
Sources of Teaching

OVERVIEW

Topics

- Intro
- Sources of Teaching in the Orthodox Church
- What is 'Church Father' ?
- Who are the 'Church Fathers' ?
- How should I read their writings?
- Apostolic Fathers
- Some examples

Why is this important in our worship?

- Worship God in Spirit and Truth
- Truth is revealed, it is NOT our opinion
 - *Dogma is the opposite of opinion*
- God revealed the Truth to the Church, and we are to receive it in humility, so that when we worship, we worship Him as He revealed Himself, not as we perceive Him
- Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? (*Job 11:7-8*)
- Theology is a LIVING EXPERIENCE
- Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set. (*Prov. 22:28*)

Sources of Teaching in the Orthodox Church: Holy Tradition

Divine Revelation:

- God is the Lord and He has revealed Himself to us (has given us Light)
- God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1)
- That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us (1John1:1)

Sources of Teaching in the Orthodox Church: Holy Tradition

Holy Tradition (gk: *Paradosis*): That which is passed on; the very life of the Church

- *So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, **either by word of mouth or by letter**. (2 Thes. 2:15)*
- *For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered to you (1 Cor. 11:23).*
- *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received (1 Cor. 15:3)*
- *If any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed (Gal.1:8-9).*
- *I had many things to write, but **I will not with ink and pen** write unto you. But I trust I shall shortly see you and **we shall speak face to face**. (3 John 13, 14)*
- *And the rest (remaining matters) will I set in order when I come. (1 Cor 11:34)*



Sources of Teaching in the Orthodox Church: Holy Tradition

1. The Holy Bible
2. Liturgies: *The law of pray is the law of faith*
3. Church Fathers: We learn from their Life and their writings
4. Councils: Ecumenical and Local
5. Arts:
 1. Hymns: Theology in tunes
 2. Icons: Theology in colors
 3. Architecture of the church



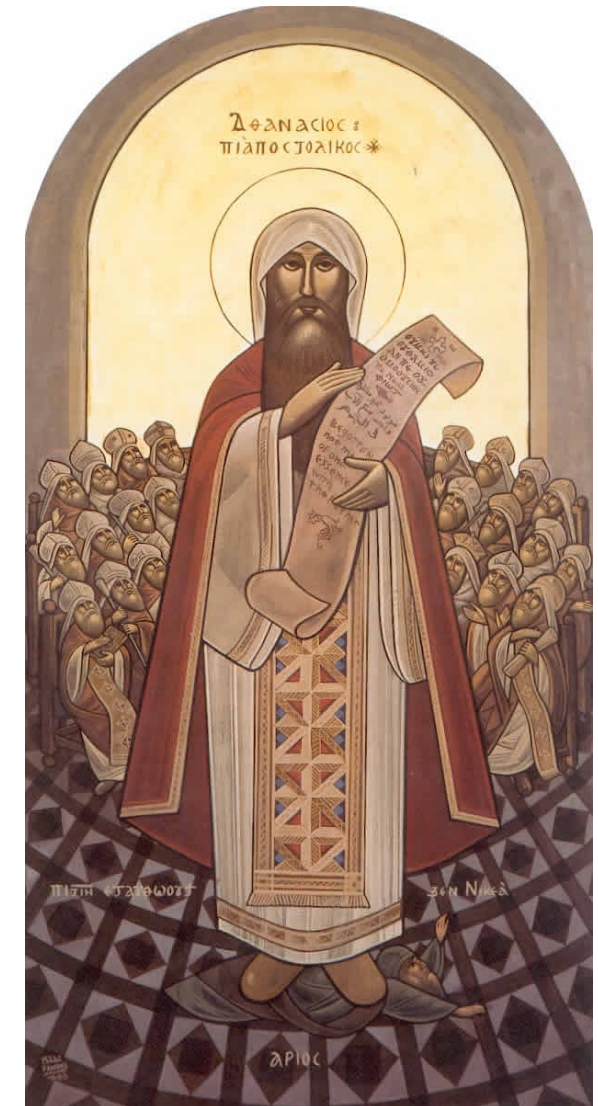
What is 'Church Father' ?

- When a man learns from the mouth of another, it is said that he is the son of the person who teaches him, the and latter is called *father*.
- *St. Irenaeus of Lyons (125-200AD)*
- The speech is the son of the soul, therefore we call these who teach us *our fathers*
- *St. Clement of Alexandria (150-215AD)*
- **"Let us look at the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the catholic [universal] Church from the very beginning, which the Logos gave, the Apostles preached, and the Fathers preserved. Upon this the Church is founded " *St. Athanasius the Great (4th century)***
- They hold fast with what they found in the Church, practiced what they had learned and what they had received from the Fathers...He who despises the holy Fathers, must know that he despises the whole Church
- *St. Augustine (5th century)*



What is 'Church Father' ?

