy churches, the same faith which those who afterwards were holy fathers and doctors handed down [tradiderunt] to the people entrusted to them. We confessed that we believe, protect and preach to the holy churches that confession of faith which was set out at greater length by the 318 holy fathers who met in council at Nicea and handed down [tradiderunt] the holy doctrine or creed. The 150 who met in council at Constantinople also set out the same faith and made a confession of it and explained it. The 200 holy fathers who met in the first council of Ephesus agreed to the same faith. We follow also the definitions of the 630 who met in council at Chalcedon, regarding the same faith which they both followed and preached. We confessed that we held to be condemned and anathematized all those who had been previously condemned and anathematized by the catholic church and by the aforesaid four councils.

[Second Council of Constantinople, *Sentence against the "Three Chapters"*, 553 AD]

Such then are the assertions we confess. We have received them from Holy Scripture, from the teaching of the holy fathers, and from the definitions about the one and the same faith made by the aforesaid four holy synods [Nicea, Constantinople I, Ephesus, Chalcedon].

[Second Council of Constantinople, 553 AD, Canons, Conclusion] DH 438

For, among men placed amid the Gentiles, and earning their daily bread by bodily labour with considerable distraction, how could a knowledge of the Scriptures, in its fullness, be found unless what has been canonically defined by our holy and apostolic predecessors, and by the venerable five councils, we preserve in simplicity of heart, and without any distorting keep the faith come to us from the Fathers, always desirous and endeavouring to possess that one and chiefest good, viz.: that nothing be diminished from the things canonically defined, and that nothing be changed nor added thereto, but that those same things, both in words and sense, be guarded untouched? To these same commissioners we also have given the witness of some of the holy Fathers, whom this Apostolic Church of Christ receives, together with their books, so that, having obtained from the power of your most benign Christianity the privilege of suggesting, they might out of these endeavour to give satisfaction, (when

your imperial Meekness shall have so commanded) as to what this Apostolic Church of Christ, their spiritual mother and the mother of your God-sprung empire, believes and preaches, not in words of worldly eloquence, which are not at the command of ordinary men, but in the integrity of the apostolic faith, in which having been taught from the cradle, we pray that we may serve and obey the Lord of heaven, the Propagator of your Christian empire, even unto the end. Consequently, we have granted them faculty or authority with your most tranquil mightiness, to afford satisfaction with simplicity whenever your clemency shall command, it being enjoined on them as a limitation that they presume not to add to, take away, or to change anything; but that **they set forth this tradition of the Apostolic See in all sincerity as it has been taught by the apostolic pontiffs, who were our predecessors.** . . .

It is not their wisdom that gave us confidence to make bold to send them to your pious presence; but our littleness obediently complied with what your imperial benignity, with a gracious order, exhorted to. **And briefly we shall intimate to your divinely instructed Piety, what the strength of our Apostolic faith contains, which we have received through Apostolic tradition and through the tradition of the Apostolical pontiffs, and that of the five holy general synods, through which the foundations of Christ's Catholic Church have been strengthened and established; this then is the status [and the regular tradition] of our Evangelical and Apostolic faith, . . . [Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are outlined] . . . This is the apostolic and evangelic tradition, which the spiritual mother of your most felicitous empire, the Apostolic Church of Christ, holds.**

And therefore I beseech you with a contrite heart and rivers of tears, with prostrated mind, deign to stretch forth your most clement right hand to the Apostolic doctrine which the co-worker of your pious labours, the blessed apostle Peter, has delivered, that it be not hidden under a bushel, but that it be preached in the whole earth more shrilly than a bugle: because the true confession thereof for which Peter was pronounced blessed by the Lord of all things, was revealed by the Father of heaven, for he received from the Redeemer of all himself, by three commendations, the duty of feeding the spiritual sheep of the Church; under whose protecting shield, this Apostolic Church of his has never turned away from the path of truth in any direction of error, whose authority, as that of the Prince of all the Apostles, the whole Catholic Church, and the Ecumenical Synods have faithfully embraced, and followed in all things; and all the venerable Fathers have embraced its Apostolic doctrine, through which they as the most approved luminaries of the Church of Christ have shone; and the holy orthodox doctors have venerated and followed it, while the heretics have pursued it with false criminations and with derogatory hatred. This is the living tradition of the Apostles of Christ, which his Church holds everywhere,

