

Chapter 1 : The Ecumenical Councils and their Chief Doctrines - Prayers - Catholic Online

The Ecumenical Councils of their doctrines have shaped the Church for two millennia. These important sessions serve to define the Catholic faith, to protect the Church from heresy and challenge.

The Third Ecumenical Council Ephesus September 9 was convened in the year against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger. The Fourth Ecumenical Council Chalcedon July 16 was convened in the year , against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible. The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas, the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon of the Council of Trullo also known as Quinisext , held in the year In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Therefore the Church proclaims: We reject and we anathematize all whom they have rejected and anathematized, as being enemies of Truth. In addition to their dogmatic definitions, the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils exerted great efforts towards the strengthening of church discipline. Local Councils promulgated their disciplinary canons according to the circumstances of the time and place, frequently differing among themselves in various particulars. The universal unity of the Orthodox Church required unity also in canonical practice, i. Thus, according to conciliar judgment, the Church has accepted: The Fifth and the Sixth Councils concerned themselves only with resolving dogmatic questions, and did not leave behind any disciplinary canons. The need to establish in codified form the customary practices during the years , and ultimately to compile a canonical codex for the Orthodox Church, occasioned the convening of a special Council, which was wholly devoted to the general application of churchly rules. This was convened in the year The Council in Trullo, with its Canons more than of all the Ecumenical Synods combined , had a tremendous significance in the history of the canonical theology of the Orthodox Church. Listing through in chronological order, and having been accepted by the Church the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and the Canons of the Holy Ecumenical and the Local Councils and of the holy Fathers, the Trullo Council declared: In its repository of grace is expressed a canonical norm, a connection to every era, and a guide for all the local Orthodox Churches in churchly practice. New historical conditions can lead to the change of some particular external aspect of the life of the Church. This makes creative canonical activity necessary in the conciliar reasoning of the Church, in order to reconcile the external norms of churchly life with historical circumstances. The details of canonical regulation are not fully developed for the various eras of churchly organization at all once. With every push to either forsake the literal meaning of a canon, or to fulfill and develop it, the Church again and again turns for reasoning and guidance to the eternal legacy of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, to the inexhaustible treasury of dogmatic and canonical truths.

Chapter 2 : ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

In the history of Christianity, the first seven ecumenical councils, include the following: the First Council of Nicaea in , the First Council of Constantinople in , the Council of Ephesus in , the Council of Chalcedon in , the Second Council of Constantinople in , the Third Council of Constantinople from and finally, the Second Council of Nicaea in

Several General Councils were held in the same places at different times and so are named first, second, etc. Of necessity only a very general statement can here be made of the various actions of the Councils and we limit this to the more important doctrinal questions. The First Council of Nicaea A. It formally presented the teaching of the Church declaring the divinity of God the Son to be one substance and one nature with that of God the Father. There were twenty canons drawn up, in which the time of celebrating Easter was clarified and a denunciation of the Meletian heresy made, also various matters of discipline or law were dealt with and several decisions advanced. From this Council we have the Nicene Creed. The First Council of Constantinople A. Answer was also given against the Apollinarian and Macedonian heresies. In answering the latter which denied the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, the dogma of the Church was again stated and the words inserted into the Nicene Creed declaring the truth that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son. The Council of Ephesus A. The Council was convened against the heresy of Nestorius. The Council of Chalcedon A. This followed as a result of the growing controversy among the early theologians who were being led into error by a confused idea of the one divine person being both God and man or that there are two natures, human and divine, in the one person of the Word. The Second Council of Constantinople A. It reaffirmed the dogmas stated by the third and fourth General Councils. The Third Council of Constantinople A. The Second Council of Nicaea A. It also gave twenty-two canons regarding the clergy. The Fourth Council of Constantinople A. This was done by deposing the usurper, Photius, and restoring the patriarch, Ignatius. The Greeks finally refused acknowledgment of the Council. The First Council of the Lateran A. This was the first General Council held in the West. It was convened to confirm the peace between the Church and State and to give final settlement to the problem of Investiture between Emperor Henry V and the Holy See. It was agreed that the Church has all rights to choose and consecrate prelates and invest them, and Church goods were restored to the Church. The Second Council of the Lateran A. Anacletus II, and imposed silence on Arnold of Brescia. Canons against simony, incontinence, breaking the "Truce of God," dueling or group feuding were advanced, and regulations concerning clerical dress were given. The Third Council of the Lateran A. Also defense of the true teaching was made in answer to the Albigenses and Waldenses. The Fourth Council of the Lateran A. The First Council of Lyons A. The Second Council of Lyons A. It also defined that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. The discipline governing the election of the pope was formulated. The Council of Vienne A. The doctrinal decrees of the Council were: The Council of Constance A. The heretical teaching of John Huss and Wyclif were answered. It was here that communion to the laity under one species was prescribed as a cure to the make it understood that the entirety of Jesus Christ is present under both or either species. In transubstantiation all of the bread is changed into the body, blood, soul and Divinity of Christ and all of the wine is changed into the body, blood, soul and Divinity of Christ and reception of either species was reception of the total; body, blood, soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Council of Ferrara-Florence A. It was defined that "the Holy Apostolic See and Roman Pontiff hold the primacy over all the world; that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Peter, prince of the Apostles; that he is the true vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the Father and teacher of all Christians. Besides many refutations against the so called reformers were given and measures of true reform advanced. Of this council the most important decree was that of the primacy of the pope and of papal infallibility.