- Four marks to recognize a writer as one of the Church Fathers:
 1. **Orthodoxy**: Strict Orthodox Teaching
 2. **Orthopraxy**: Holy Life
 1. EX: In praising Athanasius, I shall be praising virtue. To speak of him and to praise virtue are identical, because he had, or, to speak more truly, has embraced virtue in its entirety. (St. Gregory the Theologian)
 3. **Ecclesiastical Approval**
 4. **Antiquity**: up to 5-6th century
- **Not only clergy** (ex: St. Jerome, St. Antony, St. Ephraim the Syrian)



How to read the Fathers?

1. Comprehensively: Do not rely on the writings of a single Father, because no one is capable of acknowledging the “truth” in its entirety. We **only** accept the opinion of a Father, if it is in harmony with the Bible and the Church Tradition.
2. Context: Do not rely on one or more separate quotation from the acts of any Father, but rather **study all his thoughts and understand the quotations within his whole work**. We must also consider the circumstances and the church environment, at that time. **We must not single out one or more quotations to form our own opinion.** (ex: Dionysius quoted by Arius)
3. Language: We must study the meaning of the terms which a Father had used. Sometimes they had certain contemporary philosophical or popular concepts of the era. Some Fathers used the same pagan or heretic terms of that time, especially when they wrote to certain groups. They wrote to them, using their (pagan or philosophical) terms, language and concepts.

Writings of the Fathers (Characteristics)

- **Biblical**: They knew the Bible so well (ex: St. Athanasius, St. Didymus)
- **Liturgical** (ex: St. Basil, St. Gregory...)
- **Dogmatic**: Means practical faith – to live it!! **IT'S NOT JUST THEORY**
- **Spiritual**: Focus on the soul and spiritual life, and how to live in communion with God
- **Historical** (ex: Eusebius of Caesarea, father of Patrology; Ecclesiastical History. Jerome: The Illustrious Men – Biographies and writings of Christian writers until 379AD)

Biblical: Quotations before Nicaea (325AD) concerning NT

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline	Catholic n	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex)	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

All of NT can be recreated from early writings except of 11 verses.

Who are the Church Fathers?

12 Disciples / 70 Apostles



Apostolic Fathers



Apologetic Fathers

2nd century- Nicea: Arguments vs: Judaism, vs: Paganism, for Christianity

Examples: Justin Martyr, Athenagorus, Irenaeus, Clement (Alex.)



Golden Era of Patristics

From Nicea - Chalcedon (325-451AD)

Ex: Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, Cyril of Alex., Chrysostom

Apostolic Fathers and Writings



THE EARLIEST WRITINGS AFTER THE NT

Who/What are they?

Apostolic Fathers and works of this period:

1. Apostle's Creed
2. Didache (70-90AD)
3. St. Clement of Rome: Epistle to Corinthians (95AD)
4. St. Barnabas: Letter of Barnabas (150AD)
5. St. Ignatius of Antioch: 7 Epistles (before 117AD)
6. St. Polycarp of Smyrna: Epistle to the Phillippians (135AD)
7. Martyrdom of St. Polycarp (155AD)
8. Hermas: Shepherd of Hermas
9. Papias
10. Epistle to Diognetus

Apostle's Creed

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:
5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:
9. I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints:
10. The forgiveness of sins:
11. The resurrection of the body:
12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Apostles: But it is an early summary of their teaching.

Didache (70-90AD) – The Teaching of the Twelve

- Found in 1883
- **Manual for Christian Conduct**
- 16 Chapters
 1. Moral Instruction (Ch. 1-6)
 2. Church Order (Sacramental Life) (7-10)
 3. Disciplinary Instruction (11-15)
 4. Parousia (2nd Coming) (16)

Didache – Some interesting stuff in it

- Fast 1-2 days before Baptism
- Baptism should be in running water, but if there is no running water, then in other water, and if you cannot in cold, then in warm. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times in the Name of the Father and the Son and The Holy Spirit.
- Fast Wednesday (4th day) & Friday (Preparation day), not Tuesday and Thursday like the Jews
 - Fasting and Prayer are salvation to our souls
- Don't give the Eucharist to unbelievers
- Gather on together on Sunday for Eucharist
- Confess your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure

St. Clement of Rome

- Date: 30-100 A D
- Place of ministry: 3rd bishop of Rome
- Possibly the clement mentioned in (Phillipians 4:3) - Origen
- Not a martyr (St. Ireneaeus) – Eusabius
- The writings: 1 Clement (c. 95)
 - o From church to church
 - o Trying to peacefully restore a schism which had broken out in the church of Corinth.
 - They had divisions in the Church
 - o Some persons stirred up the faithful against the presbyters, of whom several of irreproachable life had driven them from office.
 - o St. Clement learned of the these troubles, so he, intervened to restore the peace of the churches.
 - o This letter stresses the importance of Apostolic succession.