Who does not hate, and rage against, and avoid such blind errors, if he have any desire to be saved and seek to offer to the Lord at his coming a right faith? **Therefore the Holy Church of God, the mother of your most Christian power, should be delivered and liberated with all your might (through the help of God) from the errors of such teachers, and the evangelical and apostolic uprightness of the orthodox faith, which has been established upon the firm rock of this Church of blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, which by his grace and guardianship remains free from all error, that faith I say the whole number of rulers and priests, of the clergy and of the people, unanimously should confess and preach with us as the true declaration of the Apostolic tradition, in order to please God and to save their own souls.**

[Pope Agatho, *Letter to the Third Council of Constantinople*] read at the Council and referenced in the conciliar decree below.

This same holy and universal synod, here present, faithfully accepts and welcomes with open hands the report of Agatho, most holy and most blessed pope of elder Rome, that came to our most reverend and most faithful emperor Constantine, which rejected by name those who proclaimed and taught, as has been already explained, one will and one principle of action in the incarnate dispensation of Christ our

true God; and likewise it approves as well the other synodal report to his God-taught serenity, from the synod of 125 bishops dear to God meeting under the same most holy pope, as according with the holy synod at Chalcedon and with the Tome of the all-holy and most blessed Leo, pope of the same elder Rome, which was sent to Flavian, who is among the saints, and which that synod called a pillar of right belief, and furthermore with the synodal letters written by the blessed Cyril against the impious Nestorius and to the bishops of the east.

Following the five holy and universal synods and the holy and accepted fathers, and defining in unison, it professes our lord Jesus Christ our true God, one of the holy Trinity, . . .

[Decree of the Third Council of Constantinople, 680-1 AD, Decree] (Tanner, I:126-7)

The holy, great and universal synod, by the grace of God . . . following the tradition [παράδοσει / *traditionem*] of the catholic church. . . .

To this gracious offer some people paid no attention . . . , and setting themselves against the tradition [παράδοσει/*traditionem*] of the catholic church . . .

[Second Council of Nicea, 787 AD, Definition] (Tanner, I:133)

So having made investigation with all accuracy and having taken council, setting for our aim the truth, we neither diminish nor augment, but simply guard intact all that pertains to the catholic church.

[Second Council of Nicea, 787 AD, Definition] (Tanner, I:134)

To summarize, we declare that we defend free from any innovations all the written and unwritten ecclesiastical traditions [παράδοσεις/*traditiones*] that have been entrusted to us, one of which is the making of pictorial representations, agreeable to the history of the preaching of the Gospel, a tradition useful in many respects, but especially in this, that so the incarnation of the Word of God is shown forth as real and not merely phantastic, for these have mutual indications and without doubt have also mutual significations.

We, continuing in the regal path, and following the divinely inspired teaching of our Holy Fathers, and the tradition [παράδοσει/*traditionem*] of the Catholic Church, for we know that this is of the Holy Spirit who certainly dwells in it, define in all certitude and diligence that as the figure of the honored and life-giving Cross, so the venerable and holy images, the ones from tinted materials and from marble as those from other material, must be suitably placed in the holy churches of God, both on sacred vessels and vestments, and on the walls and on the altars, at home and on the streets, namely such images of our Lord Jesus Christ, God and Savior, and of our undefiled lady, or holy Mother of God, and of the honorable angels, and, at the same time, of all the saints and of holy men. [DH 600]