Chapter 3 : Fathers of the First Six Councils - Orthodox Church in America

Ecumenical Council of the New Testament Period. There is a sole meeting of the early Christian Church the New Testament period which has been generally regarded as a Council and which is included in the traditional Catholic reckoning as the first of the Ecumenical Councils, whereas other denominations usually count the First Council of Nicaea as such.

Short Summaries of the Ecumenical Councils. The first Ecumenical Council. The First Ecumenical Council was convened in A. This Council was called because of the false doctrine of the Alexandrian priest Arius, who rejected the Divine nature and pre-eternal birth of the second person of the Holy Trinity, namely the Divine Son of God the Father, and taught that the Son of God is only the highest creation. Nicholas the Wonderworker, St. James, bishop of Nisibis, St. Spiridon of Tremithus, and St. Athanasius, who was at that time a deacon. The Council condemned and repudiated the heresy of Arius and affirmed the immutable truth, the dogma that the Son of God is true God, born of God the Father before all ages, and is eternal, as is God the Father; He was begotten, and not made, and is of one essence with God the Father. In order that all Orthodox Christians may know exactly the true teaching of the faith, it was clearly and concisely summarized in the first of seven sections of the Creed, or Symbol of Faith. At this Council, it was resolved to celebrate Pascha on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox, after the Jewish Passover. It also determined that priests should be married, and it established many other rules or canons. The Second Ecumenical Council. This Council was convoked against the false teaching of the Arian bishop of Constantinople, Macedonius, who rejected the deity of the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He taught that the Holy Spirit is not God, and called Him a creature, or a created power, and therefore subservient to God the Father and God the Son, like an angel. At the Council, the Macedonian heresy was condemned and repudiated. The Council also supplemented the Nicene Creed, or "Symbol of Faith," with five Articles in which is set forth its teaching about the Holy Spirit, about the Church, about the Mysteries, about the resurrection of the dead, and the life in the world to come. Thus they composed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which serves as a guide to the Church for all time. The Third Ecumenical Council. The Third Ecumenical Council was convened in the year A. The Council was called because of the false doctrine of Nestorius, Archbishop of Constantinople, who profanely taught that the Most-holy Virgin Mary simply gave birth to the man Christ, with whom then God united morally and dwelled in Him, as in a temple, as previously He had dwelled in Moses and other prophets. The bishops present at the Council condemned and repudiated the heresy of Nestorius and decreed that one should recognize that united in Jesus Christ at the time of the incarnation were two natures, divine and human, and that one should confess Jesus Christ as true God and true Man, and the Holy Virgin Mary as the God-bearer Theotokos. The Council also affirmed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and strictly prohibited making any changes or additions to it. The Fourth Ecumenical Council. The Fourth Ecumenical Council was convened in A. The Council met to challenge the false doctrine of an archimandrite of a Constantinople monastery, Eutychius, who rejected the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Refuting one heresy and defending the divinity of Jesus Christ, he himself fell into an extreme, and taught that in the Lord Jesus Christ human nature was completely absorbed in the Divine, and therefore it followed that one need only recognize the Divine nature. This false doctrine is called Monophysitism, and followers of it are called Monophysites. The Council of bishops condemned and repudiated the false doctrine of Eutychius and defined the true teaching of the Church, namely that our Lord Jesus Christ is perfect God, and as God He is eternally born from God. As man, He was born of the Holy Virgin and in every way is like us, except in sin. Through the incarnation, birth from the Holy Virgin, divinity and humanity are united in Him as a single Person, infused and immutable, thus repudiating Eutychius; indivisible and inseparable, repudiating Nestorius. The Fifth Ecumenical Council. The Fifth Ecumenical Council was convened in A. It was called to quell a controversy between Nestorians and Eutychians. The major points of contention were the well-known works of the Antiochian school of the Syrian church, entitled "The Three Chapters. Nestorians, in argument with Eutychians Monophysites, referred to these works, and Eutychians

