

# **The Lives of Great Christians**

## **Part I**

**Professor William R. Cook**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **William R. Cook, Ph.D.**

Distinguished Teaching Professor of History,  
State University of New York at Geneseo

William R. Cook was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended public schools there. He is a 1966 graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana (*cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa). He received Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Lehman fellowships to study medieval history from Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971.

In 1970, Dr. Cook was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo, the honors college of SUNY. He has taught there for thirty-seven years and holds the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor of History. At Geneseo, Dr. Cook has taught courses in medieval and ancient history, the Renaissance and Reformation periods, and the Bible and Christian thought. Recently, he taught a course on Alexis de Tocqueville, as well as freshman seminars that focus on several aspects of African American history and American politics. In 1992, Dr. Cook was named CASE Professor of the Year for New York State. He received the first-ever CARA Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Medieval Studies from the Medieval Academy of America in 2003. He was recently named the alternate for the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, receiving a prize of \$15,000, plus a substantial award to his department.

After publishing several articles on Hussite theology and monastic thought, Dr. Cook has, for the last thirty years, focused much of his research on St. Francis of Assisi. Since 1989, he has published three books about St. Francis and how he is represented in paintings in Italy. Dr. Cook has also contributed to the *Cambridge Companion to Giotto* and is the editor of and a contributor to *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, published by Brill in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Professor Cook spends part of each year doing research and teaching in Italy. From his base in Siena, he works frequently in Florence, as well as Assisi. He has taken students from SUNY Geneseo to Italy on eight occasions and conducts study tours for the public.

In recent years, Dr. Cook has been a lecturer and site visit leader for the Young Presidents' Organization, a group of young corporate leaders from around the world. He has participated in their programs in Florence, Prague, Istanbul, Dublin, and Kyoto. In 2005, he was invited by the Friends of Florence, a group of philanthropists dedicated to preserving works of art in Tuscany, to make presentations for the group's fall meeting in Florence; he now presents programs for the group in Florence each February.

Dr. Cook has directed ten Summer Seminars for School Teachers for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) since 1983; six have had St.

Francis as their subject and were conducted in Siena and Assisi, Italy. In 2003 and 2006, he directed an NEH seminar for college teachers in Italy titled “St. Francis and the Thirteenth Century.”

In addition to his research in Italy, Professor Cook has studied the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. This interest came about primarily after his unsuccessful run in 1998 for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has written three volumes of local history and writes a weekly column for his local newspaper, the *Livingston County News*. He was also a frequent contributor to the editorial pages of the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle* in 2004–2005.

# Table of Contents

## The Lives of Great Christians

### Part I

<b>Professor Biography</b>		i
<b>Course Scope</b>		1
<b>Lecture One</b>	Introduction—What Makes a Great Christian? .....	3
<b>Lecture Two</b>	Paul and the First Christian Missionaries.....	6
<b>Lecture Three</b>	The Early Martyrs .....	10
<b>Lecture Four</b>	St. Antony, the First Monk .....	14
<b>Lecture Five</b>	The Desert Fathers and Mothers .....	17
<b>Lecture Six</b>	Augustine .....	21
<b>Lecture Seven</b>	St. Patrick and the Conversion of Ireland .....	25
<b>Lecture Eight</b>	St. Benedict and His Rule .....	29
<b>Lecture Nine</b>	Leo IX, Gregory VII, and Church Reform.....	33
<b>Lecture Ten</b>	Bernard of Clairvaux and Monastic Reform.....	37
<b>Lecture Eleven</b>	Francis of Assisi.....	41
<b>Lecture Twelve</b>	Clare of Assisi.....	45
<b>Timeline</b>		49
<b>Glossary</b>		53
<b>Biographical Notes</b>		Part II
<b>Bibliography</b>		Part II

# The Lives of Great Christians

## Scope:

Often, especially in academic circles, the Christians who are most often discussed are those who contributed significantly to the intellectual traditions of Christianity. In addition to Paul and other New Testament writers, a list of “great Christians” often includes Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and more recently, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Karl Rahner. For many Catholics, their lists would start with the 33 officially proclaimed Doctors of the Church. And who would disagree that such people are indeed among the most important Christians?

However, as many Christian authors have pointed out, my favorite being the Lutheran Johann Arndt, ultimately, God will not ask us what we know but how we have loved. Of course, most Christians recognize that there is a connection between knowing and doing—it is harder to love well if one does not know what love consists of. Hence, we rightly expect that some of the great Christian thinkers are also among the great Christian lovers.

This course will focus on great practitioners of the Christian life. In several of the portraits I will paint, the subjects are among the greatest of Christian theologians. However, I will concentrate more on their lives than on their writings. The vast majority of figures I will present are not likely to appear in books focusing on theology. Some, in fact, wrote nothing at all. Others, St. Clare of Assisi being an example, would hardly be a well-known figure to Christians based on the writings she has left us.

I have made no attempt to be systematic in my selection of great Christians for this course. For example, I have not attempted to have a representative figure from every era or from every one of the multiple branches of Christianity, past and present. I confess to giving somewhat greater weight to the Middle Ages (an often-ignored period that is, in fact, half of Christian history) than other periods, in large part because that is the part of Christian history I know best. However, we will encounter people who died in the 1<sup>st</sup> Christian century and others who are alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Christian century. The figures whom I focus on come from five continents. It is particularly important that we consider contemporary Christians, lest we fall into the trap of believing that all the heroes lived in the distant past, what Americans may recognize as a version of what I call the “founding fathers syndrome.”

Some of the figures we will examine are among the most famous Christians. It would be hard to find a person seriously interested in Christianity who does not know Paul or Augustine or Francis of Assisi or Martin Luther or his namesake Martin Luther King. Some names will be familiar but probably only as names, for example, Saint Patrick, the apostle to Ireland, and San Bernardino of Siena, who is known better for a city in California that bears his name than for his life

in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italy. Some of the figures will be better known to one group of Christians than to another. Not too many Protestants recognize the name Maximilian Kolbe, and most Catholics are unfamiliar with Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Both died in Nazi concentration camps. Few who are not Orthodox are familiar with the 1,000-year history of monasticism on Mount Athos in northern Greece.

One of the clearest lessons to be learned from these portraits is that there is no such thing as *the* model of the Christian life. Certainly, all Christians seek to live the life modeled and prescribed by Jesus during his earthly ministry. However, it is obvious that to imitate Christ does not mean wandering through modern Israel as an itinerant preacher. Once we dismiss this very literal notion of imitation, exactly how one strives to be a true Christian becomes difficult to discern.

If we asked any of the people featured in this course about the way they lived their lives, all their answers would soon turn to their attempts to follow in Christ's footsteps. Yet some of these have chosen physical isolation from "the world," be it the desert of Egypt or a mountaintop in Italy or a peninsula populated only by monks in Greece. On the other hand, Gustavo Gutierrez spent a lot of time in the barrios of Lima and Mother Teresa searched the streets of Calcutta for people to comfort. Some of our great Christians died peaceful deaths surrounded by friends and family, while others bore the cross of martyrdom, perhaps at the hands of Roman imperial officials or officers of the Third Reich. Some preached and some held church offices. Others lived lives of constant prayer interspersed with simple activities, such as making baskets or altar cloths. Several scholars are found among the great Christians I have chosen, while others were barely literate.

Hence, we will see the Christian life from many perspectives, and we will see how people in radically different political and social circumstances have tried to use their strengths and address their weaknesses in light of their call to the gospel life. Just as one can look at a great work of art, such as Michelangelo's *David*, from many different angles and in different light and continually experience anew its beauty and gain insight into the genius of its creator, so looking broadly at the Christian life as lived out by a variety of individuals will serve to help us understand more fully what it means to be a Christian and, perhaps, even to gain new insight about the God Christians seek to serve. And the varieties of the Christian life that we explore will, I hope, encourage people to think creatively about what it means to be a Christian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# Lecture One

## Introduction—What Makes a Great Christian?

**Scope:** Because the Christian life is fundamentally rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and the record of his life and the reflections about him found in Christian scripture (the New Testament), it is necessary to examine the familiar ground of Jesus' life and teachings. I will consider both the search for the historical Jesus and the ways Jesus is represented by the evangelists and Paul—in other words, the aspects that are often called the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith. Only after a survey of the life and teachings of Jesus can we begin to examine ways in which his followers have sought to live their lives as his faithful disciples.

### Outline

- I. In the most fundamental sense, Christians seek to be followers and imitators of Christ.
  - A. This is a difficult task because Christ lived a long time ago in a faraway place.
    1. Christ never directly dealt with such matters as stem-cell research, homosexuality, the market economy, or nuclear power.
    2. It is often difficult to “translate” words and actions from one culture into another, and we no doubt often err when we do so.
  - B. Understanding exactly what Jesus did and said is difficult.
    1. The gospels were probably written between 40 and 70 years after the end of Christ's earthly ministry.
    2. It is not certain that any of the evangelists was an eyewitness to the events he described.
    3. Paul, the earliest Christian author, was not one of Christ's followers during his ministry.
    4. Jesus spoke Aramaic, yet the entire New Testament was in Greek.
    5. Jesus was a Jew and lived his entire life as a practicing Jew.
  - C. Despite problems, we can with some confidence outline Jesus' teachings and reconstruct the sorts of things he did during his lifetime.
- II. Even if such tasks are successfully completed, we can hardly make one-to-one equations between Jesus' response to his world and how we should respond to ours.
  - A. Historians struggle all the time with false analogies and misunderstandings of what words and actions mean (and many experience this today when traveling to exotic lands).

- B. Since the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the dominant view of Christ is that he is fully human and fully divine, like us in all things save sin.
    - 1. In many ways, this formula raises as many questions as it answers.
    - 2. If sin is the one difference between Christ and other humans, that is a very big difference!
- III.** Asking how to live the life of Jesus in our place and time (the “What would Jesus do?” question is difficult but has been turned into a slogan) is to ask an extraordinarily difficult question. Let us start, however, by looking at our sources for the life and teachings of Jesus.
- IV.** First and foremost are the four canonical gospels and, perhaps, the Gospel of Thomas.
- A. Most scholars date Mark as the oldest of the gospels, circa 70.
  - B. Matthew and Luke rely on Mark, have another common source, and have material unique to each. For this reason, Mark, Matthew, and Luke can be looked at together, and the term *synoptic* is used to refer to them collectively.
  - C. John was probably the last of the canonical gospels and was written in the 90s.
  - D. Although there are many apocryphal gospels, only Thomas may be as ancient as the canonical gospels.
- V.** Even if biblical scholars can reconstruct to some extent the “historical Jesus,” that hardly means that the matter of living an authentic life following Jesus is obvious or easy.
- A. In this course, in fact, we will focus on some of the greatest practitioners of Christianity, rather than on great scholars or writers about Christianity.
  - B. Those scholars who are included here, for example, Augustine and Martin Luther, are people who struggled mightily to follow Jesus; hence, we will concentrate on their lives, rather than their writings.
- VI.** In this course, we will focus on Christian action, although we certainly will not ignore the fact that action often has intellectual content and that much genuine theology comes from reflection on actions.
- A. I have selected people from all Christian eras and from a variety of Christian traditions.
  - B. I will continually return to the Christian maxim (best expressed, at least for me, by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Lutheran Pietist Johann Arndt) that at the Judgment, God will not ask people what they know but, rather, how they have loved.



**Essential Reading:**

One of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, or Luke) and John.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Garry Wills, *What Jesus Meant*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why is it not possible for Christians simply to do what Jesus did?
2. Does it matter precisely what Jesus said or did? In other words, how important is the quest for the historical Jesus?
3. Why is it vital to look for models of the Christian life in many times and places and in many different human conditions?
4. Can we *know* what the loving thing is to do?

## Lecture Two

### Paul and the First Christian Missionaries

**Scope:** Although the letters of Paul are the earliest surviving Christian documents and probably the most important theological texts in the history of Christianity, in this lecture we will focus on Paul the convert and his life as a missionary. It is not easy to discover the narrative of Paul's life because the autobiographical tidbits found in his letters are not always congruent with the narrative of his life found in Acts of the Apostles. Despite the historical problems, we can with confidence look at his insights into the "good news" of Jesus and how they shaped the way he lived out his call to discipleship. It is also worth remembering that Paul did not carry the gospel of Christ alone; hence, we will look at some of his companions and faithful followers in Asia Minor and Europe in the first decades of Christian history.

### Outline

- I.** The first people to spread the good news about Jesus beyond those who had known him during his ministry were the apostles, especially Peter.
  - A.** This story is contained in the first chapters of Acts of the Apostles, written by the author of the Gospel of Luke.
  - B.** The conversion of an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) is something of a prologue to the story of taking the good news beyond Palestine and its neighbors.
  
- II.** The person we most associate with the spread of the good news into what is now the nations of Turkey, Greece, and Italy was Saul, later called Paul, of Tarsus.
  - A.** Paul was roughly a contemporary of Jesus.
  - B.** He was a persecutor of "Jesus people," who later became one of them.
  - C.** Paul saw the claims that the Messiah had come as undermining the Law to which he, as a Pharisee, was devoted.
  
- III.** Following his conversion (described in Acts but never by Paul in his letters), Paul spent time in Damascus and soon undertook the first of a series of missionary trips that would occupy him for the next 30 years.
  - A.** His first mission to Arabia was apparently completely unsuccessful.
  - B.** He returned to Damascus and, probably at that time, learned a trade—tentmaking—that he would be able to practice wherever he went to spread the good news.

- IV.** Paul left Damascus and went to Jerusalem, where he spent time with Peter. He soon left, and we next find him doing missionary work in what is now southern Turkey.
  - A.** Paul encountered mixed communities of Jews and Gentiles who believed in Jesus.
  - B.** Paul struggled with understanding the role of the Torah for Christians and with how mixed communities should work.
  
- V.** Paul journeyed toward Europe on another missionary project.
  - A.** He traveled with Silas and soon recruited Timothy.
  - B.** His plan to go to Ephesus was blocked, but he did find a Christian community in Galatia.
    - 1.** Paul's converts in Galatia were all Gentiles.
    - 2.** Paul was possessive about his converts.
  - C.** Paul's first community in Europe was established in Philippi.
    - 1.** This was a small city with a small Jewish population.
    - 2.** Paul used the home of a woman named Lydia as his center of operations.
    - 3.** Other women became heads of house-churches in Philippi.
  - D.** Paul went on to Thessalonica, but his converts were of a lower socioeconomic status than those in Philippi.
  - E.** He had little success in Athens.
  
- VI.** Paul established a community in Corinth, where he remained for 18 months.
  - A.** His community primarily consisted of Gentiles.
  - B.** While in Corinth, Paul wrote his first letter that we know of, I Thessalonians.
    - 1.** This is the earliest Christian document.
    - 2.** In this letter, Paul explains his teaching on the coming of the new age, which the Christians there had misunderstood.
  
- VII.** Upon returning to Asia, Paul learned of objections in Jerusalem to the idea of Gentile Christians.
  - A.** Paul traveled to Jerusalem to confront the Judaizers.
  - B.** James, Jesus' brother, called a meeting of the leaders and issued a decision that men did not have to be circumcised in order to be Christians.
  - C.** At Antioch, Peter reverted to the position of requiring circumcision.
    - 1.** Paul directly opposed Peter.
    - 2.** Paul left Antioch, which had once been his missionary base.

- VIII.** Paul spent about a year in Ephesus, where he found a group of Jews who considered themselves followers of Jesus, but who knew nothing about the passion, resurrection, or descent of the Holy Spirit.
- A.** They had received the so-called “baptism of John the Baptist.”
  - B.** Paul worked to explain to them what he regarded as the core teachings about Jesus.
  - C.** Using Ephesus as a base, Paul was responsible for the establishment of several other Christian communities, for example, Colossae.
  - D.** Here as elsewhere, Paul showed that he was a better missionary than administrator.
  - E.** Paul’s success led to his arrest in Ephesus, and while in prison, he probably wrote several of his letters.
- IX.** Once he was out of prison, Paul needed to focus on problems with the community in Corinth.
- A.** There were problems regarding differing beliefs, as well as moral transgressions.
  - B.** Out of these problems came several letters, which today have been edited into what are known as I and II Corinthians.
- X.** When he was about the age of 60, Paul proposed a missionary trip to Spain to be launched from Rome.
- A.** There was already a Christian community in Rome.
  - B.** To introduce himself to Roman Christians and to gain their support for his trip to Spain, Paul wrote what became his most important letter—Romans.
  - C.** Before heading west, Paul took his final journey to Jerusalem to deliver money for the poor that he had helped to collect from his Christian communities.
  - D.** While in Jerusalem, Paul was arrested and held for perhaps two years.
  - E.** Given that he was a Roman citizen, Paul demanded that he be sent to Rome.
  - F.** Paul probably did go to Spain via Rome. He was not received well by the Christians of Rome, and his expedition to Spain was a failure.
  - G.** After returning to the East, including a stop at Ephesus, Paul traveled to Rome a second time.
    - 1.** This was about the time of the great fire in Rome that some accused Nero of setting.
    - 2.** Paul was one of the Christians arrested in the aftermath of the fire.
    - 3.** It was probably during his time in prison that he wrote his last letter, today known as II Timothy.

**XI.** Paul was executed in Rome, by tradition at the place where today stands the Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

**Essential Reading:**

Paul's letters, especially Romans, and Acts of the Apostles, beginning with chapter 9.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: His Story*.

Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What was the basis of Paul's faith, which saw him through such hardships, setbacks, and rejections?
2. Why is the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians so important in the earliest years of Christianity?
3. Is Paul's greatness largely due to the fact that he was the first Christian writer we have, or because of his commitment, insights, and perseverance?

## Lecture Three

### The Early Martyrs

**Scope:** The 3<sup>rd</sup>-century theologian Tertullian claimed that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. Beginning with the story of Stephen in Acts of the Apostles and the letters written by St. Ignatius of Antioch as he was about to be martyred, we will look at a series of stories, some quite well documented and others, no doubt, considerably embellished in their retelling, of those who imitated Christ by dying for Him just as He died for them. For example, we will consider Perpetua and Felicity, whose martyrdoms are known through documents written shortly after their heroic deaths. Although the names of some early martyrs, for example, St. Lawrence and St. Lucy, are well known, others are known only from rather obscure sources. Keep in mind that although the “age of martyrdom” ended with the conversion of Constantine, there have been Christian martyrs in each of the Christian centuries.

### Outline

- I. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the theologian Tertullian wrote, “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”
  - A. Until the reign of Constantine (312–337), Christians were subject to persecution and execution.
    1. There were periodic and largely local persecutions of Christians until about 250.
    2. Starting around 250, empire-wide persecutions were aimed at exterminating Christianity; the most serious of these was carried out during the reign of Diocletian (284–305).
  - B. Stories of Christians who died for their faith were preserved and transmitted for the edification of the faithful.
  - C. Martyrdom was widely regarded as a guarantee of salvation—martyrs died for Christ in imitation of Christ dying for them.
- II. The earliest story of a follower of Jesus being executed is that of Stephen, recorded in Acts 7.
  - A. Stephen was killed not by Roman authorities but by Jews.
  - B. Acts also tells of the execution of James.
  - C. The canonical books of New Testament scripture do not tell about the last years of most of Jesus’ companions.
    1. It is almost certain that both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome, Peter at a place called the Vatican.

2. In later centuries, stories of the deaths of the apostles were either embellished or created, for example, the stories that Thomas died in India and that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross.
- III. One of the most important early martyrs was Ignatius of Antioch (c. 107).
    - A. He wrote several letters to churches as he was being taken to Rome.
    - B. He urged his fellow Christians, including those in Rome, not to interfere with his being thrown to the wild beasts.
  - IV. The first contemporary account we have of a martyrdom is that of Polycarp in the city of Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey).
    - A. This precious 2<sup>nd</sup>-century document is a moving and lively account of Polycarp's arrest, trial, and death.
    - B. This form of literature, the *passio*, or "passion," became one of the most popular Christian genres, either alone or, later, as the major part of the life of a saint.
  - V. We have an interesting account of the Christian "problem" in an exchange of letters between the Roman governor Pliny and the emperor Trajan.
    - A. Christians were a problem because they would not sacrifice to pagan gods or burn incense to the emperor.
    - B. Christians were often unpopular and, hence, were often reported to Roman authorities.
    - C. Trajan recommended a "moderate" policy, allowing those accused to renounce Christianity and not accepting anonymous denunciations.
  - VI. One of the most interesting and important accounts of martyrdom narrates the story of Perpetua and Felicity in North Africa in 203.
    - A. This document was widely copied and read.
    - B. It contains the writing of Perpetua herself, making this perhaps the earliest surviving writing of a Christian woman.
  - VII. Most of the famous stories of martyrdom come from the persecutions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.
    - A. These include saints who are still widely venerated among many Christians today.
      1. A good example is St. Lawrence, who was executed by being roasted on a gridiron.
      2. St. Catherine of Alexandria became a model for learned women; she was martyred on a spiked wheel.
      3. St. Lucy was stabbed, although later versions of the story have her tormentors gouging out her eyes.
        - a. We can use her as an example of the importance of saints' lives and legends.

- b. She became an intercessor for people with eye diseases.
      - c. Dante presented her as a saint important to the grace he received from God.
      - d. Since her death, her relics (remains) have been venerated, stolen, and fought over.
    - B. People familiar with medieval or Renaissance art are aware of the importance of these martyr-saints.
      - 1. St. Sebastian is a good example of one who is widely represented in the Renaissance.
      - 2. Many of the elaborate and historically inaccurate stories were collected in the 13<sup>th</sup> century into one of the most popular of medieval books, *The Golden Legend*.
    - C. Even some of the lesser-known martyrs of this period are names we are familiar with, the best example being St. Valentine.
- VIII.** These martyrs have provided later Christians with heroic figures and clear moral exempla.
- A. We find examples of people, such as Catherine of Siena in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, knowing the legend and following the model of her namesake, Catherine of Alexandria.
  - B. Many of the most popular Christian names come from these early martyr-saints.
- IX.** With the conversion of the emperor Constantine to Christianity in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, what we now might call the “age of martyrdom” quickly passed.
- A. There are Christians who sacrificed their lives for their faith or their understanding of their faith.
    - 1. Christianity has had martyrs everywhere it has spread, whether in Germany in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Japan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or Vietnam and Uganda in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
    - 2. Many Christians died in the most recent century, for example, in the Third Reich and in the Soviet Union and its satellite states.
    - 3. In recent years, Christians have been killed in such countries as Algeria and Pakistan.
  - B. Disagreements among Christians have led to the deaths of many who practiced a form of Christianity not accepted by political or religious authorities.
    - 1. Catholics have killed Protestants, and Protestants have killed Catholics.
    - 2. “Heretics” have been killed, for example, John Hus in 1415 by the Council of Constance.



- X. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when martyrdom as it had occurred at the hands of the Roman emperors was a thing of the past, a Christian lifestyle developed that was referred to as a new form of martyrdom; the beginning of monasticism is the subject of the next two lectures.

**Essential Reading:**

“The Martyrdom of Polycarp” and “The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas,” in Herbert Musurillo, ed., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

“Letter of Ignatius to the Romans,” in Bart Ehrman, *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why were Christians “different” than practitioners of other religions in the Roman Empire?
2. Why do the stories matter to Christians more than the statistics of martyrdom?
3. In modern times, is martyrs’ blood still an important seed of the Church?

## **Lecture Four**

### **St. Antony, the First Monk**

**Scope:** In the year 269, 18-year-old Antony left his village in Egypt, gave his goods to the poor, and began a life “apart” that lasted for 87 years. Although there were Christian ascetics before this time, it is proper to consider Antony the first Christian monk. He lived a simple life, and he sought greater solitude as he got older by living in ever-more-remote parts of Egypt. He was considered a wise and holy man by many, and even the Roman emperor wrote him for advice. We have several of Antony’s letters, some of his most famous sayings, and an account of his life written by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. In these documents, we discover Antony’s piety and his disciplined life as he struggled with temptations and desires.

### **Outline**

- I.** The idea of a life of discipline and “rejection of the world” is as old as Christianity itself.
  - A.** Jesus urged some to sell all they had and spoke of forsaking family and sex.
  - B.** Acts describes the first Christians in Jerusalem surrendering private property.
  - C.** Paul preferred that Christians not marry.
- II.** We have early evidence of widows sharing in some elements of a common life in Rome and other cities and men who moved to the literal and metaphorical edges of towns to live lives of prayer.
- III.** We usually identify Antony, a young man living in a town in Egypt, as the first monk.
  - A.** At age 18 in the year 269, the recently orphaned Antony arrived in church just as the gospel was being read in which Jesus told the rich man to sell what he had and give to the poor.
    - 1.** Antony understood this as a call from God.
    - 2.** He did what the gospel commanded and began an 87-year life of discipline, solitude, and prayer.
  - B.** During his long life as a hermit, Antony moved more than once farther into the desert to seek solitude.
    - 1.** People sought him out for counsel and advice.
    - 2.** Men (and a few women) chose to imitate his life.
- IV.** During Antony’s lifetime, Christianity went from being a persecuted religion to a religion of the emperors.