And so the teaching of our holy Fathers is strengthened, that is, the tradition [παράδοσις/*traditio*] of the Catholic Church, which from one end of the earth to the other hath received the Gospel. Thus we follow Paul, who spake in Christ, and the whole divine Apostolic company and the holy Fathers, holding fast the traditions which we have received. [DH 602]

Those, therefore who dare to think or teach otherwise, or as wicked heretics to spurn the traditions [παράδοσεις/*traditiones*] of the Church and to invent some novelty, or else to reject some of those things which the Church hath received (e.g., the Book of the Gospels, or the image of the cross, or the pictorial icons, or the holy relics of a martyr), or evilly and sharply to devise anything subversive of the lawful traditions of the Catholic Church or to turn to common uses the sacred vessels or the venerable monasteries, if they be Bishops or Clerics, we command that they be deposed; if religious or laics, that they be cut off from communion. [DH 603]

[Second Council of Nicea, 787 AD, Definition]

If anyone rejects any ecclesiastical tradition [παράδοσιν/*traditionem*] either written or not written, let him be anathema.

[Second Council of Nicea, 787 AD, Anathema #4, *DS* 609] (Tanner, I:138)

I, N., elected pope, with both heart and mouth confess and profess to almighty God, whose church I undertake with his assistance to govern, and to blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, that as long as I am in this fragile life I will firmly believe and hold the catholic faith, according to the traditions [traditiones] of the apostles, of the general councils and of other holy fathers, especially of the eight holy universal councils [conciliorum universalium]--namely the first at Nicaea, the second at Constantinople, the third at Ephesus, the fourth at Chalcedon, the fifth and sixth at Constantinople, the seventh at Nicaea and the eighth at Constantinople--as well as of the general councils [generalium conciliorum] at the Lateran, Lyons and Vienne, and I will preserve this faith unchanged to the last dot and will confirm, defend and preach it to the point of death and the shedding of my blood, and likewise I will follow and observe in every way the rite handed down [traditum] of the ecclesiastical sacraments of the Catholic church.

[Council of Constance, *Oath of Consent for a newly-elected Pope*, Session 39, 1417 AD] 1414-18 AD Tanner, I:442

In the name of the holy and undivided Trinity, Father, Son and holy Spirit. I, N., elected pope, with both heart and mouth confess and profess to almighty God, whose church I undertake with his assistance to govern, and to blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, that as long as I am in this fragile life I will firmly believe and hold the catholic faith, according to the tradition [traditionem] of the apostles, of general councils and of other holy fathers, especially of the eight holy universal councils [universalium conciliorum] — namely the first at Nicaea, the second at Constantinople, the third which was the first at Ephesus, the fourth at Chalcedon, the fifth and sixth at Constantinople, the seventh at Nicaea and the eighth at Constantinople — as well as of the general councils [generalium conciliorum] at the Lateran, Lyons, Vienne, Constance and Basel, and to preserve intact this faith unchanged to the last dot, and to defend and preach it to the point of death and the shedding of my blood, and likewise to follow and observe in every way the rite handed down [traditum] of the ecclesiastical sacraments of the church. I promise also to labour faithfully for the defence of the catholic faith, the extirpation of heresies and errors, the reform of morals and the peace of the Christian people. I swear also to continue with the holding of general councils and the confirmation of elections in accordance with the decrees of the holy council of Basel.

[The Council of Basel–Ferrara–Florence–Rome, *Form of Consent for a newly-elected Pope*, Session 23, March 23, 1436 AD, at Basel] Tanner, I:496

The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of Trent,--lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the Same three legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein,--keeping this always in view, that, errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel), before promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand;

(perspicuensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae ab ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptae, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditae, ad nos usque pervenerunt)

[Council of Trent, 4th Session, *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures*, DS 1501]

the holy, ecumenical and general Council of Trent, . . . intends . . . to expound to all the faithful of Christ the true and salutary doctrine of justification, which the Sun of justice, **Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith taught, which the Apostles handed down [tradiderunt] and which the Catholic Church under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost has always retained**; strictly forbidding that anyone henceforth presume to believe, preach or teach otherwise than is defined and declared in the present decree.