found in them an excuse to reject the Fourth Ecumenical Council and to slander the universal Orthodox Church, charging that it was deviating toward Nestorianism. The Council was attended by bishops, who condemned all three works and Theodore of Mopsuestia himself, as not having repented. Concerning the other two, censure was limited only to their Nestorian works. They themselves were pardoned. They renounced their false opinions and died in peace with the Church. The Council reiterated its censure of the heresies of Nestorius and Eutychius. The Sixth Ecumenical Council. The Sixth Ecumenical Council was convened in the year A. The council was convoked against the false doctrine of heretics, Monothelites, who, although they recognized in Jesus Christ two natures, God and man, ascribed to Him only a Divine will. After the Fifth Ecumenical Council, agitation provoked by the Monothelites continued and threatened the Greek Emperor with great danger. Emperor Heraclius, wishing reconciliation, decided to incline Orthodoxy to concession to the Monothelites, and by the power of his office, ordered recognition that in Jesus Christ is one will and two energies. Among the defenders and advocates of the true teachings of the Church, were St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and a monk from Constantinople, St. Maximus the Confessor, who for his firmness in the faith had suffered having his tongue cut out and his hand chopped off. The Sixth Ecumenical Council condemned and repudiated the heresy of Monothelitism, and formulated the recognition that in Jesus Christ are two natures, Divine and human, and in these two natures there are two wills, but that the human will in Christ is not against, but rather is submissive to His Divine will. It is worthy of attention that at this Council excommunication was pronounced against a number of other heretics, and also against the Roman Pope Honorius, as one who acknowledged the teaching of one will. This clearly shows that the highest power in Christendom belongs to the Ecumenical Council, and not to the Pope of Rome. After eleven years, the Council again opened a meeting in the imperial palace, called Cupola Hall in Greek, Trullos, in order to resolve questions of primary importance pertaining to the Church hierarchy. This Council established canons by which the Church must be guided, namely, 85 canons of the holy Apostles, canons of the six Ecumenical and seven local councils, and canons of thirteen Fathers of the Church. These canons afterward were supplemented by canons of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and another two local councils, and comprise the so-called "Nomocanon," in English, "The Rudder," which is the foundation of Orthodox Church government. Here several innovations of the Roman Church were condemned as not being in agreement with the spiritual decisions of the Ecumenical Church, namely, the requirement that priests and deacons be celibate, a strict fast on Saturdays of the Great Fast, and the representation of Christ in the form of a lamb, or in any way other than He appeared on the earth. The Seventh Ecumenical Council. The Seventh Ecumenical Council was convened in A. The Council was convened against the iconoclastic heresy, which had been raging for sixty years before the Council, under the Greek Emperor Leo III, who, wishing to convert the Mohammedans to Christianity, considered it necessary to do away with the veneration of icons. The Council condemned and repudiated the iconoclastic heresy and determined to provide and to put in the holy churches, together with the likeness of the honored and Life-giving Cross of the Lord, holy icons, to honor and render homage to them, elevating the soul and heart to the Lord God, the Mother of God and the Saints, who are represented in these icons. Veneration of the holy icons was finally restored and affirmed by the local synod of Constantinople in A. At this council, in thanksgiving to the Lord God for having given the Church victory over the iconoclasts and all heretics, the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was established on the first Sunday of Great Lent, which is celebrated by the Orthodox Church throughout the world. The Roman Catholic Church, in addition to these seven Councils, recognizes more than 20 "ecumenical" councils. Incorrectly included in this number were councils in the Western, held after the separation of the Western Church. Protestants, in spite of the example of the Apostles and acknowledgment of the entire Christian Church, do not recognize a single one of the Ecumenical Councils.

Chapter 4 : First seven ecumenical councils - Wikipedia

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils. In the Ninth Article of the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." By virtue.

And if the Church had remained indifferent to these deviations from the truth, what- speaking according to human reasoning- would have happened to Christian truth? But the Church, with the help of the epistles of bishops, the exhortations and excommunications of local and regional councils and, beginning with the fourth century, of Ecumenical Councils , sometimes with the cooperation and sometimes with the opposition of the governmental authorities, brought the "rule of faith" unshaken out of the battle and preserved Orthodoxy unharmed. Thus it was in the first thousand years. The second millennium has not changed this situation. In these years the deviations from Christian truth, the divisions and sects, have been many more than in the first millennium. Certain currents hostile to Orthodoxy are no less passionate in their proselytism and hostility to Orthodoxy than was the case in the epoch of the Ecumenical Councils. This means that it is essential to be vigilant in preserving Orthodoxy. A special vigilance in defending dogmas is required now because of a false path which has come from Christian circles outside the Church; this false path, while it seeks to attain a seemingly good aim, is unacceptable for the Orthodox Church: It is disdainful with regard to the dogmatic side of Christian faith in its striving to realize the unity of the whole Christian world Mr. Smirnov is referring to the movement to unite all Christian churches and denominations, and even involve uniting all religions of the world, into some kind of contrived, man-made universal religion or universal Christianity. They considered Jesus Christ to be a prophet like Moses; they demanded of all Christians the strict fulfillment of the law of Moses; they looked on the Christian teaching as a supplement to the law of Moses. Nazarites The Nazarites believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, but insisted on the fulfillment of the law of Moses by Christians who were Jews, without demanding this of the non-Jewish Christians moderate Ebionites. The Essenes considered themselves the preservers of the pure religion revealed to Adam but later obscured in Judaism. The Ebionite-Gnostics recognized the restoration of this religion by Christ, as the bearer of the Divine Spirit; the Gnostic element was expressed in their view on matter as being an evil principle, and in the preaching of severe asceticism. Gnostics The foundation of the Gnostic systems is the idea of the creation of a higher religio-philosophical knowledge gnosis by uniting Greek philosophy and the philosophy of the learned Alexandrian Jew Philo with the Eastern religions, especially the religion of Zoroaster. In this way the Gnostics worked out diverse systems which set forth an absolute resolution of all questions of existence. To the metaphysical constructions made on this foundation were added fantasy-like symbolical forms. Having become acquainted with Christianity and even having accepted Christianity, the Gnostics did not abandon their fantastic constructions, but strove to unite them with Christianity. Thus arose the numerous Gnostic heresies in the midst of Christianity. He is considered the first ancestor of all heretics. Cerinthus the Alexandrian His teaching is a mixture of Gnosticism and Ebionitism. He lived for some time in Ephesus when the Apostle John the Theologian was there. See the Life of St. John the Theologian in Orthodox Life, , no. Docetists The Docetists considered the human nature in Christ to be only a phantom, since they considered flesh and matter in general to be evil. John the Theologian directed accusations against them in his epistles for example, 1 John 4: Nicolaitans The Nicolaitans Revelation 2: Starting from the Gnostic demands for the mortification of the flesh, they ended by allowing immorality. Starting from dualism, or the acknowledgement of two fundamental principles of existence, they considered matter to be an inactive, inert, dead, negative principle, while To this current, among others belonged Tatian, who had been a disciple of St. Justin the Philosopher and who preached a strict asceticism. The Antinomians were an offshoot of the Syrian Gnostics; they permitted immorality for the purpose of weakening and mortifying the principle of evil- the flesh, matter. Marcionites The Marcionites from Marcion, the son of a Syrian bishop who excommunicated his son for Gnosticism. The founder of the heresy, Marcion, taught that the world was governed on the one hand by a good God, the spiritual principle, and on the other hand by satan, as the sovereign over matter. In Jesus Christ,