St. Ignatius of Antioch

- 2nd bishop of Antioch □ AFTER ST. PETER
- Sentenced to death under Emperor Trajan (98-117AD). Travelled from Syria to Rome. On the way, he wrote 7 epistles:
 1. Ephesus
 2. Magnesia
 3. Tralles
 4. Philadelphia
 5. Smyrna
 6. To St. Polycarp
 7. Rome
- He was a disciple of St. John the Beloved
- Called Theophorus (possibly the child who Christ took on his lap)

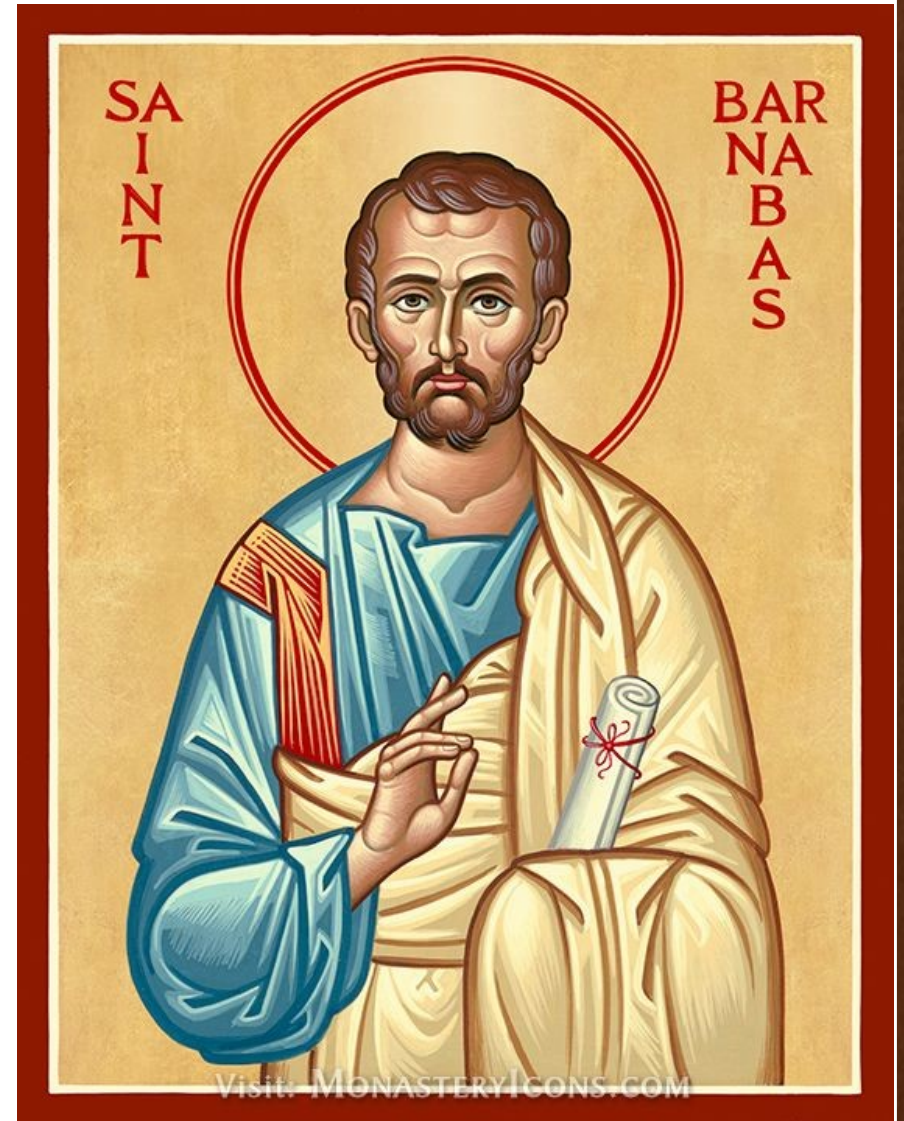


St. Ignatius of Antioch (Continued)

- Some important teachings:
 - The bishop is to preside in the place of God, while the presbyters are to function as the council of the Apostles, and the deacons who are most dear to me, are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ (Mag. 6)
 - Neither baptism, nor agape, nor Eucharist may be celebrated without him...
 - It is not permitted without authorization from the bishop either to baptize or to hold agape, but whatever he approves is pleasing to God...Let no one do anything touching the Church apart from the bishop. Let that celebration of the Eucharist be considered valid which is held under the bishop or anyone to whom he has committed it. (Smyr.8)
 - Take care, then, to partake of the one Eucharist; for one is the Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with His Blood, and one altar, just as there is one bishop assisted by the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants. (Phil 4)
 - The Eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His loving-kindness raised from the dead (Smyr. 7)
 - Eucharist: "Medicine of Immortality"

