

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

What Did The Early Church Fathers Give Us?

Know This...

Most Christians have heard of the Apostles Peter, James, and John. Most Christians know the Biblical writings of Paul, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But few have read Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Jerome, Minucius Felix, Cyprian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers, Isidore of Seville, or John Damascene. These ten men are only a few of the early Christians who clarified apostolic teaching. These Early Church Fathers gave us a treasury of insight into the mind of Christ.



John: The Early Church Fathers lived in the first seven centuries of Christianity. They wrote and spoke extensively on the teachings of the early Church. Some of them learned directly from the Apostles.

James: The last western Church Father was Saint Isidore of Seville who died in 636 A.D. The last eastern Church Father was Saint John Damascene who died in 749 A.D.



John: Unlike Sacred Scripture, their words are not uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit; but they are highly regarded and often referenced by the Church.

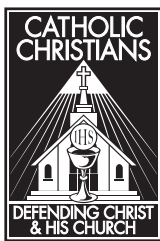
James: Church councils have relied on these men for insight into the teaching of Christ and the Apostles.

John: As the Gospel spread, followers raised questions, false teachers attracted disciples, and dissenters attacked the church.

James: The Early Church Fathers stepped into these scuffles to give the Church a reliable source of Christian wisdom and truth.

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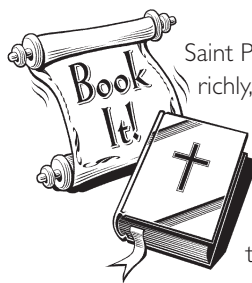
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Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." ^{Mt. 6:19-21} The Early Church Fathers ignored, and even rejected, the comforts of this world for a deeper understanding and love of Jesus. Many of them were martyred for their unwavering defense of Christ and His Church.

"The sayings of the Holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer." ^{Dei Verbum 83}

"I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ; and for drink I desire His Blood, which is love incorruptible." ^{Irenaeus of Antioch} "If the flesh were not in a position to be saved, the Word of God would certainly not have become flesh. And if the blood of the righteous were not to be sought after, the Lord would certainly not have had blood." ^{Irenaeus} "Whoever dies in his sins, even if he profess to believe in Christ, does not truly believe in Him; and even if that which exists without works be called faith, such faith is dead in itself, as we read in the Epistle bearing the name of James." ^{Origen} "The Church is Catholic because it extends over the whole world and because it teaches universally and infallibly each and every doctrine." ^{Cyril of Jerusalem} "There are venial sins and there are mortal sins." ^{Jerome} "I would put no faith in the Gospels unless the authority of the Catholic Church directed me to do so." ^{Augustine} "Since in Father and Son and Holy Spirit the subsistence of each is distinct, there are three Persons. And since each does not will and operate in His own peculiar fashion nor separately and apart from the others, but conjointly, there are not three gods but one God!" ^{John Damascene}



Saint Paul wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another; singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." ^{Col 3:16-17}

God our Father, in the early Church You raised up and inspired faithful men to reject the allure of this world and to subordinate their will to the will of Your Son. These men opened their hearts and minds to Your Spirit and allowed Him to guide their writing. I humbly desire to study and learn from their written insights into the teaching of Your Son and His Church. I ask this through my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

