

ST CLEMENT OF ROME AND REFLECTION ON HIS PERSONALITY, WORK AND TIME IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE 20TH-CENTURY POPES¹

Martin Husár

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Abstract: HUSÁR, Martin. *St Clement of Rome and Reflection on His Personality and Work in the Documents of the 20th-Century Popes*. Minor references to St Clement of Rome (the 1st century AD), the third successor of St Peter, in popular, educational, and scholarly writings (not only in Slovakia) are mostly related to the theme of the mission and legacy of Sts Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, who brought his relics to Papal Rome in the year 867/868. Thereafter, his figure and legacy have been treated in various writings on the basis of the so-called First and Second Letters of Clement to the Corinthians, other Pseudo-Clementine writings, or various hagiographical texts about the given saint. However, the topic discussed has not yet been debated in the light of the documents of the 20th-century Popes, and has also been insufficiently examined and compared in the context of the (Catholic) Church of the periods of Antiquity and the 20th century. Various aspects of the personality and work of the aforementioned first-century Apostolic Father, as well as other related and intertwined particular themes or aspects, can be found in 22 Papal documents. They are the apostolic constitutions, encyclicals, apostolic exhortations and letters, as well as the speeches of the following four Popes of the 20th century: Pius XI (1922 – 1939), John XXIII (1958 – 1963), Paul VI (1963 – 1978) and John Paul II (1978 – 2005).

Keywords: *St Clement of Rome, Antiquity, the 20th Century, the Church, Popes*

I. Introduction

The theme of St Clement of Rome has not been treated in the light of the documents of the 20th-century Popes yet. And this theme and its aspects has not even been placed or compared sufficiently in the context of (Catholic) Church during Antiquity and the 20th century.² Therefore, filling these research gaps is among the main objectives of the present article. I have not accidentally picked up the given theme of this article. The 20th century was important and turbulent not only in a history of the Church but also in secular history. The Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) or two World Wars (1914 – 1918; 1939 – 1945) evidently influenced the history of the Church, Europe and the whole world. It is appropriate to compare this period with that of Antiquity and the 1st century AD, in which the story of St. Clement of Rome also unfolded.

Brief mentions of this saint are usually connected with the topic of the mission or legacy of Sts Constantine-Cyril and Methodius who found and brought his relics to Papal Rome in 867/868 (e.g. Dvorník 1970, 66-67, 134-135, 137, 140, 181, 207, footnote 7 on page 364; Hetényi – Ivanič 2013, 41; Tachiaos 2002, 213-214, 220; Vavřínek 2013, 71-72, 160-162). Last but not least there

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² This might be applied to popular, educational or scholarly literature.

are discussions on his figure, message, reverence, which are chiefly based on his so called First and Second Letter to the Corinthians, Pseudo-Clementines/Pseudo-Clementine writings (two letters to Virgins, the Homilies, Recognitions, and Epitomes) or various hagiographic texts about him (e.g. Curta – Williamson 2021, 16-54; Kashtanov – Korolev – Vinogradov 2018, 201-220; Kochan – Kuzmyk 2016, 33-60; Kraft 2018; Murgašová 2016; Piřha 2004).

Various aspects of the personality and work of the above mentioned saint as well as the topics that concern him, which can even be intertwined too, can be found in 22 documents of the 20th-Century Popes. They include apostolic constitutions, encyclicals, apostolic exhortations and letters, and the speeches of the following four Popes of the 20th century: Pius XI (1922 – 1939), John XXIII (1958 – 1963), Paul VI (1963 – 1978), and John Paul II (1978 – 2005).

According to my research, the next particular themes or aspects can be connected with St Clement of Rome in the documents of the 20th-century Pontiffs:

1. One of the (early) Church Fathers and especially one of the Apostolic Fathers
2. The third successor of St Peter
3. The unity of the Church
4. The martyrdom of St Clement of Rome in Crimea
5. Transfer of the relics of St Clement of Rome
 - a) to the West (also to Great Moravia)
 - b) to Rome
6. The Basilica of St Clement in Rome
 - a) The burial place of St Constantine-Cyril
 - b) The place of the homage to the Salonica Brothers and particularly to St Constantine-Cyril
7. Asceticism and repentance in the two so-called Letters of Clement to the Corinthians
8. The closing prayer of St Clement of Rome from his First Letter to Corinth
9. The mention of the so-called Second Letter of Clement to the Corinthians
10. St Clement of Rome in Georgia

II. The Apostolic Father and His Two Letters to the Corinthians

Here I can merge the first and ninth aspects from the previous list. In fact, both Letters of St Clement of Rome to Corinth imply the first aspect (the saint is an Apostolic Father) under consideration. St Clement of Rome is mentioned as one of the Church Fathers by the following 20th-century Pontiffs:

- a) Pope Pius XI (1930, 4) in his Encyclical *Ad Salutem* (10; the 20th of April 1930);
- b) Pope John Paul II (John Paul II 1979, 6-7) in his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (part named the Fathers of the Church; the 16th of October 1979) and in his Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* (18 and note No 38; the 2nd of May 1995).

Pius XI, in his aforementioned encyclical (from the year 1930) dedicated to St Augustine of Hippo, named St Clement of Rome among the Fathers and Doctors of the Church whom this saint (St Augustine of Hippo) had studied and venerated thoroughly, because they made him understand better the truths of Divine Revelation (*Ad Salutem* 10; Pius XI 1930, 4). John Paul II then wrote in 1979, in the 12th article (concerning the Church Fathers) of his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (in regard to the Synod of Bishops on Catechesis from the milieu of the Church) that the early collaborators of the Apostles continued their mission of teaching. In the period after the Apostles, important works were written from Clement to Origen (*Catechesi Tradendae* 12; John Paul II 1979, 6-7). Also in his Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* (18, note 38; John Paul II 1995,

15), John Paul II stated that the letters of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church (including the quoted so-called First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians) left us a testimony to the very close and fraternal relations between the churches, in full communion of faith, respecting their specific characteristics and identities, and in spite of their various problems and differences.

It should be noted that the term Apostolic Fathers was coined by the deliberate abbreviation (by librarians, booksellers, readers – Lincicum 2015, 139) of the title of J. B. Cotelerius' treatise of 1672: "*SS. Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt, Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermæ, Ignatii, Polycarpi opera edita et non edita, vera et supposita, græce et latine, cum notis.*"³ However, here we may speak of, or it may rather refer to, "*The published and unpublished works of the Holy Fathers... who developed their activities in the Apostolic Age...*" However, Luigi Longobardo and Jan Krupa, for example, in their 2019 article, mistakenly believed that the term Apostolic Fathers was associated with the Latin title of the above-mentioned publication, which they listed only in the brief and non-existing form "*Patres aevi apostolici*" (Longobardo – Krupa 2019).

