



Appreciating the Ancient Future of the Rites of Initiation

Annual Gathering of the North
American Association for the
Catechumenate

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“Appreciating the Ancient Future...”

- What does this interesting title mean?
- Goals of this workshop:
 - Seeing the history of the rites of the catechumenate as a history of diversity and adaptation
 - Using that history as a model for implementing the rites in our congregations today
- Time for discussion at end of overview of history

References to Baptism in the New Testament

- A rite never described, but various theologies appear:
 - Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
 - New birth through water and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-7)
 - Putting off of the old self and putting on the new; being clothed in righteousness (Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:9-10)
 - Initiation into the one body of the Christian community (1 Corinthians 12:13)

References to Baptism in the New Testament

- Washing, sanctification, and justification in Christ and the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- Enlightenment (Hebrews 6:4; 10:32; 1 Peter 2:9)
- Being anointed and/or sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27)
- Being sealed or marked as belonging to God and God's people (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Revelation 7:3)

References to Baptism in the New Testament

- Being joined to Christ through participation in his death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-11; see also Colossians 2:12-15)
 - The verbs which speak of the believers' **dying** with Christ are in the aorist or perfect
 - ἐβαπίσθημεν (aorist) "were baptized"
 - συνετάφημεν (aorist) "were buried"
 - γεγόναμεν (perfect) "have been united"
 - συνεσταυρώθη (aorist) "was crucified"

References to Baptism in the New Testament

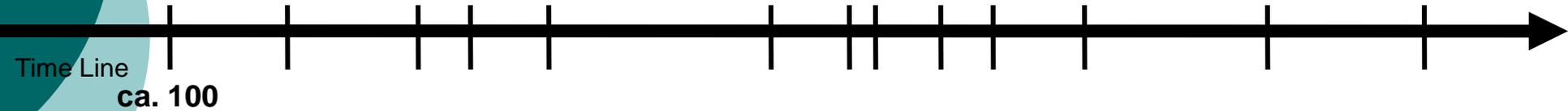
- The verbs which speak of their **rising again** with him are imperatives, subjunctives, or futures
 - περιπατήσωμεν (aorist subjunctive) “might walk”
 - ἐσόμεθα (future) “shall”
 - συζήσομεν (future) “shall also live”
 - λογίξεσθε (imperative) “must consider”

References to Baptism in the New Testament

- What does Romans 6 say about baptism, death and resurrection?
 - People must *believe* that they might also live with him, and they must *consider* themselves alive to God in Jesus Christ.
 - To die with Christ means not simply to share the fate of the cult deity, it means the initiation of a process of dying to sin and of walking in newness of life.
 - Resurrection of the believers takes place first at the *parousia*.
 - Thus, we do not “rise with Christ” in baptism.

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Didache



Source: Syrian, possibly contemporary with John's Gospel

Preparation: Instruction in the "Two Ways" (length not indicated), immediate preparatory prayer and fasting

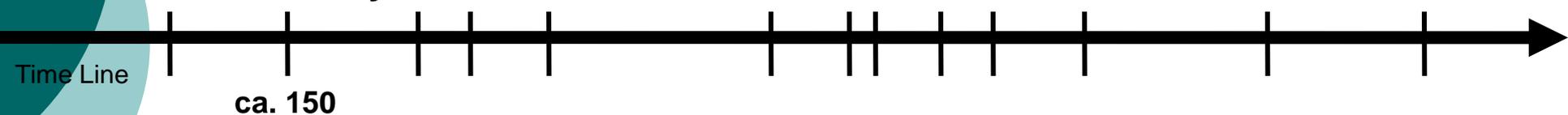
Baptism proper: Baptism in "running water" with trinitarian formula

Eucharist: Only for the baptized



A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Justin Martyr



Source: Roman apologist

Preparation: Instruction in the “truth” (length not indicated), preparatory prayer and fasting