according to the teaching of Marcion, the good God Himself came down to earth and assumed a phantom body. The Marcionites taught the impossibility of the knowledge of God. This heresy survived until the sixth century. Manichaeism The Manichean heresy, like Gnosticism, was a mixture of elements of Christianity with the principles of the religion of Zoroaster. In the teaching of Manes, who founded this heresy, the battle in the world between the principles of spirit and matter, good and evil, light and darkness, comprises the history of heaven and earth, in which is manifested the activity of: The passionless Jesus, descending to earth, assumed only the appearance of man docetism , taught men, and promised the coming of the Comforter. The promised Comforter was manifested in the person of Manes, who purified the teaching of Jesus which had been corrupted by men, and opened the Kingdom of God. Manes preached a strict asceticism. Accused of distorting the religion of Zoroaster, Manes was killed in Persia. This heresy was spread primarily in the Western half of the Roman Empire and was especially strong in the fourth and fifth centuries. Antitrinitarianism This heresy, which was also called Monarchianism, arose on a basis of philosophical rationalism; the heretics did not acknowledge the teaching of Three Persons in God. The heresy had two branches: A leading representative of this heresy was Sabellius, who had been a presbyter in Ptolemais of Egypt. Montanism This heresy was given its name by Montanus, an unlearned man who imagined himself to be the Paraclete the Comforter ; he lived in the second century. As opposed to the Antitrinitarians, the Montanists demanded the complete submission of reason to the commands of faith. The ascetic spirit of the Montanists disposed to them the learned presbyter of Cathage, Tertullian, who joined them, although he ended his life a little apart from this heresy. The Roman bishops Eleutherius and Victor were also disposed towards Montanism. The Montanists accepted the teaching of the thousand-year earthly Kingdom of Christ Chiliasm. The heresy of Chiliasm was held, apart from the Montanists, by several other heresies as well- for example, the Ebionites. Before the Second Ecumenical Council, when Chiliasm was condemned, certain teachers of the Church were also sympathetic to this teaching. Heresies of the Fourth to Ninth Centuries Arianism The Arian heresy, which disturbed the Church greatly for a long time, had as its originator the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. Arius was born in Libya and had been a student in the theological school of Antioch, which avoided every kind of abstraction in interpreting the dogmas of faith as opposed to the contemplative spirit and mystical inclination of the Alexandrian school. He interpreted the dogma of the Incarnation in a purely rational way, relying on a concept of the oneness of God, and began to teach falsely of the inequality of the Son of God with the Father, and of the created nature of the Son. His heresy seized the Eastern half of the empire, and despite its condemnation at the First Ecumenical Council, it survived almost to the end of the fourth century. After the First Ecumenical Council Arianism was continued and developed by: The Anomoeans, or strict Arians; Aetius, who had been a deacon in the Church of Alexandria, and Eunomius, who before his excommunication had been bishop of Cyzicus. Aetius and Eunomius brought Arianism to its final heretical conclusions by developing the teaching that the nature of the Son of God is different from and unlike the nature of the Father. Apollinarianism Apollinarius the Younger was a learned man who had been bishop of Laodicea from He taught that in the God-manhood of Christ the human nature was incomplete; accepting the tripartite composition of human nature- spirit, irrational soul, and body- he affirmed that in Christ only the body and soul were human, but His mind was Divine. This heresy did not spread very far. Heresy of Macedonius Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople about , taught falsely of the Holy Spirit in an Arian sense, namely: His heresy was condemned at the Second Ecumenical Council, which was called because of this heresy. At the Second Ecumenical Council other heresies were also given over to anathema: Pelagianism Pelagius, a layman and ascetic from Britain beginning of the fifth century , and Celestius the presbyter denied the inheritance of the sin of Adam by his descendants, considering that each man is born innocent, and only thanks to moral freedom does he easily fall into sin. Pelagianism was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council together with Nestorianism. Nestorianism This heresy takes its name from Nestorius, who had been archbishop of Constantinople. Predecessors of Nestorius in this false teaching were Diodorus, teacher of the theological school of Antioch, and Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia died in , whose disciple was Nestorius. Thus, this heresy came from the school of Antioch. The heresy was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council. Monophysitism the Heresy of Eutyches The heresy of the Monophysites arose among the monks of Alexandria and was a reaction against Nestorianism, which had

lessened the Divine nature of the Saviour. The Monophysites considered that the human nature of the Saviour had been absorbed by His Divine nature, and therefore they acknowledged in Christ only one nature. The heresy was condemned at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Monothelism Monothelism was a softened form of Monophysitism. While acknowledging two natures in Christ, the Monothelites taught that in Christ there was only one will -- namely, the Divine will. Adherents of this teaching included several patriarchs of Constantinople who were later excommunicated Pyrrhus, Paul, Theodore. It was also supported by Honorius, Pope of Rome. This teaching was rejected as false at the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Iconoclasm Iconoclasm was one of the most powerful and prolonged heretical movements. The Iconoclast heresy began in the first half of the seventh century and continued to disturb the Church for more than a hundred years. Directed against the veneration of icons, it touched also on other aspects of the faith and Church order for example, the veneration of saints. The seriousness of this heresy was increased by the fact that a whole series of Byzantine emperors acted energetically in its favor for reasons of internal and external politics; these emperors were also hostilely disposed to monasticism. The heresy was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 786, and the final triumph of Orthodoxy occurred in 843 under St.