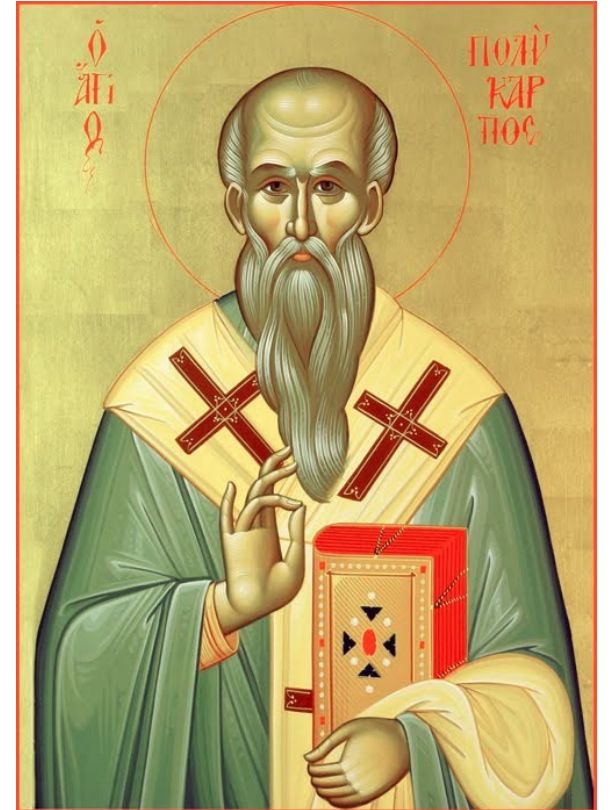
Epistle of Barnabas

- Date: late 1st to early 2nd century
- Many said; He is St. Barnabas who accompanied St. Paul in the 1st journey.
- Uncle of St. Mark
- Alexandria
- Associated with St. Philo
- His letter is more like a theological tract
 - Old law fulfilled in Christ (1-17)
 - The two ways (18-21)
 - “Christianity is superior to Judaism, which is a false religion that did indeed receive the law, the covenant, but “they [Jews] were not worthy to receive it because of their sins”



St. Polycarp

- 70-156 AD, Disciple of the apostle John
- He was a pagan, Baptized in young age
- Friend of St. Ignatius
- Bishop of Smyrna
- He was respectful in his appearance
- The letter to the angel of Smyrna (rev. 2:8-10)
- His letter to Philippians
- Martyred in Smyrna
- Story of his martyrdom preserved in “the martyrdom of Polycarp”
 - “Christ is my friend, I am now 84 years old. He did nothing wrong with me, how can you ask me to deny him now
- Looking up to heaven, he said: “Lord, almighty God, Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom have come to the knowlege of yourself, God of angles, of powers, of all creation, of all the race of saints who live in your sight, I bless
- His blood extinguished the fire



THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS



Theological Schools

- What is a Theological School?
 - School does not refer to a building, or a specific location. The school represents a **living traditional thought of the Church**, which continues throughout the ages without being limited to a particular point in time.
 - The School adopts a **certain methodology interpreting Scripture and in teaching**.
 - How to **preach**, how to **teach**, how to **defend** the faith
- What are the Schools of theology in the Ancient Church
 - Alexandria, Antioch, Cappadocia, Western

