

Epiphany of the Lord – English
Most Holy Name of Jesus – Latin
January 4, 2026
Year of the Church in History

“Let us note how free from anger He [God] is towards all His creatures.”
(Saint Clement of Rome, Epistle to the Corinthians, circa 95-96 AD)

Over these past few years, we as a church, have dedicated ourselves to the study and consideration of a teaching of our Catholic Faith. After much prayer and thought, I would like to return to the beginning of Christianity. As Christians, we profess beliefs in the Trinity, the divine and human natures of Christ, and various other teachings not explicitly spelled out in Sacred Scripture. These truths we hold, had to find a voice through the writings of those individuals closest to Jesus, His Apostles and their disciples. Christianity did not suddenly cease after the martyrdoms of Saints Peter and Paul, only to be “re-discovered” some 1,500 years later. My family, our Christian History is too important to not be studied. We can never truly appreciate the Faith we have unless we take the time to understand the development of our Christian Faith.

We begin in the years following 90 AD. At this point in our Christian Faith history, the Apostles, Saint John being the exception, have all gone to the Lord through persecution and martyrdom. Their immediate successors, or disciples, are now the ones who are leading the fledging Faith. They are guided by the beliefs they have been taught and the promise of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A few of these earliest Christians would be given the title of “Apostolic Fathers” due to their writings. Their writings would be directed to the various churches to address issues which had arisen. These issues could be either directly related to questions concerning the Faith or various other moral issues. A few of these earliest leaders are Saints Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna. Other early writings, the Didache or the Shepherd of Hermas, have come down to us from anonymous sources, but still offer valuable teachings concerning our Christian Faith.

Written circa 95-96 AD, Saint Clement of Rome’s Epistle to the Corinthians will be the first work we shall explore. As a reference point, Saint Clement is the Bishop of Rome and one of the first successors of Saint Peter of whom we possess definite information. Tertullian, who wrote around 190 AD, believed Saint Clement to have been ordained a priest by Saint Peter. Saint Jerome, who wrote around 360 AD, is of the opinion Saint Clement was the fourth Bishop of Rome. Saint Clement’s First Epistle, written to the Church of Corinth, seeks to address a scandal which has begun. Younger members of the Christian community are no longer listening to older members who were appointed by either the Apostles or their direct successors. In essence, a feud has broken out concerning leadership and popularity. Why is this important? It reminds us that we have not changed

much since the beginning. Even in our own time, Christians will base their discipleship upon their feelings toward various leaders. Furthermore, there were some Christians whose daily lives appeared as a contradiction to the moral teachings being promoted by the Church. This too is important, because it reminds us of the need for the Christian to be a man or woman whose life is a witness to their belief. Saint Clement would write: "*The good workman receiveth the bread of his work with boldness, but the slothful and careless dared not look his employer in the face.*" This one line begs the question: "How can we profess our love of Jesus and our assured salvation, IF we practice the Christian Faith in a haphazard way or with a lackadaisical attitude?" If we do not hold our Christian Faith as the guiding principle of our life, then, is it?