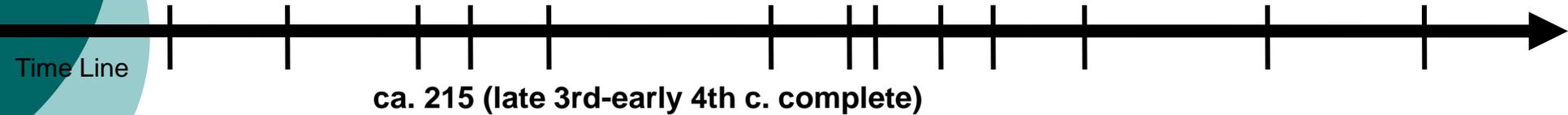
Baptism proper: “Regenerated” and “enlightened” with possible interrogations

Postbaptismal: Led to the assembly for common prayers and kiss

Eucharist: Served as culmination

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Apostolic Tradition



Source: Roman church order made up of many “layers” of sources

Preparation: Three-year catechumenate with catechumens dismissed at the end of the Intercessions

Election to baptism with catechumens examined, attested to by sponsors

Immediate preparation of fasting, prayer, daily exorcism

Prebaptismal: Blessing of waters and oils, renunciation of Satan, anointing/exorcism

Baptism proper: Connected to three-fold interrogation and profession of faith

Postbaptismal: Anointing by presbyter, handlaying prayer for “grace” by bishop, anointing/consignation by bishop

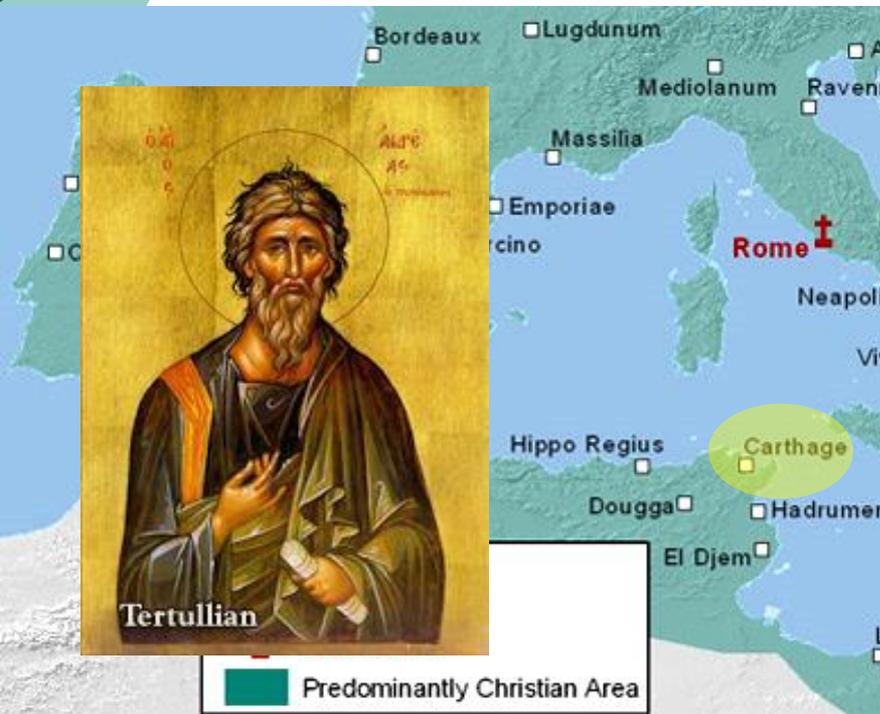
Eucharist: Included “milk and honey”

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Tertullian

ca. 220

Time Line



Source: North African lay person

Preparation: Catechesis of unspecified length, included vigils, fasting, prayer

Prebaptismal: Sanctification of the waters, renunciation

Baptism proper: Connected to three-fold interrogation and profession

Postbaptismal: Anointing, handlaying related to Holy Spirit

Eucharist: Included "milk and honey"