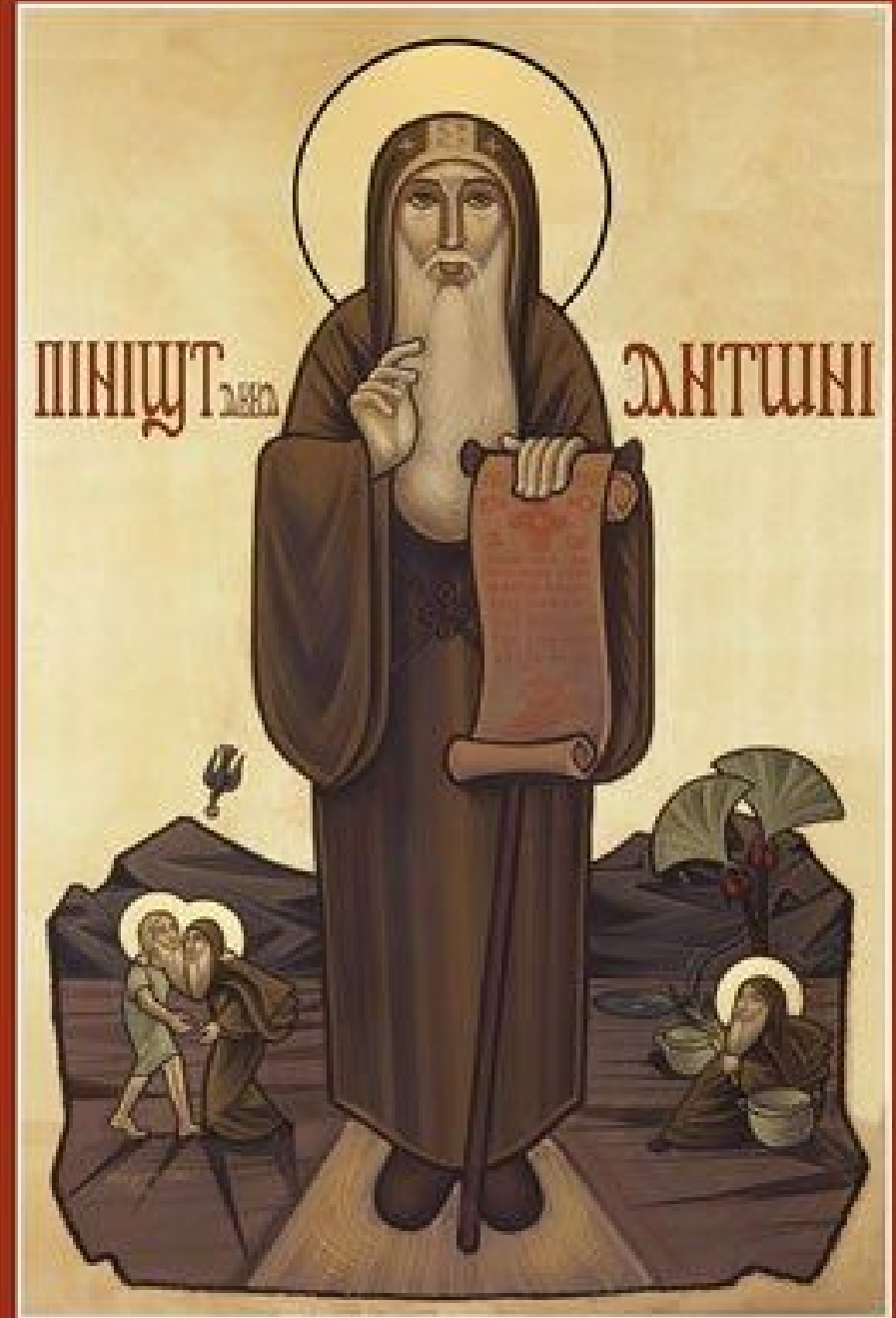
Alexandria – Key Characteristics

- **Reconciliation with Philosophy** (ex: St. Clement of Alexandria)
 - To gain those outside the faith into the Faith through Philosophy
- **Allegorical Interpretation** (Origen)
 - To enjoy the journey from Earth to heaven through the deep understanding of Scripture



Alexandria – Key Characteristics

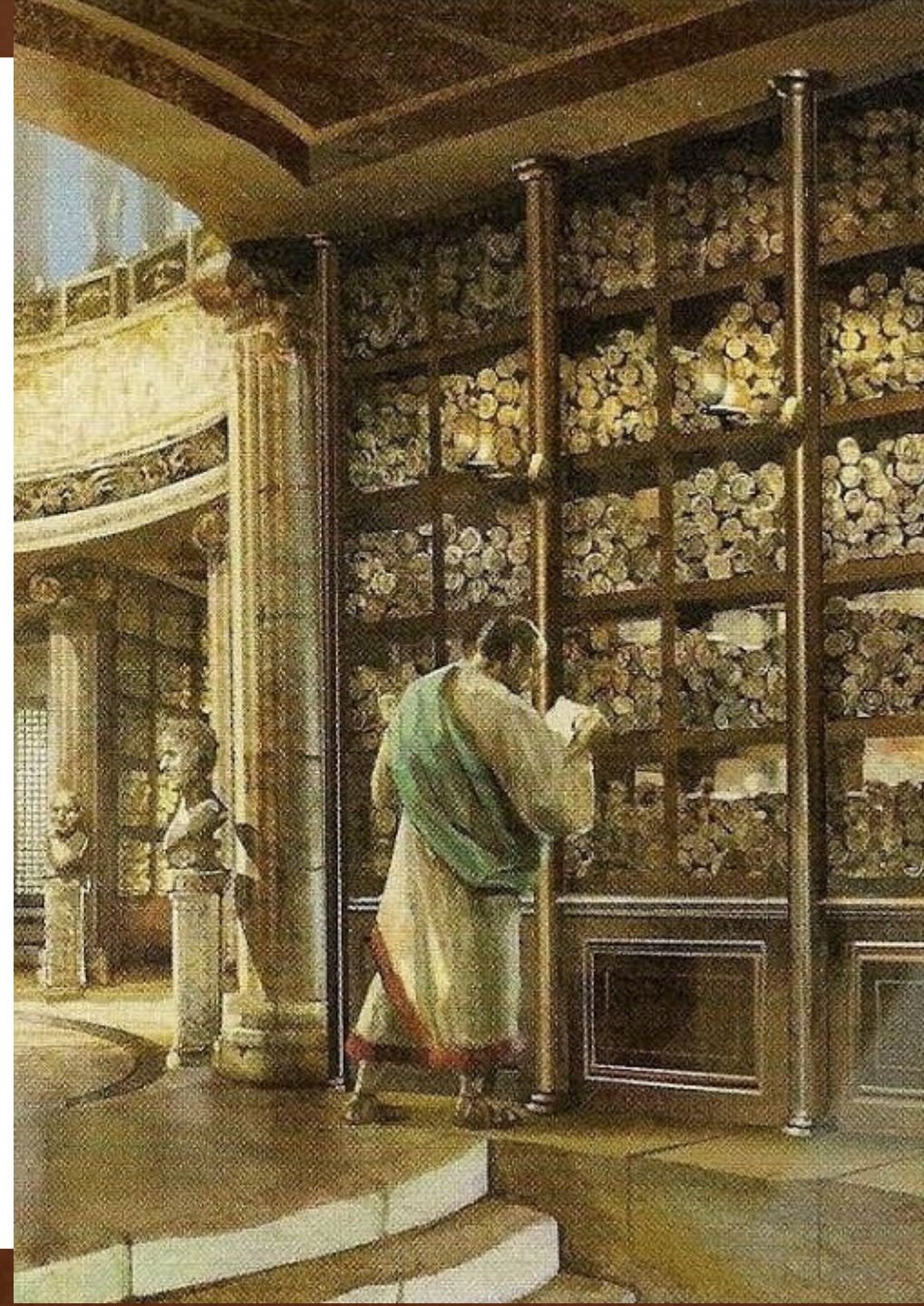
- **Theological Disputes** (St. Athanasius, St. Cyril)
 - To witness to the True Faith for salvation of mankind
- **Soteriological Attitude** (St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Severus)
 - The Doctrine of the Church, her Faith, is directly linked to **my** salvation
- **Eschatological Attitude** (St. Antony, St. Macarius...)