St Clement of Rome was actually an Apostolic Father who may have lived during the lifetime of the longest living Apostle, St John. We can associate the Apostolic Fathers (within the early Church Fathers)⁴ with a heterogeneous collection of Christian pastoral writings that were produced approximately from the end of the 1st century to the middle of the 2nd century AD. (Longobardo – Krupa 2019). They relate to the tradition of the Church and draw on the activities and teachings of important Apostles and missionaries, such as Sts Paul, Peter, and John (Suchánek – Drška 2013, 72). From the Apostles, of whom they were generally disciples, they took the Treasure of Faith (Judák 2002, 8). They also relied firmly on the Holy Scriptures and Judeo-Christian foundations, but less on Hellenistic education (Suchánek – Drška 2013, 74). We particularly include here the following writings nowadays: the so-called First and Second Clement's Letters to the Corinthians, the seven authentic Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians, Polycarp's Martyrium, the Didache, the Letter of Barnabas, the Letter to Diognetus, the Shepherd of Hermas, and fragments of Papias and Quadratus [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 12-14].

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers, in addition to the canonical books of the Old (46 books) and New (27 books) Testaments of the Church, were also significantly copied and read by members of the Church at least into the medieval period [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 3]. For example, even Pope Benedict XVI, on the 7th of March 2007, stated during the General Audience in the Audience Hall of Paul VI (the main topic was St Clement of Rome) that the First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians had received almost canonical solemnity (Benedict XVI 2007a, 2; 2009, 8).

While with the First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians⁵, one can suppose the authorship of St Clement of Rome himself [Benedict XVI 2007a, 1; Benedict XVI 2009, 7; Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 21-23], for the later so-called Second Letter of Clement to the Corinthians⁶, actually a sermon, the author has been unknown yet [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 157-158]. Therefore, I might say that St Clement of Rome, as one of the Apostolic Fathers, entered the history of the Church mainly through his so-called First Letter to the Corinthians, namely, from "*The church of God that*

³ Here is, for instance, his revised version in two volumes of 1698 from Antwerp [Cotelerius (ed.) 1698a; 1698b] that is available online as well.

⁴ The early Church Fathers can be roughly divided into the Apostolic Fathers and then those who served before and after the First Council of Nicaea (325 AD). Among the works of the latter two groups may be found the Church Fathers who composed important mystagogical works or catecheses for the Church. These were mainly Sts Irenaeus (of Lyons), Augustine, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia (Ďatelinka 2019, 65-87).

⁵ It might be dated to the mid-90s of the 1st century [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 23-25] or after 96 (Benedict XVI 2007a, 2; 2009, 8).

⁶ It is probably dateable to the 40s of the 2nd century [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 159-160].

temporarily resides in Rome, to the church of God that temporarily resides in Corinth,...” (1 Clemens, Prologus; 1 Clemens 2003, 35).

The Codex Alexandrinus (the 5th century) is one of the four or five great uncial codices of the 4th – 5th centuries that contain the entire text of the Bible in Greek. Among the New Testament books and writings of the given codex, which formerly originated in Alexandria (Egypt), are found almost the whole of the so-called First Letter (excluding parts 57:7-63:4) and part of the so-called Second Letter (parts 1:1-12:5) of Clement to the Corinthians [Bruce 1988, 206-207; Ehrman (ed.) 2003 30]. Also, the Nomokanonъ of St Methodius (made for Great Moravia) lists two Letters of Clement in title L (On the Canon of Prayers and on Chanting and Reading...) among the venerable and sacred books of the New Testament for clerics and laity (Nomokanonъ L, Ap 85; Nomokanonъ 2013, 288-289). It is part of the 85th Canon of the Apostles⁷. The two Letters of Clement are also found in the Codex Hierosolymitanus of 1056, alongside other works of the Apostolic Fathers [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 3].

The First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians was written, according to the Five Books Against Heresies/Adversus Haereses of (St) Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (circa 140 – 202), by Clement, the third Bishop of Rome after St Peter. This Clement had experienced the preaching of the Apostles and conversed with them too (Irenaeus. Adversus Haereses III, 3; AH 1857, 849-850; Benedict XVI 2007a, 1; Benedict XVI 2009, 7; Buttler – Collorafi 2022, 9-10; Kraft 2018, Murgašová 2016, 16-17).

Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea († before 341) also confirmed the letter that Clement had written to Corinth. Namely, he mentioned a letter from Dionysius, the Bishop of Corinth, to Soter, the Bishop of Rome, dated about 170. Dionysius wrote to Soter that in Corinth they were reading and taking advice from his letter and the previous letter written by Clement (Eusebii Historia Ecclesiastica IV, XIII; EHE 1926, 381-385; Buttler – Collorafi 2022, 13; Kraft 2018).

III. The Third Successor of St Peter

The succession of St Clement of Rome to the See of Peter is reflected in John Paul II's Address to a delegation of dignitaries from (North) Macedonia (then FYROM) on the 22nd of May 2000. The main theme of the address was to deliver a speech to the traditional Macedonian delegation coming to the Basilica of St Clement in Rome to honour Sts Cyril and Methodius. In doing so, the Pope pointed out that the church also contains the venerable remains of St Clement of Rome, the third successor of Peter, and of St Cyril, the younger of the Solonica brothers, the Apostles of the Slavs (Address to the Delegation from FYROM; John Paul II 2000, 1).

As I mentioned above, (St) Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, who was already active before 202, stated that St Clement became the third successor after St Peter, between Cletus and Evaristus (Irenaeus. Adversus Haereses III, 3; AH 1857, 849-851; Benedict XVI 2007a, 1; 2009, 7; Butler – Collorafi 2022, 9-11; Kraft 2018).

The consecration of Clement by Peter in connection with the interpretation of the apostolic succession, however, is given in Tertullian's De Praescriptione Haereticorum (circa 160 – 220; De Praescriptione Haereticorum XXXII; TLDPH 1842, 405). The author mentions neither Linus nor Cletus as successors of St Peter. A different view from that of St Irenaeus of Lyons was, in a way, also held by Rufinus of Aquileia (turn of the 4th and 5th centuries) in his preface to the Books

⁷ Since the Council of Trullo (Concilium Quinisextum in 692) there have been 85 Canones Apostolorum recognised by the Church in the East. The Latin Church in the West has only recognised 50 of them, not Canons 51 to 85.

of Recognitions of St Clement addressed to Bishop Gaudentius. Rufinus, in fact, on the basis of a supposed letter of St Clement to James the Younger⁸ (the brother of the Lord) thought that Linus and Cletus were only in charge of the episcopate in Rome. To put it simply, they could only have been a kind of auxiliary bishops.⁹ Peter was then to fulfill the office of Apostle in Rome with the help of the two bishops mentioned above. After Peter's death, however, the teaching chair was already occupied by St Clement (Rufini Aquileiensis Presbyteri in S. Clementis Recognitionum Libros, Praefatio ad Gaudentium Episcopum; Recognitiones 1857, 1207-1208; Butler – Collorafi 2022, 11).

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, St Clement of Rome, Bishop of Rome, died in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98 – 117)¹⁰, having previously handed over his office as bishop of Rome to Evaristus after nine years of preaching the Word of God (Eusebius Historia Ecclesiastica III, XXXIV; EHE 1926, 379). Hence, he should not be identified with the Consul Titus Flavius Clemens, who was most likely executed by the emperor Domitian (81 – 96) as early as 96 because of his affiliation with the Christians (Kochan – Kuzmyk 2016, 36).