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Origen

ca. 240

Source: Alexandrian theologian

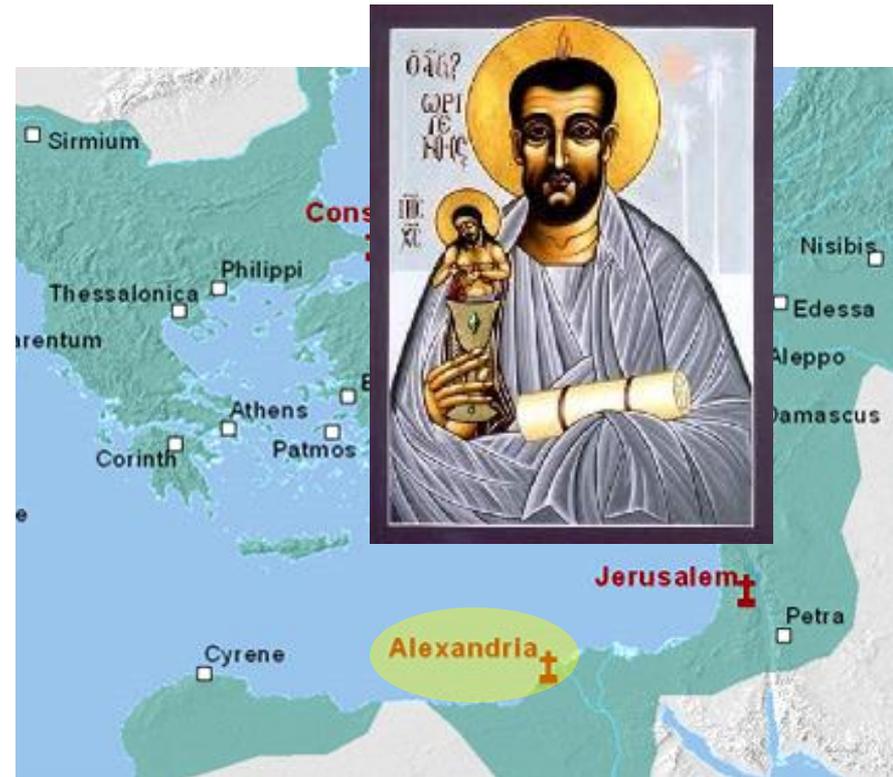
Preparation: Relatively short catechumenal period of possibly forty days in length

Prebaptismal: Anointing connected to Holy Spirit

Baptism proper: Three-fold interrogation and profession of faith

Eucharist

Baptismal rites occurred on Epiphany



A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Cyril of Jerusalem

ca. 350



Source: Bishop of Jerusalem

Preparation: Lenten preaching with focus on contents and meaning of the Creed

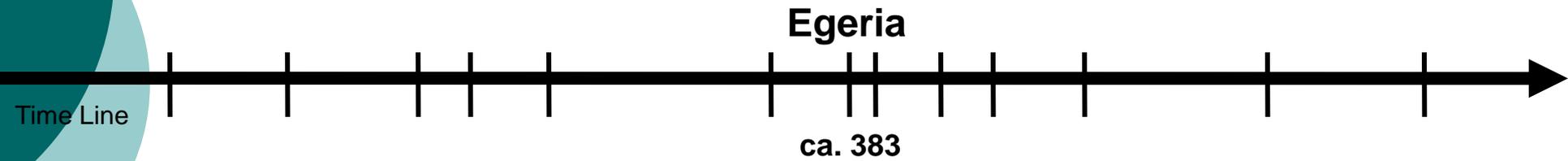
Prebaptismal: Renunciation and anointing

Baptism proper: Interrogations done right before baptism

Postbaptismal: Anointing

Eucharist: Mystagogical catechesis during Easter week

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne



Source: Spanish nun visiting Jerusalem, most likely heard Cyril preach

Preparation: Names of those to be baptized collected on the "first day of Lent"

Enrollment on "second day of Lent"

Exorcisms and catechesis (3 hours per day) during Lent

Handing over of Creed after 5 weeks

Repetition of Creed during Holy Week

Baptism: At Easter Vigil



Mediterranean World ca. 600

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

John Chrysostom

ca. 385

Source: Archbishop of Constantinople; along with Cyril, considered one of the great baptismal preachers of the 4th-5th centuries

