ST. ATHANASIUS THE GREAT
Doctor of the Church and Champion of Orthodoxy
Patriarch of Alexandria and Confessor of the Faith
“Athanasius Contra Mundum”

297 Athanasius born in Alexandria (gold forged in a furnace)
297 Rebellion by Lucius Domitianus
(Spring) 298 Emperor Diocletian sieges and sacks Alexandria

303-313 The Great Persecution
~305 Schism of Meletius; Patriarch Peter excommunicates him and Deacon Arius
311 Galerius’ Edict of Tolerance
311 * St. Peter of Alexandria martyred by Maximin
312 Patriarch Achillas restores Arius to communion, ordains him a priest
312 * St. Achillas of Alexandria martyred by Maximin

313 Edict of Milan (Licinius compels Maximin to cease persecution of Christians)

313 St. Alexander named Patriarch of Alexandria
313 Alexander takes Athanasius under his tutelage
~317 Athanasius authors Against the Gentiles and On The Incarnation
319 Public debate between Alexander and Arius begins
321 Council of Alexandria condemns Arianism; Alexander excommunicates Arius
(Nov) 324 Hosius of Córdova sent by Constantine to Alexandria to resolve growing crisis
(Easter) 325 Hosius directs Council at Antioch; Patriarch St. Eustathius elected and Arianism condemned

325 Council of Nicea (Creed signed June 19, Council ends in August)

328 St. Athanasius named Patriarch of Alexandria
329 Athanasius tours all of Egypt
330 St. Eustathius deposed from See of Antioch
330 Athanasius travels to Constantinople to defend himself before Emperor Constantine
332 Athanasius returns to his See fully exonerated and honored (after a 1 ½ year absence)

335 “Robber” Council at Tyre – condemns Athanasius in absentia
(Nov 6) 335 Constantine judges against Athanasius and exiles him to Gaul

335-337 First Exile - In Trier (2 years)
336 * Arius dies in Constantinople before being received into communion
(Feb 6) 337 Pope St. Julius elected Supreme Pontiff
(May 22) 337 * Constantine dies on Pentecost Sunday, after being baptized

(Nov) 337 Athanasius returns to his See
(Jul) 338 St. Antony visits Alexandria (2nd and final time)
338 Eusebius of Nicomedia becomes Patriarch of Constantinople
(Winter) 338 Arians gather in Antioch, reject Pope Julius’ decision, consecrate Gregory of Cappadocia as anti-Patriarch
(Mar) 339 Prefect Philagrius attacks Church of Theonas; Athanasius goes into hiding; Gregory seizes Churches
### Second Exile - In Rome (7½ years)

- Pope Julius directs Synod in Rome; rules against Arians in favor of orthodox bishops
- Arian Council at Antioch drafts four different creeds; birth of Semi-Arianism
- *Eusebius of Nicoemdia; Paul attempts to return to Constantinople; Constantius exiles him
- Council at Sadrīca (Arians refuse to meet, flee; hold their own anti-Councils)

- Constantius begins persecution of Nicene Catholics in the East

- (Jun) 346 *Gregory of Cappadocia, anti-Patriarch
- (Oct 21) 346 Athanasius triumphantly returns to Alexandria amidst great rejoicing

### Golden Decade of Christianity in Egypt

- ~ 347 Bishop Frumentius of Aksum, apostle to Ethiopia
- 347 1st Arian Council at Sirmium
- 350 Magnentius of Gaul murders Constans; Civil War!
- 351 *Defence Against the Arians
- 351 2nd Arian Council at Sirmium: 2nd Formulary (ambiguous)

- (Apr 12) 352 *Pope St. Julius
- (Oct) 353 Arian Council at Arles
- 355 Arian Council at Milan
- 355 Diogenes, Emperor’s Secretary, sent to Alexandria
- (Feb 8) 356 Duke Syrianus attacks Church of Theonas; Athanasius miraculously escapes

### Third Exile - In the Egyptian Desert (7 years)

- 356 *St. Antony; leaves his sheepskin coat for Athanasius
- 356 Bishop Hosius imprisoned; Pope Liberius abducted; anti-Pope Felix
- 356-360 *History of the Arians and Four Discourses Against the Arians
- 357 George the Pork Dealer installed as anti-Patriarch of Alexandria
- 357 Sebastian the Manichee rains terror upon the Catholics of Egypt
- 357 3rd Arian Council at Sirmium
- 357 4th Arian Council at Sirmium (Pope Liberius signs Basil of Ancyra’s Formulary)
- 359 Arian Council at Rimini (Italy) drafts the Arian Creed of Nice (Thrace)
- 359 Arian Council at Seleucia (Asia Minor)

- **St. Jerome:** “The world groaned in astonishment to find itself Arian”

- 359 George the Pork Dealer flees from Alexandria
- (Apr) 360 Rebellion in West: Julian elected emperor by his armies.
- 360 Eudoxius named Patriarch of Constantinople
- (Nov) 360 St. Hilary leads Synod in Paris back to orthodoxy
- 361 Euzoius named Patriarch of Antioch
- (Nov 3) 361 *Emperor Constantius; Julian the Apostate becomes sole emperor
- 361 *George the anti-Patriarch dismembered by angry pagan mob
- (Feb) 362 Edict of Emperor Julian returning all exiles

### Brief Interlude of Ecclesiastical Peace and Mercy

- (Feb 21) 362 Athanasius returns home to his See (little does he know, only for eight months)
- 362 Synod at Alexandria: reconcile heretics with mercy
- (Oct) 362 Athanasius flees, sailing down the Nile River, escaping Imperial troops
362-364 Fourth Exile - In the Thebiad Desert (1½ years)

Jun 26 363 Emperor Julian killed in skirmish with Persians; Jovian elected Emperor
(Feb) 364 Athanasius returns to his See
(Feb 17) 364 Jovian dies within eight months of assuming the Imperial throne
(Feb 26) 364 Valentinian elected Emperor (in the West) – he is an orthodox Catholic
(Mar 28) 364 Valens, his brother, is named co-Emperor (in the East) – he is an Arian heretic

365-366 Fifth Exile - In his Father's Tomb (5 months)
(Oct) 365 Imperial soldiers attack the Church of Dionysius; Athanasius escapes
(Autumn) 365 Procopius, last member of Constantine’s family, leads a civil rebellion
366 Imperial agents escort Athanasius back to Alexandria with all honors

366-373 Final Seven “Peaceful” Episcopate Years in Alexandria
366 Heathen mob burns down the Church of the Caesareum
366 Semi-Arians embrace Nicene Creed at Synods of Lampsacus and of Tyana (reject Arian Rimini Creed)
367 Festal Letter On the Canonical Books of the Bible
(Sep) 367 Arian bishop Lucius tries to challenge Athanasius for the See
369 To the Bishops of Africa (gives an account of the Council of Nicea)
369 Pope Damasus' Council in Rome – Final defeat of Arianism in the West
370 Church in Mendidium completed; dedicated to St. Athanasius after his death
370 Begins correspondence with Basil of Caesarea

373 * Athanasius, age 75, enters into eternal glory on May 2, 373

Epilogue Defeat of Arianism (?)
(Aug 9) 378 * Valens, last Arian Emperor, dies at the Battle of Adrianople against the Goths
(Jan 1) 379 Theodosius (Spaniard orthodox general) appointed Emperor of the East by Gratian
380 Edict of Thessalonica (signed by Emperors Theodosius, Gratian and Valentinian II)
381 Second Ecumenical Council: Constantinople I – Final defeat of Arianism in the East

Selected Bibliography:
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