It is also important in relation to the succession of St Clement after St Peter that at the time of St Clement of Rome, St Ignatius of Antioch¹¹ had already stated in the preface to his Letter to the Romans that their Church (of the Romans) presided over charity – “..., *et praesidens in charitate...*” (Ignatius Antiochensis. Epistula ad Romanos, Prologus; Ignatius 1849, 40; Buttler – Collorafi 2022, 6-8; Benedict XVI 2007b, 4). Also Part III of the Letter of St Ignatius of Antioch to the Romans, which he wrote before his martyrdom in Rome, can be understood as an exhortation to heed what the Church of Rome says also in the Church of Antioch (Ignatius Antiochensis. Epistula ad Romanos, III; Ignatius 1849, 44; Buttler – Collorafi 2022, 7).

IV. The Unity of the Church

The theme of the unity in the Church, also in relation to the work of St Clement of Rome, can be traced in two documents of Pope John Paul II:

- a) Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2; John Paul II 1984, 2-3) of the 2nd of December 1984;
- b) Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* (18; John Paul II 1995, 15) of the 2nd of May 1995.

The aforementioned apostolic exhortation addresses reconciliation and repentance in the Church. In it, Pope John Paul II stated that throughout history the Church has had the experience of sporadic disagreements among its members because of differences of opinion or options in the field of doctrine and pastoral care (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* 2; John Paul II 1984, 2-3). St Clement of Rome and articles 3 to 6 as well as 57 of his so-called First Letter to Corinth were quoted by the Pope in this very context. In these sections St Clement denounced the wounds within the (ecclesial) community of Corinth (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, footnote 5; John Paul II 1984, 52).

The Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* was written by John Paul II on the occasion of the centenary of the Encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas* of Pope Leo XIII (1878 – 1903), which concerned the Eastern traditions of the whole Church to be safeguarded, and the intention (as John Paul II had also expressed in *Oriente Lumen*) to be instrumental in the renewal of unity with all the

⁸ In the letter in question Clement himself speaks of his succession to Peter.

⁹ St Peter also had a (auxiliary) bishop, Zacchaeus, in Caesarea.

¹⁰ That is, between about 100 and 101.

¹¹ Bishop of Antioch between 70 and 107.

Christians of the East (Orientale Lumen 1; John Paul II 1995, 1). As I have noted above, John Paul II emphasised here that St Clement of Rome also left us evidence in his (so-called the First) Letter to Corinth about the close relations between the (Christian) churches based in different areas, while they were in full communion of faith despite their specificities (Orientale Lumen 18, footnote 38; John Paul II 1995, 15, 24).

There were efforts for unity in the Church before and after the Second Vatican Council (the 11th of October 1962 – the 8th of December 1965). However, there is a difference with whom the (Catholic) Church felt in communion before and after this Council. In the Catechism of the Council of Trent (original written in 1566) we read that in the Church Militant¹² cannot be found infidels, heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated (CCT I, X, Question VIII; CCT 1867, 94-95). Thus, the Catholic Church did not even understand other Christian churches in the same communion, which, moreover, would also have recognised its head, the Pope.

Among the last to have commented on the issue before the Second Vatican Council was the aforementioned Pope Pius XI, who in 1928 issued the Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (Pius XI 1928, 1-8). It concerned religious unity, and in its 10th article it states: “*So, Venerable Brethren, it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it... During the lapse of centuries, the mystical Spouse of Christ has never been contaminated, nor can she ever in the future be contaminated, ...*” (*Mortalium Animos* 10; Pius XI 1928, 5-6). In this context, the Church was founded by Christ “...as a perfect society, ... which should carry on in the future the work of the salvation of the human race, under the leadership of one head, with an authority teaching by word of mouth, and by the ministry of the sacraments, the founts of heavenly grace; for which reason He attested by comparison the similarity of the Church to a kingdom, to a house, to a sheepfold, and to a flock.” (*Mortalium Animos* 6; Pius XI 1928, 3). I can add to my interpretation the ideas from Article 11 of the same encyclical, where Pope Pius XI quoted Lactantius (turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries) and thus accented that only the Catholic Church stuck to the true worship and represented the fount of truth, the house of Faith and the temple of God. If one moves away from it or does not join it, he or she alienates himself or herself from the hope of life and salvation (*Mortalium Animos* 11; Pius XI 1928, 6).

In the Catholic Church, after the Second Vatican Council, there were changes in the composition of the Church and unity within it. The Church Militant on the earth was changed into a Pilgrim Church (*Lumen Gentium* 48-51; Paul VI 1964, 24-26). It is (still) accepted that only through Christ’s Catholic Church, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, can the fullness of the means of salvation be achieved (CCCH 816; CCCH 2019; UR 3; UR 1964, 2-3).

From the full communion of the Catholic Church, various communities have separated throughout history, in which today are born those who believe in Christ, are justified by baptism through faith and incorporated into Christ, are the Christians, and are accepted by the sons of the Catholic Church as their brothers. They are in communion with the Catholic Church, even though this communion is not perfect (CCCH 818; CCCH 2019; UR 3; UR 1964, 2). In the dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on the 11th of November 1964 (*Lumen Gentium*; Paul VI 1964, 1-51), Article 8 states that even outside the Catholic Church, headed by St Peter’s successor and the bishops (who are in communion with that successor), there are “...many elements of sanctification and of truth,...” which prompt Catholic unity (*Lumen Gentium* 8; Paul VI 1964, 4). The separated churches and communities are used by

¹² The communion of the faithful on the earth who profess the same faith and partake of the same sacraments, as well as heading to Heaven for the Church Triumphant.

the Spirit of Christ as instruments of salvation. The efficacy of these instruments then “...derives... from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the (Catholic) Church.” (UR 3; UR 1964, 2).

The visible bonds of communion that ensure the unity of the pilgrim Church are: “*profession of one faith received from the Apostles; common celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments; apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders (sacramentum Ordinis), maintaining the fraternal concord of God’s family.*” (CCCH 815; CCCH 2019). Under the valid Catechism of the Catholic Church, the renewal of the unity of the Church is to be ensured by the Catholic Church towards other Christians through a common ecumenical prayer, dialogue, cooperation and fraternal knowledge, as well as through the ecumenical forming of the faithful and priests (CCCH 821, CCCH 2019).

In the important declaration of the former Congregation (now Dicastery) for the Doctrine of the Faith, Dominus Iesus, we can read that there is only the one Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church led by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him. “*The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church.*” (DI 17; DI 2000, 9).

Those ecclesial communities which lack a valid episcopate and the true and full substance of the Eucharist are therefore not churches in the true sense of the word. By baptism the members of these communities have been incorporated into Christ, and are thus with the Church only in a kind of imperfect communion (DI 17; DI 2000, 10).

The statement “*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” has ceased to be absolutely valid in the Church after the Second Vatican Council. While the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that all salvation comes from Christ, who is the Head of the Body, which is the Church (CCCH 846; CCCH 2019), this does not apply to people “...*who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church,*...” (CCCH 847; CCCH 2019). These too, according to the Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, can sincerely seek God, do his will through the influence of grace, as the voice of their conscience makes known to them, and they can also attain salvation (Lumen Gentium 16; Paul VI 1964, 8).