Preparation: Catechesis, followed by exorcism

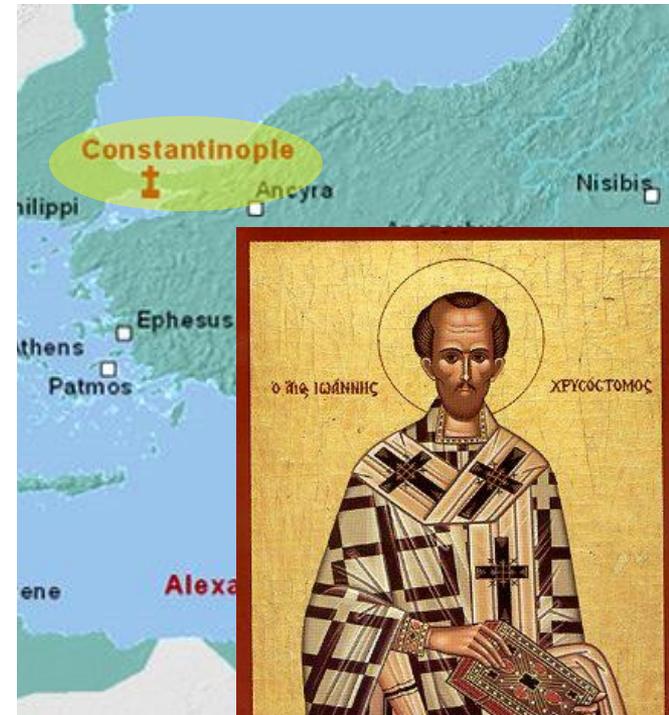
Renunciation and profession most likely took place on Good Friday

Prebaptismal: Anointing

Baptism proper: With trinitarian formula

Postbaptismal: Vesting in "radiant garment"

Eucharist: Prefaced with kiss

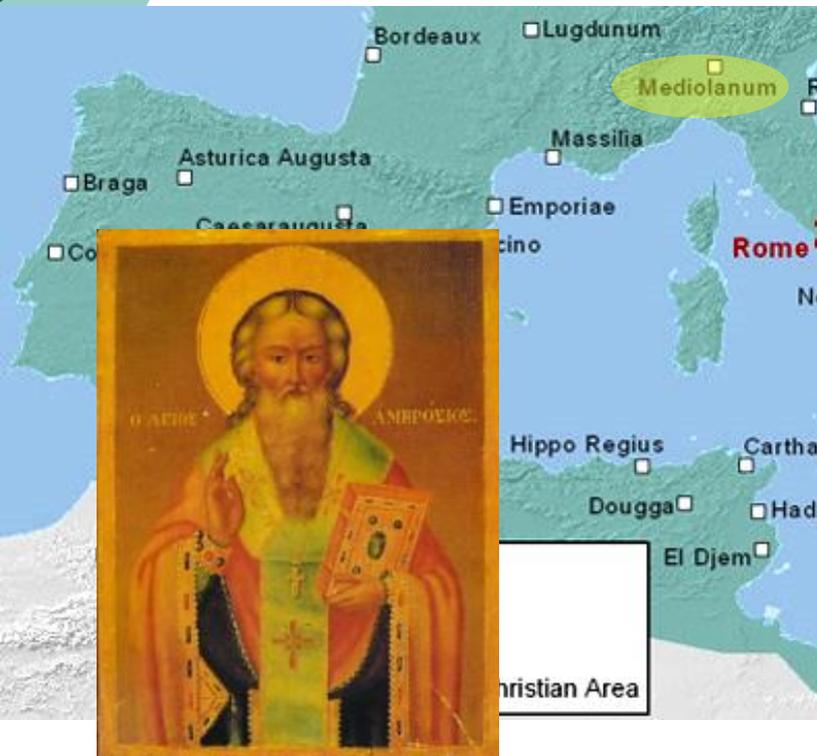


A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Ambrose

ca. 390

Time Line



Source: Bishop of Milan (claims to be using "Roman" practice)

