

May 2011

A.D.:Anno Domini

A Church history supplement for adult Catholics

This Month's Focus: A.D. 1000-1100



Diocesan Mission Statement

"We the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, in union with our Holy Father, the Pope, are called through baptism to share in the mission which Jesus Christ has entrusted to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Priests, deacons, religious and laity, under the leadership of our Bishop, cooperate to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the teaching of the Church to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, for the salvation of all, and to witness by grace to the Kingdom of God so as to promote a culture of life, justice and peace."

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Key Events: A.D. 1000-1100

1009: As part of the Caliph Hakim's persecution of Christians in the Holy Land, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is destroyed. By 1014 over 30,000 churches had been pillaged and destroyed. Christians were also forced to wear distinctive clothing to identify them and pilgrims began to be harassed and—at times—killed.

1050: The High Middle Ages begins. Education, literacy, and trade increase notably during this period.

1054: The Great Schism takes place between the eastern (now called Orthodox) and western (Roman Catholic) churches, with

both sides excommunicating one another. Today, tensions have died down and many efforts towards reunification are taking place, with attention primarily given to the major doctrinal differences (e.g. the role of the Pope, the procession of the Holy Spirit).

1073: A monk from Cluny (see previous issue), Hildebrand, is elected Pope and takes the name Gregory VII. Gregory VII was an ardent reformer who was particularly committed to ensuring that the clergy lived worthy lives and to ensure that secular rulers did not interfere in Church affairs (e.g. appointing their own bishops, etc).

1084: St. Bruno founds the Carthusian order. They were unique from other religious orders of their day because they lived an ascetic life in their own cells (like the monks in the desert) but their cells were within a monastery, so they would gather for communal worship and prayer.

1096: The First Crusade begins with two goals: First, to free the Holy Land from Muslim occupation to stop the killing of Christian pilgrims; Second, to check the military expansion of Islam which threatened to wipe out the Christian world.

Key Concept: Schism

Schism is the formal and willful separation of an individual (or group) from the unity of the Church. This is usually expressed through the rejection of the apostolic authority of the Pope and/or the bishops appointed by him. The term comes from the Greek word meaning "to tear."

Schism is not the same thing as *heresy* (when a baptized person

formally denies or rejects a revealed truth of the faith and encourages others to do as well) or *apostasy* (when a baptized person formally rejects the Christian faith). Historically speaking, however, schism, heresy, and apostasy tend to go hand in hand (e.g. King Henry VIII rejected the established Christian teaching on the inviolability of marriage and then left the Church, proclaiming him-

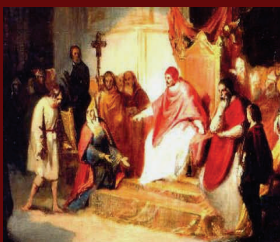
self head of the Church of England).

It is important to note that while those who deliberately disrupt the union of the Church can accurately be called *schismatics*, their historical descendants do not carry that label, since they oftentimes are simply born into the tradition, instead of choosing it for themselves.



Pope St. Gregory VII's love for the spiritual reform of the Church was first instilled in him at the monastery in which he studied.

“May Almighty God, from whom all good things come, continually enlighten your minds and fill them with love for Him and for your neighbor....”



Emperor Henry IV did penance and received absolution from St. Gregory VII in A.D. 1077. He later went back to his old ways and forced the pope into exile.

Get to Know: Pope St. Gregory VII (A.D. 1025-1085)

Pope St. Gregory VII was born into a lower class family in Tuscany. Given the name Hildebrand at his baptism, he traveled to Rome as a youth, receiving his education at the monastery of St. Mary on the Aventine. As he matured he quickly gained attention for his intelligence and deep faith. These characteristics led Pope Gregory VI to select him as his personal chaplain.

Beginning with this appointment, Hildebrand began to play an active role in the reform efforts of Gregory VI and his four successors. It was at the funeral of Pope Alexander II (d. 1073) that the crowd loudly voiced their desire that

Hildebrand become the next successor of St. Peter. By all accounts, he was not initially keen to the idea, but he eventually agreed and took the name Gregory VII in honor of the reforming pope, St. Gregory the Great.

St. Gregory VII immediately set about reforming the life of the Church. He was particularly concerned with the sanctity of the clergy and freeing the Church from the interference of secular rulers. To this end he enacted stiff penalties against simony (the buying and selling of spiritual goods—which included paying money to become a bishop, abbot, etc.); barred priests guilty of fornication

from celebrating Mass; and instructed secular rulers that they were not to select bishops for dioceses in their lands. His most famous work, *Dictatus Papae*, systematized the biblical, theological, and historical basis of the rights of the pope as the successor of St. Peter.

His efforts were not always welcomed—especially among the rulers. He was forced to excommunicate Emperor Henry IV on two separate occasions. He was not without his own missteps but, in the end, his personal example and reformation efforts did much to regenerate the spiritual life of the Church.

In Their Own Words: From a letter by Pope St. Gregory VII

“I beg and implore in the Lord Jesus, who redeemed us by His death, that by careful investigation you may become aware of the trials and distresses brought on me by the enemies of Christianity and understand why and how I endure them.

By God’s will Mother Church placed me in my unworthiness (and God knows that I am unwilling, too) upon the apostolic throne, and with all my powers I have tried to see that the holy Church, the bride of God, our lady and mother, might return to the beauty which is rightly hers and remain free, chaste and catholic. But, because this so greatly displeases our ancient foe, he has armed his minions against us so that they might overturn all our

efforts. What he has been unable to do from the days of Constantine the Great he now does against us and particularly against the Apostolic See. Do not be surprised that, as the time goes on, he will fight all the harder to wipe out the Christian religion. But now, my dearest brothers, listen carefully to what I tell you. All those throughout the world who are numbered as Christian and who truly acknowledge the Christian faith know and believe that the blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles, is the father of all Christians and, after Christ, the first shepherd, and that the holy Roman Church is the mother and teacher of all the churches. Therefore, if you believe this and hold to it without hesitation, I ask you

and enjoin upon you by Almighty God—I, your brother and your unworthy teacher as I am—to support and assist your father and your mother if you wish to have, through them, the remission of all your sins, along with blessing and grace in this world and in the life to come.

May Almighty God, from whom all good things come, continually enlighten your minds and fill them with love for Him and for your neighbor, so that by your devotion you may deserve to make this father and mother of whom I have spoken your debtors and enter without shame into their company. Amen.”