[Council of Trent, 6th Session, *Decree Concerning Justification*, Intro., DS 1520]

But now it is our purpose to profess and declare from this chair of Peter before all eyes the saving teaching of Christ, and, by the power given us by God, to reject and condemn the contrary errors. This we shall do with the bishops of the whole world as our co-assessors and fellow judges, gathered here as we are in the Holy spirit by our authority in this ecumenical council, and relying on the **word of God in scripture and tradition [Dei verbo scripto et tradito]**, as we have received it, religiously preserved and authentically expounded by the catholic church.

[Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Preface] Tanner, II:805

Now this supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal church, as declared by the sacred council of Trent, is **contained in written books and unwritten traditions [in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus]**, which were received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or came to the apostles by the dictation of the holy Spirit, and passed on [traditae] as it were from hand to hand until they reached us.

[Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Chap 2] Tanner, II:806

Wherefore, by divine and Catholic faith all those things are to be believed which are contained in the **word of God as found in Scripture and tradition [verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur]**, and which are proposed by the Church as matters to be believed as divinely revealed, whether by her solemn judgment or in her ordinary and universal magisterium.

[Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Chap 3] Tanner, II:807

Norman P. Tanner, SJ, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. 2 vols. Washington, DC: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990.

DH = Denzinger Hunermann, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Forty-Third Edition, Ignatius Press, 2010

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Because it is new Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honor after the bishop of Rome.

[First Council of Constantinople, Canon 3]

And because of those who are attempting to corrupt the mystery of the economy and are shamelessly and foolishly asserting that he who was born of the holy virgin Mary was a mere man, it has accepted the synodical letters of the blessed Cyril, [already accepted by the Council of Ephesus] pastor of the church in Alexandria, to Nestorius and to the Orientals, as being well-suited to refuting Nestorius's

mad folly and to providing an interpretation for those who in their religious zeal might desire understanding of the saving creed.

To these it has suitably added, against false believers and for the establishment of orthodox doctrines the letter of the primate of greatest and older Rome, the most blessed and most saintly Archbishop Leo, written to the sainted Archbishop Flavian to put down Eutyches's evil-mindedness, because it is in agreement with great Peter's confession and represents a support we have in common.
[Decree of the Council of Chalcedon] (Tanner, I:85)

Following in every way the decrees of the holy fathers and recognizing the canon which has recently been read out--the canon of the 150 most devout bishops who assembled in the time of the great Theodosius of pious memory, then emperor, in imperial Constantinople, new Rome -- we issue the same decree and resolution concerning the prerogatives of the most holy church of the same Constantinople, new Rome. The fathers rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honored by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equaling older imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her. The metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, but only these, as well as the bishops of these dioceses who work among non-Greeks, are to be ordained by the aforesaid most holy see of the most holy church in Constantinople. That is, each metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses along with the bishops of the province ordain the bishops of the province, as has been declared in the divine canons; but the metropolitans of the aforesaid dioceses, as has been said, are to be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, once agreement has been reached by vote in the usual way and has been reported to him.

[Council of Chalcedon, Canon 28] This canon was rejected by the Pope.

“[T]he holy Church of God . . . has been established upon the firm rock of this Church of blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles, which by his grace and guardianship remains free from all error, [and possesses that faith that] the whole number of rulers and priests, of the clergy and of the people, unanimously should confess and preach with us as the true declaration of the apostolic tradition, in order to please God and to save their own souls”

[Pope Agatho, Letter read at fourth session of III Constantinople (680 AD)]

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Regional Councils

3. Bishop Hosius said: It is necessary to declare this in order that no bishop may keep crossing from his own province into a different province in which there are bishops, unless perchance he should be invited by his brothers, so that we may not seem to close the doors of charity.