V. Martyrdom in Crimea

The martyrdom of St Clement of Rome is reflected in one encyclical (from 1985) and in two speeches (from 2001 and 2002) of Pope John Paul II:

- a) Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* (II, 4; John Paul II 1985, 3) from the 2nd of June 1985;
- b) Pope John Paul II’s speech during the opening ceremony of his visit to Ukraine in Kiev (1; John Paul II 2001b, 1) on the 23rd of June 2001;
- c) Pope John Paul II’s speech during the opening ceremony of his visit to Bulgaria in Sofia (1; John Paul II 2002, 1) delivered on the 23rd of May 2002.

In all of the above-mentioned documents, Pope John Paul II referred to St Clement as a Pope, a saint, and a martyr. Both the text of the Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* and John Paul II’s address in Kiev show that he links the martyrdom of St Clement with Crimea (Address in Kyiv 1; John Paul II 2001b, 1; *Slavorum Apostoli* II, 4; John Paul II 1985, 3). In his address in Kiev, the aforementioned Pope reminded the attending clergy and statesmen that as many as two Popes had died as martyrs

in exile in Crimea, namely the much-discussed St Clement I at the end of the first century and St Martin I in the middle of the seventh century (Address in Kyiv 1; John Paul II 2001b, 1).

As the Bishop of Rome, St Clement of Rome is mentioned in the sources since the 2nd century, namely by the aforementioned (St) Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons. He refers to him as the third Bishop of Rome after St Peter. His martyrdom, however, only began to appear in various sources from the 4th to 6th centuries (Benedict XVI. 2007a, 1; Benedict XVI. 2009, 7), written by, for example, Rufinus of Aquileia (397) in *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*; Pope Zosimus (417 – 418) through his letter; the unknown author of the biography of Pope Clement I in his *Liber Pontificalis* (the first half of the 6th century); or even Gregory of Tours in his *Liber in Gloria Martyrum* (the last decades of the 6th century) (Curta – Williamson 2021, 19; Kashtanov – Korolev – Vinogradov 2018, 205).

The first connection between St Clement and the veneration of his relics in Chersonesos is probably in the Travelogue of Theodosius, a possible pilgrim from Frankish Gaul, who wrote it around 530. The tomb of St Clement, to which a procession was made on his feast day (probably the 25th of November), was placed on an island, and pilgrims, according to this author, reached it in small boats or small ships (*barcae*; Curta – Williamson 2021, 21-22; Kashtanov – Korolev – Vinogradov 2018, 206).

In the following lines, it is useful to comment on martyrdom, relics and their importance (among other things) in the consecration of altars in the Catholic Church in the context of the history of its centre, Rome, where the significant relics of St Clement are deposited.

In St John's Apocalypse/Book of Revelation, with regard to the altar in Heaven and the martyrs present, it is stated: "*When he (the Lamb) broke open the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the word of God. They cried out in a loud voice, 'How long will it be, holy and true master, before you sit in judgment and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?' Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to be patient a little while longer until the number was filled of their fellow servants and brothers who were going to be killed as they had been.*" (Rev 6:9-11; CHB 2002). This passage, written by St John, clearly explains why the same relationship and pattern began to be applied on the earth within the Christian oikumene.

Pope Gregory (I) the Great (590 – 604) still opposed any transfer of relics (parts of the bodies or bodies of martyrs and saints), and in the consecration of the Church of St Agatha the Martyr he could most probably have only used relics of fabrics (contact relics) given to the tombs of St Sebastian and St Agatha. However, his third successor in order, Pope Boniface IV (608 – 615), used as many as 28 carts of relics from the catacombs at the consecration of the Pantheon as early as 609. This church was then dedicated to all the Martyrs (Jensen 2014, 164-166).

The transfer of the mortal remains of Christian martyrs and saints from the unprotected outskirts of Rome or from abroad to Roman churches and the Lateran Palace already began in the 40s of the 7th century under two Popes of Eastern origin, Pope John IV (640 – 642) and Theodore I (642 – 649). The repositioning of the bones of martyrs was more or less a custom of the Church in the East. The custom in question – to relocate the bones of saints and especially of martyrs – had previously been rejected by the Popes (Husár 2016b, 32; 2017, 97; Krautheimer 2000, 90, 113). Moreover, there was Canon 83 of the Council of Carthage [LXXXIII (Greek LXXXVI); Percival (ed.) 1900, 482] from 401 stating that all altars where the bodily remains of martyrs were not present should not be venerated (Jensen 2014, 161, footnote 35). Several scholars have mistakenly believed that Canon LXXXIII also mandated their destruction (e.g. Doig 2009, 89). However, this concerned probably only the altars that were erected by the roadsides and in the fields in memory of the martyrs. It was not until the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which established in its

Canon 7 [VII; Percival (ed.) 1900, 560] that the consecration of churches without the relics of the martyrs should be rectified and any bishop who did so without the holy relics should be deposed.

However, the consecration of altars in churches, or rather the rite of the dedication of the church before the 6th century, was first performed only in the form of the celebration of the Holy Mass. Thereafter, as part of the consecration of churches, relics have been inserted into the altars since the 6th century, as was the case with the aforementioned consecration of the Church of St Agatha the Martyr in Rome by Pope Gregory (I) the Great in 591/592 (Jensen 2014, 153, 160-161).

As I have noted elsewhere, relics had been transported on a large scale to churches and monasteries outside the walls of Rome since the second half of the 8th century, particularly from the pontificate of Paul I (757 – 767), and later Pope Hadrian I (772 – 795) even had to impose a ban on the export of relics of martyrs and saints outside the boundaries of Rome (Husár 2016b, 32-33; 2017, 97 – see here also further reading).

The situation with the placement of relics in altars before the Second Vatican Council can be understood by looking at the Code of Canon Law of 1917, which was created mainly by Popes Pius X (1903 – 1914) and Benedict XV (1914 – 1922). In § 4 of Canon 1198 (CIC 1917, 331) it is written: “*As in a fixed/importable altar, so in a sacred stone let there be, according to the norms of the liturgical law, a tomb containing the relics of saints, enclosed by a stone.*” In this statement is contained the unequivocal obligation of the presence of a relic in functioning altars.

After the Second Vatican Council, however, according to § 2 of Canon 1237 of the new Code of Canon Law: “*The ancient tradition of placing relics of martyrs or other saints under a fixed altar is to be preserved, according to the norms given in the liturgical books.*” (CCL 2023). Nevertheless, the given liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal or the Ceremonial of Bishops, no longer contain an explicit requirement for the presence of relics under an altar (Senz 2023).

I would like to dwell for a moment on the aforementioned Pope Martin I (645 – 654/655), who originally came from Umbria. Because of his opposition to monothelitism, he was captured by the Eastern Roman Emperor Constans II (651 – 668) and eventually exiled to Chersonesos, where he died in 655. This was during the period of acceptance of monothelitism in the Empire between 638 and 680 (Husár 2018, 95). Monothelitism proclaimed that Christ had only one will (monos + thelema) and two natures. In contrast, the dogma of his two wills (human and divine together with omnipotent) and two natures (divine and human) is generally accepted in the Church, based on the conclusions of the 6th Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 681. This is stated in the current Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCCH 475; CCCH 2023). In the previous catechism (before the Second Vatican Council) the emphasis was only on the presentation of Christ’s two natures (CCT I, III, Question XI; I, IV, Question II; CCT 1867, 46-47, 49).