- A. With martyrdom no longer a possibility and Christianity the favored religion, Antony's pattern of life was understood to be a kind of "daily martyrdom."
  - B. There were doctrinal disputes among Christians at this time, and Antony supported the Council of Nicaea's decrees. He entered Alexandria more than once to support his position against the Arians, whose beliefs had been rejected at Nicaea.
- V. Before describing how Antony lived his life and what he thought, it is worthwhile to explain the surviving sources.
- A. The famous Alexandrian bishop and theologian Athanasius wrote a life of Antony; this work became a model for future saints' lives, called *hagiographies*.
  - B. Several letters of Antony survive.
  - C. Some of Antony's sayings are incorporated into collections known as the sayings of the desert fathers, which are major sources for the discussion of desert fathers in the next lecture.
- VI. Athanasius describes Antony's life as one of discipline.
- A. He ate little, wore itchy clothing, and rarely bathed.
  - B. Antony constantly faced temptations in the form of family, money, glory, good food, and sex.
  - C. Athanasius describes many of Antony's struggles in terms of conflict with demons, and his imagery has entered into Christian lore and art.
  - D. Antony grew some vegetables and wove baskets, which he would sell to buy necessities.
  - E. Stability was important for Antony: "Just as fish die if they stay too long out of water, so the monks who loiter outside their cells...lose the intensity of inner peace."
- VII. Antony's letters, as well as Athanasius's account of his life, make clear that although he was not highly educated, he was acquainted with the thought of the Greeks and with pagan practices, some dating back millennia in Egypt.
- A. Antony emphasizes that people must know themselves, a theme traceable to ancient Greek philosophers.
    - 1. Antony argues that anyone who knows himself or herself knows God.
    - 2. The error of the heretic Arius is that he did not know himself.
    - 3. The inward journey becomes an important theme in subsequent monastic writing.
  - B. On at least one occasion, Antony had a direct encounter with a pagan philosopher.
    - 1. Antony mocks much of the mythology of the Greeks.

2. He points out that although Christians were persecuted and followers of pagan cults were not, Christianity was winning out.
3. Antony told a philosopher who asked how he lived without books that his book was nature, in which he could read about God at any time.

**VIII.** Some of the sayings of Antony preserved in collections of sayings of the early monks express his practical wisdom and the fruits of years of prayer and meditation.

- A. He often stressed that monks should not avoid temptation but, rather, pray for the ability to overcome it.
- B. Although Antony appears extreme to most modern people, he claimed to believe in moderation and would sometimes be playful with brothers who were too intense.
- C. He described a monk who accepted praise but not criticism as similar to a city that looks beautiful from a distance but is being eaten up and destroyed from the inside.

**IX.** Athanasius described the desert as a city because it filled up with monks who came to imitate Antony. These desert fathers (and mothers) are the subject of the next lecture.

**Essential Reading:**

Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, especially chapter 1.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What are the sorts of insights that are most likely to come from the kind of life that Antony chose?
2. How can the life Antony led be thought of as being like martyrdom?
3. What are the problems for a Christian who lives most of the time cut off from other Christians and, hence, a Christian community?

## Lecture Five

### The Desert Fathers and Mothers

**Scope:** In his life of Antony, Athanasius says that the desert of Egypt became a city of monks. We know a great deal about the men and women who lived in the desert, both as hermits and as members of communities, from a variety of sources. They allow us to listen to their wisdom and observe the ways of life that developed there. Furthermore, there were soon monks in the Holy Land and other parts of the Near East. Some of them chose exotic ways to live out their Christian vocations. For example, St. Simeon the Stylite lived for 34 years on top of a column! However, even these most colorful monastic characters need to be considered seriously because they were regarded in their own time as the people who best bridged the gap between Earth and heaven.

### Outline

- I. As Athanasius wrote, the desert became a city; the idea of monks spread beyond Egypt, first into Syria and the Holy Land and, soon thereafter, throughout the Roman Empire, including Western Europe.
  - A. Male and female hermits (*abbas* and *ammās*) flourished in the desert of Egypt.
  - B. By the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, some monks came together to live in community under an *abba* named Pachomius, whose rule is still the basis of monastic life in the Coptic monasteries of Egypt.
  - C. In Palestine and Syria, some of the monks practiced extraordinary forms of asceticism.
    - 1. There were monks who lived in caves, cisterns, and even trees.
    - 2. The most spectacular of these monks were the Stylites, who lived on the tops of columns; the most famous of these is Simeon the Stylite, who lived on his column for 34 years.
  - D. St. Martin of Tours (in modern France) is usually regarded as the first monk in Western Europe, but by the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, there were numerous males and females living monastic lives in Spain, Gaul, and Italy.
- II. Some of the most important Christian writers of this period were monks.
  - A. Usually, these were learned men who were able to generalize and “codify” the experiences and wisdom of the desert fathers.
    - 1. Basil, a monk originally from what is now central Turkey, wrote about monastic life.
    - 2. He believed that monks should do what we today would call charitable work—caring for travelers, housing orphans, and so on.

3. Basil was the first monastic writer who believed in the superiority of the communal (*cenobitic*) life to that of the hermit.
- B.** The monk Evagrius of Pontus is the earliest Christian writer specifically on prayer.
1. He lived in the desert but was highly educated.
  2. His reputation in later centuries was tainted by his association with some of the ideas of the controversial theologian Origen.
  3. He was able to reflect on monastic experiences of prayer, especially in a work entitled *Chapters on Prayer*.
    - a. People need to remove every thought and passion when they pray because God is beyond thought and material things.
    - b. Any desire for vengeance blocks people when they try to pray; Evagrius likens this to drawing water from a well and putting it in a container with holes in it.
    - c. Evagrius links selling everything and giving to the poor with the elimination of distractions from prayer.
    - d. People ought always to pray for God's will to be done rather than their own because no one knows God's will.
    - e. The state of prayer is one of imperturbable calm.
    - f. "If you are a theologian, you truly pray. If you truly pray, you are a theologian."
    - g. "Happy is the monk who views the welfare and progress of all men with as much joy as if it were his own." Evagrius also says that in separation from the world, a monk must be in harmony with all people.
    - h. "Happy is the monk who considers all men as god—after God."
- C.** John Cassian lived as a monk and recorded conversations he had with desert hermits; his great works, *The Conferences* and *The Institutes*, written in Latin, are the primary means of the transmission of the wisdom of the desert to Western Europe and Latin culture.
1. Cassian stresses that neither age nor degree of asceticism makes a monk wise. One needs discernment.
  2. Works of charity are required of Christians as long as inequality prevails.
  3. Cassian warns of the danger of the vice of *accidie*, a fear of monotony, which we sometimes translate as sloth.
  4. Cassian proposes a taxonomy of prayer.
    - a. First is supplication, in which one recalls a sin and seeks pardon.
    - b. Second are prayers in which we offer something to God.
    - c. Next is intercessory prayer, in which we ask God's help for others.
    - d. Finally are prayers of thanksgiving.

5. Ultimately, the goal of the monk is what we often refer to as a mystical experience of God; a union, however temporary, with God; a foretaste of heaven.
6. We make spiritual progress in our motivations for doing good—from fearing punishment, to hoping for reward, to the love of virtue itself.
7. Cassian, building on the thought of Evagrius, develops a list of eight serious sins; in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Gregory I slightly reconfigures them into what we know as the seven deadly sins (pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, lust).

**III.** It is fitting to end this lecture by listening to words not just of the great synthesizers of the desert tradition but also of the ‘rank-and-file’ desert fathers and mothers.

**A.** It was a tradition in the Middle Ages and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century for monks to collect their favorite sayings of the desert fathers and mothers into private collections. In the last century, Thomas Merton published his *florilegium* under the title *The Wisdom of the Desert*.

**B.** Here are a few flowers from my bouquet.

1. An anonymous monk explained that he sold his book of the gospels because the book said to sell everything and give to the poor.
2. Monks were famous for being non-judgmental. One said not to judge a fornicator if you are pure because the God who says not to fornicate also says not to judge.
3. Amma Syncletica said that it is possible to be a solitary while living in a crowd and that a solitary might, in fact, live in the crowd of his own thoughts.
4. Another theme of the inhabitants of the desert is that teachers must practice what they profess. One Syncletica said, “It is dangerous for anyone to teach who has not been trained in the practical life... By words one may convert [others] to salvation, but by evil behaviour one injures them.”

**Essential Reading:**

Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert*.

John Cassian, *The Conferences*.

Evagrius Ponticus, *The Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*.

Lucien Regnault, *The Day-to-Day Life of the Desert Fathers in Fourth-Century Egypt*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How can some of the wisdom of the desert be applied by Christians who live “in the world” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
2. What is the value of having lists, such as the types of prayer or the deadly sins?
3. What are the conditions without which serious prayer is impossible?



## Lecture Six

### Augustine

**Scope:** Augustine, bishop of Hippo (modern Algeria) in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, is probably the most important non-biblical Christian writer, and his surviving works fill about 50 modern volumes. In this lecture, however, we will focus on his life. We know the dramatic story of his conversion to Christianity from his own account, the *Confessions*, one of the great books of Christian literature. However, Augustine also created a pattern of life for the clergy of his diocese and wrote the first Latin rule for monks, as well as a letter that served as the basis of a rule for nuns. In this lecture, we will focus on Augustine the convert and Augustine the prescriber of forms of Christian life.

### Outline

- I. Augustine is perhaps the most important non-biblical Christian writer, at least in the Latin-speaking world.
  - A. Modern printed editions of his works run to about 50 volumes.
  - B. His *Confessions* and *City of God* are on any short list of great books.
  - C. In many areas of theology, Augustine has defined the questions and proposed solutions.
    1. His writing about grace is central to Christian understanding of this important topic.
    2. His criteria for a “just war” are still often cited.
  - D. Augustine is equally respected and consulted by Catholics and Protestants.
- II. Rather than examine his theology here, we will look at his life, focusing on the issues of original sin (Augustine invented the term) and conversion.
  - A. First, it is important to know that Augustine was a Latin-speaking citizen of the Roman Empire, who lived most of his life in what is today Algeria.
  - B. Augustine had a Christian mother and pagan father.
  - C. He lived during a period when Christianity was becoming the privileged religion of the Roman Empire.
  - D. For more than 30 years, he was a bishop in the city of Hippo (again, in modern Algeria).
- III. Augustine composed his spiritual autobiography, the first work of its kind, the *Confessions*, in 397, when he was 43 years old and about 10 years after becoming a Christian.

- A. For a detailed analysis of this splendid book, see my Teaching Company course called *St. Augustine's Confessions*, co-taught with Ron Herzman.
  - B. This lecture highlights the life of sin, struggle, and redemption as it is described in the first eight books of the *Confessions*.
- IV. Augustine tells us that he had been a sinner since the day he was born.
- A. Humans are all born with a radical selfishness.
  - B. Despite that fact and the sins we commit throughout our lives, we are nevertheless made to praise God and cannot find peace until we do so.
  - C. Augustine does not suggest that infants be punished for their sins.
  - D. However, recognition of our sinful nature is vital if we are to turn away from ourselves and toward God.
  - E. Consequently, children need education and correction as soon as they are able to profit from it.
- V. Augustine explains that he was mis-educated by both his schoolmasters and his parents.
- A. His teachers wanted him to be rich and famous and to master Latin in order to achieve success.
  - B. His parents were overly concerned with his professional success and not enough with his character, although his mother, Monica, cared for her son more than Augustine's father did.
  - C. An incident Augustine recounts of stealing pears is a good summary of the state of his soul and his spiritual needs when he was a teenager.
- VI. When he was 18, Augustine began the long process of change, but he did not really make the move toward Christianity until he was 31 years old.
- A. Augustine learned from a pagan writer, Cicero, that people should seek eternal, not temporal, things.
  - B. Augustine rejected the Bible as the source of knowledge and turned to a religious/philosophical community called the Manichees.
  - C. For professional reasons, Augustine moved to Italy.
    1. He heard the sermons of Bishop Ambrose of Milan, who provided Augustine with a way of reading scripture that began to make sense to him.
    2. He began to understand that faith is necessary for life.
    3. This led him to ask what sources, what authority, he could trust, and he began to believe that the Bible was that source, that authority.
  - D. Augustine struggled with certain intellectual problems concerning the nature of God and the nature of evil.

1. After reading some writings of Platonists, Augustine concluded that God simply *is*.
  2. He also determined that evil is not a substance but the turning from higher toward lower things.
- E. Augustine was intellectually accepting of Christianity and recognized the futility of seeking fame and fortune, but he was held back by his sexual appetite.
1. He struggled mightily to make the turn toward God.
  2. He knew that for him to choose Christianity meant to renounce sex forever.
- F. Augustine's conversion experience took place while reading a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans while in a garden.
- VII. It is impossible even to survey the range of Augustine's intellect and his impact on Christianity. However, let me suggest something of Augustine the teacher.
- A. He wrote a rule for the clergy who were attached to his church at Hippo.
- B. He prescribed a way of life for a group of nuns.
- C. He wrote an extraordinarily important work called *On Christian Doctrine*, which lays out how various "liberal arts" subjects are or are not useful to Christians.
- D. A work of Augustine known as *The Teacher* is probably a fairly accurate rendition of a discussion he had with his teenage son Adeodatus, who died shortly afterward.
1. This dialogue is largely about the nature of language and how words operate as signs pointing beyond themselves to the thing signified.
  2. Much of this dialogue could almost be dismissed as an elaborate intellectual game or sparring match with his son.
  3. Ultimately, the understanding of the relationship of sign to thing signified has a profound meaning for Christians and how we learn about things that are invisible.
  4. Understanding this also teaches us what we can and cannot know.
  5. Hence, Augustine is really teaching his son Adeodatus about the need for faith and what we mean by faith.
  6. Words provide an occasion for learning, and their truth is established by what Augustine calls our inner teacher.
  7. This dialogue shows Augustine as one of the greatest of Christian teachers.

**Essential Reading:**

Augustine, *Confessions* (books 1–9).

Augustine, “The Teacher,” in Garry Wills, *Saint Augustine’s Childhood: Confessions, Book One*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Garry Wills, *Saint Augustine*.

Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How is the story of Augustine in form the story of every Christian?
2. Why is it important to know the human condition in order to understand what education consists of and what its goals are?
3. What teaching strategies does Augustine employ in *Confessions* and *The Teacher*?

## Lecture Seven

### St. Patrick and the Conversion of Ireland

**Scope:** Patrick was raised a Christian but was captured in his native Britain and made a slave in Ireland. After his escape to Britain, he experienced a call from God to bring the good news of Jesus to the land where he had been held in captivity. Patrick spent many years spreading the gospel in Ireland. Because Ireland had never been part of the Roman Empire, Christianity was virtually unknown except along the coast. In his two surviving letters, we get a precious look into the mind and activity of this preacher and missionary. Although some of the stories we hear about St. Patrick today are later elaborations of his life's work, the extraordinary life of the historical Patrick needs no embellishments.

### Outline

- I. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity had spread throughout the Roman Empire.
  - A. The entire Mediterranean world had been evangelized by the time of Constantine's conversion in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.
  - B. By the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, it is possible that the majority of people living in the Roman Empire were at least nominal Christians.
- II. Ireland, however, lay outside the Roman Empire.
  - A. The Irish did not know Latin, the language in which Christianity had been transmitted in Western Europe and Britain.
  - B. Although there were Christian merchants who visited Ireland and even set up colonies there, Christianity was largely unknown in Ireland at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.
- III. Patrick was born in Britain, the son of a landholder, who was also a Christian deacon, and grandson of a priest.
  - A. We know about his life almost entirely from two letters he wrote when he was a missionary bishop in Ireland; these serve as the basis for this lecture on Patrick.
  - B. He spoke both Latin and a local language, probably related to modern Welsh.
  - C. He received some education and was literate.
  - D. As a boy, he learned the basics of Christianity.
  - E. When Patrick was about 16, he was captured by a raiding party and brought to Ireland as a slave.
    1. For six years, Patrick was a slave, spending much time as a shepherd.

- a. He learned the language of the Irish.
    - b. As a shepherd, he spent a good deal of time alone and thought deeply about the God whom he worshiped.
  - 2. Patrick was able to escape after about six years and returned to Britain to be reunited to his family.
  
- IV. Shortly after returning to Britain, Patrick experienced a call to go back to Ireland and bring Christianity to the land in which he had been enslaved.
  - A. After an uncertain number of years in which Patrick lived in Britain, he was made a missionary bishop and sent to Ireland.
  - B. The traditional date for the beginning of Patrick’s mission was 432, but in fact, he may have arrived a generation later than that.
  - C. There had been some sort of Christian mission to Ireland in 431, but for reasons we do not know, it was unsuccessful.
  
- V. The only contemporary or near-contemporary records we have of Patrick and his activities come from two letters he wrote.
  - A. The earliest account of Patrick’s life was not written until more than 200 years after he lived.
  - B. His first letter, called his *Confession*, contains a great deal of autobiographical information; however, it describes conditions more than events during his time in Ireland.
  - C. His other letter is addressed to soldiers of a man named Coroticus.
  
- VI. Ireland had almost no written language, and politically, it was divided into numerous petty kingdoms; this suggests what a difficult and, at times, lonely mission Patrick undertook.
  - A. Patrick worked under almost impossible conditions.
    - 1. He had learned to speak the Irish language at least passably while a slave.
    - 2. He had a strong sense of vocation.
  - B. Patrick had to be “creative” in dealing with the numerous kings in Ireland.
    - 1. On occasion, Patrick had to bribe local rulers so that he could preach.
    - 2. Even so, Patrick was subject to being detained and even imprisoned.
    - 3. On at least one occasion, he faced the wrath of a local king when the king’s daughter decided to dedicate her life to Christ in virginity.
  - C. Patrick baptized numerous Irish people and ordained many priests.
  - D. Patrick’s letter to the soldiers of Coroticus reminds us of other dangers to the bishop’s flock.

1. A raid by Christian slavers took place one day after Patrick had baptized a group of Irish.
  2. The letter is an excommunication of the men who carried out this raid.
- E.** Patrick composed his *Confession* to respond to detractors of his mission back in England; an old accusation about an unknown evil that Patrick had done as a young man was raised against him.
- VII.** Patrick was motivated by his belief that the end times were near.
- A.** Paul too, the earliest Christian writer, had shaped his ministry in part with the view that the second coming of Christ was imminent.
  - B.** Patrick believed he was fulfilling Christ’s call to preach and teach to the ends of the Earth.
- VIII.** Many of the stories people most associate with Patrick today are not recorded in any contemporary or near-contemporary documents.
- A.** One is Patrick teaching about the Trinity using a shamrock.
  - B.** A second is his dramatic showdown with the forces of the pagans in Ireland at Tara.
  - C.** Patrick may have visited the islands in Lough Derg, which have been known for their purgatorial pilgrimages since the Middle Ages, but there is no documented connection of Patrick with these islands or with his purgatorial experience there.
- IX.** Although Patrick’s name is associated with the great feast of “Irish-ness,” he was a great Christian because of his life and ministry.
- A.** He dedicated his life to work among a people where he had once been a slave.
  - B.** He faithfully carried out a ministry for many years with little help from, or connection with, the larger church.
  - C.** Although he was not the first or the only missionary in Ireland, his cult developed, making him the great saint of Ireland.

**Essential Reading:**

St. Patrick, “Confession” and “Letter to Coroticus,” in Thomas O’Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Thomas O’Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick*.

Noel O’Donoghue, *Aristocracy of Soul: Patrick of Ireland*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why are missionaries often unable to abide by the strict rules of conduct that are followed in areas where Christianity is well established?
2. In what ways does the legend surrounding Patrick become as important as what the historical Patrick did?
3. Why might the apocryphal story of Patrick teaching Christianity using the shamrock be a good metaphor for how missionaries often operate?



## Lecture Eight

### St. Benedict and His Rule

**Scope:** There were monks in Western Europe by the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and monastic life for both men and women spread throughout the Latin-speaking world. However, it was not until the 6<sup>th</sup> century that a way of life developed that would eventually become the norm for male and female monastics in Europe. Benedict lived as a hermit before eventually founding the monastery of Montecassino south of Rome about 529. His Rule continues to this day to provide the structure of life for most monks in the Catholic Church. However, this Rule is more than a monastic prescription, because it describes a form of Christian life that is widely recognized as useful for Christians both outside and inside the cloister. In this lecture, we will begin to examine the Rule by looking at its prologue as a guide for Christian living and at the chapter about the abbot as a description of Christian leadership. Benedict recognizes human frailty and prescribes both discipline and flexibility in his Rule. Perhaps the most famous line of the Rule is “Idleness is the enemy of the soul.” Despite the cloistered lives of the monks, Benedict knew that monasteries do not exist in a vacuum; thus, he suggests how the monks could and should interact with the world beyond the monastery.

### Outline

- I.** By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, there were numerous monks and hermits living in Western Europe, but there was no “standard” form of monastic life.
  - A.** As we saw in Lecture Five, monasticism came to Western Europe in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the region was a part of the Roman Empire.
  - B.** With the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, traditionally dated to 476, there was a certain disorder in Western Europe.
    - 1.** Many different monastic rules and traditions were followed, from rigorously ascetic to quite relaxed.
    - 2.** Some monasteries primarily performed liturgical functions while others were centers of knowledge and education.
    - 3.** There were even monks who tried to imitate desert monks literally, for example, by sitting on top of a column or living in a cave.
- II.** Benedict of Nursia was born in 480 and went to Rome for an education but soon abandoned the city for the life of a monk.
  - A.** Benedict lived as a hermit at Subiaco, south of Rome.
  - B.** Later, he became abbot of a monastery but was too rigorous for the monks.

- C. He established a series of small monasteries before, in, or around 529, including the monastery at Montecassino.
- III.** Benedict composed a Rule for his monks at Montecassino.
- A. In formulating the Rule, he used existing monastic literature, including the work of John Cassian.
  - B. Benedict created a Rule that was both rigorous and flexible and that included a strong abbot.
  - C. Although we do not know as much as we would like about the spread of the Rule, it gradually extended to other monasteries, first in Italy but soon in England and other parts of the West.
  - D. By about 800, it was virtually the only monastic Rule in use in Western Europe, where there were thousands of monastic foundations.
  - E. The Rule was adapted for the use of women.
- IV.** Flowing from Benedict on, there have been a great many books written prescribing a Christian lifestyle.
- A. Today, there are numerous books—most notably, *The Cloister Walk* by the Protestant Kathleen Norris and several books by Joan Chittester—that look at the monastic life as a model for the Christian life outside the cloister.
  - B. Eric Dean, a former theology professor, devout Calvinist, and Presbyterian minister, wrote a book 30 years ago entitled *St. Benedict for the Laity*.
- V.** Other writings of the first Christian centuries about the Christian life included pagan and biblical materials.
- A. Benedict’s Rule is the earliest prescription for a Christian lifestyle that owes virtually nothing to pagan philosophers.
  - B. It is vital to note that the Rule presents *a* Christian lifestyle—monks are not the only or even the superior Christians.
  - C. When discussing monks as followers of Christ, we do not mean that monks tried to do literally what Jesus did; obviously, Jesus was not a cloistered monk.
- VI.** The prologue to the Rule introduces valuable images and insights into the Christian life.
- A. Benedict describes the monks as soldiers who must arm themselves against the enemy.
  - B. Monks are laborers and need the qualities of those who are successful as workers.
  - C. Benedict describes monks as travelers and wayfarers, needing to remember where they are heading.

- D. Monks are students for life and thus need instruction and some freedom but also some discipline to succeed.
- VII.** Benedict’s description of the abbot is one of the great masterpieces on the subject of Christian leadership.
- A. The abbot holds the place of Christ in the monastery.
  - B. Being a good abbot consists more in doing good deeds than in speaking fine words.
  - C. The abbot may not use any worldly standards for ranking monks.
  - D. Treating the monks equally does not mean treating them all alike.
  - E. The abbot is required to consult the other monks, including young ones, before making a decision.
  - F. Benedict uses two important metaphors when describing an abbot.
    - 1. He is a shepherd of his flock.
    - 2. He is a physician, who needs to care for the monks.
- VIII.** Benedict creates a 12-step plan for monks to achieve humility.
- A. He stresses the need for obedience at the beginning.
  - B. The goal is to move from fear to love.
- IX.** Although flexible on many matters, Benedict is strict when it comes to monks having their own possessions.
- A. He does not want monks to carry worldly rank into the monastery.
  - B. He believes that monks should imitate the early Christian community described in Acts 4.
- X.** Benedict likens two groups of people to Christ.
- A. First are the sick, who must be treated as Christ would be treated.
  - B. Second are visitors, especially those who are poor.
- XI.** Benedict writes, “Idleness is the enemy of the soul.”
- A. Manual labor is required of all monks.
  - B. The monastic day consists of eight services (offices), physical work, and periods of rest.
  - C. Benedict prescribes that monks read a book each year during Lent but generally does not emphasize study.
- XII.** One of the reasons for the success of the Rule of Benedict is its author’s wise combination of important principles and a degree of flexibility.
- A. Benedict prescribes precise rules for singing psalms—then says that other arrangements are fine as long as the monks sing all 150 psalms each week.

- B.** Benedict is moderate in his prescription for food and drink.
1. Monks should not drink wine at all, but Benedict knows that monks will not follow that prescription; hence, he calls for a limit on the amount.
  2. Benedict prescribes more than one dish to be served at a meal and allows for more food at the time of greatest manual labor.
  3. After a full day's works, the readings monks hear are designed to keep them interested when they are tired.

**XIII.** A monk once told me—referring to a commune that had sprung up near his monastery in the 1960s—that the commune residents should have come to the monks for advice because “we’ve been in the commune business for 1,500 years.”

**Essential Reading:**

Benedict, *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gregory I, *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict*.

Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How do Christians living in the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century adapt principles of Benedictine monasticism for their own use?
2. What are the moral qualities of soldier, laborer, pilgrim, and student that make someone a good Christian?
3. How are monasteries today “schools” for Christians?

## Lecture Nine

### Leo IX, Gregory VII, and Church Reform

**Scope:** By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the papacy had become corrupt and worldly, and those qualities had trickled down to the bishops and parish priests. Beginning with the election of Leo IX in 1049, several popes sought to reform the church by establishing papal authority throughout Christendom. Leo and his successors, most notably, Gregory VII, tried to enforce clerical celibacy and to stop the buying and selling of church offices (*simony*). This era of reform saw a formal division between the Eastern Church and Rome, and Gregory VII became embroiled in a dramatic and sometimes violent struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor. In fact, Gregory was chased from Rome, and traditionally, his last words were said to be: “I love truth and hate iniquity; hence, I die in exile.”