And this too, one must provide for, that, if in any province one of the bishops should have trouble with his brother and fellow bishop, neither of these two call to his aid as judges the bishops of another province.

Yet, on the other hand, if one of the bishops should think that he is being condemned in some trouble and thinks that he has, not an unsound, but a good case, in order that a new trial may be held, if it seems good to Your Charity, let us honor the memory of Peter the apostle and let these judges write to the bishop of Rome so that through the bishops who border on the province, if it should be necessary, the trial be reopened, and he himself should furnish the judges. But if it cannot be proven that this matter is of such a nature as to need a new trial, let not the decisions made once be set aside, but let them be confirmed.

[Council of Sardica (343-344 AD), Canon 3 (DH, 133)]

Sardica (sometimes spelled “Serdica”) is present day Sophia, the capital of Bulgaria. It was attended by approximately equal numbers of Eastern and Western participants.

4. Bishop Gaudentius said: If it is decided, we ought to add to this decision that you have offered full of pure charity: if a bishop has been deposed by the judgment of these bishops who are in the vicinity and he alleges that the business of defense will again fall upon himself, another may not be ordained to his office unless previously the bishop of Rome has come to a decision concerning him and has published his judgment.

[Council of Sardica (343-344 AD), Canon 4 (DH, 134)]

5. Bishop Hosius said: It has been agreed that, if a bishop has been accused, and the assembled bishops of the same region have deposed him from his rank, and inasmuch as he has appealed and taken refuge with the most blessed bishop of the Roman Church and he has wished to hear him, if he thinks it is just to renew the examination of his difficulty, let him deign to write to these bishops who live in the neighboring province so that they themselves may examine carefully and with exactness each matter and declare their vote on the problem according to their pledge of truth.

But if anyone should ask that his case be heard again and by his prayer seems to move the bishop of Rome to dispatch presbyters from his side, what he decides is good is in the power of the bishop himself, and if he determines that it is necessary to send those who will judge with the bishops and who have the absolute authority of him by whom they were sent, this also must be granted. But if he should consider it sufficient by reason of the examination of the difficulty and the sentence of the bishop, he will do what he thinks is good according to his very wise deliberation. The bishops gave an answer. What was said was agreeable.

[Council of Sardica (343-344 AD), Canon 5 (DH, 135)]

For this will seem to be best and most fitting indeed, if the priests from each and every province refer to the head, that is, to the chair of Peter the apostle.

[Letter of the Synod of Sardica *Quod semper* to Pope Julius I, c. 343 AD (DH,136)]

Chap 8. Moreover, in addition to these inviolable determinations made by the most blessed Apostolic See, by means of which [the very devout Fathers have taught us](#), in casting aside the arrogance of pernicious innovation, to attribute to the grace of Christ the beginnings of good will and progress in praiseworthy endeavors and perseverance in them all the way to the end, let us also consider the [sacred rites of \(liturgical\) prayer](#) offered by priests, [rites that, having been handed down from the apostles, are celebrated in a uniform manner in the entire world and in every Catholic church, so that the rule of prayer determines the rule of belief](#) [*legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*].

[*Indiculus*, 435-442 AD, Chap. 8, DH 246]

There has come to us news of some who, in regard to grace and free will, would like to judge with little caution and [not according to the rule of the catholic faith](#). To us, according to the admonition and authority of the Apostolic See, it has seemed just and reasonable that we should set forth to be observed by all, and that we should sign with our own hands, a few chapters transmitted to us by the Apostolic See, which were [collected by the ancient Fathers from the volumes of the Sacred Scripture especially in this cause, to teach those who think otherwise than they ought](#).

