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1 — The Mission to the Jews

IMMEDIATELY after the apostles had witnessed the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into the Kingdom of His Father, they returned to Jerusalem to await the appearance of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised to them.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

“When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me” (John 15:26).

“While meeting with [the Apostles, Jesus] enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for ‘the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit’ ” (Acts 1:4-5).

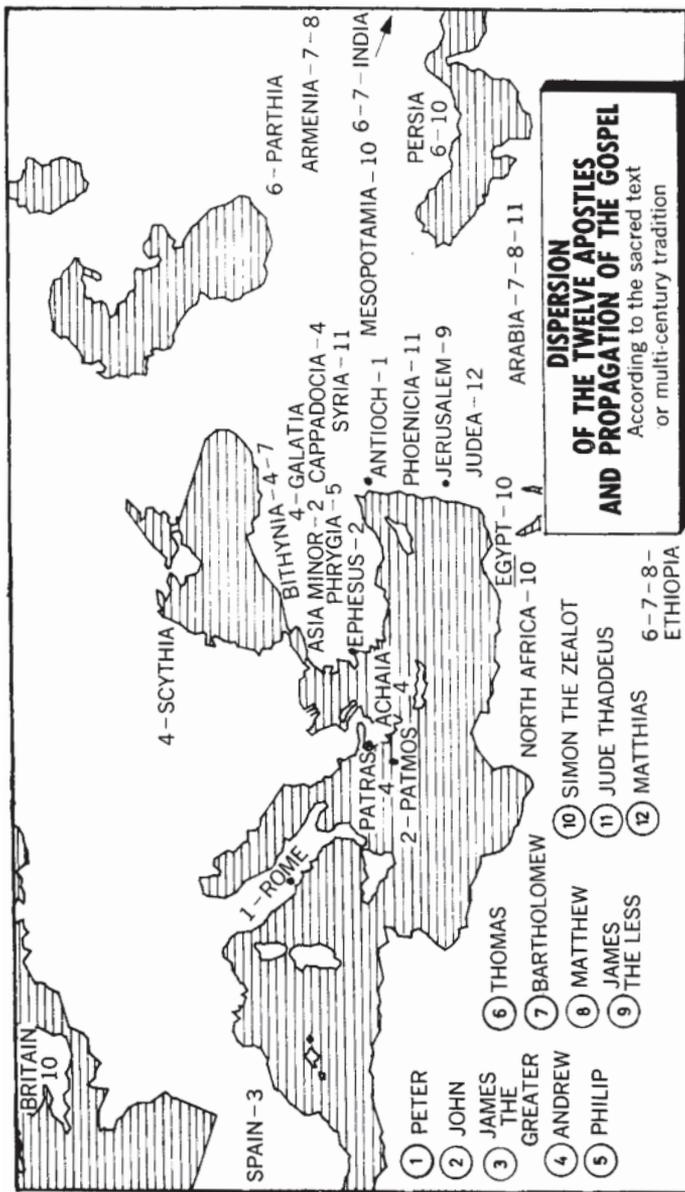
“But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Descent of the Holy Spirit

After ten days spent in prayer in the Upper Room where they were staying, during which time they chose Matthias to replace the traitor Judas in the ranks of the Twelve, the promised Paraclete appeared to them.

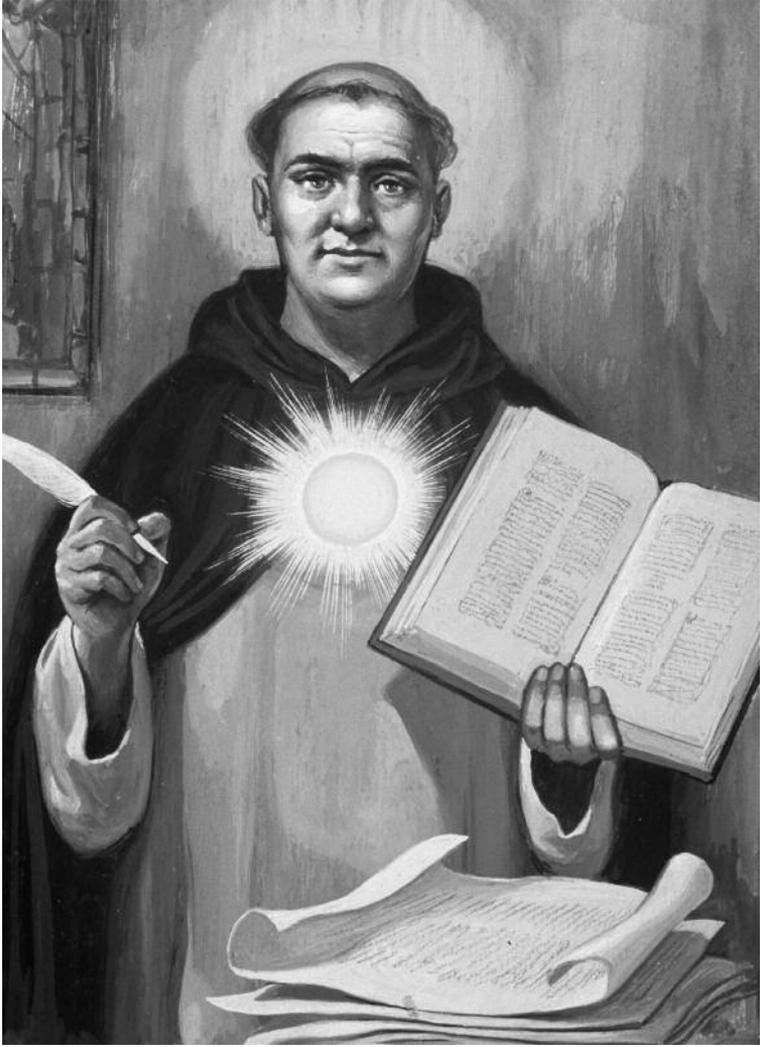
“When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim” (Acts 2:1-4).

