

# CHRISTIAN TIMELINE

## AD 30 - 33

**Jesus starts the Catholic Church**, appoints Peter as head over the Church, and promises that the Church will endure.

*[Jesus] said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* (Matthew 16:15–20)

**Jesus revealed God and his plan of salvation** to the apostles through words and actions. He gives them divine authority to pass on this faith to all nations.

*Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18 – 20)*

John the Evangelist makes the point that **Jesus showed more** to the apostles than can be contained in writings.

*There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written. (John 21:25)*

## 50 - 96

**New Testament** books are written. The Church grows amid persecution.

## 110

First surviving documented use of the term **"Catholic Church"** (universal church), to refer to the church Jesus started, in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, a Catholic bishop known as one of the Early Church Fathers.<sup>4</sup> Persecution of Christians continues.

306

**Constantine** becomes emperor, and will bring an end to Christian persecution.

325

**The Nicene Creed** formally defines the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic Church.

382 and following

**St. Jerome** translates the Greek and Hebrew texts of Scripture into Latin, the language of the Roman Empire.

386

**Augustine** is converted to Christianity and becomes bishop of Hippo. His writings will help shape Western Christianity and philosophy.

393

At the Synod of Hippo, Catholic bishops discern which documents will be accepted into the canon of Scripture (**the Bible**). The criteria include that the writings of the New Testament must be of apostolic origin and conform to the oral traditions of the Catholic Church.

480

**St. Benedict** writes his rule to guide monasteries in a life of prayer and service to God.

621

Muhammad introduces **Islam**, which will challenge Christianity for centuries.

1054

Issues in the **Eastern churches** lead to their separation from the Catholic Church.

## 1200S

**St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic** inspire many to greater faith and devotion through their preaching and teaching.

## 1517

**Martin Luther** breaks from the Catholic Church. Protestant denominations will eventually number in the thousands. Jesus intended unity, not separation of Christians. He wanted everyone to follow exactly what he taught the apostles. As St. Paul wrote in the first century:

*I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. (1 Corinthians 1:10)*

## 1492

**Columbus** discovers America, opening a new mission field for the Church.

## 1531

**The Blessed Virgin Mary's appearance** in Tepeyac, under the name Santa María de Guadalupe, sparked the conversion of some ten million people to the Church over the next decade.

## 1534

King Henry VIII breaks from the Catholic Church to form the **Anglican Church** or Church of England.

## 1545

**Council of Trent.** The bishops meet to defend and clearly restate Catholic doctrines that are under attack through the Protestant Reformation. The council also addresses numerous abuses in the Church. It is important to note that no Catholic teachings were changed at the Council of Trent.

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*The No. 1 priority was to defend clearly Catholic beliefs...the belief that Christ instituted seven sacraments, not two as asserted by Luther; that justification was achieved by faith and good works, not by faith alone; that the deposit of faith included both the sacred Scriptures and sacred Tradition, not the Scriptures alone; that Communion of one kind for laypeople is sufficient to receive the Real Presence; that the traditional teachings on transubstantiation and original sin are correct; that purgatory does exist; that Masses for the dead are appropriate. These were affirmations, not changes, to Catholic beliefs. In a like manner, the conciliar decrees that defended the Mass were based on unchanging truths and revelation, not on innovation.<sup>5</sup>*

1640's

**St. Isaac Jogues** and others spread the faith in America, with many losing their lives for the faith.

1789

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is the **first diocese** established in the United States.

1917

**The Blessed Virgin Mary appears to three children in Fátima, Portugal**, to warn of coming troubles and the need for prayer.

1962-1965

**The Second Vatican Council** meets to invigorate the Church for her mission in the world.

1968

Pope Paul VI issues "**Humanae Vitae**" ("**Of Human Life**"), confirming the Church's teaching on the transmission of human life.

1984

Pope John Paul II initiates **World Youth Day**, to bring young Catholics together for prayer, instruction, and community.

2000

Jubilee Year commemorates the **two-thousandth anniversary of the Son of God becoming man**.

2015

Pope Francis announces the **Holy Year of Mercy**.