Preparation: Enrollment of catechumens on Epiphany, final preparation in Lent

Handing over of Creed on Palm Sunday

Prebaptismal: Anointing and renunciation

Baptism proper

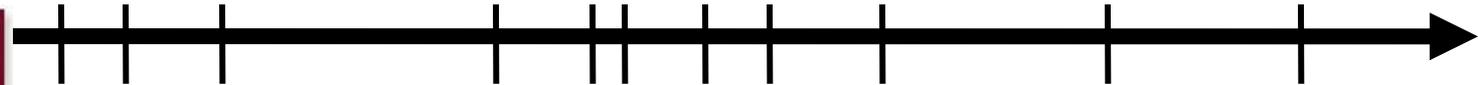
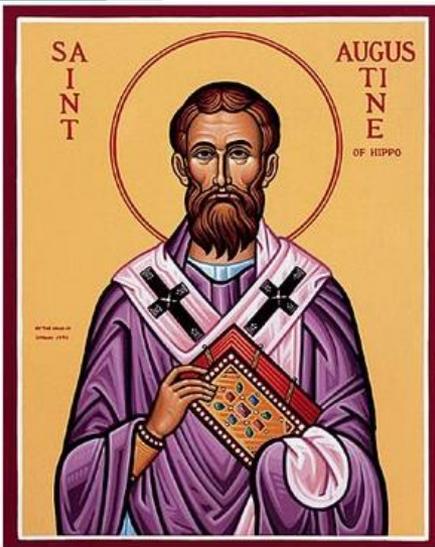
Postbaptismal: Anointing, white garment, handing over of Lord's Prayer, "spiritual seal"

Eucharist

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Augustine

ca. 400



Source: Bishop of Hippo in North Africa

Preparation: Penitential practices included fasting, exorcisms, wearing of hair shirts, and worship at Vigils

Three scrutinies during Lent (including handing over of Creed and Lord's Prayer)

Footwashing on Maundy Thursday

Prebaptismal: Anointing and renunciation

Baptism proper

Postbaptism: Anointing and laying on of hands

Eucharist

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne

Theodore of Mopsuestia

ca. 420

Source: Bishop of Mopsuestia; along with Cyril and John, known for his baptismal preaching