- The Ascetical life, focusing on age to

Cause of the characteristics

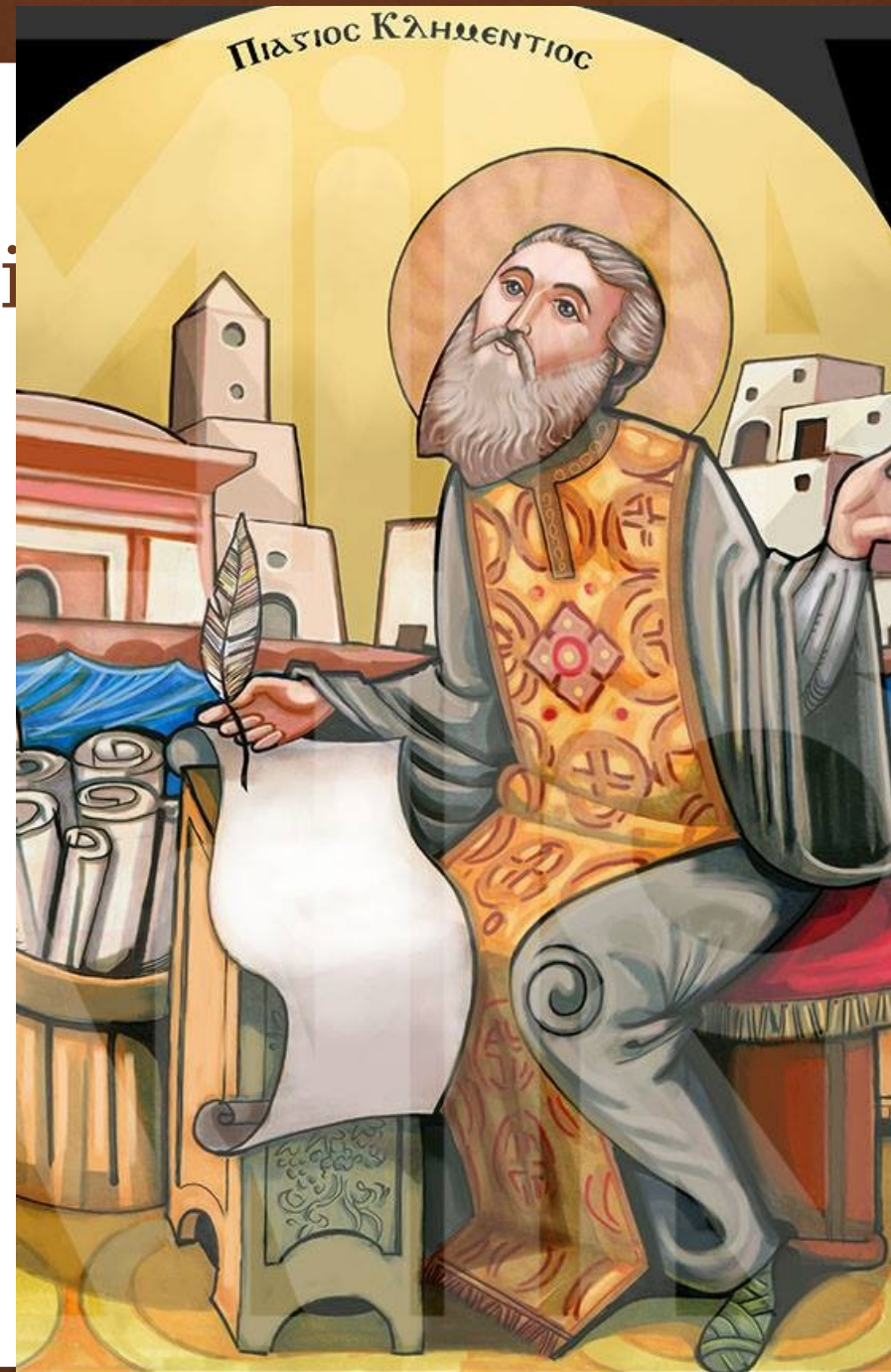
- **Alexandria** was an intellectual world center, with the library of Alexandria
- The monastic movement began in Egypt and accelerated after the age of persecution
- **The responsibility to face the heresies** as they came, since the Theological School of Alexandria brought about very sound minds