Chapter 5 : Ecumenical Council | Christian Forums

The saints fought the heresies; while Holy Mother church protected her flock through Ecumenical Councils. By the 3rd century, the church existed in relative calm and in some parts, even in luxury. There was much time for everything specially for speculative theology.

First Council of Nicaea Emperor Constantine presents a representation of the city of Constantinople as tribute to an enthroned Mary and baby Jesus in this church mosaic. Hagia Sophia , c. Emperor Constantine convened this council to settle a controversial issue, the relation between Jesus Christ and God the Father. The Emperor wanted to establish universal agreement on it. Representatives came from across the Empire, subsidized by the Emperor. Previous to this council, the bishops would hold local councils, such as the Council of Jerusalem , but there had been no universal, or ecumenical, council. The council drew up a creed, the original Nicene Creed , which received nearly unanimous support. The council also addressed the issue of dating Easter see Quartodecimanism and Easter controversy , recognised the right of the See of Alexandria to jurisdiction outside of its own province by analogy with the jurisdiction exercised by Rome and the prerogatives of the churches in Antioch and the other provinces [4] and approved the custom by which Jerusalem was honoured, but without the metropolitan dignity. Even when Arius died in , one year before the death of Constantine, the controversy continued, with various separate groups espousing Arian sympathies in one way or another. Little else is known, though there is plenty of speculation. For example, it is speculated that this may have provided motivation for canon lists , and that Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are examples of these Bibles. Commissioned in the 4th century , it ranks as the first church built in Constantinople , and has its original atrium. In the First Council of Constantinople took place in the church. Damaged by an earthquake in the 8th century , its present form largely dates from repairs made at that time. First Council of Constantinople The council approved what the current form of the Nicene Creed as used in most Oriental Orthodox churches is. The form used by the Armenian Apostolic Church , which is part of Oriental Orthodoxy , has many more additions. First Council of Ephesus Theodosius II called the council to settle the christological controversy surrounding Nestorianism. Council of Chalcedon The council repudiated the Eutychian doctrine of monophysitism , described and delineated the " Hypostatic Union " and two natures of Christ , human and divine; adopted the Chalcedonian Definition. Before the council[edit] In November , a synod at Constantinople condemned Eutyches for unorthodoxy. Second Council of Constantinople This council condemned certain writings and authors which defended the christology of Nestorius. Three-Chapter Controversy Prior to the Second Council of Constantinople was a prolonged controversy over the treatment of three subjects, all considered sympathetic to Nestorianism, the heresy that there are two separate persons in the Incarnation of Christ. Eastern Patriarchs supported the Emperor, but in the West his interference was resented, and Pope Vigilius resisted his edict on the grounds that it opposed the Chalcedonian decrees. Since it was mostly an administrative council for raising some local canons to ecumenical status, establishing principles of clerical discipline, addressing the Biblical canon , without determining matters of doctrine, the Eastern Orthodox Church does not consider it to be a full-fledged council in its own right, viewing it instead as an extension of the fifth and sixth councils. It gave ecclesiastical sanction to the Pentarchy as the government of the state church of the Roman Empire. In , Emperor Constantine V convened the Synod of Hieria , which declared that images of Jesus misrepresented him and that images of Mary and the saints were idols.