[The Second Synod of Orange, 529 AD, DH 370] Preface

Conclusion. And thus [according to the passages of holy Scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers](#) we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows. The sin of

the first man has so impaired and weakened free will that no one thereafter can either love God as he ought or believe in God or do good for God's sake, unless the grace of divine mercy has preceded him. . . . [The Second Synod of Orange, 529 AD, DH 396]

Canon 17. If anyone in word and mind does not properly and truly confess according to the holy Fathers all even to the last point that has been handed down and preached in the holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church of God, and likewise by the holy Fathers and the five venerable universal Councils, let him be condemned.

Canon 18. If anyone according to the holy Fathers, harmoniously with us and likewise with the Faith, does not with mind and lips reject and anathematize all the most abominable heretics together with their impious writings even to the least detail, whom the holy Catholic and apostolic Church of God, that is, the holy and universal five Synods and likewise all the approved Fathers of the Church in harmony, rejects and anathematizes . . .
[Lateran Synod of 649, #17-18, DH 517-518]

It behooves those who preside over the churches, every day but especially on Lord's days, to teach all the clergy and people words of piety and of right religion, gathering out of holy Scripture meditations and determinations of the truth, and not going beyond the limits now fixed, nor varying from the tradition of the God-bearing fathers. And if any controversy in regard to Scripture shall have been raised, let them not interpret it otherwise than as the lights and doctors of the church in their writings have expounded it, and in those let them glory rather than in composing things out of their own heads, lest through their lack of skill they may have departed from what was fitting. For through the doctrine of the aforesaid fathers, the people coming to the knowledge of what is good and desirable, as well as what is useless and to be rejected, will remodel their life for the better, and not be led by ignorance, but applying their minds to the doctrine, they will take heed that no evil befall them and work out their salvation in fear of impending punishment. [Council in Trullo, 692 AD, Canon 19]

This council, also called "The Quinisext Ecumenical Council," supplemented the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553 (Constantinople II) and the Sixth Ecumenical Council of 681 (Constantinople III). The Orthodox Churches consider this council to be ecumenical and add its canons to the decrees of the Fifth and Sixth Councils. Due to its inimical attitude toward anything non-Byzantine it has not been accepted in the West.

We believe the Divine and Sacred Scriptures to be God-taught; and, therefore, we ought to believe the same without doubting; yet not otherwise than as the Catholic Church hath interpreted and delivered the same. For every foul heresy receiveth, indeed, the Divine Scriptures, but perversely interpreteth the same, using metaphors, and homonymies, and sophistries of man's wisdom, confounding what ought to be distinguished, and trifling with what ought not to be trifled with. For if [we were to receive the same] otherwise, each man holding every day a different sense concerning the same, the Catholic Church would not [as she doth] by the grace of Christ continue to be the Church until this day, holding the same doctrine of faith, and always identically and steadfastly believing, but would be rent into innumerable parties, and subject to heresies; neither would the Church be holy, the pillar and ground of the truth, (1 Tim 3:15) without spot or wrinkle; (Eph 5:27) but would be the Church of the malignant (Ps 25:5) as it is manifest that of the heretics undoubtedly is, and especially that of Calvin, who are not ashamed to learn from the Church, and then to wickedly repudiate her. **Wherefore, the witness also of the Catholic Church is, we believe, not of inferior authority to that of the Divine Scriptures. For one and the same Holy Spirit being the author of both, it is quite the same to be taught by the Scriptures and by the Catholic Church. Moreover, when any man speaketh from himself he is liable to err, and to deceive, and be deceived; but the Catholic Church, as never having spoken, or speaking from herself, but from the Spirit of God--who being her teacher, she is ever unfailingly rich--**

it is impossible for her to in any wise err, or to at all deceive, or be deceived; but like the Divine Scriptures, is infallible and hath perpetual authority.

[Synod of Jerusalem (A.D. 1672), *The Confession of Dositheus*, Decree II]

Are the Scriptures plain to all Christians that read them?