Preparation: Giving of names, then exorcisms

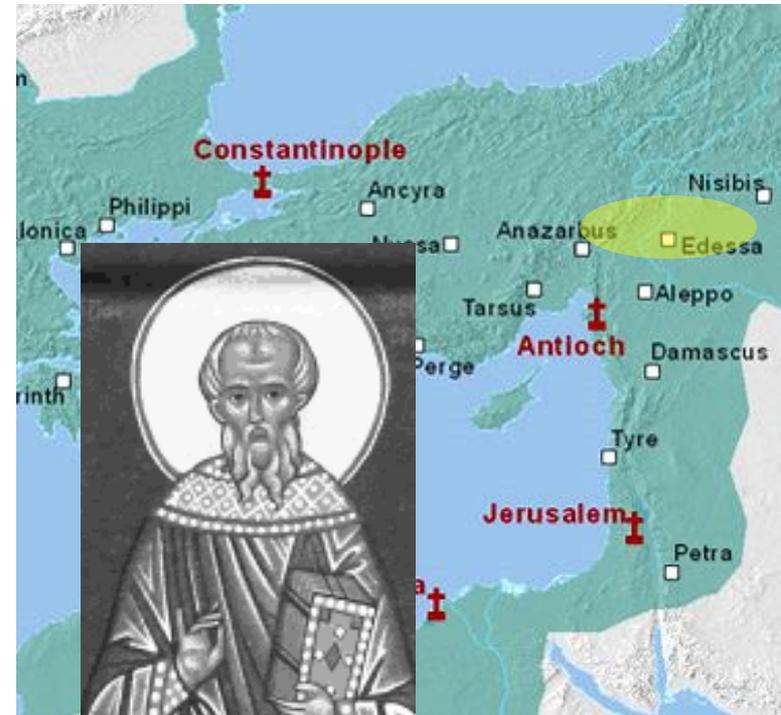
Reciting of Creed and Lord's Prayer

Prebaptismal: Renunciation and vow right before baptism, anointing

Baptism proper

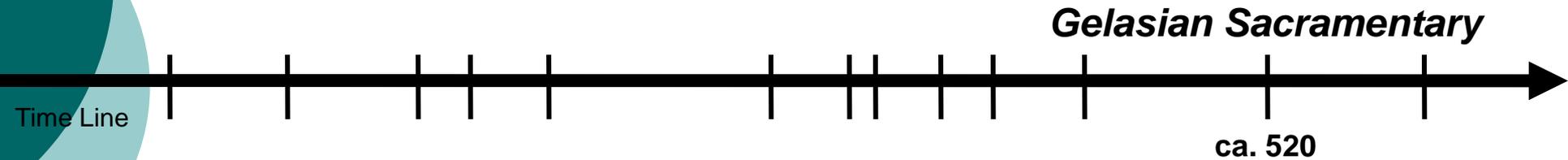
Postbaptismal: Kiss, signing

Eucharist



Mediterranean World ca. 600

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne



Source: Book used for presiding ministers in Rome

Infant baptism as practiced norm

Preparation: Enrollment and election happened on Monday of third week of Lent

Scrutinies on third, fourth and fifth Sundays in Lent had become exorcisms

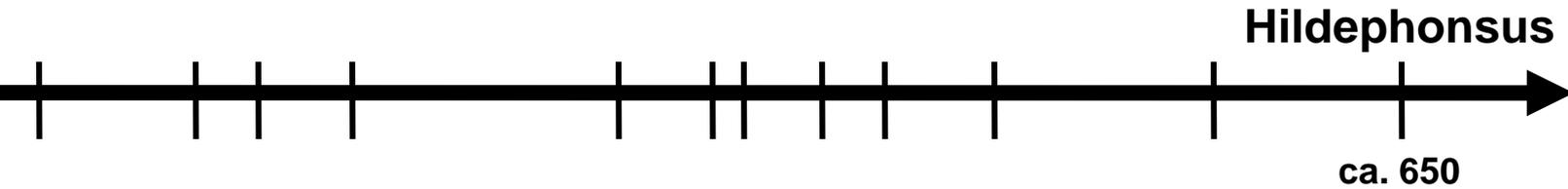
Handing over of Creed and Lord's Prayer

Prebaptismal: Anointings, renunciation, and recitation of Creed happened on Holy Saturday

Baptism proper: At Easter Vigil

Confirmation as a separate rite by bishop

A Plurality of Particularities: Baptism and Preparation until Charlemagne



Source: Archbishop of Toledo, Spain

Preparation: Reading from Isaiah before exorcisms, followed by anointings

Sufflation and effeta

Handing over of Creed on Palm Sunday, recited on Maundy Thursday

Prebaptismal: Three-fold interrogation and profession

Baptism proper: Single immersion

Postbaptismal: Anointing, laying on of hands, veil
Eucharist



Infant Baptism as Norm

- Even though the later sacramentaries show a catechumenate (textually), most of these rites were compressed into the prebaptismal ceremonies by the 6th century.
- On the eve of the Reformation, the prebaptismal ceremonies began to overshadow the baptism itself.

Sarum Use of the Roman Rite

- Infant brought to the door
 - Sign of the cross on forehead and breast
 - Enrollment and election
 - Another sign of the cross
 - Exorcism and giving of salt
 - Multiple exorcisms (separate texts for males and females)
 - Reading from Matthew, then effeta
 - Recitation of Creed
 - Final sign of the cross
- “Catechumen” led into church to baptismal font
 - Litany of the saints and blessing of baptismal waters
 - Renunciation, then anointing with “oil of salvation”
 - Interrogatory profession of Creed
 - Baptism proper
 - Postbaptismal anointing and giving of candle