### Outline

- I. By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Church was at one of the low ebbs in its history.
  - A. The papacy had become essentially the office of a political ruler in the central part of Italy and had been traded among local families.
  - B. More generally, the church was deeply imbedded in feudal society.
    1. Many bishops were more interested in the wealth and political power that went with the office than in shepherding their flocks.
    2. Many priests were married or had mistresses and passed their posts on to their children.
  - C. In short, the church was not just *in* the world but *of* the world, too.
- II. The Holy Roman Emperor decided to intervene in the squalid doings of the Roman Church and got “his man” installed as pope.
  - A. This was not easy; his first two candidates died shortly after becoming pope, probably not of natural causes.
  - B. The third candidate, a distant relative of the emperor, became pope with the name Leo IX. In his five-year pontificate, he set in motion a program of reform that would transform the church and its role in society forever.
- III. Leo established new procedures and principles for reform of the church.
  - A. He brought a group of talented churchmen to Rome, both to advise him and to carry out some of the tedious work of having the papacy’s authority acknowledged everywhere in Christendom.

1. These men came to form the College of Cardinals, and in less than a decade after Leo's death, they became the papal electors.
  2. The office of cardinal was originally a liturgical post, signifying the association of clergy from outside Rome with specific churches in Rome that had unique liturgical traditions. Hence, these men swung back and forth—the word *cardinal* derives from the Latin word for “hinge.”
- B.** Leo and his officials in Rome communicated by letter with bishops and others to try to enforce church law.
- C.** Leo also established legates, who would travel to a place where a controversy was at hand, stand in for Leo, and wield his authority.
1. One of those legates, Cardinal Humbert, was sent to Constantinople; this visit led to mutual excommunication between the patriarch there and the Roman Church.
  2. This formal split between what we today usually refer to as the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church has never been fully healed.
- D.** Leo “took the papacy on tour” and occasionally had dramatic confrontations with local bishops, most noticeably in the important French see at Reims.
- E.** These actions showed that Leo meant business in reforming the church and centralizing ecclesiastical authority.
- IV.** Leo condemned what he believed were the great moral failings of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of his day.
- A.** He condemned clerical marriage and clerical concubinage, thus seeking to end inherited offices while trying to define differences between laity and clergy.
- B.** Leo condemned the buying and selling of church offices, the practice of *simony*, which was largely responsible for worldly and political men holding so many bishoprics.
- V.** After Leo IX's death in 1054, the popes and their officials worked hard to make permanent the changes established by Leo.
- A.** During this time, the cardinals were established as papal electors.
- B.** A decree was issued that banned the practice of lay investiture.
1. Lay investiture is the practice of laymen, such as the emperor, investing a bishop with the spiritual symbols of office.
  2. This practice essentially allowed laymen to select bishops, usually for reasons not related to their pastoral abilities.
- VI.** In 1073, Cardinal Hildebrand, the sole remaining cardinal from the pontificate of Leo IX, was elected pope and took the name Gregory VII.
- A.** Gregory struggled aggressively for authority over the church.

1. He took up the issue of lay investiture.
  2. He even claimed the power to depose an emperor.
- B.** Gregory came into conflict with the emperor Henry IV.
1. The specific issue was lay investiture.
  2. The larger issue was the leadership of Christian society.
- C.** In a dramatic moment, after Gregory suspended Henry from his position as emperor, Gregory met with Henry IV at Canossa.
1. Henry came as a penitent sinner.
  2. As a priest, Gregory offered forgiveness and reinstated the emperor.
- D.** Ultimately, this agreement did not hold.
1. The pope again deposed Henry.
  2. The emperor refused to recognize Gregory as pope.
  3. The German nobles supported Gregory, while most German bishops supported the emperor.
- E.** In the ensuing struggles, Henry took the city of Rome, and Gregory fled to Salerno, where he died.
- VII.** The so-called Investiture Contest was eventually settled in a compromise that was closer to the papal than to the imperial position.
- VIII.** This period of church reform left lasting legacies.
- A.** It reestablished the universal jurisdiction of the popes.
  - B.** The idea that an emperor was God's chief representative on Earth and that he had responsibility for the church, a position that had been held for almost 300 years, was essentially dismissed.
  - C.** From time to time, popes enlisted the laity to enforce their pronouncements; for example, congregants were told not to attend a mass said by a married priest. Later, there would be lay-led movements for greater reform, some declared heretical and others incorporated into the church.
- IX.** Leo IX and Gregory VII were savvy leaders who understood political, as well as moral, authority.
- A.** Both were courageous leaders, recognizing that the status quo was unacceptable to God.
  - B.** Both were willing to take on incredibly powerful forces and risked rebellion from clerics who were comfortable with the way things were.
  - C.** Whatever their mistakes, Leo and Gregory were relentless in freeing the church from secular domination.

**Essential Reading:**

Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300*, to p. 95.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250*, to p. 181.

H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII: 1073–1085*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why was secular control of the church unacceptable?
2. Did Leo or Gregory have a chance to reform the church without stirring up animosity and division?
3. If such matters as clerical celibacy were tools to reform certain prevalent practices, do they need to be reconsidered in light of the different contexts in which they exist in other eras?



## Lecture Ten

### Bernard of Clairvaux and Monastic Reform

**Scope:** Just as the papacy underwent a great reform in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, so, too, did the monastic world. The most significant new institution was the Cistercian Order, begun in 1098, which tried to return to a more rigorous practice of the Rule of St. Benedict than was observed at this time. The man most responsible for the Cistercians' success is Bernard of Clairvaux. However, he was much more than a monastic reformer. Bernard urged the papacy to steer clear of worldly entanglements and preached a crusade. Most important, Bernard was one of the great mystical writers in the history of Christianity. His sermons, treatises, and poems are important and influential Christian literature. A century and a half after Bernard's death, the poet Dante used Bernard as his final guide on his journey from the dark wood of error to God.

### Outline

- I. Just as the church in general was in disorder by the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, so was the state of the monastic life.
  - A. The wealth of monasteries determined that secular rulers were interested in controlling monasteries.
  - B. The monks had gotten away from manual labor and had serfs, just as secular landlords did.
  - C. Primogeniture, the rule that gave inheritance of land to the oldest son, led to many younger sons being sent to monasteries without any vocation to that life.
- II. Several reform movements of the monastic life took place, beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
  - A. The abbey of Cluny in Burgundy was established so that local nobles or bishops could not control it or intervene in its affairs.
    1. It became a center of reform, and by the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps 1,000 monasteries were connected to it.
    2. The reform did not lead to the withdrawal of monasteries from feudal structures.
  - B. Several monastic movements advocated a return to the earliest form of monastic life—the eremitical life of the desert fathers.
    1. The earliest of these somewhat hybrid eremitical monasteries was Camaldoli, founded by St. Romauld in the mountains of Tuscany.
    2. Another was Vallombrosa, founded by a Florentine in the hills south of Florence.

3. The most successful was La Grande Chartreuse, founded near Grenoble, France, by St. Bruno in 1084.
    - a. In the 12<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, many so-called Carthusian monasteries were founded in Europe; these are called *charterhouses* in English.
    - b. The Carthusians were known for their austerity and had something of a motto: “Never reformed because never deformed.”
  - C. Cluny did not separate itself enough from “the world,” and even for many devout and zealous Christians the hermit orders separated themselves too much.
- III.** By far, the most popular and important monastic movement in this period was the founding and development of the Cistercian Order, established at Citeaux (Cistercium in Latin), France, in 1098.
- A. The basic idea of Citeaux was for monks to “get back to basics,” which included manual labor and, more generally, Benedictine simplicity.
  - B. Although Citeaux was unlike Benedict’s Montecassino in several ways (it is impossible simply to transpose an exact pattern of life to a group of monks removed by more than 500 years), the Cistercians became a wildly successful “solution” to the problems of monasticism at the time.
  - C. When the Cistercians established daughter houses, they were expected to conform strictly to the life at Citeaux; hence, it is fair to refer to Cistercians as the first monastic *order*, governed by a constitution and involving meetings of superiors to refine the Cistercian life.
- IV.** In 1112, a young man named Bernard entered the monastery of Citeaux along with 30 of his relatives; three years later, Bernard was sent to be the founding abbot of a new monastery of Clairvaux.
- A. Bernard soon became a famous monk, churchman, political negotiator, preacher, and spiritual writer.
  - B. At the time of his death in 1153, there were more than 300 Cistercian monasteries in Europe, many established as a direct result of Bernard’s fame and example.
  - C. Bernard is often known today (and seen in art) as one specially devoted to the Virgin Mary and in no small part responsible for the development of her cult in medieval Europe.
- V.** Like all people, Bernard was (even in certain ways that make us uncomfortable) a person of his time.
- A. Bernard was the most important preacher of the Second Crusade.

1. His famous sermon at the Cluniac monastery of Vézelay was so successful that not enough pilgrim badges had been prepared for those who pledged to go.
  2. However, shortly thereafter, Bernard preached against attacks on Jews in Europe.
- B.** Bernard opposed the new kinds of Christian learning coming from theologians we call the *schoolmen*.
1. Bernard feared a too much intellectualized Christianity that emphasized knowledge more than experience.
  2. He was zealous in seeking the condemnation of certain writings of the most famous of the schoolmen, Peter Abelard.

**VI.** Perhaps the most-read work of Bernard's is his last, entitled *On Consideration*.

- A.** Near the end of Bernard's life, a man who had once been a novice at Clairvaux was elected pope as Eugenius III.
- B.** *On Consideration* is a book of advice to the pope.
- C.** Later authors, from Dante to Martin Luther, drew heavily from this work.
- D.** It was the bedside reading of Pope John XXIII (d. 1963), and Pope Benedict XVI has quoted it publicly.

**VII.** The advice in *On Consideration* is really an application of fundamental Christian principles to the chief ecclesiastical office.

- A.** Bernard urges the pope not to spend his day concerned with earthly business, such as disputes over property settled according to the law of the church (canon law).
- B.** Such work is unworthy of a pope, who should be praying for, and building up (edifying), the people of God.
- C.** In language reminiscent of the monastic tradition, Bernard writes that the pope needs leisure (freedom from caring about worldly things) in order to meditate.
- D.** Using an image from Benedict and the monastic life, Bernard refers to the pope as a laborer, a peasant, whose job is to serve rather than to rule.
- E.** Bernard asks why any cleric would want to act like a knight or a secular ruler—those positions are inferior to the authority and ministry of the pope and other clerics. Why would a shepherd want to be adorned with gold? Does that benefit the sheep?
- F.** Bernard reminds the pope that the apostles were not allowed earthly dominion.

- VIII.** Bernard was a poet and mystic, and his spiritual writings are among the great classics of Christian literature.
- A.** Perhaps his most famous works of this type are his sermons on the Song of Songs.
1. These sermons, 86 in number, were written to be read rather than delivered orally.
  2. Although they take up four modern bound volumes, Bernard did not address all the short verses in Song of Songs.
  3. Monks practiced a meditative reading rather than a rapid or scholarly one, and these sermons are a wonderful example of meditative, slow reading of a text.
- B.** The first verse of the Song of Songs is, “Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.”
1. This image, from a rather erotic love poem after all, Bernard understands to be about the experience of union with God; this is a mystical kiss.
  2. Bernard explains that personal experience, not scholarly commentary, can unlock the meaning of such a verse and such a book of scripture.
  3. Anyone who has experienced this mystical kiss will passionately seek that experience again.
  4. For Bernard, the kiss of the mouth (union) follows the kiss of the feet (forgiveness) and the kiss of the hand (perseverance).
- C.** The mystical writings of Bernard are responsible for Dante having Bernard of Clairvaux as his final guide to the experience of God.

**Essential Reading:**

Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration; On the Song of Songs*, vol. 1.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How are Bernard’s exhortations to the pope and his mystical writings both rooted in his experience as a monk?
2. How do we explain Bernard the great lover of God as also a zealous preacher of crusade against Islam?
3. What is the value of meditative reading, and how do we break away from our habit of trying to read as many words and books as possible?

## Lecture Eleven

### Francis of Assisi

**Scope:** A recent book refers to Francis as the “last Christian,” and he has even been called the “only Christian.” The story of how this son of a rich merchant underwent a radical conversion and chose a life of extreme poverty is the stuff of countless books, at least three movies, and even a comic book. In this lecture, we will not just examine his extraordinary life but try to explain how Francis understood Christ and how that understanding led him to poverty and to his fabled love of animals and his warm embrace of lepers and others who lived on the margins of society in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Italy. We will also discuss the stigmatization of Francis, the imprinting of the wounds of Christ on the little poor one from Assisi, and how that provided, for many, proof of his unique likeness to Christ.

### Outline

- I. Francis has probably had more superlatives attached to his name than anyone who has ever lived.
  - A. He has been called the “last Christian.”
  - B. A modern Brazilian theologian called him a “model for human liberation.”
  - C. The bestselling work of all time about Francis, a Marvel comic, refers to Francis as “brother of the universe.”
  - D. He is probably the most widely known and venerated non-biblical saint by Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox alike.
  
- II. Francis had a vision in a crumbling church outside the walls of Assisi that he was being called by God to rebuild the church.
  - A. At first, Francis took this call quite literally, gathering stones to fix up little San Damiano and, later, other churches.
  - B. Eventually, he and others, including Pope Innocent III, understood this call as a rebuilding of the institutional church.
  - C. As Francis’s earliest biographer emphasized, Francis was called to rebuild an old church, not to establish a new one.
    1. In his early days, Francis was thought by some who saw him to be a heretic, but he was, in fact, completely loyal to the institutions that he believed were created by God.
    2. Francis did his “rebuilding” primarily through preaching by word and example, rather than by criticizing rich and sometimes corrupt church officials.

- III.** As Francis looked at the church and the society of his day (early 13<sup>th</sup>-century Italy), he saw the besetting sins of pride and avarice, a growing complexity in society, and a lukewarmness toward Christianity, which he challenged.
- A.** Pride was especially the sin associated with the feudal aristocracy; in fact, pride was often represented in medieval art as a knight falling off his horse: *Pride goeth before a fall*.
1. Francis himself had aspired to knighthood.
  2. In Francis's time, almost all the bishops and abbots had come from the feudal nobility.
  3. The antidote to pride was humility, and Francis lived a life of humility.
    - a. Francis's humility was not a kind of false modesty but an honest understanding of his own life.
    - b. God's act of becoming human was, for Francis, the greatest expression of humility and the one all humans should recognize and seek to imitate.
- B.** For the rising middle class, the besetting sin was avarice.
1. The money economy was relatively new, and people respond quite differently to money than they do to wealth in other forms, such as land.
  2. Francis grew up in the house of a rich merchant and worked for several years in the family cloth business.
  3. He chose to live a life of utter poverty, dropping out of the money economy and never even touching money.
- C.** Life was becoming more complex, especially in the development of universities and what we might call academic theology.
1. Francis went to school for several years and could write in both Latin and his native Umbrian, but he was no scholar.
  2. Francis understood that there was a certain aridity and pride in much of academic theology. What is the value of knowing and being able to make arguments and proofs if such things resulted in bragging rather than in improvement to life?
  3. Francis brought his experience of God, his way of life, and his prayerfulness to scripture. In a famous story, a scholar recognized that Francis's way was better.
  4. However, Francis never denounced learning and scholarship and, indeed, was quite supportive of one of his learned brothers, now known as St. Anthony of Padua.
- D.** Francis recognized that many Christians were essentially "going through the motions," and he wanted them to experience God's forgiveness and love.
1. Francis's preaching called people to repent rather than to understand doctrines.

2. Francis preached at least as much with his actions as with words; his earliest biographer said that he made a tongue of his body.
  3. One dramatic way that Francis tried to bring the experience of God's humility and love into the lives of "ordinary" Christians was when he brought an ox, ass, manger, and straw into a cave in Greccio for the celebration of Christmas.
- IV.** Francis received the support of his bishop and the sanction of the pope and had thousands of brothers in his order by the time he died at age 44. Why was he so successful?
- A.** Francis's conversion was an ongoing process; there was no magic moment.
    1. He became unhappy, despite his wealth and position in society.
    2. He found consolation in prayer that he lacked in other facets of his life.
    3. Francis tried to follow God's call as best he could, even when he knew he did not understand it very well.
    4. His experience with lepers was transformative, as he himself tells us in a rare autobiographical passage in his writings.
    5. His humility restrained him, and he almost never criticized others with his words.
  - B.** Francis always learned from others and from experience.
    1. He wished to be ruled, not to rule others, hence the name of his order, the Order of Friars Minor (Lesser Brothers).
    2. His openness is demonstrated by the fact that he brought back to Europe ideas he learned while in Egypt in the presence of the sultan Malik al-Kamil.
  - C.** Francis was open, virtually unable to deceive.
    1. Pope Innocent III recognized this quality when he approved the order.
    2. Francis's rejection of special food after his conversion is an indication of his genuineness.
    3. A story of Francis sewing equal patches on both the inside and the outside of his habit is emblematic of his transparency.
- V.** Francis's reception of the stigmata two years before his death shows his mystical union with God and his authentic Christ-likeness.
- A.** The stigmatization is a gift that allowed Francis to experience the suffering of Christ on the cross in a unique way.
  - B.** The marks on Francis's body are a seal of his authenticity from God and show the world that Francis in some real sense became what he loved.

**Essential Reading:**

The writings of Francis and the first life of Francis by Thomas of Celano in *Francis of Assisi: The Saint*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Raoul Manselli, *St. Francis of Assisi*.

William R. Cook, *Francis of Assisi: The Way of Poverty and Humility*.

Pamela Mason Wagner, director, *Reluctant Saint—Francis of Assisi* (video, 2003).

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How can the life of an imitator of Christ in the 13<sup>th</sup> century be a bridge between people today and Christ?
2. What might have happened if one of the popes during Francis's life would have been willing to reform the church radically and tried to root it again in poverty, humility, and simplicity?
3. Why would modern people think of Francis as a liberated human and even as the last person really to understand and live according to the gospel?



## Lecture Twelve

### Clare of Assisi

**Scope:** In 1211, young Clare escaped from her home and joined Francis, whom she had heard preaching in Assisi. After living briefly in convents with Benedictine nuns, she moved to a little church that Francis had repaired with his own hands and remained there until her death in 1253. As much as Clare loved Francis, she was much more than a “female Francis.” She developed a spiritual life for women and was the first woman to write a rule for a house of women. She created a new and risky life for religious women because she sought and received the *privilege of poverty*, the right of her and her sisters to own absolutely nothing. Additionally, Clare’s letters to Agnes of Prague and other writings constitute an important element in the development of female spirituality.

### Outline

- I. By Francis’s time, religious institutions for women were well developed.
  - A. There had been female hermits in the Egyptian desert, and there were monasteries for women almost as early as those for men.
  - B. Many of the most famous and influential women of the Middle Ages were sisters, for example, Hildegard of Bingen and Heloise.
    1. These women were sisters who lived under an adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict.
    2. Their convents tended to be rather well endowed, and virtually all of the sisters were the daughters of feudal lords.
  - C. New convents built and endowed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century adopted the reforms of the Cistercians.
  - D. In the developing urban world, there were groups of women who prayed and acted and sometimes lived together, but they often were regarded as suspicious, if not heretical, by ecclesiastical authorities.
- II. Clare, born in 1193, lived in Assisi but was of the feudal class.
  - A. She was raised primarily by her mother.
    1. Clare’s mother had taken part in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
    2. She and other women, including some servants, formed a lay community of women who prayed and performed acts of charity.
  - B. Despite the claims of some modern versions, including movies, of the lives of Francis and Clare, they had no romantic relationship and perhaps did not know each other at all until after Francis renounced the world.

- C. Clare, about 12 years younger than Francis, certainly would have seen him begging alms in the streets of Assisi and heard him preaching.
- III.** When Clare was 18 years old, she decided to join the movement that Francis had started.
- A. On Palm Sunday in 1212, Clare “escaped” her house and went to the Portiuncola, a small church on the plain below Assisi where Francis and his brothers were living.
  - B. In a symbolic act, Francis cut Clare’s hair (tonsured her), indicating that she was no longer “in the world.”
  - C. At first, Clare was placed in a nearby Benedictine convent, but clearly, she had not escaped her family to become a conventional nun.
  - D. Clare’s male relatives were furious and tried to take her back to Assisi.
- IV.** Francis soon installed Clare at the church of San Damiano, the first of the little churches around Assisi that he had rebuilt.
- A. Clare remained at San Damiano until her death in 1253, more than 40 years.
  - B. Soon, other women came to join her at San Damiano, first a sister and, eventually, Clare’s own mother.
  - C. Today, we often imagine that Clare wanted to or even planned to travel and preach and do the other things that the friars did, but there is no evidence for this; it would have been a virtual impossibility in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
  - D. Hence, Clare sought to live as Francis lived, yet to do so in an enclosed place.
    - 1. We should not look at Clare as someone “forced” into a life she did not want.
    - 2. We should look at Clare as a startlingly original woman who created a way of life for herself and others that was neither Benedictine nor a female copy of male Franciscanism.
- V.** The main issue that Clare dealt with was what poverty, so central to Francis and his followers, meant for women living in one place.
- A. During Clare’s four decades at San Damiano, popes made more than one attempt to provide her and her sisters with property so that they had stability and a predictable income.
  - B. In 1216, Clare received the so-called *privilege of poverty*, the right to own nothing at all, and its renewal in 1228 by Pope Gregory IX, former cardinal protector of the Franciscans, is an important milestone in defining the life Clare wished for herself and her sisters.

- C. Despite the privilege of poverty, popes tried to place Clare and her sisters under a version of the Rule of St. Benedict and granted exemptions from poverty to some foundations by Clare's followers.
  - D. Clare struggled against any easing of the rigors and instability of poverty, eventually writing the first rule for religious women authored by a woman.
    - 1. This rule enshrined poverty.
    - 2. It was approved in Assisi by Pope Innocent IV as Clare lay on her deathbed.
  - E. In her writings, Clare referred to "blessed poverty," "holy poverty," and "God-centered poverty," and in her rule, she writes of "highest poverty."
  - F. Of course, Clare and her sisters could not leave San Damiano and beg, but they made items, such as altar cloths, that others sold for them to obtain necessities.
  - G. San Damiano was extraordinarily simple and austere, and Clare did the most humble tasks, despite poor health caused at least in part by a rigorous and, some might say, exaggerated asceticism.
- VI.** Clare's most beautiful contributions to Christian literature are probably her letters to Agnes of Prague, the daughter of a king of Bohemia, who established a house of Poor Clares.
- A. She develops the image of Christ as the mirror into which we must gaze.
  - B. In that mirror, we see poverty, humility, and charity.
  - C. In particular, Clare asked Agnes to gaze at the "mirror suspended on the wood of the cross."
- VII.** Clare is far more than the "female Francis," as she is sometimes thought of.
- A. She sought a life and a spirituality that addressed the concerns of her and her sisters.
  - B. In a sexual role reversal, she told of a vision in which she sucked milk from the nipple of St. Francis.
  - C. In his canonization bull, Pope Alexander IV played on Clare's name, which means "clear" or "bright."
  - D. Today, in part because of a vision Clare had of a Christmas mass that she could not attend, she is the patron saint of television for Catholics.

**Essential Reading:**

Regis Armstrong, ed., "The Legend of St. Clare" and Clare's letters to Agnes of Prague, in *The Lady: Clare of Assisi, Early Documents*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Ingrid Peterson, *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*.

Ilia Delio, *Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why is it important for a woman to write a rule that women live under?
2. In learning about Clare, how can we see Francis reflected in her?
3. How could a cloistered sister outside a little town in Italy get her way with popes who had a very different vision of what the sister's life should consist of?

## Timeline

- c. 4 A.D.–30 A.D. .... Life of Jesus of Nazareth.
- c. 35–65 ..... Ministry of Paul.
- c. 70–95 ..... Period during which the four canonical gospels were written.
- c. 107 ..... Martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch.
- c. 155 ..... Martyrdom of Polycarp.
- c. 160–c. 240..... Life of Tertullian.
- 203 ..... Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity.
- c. 251–356 ..... Life of Antony, the first Christian monk.
- 258 ..... Martyrdom of Lawrence.
- 269 ..... Antony leaves his village for the “desert”.
- 284–305 ..... Reign of Diocletian.
- 287 ..... Martyrdom of Sebastian.
- 305 ..... Martyrdom of Catherine of Alexandria.
- 312–337 ..... Reign of Constantine.
- 316–397 ..... Life of Martin of Tours.
- 325 ..... First ecumenical council held at Nicaea (modern Iznik, Turkey).
- 328–373 ..... Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.
- 345–399 ..... Life of Evagrius of Pontus.
- 354–430 ..... Life of Augustine.
- c. 360–c. 435..... Life of John Cassian.
- 386 ..... Conversion of Augustine.
- 397 ..... Augustine writes *Confessions*.
- 432 ..... Traditional date given for Patrick’s arrival in Ireland as a missionary bishop.
- 480–c. 547 ..... Life of Benedict.
- 493 ..... Probable date of Patrick’s death, suggesting a date later than 432 for the beginning of his mission to Ireland.

529 .....	Traditional date for Benedict's founding of Montecassino.
800 .....	Coronation of Charlemagne as the first (Holy) Roman Emperor of the Middle Ages.
962 .....	Traditional date for the founding of the first great monastery on Mount Athos.
1049–1054 .....	Pontificate of Leo IX.
1054 .....	Beginning of the Catholic/Orthodox Schism.
1073–1085 .....	Pontificate of Gregory VII.
1077 .....	Meeting of Gregory VII and Henry IV at Canossa.
1084 .....	Foundation of La Grande Chartreuse by Bruno.
1095 .....	Preaching of the First Crusade.
1098 .....	Founding of the monastery of Citeaux, the first Cistercian monastery.
1112–1153 .....	Monastic career of Bernard of Clairvaux.
1122 .....	Agreement to end lay investiture reached in the Concordat of Worms.
1147 .....	Bernard of Clairvaux preaches the Second Crusade.
c. 1182–1226 .....	Life of Francis of Assisi.
c. 1193–1253 .....	Life of Clare of Assisi.
1209/1210 .....	Approval of the Primitive Franciscan Rule by Innocent III.
1211 .....	Clare enters religious life.
1219 .....	Francis meets with Sultan Malik al-Kamil.
1224 .....	Francis receives the stigmata at LaVerna.
1296–1359 .....	Life of Gregory Palamas.
1305–1378 .....	Papacy located in Avignon, the so-called Babylonian Captivity.
1347–1380 .....	Life of Catherine of Siena.
1369–1415 .....	Life of John Hus.