Chapter 6 : List of Heresies the Catholic Church Rejected

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Council of Jerusalem[edit] Main article: It is unique among the ancient pre-ecumenical councils in that it is considered by Catholics to be the first Ecumenical Council and by Orthodox to be a prototype and forerunner of the later ecumenical councils. Both Catholics and Orthodox regard it as expressing a key part of Christian doctrine and moral teaching. The council decided that Gentile converts to Christianity were not obligated to keep most of the Law of Moses , including the rules concerning circumcision of males. The Council did, however, arguably retain prohibitions on eating meat sacrificed in pagan rites, on fornication and on idolatry. These decisions are sometimes referred to as the Apostolic Decree. The prime account of the Council is found in Acts of the Apostles chapter Ecumenical Councils of Antiquity[edit] These comprised the hierarchs of the undivided Church i. First Council of Nicaea[edit] Main article: Most importantly, the council defined the equality of God the Father and Christ, his son. It taught that Jesus was of the same substance as God the Father and not just merely similar. The Council issued 20 canons [6] and repudiated Arianism. Most importantly, it defined the divinity of the Holy Spirit , which is derived but not defined in the Bible. Thus the Council built on the Apostolic Tradition. The council met from May until July during the pontificate of Pope Damasus I and issued four canons. Council of Chalcedon[edit] Main article: It issued 28 canons, the last one defining equality of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, which was rejected by the papal delegates and Pope Leo the Great , and therefore not binding for the Catholic Church. Second Council of Constantinople The Council again dealt with the issue of the two natures of Christ, as monophysitism had spread through Christianity despite the decisions of Chalcedon. The Council met from May 5 until June 2, in eight sessions during the pontificate of Pope Vigilius , who was imprisoned during the Council by the emperor. Several Catholic provinces refused to accept the Second Council of Constantinople because of the political pressures. Third Council of Constantinople The Council repudiated Monothelitism , and reaffirmed that Christ, being both human and divine, had both human and divine wills. It met in sixteen sessions from November 7, until September 16, It also discussed the views of Honorius. Second Council of Nicaea[edit] Main article: Second Council of Nicaea In , the emperor outlawed pictorial presentations of Christ and the saints and created thus the first iconoclasm. The Pope argued against it and convened in a local council in Rome to no avail. Pictures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints were used to stimulate piety and imitation. The Council met in eight sessions from September 24, until October 23, during the pontificate of Pope Hadrian I. It issued twenty canons. Fourth Council of Constantinople[edit] Main article: This freed the pontiffs to some degree from the power of the emperor in Constantinople, but it also led to a schism , because the emperors and patriarchs of Constantinople interpreted themselves as the true descendants of the Roman Empire dating back to the beginnings of the Church. The Council condemned Photius, who questioned the legality of the papal delegates presiding over the Council and ended the schism. First Council of the Lateran Successors of Charlemagne insisted increasingly on the right to appoint bishops on their own, which led to the Investiture Controversy with the popes. The Concordat of Worms signed by Pope Calixtus II included a compromise between the two parties, by which the pope alone appoints bishops as spiritual head while the emperor maintains a right to give secular offices and honors. Pope Calixtus invoked the council to ratify this historic agreement. The Council met from March 18 to April 5, Second Council of the Lateran[edit] Main article: In important decisions regarding the celibacy of Catholic priests, clerical marriages of priests and monks, which up to were considered illegal, were defined and declared as non-existing and invalid. Third Council of the Lateran[edit] Main article: Third Council of the Lateran The Council established the two-third majority necessary for the election of a pope. Still valid today are the regulations that outlawed simony , and the elevation to Episcopal offices for anyone under thirty. The council also ruled it illegal to sell arms or goods which could assist armaments to Muslim powers. Saracens and Jews were forbidden from keeping Christian slaves. Catharism was condemned as a heresy. This council is well documented: Reports include the saga of

an Irish bishop whose income consisted in the milk from three cows. If one of the cows would stop giving milk, the faithful were obliged to donate another animal. Fourth Council of the Lateran[edit] Main article: Fourth Council of the Lateran The Council mandated every Christian to go at least once a year on Easter to confession and to receive the Holy Eucharist. The Council formally repeated Catholic teaching, that Christ is present in the Eucharist and thus clarified transubstantiation. It dealt with several heresies without naming names but intended to include the Catharists and several individual Catholic theologians. It made several political rulings as well. First Council of Lyon[edit] Main article: Frederick was accused of heresy, treason and arresting a ship with about prelates willing to attend a meeting with the Pope. Frederick outlawed attendance at the council and blocked access to Lyon from Germany. Therefore, the majority of council fathers originated from Spain, France and Italy. Second Council of Lyon[edit] Main article: The council achieved a short-lived unity with the Greek representatives, who were denounced for this back home by the hierarchy and the emperor. Papal conclaves were regulated in *Ubi periculum* , which specified that electors must be locked up during the conclave and, if they could not agree on a pope after eight days, would receive water and bread only. Franciscan , Dominican , and other orders had become controversial in light of their increasing popularity. The Council confirmed their privileges. Pope Gregory X approved all 31 chapters, after modifying some of them, thus clearly indicating papal prerogatives. The Council met in six sessions from May 7 to July 17, under his leadership. Council of Vienne[edit] Main article: Council of Vienne Bishops debating with the pope at the Council of Constance Pope Clement V solemnly opened the council with a liturgy , which has been repeated since in all Catholic ecumenical councils. He entered the Cathedral in liturgical vestments with a small procession and took his place on the papal throne. Patriarchs, followed by Cardinals, archbishops and bishops were the next in rank. The Pope gave a blessing to the choir, which intoned the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. He mentioned four topics, the Order of Knights Templar , the regaining of the Holy Land , a reform of public morality and freedom for the Church. Pope Clement had asked the bishops to list all their problems with the order. The Templars had become an obstacle to many bishops because they could act independently of them in such vital areas as filling parishes and other positions. Many accusations against the order were not accepted as the Pope ruled that confessions under torture were inadmissible. He withdrew canonical support for the order but refused to turn over its properties to the French king. He successfully proposed the teaching of Greek , Hebrew , and Arabic languages in Catholic universities. In the three sessions, the council discussed further Franciscan poverty ideals. It met from October until May The following councils in Constance, Basel, Ferrara, Florence witnessed an ongoing debate regarding the superiority of the papacy over ecumenical councils. Council of Constance[edit] Main article: Council of Constance At the beginning of the Council there was the great schism, with three popes, each claiming legitimacy. When public opinion moved against him in March , he fled to Schaffhausen [20] and went into hiding in several Black Forest villages such as Saig. After his flight, the Council issued the famous declaration *Sacrosancta*, which declared that any pope is below, not above, an ecumenical council. Reforms did not materialize as hoped for, because the reformers disagreed among themselves. John Hus , a Bohemian reformer, was issued an imperial guarantee for safe conduct forth and back. The Church did not revoke its suspension to say Mass and preach in public. When Hus did just that, he was arrested and tried for heresy. Turned over to State authorities, he was burned at the stake in The influx of 15, to 20, persons into the medieval city of 10, created inflation of unknown proportions. The German poet Oswald von Wolkenstein wrote: Just thinking of Constance, my purse begins to hurt. The Council met in 45 sessions from November 4, until April 22, Council of Florence The council continued debate on conciliarism. The papal delegate opened the Council in Basel on July 23, without a single bishop present. When he tried to close it later, bishops insisted of citing the pope to the Council, which he refused. The Council continued on its own and issued several decrees on Church reform. Most of the participants were theologians, bishops made only ten percent of the eligible voters. The Pope moved the council to Ferrara , where he achieved a major success, when the Greek Orthodox Church agreed to unity with Rome. The council decreed in a short-lived union with Greek, Armenian, and Jacobite Churches It was moved to Rome in Fifth Council of the Lateran[edit] Main article:

Chapter 7 : The Ecumenical Councils of the Roman Catholic Church

The Sixth Ecumenical Council condemned and repudiated the heresy of Monothelism, and formulated the recognition that in Jesus Christ are two natures, Divine and human, and in these two natures there are two wills, but that the human will in Christ is not against, but rather is submissive to His Divine will.

Donatism often spoken of as a "schism" rather than a "heresy" [20] [21] [22] Donatists were rigorists, holding that the church must be a church of saints, not sinners, and that sacraments administered by traditores were invalid. They also regarded martyrdom as the supreme Christian virtue and regarded those that actively sought martyrdom as saints. The essence ousia of the Trinity could be perceived by the carnal senses. The Threefold God transformed himself into a single hypostasis substance in order to unite with the souls of the perfect. God has taken different forms in order to reveal himself to the senses. Only such sensible revelations of God confer perfection upon the Christian. The state of perfection, freedom from the world and passion, is attained solely by prayer, not through the church or sacraments. Bishop Flavian of Antioch condemned them about The group might have continued for several centuries, influencing the Bogomils of Bulgaria, the Bosnian church, the Paterenes and Catharism. The policy continued under his successors till about Later Leo V launched a second attempt which continued till the death of the emperor Theophilus in Condemned by Nicea II in which regulated the veneration Leo III may have been motivated by the belief that the veneration of icons, particularly in the excessive form it often took, was the chief obstacle to the conversion of Jews and Muslims Marcionism An Early Christian dualist belief system. Marcionists believed that the wrathful Hebrew God was a separate and lower entity than the all-forgiving God of the New Testament. This belief was in some ways similar to Gnostic Christian theology, but in other ways different. Originates in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year The beliefs of Montanism contrasted with orthodox Christianity in the following ways: The belief that the prophecies of the Montanists superseded and fulfilled the doctrines proclaimed by the Apostles. The encouragement of ecstatic prophesying. The view that Christians who fell from grace could not be redeemed. A stronger emphasis on the avoidance of sin and church discipline, emphasizing chastity, including forbidding remarriage. Some of the Montanists were also " Quartodeciman ". It spread rapidly to other regions in the Roman Empire during the period before Christianity was generally tolerated or legal. The churches of Asia Minor excommunicated Montanists. Belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without Divine aid. The theology was later developed by C a elestius and Julian of Eclanum into a complete system. Pelagianism was attacked in the Council of Diospolis [38] and condemned in at the Council of Carthage [39] and the decision confirmed at the Council of Ephesus in Semipelagianism A rejection of Pelagianism which held that Augustine had gone too far to the other extreme and taught that grace aided free-will rather than replacing it.

This is our award-winning summary of the twenty-one ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church. It has proved useful for students and others who would like a quick reference to the major facts relevant to each council.

An Ecumenical Council is comprised of archpastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the local Churches, from every land of the "oikumene" i. The Third Ecumenical Council Ephesus September 9 was convened in the year against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger. The Fourth Ecumenical Council Chalcedon July 16 was convened in the year , against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene. The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as "lights upon the earth," guiding us to the true Faith. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible. The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas, the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, "not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something" St Gregory the Theologian. A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon of the Council of Trullo also known as Quinisext , held in the year In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Therefore the Church proclaims: We reject and we anathematize all whom they have rejected and anathematized, as being enemies of Truth. And if anyone does not cleave to nor admit the aforementioned pious dogmas, and does not teach or preach accordingly, let him be anathema" Canon I of the Council of Trullo. In addition to their dogmatic definitions, the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils exerted great efforts towards the strengthening of church discipline. Local Councils promulgated their disciplinary canons according to the circumstances of the time and place, frequently differing among themselves in various particulars. The universal unity of the Orthodox Church required unity also in canonical practice, i. Thus, according to conciliar judgment, the Church has accepted: The Fifth and the Sixth Councils concerned themselves only with resolving dogmatic questions, and did not leave behind any disciplinary canons. The need to establish in codified form the customary practices during the years , and ultimately to compile a canonical codex for the Orthodox Church, occasioned the convening of a special Council, which was wholly devoted to the general application of churchly rules. This was convened in the year It is also called the "Quinisext" [meaning the "fifth and sixth"], because it is considered to have completed the activities of the Fifth and Sixth Councils, or rather that it was simply a direct continuation of the Sixth Ecumenical Council itself, separated by just a few years. The Council in Trullo, with its Canons more than of all the Ecumenical Synods combined , had a tremendous significance in the history of the canonical theology of the Orthodox Church. Listing through in chronological order, and having been accepted by the Church the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and the Canons of the Holy Ecumenical and the Local Councils and of the holy Fathers, the Trullo Council declared: In its repository of grace is expressed a canonical norm, a connection to every era, and a guide for all the local Orthodox Churches in churchly practice. New historical conditions can lead to the change of some particular external aspect of the life of the Church. This makes creative canonical activity necessary in the conciliar reasoning of the Church, in order to reconcile the external norms of churchly life with historical circumstances. The details of canonical regulation are not fully developed for the various eras of churchly organization at all once. With every push to either forsake the literal meaning of a canon, or to

fulfill and develop it, the Church again and again turns for reasoning and guidance to the eternal legacy of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, to the inexhaustable treasury of dogmatic and canonical truths.