VI. Transfer of the Relics of St Clement of Rome by the Salonica Brothers

The translation of the relics of the referred saint and successor of St Peter by the Salonica Brothers is treated in the following three documents of Pope John Paul II:

- a) Letter *Convenistis/Epistula missa ad universum Clerum Cecoslovachiae MC anniversaria memoria incidente ab obitu S. Methodii* [2, Ioannes Paulus PP. II 1985, 2-3; Bugel (ed.) 2003, 132] of the 19th of March 1985;
- b) Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* (II, 4; John Paul II 1985, 3) of the 2nd of June 1985;
- c) Pope John Paul II’s speech during the opening ceremony of his visit to Bulgaria in Sofia (1; John Paul II 2002, 1) on the 23rd of May 2002.

In both of the aforementioned documents of 1985, Pope John Paul II mentioned the fact that the relics/remains of St Pope Clement were carried by Sts Cyril and Methodius from Chersonesos in Crimea all the way (to the West or even to Great Moravia and then also) to Rome at the Christmastide (Convenistis 2, Ioannes Paulus PP. II 1985, 2-3; Bugel ed. 2003, 132), and were presented to Pope Hadrian II (867 – 872) (Slavorum Apostoli II, 4; John Paul II 1985, 3).

The speech of John Paul II states that Pope Hadrian II personally came to meet with the Holy Salonica Brothers, who had come to Rome to bring the relics of St Pope Clement (Apostolic Visit in Sophia I; John Paul II 2002, 1).

The mortal remains/relics of St. Clement of Rome mentioned above were found on the Crimean Peninsula, specifically in Chersonesos, during the mission of Sts Constantine and Methodius to the Khazars in 860 – 861 (Vita Constantini-Cyriilli 1-6; Vita Constantini 2010, 103-108; Husár 2016a, 166; Husar 2016, 96-97). The discovery of St Clement's relics in Chersonesos was reflected in three¹³ texts (a short history, a sermon and a hymn) that St Constantine-Cyril had composed in honour of St Clement, as his contemporary, Anastasius Bibliothecarius, also reported to Bishop Gauderich of Velletri (Curta – Williamson 2021, 25-26; Epistola 60; MMFH III 2011, 144-146).

The short history, which St Constantine-Cyril first translated in Rome, before his death, from Greek into Old Church Slavonic, is preserved in the manuscripts from the Russian milieu of the 15th and 16th centuries under the title “*Slovo na prenesenie moštem preslav'nago Kliment'a istoričeskiju imušte besědu*”. This work is also called the Kherson Legend (Curta – Williamson 2021, 26-27). Today we also have its translations in Latin (Vasica 1948, 38-80), German (Sermo in translatione; Sermo in translatione 2012, 95-101) or English (Butler 1993-1994, 15-39), for instance.

Regarding the visit of the Khazars by the Salonica Brothers, we know that Constantine also appeared at a banquet and meetings with the Khazar Khagan, where he discussed faith issues with the Jews. These concerned the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior and in Him all prophecies were fulfilled (Žitije Konstantina Filosofa IX-XI; ŽKF 2010, 61-75). It was even possible to baptise 200 people thanks to Constantine's teachings, even though the Kagan of the Khazars himself remained a follower of Judaism (Galuška – Vaškových 2013, 11). The visit in question also had a diplomatic dimension, which was to transform into the renewal or creation of a Byzantine-Khazar alliance against the Rus', who attacked Constantinople in 860 (Curta – Williamson 2021, 25; Galuška – Vaškových 2013, 11).

We do not know if the Salonica Brothers originally planned to come to Rome. The Roman Legend (Vita Constantini-Cirilli 8; Vita Constantini 2010, 109-110) mentions an invitation given to them by the Pope on the basis of their activities in Moravia, which he appreciated. In the Life of Methodius (Žitije Mefodija V; ŽMAM 2010, 125) it is again stated that after three years Constantine and Methodius returned from Moravia (it is unknown where), where they taught their disciples. There is also a mention (Žitije Mefodija VI; ŽMAM 2010, 126) that the Pope sent for them when he heard about Constantine and Methodius. In the Life of Constantine (Žitije Konstantina Filosofa XV; ŽKF 2010, 84) it is again mentioned that after 40 months Constantine went to ordain disciples (but it is also unknown where). The invitation from the Pope then came only on the basis of the conversations of the Salonica Brothers with the clergy in Venice about the Slavonic liturgy (Žitije Konstantina Filosofa XVI-XVII; ŽKF 2010, 85-90).

According to some authors, the Salonica Brothers planned to sail to Byzantium from Venice, but during the late autumn of 867 they received an invitation from Pope Nicholas I (858 – 867) because of the aforementioned conversations with the Venetian clergy (Dvorník 1970, 146-147; Dvornik 1970, 131-133; Löwe 1983, 655-656). Constantine and Methodius could have arrived in

¹³ They are now most probably lost in their original form.

Rome either in December 867 at the earliest or in early 868 at the latest, since Pope Nicholas I, who had invited them to Rome, died on the 11th of November 867, and the new Pope Hadrian II did not ascend the See of St Peter until the 14th of December 867 (Dvorník 1970, 145; Dvornik 1970, 131; Husár 2016b, 31; 2017, 95).

Regarding the arrival of the Salonica Brothers with the relics of St Clement of Rome in Rome itself, I can state on the grounds of the relevant primary written sources mainly the following. Pope Hadrian II, at the time of the arrival of the Salonica Brothers to Rome (867/868), is said to have “...learned that the above-named Philosopher was bringing with him the body of St Clement...”. (Vita Constantini-Cyrylli 9, Vita Constantini 2010, 110). He then “...rejoiced greatly...and stepped out to meet them with the clergy and people of the city, receiving them with great honors.” (Vita Constantini-Cyrylli 9; Vita Constantini 2010, 110). This story is also similarly recounted in other written sources concerning the Salonica Brothers (e.g. Žitije Konstantina Filosofof XVII; ŽKF 2010, 90; for more sources, see Husár 2017, 95).

VII. The Basilica of St Clement in Rome

The Basilica of St Clement in Rome, or Basilica di San Clemente in Italian, was discussed several times in the documents of the aforementioned Popes, either as the burial place of St Constantine-Cyril or as a place of the homage to the Salonica Brothers and especially to St Constantine-Cyril. This was the case in 8 addresses of Pope John Paul II to delegations of official representatives of Bulgaria and North Macedonia, or in his two letters (one of them is apostolic) and the Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*. There are also two references to the basilica dedicated to St Clement of Rome in two apostolic letters written by Pope John XXIII and Paul VI.

