

The Church - An Unbroken History

Jesus said His Church would be "the light of the world." He then noted that "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt 5:14). This means his Church is a visible organization. It must have characteristics that clearly identify it and that distinguish it from other churches. Jesus promised, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). This means that His Church will never be destroyed and will never fall away from Him. His Church will survive until His return.

Among the Christian churches, only the Catholic Church has existed since the time of Jesus. Every other Christian church is an offshoot of the Catholic Church. The Eastern Orthodox churches broke away from unity with the pope in 1054. The Protestant churches were established during the Reformation, which began in 1517. (Most of today's Protestant churches are actually offshoots of the original Protestant offshoots.)

Only the Catholic Church existed in the 10th century, in the 5th century, and in the 1st century, faithfully teaching the doctrines given by Christ to the apostles, omitting nothing. The line of popes can be traced back, in unbroken succession, to Peter himself. This is unequalled by any institution in history.

Even the oldest government is new compared to the papacy, and the churches that send out door-to-door missionaries are young compared to the Catholic Church. Many of these churches began as recently as the 19th or 20th centuries; some even began during your own lifetime. None of them can claim to be the Church Jesus established.

The Catholic Church has existed for nearly 2000 years, despite constant opposition from the world. This is testimony to the Church's divine origin. It must be more than a merely human organization, especially considering that its human members - even some of its leaders - have been unwise, corrupt, or prone to heresy.

Any merely human organization with such members would have collapsed early on. The Catholic Church is today the most vigorous church in the world (and the largest, with over a billion members - one sixth of the human race), and that is testimony not to the cleverness of the Church's leaders, but to the protection of the Holy Spirit.

See the History of the Church diagram from our on-line apologetics booklet *To Tell You The Truth About The Church And The Holy Bible.*

Name of Pope and Year of End of Pontificate

* indicates that this pope was martyred

<u>NAMES OF POPE</u>	<u>YEAR OF END OF PONTIFICATE</u>
St. Peter *	c.64
St. Linus *	c.76
St. Anacletus (Cletus) *	c.90
St. Clement I *	c.100
St. Evaristus *	c.109
St. Alexander I *	c.115
St. Sixtus I *	c.125
St. Telesphorus *	c.136
St. Hyginus *	c.140
St. Pius I *	c.155
St. Anicetus *	c.166
St. Soterus *	c.175
St. Eleutherius	c.189
St. Victor I *	199
St. Zephyrinus *	217
St. Callistus *	222
St. Urban I *	230
St. Pontian *	235
St. Anterus *	236
St. Fabian *	250
St. Cornelius *	253
St. Lucius I *	254
St. Stephen I *	257
St. Sixtus II *	258
St. Dionysius	268
St. Felix I *	274
St. Eutychian *	283
St. Caius (Gaius) *	296
St. Marcellinus *	304
St. Marcellus I *	309
St. Eusebius *	310
St. Melchiades	314
St. Sylvester I	335

St. Mark	336
St. Julius I	352
St. Liberius	366
St. Damasus I	384
St. Siricius	399
St. Anastasius I	401
St. Innocent I	417
St. Zozimus	418
St. Boniface	422
St. Celestine	423
St. Sixtus III	440
St. Leo (the Great)	461
St. Hilary	468
St. Simplicius	483
St. Felix II or III	492
St. Gelasius I	496
Anastasius II	498
St. Symmachus	514
St. Hormidas	523
St. John I *	526
St. Felix III or IV	530
Boniface II	532
John II	535
St. Agapitus	536
St. Silverius	537
Vigilius	555
Pelagius I	561
John III	574
Benedict I	579
Pelagius II	590
St. Gregory I (the Great)	604
Sabinianus	606
Boniface III	607
St. Boniface IV	615
St. Deusdeditus or Adeodatus I	618
Boniface V	625
Honorius	638