in the Faith of the Church

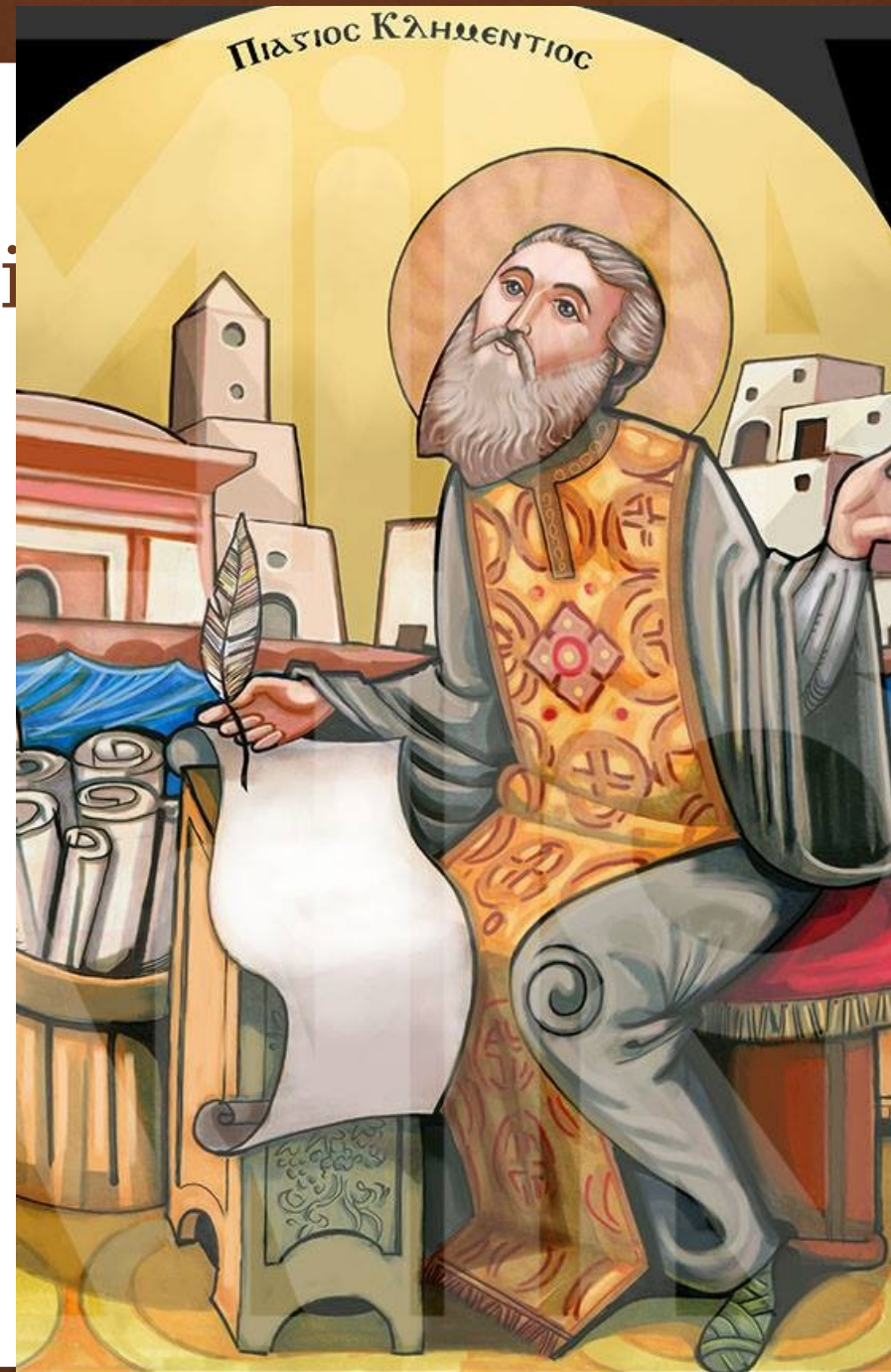
Catechetical School of Alexandria

- Founded by St. Mark
- By 2nd century, it became very influential in the life of the Church
 - Encourage higher studies in Christian theology
 - Gave birth to numerous Church teachers around the world
 - Preached and converted many to Christianity



Catechetical School of Alexandria

- By 2nd century, it became very influential in the life of the Church
 - Attracted students from all over the world
 - First systematic school of theology in the world
 - Used philosophy to convert the philosophers to the True Philosophy
 - Taught not only Christian theology, but sciences, grammar, morals...