- I. In this group of documents there are primarily those that mention the given basilica mainly as the burial place of St Constantine-Cyril:
 1. The earliest papal document considered chronologically is Pope John XXIII's apostolic letter on the 11th of May 1963, *Magnifici Eventus*, which he addressed to the Catholic high priests/bishops (pl. antistites in Latin) of the Slavic countries. In it, the Pope gives thanks for the arrival of Sts Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia. In the letter, the Pontiff also stated that the body of St Cyril was buried in the city's (/Rome's) shrine/church (sg. aede in Latin) of St Clement (*Magnifici Eventus*; *Ioannes PP. XXIII. 1963, 2*).
 2. Then, in 1969 (the 2nd of February), the Apostolic Letter *Antiquae Nobilitatis* on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of the death of St Cyril was issued from the pen of Pope Paul VI. The letter also mentions the burial of St Cyril in the Basilica of St Clement (*Antiquae Nobilitatis*; *Paul VI 1969, 4*). In addition, Pope Paul VI outlined in that letter how, in 1963, he handed over to this basilica the then discovered remains of St Cyril. This was done during the Holy Mass and in the presence of many Fathers of the then-going Second Vatican Council (*Antiquae Nobilitatis*; *Paul VI 1969, 1-2*).
 3. In 1980 and then twice in 1985, Pope John Paul II mentioned the death of St Cyril in Rome and afterwards his burial in the Basilica of St Clement. This was in the Apostolic Letter *Egregiae Virtutis* (on the proclamation of Sts Cyril and Methodius as Co-Patrons of Europe) of the 31st of December 1980 (*Egregiae Virtutis 1*; *Ioannes Paulus PP. II 1980, 2*), then in the Letter *Convenistis* of the 19th of March 1985 (*Convenistis 1*; *Ioannes Paulus PP. II 1985, 2*; Bugel ed. 2003, 130), and in the Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* of the 2nd of June of the same year (I, 3; *John Paul II 1985, 2*). As for the encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*, the Pope recalled that St Cyril's relics are still held in this basilica with profound reverence (*Slavorum Apostoli I, 3*; *John Paul II 1985, 2*).

4. Finally, there is the aforementioned Address of Pope John Paul II on the visit of officials from (North) Macedonia (then FYROM) on the 22nd of May 2000. In addition to the traditional annual veneration of the Salonica Brothers in the basilica under discussion, there is also a reference to the custody of the venerated remains of St Clement of Rome, the third successor of (St) Peter, and St Cyril, the younger of the Salonica Brothers, who were the Apostles of the Slavs (Address to the Delegation from FYROM; John Paul II 2000, 1).
- II. Next, there is a group of documents where the Basilica of St Clement is discussed as a place of the homage to the Salonica Brothers and especially to St Constantine-Cyril:
1. In Pope John Paul II's Address to Bulgaria's new ambassador to the Holy See, Kiril Kirilov Maritchkov, we have a reference to the annual tribute of the Bulgarians and their highest representatives to Sts Cyril and Methodius, who were the evangelisers of Central Europe and are also part of Bulgaria's history and tradition (Address to Maritchkov 1; John Paul II 1992, 1).
 2. In 1997, the Slavic Pope addressed both delegations from (North) Macedonia and Bulgaria on the 23rd (Address to a Delegation from the FYROM; John Paul II 1997a, 1) and 24th of May (Address to Bulgarian Delegation 1; John Paul II 1997b, 1), that came to the tomb of St Cyril on the feast of the Salonica Brothers to honour them and their work.
 3. About two years later, on the 22nd of May, Pope John Paul II greeted a delegation from (North) Macedonia during the annual visit to the Basilica of St Clement in Rome on the occasion of the feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius, which also commemorated the relics of St Cyril there (Address to a Delegation from the FYROM, John Paul II 1999a, 1). In a similar vein, the same Pontiff rejoiced at the same objectives of the pilgrimage made by the officials of Bulgaria on the 25th of May 2001 (Address to a Delegation from Bulgaria 1; John Paul II 2001a, 1).
 4. Almost before the end of his pontificate, in 2004, Pope John Paul II welcomed in Rome some of the highest dignitaries from Bulgaria (Address to Professor Oghnjan Gerdjikov 1; John Paul II 2004b, 1) and (North) Macedonia (Address to H.E. Mr Branko Crvenkovski; John Paul II 2004a, 1) on the 24th of May. They both had arrived with their delegations to pay homage to Sts Cyril and Methodius in St Clement's Basilica in Rome. In the first case, the aforementioned delegation came headed by its Speaker of Parliament and in the second case by its President.

There are references to the bringing of the relics of St Clement of Rome to the City of Rome or directly (?) to the Church of St Clement in the Life of Constantine the Philosopher (Žitije Konstantina Filosofofa XVIII; ŽKF 2010, 94) and in the Roman Legend (Vita Constantini-Cirilli 12; Vita Constantini 2010, 112). At the end of the Roman Legend is the story of Methodius' pleading with Pope Hadrian II for the burial of his brother Cyril in the Church of St Clement "... *whose body with great labor and zeal he had found and brought here.*" (Vita Constantini-Cirilli 12; Vita Constantini 2010, 112). We have a similar statement in the Church Slavonic Life of Constantine the Philosopher: "...*let him be laid in the Church of St Clement, with whom he came here.*" (Žitije Konstantina Filosofofa XVIII; ŽKF 2010, 94).

Cyril himself died 50 days after he had become a monk in Rome (the 14th of February 869) and was subsequently laid to the right of the altar in St Clement's Church in a marble coffin sealed with Pope Hadrian II's own seal (Grotz 1970, 175; Vita Constantini-Cyrilli 12; Vita Constantini 2010, 112). On the occasion of his funeral, "...*a large number of clergy and people gathered, ... giving thanks to God, accompanied by canticles and hymns of praise, ...*" (Vita Constantini-Cyrilli 12; Vita Constantini 2010, 112-113). The Life of Constantine the Philosopher even states that, "...*over his*

tomb they (the Romans) painted an image, preparing to burn lights over it day and night, praising God, Who thus glorifies those who glorify Him; for to Him is glory and honour for ever. Amen.” (Žitije Konstantina Filosofa XVIII; ŽKF 2010, 95).

Already at the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century there must have been at least one room where Christians worshipped God on the site of today’s St Clement’s Basilica. By about 200 there must have been a titulus Clementis in a dwelling owned by one Clement (Clemens in Latin). Later, after the legalisation of Christianity by the Edict of Milan (313), a church with a rectangular ground plan and a semicircular apse was built here and dedicated to Pope Clement during the pontificate of Pope Siricius (384 – 399; Boyle 1989, 9-10). St Hieronymus also wrote around 390 that a church stood in Rome which preserved the memory of St Clement until the time of Hieronymus himself (Boyle 1989, 8).

The alleged relics of St Clement, and also of St Ignatius of Antioch [martyred in Rome circa 107(?)], are kept in the discussed basilica under the main altar, in a marble tomb and specifically in a box (Boyle 1989, 20, 26). The relics of St Clement are displayed for veneration on the 23rd of November, his feast day, and are carried in solemn procession through the streets adjacent to the Basilica of St Clement (BSC 2023). With regard to the relics of St Cyril in the Basilica of St Clement, a number of details about their original location are lacking. His relics must have been moved from the present abandoned Lower Church (a 4th century basilica) to the present Upper Church, a 12th century basilica.