Luther's Orders of Baptism

- Prebaptismal rites (at door)
 - Sign of the cross with prayer
 - ~~Exorcism with salt~~
 - Flood Prayer and exorcism with signs of the cross
 - Reading from Mark
 - Laying on of hands and Lord's Prayer
 - ~~Effeta~~
 - At baptismal font
 - Renunciation (3-fold)
 - Interrogatory profession with Creed
 - ~~Anointing~~
 - "Wilt thou be baptized?"
 - Baptism proper
 - ~~Postbaptismal anointing~~
 - Baptismal garment and ~~candle~~
- 1523 1526**



The Catechumenate: Re-introduction in Twentieth Century

- African bishops began using the catechumenate model in missionary activities
- Second Vatican Council called for a fuller baptismal rite for both infants and adults
- “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” published:
 - 1972 Latin edition
 - 1974 Interim English edition
 - 1985 Official English edition
- RCIA mandated for regular use in US in 1988
- Bishops require a minimum of one year of formation

Prelude to Today's Rites

- Catechumenate rites themselves do not appear in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) and *Book of Common Prayer* (1979)
- Episcopal *Book of Occasional Services* (1979) contained "Preparation of Adults for Holy Baptism: The Catechumenate"
- Lutheran *Occasional Services* book (1982) contained "Enrollment of Candidates for Baptism" with a brief description of the process
- Second Episcopal *Book of Occasional Services* (1988) contained catechumenate-like rites for confirmation, reception and/or reaffirmation



Prelude to Today's Rites

- In 1992 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada produced a series of books to introduce the catechumenate to their churches
- In 1997 the ELCA, ELCIC and LCMS together published the *Welcome to Christ* series, which was eventually included in the *Renewing Worship* volume dedicated to baptism (2002)
 - Unlike the Episcopal version, these rites were “provisional”
- *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006) contains the rite “Welcome to Baptism”
- *Come to the Waters* proposed by Dan Benedict as a way to introduce the Catechumenate to Methodist congregations



Catechumenate Rite #1: Move from Inquirer to Catechumen

- Welcome of Inquirers (Lutheran)
- Admission of Catechumens (Episcopal)

- Components of this rite:
 - Knocking on the door and welcoming into the church
 - Signing the body/senses with the cross by the sponsor
 - Presentation of a Bible
 - Prayer of blessing and charge to hearing/living the gospel



Catechumenate Rite #2: Move from Catechumen to Candidate

- Enrollment of Candidates for Baptism (Rite of Election)
- Components of this rite:
 - Presentation of catechumens [to the bishop]
 - Affirmation by sponsor:
 - “Have they been faithful in hearing the word of God and in receive it as a pattern for their lives?”
 - Enrollment of names in book
 - Prayer of blessing for the “journey”

Catechumenate Rites #3: Candidacy / Baptismal Preparation

- Blessings (“scrutinies”)
 - Confession of Faith
 - Handing over of the Creed (*traditio symbolii*)
 - Renunciation of Evil
 - “Exorcism”
 - Prayer of protection
 - Commitment to Prayer
 - Surrounded by the Intercessions
 - Handing over the Lord's Prayer



Catechumenate Rite #4: Holy Baptism and Thereafter

- Rite of Baptism

- Baptismal Living / Mystagogy
 - Extends over the fifty days of Easter (for those baptized at the Easter Vigil)
 - Period devoted to activities that will assist the newly baptized to experience the fullness of corporate life of the church and to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the sacraments
 - During period, persons called *neophytes*
 - Culminates in Affirmation of Vocation

Adapting the Catechumenate Rites for [Re-]Affirmation of Baptism

- **Inquiry** (\approx Pre-Catechumenate)
 - At end of period, liturgical rite:
 - Welcome of Inquirers (Lutheran)
 - Welcoming of Baptized Christians into a Community (Episcopal)
- **Formation / Affirmation** (\approx Catechumenate)
 - At end of period, liturgical rite:
 - Calling of the Baptized to Continuing Conversion
- **Candidacy**
 - At end of period, liturgical rite:
 - Preparation of Candidates of Affirmation for the Triduum (Lutheran)
 - Maundy Thursday Rite for Baptized Persons in Preparation for the Paschal Holy Days (Episcopal)

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