Chapter 9 : Ecumenical Councils - Reformed Episcopal Church

The following is a summary of each of the three councils' reason for being, the deliberations, the personalities, the heresy, Egypt contribution to the council and the outcome of each one of them.

Sylvester I, Emperor: Called by the emperor and ratified by the Pope, this council condemned the heresy of Arius priest of Alexandria, d. Athanasius, Doctor of the Church d. Ephrem, Doctor of the Church d. Damasus I, Emperor: Theodosius I, the Great, Action: It appears that Pope St. Damasus I was not contacted in regard to this council attended by about bishops. Called by the emperor, it was not attended by the pope or his legates or any bishops from the West. Nevertheless, it is listed as a General Council of the 4th century by papal decrees of the 6th century, by which time its doctrinal definitions were accepted throughout the Church Murphy, pg. This council condemned the heresy of Macedonius by clearly defining the divinity of the Holy Ghost: Gregory Nazianzen, Doctor of the Church d. Cyril of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church d. Celestine I, Emperor: Theodosius II, Action: Nestorius was deposed as bishop of Constantinople. This council also briefly affirmed the condemnation of the Pelagians see local Council of Carthage, A. Cyril of Alexandria, Doctor of the Church d. Chalcedon, north of Constantinople Year: Saint Leo I, the Great, Emperor: Called by Emperor Marcian, spouse of the chaste and noble St. Pulcheria, and ratified by Pope St. Though the council had approved the assertion that Constantinople should be ranked first after Rome ecclesiastically, Pope St. Leo I, Doctor of the Church d. Justinian I, Action: The last two friends of Nestorius had been restored to their sees by Chalcedon when they no longer opposed the teachings of St. Cyril of Alexandria d. Chalcedon was not discredited here as the Monophysites had hoped since it had been concerned with men. Constantinople II was concerned with their writings, although a hundred years after they had died. Two important local councils condemning heresies: Augustine on grace , which claimed man needed grace only after his first supernatural act. Council referred much to St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, Doctor of the Church d. Agatho, , and St. Leo II, Emperor: Constantine IV, Action: Agatho, this council condemned the heresy of the Monothelites Mono-one thelema -will , which attributed only one will, to Christ the divine , instead of two wills divine and human , which two are in perfect accord within the one divine person, Jesus. Constantinople III also reconfirmed Chalcedon. Agatho having died Jan. Leo II also condemned Pope Honorius I for negligence of duty in the face of heresy, in that he should have ascertained that Sergius was teaching not a mere harmony oneness of wills in Christ but literally one will in Christ, the divine will. Honorius had not spoken ex cathedra, so infallibility had not been involved. Sergius patriarch of Constantinople, A. Hadrian I, Emperors: Leo I at Chalcedon, set the tone of the council. Brewing beneath the surface at this time, however, was a rejection of papal authority. The Eastern Bishops, cut off from Rome and receptive to heresy under persecution, were held suspect by Rome. Hadrian II, Emperor: In the Greek schism was actually consummated by Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople at that time. On 16 July, , they publicly placed on the altar of Saint Sophia the document containing his excommunication. Callistus II, Emperor: Henry V, Action: In Germany the emperor was to preside over these free elections and then bestow temporal power on the bishop so chosen, in return for temporal fealty. Outside Germany the emperor was to have no part in any elections. Also dealt with at this council was the subject of clerical marriages. It was decided that once ordained, a priest may not marry in either Latin or Eastern Rites. Innocent II, Emperor: Conrad III, Action: It also condemned the heresies of: Bernard, Abbot and Doctor of the Church d. Alexander III, Emperor: Frederick Barbarossa, Action: Called and ratified by Pope Alexander III, this council regulated the election of popes two-thirds majority vote by the College of Cardinals was required for the Pope to be elected, and the emperor was excluded from voting. It annulled the acts of three antipopes: Innocent III, Emperor: Otto IV, Action: It reformed discipline and condemned the heresies of: Waldensianism also held that oath taking and assigning death penalties were held to be mortal sins. They also held that the Evangelical Counsel of poverty was a commandment, thus they forbade all private ownership of property. Innocent IV, Emperor: Frederick II, Action: Called and ratified by Pope Innocent IV, this council excommunicated Emperor Frederick II, grandson of Frederick Barbarossa, for his contumacious attempt to make the Church merely a department of the state. Lyons I also directed a new

crusade the 6th under the command of King St. Blessed Gregory X, Emperor: Rudolph I of Hapsburg, Action: Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Doctor of the Church d. Bonaventure, Cardinal and Doctor of the Church d. Fifteenth Ecumenical Council " Vienne Site: Vienne South of Lyons , France Years: Clement V, Emperor: Henry VII, Action: Their confiscated property was given to the Hospitalers or, in Spain, to national orders that had fought against the Moors. Quietism, that prayer and fasting became unimportant. Sixteenth Ecumenical Council " Constance.