1378–1415 .....	The Great Schism.
1380–1444 .....	Life of Bernardino of Siena.
1414–1417 .....	Council of Constance.
1415 .....	John Hus burned at the stake in Constance.
1433 .....	Hussite speakers appear before the Council of Basel.
1453 .....	The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks.
1478–1535 .....	Life of Thomas More.
1483–1546 .....	Life of Martin Luther.
1509–1547 .....	Reign of Henry VIII of England.
1516 .....	Thomas More publishes <i>Utopia</i> in Latin.
1517 .....	Martin Luther posts his Ninety-Five Theses.
1521 .....	Diet of Worms.
1535 .....	Thomas More beheaded at the Tower of London.
1619 .....	The initial importation of black slaves into what is now the United States.
1646 .....	Martyrdom of Isaac Jogues.
1703–1791 .....	Life of John Wesley.
1707–1788 .....	Life of Charles Wesley.
1729 .....	Establishment of the first Methodist Society in Oxford.
1840–1889 .....	Life of Father Damien of Molokai.
1873 .....	Father Damien volunteers to serve lepers at Molokai.
1894–1941 .....	Life of Maximilian Kolbe.
1906–1945 .....	Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
1910–1997 .....	Life of Mother Teresa.
1928– .....	Life of Gustavo Gutierrez.
1929–1968 .....	Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

- 1941 ..... Martyrdom of Maximilian Kolbe at Auschwitz.
- 1945 ..... Martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer at Flossenberg Prison.
- 1950 ..... Mother Teresa founds the Order of Missionaries of Charity.
- 1956 ..... Martin Luther King, Jr., organizes the bus boycott in Montgomery, AL, following the arrest of Rosa Parks.
- 1962–1965 ..... Second Vatican Council meets in Rome.
- 1963 ..... Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers his “I Have a Dream” speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC.
- 1968 ..... Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, TN; meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellin.
- 1971 ..... Publication of Gustavo Gutierrez’s *A Theology of Liberation*.
- 1978 ..... Meeting of Latin American bishops at Puebla, where they proclaimed Christ’s preferential option for the poor.
- 1982 ..... Canonization of Maximilian Kolbe by Pope John Paul II.



## Glossary

**abba:** This is an Aramaic word meaning “dad” and was used by Jesus. The great men of the desert came to be known as *abbas*, and the word is the root for the head of a monastery, the *abbot*. The feminine form, used for great women of the desert, is *amma*.

**accidie:** Sometimes translated “sloth,” this is a great temptation to the monks of the desert. It is a kind of boredom, a loss of zeal.

**apocryphal:** This term refers to those gospels, letters, acts, and apocalypses that are not included in the New Testament. With the exception of the Gospel of James, these works are regarded as having no historical information about the life and ministry of Jesus, although they tell us a good deal about varieties of Christianity that existed in the early Christian centuries.

**Arians:** A group of Christians who based their views on those of a 4<sup>th</sup>-century priest from Alexandria named Arius. He believed that Christ, the Word, was the first creation of God, rather than part of the uncreated God. Arian teachings were condemned by the Council of Nicaea in 325.

**Augustinian friars:** This was one of the smaller mendicant orders of the church, founded in Italy in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The most famous Augustinian friar was Martin Luther, who entered the order in Erfurt and lived in the Augustinian convent in Wittenberg when he moved there to teach. Later, Luther and his family were given the Augustinian convent in Wittenberg.

**Auschwitz:** Of all the Nazi concentration camps, Auschwitz in Poland is rightly the most notorious. Millions of Jews died there in the last years of World War II. Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest, was starved to death there in 1941.

**Avignon:** This city in what is now southern France was the location of the papacy from 1305 to 1378. From 1378 to 1415, the period of the Great Schism, one claimant to the papal office lived in Avignon, while the other lived in Rome. The splendid palace of the popes still dominates Avignon.

**Bohemia:** This medieval kingdom is now the larger part of the Czech Republic and includes the city of Prague. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a major revolt took place there against the Roman Church, following the death by burning in 1415 of the popular preacher and university master John Hus at the Council of Constance.

**canonical:** Those gospels and other Christian writings that are included in the New Testament are referred to as canonical. Only in the 4<sup>th</sup> century was a generally accepted list of books, the *canon*, defined.

**Canossa:** This castle in northern Italy was the site of a meeting of Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII in 1077. Gregory forgave the penitent emperor, but shortly thereafter, Henry reverted to lay investiture and Gregory deposed him from the imperial office.

**Carthusians:** An order of hermit monks founded by Bruno at La Grande Chartreuse near Grenoble in southern France. The hermits lived in small houses around a large cloister. The order still exists today, and some former Carthusian houses are among the most interesting monuments of the later Middle Ages.

**cenobitic:** This term refers to the communal form of monasticism, in which monks live in community under an abbot. The other form of monastic life is eremitic, meaning living alone as a hermit.

**Christian perfection:** John Wesley taught, based on biblical texts, that Christians could achieve a state of sinless perfection in this life. This did not mean, however, that Christians did not make mistakes or operate sometimes in ignorance.

**Cistercian:** This order of monks following the Rule of St. Benedict was founded at Citeaux (Latin: Cistercium) in 1098. It grew in size and influence largely thanks to Bernard of Clairvaux, a monk from 1112 until his death in 1153.

**City of God:** Augustine's most comprehensive book, it deals with history and politics in a Christian framework. Augustine wrote it at least in part as a response to pagan critiques of Christianity following the Gothic sack of Rome in 410.

**Cluny:** This monastery operating under the Rule of St. Benedict was established in Burgundy in 910 and constituted a major reform of monastic life in Europe. Ultimately, there were perhaps 1,000 monasteries in some way dependent on Cluny by the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

**College of Cardinals:** This term originally referred to a group of churchmen called to Rome by Pope Leo IX as advisors and administrators. In 1059, the cardinals were given the responsibility of electing the pope. With relatively few changes in how this is accomplished, the College of Cardinals is still the papal electoral body.

**Confession:** The title given to St. Patrick's surviving semi-autobiographical letter. It is the only document from ancient times in which a slave describes his enslavement.

**Confessions:** Augustine's story of his life until his conversion at age 31. The last four books are not narrative, but they teach readers how to read the Bible and, thus, provide a way of reading Augustine's own story.

**Congregation of the Sacred Hearts:** Father Damien was a member of this Catholic missionary order. He studied as a member of the order in France and was sent by its leaders to do missionary work in Hawaii, eventually ministering to lepers on the island of Molokai.

**Council of Basel:** Convened in 1431 largely to deal with the success of the Hussites in Bohemia, this council invited Hussite representatives to speak in

1433 and made some important concessions to the Hussites, although they were never completely implemented.

**Council of Constance:** This ecumenical council of the Catholic Church was convened in 1414 to end the Great Schism, and eventually it did so before its dissolution in 1417. In 1415, the council condemned the Bohemian preacher John Hus of heresy, and he was burned at the stake.

**Council of Nicaea:** The first ecumenical council, which met in Nicaea (Iznik in modern Turkey) in 325. The council condemned the views of Arius and his followers.

**Dexter Avenue Baptist Church:** In 1956, Martin Luther King, Jr., was pastor of this church. From there, King organized the bus boycott following the arrest of Rosa Parks.

**Diet of Worms:** At this meeting of the leaders of the Holy Roman Empire in 1521, Martin Luther stood by what he had written (“Here I stand”) and was condemned. The elector of Saxony “kidnapped” him to protect him from being arrested by the emperor.

***florilegium:*** Word used for collections made by monks of their favorite passages from books they read (often of their favorite sayings of the great monks of the past). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Merton made his own *florilegium* of his favorite sayings of the desert fathers, published as *The Wisdom of the Desert*.

**gospel:** The word means “good news” and can refer to any proclamation of the good news of Christ. Often, however, it is used to refer to the four accounts of Jesus’ life found in the New Testament.

**hesychasm:** A method of prayer and ascent to God especially associated with the Orthodox monastic tradition centered in Mount Athos. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there was a dispute within Orthodoxy about hesychasm, but its defenders won the day.

**Holy Mountain:** Mount Athos in Greece is often known as the Holy Mountain because of its concentration of Orthodox monasteries and hermitages.

**Holy Roman Emperor:** The office of the medieval emperors beginning with Charlemagne. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century on, the center of the empire was in Germany. The great clash of emperor and pope occurred in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the pontificate of Gregory VII and while Henry IV was emperor.

**Humanist:** Refers to those scholars of the Renaissance who profoundly read and were deeply influenced by the great writers of classical antiquity. Humanism originated in Italy. The most famous transalpine Humanists were Thomas More and Erasmus of Rotterdam.

**Hussites:** This term designates the followers of John Hus in Bohemia. The movement was strong following Hus's execution. In the 1430s, there was a division between Hussite factions that allowed the Roman Church to reassert some power in Bohemia.

**Jesus Prayer:** "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." This prayer is used especially by Orthodox monks as something of a mantra to seek God. It is known outside the Orthodox world primarily because of the popularity of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian work, *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

**Judaizer:** This term refers to early Jewish followers of Jesus who believed that only Jews could participate fully in the activities of the church. Paul was the principal opponent of the Judaizers and won major concessions for Gentile followers of Jesus.

**Kalawao:** The name of the leper colony located on the island of Molokai where Father Damien ministered to lepers for 16 years.

**Knights of the Immaculate (Mary):** Maximilian Kolbe established this religious society dedicated to service to the Virgin Mary. Begun in Poland, it is today an international Catholic organization.

**lay investiture:** The practice of conferring the spiritual symbols of office on bishops by emperors and other lay officials. It became the central contention between papacy and empire during the pontificate of Gregory VII (1073–1085) and was settled in favor of the popes in 1122 with the Concordat of Worms.

**Letters and Papers from Prison:** This famous collection of documents written by (and to) Dietrich Bonhoeffer while he was in prison contains some of his most radical rethinking of Christianity, especially the concept of religionless Christianity.

**liberation theology:** This type of theology was pioneered by Gustavo Gutierrez with the publication of *A Theology of Liberation* in 1971. Gutierrez defined a Christianity in which God made a preferential option for the poor and that sought to liberate people from sinful ideologies and structures, not only from personal sin.

**martyrdom:** The condition of suffering death because of one's beliefs. Those who die because of their belief in Christ are called *martyrs*. There have been martyrs in every Christian era, but those of the first three Christian centuries are the most famous. According to Acts of the Apostles, the first martyr was Stephen.

**Medellin:** This city in Colombia hosted the 1968 meeting of Latin American bishops. With Gustavo Gutierrez as a theological advisor, they talked of a pastoral option for the poor.

**Methodist Societies:** The first Methodist Society (or Holy Club) was founded in 1729 at Oxford by Charles Wesley, and his older brother, John, soon became

a part of this movement. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Methodist Societies developed throughout England and are the origins of the modern Methodist churches.

**Molokai:** This Hawaiian island was the location of the leper colony called Kalawao. For 16 years, Father Damien ministered to lepers there until he died of the disease in 1889.

**monk:** A monk is someone who renounces many elements of the world in order to seek God. Monks can be either hermits or cenobites. Although for most of their history, monks have taken formal vows and lived under a rule, the early desert monks were more independent.

**Montecassino:** Located south of Rome, this mountain is the site of the foundation of Benedict's famous monastery. Although destroyed several times, including once during a bombing by the United States in 1944, it has always been reestablished and is still an important monastery today.

**Moravian Brethren:** Originally founded in 1457 as an offshoot of the Hussite movement in Moravia (today the eastern part of the Czech Republic), this movement was revised along Pietist lines in 1722 by Count Zinzendorf in Germany. The Moravian Brethren in London were a direct influence on the shaping of the Wesley brothers' Methodist Societies.

**Mount Athos:** A peninsula in Thrace in the Aegean Sea. Since 962, it has been populated by Orthodox monasteries and hermitages.

**mystic:** Term used to describe men and women who experienced in some manner a union with God while still on Earth. One of the greatest mystical writers was Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153).

**Ninety-Five Theses:** These were debating points concerning indulgences that Luther posted in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Their translation into German and circulation thanks to the printing press made Martin Luther, an obscure professor at an obscure university, something of a personality in Germany.

**Observant Movement:** A movement within the Franciscan Order in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to return to the simplicity of the early friars. Bernardino of Siena was one of the great leaders of this movement, and it became a separate order 73 years after his death.

***On Consideration:*** Probably the most widely read book of Bernard of Clairvaux. It is written to Pope Eugenius III and urges him to spend more time in prayer and less in litigation and other worldly matters.

**Order of Missionaries of Charity:** The order founded in Calcutta in 1950 by Mother Teresa. It serves the poorest of the poor. Sisters are easily recognized by their distinctive habit—a white sari with blue stripes.

**Orthodox:** The word literally means “correct teaching,” but it is most often used to designate Christians who became distinct from Western Catholicism

beginning in 1054. The “first among equals” of the Orthodox is the patriarch of Constantinople. In fact, there are a number of essentially independent (autocephalous) Orthodox churches, loosely defined along national lines (Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and so on).

***passio***: A narrative of the “passion,” or death, of a saint. In the story, it is clear that the saint is imitating Christ, whose passion story is narrated in all four canonical gospels.

**Pharisee**: The Pharisees were a faction of Jews who stressed obedience to the law and ritual purity and a certain separation from Gentiles. Paul was a Pharisee before his conversion.

***Philokalia***: Monks, especially on Mount Athos, made collections of early ascetic texts that supported their notions of prayer and ascent to God. There are several versions of the *Philokalia*.

**Pietism**: The 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century movement within the Lutheran Church to emphasize the religion of the heart more than doctrine and credal statements. One of the most important Pietists was Johann Arndt. Elements of Pietist thought influenced the Wesley brothers and the development of Methodism in England.

**priesthood of believers**: According to Martin Luther, every baptized Christian was a priest, although that did not mean that he or she had the right to exercise public ministry. This set Luther at odds with the Roman Church, for whom priestly ordination is a sacrament.

**privilege of poverty**: In 1228, Pope Gregory IX gave Clare the privilege of poverty, which granted to her and the sisters at San Damiano the right to own absolutely nothing.

**Puebla**: This Mexican city hosted the 1978 meeting of Latin American bishops, who proclaimed Christ’s preferential option for the poor.

**relics**: The remains and/or possessions of those considered saints, which are often carefully preserved, displayed, and venerated. This practice began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. One of the best known examples today is the head of St. Catherine of Siena, displayed in the church of San Domenico in her native city.

**religionless Christianity**: While in prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer considered what Christianity might be like minus its religious premise. To many, the term *religionless Christianity* is an oxymoron, but Bonhoeffer wondered if there was an alternative given the dominant worldview of his time.

**Rule of St. Benedict**: Written for Montecassino circa 529, the Rule had become almost universally used by monks in the West by the early 9<sup>th</sup> century. It is still the most commonly used Rule in Western Christendom.

**San Damiano:** The first church that Francis rebuilt. Located just outside Assisi, it later became the place where Clare and her sisters lived. After Clare's death, the sisters moved to a new facility inside Assisi's walls.

**Second Vatican Council (also called Vatican II):** This council, only the second since the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Council of Trent, was called in 1962 by Pope John XXIII. It brought radical change to the church (for example, the institution of the vernacular mass).

**Siena:** This city in southern Tuscany was the home to two of the greatest saints of the later Middle Ages, Catherine and Bernardino, although both saints died away from their hometown. Hence, Bernardino's body rests in L'Aquila, while Catherine's is in Rome. However, Catherine's head was returned to Siena a few years after her death and is still highly venerated there today.

**simony:** The practice of buying and selling church offices. The name comes from the figure Simon in Acts 8, who asked the apostles how much the power of conferring the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands would cost. The papacy attacked simony beginning with the pontificate of Leo IX (1049–1054).

**Sixteenth Street Baptist Church:** Located in Birmingham, AL, this was the site of a horrific bombing in 1963 that killed four young girls attending Sunday school there.

**social gospel:** A theological movement that developed in the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The theologian Walter Rauschenbusch, author of *Theology of the Social Gospel*, was a significant influence on Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference:** The civil rights organization founded and led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Spirituals:** The name given to the Christian songs of the American slaves. After the Civil War, these songs were transcribed and performed, most notably by the Fisk University Jubilee Singers. They are our main source for knowing about the Christianity of American slaves.

**stigmata:** These are the wounds of Christ. Francis received the stigmata at LaVerna in 1224. Catherine of Siena received invisible stigmata in Pisa in 1375.

**synoptic gospels:** This term collectively refers to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Mark was written first, and both Matthew and Luke used Mark as the basic narrative for their gospels. Hence, these gospels can be "seen together," the literal meaning of *synoptic*.

**Subiaco:** Benedict lived as a hermit at Subiaco, southeast of Rome, before being called to be an abbot and, later, founding his great monastery of Montecassino. A great Benedictine house is built over the cave where Benedict lived at Subiaco.

***A Theology of Liberation:*** Gustavo Gutierrez's paradigm-breaking book offers a theology that is rooted in the experiences of Latin America's poor. Its influence has been enormous, not just throughout the developing world, but also for African Americans and women, to cite just two examples.

***utopia:*** Thomas More created the word from Greek roots meaning "no place." In 1516, he published his fictional account of an island called Utopia located in the New World.

***vita:*** The Latin word for "life," this term is used to describe the life of a saint written to edify its readers rather than to relay a factual account. These *vitae* (plural) are often referred to as *hagiographies*.

***The Way of the Pilgrim:*** An anonymous 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian work, *The Way of the Pilgrim* is a widely known spiritual book that advocates the use of the Jesus Prayer.

**Wittenberg:** This small city in eastern Germany was where Martin Luther taught and where he carried out his reformation of the church. He spent more than 30 years in Wittenberg and is buried there.



# **The Lives of Great Christians**

## **Part II**

**Professor William R. Cook**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **William R. Cook, Ph.D.**

Distinguished Teaching Professor of History,  
State University of New York at Geneseo

William R. Cook was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended public schools there. He is a 1966 graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana (*cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa). He received Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Lehman fellowships to study medieval history from Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971.

In 1970, Dr. Cook was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo, the honors college of SUNY. He has taught there for thirty-seven years and holds the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor of History. At Geneseo, Dr. Cook has taught courses in medieval and ancient history, the Renaissance and Reformation periods, and the Bible and Christian thought. Recently, he taught a course on Alexis de Tocqueville, as well as freshman seminars that focus on several aspects of African American history and American politics. In 1992, Dr. Cook was named CASE Professor of the Year for New York State. He received the first-ever CARA Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Medieval Studies from the Medieval Academy of America in 2003. He was recently named the alternate for the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, receiving a prize of \$15,000, plus a substantial award to his department.

After publishing several articles on Hussite theology and monastic thought, Dr. Cook has, for the last thirty years, focused much of his research on St. Francis of Assisi. Since 1989, he has published three books about St. Francis and how he is represented in paintings in Italy. Dr. Cook has also contributed to the *Cambridge Companion to Giotto* and is the editor of and a contributor to *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, published by Brill in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Professor Cook spends part of each year doing research and teaching in Italy. From his base in Siena, he works frequently in Florence, as well as Assisi. He has taken students from SUNY Geneseo to Italy on eight occasions and conducts study tours for the public.

In recent years, Dr. Cook has been a lecturer and site visit leader for the Young Presidents' Organization, a group of young corporate leaders from around the world. He has participated in their programs in Florence, Prague, Istanbul, Dublin, and Kyoto. In 2005, he was invited by the Friends of Florence, a group of philanthropists dedicated to preserving works of art in Tuscany, to make presentations for the group's fall meeting in Florence; he now presents programs for the group in Florence each February.

Dr. Cook has directed ten Summer Seminars for School Teachers for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) since 1983; six have had St.

Francis as their subject and were conducted in Siena and Assisi, Italy. In 2003 and 2006, he directed an NEH seminar for college teachers in Italy titled “St. Francis and the Thirteenth Century.”

In addition to his research in Italy, Professor Cook has studied the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. This interest came about primarily after his unsuccessful run in 1998 for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has written three volumes of local history and writes a weekly column for his local newspaper, the *Livingston County News*. He was also a frequent contributor to the editorial pages of the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle* in 2004–2005.

.

# Table of Contents

## The Lives of Great Christians

### Part II

<b>Professor Biography</b>		i
<b>Course Scope</b>		1
<b>Lecture Thirteen</b>	Catherine of Siena.....	3
<b>Lecture Fourteen</b>	Bernardino of Siena .....	7
<b>Lecture Fifteen</b>	John Hus and the Hussites .....	11
<b>Lecture Sixteen</b>	Thomas More .....	15
<b>Lecture Seventeen</b>	Martin Luther .....	19
<b>Lecture Eighteen</b>	John Wesley and the Origins of Methodism.....	23
<b>Lecture Nineteen</b>	The Monks of Mount Athos.....	27
<b>Lecture Twenty</b>	Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilian Kolbe .....	31
<b>Lecture Twenty-One</b>	Damien of Molokai and Teresa of Calcutta .....	35
<b>Lecture Twenty-Two</b>	From Slavery to Martin Luther King .....	39
<b>Lecture Twenty-Three</b>	Gustavo Gutierrez and Liberation Theology .....	43
<b>Lecture Twenty-Four</b>	Defining the Christian Life .....	48
<b>Timeline</b>		Part I
<b>Glossary</b>		Part I
<b>Biographical Notes</b>		52
<b>Bibliography</b>		58

# The Lives of Great Christians

## Scope:

Often, especially in academic circles, the Christians who are most often discussed are those who contributed significantly to the intellectual traditions of Christianity. In addition to Paul and other New Testament writers, a list of “great Christians” often includes Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and more recently, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Karl Rahner. For many Catholics, their lists would start with the 33 officially proclaimed Doctors of the Church. And who would disagree that such people are indeed among the most important Christians?

However, as many Christian authors have pointed out, my favorite being the Lutheran Johann Arndt, ultimately, God will not ask us what we know but how we have loved. Of course, most Christians recognize that there is a connection between knowing and doing—it is harder to love well if one does not know what love consists of. Hence, we rightly expect that some of the great Christian thinkers are also among the great Christian lovers.

This course will focus on great practitioners of the Christian life. In several of the portraits I will paint, the subjects are among the greatest of Christian theologians. However, I will concentrate more on their lives than on their writings. The vast majority of figures I will present are not likely to appear in books focusing on theology. Some, in fact, wrote nothing at all. Others, St. Clare of Assisi being an example, would hardly be a well-known figure to Christians based on the writings she has left us.

I have made no attempt to be systematic in my selection of great Christians for this course. For example, I have not attempted to have a representative figure from every era or from every one of the multiple branches of Christianity, past and present. I confess to giving somewhat greater weight to the Middle Ages (an often-ignored period that is, in fact, half of Christian history) than other periods, in large part because that is the part of Christian history I know best. However, we will encounter people who died in the 1<sup>st</sup> Christian century and others who are alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Christian century. The figures whom I focus on come from five continents. It is particularly important that we consider contemporary Christians, lest we fall into the trap of believing that all the heroes lived in the distant past, what Americans may recognize as a version of what I call the “founding fathers syndrome.”

Some of the figures we will examine are among the most famous Christians. It would be hard to find a person seriously interested in Christianity who does not know Paul or Augustine or Francis of Assisi or Martin Luther or his namesake Martin Luther King. Some names will be familiar but probably only as names, for example, Saint Patrick, the apostle to Ireland, and San Bernardino of Siena, who is known better for a city in California that bears his name than for his life

in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italy. Some of the figures will be better known to one group of Christians than to another. Not too many Protestants recognize the name Maximilian Kolbe, and most Catholics are unfamiliar with Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Both died in Nazi concentration camps. Few who are not Orthodox are familiar with the 1,000-year history of monasticism on Mount Athos in northern Greece.

One of the clearest lessons to be learned from these portraits is that there is no such thing as *the* model of the Christian life. Certainly, all Christians seek to live the life modeled and prescribed by Jesus during his earthly ministry. However, it is obvious that to imitate Christ does not mean wandering through modern Israel as an itinerant preacher. Once we dismiss this very literal notion of imitation, exactly how one strives to be a true Christian becomes difficult to discern.

If we asked any of the people featured in this course about the way they lived their lives, all their answers would soon turn to their attempts to follow in Christ's footsteps. Yet some of these have chosen physical isolation from "the world," be it the desert of Egypt or a mountaintop in Italy or a peninsula populated only by monks in Greece. On the other hand, Gustavo Gutierrez spent a lot of time in the barrios of Lima and Mother Teresa searched the streets of Calcutta for people to comfort. Some of our great Christians died peaceful deaths surrounded by friends and family, while others bore the cross of martyrdom, perhaps at the hands of Roman imperial officials or officers of the Third Reich. Some preached and some held church offices. Others lived lives of constant prayer interspersed with simple activities, such as making baskets or altar cloths. Several scholars are found among the great Christians I have chosen, while others were barely literate.

Hence, we will see the Christian life from many perspectives, and we will see how people in radically different political and social circumstances have tried to use their strengths and address their weaknesses in light of their call to the gospel life. Just as one can look at a great work of art, such as Michelangelo's *David*, from many different angles and in different light and continually experience anew its beauty and gain insight into the genius of its creator, so looking broadly at the Christian life as lived out by a variety of individuals will serve to help us understand more fully what it means to be a Christian and, perhaps, even to gain new insight about the God Christians seek to serve. And the varieties of the Christian life that we explore will, I hope, encourage people to think creatively about what it means to be a Christian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Lecture Thirteen

### Catherine of Siena

**Scope:** One of only three female Doctors of the Catholic Church, Catherine is one of the most extraordinary figures in church history. She was a member of a third-order community of Dominican sisters in her native Siena, but Catherine became an important figure for the whole church. Whether she was consoling a condemned prisoner, chastising lax prelates, or comforting those stricken by the bubonic plague, Catherine strove to follow Jesus. She traveled to Avignon to urge Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome, which he did. Catherine dictated hundreds of letters, which are a precious source for understanding this woman on fire with the love of God. Like the one on whom she modeled her life, she died at the age of 33.

