

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Why Does The Pope Convene Church Councils?

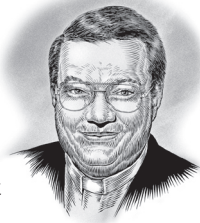
Know This...

Most of us don't look forward to meetings. They're too often called to address issues, problems, or conflicts. Church councils are "meetings" called to address doctrinal issues and heresies. Jesus revealed to the Apostles the truth of God's existence, creation, and desires. He then sent them to reveal these truths to others. Unfortunately, man is incapable of quickly digesting everything Jesus taught; so as years and centuries pass, errors and heresies creep into the Church. Ecumenical councils are convened to refocus the Church on the true teaching of Christ.



John: There are different types of Church councils; but ecumenical or universal councils carry the full authority and power of the papacy. Their decisions are binding on all the faithful. Ecumenical councils shed light on the mind of Christ.

James: For two thousand years, 22 ecumenical councils have clarified and defined the teaching of Jesus, discussed and regulated Church doctrine and discipline, and addressed heresies and situations that threatened Church unity.



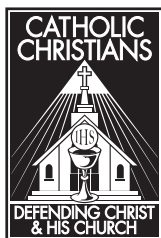
John: Acts 15 reveals the events and decisions of the first ecumenical council: the Council of Jerusalem.

James: Ecumenical councils have, seemingly, taken place just in the nick of time to resolve heresies that were close to tearing the Church apart.

John: Jesus is very protective of His Bride, the Church. He will not allow heresy to destroy her.

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"Then the Apostles came and said to Jesus, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' And He answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.'" Mt. 13:10-11, 13 The bishops are the successors to the Apostles. They, like the Apostles, have been given a gift to know the "secrets of the kingdom of heaven." They use this God-given wisdom and knowledge in Church councils to address, clarify, and resolve doctrinal disagreements and heresies.



"An Ecumenical Council of the Church is a gathering of all the bishop of the world, in the exercise of their collegial authority over the universal Church. An ecumenical council is usually called by the successor of St. Peter, the Pope, or at least confirmed or accepted by him." ccc glossary Ecumenical councils have addressed heresies against the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the two natures and wills of Christ, Mary as the Mother of God, and the veneration of holy images. In the 1545, the Council of Trent was called to address the heresies of the Protestant Reformation. "If anyone says that the whole punishment, together with the guilt, is always pardoned by God, and that the satisfaction of penitents is nothing other than faith, by which they perceive that Christ has made satisfaction for them: let him be anathema." Council of Trent, 1551

PAPA SAYS

Pope Leo I wrote, "From the whole world only one, Peter, is chosen to preside over the calling of all nations and over all the other Apostles, and over the Fathers of the Church. Thus, although among the people of God there are many priests and many pastors, it is really Peter who rules them all, of whom, too, it is Christ who is their chief ruler." Sermons, 4, 2, 461 A.D. Pope Gregory I wrote, "I confess that I receive and revere, like the four books of the holy Gospel, four Councils, to wit: that of Nicaea, in which the perverse doctrine of Arius is destroyed; that of Constantinople, also, in which the error of Eunomius and Macedonius is overthrown; the first also at Ephesus, in which the impiety of Nestorius is judged; and that too of Chalcedon, in which the wickedness of Eutyches and Dioscurus is reprov'd." Letters, 1, 24, 591 A.D.



Beloved Holy Spirit, Soul and Guardian of the Church, Your presence guarantees the truths taught by our Holy Father and in ecumenical councils. Help me be obedient to the Pope and to the decisions of the Church. Help me be firm, but tactful, in upholding her doctrines and defending her right to speak for all of Christianity. Finally, fill me with the benefits of being a faithful follower of Jesus and His Church. I ask this through Jesus, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