Severinus	640
John IV	642
Theodore I	649
St. Martin I *	655
St. Eugene I	657
St. Vitalian	672
Adeodatus II	676
Donus I	678
St. Agathonus	681
St. Leo II	683
St. Benedict II	685
John V	686
Conon	687
St. Sergius I	701
John VI	705
John VII	707
Sisinnius	708
Constantine	715
St. Gregory II	731
St. Gregory III	741
St. Zachary	752
Stephen III	757
St. Paul I	767
Stephen IV	772
Adrian I	795
St. Leo III	816
Stephen V	817
St. Paschal I	824
Eugene II	827
Valentine	827
Gregory IV	844
Sergius II	847
St. Leo IV	855
Benedict III	858
St. Nicholas (the Great)	867
Adrian II	872
John VIII	882

Marinus I	884
St. Adrian III	885
Stephen VI	891
Formosus	896
Boniface VI	896
Stephen VII	897
Romanus	897
Theodore II	897
John IX	900
Benedict IV	903
Leo V	903
Sergius III	911
Anastasius III	913
Landus	914
John X	928
Leo VI	928
Stephen VIII	931
John XI	935
Leo VII	939
Stephen IX	942
Marinus II	946
Agapitus II	955
John XII	964
Leo VIII	965
Benedict V	966
John XIII	972
Benedict VI	974
Benedict VII	983
John XIV	984
John XV	996
Gregory V	999
Sylvester II	1003
John XVII	1003
John XVIII	1009
Sergius IV	1012
Benedict VIII	1024
John XIX	1032

Benedict IX	1044
Sylvester III	1045
Benedict IX	1045
Gregory VI	1046
Clement II	1048
Benedict IX	1048
Damasus II	1048
St. Leo IX	1054
Victor II	1057
Stephen X	1058
Nicholas II	1061
Alexander II	1073
St. Gregory VII	1085
Bl. Victor III	1087
Bl. Urban II	1099
Paschal II	1118
Gelasius	1119
Callistus II	1124
Honorius II	1130
Innocent II	1143
Celestine II	1144
Lucius II	1145
Bl. Eugene III	1153
Anastasius IV	1154
Adrian IV	1159
Alexander III	1181
Lucius III	1185
Urban III	1187
Gregory VIII	1187
Clement III	1191
Celestine III	1198
Innocent III	1216
Honorius III	1227
Gregory IX	1241
Celestine IV	1241
Innocent IV	1254
Alexander IV	1261

Urban IV	1264
Clement IV	1268
Bl. Gregory X	1276
Bl. Innocent V	1276
Adrian V	1276
John XXI	1277
Nicholas III	1280
Martin IV	1285
Honorius IV	1287
Nicholas IV	1292
St. Celestine V	1296
Boniface VIII	1303
Bl. Benedict XI	1304
Clement V	1314
John XXII	1334
Benedict XII	1342
Clement VI	1352
Innocent VI	1362
Bl. Urban V	1370
Gregory XI	1378
Urban VI	1389
Innocent VII	1406
Gregory XII	1415
Martin V	1431
Eugene IV	1447
Nicholas V	1455
Callistus III	1458
Pius II	1464
Paul II	1471
Sixtus IV	1484
Innocent VIII	1492
Alexander VI	1503
Pius III	1503
Julius II	1513
Leo X	1521
Adrian VI	1523
Clement VII	1534

Paul III	1549
Julius III	1555
Marcellus II	1555
Paul IV	1559
Pius IV	1565
St. Pius V	1572
Gregory XIII	1585
Sixtus V	1590
Urban VII	1590
Gregory XIV	1591
Innocent IX	1591
Clement VIII	1605
Leo XI	1605
Paul V	1621
Gregory XV	1623
Urban VII	1644
Innocent X	1655
Alexander VII	1667
Clement IX	1669
Clement X	1676
Bl. Innocent XI	1689
Alexander VIII	1691
Innocent XII	1700
Clement XI	1721
Innocent XIII	1724
Benedict XIII	1730
Clement XII	1740
Benedict XIV	1758
Clement XIV	1774
Pius VI	1799
Pius VII	1823
Leo XII	1829
Pius VIII	1830
Gregory XVI	1846
Bl. Pius IX	1878
Leo XIII	1903
St. Pius X	1914

Benedict XV	1922
Pius XI	1939
Pius XII	1958
Bl. John XXIII	1963
Paul VI	1978
John Paul I	1978
John Paul II	2005
Benedict XVI	