### Outline

- I. Catherine Benincasa, born in 1347 and dead at the age of 33, has left Christianity an extraordinary example and body of writings.
  - A. Her letters—more than 380 survive—take up four large printed volumes.
  - B. Her *Dialogue* is regarded as a masterpiece of the spiritual life.
  - C. Catherine is one of only three female Doctors of the Church out of thirty-three total Doctors of the Church, the other two being Teresa of Avila and Theresa of Lisieux.
  - D. She is co-patron of Italy with Francis of Assisi and co-patron of Europe with Benedict and several others.
- II. The world into which Catherine was born was a particularly difficult and tumultuous one.
  - A. A year after she was born in Siena, an independent city-republic about 40 miles south of Florence, the bubonic plague, perhaps in conjunction with other diseases, killed about a third of the population of Europe and more than half the residents of Siena.
  - B. A great deal of social and political unrest followed in the wake of the plague, and the disease killed many others two more times during Catherine's life.
  - C. The papacy had been relocated to Avignon in 1305.
    1. It is important to remember that the pope is the bishop of Rome.
    2. Italy saw a great deal of political instability and economic decline as a result of the pope's absence.

- III.** Catherine was the 24<sup>th</sup> of 25 children of a reasonably prosperous dyer, Giacomo Benincasa, and his wife, Lapa.
  - A.** She received visions at an early age.
  - B.** She made clear to her parents that she wished to remain a virgin and, thus, not to marry.
  - C.** As a young woman of 18, Catherine joined a group of Dominican third-order sisters, the Mantellate.
    - 1.** The group provided her with a structured life and spiritual direction.
    - 2.** These women were not cloistered, so Catherine was able to engage in a life of active charity.
    - 3.** She learned to read and, ultimately, to write.
- IV.** Catherine was active in Siena.
  - A.** She cared for the sick and dying at the hospital of Siena during recurrences of the bubonic plague.
  - B.** Famously, she counseled, consoled, and brought to contrition a man condemned to death for a crime; according to tradition, his head fell into her lap at his execution.
- V.** Catherine became involved in what we could call papal politics when Siena and its northern neighbor participated in a politically motivated war against the Papal States and, hence, the pope.
  - A.** Catherine became convinced that the pope must return to Italy.
    - 1.** She wrote letters to the pope, including several in which she questioned his courage and urged him to resign if he lacked the will to do what is right: “Since [God] has given you authority and you have accepted it, you ought to be using the power and strength that is yours. If you don’t intend to use it, it would be better and more to God’s honor and the good of your soul to resign.”
    - 2.** Catherine urged Pope Gregory XI to reform the entire church.
      - a.** She criticized many papal appointments.
      - b.** She called for the pope to support a crusade, in part because it would unify Christendom against a common enemy.
  - B.** Catherine journeyed to Avignon to urge the pope to return to Italy.
  - C.** After Gregory’s return to Rome, he persuaded her to come to Rome, where, in fact, she died in 1380.
- VI.** Catherine’s letters present many sides of her devotion and involvement in the world; here, we can look at only a sampling.
  - A.** Much of the information in this lecture about Catherine, the papacy, and church reform comes from the letters.



- B. Catherine believed that Christ despised no one—not those of low or illegitimate birth or those who have sinned—and imitating him meant that we should despise no one.
- C. She wrote to a prostitute in Perugia that she did not recognize the dignity accorded her by Christ’s sacrifice.
- D. Catherine told the pope that the goods of the church were intended to be held in trust for the poor but were being used to wage war.
- E. She asked a political leader to treat with mercy a man who was harassing and threatening a house of nuns.
- F. Catherine’s language, like Clare’s, sometimes pushed religious imagery in unexpected directions, as shown, for example, by her peculiar metaphors: “Oh, Jesus, gentlest love, as a sign that you had espoused us you gave us the ring of your most holy and tender flesh at the time of your holy circumcision on the eighth day...Notice that the fire of divine charity gave us a ring not of gold but of his own purest flesh.”
- G. Perhaps thinking of Francis’s reception of the stigmata, Catherine wrote, “We always become one with the object of our love.”

**VII.** Catherine had a deep devotion to the crucified Christ.

- A. She was conscious of being a follower of St. Francis of Assisi in this devotion.
- B. In 1375, while praying during Holy Week in a church in Pisa, she experienced the reception of Christ’s wounds, although they did not appear on her body.
- C. One of the most popular stories about Catherine is that Christ appeared to her and offered her a choice of crowns—a royal diadem or a crown of thorns. She, of course, chose the latter.

**VIII.** Catherine is much venerated today.

- A. Her relics are especially venerated at the Dominican churches in Siena and Rome.
- B. Just four years after her death, Catherine’s head was brought to Siena, where it is still displayed and venerated.

**Essential Reading:**

Catherine of Siena, selections from *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Mary Ann Fatula, *Catherine of Siena’s Way*.

Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does the life of Catherine challenge our ideas of women and, in particular, religious women in pre-modern times?
2. Can we imagine why Catherine was once “brought in for questioning” by the Dominicans to ensure that she was not a heretic?
3. In what ways does Catherine personify the idea that unusual circumstances call for unusual acts and “thinking outside the box”?

## **Lecture Fourteen**

### **Bernardino of Siena**

**Scope:** Catherine's fellow Sienese Bernardino was born the year she died. He became a Franciscan friar and a tireless preacher and Franciscan reformer. His sermons show a man who sought to present Christian values to a mercantile society, one quite different from the society in which Jesus lived. Bernardino, now patron saint of advertising and accountants, sought to define what it meant to be a Christian businessman and how a Christian addresses problems that Jesus never directly dealt with. Two centuries after Francis lived, Bernardino sought to continue the work that Francis began and struggled to re-create a more disciplined and austere life for the friars, who had come to be rather comfortable in their many elaborate convents.

### **Outline**

- I. The year Catherine of Siena died (1380), her fellow Sienese Bernardino was born; he became a Franciscan and the best known preacher in Italy in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
  - A. Bernardino sought to live a simple life, which meant separating himself to some extent from the way most friars lived at that time.
  - B. Bernardino gave cycles of sermons in many places in Italy.
    1. Typically, a cycle consisted of as many as 40 sermons.
    2. A sermon usually was preached for two to three hours.
  - C. Bernardino preached in Italian to large crowds in Franciscan churches and in a city's main piazza.
    1. He wrote some sermons in Latin so that they could be circulated and used as models by other preachers.
    2. One cycle of 40 sermons, preached in the Piazza del Campo in his native Siena in 1427, was scrupulously written down by a scribe.
    3. Those 40 sermons, occupying about 1,100 pages in modern editions, constitute one of the most complete looks we have not only of Bernardino but of life in the Italian city-states in the early Renaissance.
- II. Bernardino is important as a Franciscan reformer.
  - A. By the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, most friars lived rather stable and comfortable lives in large complexes in most cities and larger towns throughout Europe.
  - B. Technically, the friars owned nothing, but for all practical purposes, the Franciscan houses belonged to the friars.

1. These complexes consisted of large and often sumptuously decorated churches, cloisters, expansive refectories and chapterhouses, and comfortable quarters; they resembled large Benedictine monasteries.
  2. Surviving examples of such Franciscan complexes can be seen today in Assisi, Florence (Santa Croce), and Siena.
- C. Beginning in the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there was a small “back-to-basics” movement centered in Umbria.
- D. Bernardino was one of three leading friars in the 15<sup>th</sup> century who embraced this reform, called the *Observant movement*.
1. The other two were John of Capistrano and James of the Marches.
  2. Observants established smaller, simpler houses of friars in cities that already had Franciscan establishments.
  3. The Observants did not live exactly like Francis and the first brothers any more than Cistercians lived exactly like the monks of Montecassino in Benedict’s day, but they did seek to live in simplicity.
  4. The movement caused tension within the Franciscan Order, and in 1517, about 70 years after Bernardino’s death, the Observants became a separate order from the so-called Conventual Friars.

**III.** Bernardino loved both the ideals of the Franciscans and his hometown of Siena.

- A. Siena was a city of perhaps 20,000 (it had a population of about 60,000 before the arrival of the bubonic plague) and a center of feverish banking and mercantile activity.
- B. Bernardino addressed many of his sermons to urban dwellers of some means, defining how one can be both a successful merchant and a good Christian.
- C. In this way, he is the heir of St. Francis, who had been a merchant, who preached primarily in cities, and who called on everyone in those cities to be holy people.

**IV.** Bernardino is one of the major Christian figures to “translate” Christian principles into a capitalist society.

- A. Bernardino believed that it was permissible for Christians to own private property.
- B. He believed that it was possible to calculate a just price for goods.
- C. He recognized that foreign trade is necessary, although he worried about the consequences of traders being long absent from their families.
- D. He understood the risk of trade and the need for certain goods, justifying a profit. His example was the need for pepper in Siena.

- E.** Like other Christian moralists of his day, Bernardino wrestled with what constituted usury.
  - 1.** Some thought any repayment beyond the principal was usury and, thus, sinful.
  - 2.** Bernardino recognized circumstances in which payment in addition to the principal was licit as long as it was not done with the intention of making a profit.
  
- V.** Although in many ways Bernardino's views of women conformed to those of most people of his time, he also expressed real understanding and sympathy for women.
  - A.** Bernardino had been orphaned and was raised primarily by two aunts.
  - B.** He perceived the difficulty and pain a woman experienced when she left her home for a new life with a husband in an arranged marriage.
  - C.** He realized that husbands often treated their wives as trophies by dressing them up and parading them around.
  - D.** Bernardino disapproved of the common practice of the wealthy of sending their babies into the countryside to be wet-nursed.
  - E.** Bernardino did criticize women who dressed up for church simply to attract young men.
  
- VI.** Bernardino identified with the poor and called on those with means to relieve their lot.
  - A.** He believed that the only Christian justification for being wealthy was that the rich had the means to be generous to the poor. Hence, the rich needed the poor as much as the poor needed the rich.
  - B.** He chastised those who did not hear the cries of the poor.
  - C.** He was shrewd enough to know that some of the poor would go to hell and that some of the wealthy were exemplary Christians.
  
- VII.** Bernardino shared some of the prejudices of his day, and for that reason, he is often criticized.
  - A.** He had a hatred for witches.
  - B.** He was intolerant of what he called sodomy, which included all homosexual and some heterosexual activity.
  - C.** He despised Jews and said that Christians may love Jews generally but not specifically.
  
- VIII.** Bernardino was a popular figure and was canonized only six years after his death.
  - A.** He began an important Catholic devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus.
  - B.** He may not have been an intellectual giant and he certainly shared some of the prejudices of his era, but Bernardino was kind, and

somewhat unusually for someone who lived an austere lifestyle, he was even kind to himself.

**Essential Reading:**

Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Cynthia Polecritti, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How and why could anyone listen to two-hour sermons every day for six weeks?
2. Was Bernardino a faithful follower of St. Francis?
3. Does Bernardino compromise Christian values with his view of mercantile activity?

## Lecture Fifteen

### John Hus and the Hussites

**Scope:** By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the church had endured the papacy's 75-year stay in Avignon, followed by almost 40 years of two and sometimes three claimants to the papal office. Furthermore, the quality of pastoral care was generally poor. A movement for reform began in the Kingdom of Bohemia; by about 1400, this movement was led by a master at the University of Prague named John Hus. Building on the contributions of local reformers and making use of the works of an English theologian, John Wyclif, Hus became increasingly critical of the Catholic Church and its structure. Summoned to the Council of Constance to present his views, he was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake in 1415. His followers in Prague broke with the Catholic Church and declared their independence from papal authority, symbolized by the offering of communion wine to laypeople, a practice prohibited by the church at that time.

### Outline

- I. As we have seen, the 14<sup>th</sup> century was a difficult time for the Catholic Church.
  - A. Catherine of Siena and many others were scandalized by a papacy located in Avignon.
  - B. Shortly after Gregory XI's return to Rome, a dispute occurred over a papal election, beginning what we refer to today as the *Great Schism*. This period saw "popes" in both Rome and Avignon and, for a while, a third papal claimant.
- II. The Kingdom of Bohemia, a territory today known as the Czech Republic, and its capital, Prague, were important and sophisticated places.
  - A. In the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, the king of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV, had made Prague an important cultural and intellectual center.
  - B. He established the first university in the Holy Roman Empire, Charles University, in Prague.
- III. The schism and a more general malaise that had affected Western Christendom certainly existed in Bohemia.
  - A. A reform movement began in Prague late in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
    1. It was largely a call for moral reform, including for example, the conversion of prostitutes to a reformed life.
    2. Preaching in Czech was a major element of this reform movement.

3. Reform-minded preachers urged listeners to take communion frequently.
  - B. This movement was characterized by a certain “nationalist” element because the Czech majority was, to a great extent, under the thumb of a German minority in Prague.
- IV. A master of Charles University, John Hus became the leader of this movement at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- A. Hus preached at the newly established Bethlehem Chapel in Prague.
  - B. He became acquainted with the writings of John Wyclif, an English theologian (d. 1384) whose work had been condemned as heretical.
    1. Czech students at Oxford may have brought copies of Wyclif’s writings to Prague.
    2. Anne of Bohemia was queen of England at the time.
  - C. Hus had been critical of dominant conceptions of the church and the structure of its authority.
    1. Using Wyclif, Hus was able to place the reform movement in Prague in a theological framework.
    2. Hus was preaching and writing at a time when there were three claimants to the papal throne, and his Wyclif-influenced work was increasingly critical not just of the claimants but of the claims made for the papal office.
    3. Hus did not accept Wyclif’s ideas uncritically, rejecting for example, Wyclif’s objections to the doctrine of transubstantiation.
    4. In 1410, one of the papal claimants, Alexander V, excommunicated Hus.
- V. Hus appeared before the Council of Constance in 1414.
- A. The Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund pressured the papal claimant he was supporting to call a general council to end the Great Schism.
  - B. This council met in 1414 in the city of Constance.
  - C. Shortly after it began, John XXIII, the “pope” who had called the council, tried to flee and was captured.
  - D. The council asserted that in matters of faith, morals, and schism it was superior to a pope, although this claim was new and somewhat audacious.
  - E. While these events were unfolding, Hus arrived in Constance to defend his views, having been granted safe conduct from Sigismund.
  - F. Hus was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.
    1. He was condemned as a Wycliffite, although he rejected those teachings of Wyclif that many at the council most vehemently objected to.



2. Sigismund said that safe conduct did not apply to a condemned heretic.
3. Within a few months, a second Bohemian reformer, Jerome of Prague, was also executed at Constance.

**VI.** In Prague, followers of Hus rejected the council's verdict.

- A. Perhaps while Hus was still alive, reform priests in Bohemia began to distribute both the consecrated bread and the wine to laity, the practice of *utraquism* (meaning under both species), in defiance of a decree of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.
- B. The situation became much worse when, after the death of Wenceslas IV, Sigismund was elected king of Bohemia.

**VII.** By 1420, Bohemia was in rebellion against the Roman Church.

- A. In addition to those led by university masters and Prague preachers, a wide variety of other reform movements sprang up throughout Bohemia.
- B. On several occasions in the 1420s, the church launched crusades against the Hussites, but all were miserable and ignominious failures.
- C. Although the Hussites were successful in defending their homeland and their religious practices, various factions experienced serious discord.

**VIII.** In 1433, a group of Hussite theologians was invited to the Council of Basel to defend the basic tenets of their beliefs.

- A. They were allowed to speak openly in the council.
- B. They demanded that certain moral standards be observed in Basel before they agreed to come.
- C. The council agreed to judge the arguments of the Hussites by God's law and the practice of Christ, the apostles, and the primitive church.
- D. After the Hussites' appearance at the council, an agreement was reached that allowed Prague to have a *utraquist* bishop.
- E. The church never acted on the agreement, largely because the Hussite divisions had led to a civil war between Roman-leaning and radical Hussites.

**IX.** Many Christians in Bohemia continued to operate independently of the Roman Church and eventually sided with the 16<sup>th</sup>-century reform in Germany.

- A. It was only after a military defeat of Bohemia in 1619 that the kingdom was forcibly returned to the Catholic fold.
- B. The denomination known as the Moravian Brethren is a direct descendant of the Hussite movement.

**Essential Reading:**

Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Thomas Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How can we see the Bohemian reform movement as a mixture of religious and political matters?
2. Why was the Roman Church so intolerant of theological differences and such practices as giving communion in both kinds to the laity?
3. How does the success of the Hussites for 15 years show us some of the weaknesses of the Roman Church and changing attitudes among western European Christians?

## Lecture Sixteen

### Thomas More

**Scope:** Many today know about Thomas More from Robert Bolt's wonderful play *A Man for All Seasons*, later made into a film. More is considered by Catholics to be a martyr at the hands of King Henry VIII, whom More had once faithfully served as chancellor. More's most widely known book, *Utopia*, is often read as a work of Renaissance Humanism rather than for its Christian content. In this lecture, however, we will reflect on that work, as well as More's more straightforward Christian writings. Although a harsh critic of Martin Luther, More was ultimately a man who believed that Christians were called to love and to do good deeds in an imperfect world. Like his friend Erasmus, he deeply believed in the need for the proper education of Christians. He was, indeed, a man for all seasons.

### Outline

- I. Thomas More is one of the best known saints of the Catholic Church from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
  - A. He was virtually a contemporary of the great founder of the Protestant tradition, Martin Luther, and criticized him harshly.
  - B. He was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to accept Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church in England, making him a martyr in the eyes of Catholics.
  - C. His best known work, *Utopia*, appears to have very little to do with Christianity.
  - D. More was not canonized until 1935.
- II. More grew up in a privileged environment near the centers of political and religious power.
  - A. As a teenager, he lived at the court of Cardinal Morton, who was both archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England under King Henry VII.
  - B. He studied at Oxford and later studied law in London.
  - C. He became acquainted with Erasmus, the greatest Humanist outside of Italy in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.
  - D. More served in Parliament, including one term as speaker of the House of Commons; was undersheriff of London; and participated in missions abroad.

- E. More seriously considered a religious vocation but married, had several children, was widowed, and married a second time to a widow named Alice, who helped him to raise his children.
- III. In addition to More's own writings, many other sources are available for the life of Thomas More.
- A. Erasmus wrote not only to but also about Thomas More.
    - 1. Erasmus describes More as one who despised absolute rule and had a great love of liberty.
    - 2. No one was ever less swayed than More by public opinion.
    - 3. More encouraged the education of his wife and daughters.
    - 4. He was content with what he had and was not tempted by bribes.
    - 5. He was a man of genuine piety.
  - B. More's son-in-law William Roper wrote a famous life of More.
  - C. We have several fine portraits of More, most notably one by Hans Holbein the Younger, now in the Frick Collection in New York.
- IV. More was a great believer in the study of the classics.
- A. He kept a close eye on the education of his daughters.
  - B. He wrote a famous letter to Oxford University, criticizing a group called the Trojans, who were determined to suppress the teaching of much of the newly rediscovered literature and even the language of ancient Greece.
    - 1. More argued that although no one *needs* Greek (or Latin) literature to achieve salvation, it fosters a life of virtue.
    - 2. He criticized many of the professors of theology at Oxford for a narrow and academic theology.
    - 3. He pointed out that not just the work of Homer and other pagan Greek writers was available but also the writings of Greek fathers, such as Basil and Chrysostom.
    - 4. He believed that it is important to study the New Testament in its original language, Greek.
  - C. More's great work *Utopia* consciously imitates Plato both in form (a dialogue) and content (a discussion of an ideal society).
    - 1. He presents an internal debate about whether to live a life of leisure or to speak the truth no matter the consequences.
    - 2. He makes the case for a life of "rolling up one's sleeves" and trying to make the world a little better.
    - 3. More reminds Christians just how radical Christ's and the apostles' teachings are.
      - a. In More's day, there had been an attempt to fit Christianity into the prevailing culture instead of critiquing the culture by Christian standards.
      - b. The earliest Christian community held property in common.

- c. More invokes Isaiah’s call to defend widows and orphans, even if doing so means attacking absolute ownership of private property.
  - 4. More, in describing the fictional Utopia, creates a place based on reason alone because Christianity was not known when the institutions of Utopia were established.
    - a. When Christianity does become known in Utopia, many people convert because Utopia’s values in general coincide with those of Christianity.
    - b. It is clear that Utopia is, in many ways, a more just society than Europe in More’s day.
    - c. Certain practices in Utopia appear to make sense on the surface but are ultimately silly, suggesting that reason alone is insufficient.
    - d. Ultimately, More challenges the readers in Europe to use the advantage they have over Utopia—they have both reason and revelation—in order to make society just.
- V. More’s specifically religious thought is found in a variety of his writings.
  - A. More wrote lots of specifically religious works, including prayers and treatises.
  - B. More was involved in the polemic involving the Protestant Reformation and wrote some severe criticisms of Martin Luther.
- VI. More’s career in the service of Henry VIII reached the highest office available to a commoner but also led to his execution in 1535.
  - A. More became chancellor of England in 1529, finally resigning in 1532 because of his dispute with Henry VIII over Henry’s claim to be supreme head of the Church in England.
  - B. In something of a mockery of a trial, More was convicted of treason and sentenced to death.
  - C. Some of More’s greatest writings, especially concerning conscience, were written as he awaited his trial and execution.
  - D. His last words were: “I die the king’s good servant, but God’s first.”
- VII. Thomas More is indeed a man for all seasons, a phrase that Erasmus used to describe him.

**Essential Reading:**

Gerard Wegemer and Stephen Smith, eds., *A Thomas More Sourcebook*.  
 Thomas More, *Utopia*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence*.

Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons* (play).

Fred Zinnemann, *A Man for All Seasons* (film).

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does More understand the relationship between reason, especially exemplified in pagan literature of the ancient world, and God's revelation?
2. Some have interpreted *Utopia* as a secular work or even as an elaborate spoof. How can a work with almost no mention of Christianity be read as a deeply Christian book?
3. How is "a man for all seasons" an apt term to describe Thomas More?

# Lecture Seventeen

## Martin Luther

**Scope:** Luther was a man of dramatic gestures, whether posting his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, publicly burning the papal bull that excommunicated him, or declaring to the Diet of Worms, “Here I stand.” Luther was a university professor for most of his adult life, and his writings fill almost 60 modern volumes. However, in this lecture, we will look primarily at how Luther lived his life and how he developed new Christian models of marriage and education. Certainly, there are elements of Luther’s thought that just about everyone today finds repugnant, especially some of his later writings about Jews. However, no one knew better than Luther himself that he was a flawed human in need of God’s mercy. His dying words were “We are beggars: this is true.”

### Outline

- I.** Martin Luther is justly famous for being one of the great theologians and commentators on scripture in the Christian tradition.
  - A.** Luther’s writings in modern editions run to almost 60 volumes.
  - B.** Luther was a “doctor” and spent most of his adult life as a professor at the University of Wittenberg in eastern Germany.
- II.** For most people, however, Luther is not so much a theologian as the “first Protestant.” His break with the Roman Church began with the posting of his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517 and became final at the Diet of Worms in 1521.
  - A.** Luther’s life story, especially from his birth in 1483 until the Diet of Worms, is well known and often told.
  - B.** Both Protestants and Catholics recognize the significance of his formation of a new type of Christianity that, by the time of his death, had spread through about half of Germany and most of Scandinavia and had influenced other reform movements.
- III.** This lecture does not recount in detail the narrative of Luther’s life or examine the most important elements of his thought.
  - A.** Instead, we will explore Luther, the man of faith.
    - 1.** He was troubled and burdened by his own failings and recognized his dependence on God.
    - 2.** He was a man of great personal courage who took extraordinary risks in proclaiming the truth of Christianity as he understood it.
  - B.** We will focus on events in Luther’s life that tell us the most about what sort of Christian he was.

- C. Luther's writings reveal a man who was at times humble and at other times quite arrogant; a man who recognized love as the way humans express their faith, yet a man who was capable of virulent hatred and intolerance.
  - D. It is significant that Luther's last written words were: "We are beggars: this is true."
- IV.** Luther's university training for a career in law was interrupted when, in fear during a storm, he pledged that he would become a monk if he survived.
- A. Luther entered the order of Augustinian friars at Erfurt, where he was studying, and changed his study to theology.
  - B. Despite "heroic" attempts at fasting and other ascetic practices as well as quite frequent confession, Luther was deeply troubled.
  - C. After profession, ordination, and years of study, he went to a small and rather insignificant new university in Wittenberg to teach.
- V.** While Luther was preparing lectures on Paul, he had what we refer to as the *Reformation discovery*.
- A. Luther had been scrupulous about discipline and confession but continued to fear God's wrath.
  - B. Someone famously said to Luther that God was not angry with him but, rather, Luther was angry with God.
  - C. As Luther reflected deeply on Paul, especially Romans 1:17, it was as if the scales fell from his eyes; he realized that the just person lives by faith.
  - D. This primacy of faith had extraordinary implications, but it took Luther a while to grasp them.
- VI.** In the meantime, as a priest, Luther had to deal with the fact that people in Wittenberg were buying indulgences that claimed to do all sorts of things, including getting souls out of Purgatory.
- A. Troubled by this, Luther acted as a professor by posting in Latin on the bulletin board of the university (the door of the castle church in Wittenberg) 95 propositions or theses about indulgences, for the purpose of debate.
    1. These were translated into German, and printed versions were circulated in Germany, making Luther something of an "overnight sensation."
    2. Authorities in the church had several meetings with Luther to persuade him that some of his theses were incorrect and had radical implications.
  - B. As Luther was questioned and prodded, he began to see the implications in what he had written.