Famous deans of the School

- **Pantaenus** (end of 2nd century): introduce **Coptic Alphabet**, led the translation of Bible from Greek to Coptic
- **Clement of Alexandria** (150-215AD): Known as **father of Christian Philosophy**, had to flee due to persecution



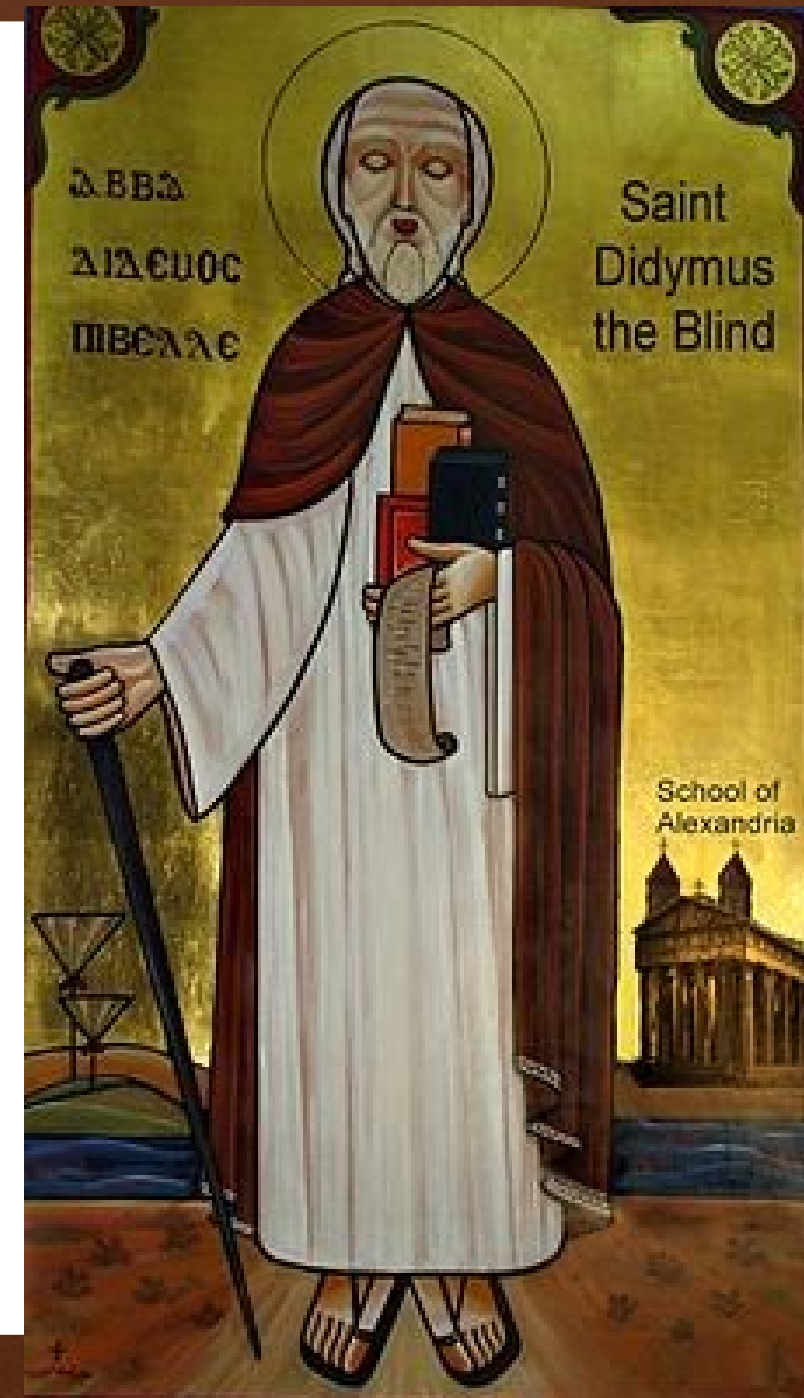
Famous deans of the School

- **Origen** (b. 185AD): Teen Dean – One of the most original thinkers the world has ever seen. Used **Allegorical Interpretation of the Bible**. Wrote more books than anyone could read! (St. Jerome) including **Hexapla**. Was tortured under Decius, died shortly after possibly due to injuries.



Famous deans of the School

- St. Peter the seal of the Martyrs, Dean, Pope, Martyr. Age of Persecution ended with his martyrdom.
- Didymus the Blind (b. 313AD): Lost his sight at age 4. Developed first form of “braille” 1500 years before Braille. Famous for his knowledge of Scripture, grammar, mathematics, hymns. Friend of St. Antony. Many disciples such as St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Jerome, Rufinius, Palladius



Monastic Movement

- Movement start end of 3rd century and accelerated when persecution ended and with the circulation of the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius of Alexandria (~356AD)
- Based on Biblical Principles of **Asceticism, Poverty, Chastity** and **Obedience**
- Flourished in **Egypt** and peaked around the **6th century**