If the Divine Scriptures were plain to all Christians that read them, the Lord would not have commanded such as desired to obtain salvation to search the same (Jn 5:39) and Paul would have said without reason that God had placed the gift of teaching in the Church (1 Cor 12:28) and Peter would not have said of the Epistles of Paul that they contained some things hard to be understood (2 Pt 3:16). It is evident, therefore, that the Scriptures are very profound, and their sense lofty; and that they need learned and divine men to search out their true meaning, and a sense that is right, and agreeable to all Scripture, and to its author the Holy Spirit.

So that as to those that are regenerated [in Baptism], although they must know the faith concerning the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, His passion, resurrection, and ascension into the heavens, what concerneth regeneration and judgment--for which many have not hesitated to die--it is not necessary, but rather impossible, that all should know what the Holy Spirit manifesteth to those alone who are exercised in wisdom and holiness.

[Synod of Jerusalem (A.D. 1672), *The Confession of Dositheus*, Question II]

1124 The Church's faith precedes the faith of the believer who is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles--whence the ancient saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi* (or: *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, according to Prosper of Aquitaine [5th cent.], *Epistle* 8). The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she prays. *Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition.* (cf. *DV*, 8) [Catechism of the Catholic Church]

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Peter, the Rock, in Matthew

Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 Vols., Grand Rapids, Michigan, The Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Vol VI, 1968, s.v., πέτρα, pp. 95-99; Πέτρος, Κηφάς, pp. 100-112, both by Oskar Cullmann.

The masc. πέτρος is used more for isolated rocks or small stones, including flints and pebbles for slings. Since there is such a great difference in content, the emphasis should be noted, though in practice one cannot differentiate too strictly between πέτρα and πέτρος; they are often used interchangeably. {95}

The obvious pun which has made its way into the Gk. text as well suggests a material identity between πέτρα and πέτρος, the more so as it is impossible to differentiate strictly between the meanings of the two words. On the other hand, only the fairly assured Aramaic original of the saying enables us to assert with confidence the formal and material identity between πέτρα and πέτρος: πέτρα = *Kephas* = πέτρος. Elsewhere in the NT the individual Christian is never called πέτρα, though he is λίθος in the spiritual building, the body of Christ (1 Pt. 2:5). {99} Rightly understood, Christ alone is πέτρα. If, then, Mt. 16:18 forces us to assume a formal and material identity between πέτρα and πέτρος, this shows how fully the apostolate, and in it to a special degree the position of Peter, belongs to and is essentially enclosed within, the revelation of Christ. Πέτρος himself is this πέτρα, not just his faith or his confession.

{100} In the NT sources the disciple Symeon/Simon also bears the sobriquet Κηφάς, which is a Gk. transcription of the Aram.

b. The Question of Authenticity. The authenticity of the saying has been hotly contested since the 19th century. Discussion of the matter occupies a good deal of **{105}** space in exegesis. Scholars are by no means unanimous on the issue. It is fairly generally recognized that the linguistic character of the saying is Semitic, and this proves that it could not have arisen in the Greek *diaspora*. The pun can be fully appreciated in Aram., which has the same word *kepha*, both times, not πέτρος . . . πέτρα as in Gk.

{108}

c. The Meaning of the Saying. But what does Jesus mean when He says: "On this rock I will build my church"? The idea of the Reformers that He is referring to the faith of Peter is quite inconceivable in view of the probably different setting of the story. For there is no reference here to the faith of Peter. Rather, the parallelism of "thou art Rock" and "on this rock I will build" shows that the second rock can only be the same as the first. It is thus evident that Jesus is referring to Peter, to whom He has given the name Rock. He appoints Peter, the impulsive, enthusiastic, but not persevering man in the circle, to be the foundation of His *ecclesia*. To this extent Roman Catholic exegesis is right and all Protestant attempts to evade this interpretation are to be rejected. A supposed reference to "disciple" does not improve matters, for there is no mention of "disciples" in the text. The meaning of the logion rests on the two words Peter and *ecclesia*. What is stated is that the Church which is to be built is founded on the one rock.