1. When asked if he was a Hussite, Luther ultimately said yes.
  2. As these confrontations took place, Luther began to put together some of his theological insights and his pastoral concerns.
- VII.** In 1520, Luther wrote several important works that essentially created an unbridgeable gap between himself and the Roman Church.
- A.** Luther publicly burned the papal bull declaring his excommunication.
  - B.** Luther attacked not just the corruption of the Catholic Church but its very bases.
    1. He proclaimed the priesthood of believers, arguing that *ministry* is publicly serving a congregation but that all Christians become priests at baptism.
    2. Luther rejected Catholic teachings about the Eucharist and rejected five of the seven Catholic sacraments, leaving only baptism and the Eucharist.
- VIII.** In 1521, Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms and stood by what he had written, despite the virtually unanimous opinion of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities gathered there.
- A.** Luther was “kidnapped” by his secular ruler and lived for a time at Wartburg Castle, directing religious matters at Wittenberg in absentia and translating the New Testament into German.
  - B.** When Luther returned to Wittenberg, he carried out a series of reforms, including vernacularization and simplification of the liturgy. He also married.
- IX.** Luther faced opposition all around him and was quick to condemn his opponents.
- A.** He called for the slaughter of peasants who revolted, in part based on what they understood Luther to mean about Christian freedom.
  - B.** He saw Erasmus as something of a vacillating coward and rather vehemently attacked him in a famous treatise called *On the Bondage of the Will*, a response to a work of Erasmus about free will.
  - C.** Luther met with the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli at the end of the 1520s but was unable to form an agreement with him because of differences in their understanding of the Eucharist.
- X.** Especially toward the end of his life, Luther viciously attacked Jews and their religion.
- A.** In 1523, Luther had written about the Jews, urging compassion toward them and hoping for their conversion to Christianity.
  - B.** In 1542, Luther published *Against the Jews and Their Lies*, advocating the expulsion of Jews from Saxony or, at least, the burning of their synagogues and books.

C. The 16<sup>th</sup> century was not a tolerant time, and Luther's powerful writings and strong personality show him in combat with everyone from Catholics to other Protestants to Jews.

XI. Luther was larger than life, a man of great intellect and courage, but one who shared some of the worst traits of the era in which he lived and, indeed, magnified them.

**Essential Reading:**

Martin Luther, "95 Theses," "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality," "The Pagan Servitude of the Church," "The Freedom of a Christian," in John Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

James Kittelson, *Luther the Reformer*.

Martin Marty, *Martin Luther*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did intellectual matters and personal experiences come together to form the Martin Luther who led the break from the Roman Church?
2. From what you have learned in the lectures on John Hus and other late-medieval figures, why do you think a serious Christian, such as Luther, might find himself so vehemently opposed to so many practices of the Catholic Church?
3. How can we understand that a man so in love with God and so knowledgeable of scripture could be so intolerant of other Christians and Jews and doubt their good will or the possibility for their salvation?

## Lecture Eighteen

### John Wesley and the Origins of Methodism

**Scope:** One of the problems that the churches of the Reformation faced was that those that had political support became comfortable and, hence, in certain ways, like the Catholic Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century from which they had withdrawn. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century came a movement named *Pietism* within the Lutheran Church that called for more emphasis on living the Christian life and less on doctrine and outward forms of piety. The Anglican John Wesley (and his prolific hymn-writing brother, Charles) were influenced by this movement on the continent and soon established Methodist Societies throughout England to bring the Church of England back to basics. Although John Wesley never left the Church of England, his followers created one of the most widespread forms of Christianity in the English-speaking world.

### Outline

- I. Even before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, established churches of the Reformation were showing tendencies to establish creedal statements and stress obedience and adherence to such statements.
  - A. Of course, the churches that were not established had very different histories.
  - B. In this lecture, we will focus on the Lutherans and the Church of England, but we can include various Calvinist churches among those that were transformed in some ways by their success.
    1. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a movement called *Pietism* emerged within Lutheranism.
    2. The Pietists emphasized that Christianity was ultimately about love, not doctrine.
    3. Johann Arndt, one of the great Pietists, said that God will not ask us at Judgment what we know but, rather, how we have loved.
  - C. The Church of England, although less dogmatic than continental Protestants, nevertheless in some ways fell victim to a formal kind of Christianity.
    1. One famous movement away from Anglicanism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was Quakerism.
    2. Especially after the Church of England was reestablished in the wake of the Civil War and even more so after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, religious practice was both lax and formalistic.
- II. Beginning in 1729 with the founding of a Methodist Society at Oxford, a strong movement developed in England that sought to be methodical in the

study and practice of Christianity.

- A. The founders of Methodism are John and Charles Wesley, two brothers, sons of an Anglican vicar, and themselves ordained Anglican priests.
- B. Although John was older than Charles, it was the latter who set up the first Methodist Society (also known as the Holy Club but derisively called Methodist because of their methodical ways) at Oxford, where both brothers studied.
- C. Ten years later, this movement began to spread beyond Oxford to Bristol, London, and other parts of England.

**III.** Much had happened in the lives of John and Charles Wesley in that decade.

- A. Both brothers traveled to the New World, spending time in the colony of Georgia.
- B. Both underwent personal conversions.
  - 1. John Wesley came into contact with a group called the Moravian Brethren, some of whom lived in London.
    - a. The Moravians had been much inspired by the Pietist movement in Germany.
    - b. John Wesley's self-described conversion experience occurred when he heard one of the Brethren read from Martin Luther's commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans.
    - c. Wesley was quick to grasp the implications of Luther's key concept of justification by faith.
    - d. He traveled to Germany to delve more deeply into the teachings of the Brethren.
    - e. Ultimately, Wesley had a falling out with the Brethren.
  - 2. At about the same time, Charles Wesley had a parallel experience with a member of the Moravian Brethren during an illness.
    - a. He had held a somewhat legalistic idea of how to obtain salvation.
    - b. He, too, became convinced that justification came through faith alone.

**IV.** For the next 40 years or so, the Wesley brothers set up hundreds of Methodist Societies all over England and extending to the United States.

- A. Both brothers were indefatigable preachers.
- B. It is often said that John Wesley traveled 250,000 miles and preached perhaps 40,000 sermons. He was also a prolific writer.
- C. Charles, also a preacher, is better known for composing thousands of hymns, the most famous being "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."
- D. Some followers proclaimed what John Wesley regarded as improper enthusiasms, and he found himself having to deal with criticism that he

did not go far enough.

- V. If not actually persecuted, the Wesley brothers and their followers were certainly harassed in their activities.
  - A. They were often denied the opportunity to preach in churches; hence, they often preached, albeit reluctantly at first, outdoors.
  - B. John came to doubt apostolic succession of bishops, and he laid hands on men and authorized them to preach and to administer the sacraments.
    - 1. John Wesley never formally left the Church of England, but the Methodists split from the Anglicans at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, just a few years after the deaths of both brothers.
    - 2. Charles was vehemently opposed to any actions that could lead to a division between the Church of England and the Methodists and was upset by some of his brother's acts.
- VI. John Wesley's thought is expressed in many works, but he wrote *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* as a kind of summary of his views. We will use this work as the basis for a discussion of his thought.
  - A. The idea of "Christian perfection" is John Wesley's signature contribution to Christian thought.
  - B. He was influenced not only by the Moravian Brethren and indirectly by the Pietists but also by Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* and Jeremy Taylor's *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying*.
  - C. Wesley believed that by faith Christians can attain perfection while still alive.
    - 1. This perfection does not suggest that Christians are infallible or omniscient.
      - a. We may think wrong and act wrongly based on a wrong thought.
      - b. Nevertheless, a mistake is different from a sin, even if it involves not treating a person as he or she ought to be treated.
      - c. People who have attained Christian perfection are liable to involuntary transgressions.
    - 2. Wesley does believe it is possible to be freed from evil thoughts and temptations.
    - 3. Normally, perfection is obtained gradually, although Wesley does not deny the possibility of instantaneous perfection.
    - 4. Wesley claims that scripture supports the idea of Christian perfection, for example, Psalm 130, 1 John, and Romans, as well as Jesus' command to "be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

**Essential Reading:**

John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

V. H. H. Green, *John Wesley*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Is it inevitable that popular or favored forms of Christianity lose their prophetic edge and get comfortable over time?
2. Do you find credible Wesley's claim that people can attain perfection? Note that Wesley never claimed that he existed in such a state.
3. Do the Wesley brothers fit into a pattern of leaders who were personally devout and ready to make great personal sacrifices for truth as they understood it?

## Lecture Nineteen

### The Monks of Mount Athos

**Scope:** Since the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Mount Athos and the peninsula on which it is located in northern Greece have been the home to Orthodox monks. In fact, no one can go there today without permission from both the Greek government and Orthodox officials, and women are never allowed. These monks represent a variety of Orthodox traditions, including Greek, Russian, and Bulgarian. For the most part, monastic life has survived there despite several hundred years of Turkish rule and modern secularism in Greece. Monks there live in a kind of radical separation from “the world” that is far greater than even the most contemplative of Catholic monasteries. Some of the most important Orthodox thought, especially concerning prayer and the mystical life, has originated on Mount Athos. I have had the opportunity to visit the Holy Mountain twice, and in this lecture, we’ll look at the forms of monastic life that have been practiced and continue to exist there.

### Outline

- I. As we move to examining Christianity in the modern world, it may seem strange to begin with a group of men whose way of life has changed little over the past several centuries.
  - A. Many Christians today believe it is important to remain in contact with the traditions and practices of Christians of the past.
    1. There are those who find, for example, that it is easier to pray in a Gothic chapel with stained-glass windows than in a building of modern design.
    2. Struggles always arise among Christians when leaders of churches seek to make liturgical changes.
      - a. For instance, some Catholics still prefer the mass to be said in Latin rather than in vernacular languages.
      - b. When the Episcopal Church modernized the prayer book that dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were great outcries.
    3. Some people pray with their hands extended, imitating the way early Christians prayed and rejecting the “new” gesture of prayer with palms held together that became widespread in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
  - B. In the area of theology and doctrine also, there are people who believe that the answers of the past are sufficient for the present.
    1. Later in this course, we will discuss such ideas as religionless Christianity and the concept of a Christian’s call to oppose sinful social and political structures.

2. When John A. T. Robinson, an Anglican bishop, published a book called *Honest to God* in 1963, calling for a revolution in Christian thought, he faced great opposition from both clergy and laity.
- II.** Until now, we have not examined any Christians from the Orthodox tradition, which split from the Roman Church in 1054.
- A.** In general, Westerners are ignorant of the Orthodox world, although they may be acquainted with the thought of the Greek and Latin fathers of the church.
  - B.** For most Western Christians, Protestant and Catholic, the Orthodox tradition seems quite foreign and even bizarre.
    1. The use of icons, for example, is quite different than Western uses of art in churches, although more so for Protestants than Catholics.
    2. We may picture Orthodox priests and monks with long beards and heavy, black robes.
  - C.** The “otherness” of the Orthodox tradition was dramatized by the fact that most practitioners of Orthodoxy were closed off from Western Europe and the United States for more than 40 years by the Iron Curtain and the Cold War.
- III.** The monks of Mount Athos are Orthodox and quite traditional, although not completely impervious to change.
- A.** In about 962, a major monastery was established on Athos, a peninsula that juts into the northern Aegean Sea.
  - B.** Other monasteries, including for a brief period a Latin monastery, were soon established there.
  - C.** The so-called Holy Mountain established a set of regulations that all the monasteries were to live by and a legislative council.
  - D.** The monasteries received a great deal of patronage from the emperors and powerful families of the Byzantine Empire.
  - E.** In the later Middle Ages, the monasteries sought protection from the Muslims who had come to rule in Greece, more or less ensuring their survival after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.
  - F.** Although the monasteries are all Orthodox, it is important to note that Orthodoxy is different than Catholicism. Instead of a “central government” of the church, the Orthodox have a head whom they all accept, the patriarch of Constantinople, but there are several essentially independent churches.
    1. These churches tend to be national in character, for example, Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, or Syrian.
    2. There are monasteries on Mount Athos from many of these “national” churches.



- G.** Although there have been periods of flourishing and decline, the major monasteries and many hermits have been present on Mount Athos for more than 1,000 years.
- IV.** Visits to Mount Athos require multiple permissions from both the Orthodox Church and the government of Greece, which protects Mount Athos in its constitution. In my two visits, I have had an opportunity to see up close the ancient forms of Eastern monasticism lived out in the modern world.
- A.** Visitors immediately recognize that they have entered a different world when they discover the monks still using the Julian calendar and dividing the day into 12 hours of day and night.
- B.** Women are not permitted on the Holy Mountain, and even all domesticated animals used there are male.
- C.** There is a road from the port to the administrative center of the Holy Mountain, but there are no roads, only paths, between monasteries.
- D.** When I was last there, only one monastery had electricity and a telephone.
- E.** I was once denied shelter in a monastery late in the day solely because I was not Orthodox.
- F.** Even the most modern decorations are in a traditional style.
- G.** Although some monks live in large monasteries, others live in groups of small houses of two or three monks, while still others live as hermits.
- 1.** There is no equivalent in the East to the Rule of St. Benedict.
  - 2.** There is a greater variety of lifestyles—or, as we might better say, monastic vocations—in the East than in the West.
- V.** The most important and influential idea to come from the Athonite monks is that of *hesychasm*, a form of mystical prayer.
- A.** Although its origins predate the monastic communities, we associate hesychasm primarily with monks.
- B.** Hesychasm was the quest for spiritual ascent to God.
- 1.** One of the most common hesychast practices is the repetition of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”
  - 2.** Some hesychasts also use physical positions and even rhythmic breathing as part of their spiritual exercises.
  - 3.** This form of prayer is largely a matter of stripping away or leaving behind what the senses record in order to bask in the uncreated light of God.
  - 4.** The most widely used texts for those who practice hesychasm are found in a collection called the *Philokalia*, written beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

- C. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a Western-trained abbot in Constantinople condemned hesychasm.
  - 1. He objected to certain theological presuppositions of hesychasm.
  - 2. Being trained in Scholastic thought, he believed that knowledge of God came from more intellectual activity.
- D. The great defender of hesychasm was the 14<sup>th</sup>-century monk of Mount Athos, St. Gregory Palamas.
  - 1. Two councils held in Constantinople ultimately gave official sanction to hesychasm, which remains an important element of the Orthodox faith today.
  - 2. This way of prayer to God is best known today in the West through *The Way of the Pilgrim*, the writing of an anonymous 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian monk.

**Essential Reading:**

Graham Speake, *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Basil Pennington, *The Monks of Mount Athos: A Western Monk's Extraordinary Spiritual Journey on Eastern Holy Ground*.

Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. Why would anyone today leave the world in such a radical way in order to seek God as a monk on Mount Athos?
- 2. Is monastic life an escape from the world and its problems or a beacon of light and hope to Christians who live thoroughly “in the world”?
- 3. Can people not living the monastic life benefit from the kinds of prayer developed and written about by the monks of Mount Athos?

## Lecture Twenty

### Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilian Kolbe

**Scope:** Although the age of martyrdom ended in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there have always been Christians who have died because of their fidelity to their Christian belief and vocation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister who was placed in a concentration camp by the Nazis and died there shortly before the camp's liberation in 1945. Documents that he wrote in captivity, had smuggled out, and were later published as *Letters and Papers from Prison* form a moving collection of thoughts about what it means to be a Christian and live in a world with so much evil. Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan priest, sacrificed his life at Auschwitz to save that of a man who was the father of young children. He has been formally canonized by the Catholic Church. The stories of Bonhoeffer and Kolbe give us glimpses of modern people willing to sacrifice everything for the truth as they understand it.

### Outline

- I. Although the so-called age of martyrdom ended for Christians in the 4<sup>th</sup> century with the triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire, there have been martyrs all over the world and in every age.
  - A. Over the centuries, many men and a few women who tried to bring Christianity to areas where it was not established have been martyred.
    1. We find such people in central Europe and Scandinavia as Christianity expanded beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire.
    2. Especially beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there have been martyrs in the New World, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.
      - a. The Catholic Church has canonized groups of martyrs in Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Uganda.
      - b. A good example in what is now the United States is the Jesuit Isaac Jogues, martyred in upstate New York in 1646.
  - B. There have also been martyrs in Christian areas.
    1. During the Protestant Reformation, both Protestants and Catholics died at the hands of hostile Christians.
    2. There were numerous deaths of clergy and laity in repressive regimes, such as the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact, some of which we are just beginning to learn about.
  - C. This lecture focuses on two men who were martyrs during the Third Reich in Germany, one Protestant and one Catholic.
- II. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was an important Christian figure and writer in Germany before and during World War II.

- A. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister.
  - B. He studied theology in Germany and at the Union Theological Seminary in the United States, traveled to Italy, and served as a pastor to congregations in Spain and England, as well as Germany.
  - C. His pastoral work made him somewhat suspect of even the most authoritative modern theologians, for example, Karl Barth.
  - D. After Hitler took power, Bonhoeffer was active in what was called the Confessing Church, which rejected the Nazi-dominated state church.
  - E. He was a leader of an underground seminary.
  - F. Two of his influential books were *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Ethics*.
  - G. Bonhoeffer was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, and he was arrested by the Gestapo in the spring of 1943.
- III.** Bonhoeffer remained in prison until he was hanged by the Nazis in April 1945.
- A. Most of his time in prison was in Berlin, and he was thus occasionally able to see his parents, friends, and fiancée.
  - B. He wrote many letters and poems, and quite a few of them were smuggled out of the prison by a sympathetic guard.
  - C. These documents, as well as letters written to Bonhoeffer, were collected after the war and published, in several iterations, as *Letters and Papers from Prison*.
    1. Many of these letters dealt with matters of the moment, such as requesting certain foods or telling friends and family about his health.
    2. In general, they were upbeat, suggesting that his arrest was a misunderstanding that would be cleared up.
    3. A few months before his arrest, Bonhoeffer had written that the man who stands fast in difficult times is the one whose standard is not reason or conscience or freedom but who is willing to make any sacrifice in exclusive allegiance to God.
    4. His arrest taught him the necessity to live a life of trust (faith).
    5. Bonhoeffer became increasingly wary of what he called “religiosity,” recalling that the Hebrews did not utter God’s name.
    6. He found himself reading the Old Testament more than the New and pondered why behavior that is praised in Hebrew scripture is ignored or condemned in the New Testament.
    7. Bonhoeffer, in his later letters, introduces an idea that seems oxymoronic to many—*religionless Christianity*.
      - a. The world has “come of age” and is a secular world.
      - b. What do God and Christianity mean in a secular world, a world without the religious premise?

- c. Bonhoeffer draws a comparison of circumcision as a requirement of salvation for the Jews and religion as necessary for salvation in modern times.
- d. He feared that God was viewed as a God of the gaps, and as the gaps narrow, so God is squeezed out of modern life.
- e. Are most modern people concerned about the concept of the salvation of the individual?
- f. It is wrong and un-Christian to attack modernity; the question is: Who is Christ in this world come of age?
- g. For many Christians, redemption has come to mean freedom from cares and fears because of the promise of a better world beyond the grave.
- h. The biblical God is a weak and suffering God.

**IV.** Maximilian Kolbe, another martyr of the Third Reich, was a Polish Franciscan who was starved at Auschwitz in 1941; in 1982, he became St. Maximilian Kolbe when John Paul II canonized him.

- A.** Kolbe joined the Franciscan Order (Conventuals) as a young man and received a doctorate in Rome.
- B.** He had a deep Marian devotion and founded an organization called Knights of the Immaculate (Mary).
- C.** Kolbe realized the importance of media and founded a newspaper for Catholics in Poland.
  - 1. It later reached a circulation of hundreds of thousands.
  - 2. Eventually, the newspaper was published in other countries.
- D.** Kolbe decided to found a new Franciscan monastery near Warsaw known (in English) as Marytown, and it soon became the largest Franciscan house in the world.
- E.** Kolbe set out to establish a mission in Japan and to print a newspaper there, eventually settling on the outskirts of Nagasaki.
- F.** He returned to Poland and, continuing to believe in the value of new media in the spread of Catholic piety, he established a radio station.
- G.** By this time, the Nazis were in control of neighboring Germany, and in his newspaper columns, Kolbe criticized the Third Reich for its persecution of Jews and establishment of concentration camps; he also criticized Stalin for the horrors that were occurring beyond Poland's eastern border.
- H.** In 1939, Kolbe was arrested but set free.
- I.** In 1941, he was arrested and transported to Auschwitz.
  - 1. Kolbe, like other detainees, was known by his number—16670.
  - 2. Despite prohibitions of prayer, he heard confessions, prayed with inmates, and even held masses.

3. One day, one of the men in Kolbe's barracks escaped, which meant that 10 men would be selected to be starved to death in a hellish dungeon.
    - a. One man chosen to die was Francis Gajowniczek, who cried out that he had a wife and two children.
    - b. Kolbe asked to take this man's place and was allowed to do so.
    - c. With the other nine, Kolbe was left to starve to death; he was the last to die, killed by a lethal injection, comforting the others and praying to the end.
  4. Francis Gajowniczek survived past the end of the war and spent many years telling Kolbe's story.
  5. Maximilian Kolbe was canonized by his fellow Pole John Paul II in 1982, and Francis Gajowniczek was present for that ceremony.
- V. The martyrs of the Third Reich discussed here are only two of many who were killed for their beliefs. They show us the truth of Tertullian's belief that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church in modern times as well as in the early Christian centuries.

**Essential Reading:**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

Diana Dewar, *The Saint of Auschwitz*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Should all Christians be conscious of the possibility that they will be called to sacrifice their lives in order to remain faithful to God?
2. Can it ever be justified for a Christian to participate in an assassination attempt, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer did?
3. How can we see Maximilian Kolbe as a follower of both Christ and Francis of Assisi?

# Lecture Twenty-One

## Damien of Molokai and Teresa of Calcutta

**Scope:** From the words and actions of Jesus and from the example of Francis of Assisi and many other great Christians, it is clear that a central call of the Christian life is to clothe the naked and care for “the least” among us. Two great figures of the last two centuries whose lives were centered in that call are Father Damien of Molokai and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Father Damien went to serve those afflicted with leprosy in Hawaii. After many years among the lepers, he himself died of leprosy. Mother Teresa is universally known for her work among the sick and dying in Calcutta. This diminutive woman moved the world with her compassion for those to whom she ministered. Father Damien’s statue stands today in the U.S. Capitol, and Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize. Their stories suggest why those are well-deserved honors.

### Outline

- I. The image of Christians doing so-called apostolic work—that is, work described in Matthew 25 that involves caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, visiting the incarcerated, and so on—has always been a central one.
  - A. In fact, the 8<sup>th</sup>-century prophet Isaiah called his fellow Hebrews to care for widows and orphans, and the book of Exodus contains laws to provide for widows, orphans, and aliens.
    1. These groups represent the most vulnerable people in Hebrew society.
    2. Isaiah goes so far as to suggest that doing justice—including proactive justice—for the weakest in society is a sine qua non for having a relationship with God.
    3. Jesus both inherits and expands this Hebrew belief and practice.
  - B. Who the most vulnerable are may change from age to age.
    1. Certainly, two groups that have always been seen as among the most wretched and powerless on Earth are the desperately poor and people afflicted with leprosy.
    2. Leprosy, which we call Hansen’s disease today, not only leads to ugly ulcers and a terrible odor but also often has a kind of moral stigma attached to it.
    3. A modern analogue perhaps is attitudes toward people with HIV/AIDS, especially in the early years of the disease.
    4. Francis of Assisi’s experiences with lepers were perhaps the defining events in his conversion. Compare, too, Mother Teresa’s experiences.

- II.** In modern times, perhaps the two Christians best known for their care and compassion for the most wretched of the Earth are Father Damien of Molokai and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.
- A.** By examining briefly their works and thought, we can more easily apply gospel precepts to our own age.
  - B.** If the term *Christian hero* is ever applicable, it is with reference to Father Damien and Mother Teresa.
- III.** Joseph de Veuster (later, Father Damien) was born to a farming family in Belgium in 1840.
- A.** At the age of 19, he chose the name Damien when he entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts.
  - B.** He studied in France and was later ordained to the priesthood.
  - C.** In 1864, Father Damien arrived in Hawaii to serve as a missionary priest. He lived there before the United States made Hawaii a territory at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
    - 1.** Father Damien served as a priest to native peoples.
    - 2.** He was responsible for a territory of 1,000 square miles. He built many chapels and learned to speak Hawaiian.
- IV.** In 1873, Father Damien volunteered to serve as the priest at the leper colony of Kalawao on the island of Molokai, and he remained there until his death in 1889 at the age of 49.
- A.** Leprosy was prevalent in Hawaii, and there were laws that forced lepers to live on Molokai.
  - B.** Sometimes, there were as many as 1,000 lepers there.
  - C.** From the beginning of his ministry, Damien addressed his flock with the phrase “we lepers.”
  - D.** Damien was known for his physical strength and his energy, both of which were valuable to the lepers at Molokai.
  - E.** Damien made sure that he visited each leper in his charge—several hundred were Catholics or catechumens, and some were orphaned children.
  - F.** In 1884 or 1885, Damien began to show signs that he had contracted leprosy.
    - 1.** Although leprosy was not highly contagious, Damien’s years of intimacy with lepers clearly made him vulnerable.
    - 2.** Damien’s reference to “we lepers” was now both literally and metaphorically true.
  - G.** Damien had, of course, sought to imitate Christ by serving the lepers, and the year before his death, he received an image of St. Francis of Assisi as a gift, which he hung in his bedroom.



