

Who are the Fathers of the Church

The Fathers of the Church are so called because of their leadership in the early Church, especially in defending, expounding, and developing Catholic doctrines. For the first two centuries, most of these men were bishops, although in later years certain priests and deacons were also recognized as Fathers.

The list includes such notables as: Clement of Rome (d. A.D. 97), He is believed to have been the fourth bishop of Rome and served during the last decade of the first century. Around 96, he sent a letter from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, a major city in northeastern Greece and the site of St. Paul's evangelization. This letter, known as Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians, is most likely directed against immoral practices of prostitution connected with the Temple of Aphrodite. In the letter, Clement expresses his dissatisfaction with events taking place in the Corinthian Church and asks the people to repent for their un-Christian ways. The letter is important because it indicates that the author was acting as the head of the Christian Church and that it was centered in Rome. Clement was allegedly put to death under Emperor Domitian.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/church-fathers/biographies-of-church-fathers/st-clement-of-rome/>

The Church demands four major characteristics to be exhibited in the life and works of an early Church leader if he is to be considered a Father of the Church. These are antiquity, meaning that he lived before the eighth century (the death of St. John Damascene [cir. A.D. 750] is generally regarded as the close of the age of the Fathers); doctrinal orthodoxy; personal sanctity; and approval by the Church.

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/who-were-the-church-fathers>

A good source <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/>

Apostolic Fathers of the Church

Catholic Christians believe that the promise of the Spirit of Truth to guide believers in truth is found in the constant faith of the Church preserved in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. The term "Apostolic Fathers" applies to certain disciples and successors of the twelve apostles. In a more restricted sense, the term is applied to a group of Greek-language writers who were among the martyrs and major figures of the 1st and 2nd centuries in the Christian Church.

There are many others called Fathers of the Church, but they are not the Apostolic Fathers, which are the ones who had direct contact with the original Apostles. You can find out more about them via the Internet.

Clement I, St. (Clement of Rome), 4th Bishop of Rome, Place and dates r. 92 - 101

Writings:

I Clement or Letter to the Corinthians (c. 96): earliest piece of literature outside the NT historically attested; addressed disputes in the Church at Corinth;

II Clement (a sermon)(c. 140): Clementine authorship disputed

Ignatius of Antioch, St., Personal Martyr for the faith, Disciple of John the Evangelist, Condemned to die by wild beasts in Rome, Brought from Antioch to Rome and wrote seven

letters to churches and individuals. Letter to Ephesians, Letter to Magnesians, Letter to Tralles, Letter to Philadelphians, Letter to Smyrnans, Letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, Letter to Romans

These contain warnings against heretical doctrines; contain detailed summaries of doctrines; and a picture of Church organization with bishops, presbyters (elders) and deacons - First to stress Virgin Birth and to use the term "catholic church"

Polycarp of Smyrna, St. Received a visit and letter from Ignatius - Represented the Church of Asia Minor in meetings with Pope Anicetus - Dating of Easter - A teacher of Irenaeus - Knew John the Evangelist and other apostles - Was a disciple of John the Evangelist Place and dates 69-155

Writings: Polycarp to the Philipians - Martyrdom of Polycarp (about him)

Unknown Author of the Didache - Didache ("Teaching"): A compendium of moral precepts, instructions on organization of church communities, liturgical worship and regulation. It contains oldest Eucharistic prayer, directions on Baptism, fasting, prayer, treatment of bishops, deacons, prophets

Barnabas: Personal Surname of Joseph, a member of the early Christian church in Jerusalem (Acts 4:36) - Companion of Paul - Did missionary work with Mark (Acts 15:39) Place and dates c. 130

Writings: Letter of Barnabas, Allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament

Papias of Hierapolis: Contemporary of Polycarp - Knew of a collection of the "sayings of the Lord" to have been written in Aramaic or Hebrew by Matthew Place and dates (Phrygia) 120?

Writings: Five Books of Exegeses of the Dominical Oracles: - Quoted by Irenaeus - Witness to the existence of Jewish Christianity

Shepard of Hermas: Little known Place and dates (Rome) 140? A document, not a person, who we think was an apostle who wrote about being a Christian.

Writings: Mandates, Similitudes, The Shepherd: a vivid description of early Christianity

Above list from: <http://www.catholicapologetics.org/ap040500.htm>

Another source of info: <http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/index.html> which was www.DrItaly.com

Be sure to check out this website for a long list of Fathers:

http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_category/6/Early_Church_Fathers.html