During the turbulent period of the establishment of the first early modern and non-ecclesiastical Roman Republic, a marble box containing the ashes and bones of St Cyril was said to have been found in 1798 under the present altar of the Chapel of St Dominic (within the Upper Church of St Clement’s Basilica). This box was then moved to the Church of the Chiesa Nuova, right next to the remains of St Philip Neri. The following year it was taken to an unknown location. A small part of the contents of the box in question was eventually found in the family chapel in Recati, near the Adriatic coast, in July 1963. Later, in November 1963, the concerned relics were placed in the altar in the Chapel of St Cyril, which was built in the Upper Church of the Basilica of St Clement between 1882 and 1886, during the pontificate of Leo XIII (Boyle 1989, 33-34).

There are various frescoes and mosaics associated with St Clement of Rome in the above mentioned Lower and Upper Churches. The interesting scenes include the mosaic¹⁴ from the triumphal arch over the high altar in the Upper Church. Part of the aforementioned triumphal arch also features St Peter, who urges St Clement (holding the anchor) to look up to Christ, whom he (St Peter) has already promised St Clement– “*RESPICE PROMISSUM CLEMENS A ME TIBI XUM (CHRISTUM)*” (Boyle 1989, 32; Nolan 1914, 30).

In John Paul II’s theology of history, the European vision was closely linked with the Cyrillo-Methodian vision. As Emilia Hrabovec (2017, 14) has already expressed in 2017, during the course of his pontificate, one of his goals or visions was also “...through the rediscovered spiritual and cultural heritage of the Christian East and the Christianity of the Slavic peoples, to restore the identity, unity and evangelising-civilising emanation of Europe.” Pope John Paul II even took from the representative of Russian Symbolism, Vyacheslav Ivanov, the expression about the two spiritual halves of the lungs of Europe (Hrabovec 2017, 15).

The above-mentioned addresses of Pope John Paul II, which also treats the Basilica of St Clement in Rome, can be included among the other addresses given by the aforementioned

¹⁴ It is dated to the 12th century, although this is probably a reproduction (but to a lesser extent) of the 4th – 5th century mosaics from the Lower Church (Boyle 1989, 28) The mosaic scenes from the apse (of the Upper Church) are early Christian in symbolism, but their placement/setting is already medieval (Boyle 1989, 30).

successor of St Peter to official delegations from Bulgaria and (North) Macedonia every year in May since 1979 (Naumow 2017, 113-114). This was more precisely the case around the 24th of May, when, not least in Bulgaria and North Macedonia, the Day of Sts Cyril and Methodius is also celebrated. Speeches to Bulgarian delegations were discussed by Natalia Naumow (2017, 112-118) in one of her scholarly papers a few years ago.

The basic topic of the 14 speeches given to the Bulgarian side was the Salonica Brothers, which was intertwined with the Pope's reflections on inculturation, ecumenical dialogue, and the history and unity of Europe. Pope John Paul II understood the visits of the aforementioned South Slavic peoples to San Clemente during his pontificate not only as pilgrimages, but also as encounters between the East and the West, or between the Greek-Slavic and Latin spheres (Naumow 2017, 113).¹⁵

VIII. Asceticism and Repentance

The mentions of asceticism and repentance in both so-called Letters of Clement to Corinth can be found in one document of Pope Paul VI. In the Apostolic Constitution *Paenitemini* (II, note 53; the 17th of February 1966) of this Pope, concerning fasting, abstaining from certain foods and penance, Paul VI (1966, 3, 8) noted that although the necessity of repentance is above all motivated by participation in the sufferings of Christ, the necessity of asceticism, which chastens and subdues the body, is also affirmed by the example of Christ Himself. This is reflected in both the New Testament and the History of the Church, including the so-called two Letters of Clement, which he quotes in thematic sections, albeit not exhaustively in this area (1 Clemens 7, 4; 8, 5; 1 Clemens 2003, 47, 49; 2 Clemens 8, 1-3; 16, 4; 2 Clemens 2003, 177, 191).

The particular suggestions in the area of repentance and fasting appear in the above-mentioned so-called Second Letter of Clement, where its author speaks in the first case about the impossibility of making the Sacrament of Penance or repenting of one's sins in the Otherworld (2 Clemens, 8, 1-3; 2 Clemens 2003, 177). In the second case, he states that "*Fasting is better than prayer, but giving to charity is better than both* (of these given works)." (2 Clemens, 16, 4; 2 Clemens 2003, 191).

The early Church in fasting followed what had become the practice in the period after the Ascension of the Lord and in the lifetime of the Apostles. The Christians fasted regularly during the week, but also during Great Lent. The Church's norms and practice of fasting then, as well as her norms and practice of Eucharistic fasting, differ markedly from the norms and practice of the Catholic Church today. The latter today requires fasting only twice a year (on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday). Eucharistic Fast lasts only one hour before Holy Communion and involves abstaining from "*...any food and drink, except water and medicine.*" (CCL Can. 919, § 1; CCL 2023).

During the week, fasting took place on Wednesdays and Fridays in the early Church (Plese 2022, 17). This is informed by one of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers - the *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles - which was composed around the year 100 AD, or a decade or more later [Ehrman (ed.) 2003, 411]. Chapter 8 of the *Didache* mentions that, unlike the hypocrites (i.e. the Jews) who fast on the second and fifth days of the week, one should fast on the

¹⁵ Pope Benedict XVI (2005 – 2013) also followed up on the speeches on the annual visits in question, mentioning the Salonica Brothers in the process. However, the current Pope, Francis I, did not issue any further documents dedicated to the Bulgarians and their delegations, which also commemorated Sts Constantine-Cyril and Methodius (Naumow 2017, 116).

fourth day¹⁶ – i.e. Wednesday – and on the day of preparation (the preceding Sabbath), i.e. Friday (Didache 8; Didache 2003, 428-429). According to St Peter of Alexandria¹⁷, this was because it was on Wednesday that Christ was betrayed and on Friday that He underwent death for the redemption of mankind (Plese 2022, 17).

The (Great) Fast before Easter was originally practiced only by catechumens preparing for their baptism, all others fasted only during the Holy Week. Later, the Christians joined the catechumens in fasting for that time of the year. From the 3rd – 4th centuries onwards, then, Great Lent had begun to have 40 days, since even St Athanasius in 339 mentioned that this 40-day Great Fast was observed by “the whole world” (Plese 2022, 19). Fasting was practiced by the early Christians during the day, and they could have only one meal after sunset, as the Jews did when fasting. The Christians in the Apostolic Age ate mainly bread and vegetables when fasting, while wine, meat, or fish were not allowed (Plese 2022, 20).

Eucharistic fasting (no water and no food) could be practiced in the early Church until the Eucharist was received, namely since midnight (Pleso 2022, 62), at least from the time of Tertullian or St Hippolytus (circa 170 – 235). Tertullian, in the second book of his work “*Ad Uxorem*”, written for wives, mentioned their practice in a common household with a non-Christian husband of receiving the Eucharist before consuming any food (Tertulliani *Ad Uxorem* 2, V; AU 1842, 427). St Hippolytus, in a literary work devoted to apostolic tradition, specifically in its Article 32, stated: “*But let each of the faithful be zealous, before he eats anything else, to receive the Eucharist; for if anyone receives it with faith, after such a reception he cannot be harmed, even if a deadly poison should be given him.*” (Hippolyti *Traditio Apostolica* 32; TA 1934, 58).