- H. When Father Damien died, he was interred in the leper cemetery at Kalawao.
- I. Father Damien had become somewhat famous in America and Europe before his death.
  1. Although his order made no immediate move to publicize his life or seek his canonization, some laypeople did.
  2. Eventually, many of Damien's things were returned to Belgium to establish a museum, and his body was re-buried in Louvain.
  3. In 1938, the formal process of seeking sainthood for Father Damien began.
  4. When Hawaii became a state, it chose Damien as one of two Hawaiians whose statues are displayed in the U.S. Capitol.
- V. Mother Teresa was an ethnic Albanian, born with the name Agnes Gonhxa Bojaxhiu in 1910 in Skopje, now the capital of the nation of Macedonia.
  - A. In 1928, she joined the Order of Sisters of Our Lady of Loreto and was sent to Dublin.
  - B. She arrived in India in 1929, chose Teresa as her new name, and was solemnly professed as a sister in 1937; she worked as a schoolteacher.
  - C. Sister Teresa experienced a calling to serve the poor outside the convent, and she began that work in 1948, taking as her dress a white sari with blue stripes.
  - D. Two years later, she founded the Order of Missionaries of Charity, and in 1952, she opened her first home for the dying and destitute; she also worked with lepers.
  - E. The order spread across the world, and in 1969, the first lay co-workers were admitted.
- VI. Until the 1970s, Mother Teresa was not widely known in Europe and America.
  - A. A book by the British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, called *Something Beautiful for God*, introduced her to millions of people.
  - B. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and was probably the most well known Catholic in the world other than the pope.
  - C. In 1996/7, Mother Teresa became an honorary U.S. citizen and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.
  - D. She died in 1997, and the process for her canonization began almost immediately.
- VII. Many people are aware of Mother Teresa's work—carrying the dying to the facilities she built for them, cleaning the wounds of a leper or someone infested with maggots, and so forth. We will look at some of Mother

Teresa's own words to understand why she did what she did and how she is a model of Christian life for all of Christ's followers.

- A. Her theology of prayer began with her need for God's grace and her duty to pray for those who do not pray themselves.
- B. Mother Teresa believed that the only way to conquer the world was through love.
  - 1. She emphasized that love begins at home with family and friends, and she urged everyone to find the poor in their own homes and love them.
  - 2. Love is not defined by extraordinary deeds but in the daily giving of oneself to others.
- C. Her concept of holiness begins with people divesting themselves of their own wills and surrendering to God.
- D. She reminded people of Gandhi's words: "If Christians were to live their Christian lives to the fullest, there would not be one Hindu left in India."
- E. Unlike some Christians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Lecture Twenty-Three), Mother Teresa addressed individuals and their individual needs rather than systems and ideologies.
- F. Especially to people in the First World, she reminded them that it is easier to sympathize with poor far away than with those we encounter personally.
- G. Perhaps Mother Teresa's most enduring teaching—I speak personally here—is that every beggar or sick or needy person we meet is Christ. In her words, Christ appears in many "distressing disguises."

**Essential Reading:**

Gavan Daws, *Holy Man: Father Damien of Molokai*.

Mother Teresa, *No Greater Love*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Malcolm Muggeridge, *Something Beautiful for God*.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. Who are the widows and orphans and aliens and lepers in our own time and place?
- 2. Do we see around us today, either in person or through the media, the next generation of Father Damien and Mother Teresa?
- 3. Why are such figures as Father Damien and Mother Teresa so highly respected today when so few really attempt to imitate them?

## Lecture Twenty-Two

### From Slavery to Martin Luther King

**Scope:** It has been said that the songs of African slaves in the United States, often referred to as *spirituals*, provided a way for slaves to survive under intolerable conditions while proclaiming the blatant contradiction between a liberator God and their masters. Beginning with the songs and the courage of those who would “steal away to Jesus” to sing them, we will then turn to the most famous African-American Christian leader, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. King was educated in theology and pastored his entire adult life. His belief that American ideals, if lived out, are consonant with Christian values was guided by his prophetic vision of just how imperfectly Americans lived out the values they professed. Although King borrowed mightily from the example of Gandhi, he incorporated what he learned into his vision of the Promised Land, the peaceable kingdom.

### Outline

- I. Beginning in 1619, Africans were imported into what is now the United States as slaves.
  - A. They were not Christians.
  - B. Unlike in other parts of the New World, slaveholders brought about the conversion of their captives to Christianity.
  - C. Over time, slaves came to a view of Christianity that was different from that of the white slave owners.
  - D. We know about some developments of Christianity among African Americans from the songs they sang, which were largely written down after the end of slavery.
    1. While slaves received a white form of Christianity from their masters and their preachers, some slaves who could read had very different takes on Christianity.
    2. A passage such as Paul’s “slaves, obey your masters” may have been part of what slaves heard from whites, but they discovered or found different meanings for Christ’s and Paul’s teachings about human dignity and true freedom.
    3. Slaves would sometimes meet in the woods away from the masters and sing and hear about Christianity that addressed who they were. As one of their songs suggested, they would “steal away to Jesus.”
    4. They saw in the story of the Exodus that God favors the oppressed and will lead people to freedom from their oppressors.
      - a. The most famous of all the spirituals is “Go Down, Moses,” a hopeful retelling of the Exodus story.

- b. Songs that refer to crossing over the Jordan River into the Promised Land had historical meaning and signified going to heaven but also suggested freedom across the slaves' own Jordan, the Ohio. One of the most famous of these spirituals is "Deep River."
    - 5. Some songs reassured the slaves that God sees and knows all and that the masters will have to face God and be judged for their sins.
      - a. "I Gotta Shoes" suggests that not everyone who talks about heaven will get there.
      - b. "The Welcome Table" even suggests that the slaves will report to God what the masters are up to.
    - 6. Some of the songs are rooted in all-too-common situations that slaves had to endure (for example, "Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child").
    - 7. Slaves identified with the suffering and crucified Christ.
      - a. One mournful song asked, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"
      - b. Still, such stories as the Exodus and, especially, Christ's Passion brought hope to the slaves. Hence, one song about all the troubles that people experience ends with the words "Glory Hallelujah."
    - 8. The Christianity of the slaves helped them to live through horrific circumstances while never letting them forget just how intolerable their conditions were and giving them hope for a better future.
- II. Separate black denominations were established in the North before the Civil War, and after the Civil War, numerous black churches were established in the South, some with northern support.
  - A. For the next century, black churches, especially in the South, provided for much more than the spiritual well-being of their members.
    - 1. Many denominations and individual churches established schools and colleges that offered blacks their best hope for receiving an education and moving up.
    - 2. Many of those colleges still exist, primarily in the South, and are known as HBCUs, historically black colleges and universities; these include such well-known institutions as Fisk University and Morehouse and Spelman Colleges.
    - 3. Black churches established social networks and provided safe places for blacks to meet and discuss important matters beyond the ears of whites.
  - B. Although there was a great variety of black churches and some of these churches seemed somewhat comfortable in a world of Jim Crow laws, many churches and their leaders were also often in the forefront of efforts to advance blacks' pursuit of justice, fired by the words of Jesus and the writings and actions of the Old Testament prophets.

- III.** It is important to remember to what extent the civil rights movement was rooted in the Christian values of dignity and freedom.
- A.** When we think of the great leaders of the civil rights movement, many were, in fact, clergy. They include such figures as the Reverend Ralph Abernathy and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.
  - B.** Further, many churches served as the locations for mass meetings and starting points for marches.
    - 1.** The Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham are a part of the history of the civil rights movement.
    - 2.** Many of us have seen, in such films and television series as *Eyes on the Prize*, the prayer meetings before marches in Selma and elsewhere.
- IV.** The most famous of the great African American pastors was Martin Luther King, Jr., who had a Ph.D. in theology from Boston University, as well as a divinity degree from Crozer Divinity School, and who spent almost his entire adult life as a pastor and as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
- A.** King was born in Atlanta in 1929, the son of a pastor.
  - B.** His education in Christianity came from being a pastor's son as much as a theology student.
  - C.** His theological training allowed him to study modern Christian thought and to use such authors as Karl Barth, Walter Rauschenbach, and a host of other Christian writers to articulate and expand the traditions he inherited from his experiences in African American churches.
  - D.** He also was able to learn from non-Christians, as so many important Christian thinkers in the past, including Augustine, had done. In particular, King employed some of the practices and ideas of Gandhi.
  - E.** King constantly quoted the prophets of the Old Testament, especially texts about the call for justice.
    - 1.** In his "I Have a Dream" speech, he quotes Isaiah when he tells of his dream that every valley will be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low.
    - 2.** His most often quoted passage in scripture was probably Amos 5:24: "Let justice roll like a river."
  - F.** King recognized that Christians must be concerned not only with people's souls but also with "the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them."
  - G.** For King, peace was more than lack of violence; true peace required justice.

- H.** The dream that King spoke about on August 28, 1963, is, as he said, deeply rooted in the American dream.
1. King believed in the basic values of America and called Americans to live them out.
  2. Toward the end of his life, he became more critical of the America he lived in, especially the war in Vietnam and the country's gross economic inequalities.
- I.** It is important to remember that Reverend King's—Brother Martin's—last public words were: “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

**Essential Reading:**

Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., including “I Have a Dream” and the speech delivered April 3, 1968, in Memphis, in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**Supplementary Reading:**

Noel Erskine, *King among the Theologians*.

Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How can we use songs and other religious expressions (art, for example) to find deep Christian values?
2. How can we imagine slaves being both soothed (there is a balm in Gilead) and moved to action by the words of Jesus and the prophets?
3. Are there still prophets, and should we consider Martin Luther King to be one of the prophets of our era?

## Lecture Twenty-Three

### Gustavo Gutierrez and Liberation Theology

**Scope:** By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several theologies of liberation have developed around the world, in regions of South Africa and Korea and in groups of feminists and gays in the developed world. All of these are, to some extent, inspired by a theology that developed among the poor of Latin America. This theology was given a name and an identity by a Peruvian priest named Gustavo Gutierrez, who published his famous book, *A Theology of Liberation*, in 1971. Liberation theology is rooted in the establishment of base communities among the poor and dispossessed. Its advocates argue that all Christians are called not just to alleviate the suffering of individuals who are poor and oppressed but, as Christians, to oppose oppressive political, economic, and social structures. Liberation theologians argue that Christ made a preferential option for the poor, and all who call themselves followers of Christ must do likewise.

### Outline

- I. Very few people can answer correctly the following question: What is the largest Catholic nation (by population) in the world? The answer is Brazil.
  - A. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, regions south of the equator have had the fastest-growing Christian populations.
  - B. Although Latin America is overwhelmingly Catholic, sub-Saharan Africa has millions of Protestants and Catholics.
  - C. Two countries in East Asia, Korea and the Philippines, also have large Christian populations.
  - D. One illustration of the emerging importance of so-called Third World theology is that cardinals from Africa and Central and South America were considered “papabile” in the conclave of 2005.
  
- II. Many theologians and church leaders in Europe and North America have realized that some of the best theology and practice of Christianity can be found in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
  - A. In Asia and parts of Africa, where Christians are minorities, often tiny minorities, inter-religious dialogue has developed out of necessity.
  - B. Peoples who are not part of European or European-derived cultures respond to the gospel differently because they view Christianity without its usual cultural dress.
    1. Sometimes, this is as simple as depicting Christ and the apostles at the Last Supper as Asians eating an Asian meal.
    2. Liturgies may contain local dance and musical forms.

3. Some writers, a good example being the Japanese novelist and Catholic Shusaku Endo, have reflected deeply on the question of whether an individual must give up some of his or her culture in a place like Japan to be a Christian.
4. Whole new ways of thinking about and practicing Christianity have developed in the Third World.

**III.** In this lecture, we focus on one movement and its founder, liberation theology and the Peruvian Gustavo Gutierrez.

- A. Latin America, which is predominantly Catholic, is home to millions of people living in abject poverty and on the edges, literally and metaphorically, of society.
- B. Often, the leaders of the church have come from the privileged classes and have been sympathetic to the status quo.
- C. In the 1960s, stimulated in part by a tradition of Catholic social justice and the renewal of the church begun by John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, new voices began to emerge in Latin America (from both clergy working with the poor and bishops).
- D. The most important voice was that of Gustavo Gutierrez.

**IV.** Gustavo Gutierrez, born in Lima, Peru, in 1928, is still a priest and teaches theology.

- A. He was raised in humble circumstances in Lima and, for several years, was confined to his bed with illness, which turned him into an avid reader and gave him the experience of powerlessness.
- B. He studied in Lima, Louvain, Lyon, and Rome.
- C. Gutierrez was ordained to the priesthood and, late in life, entered the Dominican Order.
- D. Even though he is a prolific writer and has traveled widely to lecture and teach, including at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, for many years, he served a poor community in Lima as a parish priest.
- E. Gutierrez served as the official theological advisor to the Latin American bishops when they met at Medellin (Columbia) in 1968.
  1. The documents that came out of Medellin led to the development of what is known today as *liberation theology*.
  2. One key point was declaring a pastoral option for the poor.
- F. In 1971, Gutierrez published, in Spanish, of course, the book that was to become the touchstone of the movement, *A Theology of Liberation*.
- G. The 1978 meeting of the Latin American bishops in Puebla, Mexico, deeply influenced by Gutierrez, went farther than Medellin by proclaiming God's "preferential option for the poor."



- H. Liberation theology encompasses radical ideas and practices and unusual influences, making it suspect among some theologians and even some Vatican officials.
- V. Liberation theology now has many articulate spokespeople.
- A. Among the most famous is the Brazilian Leonardo Boff, who was briefly silenced by the Vatican.
  - B. There have been fruitful exchanges between African American theologians in the United States and liberation theologians from Latin America. It is no coincidence that James Cone published his most important book with the title *A Black Theology of Liberation*.
  - C. In the First World, some female and gay Christians have been empowered by Latin American liberation theology.
  - D. Groups and subgroups throughout the Third World have also adapted ideas of Latin American liberation theology to their own conditions.
- VI. We can use the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez to look at some of the essential principles and sources for liberation theology.
- A. Gutierrez stresses that all theologies arise out of particular sets of historical circumstances and cannot be understood without an awareness of the circumstances existing when important books were written.
    1. He believes that there is a danger in absolutizing historical theologies.
    2. It follows that at a given time, certain theologies may be particularly useful or not very useful.
    3. Many liberation theologians, for example, find the writings of the early fathers more useful today than those of certain medieval theologians.
    4. It should not be surprising that one of the great heroes of liberation theology is Francis of Assisi.
  - B. Of course, Gutierrez and the liberation theologians give first place to the Bible. Even here, many liberation theologians emphasize certain books and passages more than others, such as Matthew 25 and the Gospel of Luke.
  - C. One of the most controversial elements of liberation theology is the use Gutierrez and others make of certain writings of Karl Marx.
    1. Gutierrez and others use Marx critically and certainly do not share his views about religion as the opiate of the people.
    2. They emphasize that Marx understood the role that systems of thought and structures play in shaping society.
    3. Hence, in the view of liberation theologians, Christians must understand and oppose ideologies and structures that keep the

- poor, poor.
4. It is important to remember that liberation theology developed during the Cold War and, at least in part, during the pontificate of John Paul II, who suffered at the hands of the communist government of his native Poland.
- D.** Gutierrez contextualizes contemporary Christianity by looking at certain historical trends.
1. He starts with a certain privatization of religion that accompanied the secularization of the West beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
  2. In the so-called post-modern age, many doubt that there are any fundamental truths, and the resulting relativism leads to further privatization of religious beliefs and practices.
  3. According to Gutierrez, such privatization and relativism must be addressed and overcome to practice the Christianity that Christ prescribed.
- E.** Poverty must be eliminated, and that requires nothing less than the remaking of history and the empowerment of the poor.
1. Christians must be actively involved in aiding the poor individually and in opposing structures and ideologies that keep people poor.
  2. The same principles must be applied to other un-Christian conditions, for example, the oppression of women.
  3. Gutierrez has stressed that globalization, as it is moving forward, is harmful to the poor and destructive of God's creation.
  4. Love of God and love of neighbor (remembering the story of the Good Samaritan) must be joined every day.
- VII.** The development and influence of liberation theology have been different, even within Latin America.
- A.** One example is the stress on base communities, especially in Brazil.
  - B.** Another example can be found in the statements and assassination of Oscar Romero, archbishop of San Salvador.
  - C.** Some applaud, while others worry about, the fragmentation of liberation theology into numerous micro-liberation theologies.

**Essential Reading:**

Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: Perspectives and Tasks*.

Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What does liberation theology have to contribute to the thought and practices of prosperous Christians in the developed world?
2. Are the principles of liberation theology solidly enough grounded that they can be applied in a wide range of places and situations?
3. Should we look at Paul's idea of Christianity as liberation from the bondage of sin as including sinful structures and ideologies?

## Lecture Twenty-Four

### Defining the Christian Life

**Scope:** As we look back at 20 centuries of the practice of Christianity and the extraordinary diversity of Christian lives in the contemporary world, it is important to ask if we can define “the Christian life” or even suggest what the bases are for anyone who seeks to live as a faithful follower of Jesus. It’s important to respect the entire range of Christian lives that we have examined in this course. It would be easy for a monk on Mount Athos to criticize Christians who are too involved in worldly politics and what might be called social work. It would be perhaps just as easy for someone struggling in a *barrio* in Lima to wonder how a monk on Mount Athos is advancing the kingdom of God. My experience is that the wisest monks and the wisest Christians in the barrios recognize the importance of those with radically different but valid Christian vocations. In addition, we discover that no one has succeeded in being just like Jesus or following all of his examples and counsels. However, there are certain beliefs that all the great Christians share, and we will finish the course with some thoughts about what all the figures have in common.

### Outline

- I. The most obvious answer to the question, “What makes a great Christian?” is that there is no clear or specific answer.
  - A. We have considered great scholars, such as Augustine and Martin Luther, as well as people who were illiterate, for example, some of those desert hermits, many of the African slaves, and many who practice liberation theology.
  - B. We have looked at almost every Christian century and, of course, could have found many great Christians in each century.
  - C. Even in this short course, we have examined great Christians on five continents.
  - D. Some of our great Christians were Catholic, some Protestant, some Orthodox, and one was burned at the stake as a heretic.
  - E. Some are known for their writings, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, while others are men and women we know from their actions, such as Francis of Assisi and Father Damien. Some, of course, are known for both, including Catherine of Siena, Thomas More, and Martin Luther King.
  - F. Leo IX and Gregory VII and, in a slightly different way, Benedict are primarily discussed in terms of their service to, and development of,

Christian institutions; others, such as St. Patrick and John Wesley, were critical of institutional Christianity in important ways.

**II.** Having suggested the ultimate futility of creating *the* definition of a great Christian, I will nevertheless suggest some qualities that just about all of the people we focused on share.

**A.** All are rooted in scripture.

1. From Paul to Martin Luther King, it is important to note that *scripture* means both parts of the Christian Bible, Hebrew and Christian scriptures (Old and New Testaments).
2. To be rooted in scripture does not require careful, scholarly study or even that scripture has to be read.
  - a. The African slaves in America heard Bible stories and sermons.
  - b. Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena clearly gained some of their understanding of scripture from looking at paintings.
3. Being rooted in scripture means bringing biblical ideas and stories into one's own life.
  - a. The slaves in America saw that they were living lives parallel to those of the Hebrews in bondage in Egypt.
  - b. Francis, Mother Teresa, and others recognized the "widows, orphans, and aliens" of their time.

**B.** All the people we examined were willing to sacrifice their lives for Christ, in imitation of Christ himself who, after all, sacrificed his life for them.

1. Of course, this applies literally to early Christian martyrs, as well as to later figures such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Maximilian Kolbe, Thomas More, John Hus, and Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. However, it is equally clear that such people as Clare in her cloister, Father Damien on Molokai, and Gustavo Gutierrez in a barrio in Lima also lived lives of total commitment.
3. Although they all sought to live eternally with Christ, they were clearly servants of God and of their neighbors.

**III.** Although the lifestyles of these men and women were quite varied, they all were conscious of finding a relationship between the active and contemplative dimensions of Christianity.

**A.** Sometimes, the active and contemplative lives are presented as a choice—which will we follow?

**B.** However, Christ himself spent time alone in the desert and in prayer, along with preaching and healing.

**C.** Even the hermits of the desert and the monks of Mount Athos recognize that pure contemplation is impossible.

- D. Similarly, Mother Teresa, Bernardino of Siena, and John Wesley recognized not just the desirability but the necessity of prayer and periods of withdrawal.
  - E. Finding a balance of action and contemplation, or work and prayer as Benedict wrote in the Rule, is an essential part of living a fully Christian life.
- IV.** All of the great Christians discussed in this course perceived the need to practice Christian love and live as part of the visible body of Christ on Earth.
- A. When we read of the monks and, especially, the hermits, we sometimes assume that they sought utter detachment from other Christians, but this is not so.
  - B. Love may be directly shared with only a small number of people and infrequently, but we must recognize the centrality of prayers of petition in the lives of even the most reclusive Christians. Detachment does not mean disregard.
- V.** The virtue of humility is a universal attribute of great Christians, although specific sins, such as gluttony or greed, and specific virtues, such as courage or charity, may be more characteristic of some periods and cultures than others.
- A. Pride was the sin in the Garden of Eden, that is, the first sin; we see it everywhere.
    - 1. It was the foundational sin that Dante presents in his seven-story purgatorial journey.
    - 2. If we make progress in dealing with lust or love of money, the pride we take in our advancement is more serious than the sins we conquered.
  - B. Humility does not mean that Christians must be always self-effacing or apologizing or making statements of false humility.
    - 1. As Augustine recognized, humility is recognizing one's place in the universe, which is, of course, far from the center of it.
    - 2. It does not mean refusing to give opinions, although it is vital that people remember that they do not see things from God's perspective.
  - C. Martin Luther, who was aggressive and often abrasive, wrote the words of humility "We are beggars" as he lay dying.
  - D. Perhaps Francis of Assisi has the best way of explaining humility.
    - 1. When asked what he thought of himself, he stated that he was the greatest of sinners.

2. What he meant was that he knew how many gifts God had given him but he also knew to what extent he did not use or give sufficient thanks for those gifts.

**Essential Reading:**

Review the biblical texts listed in Lecture One and reexamine them in light of the Christians we have studied in this course.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why is humility *the* Christian virtue, and how does humility aid a Christian in dealing with lust, envy, or another serious sin?
2. How is the practice of humility the ultimate imitation of Christ?
3. In a world so seemingly geared to constant action, how do Christians carve out for themselves a contemplative dimension in their lives?

## Biographical Notes

**Ambrose** (c. 340–397): Bishop of Milan from 374 to 397. Ambrose was an important writer and political figure in the church. He was partly responsible for Augustine’s conversion and also baptized him.

**Antony** (c. 251–356): Usually regarded as the first Christian monk. Antony left home at age 18 in 269 and lived in various degrees of asceticism and isolation in Egypt for 87 years.

**Athanasius** (c. 295–373): Bishop of Alexandria from 328 until his death. Athanasius attended the Council of Nicaea and was a fierce opponent of the Arians. Several times, he was exiled from his see in Alexandria. He wrote a *Life* of Antony, the first monk, one of the most important biographies ever written of a holy person.

**Augustine** (354–430): For more than 30 years, Augustine was bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He is probably the most influential non-biblical Christian writer in the West. His most massive and comprehensive tome is his *City of God*, but his autobiographical *Confessions* is certainly his most loved and read book in our time.

**Benedict** (480–c. 547): The most important monk in the history of the church in the West. After living as a hermit and serving as an abbot (two quite different situations), Benedict founded Montecassino in 529 and wrote his famous Rule for it. The Rule of St. Benedict is still the Rule by which most Catholic monks live.

**Bernard of Clairvaux** (c. 1090–1153): This young French noble entered the Cistercian Order in 1112 and, within a few years, became abbot of Clairvaux. He was one of the most important mystics, preachers, and writers of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**Bernardino of Siena** (1380–1444): A Franciscan preacher during his career as a friar (1402–1444). He sought to apply the teachings of Christ to life in the merchant-oriented city-republics of northern Italy. He was also an important reformer of the Franciscan Order.

**Bojaxhiu, Agnes Gonhxa**: See **Mother Teresa**.

**Bonhoeffer, Dietrich** (1906–1945): A Lutheran pastor and theologian. He was involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler and spent almost two years in prison before being killed in 1945. His books and his letters and papers from prison are some of the most important work of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and sometimes radically question traditional Christian beliefs and practices.

**Cassian, John** (c. 360–c. 435): By visiting monks and writing about his observations in Latin, Cassian is primarily responsible for transmitting the



wisdom and lore of the desert to the West. He also founded an important monastery in southern France, near Marseille.

**Catherine of Alexandria** (d. 305): Martyred during the reign of Diocletian by being tortured on a spiked wheel. Catherine was one of the most venerated saints throughout the Middle Ages and after, and is the subject of paintings by almost every well-known Italian artist.

**Catherine of Siena** (1347–1380): Born in Siena, Catherine became a member of a group of third-order Dominican women. She ministered to those in need, wrote hundreds of letters, had extraordinary mystical experiences, and was deeply involved in bringing the papacy back to Rome from Avignon. She died at age 33.

**Constantine** (c. 272–337): Constantine became Roman emperor in the West in 312 following his victory at the Milvian Bridge, before which he had a vision that led him to Christianity. Although not baptized until he was on his deathbed, Constantine favored Christianity, called and presided over the Council of Nicaea, and built the “Christian Rome,” Constantinople.

**Coroticus**: A Christian in Britain whose soldiers took captive some Irish who had recently been baptized by St. Patrick. Patrick’s letter to the soldiers of Coroticus is one of his two surviving writings.

**De Veuster, Joseph**: See **Father Damien**.

**Diocletian** (c. 245–c. 312): Ruling as Roman emperor from 284 to 305, Diocletian carried out the most systematic and deadly persecution of Christians of any Roman emperor.

**Erasmus** (c. 1466–1536): Born in Rotterdam, Erasmus was the most important Humanist writer and scholar of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He was a friend of Thomas More and called him “a man for all seasons.” He was attacked for his views on free will by Martin Luther.

**Evagrius of Pontus** (345–399): A highly educated man who became a monk of the Egyptian desert. His writings on prayer are some of the most important texts ever written on that subject. His influence was somewhat diminished by his identification with the teachings of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century writer Origen.