Immediately thereafter Peter and the other Apostles descended from the Upper Room and began to preach to the great crowds of Jews who had gathered in the Holy City of Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost.



DISPERSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL — (a) The Apostles were twelve men chosen by Jesus to enjoy special jurisdiction and to teach; they were called the Twelve most likely after the number of the twelve Patriarchs, the heads of the tribes of Israel. (b) Within the circle of Jesus' disciples, the Twelve were given a privileged position; they alone were present with him at the Last Supper (Mk 14:17); later they exercised leadership over the primitive community in Jerusalem (Acts 1:26; 2:14; 5:20f), and were responsible for the information about Jesus that developed into the Gospel traditions (Acts 6:2, 4). (c) Of the original Twelve,

all except Judas were from Galilee (cf. Acts 1:11; 2:71), and it is certain that two of them were married, namely, Peter and Philip. (d) For a while after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, the Twelve (with Matthias replacing Judas) restricted their activities to Palestine, until Divine Providence indicated to them different missionary lands. (e) The New Testament is silent about the missionary work of the majority of them, but apocryphal literature has supplied us with many accounts—historical as well as legendary; most of them died through martyrdom for their faith in Jesus.



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS — THE ANGELIC DOCTOR

St. Thomas Aquinas is the logical man to represent this period because of his vast influence on those who have come after him. Among the many writings that he has left us are the *Summa Theologica*, the basis for the Thomist system of philosophy and theology, and the beautiful prayers and hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament that have been repeated by thousands over the years.

Part Three

THE CHURCH IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

(800-1517)

INTRODUCTION

THE Middle Ages, covering the years from 800 to 1517, were a period of tremendous significance in the history of the Church, leading up to the Reformation.

Feudalism was one of the first problems the Church had to confront in that era, and of equal importance was the need for reform to counteract the disorders that threatened to overwhelm it. The apostolate continued meanwhile to spread, moving into Eastern Europe and Scandinavia.

Far more serious difficulties loomed on the horizon. The schism of the Eastern Church was a major blow to the ideal of Church unity, conflicts with temporal powers arose in Germany, England, and France, and the papal exile at Avignon was a cause of great concern.

On a more positive note could be mentioned the formation of several new contemplative and mendicant orders, the increase of missionary activity, and the Crusades. Equally significant was the development of devotion to the Eucharist and to our Lady.

This epoch prepared for the Modern Age a legacy of Christian life, art, architecture, literature, philosophy, education, and law (growing out of sacred customs and Roman law). It promoted the dignity of womanhood, economic activity, and political thought, organization of governments, peace, and unity of Christendom.

We might say that this period harbored and developed all the most saving elements of civilization—an independent papacy, a celibate clergy, elimination of slavery, protection of the rights of the individual, establishment of charitable institutions, and the rise of mendicant orders together with a new monasticism.

Chapter 15

THE CHURCH AND THE FEUDAL LORDS

(800-1073)

PREVIEW

The early Middle Ages witnessed the development of the system of feudalism, a direct result of the instability of political life in those days and the feeling of helplessness experienced by the common people in the face of savage incursions by warring neighboring peoples.

However, the power that devolved into the hands of the feudal lords as a result of this system inevitably resulted in corruption and abuses, and members of the priesthood and hierarchy were by no means exempt from guilt.

As a result the Church recognized the necessity of reform to eradicate those abuses, a process that was effected in part through the establishment of new monastic foundations.

1 — Feudalism

IN the early Middle Ages the institution of feudalism arose. Society at that time was not organized to any significant extent, and the general populace was continually subjected to attacks by neighboring barbarian raiders. When such dangers arose, the weaker members of society would seek refuge and safety in the castle or fortress of a local lord and thus become dependent upon him. Such local lords in turn were subject to more powerful lords, and so it went on up the feudal ladder, to the supreme authority of the king.

On the death of a lord, his eldest son had the right to succession, and he would present himself to the king or overlord to take a solemn oath of allegiance. The king or overlord would then give his approval for the official transfer of lands and rights of the deceased lord to his heir and give a promise of protection.

The feudal system was essential for the society of that era, for it succeeded in preserving peace and order and ensuring the possibility of leading a normal Christian life. However, its achievements were based on power and thus opened the way for might to prevail over right.

Chapter 29

THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

(1800-1900)

PREVIEW

After many years of terrible setbacks and persecutions, the Church began to make considerable strides toward revival in the nineteenth century.

Europe was the spearhead of this revival, as great progress was made in the major countries of France, England, Ireland, and Germany.

Perhaps the most important Church figure during this period was Pope Pius IX whose reign encompassed such noteworthy events as the definition of the dogma of the immaculate Conception, the publication of the Syllabus of Errors, and the summoning of Vatican Council I that defined papal primacy and papal infallibility.

IN the nineteenth century, after enduring severe persecutions and difficulties, the Catholic Church began to foster a revival throughout the Catholic world, with particular success in the countries of France, England, Ireland, and Germany, owing in great part to the efforts of Pope Pius IX.

1 — France

The restoration of King Louis XVIII to the throne of France in the year 1814 after the fall of Napoleon brought a considerable measure of relief to the Church. The new king restored the Papal States to Rome. Religious orders, long suppressed in France, were reestablished, and new orders were founded. Thirty new dioceses were created, and a new Concordat was entered into with the Holy See.

2 — England and Ireland

The general effect of the French Revolution upon the English government was to soften the severity of the anti-Catholic penal code and to hasten the removal of the remaining injustices under