The Sacrament of Penance (or nowadays the Sacrament of Reconciliation), which is linked to the remission of sins, is currently carried out in the Catholic Church (at least) by priests who absolve penitents in the name of Christ. This is done, with a few exceptions, only on an individual basis (CCL Can. 959-997; CCL 2023; Vragaš ed. 2008, 307).

The aforementioned Sacrament of Penance has its roots in the events following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when He gave His disciples the power both to forgive and to retain someone’s sins (John 20: 21-23; CHB 2002). We can approach the practice of this sacrament in the Apostolic Age through the aforementioned writing of the Didache. The text refers to the directive to confess unlawful acts in church/a church (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ in Greek) in order not to pray with an evil conscience (Didache 4: 14; Didache 2003, 425). However, there are also serious claims that in the first centuries of Christianity, the Christians had to make a strict public penance for their grave sins, even for years, before they received absolution (CCCH 1447; CCCH 2019, 363). Public confessions relating to the sin of apostasy, for instance, were made by some women who had formerly been among the followers of the Gnostic sect around Marcus in the 2nd century, as reported by (St) Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (Irenaeus. *Adversus Haereses* I, 13: 5, 7; AH 1857, 587-588, 591-592).

It was most likely from the 7th century onwards, through Irish missionaries (inspired by Eastern monasticism), that the practice of private penance and the administration of this sacrament in secret between a penitent and a priest started to spread throughout continental Europe (CCCH 1447; CCCH 2019, 363).

¹⁶ The first day of a week was Sunday.

¹⁷ He was its patriarch until 311.

IX. The Closing Prayer of St Clement of Rome from His First Letter to Corinth

A part (1 Clemens 59, 3; 1 Clemens 2003, 141-143) of the aforementioned, relatively long, concluding prayer¹⁸ of St Clement of Rome (General Audience 2003, 5; John Paul 2003, 2) was set at the end of Pope John Paul II's address at his General Audience on the 19th of February 2003, the main theme of which was the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, specifically verses 52-57 (John Paul 2003, 1-3). The Pope gave his address a subtitle based on part of the above-mentioned 57th verse of the third chapter of the Book of Daniel: "*Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord,...*"

The previously mentioned verses also refer to the blessing and exaltation of the Lord by three Jewish youths – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego¹⁹, who, according to Prophet Daniel, were thrown into a white-hot furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar because they had not bowed down to his golden statue (Dan 3:8-23; CHB 2002). Fortunately, in the end, the fire did not touch them, and the king even promoted them because of their faith and miraculous survival (Dan 3:91-97; CHB 2002).

John Paul II, in the above address, also praised the prayer of St Clement of Rome, describing it as being interspersed with biblical quotations and also perhaps reflecting the early Roman liturgy. It was supposed to be a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord Who, despite the apparent triumph of evil, leads history to a happy end (General Audience 2003, 4; John Paul 2003, 2).

X. St Clement of Rome in Georgia

The aspect mentioned above is contained in the address of Pope John Paul II during a meeting with Georgian statesmen and representatives from the fields of culture, science and the arts at Tbilisi on the 9th of November 1999 (3; John Paul II 1999b, 2). In the present address, the Pope mentioned that, according to tradition, the Gospel was first preached in Georgia by Apostles Andrew and Simon (the Zealot), as well as by St Clement of Rome, who was in exile in the mines of Chersonesos (Address in Tbilisi 3; John Paul II 1999b, 2).

On the website of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia we can find an article (Metropolitan 2014), which refers to an unnamed source, according to which St Clement, in his missionary activity, is said to have presented the Gospel also in the territory of Iberia, stretching along the coast of the Pontus Sea and called Colchis. It also mentions that he lived in exile under Emperor Trajan. The article in question refers to a passage in a Georgian monograph (Tabaghua 1984, 171), which, nonetheless, also lacks a source in this regard. However, on page 237 of that monograph there is a quotation from Caesar Baronius, who is said to have stated that the Iberians living near Pontus Euxine (the Black Sea) heard the light of the Gospel from Pope Clement, who was in exile in the Tauric Chersonese (Crimea), and not from St George (Tabaghua 1984, 237).

Caesar Baronius (1538 – 1607) allegedly said so in volume 2 of his Ecclesiastical Annals (Annales Ecclesiastici) for the year 100 and in Paragraph 10 (Tabaghua 1984, 237), but no such information is found there (Baronius 1864, 105). Baronius (1864, 105), however, in the 11th paragraph for the year 100, writes earlier only that the Iberians received the Gospel in the time of St Irenaeus (of Lyons) and St Clement (of Rome).

¹⁸ The complete prayer is about the following length: 1 Clemens 59, 3; 60-61; 1 Clemens 2003, 141-147.

¹⁹ Their Hebrew names were: Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael.

XI. Conclusion

The major part of the considered collection of 22 documents consists of the documents of Pope John Paul II, namely 18 of them. It follows that we have the most references to St Clement of Rome by that Pope. No less than 12 of them are linked in some way to the figures of St Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, because the Slavic Pope wanted to elevate the identity of Europe by presenting the heritage of the Christian East and the Christianity of the Slavic peoples.

12 of John Paul II's 18 documents under consideration are addresses, either before dignitaries and delegations or at a general audience. Two other documents are apostolic letters, one a letter, two apostolic exhortations and one an encyclical. In the other 6, John Paul II dealt with St Clement of Rome in Georgia, his martyrdom in Crimea, his Apostolic Fathership, his final prayer from his so-called First Letter to Corinth, and finally he discussed the unity of the Church.

Disproportionately less documents on the subject of St Clement of Rome were published by the other three examined Popes. In his Encyclical *Ad Salutem*, dedicated to St Augustine of Hippo, Pope Pius XI looked upon St Clement of Rome as an Apostolic Father.

Pope John XXIII, in his Apostolic Letter *Magnifici Eventus* (as a thanksgiving for the arrival of the Salonica Brothers in Great Moravia) discussed St Clement of Rome in connection with his basilica in Rome, where St Cyril was also buried.

Eventually, Pope Paul VI, in his Apostolic Constitution *Paenitemini* (on fasting, abstaining from certain foods and penance), also treated asceticism and penance in the two so-called Letters of Clement to Corinth. The Basilica of St Clement was then also mentioned in Paul VI's apostolic letter, *Antiquae Nobilitatis*, concerning the 1100th anniversary of the death of St Cyril. In the same letter, the Pope also noted the rediscovery of the relics of St Cyril, which were again reinterred in 1963 in the Basilica of St Clement, where St Cyril was initially buried.

It should be added in conclusion that St Clement of Rome lived in a time in which the demands placed on the private and public life of the Christian community were higher than those placed on the Catholics in the 20th century. This is evident from the facts in the chapters mentioned above, especially those concerning martyrdom or penance. So the higher bar thus set might also have resulted in their greater determination to defend the Treasure of the Faith.

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doc. Mgr. Martin Husár, PhD.
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Faculty of Arts
Institute for Research of Constantine and Methodius' Cultural Heritage
Štefánikova 67
949 74 Nitra
Slovakia
mhusar@ukf.sk
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6569-6833
WOS Researcher ID: AAG-9365-2020
SCOPUS Author ID: 57191329261