**Father Damien** (1840–1889): Born in Belgium with the name Joseph de Veuster, this priest was educated in France. A member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, he was sent as a missionary to Hawaii and, from 1873 until his death from leprosy, ministered at the leper colony of Kalawao on the island of Molokai.

**Gajowniczek, Francis**: This man was sentenced to starvation at Auschwitz after a prisoner in his barracks escaped. Maximilian Kolbe asked to replace him. Gajowniczek spent much of his life proclaiming the virtues of Father Kolbe and was present at the saint’s canonization in 1982.

**Gregory VII** (d. 1085): Pope from 1073 to 1085, Gregory VII was embroiled in a controversy with the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV over lay investiture and, more generally, the leadership of Western Christendom. He died in exile.

**Gregory XI** (1330–1378): The last of the popes to live in Avignon. Catherine of Siena, among others, urged him to return to Rome and told him either to be courageous or to resign. He returned to Rome in 1377 and died shortly thereafter.

**Gutierrez, Gustavo** (1928–): A priest from Lima, Peru, Gutierrez wrote the foundational book laying out the principles of liberation theology. For almost 40 years, he has taught and written about a theology that seeks to liberate people not just from personal sin but from sinful structures, systems, and ideologies.

**Henry IV** (1050–1106): Holy Roman Emperor from 1084 to 1106. For much of that time, he struggled against the popes, who tried to end lay investiture of bishops. Ultimately, Henry was weakened because his nobles supported the pope and his son rebelled against him.

**Humbert** (c. 1000–1061): A cardinal during the pontificate of Leo IX. He took a hard stand against simony and excommunicated the Byzantine patriarch while he was in Constantinople in 1054.

**Hus, John** (1369–1415): Famous Czech reformer. A university master, reformer, and preacher, Hus selectively used some of the writings of John Wyclif to define his view of the church. His safe conduct to Constance for the council there was revoked by the emperor Sigismund after he was convicted of heresy, and he was then burned at the stake.

**Ignatius of Antioch** (d. c. 107): Bishop of Antioch and Christian martyr. The letters of Ignatius, some composed as he was being taken to Rome to be executed, are some of the earliest and most important Christian writings not included in the New Testament.

**Innocent III** (c. 1160–1216): The youngest cardinal when he was elected pope in 1198 and one of the most powerful popes of the Middle Ages. Innocent was also an important reformer and approved the establishment of the Franciscan Order in 1209–1210. He called the most important council of the Middle Ages, the Fourth Lateran Council.

**Jogues, Isaac** (1607–1646): He was a Jesuit missionary in what is now Canada and New York State. He was martyred in 1646.

**John XXIII** (1881–1963): Pope from 1958 to 1963, John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council. This council attempted to carry out a thorough reform and modernization of the Catholic Church.

**King, Martin Luther, Jr.** (1929–1968): Born in Atlanta, the son of a prominent minister, King received a divinity degree and a Ph.D. in theology before returning to the South. Beginning with his organization of the

Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, King became the most prominent leader of the civil rights movement. His “I Have a Dream” speech is one of the greatest American speeches, and he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. King was assassinated in Memphis.

**Kolbe, Maximilian** (1894–1941): A Polish Franciscan friar, publisher of Catholic magazines, and founder of a major Franciscan monastery known (in English translation) as Marytown. He was arrested by the Nazis after their conquest of Poland. While a prisoner at Auschwitz, Kolbe asked to replace a man with a family, who was to be starved to death, and Kolbe died there, by lethal injection, in August of 1941.

**Lawrence** (d. 258): Martyred by being roasted on a gridiron, Lawrence became one of the most popular of the Christian martyrs and appears in countless works of art, for example, a 5<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic in the tomb of Galla Placidia in Ravenna.

**Leo IX** (1002–1054): Elected pope in 1049, Leo IX’s five-year pontificate is one of the most important in the history of the church. He sought to disentangle the church from the “world” by putting an end to simony and finding a way for the church to operate without control from secular authorities.

**Luther, Martin** (1483–1546): Born in a small town in eastern Germany, Luther went on to become a friar, a professor, and the leading figure of the Protestant Reformation centered in Wittenberg. He was a prolific scholar, translator, and polemicist. He is buried in the same church where he had posted his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517.

**Martin of Tours** (c. 316–397): Said to be the first monk in Europe, Martin abandoned his military career. He is important not only as a monk but also as the bishop of Tours in Gaul.

**More, Thomas** (1478–1535): Born in London, More became a leading Humanist and political figure in early-16<sup>th</sup>-century England, rising to the office of chancellor. After Henry VIII’s break from the Roman Church, More was convicted of treason and executed. He is the author of many works, most notably, *Utopia*.

**Mother Teresa** (1910–1997): An ethnic Albanian, born with the name Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, in what is now the nation of Macedonia. She founded the Order of Missionaries of Charity in India in 1950 and served the poor there for almost half a century. She received the Nobel Peace Prize and was perhaps the most admired woman in the world at the time of her death.

**Niebuhr, Reinhold** (1892–1971): Niebuhr was one of the most influential theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His Christian Realism, which sought to bring Christian teachings to bear on social and political matters, deeply influenced Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Palamas, Gregory** (1296–1359): Gregory was a monk on Mount Athos in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He became the great defender of the spiritual practice of hesychasm, a method of prayer and spiritual ascent to God. His writings, though not well known in the West, are an important contribution to Christian thought, especially concerning prayer and the mystical quest.

**Patrick** (c. 387–493): Born in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland while a teenager. After his escape, Patrick was ordained a bishop and carried out a successful mission to bring Christianity to Ireland (although there were certainly other Christians in Ireland working toward the same goal).

**Paul** (d. c. 68): Although Paul, a Pharisaic Jew, persecuted followers of Jesus, he had a dramatic conversion and spent more than 30 years as a Christian missionary in Asia and Europe. His letters are the earliest and probably the most important Christian documents. He was martyred just outside the walls of Rome.

**Perpetua and Felicity** (d. 203): These women, the latter the servant of the former, were important martyrs of the early church. Perpetua wrote much of their *passio* herself, one of the earliest Christian writings by a woman.

**Peter** (d. c. 68): Chief among the followers of Jesus, he became the most important leader in the early church. He was martyred in Rome and buried in the Vatican.

**Polycarp** (c. 69–155): Polycarp’s martyrdom in 155 is the first for which we have a narrative, making him an important martyr of the early church.

**Robinson, John A. T.** (1919–1983): In 1963, this Anglican bishop published *Honest to God*, a book suggesting that something of a revolution in Christian thought was necessary if Christianity was to remain relevant in the modern world.

**Sebastian** (d. 287): A Roman soldier who became a Christian, Sebastian was martyred by being shot with arrows. In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, he was one of the principal saints invoked against the bubonic plague. This, combined with his youthful male figure, made him one of the most often-depicted saints in Renaissance Italy.

**Synecletica**: The best known of the desert mothers or *ammās*. We have several sayings of hers, and there is an early version of her life that has survived.

**Tertullian** (c. 160–c. 240): An important 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-century Christian writer, although his reputation has long been tainted by his leanings toward Montanism, declared a heresy. He famously proclaimed, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

**Wesley, Charles** (1707–1788): Technically the founder of the first Methodist Society (1729), although we usually associate this with his brother, John. Like his brother, Charles was a great preacher, and he wrote several thousand hymns,

the most famous being “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing.” He was vehement that the Methodists not separate from the Church of England.

**Wesley, John** (1703–1791): The great leader and preacher of the movement we call Methodism. John Wesley traveled perhaps a quarter of a million miles in his long career as a preacher. He believed that it was possible for people to achieve Christian perfection. Shortly after his death, the Methodists broke from the Church of England and became a separate denomination.

**Wyclif, John** (c. 1328–1384): An English theologian who was critical of the church and rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. He was condemned as a heretic. Some of his writings influenced John Hus in Bohemia.

**Zwingli, Ulrich** (1484–1531): A priest in Zurich, he broke with the Roman Church and led a reform movement in Zurich and other Swiss cities. When Zwingli met with Luther, they agreed on many points but disagreed about the Eucharist.

## Bibliography

Ackroyd, Peter. *The Life of Thomas More*. New York: Doubleday, 1998. A readable modern biography of one of the great Humanists and Christians of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Armstrong, Regis, ed. *The Lady: Clare of Assisi, Early Documents*. New York: New City Press, 2006. A wonderful collection, with commentary, of works by and about Clare from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The document that contains testimonies about her life made in conjunction with the process of her canonization is one of the most interesting accounts in helping us to understand how someone was declared a saint.

———, et al., eds. *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*. 3 vols. plus index. New York: New City Press, 1999–2001. All of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century sources for the life of Francis, including Francis's own writings, are translated in these volumes, with useful introductions. Volume 1 is called *The Saint* and that is the bibliographical reference given at the end of the Francis lecture. Volumes 2 and 3 are called *The Founder* and *The Prophet*.

Athanasius. *The Life of Antony*. Translated by Robert Gregg. New York: Harper, 2006. This translation, originally published by Paulist Press, includes a brief introduction and one of Antony's letters.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by Maria Boulding. New York: New City Press, 1997. This is the liveliest translation and catches more of the sense of Augustine's Latin than others. However, there are several other good translations, and a new one has just appeared by Garry Wills, whose previously published translations of individual books of the *Confessions* are quite good.

Benedict. *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*. Edited by Timothy Fry. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982. There are many translations of the Rule of St. Benedict. This one is compact and was made to commemorate the 1,500<sup>th</sup> birthday of Benedict.

Bernard of Clairvaux. *Five Books on Consideration*. Translated by John D. Anderson and Elizabeth T. Kennan. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976. This work takes the form of a letter written to Pope Eugenius III and contains advice about what a pope should be doing and how the papal office has lost its bearings.

———. *On the Song of Songs*. Translated by Kilian Walsh. 4 vols. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1971ff. These 86 sermons on the biblical Song of Songs are among the great mystical works of the Western tradition. The first few sermons give the reader a sense of what Bernard's quest and method consist of.

Bethge, Eberhard. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*. Revised edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. This 1,000-page biography is the standard work on Bonhoeffer. Bethge was a close friend and correspondent of Bonhoeffer, and this biography is both personal and monumental.

Bethge, Renate. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Brief Life*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. Renate Bethge was a niece of Bonhoeffer and the widow of his friend Eberhard Bethge. This brief book contains an essential narrative, selected passages from Bonhoeffer's writings, and wonderful photographs.

Boff, Leonardo. *St. Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*. New York: Crossroad, 1984. Boff, an important liberation theologian, writes a stimulating book about Francis of Assisi from a liberation perspective.

———, and Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987. A brief but comprehensive introduction to liberation theology, written by outstanding liberation theologians from Brazil.

Bolt, Robert. *A Man for All Seasons*. London: Heinemann, 1961. Play based on Thomas More's life. For film version, see entry for Fred Zinnemann below.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995 (orig. pub. 1937). I recently asked a seminary student studying Bonhoeffer about his most important book, and she unhesitatingly responded, "*The Cost of Discipleship*." I agree.

———. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Edited by Eberhard Bethge. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, enlarged ed. This great collection of writings from and to Bonhoeffer during his two-year imprisonment provides insights into both the man and his thought. In one letter, he provides a profound meditation on scripture and, in the next, worries about not getting cigarettes.

Branch, Taylor. *America in the King Years*. 3 vols. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988–2006. This enormous work is the standard study of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. New edition with an epilogue. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000 (orig. pub. 1967). Although there are many fine biographies and quite a few were written after Brown's, it remains the standard.

Brown, Raymond. *The Birth of the Messiah*. Updated edition. New York: Doubleday, 1999 (orig. pub. 1977). Offers a brilliant look at the two nativity narratives of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke.

———. *The Death of the Messiah*. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Brown, the most important American biblical scholar of his generation, presents an exhaustive analysis of the passion narratives of the four gospels.

———. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997. Brown's last major work is a wonderful survey of the books of the New Testament.

Butcher, Carmen. *A Life of St. Benedict: Man of Blessing*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006. The newest biography of Benedict; contains some imaginative conversations, as well as more traditional biographical materials.

Cassian, John. *The Conferences*. Translated by Boniface Ramsey. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997. *The Conferences* are 24 recreations of conversations John

Cassian had with monks in the Egyptian desert and constitute the most important means by which the wisdom of the desert became available to the Latin-speaking world.

———. *The Institutes*. Translated by Boniface Ramsey. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000. Cassian's first work on monastic life in the East.

Catherine of Siena. *The Dialogue*. Translated by Suzanne Noffke. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980. The best translation of the most important spiritual work of Catherine of Siena.

———. *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*. Translated by Suzanne Noffke. 2 vols. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000—. With more volumes to come, this project will eventually include all of Catherine's correspondence. Although many of the letters seem in large part formulaic, some of them contain precious insights and telling biographical details.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. Revised edition. New York: Penguin, 1993. This, the first volume of the *Pelican History of the Church*, is a sure and readable guide to the early Christian centuries.

———. *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Beginning with apostolic times, Chadwick describes the developments that led to the division of Christendom into Catholic and Orthodox. He carries the story to the temporary union of the two churches that took place at the Council of Florence in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Cherubim, Archimandrite. *Contemporary Ascetics of Mount Athos*. 2 vols. Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1991–1992. This book contains numerous word pictures of, and interviews with, holy men from the Holy Mountain. Also includes photographs.

Chitty, Derwas. *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966. Borrowing his title from a phrase of Athanasius, Chitty gives us the best overall discussion of early Christian monasticism.

Cook, William. *Francis of Assisi: The Way of Poverty and Humility*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, and Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989. This short volume does not try to survey the life of Francis but, rather, focuses on a few key events as a way into exploring who this man was.

Cowdrey, H. E. J. *Pope Gregory VII: 1073–1085*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Cowdrey has written an excellent biography of Gregory. Long and detailed, it is the most significant book in English about this important pope.

Daws, Gavan. *Holy Man: Father Damien of Molokai*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973. A first-rate biography of Father Damien. It also contains important information about leprosy and how it was understood at the time Father Damien served lepers at Molokai.



Delio, Ilia. *Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007. Delio's book is an excellent and clear introduction to Clare.

Dewar, Diana. *Saint of Auschwitz: The Story of Maximilian Kolbe*. London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1982. Published in the year of Kolbe's canonization, this is a sympathetic portrait of the Franciscan martyr.

Dunn, James, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Part of a distinguished series, this volume contains essays by many of the finest contemporary Pauline scholars.

———. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. A lengthy and magisterial study of Paul's thought. It is organized topically rather than letter by letter.

Dunn, Marilyn. *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Dunn takes her story as far as the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but she devotes a great deal of time to the story of monasticism in Egypt and the Near East. She is thorough and incorporates the newest scholarship.

Ehrman, Bart. *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Ehrman provides his readers with a wide range of early Christian sources beyond those found in the New Testament. He brings together materials that are otherwise widely scattered.

Erskine, Noel. *King among the Theologians*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994. The author treats Martin Luther King's theology both in terms of its sources and its influences.

Evagrius Ponticus. *The Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*. Translated by John Eudes Bamberger. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981. Dom John Eudes's translation of, and commentary on, the works of this far-too-often-ignored desert father is an important text for those who seek to find the desert experience put in language that places it in an intellectual context.

Fatula, Mary Ann. *Catherine of Siena's Way*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987. Fatula's book is part of a series called *The Way of the Christian Mystics* and is written for the general reader.

Fox, Alistair. *Thomas More: History and Providence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. This book is a standard for those interested in a detailed investigation of More.

Fudge, Thomas. *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998. Fudge's history of the Hussite movement takes into account recent scholarship from the English-speaking world but also from Czech scholars.

Green, V. H. H. *John Wesley*. New York: University Press of America, 1987. This biography is thorough and scholarly.

Gregory I. *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict*. Translated by Odo Zimmerman and Benedict Avery. Collegeville, MN: St. John's Abbey Press, 1949. This handy little book is a translation of a *vita* of Benedict, probably written about a half century after he died. It is the earliest account of Benedict's life and a source for later biographies and for medieval and Renaissance painters.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *Essential Writings*. Edited by James Nickoloff. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. The best collection in English of a number of Gutierrez's most significant writings.

———. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed., with a new introduction by the author. Translated by Sister Caridad Ina and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988. This edition has the advantage of Gutierrez's reflections in the 15 years since this English translation was first published.

———. *A Theology of Liberation: Perspectives and Tasks*. Lima: CEP, 2003. Although somewhat hard to find, this gem is a pamphlet in which Gutierrez issues a renewed call in light of the great poverty in much of the world.

Hilkert, Mary Catherine. *Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001. This insightful little work deals with issues of gender through the prism of the works of Catherine of Siena.

Jorgensen, Johannes. *Saint Catherine of Siena*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1938. This work is rather old but still brings insight and understanding to the life and writings of Catherine of Siena. Jorgensen also wrote a fine a biography of St. Francis.

Kaminsky, Howard. *A History of the Hussite Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. The most detailed account of the Hussite movement in English.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Edited by James Washington. San Francisco: Harper, 1986. This large volume contains more than 600 pages of the words of Dr. King, including all of the most famous speeches and writings.

Kittelson, James. *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. A sympathetic biography by a major Luther scholar; unusually clear about some of the thorny theological issues of the Reformation.

Leclercq, Jean. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*. Translated by Catharine Misrahi. Third edition. New York: Fordham University Press, 1982. The classic study of medieval monastic culture in the West. Jean Leclercq was perhaps the greatest monastic historian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his insights are numerous. He especially illuminates the thought of Bernard of Clairvaux.

———. *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-historical Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979. This small volume is rich in insights into

monastic concepts of love and its relationship to more profane ideas about love in an age of courtly literature.

Lorit, Sergius. *The Last Days of Maximilian Kolbe*. New York: New City Press, 1988. A moving account of Kolbe's final days at Auschwitz.

Luther, Martin. *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*. Edited by John Dillenberger. New York: Doubleday, 1961. This serviceable volume contains the major writings of Luther at the time of his break from Rome.

Mann, William, ed. *Augustine's Confessions: Critical Essays*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. This new collection of essays on the *Confessions* offers a broad array of looks at the great classic.

Manselli, Raoul. *St. Francis of Assisi*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988. The best biography of Francis available in English; thorough and balanced.

Marty, Martin. *Martin Luther*. New York: Penguin, 2004. This great scholar has written a lovely, brief biography of Luther.

McGinn, Bernard. *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. 4 vols. New York: Crossroad, 1991-. A magisterial study of the subject. McGinn is especially good at explaining the nature of the mystical quest, and his analysis of such figures as Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi is groundbreaking and brilliant.

Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. As the descriptive title makes clear, this is a study of the world Paul traveled in and provides vital background to understanding Paul's tactics and meaning. Meeks's book is something of a classic.

Meier, John. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. 3 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1991-. Meier's three-volume biography of Jesus is an exhaustive study not only of the gospels but also of all sorts of contemporary and near-contemporary records. His deep understanding of Jewish tradition also illuminates this work.

Merton, Thomas, trans. *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century*. New York: New Directions, 1960. This is Thomas Merton's collection of his favorite sayings of the desert fathers. As one would expect, this spiritual master has chosen well.

Moorman, John. *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968. A fine history of the Franciscan movement; includes an examination of Francis, Clare, and Bernardino of Siena and puts them in the context of the institutional history of the friars.

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Translated by Clarence Miller. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. This translation is particularly clear and allows the reader to appreciate both the humor and seriousness of this great work.

Morris, Colin. *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. The first part of this book focuses on the papal

reform beginning with Leo IX. Morris later discusses Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi and their relationship with the papacy.

Mother Teresa. *No Greater Love*. Edited by Becky Benenate and Joseph Durepos. Novato, CA: New World Library, 1997. Contains passages from Mother Teresa's writings and a short and useful biography and timeline of her life.

Muggeridge, Malcolm. *Something Beautiful for God*. Reprint. San Francisco: Harper, 1986. Originally published in 1971, this splendid book introduced Mother Teresa of Calcutta to Western Christians. Muggeridge's book is not to be missed.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul: His Story*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. The most accessible of the works of this great scholar of Paul. It presents a credible if often speculative story of Paul's historical and metaphorical journey.

Musurillo, Herbert, ed. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. The best collection of the stories of the early martyrs, the form of literature known as the *passio*. Although some of these stories are available online, Musurillo has useful accompanying materials.

Norris, Kathleen. *The Cloister Walk*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1996. Norris has written a wonderful book about monasticism and how all Christians can learn from the tradition and practices of monks.

Oberman, Heiko. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. A somewhat unconventional biography of Luther, but it is full of insights for those who can keep the chronology straight.

O'Donnell, James. *Augustine: A New Biography*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005. O'Donnell wrote a three-volume commentary/guide to the *Confessions*; his biography of Augustine shows the thoroughness of a great scholar and is also readable.

O'Donoghue, Noel. *Aristocracy of Soul: Patrick of Ireland*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987. This brief book is a good introduction to Patrick's life and importance, especially for the Christian mystical tradition.

O'Loughlin, Thomas. *Discovering Saint Patrick*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005. A truly outstanding book. O'Loughlin presents both the history and the legend and explains how one became the other. The book also contains translations of the two surviving writings of Patrick, as well as the earliest surviving *vita*, an account of Patrick's life written by Muirchú about 700.

Origo, Iris. *The World of San Bernardino*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962. This wonderfully written biography captures Bernardino extraordinarily well. Origo quotes a great deal from Bernardino's sermons, and readers feel that they have gotten to know the famed preacher from Siena.

Palamas, Gregory. *The Triads*. Translated by Nicholas Gendle. Edited, with an introduction by John Meyendorff. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983. This work

is Gregory's classic defense of hesychasm. A good introduction allows readers who are unfamiliar with this form of Christian thought to profit from a reading of this great medieval writer.

Pennington, M. Basil. *The Monks of Mount Athos: A Western Monk's Extraordinary Spiritual Journey on Eastern Holy Ground*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2003. Basil Pennington, a Cistercian monk and important spiritual writer, reflects on his pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain.

Peterson, Ingrid. *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993. Peterson's biography is well done and is especially good at helping readers to understand the feminine dimension of Clare, not just her discipleship to Francis.

Polecritti, Cynthia. *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000. The title describes what Polecritti does in this interesting look at the preacher from a particular perspective and with a focus on the audience Bernardino was addressing.

Pollock, John. *Wesley the Preacher*. London: Lion, 1989. Pollock's look at Wesley is a popular and readable version of the preacher's life.

Raboteau, Albert. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Updated edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Raboteau has written the most authoritative account of the religious experience of American slaves.

Regnault, Lucien. *The Day-to-Day Life of the Desert Fathers in Fourth-Century Egypt*. Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1999. Regnault has used all of the surviving literature to painstakingly and thoroughly re-create how the men and women of the desert really lived their lives.

Robinson, John A. T. *Honest to God*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963. This slim book sent shock waves through English-speaking Christianity. It contained radical though hardly original ideas, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's notion of religionless Christianity. However, it was written by an Anglican bishop and for a broad audience.

Rubenson, Samuel. *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. A thorough study of the seven letters and the manuscript tradition, as well as translations of these seven precious documents.

Schaefer, Linda. *Come and See: A Photojournalist's Journey into the World of Mother Teresa*. Sanford, FL: DC Press, 2003. These intimate photographs of Mother Teresa at work in Calcutta are extraordinary.

Smith, Allan, trans. *The Pilgrim's Tale*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999. This volume contains the great anonymous Russian spiritual classic often translated as *The Way of the Pilgrim*. It has an excellent introduction for readers.

Speake, Graham. *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. About half of this book is a history of Mount Athos; the other half is a look at contemporary Athonite monasticism. The volume has stunning photographs.

Spinka, Matthew. *John Hus: A Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968. A reliable biography by one of the great English-speaking scholars of the Hussite movement.

Stewart, Columba. *Cassian the Monk*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. The newest study of Cassian; focuses on his writings about monasticism.

Tellenbach, Gerd. *Church, State, and Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1948 (reprinted by University of Toronto Press, 1991). An old but still excellent look at the period of the Investiture Contest (second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century).

Tierney, Brian. *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964 (reprinted by University of Toronto Press, 1988). This wonderful book contains the key documents for the Gregorian reform, along with Tierney's brilliant commentary. Other church-state controversies of the Middle Ages are also included in this volume.

Vivian, Tim, trans. *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. Six of these are interesting accounts of early desert fathers in Egypt and the Near East. Particularly important is the life of one of the desert mothers, Syncletica.

Ward, Benedicta, trans. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*. London: Mowbrays, 1975. Sister Benedicta has provided English readers with the most extensive and important collection of the wisdom of the desert fathers and mothers.

Wegemer, Gerard, and Stephen Smith, eds. *A Thomas More Source Book*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004. The editors have put together a fine collection of the writings of Thomas More and include the earliest biography of More, by his son-in-law, Will Roper.

Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth, 1952. This work, originally published circa 1767, is the best introduction to the most characteristic element of Wesley's thought.

———. *Sermons: An Anthology*. Edited by Albert Outler and Richard Heitzenrafer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991. This book is a useful anthology of important sermons of John Wesley and a broad sampling of topics he often preached about.

Wills, Garry. *Saint Augustine*. New York: Penguin, 1999. This short but quite good biography has been followed by several volumes of Wills's translations of single books of the *Confessions*, accompanied by excellent commentary.

———. *Saint Augustine's Childhood: Confessions, Book One*. New York: Viking Adult, 2001. Wills has an interesting and thoughtful commentary to accompany his translation of Book I of the *Confessions*.

———. *What Jesus Meant*. New York: Viking, 2006. Wills tries to introduce his readers to the Jesus found in the gospels, presenting him as a spiritual figure without a political agenda.

Wagner, Pamela Mason, producer. *The Reluctant Saint*, based on the book of the same title by Donald Spoto. Produced for the Hallmark Channel, 2003. This is a beautiful documentary about Francis, including comments by Donald Spoto and William Cook, the professor teaching this course.

Zinnemann, Fred, producer. *A Man for All Seasons*. This film, which won an Oscar for best film in 1966, is a wonderful dramatization of More's life. It follows the sources for More's life rather closely. (The film is based on the play by Robert Bolt; see entry above.)